

Revitalizing Our Dances: Land and Dignity in Paraguay

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

By

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Fall Semester 2008  
George Mason University  
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## Dedication

I am honored by the time, friendship and support offered to me by so many in Paraguay, particularly the indigenous leaders who took the time to share their stories with me. It is to them that I dedicate this work. *Arriba Paraguay!*

## Acknowledgements

As you may imagine, there are innumerable people to thank for their time, support, encouragement and listening as I completed this project. First I am pleased to thank my committee, Agnieszka Paczynska, Peter Mandaville and Dan Rothbart, for their guidance, insight and creativity. I would also like to thank my family, Mom, Dad, Jack, Paula, Peter and Rebecca, for their hours of listening and cheerleading. Mom, Jack, Paula and Dad, thank you so much especially for being such a generous research grant foundation! I would also like to thank the warm and kind people throughout Paraguay who offered their time and help—Josephina and all at Peace Corps Paraguay, the Kansas-Paraguay Committee, Andres, Krista, Julio, Domingo, Perla and all at the inspiring Santa Ana community!

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## List of Abbreviations/Symbols

BID/IADM—*Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo*/InterAmerican Development Bank  
BWI—Bretton Woods Institutions (eg, the World Bank and the IMF)  
CIRD—*Centro de Información Y Recursos para el Desarrollo*  
DAI—*Departamento de Asuntos Indigena*  
ECBs—Ecclesiastical Base Communities  
ECLAC—Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean  
ENM—*Equipo Nacional de Misiones* (National Catholic Missions Team)  
FDI—Foreign Direct Investment  
GATT—Global Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  
GDP—Gross National Product  
GNI—Gross National Income  
HRC—Human Rights Commission  
IBR—*Instituto Bienestar Rural* (Institute for Rural Wellbeing)  
IMF/FMI—International Monetary Fund/*Fondo Monetario Internacional*  
IACHR—Inter-American Court of Human Rights  
INDI—*Instituto Nacional del Indigena*  
LAC—*Ligas Agarias Christianas* (Christian Peasant Leagues)  
MEC—Ministry of Education and Culture  
MERCOSUR—*Mercado Común del Sur* (Common Market of the South)  
NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NGO—Non-governmental organization  
OAS—Organization of American States  
SMO—social movement organization  
UN—United Nations  
USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development  
WTO—World Trade Organization

## ABSTRACT

### REVITALIZING THE DANCE: LAND AND DIGNITY IN PARAGUAY

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George Mason University, 2008

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Throughout Paraguay, indigenous communities are facing increased and unnecessary hardship as their lands are sold to private agriculture business. They are often subject to arrest, intimidation and torture. As a result of losing their lands, they no longer have access to food security, potable water or shelter. Accordingly, they are increasingly organizing resistance to neoliberal policies, specifically land privatization. The stunning fall of Gen. Stroessner opened unprecedented social and political space for such mobilization. The new sociopolitical space enabled indigenous leaders to form critical (if complex) partnerships with NGOs, accessing social and financial resources. Movements nearly always coalesce around an organizing frame. The prominence of dignity in the framing of this movement is clear. This dissertation will support my claim that once

Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **An Overview of the Impact of Land Privatization**

Just beyond the city limits of Asunción, Paraguay, lie shanty towns which have developed as citizens flock to the capital. The leader of one community (my confidentiality agreements with my research partners prevent me from naming either him or the community) walks a nearly 45 minute *carrito*-ride (a rickety wooden, horse-driven cart) to *Radio Solidaridad* where he speaks on Guaraní culture, history, struggles and visions for the future. To support his organizing efforts, he sells small wooden crafts, but the Santa Ana community is nearly as poor as his own community of *desplazados* (Displaces Ones) and the results are meager. Across town, in the city center, a group of indigenous leaders from throughout the country gather at an Episcopalian meeting center to discuss how they should best react to a recently proposed change in Paraguay's law governing the sale of indigenous land. Research by scholars such as Peter Lambert, John Renshaw and the World Bank's Estanislao Gacitua Mario, indicates that, among a number of factors precipitating this loss of land in Paraguay, two are prominent. One is the deregulation and privatization of land, typically for agribusiness or resource exploitation. The second is the dependence on wage labor of the poor, indigenous population who hope to, but typically cannot, find work in Asunción. What is the impact of land privatization on the lives and livelihoods of Paraguay's indigenous citizens? How

are indigenous leaders in particular responding to this phenomenon? Why has the Dignity Frame occurred in this particular time and place? What have been the results of their responses and why? What might all of this suggest both for conflict resolution theory and practice, as well as for the consolidation of Paraguay's new democracy? These are the central questions that this dissertation will address. As I will detail in Chapters 4-5, this dissertation will ultimately offer my analysis that the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. From the viewpoint of this frame, such policy reforms as land rights, language equality, and full access to health care and education are a natural conclusion.

Framing, of course, is a process by which a social group involved in a movement understands, presents and explains their worldview and the specific claims they are making. As the Literature Review (Chapter Three) will explore, frames are a significant factor in successfully mobilizing people. Framing is a hotly contested, contingent and social process. Indeed, the ability to put one's frame out before or ahead of opponents has meant success or failure for the claim-making of some groups. Framing therefore is

itself a battleground for participants in social movements. Much of what is fought for through the whole repertoire of activities that social movement actors take on is itself the supremacy of one's frame. It can be both means and end. Consider the opposing frames relevant to abortion. Those who frame themselves as "pro-life" subtly imply that those who do not support them are against life; those who frame themselves as "pro-choice" do much the same regarding the value of freedom. Recently those who oppose the current war in Iraq have rejected and challenged the frame of the war's supporters that to oppose the war is to oppose the troops. The reply of "Support Our Troops: Bring Them Home" directly refutes this and advances the argument of war opponents that the troops are not "supported" by having their lives risked in a war they perceive as ill-conceived and unnecessary. To frame is to define a problem or issue and thereby set the rules of debating it, and the boundaries and means of understanding it.

I am particularly interested in the implications of the Paraguayan indigenous social movement around land rights for conflict. As John Burton classically theorized, humans have certain basic psychological and social needs that are not negotiable. They include such needs as belonging, esteem, security, dignity and identity (Burton 1990). Burton issued this theory in the context of a stinging critique of "real-politik" and the conventional approach to conflict resolution and peace making in general, which he felt relied far too heavily on negotiating settlements which rarely held because they did not deal in a fundamental way with the inequitable social and political systems that were causing the conflict to begin with (Burton 1997 Online, Burton 1998). As I will discuss in more detail later, this is well expressed in his notion of "provention", a hybrid of

“proactive prevention”. I understand this idea to challenge the tendency of conventional, especially “track one” (governmental) approaches to conflict resolution to be reactive and hence less effective. Burton argued that a deep understanding of the systems which were preventing human beings from meeting their basic needs could allow us to then transform those systems, and prevent future conflicts from emerging to begin with.

As I will explain, Burton’s theory of basic human needs is an important theoretical building block for my analysis for a number of reasons. It clarifies that negotiation is not likely to be a sufficient solution to the conflicts arising over land rights and privatization in Paraguay. Because the loss of traditional or even ancestral land represents such a fundamental existential threat to both cultural identity and livelihood, negotiation is not possible. One cannot negotiate food security, for example. Nor can one “negotiate” away belonging, esteem or identity, which Burton argues, and I agree, are human needs just as essential as one’s daily bread.

These observations lead us to another fundamental conflict resolution theory. I refer to Johann Galtung’s notion of “structural violence”, a concept that is very familiar to peace scholars but remains controversial in the mainstream (Galtung 1996). Just as someone can be physically harmed or killed by an act of physical violence, Galtung argues, individuals and communities can be victims of very real violence caused by unjust social or political systems. To illustrate, if a person dies because there is no food, a tragedy has occurred, but no violence was done. If someone dies, and there was food to nourish him or her, a real act of violence was committed. In other words, Galtung’s theory of structural violence proposes that actual weapons are not necessarily required,

nor is intention required, for violence to have occurred. Neglect will suffice.

Galtung's notion of structural violence also is an important theory for building my case. While much of the violence directed against indigenous communities is actual violence involving torture, guns, or fire, the structural violence of contaminated water, forced relocation by the State onto reservations, or loss of the ability to provide food for oneself is also causing much illness, injury and death. Because the Dignity Frame directly addresses the reality of structural violence and dehumanization which has been dominant for so long in Paraguay (as elsewhere), its use by indigenous leaders in Paraguay is quite expected. The more hidden aspects of the violence against indigenous communities in Paraguay, as described above, make structural violence an important theory for my analysis of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay.

Indigenous leaders, civil society advocates, and indeed many anthropologists and Latin America or Paraguay scholars seem to view land privatization as structural violence, though I at least have not seen that precise theory invoked in those words. For example, as Richard Reed, an anthropologist who specializes in Paraguay, observed this during his time living with a Guarani community:

As entrepreneurs buy and clear the forests, Guarani are forced onto small reservations. On these small reserves, sometimes only a tenth of their previous area, they do not have the extensive forests they need for hunting, gathering and shifting agriculture. As Guarani are forced to abandon their traditional production systems, they lose control of their relationship with the larger society. Traditional residence patterns, kinship systems, religious beliefs and political institutions are giving way to the authorization and hierarchical relations of the larger society (Reed 1997, 3).

Shifting agriculture is a method of forest use and management which exploits a specific

area of the forest for a brief period, until soil and other natural resources reach a point where they need to replenish themselves. At this point, the community will move the entirety of their community to another part of the forest. The Guarani view this system as central to their culture and cosmology for several reasons. One, it previously produced a (comparatively) modest profit for them and enabled them to interact with the market and the *Paraguayos* with some power and autonomy. Secondly, the Guarani (who refer to themselves as “People of the Forest”) believe they originated “from the forest and each person maintains a personal spiritual connection with it. Religious activity not only expresses this connection, it develops and strengthens the relationship” (Reed 1997, 6).

Such ethnographic data substantiates my own qualitative data, in which indigenous community leaders shared with me their losses, responses and hopes. One man (“H”), for example, has traveled in between the capital and *el Interior* (that is, the rural areas outside of Asunción) organizing a council of other indigenous leaders to discuss how to best make their claims to the government, secure and defend land title, and similar. Another leader (“A”) provides a link between communities currently fighting off attacks on their land, by pressing their claims to INDI and providing support to jailed activists.

The numbers validate such a view. According to a World Bank socio-economic report, among others, indigenous citizens are the poorest of any other communities in Paraguay. This report notes that “a key issue for Paraguay is land tenure” (Mario 2004, online). They specify that “the search for better employment opportunities and expansion of the agricultural frontier seem to be the main reasons for migration” (Mario 2004,

online). In addition to land sales to foreign agriculture, land privatization has allowed immigrants, especially from Brazil, to buy indigenous land and “evict” indigenous groups (Mario 2004 online, Hilton online). Writes Ramon Fogel, a Paraguayan anthropologist and former government official, “...the rural structure [of land ownership] became increasingly polarized as powerful new actors appeared on the scene—the modern agricultural entrepreneur...” (Lambert 1997, 97). The result has been a highly unequal distribution of land: “1.1% of the landowners over 1,000 hectare owned 77% of the land, while the small producers under 10 hectares, who represent 5% of the landowners, owned only .9% of the total land” (Lambert 1997, 9). This is exacerbated by the fact that “informal labor arrangements account for roughly half of the national workforce” (Mario 2004, online). Increasing the threat to daily survival, almost half of Paraguay is employed by export-dependent sectors (such as commercial goods), leaving a large majority of Paraguay’s workforce directly vulnerable to the shocks of an increasingly deregulated market. As with many developing nations, Paraguay’s economy is primarily agricultural, (40% according to Sengupta). Hence the indigenous subsistence farmers have been the most effected by government policies of clearing forests and the commercialization of agriculture (Sengupta online, Lambert et al, 1997, 114-130, Renshaw 2002, 65-87). Political economist Donald Richards noted a specific impact of neoliberal incentivizing of agribusiness on employment: “Moreover, the transformation of Paraguayan agriculture in recent years has been accompanied by a concentration of land holdings as well as increased mechanization and sophistication of the production processes in a way that has decreased employment opportunities for unskilled labor. The

result has been an increase in rural-urban migration” (Richards 2000, 189). Families have been left either in shanty towns outside of Asunción (ironically, just across the river from the presidential *Casa Blanca*) or landless altogether, with the obvious implications for food security, community stability and dignity.

### *Neo-liberalism in Paraguay*

Because it is the worldview of many of Paraguay’s policy makers, neoliberalism’s historical development is context essential to understanding the current conflict in Paraguay. Consider, for example, this recent interview with President Frutos in which he argues that even social economies “accept the market economy”. He added that he is “not at all in agreement” with the model of a “socialist society with centralized government planning” (Ruiz Online). It is also important context because it is the ideology of the decision-makers which can either approve or deny future loans, as well as decide how current loans will be paid (Paraguay currently owes nearly three billion dollars, according to the World Bank). The President is well aware of this, as his response to Ruiz’s question about Paraguayan emigration to Spain demonstrates: “True, we are seeing massive emigration. And we are not going to be able to remedy the situation if loans are blocked....” (Ruiz Online). Given the stunning recent election of Padre Lugo, a Catholic Priest who had run on an explicit platform of land rights and economic justice, the dominance of neoliberal economics may be about to change, but of course, only time will tell. Land privatization is best understood in the context of both global and regional neoliberalism because it is in and of itself a neoliberal policy. Neoliberalism is a set of economic policy prescriptions quite uniformly adhered to by

major international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and regional development banks (to include *Banco InterAmericano de Desarrollo (BID)*, the InterAmerican Development Bank). The hallmark policies of neoliberalism are market and trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization. A theoretical underpinning of this dissertation is that neo-liberalism, the ideological engine of economic globalization, is more than a mere set of neutral policy prescriptions. Rather it is a set of cultural assumptions and values regarding how human nature is to be understood and how human society is best organized. The underlying values of capitalism include efficiency, individualism, and productivity. Alternatively, numerous data sources (ethnographies, media reports, observational data and personal interviews, for example) demonstrate that indigenous economies value equity, community, unity, sustainability and conservation. Economic globalization is, among other things, a project to extend and normalize free-market capitalism. Although cultural identities are malleable, they are not infinitely so and, as Burton classically theorized, they cannot be negotiated. Hence the movements responding to neoliberalism which have predictably arisen in countries throughout the Global South, Paraguay included. While opposition to neoliberalism has been common throughout the Global South, it has of course taken widely varied forms in various contexts. How Paraguay's specific context has shaped its indigenous land movement is precisely what this dissertation wishes to probe. My interpretation of events will draw on political opportunity theory, resource mobilization and framing. I will argue that I believe the dignity frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the

ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships.

I just argued that neoliberalism is not value-neutral. Nor is neoliberalism exported in a power vacuum; this is a vastly asymmetrical conflict, meaning that one of the parties (the government and relevant international institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF) have far more power and resources than the indigenous communities who mobilize in response to (not uniformly against) their policies and projects. Many historians have observed that, in at least one sense, neoliberalism can be thought of as an extension of colonialism (Korten 2001, 31-32; Meyer 1999). As Diouf for example writes, "The principal characteristic of the production of a city and an urban civility is at the heart of a globalization project, the colonial civilizing mission, imposing on it the special rhythm of societies that adapt to an economic and political situation...." (Meyer 1999, 94).

Further, understanding the development of the power imbalances inherent in the relationships between the Global North and the South provides insight into the structural violence currently manifest in this relationship. While in one sense theorizing about capitalism can be traced to Adam Smith or before, it is adequate for my purposes here to "date" it circa the Bretton Woods Conference in the 1940s. The IMF was tasked with

“ensuring global economic stability” (Stigletz 2002, 11). After the Great Depression of the 1930s, two central things became clear to many political scientists and economists. One was the so-called “beggar thy neighbor” policies, which believed that one nation’s economy would best succeed at the expense of other economies. This theory is now called into serious question because countries which adopted such policies saw negative results (Stigletz 2002, 23-52; Chang 2002, 13-68). Also called into question were *laissez faire* policies which had predominated through much of the Gilded Age. The two major Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were established with these lessons in mind. An increasingly global economy needed global institutions to regulate, finance and coordinate just as national states did for national economies.

In its original conception, then, the IMF was based on a recognition that markets did not work well—that they could result in massive unemployment and might fail to make needed funds available to countries to help them restore their economies...Founded on the belief that markets often worked badly, it now champions market supremacy with ideological fervor. Founded on the belief that there is a need for international pressure on counties to have more expansionary economic policies—such as increasing expenditures, reducing taxes, or lowering interest rates to stimulate the economy—today the IMF typically provides funds only if counties engage in policies like cutting deficits, raising taxes, or raising interest rates that lead to a contraction of the economy. (Stigletz 2002, 12-13).

This is critical because current neoliberal policies come from ideological beliefs which are diametrically opposed to those upon which the IMF was founded. Current neoliberal believers state as an explicit goal the minimization of the role of the state. This stems logically from their belief that states are corrupt and inefficient, and market discipline leads to a more accountable and effective allocation of resources. For neoliberals,

regulation is intrusion that will result in waste and corruption.

This ideological shift became most visible during the Reagan-Thatcher years of the 1980s, as most historians of the global economy, and the Bretton Woods Institutions in particular, such as Ha Joon Chang, Peter Galbraith and Joseph Stiglitz, note. Stiglitz's history of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) notes the opening which the fall of the Berlin Wall provided. This was both a literal opening—suddenly a number of new, potentially free market countries needed assistance—as well as an ideological opening, since many policy makers and academics celebrated that the final ideological battle of the globe had been won (Fukuyama, infamously now, even referred to the 'end of history'; a glance, however, at any newspaper will disconfirm his thesis).

One of the most significant impacts of neoliberalism on Paraguay, and indeed on much of Latin America, was the debt crisis. The majority of Paraguay's debt comes from two sources: the Chaco War (1932-35), fought against Bolivia, and from the Stroessner regime. According to the World Bank, Paraguay currently owes \$ 2.8 billion, which represents 52% of its GNI (Mario 2004 online)! The impact has of course been felt in Paraguay, among the indigenous and non-indigenous poor alike, much in the same way the debt crisis was experienced throughout the Global South. This reality has impacted the indigenous peoples in Paraguay uniquely; Paraguay has actually sold land to help pay for war reparations (Lambert 1997, 114). This caused a lack of resources to invest in education, health care, job creation and infrastructure. Sondrol notes that Paraguay faces the paradox that neoliberalism has created for the Global South in general: "The problem for Paraguay is that, to sustain any kind of political stability, the regime must build

legitimacy. This poses a contradiction for the new regime, as it finds itself caught between the requirements to (1) accumulate capital (in part, *via* austerity measures) and (2) build support and maintain legitimacy by meeting demands for increased levels of subsidies and services by key social groups” (Lambert 1997, 143). As noted above, the results have been illness, hunger and illiteracy and the impact has disproportionately burdened the indigenous population. This has been both a result of the debt crisis, as well as of responses to it. Impacted both by the depressions of Brazil and Argentina’s economies, as well as its own internal lack of growth and revenue, Paraguay has yet to genuinely recover.

As many economic historians note, the debt crisis was aggravated by global recession in the 1970s, triggered by the oil crisis. Interest rates for borrowing rose sharply; in Latin America’s case specifically, this resulted in national debts doubling or even tripling (Hanlon 2002, 27). Paraguay, like many nations, staggered, particularly when the boom spurred by the construction of the Itaipú dam (on the border with Brazil and Argentina) was complete. “As the economy spiraled down”, writes Sondrol, “inflation rose, unemployment increased, and debt burgeoned”, resulting in a populace, especially business elites, increasingly less inclined to tolerate autocracy (Sondrol 1992, 133). Paraguay struggled with inflation and the recession that had taken hold of Argentina and Brazil as well (Baer Online). Baer and Breuer also note that inflation was aggravated by Paraguay’s need to make payments on its debt service. Little to no foreign direct investment (FDI) replaced the demand lost upon the completion of Itaipú Dam, and few neoliberal reforms were undertaken (Crisp and Kelly Online). Hence inflation went

unchecked. Notably for its implications regarding my analysis, it was largely the growth of the agricultural sector, with its obvious need for large tracts of land, which began to stimulate Paraguay's economy again, specifically major export-oriented crops (Baer Online). We see clearly here the contradiction inherent within Paraguay's development policy which is bringing it into conflict with its indigenous communities. To provide the services they (and other citizen groups) demand, Paraguay must generate revenue. Yet currently its primary source of growth displaces and disempowers Paraguay's indigenous citizens.

A key methodological focus of this dissertation is teasing out the various local, national, regional and global forces which all form the context that shape a particular movement. We have just examined some relevant global forces. At the regional level, one of the major dynamics impacting Paraguay's development, economically as well as politically and socially, is its relationship with its larger and economically far more powerful neighbors, Brazil and Argentina. Related is Paraguay's membership in Mercosur, the regional free-trade treaty that exists between Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Formed in 1991 (after Stroessner's ouster but before the 1992 Constitution), it created "a free trade zone, with zero trade tariffs and non-tariff barriers, a common external tariff and integrated economies" (Manzetti 1994, 102). Mercosur has as a requirement that member governments be democratically elected, which would seem to give the business class an interest in at least the appearance of democracy. In a significant link between the regional and the global, shortly after its creation, Mercosur requested that the GATT (the predecessor to the WTO) grant it recognition as a regional

trade block.

With specific relevance to the conflict over Paraguay's policy of land privatization, Mercosur's emphasis is on export-led growth. Recall that Paraguay's main exports are cotton and soy, as well as the significance of cattle ranching to Paraguay's economy. As noted before, these industries are particularly land-intensive, further aggravating the conflict with indigenous communities over the land. Additionally, it is not at all automatic that macroeconomic growth will result in less inequality or poverty. That demands the right policy context.

Just as power imbalances exist between the Global North and Global South, so too do they shape the political and economic relationships between Mercosur's most powerful members, Brazil and Argentina, and Paraguay. As Manzetti notes, "the Asunción Treaty [which formed Mercosur] was constructed around the agreement, already in existence, between Argentina and Brazil, to which Paraguay and Uruguay gave quiescent acceptance" (Manzetti 1994, 119). Brazil alone constitutes "70% of Mercosur's GDP and 80% of its industrial manufactures" (Manzetti 1994, 123). Echoing the basic tenant of dependency theory about the Periphery serving as a supply base of resources and labor for the Center, Manzetti notes that "there is widespread fear in these countries that they will become relegated to the position of serving as suppliers of raw materials and intermediate products to Brazil's industrial sector unless appropriate industrial policies are adopted to forestall it" (Manzetti 1994, 123-124). The data seems to confirm these fears; Paraguay's imports from Brazil doubled between 1992 and 1993. According to the State Department, Paraguay's 2005 imports from Brazil were nearly

30% of its total (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1841.htm>). The implications for Paraguay's self-sufficiency and autonomy as the less powerful "partner" are clear, which has in turn implications for the sorts of development policy decisions that the state is likely to make. Given all of the above, it is no surprise that so much of the indigenous organizing in Paraguay has focused on land rights as a specific and immediate issue demanding attention in order to fully realize human dignity.

Paraguay's current macroeconomic situation is notably improved in comparison to past decades. According to the Economic Commission of Latin American and the Caribbean (2003-2004), tax revenue has improved after government measures to "reduce evasion" (ECLAC 2003-2004 Online). Public spending was cut, and debt serving was prioritized. The Guarani (Paraguay's currency) appreciated and a growth rate of nearly 3% is projected. Agriculture continued to drive growth, especially soybeans, but significantly, "non-agricultural activities are likely to enjoy a widespread recovery, with livestock and construction being the fastest growing sectors" (ECLAC 2003-2004 Online). This is particularly relevant news to a dissertation examining a social movement demanding land rights, because it has been precisely Paraguay's heavy dependence on agriculture that has made it so difficult for Paraguay's officials to enforce indigenous land claims or otherwise substantively address their demands. Should this prediction bear out, the theoretical possibility, at least, of a sustainable resolution to the conflict over Paraguay's land will increase. However, the most recent data informs us that the agricultural sector "grew by 15%" in 2003, the highest of any other sector in Paraguay's economy. Further, this sector alone was largely responsible for the growth that Paraguay

did manage to achieve (2.6% in 2003), as “non-agricultural sectors, meanwhile, dipped by .4%” (ECLAC 2003-04 Online). Continued dependence on such highly land-intensive agricultural products as soy or cattle can only aggravate an already deadly conflict over an increasingly scarce resource. Further, the nature of the agricultural sector is inherently unreliable compared to other sectors, given its dependence on the weather. Levels of “informal” employment remain high, a sector particularly likely to impact indigenous communities, as high rates of illiteracy and the continued dominance of Spanish constitute continued barriers to more secure employment (Mario 2004 Online).

In keeping with neoliberal orthodoxy, “the government established regularization of debt servicing” as a part of the August 2003 Administrative Reorganization and Fiscal Adjustment Act (adopted in June 2004). This Act also “broadens the corporate income tax base”, introduced a personal income tax rate and an excise tax on luxury goods such as petroleum and cigarettes (ECLAC 2003-04 Online). Scholars of neoliberalism in the developing world, such as Eckstein (2001), Gill (2000) Chang (2002), Brysk (2000), Galbraith (2002), and Mittleman (2000), often note the austerity-based approach to social spending on sectors such as health and education as a result of debt, economic adjustment and market liberalization. This austerity, they argue, can cause the state to severely restrict needed social spending. According to the ECLAC’s 2003-2004 report (online), this has certainly been the case for Paraguay. The annual growth rate for community, social and personal services grew by 4.1% in 1995 and has shrunk steadily to actually retracting at a rate of 2% in 2003 (the most recent year for which data are available). Meanwhile, Paraguay’s debt has shot up from 19% of GDP in 1995 to 52%, or over half

of Paraguay's GDP. From another angle, "debt servicing as a percentage of exports has also increased in recent years, reaching 10.3% in 2003" (ECLAC 2003-04). To put into perspective the future problems this could portend, 63.5% of this debt "carries a variable interest rate." A full third of the debt is financing costs (ECLAC 2003-2004).

What does all of this mean for development, democracy and the indigenous communities in Paraguay? I would argue that neoliberal economic and political policies have made and continue to make indigenous organizing very difficult—and necessary. (I say political policies, as opposed to just neoliberal economic policies, because again, neoliberalism is a normative cultural and socio-political project just as much as a set of economic policy prescriptions, as argued above.) Neoliberal policies, and in particular, land privatization, as shown above, have stripped away what little autonomy indigenous communities might have been able to negotiate. As Reed notes (1997), previously indigenous communities were more able to determine when, where and how they would engage the market. Neoliberal policies have also brought with them significant challenges to basic daily survival, to include food security, shelter and clean water. Neoliberal policies also go some way to explaining why the Dignity Frame may have been the one to occur in the context of contemporary Paraguay. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Because neoliberalism is a normative project that advances a particular view of what it means to be modern and civilized, it also represents a challenge to the worldview and identity of indigenous communities. Dignity demands that one is able to define for oneself one's destiny. Dignity demands

participation in the decisions that shape one's future. By resisting land privatization, as well as demanding health care, education and participation in all levels of government, on the grounds of human dignity, indigenous leaders and their allies are doing more than advocating for specific policies to improve the quality of life of indigenous people. They are, in my analysis, advancing a narrative which opposes the norms of neoliberalism (Reed 1997, 119-131, Renshaw 157-182, 2002).

### *El Stronato*

The impact of Stroessner's regime, and indigenous responses to it, will be explored more fully in Chapter 4. So too will the crucial importance of his ouster to opening up the needed political space for indigenous organizing. More briefly, here, though, Paraguay's ousted (and now late) dictator, Gen. Alfredo Stroessner and his Colorado Party viewed the indigenous communities as invisible, and when visible, less than human. Their purpose was to provide cheap, if not slave, labor for the landowners, whose purpose in turn was to continue to support the Stroessner regime. As Chapter 4 will examine in more detail, the deep and pervasive corruption of Stroessner's regime (the "*Stronato*" as it has been named) is another significant factor that impacted Paraguay's socioeconomic development. *Partido Colorado* "was developed from a party deeply divided along factional lines into a highly efficient vertically organized political vehicle which dominated all aspects of Paraguayan life" (Lambert 1997, 5). It is also one of the most significant contextual factors shaping the land rights movement in Paraguay, because as Chapter 4 will lay out in more detail, continuing corruption results in a lack of access to justice for indigenous communities when they attempt to press land claims or

have abuses prosecuted.

The black market thrived under the General, and “high-ranking military officers, party members, and bureaucrats enjoyed lucrative side interests involving rich sinecures in state monopolies” (Lambert 1997, 13). His regime was based on control of the military (from which he seized power), government institutions, and *Partido Colorado* (Lambert 1997, 4-5). After the Chaco War, a “short but brutal” Civil War emerged over whether Paraguay would move towards democracy or dictatorship. The Colorado Party fiercely put down democratic rebellion; Stroessner hence had a powerful mechanism of socio-political control already at his disposal. Like other autocratic regimes, “all aspects of Paraguayan life” were controlled by *el Stroonato* (Lambert 1997, 6). Membership in the party led to “economic or personal reward”, while of course, refusing membership resulted in poverty and oppression.

Gen. Stroessner’s regime was highly successful at demobilizing civil society: “with arrest, torture, death and exile awaiting those who would chose to oppose the regime, opposition was perceived as futile”, a feature with obvious relevance to a dissertation exploring growing political mobilization (Lambert 1997, 9). In fact, writes Lambert, “To a large extent, the regime succeeded in not only demobilizing but depoliticizing society” (Lambert 1997, 9). Like any autocrat, he targeted his opponents. Regarding the indigenous population specifically, Kidd notes they were placed under military control (Lambert 1997, 114). This was, he further writes, “a by-product of [the Stroessner regime’s] support for the most powerful groups in Paraguayan society—the military, the land owners and big business” (Lambert 1997, 115) who wanted a compliant

and cheap labor force, as well as massive tracts of land on which to raise cattle, and grow cotton and soy for export. This was pleasing, of course, to Stroessner's creditors and to international financial institutions, who saw open, neoliberal economic policy (Lambert 1997, 116). His regime was also bolstered by the support he cultivated from the U.S. with his strident and consistent anti-communist rhetoric during the time of the Cold War. Such cultivation of a positive international image was critical to Stroessner's long grip on power.

Still, as always, there was resistance. Though largely unsuccessful, this is important to realize as it suggests that much ideological groundwork for democratic reform was being laid even during the *Stronato*. Most of the resistance was organized by the Catholic Church and the landless, both *campesinos* and indigenous (Lambert 1997 3-21; Carter 1990). While marches and demonstrations by landless peasants were not difficult to put down, an ancient and international institution such as the Catholic Church proved more difficult. Their criticism was damaging to the international image so vital to the maintenance of the *Stronato* and was instrumental in weakening his regime (Carter Online).

Paraguay has, since Stroessner's ouster, made some important democratic reforms. Specifically, the new 1992 Constitution, replacing the 1967 one from the Stroessner era, recognized the existence of indigenous communities. It is difficult to highlight enough that the 1967 Constitution made no mention, quite literally, of them (Lambert 1997, 117). Small wonder, then, that, as we will see in detail in Chapters 4-5, the dignity of inclusion and recognition are guiding values of the indigenous rights

movement! The 1992 Constitution recognized them as culturally distinct and “they were guaranteed the right to preserve and develop their ethnic identities within their respective habitats” (Lambert 1997, 117). Further, they were given the right to preserve their own socio-political systems (Lambert 1997, 117). It was also under Rodriguez (recall he was the General who served directly under Stroessner and then led his ouster) that INDI, *Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena*, was created as a civilian institution. Under Stroessner, it had been part of the Department of Defense (Lambert 1997, 118). The result of such political openings has been a rapid and sizable proliferation of Paraguayan civil society, with most citizens less afraid to demonstrate and organize politically, a media more able to be critical, and regular elections. Any student of political transitions or Paraguay, however, will understand that none of the above implies that abuses of human and civil rights no longer occur (*Derechos Humanos* 2004; “Widely Practiced Torture” Online). INDI’s leadership at times blames a lack of indigenous initiative for the poverty of their communities (RF, Personal Interview, June 28, 2006), and blocks meetings of indigenous leaders with other institutions (Personal Interview H, July 11, 2006). Chapters 4-5 will provide more detail regarding the specific harassment, abuse and bureaucratic barriers that indigenous leaders face in their advocacy.

### *Outline of the Dissertation*

Chapter One has given an initial presentation of the central analysis of this dissertation. It has also provided the necessary background and context of Paraguay, including economic and social data, the situation in which the indigenous communities of Paraguay find themselves, and why land privatization has become such a central issue for

indigenous mobilization. This dissertation's central analysis will be that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. The political opportunity represented by Stroessner's ouster, the need for partnerships with NGOs and their resources and the dehumanizing context of daily life for most indigenous people interacted such that it is the Dignity Frame that we observe in contemporary Paraguay, when others were possible.

Chapter Two will provide the necessary context and historical background on the indigenous communities of Paraguay, and how they have related to the emerging and evolving Paraguayan state and to the market, before the Stroessner era. By so doing, it will trace the development of the land rights movement in Paraguay. It will also explore the deep relationship between land and dignity for Paraguayan indigenous communities, and how this has in part shaped the land rights movement.

Chapter Three, the Literature Review, will detail and engage the relevant literature and analytical tools I will employ in understanding why and how the indigenous land rights movement occurred as it did. Specifically, it will engage the social movements literature, particularly relevant theories such as political opportunity theory, resource mobilization and framing. It will also engage the relevant conflict resolution literature, as noted above, especially Basic Human Needs Theory and Galtung's notion of structural violence.

Chapters Four and Five will present my analysis of the recent indigenous rights movement in Paraguay. They will explore the critical nature of the political opening

represented by the fall of the Stroessner regime. They will fully develop the Dignity Frame and present evidence for this dissertation's analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Because of the dehumanizing context in which indigenous communities have for so long found themselves, as well as the strategic utility of the Dignity Frame in partnering with other civil society organizations, this frame proved both resonant and useful.

Finally, Chapter Six will provide concluding thoughts on the implications of all of the above for the development and consolidation of Paraguay's democracy, the field of conflict analysis and resolution, and areas for future research.

## Chapter 2: An Historical View of the Indigenous Rights Movement in Paraguay

This chapter will detail the chronological history of indigenous communities in Paraguay, tracing the development of their interaction and relationship with the state and the continuing development of the indigenous rights movement there. It will do so examining this interaction in the pre-Stroessner period. It will emphasize strategies of resistance, subversion and accommodation which are common to past and present indigenous communities. It will also emphasize the role of dignity as a primary reason for such advocacy. In so doing, this chapter provides useful historical context for my analysis of the indigenous rights movement (Chapter 4 and 5).

### *Resistance, Subversion and Accommodation*

As indigenous leaders and their allies will readily remind someone, indigenous history does not “begin” with the Spanish colonial invasion in 1573. This is quite true. Having been referred to as “a people without history” by some of the anthropologists and historians studying them, it is no wonder that an insistence on dignity would compel them to refute such notions (Miller 1999, 37; Horst 2007, 7). The colonial invasion, however, is a reasonable starting point to examine the indigenous struggle for land rights and cultural autonomy. Land has been the core issue between indigenous communities and colonial and dictatorial regimes literally since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. As Horst writes, “Colonial patterns, the dictatorships and the war [referring here to the War of the Triple

Alliance] all contributed to unequal land distribution in Paraguay” (Horst 2007, 14). Its occupation was, after all, the explicit purpose of nearly the entire colonial project. Indigenous communities employed a number of tactics, to include direct petition, so-called “weapons of the weak” and armed revolution in defense of their lands and communities. (Given that we are observing a period of several centuries here, this variety of tactics employed is not surprising.) Interestingly, as the below will demonstrate, the “public face” that some indigenous communities, at least at times, presented was one of loyal subjects to the Crown who therefore deserved protection and deserved to have their petitions heard. Letters to Spanish colonial officials, for example, suggest this. Meanwhile, more quietly subversive practices often successfully preserved indigenous communities and culture.

As noted just above, land was as central to the conflict during the Colonial Era as it is now. For example, the Triple Alliance War, which Paraguay fought against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay from 1865-1879, obligated the government to sell much of its land to speculators as a result of Paraguay’s utter defeat in this war. This included much of the Chaco, where numerous indigenous communities dwelt (Lambert 1997, 114). As just noted, petition and participation within the colonial system was one tactic indigenous communities used to defend themselves. Indigenous historian Barbara Ganson, for example, cites a letter written in 1753 by a Guarani magistrate to Jose Andonaegui, then governor of Buenos Aires. The letter protested the Treaty of Madrid (signed in 1750), pleading that “it could not be in the heart of the King of Spain to make them [the Guarani] relocate” (Ganson 2003, 1, brackets hers). This letter, she writes,

“along with similar letters from the Indian *corregidores* of the seven missions, demonstrates that the Guarani attempted to work within the Spanish colonial control system to redress their grievances before proceeding to extralegal methods” (Ganson 2003, 4). This technique of petitioning for redress of grievances through official, sanctioned channels is still a common strategy of indigenous activists. Indigenous strategy now also includes legal methods, such as voting, organizing marches, and petitioning elected officials. It also continues to include violent defense of their community lands, land invasions, and occupations of the National Plaza. However, we must note here an important difference between past and present. Ñeengirú, the author of the above 1753 letter, later helped to lead a militant revolution against the Spanish officials as it became clear that their petitions were not going to be addressed. As I will argue in Chapter 3, while the current conflict is indeed violent, it is not currently revolutionary or approaching a civil war. This may be the most stark difference between the nature of the conflicts then and now.

Importantly for my study, Horst and Ganson echo and corroborate anthropologist Richard Reed in the observation that, contrary to many depictions, indigenous communities were active agents who preserved many aspects of their culture in the face of violent occupation. As Horst writes, “...the native population resisted, responded to, and adapted to the dictatorship’s goals and plans. Indigenous agency provides examples of native responses to coercive national policies, religious proselytism, changing environments and the loss of ancestral territories” (Horst 2007, 5). Their use of more subtle techniques or so-called “weapons of the weak” should not suggest a lack of

agency. Furthermore, in addition to subtle subversion and, when necessary, accommodation, indigenous communities rebelled against the Spanish Crown repeatedly. According to Horst, “Between 1537 and 1609, the Guarani revolted violently twenty-three times against a system of imposed labor” (Horst 2007, 7). They were agents defending the well-being, dignity and autonomy of their communities. This bears obvious relevance to my own analysis of current indigenous political organizing, which sees indigenous communities actively opposing the dehumanization that sustained and legitimized colonialism and *el Stronato*. As with the indigenous movement now, language was a prominent focus of resistance. Ganson writes, “Native texts, Indian testimonies, late-eighteenth –century descriptions of their religious festivities, missions, Indian artifacts, and the widespread use of the native language in the upper region of the Río de la Plata all demonstrate Guarani cultural resiliency” (Ganson 2003, 5). Each of these techniques of resistance suggests indigenous determination to preserve their way of life, a fact which in and of itself debunks the dominant colonial narrative of puerility, dependency and inhumanity. Social movement scholar June Nash argues convincingly that, in the context of armed occupation, preservation of one’s community and way of life itself constitutes resistance and agency (Nash 2005, 178-179).

Colonial misunderstanding of native cultures was apparent from the beginning of the occupation. For example, according to Ganson, “Sixteenth-century Europeans imagined that the Tupi-Guarani were godless” (Ganson 2003, 20). Rather, in reality, they were—and are—animistic. That is, they believe in a divine presence throughout nature. “These native peoples,” Ganson specifies, “believed in nature and in the importance of

the sun, moon, thunder, lightning, and other natural forces” (Ganson 2003, 20). Like many other anthropologists, such as Marilyn Renfel, Jose Zanardini and Richard Reed, Ganson notes the quintessential Guarani belief in “yvy marane’y”—in Spanish “tierra sin mal”, or “land without evil” (Ganson 2003, 20). “Marane’y” specifically meant “purity, innocence or virginity” (Ganson 2003, 22). The connection between this essential aspect of native cosmology and narratives of dignity is striking. Recall that I have argued that neoliberal economic policies constitute more than fiscal restructuring; they constitute the validation and in fact institutionalization of certain values such as individualism, productivity and progress (as those implementing the policies define such). Neoliberal definitions of progress typically include macroeconomic growth and development of infrastructure. Hence “progress” as it was being implemented by the Spanish colonial administration might readily have been viewed by indigenous people as a threat to the land’s “virginity” and hence one of their most fundamental and deeply held values (as well as their way of providing food and shelter for their communities). This is a major reason why, in my analysis, indigenous activism has not simply been a legal effort to regain their land, but a broader effort to protect and promote indigenous dignity in the face of poverty, invisibility and racism. Land and dignity for so many indigenous communities are intimately connected.

Data from historical analyses and anthropological studies indicates that this, albeit sometimes subtle, cultural resistance, mixed with accommodation and adaptation, has been the dynamic of cultural and community survival even in the context of military occupation and for some time now. For example, regarding the specific mission of

evangelizing the indigenous communities which so often accompanied violent colonization, Ganson reports, “The Guarani found methods for both the accommodation of and resistance to the pressures of missionization” (Ganson 2003, 29). Cultures are dynamic, and therefore can and do evolve through contact with other cultures. This is suggested, for example, by the Guarani’s acceptance and use of what would then have been modern tools. In my opinion, however, such adaptation need not necessarily imply a lack of resistance against the Crown’s occupation. Writes Ganson, “In exchange for metal hardware and assistance in defeating the nomadic Chaco Indians, the Cario-Guarani offered the Spaniards food and labor, as well as their wives and daughters, not only as concubines or even wives but also as agricultural laborers” (Ganson 2003, 24). Ganson also notes that, “Despite the violent nature of the occupation, a pattern of cultural borrowings developed in this backwater region of the Spanish Empire in the mid-sixteenth century” (Ganson 2003, 28). She cites, for example, intermarriage and the “predominance” of the Guarani language. Cultural traditions were exchanged as well. For example, Spaniards apparently adopted local staple foods of manioc (related to the potato) and sleeping in hammocks, and of course, *maté*, a strong root tea that is an omnipresent fact of indigenous life throughout much of South America. The Guarani adopted tools and “other items of trade” (Ganson 2003, 29). So there is evidence that the cultural adaptation, at least in some respects, was mutual. Yet clearly, as I have noted before, one must be careful about claiming that “choice” was exercised in such examples. Can there be choice in the context of military occupation? Not authentically, I would argue, not in the same manner as one who is not under such occupation could choose.

And quite clearly, there was little to no choice for the women and girls who were literally given as gifts in what can only be described as a patriarchy. Yet there is evidence of savvy and survival skills as a primary feature of indigenous response to occupation, and a readiness to embrace new technology, as evidenced above. That some mutual cultural adaptation took place should not, however, at all obscure either the brutal realities of the colonial occupation or clear strategies of resistance to it. Paraguay's capital city of Asunción was established in 1537 (Ganson 2003, 25). By 1600, the indigenous population in the occupied province "collapsed" (Ganson 2003, 26), as a result of foreign illnesses the colonists had introduced, violent conflict, the burning of primary indigenous sources of food, and literally being worked to death.

Further, while many indigenous citizens did convert to Christianity, or appear to, "several powerful Shamans strongly resisted all Jesuit efforts to alter their lifeways" during this time. This conflict was violent on both sides (Ganson 2003, 37-38). The Shamans in particular resisted Jesuit attempts to "supplant the shamans as the principal religious and political leaders in all aspects of native life" (Ganson 2003, 39). Naturally these attempts were viewed as not only threats to indigenous culture and autonomy, but as personal threats against the power of the shamans. Autonomy, a central component of dignity as I am defining it, was a central inspiration for indigenous resistance to outside attempts to change them. Another common technique used by some indigenous communities in response to attempts at conversion was to hold their sacred rituals and practices in secret, as a way to preserve identity without necessitating direct confrontation (Ganson 2003, 39). In another example of their willingness to advocate (with various

results) for their right to preserve their culture and socio-political systems, they would often seek redress from more highly placed colonial Spanish authorities, often traveling as far as Buenos Aires to do so (Ganson 2003, 41). This strategy suggests political savvy and understanding on the part of indigenous leaders on where power in the colonial structure rested. It also suggests—similarly to what one can observe today—a readiness to advocate “within the system” when possible. Interestingly, in some of these instances, we can see indigenous leaders clearly depicting themselves as loyal subjects who were seeking protection. The survival strategy which indigenous communities seem to have adopted during parts of the colonial era was to present publicly the face that the Crown demanded, while simultaneously employing more subtly subversive techniques to preserve their land and culture.

Another common tactic used by the indigenous communities to protect their interests in the face of violent occupation was the use of Jesuit missionaries as intermediaries on their behalf to negotiate compromises with the Spanish Crown. Writes Ganson, “These native people, through the use of intermediaries, were capable of protecting their own interests. Their native voices were heard by Spanish authorities through the Jesuits and were not ignored” (Ganson 2003, 49). As Ganson notes, the Jesuits did in some manner protect indigenous communities from slavery (Ganson 2003, 50). Much like the relationship between the Mennonites and indigenous laborers today, the relationship between the Jesuits and the indigenous communities in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was deeply complex. Clearly this was not a relationship of equals. And as noted before, clearly indigenous communities did find strategies to preserve some

autonomy despite Jesuit attempts to convert them. Yet just as clearly, "...the lives of the Guarani underwent change as a result of their contact and confrontations with the priests" (Ganson 2003, 51). For example, the Jesuits used religious and literacy instruction, cultural expressions such as music, song and dance, and "the use of rewards and corporal punishment...and military discipline" as mechanisms of social control (Ganson 2003, 76). This included the practice of distributing food rations just after Mass; those who did not attend did not receive their rations (Ganson 2003, 79).

As just noted, however, subtly subversive practices that maintained indigenous culture have been documented. For one example, "although outwardly they accepted Catholicism, some Guarani maintained traditional native beliefs and practices, as suggested by small ceramic figurines uncovered at the mission sites....These small figures with half-human and half-animal features could easily be hidden from the eyes of the missionaries" (Ganson 2003, 77). Such "weapons of the weak" seem to have been an important site of resistance for indigenous communities, but were ultimately not sufficient for indigenous social, economic and political traditions to emerge unscathed. Writes Horst, "As the Colonial Period came to an end in the early nineteenth century, the plundering of missions contributed to the creation of a peasantry in Paraguay and the collapse of any significant Guarani resistance" (Horst 2007, 7). As a result of contact with the colonial and Jesuit systems, indigenous social and political systems "incorporated new writing skills, artisans crafts, and products into their economic and social lives, which became more complex, less egalitarian and socially differentiated" (Ganson 2003, 84). While, yes, in some ways, the Spanish colonists and missionaries did

adapt to the Guarani as well (recall that they learned local languages and took to local food), the vastly asymmetrical power context cannot allow for this to have been an equitable cultural exchange. Few present-day historical or anthropological scholars would claim otherwise (Ganson 2003, 1-14; Renshaw 2002, 63-87; Miller 1999, 37-60; Reed 1997, 77-109).

*Land, Dignity and the Treaty of Madrid*

My analysis of how the indigenous rights movement unfolded focuses on the deep, spiritual connection to the specific land on which the colonized indigenous communities had been dwelling. It is therefore also striking that it was the Treaty of Madrid, signed in 1750, and the Treaty's restructuring of land settlements, that finally incited open rebellion among indigenous communities. (Attempts to enforce Spanish-only instruction, an obvious offense to dignity, were another prominent reason why.) The restructuring determined in the Treaty was the result of negotiated settlements with Spain's major colonial rival, Portugal. The restructuring, which was resisted and ignored by many Jesuit and local Spanish officials as well as indigenous people, would have forced numerous resettlements, to include the laborious (not to mention costly) uprooting of agriculture. As nearly every analysis of indigenous relations with colonial or dictatorial governments notes, the cosmic significance of the land played a central role in the resistance of indigenous communities to resettlement. Horst reports that, "In 1753 when Spain gave the easternmost missions to Portugal following the 1750 Treaty of Madrid, the Guarani rose up in revolt against the Portuguese crown" (Horst 2007, 7). Writes Ganson, "Land for the Guarani not only represented something to farm and to

raise cattle on but also was closely linked to the spiritual world”. Burial ground was—and is—especially significant. So too was the sense of belonging to the land on which one had labored. According to testimony from 1754 which Ganson cites, the Guarani expressed that, “We do not need those [newly proposed] lands because we already have the land of our ancestors who were always here and lived well, and we have had for many years our well-constructed church and town all built by the sweat of our brow and cannot leave because a priest, Rafel Genester, who loved the Indians so, was buried here” (Ganson 2003, 95). In the cases where the Jesuits were successfully able to convince indigenous communities to relocate, this was the result of what Ganson describes as literal pleading by the Jesuits, “on their knees and with tears in their eyes” (Ganson 2003, 97). By contrast, in other missions, the Guarani told “them to return the money because his people would rather die than leave their lands” (Ganson 2003, 105). Meanwhile, indigenous military leaders led formal, armed resistance, often with success, against colonial forces. Interestingly, they were able to use in particular the Spanish literacy they gained from Jesuit education to “create [a voice] by writing letters to express grievances”(Ganson 2003, 99). Similarly, the Enxet (another indigenous people of Paraguay) adopted equestrianism, which ironically enabled them to oppose the Spanish invaders. As Stephen Kidd, an anthropologist who specializes in Paraguay, writes, “When they [the Enxet] eventually entered into full-scale conflict with the Spaniards, their ability as horseman placed them on equal terms, and as a result, the Spaniards were never able to successfully invade the Chaco” (Miller 2003, 38).

The theme of struggle for land was also as prominent then as it is now; even in the

face of slave trader raids which occurred, the majority of the Guarani refused to leave (Ganson 2003, 46). Their economy was based largely on hunting, gathering and fishing, pursuits that demand ready access to land (Miller 1999, 39). Unlike for some other indigenous communities (such as the Guarani), the Enxet largely maintained their independence “until...unknown to them, in 1825 the Paraguayan government declared that the lands of the Chaco region were to become property of the state” (Miller 1999, 39). This was, according to Kidd, not largely enforced, however, until in 1885, “with the intention of repaying its foreign debt, the government began to sell off the region on the London Stock Exchange” (Miller 1999, 40). Notably, the conflict between Western and indigenous socio-political forces even then was, at least in part, driven by global economic forces, as we can see from the role that foreign debt played in forming colonial policy. The result was that “within two years, 115, 591 square kilometers had been acquired by sixty foreign businesses” (Miller 1999, 40). The end result was that “by the late 1940s their entire land had been fenced off, and the best water sources had been settled by white people” (Miller 1999, 40).

In the end, the Guarani resistance was not successful. By the end of the nineteenth century, as Horst notes, “Only a few groups of Guarani in eastern Paraguay and most of the western Chaco tribes remained free from national control” (Horst 2007, 9). As noted above, many Guarani employed the tactic of seeking the Crown’s support and protection, depicting themselves as loving and loyal subjects (Ganson 2003, 122-125). Not only does this suggest the political savvy to determine where power was residing, it also allowed indigenous communities in a sense to play the Crown and the

Church off of one another. By 1768, the Jesuits were expelled by the Spanish colonial authority. The central indigenous response to this was “a substantial rise in migration to towns and the countryside in the Río de la Plata and Southern Brazil” (Ganson 2003, 126). One main reason for this migration was epidemics of illness at the declining missions (Ganson 2003, 129). However, another important reason was simply a demand for the freedom to move about as one wished. I would view this freedom of movement as an essential ingredient of human dignity. Ganson substantiates that there is evidence that indigenous peoples did welcome some of the economic opportunities that, for example, the 1778 Free Trade Decree, afforded them, particularly in a context where they were (relatively) more free to engage or not engage with the market as they chose. One reason for this might be suggested by Horst’s observation that Paraguay’s first *El Supremo Dictador*, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, “extended state recognition to the remaining indigenous communities even as he took territory from the church and land owners” (Horst 2007, 9). This was, according to Horst, to weaken the power of elites who might otherwise be able to challenge him (Horst 2007, 9-10). He argues that Lopez’s “much-lauded emancipation masked a hidden agenda.” Specifically, “by ‘freeing’ the native population, the dictator divested pueblos of their special status, seized all their cattle, goods and properties, and subjected the native inhabitants to military service and taxes payable in *yerba mate*”, food or alcohol (Horst 2007, 10-11). One tribe, the Evuení, was actually made extinct long before anyone had coined the word “genocide” (Horst 2007, 14). Ganson also views the Guarani’s flight from the missions as a “nonconfrontational form of resistance”, noting that “desertion was less risky than

other forms of native resistance” (Ganson 2003, 136). As the missions transitioned and declined in the post-Jesuit period, it seems that the most common strategy of engagement continued to be accommodation and nonviolent resistance such as seeking the protection of the Crown when local authorities were thought incompetent or abusive (Ganson 2003, 140-145). Given the political economy of the time as Paraguay scholar Abente describes it, there was little choice. Specifically he cites an “outward orientation of the economy” which “introduced a further bias in favor of foreign companies” (Abente 1989, 65). This state policy combined with the devastation of war “ruined the indigenous landed elite”, further limiting the literal and metaphoric space indigenous communities had in which to organize on their own behalf (Abente 1989, 65). The dominance of these foreign companies led to a dependence which for Paraguay “prevented the development of local industry” (Abente 1989, 68). This of course resulted in a lack of economic autonomy for indigenous communities throughout Paraguay. This lack of autonomy, notably, continued even after domestic economic elites did manage (after the Triple Alliance War) to establish some power within foreign elite business arrangements. The land-starved industry of ranching dominated domestic elite business (Abente 1989, 75), perpetuating the indigenous struggle to claim their land rights. Further, this landed economic elite “came to dominate Paraguayan politics in a loose alliance with powerful military leaders....” (Abente 1989, 75). Lopez’s Triple Alliance War saw half of Paraguay’s population killed, and “the male population decreased from 220,000 to 28,000” (Horst 2007, 14). Indigenous communities were uniquely impacted in that they were increasingly used to “resist occupying Argentine forces” (Horst 2007, 14). Further, when

Bernadino Caballero seized power from Lopez in 1880, he “sold the remaining state-owned land in western Paraguay to foreigners to replenish his bank account, and soon British companies entered the Chaco” (Horst 2007, 15). The end result, according to Horst, was that by the end of the 1800’s, “seventy-nine people owned half the country’s land...It was at this time that most indigenous land in the Chaco passed into private ownership” (Horst 2007, 15). Given the disempowerment that resulted from the systemic theft of their land, it is not a surprise that horrific abuses of indigenous communities escalated. Horst describes “macabre hunts to kill and capture Ache in Eastern Paraguay” and the bragging of peasants “that they had raped and killed Ache women to steal their children” (Horst 2007, 16-17).

### *Internal Divisions*

Like today, indigenous resistance to colonial occupation was complicated by tensions between “elite” indigenous leaders and the *peons* (commoners), as they were then called. In a standard colonial occupation tactic, indigenous leaders were often sought to act as town or mission officials (called *cabildantes* or *caciques*). The result of this in terms of their subsequent relationship with their fellow indigenous people was varied. Some *cabildantes* appear to have effectively petitioned the Spanish government for what they could. Some even defied Spanish decrees on behalf of their people. Yet many also collaborated in order to remain in power (Ganson 2003, 145-147). Given the importance of at least some measure of unity to a movement, one can extrapolate that these divisions were harmful to the efforts of indigenous communities to preserve their land, culture and to simply survive. We will see echoes of this class division in the

current indigenous rights movement, particularly in the debate over *Ley 904* and *Ley 2822* in more detail during Chapter 5. For example, indigenous leaders who live in the city, due to displacement, advocacy activities or having sought improved educational and job opportunities, have come to be seen by some indigenous people as “less” indigenous (and by implication less legitimate as leaders). The suggestion is that urbanity is incompatible with indigenous identity. Chapter Five will examine this in more detail.

### *A People Without Things*

Notably, the current struggle over what economic system is best, capitalism or a more traditional, community model, has echoes from this colonial period as well. Many activists today argue that indigenous culture is destroyed by the encroachment of modernity; neoliberal theorists, of course, argue that indigenous and other impoverished communities will never be lifted out of poverty unless macroeconomic growth is achieved. The reality appears, as ever, to be a more complex picture, one that suggests indigenous citizens are quite open to *modernismo*, but insist on control over the changes they embrace or not. In other words, the issue is autonomy, not modernity itself. As Petras and Veltmeyer argue (2001), and as I myself will argue in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation, indigenous communities are not mobilizing “against” modernity or development per say. They are mobilizing for their own view of what modernity should look like: a more inclusive, localized form of development.

Not surprisingly, land policy was at the center of this economic struggle throughout the colonial occupation just as it is today, given its importance to both indigenous communal culture and to the Colonial economy. Writes Ganson, “Beginning

in the nineteenth century, the Guarani, especially their communal landholding and labor practices, came increasingly under attack from governments that believed that corporate bodies constituted an obstacle to ‘progress’” (Ganson 2003, 153). Communal land holding, of course, would clearly fall into this category. The Spanish agenda at this time (by now the “Enlightenment”) was “to turn the Guarani into small, independent yeoman farmers”, rather than being so focused on evangelism as the Jesuits were. Capitalism was the Gospel now. Resulting from the Bourbon Decree, a decree which “accelerated the secularization of the missions”, communal land was broken up, so as to “eliminate constraints on individual interests” (Ganson 2003, 154). Ganson reports that the result for indigenous communities was hunger. Many fled the Missions to work as free-wage laborers. While, as she notes, some welcomed the new economic freedom, having adopted more European cultural values towards society and markets, many did not, as is evidenced by the fact that communal land-holding did not (and still has not) end (Ganson 2003, 155). In 1848 Carlos Antonio Lopez, then Paraguay’s dictator, also issued a second decree that fully and finally “divested all the Indian *cabildos* in Paraguay” (Ganson 2003, 162). A simultaneous decree illustrated the state strategy of further dividing the indigenous populations whenever possible: Lopez had the land and cattle of the now-former Missions divided up and given to those indigenous who had been well-behaved. Writes Ganson, with these Decrees, “the Guarani thus lost all formal mechanisms for protecting their communal lands and rights” (Ganson 2003, 162). It is not surprising, then, that, as noted just above, many indigenous migrated into towns, turned to wage labor or even engaged the market economy in whatever ways they could.

Recall here Reed's observations that, when indigenous communities had access to their land to provide basic survival needs, many indigenous communities were able to engage the market when and how they chose, and did so often successfully.

Kidd provides further detail on the manner in which increasing capitalist expansion did—and did not—conflict with the Enxet “moral economy” (evoking James Scott's language). Kidd notes that “it was easy to recognize Enxet leaders because they were the poorest members of the community” (Miller 1999, 39). In fact, apparently when one Enxet leader did begin to accumulate wealth by renting out a corral to local ranchers, to the anger of his community, he returned to find that community members had “dismantled the corral and sold the wood to a local trader” (Miller 1999, 48). Kidd further explains that the Enxet consider themselves a “people without things”, which he argues “encapsulates the assumption that those who live together should, ideally, be kin but also alludes to the requirement of economic equality between co-residents” (Miller 1999, 44). Food and even goods such as household furniture can be shared rather than saved. I would argue that this is economically rational behavior, though that may seem counterintuitive at first. In an environment with highly unpredictable natural resources such as the Chaco, such sharing is an important way to ensure community survival. Kidd notes the same, and specifies further the role of sharing in maintaining community bonds upon which survival can depend:

Among many South American indigenous peoples, kinship is not regarded as derived from the biological act or procreation and birth but rather as maintained through the social act of giving. Kin relations must be continually enacted by the sharing of food” (Miller 1999, 46).

It is not a surprise, then, that being forced to adapt to a formal monetary economy and “into a set of economic rules and practices that would seem to contrast sharply with their sharing economy” would result in resistance on the part of indigenous communities (Miller 1999, 48). Kidd specifies, “it is believed [by anthropologists] that on entering an indigenous economy, money will inevitably lead to the creation of depersonalized market relations between people and the eventual disappearance of sharing and gift giving, which are...constitutive of love and social relationships among the Enxet” (Kidd 1999, 48). However, Kidd notes, rightly in my analysis, that indigenous communities do seem to have adapted to the use of hard currency, as money can be given and shared just as food or other goods can. By incorporating currency into their traditional cultural sharing systems, the Enxet communities actively preserved their autonomy and values, key components, of course, of dignity. This is worth stressing as an example of the fact that a change in way of life, when chosen, need not automatically compromise dignity.

The indigenous communities in Paraguay during this period, as we have seen, used a number of strategies to survive and resist the imperial wars and colonization I have described above. One was accommodation and adaptation when necessary or when community members felt a certain specific change was welcome. Another strategy included more subtle forms of resistance, such as secretly practicing their own faith(s) while pretending to have converted to Catholicism, or blending the two belief systems. A third strategy, of course, was violent rebellion when indigenous leaders and communities felt that too much was at stake and that the current context reasonably might have allowed for success.

### Chapter 3: Literature and Theory Review

This chapter will review and critically engage with the literature relevant to my analysis. Such literature includes some of the social movement literature, certain conflict resolution theories and Paraguay/Latin America studies. It will explain that this dissertation's central contribution is applying relevant social movement and conflict resolution theories to the case of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay. It will offer clarity on several definitions and concepts key to my analysis. Perhaps most importantly, it will make explicit the central analysis that I will be detailing in following chapters.

#### **CENTRAL ANALYSIS**

This dissertation will offer my analysis of why the indigenous social movement in Paraguay unfolded in the particular manner that it did. I believe three main factors interacted to shape this movement. The most visible and dramatic factor was the ousting of Gen. Stroessner, which precipitated the opening of social and political space for civil society throughout Paraguay. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. This enabled open claim-making and partnerships between indigenous communities and NGOs. The need for such partnerships made the use of the language of dignity quite strategic. As dignity is a basic human need, it readily translates across

cultures. Finally, a third factor shaping this movement such that it is the Dignity Frame that we observe post-Stroessner is the dehumanizing reality of poverty and discrimination which continues to face indigenous communities.

### *Definitional Clarity*

Before proceeding, I should be quite clear about the type of conflict I am interested in examining. Broadly speaking, the kind of conflict I am interested in fits into what conflict analysts have called “contentious politics.” McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly define this type of social movement as, “episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants” (*Dynamics* 2003, 5). As the conflict in Paraguay clearly involves ongoing, very public group action involving a specific legal claim to protection of land rights by a particular citizen group, this definition suits my purposes well. It is worth specifying that I am not referring to revolution, terrorism or civil war. Nor am I referring to what the United Nations and other organizations sometimes call “complex humanitarian emergencies”, such as the genocidal implosions in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia, though certain insights about the political formation and reformation of group identity from those conflicts are relevant. The conflicts I am referring to entail both nonviolent and violent means, on the part of both the state and the indigenous organizations which contest various state policies. They have included various forms of political engagement such as lobbying government officials or participation in political organizations, but also include many non-state-sanctioned

conflict behaviors such as protests, marches, and violent land invasions. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly refer to this as “transgressive conflict”, a definition well-suited to my purposes (*Dynamics* 2001, 7). Specifically, they write that

Transgressive contention consists of episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to claims, (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants, (c) at least some parties to the conflict are newly self-identified political actors and/or (d) at least some parties employ innovative collective action (*Dynamics* 2001, 8).

Two elements of the above definition are crucial to my analysis of the current indigenous land movement in Paraguay. One is that the conflict includes “newly self-identified political actors”, of course, the indigenous communities who are claiming space both within and apart from the Paraguayan state. Second is that “at least some parties employ innovative collective action” (*Dynamics* 2001, 8). In their use of demonstrations and occupations, for example, indigenous activists use methods outside of the repertoire of what the state would deem acceptable as a form of petition (I understand “innovative” as such, not as a technique never or rarely use before).

Another aspect of this conflict vital to understand is its grossly asymmetrical nature. Unlike in its neighbors, Argentina and Bolivia, the Guarani and other indigenous communities in Paraguay represent just barely 2% of the population (Lambert 1997, 114). This alone goes some way to explaining the asymmetry, but is not sufficient. Many successive generations of oppression by state political structures have also contributed to this asymmetry. As will be detailed more in Chapters Four-Five, this oppression has involved the forbidding of speaking Guarani (Personal Interview, CP, July 17, 2006;

Personal Interview, RA, 6/14/2006), forced relocation, human rights violations including torture and arbitrary arrest, and debt bondage resulting from a virtually complete lack of economic options by which families and communities could support themselves (*Derechos Humanos 2004, Derechos Humanos 2005, Amnesty Online 2005, Kidd 1995, Lambert 1997, 114-130; Nickson 1995, Reed 1997*).

In further providing conceptual clarity, I find commonly used terms such as “identity conflict” too vague and broad to be of much use. Examination of the social, economic and political systems at work in the land rights movement in Paraguay suggests that a number of processes are at work here which the label “identity conflict” obscures. One can reasonably ask if these “identity” or “cultural” conflicts between indigenous populations and the State throughout Latin America would be occurring outside the context of historical and current racism, marginalization, and a dearth of economic options and opportunity that results in lethal poverty.

Similarly, I find the term “globalization conflicts” to say not much at all. Globalization is a notoriously murky concept with various meanings in different contexts, so before I proceed, a few words for definitional clarity. Tarrow and Tilly define globalization as “an increase in the geographic range of locally consequential social interactions, especially when that increase stretches a significant proportion of all interactions across international or inter-continental limits” (Smith 2002, 231). Of course, the interaction I am most interested in is the impact of the neoliberal policy of land privatization and the Dignity Frame as an indigenous response to it. I view globalization as a contradictory, paradoxical, interrelated set of political, economic and

socio-cultural forces which are simultaneously empowering and homogenizing (the “compressing in time and space” resultant from globalization which is often spoken of in the literature) parts of the globe, while disempowering and dislocating others. As I propose to focus specifically on land privatization, the “globalization literature” most relevant to my analysis is that which addresses neoliberal economic policies and indigenous responses to those policies. Hence for my purposes, I define globalization quite concretely and narrowly as a normative set of neoliberal economic policies. By “normative”, I mean to suggest that neoliberalism is more than “merely” a set of economic policy prescriptions meant to homogenize the global economy in a manner that neoliberals believe will reduce poverty. Neoliberalism is also a set of cultural values that can and has often come into conflict with the values of many indigenous communities, those of Paraguay included. The values of neoliberalism, and of capitalism in general, include individualism, ingenuity, hard work and perceived modernity and progress. The values prized by most indigenous communities include community, equality, sustainability and a reverence for nature that flows from their very cosmology. The details of this cosmology have been documented by anthropologists such as Jose Zanardini (Personal Interview, June 5, 2006), Marilyn Renfel (Personal Interview, May 26, 2006), Richard Reed (1997) Stephen Kidd (1995) and John Renshaw (2002), and will be described in full in Chapters 4-5.

Regarding the global advance of neoliberalism, two simultaneous processes appear to be unfolding. One, institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and BID (*Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo*, the InterAmerican Development Bank) and the

neoliberal policies they promote provide a grievance; meanwhile reasonably new institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union institutionalize a means of circumventing a state which is not willing or able to respond as movement activists might want (albeit with varying means and definitions of success). Steinberg argues, the growth of capitalism not only represents a threat to economic security for laborers but represents a closing of public, social space as well (Hanagan 1998, 32-33). Such a closure of public social space can readily be understood as a threat to one's dignity and autonomy. Given the insights of Basic Human Needs Theory, we understand that dignity and autonomy are human needs, necessary for survival, and hence threats to them are existential.

What is the relevance of all this to my exploration of the indigenous organized resistance to land privatization in Paraguay, and in turn, what light can my analysis of Paraguay shed on this debate? While Paraguay is certainly not as "globalized" as its neighbors Brazil or Argentina, its government has adopted neoliberal policies and is highly indebted, as readers will recall from Chapter 1 (Mario 2004 Online). Further, while there is a significant amount of debate on the exact nature of transnational social movements and how best to conceptualize them (see for example Keck and Sikkink, 1998 or Smith, et al, 1997) there is considerably more consensus on the observation that the global and local "levels" of society are increasingly impacting one another. Recall from Chapter 1 the impact on Paraguayan development policy of, for example, a systemically weaker position within MERCOSUR or indebtedness to international financial institutions.

As a final observation, the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay is almost markedly non-revolutionary in character. I argue this for a number of reasons. One is that an examination of the tactics employed by indigenous leaders and their allies demonstrates demand for recognition by the State, and policies and actions by the State to ensure the basic human needs of Paraguay's indigenous communities are met. Nowhere in any of the media I examined—from, for example, *Ultima Hora*, one of Paraguay's main dailies, or *La Nación*, another major daily news paper—did I find anything that might suggest a desire to secede from the State or take it over, violently or otherwise. Indigenous leaders organize *marchas* and *manifestaciones*. They circulate community petitions and are beginning to organize NGOS of their own; H's Council for Self-Determination of Indigenous People and COSEPIP are two examples (“*Depredadores*” 37; “*Nativos*” 21). They petition government officials and stage demonstrations outside of various relevant Ministries, and have staged occupations of the *Plaza Nacional*, similar in socio-political significance to the National Mall in Washington, DC. Yet their calls are for access to health care and education, secure land title and self-governance within Paraguay. These actions demanding participation in government seemly clearly at odds with more revolutionary rhetoric. Bolstering this is an interview I had with an indigenous leader, “CP”, one morning just outside of Asunción. I asked him if he thought of himself as Paraguayan, and he answered that he felt more Paraguayan than those descended from Europe, as his people had been in Paraguay for thousands of years, not just hundreds. He explained that he wanted the valuable contributions of indigenous culture to Paraguay to be recognized and celebrated (Personal Interview CP, July 17, 2006). Such a desire is

more about inclusion and recognition—key elements of dignity—than revolution.

That said, scholars such as Eckstein (2001), Tilly (in Smith 1997) and Gill (2000) have noted the manner in which indigenous organizing is reshaping and redefining citizenship, forcing the State to consider who is and is not a citizen and what that means regarding duties and rights. Is this revolutionary? I would argue no, though it is significant and directly relevant to my analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Reshaping citizenship (or struggling to) is not the same as completely breaking away or overthrowing the state. In part (re)shaping the citizenship regime can be seen as an assertion of the autonomy, belonging and visibility that are fundamental to dignity. Writes Eckstein, indigenous activists “demanded respect for indigenous legal autonomy, for the right to rule within their communities according to their own customary laws and their own system of authority” (Eckstein 2001, 387). Specifically regarding citizenship, she continues, “They also pressed for a community-based concept of citizenship premised on collective rights as Indians, along with citizenship based on individual rights. Their vision of citizenship is different from the Western concept grounded in equal rights and responsibilities as individuals” (Eckstein 2001, 387). Allison Brysk specifies that

Beyond regime type... is the relationship between state and civil society—the terms of citizenship—that has become the critical component of consolidating and deepening democracy. At the normative level, indigenous peoples remind us that social and cultural rights interact with institutions and guarantees that universal citizenship is plurinational” (Brysk 2000, 285).

We will see the salience of this observation become especially clear during the data

analysis chapters (Chapters 4 -5). Here I will illustrate with an example. Leaders of indigenous organizations such as COSEPIP, among others, are demanding representation not only in Paraguay's parliament, but in the Ministry of the Interior (with its obvious significance to land rights and development issues), MEC (the Ministry of Education and Culture) and the Ministry of Health. As those leaders argue, why should they not be represented in organizations which take decisions that so directly impact them? (Personal Interview L, 7/28/2006, Personal Interview LD, 7/28/2006, Ogazu Meeting Minutes, Personal Correspondence, 8/1/2006).

Since I have said that I do not characterize the indigenous land rights movement as revolutionary, I should also state here that, since the ousting of Stroessner, there has been one coup attempt, by a General Oviedo and forces loyal to him. Oviedo had won the Colorado Party's nomination, the party of Stroessner which, until Padre Lugo's recent upset victory, had remained in power since his ouster, "by campaigning hard against neoliberalism" (Buxton 1999, 53). Specifically, he was campaigning against the neoliberal policies of then-President Wasmosy, whom Oviedo had formerly served before being "discharged for insubordination" (Buxton 1999, 53). Oviedo was jailed until recently, when he was released to stand for the elections ("Oviedo Set" Online). It was common to find supporters in groups of about three to five of his carrying signs on street corners of Asunción, as I observed during my field research. Even from jail, he polled higher than current President Frutos! Even more stunning was this recent election of Padre Lugo, a "populist priest" who campaigned specifically on a platform of economic justice and land rights. This represents the first time in several generations that a

candidate from other than the Colorado Party has held Paraguay's highest office. Clearly it demonstrates how salient economic issues were to Paraguay's electorate, both indigenous and otherwise. One fascinating dynamic revealed by Lugo's victory is precisely this (I think narrow) confluence of economic interests between indigenous and other electoral groups in Paraguay; Paraguay's indigenous community is simply not large enough to have delivered a national election on their own, so logically, President-elect Lugo must have appealed to other voters as well. Time will tell if Lugo is both willing and able to deliver on any of his economic justice platform.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION LITERATURE**

Basic human needs is a useful building block for my analysis of the Dignity Frame in Paraguay's indigenous right's movement. As Galtung writes about human needs theory in particular, "If needs theory is to have any purpose or positive political function in contemporary society, it should be to serve as a basis for revealing such social malconstructions or cases of maldevelopment and to indicate other possibilities" (Burton 1990, 311). Conflict resolution theorists and practitioners cannot hope to move towards this goal without such a multidisciplinary research approach, because conflicts are themselves so complex that they intersect over compartmentalized academic disciplines. Yet the field of conflict analysis and resolution is more than a collection of the social sciences and humanities cobbled together and applied with an eye to problem solving. It has developed and continues to develop theories unique to this field. When I characterize peace theories such as structural violence or basic human needs as "unique", I mean to say that these are theories which (while they may certainly extend work done in

other fields such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs) are original to the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

While several conflict resolution theories could be relevant, any study needs parameters, and the parameters of this dissertation do not allow for a full examination of each of them. Relative deprivation comes to mind as an important conflict resolution theory, for one example. This is not a terribly convincing explanation for the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay, however. For one, as I will cite in my data presentation chapters, many indigenous communities do not desire contact at all with Paraguayans. Many indigenous leaders feel engagement is necessary for defense of indigenous rights, but this is different from desiring contact. At its heart, relative deprivation suggests that if everyone is poor, conflict will not likely result (though the lethal impacts of poverty certainly will). Yet if some are impoverished and others are not, particularly if social, political or economic systems bring the unequal groups into increasing contact, conflict will likely indeed result. This is a powerful and important explanation for many conflicts, but does not provide the best possible fit for the specifics of Paraguay's social movement. This is primarily because Paraguayan indigenous leaders do not tend to present their reasons for their claim making in terms of comparison to "modern" Paraguayans. Rather, their statements, literature and actions are an affirmation of their own dignity and way of life, as is more fully detailed in Chapters 4-5. Finally, if a sense of deprivation relative to other social groups was a main driving force of Paraguay's indigenous rights movement, why did such a movement not arise long ago? Indigenous communities in Paraguay have been "relatively deprived" for centuries now. As Chapter

Two in particular details, indigenous communities used a combination of armed resistance, subtle subversion and accommodation to defend their way of life (Horst 2007; Ganson 2003; Reed 1997). Yet this did not coalesce into today's social movement until the fall of Gen. Stroessner opened up the socio-political space needed for movement leaders to begin deploying the Dignity Frame. This suggests that the framing of the movement around the basic human need and universal value of dignity, and the newly opened socio-political space to press claims on a government which needs to be seen as democratic, are a far more convincing explanatory fit. In addition, indigenous movement scholars interested in applying Gurr's theories to indigenous movements or even uprisings tend to be more interested in explaining overt rebellion or highly escalated levels of ethnic political violence (see Cleary 2000, for example). While indigenous uprisings did occur most notably during the Colonial era in Paraguay (Horst 2007), it is not a feature of today's social movement, nor was it a dominant characteristic during the Stroessner regime. Hence I am focusing on the two major conflict resolution theories which are the most directly relevant to the contemporary indigenous movement in Paraguay: Burton's basic human needs and Galtung's theory of structural violence.

Basic human needs is one such fundamental theory that is unique to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. Recall that this dissertation's analysis is that the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. The central contribution this dissertation makes is that I am offering my analysis of why the indigenous social movement unfolded in the particular manner in which it did. Human needs theorists such as John Burton and Johan Galtung have argued that dignity is a basic human need. Recall as well that I have defined dignity as involving autonomy, social and self esteem and belonging. There is of course a tension between belonging and autonomy. Implied within social esteem and belonging is visibility—being seen, known accurately and accepted. It is worth emphasizing that dignity involves being known *accurately*, for as we will see in Chapter 5, much of the forming and dissemination of the Dignity Frame has addressed inaccuracies and false stereotypes which the dominant narratives of the State and neocolonial culture have advanced. Human needs theory, of course, posits that dignity is a non-negotiable need and hence cannot be legislated or negotiated away.

If this theory rests on the argument that certain needs are fundamental to a human being fully functioning as a human being, it should then also be able to delineate what those needs are, how we know, and why it qualifies as a need rather than a “mere” desire. If a measure of the influence of a theory is the extent to which other scholars cite and discuss it, basic human needs has clearly established itself as a central conflict resolution theory. Conflict resolution scholars such as Galtung, Rubenstein, Sites and Fisher, for example, have all critiqued and built upon Human Needs Theory (Burton 1990). One

common thread of their critique is the need for specificity on what human needs are and what the evidence might be for that. If this cannot be accomplished, the work of transforming socio-political and economic systems to meet human needs and thereby “prevent” conflict becomes forbidding.

How can we define or measure what is a need and what is not? Fisher posits the following categories: self-actualization (taken directly from Maslow’s hierarchy previously presented), esteem needs, aesthetic needs such as beauty and order, cognitive needs, belongingness and love, safety, and physiological bodily needs. Surely, as some criticisms of basic human needs point out, even if the needs themselves are consistent throughout time and across cultures, the manner in which they are expressed varies. At the least this creates challenges for Needs theory. A definition along the lines of “A need is that without which the human person would not survive” does not seem useful. Biologically speaking, a person could survive without autonomy or esteem. Here we confront a problem that has troubled the social sciences in general since their inception: the social sciences are not the so-called “hard” sciences. Their measurement is far more complex and less readily quantifiable. What consequences might we measure from a person’s need for belonging not being met? While not as clear-cut as measuring biological factors, I would argue that there are observable results that emerge when an individual or group are not able to meet their “invisible” basic human needs. Paul Sites, for example, notes that “because needs cannot be directly observed, all we can do is to conceptualize a need as existing when certain emotions are observed or reported since, as indicated, needs are tied to emotions” (Burton 1990, 10). They certainly are, as is

mobilization, a link which we will explore as this literature review progresses. As Sites continues, “In addition to the physical organism, the human has a self which, once established, also has a survival problem. I argue that the same emotions that serve to enhance the survival of the physical organism also serve in the human to enhance the survival of the self” (Burton 1990, 11). Psychology has explored emotional, social and psychological needs for centuries; it is far too large a discussion to summarize here. The relevant point for purposes of my analysis is that, though unseen, emotions and psychic needs do indeed impact physical survival. As Sites argues, “primary emotions and their need analogues are intertwined” (Burton 1999, 20). Sites cites Masini’s definition of needs: “Needs can be understood abstractly to refer to those human requirements calling for a response that makes human survival and development possible in a given society” (Burton 1990, 10). His addition of “and development” is particularly critical, for this implies a host of needs that are not merely physical in nature. (See also Sen 1999.) Such needs might include education, cultural survival, belonging and—the focus of this dissertation—dignity. Sites explores one need in particular, the need for control (Burton 1990, 10-20). I bring this into the discussion of dignity and human needs because autonomy (of course a synonym for control) is an essential aspect of human dignity. He cites two fellow psychologists, Langer and Seligman, who have conducted studies on the human need for control and even made quantified links to detriments for physical health when the need for autonomy is not met (Burton 1990, 14). Dignity, being a non-negotiable need, is readily able to serve as an organizing frame around which communities can be mobilized to struggle for land rights, health care, education and

democratic representation in government. I certainly do not claim that being a basic non-negotiable need makes dignity or any other need a *sufficient* condition for organizing; numerous other factors must be in place as well, such as perceived opportunity, social networks, leadership, and resources, as my central analysis itself argues. That said, I would argue that the non-negotiable nature of dignity is a primary reason, in addition to the opening of political space precipitated by the fall of Stroessner, that mobilization rather than mediation is the current trajectory of the indigenous movement in Paraguay.

Like Fisher, Galtung has noted the need for human needs theory to further its capability for distinguishing between a need and a want, and to delineate which needs humans do indeed have. Galtung recommends talking about classes or categories of needs such as “security needs” or “identity needs” (Burton 1999, 303) for analytical precision but, I think wisely, argues against attempting to establish “a list of needs...complete with minima and maxima, for everybody at all given social times and social spaces as *the* universal list of universal needs” (Burton 1999, 303). I think this approach is particularly wise given the vulnerability of human needs theory to the charge that it does not leave room for the vast variety of culture. I have argued above that Human Needs theory does not, of necessity, have to be applied in such a manner. Galtung’s approach here is demonstrative.

He also highlights another feature of human needs theory that makes it important to my analysis, which is that many, if not all, of our human needs are social in nature. As he writes, “the need subject [that is, the entity experiencing the need, in this case the human] is an individual, but that does not mean that the satisfiers, the “things” necessary

in order to meet or satisfy the needs, are in the individual or can be met by the individual alone, without a social context” (Burton 1999, 204). I would argue that is one reason why framing is such a common feature of social movements. If the needs themselves are social (or at least must be satisfied socially), a social mechanism such as framing is needed to mobilize around getting said need met. In addition to political opportunity theory and resource mobilization, framing constitutes an important theoretical tool to support my analysis of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay. My focus on framing helps link the individual level of analysis to the social level of analysis by providing a coherent organizing idea that communicates a certain movement’s views and objectives, thus encouraging individuals to identify with the movement and become mobilized (Benford and Snow 2000; Passy 2001; *Dynamics* 2003, 26-37; Della Porta 1999, 87-106).

Galtung also provides support for a point I have been making in laying out the theory and literature review for this dissertation. If indeed there is a “hierarchy” of basic human needs, wherein some needs are more important than others, it is not at all clear that needs most closely corresponding to physical survival such as food “outrank” needs relating to dignity. Writes Galtung, “People are willing to suffer both violence and misery—including the sacrifice of their own lives—in struggling for identity and freedom” (Burton 1999, 310). Indeed, this observation goes a long way to explaining the emergence of social movements that political opportunity theory and resource mobilization theory *alone* cannot address: why do some social movements emerge and persist—and sometimes even gain considerable successes—in the bleakest of political

contexts, with little to no resources at their disposal? Medical doctor and expert on the origins of violence, James Gilligan, has also documented this phenomenon in *Violence*, a reflection based upon a career's worth of work with some of America's most violent serial murderers. Writes Gilligan, "Let me begin with the common observation that people feel incomparably more alarmed by a threat to the psyche or the soul or self than they are by a threat to the body. People will willingly sacrifice their bodies if they perceive it as the only way to avoid 'losing their souls', 'losing their minds' or 'losing face.'" With respect to culture, he elaborates

One consequence of the fact is that a perceived threat to the integrity and survival of a person's culture is perceived as a threat to the integrity and survival of the individual's personality or character, and to the viability of one's ethical value system which is a central and essential component of both personality and culture, and is what most intimately links the self and the culture, the culture and its selves. Those are among the reasons why death of a person's culture is tantamount to the death of one's self (Gilligan 1996, 96-97).

Galtung noted earlier that a useful application of needs theory would be its ability to help detect social problems and generate alternatives. Along those lines, in "diagnosing" what he views as ten "problem areas" prevalent in Western culture, he provides explicit support for my contention that neoliberalism is a normative project that reaches beyond the merely economic (and hence encounters resistance not just from people who suffer economic consequences of neoliberalism but who perceive themselves to suffer personal, cultural consequences as well). On the West's "Western-centered, universalist conception of space", Galtung observes, "the tendency of the West to see itself as a universally valid model to be imitated and in addition to promote and institutionalize processes emanating from Western centers, penetrating all over the world (at least to the level of the elites)"

(Burton 1999, 314). His concern here is that needs theory itself, intended to be emancipatory, could be used to design a Universal List of Needs and How to Meet Them, complete with ranking of which needs are “higher” or more urgent, and that this itself would inevitably reproduce structural violence. “What could be better,” he writes, “for reproduction of the marginalization of the masses of our societies than a hierarchy of needs, having at the bottom people whose major concern it should be to have material needs...well taken care of before they can or ought to proceed to the non-material needs?” (Burton 1999, 321). Addressing power imbalances in particular, he writes that there is the danger of a “conditioning of the periphery by the Center.” This conditioning, “is not merely a question of potential and actual culturocide and depersonification [the opposite of dignity] to be expected when Western need structures elaborated by elites are beamed in all directions as universal norms to be pursued, but also a question of making people dependent on economic satisfiers that will follow in the wake of the propagation of need structures” (Burton 1999, 320-21, brackets mine).

This observation reinforces why basic human needs is a useful theory to include in my analysis. In many ways, what Galtung describes is precisely what neoliberalism, which of course includes the policy of land privatization, has accomplished, and precisely what indigenous communities, through the Dignity Frame, are resisting. Recall that neoliberalism promotes as the highest policy priority market liberalization, deregulation and privatization. As such, neoliberalism through the IFIs promotes not just these economic policies, but values such as individualism, modernity (as it defines the same), productivity and competition. These values have come into conflict with indigenous

values of community, sustainability and a reverence for nature. Living in accord with one's values, of course, is an important aspect of dignity.

Examples and more detailed data, of course, will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5, but presently, consider the following example of the Dignity Frame at work. An NGO (they will remain anonymous per my agreement with them) who focuses on the Mbyá community, one of Paraguay's 17 indigenous peoples, provided me with extensive notes on their work with the Mbyá. These include meeting minutes, project proposals and project assessments which provide support for my analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. An explicit goal of one NGO project, for example, was "to harmonize and improve the image of the Mbyá community and other Guaraní ethnic groups in public opinion and institutional spheres of their region and the nation" (MR, Personal Correspondence, July 21, 2006). I have argued that one essential component of dignity is visibility. Consider other movements such as the Gay Rights Movement, whose frame messaging has begun with "We're here!" The recent movement for immigrant rights in the U.S. is another example. The marches in Los Angeles, Washington DC and numerous other cities were intended in large part to make visible just how many (legal and illegal) immigrants there are in the U.S. and how vital they are to the U.S. economy. Similarly, the partnership between this NGO and Mbyá communities has as a stated goal "indigenous representation in public events", along with outreach to the media as means by which the challenges indigenous communities face can be brought to the Paraguayan public and policy makers. A corollary goal is "to

strengthen the visibility and empowerment of Ethnic Indigenes of the Eastern Region (RO) of Paraguay with the promotion of effective capabilities to intervene in the instances of the creation / application of policies in their interest and in the self-management of their internal affairs” (MR, Personal Correspondence, July 21, 2006). Accordingly, participation in public life and self-representation are seen by project participants as vital concrete manifestations of growing autonomy and dignity, according to project documents. As they write, a key goal is “To promote the organization of the Guaraní ethnic groups of the Eastern Region, for the composition and consolidation of a sustainable and representative Federation, that functions as a means of expressing one’s ideas, as a space for debate and defense of the general interest of the indigenous peoples” (MR, Personal Correspondence, July 21, 2006). Autonomy and visibility—being seen and heard, accurately, on one’s own terms—are a vital first step in (re)building dignity and resisting the challenge to autonomy that neoliberalism represents. While of course what most Western analysts (such as myself) would consider “civil rights” is encompassed in the movement goals described by these NGO documents, “visibility and empowerment” speak to larger social and cultural goals than the “mere” specific policy outcomes of land tenure or access to health care and education. Hence, as I have noted before, this dissertation builds upon and extends the literature on indigenous movements and framing by examining the Dignity Frame in Paraguay. While the history, transition to democracy, economic development and even indigenous communities of Paraguay have certainly received scholarly attention, Paraguay remains dramatically understudied by comparison to its neighbors. Also, the scholarship on Paraguay’s indigenous

movement has not explicitly addressed that movement's framing and why this particular frame is the one we observe. Rather, it has been focused on other questions. My analysis will address the question of why the Dignity Frame in the specific context of contemporary Paraguay. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

Structural violence is a concept related to basic human needs, for it is essentially the denial of those needs by social, economic or political systems. Johan Galtung is the dominant theorist on structural violence (Galtung 1996). This theory's power lies in expanding our definition of violence to include the very real violence that results from social, political and economic injustices. Sociopolitical systems are not visible in the same sense that war or violent assaults might be. The theory of structural violence then is an important tool, in my view, for making inequality more "visible." As detailed in Chapter One, the structural violence of land privatization has resulted in death from the illness and hunger associated with displacement. My application of the theory of structural violence argues that such violence is just as real as the "actual" violence associated with crime or war or armed occupation.

## **THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS LITERATURE**

A number of major themes from the social movements literature are relevant to my study of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay. This section of the Literature Review will examine those most relevant, such as political opportunity theory and resource mobilization. It will discuss what they are able to contribute to our understanding of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay, and the Dignity Frame

specifically. Recall once again that one contribution that this dissertation makes to the literature is extending the existing social movements literature on framing to examine the workings of the Dignity Frame in Paraguay, specifically why the Dignity Frame is the one we can observe instead of other possibilities. My claim is that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Again, this specific question has not yet been addressed for the case of Paraguay.

For purposes of examining each theory, I discuss them individually here. However, as my own analysis will reflect particularly in the Data Presentation and Analysis Chapters (4-5), most analyses currently of course incorporate more than one theory or school of thought. This reflects the reality that, as I noted in Chapter 1, conflicts do not have one "cause". Rather, a complex tapestry of global and specific regional, national and local forces combine to shape (and be shaped by) social movements and impact their likelihood both of emerging to begin with and of achieving their social, political and economic goals. Because of this, as I have noted above, the literature on social movements offers a near consensus that no one explanatory school of social movements, such as political opportunity, resource mobilization or theories related to framing, can offer a complete explanation of how or why a particular social movement has arisen.

Reflecting this, while my analysis of the indigenous land rights movement in Paraguay focuses in part on the Dignity Frame, the importance of the political opportunity that Stroessner's ouster represented will clearly emerge. Once Stroessner's

regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. So too will emerge the vital importance of resources, financial, social and political, provided by indigenous partners and allies, such as OGAZU, *Tierra Viva* and numerous Christian organizations, to include the Catholic Church. Again, rarely is any social phenomenon caused by one occurrence alone; hence the necessity of drawing on several major schools of social movements theory to offer a complete analysis. I now turn to my three major theoretical tools from the social movements literature.

### *Political Opportunity*

A major original influence on social movement studies was political opportunity theory, which hypothesized that participants in social movements were rational actors who had calculated that the benefits of participation out-weighed the costs. This theory posited that one could explain the emergence and trajectory of a social movement by looking at the socio-political space a certain group had (*Dynamics* 2003, 14-20; Hanagan 1998, ix-xxix; Brockett 2005, 1-36; Della Porta 1999, 1-20). If they mobilized, it was likely because they had seen an opening and judged success likely. This school would largely explain the indigenous movement in Paraguay by the collapse of Stroessner's dictatorship which opened up socio-political (if not economic) space within which to organize. Hence political opportunity theory does form one important part of explaining the current shape and trajectory of the land rights movement in Paraguay. Yet it, by itself, cannot explain the resistance that did occur throughout the colonial era and Stroessner's dictatorship, even in the face of torture and murder. Nor can it alone

adequately explain the particulars of this movement, such as the role of framing, and why specifically the Dignity Frame is the one we can observe. Again, in my analysis, the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships.

Political opportunity theory formed largely in response to earlier studies of social movements which understood most of the behavior of most social movement participants as produced by "irrational" emotions such as anger. As the concept of political opportunities was tested, expanded and refined, several key improvements occurred. For one, scholars such as McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly caution that this model can be too static. Political opportunities, they point out, must be *perceived* in order to be acted on (*Dynamics* 2003, 16). Also, might not shifts in power structures that either "open" or "close" political opportunities for claim-making at least indirectly impact group identities? One's perception of one's own agency is a powerful factor in how a person or group views him or itself. I argue that one might not "see" certain opportunities if one feels powerless, for example. Often marginalized populations adopt the image of themselves advanced by the oppressive authority, as Paolo Freire theorized (Freire 2003).

This is a particularly crucial observation for my argument since shedding this self-perception is a vital aspect of developing a political identity, and another reason why I believe the Dignity Frame is the one to have occurred in Paraguay instead of other possibilities once Stroessner's regime had collapsed. As it directly addresses the context of dehumanization, it also challenges the view of indigenous powerlessness, for to be dignified is to have worth and agency. And might not other factors—the relative wealth and power of a particular group, for example—also influence whether or not a particular grievance gets expressed as contentious protest? Political opportunity is generally now understood as contextual, contingent and at least partly a socio-cultural and cognitive construct, for the above reasons (*Dynamics* 2003, 10-20; Foweraker 1995, 9-35; Goodwin 1999; Gamson 1991, Della Porta 1999, 10; Meyer 2004). Because of this interaction between personal identity, group identity and the socio-political context in which one finds oneself, this political opportunity school of social movement studies is relevant to my own study.

Given this then, what sort of opportunity structure do the indigenous leaders shaping this movement find themselves facing? Paraguay of course has recently undergone a major political transition from the Stroessner (1913- 2006) dictatorship to a new democracy, an obviously clear political opening which constitutes a major thread of my analysis of this social movement. And indeed, as one might expect, considerable gains have been since made by indigenous communities and Paraguayan civil society in general regarding the establishment and defense of human rights, government transparency and various forms of socio-economic security. Needless to say, much work

remains to be done. It does not at all follow from Stroessner's ouster that indigenous communities demanding the return of their lands will be successful. For one, Stroessner's ouster was no popular revolution. It was an elite military coup lead by General Rodriguez, who was at the time Stroessner's senior officer. Very little of Paraguay's economic system—and certainly not its distribution of land, at least in practice—appears to have changed since Stroessner, as the reader will recall from Chapter 1. Additionally, civil society efforts to bring about more democratic reform have been hindered especially within the judicial branch. Culturally, personal connections and local relations are often still more important than adherence to abstract notions of legal justice. Judges will often rule with those they know better rather than based on the facts of a case. Says one priest and anthropologist who has worked for over thirty years with indigenous communities, “Other laws are more important” to many in Paraguay than those of the State. Given the increased social distance between indigenous peoples and *Paraguayos*, one can readily understand how this dynamic impedes the progress of indigenous communities pressing legal cases to reclaim their land. When indigenous communities marched to Asunción as recently as 1999, it was the first time many *Paraguayos* had seen a *nativo* (Personal Interview PZ, June 5, 2006). Again, we see why such seemingly basic goals as recognition and acknowledgement drive this movement.

Law enforcement continues to pose grave difficulties as well. Often local police are bribed to either arrest someone or overlook certain activities, such as a prospective land buyer setting fire to a forest to force communities out, or beating indigenous community members as a warning to the entire community to leave. This has had direct

relevance to the struggle indigenous communities are waging for land; numerous indigenous and civil society activists shared with me that it is common for an indigenous citizen to be accused of a crime, usually stealing. That person and sometimes family members as well are typically then jailed and beaten (Horst 2007, Amnesty International 2005, *Derechos Humanos 2004*, *Derechos Humanos 2005*). Such is the context in which indigenous leaders press their claims. Political opportunity is more than regime type, and democratic space does not automatically open at all levels of society because a new democratic constitution is ratified.

Again, political process theory now attempts to emphasize the highly contextual nature of social organizing (Tarrow 2003, 311; Della Porta 1999, 13). Numerous factors shape the specific “repertoire of contention” that specific movements take (*Dynamics* 2003). Sociocultural beliefs, a specific nation’s or indigenous group’s history, access to financial and political resources, precedent of previous contentious political behavior, elite responses, and the extent of connection to other similar social movements all directly affect the shape and strength that a social movement will have. Expressing what seems to be a near-consensus among social movement scholars, Eckstein writes, “Class and market relations, gender, politics and religion may be sources of rage, but we have seen that the ways discontent is expressed may vary considerably. Historical evidence suggests that local institutional structures and cultural milieux, interclass ties and alliances, and perceived options all condition whether and how shared grievances are defied and resisted” (Eckstein 1995, 33). Since the Spanish invasion, indigenous communities in Paraguay (and indeed, throughout Latin America) have employed

numerous strategies to ensure cultural and physical survival. Scholars note their use of accommodation, armed uprising and resistance, pleas to officials for protection and subtle forms of subversion such as appearing to be converted to receive food and other benefits from missionaries (Reed 1997, Horst 2007, Renshaw 2002, Ganson 2003). Current tactics in Paraguay include marches, petitions, sit-ins and rallies, as well as outreach to the media. Eckstein's observation suggests the need for exactly the kind of study I am undertaking here: one that seeks to shed light on the particulars of why a certain movement frame occurred in a particular time in a particular place. This is the basis, once again, for designing my methodology and analysis the way that I have. My inclusion of framing allows me to illuminate why, in Paraguay's specific context, the Dignity Frame is the one we can observe. Frames inherently speak to how people understand and represent themselves. Again, in my analysis, the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. As political opportunity theory illuminates, advancing such a frame without any socio-political space in which to operate is exceedingly difficult. Hence it is a critical ingredient for understanding how, when and why the Dignity Frame was the one

to occur in contemporary Paraguay.

### *Resource Mobilization*

This leads us to a second major “school” of social movement studies: resource mobilization. Resource mobilization focuses, as its name would suggest, on the resources a group has available to them to mobilize around their agenda. Resources might be financial, but they might also be access to decision makers, celebrities, or the media, or in the case of violent groups, weapons. This school expanded and clarified the study of social movements by addressing the fact that social groups vary considerably in their access to resources and the social power needed to use them effectively (Della Porta 1999, 7-9). Both of these schools also incorporated a factor crucial to explaining social movements which had previously been overlooked in explanations of social movements that relied solely on grievance: people with grievances are not always mobilized. Hence grievance is not sufficient to explain the rise of social movements (*Dynamics* 2003, 14-15; Della Porta 1999, 7-9). As many social movement scholars note, the calculation that one’s efforts have a reasonable chance of success is one of a number of important factors. Also, as most social movement theorists now note, while one important factor, resource mobilization alone is not sufficient to explain the emergence of social movements. It offers, for example, little leverage to explain the rise, persistence and even occasional success of the social movements launched by oppressed groups with few resources. As I will detail more later in this literature review, analysis of culture and social identity help to explain the rise of certain social movements, as well as the specific shape they take, how they behave and the (highly contingent and contextual) odds that they will succeed

in their claim-making. The resources of Paraguay's landless indigenous population are of course quite scarce; yet both peaceful and violent resistance to land privatization continues to occur and in some instances, succeed. The power of solidarity in social networks and the power of framing have played significant roles in Paraguay's indigenous rights movement. Indeed, as I have been arguing, dignity's universality has been strategic in addressing this lack of resources by enabling indigenous leaders to partner with NGOs who have provided money, legal expertise and social connections.

Despite their continuing influence and utility in explaining social movements, studies focusing primarily on political opportunity theory and resource mobilization have also been critiqued for an overly static conceptualization of social movements and the contexts in which they arise and proceed. In *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly issue a challenge to scholars to analyze episodes of contentious politics in terms of dynamic processes and mechanisms which can be identified across geographical regions, cultures and time. They detail a number of processes and mechanisms which can be identified in episodes of contentious politics as diverse as the U.S. Civil Rights movement, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the French Revolution (*Dynamics* 2001, 13). Mechanisms they define as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (*Dynamics* 2001, 24). Processes are "sequences of such mechanisms" (*Dynamics* 2001, 24). Regarding interaction, they write that mechanisms "typically concatenate with other mechanisms into broader processes" (*Dynamics* 2001, 27). Hence the importance, which I noted before, of approaching the analysis of a conflict by looking at social relations,

which are dynamic, contextualized, and shaped by power, rather than mere institutions. My focus, drawing as it does on the interaction of several major social movement theories, helps me to achieve a focus more oriented towards such a dynamic analysis. Drawing on several different social movement theories, and observing how they have unfolded and interacted in the specific context of Paraguay's indigenous movement, helps to ensure that my analysis will avoid being static or divorced from actual lived history.

### *Framing*

Framing, needless to say, is an essential contribution of the social movements literature to my dissertation. Some of this literature discusses the development of specific frames. As the above examples suggest, one very common frame in mobilizing resistance against a particular state policy is the *injustice frame* (Benford and Snow 2000, Meyer 2002, 251; Stryker 2000, 305-306; Gamson 1991, Passy and Giugni 2001, Jasper 1998, Keck and Sikkink 1998, 205). This frame is increasingly recognized as crucial to the politicization of identities. It serves to provide an entity to blame for the situation against which people are mobilizing. It also helps to counter the tendency that oppressed groups can have to absorb the beliefs about themselves that their oppressors have manufactured, as Paolo Freire among others powerfully theorized (Freire 2003). Hence the social construction of many contentious political identities directly counters this, as Tilly notes, capturing the essence of politicized identity: "They asserted the existence of valid, weighty political claimants to participation in the national polity. They declared, 'We exist and have a right to exist. We have strength, coherence and determination. National politics must take us into account'" (Hanagan 1998, 14).

This same “message” of insistence on being taken into account has been prevalent throughout the frames that indigenous movements throughout Latin America have sought to advance as well, with Paraguay no exception (Yashar 2005, 286-300; Brysk 2000, 189-245; Eckstein 2001, 385-394; Horst 2007, 100-134; Postero 2004, 32-80; Warren and Jackson 2002, 123-148; Lucero 2006). As Chapters 4 and 5 will illustrate, this “being taken into account” that is the heart of indigenous claims throughout Latin America is central to the indigenous land movement in Paraguay as well. This is logical as marginalization and dehumanization, key ingredients of dignity, have been for so long at the root of the problems indigenous communities face throughout both North and South America. During my field research in Paraguay, I noted the prominence of asserting indigenous dignity in Paraguay’s social movement. Recall again that one contribution of this dissertation to the literature is that I extend the literature on framing, such as the Injustice Frame or the Rights Frame, to explore the existence of the Dignity Frame as it continues to unfold in Paraguay. The Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one’s movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. As we will see below, scholars have been exploring the role of dignity (they use this precise word sometimes

and sometimes not) in indigenous movements throughout Latin America. This narrative, I believe, is meant to counter the view which the state and business elites, from colonial times through Stroessner and today, have held of indigenous peoples as backwards and powerless. Again, Chapters 4 and 5 will provide detailed evidence of this.

Again, numerous studies work to identify specific frames which movement leaders use to mobilize constituents, and how those frames diffuse locally, nationally and (increasingly) trans-nationally (Smith, et al, 1997, 3-18; Guidry, et al, 2000, 1-23; Keck and Sikkink 1998, Smith et al, 2002, 1-12; Gamson 1991, Jasper 1998, Passy and Giugni 2001, Benford and Snow 2000). Studies also address how frames interact with, transform and are transformed by individual and group identities, as well as the various processes that unfold when a frame (and by implication an identity) is contested by either a state, trans-national organization or by a counter-movement. As mentioned above, one nearly ubiquitous frame is the injustice frame. Other frames encourage potential movement activists to see themselves as agents. De Volo theorized an *obligation* frame whereby bereaved mothers were mobilized from anger to action (Guidry, et al, 2000, 127-146). Numerous other studies cite a “rights” frame that has become globally powerful and which indigenous groups have employed in their claim-making (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 204-206; Benford and Snow 2000). Still other studies examine processes of identity formation and transformation, or how personal and group identities interact. Some scholars focus specifically on the state “production”, through framing, of identity (Anderson 1991, Kaldor 2001, 31-68).

One important point to come out of many of these studies, which directly

addresses why framing matters for the study of social movements, is that social movements are often a contest for whose “version” of identity—that is, whose frame—will emerge hegemonic (Gamson 1992; Benford and Snow 2001; Meyer 2002, 85-104; Stryker 2000, 21-40; Tarrow 2003, 106-122). This is where framing interacts with identity: “collective action frames are not merely aggregations of individual attitudes and perceptions but also the outcome of negotiating shared meaning” (Gamson 1992, 111). This is why I focus, in addition to political opportunity and resource mobilization, on the framing of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay; the inclusion of framing allows me to conceptually link the individual to the social, and to better explore power relations which are often central to conflict and conflict resolution.

Another relevant observation of the literature on framing is that collective framing, in fact, appears to be a critical factor in explaining why people participate in a social movement, or why not. The ability to begin addressing this question is precisely why I believe framing is an important theoretical tool for my analysis, in addition to political opportunity or resource mobilization. Again, explorations of framing are more able to address motivations for mobilization. This is because, as argued earlier in this chapter, possessing the opportunity or the resources to mobilize does not necessarily mean that people will in fact do so. Frames are explicitly “intended to mobilize potential adherents...” (Snow and Benford 1988, 198). If the frame does not resonate on both personal and cultural identity levels, it will not likely succeed, and hence the movement itself will not likely succeed (Gamson 1991; Snow and Benford 2000, Stryker 2000, 68-87; Meyer 2002, 266-285). Benford and Snow identify several “core framing tasks”,

which are diagnostic framing (to define the problem), “prognostic framing” (to propose solutions) and motivational framing (which provides a “call to arms” similar to De Volo’s “obligation frame”) (Benford and Snow 2000). Barker and Lavalette make the point that collective action is not even possible without social identities being framed in a resonant way, and in such a manner that a problem is identified, blame placed and the contentious group defined as one that has the worth and dignity to undertake the proposed action; hence they reject the false dichotomy of “strategy *or* “identity” and argue for both/and (Meyer 2002, 142; Foweraker 1995, 12). In other words, that a particular frame is strategic does not necessarily make it false. My discussion of framing will adopt this “both/and” understanding of the interaction between social movements and frames.

Social movement scholars exploring the salience of framing have also emphasized the discursive, dialogic nature of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000; Meyer 2002, 208-225). That is, like all other social interaction, political power, identity and claim-making all are negotiated via language. Benford and Snow in particular identify two discursive processes (frame articulation and frame amplification) whereby frames are proposed, negotiated and refined, ever-evolving in interactions with allies, foes and larger local, national and global processes. Benford and Snow further identify four strategic processes which social movements—who are, after all, trying to achieve specific, articulated purposes—typically use to mobilize participants. They are: frame bridging, which links two separate but logically connected frames; frame amplification, which “involves the idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs”; frame extension, whereby social movement organizations (SMOs) depict

their interests as relevant to the interests of others; and frame transformation, which “refers to changing old understandings and meanings and/or generating new ones” (Benford and Snow 2000). Such processes are clearly relevant to how both individual and collective identities are formed and reformed (though it is important to bear in mind that identities impact frames as much as the reverse). Some have objected that framing analyses can be too static (Meyer 2002, 2-21). This is not inevitable, however, and a dialogic view of collective frames can enhance our understanding of how social movements and collective framing processes work by reminding us that they are contextual, contingent, formed via social process and often highly contested—indeed often the explicit battleground over which movements and countermovements struggle.

There is much debate in the scholarly community as to how exactly political identity is constructed (or indeed **if** it is constructed). I am adopting a discursive, intersubjective, relational and above all dynamic model of both framing and conflict here. While there is not space to rehearse each point of this debate here, it is important to note that many scholars have detailed the flaws of an essentialist view of identity. For one, it overlooks the explicit, concretely identifiable efforts of states and political entrepreneurs to privilege, make salient or even create certain ethno-political identities (Croucher 2004, 35-42; Ashmore 2001, 42-67; Kaldor 2001, 31-68; Sadowski 1998, 145-169). Secondly, it can further the view of conflict as something that is “over there”, isolated in a specific region (typically the developing world), ignoring the interactions between local, national and global forces which can cause conflicts (Appadurai 1996, 21). Thirdly, it ignores that identities throughout history have evolved; they are not fixed.

Still, recognizing that identities are flexible, socially negotiated and multifaceted does not imply that they are not quite real and important. Nor can they be created *ex nihilo* by either local or state elites. Hence the utility of the framework for understanding ethno-political (and in my case, specifically *indigenous*) identity that Shelia Croucher offers in her *Globalization and Belonging*. As she writes, "...a careful constructivist approach can preserve an appreciation for the emotional appeal of belonging, while shifting needed attention to the dynamic processes and politics of identity formation and reconfiguration" (Croucher 2004, 40). Some scholars of indigenous movements talk of a "strategic essentialism" among indigenous leaders who, they argue, adopt certain stereotypical characteristics in order to "prove" indigenous identity and thereby make the strongest case possible towards Western NGOs or governments (Lauer 2006, 52). This is not the same, however, as actually endorsing an essentialist view of identity itself. Rather, it suggests that, while indigenous identity is as multidimensional, fluid and social as any other, indigenous leaders have been savvy in their understanding of essentialized Western notions of indigenous people and this understanding has shaped their advocacy. Specifically, consistent with their goals of advancing indigenous dignity, indigenous leaders have often emphasized their cultural uniqueness. The scholars in Warren and Jackson's 2004 volume repeatedly emphasize this point as well.

Other important points made by the literature on framing and social movements remain to be made. One, frames cannot be constructed randomly or in any arbitrary manner a political entrepreneur might wish. They must resonate with and draw upon the relevant cultural resources (beliefs, symbols, rituals). Also, just like social movements,

they interact with very specific historical, cultural, economic and political contexts which do not dictate but shape (and are recursively shaped by) the frames and actions of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000, Tarrow 2003, 106-122).

Also crucial is that frames are a mechanism that allows us conceptually to explain how the individual and collective identities are linked. Quoting Hunt et al, Benford and Snow write, “not only do framing processes link individuals and groups ideologically, but they proffer, buttress and embellish identities that range from collaborative to conflictual” ( Benford and Snow 2000). This mechanism of linking individuals and groups is critical for my analysis of this social movement, which claims that once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

Whether successful or not, frames are intended to mobilize a constituency. Expanding our understanding of social network interaction with social movements, networks and framing, Passy and Giugni identify three main functions of networks in explaining micromobilization: “structurally connecting prospective participants to an opportunity to participate, socializing them to a protest an issue and shaping their decision to become involved” (Passy and Giugni 2001). Specifically, they posit that social networks “work as a bridge between structure and agency, insofar as they shape the decision of prospective participants to become involved” (Passy and Giugni 2001). As I noted previously, my conceptualization of framing is that it is inherently social. Hence the networks one is connected to are highly relevant as to whether and how one becomes mobilized. This link between structure and agency cannot be overemphasized.

For one, without integration into active social networks, the geographic and sociopolitical isolation of many indigenous communities, both from the state and from one another, might easily prevent any political movement from forming. In addition, recall again Freire's observation that dominated peoples often take on the identity which their oppressors have constructed for them. Here we can also observe the interaction between framing and resource mobilization. As I have been emphasizing, the political opportunity represented by the fall of Stroessner opened up unprecedented sociopolitical space for indigenous communities to partner openly with other civil society, accessing vital financial, media and expertise resources. In my observation, numerous civil society organizations, individuals such as human rights lawyers, and various Catholic and Protestant Church organizations are instrumental in catalyzing this link between the social and the individual in Paraguay. Brockett, among others, even specifically suggests that participation is what radicalizes identities, not vice versa (Brockett 2005, 87). Social networks, both formal and informal, disseminate frames and encourage participation in certain movement activities (such as lobbying, petitioning, or demonstrating).

My focus on framing means that I am observing an inherently social, relational process, and therefore find much to draw on from analyses which give attention to the larger processes and systems (note the more dynamic choice of words, as opposed to 'structure') in which we find ourselves. Yet it is also clear to me that individuals do possess some sort of agency and make choices within those systems. The focus on framing, political opportunity and resource mobilization, which drive the socio-political conflict I have chosen, will allow me to not only give due attention to both the salient

systems and the individual humans within them, but will also allow me to focus on how, where, why and when they interact. Chapters 4 and 5, Data Presentation and Analysis, will detail the evidence for my claim that once Stroessner's regime collapsed, due to the sudden opening in the political opportunity structure, narratives around dignity crystallized into active mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Other social movement scholars have noted the importance of analytically linking the social and individual levels of analysis as well. Klandermans, for example, wrote that "Without individuals there is nobody to share with and without collective beliefs there is nothing to share" (Klandermans 1992). Foewracker notes Melucci's observation that "individual motivation to participate 'cannot be considered as an exclusively individual variable' because all potential participants are 'rational actors embedded in networks'" (Foweraker 1995, 19). Hence the utility of a focus on the process of framing, which helps me analytically link the individual and social levels of analysis.

Much of the literature on indigenous movements emphasizes the importance of local, informal and indigenous organizations to generating and disseminating such frames. As Brockett observes in his case studies of the peasant movement in Guatemala and the revolution in El Salvador, "Making sense of one's emotional responses to unjust situations or improper treatment is worked out not just individually but very much in interaction with others. This social construction of grievances is captured well by the literature on collective action frames" (Brockett 2005, 42). For one example, a local grassroots group in Guatemala, Catholic Action, reframed relationships with the *patrones* as relationships that were exploitive and oppressive, rather than necessary, as many

indigenous Guatemalans tended to think. This reframing opened the socio-psychological space necessary for further organizing and resistance (Brockett 2005, 133-134).

Ondetti's study of the Brazilian land movement revealed a similar phenomenon:

"...grassroots organizational networks can be seen to play an important role in collective action, by affecting individual expectations about the participation of others....In effect, they reduce the level of uncertainty about protest" (Ondetti 200, 28). Chapters Four-Five will detail the role local faith-based and indigenous organizations have played in developing narratives of dignity and ultimately the Dignity Frame.

For example, the Catholic Church, numerous Protestant denominations, traditional Marxist/labor organizations, and transnational organizations such as the United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues have been powerful allies to South American indigenous leaders, providing access, money, legal representation, technological support and symbolic power (Adriance 1994, Blaser Online, Brockett 1998, 107-109; Brockett 2005, 133-138; Brysk 2000, 8-9; Eckstein 2001, 30-32; Gill 2000, 31-32; Lambert 1997, 1-24). At the time same time, as many social movement scholars note, it is important not to overlook informal networks as well; they can provide crucial links to SMOs (Tarrow 2003, 47-50). Given that I am advancing a fluid, complex, multi-dimensional view of identity here which understands identity as intersubjective and inherently relational, as well as shaped by specific political, historical and cultural contexts, logically these informal interactions will have an impact on the shape and trajectory of Paraguay's indigenous movement. We will see this manifest in Chapters 4 and 5, particularly in the work of indigenous leaders such as CP, A, H, L and LD, who are not the directors of

formalized NGOs and yet who are working to educate and mobilize indigenous communities throughout Paraguay.

Indeed, this became especially clear during my conversations with a community of *desplacados* just outside of Santa Ana, who did not know each other previously. Each member of the community had been displaced from his or her land, or was compelled to immigrate to the capital in the hopes of finding higher wages and access to education for children. Upon discovering the similarity of their stories, they began to organize themselves into a political force. I will detail this more in Chapters 4 and 5, but more briefly here, they elected leaders for their community, and formed a council to set priorities such as land title, health care, education and a community garden. Their leaders engage in a number of advocacy activities, such as public education about indigenous history, culture and current challenges on *Radio Solidaridad*, as well as lobbying officials at INDI and MEC. In another example of the importance of informal networks, so-called “nativos urbanos” (urban Indians), as I will detail more in Chapter 5, are also clearly serving to consolidate the Dignity Frame in Paraguay. They are organizing indigenous NGOs, pressing their claims at MEC, INDI, and the *Municipalidad de Asunción* and reaching out to rural communities to engage, equip and empower them to defend their rights.

Somewhat similarly to framing, scholars more and more are examining the role of emotion (or “affect”) in social movements. Framing is not insensitive to rational, political considerations. It is, however, also not divorced from the emotional, which commonly inspires and shapes behavior. Given the earlier suggestions by scholars of

social movements that movement participants were irrational, scholars have approached this subject tentatively, according to Jasper (1998). Brockett (Brockett 2005, 24-25) and Tarrow (Tarrow 2003, 111-112) have addressed the importance of emotion in social movements as well. The logic of this is clear to me. The emotions (especially solidarity and anger at injustice) that movement participants feel play a significant role in their decisions about whether or to what extent they will participate in a movement.

Additionally, many social movement organizations explicitly frame their actions in terms of moral outrage; Oxfam's 'blood diamonds' campaign comes to mind. Given that one can hardly separate one's identity from one's emotions, theorizing on the role of emotion in social movements is a useful building-block for my study. Jasper's 1998 article examined this in detail; as he writes, "emotions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfaction, they constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities, and interests. They are, in Collins' words, the 'glue of solidarity—and what mobilizes conflict' "(Jasper 1998). With specific relevance to a person displaced by land privatization, he writes, "The prospect of unexpected and sudden changes in one's surroundings can arouse feelings of dread and anger" (Jasper 1998). These emotions can easily interact with a Dignity Frame, and a suddenly increased access to various resources and partners, to mobilize movement leaders and politicize identities. The emotions of outrage are precisely what indigenous leaders, NGO allies and largely sympathetic media coverage display, and it does indeed seem to be acting as a "glue of solidarity" due to the sharing of experiences which is a part of collective organizing.

*Dignity Throughout Latin America*

Some aspects of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay can also be observed in other indigenous movements throughout the Global South. Above I have emphasized the role of framing, political opportunity and resource mobilization. I have also dwelt upon the context of political and economic globalization. Now I will place the indigenous social movement in Paraguay in the context of Latin American indigenous social movements more broadly, discussing several important similarities and situating myself within this indigenous movements literature.

The salience of land to the cultural identity of indigenous peoples throughout Latin America, as well as Asia and Africa, is the most striking and predominant feature of indigenous movements throughout Latin America (in addition to Ondetti's study, see for example Nash 2005). (Chapter Five will address fully the strong ties between land and dignity for Paraguay's indigenous people.) This is an important reminder that the movement unfolding in Paraguay is by no means unique to it, but rather is deeply connected to regional and global policies of economic neoliberalism implemented about which many throughout the Global South have had little to no say. Hence the similar patterns in indigenous land rights movements throughout the globe. This feature of protest against dehumanizing and oppressive treatment, tied with demands for the return of their lands, became such a prominent feature of indigenous communities throughout Latin America that one scholar referred to such resistance as "the primary characteristic of Indian ethnicity" (Field 1994, 239).

The Brazilian landless movement provides one example. Garfield notes the ways in which the Brazilian Xavante both accommodated the dominant culture and used

cultural distinctiveness to assert their claims (Van Cott 2003). Ondetti's doctoral study of the Brazilian Landless Movement provides much support for the continued relevance of political opportunity theory, so long as one bears in mind that no one theory alone will likely be able to provide a complete analysis (Ondetti 2002, 11). He makes two points about land in particular that are quite relevant for Paraguay, and sheds some light on why land has become so central to indigenous movements. As he writes, "Two distinctive characteristics of farmland as a good were especially critical in terms of making land occupations viable. One is the fact that land is an existing, rather than government-generated resource. The second is farmland's unique cultural and juridical status in the Brazilian context, as the only type of private property that can be subject to expropriation based on the social efficiency of its use" (Ondetti 2002, 13). As I described in Chapter One, loss of land both due to displacement onto government-decreed reserves (which are inevitably smaller than the land a community was originally living on) and due to sale of said land to large agricultural corporations remains a driving reality of this conflict, and a central reason for the mobilization of Paraguay's indigenous communities. As in Brazil, Paraguay's indigenous communities depend directly on the land for their subsistence. Also as in Brazil (and throughout indigenous communities worldwide) land is a deeply important part of cultural and spiritual life. Indeed, this salience of land to indigenous dignity goes a long way to explaining why so many indigenous movements have presented their objectives, activities and indeed themselves in terms of indigenous dignity, as opposed to the myriad of other ways in which they might have represented themselves. Deere and León further examine the role of land in indigenous cosmology

and from the unique perspective of female indigenous leaders in Mexico, Bolivia and Ecuador (Deere and León 2001).

Van Cott notes that scholars of the Bolivian indigenous movements have focused on the efforts of movement leaders to mobilize indigenous communities around the dignity of their identity (Van Cott 2003). Gordillo's study specifically of shamans in the Argentinean Chaco, which area also extends well into Paraguay and Bolivia, emphasizes the role of native cosmology in contemporary resistance to white power (Gordillo 2003). As we will see in Chapter 5, Paraguay scholar Kidd (1995) also makes this point about Paraguay specifically. June Nash's study of the Mayan resistance to appropriation of their land further reinforces indigenous agency. Writes Nash, "Many continue to practice collective lifeways and to relate to cosmic powers in ways envisioned by their ancestors. These practices are not the result of passivity, but rather the product of practiced resistance by those who have experienced the trauma of conquest and colonization" (Nash 2005, 178-179). This is the second main feature of Paraguay's land movement which one sees commonly in other land movements that I wish to highlight. Even under the occupation of their land, and even when that occupation has resulted in real devastation to indigenous communities, they have remained active agents in resistance and fighting for their community's survival. Nash's point is that maintaining one's way of life in the context of occupation *itself constitutes resistance*. This observation is reflected throughout my historical analysis of Paraguay's land movement as well (see Chapter Two, and Chapters Four-Five). Renée Sylvain's study of land, its loss, and San identity (in Africa) provides a similar example (Nash 2005, 216-233). This study

suggests specifically that Paraguay's indigenous communities are not the only ones having difficulty "proving" their indigenous status to the satisfaction of the State. Writes Sylvain,

First the concern to distinguish indigenous Africans from other Africans has resulted in an overdrawn distinction between the 'cultural' features of indigeneity and the political-economic features that indigenous peoples share with marginalized minorities—namely, non-dominance. Second, political economy gets pushed further into the background as essentializing ontological connections among prior occupancy (and genealogical heritage), cultural distinctness, and self-identification are foregrounded to become the core features of African indigenous identity (Nash 2005, 218).

As Blaser notes, Paraguay's indigenous communities have found themselves in the ironic and disempowering position of having to demonstrate their "purity", often by conforming to Western stereotypes of what an "Indian" should be (Blaser Online). I can see several detrimental effects from this. One, it narrows the socio-political and legal space within which indigenous communities and their allies can organize to tell their own story as they see it, which is essential to dignity. It also serves to reproduce the "legitimacy" of stereotypes of Paraguay's *nativos*. Thirdly, it hinders their efforts to legally secure their land.

A similar observation that many scholars note are the internal divisions that challenge and characterize many indigenous movements. Rappaport and Gow, for example, argue that, "we cannot speak simply of a bipolar struggle between the dominant society and the indigenous movement; nor can we focus exclusively on how a monolithic movement represents itself to a dominant society. We must examine the complex internal dialogue within organizations, between organizations, and between organizations

and communities which is framed by the struggle of the movement with the state” (Mattiace 2005, 241). The scholars throughout Warren and Jackson’s 2002 volume also focus on the complexities and political difficulties of indigenous self-representation throughout Latin America (Paraguay is not mentioned). The debate among indigenous communities over whether Law 904 or Law 2822 would have been better to protect their land rights and who “really” speaks for the indigenous in Paraguay is a good example of this tension. Full discussion of these points can be found in Chapter One and Chapters Four-Five.

As important as land has been to Latin American indigenous movements, its importance must be understood, as I have been emphasizing, within the context of larger socio-cultural and political goals of defeating racism, and achieving dignity and autonomy. Framing has played a significant part, as one might expect, in indigenous land movements outside of Paraguay as well, as it does in most social movements generally. Framing, the reader will recall, was discussed at length in the review of the social movements literature above. The universal value and basic human need of dignity has been central to other, more often studied Latin American indigenous movements as well. Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico come to mind. They have both featured explicitly-named “marches for dignity” (Postero 2004, 1; Postero 2004, 67; Lucero 2006; Lauer 2006, Yashar 2007, Stephen 1997, Schmidt 1994, Van Cott 2003; Deere 2001, 48). Hirsch and Gordillo (2003) offer a specific case study on the struggle of indigenous communities against the invisibility that had been crafted by the Argentine state. Calling such public actions “Marches for Dignity” is clear evidence that “mere” land title was not the goal.

Rather, respect for indigenous political and social culture and autonomy in deciding how indigenous land was used seems to have been the goal (Warren and Jackson 2002, 1-29; Postero 2004, 50-66, Schmidt 1994, Yashar 2007, Lauer 2006, Lucero 2006, Hirsch 2003, Stephen 1997, Van Cott 2003).

One frame that ultimately failed to resonate, at least solely on its own, was a class-based frame for organizing; Lucero (2006) for example makes this point regarding the Bolivian indigenous movement. He describes this movement rather built on “cultural validation” (Lucero 2006, 44). As I will note again in my data presentation chapters, the Marxist groups in Paraguay were largely urban cives of organization which failed to incorporate and resonate with the largely rural indigenous communities. For most indigenous communities throughout the Americas, the land is a non-negotiable centerpiece of their worldview and way of providing for themselves. The emergence of the Zapatistas in Mexico, according to Gunter Dietz, is another example of this. Strictly Marxist organizing, while effective in some respects, ignored or misunderstood the salience of ethnicity to the “proletariat” that what Dietz calls “external advisors” were trying to organize (Postero 2004, 48). Often, when indigenous communities in Mexico were organized to fight for a land title, once it was achieved, they would simply return “to daily business” (Postero 2004, 48). Clearly, the indigenous communities were coming from a world view very different from the “external advisers” working to organize them as a class. Yet when the celebration of 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance occurred, this frame which shifted the emphasis from class to ethnicity proved fruitful. Writes Dietz, it “succeeded in re-establishing the dialogue between pro-

government and oppositional indigenous representatives. The common group was shared ethnicity” (Postero 2004, 53). This is logical, as indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, Paraguay included, reportedly view the first waves of colonization as the origins of their oppression. While it is impossible to deny that capitalist expansion was a primary motive for colonization, a class-based frame which did not address indigenous cultural dignity proved inadequate. When leading their own movement, Mexican indigenous communities appear to have explicitly framed their actions in terms of dignity, as Paraguay’s indigenous leaders do. For example in Mexico, in 2000, “...a wide range of regional indigenous organizations staged a massive ‘March of Indigenous Dignity’” (Postero 2004, 67). Bolivian and Ecuadorian indigenous communities framed their march in nearly identical language, a march for “territorio y dignidad” (Postero 2004, 1; Lucero 2006, 47; Yashar 2007, 172). Note especially the explicit linking of land and dignity, for the two are intimately connected in the worldview of indigenous communities throughout Latin America. Indeed, the above details should not be read as an argument “against” the salience of class per se, but rather “these examples show that the new indigenous organizing is not necessarily going to be based upon identity politics but, rather, on a fluid mixture of livelihood and culture” (Postero 2004, 14).

Dietz provides a clear example of this in his examination of Mexico’s *Zapatismo*. He argues that the government-endorsed class-based frame “failed in its attempt to ‘open’ communities and ‘proletarianize’ indigenous peasants” (Warren and Jackson 2004, 42). He then further details the success of organizing around a frame of indigenous ethnic dignity. For example, *Consejo Mexicano 500 Años de Resistencia Indígena* (the Mexican Council

for 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance) “succeeded in establishing a dialogue between pro-governmental and oppositional indigenous representatives. The common ground for their re-encounter was shared ethnicity” (Warren and Jackson 2004, 53). The literature does not argue that indigenous people did not organize or resist until recently; rather, as Yashar phrased it, “they had not organized along ethnic lines to promote an explicitly ethnic agenda” (Yashar 2005, 5). Dietz provides a specific example from Mexico when he notes that indigenous communities did participate in the larger revolutionary movement, framed in class-based terms, but once land title was obtained, they quickly returned “to their daily business” (Postero 2004, 48). Such a narrative does not support the conclusion that these indigenous communities viewed themselves as truly represented by the larger revolutionary movement.

Interestingly, misgauging this focus on the part of indigenous leaders seems to have been a reason why “external advisors” particularly of a Marxist ideology were not successful in mobilizing indigenous communities around a solely class-based frame. Indigenous movements scholar David Maybury-Lewis (2002) observed that even as states integrated indigenous communities (with varying degrees of success and meeting varying degrees of resistance) as a class of laborers, “there was no place for them *as Indians* in the countries where they lived” (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 348). He continues, noting as I myself have noted, that “the history of the Americas since the European invasions is that of a 500-year attempt to abolish indigenous cultures” (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 348). Frames that fail to acknowledge this have not been successful, as one might logically expect. Such a frame as class organizing **alone** is not able to assert the dignity

of indigenous culture and communities as such. It defines participants as workers, without regard to ethnicity or gender. But much of the literature on Latin American indigenous movements suggests that indigenous communities did not experience forced labor and were not displaced from their ancestral lands as workers or a proletariat. They were so oppressed as indigenous communities. More than their lands were attacked; their very humanity was. They were considered less than human for their “backwards” communal economy and non-Christian cosmology (Horst 2007, Reed 1997, Galeano 1997). Hence organizing solely (and I emphasize “solely”) as workers did not resonate with the full extent of what indigenous communities were trying to do—and undo (Lauer 2006, Lucero 2006, Warren and Jackson 2004, Stephen 1997, Yashar 2007). I include this discussion because if I am to support my claim that once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame, I must also consider why other frames did not occur. I will return to this point.

Berger (2001) pushes this observation further with the argument that this is because Marxism, at least in the case of Mexico, has been “heavily implicated in nationalism” (Berger 2001, 153). Berger further notes the distinctly indigenous character of the rebellion and its “grounding in colonial and post-colonial history” (Berger 2001, 157-162). Such an historical context would indeed be at odds with a movement that linked itself to opposing colonialism and affirming the dignity of indigenous culture, as Harvey suggests just below. What this means is that the approach itself of nations to indigenous peoples was and is an affront to dignity, as it required violently militarized

incorporation into a foreign sociopolitical system. Ultimately, Berger asserts what numerous other scholars such as Postero and Zomasc (2004), Kay and Warren (2002), Brysk (2000), Nash (2005) and Yashar (2007) also note, which is that the most comprehensive and useful analyses of indigenous movements today engage how class and ethnic identity intertwine, rather than “explaining” the emergence of these movements as resulting from one or the other. If this is indeed an emerging consensus, I situate myself within this school of thought on indigenous social movements. Hence the grounding of my exploration of the indigenous social movement in Paraguay, obviously framed to affirm and assert indigenous dignity, in local, national, regional and global processes of neoliberal economics. A number of other studies of the indigenous rights movement and rebellion in Mexico further evidence this point (Harvey 1998, Stephen 1997). Stephen notes the emphasis of autonomy and self-determination in movement speeches and documents such as Convention 169 (Stephen 1997). Neil Harvey’s study (1998) bolsters my own analysis that the Dignity Frame is present in Paraguay because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one’s movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. As Harvey details, the “right to have rights” became the frame (though he does not use the

word “frame” explicitly) which successfully mobilized the indigenous communities, and united them to enough of an extent that they could press claims together, despite some apparently significant internal divisions about how closely one should deal with the Mexican government (Harvey 1998, 1-35). The claims for citizenship, and citizenship increasingly understood on their own terms as Yashar (2005) noted, was fundamental to the Chiapas Rebellion. Harvey writes that the significant process of the Zapatistas was “the political construction of citizenship from the fragments of multiple struggles of rebellion” (Harvey 1998, 13). According to Harvey, the more indigenous communities themselves took the lead in shaping their movement, the more dignity and autonomy came to the fore. One Mexican movement leader, Dr. Salvador Nava, clearly framed movement values and strategy in terms of dignity. Harvey quotes him as saying:

The principle of dignity brought thousands of Mexicans without reservations about ideology or party. The dignity of the citizens has often been humiliated by power, violating the fundamental rights of Mexicans. It is because of this that today dignity demands the installation of democracy in Mexico (Harvey 1998, 25).

Logically, one benefit of movement strategy centered around a universal value such as dignity is that the very universality allows the movement frame to resonate with potential allies. This utility, of course, is a main thread of my analysis regarding the Dignity Frame. The Catholic Church, according to Harvey, is one example of this in Mexico (as in Paraguay as well). Writes Harvey, “Democracy is valued less for its rules and procedures and more for the dignity it bestows to the poor” (Harvey 1998, 27). This again is evidence that citizenship (inclusion, belonging) per se is important because of its relevance to dignity, not vice versa. As do many scholars of Paraguay (see for

example Horst 2007, Reed 1997 and Ganson 2003), Harvey understands the Chiapas Rebellion in the context of centuries of colonial oppression: “The Zapatista Rebellion can be seen as the latest in a long cycle of popular demands for dignity, voice and autonomy” (Harvey 2007, 37). They expressed to the Mexican government their demands “for land reform and respect for indigenous cultures” (Harvey 1998, 78). This strategy is logical for several reasons. One, recall the centrality of land to indigenous livelihood and cosmology. Secondly, it is all too easy to imagine surface “land reform” later revoked or simply ignored by local land owners or racist, corrupt authorities. (In fact, Horst details that this was precisely the case in Paraguay, as will be further detailed in Chapters 4 and 5). Thus, in my analysis, because the Dignity Frame addresses the actual root of the problem (racism, oppression, exclusion), it can empower indigenous leaders to fight for more sustainable and lasting solutions than simply changes in the law, as vital as those may be. None of the above is to argue that class identification has not at all been important in indigenous organizing, but rather to note that indigenous dignity, particularly when indigenous leaders themselves stepped forward to shape their own movement, has been the driving value or master frame. As Ramos notes, “ethnic awareness, like class awareness, emerges from specific historical processes which can, in fact, initially converge with class. But once created, ethnicity follows a path of its own; that is, ‘once objectified as a principle by which the division of labor is organized, ethnicity assumes the autonomous character of a prime mover in the unequal destinies of persons and populations’” (Warren and Jackson 2002, 274). Again, I detail this at length

here because of the importance to my methodology of considering why specific other possible frames did not occur, if I am to support my analysis of the Dignity Frame.

Fischer's study of the Mayan movement evidenced a similar frame of dignity. He quotes Cotjí, a Mayan scholar, as stating the movement goal as, "the development of a Maya consciousness in, of and for itself and to fight for the rights of the Maya pueblo" (Postero 2004, 102). The goal here is not uniting the workers of Latin America, or mere land reform, or inclusion in the State apparatus. The goal is Mayan dignity as Mayans. Ecuador's indigenous movement exhibits a similar rejection of class as the primary organizing frame; rather it blends class with indigenous ethnicity (Postero 2004, 132). Bolivia's Guarani people (the reader will recall that this is the same indigenous group that lives in Paraguay, as well as Argentina) express a similar frame (Postero 2004, 201-206). Warren, in the final chapter of Postero's volume (2004), is even more explicit when he quotes Wilkenson: "Each time [indigenous leaders] had told a different story about who they were and why they deserved the land. But only in 1992 did they hit upon one that worked. They changed the name of their movement from 'pro-land' to 'pro-ethnicity' and began to talk about themselves as Mayans" (Postero 2004, 225). Yashar observes the same salience of indigenous dignity as opposed to class dignity in indigenous movements in Guatemala, Bolivia and Mexico (Yashar 2005, 24-25). Ecuador scholar Amalia Pallares "situates the development of the Indian movement and Indian consciousness in Ecuador within a history of anti-colonial struggles...." (Mattiace 2005, 243). Hence, for example, the use by Ecuadorian indigenous activists of the native word *Pachakutik*, which means "the remaking of the world" to capture the spirit of not simply social

change, but specifically the asserting of indigenous dignity (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 255). It is commonly observed by nearly all scholars of social movements that they emerge as they do in quite specific historical, economic and socio-political contexts. The emergence of a Dignity Frame only makes sense given that indigenous peoples were enslaved, disparaged, abused and displaced *because they were indigenous*, not (only) because they were poor. Had the historical facts of colonialism been otherwise, another frame indeed might have emerged.

In addition to explicit Dignity Framing, such as evidenced above, the indigenous communities' approach to democracy itself suggests their central focus on the dignity and integrity of their culture. I argue this because indigenous leaders often suggest a critique of Western democracy in their own resistance (Postero 2004, 2). Specifically, they often suggest that Western approaches to democracy can be hierarchical and overly centralized, and have called for a view of democracy that is more local, participatory and social as opposed to centered on the individual. "Implicit in these values is a critique of occidental forms of authority, desires to control and commodify nature, and the sovereign nation-state model with its accompanying power to define democracy, citizenship, penal codes, jurisdiction, and legitimate violence" (Warren and Jackson, 2002, 13). Warren and Jackson note that indigenous movements in, for example, Colombia and Mexico exhibit "highly participatory forms of decision-making" and "have the potential to help achieve democratization throughout the country" (Warren and Jackson 2002, 14). For one example, in Guatemala, recognition of communal (as opposed to individual) land rights was a major issue to emerge from the Indigenous Accords (Warren and Jackson 2002,

158). Alcida Ramos notes that “indigenous peoples of the Americas replaced their white spokespersons with their own voices, while the trend continues to move from assimilationist state policies to indigenous demands for autonomy and self-representation” (Warren and Jackson 2002, 255). Maybury-Lewis offers a similar observation, writing that most Latin American regimes “assume that the relationship with indigenous peoples and their manner of incorporation into the nation are central aspects of nation building” (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 357). A recent volume, *The Challenge of Diversity: Indigenous Peoples and the Reform of the State in Latin America*, further emphasizes this struggle for recognition not just of land rights, but of the validity of indigenous autonomy over their own socio-political life (Van Cott 2003). Like Yashar, scholars such as Van Cott and Madrid argue that indigenous movements not only do not compromise democracy, as some have argued, expressing the concern that ethnic tensions would be aggravated (Madrid 2005; Van Cott 2003). Rather, in their expansion of political space and demands for greater responsiveness, transparency and human rights, numerous scholars agree that indigenous movements are more likely to contribute to democracy rather than undermine it. As Madrid notes, there is not a consensus on this point (Madrid 2005, 162). Based on the expansion of democratic participation, representation and responsiveness that we will see below in Chapters 4-5 as a result, at least in part, of indigenous advocacy in Paraguay, I situate myself with these scholars. Specifically of interest to this aspect of the literature on indigenous movements in Latin America is the expansion of the definition of citizenship in Paraguay, and the Constitutional protections for communal land ownership. Hence the evidence that this

study presents from Paraguay suggests that indigenous movements are indeed potentially very healthy for democracy in Latin America, even given that Paraguay does not (yet) have formalized indigenous political parties. (It will be interesting to see if some of the newer indigenous NGOs begin to head in this direction.) At the least, even if one does not accept that they have contributed to democracy, clearly they have not threatened it. Notably, the election upset achieved by President-Elect Lugo suggests more responsiveness and power-sharing than ever before in Paraguay's history—if for no other reason than that the opposition won! Again, though, caution is always in order; it clearly remains to be seen whether a president who has not even yet been inaugurated will deliver on his platform.

While among indigenous movement leaders in Paraguay there is still considerable dependence financially and for technical legal expertise, Chapters 4 and 5 will show that there is also explicit and determined insistence on national political self-representation as the only true path to dignity and autonomy. This insistence on indigenous values not only “within” indigenous communities but within the State is, indeed, a potentially significant contribution to democracy; it is also an insistence on the inherent dignity and worth of indigenous values, and their potential to benefit society at large. This is a refusal to (any longer) accommodate the oppressive status quo. In addition to direct statements movement leaders make on indigenous dignity, the language of actions such as petitions, Marches for Dignity and land occupations work to advance indigenous dignity as well.

Again, I would like to situate my analysis of Paraguay's indigenous rights

movement directly within the school of scholarship on indigenous movements that understands their aims to be far larger than “mere” access to social services, land reform or even a rejection of neoliberalism. Like Yashar, Van Cott, Stephen, Brysk, Harvey, Dietz and others, I view movement leaders in Paraguay as contesting the meaning of and acting to expand citizenship. Maybury-Lewis’s summary of the argument is apt: “What we are witnessing then, throughout the Americas, is a series of debates, conflicts, even wars concerning not merely who controls the state, but the nature of the state itself and the kinds of negotiations and dialogues that take place within it” (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 361). As Chapters 4-5 will detail, they are demanding both participation and autonomy. Yet even a “citizenship frame”, I feel, can be pushed one step forward. What basic human need lies at the root of indigenous claims for what we can call autonomous citizenship? That is, on what do they base their claims for such? Why is it that human beings need their identity affirmed to begin with? As the scholars above note, and as I observed in Paraguay, they base it on the fact of their dignity, which is a basic human need.

I detail these non-Paraguayan cases because of their relevance to my own argument that once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Clearly the scholars above focus on dignity as a driving value of the movements they study and as such constitute significant work on the role of dignity in indigenous organizing throughout Latin America. Yashar focuses primarily on social networks and political opportunity. Harvey, as described above, does highlight the importance of dignity but

does not explicitly discuss framing processes or the role of frames in social movements. Brysk's (2000) primary focus is the development of international social networks which indigenous movements have been able to forge recently. Leslie Gill (2000) focuses primarily on the economic struggles and social dislocations of indigenous communities in Bolivia as that state embraced economic neoliberalism. A wealth of articles (Stephen 1997, Lucero 2006, Lauer 2006, Hirsch 2007, Schmidt 1994, Kay 2007, Yashar 2007, Jackson and Warren 2005, Petras and Veltmeyer 2001, Borras and Ross 2007) examine the construction of various Latin American (Mayan, Guarani) identities, detailing the content of culture and worldview, and how it has come into conflict with the dominant culture. These scholars examine the efficacy and impact of indigenous movements. The scholarship on Paraguay, in particular, overwhelmingly focuses on the fall of Stroessner and the subsequent troubled transition to democracy (Lambert 1997, Lambert 2000, Renshaw 2002, Sondrol 2007). Paraguay scholars such as Reed (1997), Stephen Kidd (1995) and Horst (2007) have focused extensively on the Paraguayan indigenous movement, specifically indigenous responses to the marginalization, poverty and oppression they have faced. But they do not specifically examine, as do some other studies of Latin American indigenous movements, the framing of the movement or why, how and when the frame occurred as it did in a particular context. As noted earlier in this Literature Review, a contribution of this dissertation is precisely to apply some of the literature on framing with the scholarship on Paraguay to examine the Dignity Frame in Paraguay. Again, my claim is that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the

## Dignity Frame.

Finally, I have been addressing Yashar's (2005) influential and often-cited thesis that indigenous movements have done more than win language or land rights. Rather, she argues, indigenous movements have at least in some instances challenged the very shape of the states against which they are pressing claims. In her own words, "contemporary changes in citizenship regimes politicized indigenous identities precisely because they unwittingly challenged enclaves of local autonomy that had gone largely unrecognized by the state" (Yashar 2005, 8). She further cites social networks and political space as key factors for explaining when, why, how and where indigenous movements arose as they did (Yashar 2005, 8). Autonomy is a key aspect of dignity; one cannot be dignified if one is not at least as free as most other people to determine one's own affairs. She views indigenous people as "defending Indians as Indians", an observation that resonates with my own analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Hence Yashar's argument both shapes and supports my own analysis. Stroessner's regime certainly constituted an affront to the autonomy and dignity of Paraguay's indigenous communities, but the associational space and networks which such space allows were not yet present. In pressing their claims, Yashar argued, indigenous communities have challenged the very definition states have held of what it means to be a citizen—what she calls the "content" of citizenship (Yashar 2005, 34). Such content includes exactly what rights a citizen is indeed entitled to, and has been, to say the least, highly contested. Such rights can include protection of life and

property, political participation, protection from abuses by the State, and various types of social and economic security (Yashar 2005, 45-50). The guarantee of particularly economic rights, of course, has come into at times violent conflict with neoliberal economic policies, which view the state as ineffective and inefficient, and therefore seek to limit its role in social and economic development. (Recall this discussion particularly from Chapter One). Citizenship regimes are being reshaped to (at least on paper) include communities, not just individuals, as holders of civil and human rights, for example (Yashar 2005, 286-287). A second manner in which indigenous communities are reshaping democratic citizenship is by expanding membership so that rights, responsibilities and privileges of citizenship include them (Yashar 2005, 32). She writes that in, “the contemporary formation of indigenous movements in Latin America, indigenous peoples are contesting the terms of citizenship. They are demanding equal rights, but they are also demanding recognition of special rights as native peoples....” (Yashar 2005, 5). As Chapters 4 and 5 will detail, this has been important in Paraguay, as in other Latin American countries, since indigenous communities in Paraguay practice communal land ownership. What is more, these claims have been pressed during a time when economic liberalism has been ideologically hegemonic. The reader will recall that minimizing the state’s role, especially in markets, is key. Hence, as noted before, states such as Paraguay (and throughout the Global South, in fact) are subject to simultaneous and contradictory pressures of demands from their citizenry and from global lenders and IFIs. Further, communal human rights speaks to how indigenous communities view the root cause of the problems they face which their movements are designed to address;

based on the literature I have been reviewing here, they do not feel they were denied their rights as a collection of individuals, but rather as a community of indigenous people.

This redefining and contesting of citizenship—and by logical extension the entire colonial and neocolonial project—is a basic, fundamental dynamic of Latin American indigenous movements (Yashar 2005, Harvey 1998, Kay and Warren 2002, Postero and Zamosc 2004, Brysk 2000, Gill 2000).

This aspect of the large literature on indigenous movements is relevant to Paraguay's indigenous movement; focused as it is on dignity, it naturally addresses issues such as human rights, both individual and communal, participation in the political sphere, access to social services and, of course, land title. If one is recognized as a fully human and dignified being, then naturally autonomy and participation will result. Recall I suggested above that I believe this resonates with and builds upon Yashar's argument that indigenous citizenship regimes are challenging and reshaping the traditional Western definitions of citizenship. The root basis of their arguments for expansion of citizenship and changes to the "content" of citizenship (such as more communitarian conceptions thereof) is their inherent dignity as human beings. As Yashar notes, changes in "citizenship regime" were one important factor in determining where indigenous movements would emerge (her cases studies do not at all address Paraguay). This is because, as she notes, the newer neoliberal regimes threatened what she calls autonomy (Yashar 2005, 65). Recall that autonomy, the ability to be the master of one's own fate, is a critical aspect of dignity as I have defined it. Hence Paraguay can be seen as similar to the other, more often-studied cases throughout the rest of Latin America, with one

important caveat. Paraguay stands out among most other Latin American nations as having never been a democracy at all; Lambert (1997) and Horst (2007) among others emphasize Paraguay's lack of a democratic tradition and in fact culture of autocracy. Hence indigenous movement leaders, and other civil society groups in Paraguay concerned with governance, human rights and transparency issues, are not renegotiating a new social contract or demanding that the "terms" of a present contract change. They are establishing a new one. This suggests a considerable amount of work in building from the ground up democratic traditions, culture and institutions. An interesting corollary to this is Paraguay anthropologist Richard Reed's recent (2002) argument that democracy has not significantly, and indeed may not be able to, improve the lives of indigenous communities in Paraguay because they represent such a tiny percent of Paraguay's population (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 309-327). Indeed, while the political opportunity opened by the fall of a dictatorship has made real differences, continued progress will depend on how comprehensive Paraguay's democracy becomes. Indigenous leaders, in my view cognizant of this reality, have therefore focused their movement on the value of dignity, with its key ingredients of visibility, respect and autonomy.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### *Data Sources and Limitations*

As I have been suggesting, gathering data from a number of sources was crucial to my methodology. My analysis, again, is that the Dignity Frame has been the one to occur in Paraguay for several reasons specific to contemporary Paraguay's context. Perhaps the most dramatic was the fall of Stroessner, which precipitated the opening of

sociopolitical space for indigenous civil society. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. The opportunity and need to partner with NGOs who could help mobilize resources is a second influential dynamic; because of the need for these partnerships, framing the movement through a universal value, such as dignity, which readily translates cross-culturally, has been strategic. Of course another major dynamic was and is the dehumanizing context of racism and poverty against which indigenous communities struggle.

Again, framing is a relational, social and contested process. From a methodology standpoint, this means that I needed to gather data from numerous sectors of Paraguayan society if I was going to provide a suitably comprehensive analysis of the indigenous social movement in Paraguay. Through the method of open-ended interviews, I gathered qualitative data from civil society, government officials and indigenous leaders. As noted above, such open-ended interviews, a qualitative methodology, was most appropriate because of the nature of this dissertation's focus on, among other dynamics, framing. A more structured methodology, or even a quantitative methodology, would not have successfully opened the necessary space for me to gather data on framing. Also, this methodology allowed me to prioritize the worldview and ontological categories of my research partners, which was necessary if I was to understand how participants in this movement understand and present themselves—that is, their frame. A more closed-ended qualitative or a quantitative strategy would have been poorly suited to an analysis which aims to explain that due to a shift in political opportunity structure after the fall of

Stroessner, prior narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

To increase my data's reliability and validity, I also gathered data from both Paraguayan national and international sources, such as *Ultima Hora*, *ABC*, *The New York Times* and the BBC. This allowed me to gather views from different sectors of society, which of course sometimes conflicted. Gathering such divergent views was essential to my study of the land conflict in contemporary Paraguay. Frames are not developed or advanced in isolation, so data from indigenous leaders alone would have been incomplete. I also gathered data from anthropological, historical and other scholarly sources, such as ethnographies by Richard Reed (1997), Stephen Kidd (1995), John Renshaw (2002) and Donatella Schmidt (1994), as well as histories by scholars such as Barbara Ganson (2003). As noted elsewhere, such sources also included Latin American studies journals, comparative political journals, or journals focused on development and democracy. Studies of recent Paraguayan history, such as the works by Sondrol, Horst (2007), Nickson (1995) and Lambert (1997), of course were vital. They allowed me to situate the advocacy work of today's indigenous leaders in historical context. This was particularly vital since the history of colonial exploitation and oppression is such an important aspect of the Dignity Frame. Such ethnographies contributed a deep understanding of the traditions, worldview and values of Paraguay's indigenous communities. As any frame advanced by indigenous leaders would naturally be shaped by their own specific historical and cultural context, this was critical data. Among other contributions, these ethnographies contributed detailed interviews with indigenous

leaders in which said leaders assert the dignity of their culture and communities. The interviews and participatory observation conducted by these scholars presents how indigenous leaders themselves view their struggles, the reasons for them and the most appropriate solution. They also include detailed narratives of actions which indigenous leaders and their communities undertook to secure and defend their lands. This firsthand language is therefore important data to support my analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Collecting such ethnographic, political science and historical data also strengthens my study's validity and reliability as it allows me to triangulate my data. This further enables me to corroborate facts and gain a variety of perspectives, which is particularly important considering the explicit advocacy mission of some of the indigenous leaders and allied civil society leaders I spoke with. The reader will see such data used extensively throughout my Data Presentation Chapters, 4-5.

One final source of data, of course, was the narratives of the lived experience of my research partners gathered during open-ended interviews. My Spanish was beginner-level, so to ensure the quality of the data, I hired a translator who spoke both Spanish and Guarani. Her ability to speak Guarani was particularly useful, for two main reasons. One, of course, is that some of the indigenous leaders simply do not speak fluent Spanish. Additionally, there are class implications to speaking either Spanish or Guarani. To be fluent in Spanish in Paraguay is to be more educated, wealthy, socially connected and admired. Yenny, my translator, and I talked in detail about the importance of using Guarani when talking with the indigenous leaders we met. She was pleased to, and

confirmed in our debriefings my suspicions that they were far more comfortable and expressive in their native language.

During this field data collection, I was also cognizant of myself as a comparatively wealthy “*Norteamericana*” (North American), white female who was studying in their country temporarily and who did not speak Guarani. The social distance created by some of these characteristics of mine was something I needed to carefully consider and navigate. As this dissertation is not an anthropological or ethnographic study, this social distance did not prevent me from undertaking my study, but it was a factor to consider while designing my study. Perhaps the most important aspect of my methodology which allowed me to gain the trust I needed for my data collection was carefully arranging for introductions by other connected and trusted parties, especially when beginning to reach out to indigenous communities. Having helped lead a community development program in Asunción and several rural areas in Paraguay was beneficial. I was able to draw on numerous professional and personal contacts I had established at the World Bank, BID, USAID Paraguay, Peace Corps Paraguay, the Santa Ana Community, and various Paraguayan think tanks and development organizations such as CIRD (*Centro de Información Y Recursos para el Desarrollo*) and *Desarrollo*. These contacts, particularly Peace Corps Paraguay and *Desarrollo*, proved invaluable. For example, the Peace Corps Volunteer stationed in Paraguay was well known to her community, including the indigenous leaders nearby. Through her and two of her Paraguayan neighbors (with whom she lived), I was introduced to CP and his community. Through colleagues at *Desarrollo* and CIRD, I was introduced to H and his council, in a

second example.

Another benefit of my collegial relationships with such people was the ability I therefore gained to learn from them even more about social and cultural mores in Paraguay. This was useful in establishing some rapport with my research partners, as one might imagine. For example, I was advised to expect a very different conversational cultural style than a white Westerner might take. While a traditional Western approach to discourse can be described as direct and linear, other styles are less direct and more narrative. Hence my choice to employ open-ended questions served me well, as it did not involve me presupposing a particular cultural approach to dialogue. It allowed me to approach my dialogue with especially indigenous leaders in a way that was culturally appropriate and respectful, thereby establishing the rapport needed for reliable data. It also allowed me to gather data I might not have known to look for otherwise; had I selected a quantitative approach or even more narrowly focused qualitative questions, I might not have elicited some of the rich stories which indigenous leaders and civil society leaders shared with me. Given that my analysis centers on the Dignity Frame's occurrence once the fall of Stroessner opened sufficient sociopolitical space, it was especially important that I be able to hear the perspective of indigenous leaders on their own terms, discussing what they viewed as most important. A frame, after all, is itself a way of presenting one's goals, values and actions, and so data on why a particular frame developed could not as effectively be gathered with close-ended qualitative instruments. Though I did come prepared with a general guide, any preset notions I brought about what indigenous leaders considered important were subjugated to what they themselves

had to say.

Along similar lines, I will address here another potential weakness of my data and how I handled it. Again, doing so is especially important because of my philosophical commitment to transparency. Transparency enhances a study's validity, especially qualitative studies. My field work constitutes too small a sample to support a dissertation study alone. I address this limitation through several techniques. One, as I have been noting, was incorporating a wealth of other data into my study. This includes political science scholarship, Latin America and Paraguay scholarship, scholarship on other indigenous movements, media reports and ethnographies. That said, the limitations of my field data (as opposed to the other scholarship I collected) allow me to make certain specific claims but do not allow me to support other claims. For example, it does not allow me to make a definitive claim about the success of the Dignity Frame, or indigenous mobilizing in Paraguay overall. (I do identify specific successes, such as the 1992 Constitution, but this is different from making a claim for success of the movement in general.) Nor does my data allow me to advance an argument about why indigenous leaders chose this frame or took other strategic movement decisions. Because of its limited size, neither does my field data allow me to make general claims about how indigenous leaders view the government of Paraguay, their own changing place in society, or how displacement may have changed their view of themselves. Similarly, it does not allow me to qualify how participation in the movement may have changed identities. (All of these would be fascinating follow-up studies.) Rather, the entirety of my data allows me to support my analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed,

previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Accordingly, it is on this claim that I center my dissertation. Again, this is because of the comprehensive nature of my data collection, which gathered data from numerous sectors of Paraguayan society (government, indigenous, civil society) and various other sources, including the national and international media, political science scholarship, ethnographies, economic development data and historical accounts. As previously emphasized, also important to my methodology was its qualitative design. These two features of my methodology are what best suit it to support my central analysis.

To detail my data collection further, I conducted interviews in essentially four main sectors of Paraguayan society: indigenous leaders, land owners, NGO leaders at such organizations as *Tierra Viva*, *Servicio Y Apoyo Indigenia (Service and Support for Indigenous)*, academics and intellectuals, and government or international officials from various relevant organizations such as UNICEF Paraguay, *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (the Interamerican Development Bank)*, *Congreso Nacional*, the *Ministerio de Educación Y Cultura*, *Defensoria del Pueblo (Defense of the People)* and of course the government's main institute for indigenous matters, *Instituto Nacional del Indigena (INDI)*. (Please note that respecting my confidentiality agreements with all research partners prevents me from being more specific.) My field notes from these interviews included, of course, the substance of our conversation about their experiences of indigenousness in Paraguay, of land privatization, and how a particular research partner responded to it, and why (see Appendix B). My field notes also included observation of

the details of interview setting, facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures and similar to best capture what each partner was thinking and feeling. To be as prepared and focused as possible, I did create interview guides to assist me in ensuring that I could gather the data I needed (see Appendices); that said, again, I conducted the interviews in an open-ended manner. This meant that if a research partner offered information that did not “fit” one of my prepared questions, I collected this data just as data that did emerge more directly from my prepared guide questions. This open-ended methodology also impacted the structure of my guide questions themselves; I designed them to be broad and able to elicit a variety of responses, rather than more close-ended or yes/no questions more appropriate to quantitative studies.

Drawing on such varied and diverse sources of data was the methodology most appropriate to supporting my analysis for a number of reasons. For one, one main subject of this dissertation is of course framing and framing processes. Hence a quantitative methodology, such as survey research, would have served me poorly. It would have entailed me preconceiving what ideas and points were important enough to ask about, rather than gathering reliable data on what my research partners deemed important. Their own frame and reasons why it might have been the one to occur, was of course precisely what I hoped to elicit, and the open-ended qualitative methodology that I chose provided space for my research partners to share data I may not have even known to ask for otherwise. Further, framing is by nature a discursive process, and therefore a qualitative methodology seemed more appropriate, as it opens more space for dialogue.

Collecting data from a number of different sectors of Paraguayan society, such as

government officials, the civil society sector, and indigenous leaders, was also vital to crafting a methodology that would allow me to support my analysis. To be comprehensive, my analysis has examined not just how this movement is framed; it places these events in historical context, as well as examining state response to indigenous actions. This was important for several reasons. One, recall that framing is by no means a one-dimensional process. Rather, movements shape and advance frames in response to opposing actors (such as counter-movements or the State itself). This is a natural extension of the observation that identities themselves are relational; we define ourselves in relation to, and often in opposition to, others. That is, we self-identify both who we are as well as who we are not. Thus, again, it would not have been complete to gather data from only one or two of the relevant sectors. Had I done so, I would not have been able to make the contribution to the literature on framing or indigenous movements that I hope to make. To repeat, I view the contribution of this dissertation as extending our understanding of framing and indigenous movements by offering my analysis that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

With indigenous leaders specifically, I conducted twelve interviews with eight indigenous leaders: N, A, H, CP, L, CC, G and LD. Rather than seek out other leaders, I made a strategic decision to revisit them whenever possible to learn more about the movement they are leading, their goals, experiences, hopes and strategy. My efforts, happily, were successful and I was able to do so with each of these leaders except for N. I spoke with A, H, L and LD twice, and CP four times. The times of these interviews

varied depending on my translator Yenny's schedule, and the availability of my research partners. They were typically during "office hours", with the exception of CP. He and I met several Saturday mornings, after his *Radio Solidaridad* show. We also met one weekday afternoon, at the home of a Peace Corps volunteer I had befriended who offered us her front yard. Otherwise, we met typically at the offices of various NGOs these leaders were working with. I will detail the complex and contested relationship between indigenous communities and NGOs. For now, it is enough to note that in the specific cases of the above leaders, the NGOs simply offered space to meet when the indigenous organizations wished. I met CP out at *Radio Solidaridad's* office. A and I met for the first interview at INDI, where he was waiting for an appointment he had been promised with the President of INDI. A and I met for our second conversation outside of INDI, but it was such a cold and windy day that we decided to walk around the corner to a tuck shop that sold Cokes, coffee and mate, to preserve both our comfort and my data quality.

I was pleased to meet with nearly every NGO in Asunción that works with indigenous communities. Confidentiality prevents me from naming them all. However, I conducted nine interviews with senior employees at each of these organizations. As with the other categories of interview, these were conducted with my translator, in the NGO's offices, during standard business weekday hours. I spoke with JC and OA at an NGO which works specifically on indigenous land rights, *Tierra Viva*. SAI, AR, MP, CM, CDV, SG, JS and SR were the other officials I met with representing their NGOs. My criteria for selecting an interview was whether they had a program specifically focused on indigenous communities, or if they were an NGO that worked on other issues, such as

poverty or human rights in general, as well. As above, I met with these officials at their offices in downtown Asunción, during business hours. The interviews were about sixty to ninety minutes.

I also met with a number of anthropologists who have been working with indigenous communities throughout Paraguay for decades, SG, MR and PZ. MR I met in her home; SG and PZ I met in their offices. These interviews typically lasted about an hour to eighty or ninety minutes. (Any longer than that, I feared, would be far too long for my partner, my translator and myself!)

L and LD also connected me with a rancher (“RK”) who also owned a home in Asunción. I talked with him about ninety minutes to hear his views on indigenous poverty, NGOs, and local Paraguayan politics.

Finally, I also met with several government officials whose portfolios pertain specifically to indigenous issues. One of these, who I was pleased to meet with twice, was a senior official at INDI itself (“RF”). I met with an official at BID (“GT”), as well. Thirdly, I met with an official, “NB” at *Defensoria del Pueblo* (Defense of the People). I interviewed an official at MEC whose work at that *Ministerio* specifically relates to education and cultural rights for indigenous communities, “RA”. I also interviewed a woman (“AR”) who works on indigenous issues with UNICEF. Finally, I was able to meet with a Congressman whose work focuses on poverty, development and indigenous communities. These meetings were always in the official’s office, during weekdays. A couple of them did speak English; in all other cases, my translator Yenny accompanied me. These meetings also lasted from sixty to ninety minutes. I should note here as well

that, consistent with my Human Subjects Research Review and personal ethical commitments, I offered each of my research partners anonymity. This impacts my data reporting mildly, in that I cannot name specific communities, indigenous leaders or government officials with whom I spoke. I refer to them through this dissertation by initials (for example, I would cite myself as CD).

My questions were designed to elicit understanding of how indigenous leaders, government officials and NGO officials perceived and presented the values, tactics, rationale for and strategy of the indigenous movement—that is, how the movement is framed. Questions such as “What do you think of the government’s land decisions” and “Do you think the government of Paraguay represents people like you?” (for indigenous partners) elicited data on how they understood themselves in relationship to the government and to land owning *Paraguayos* or *Brazileros*, as well as (and this distinction is important) how they **wish** to be understood. Questions for NGO leaders such as “Do you think indigenous leaders would have mobilized without the aid of NGOs?” further elicited data on how those leaders view their indigenous partners. Such data provided important information on how indigenous leaders, their NGO partners, and the State have all interacted, which is critical information in understanding how and why previous narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame post-Stroessner. Along with the media and scholarship on Paraguay that I have gathered, it provided detail on the specific actions particular NGOs and indigenous communities undertake together. These sources further illuminated power dynamics and tensions between these actors. This is important data to include because one major thread of my

analysis argues that dignity's universality and the need for the resources NGO partnerships could provide help explain why previous narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame after the fall of Stroessner.

As one can see from the above, my research design was diverse in an effort to reflect the complexity of this conflict. In order to understand what various frames are being advanced, shaped and contested, it was important for me to understand the various ways in which this conflict's numerous players interact with one another. As noted above, this dissertation understands identity as inherently relational; identity groups of necessity define themselves (at least in part) *against* other groups. Hence the necessity of speaking with various sectors of Paraguayan society and players in this conflict. In order to best understand the indigenous social movement in contemporary Paraguay, I wanted to be able to form some kind of judgment about how these various groups were interacting. How did they describe the conflict? Was there agreement on this, and what does that suggest? How did they present themselves to me, and how did they present "the others"? All of these are pieces of the puzzle as to how prior narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame after the fall of Stroessner. I will detail this more in Chapters 4-5, but the contention surrounding Law 904 and Law 2822, which were competing pieces of land use legislation, provides a clear and concrete example. All of my research partners, whether a landowner living in Asunción who had indigenous ranch hands working for him, leaders of NGOs, indigenous activists or government officials, clearly positioned themselves as the party

who best understood the situation and who most sincerely had the interests of indigenous communities at heart. When indigenous communities themselves disagreed with one another about how to proceed—whether to support *Ley 904* or *Ley 2822*—they presented one another as misled and manipulated, and themselves as independent and directly connected to “real” indigenous communities.

The place for a detailed discussion of what it means to be indigenous in 21<sup>st</sup> century Paraguay will be Chapters Four and Five, but to the extent that it relates to my methodology, I will discuss it more briefly here as well. To be indigenous is to not be originally of European descent. Yet this is terribly complex, of course, in the year 2006. As one of my research partners, SR, noted, “*No hay cultura pura*” (there is no pure culture) (Personal Interview, SR, June 14, 2006). This goes again to the notion that frames are socially constructed, though they cannot be constructed at random. Cultural identity in this sense is more a result of sociopolitical and economic processes rather than a result of the percentage of one’s parentage. I should not be understood here as saying that individuals who understand themselves as indigenous do not have actual parentage and descent from pre-colonial *nativos*. There is precious little way to even tell for certain any more. What I am saying is that the “percentage of Guaraní” versus the “percentage of European” (or Asian, given the significant Japanese and Chinese influence in Paraguay) is not as salient as the fact that a given individual *defines him or herself* as indigenous as the result of specific social, political and economic processes. For those reasons I did not seek any sort of “evidence” of being indigenous. For one thing, birth, death, marriage and other records for indigenous communities simply do not exist, so it

would have been impractical. Secondly, one of the myriad difficulties facing indigenous communities as they advocate for autonomy and dignity is the irony of having to conform to European stereotypes in order to prove that they qualify for legal gains recently won (Blaser Online). Of course I have no wish to replicate that. Also, again, how people self-identify is more important to my study than their DNA.

While, as noted above, Paraguay has not received the scholarly attention that its neighbors have, there is data available on indigenous social movements in Paraguay (as summarized briefly in this Literature Review). News paper accounts, journal articles and other scholarly attention to Paraguay, such as Renshaw's ethnography, the Lambert/Nickson volume on Paraguay's transition to democracy, or Richard Reed's ethnographic work among indigenous communities in Paraguay over the past decades, can provide invaluable data on Paraguay's indigenous rights movement. These sources of data are central to supporting my analysis, and to my data's reliability and validity, as I just described above. One reason for the importance of this data is that it allows me to triangulate and corroborate my data. Many of my research partners in the field of course have an explicit advocacy mission. While no source is completely reliable, sources that do not have a stake in such explicit advocacy strengthen the validity and reliability of my data. These sources also contributed to my data's varied nature, drawn from numerous sectors and sources. I noted above that this feature of my data collection enables me to support my analysis because my analysis seeks to explain that once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Frames are contingent, social, recursive and

relational, and emerge for reasons very particular to their time and place. Again, another reason to gather such a variety of media and scholarly data was the limitation of my field work. It is too small a sample size to alone support my analysis. Accordingly, I gathered a variety of other data from other sources. A less comprehensive data collection methodology would not have enabled me to support my analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

Recall again that I believe the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. With that established, my analysis will proceed primarily from historical data, media reports, ethnographies, and scholarship on Latin America and Paraguay. It will draw in part also on the stories of the experiences of my research partners collected during my field research. It will be largely linear, chronological and narrative, though not so restrictive as to misrepresent a dynamic living reality as a static model. It will examine in particular the survival strategies of indigenous communities in response to the neoliberal State policy, and demonstrate how those responses are shaped by the central defining value (that is, frame) of dignity. I will be looking for evidence of indigenous leaders framing their goals,

objectives and actions in terms of indigenous dignity. I will also be searching all the available data, to include my histories, media reports, political science scholarship and ethnographies, for details on how NGOs and indigenous leaders partner, the dramatically different sociopolitical environment post-Stroessner and how indigenous leaders have seized this opportunity. As discussed above, many framing and social movement scholars have theorized the presence of such frames as the “rights frame” and even an “obligation frame”. In their case studies of, for example, the gay rights movement, or the grieving *madres* in Nicaragua, the analysts extrapolated from how the movement’s leaders present, describe and explain their experiences (Tarrow 2003, 106-122; Guidry 2000, 127). My methodology will be similar. This dissertation makes a contribution to the literature on indigenous movements by extending the literature on specific frames, such as the Rights Frame or the Obligation Frame, to offer my analysis that once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

To perform this analysis, I drew from the entirety of my sources from Ganson’s colonial history to Richard Reed’s ethnographies and breaking media reports. Of course, I read these sources with a careful eye to the partnerships between indigenous leaders and Paraguayan NGOs. The reader will notice my detailing of these partnerships, why they were necessary and their *common* use of the language of dignity. This was an important methodological step because one central thread of my analysis is that dignity’s universality helped to foster such partnerships. I also gave special attention to the ways in which civil society could partner, mobilize resources, and press claims post-Stroessner.

(The reader will notice my analysis of indigenous meetings with President Frutos himself, as well as public marches, occupations of the National Plaza and media interviews, for example.)

I also analyzed these data sources for the possible presence of other potential frames, an important step since my analysis is focused on the Dignity Frame in the specific context of contemporary Paraguay once Stroessner's fall precipitated such a sudden opening of sociopolitical space. What role did class play? Were there NGOs, indigenous leaders, or other influences which seemed to present the movement primarily in terms of class? Similarly, what about an Obligation Frame (as de Volo posits in Nicaragua) or a Rights Frame (such as often employed by modern U.S. feminism or the Civil Rights Movement)? The reader will notice this discussion throughout Chapters Four and Five, but specifically a dedicated discussion of these others frames at the end of Chapter Five. This literature and theory review chapter also includes a detailed analysis of the troubles of the class frame in indigenous movements throughout Latin America, to include Paraguay. Throughout the variety of media reports, political science scholarship, histories and ethnographies, as well as my own field research, I did not see the use of obligation, class or legal rights as the primary means of explaining what this movement is about. I do not view this as a false dichotomy; economic class and insisting upon one's legal rights can of course be important aspects of dignity. Yet, as Chapters 4 and 5 will show, this simply is not how indigenous leaders and their allies, based on the variety of data I gathered from multiple sources, speak of their goals and actions.

The analytical question then becomes: why narratives of dignity in this time and

place? Accordingly, it is upon the narratives of dignity, and then ultimately the Dignity Frame, that I centered my dissertation. My methodology was then to analyze my variety of data sources—the ethnographies, media reports, interviews, histories and political science scholarship I have been referring to—for the specifics of my claim. I analyzed for the ways in which indigenous leaders and their partners could organize post-Stroessner, the barriers to organizing under (and prior to) his regime, the common use of dignity to explain their goals and actions, and the dehumanizing reality in which indigenous communities continued to find themselves, as well as their response to such.

Narrative analysis is a methodology often employed in the study of indigenous movements, and of course my own dissertation focuses on the dominant narrative of dignity in the indigenous social movement in Paraguay. It is a particularly useful instrument, naturally, for a dissertation which examines the role of narratives around dignity. As Riessman writes, “Respondents narrativize particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between the ideal and real, self and society” (Riessman 1993, 3). She continues: “Social movements aid individuals to name their injuries, connect with others, and engage in political action” (Riessman 1993, 4). One can readily understand from Riessman’s observations why narrative analysis has often been employed in the study of indigenous social movements. Generations of exploitation and oppression constitute precisely such a breach between self and society, and Chapters 4 and 5 will indeed evidence indigenous leaders articulating common grievances, building partnerships and pressing specific political claims. Much (though not all) of my own data, in fact, is gathered from the statements, claims and language of leaders of the

indigenous movement in Paraguay, whether from media reports, ethnographies, formally issued statements, NGO documents or my own field interviews with government officials, indigenous leaders and other civil society leaders. The narratives indigenous leaders and their allies employ to support their claims, I argue, have centered on the basic human need of dignity, and once Stroessner's regime fell, opening the sociopolitical structure dramatically, these narratives crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. At the heart of narrative analysis is how people understand and represent their own struggles, which speaks directly to my own study of indigenous narratives of dignity throughout the Paraguayan indigenous social movement. Additionally, at least some versions of narrative analysis highlight the power dynamics between the various conflict actors (Riessman 1993). BID officers or a senior INDI official did not talk to me (or to anthropologists such as Reed, Kidd or Schmidt) from the same social position as indigenous leaders did. Narrative analysis allows research partners to tell their story as they see fit, helping to illuminate the power dynamics so critical to an analysis of any social movement. Such open dialogic space allows an analyst to gather data on the priorities, values and worldview of her research partners without presupposing, a virtue as presupposition could well lead to misinterpretation. Bearing these power inequalities in mind, many approaches to narrative analysis, as Riessman notes, understand that, "the text is not autonomous of its context" (Riessman 1993, 21). Similarly, I have emphasized the importance of understanding this social movement in its particular historical, social, political and economic context. Chapters Two, Four and Five detail the political, social and economic context in which the

narratives of dignity developed.

One other particularly relevant point that narrative analysis often makes is that the analyst is a “created self” (Riessman 1993, 11). This means that I am not neutral in my analysis; hence it is critical for me to be transparent about my own subjectivity. The reader will therefore note that I emphasize throughout the dissertation that this is my own interpretation of events. Such transparency allows the reader to assess my data and process more independently and critically, a point Riessman also makes (Riessman 1993, 42). Similarly, narrative analysis asserts that it is not possible to escape my own identity as a middle-class, white American woman. The reader will recall the brief discussion above of how my methodology accounted for this potential difficulty in gathering my data. Because narrative analysis is so often employed in the study of indigenous communities and social movements, I include here a brief discussion of its merits and relevance to my own study.

#### *Reliability and Validity*

The use of qualitative methods reflects my skepticism about the classical positivist assumptions about the nature of knowledge as objective, concrete and something “out there” waiting to be discovered by an attentive scientist. Rather, I believe with most post-modern social scientists and critical theorists, that knowledge is at least in part subjective and cultural, and that it is socially created through human relations (see for example Habermas 1987). Note, for example, the detail that I do not refer to myself in this dissertation as “the analyst” or “this researcher” but rather as “me” or “I”. A small point, perhaps, but I do so in acknowledgement that this is my own analysis, with all of

its human subjectivity. Patton also reflects this orientation in his assertion that, in qualitative research, much of the reliability and validity of the data “hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork” (Patton 2002, 14). My theoretical orientation to research does not permit me to believe that I am capable of overcoming my preconceptions completely; however, reliability and validity can be increased by researcher transparency regarding those biases and data limitations. This is why I detailed above how I handled translation issues, as well as the potential impact on my data of my status as a white American woman. Further, such techniques as examining alternative possible explanations can increase reliability and validity as well. Finally, multiple sources of data can allow me to triangulate and corroborate my data, strengthening reliability and validity also. As just mentioned, this was my rationale for consciously seeking data from all sectors involved in the conflict, as well as from the media, NGO organizational literature and other scholarship.

Because this movement is shaped by a desire to be accurately understood and respected for who they are, I found most people very happy to talk to me, especially given the previous groundwork I had laid to ensure that I would have introductions through a trusted mutual friend. Given the explicit advocacy mission of the indigenous leaders I partnered with, how can I be sure of the accuracy of what I am told? I would make several responses to this question. One, while I am no relativist who questions whether or not facts in a conflict can be actually established, clearly perspective is a real and powerful filter through which we understand facts. Hence I am throughout this study quite transparent about my own views and assumptions and data limitations. I would also

note again the various sectors I collected data from—the NGO sector, indigenous leaders, government officials, mainstream Paraguayan and international media, and academia. As mentioned above, this enables me to, as well as possible, cross-check facts, and gain a sense of the many differing views on this conflict, and draw reasonably valid conclusions.

## Chapter 4: The Indigenous Communities Under Stroessner

*“It is necessary to foment criminality, because criminality produces complicity and complicity produces loyalty” ~Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, June 7, 1998*

Chapter 1 briefly addresses some of the most salient aspects of the Stroessner regime, which lasted from 1954-1989, when he was deposed in a military coup by Gen. Andrés Rodríguez, who ironically had been, according to analysts, a close confidant and ally (Nickson 1995; Lambert 1997, 18). Chapter 2, of course, offered a detailed history of indigenous reality from the original Spanish invasion to the beginning of Stroessner’s regime. I will provide more detail on his regime here, and specify some of the most salient aspects of the condition of indigenous communities under Stroessner and indigenous responses to his regime. This and the following chapter will also offer my analysis of why the indigenous movement unfolded in the specific way that it did in the context of contemporary Paraguay, centered on narratives of dignity.

“No nation”, political scientist Paul Sondrol writes, “in Latin America has a more firmly rooted authoritarian legacy than Paraguay” (Sondrol 1992, 612). Hence Stroessner inherited a political culture built on “enshrining authoritarian values” (Sondrol 1992, 613). Nor was perpetuating the invisibility of indigenous culture a creation of *el Stronato*. As anthropologist Donatella Schmidt noted in her study of indigenous activism

in Argentina and Paraguay (1994), President Lopez “forced the change of Guarani names for Castilian names” (Schmidt 1994, 15). Stroessner himself came to power during a military coup in 1954. Demonstrative of the turbulence of Paraguayan politics and history during this time, Lambert notes that “When Stroessner seized power in May 1954, he was the eighth president in seven years of political instability” (Lambert 1997, 5). Two other significant events in Paraguay’s history just prior to Stroessner’s seizure of power perhaps helped to provide a context that enabled him to do so. One was Paraguay’s war with Bolivia, called the Chaco War, from 1932 to 1935, which helped make Stroessner a war hero (Sondrol 1992, 615). In the subsequent attempts to form a democracy amidst the devastation of the war, Gen. Mornigo briefly emerged as a dictator who attempted to “lay the foundations of a corporatist state” (Lambert 1997, 4). Rebellion against him arose and in 1947, Paraguay fought a civil war. The complete oppression of the rebel forces “left the Colorado Party as the undisputed political force, enabling it to extend its control over all civil, social and political movements” (Lambert 1997, 4). Indeed, they remained in power until May 2008, when as I noted previously, President-elect Lugo became the first opposition candidate in nearly sixty years to gain office (“Ex-Cleric Wins” Online). We will return to the significance of this development in Paraguay’s democracy in Chapter Five.

While this context may help explain Stroessner’s emergence as a dictator, it does not, however, explain how Stroessner managed to remain in power for thirty-five years—nearly two generations! I would note that the support of the U.S. was a significant factor; Stroessner was fiercely anti-communist as America was fighting the Cold War (Nickson

1995, 129; Mora 1998, 459). Lambert points to his successful “consolidation of a mutually dependent tripartite structure of power composed of the armed forces, the government and the Colorado Party...In this structure of power, Stroessner acted as the unifying force, in his role as President, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Honorary President of the Colorado Party” (Lambert 1997, 3-4). The global context of the Cold War also allowed Stroessner to punish communal land holding: “In the eyes of conservative politicians, communal land holding and production made native settlements potential sites for Communist infiltration” (Horst 2007, 32). Consistent with the patronizing and racist views which indigenous people in Paraguay have faced since the first Spanish invaders, Stroessner pursued a policy of assimilation, encouraging missionary work and development to “help” the indigenous communities learn to be progressive and modern, based on models in Brazil and Mexico (Horst 2007, 34). The result would be a compliant native populace which did not act or think that differently from anyone else. This attempted assimilation is just one of the barriers to indigenous advocacy which existed under Stroessner. Stroessner further consolidated control over *Partido Colorado* itself by purging all perceived political enemies. As with many authoritarian dictators, unity was a central value through which he framed his regime (a “granite-like unity”, as he commonly put it) (Lambert 1997, 6). Also typically of these regimes, membership in the Party was not optional. Stroessner also used the economy to consolidate and maintain absolute power. “Patronage,” explains Lambert, “principally dispersed through the Colorado Party, tied people to the regime on all social levels, guaranteeing a high degree of civilian acquiescence” (Lambert 1997, 7). Another

important feature of his regime was the inclusion of the armed forces in “the ruling power block” (Lambert 1997, 7). Stroessner ensured the loyalty of the armed forces by controlling budgets, promotion and retirement. Further consolidating power, “when Congress complained of police brutality, the president dissolved it” (Horst 2007, 27). His engineering of the black market “bought complicity and support from...businessmen and politicians resulting in elite groups owning a personal stake in Stroessner’s rule and spoils system” (Sondrol 1991, 618). In fact, Reed notes that it was Stroessner’s inability to continue this, due to Paraguay’s economic challenges in the late 1980s, that in large part doomed his regime (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 315). Under him foreign business, mostly from Brazil and Argentina, owed nearly 80% of Paraguay’s legal business, and “made regular payoffs to Colorado bureaucrats to evade taxes and governmental red-tape” (Sondrol 1991, 618). This of course resulted in a dynamic whereby it behooved Stroessner to shape policy for foreign elite business interests, not indigenous communities whose existence he literally did not recognize. As the *campesinos* (recall they are a group of farmers who do not identify as indigenous and who are often the perpetrators of violence against indigenous communities) organized against Stroessner’s land policies, indigenous communities found themselves further marginalized. The economic privileges he rewarded allies with are particularly significant, because they often involved access to state monopolies and land. Indigenous communities, it need not be said, were providing the labor. Stroessner even apparently assured then President Eisenhower in 1956 “that Paraguay had two important resources to offer the USA— ‘Paraguayans and land’ ” (Mora 1998, 459). The companies with which Stroessner

allied himself “sought indigenous workers and employed them through an often exploitive and violent debt peonage system” (Horst 2007, 25). One can still hear the terror he imposed on Paraguay echo in recent Paraguayan politics. Frutos, the current president soon to be succeeded by President-Elect Lugo, was embroiled in a scandal over a similar dual role as President and President of the ANR (the Colorado Party). Undoubtedly because of Stroessner, such a dual role is forbidden by Paraguay’s current Constitution.

Such was the dehumanization Stroessner’s state promulgated to legitimize and justify his policies; the legal status of indigenous people as indeed human was not even official until 1957 (Horst 2007, 36). Specifically, the indigenous communities were explicitly to be integrated into Paraguayan society as cheap, if not slave, labor. One instrument to accomplish this was the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DAI), which he established in 1958 (Horst 2007, 33). Again, I would note the barrier this represented to indigenous advocacy under Stroessner. Writes Reed, “Government officials saw Guarani gardening and hunting as evidence of their economic backwardness. The solution to what they called “the Indian problem” was to assimilate the Guarani into national society” (Reed 1997, 111). Despite the past indigenous history of economic engagement when and where they chose, Borgognón, the head of the DAI (*Departamento de Asuntos Indigenas*), “saw indigenous people as too naïve and inexperienced to successfully engage in the capitalist system and thus sought non-Indians to oversee his work” (Horst 2007, 45). Writes Kidd, “The policy of the Stroessner regime towards indigenous peoples was a by-product of its support for the most powerful groups within Paraguayan

society—the military, land owners and big business. The regime protected their land, on which indigenous workers were obliged to function as a cheap and flexible labor force” (Lambert 1997, 115). Land sale numbers support this. According to Reed, during the 1970s, government efforts to transfer title to indigenous communities were successful enough that half of the indigenous communities in Eastern Paraguay had some land. Reed notes that, “This demarcation slowed, however, as private developers acquired the last of the public land in the region” (Reed 1997, 111). This privatization of land, of course, occurred in the context of the Cold War. Recall that Stroessner positioned himself as a virulent anti-Communist, both to ensure continued U.S. support and to maintain the autocratic control over civil society that he had built. Hence it was not difficult to cast communal land-holding as a practice that made Paraguay vulnerable to communist infiltration. Schmidt makes a similar observation, writing, “...the Guarani, who had an organizational system requiring many hectares of land not used for production, were considered obstacles to the development process implemented by the government” (Schmidt 1994, 148). In this context, privatizing land took on a moral virtue. This is one reason why the partnerships between NGOs and indigenous leaders (asymmetrical though they are) prove so crucial to indigenous advocacy; in addition to financial resources and legal or political expertise, they have also corroborated the claims made by indigenous leaders when indigenous leaders decried the theft of their land. Recall that one thread of my analysis of this indigenous movement is that the universality of dignity has been useful in fostering just such partnerships. I will provide ample examples of such partnerships in this and the following chapter.

Of course, the demobilization Stroessner was so successful in accomplishing made these kinds of informal and formal partnerships dangerous and terribly difficult. This is why my analysis of the indigenous movement in Paraguay draws also so heavily on political opportunity theory (see Chapter Three for a discussion of this). After his ouster, civil society, both indigenous and otherwise, could organize in ways that would previously have resulted in torture or even death. To maintain this demobilization, Stroessner and his administration needed to continue to assimilate indigenous communities into the national identity. He increasingly turned to missions throughout Paraguay to accomplish the “Christian” civilizing work of assimilating the Indians into Paraguayan culture. At the same time, largely due to the paternalistic but empathic Borgognón, in 1958 new DAI bylaws were written that mandated protection for indigenous lands and people. This presented a mission for the DAI that was too contradictory to be possible; they could not simultaneously assimilate indigenous communities into the national culture and labor force and protect their lands and culture (Horst 2007, 47-48). Indeed, many times the missionaries ostensibly meant to assimilate and protect indigenous communities refused to provide land, even as they did at times provide credit, schooling or health clinics (Horst 2007, 49). The result for indigenous communities was a continued dependence that many indigenous communities found unacceptable.

Yet Stroessner needed such dependence if he was to integrate indigenous communities as compliant, near free labor as he planned. States have often employed shaping (I resist the word ‘constructing’ which sounds too concrete and rigid to suit

dynamic human social systems) identity to consolidate support and establish ideological control. (See for example Kaldor 2001, Anderson 2003 and Sadowski 1998). Sondrol writes, “A crucial determinant of Stroessner’s longevity centered on his recognizing the importance of ceremony and symbolism in Paraguayan culture. Stroessner effectively manipulated the myths and values of the nation to lend legitimacy to his dictatorship....” (Sondrol 1991, 614; Lambert 2007). Conversion to Catholicism was another vital step to modernity and full humanity in the eyes of most Paraguayans (Reed 1997, 111; Horst 2007, 48-53). In addition to Catholics, the Mennonites gave religious instruction, work programs and health care “to further cultural changes within the native communities” (Horst 2007, 51). As noted above, the official identification of indigenous communities was as dependent and backwards. What’s more, there is evidence that at least some indigenous people themselves internalized this dehumanizing narrative. When asked what their deepest desire was, the Nivaklé, an indigenous group, often responded, “One wants to become a person” (Horst 2007, 49). Consider what a barrier to advocacy such a self-view is! It is hardly surprising then that dignity is the central narrative we can observe in this movement. Some indigenous communities often simply feigned conversion to Catholicism to gain access to the social programs various missionaries offered (Horst 2007, 60). Often indigenous people saw no contradiction between the belief systems, and would perform both Mennonite, Protestant or Catholic rites while retaining their traditional beliefs (Horst 2007, 61). This meant that a core dynamic of state relations with the indigenous communities was deeply paternal and often woefully uninformed about those they ostensibly wanted to assist. This paternalism and ignorance

resulted in a damaging dependence but also provided a site of resistance which indigenous communities skillfully exploited to ensure the survival of their way of life where ever possible, often taking advantage of educational, health or work programs that various missionaries offered while still resisting cultural assimilation (Horst 2007, 32-65). The evolving legality of the Guarani language provides one example. On one hand, military dictators such as Francia extolled Guarani as a nationalist symbol of Paraguay's uniqueness. In 1967, under Stroessner, Guarani was declared a (not the) national language. Yet schoolchildren were still only taught Spanish. Finally, in 1992, concomitant with the new Constitution, Guarani was declared the official language of Paraguay, along with Spanish, opening the door to its use in schools and other public institutions (Schmidt 1994, 15-16).

Reed provides one narrative example of such state paternalism. In an effort to help the indigenous achieve the (apparently universal, natural) goal of modernity, the DAI undertook such programs as seed distribution and education on commercial agriculture. While it seems that some indigenous communities did at first try cash cropping, provided government support continued to flow, profits were small and the program failed when indigenous communities abandoned it. According to Reed, "the DAI degenerated quickly into a feed trough for political appointees who fattened themselves on the paltry sums allocated to help indigenous people" (Reed 1997, 111).

Land policy under Stroessner was riddled with contradiction. This helps to explain why land titling for indigenous communities has been so hard to effectively implement and why it often did not significantly improve the welfare of those

communities, even post-Stroessner. According to Reed, and other anthropologists, it was often the case that when land was successfully titled to indigenous communities, it was not sufficient to support agroforestry, one of the most common manners in which indigenous communities have always provided for themselves (Reed 1997; Personal Interview, JS, June 16, 2006). Reed adds, “Worse still, many lands are titled to the Guarani only after the timber has been cleared” (Reed 1997, 112). This example highlights the real priorities of those designing and implementing indigenous policy. Sometimes, in fact, *caciques* themselves willingly sold their land’s resources, usually lumber (Schmidt 1994, 103-104). While this seems to be the exception, rather than the rule, it is worth noting. As a result of such human rights abuses, “in 1960, 300 peasants marched to San Juan Bautista and successfully prevented a rancher from fencing off the land where 420 families grazed their cattle” (Horst 2007, 54). The Act of Iguazú, which Stroessner signed in 1966, also “removed restrictions on Brazilian colonization of Paraguay’s eastern border region. Within a few months, Brazilian immigrants would pour into Eastern Paraguay and seriously threaten the indigenous communities in the area” (Horst 63, 2007). Instances such as these illustrate the dehumanizing context in which narratives around dignity operated.

As Stroessner continued with his policies of indigenous integration, violence against indigenous communities worsened (Horst 2007, 32-65). Stories of murder and torture of Guarani families surfaced. Finally, in 1957, Stroessner’s Minister of the Interior was forced to issue a decree against the abuse or murder of indigenous people, constituting the first time the actual humanity of indigenous men, women and children

was in fact recognized (Horst 2007, 36). That said, as several analysts have noted, on paper one can observe real and concrete progress for the indigenous communities under Stroessner's regime, particularly when his most powerful ally, the U.S., began to pressure him on human rights and democracy concerns (Mora 1998). For example, Paraguay under Stroessner ratified Convention 107 with the International Labor Organization (ILO), the convention that assures indigenous property rights. Law 904 itself, which regulates the sale of land, of course was signed under Stroessner. I share the view of Kidd, Horst and other analysts that protecting his international image, particularly with multilateral lenders such as the World Bank and with the United States, was the main reason for such "progressive" legislation (Lambert 1997, 116). Kidd provides an especially illuminating example. Apparently the World Bank, in 1988, suddenly refused to continue financing a major development project in Caazapá, as Stroessner's government had failed to assure land title for the indigenous communities living there. In response, the government passed Law 1372 to correct this oversight, but "several other communities were totally ignored by the law and many others were awarded either unsuitable lands or smaller areas of land than they had previously been claiming" (Lambert 1997, 116). Hence it is clear that the legislation was targeted to minimally satisfy World Bank concerns to allow the loan to move forward, rather than to address the wellbeing of indigenous communities.

Despite the barriers to advocacy that I have been describing, Stroessner experienced resistance from indigenous communities and throughout Paraguay to his oppressive regime, just as the Spanish colonists and military dictatorships before him did.

One interesting development during Stroessner's era was the formation of three indigenist groups, API (the Association of Indigenous Minorities), AIP (the Paraguayan Indianist Association) and ENM, the National Missions Team. They were not terribly impactful in achieving their goals of advocating for indigenous rights, though they did achieve some specific victories in legal cases regarding land tenure. Specifically, as Schmidt notes, "AIP avoided confrontation with the Stroessner regime, tending to work in a quiet and nonconfrontational way" (Schmidt 1994, 138). Still, that such civil society initiatives existed in the context of *el Stronato* is worth noting. It suggests, for one, more subtle ways of resistance that indigenous and pro-democracy groups found to partner for mutual gain even in a most violently repressive context. Their key strategy seems to have been quietly and incrementally seeking modest reform, always being careful to cast their language in terms consistent with and flattering to the regime. Secondly, it suggests that, as numerous scholars in Chapter Three's Literature Review argued, indigenous movements have the potential to be healthy for Latin American democracies overall. Championing indigenous rights became one way to resist the Stroessner regime.

Analyses are fairly consistent, though, that his regime, which commonly employed 'disappearances', torture and arbitrary arrest to maintain power, was largely successful in its repression despite the resistances that did exist. The fear he created was quite real and effective. Andrew Nickson, who studied Paraguay's *Archivo del Terror*, is one scholar to document this history. He writes,

The contents of the archive have already cast serious doubts on the conventional view that the repressive apparatus of the Stroessner regime was cumbersome and poorly organized. On the contrary, the documents show that the government kept

a meticulously updated list of all political prisoners, even to the extent of encoding the records of those who subsequently died under torture. The archive also contains detailed evidence substantiating human rights violations by the security forces (Nickson 1995, 128).

Stroessner's oppressive state apparatus was targeted most specifically at political opponents whether indigenous or otherwise. For example, "Stroessner received regular written reports on surveillance activities by the security forces" to monitor any potential subversive activity (Nickson 1995). While numerous other sources note Stroessner's widespread use of torture, Nickson also notes that surveillance and even kidnappings of political opponents were conducted "with the cooperation of the security forces of neighboring countries" and that Paraguay under Stroessner was actively involved in *Operación Cóndor*, a "collaborative network set up by the military regimes ruling Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay" (Nickson 1995, 129). This combination of violently repressive mechanisms appears to have been largely successful in achieving Stroessner's ultimate aim: demobilizing Paraguayan society to ensure that he would face no opposition, from indigenous leaders, labor, academics or otherwise. This meant that not only were indigenous communities and other potential sites of resistance not able to effectively organize, but according to Nickson, the capacity to "question, to analyze and to criticize" was largely damaged as well (Lambert 1997, 9). My own data bolsters this observation. A senior official at the Ministry of Education and Culture who oversees education in indigenous communities noted that one of the greatest challenges facing educators in Paraguay now is undoing this (to borrow from Habermas) "lifeworld colonization" (RA, June 14, 2006). Analyses of educational reform in Paraguay offer a

similar observation: “Collective goals were reframed in terms of inclusion, emphasizing primary criteria as a central mark of membership.” Wasmosy (a president directly after Stroessner) stated that education was a means for “widening the basis of participation in the national enterprise” (Waisman 2005, 228). Educational experts and curriculum designers in Paraguay, for example, are focusing on the inclusion of activities that develop the critical and creative thinking of students, which is currently not a common feature of the curriculum.

Indeed, Prieto writes, “Paraguay’s multiethnic reality was ignored for many years until promulgation of the new constitution in 1992” (Van Cott 1995, 236). Along similar lines, in the curriculum often presented in schools, indigenous peoples were quite simply often invisible. Recall again that this dissertation has posited visibility as an essential component of dignity. It follows naturally then that there should be no representation for indigenous peoples in public space—to include government or classroom textbooks—if one was to shape and socially reproduce a system of dehumanization. As we will see in the next chapter, indigenous advocacy efforts have addressed this directly, demanding to become visible through such means as the inclusion of indigenous historical heroes in school texts, and schooling in their native languages (RA, Personal Interview, 6/14/2006; Waisman 2007, 215-232).

In order to continue integrating indigenous communities into Paraguay as docile, nearly free labor, and to assure that agro-business had all the land it would need, Stroessner put into place a number of specific policies intended to assimilate and exploit indigenous communities. One such specific mechanism of control over indigenous

communities was INDI, founded under the Stroessner regime in 1981, as part of *Ley 904*. This, again, was the watershed law that recognized indigenous land and cultural rights. As Prieto writes, INDI had three main functions. One was to “provide a stamp of approval for indigenous leaders” (Van Cott 1995, 246). Note the affront to dignity implied by the need for indigenous leaders to have governmental approval. Again, in my analysis, this debasing social and political context was a major reason that the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay is shaped by narratives of dignity. A second purpose of INDI was to “administer indigenous matters” such as the transfer of land title pursuant to Law 904, and thirdly, INDI was to “become actively involved in indigenous development” (Van Cott 1995, 246). Significantly INDI was structurally linked to the Paraguayan armed forces—as were most other Paraguayan official institutions. Writes Prieto, “INDI could not enjoy autonomy since it was limited by statute to relating to the executive branch exclusively through the Ministry of Defense” (Van Cott 1995, 246). Other structural problems inhibited it from being able to effectively carry out its mission for the indigenous communities of Paraguay. For example, it was understaffed, particularly for a Ministry tasked to “coordinate, supervise, and evaluate the activities of the public and private sector, and to study and propose rules for the civil registry, military service, education, criminal liability, and identity documents” (Van Cott 1995, 247). Its relationship to other relevant government ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Justice and Labor, was also poorly defined (Van Cott 1995, 247-248). This forced INDI to act unilaterally at times and has often led to confusion as to where one Ministry’s jurisdiction ends and another begins. In

addition, official functions meant to improve the welfare of indigenous communities often suffered from a neglect that was far from benign. Writes Kidd, "...the Stroessner regime paid little attention to them [the indigenous communities] and responsibility was delegated to a variety of Catholic and Protestant Missions" (Lambert 1997, 114).

This neglect impacted the indigenous communities in a number of damaging and specific ways. One analyst described this as a "dependent-capitalist model of development" (Carter 1999, 75.) Horst details the embezzlement of funds by a Stroessner official, Pereira, which Stroessner was evidently content to overlook so long as he successfully displaced indigenous communities away from the land his regime was trying to develop (Horst 2007, 73). Remembering the centrality of land to indigenous livelihood and culture, the corrupt relationship between private land speculators and the Stroessner regime had great impact specifically on indigenous communities and is a major reason why they were forced off their land. As shown above, there was not much overt indigenous rebellion against *el Stronato*. Seeing little other option, many Ache, for example left the forest, fearing that if they did not, they would be killed (as in fact, many were) (Horst 2007, 76). Much of the indigenous response to such displacement was thus enacted through allies such as the Catholic Church, whose nature as a wealthy, international and ancient institution made them far more difficult than indigenous communities, disbanded labor unions or illegal opposition parties to control. Indeed by the mid-to-late 1970's, the Church's criticism of Stroessner was overt, and even included the excommunication of a Stroessner minister and his Chief of Police (Horst 2007, 78). The reader will recall from Chapter 3 that social movement scholars have highlighted the

role of social networks in mobilizing communities. The Church was able to provide sanctuary and a desperately needed social space to meet, debate and discuss the concerns that Stroessner's regime raised in one of the few comparatively safe spaces left (Carter 1990, 85). Labor unions had been brutally and violently disbanded and the oppositional media was limited to a bi-weekly newsletter published under the auspices of the Church (Carter 1990, 80; Alexander 2005, 89-144). These groups of landless (both indigenous and not), students, and women could organize locally. These CEBs (Church Base Communities, or *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*), as they were known, even actively participated in marches and *manifestaciones*. Again, we see how important such partnerships were to early indigenous organizing; this is why one major strand of my analysis of the indigenous movement in Paraguay focuses on the common language of dignity to allow indigenous communities to mobilize the resources that wealthier, more powerful partners could offer. I argue that the nature of dignity as a universal value facilitated such partnerships, albeit in a vastly asymmetrical way, and strengthened the indigenous movement.

To repeat, a significant strategy during this time for indigenous resistance (like democratic resistance to the autocratic regime in general) was collaboration with other institutions that Stroessner found more difficult to co-opt or control, such as the Catholic Church. As Ricardo Medina notes,

Between 1964 and 1968 a social movement appeared in rural areas known as the Christian Peasant Leagues (Ligas Agrarias Christianas—LACs). Although the LACs were initially promoted by youth members of the Catholic reform movement, *Acción Católica*), they contained many activist clergy, and found an ideological basis in the teachings of liberation theology” (Lambert 1997, 76-77).

Significantly with respect to indigenous communities, these LACs were the first left-leaning organized resistance to Stroessner “with a strong rural basis” where indigenous communities could actually access them. The Left in Paraguay had previously otherwise been a largely urban phenomenon comprised of university students, clergy and labor (as Marx might have predicted) (Lambert 1997, 77). Recall that my Literature Review made the point that organizing based on indigenous dignity proved more resonant with indigenous communities than strictly class-based ideologies. Liberation theology, with its emphasis on the dignity and value of each human being, fit well with the language of dignity consistently used by indigenous leaders and their allies. Strategically, the language of dignity may well have also been more palatable than explicitly class-based framing with especially non-indigenous partners who wished to avoid charges of communist sympathy. Of course this would have been especially true during the violently anti-communist *el Stronato*. This is also an example, as I have been emphasizing, of how narratives around the universal value of dignity helped to foster critical partnerships between indigenous communities and NGOs. Dignity’s nature as a universal value readily translates across cultures, and is resonant specifically with the faith-based, democracy and human rights NGOs as well as, of course, with the indigenous leaders of this movement as this chapter has been detailing.

Because of this threat to dignity, mobilization continued. Stroessner responded to this resistance by revising the laws relevant to land regulation, enacting a law that created the Orwellian *Instituto de Bienestar Rural* (the Rural Welfare Institute) in 1963. The

IBR, far from protecting indigenous lands and culture, worked to increase Paraguay's economic growth and "offered cheap land to foreigners, especially Brazilians" (Horst 2007, 54). It limited the size of land that could be privately held, but Horst notes that this statute was not actually enforced. Further, the new IBR framework provided for relocation of many indigenous communities. This freed up arable land while at the same time seeming to answer indigenous demands for land protection. In reality, the land indigenous communities were relocated to was often infertile. The IBR also often decided cases of land rights in favor of agrobusiness (Schmidt 1994, 117). Note also the clean fit between IBR's goals and neoliberal economic policy. The result for indigenous communities was increased integration, deprivation and dependence on a state little concerned with their survival. Again, this constitutes a clear barrier to indigenous advocacy resulting from Stroessner's autocratic policies. As Horst frames the argument, the more that assimilation failed as a result of indigenous resistance, the more the regime turned to a policy of exclusion (Horst 2007). Indeed, in 1975, Stroessner disbanded the DAI, in a significant blow to the regime's policy of assimilation (Horst 2007, 67).

In 1976, members of the LACs, along with young Catholic students, formed *Organización Primero de Mayo (OPM)*. As Medina reports, "the OPM became the pretext which the regime had long been seeking in order to carry out one of the harshest bouts of repression ever against peasant organizations." The result, echoing Nickson's earlier observation of Stroessner's successful demobilization of Paraguayan society, was "the virtual annihilation of the LACs in 1976" (Lambert 1997, 77). Even these, however, may have reemerged in the mid-1980s, several years prior to Stroessner's ouster in 1989,

as the *Movimiento Campesino Paraguayo (MCP)*, that represented, to a certain extent, the continuation of the LACs (Lambert 1997, 77). In addition, increasing human rights advocacy outside of Paraguay, combined with the continued pressure from the Paraguayan Catholic Church, helped ensure that the position of indigenous communities was not powerless.

In addition to the Church, human rights and anthropological NGO advocacy throughout the 1970s and 1980s was an important site of resistance to Stroessner, enabling indigenous communities to find some support and visibility. Horst notes throughout his analysis (2007) that the common enemy democracy activists and indigenous activists found in Stroessner bolstered indigenous advocacy, and his view resonates with my own argument for the salience of these partnerships, and the common language of dignity which helped enable them. Two anthropologists, Mark and Christine Münzel, made public accusations of genocide against the Ache, one of Paraguay's indigenous groups (Horst 2007, 80). In 1974, he hosted a conference of 30 indigenous leaders from Paraguay and a number of neighboring countries. The statement they issued from this conference clearly exemplifies a common use of the language of dignity: "WE PROCLAIM THE VALIDITY OF OUR CULTURES before the men of all the earth...strangers to the indigenous communities need to realize that we are united, and that in the future it will be more difficult to continue the extermination of our brothers" (Horst 2007, 92, capitalization his). This began the Marandú project, begun by Miguel Chase-Sardi (Schmidt 1994, 107). Schmidt observes that Chase-Sardi too presented indigenous goals and actions in terms of dignity. His purpose for the Project "aimed at

creating the conditions necessary for Indian self-government; its work was on the ideological level with an emphasis on the validity of indigenous cultural values” (Schmidt 1994, 107). He continued the Project’s work at an October conference in Florida and Washington DC, where indigenous leaders were able to continue to assert the dignity of indigenous peoples and importantly, connect with other indigenous leaders. The Indigenous Council at this time also wrote a letter to Stroessner emphasizing the importance of their participation for the good of Paraguay (Horst 2007, 94). The Marandú Project also offered courses in indigenous communities on advocacy for land title, forming co-ops, and health care (Horst 2007, 93). This advocacy, as well as continued organizing and protests against the regime by students and the Church, prompted brutal crackdowns by Stroessner, including the torture of peasant leaders, mass arrests and a raid of Catholic University in Asunción. Chase-Sardi himself and senior Indigenous Council members were imprisoned, beaten and Chase-Sardi was “submerged in human waste” (Horst, 2007, 97; Schmidt 1994, 154). Argues Horst, such repression marked the end of the regime’s policy of assimilation, which had failed, and the beginning of its policy of exclusion. This effectively ended the work of the Marandú Project. The Indigenous Council was forced to turn authority over to INDI (Horst 2007, 97). With the support of advocates like Chase-Sardi, indigenous leaders were gaining an independence that was a clear threat to the regime, who violently ended it in another example of the barriers to indigenous organizing during Stroessner’s rule.

Indeed, INDI was an important tool of control for the Stroessner regime. This was the case with API, which became dependent on the funds and stipends INDI was

offering (Horst 2007, 103). The Stroessner regime used such control tactics as the above stipends and refusing to recognize the representatives that communities sent and instead appointing their own (Horst 2007, 103). This made developing alternative networks all the more critical. Horst traces the beginnings of the national (as opposed to regional) indigenous movement to around this period of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Interestingly, the very missions Stroessner had intended to “civilize” the *nativos* were an early catalyst for such indigenous organizing, as it strengthened informal social networks (recall that I have been emphasizing how critical they are). Also important to fostering such networks was the creation of church literature in indigenous languages, a move clearly intended to enable partnerships between the churches and indigenous communities and assert the dignity of indigenous culture (Horst 2007, 105). Such details further illustrate why I believe dignity has become the narrative which is so clearly at the forefront of this movement. The dehumanizing reality of Stroessner’s regime, and specifically his policy of exclusion, as I have been arguing, is a major reason that the language of dignity, rather than a perhaps less comprehensive narrative such as one based on legal rights or economic class, was the one to occur in contemporary Paraguay. This context interacted with the need to mobilize resources which NGOs could provide, making the universal value of dignity both strategic and authentically resonant. Once Stroessner’s regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

In response to this dehumanizing context, as development of the country side, notably the beginning of the Itaipú Hydroelectric Dam (which I visited during one of my

several trips to Paraguay) continued and accelerated, indigenous communities and their allies continued organizing. The Toba-Qom community had been pressing their demands to AIP and INDI, but to no avail and finally “told opposition newspapers that they were desperate to reclaim their ‘independent lives’ and ‘dreamed of owning their own land once again’” (Horst 2007, 112). They lobbied directly and collected community funds to send delegated leaders to the capital, despite the lethal poverty to which they were subject. Another community, after years of petitioning the DAI and INDI, turned to tactics similar to Buddhist monks lighting themselves aflame, anti-war “die-ins” or hunger strikes. Maskoy women, for example, would abort their children and many Maskoy men would become drunk and “wander disruptively through the streets” (Horst 2007, 112). The objective here clearly was to force visibility, visibility being, we recall from the Literature Review, a critical component of dignity. Other tactics included camping outside the land which they were intending to retake (Horst 2007, 113-114). Finally, Col. Oscar Centurión pledged to ensure the return of their lands and Stroessner expropriated the lands, making them official state property, in October of 1980. Additionally, in another example of Stroessner’s privileging of the business elite, several months after the expropriation, the Maskoy were rounded up at gunpoint by the military and moved to unproductive land. Maskoy leaders used the media coverage of the event to gain sympathy and pressure the regime, but ultimately “the removal from Casanillo was disastrous for the Maskoy” and the community’s dependence on food rations meant that “the community was soon starving” (Horst 2007, 116). Ultimately, the Catholic Church, in secret, purchased land for both the Maskoy and Toba communities (Horst

2007, 118). Finally at wits end over continued loss of land and the inability or unwillingness of the State to do anything about it, the Mbyá community held a *aty guazú*, a large meeting held only for special purposes, “to finally take their demands for titles to property to the national authorities” and successfully took INDI itself to court (Horst 2007, 138). Fifty families participated (Horst 2007, 138). The Toba claim, however, was defeated by ranchers whose nationalist rhetoric resonated, naturally, with Stroessner (Horst 2007, 114).

Schmidt’s study (1994) provides further detail of the deceptive and violent means that INDI, the Paraguayan state and land owners used to keep indigenous people from their land, and the common use of the language of dignity which indigenous leaders and their allies used to resist them. For one more example, an Mybá leader of the Yvy Moroty community resisted displacement. In August 1987, their community was raided by employees of a Mr. Ancieux, a rancher who intended to use the land for cattle raising. Resisting the fear and harassment to which his community was being subjected, the leaders of this community asserted, “We do not want to move from here; this is our land, and we will stay” (Schmidt 1994, 113). Statements and actions such as these each contribute to the empowerment of indigenous communities and challenge the notion that it is acceptable to simply force families off of their land, separated from the ability to reproduce their culture and provide for themselves. Schmidt is one of numerous analysts who note that malnutrition and starvation have been the result of the loss of community lands; I have been documenting this reality throughout this dissertation (Schmidt 1994, 125). The ability to provide for oneself and reproduce one’s culture, as I have been

arguing, are key aspects of the basic human need of dignity. The deprivation of same, of course, is one major reason why I believe the language of dignity has become so prominent in Paraguay's indigenous movement. It also represents a barrier to indigenous advocacy and exemplifies why the political opportunity represented by Stroessner's fall was so critical to understanding how and why the Dignity Frame then occurred.

Continued resistance and media coverage thereof finally resulted in the passage of *Ley 904* in 1981. The language of this law's commitment to protecting both indigenous lands and culture is explicit. One passage of Article I of Law 904 reads

This law has as an objective the **social and cultural preservation** of the indigenous communities, **the defense of their resources and traditions**, the improvement of the economic conditions, their effective participation in the process of national development, and their access to a juridical standing which would guarantee them access to land ownership and well as other productive resources, with the same rights as other citizens. (Schmidt 1994, 107-108).

*Ley 904*'s references to preserving culture and the defense of indigenous traditions reflect the intense advocacy that indigenous leaders and their allies undertook around Law 904.

As we will continue to see, Law 904 and Law 2822, which some proposed to replace 904 and create a National Council of Indigenous Peoples, have been recent central reasons for the advocacy of indigenous leaders as they struggle to advance indigenous dignity.

The most contentious component of Ley 2822 is its proposal of a National Council of indigenous leaders. Those in favor argued that this would have provided a concrete and necessary mechanism for indigenous participation at the national level. Opponents argued that power must remain local and suggested that the Council would have only further entrenched elite interests. Ultimately, Law 2822 was vetoed in response to the

demands of its indigenous opponents. With regard to *Ley 904*'s original passage in 1981, the Stroessner regime weakened the original legislation as they could and even today, indigenous communities have won more progress on paper than on the ground. This is in large part because INDI, charged with implementing Law 904, was fraught with conflicts of interest. For example, recall that INDI was a part of the Ministry of Defense. Yet as Schmidt notes, the "the Ministry of Defense was appointed by the *Poder Ejecutivo* (the President) of INDI, with the result that he is simultaneously judge and member" (Schmidt 1994, 115).

Rather than carry out land reform, INDI more often obstructed it. For example, its native census undercounted indigenous citizens almost by half (Horst 2007, 121)! INDI also often, rather than forcing loggers and ranchers to cease their violations of *Ley 904* and other human rights abuses such as arson and torture of indigenous leaders, simply relocated indigenous communities to other undesired land (Schmidt 1994, 112-114). INDI has also been known to charge impoverished indigenous communities for their "services", in violation of *Ley 904*. In point of fact, INDI was itself funded by the government of Paraguay precisely in recognition of the fact that indigenous communities could not afford to purchase land or legal services (Schmidt 1994, 116). The media work of indigenous leaders and their NGO allies did lead to one particular victory in 1988 involving the World Bank which had previously supported development projects on indigenous land in violation of its own regulations (Schmidt 1994, 123). Mbyá communities in Caazapá, a department of Paraguay, had been struggling against the loss of their land, refusing to leave. Pressured by media coverage, the World Bank ceased

funding until the government would guarantee a solution for indigenous communities (Schmidt 1994, 126-127). The government responded with two laws, Law 1372, which stopped development of indigenous lands in Caazapa for a ten-year period, and then Law 43, which extended this stoppage to the whole of Paraguay (Schmidt 1994, 127). By 1988, 37% of indigenous communities had had land purchased for them (Schmidt 1994, 149). Indigenous leaders have begun to demand not simply land but the dignity of participation, autonomy and a recognition of (to echo Neil Harvey's study of the Zapatistas) the right to have rights. In my analysis, they are struggling against more than poor public policy; they are fighting to change the racist views of their society which serve to "justify" (as we see in the above examples) not enforcing laws intended to protect their communities. As my central analysis makes clear, this is a major reason why I believe dignity continues to be so prominent in the language of this social movement.

While quite imperfect, *Ley* 904 represented real progress. Indeed, the language of a draft version of *Ley* 904 explicitly affirms the worth of indigenous cultures and—quite notably—their contributions to Paraguayan culture as a whole. Once striking victories like this which echoed indigenous narratives of dignity were secured, of course, continued use of such language becomes even more strategic, in my view. Once the government had, if only on paper, affirmed the worth and dignity of indigenous communities and indigenous culture, continuing abuses became harder and harder to defend. Of course, in a conflict that remains dramatically asymmetrical, abuses continue to go unpunished, but are now documented as abuses, which did not occur during Stroessner's regime. The draft language of Law 904 reads, "These institutions so rich in

traditions and cultural elements are witnesses of our national identity and they form part of our historic patrimony; accordingly the fact of preserving and protecting those institutions is a way of defending what is ours and what we are as men and as people” (Schmidt 1994, 177). A clear result of the successes of pro-indigenous advocacy by both indigenous leaders and their allies, this language argues directly that to protect indigenous culture is to protect Paraguayan national culture. Given the exclusion and invisibility that had characterized the relationship of indigenous communities and the Paraguayan state, this is quite an amazing argument to find in an official document, even merely as draft language. It signals that a cultural shift was (and indeed still is) occurring. This shift is, of course, precisely what I believe to be the purpose of the common use of the language of dignity.

In addition, despite its deeply flawed implementation, “the deeper significance of Law 904 was the extent to which indigenous communities began to use it to focus their resistance” (Horst 2007, 119). It began to provide a unifying force to a movement that could often be fragmented. As I say, once the language of movement leaders began to influence the national debate and indeed become codified into law, such language of course became even more strategic. Such forces help unify movements, and winning some victories encouraged further boldness and confidence. As indigenous leaders continued to speak out, the narrative of dignity became more visible. As Horst writes, “Indigenous leaders had adopted a discourse that presented Paraguayos as oppressors and tied them directly to colonial European depredations” (Horst 2007, 122). Throughout Latin America, as we recall from my Literature Review, the language of dignity has been

prominent in indigenous struggles. Naturally this is because so many indigenous groups share precisely this common heritage of having been colonized. Referencing the Spanish Invasion reminds listeners of a number of important facts. One is the history of centuries of military occupation. Second is the related yet more subtle reminder that indigenous communities lived and thrived on this land before the first “white man” had even seen it. Accordingly one Mbyá leader threw out the employees of a project to develop his community’s land, saying, “They can do what they want in their own territory, but not on Mbyá territory” (Horst 2007, 122). When settlers later literally took bulldozers to indigenous community houses, Mbyá protests and mobilization resulted in the jailing of Willie Hildebrand, the Mennonite leader guilty of burning indigenous crops (Horst 2007, 214). When a Paĩ Tavytere indigenous community was attacked by Col. Oviedo (recall that he was arrested for attempting a violent coup), “leaders from sixteen neighboring native communities met and...decided to expel the invaders” (Horst 2007, 144). Such actions of solidarity, as noted in the Theoretical Framework, bind together social movements. Such actions and assertions of autonomy strengthen indigenous dignity and offer it as the reason why communities both can and must mobilize.

By the mid-1980’s, in the context of regular and massive student, landless and clergy protests against *el Stronato*, indigenous communities further developed and more boldly asserted their narrative of dignity. Recall here that I have argued that indigenous advocates and other democracy activists found a common enemy in Stroessner. This served to strengthen the hand of indigenous leaders, as advocating for indigenous rights became also a way for human rights advocates and democrats to resist the dictator. As

always, dignity was the common language these allies employed. The following, lengthy but well worth quoting in full, is a joint statement of indigenous and religious leaders throughout Paraguay. The emphasis on dignity is striking

We have prayed...four days and nights. We have talked much about... [the culture]...our God and our ancestors have left for our own way of life. We have also seen that we cannot give it up, we the Guaraní, as it is a gift from God. We also see attempts to introduce another culture among us, which destroys members of our community, our descendents, because it weakens them. Therefore, after much discussion, we have decided these points: In all Guaraní-Chiripá communities we must strengthen our Guaraní culture; we need to revitalize our dances. We the Guraní need to live like Guaraní if we wish to be authentic (Horst 2007, 131).

As indigenous leaders increasingly articulated their actions, values and objectives in terms of dignity, so to did NGO allies. NGO partners provide the indigenous movement with essential financial, social (in the sense of access) and technical resources. A common language has been therefore very strategic for indigenous leaders. Movement ally Father Wayne Robbins, who directed ENM, the National Catholic Missions Team, emphasized the worth of indigenous culture:

Inside the territory which the State considers its own and limits with precise boundaries, there are communities which do not share this vision; they consider their symbolic world tied to a territorial space with which they identify themselves. They have the right to preserve and transmit to the future generations their territory with its significance” (Schmidt 1994, 143).

One other scholar-advocate, David Maybury-Lewis, as President of Cultural Survival, who is also cited in Chapter Three’s Literature Review, challenged the neoliberal paradigm in favor of indigenous communal values. He argues, “The land of Indian communities cannot be perceived as a commercial good. Instead it must be understood as a spatial continuum, an indissoluble complex including economic resources and

critical areas of Indian culture and society” (Schmidt 1994, 143). Schmidt also notes Maybury-Lewis’s (1980) argument that Stroessner viewed API, much like the Indigenous Council of the Marandu Project, as more problematic than other organizations because API’s grant “was awarded on the conditions that API was already an organization run by Indians themselves rather than an organization which was trying to work toward Indian control” (Schmidt 1994, 154). As I noted previously, such civil society efforts to empower indigenous communities offered democracy and human rights activists a way to resist Stroessner, as he was clearly aware: “To advocate Indian rights thus became the metaphor for the right to self-determination which part of the society claimed for itself” (Schmidt 1994, 167). Stroessner provided a common enemy, of course; dignity’s nature as a basic human need and universal value enabled NGO and indigenous leaders to present a common language that resonated with both groups.

### *The Beginning of the End*

One major thread of my claim is that the strategic need for these partnerships is a central reason for the common language of dignity in contemporary Paraguay’s indigenous rights movement. Once again, the Catholic Church was a critical ally. Support for the indigenous communities was a natural fit for the values of dignity and solidarity which the Church preached; it was also a means for the Church, as well as democracy and human rights advocates, to resist and weaken Stroessner. Indeed, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 1987, “the church united all of the opposition in a massive show of power as Archbishop Rolón led thirty-five thousand workers, students, laypersons, and priests on a silent march to the National Cathedral” in Asunción (Horst 2007, 132). As a

corollary, the mounting protests against Stroessner's regime enabled indigenous leaders to build skills, experience, confidence and networks for future organizing. In an example of certification that can often bolster embattled movements, in 1988, Pope John Paul II visited and dedicated a Mass to the *campesinos* and indigenous. This support effectively opened more public space in which a frame, such as the Dignity Frame, that opposed Stroessner could be advanced, once his regime had fallen. Because of this, "Leaders of these marginalized sectors of society were allowed to present their grievances to a sympathetic Pope, via television, to a broad national audience" (Carter 1990, 92). Indigenous leaders used the occasion of such a significant visit to tell of their struggles for land, survival and dignity. One indigenous leader, René Ramírez, spoke directly to the Pope, saying, "But the most important of all is that we now find ourselves on our land. All of this is especially important because we were able to overcome different obstacles to be able to settle definitively on the place where our ancestors lived" (Horst 2007, 142). Dignity is prominent in this statement, especially in Ramírez's positioning of the land as belonging to his indigenous community and in his pride at having surmounted significant struggles. Dignity is also evident in that he notes that his community has now returned to the land of their ancestors. By choosing to highlight such specifically indigenous cultural content to the Pope, he is publicly asserting the worth and validity of indigenous culture. Similarly, another indigenous leader specifically chose to call out INDI before his Papal audience: "We Indians are worried because INDI is not able to secure our lands, to defend us from the powerful who set fire to our houses, destroy our planting, and drive us out of our lands" (Schmidt 1994, 118).

As typical, he explicitly defines the land in question as belonging to indigenous communities. Given that this was precisely the issue of contention, this is no trivial or self-evident point he's making but rather an assertion that indigenous people have the right to expect protection and the same basic human decency as anyone else in Paraguay. His statement, with its details of the abuses committed against indigenous communities, given before the leader of the Catholic Church and all the media he attracts, was an insistence that the struggles of indigenous communities be made visible. In addition to the important media and social visibility gains from this, indigenous leaders were able in a perhaps strange-seeming but real and critical sense to **gain visibility to themselves and one another**. Noted one indigenous leader present, "We are many, I did not think we could be that many, and from places so far away. I have never seen them [some Indian groups] only heard of them. Those of us who came here, are not all; each of us has, in his community, several more. This means we are even more" (Schmidt 1994, 155). This chief's dawning recognition of indigenous presence in Paraguay represents a vital move forward for indigenous organizing. This meeting further destroyed the myth which indigenous communities themselves seem to have adopted that indigenous communities were tiny, insignificant, powerless. As this chief realizes, one community might indeed be powerless, but one can hear him thinking that all of Paraguay's indigenous communities united might be a different calculation altogether. In addition to the prominence of dignity in the statements of these chiefs, one can also see here again how critical the Church and other NGO partnerships were to indigenous communities attempting to press their political claims. Of course this is especially true in the period

before Stroessner's ouster, when any dissent, indigenous or otherwise, could result in arrest, torture or death.

Further opening socio-political space, the Pope's mass and other forms of ecclesiastical support also provided proof that Stroessner could indeed be questioned and even opposed, helping to "de-mystify Stroessner's overpowering image" (Carter 1990, 93). Following this visit, Archbishops and indigenous leaders continued their advocacy speaking out for indigenous land rights in the national media and gained concrete victories. In addition to the Mbyá community successfully suing INDI, several other indigenous communities who had long been pressing for land title were granted it, suggesting that the Papal visit and media attention surrounding it were having their intended effect (Horst 2007, 139). In *Ultima Hora*, for example, Archbishop Rolon wrote of the urgency of the "situation of the landless peasants, the deprivation of the native people of their habitat and forests, the violence with which both sectors are treated...." (Carter 1990, 95). Indigenous leaders cannily took advantage of more attention than they had ever before received by not only issuing statements, such as the above, but also by praying and dancing traditionally throughout the night before the Pope's visit (Schmidt 1994, 155). Communities who had previously refused any engagement with the "white world" engaged in some dialogue for the first time (Schmidt 1994, 155). Further vigil masses and marches were organized and met with military blockades, public slander and violence. The barriers under Stroessner's autocracy were very real but media, clergy and the broad-based resistance to Stroessner were a political opportunity that indigenous leaders did not allow to pass. At this point, in the late 1980s,

such intimidation was failing to have the effect it previously had (Carter 1990, 96). *El*

*Stronato* was finally waning.

## Chapter 5: Indigenous Communities and Dignity in the Post-Stroessner Era

*“To be wholly overlooked and to know it are intolerable” ~John Adams*

To the extent that political science scholarship, or even Latin American studies, has focused on Paraguay, it has largely focused on the nature of Stroessner’s regime, what led to his ouster and the transition to democracy which Paraguay now finds itself undertaking. Lambert and Nickson (1997) and Sondrol (1991, 1992 and 2007) focus primarily on the impacts of the Stroessner regime, and Paraguay’s democratic consolidation. Alexander (2005) focuses on labor’s relations with the State in Paraguay. Carter (1990) focuses specifically on the role of the Catholic Church in resistance to Stroessner, while Molinas (2004) has examined Paraguay’s political structure and the implications thereof for democratic and economic reform. Richards (2000) focuses on Paraguay’s recent economic development. Mora (1998) examines U.S.-Paraguay relations. Blaser’s online article examines the discourse regarding who “is” and “is not” indigenous and the implications thereof for their ability to press their claims. Nagel (1999) studies the dynamic of impunity with which rural land owners often act when they use violence against indigenous communities. Reed (1997), Schmidt (1994), Horst (2007) and Renshaw (2002), of course, focus quite explicitly on indigenous resistance and their movement for land and other rights, but do not address the specific question of why this social movement unfolded in the particular way that it did. Such was simply not the

purpose of their studies. (Recall this from Chapter Three's Literature Review as well.) Chapter 5 will discuss significant legal, political and social developments relevant to the indigenous movement in Paraguay. It will also focus on the movement for land rights, and indigenous responses to changing government policy. It will of course primarily focus on the growing primacy of the idea of dignity in how indigenous leaders present themselves and their movement, and support my analysis that once the Stroessner regime finally collapsed, previous narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. I contribute to the wide literature on Latin American indigenous movements and framing by exploring why I believe the Dignity Frame was the one to occur, as opposed to potential alternatives such as the class or rights frames. I am arguing that a combination of factors together can explain this. One was the dehumanizing context in which indigenous communities found and find themselves. Secondly, the fall of Stroessner almost overnight opened sociopolitical space to indigenous leaders which had never before been available. The strategic utility of partnerships with NGOs, as well, contributed to the occurrence of the Dignity Frame in Paraguay. As Burton theorizes, dignity is a basic human need, and as such resonates universally. Hence it could easily serve as a common language through which to partner.

### *Framing Dignity*

It is important to revisit what precisely I view as dignity before proceeding further. Dignity is a sense of pride and esteem in oneself. It goes beyond this, however. As with all human needs, it is social and relational. We define ourselves and our in-groups as much by who we are not, as by who we are. Relatedly, dignity involves a

sense of belonging to and the respect of a social community. Extending this, dignity involves recognition of some sort by society. It involves a sense of autonomy and some measure of control over one's future and to provide for oneself. While some may view legal or civic autonomy as a Western concept, not of priority to indigenous communities, I would respond that this is a too narrow definition of the concept of autonomy. A community's autonomy need not be defined in terms of the individual, nor must it be defined via formalized democratic institutions as a Western analyst might typically conceptualize. Recall from Chapter 3's Theoretical Framework that I view dignity as a basic human need. It is therefore fundamental to human thriving, and will readily be a catalyst for conflict if attacked, challenged or denied. The above history of the indigenous communities in Paraguay (Chapters 2 and 4), of course, demonstrated precisely this denial.

While I should not rehearse each point made above about framing again here, a few are worth quickly revisiting before I present more analysis as to why I believe that once *el Stronoto* ended, prior narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Framing in the context of this dissertation, as detailed above, is a lens through which individuals and (critically) groups view a particular conflict. Frames are developed through contingent and social processes, and they never are formed in a power vacuum. Social, economic and political power of course lends itself to advancing and disseminating one's preferred frame. It is important that frames should not be reified; like conflicts and other social systems, they are dynamic and contested. They themselves are often the site of contention, the

battleground over which movements and either States, counter-movements or counter organizations struggle.

Political opportunity theory, of course, also is a critical thread of my analysis of the land rights movement in Paraguay. Stroessner's ouster opened crucial political space within which indigenous citizens and their allies could advocate and organize with far less fear of violent reprisal, allowing the Dignity Frame to be put forth. Recall the constitutional advances which the Rodriguez administration implemented, such as protection for indigenous language, land and cultural rights. Recall as well the proliferation of civil society organizations focused on transparency, human rights, development and democracy post-Stroessner.

As discussed above, many framing and social movement scholars have theorized the presence of such frames as the "rights frame" and even an "obligation frame". To judge by their case studies of, for example, the gay rights movement, or the grieving *madres* in Nicaragua, these scholars extrapolated from how the movement's participants present, describe and explain their experiences (Tarrow 2003, 106-122; Guidry 2000, 127). My analytical process is similar. My central analysis again, is that once Stroessner's regime fell, prior narratives of dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. The end of the Stroessner regime opened up unprecedented opportunity for indigenous leaders to press claims and to partner with NGOs who provided essential money, expertise and connections. Dignity's nature as a basic human need and universal value meant it could resonate cross-culturally. These two factors interacted with the specific context of Paraguay's neoliberal economic policy

and history of autocratic rule, both of which resulted in poverty and exclusion for indigenous communities, such that it was the Dignity Frame to occur rather than other frames. (Recall for example the theft of indigenous lands, the illegality of speaking Guarani at one time, and the fact that it was once quite legal to murder an indigenous person.)

This is why I wish to contribute to the literature on framing and indigenous social movements by examining why and how the Dignity Frame occurred among movement leaders in Paraguay. Consistent with the development of the Dignity Frame, many activities of indigenous activists, NGOs and even government officials who are tasked with working on “indigenous issues”, speak in terms of indigenous “visibility” as a first vital step to combating the marginalization and racism that indigenous communities have consistently experienced. They speak of defending not just indigenous lands but way of life and values. Recall from Chapter Four, for example, the repeated calls of leaders such as René Ramírez and Servo Flores for indigenous dignity. Chapter Four also presented numerous examples of Mbyá, Guaraní or Mak’a leaders asserting the dignity and worth of their values and way of life and offering this as the substantial reason for such tangible policy goals as national representation, land rights or access to vital social services. As a Basic Human Need, dignity is a universal value; indigenous leaders and allies such as the Catholic Church and human rights NGOs were readily able to partner. Universal values, of course, are well-suited to communicating across various cultural barriers, a central reason why those partnerships and the need for them form such a central thread of my analysis.

*Seizing Opportunity: the 1992 Constitution*

The reader will recall that it was Stroessner's close advisor, Gen. Rodriguez, who successfully led the coup against him and then himself took power. Paraguayan citizens, and indigenous communities in particular, often still lack access to justice, and Paraguay's democracy remains fragile and flawed (Sondrol 2007). That said, Rodriguez's government did implement real and significant democratic reforms. A labor movement that had been, under Stroessner, all but co-opted and decimated began regenerating. In 1987 (two years before the end of the Stroessner regime), only 3% of workers were organized. Union membership grew from 22, 000 in 1988 to 75,000 within one year. The number of union organizations more than doubled from fifteen to forty by 1990 (Alexander 1005, 138). However, Rodriguez did not make indigenous welfare a priority of his government, as evidenced by the fact that "hardly any reference was made to them in presidential speeches" (Lambert 1997, 116). The **indignity of invisibility** continued. Hence it is no surprise that, as Paraguayan anthropologist Richard Reed noted as recently as 2002, maintaining "cultural and social integrity" has been a key focus of indigenous and indigenist advocacy since Stroessner's fall (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 315). For example, one major victory for indigenous activists and their allies since the new Constitution in 1992 was their success in changing policy so that Guarani and Spanish are now taught in schools and speaking Guarani is no longer illegal (Schmidt 1994, 14; CP, Personal Interview, July 17, 2006, RA, Personal Interview, June 14, 2006).

The ousting of Stroessner, as I have been emphasizing, opened unprecedented political and social opportunity for indigenous advocates and for civil society in general

to begin openly building alliances and forming formal and informal organizations to advocate for their policy priorities leading up to massive advocacy around the 1992 Constitution which was then being written. Indigenous leaders recognized this opportunity immediately and visited the capital to begin pressuring Rodríguez on indigenous policy. Hence in April of 1989, “seventeen indigenous communities came together to jointly request honest political representation and to encourage the state to stand by its promises to improve the living conditions of the native population” (Horst 2007, 151). As with previous statements indigenous leaders had released, the emphasis on dignity, especially as advanced through visibility and participation, is clear. As my analysis centers on the social, political and economic context in which the Dignity Frame in Paraguay occurred, it is worth quoting in full:

...there is one thing that we must make clear: no political leader, even General Rodríguez...has remembered the indígena. We remind you that in Paraguay we are fifty to sixty thousand Indians who demand our fundamental rights: rights to life, rights to land; **rights to culture; rights to ideology, philosophy and politics**. Many call for liberty, but it seems that liberty serves to continue oppressing or discriminating against people on the periphery, in this case, indigenous groups. We Indians need sincere participation and proposals; we also desire an opportunity in Congress in the future to show national and international society the **indigenous capacity for self-management**. We also ask, Who is the indigenous representative in the national Congress? (Horst 2007, 152).

We can see here a demand for autonomy, participation and respect, all essential components of the basic human need of dignity. Other indigenous leaders reaffirmed this in the Paraguayan press. Andrés Chem’hei, a Mak’a chief, asserted, “We do not deny we are indigenous, because that is how God created [us]....Even though we live with the Paraguayos, we will not lose our customs. There is no reason to be ashamed of being

indios” (Horst 2007, 152). Chief Pablo Barboza’s emphasis on indigenous dignity was also clear: “...the indigenous population is not extinct; on the contrary, it is growing” (Horst 152, 2007). Another indigenous leader asserted, “Since ancient times, these lands have been the center of our *tekoha*, ancient place where we had our *tapyi*, the center of our religious and social life. These lands, we do not want to lose” (Schmidt 1994, 111). This chief’s repeated references to indigenous traditions and culture evidence his advancement of the Dignity Frame. Nor was this post-Stroessner burst of activism without result; in October 1989, the Senate did indeed expropriate nearly 1,500 hectares of land for the Mbyá, allowing them after eighteen years to return home. Much of this advocacy served to lay solid ground for advocacy specifically around the shaping of the 1992 Constitution, which prompted the largest meeting of indigenous leaders in Paraguayan history and included 134 indigenous leaders from 64 different communities (Horst 2007, 155). They requested, among other policies, the return of their lands and that indigenous representatives themselves participate in the Constitutional Convention (Horst 2007, 157). I noted before that as indigenous leaders gained experience, exposure and connections in their advocacy, they increasingly adopted a *national* dignity framework as opposed to a more regional or local point of view. Indeed, in shaping their petition with respect to their goals for the 1992 Constitution, they referred to themselves collectively as “the indigenous people of Paraguay” (Horst 2007, 157). Schmidt specifically noted the emphasis on “self-determination versus paternalism” that characterized indigenous activism around the new Constitution (Schmidt 1994, 107). Four indigenous leaders, Servo Flores and René Ramírez among them, represented

Paraguay's indigenous communities in securing a highly significant, if incomplete, movement victory of indigenous participation in the Constitutional Convention.

*Desplacados* (landless ones) also staged waves of land invasions at the beginning of Rodriguez's administration; in response he dispatched military forces and condemned those who did not respect private property (Carter 1990, 116). I observe in their messages to him both the Dignity Frame and a savvy understanding of their nationalist government audience. The message of indigenous leaders to the new administration, which was promising a full transition to democracy, was that indigenous people "desire to participate in a multicultural Paraguay....Nevertheless [we] are conscious that such participation can only be achieved by living and strengthening their cultural values" (Horst 149, 2007). Chief Ramirez framed indigenous goals in terms of dignity: "We wanted liberty in democracy, and for indigenous people to be considered human, as they are the nation's original people" (Horst 2007, 149). The Dignity Frame is clearly evident in the leaders' call for living out and empowering indigenous values. Yet indigenous leaders here clearly also position themselves as Paraguayan, cognizant of the nationalism of their government and culture. In fact, some even cast the Mennonites as the foreigners and themselves, as the land's original inhabitants, as the real Paraguayans. Felipe Centurión, a leader of an Mbyá community, expressed this decisively: "Mennonites wish to evict us from our property at all costs, and we say that there is no foreigner who can throw us Paraguayos off our land" (Horst 2007, 149). These statements are clearly assertions of indigenous dignity and empowerment; they are also arguments clearly shaped to resonate with a new administration eager to be seen internationally as building

a far more just and inclusive nation than Stroessner had even been interested in doing. The framing above also enables indigenous leaders to remind the public that the land in question was in fact inhabited by them before anyone else. These leaders are asserting that indigenous communities are at once distinct and Paraguayan. Note especially the definition of Paraguay as multicultural, in an about-face of the invisibility of indigenous culture of the Stroessner years. Recall the Literature Review's discussion of Yashar's (2005) argument that indigenous advocacy has in many ways reshaped citizenship itself throughout Latin America. Such goals are reflected in the statements of the above Paraguayan indigenous leaders. Horst makes an observation similar to mine when he writes, "As native people did throughout the Americas, native groups, in effect, encouraged Paraguayans to stop building governments on a centralizing party structure and to, instead, substitute a coalition that respected cultural diversity and autonomy" (Horst 2007, 167). This positioning of indigenous people as Paraguayan citizens post-Stroessner is particularly interesting, since as Schmidt reports from her anthropological study, some in the Guaraní communities did not participate in national society "because they were not allowed to participate...and because they felt discriminated against" (Schmidt 1994, 157). She argues, "they did not feel respected; they felt different" (Schmidt 1994, 157). I have been making similar observations in my exploration of the Dignity Frame in Paraguay. Indeed, precisely this perception on the part of indigenous leaders goes a long way to explaining why it was the Dignity Frame which occurred instead of other possibilities. I believe the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political

landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships.

The root problem, of course, is the persistent view of indigenous people as less than human. As Schmidt summarized, "Today's [indigenous] survivors, who are at least nominally recognized as Guarani nations, are considered peripheral groups, foreign to the political body of the State precisely because they avoid becoming part of its apparatus" (Schmidt 1994, 166). As we will see, while this is less true today than it was in the mid-nineties, the thrust of her point regarding marginalization remains true. The new 1992 Constitution went a considerable way to correct this. Without a doubt it was the most significant change for indigenous communities post-Stroessner (Lambert 1997, 117; Van Cott 1995, 241; Renshaw 2002, 256; Schmidt 1994, 108). A number of watershed changes were promulgated, perhaps the first and most significant of which was the simple official recognition of the fact that Paraguay did, indeed, have an indigenous population. This had not previously occurred. It is also an advance that relates directly to the focus on dignity by the indigenous leaders and their allies. Recognition of existence is a necessary precondition for dignity. The new Constitution ushered in a number of changes in how the State and the indigenous communities related that are worth looking at in a bit of detail.

This new legal framework broke with the past by being “progressive and non-integrationist”. It guaranteed indigenous communities not only the right to ancestral lands but to “the right to preserve and develop their ethnic identities within their respective ‘habitats’” (Lambert 1997, 117). It grants them autonomy within their lands, enabling them to preserve their own social and political structures. It also provides “recognition and protection of cultural heritage”, to include protecting sacred places and providing that

the necessary measures shall be taken for the conservation, recovery and restoration of the objects, documents, and spaces of historic, archeological, paleontological, artistic, and scientific value, as well as their respective physical environments, which are part of the Nation’s cultural heritage (Van Cott 1995, 246).

Note especially that not only are the rights to preservation of cultural heritage protected here, *indigenous heritage is explicitly described as and recognized as part of Paraguay’s national heritage*. I am reminded here of an interview I was able to arrange with an indigenous leader living just outside of Asunción. I asked him if he thought of himself as Paraguayan. His reply speaks directly to my observation above; he answered that he indeed not only “felt” Paraguayan but that he felt more Paraguayan than those who were not native. After all, his people had been in Paraguay long before any colonists and their culture, their history, art, dance, food, music and values, have shaped Paraguay (CP, Personal Interview, July 17, 2006). The advances of the new Constitution finally acknowledged the reality CP described. Notably, however, this recognition did not prevent an indigenous argument for inclusion in the Constitutional Assembly from being rejected; they were, after intense pressure from indigenous advocates, “granted the right

to participate with voice but without vote”, an irony that will be familiar to suffragettes and civil rights activists worldwide (Lambert 1997, 117).

The more indigenous leaders themselves spoke out, the more evident their focus on dignity became. Indigenous movement leaders Servo Flores and Antonio Portillo issued the following statement in 1992 as the new Constitution was being drafted, overtly referring to the quincentennial of the original Spanish invasion of their lands: “The communities demand greater respect and better treatment from whites or Paraguayans. The date 12 October 1992 will be a day of mourning because it recalls the beginning of the extermination of our brothers. The eleventh of October 1492 was our final day of independence” (Horst 2007, 159). I have been emphasizing that the universal nature of dignity, as a basic human need, made the Dignity Frame a strategic choice for indigenous leaders needing to partner with NGOs and to see their message resonate across as broad an audience as possible. This universality enabled even a small number of government allies to support indigenous rights, and they do so employing the language of dignity. We can see this in a similar statement by two Colorado Party members of Congress, Celso Velázquez and Julio César Frutos, specifically addressing the new 1992 Constitution in a similar advancement of the Dignity Frame: “[The Constitution] will be a way to guarantee real participation of our country’s indigenous communities, which gave us their language—Guaraní—the main pillar of national cohesion and identity of which we are proud” (Horst 2007, 135). What is most interesting about the second statement in particular is that it suggests that at least some government officials were becoming influenced by the Dignity Frame, or at least feeling the need to be seen as such

in public. Increasing pressure from indigenous leaders, the Catholic Church, NGOs and foreign countries can all account in part for such sentiments on the part of Colorado party members. The Dignity Frame was also featured prominently in the National Dialogue document crafted by indigenous leaders and published by the Catholic Church. Writes Horst of the new Constitution, “A distinct call for indigenous rights figured prominently in this document. Native leaders asked for respect and educational opportunities that both tolerated their ways of life and prepared them to function in national society” (Horst 2007, 137).

Success, as the saying goes, breeds success. As I argued with respect to Law 904, when the new Constitution so explicitly enshrined the language of indigenous dignity, continuing with such framing became even more strategic. With such commitments on the part of the government in writing, in the new National Constitution no less, the framers of the Constitution handed indigenous leaders and their allies a powerful tool. As we will see throughout this chapter, indigenous advocates often refer to the Constitution, as well as Law 904, as arguments for specific policies they wish to see enacted (such as the return of land, access to health care or education). The ostensible institutionalization of the Dignity Frame offered indigenous leaders success to build on, and they have readily seized the opportunity.

As part of operationalizing the statutes in the 1992 Constitution which mandate the protection of indigenous land, rights and culture, the new government of Paraguay formed the Human Rights Commission (HRC). I was able to speak with several members of this commission (promising anonymity) and procure internal documents.

The mission of this Commission itself is framed in terms of protecting and advancing indigenous dignity. According to the documents:

To work with and for the indigenous villages constitutes a priority in the work plans of this department. Being the most vulnerable groups of the country, with the structural refusal of their civil and political, economical, social and cultural rights, there is a need for a special visibility and specific campaigns for the grave and complex problems, in order to concentrate efforts and to increase awareness of the solutions to the daily problems, among others, of accessing the rights of equality and justice, but also to health, education, nourishment security, housing security and land security that they should confront, since from them depends on the survival of the villages. (NB, Human Rights Commission Internal Memos Dec 29, 2005, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006).

It is also interesting that these documents often refer to the declarations or constitutions of other countries. The UN Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is referenced. So too are the Enlightenment, specifically the 4<sup>th</sup> French Republic, and the Constitutions of Spain (1978) and Brazil (1985) (Personal Correspondence, NB, July 15, 2006). Why does this matter and how does it bolster my analysis? These references can be seen as a strategy to define advancing indigenous rights in Paraguay as a legitimate and necessary part of the project of modernity. Modern states protect the human rights of their citizens, and are reasonably able to provide for them, the thinking goes. When indigenous leaders reference the Constitution or Law 904 in their interviews and speeches, they demonstrate, in my view, a keen political understanding of the position the State is in.

In a second memo, an HRC official even specifically refers to indigenous dignity as a primary objective of her work at the Commission:

The more than 87, 000 indigenous, divided into 414 communities, 179 hamlets, and 30 nuclear families are necessary actors for the complete development of the national identity and culture, and their economical, political and social

contributions are indispensable for the complete operation of the democracy and institutions. The **respect of their dignity and individual and collective rights** is part of this objective (NB, Human Rights Commission Internal Memo Jan 25, 2006, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006).

The projects and programs undertaken by this Commission offer evidence that even some state entities echo the dignity framing of indigenous leaders and their allies as they seek to demonstrate their acceptance of the equality and worth of indigenous communities. Ultimately, indigenous leaders are making their claims to the State, and so language which resonates across those cultural barriers, as I have been arguing, made framing their movement in terms of dignity a strategic choice. To be clear here, I am not arguing that the Dignity Frame, because of its universality, has already been able to persuade a majority of policy makers or Paraguayaos to commit to ending indigenous poverty or renounce racist views. Rather my analysis is that the universality of dignity made it a strategic choice for movement leaders which facilitated such landmark movement victories as the 1992 Constitution or Law 904. The political opportunity of Stroessner's fall ushered in a far more democratic Paraguay, making Paraguay's leaders much more susceptible to public pressure. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Such victories, of course, provided momentum on which to build.

For one further example, an official from the Human Rights Commission described one such seminar that she arranged featuring a documentary entitled, "Women Who Stole the Fire" by Raquel Rojas. The official escorted about fifty indigenous people ("men, children and especially women", as she writes) to join the rest of the audience.

This documentary, according to the official who wrote it, “was presented, based on real events of the events in 1986 when the Mission of the New Tribes realized the human housekeeping of the Totobiegosode (an indigenous group in Paraguay)” (NB, Human Rights Commission Memo Dec 29, 2005, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). That is, it describes a realization on the part of the Mission of the New Tribes that previously strange-seeming daily family practices became understandable and humanized. The official describes the indigenous audience members as having, “displayed an exemplary behavior, they enjoyed the piece and participated in the discussion, they thanked us a thousand times for the invitation and emphasized the importance of the respect towards different cultures” (NB, Human Rights Commission Internal Memo, Personal Correspondence, July 20, 2006). Note that the emphasis on respect for other cultures is consistent with the Dignity Frame. This movement ally, in my analysis, is advancing the frame of indigenous leaders that the *root* of the economic problems they face is in fact not poor economic policy but rather social dehumanization. In addition, there are no tangible, concrete policy goals associated with advocacy efforts such as this film viewing. That is, this was not a rally for land rights or education. It was not a seminar on microfinance possibilities for indigenous communities. It was, as the memo describes, specifically and solely intended to advance indigenous dignity. Because dignity is a basic human need, while it may find different cultural expressions within various specific communities, it is also a value that resonates with most people most of the time. Few are completely unable to relate to having felt invisible, an outsider, or powerless. As I noted before, that one can find support for the Dignity Frame even

within agencies and offices of the government does not suggest that support for indigenous land and cultural rights exists commonly within the government. This is not (yet) the case. Reflective of the reality that states are not monolithic, however, one can find specific examples of the Dignity Frame even within the State. This is why I have been arguing that in addition to being the natural and expected result of the denial of dignity resulting from exclusion, poverty and oppression, framing the movement through the language of dignity is also strategic because of its ability to resonate across cultural barriers. Here is one such example of the common use of the language of dignity.

The leadership and workings of INDI itself were also an important focus of indigenous leaders in the early days after the fall of Stroessner (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 316). This was perhaps a result of numerous signals INDI was sending that the watershed changes mandated by the new Constitution would not be readily apparent on the ground. For example, Rodriguez's language quickly changed from "*tierra para todos*" to "*propiedad privada*" (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 316). INDI heard the administration's signal clearly and allowed agribusiness to invade native communities or at times was even itself responsible for evicting indigenous communities. In my analysis, the context of the dominance of neoliberalism is vital to understanding why it was the Dignity Frame which occurred post-Stroessner, among other possibilities, and this is a clear example. As implemented by successive Paraguayan regimes, neoliberal economic policy resulted in hunger, illness and displacement from ancestral lands. In addition, indigenous leaders were often not even able to secure a meeting with INDI's then-President, Mallorquin (Maybury-Lewis 2002, 316-317). (As we will see later in this

chapter, many of the indigenous leaders I spoke with are still experiencing this sort of marginalization.) Such realities represent a clear threat to dignity.

A second specific legislative priority of indigenous advocates such as human rights lawyers and relevant NGOs, was the Modification of Law 1372, which again had responded to World Bank concerns by addressing in discreet ways Caazapá land title concerns, but did not go farther. The new law, Law 43, “could be used as a means of putting pressure on landowners because it prohibited their recourse to the sale of the land or timber” (Lambert 1997, 117). It is unclear the extent to which indigenous leaders and communities themselves were directly involved in this campaign; Kidd describes the coalition as an alliance of “lawyers, missions and NGOs” (Lambert 1997, 116).

Due to continued corruption within the Paraguayan government, these rights that are such a sea change on paper are sometimes nonexistent in reality. *Partido Colorado*, which was the party of Stroessner’s government, had remained in power for over sixty years until Lugo’s recent historic victory, as well as some recent victories by opposition parties at the municipal level (Lambert 1997, 81). INDI itself, the agency meant to protect and provide for indigenous communities, “actually swindled US\$18,000 donated by the World Bank to secure land for the Mbyá” (Horst 2007, 143). Nor did the fall of the Stroessner regime necessarily improve matters. In 1994 80% of Mybá still had no access to legal land title and were hence vulnerable to being moved off their land (Schmidt 1994, 109). According to its 2006 Perceptions of Corruption Index, Transparency International rates Paraguay as 116 of 159, one of the lowest ratings on its transparency scale, and considers it the most corrupt nation in Latin America. (I actually

attempted to arrange an interview with someone from their office in Paraguay, only to discover they do not have one any longer.) The pattern described above continued throughout much of the 1990s; note this was “post-Stronato”. Again, while the leadership changed, and while certain specific political reforms were indeed made, little in the way of economic policy changed (Reed 1997, 77-117; Horst 2007, 150-151).

To understand why not, let us explore in more detail the economic context in which contemporary Paraguayan indigenous communities find themselves. Paraguay’s indigenous peoples currently engage the market economy in several main ways. For most indigenous men, this primarily means wage labor, particularly on ranches, and for women, the main source of wage labor is domestic service (Renshaw 2002, 122-125). Renshaw concurs with Fogel and Reed that the primary reason for this is Paraguay’s continuing inequitable system of land tenure: “Wage labor can at times seem almost compulsory, particularly where the Indian’s right to settle or even to enter land is dependent on the goodwill of the landowner or his representatives” (Renshaw 2002, 124). Consistent with the dominant view of indigenous people as dependent and incapable, this system apparently, “was originally adopted because Indians were not regarded as competent under Paraguayan law, since they lacked identity cards, while the cooperatives that administer the colonies lacked the legal personality (*personeria juridica*) required for holding land titles” (Renshaw 2002, 125). It is important to my argument to understand the (to use Renshaw’s word) *compulsory* nature of such labor for indigenous communities. How, one may ask, can it be truly compulsory when the law protects indigenous land and rights? Recall here the contradictory pressures Paraguay finds itself

under, satisfying international creditors and seeking macroeconomic growth while simultaneously, demands for social services such as education and health care increase (ECLAC 2003-2004; “Debtors Reckoning” Online). Continuing corruption and institutional capacity, again, also complicate efforts to successfully transfer land to indigenous communities (Van Cott 1995, 235-258; Personal Interviews, RF, May 24, 2006 and June 28, 2006). This being the case, as indigenous communities continue to lose access to their land (and thus their source of food, water and shelter), they must increasingly rely on the market to sustain themselves (Reed 1997, 77-117; Renshaw 2002, 115-147). We recall from above that, as Reed noted, most indigenous communities have no inherent philosophical objection to engaging with a free market, but that it is only access to their land which has in the past enabled them to do so with success because of the security and independence it provided.

### *Recent Actions*

Such a threat to both dignity, autonomy and survival has resulted in indigenous communities protesting through marches and demonstrations to protect the dignity of their way of life (“People Power” Online; “A Political Awakening” Online). For example, one demonstration was precisely called a “March for Dignity” (Montero 1998, Online). State responses to indigenous organizing and resistance have in many cases been brutal (“Bloody Protests” Online; Desantis Online). Reports are consistent that violence in response to the land privatization conflict has escalated in the past several years. Regarding the protests in Asunción against former President Cubas, Sengupta writes, “...it is his economic policies that have been the protestor’s main target. An

informal alliance of rural workers, trade unions, left-wing groups and other organizations staged repeated demonstrations throughout the country, calling for the free-market policies to be scrapped” (Sengupta online). During the summer of 2002, then-President Macchi called a state of emergency when particularly violent protests occurred in the capital and a second large city, *Ciudad del Este* (City of the East) (“Paraguay Politics, EIU Newswire Online; Sengupta Online). This was directly related to his administration’s policies of privatization of government utilities. This pattern continued in 2003 and 2004 during the administration of President Duarte Frutos, who succeeded Macchi when he was forced from office. According to *The Economist*, Paraguay’s landless peasants “for the past 15 years...have held annual protests against the land reform, privatization, free trade, and most recently—part of the IMF agreement—the proposed abolition of value-added tax exemptions for the poor” (“Caught” online). According to a Peace Corps Volunteer who has been living in the capital for the past eighteen months, they have been occurring bi-weekly. Amnesty International confirms that the violence related to Paraguay’s economic policy has escalated over the past few years: “Negotiations between peasant farmers’ organizations and the authorities to resolve the land issue broke down in September. Subsequently, peasant leaders called for renewed protests and land invasions” (Amnesty International Online). Recently as well, conflicts over land rights triggered a cabinet crisis when President Frutos “expressed his support for actions to assist the landless” (“Paraguay Politics” online; “Plunging into Misery” online), worrying the elite business classes.

In this continuing cultural and economic struggle, indigenous leaders responded

by acting to preserve cultural integrity and autonomy. They acted to limit the access of outsiders to their communities to preserve “the original essence of ‘Guaraníness’” (Horst 2007, 144). They in many cases retained a consensus model of assigning community labor and sharing resources. Kinship relations, vital to both meeting daily survival needs and cultural dignity, they also carefully maintained in many cases. They also identified what differentiates them from non-indigenous peoples in terms of worldview and social systems. Writes Horst, “When Avá leaders identified what made them different, they referred to the way ‘our God and our grandparents have left us our way of life’ and described long prayers about the changing times” (Horst 2007, 145). Again, the very name they give for themselves (ka’aguyguá) means “people of the forest” while Paraguayans were either “christianos” or “people of the outside” (okapeguá) (Horst 2007, 145). Horst’s observation regarding the prayers about changing times is especially relevant to my analysis regarding the Dignity Frame. All communities and cultures face change; dignity is about having autonomy over how one engages with that change. Indeed, as I will continue to note throughout my analysis, many indigenous leaders see no inevitable contradiction between protecting the dignity of indigenous culture and modern comforts. Horst cites Chief Barras as one example (Horst 2007, 146); Reed (1997) and Renshaw (2002) have noted this dynamic as well.

Once again, the loss of land is experienced as an affront to dignity. Again, this is why one of the three major aspects of my analysis of this social movement looks to the dehumanizing context in which indigenous communities found themselves. This context, along with the sociopolitical opportunity provided by the ousting of Stroessner and the

resources provided by partnerships with NGOs, together can explain why the Paraguayan indigenous movement arose in the time, place and manner in which it did. Mbyá leader Máximo González made the connection between land and dignity clear: “This place has always been our place. My grandparents and my parents have lived here since time immemorial...It should not be possible to give priority to the Mennonites who moved here long after we did, but instead we should be considered as equals” (Horst 2007, 147). Schmidt’s anthropological study of indigenous advocacy in Paraguay also demonstrated an emphasis of indigenous leaders on dignity, though she does not integrate the social movements literature into her study, which is more primarily grounded in classic anthropological literature. She quotes an Mbyá chief as praying, “Might we all Mbyá live, the ones who are here, and the brothers in Argentina and in Brazil, and our race, our Mybá *reko* (way of life) might never die” (Schmidt 1994, 104). He clearly expresses here a consciousness that identifies him with all Mbyá, across national borders. His concern is also just as clearly focused on the preservation of the dignity of their way of life, a strong advancement of the Dignity Frame as he acts to change the context in which he and his community find themselves.

Advocacy continues to unfold in Asunción and throughout the country. In fact, even as I type, a four-month occupation of *Plaza Uruguay*, a popular shopping and business plaza in the heart of downtown Asunción, just ended. Over 100 indigenous families, nearly 500 people, participated. INDI was able to successfully negotiate an end to the occupation by agreeing to purchase 295 hectares of land, around half of what the demonstrators had been demanding. Clearly, their systemic position of power is still

quite weak. Notably, Augusto Fogel, the current President of INDI, suggested that the indigenous communities had in fact abandoned their lands due to internal division. The indigenous leaders interviewed for *La Nación* stated that they would go to prison before abandoning their lands, in response to the public prosecutor's statement that while he did not wish to "disrespect" the indigenous communities, his duty was to enforce the law (*Los Indígenas Acceden* online). In a further example of the Dignity Frame, one indigenous protestor at this occupation, Beatriz Sanabria, spoke of visibility and being taken account of as primary reasons for the plaza occupation. She noted in particular that, while being seen and heard was the stated goal of the latest occupation, she did not think their mobilization was why the government, via INDI, had compromised in the end. Rather, she felt that the concerns of local merchants and the Paraguayan tourism industry forced the State's hand. In her own words, "How long we were encamping and nobody made our case? Things moved when the retailers were bothered too much by our presence" ("*Indigenas estan a la espera*" online). This observation itself also stresses both the importance of visibility, a vital component of dignity, to those who participate in these *manifestaciones*, as well as their view that this vision has not yet been achieved. Her observation reinforces my analysis that one major reason that the Dignity Frame was the one to occur in the particular context of contemporary Paraguay was the marginalization with which indigenous communities found themselves faced. Additionally, the media access facilitated by NGO partnerships, as this shows, has been crucial. As we will see, media outreach and training has been a major component of the work of many NGOs focused on indigenous communities. In addition to the political

opportunity offered by Stroessner's ouster, and the dehumanizing social, political and economic reality for indigenous people in Paraguay, the need for these kinds of partnerships is a major reason why it was the Dignity Frame, as opposed to perhaps a class or rights frame, to occur in Paraguay. Dignity, as universal value and basic human need, is easily able to resonate across cultural barriers.

As I say, such demonstrations continue to occur regularly. Another occupation of MEC which occurred earlier in this year also saw around 500 people, according to *La Nación* ("*Cunden problemas*"). Reflective of growing indigenous insistence on autonomy, which I again have defined as a crucial component of Dignity, the above-referenced occupation of MEC was staged to demand a new president for INDI. Rather than reject or boycott "Western" state institutions, indigenous communities in Paraguay instead demanded ownership of it. Most interestingly, their complaint about Martha Dávalos, the prior president, was that she was too close to the non-governmental organizations ("*El Ejecutivo cedó*" *Online*). As I will explore in more detail later in this chapter, indigenous communities are often dependent on the NGOs for their political and legal expertise and money, so much so that one major thread of my argument has been that this need for NGO partnerships helped shape the framing of this social movement. However, indigenous communities often view NGOs with suspicion and increasingly are fiercely protective of the autonomy they have managed to gain. They do not want to be represented by NGOs; they insist on no less than representing themselves ("*El Ejecutivo cedó*" online). This of course further exemplifies the salience of dignity to the indigenous social movement in Paraguay. If indigenous communities "just" wanted land

rights, reliance on the NGOs, who have after all demonstrated some success at delivering this, might be an acceptable tactic. It would not, however, be consistent with the Dignity Frame. In my analysis, the objectives of this movement are far larger in seeking deep socio-political and economic changes. Through the Dignity Frame, they seek to defeat and replace the dominant cultural narrative of dependence and dehumanization with one of full human dignity.

As I noted before, one demonstration for indigenous rights was in fact explicitly framed in terms of indigenous dignity. In fact, it was precisely called “March for Indigenous Dignity: Give us Back Our Land” (Montero Online). The indigenous demonstrators also demanded improved health care and educational services. One of the leaders of the protest, Carlos Marceos, directly demonstrated the importance of visibility to movement leaders. He stated, “We have been ignored and cheated for 500 years....We are tired of wandering alongside the highway” (Montero 1997, Online). Marceos’s reference to the indigenous history of Spanish military occupation is especially interesting. A lawyer at the demonstration from *Tierra Viva*, an organization that commonly represents indigenous communities in land claims, also framed his argument for indigenous land rights in terms of aspects of dignity: “The situation of isolation and marginalization is terrible” (Montero 1997, Online). Isolation and marginalization of course refer to the opposite of dignity, which involves at a minimum inclusion. As I have been arguing, one of the reasons that the Dignity Frame, as opposed to other possible frames, occurred is due to the dehumanizing context in which indigenous communities continue to find themselves, a context which I have been detailing throughout this

dissertation. Marceos's statement is an explicit example. Another demonstrator, Antolin Kenedi, also employed the Dignity Frame by stating that "around election time, the whites come to seek our votes" but that otherwise, they are ignored. Indigenous visibility is his clear goal here. An interesting parallel observation is Kenedi's clear skepticism regarding electoral democracy. Indeed, while several indigenous leaders were able to meet with then-President Rameriez, the protest elicited nothing concrete in the way of promises from the government (Montero 1998, Online). The Interpress Service reports that over 2,000 protestors attended (Montero 1998, Online). The size of the demonstration is notable especially given the small size of Paraguay's indigenous population and the severe hardships that must be overcome in order to physically participate, such as financial burdens, the risk of government or business elite violence, and long and difficult travel.

Relatedly, this past March of 2007, indigenous protestors secured a victory related to their insistence on being represented—seen, heard. INDI was proceeding with projects related to potable water, education and sanitation; after several days of a sit-in in front of INDI, INDI agreed that eight indigenous leaders would remain to manage the projects ("*El INDI*" online). This insistence on direct self-representation reflects their goals of strengthening indigenous dignity. A frame, recall once again, is the manner in which a group or groups participating in a movement both understand and present themselves. A frame is how participants in a movement, to put it another way, think about and explain who they are and why they do what they do. As the above tactics, actions and statements by indigenous protestors suggest, visibility and autonomy, key components of Dignity,

are explicitly articulated motivations for participation in this movement. I would also emphasize again that both the size (as noted above, typically at least 500 up to 2,000 demonstrators) and regularity of these demonstrations are, in my view, impressive. Consider the numbers in light of how logistically prohibitive it is for indigenous citizens, even the “indigenous elite”, to travel. They must rely on charity, typically from allied NGOs, or spend months raising funds from other sources. An entire community can often only afford to send a handful of its members as representatives, and sometimes only one! Often indigenous people will support a demonstration they cannot themselves attend, through helping to fund the representative’s travel, tending a neighbor’s home or providing child care (Personal Interview, L, July 18, 2006; Personal Interview LD, July 18, 2006). Again, in addition to isolation from the locus of power, Asunción, indigenous communities also continue to face geographic isolation from one another. This is beginning to change, particularly as communities continue to form partnerships with NGOs and form NGOs of their own (such as CAPI and COSEPIP). This constitutes a second obstacle which indigenous leaders must overcome to successfully mobilize as a united political force. In fact, overcoming such fragmentation is an explicit objective of forming such indigenous NGOs (H, Personal Interview, June 7, 2006; LD, Personal Interview, July 18, 2006). Therefore, strong though the numbers are, it is also true that they must be placed in the above context to be best understood. Throughout my analysis of this social movement, I have argued that one reason it was the Dignity Frame, rather than other possibilities, to have occurred was the need for partnerships with NGOs. The universality of dignity, as a basic human need, lent itself to serving as a common

language. I wish to highlight here that, as these national *manifestaciones* demonstrate, this is just as true for the movement internally, as well as with external partnerships.

In further support for my analysis of the development of the Dignity Frame in Paraguay, anthropologist Stephen Kidd describes “the development of a political discourse” among the rank and file in indigenous communities throughout Paraguay (Kidd 1995, 57). This discourse, according to Kidd, reveals a deep awareness of indigenous “inferiority”, symbolized by the white man’s possession of superior weaponry, in particular the gun (Kidd 1995, 10). Included within the colonial and then autocratic state narrative of indigenous dehumanization was the legitimizing of coercive force as an acceptable means of leadership. Kidd reminds us that this concept was foreign to Paraguay’s indigenous people:

The Enxet also suffered from the white man’s imposition of an alternative discourse on prestige. Their traditional discourse had emphasized values such as hunting ability, success in war, generosity and mystical power. The person who epitomized these qualities was the leader, the *wese*, who, because of the requirement to be generous, was often the poorest man in a community. Furthermore, his leadership, for it to be legitimate, must be clearly divorced from all forms of coercion” (Kidd 1995, 51).

Past realities shaping indigenous discourse include the fact that, until 1970, killing an indigenous person was not a crime (Kidd 1995, 51). Prior to this, atrocities including torture and maiming of indigenous people resulted in indigenous communities being “obliged to live concealed in the forest” (Kidd 1995, 51). Kidd reports that, to the detriment of their identity and dignity, the values of leadership by coercion began, at least in places, to infiltrate traditional indigenous values and discourse. One Enxet man wrote that, “The Enxet of long ago were good people. They were not savages but were

powerful. Their name did not used to be Lengua” (Kidd 1995, 52). (Lengua is the Enxet slur for white men.) Small wonder, then, that when indigenous citizens in the Chaco (a rural region of Northwestern Paraguay) were asked what they wished for most, their reply was, “To become a person” (Kidd 1995, 52). Witness the narrative of dehumanization internalized.

In my analysis, it is precisely this simultaneously external and internalized dehumanization that current indigenous political debate wishes to defeat and replace with a discourse—a frame—of dignity. To begin with, Enxet peoples currently point out that “the Chaco used to be free of white men” (Kidd 1995, 57). One other process currently in place which Kidd notes is a “process whereby history is being reinvented and transformed into myth” in support of building the Dignity Frame (Kidd 1995, 59). Faced with the historical reality of superior firepower, these myths show indigenous resisters repelling the white man’s invading army with wasps, magical cramps, and spears. This reframing of history is significant to my analysis for several reasons. One, it provides a socio-narrative mechanism by which to resist the emotions of humiliation and powerlessness (of course the opposite of dignity) which so often result from military occupation. For example, “the Enxet’s historical accounts stress the role of the shamans in defeating the Paraguayans. This is indicative of a renewed pride in their culture” (Kidd 1995, 60). Accordingly, shamans now increasingly practice their healing rituals in the open, as opposed to in secret, as in the past. Indigenous citizens also suggest now that, should they so choose, their shamans could kill Paraguay’s president, but are too kind to do so (Kidd 1995, 60). Also, the 1980s, which of course saw the overthrow of

Stroessner, also saw “a resurgence of traditional dancing” (Kidd 1995, 60). This suggests more than a new pride or rediscovery of traditions and culture, however. I concur with Kidd that such practices socially produce and reproduce “the renewed belief among many (though not all) Enxet that the shamans are once again effective against the white man” (Kidd 1995, 60). Perceived powerlessness is one of the key aspects of dehumanization. By the same token, the process Kidd describes above whereby Enxet communities begin to view themselves as powerful again constitutes a process whereby, employing the language of dignity, indigenous leaders explicitly resist and seek to replace the view of indigenous people as worthless and powerless with its opposite.

What is also quite striking now is the manner in which “outward” aspects of indigenous culture are increasingly used by indigenous people to assert their political, social and cultural power. Nor would, in my view, this have been able to occur under the Stroessner regime. For example, during a demonstration in 1993, “one hundred Enxet came to Asunción to demand their rights, dancing all night in front of the Parliament building” (Kidd 1995, 60). I recall observing this dynamic myself during my field data collection. During both interviews with L and LD, for example, a radio sitting in the open window played indigenous music and L explained to me that this was the same music they had played during various demonstrations. Kidd also reports an unprecedented (at that time in the early 1990s, just after the new 1992 Constitution) event in which an indigenous leader himself directly addressed Paraguay’s House of Deputies. He stated before the House:

The Chaco is ours and we know this because of the stories told to us by our

grandfathers. It is as if the Paraguayans stole the land from us. Our culture is now in danger as are the trees, the animals, the fish and the plants. We need the land to survive and we are the best people to take care of it (Kidd 1995, 61).

This appeal to dignity, with its rhetoric of cultural survival, loss of a birthright and physical survival, is relevant not just because it was the first to be delivered by an indigenous leader before the Paraguayan House of Deputies. It is an example of another way in which the Dignity Frame is used by indigenous leaders, and of actions they have been able to take post-Stroessner that would not likely have been possible prior to his ouster. The Dignity Frame has occurred, as I have been arguing, because of several concatenating factors. An earthquake in Paraguayan politics, the ousting of Stroessner provided the political opportunity needed to press claims in comparative openness and safety. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Stroessner's ouster interacted with the dehumanizing context in which many indigenous communities live, as well as both the need and opportunity to partner with non-indigenous NGOs. Here, again, we see a second aspect of the Dignity Frame's utility that I noted previously in the presentation of my central analysis. **Dignity is a universal value.** (It being a basic human need, this is as expected.) Frames are most effective for broader audiences, it stands to reason, when they evoke precisely such universal values and are hence able to enable movement groups to communicate across the barriers of culture. Framing the goals and values of the indigenous land rights movement in terms of dignity resonates with NGO allies. The Dignity Frame also resonates with much of the Paraguayan government's own ostensible rhetoric which refers to safeguarding the dignity and way of

life of its indigenous peoples, as the state continues to seek multilateral and U.S. financial and political support and so was strategically aimed at a government audience.

Clearly, as Kidd notes, indigenous people are becoming politically active as they never have before (Kidd 1995, 61). Just as clearly, however, the obstacles they face remain enormous and success is at best contingent on their ability to remain highly visible, to continue mobilizing and to convince policy makers that taking indigenous demands into consideration is in their interests. Even this might not be enough, I regret to conclude, if other much more complex and difficult issues such as access to justice and corruption in the courts and law enforcement do not improve. (Recall this discussion from Chapter One; I will also return to this point below.) That said, the State has indeed begun, since the early 1990s, to take note of “the Indian vote”. In addition to the mobilizations detailed above, this also suggests that mobilization has been successful enough that vote-counting mayoral, Parliamentary and Presidential candidates have at least begun to work to register indigenous citizens. Kidd reports that “no politician can win a local election in the Chaco without gaining a substantial portion of the Indian vote” (Kidd 1995, 61). In addition, the efforts of politicians to court the “Indian vote” are documented (Kidd 1995, 64-65). For example, we now see *politicos* paying visits to indigenous communities. We also see efforts by candidates to “influence the leaders and teachers of the communities” through visits to Asunción (Kidd 1995, 65). Candidates have also begun in recent years to provide transport for indigenous voters to the polling places and host after-election parties (Kidd 1995, 65). Such evidence makes it clear that leaders, both NGO and indigenous, of this movement have successfully gained the

attention of the political elite, which is of course one pragmatic goal of such political organizing. This is particularly impressive since the indigenous population in Paraguay is only about 2% of Paraguay's roughly 6 million citizens. To be very clear here, my analysis is not intended to offer data on which organizing frame has been more effective or to present data on why indigenous leaders chose the frame or made the strategy decisions that they have made. My data will not support such an analysis. Rather, as we recall from Chapter Three, my intent here is to contribute to the literature on indigenous social movements and framing by offering my analysis that once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. In so doing, I include examples of movement successes and failures.

As one might imagine, the political and business elite have not just idly allowed these successes (modest and isolated though they have been) to occur. Exemplifying the corruption that still prevents indigenous peoples from translating legal gains on paper into reality, consider that numerous Parliamentarians themselves in Paraguay are land owners. Many of these same Parliamentarians are also active members of *Asociación Rural*, Paraguayan politics' main land-owner lobby group (Kidd 1995, 71). Given their privileged status, they need not mobilize in the same way that indigenous communities must to begin righting the dramatically asymmetrical power imbalance. Interestingly, however, these business and political elites present themselves as the ones in the systemically weaker position, suggesting that Indians "have never been pushed or maltreated in any way", that efforts to return their land to them were "anti-progress" and

that indigenous communities were in fact seeking “preferential treatment” (Kidd 1995, 71-72). In the context of my dissertation, which is exploring the indigenous land rights movement in the context of national, regional and global economic forces, the lobby group’s appeal to “progress” is particularly noteworthy. This rhetoric exemplifies my earlier contentions (see especially Chapter Three’s Literature Review) that neoliberal economic policies are far more than the neutral, natural, even inevitable policy recommendations they are often supposed to be. Rather, these policies, like any, embody and promote specific cultural values and worldviews. Capitalism specifically, as the rhetoric of the above landowners and lobbyists suggest, often is framed in terms of modernity and progress. In this specific example, of course, such rhetoric also serves to reproduce the privilege of the elite political and economic classes by invoking values most capitalists hold dear, progress of course being prominent among them. I mention this aspect of the response to indigenous organizing for several reasons. One, as just noted, it exemplifies the values underlying the policy rhetoric. Secondly, it demonstrates the continuing view of many of those who oppose indigenous land rights that indigenous culture and communities are backwards and anti-modernity. I have been demonstrating otherwise throughout this dissertation. Also, as an aside observation, that business elites feel the need to publicly challenge the indigenous communities suggests that their advocacy through the Dignity Frame has seen some success.

#### *Land Policy and Practice Since Stroessner*

I have been noting that, while there have been victories for indigenous communities regarding land tenure and political freedoms, the pace of land loss proceeds

rapidly and ownership of land remains dramatically unequal (Richards 2000). Many reasons for this exist. One of them, explored by Dr. José Molinas, et al, is the incentive democracy ironically builds into the House of Deputies to win particularistic bills for their districts. Such bills were rarely controversial, according to Molinas and colleagues. However, bills that would introduce systemic reform or redistribution were quite controversial and hence rarely passed (Molinas, et al, 2004). Molinas is positing here a disincentive to systemic reform built into Paraguay's legislative and policy processes. This legislative study categorize bills and charted which ones had passed or not, for the period of 1954-2003. Note this covered fourteen years after the fall of Stroessner. His ouster, naturally, precipitated genuine democratic reform, but did not result automatically in systemic economic or judicial reform—these being the central reforms related to land tenure and human rights that indigenous leaders are seeking.

Of course, the more scarce land in Paraguay becomes (or is perceived to become), the more intractable the conflict. We recall that numerous forces combine to pressure what should be abundant land resources. Cattle, cotton and soybeans are major Paraguayan exports and represent about a quarter of Paraguay's economy (Reed 1997, 78). Even in a nation that is by no stretch of the imagination over-populated, this puts pressure on Paraguay's land resources. While debate has raged regarding the effect of privatization on the poor, Carter, et al, argues that the truth is not as simple as claiming that agri-business export booms, such as is currently seen in Paraguay, are “good” or “bad” for the poor. Rather, they argue, the effect of agri-business on the poor, and the resultant scarcity of land, is structurally dependent on land prices, the specific crops

grown, and the amount of employment a specific crop is able to generate (Carter et al, online). Optimal conditions can be beneficial to the poor; similarly, certain structural conditions can create a “double squeeze” on land availability and employment availability. This, he notes, is the case in Paraguay: “The Paraguayan grain boom appears highly exclusionary” (Carter et al, online). Wheat and soy “require relatively little labor” and small farmers have little access to the capital they would need to generate growth (Carter et al, online). The inequality of land distribution as a legacy of colonialism and the Stroessner regime are also an important factor in the context shaping the conflict today (Carter et al, online; Lambert 104, 1997). Related to agri-business, “international financial forces also pushed agriculture into the forest. After decades of resisting loans from private banks and multilateral lending agencies (such as the World Bank), Paraguay borrowed massive sums in the 1970s”, for example to build hydroelectric dams on the *Rio Paraná* (Reed 1997, 80).

So too are the expanding purchases of Brazilian and Mennonite immigrant landowners pressuring Paraguay’s land resources (Carter, et al, online; Hecht 2005; Hilton Online). Carter, et al, are bleak and succinct in their summation: “...the means that have traditionally relieved land hunger in rural Paraguay have been exhausted” (Carter, et al, online). It is also important to note that government development policy has encouraged this. Writes Reed, “At a cost of fifty-four million dollars, principally from World Bank loans, the Paraguayan government built over four hundred kilometers of roads....The project provided credit and agricultural extension services for small farmers, and promoted the large-scale production of cotton and other cash crops” (Reed 1997, 81).

Such roads have provided easy access to cheap (by comparison to Brazil) land for Brazilian immigrants (Reed 1997, 85). What's more, INDI mistakenly reported that there were "fewer than ten" Mbyá families in the area, when in fact, Reed reports, there were seventeen full communities. This error "gave new settlers *carte blanche* to clear the forests of the region" (Reed 1997, 82). Another tactic developers and agri-business have used constitutes simply exploiting all the forest resources they need before the indigenous communities are able to complete the lengthy and bureaucratic process of establishing a legal identity and securing title (Reed 1997, 83). Even further exacerbating the conflict over land use, these Brazilian investors often "imported land-hungry peasants from Brazil's overpopulated southwest" (Reed 1997, 86).

Given this, it may surprise the reader to learn that, at least in some cases, the Guarani seem to have readily gone along with the commercialization for agroforestry of their land. They are incentivized by government assistance programs and soon "were clearing land for cotton, planning excitedly how they were going to spend their cash" (Reed 1997, 97). This has, however, not proven to provide for them as reliably as their own system of agroforestry did. It has failed to provide food year round, and the capital such commercial farming demands upfront has put many indigenous deeply in debt (Reed 1997, 98). The greater their integration into the national economy (that is, the more successful current development policy), the less autonomy they have, because they must rely more and more on the market for basic needs, rather than their forests.

Meanwhile, as under *el Stronato*, these peasant leaders agitating for the protection of land rights that Law 904 guaranteed them "were reportedly subjected to attacks, death

threats and harassment by armed civilians working for land owners or private companies”. Indeed, one private company even “forcibly evicted” indigenous people from their land; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered that they be allowed back while it reviewed the situation (Amnesty International Online). Local NGOs report police brutality and intimidation, as well as government deceit related to what the actual impact of a certain development project might be (*Derechos Humanos 2004, Derechos Humanos 2005*, Personal Interview, JC, June 2, 2006; Personal Interview, OA, July 7, 2006). Police have even been known to “collaborate with local cotton or tobacco merchants” (Reed 1997, 99). For example, they “may jail farmers who refuse to sell the crop at a creditor’s price or harass merchants who come from other areas to buy cotton” (Reed 1997, 99). One “powerful local store owner in eastern Paraguay dynamited the roads, leaving only one route that passed through his land” so that “all producers had to market their crop through him, and accept the low prices he offered” (Reed 1997, 99). Such narratives illustrate that this conflict is still as deeply asymmetrical as it was in the 1530s when the first Spanish *conquistadores* arrived, a central reason why we see the failure to implement the new progressive laws adequately. Simple corruption, resulting in a “lack of political will”, is another reason. As Kidd notes, this lack of political will “is not surprising given the close links of the government to the rich landowners of the Chaco”, as also noted above (Miller 1999, 55). Coming into conflict with this basic human need for autonomy—an essential aspect of dignity, as this dissertation has posited—is the State’s desire to continue integrating indigenous communities, a policy that necessitates at least some shaping of identity. As Prieto

writes, "...since independence all Paraguayan governments have sought to integrate the indigenous population into a national identity. This policy, based on denying cultural diversity, has not succeeded" (Van Cott 1995, 237).

This sort of corruption is endemic and directly impacts indigenous efforts to secure the return of their lands. Kidd provides more detail on, for example, Mennonites who simply, "armed with axes and occasionally with chain saws...can begin unilaterally cutting down the trees" (Miller 1999, 50). This sort of abuse is very difficult for indigenous communities to stop for cultural reasons; their values disallow them from prohibiting others from using the forest's resources (Miller 1999, 50). It is also extremely difficult, practically speaking, to interest local law enforcement or sometimes even INDI in actually prosecuting such cases (JC, Personal Interview, June 2, 2006; OA, Personal Interview, July 10, 2006). The response of some Enxet indigenous was to join the Mennonites and gain some of the profit. This did not, however, last when it became clear that the levels of exploitation of the forest were simply not sustainable. According to Kidd, a few individuals do still break with the community, for which there are social consequences, and many times the leader will speak with the offender to try to convince him to stop. There is little recourse, he reports, if the person refuses (Miller 1999, 51). This also exemplifies the challenges to community unity which increasingly-necessary engagement with the market can create at a time when unity is most needed. Of course this is why the context of economic neoliberalism is such a major part of my analysis. I have been claiming that one major reason why the Dignity Frame was the one to occur, as opposed to other possibilities, is the dehumanizing context in which indigenous

communities continue to find themselves; as we have seen throughout this dissertation, neoliberalism, in my view, is a dominant and powerful aspect of that context. The existence of a market economy is not inherently threatening or dehumanizing. The loss of land which results in complete dependence on the market economy, however, is.

As I have noted repeatedly throughout this dissertation, communal land ownership is a central feature of indigenous life. In fact, for this reason, indigenous communities at first found it difficult to seek legal protection for their lands under Law 904; their *reko* (way of life) holds that “land cannot be assigned and fixed by a piece of paper” (Schmidt 1994, 126). Clearly this has not stopped indigenous leaders from pursuing such legal protection, given that there is little other recourse. Such actions, however, do not suggest a relinquishing of indigenous communal values. Rather, I view it as a new and necessary means of protecting their land, food security and values. Perhaps the most significant form of indigenous resistance to continued threats to their land is the refusal to surrender communal land holding. It is an economically effective way of providing for their communities, as Reed emphasized, and is an expression of indigenous values of sustainability and solidarity. Kidd’s analysis is particularly useful to my examination of indigenous responses to State and private sector development of their land. As did Reed, Kidd offers support for my analysis that the Dignity Frame occurred in contemporary Paraguay because in large part of the dehumanizing context of poverty and racism. Once Stroessner’s dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. While the fall of the General was no cure for the exclusion and invisibility which indigenous communities

face, it did provide unprecedented opportunity for indigenous leaders to organize and advocate for their communities. Kidd's ethnography focuses on "the role played by Enxet moral values in ensuring the failure of almost all the projects attempted by the Anglicans" and the manner in which these communities actively transform development projects to conform to their own values (Miller 1999, 51). Such resistance is itself an insistence on dignity. I argue this because, by refusing to relinquish this essential aspect of the indigenous way of life, they preserve both cultural values and the autonomy necessary to preserve dignity.

To share one of Kidd's examples of such resistance, an Anglican mission provided an Enxet community cotton seeds to plow and harvest. Recall that this is not their traditional form of sustaining themselves, as it leaves the community without food until harvest and sale. "They decided to present the Anglicans with a choice: either they were to be provided with rations, or else they would abandon their fields and look for work elsewhere" (Miller 1999, 52). The Anglicans responded by providing food on credit. This system, however, accumulated debts greater than any of the Enxet would be able to pay, so they left to harvest other fields for the Mennonites and the Anglicans were forced to write the debts off (Miller 1999, 52). This strategy is effective since, as the indigenous communities know, the Anglicans do not wish to push away present or future indigenous Christians. Also, "for their part, the Enxet feel that if they are to follow the Anglican church, the missionaries must respond by demonstrating love" (Miller 1999, 53). Another strategy of maintaining cultural autonomy and therefore preserving dignity, particularly now that Paraguay is a democracy with competing political parties, is that

indigenous leaders often will offer their community's vote in exchange for food or other goods (Miller 1999, 54). While many may see this as corruption, this can also be viewed as an indigenous leader providing for his people to maintain their chosen way of life. I would also note here that, given the invisibility of the indigenous communities under Stroesser, such a strategy would not have been possible under his regime.

As noted, before, the maintenance of tradition and culture is not rigid or “anti-modern” in my view. A Toba Qom person, of the Central Chaco (the Chaco being a large region of Western Paraguay) explained, “We resort ourselves to ancestral knowledge, we use herbs, we blow...*los chamanes* (the witch doctors) help us...but many of these illnesses are new for us, our grandfathers and grandmothers did not know them, that is why we also ask help to the Health Promoter. They can give us oral serum, which helps so that our children do not get worse” (*Noticias* 11/21/2004). What is relevant to my point here is the choice the speaker describes of simultaneously maintaining indigenous traditions despite social and political pressures not to, while apparently feeling free to seek “modern” health care for community children. Similarly, another indigenous woman quoted in the article specified, “We take care of the water that they [the children of the community] drink...We boil the water for 20 minutes, then we cool it and this water is what we give our sons and daughters” (*Noticias* 11/21/2004, 68). Again, as numerous cultural identity theorists have noted, cultural identity is not fixed or monolithic (Ashmore 2001, 187-212; Croucher 2004, 35-42). Even more significantly, another indigenous Chaco resident was quoted in this article as saying, “We are from Chaco and we will always be here, we want to see our sons and daughters healthy,

playing with the other boys and girls, laughing, learning. This is how we are happy; this is how we want to live” (*Noticias* 11/21/2004, 68). With its references to ancestral land and the desire to see one’s posterity happy and healthy, the appeal to human dignity in this statement is clear. This message is framed so that most anyone, from a variety of cultures, could relate on some level. Thus the universal nature of dignity as a basic human need is evident here as well. Recall that one major thread of my analysis of this social movement is that the need for partnerships and outreach outside of the indigenous communities made dignity’s universality an especially useful, strategic choice of movement frames. The use by indigenous leaders and their allies of a now-free press to strengthen indigenous dignity is clear here as well. Of course this would not have been possible (at least not without risking death) under Stroessner.

Again, dignity is the driving force behind this growing movement, not anti-modernism, though it certainly does include its sharp critiques of modernity as now commonly defined and implemented. An analyst must, therefore, be cautious about painting 21<sup>st</sup> century indigenous citizens, Guarani or otherwise, as “anti-progress” or suggesting that this movement is about protesting the commonly conceived trappings of modernity, such as public education, modern health care, electricity and such. To do so would contradict the evidence found in media, NGO records and field interviews. For example, consider that a central focus of indigenous organizing includes demanding access to health care and improved education (for example, pressuring local and national government to hire teachers and build schools) (Ogazu Memos, Personal Correspondence, MR, June 2006; CP Personal Interview, 7/17/2006). Similarly,

*Noticias*, a Paraguayan news paper, reported on a UNICEF-supported program intended to call public attention to a drought that was particularly intense at that time (late 2004) and causing severe suffering and illness in indigenous communities (*Noticias* 11/21/2004, 66). According to the article, indigenous communities led this effort to educate the public about their struggles and their culture. Concurrent with the above media data, a young (about my age of 32) indigenous leader made this point to me, stating that he did not really have strong feelings “for or against” *modernismo* but that what indigenous people wanted was the ability to chose for themselves (Personal Interview N, June 8, 2006). This feature of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay, in my view, is another reason why the Dignity Frame was the one to occur, as opposed to, for example, a frame more exclusively based on class. The existence of the market is not in and of itself the problem, in my view. Rather, the enforced dependency on the market precipitated by the loss of community lands is the problem. A strictly class frame also does not necessarily resonate across class, national, and other cultural barriers in the way that dignity, a basic human need, does. (By definition, it seeks to organize workers based on their allegiance to a specific economic class.)

I have been emphasizing that visibility is a key component of dignity. Speaking out to the media, with the connections and financial support provided by organizations such as UNICEF or NGOs such as OGAZU, has emerged as a central strategy for promoting indigenous dignity. Recall CP’s weekly show to educate local and national government officials, as well as Paraguayans in general, on *Radio Solidaridad*, which I spoke of in the beginning of this dissertation. Telling one’s story is, indeed, a very

common technique used by movements for social change in general, such as the women's movement or the gay rights movement (Meyer 2002, 66; Meyer 2002, 85). This technique counters marginalization and advances the movement's chosen frame, simultaneously refuting the dominant frame. Without this real gains in indigenous welfare cannot be achieved. The focus and intent here for participants in the indigenous rights movement, in my analysis, is advancing the esteem, well being and autonomy of indigenous people and communities. This type of sympathetic media coverage has been significantly beneficial to the movement. We see here as well the strategic utility of the Dignity Frame; in addition to facilitating partnerships with NGOs, dignity's universality can facilitate media outreach as well.

OGAZU, for one example, has undertaken a number of media outreach initiatives in partnership with indigenous communities in the Chaco. Internal reports that I obtained refer to a weekly radio program, intended to provide "public information about indigenous issues." To facilitate public outreach in general, the Mbyá (an indigenous group in Paraguay) and OGAZU have undertaken media outreach specifically, with the goal of being able "to obtain the interest of the national press about the indigenous situation" (OGAZU June 2004 Report, MR, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). Other advocacy efforts included bringing an INDI representative to an indigenous community working for legal land title. As a first step, the representative agreed to send a surveyor (OGAZU June 2004 Report, MR, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). Visibility, a central component and even prerequisite for dignity, was both the goal and (it would appear) the outcome of this action. This project suggests the importance of the

political connections NGOs could offer. Indigenous leaders surely know that a legal system which is largely foreign to them is the object of their claim making; one must therefore either gain the expertise one self over time, or partner with those who already possess it (or eventually both).

In September 2004, OGAZU undertook another initiative specifically framed in terms of advancing indigenous dignity. It was entitled, “**Augment visibility and empowerment** of indigenous ethnicities of the Eastern Region”. Note in particular the emphasis on visibility and autonomy, two key aspects of dignity as I have been defining it. This initiative included activities such as computer training and trainings in “common law” to assist in advocacy efforts directed at government officials. The technical and legal expertise as a resource of the NGOs is clear here. While I would not argue that indigenous leaders could not advocate for their communities without such expertise, clearly being able to access it is preferable. This is especially true in a context where indigenous communities make up not quite two percent of Paraguay’s population, magnifying an already deeply asymmetrical conflict, and hence are not necessarily as able to manifest demonstrations the size that one might see in, say, Bolivia. This project also included “community strengthening” activities such as participation in traditional religious services and baptisms (“hery”) and media outreach. As a part of this project, indigenous community members also expressed their struggles for land rights to an *ABC* reporter that OGAZU brought in. Other facilitative activities were undertaken, such as moderating meetings to help resolve internal conflict. Examples include replacing leaders with whom the community is dissatisfied or resisting the exploitation of resources

from their land; in one such meeting, an INDI official at the meeting instructed some local farmers who had been cutting and selling wood from the community's land that they were not in accord with the previous agreements that had been arranged (OGAZU Sept. 2004 Report, MR, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). Note that the NGO presence here forced compliance with the law. During some meetings, legislation was also addressed that dealt with access to education and health care. One specific educational policy goal, quite consistent with the movement's defining goal being dignity, was placing indigenous leaders in the local public schools, along with a Paraguayan teacher. In addition to land rights and health care, having their language and history represented in the national curriculum has been a critical goal of this movement. It scarcely needs stating that such policy goals, in my analysis, are meant to strengthen indigenous dignity.

Securing increased representation in public institutions was a further explicit goal of movement leaders and their NGO allies. OGAZU also advocates with indigenous communities regarding access to justice. This partnership of indigenous leaders with OGAZU also produced petitions which solicited funds for community development projects that were to be, according to the report, administered by indigenous leaders. For example, an INDI official apparently gave false testimony which harmed the efforts of that particular community to secure legal title to their land. The President of INDI was approached, and the OGAZU report states that he promised to correct the record (OGAZU Sept. 2004 Report, MR, Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). This project description also suggests another critical role of the NGOs, beyond providing

financing, expertise and connections. They often serve as a source outside of the indigenous communities of witness to and documentation of the appalling human rights abuses which continue to be committed against indigenous communities, a further reason why such partnerships have been so important.

OGAZU, in 2006, undertook their “visibility and empowerment project”. It included, based on the those documents, outreach to national Paraguayan media, meetings with local and national government officials, and hearings on specific legislation related to land, health and education. It speaks of “**strengthening visibility and empowerment**”. The project also provides what it calls “leadership training”, specifically related to public hearings, information and communications. This NGO describes itself as wishing to help organize indigenous communities and create a “political space” for the defense of indigenous interests (OGAZU Internal Documents, MR, May 26, 2006, Personal Correspondence). They also provide direct humanitarian assistance in the form of books, food, clothing and building supplies.

I have noted throughout this dissertation that indigenous leaders have acted as agents of change, as well as the importance of both formal and informal networks in building this change. In an example of both these features, indigenous leaders participating in these programs also conducted outreach to other nearby indigenous communities to inform them of progress and to begin forming a Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Eastern Region (OGAZU Monthly Report March 2004, MR Personal Correspondence, June 20, 2006). Such federations, or indigenous-led NGOs such as CAPI or COSEPIP, which bring together indigenous representatives from throughout the

country, are new. Their very names insist on dignity and autonomy. CAPI is the *Comite Para Auto-Determinacion Pueblo Indigena*; COSEPIP stands for *Comisión de Seguimiento y Comunicación de Pueblos Indígenas del Paraguay*. While the movement in Paraguay overall remains atomized, as I have observed throughout this dissertation, this has more to do with lack of resources than a lack of desire to coordinate or lack of understanding of its importance, such outreach suggests. Such new regional federations, if ultimately successful, can go a long way to addressing this atomization. The training and funding provided by OGAZU seem aimed at just this objective.

In their assertion of indigenous dignity, indigenous leaders often seek human rights lawyers to take on specific legal challenges, described vividly in both press releases and internal documents I was able to gain access to. For one example, OGAZU has issued press releases which describe the forcible removal of a community of over two-hundred men, women and children from land that local Mennonite farmers claimed was theirs. This was ordered by the local District Attorney, and thirty-six were arrested, in another example of the common gulf between national policy and local reality. The crops and homes of the communities were burned to make the community inhabitable. The community organized a petition which was reportedly ignored. At this point, OGAZU provided direct legal representation. A second press release I obtained stated that, nearly a year later, they won legal title to their land and successfully returned to it (SG, Personal Correspondence, June 27, 2006). Without diminishing the real agency of indigenous leaders, the asymmetry of their access to power and hence their dependence on NGOs such as OGAZU is highlighted here. Again, this is why a movement frame

based on a universal value and basic human need, such as the Dignity Frame, that would enable and facilitate such partnerships, has been so strategic. The need for such partnerships, as I have been claiming, is one major reason why it was the Dignity Frame to occur in the particular context of contemporary Paraguay. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

One post-Stroessner response of indigenous leaders to continued threats to their land is forming NGOs of their own. Two indigenous leaders, L and LD, have formed an NGO (it will remain anonymous) intended to organize indigenous communities beyond a regional level for dignity and land rights. L clearly connects the concrete issue of protection of indigenous land rights and the broader socio-cultural issues of dignity which underlie their struggle. I asked him what he felt was most preventing (what he would view as) progress towards the goals that the Paraguayan indigenous community holds (in general, of course; as noted before there is not complete consensus). He answered, with feeling and without hesitation, *racismo* (racism), stabbing energetically at the table we were seated at with his finger, even rising a bit out of his seat. Given the easy, calm manner he had exhibited at all other times, this observational data struck me vividly. From the standpoint of crafting movement strategy, the "cure" for loss of land is a fight to secure title and /or to physically, sometimes violently, retake it. This alone would not, however, address the *root cause* of the struggles indigenous communities face. A movement designed and intended to bring about recognition of the humanity and dignity of indigenous communities, however, just might. L and LD's framing land rights as a

*part of the larger goals of autonomy and dignity*, with the actions and language that characterize this movement, speak loudly to this analyst of goals larger than a deed to land (as vital as that is). Dignity, as a basic human need, is its own end but it also stands to reason that an empowered people seen as dignified equals will not be further oppressed and exploited in the future. Accordingly, as I have been detailing, marches, *manifestaci3ns*, community organizing, advocacy to secure teachers, schools, roads, environmental protections, language rights and similar are the strategy one sees employed to build visibility and recognition.

In keeping with the theme of dignity, the indigenous support and advocacy NGO which L and LD run focuses on securing mandated participation in the legal decision-making processes for any and all matters that might affect indigenous communities. LD related to me that part of his work at INDI (where their NGO is housed) is to answer questions on indigenous life and culture at INDI's library. He has argued back to INDI that the indigenous community is very diverse, with a number of different languages spoken and at least seventeen distinct groups, and that he is qualified to answer questions about his own community, not any others. Dignity as I understand, again, implies not just being known but known *accurately*. LD is advocating, in fact, for seventeen different people to serve this function, one representative from each community. Their NGO is also advocating for indigenous participation in each local and national *Ministerio*, such as Health, Interior, and Education. After all, LD argued, indigenous people do not need others to speak on their behalf. They are, he insists, utterly capable of advocating for their own needs and making arguments even on the floor of *Congreso*

*Nación*, and therefore, as a means of furthering indigenous empowerment and dignity, they should insist on doing so. In preparation for our meeting, they had put together some documents to illustrate their view of, for example, *Banco Mundial* (*World Bank*), *Banco Internacional de Desarrollo* and INDI as corrupt and not transparent. They had for example copies of staff salaries, which they considered outrageously high and having the effect of siphoning off needed funds from indigenous communities. They also told me that they have been in continuing contact with *Banco Mundial*, and that they have been unsuccessfully trying to secure a meeting to directly address their concerns about transparency and participation. These all seem to be clear examples of demanding to be humanized, included, known accurately and completely on one's own terms (L, Personal Interview, July 18, 2007). The explicit goals here that these indigenous leaders have embraced are two essential elements of dignity: participation and autonomy. The context of marginalization that L and LD describe is, of course, one of the central reasons that, in my opinion, it was the Dignity Frame to occur in the specific context of contemporary Paraguay. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame, just as L and LD's advocacy work exemplify.

While this movement is still atomized, there is some evidence of national (as opposed to just regional) organizing; Horst notes this as well in his 2007 work.) A third man, G, working with L and LD, can be seen as a result of their successful organizing (though certainly claiming that they have accomplished their largest objectives would be false). G was ranching for the Mennonites who, as noted before, have a terribly complex

relationship with the state and the indigenous communities who often work their land. In one sense, the Mennonites provide employment and education, but the terms can often be terribly exploitive (Reed 1997; Renshaw 2002; Horst 2007). G was forced off the land where he had been living when a group of German farmers (Mennonites) bought the land in Caguazu in 1951. Those lands, as he explained, “were forest and they could live there free and hunt and fish and go where they wanted and they did not have borders” (G, Personal Interview, July 21, 2006). He is now living, again and precariously, on land that does not belong to him. Listening to him, I noted especially his view of the imposition of a foreign system based on a foreign worldview he refers to here in his description of how the borders came to be. “But then the Germans bought and put up borders so now the indigenous people there cannot go to other property so now they are encircled and displaced”, he shared. His sense of being trapped—though not helpless—was striking: “They could not do anything but work for the Germans; they do it just for food, they could not buy anything else.” G, supported by L and LD, is working on his case. They plan to find out where land they can buy is and they will go to INDI or either local or international NGOs and request the money from them, because the government has said it does not have it (G, Personal Interview, July 12, 2006).

CP, the leader of the community of *desplacados* just outside of Asunción, echoed a similar theme. This community outside of the capital came together via the common loss of their land. After meeting with them several times, I learned that they had migrated to the capital for a variety of reasons but the major causes were displacement or seeking more opportunity, specifically education and health care for their children. The

community leader, CP, I spoke to was himself displaced. After having been run off his land, he moved elsewhere, only to be evicted again, told that he was on private property. He decided at this point there was no choice but resistance. He came to the capital to participate in an occupation of the plaza near *Congreso Nacional*. There he encountered those who were to become members of his new community. Upon discovering their shared trials and experiences, this community of different indigenous groups from various locations in Paraguay came together, deciding they would be better able to advocate for themselves together than apart. They elected two leaders to head a council, which has since set an agenda of securing land title, access to health care, a school for their community, and improving their community garden. The leaders also regularly meet with national and local political leaders on behalf of the community, and host a radio show at “*Radio Solidaridad*” which teaches listeners about Guaraní customs, culture, beliefs and current reality. He made a point of telling me that he was hoping especially to educate the *Municipalidad* about his community’s struggles. Crucially, this work would not have been possible under *el Stronato* which of course arrested, tortured and killed political dissenters. Visibility is a clear goal of his work here, visibility being of course essential to dignity. In fact, during our last meeting, he suggested that he and his community organize a *fiesta cultura* for me. In keeping with dignity as the driving motive behind the framing and tactics of this movement, I believe he wanted me to simply enjoy learning about his traditions and history.

We sat for several early mornings and one afternoon talking about his community, his radio show and his advocacy work. This work focused on securing legal

land title for the grounds where he and other “displaced ones” had settled, near the large municipal waste dump where recycling would be readily available. After organizing their community by deciding on a council (recall that CP was chosen to be one of the leaders of this council), the council decided that education and access to health care would be the two issues of primary focus. To that end the community undertook a number of initiatives. CP, of course, initiated his show about Guaraní culture, history and present reality on *Radio Solidaridad*. He also regularly journeyed into the city center to lobby city officials and national officials at INDI for teachers and access to health care. However, he faced considerable systemic obstacles in doing so. For example, even the cost of a bus ticket downtown, amounting to not even a dollar US, was prohibitive. CP and his community attempted to raise money for it by making and selling wood crafts from the trees on the land where they settled. Several layers of isolation, I would argue, hindered these efforts, however. Geographic isolation from downtown, where whatever tourists Paraguay does attract would most likely be, hinders these microfinance efforts. Paraguay’s relative marginalization in the global and MERCOSUR market is a second layer. Social and economic marginalization at the neighborhood level is a hindering factor as well. For example, the local Santa Ana community nearest to CP’s settlement is itself very poor and not able to afford items which are not strict necessities. Secondly, the very real racism that so angered L factors in as well; locals were not eager to provide space for CP community members to sell their wares (CP Personal Interview, July 17, 2006).

When I posed my standard question about the unique relationship between

indigenous communities and specific ancestral land, CP's response was powerful: "It's hard to love the land", he explained, "when there is no land" (CP Personal Interview, July 17, 2006). In my view, a challenge to his traditional values is expressed here, along with a sense of resignation that there is little that can be done. Much theory on social movements attempts to explain why movements take the specific shape that they do, examining factors such as resources, networks and political opportunity. Some theorists, Olsen in particular, understand activists as rational beings who base strategy at least in part on what they deem to be possible (Tarrow 2003, 15). Here is a clear case of this being true. Rather than attempting to reclaim the land CP and his community members were displaced from, he organized with his new community to focus on securing title to the land where they had resettled, establishing a community garden to improve food security, access to free health care, and lobbying officials at the *Municipalidad de Asunción* for a school their children could attend. These were the goals that he and his community deemed most important, and the most doable. He also explained that his strategy was largely driven by his perception that getting his land back would simply not be possible. While it was too late for them, he felt, maybe they could build a more equitable and just Paraguay for their children (Personal Interview, CP, July 17, 2006). His work is focused on building the visibility that is necessary to advance dignity for his community and the next generation. The stories he related support my analysis that the ability to mobilize resources and partnerships (or not) has been exceedingly influential in shaping this social movement. As I noted, he has struggled to find funding for his community's development or his advocacy, but where he has seen success, informal

partnerships with other indigenous groups and with the locals who host his radio show have been crucial. The local DJ, for example, donates office space and air time. Another local man in the Santa Ana *barrio* who owns a car (highly unusual in this community) provides transportation when he can. Interestingly, in contrast to OGAZU for example, which represents more formal, grant-funded partnerships, the partnerships I just described above are more organic and informal. As I have argued, both kinds of partnership have been important to the development of this social movement. Indeed, the need for such partnerships (among other factors) has been a key reason that dignity occurred as the frame for this movement, dignity again being a universal value that translates readily across cultural barriers and resonates with these actors particularly because of the dehumanizing context of poverty and racism that they continue to fight. CP's work also illustrates how once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

Dignity involves being able to present oneself, and being understood as, three-dimensional and fully human. The importance of being known, strategically as well as psychosocially, was also evident in the willingness and even eagerness of indigenous leaders to talk with me. Two of them even sought me out! The other indigenous leaders (whom I sought) shared the view that it is necessary for indigenous struggles, presence and cultural contributions to become more visible. H ended our second interview by thanking me for my time and expressing directly and explicitly that his *consejo* feels it is vital for people like him, working for indigenous rights, to meet with people like me (someone not from Paraguay) to share their experiences, struggles and objectives. CP

expressed a similar sentiment. He is, the reader will recall, the co-leader of a displaced community (which I will not name to honor promises of confidentiality) just outside of Asunción. Displaying both the community's hospitality and his desire for "outsiders" to know more about them and their cultures, he wished to organize a *fiesta de la cultura* (cultural festival) for me, as I just related. Specifically, he wanted me to know more about his traditions and culture, beyond the current political and economic struggles he finds himself engaged in. He even commented that while he was happy to answer my questions—all of the indigenous leaders I spoke with felt that it was vital to communicate with others about their struggle—he wanted there to be space to focus on something other than the problems and trials facing indigenous people. No one wants to be seen one-dimensionally. As CP had this idea days before I was scheduled to leave, there was not time enough for his community to organize anything elaborate, but I was delighted to spend a morning with him, a couple other men from his community, a Peace Corps volunteer who had helped me contact them, and a few *Radio Solidaridad* staff. We passed around maté, an herbal tea that is nearly a cultural institution among some South American native communities, chatted and sang some songs on a guitar someone had brought. The activities of public education and outreach that I have been describing throughout Chapters Four and Five illustrate how indigenous leaders and their allies use the Dignity Frame. They demand recognition. They correct misunderstandings, challenge stereotypes, and create space in the political and social spheres of Paraguayan life.

I have been emphasizing the vital importance of the more open political and social space in post-Stroessner Paraguay and the partnerships this new space enabled. One leader (“A”) contacted me through an NGO that works to provide support to indigenous organizing. His work is a clear example of how critical these partnerships are, their common use of the language of dignity and also of the tensions inherent within them. While there is, again, not consensus among indigenous leaders on how best to proceed, A undertakes a number of tactics and activities designed to insist upon indigenous humanity and dignity, establish and protect legal rights and improve daily well-being, one of which in particular suggests a growing unity among Paraguay’s indigenous people. As documented in Chapters 1-5, indigenous citizens are often harassed either by *campesinos*, police or ranchers to leave their land. They have at times even been attacked, arrested, tortured and had their lands burned (Horst 2007, Reed 1997, Personal Interviews H, June 6, 2006, July 11, 2006; Personal Interview AR, June 13, 2006; *Derechos Humanos 2004*). One of A’s main tactics is to help other indigenous leaders keep records of arrests, custody conditions and releases. He, with other indigenous leaders, also seeks out civil society organizations, and human rights lawyers, for support. A explained to me that this is easier now than before, for two main reasons. One is the increasing access of indigenous communities to travel and communications which NGO partners make possible. Organizations which provide support sometimes, for example, provide travel funds, a place to stay while in Asunción, and access to basic computers and cell phones. (I was amazed to find myself arranging our follow-up meeting via text message!) A second reason he cited was that literacy rates are now

higher for indigenous people of his generation compared to the generation before, which of course better enables indigenous leaders to be informed of arrests, keep their own records, access the media and so on (Personal Interviews, A, June 28, 2006, July 3, 2006). I have noted that, because of resources and sometimes differences on how best to achieve movement goals, the indigenous movement in Paraguay can be atomized. The work of leaders like A is clearly intended to overcome this and build stronger unity towards a national indigenous movement.

Another major thread of my analysis of the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay has been that indigenous communities continue to find themselves in dehumanizing conditions which deny numerous basic human needs, not the least of which is dignity. To defend their homes, indigenous communities have at times used violence. Direct, violent confrontation when attacked was another tactic A used. In fact, he described for me the first battle he was involved in, during which he in fact lost his brother and thereby became the leader of his community. He explained that a group of *campesinos* had invaded their land and that one night at midnight, they surrounded them with bows and arrows, and guns. He detailed that the battle lasted for one full night and day. Dozens of *campesinos* were wounded, with one dead, and a dead policeman who was mistaken for a *campesino*. A himself was arrested and held without food or water for seven days. He also pointed out that legally, the police should not have had jurisdiction to arrest him to begin with since they need the permission of the tribal leader to be on indigenous lands (Personal Interview A, June 28, 2006 and July 3, 2006). This statement was a clear assertion of indigenous autonomy.

Like L and LD (neither of whom A had met), A, in my view, pointed to dignity as being the ultimate value behind his work. I asked him what values the indigenous community held most dear, and his response was respect, specifically for his culture and language. Being seen and heard were manifestations of dignity that he also emphasized. Given this, it was not surprising that when I asked him if anyone or group in particular stood out as having influence him to fight for indigenous rights, he told me about a priest who had lived with his community for years. He had given them food, ate and slept with them, and as A put it, “suffered with us”. This priest clearly treated them with humanity and showed solidarity, in another example of the importance of partnering with the Church in building this movement. The prized position of dignity in the framing of this movement can be seen here as well. So too could it be seen in A’s descriptions to me of his community. I was struck in particular by his statement that if I saw it, I would never believe it was an indigenous community. He spoke of the clinics, gardens and schools they had built over the years. His anticipation that I would hold negative stereotypes here of indigenous communities as mired in poverty was clear, as was his eagerness to dispel them and be known accurately and on his own terms. (He even invited me to travel out to visit his community for a baptism festival in his village, but to my lasting frustration, other interviews prevented me from being able to accept.) Again, dignity necessitates being seen three-dimensionally, for one’s full humanity (Personal Interview A, July 3, 2006). In my view, A included such details and offered said invitation as one small part of his work of changing the racist context in which indigenous communities have suffered, this context being, once again, a major reason

why it was the Dignity Frame that we see in contemporary Paraguay rather than another possibility. Part of the work is changing how indigenous people are seen, one person at a time. A's work, like that of other indigenous leaders, exemplifies the social mobilization around the Dignity Frame that crystallized after the fall of Gen. Stroessner's regime.

Chapter Four offered numerous examples of indigenous leaders increasingly speaking out to defend their lands and communities. I noted, as Horst (2007) in particular did as well, that as indigenous leaders have continued to gain experience and connections post-Stroessner, they have begun to organize on a more national level. H is another indigenous leader I was able to spend time talking with about his leadership for indigenous peoples. He and his *consejo* of other indigenous community leaders from throughout Paraguay are passionately focused on advancing the humanity and dignity of the indigenous peoples of Paraguay. Like other indigenous organizations described here, they are primarily focused on, and in fact came into existence because of, deprivation of land rights. They began working together and met initially to form an agenda and strategize. They have met regularly since, though the systemic obstacles they have faced have been significant. Traveling cross-country is difficult enough for Paraguay's small upper and middle classes, and there are of course few financial resources to cover the costs of bus tickets and the like. NGOs and other supportive institutions such as churches many times provide funding, without which it is difficult to imagine H's organization having been able to form. This is another reminder of how key NGO partnerships are, and why such a powerful incentive has existed for a language to frame the movement which readily resonated across cultures.

One of the first actions H's organization took was to present themselves to the government and ask to be recognized and consulted on any policies that would affect them. Note the demand for participation and autonomy over decisions that would impact them. Other campaigns have related to specific instances of land loss. For example, we recall from above that many indigenous communities were displaced and/or resettled in the wake of the construction of the Itaipú Dam near Ciudad del Este. This dam is terribly significant to Paraguay's economy, by traditional macroeconomic measures. It temporarily provided a considerable amount of jobs. It also provides the majority of Paraguay's electricity. As I noted in the methodology section, an open-ended qualitative interview methodology was the most appropriate for gathering data with indigenous leaders, because it left open dialogic space for them to communicate their own priorities in a way that made the cultural most sense to them. Along those lines, the indigenous leaders and activists I spoke with had a way of answering questions I had not yet known to ask, and this interview provided one instance. One technique I noticed consistently was story-telling. To my inquiry about what exactly made land so significant to the culture and worldview of the indigenous people, one member of H's *consejo*, CC, shared his communities' story. The government apparently did not know, quite literally, that they were living in the forest in Itaipúa; I could not but recall here the essential component of recognition in the definition of a politicized conscious. Such invisibility as this, I argue, is the reason that indigenous leaders have been framing their movement in terms of dignity, which by definition must include visibility, inclusion, respect, equality and autonomy. Its central message is, "Yes, we are here, and you must acknowledge

that.” The government was preparing to sell their land to make debt service payments—evidencing again a concrete connection between the global and the local, between neoliberal policies and indigenous displacement. This is another example of why I argue that the specific context of Paraguay shaped its social movement such that the Dignity Frame was the one to occur as opposed to other possible frames. The global, regional (I am thinking specifically of MERCOSUR) and national dominance of neoliberal economic policies, combined with the racism which often means that human rights laws meant to protect indigenous communities go unenforced, constitute this context.

In this specific instance, a fire was set in CC’s land. The government sent the authorities to put it out and directed them to leave. They refused, and said that if God wanted them to stay, he would send rain within three days. As I’m told, it did indeed rain, and the community stayed put. All of this spurred CC to travel to Asunción to speak directly with INDI, after having organized meetings within his community to decide what to do. Just the day before he and I met, he had signed an agreement with the government to create the land as a natural reserve. Importantly, he also sought out representation by MR, a Paraguayan human rights lawyer whom I also interviewed. When I asked him why he thought they were successful against considerable odds, he replied that they had been united, working together, and organized and that this unity was the reason for their success (CC, Personal Interview, June 7, 2006). Examples such as this bolster my analysis that the need for partnerships such as H’s *consejo* has been one major impetus for the Dignity Frame, as such a universal value readily translates across cultural barriers, both external to and within indigenous communities. Newly open socio-political space,

NGO resources, common grievances and a common language of dignity interacted to enable indigenous leaders to begin building this movement.

Complicating the desire to be known and seen as valid and equal participants in Paraguay's sociopolitical space is a fear of contact and a desire to simply be left alone, according to my data. A, for example, confided to me that his community would not have been pleased that he was talking to me. He explained, during our second interview, that he viewed his role as a community leader as helping his community understand the necessity of advocating for themselves, and that such advocacy would necessitate contact with non-indigenous peoples (A Personal Interview, July 3, 2006). Resistance itself necessitates contact, and this is a source of conflict and tension within indigenous communities. When government projects such as the Itaipú Dam occur, there is often little choice. Seventeen indigenous communities, according to CC, were living there and told they should best leave, as the land was going to flood. Most of them did indeed, but were unable to find land where they could resettle. The landowners would demand that they leave, saying that they had lived on that land for seventy years (Personal Interview CC, June 7, 2006). The indigenous reply often was that they had been on the land for millennia. This conflict too sometimes (quite literally) divides communities, as some would just want to leave and continue trying to resettle and others would want to resist. Hence when the strength of unity and social ties are needed most, those ties are threatened. Councils such as those led by H, L and LD, as well as the community-building programs described above by NGOs such as OGAZU, are working towards just this unity. Recall once again that dignity's nature as a **universal value** facilitates this

organizing across the cultural barriers within (as well as outside of) indigenous communities. This is not to suggest that the policy differences are not real; as the section on 904 and 2822 will discuss, they are real and may in fact hinder the movement's overall success. Yet both of the "sides" of the debate emphasize the primacy of dignity in their understanding of what the movement is about and why it needs to exist; this suggests the possibility of strengthened movement unity in the future. The realization of that possibility, of course, remains highly contingent. The recent election of Padre Lugo, who we recall is the first non-Colorado Party candidate in generations to win the Presidency, appears to bode well, as he campaigned explicitly on a platform of land rights and economic justice. This does, however, remain to be seen. President-Elect Lugo will take office August 15, 2008 ("Lugo Challenges" online).

Whether advocating for land rights, lobbying for health and education laws, supporting arrested indigenous leaders, educating the public on radio programs about indigenous culture and reality, or directly resisting removal from their lands, the language and tactics which indigenous leaders use to present their movement clearly points, in my analysis, to larger goals than "mere" legal land title. As we have seen, the values of recognition, respect and autonomy frame this movement. Ultimately, indigenous leaders are mobilizing for dignity. I believe the Dignity Frame has occurred in the specific context of contemporary Paraguay because of the dehumanizing context of poverty and exploitation, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the

Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships.

### **LAW 904 AND 2822: Tensions Within the Movement**

As suggested by the first several chapters of this dissertation, perception of a threat to one's basic needs is one of the most common causes of conflict. Dignity, of course, is the basic human need, as Burton defined it, which indigenous communities perceive to be under threat. Of course, one of the major threads of my analysis of this social movement is that Paraguay's particular context combining neoliberal economics, racism and a history of autocracy is a major force shaping the movement's framing around the universal value of dignity. As we know, land and dignity are intimately intertwined in indigenous culture throughout Paraguay. It is significant, therefore, that many of my research partners cited a specific bill about land rights as the point (to the extent that there was one identifiable moment) where they knew they needed to take action on behalf of their community. That they viewed the legal struggle taking place between Law 904 and Law 2822 as the point where they knew they must become involved reinforces both the vital importance of land rights to indigenous communities, as well as the importance of one particular aspect of dignity: autonomy. Again, this is because, depending on where one stands on these two laws, Law 2822 would have created a *Consejo Nacional* that would have enabled indigenous communities to be directly represented on the national stage, or it would have created said *Consejo* with the

result of further concentrating power among those already wealthy and well-connected in the capital, and prevented the genuine representatives of indigenous communities from being able to advocate on their own behalf. Both of these stances, while they obviously differ on which legal framework is best, prize the dignity of autonomy and self-representation. Some indigenous leaders feel that Law 904 remains their most important legal victory to date (Personal Interview A, July 3, 2006; Personal Interview H, June 7, 2006; Lambert 1997, 117; Renshaw 2002, 164). Consistent with and reproducing the Dignity Frame, Law 904's supporters value in particular maintaining the autonomy of individual, local, typically rural, indigenous communities, according to my research partners. Law 2822, by contrast, would have created a *Consejo Nacional* (National Council) in Asunción. Its opponents worried that creating a *Consejo Nacional* in the capital, perceived to be so remote from the realities of indigenous rural communities, would have only further concentrated wealth and power in Asunción, undermining recent gains in strengthening the autonomy of local indigenous communities. Equally concerned with indigenous visibility and autonomy, its supporters argued that this would have ensured direct and, at last, effective participation in the national government of Paraguay. Why, these leaders ask, should we rely on lawyers and NGOs to speak for us when we are able to do so for ourselves? (L and LD, Personal Interviews, July 18, 2006). Arguments such as this support my analysis of the Dignity Frame. Clearly the goal of their actions and rhetoric, as well as their policy demands, move beyond "mere" daily welfare. Now that the social and political space is open, indigenous leaders are determined, in my observation, to claim it. Indigenous supporters of 904 rallied and won

a Presidential veto. BID, INDI and indigenous supporters continued with the program, but the most recent information available indicates that both Houses of Congress have accepted the veto. Hence *Ley 2822* is “definitively shelved” (IWGIA 2007, 213). This resolves the official legal dispute, but not necessarily the underlying questions of who best represents indigenous Paraguayans and how they should relate to the State.

Two indigenous councils in particular made the relevance of the 904/2822 dispute explicitly clear. When I asked what it was that made them decide to become involved in this work to begin with, several different indigenous activists clearly framed their thoughts in terms any North American or European would recognize: the right to *auto-determinación*. Two of the group of indigenous leaders which I interviewed both categorically stated that they decided it was vital for them to become involved when the controversy surrounding Law 904 and Law 2822 arose. Even more significantly—and, if you were an indigenous leader opposed to 2822—outrageously, BID and INDI at first proceeded with the 2822 project of creating the *Consejo*, according to the officials from INDI and BID (Personal Interview GT, May 24, 2006; Personal Interview RF, June 28, 2006). To H, A and others opposed to this project, done in their name, this smacks of disrespect and paternalism, and is precisely what they are organizing to oppose. As is often the case in any conflict, passions run quite high over what might seem to be a quite specific, abstract legal issue. Yet several of the indigenous leaders who shared their experiences with me were adamant and explicit that this struggle was a, if not the, central reason for their beginning to become politically active to begin with. This speaks to the direct relevance of this legislation to their lives. A said that 2822 “would be death” to his

community (Personal Interview A, June 28, 2006). N, another indigenous leader who sought me out through an NGO that supported him, had similar feelings and expressed them with similar passion (Personal Interview N, June 8, 2006). Earlier I noted that, as this movement has unfolded, milestone victories won by indigenous activists have seen the Dignity Frame actually enshrined by the State itself. I discussed the 1992 Constitution as one example, but Law 904 is another such victory. As Reed, Renshaw, Horst, Schmidt and others have described, and as my own field work suggests, indigenous leaders have been keen to build on such victories. This may in part explain why there was such resistance to replacing Law 904. The indigenous leaders I spoke with (with the exception of two advocates) viewed it as an attack on the dignity, independence and rights they have won. Specifically, the fears that leaders such as H and A expressed of a National Indigenous Council only further empowering a government they do not trust suggest they fear the co-option of their movement.

For their part, leaders such as L and LD feel that indigenous leaders who opposed 2822 were manipulated by the NGOs and uninformed. L felt that NGOs who wanted to remain involved so they could continue to be funded for their work and continue to retain power essentially scared Law 904-supporting indigenous communities into believing that the *Consejo* created by Law 2822 would have been another mechanism of control used to strip away the local control they have been fighting and dying for (Personal Interview L, July 12 and July 18, 2006; Personal Interview LD, July 12 and 18, 2006). Their experience, it seems, has taught them that most state initiatives cannot be trusted.

In my analysis, at the heart of their objections to Law 2822 is the fear of a loss of the dignity they have struggled to gain. As I was able to schedule a follow-up meeting with H and his *consejo*, we had the opportunity to discuss this in some more detail. During the months previous to, and during, my fieldwork in Paraguay, H's organization and officials at BID and INDI had been in a power struggle over their meetings. At first, the president of INDI did not want H to meet directly with BID (recall that they were attempting to continue funding the project to implement 2822, despite a Presidential veto). The *consejo* wanted to meet directly with BID to discuss their concerns, a clear strategy to retain autonomy. INDI promised them such a meeting but it has not yet occurred. A meeting had been, in fact, scheduled the day before my second meeting with H, but it was cancelled over the phone. After having arranged the meeting they had wanted, this was of course a disappointment. H repeatedly expressed to me his anger at the "aggressive" treatment by INDI. He and his council held an emergency meeting to decide next steps, and the organization resolved that H would not meet with INDI at all to protest the disrespect. They then apparently told the president of INDI if he wanted to come meet with them, he was welcome to come to their space, but they would not come meet with him. I am told the president of INDI accepted this arrangement but "made it clear it was for one time only" (Personal Interview H, July 11, 2006). In my analysis, this is another example of how salient dignity is to indigenous leaders. This council was united in their insistence that government officials deal with them in a respectful manner. Far more than "just" land rights were at stake here; rather, H's *consejo* seemed to feel the very right to determine one's own future was at stake.

The conflict dynamics present in the 904/2822 struggle are revealing and intriguing, exemplifying the reality that the indigenous community is by no means unified on how best to move forward. Both “sides” contain indigenous leaders, and civil society or other institutional support, such as the national government, INDI and BID. BID and INDI both supported 2822, and brought their funding and considerable structural power to back it. Both indigenous factions described themselves to me as independent, while the “other” side was manipulated by NGOs. Recall that NGOs are often blamed by indigenous leaders and government officials alike for at least some of the problems that indigenous communities face. Both groups feel that they are the most legitimate representatives of the indigenous communities of Paraguay. The 904 proponents, such as A and H, feel that, as they are chosen either through local elections or traditional lineage to lead their communities, they are the rightful representatives. The government, they argue, cannot be a better representative of their communities than they are. Being from the rural communities themselves, they argue, gives them an authenticity that legitimizes their leadership. The 2822 proponents argued that living in the city, as increasingly many indigenous citizens do the more land privatization increases, or having some formal education, does not make one any “less” indigenous. As some of the advocacy for indigenous well-being begins (on some small level) to succeed, class divisions appear to be forming which could well pose future difficulties in forwarding a pan-indigenous movement in Paraguay. For example, in a country where my USD\$5 sunglasses marked me as wealthy, LD wore large prescription glasses scotch-taped together at the nose-bridge, where they had broken. Such features could mark him as

wealthy by most indigenous standards. Hence on the question of “can someone be indigenous in the city?” Prieto observes,

Without support from their communities, the leaders began to lose their roots and their constituency, and tended to become ‘urban Indians.’ Moreover, leaders soon began to cut down one another as each sought to collect ‘financed projects’ and became involved in the tempting relationship with money. (Van Cott 1995, 240).

This is worth noting here since it goes straight to two central questions any movement must answer. One is, “Who are we as a collective?” (This of course also necessitates determining who we are not; as I have been arguing, identity is relational.) The second is, based on the answer to the first question, who therefore represents us? It would not be accurate to represent the indigenous community as divided over this issue per se, to the extent that the division outweighs unity on their central platform of land rights, autonomy, participation and access to social services such as health care and education. Yet as leaders emerge and as the indigenous community attempts to collectively bargain for specific reforms, divisions as Prieto describes do challenge the movement. This, again, is another potential virtue of the Dignity Frame, and returns us to one central thread of my analysis regarding why the Dignity Frame was the one to have occurred in this particular time and place, once the sociopolitical space opened by Stroessner’s fall enabled prior narratives around dignity to crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. It not only directly confronts the dehumanizing context in which indigenous communities continue to find themselves; it is a shared value and movement goal which all indigenous leaders and their NGO allies from throughout Paraguay can embrace. The devil may be in the details but the Dignity Frame helps

foster unity. Indeed, this is an essential job of a movement frame. Victories such as the 1992 Constitution likely would not have been possible otherwise.

## **THE ROLE OF THE NGOS**

As the need for and opportunity to form partnerships with NGOs is a central thread of my analysis of why this movement took the specific shape that it did, I will turn here to examine the major NGOs with whom indigenous leaders partner, the projects they undertake, and their common use of the language of dignity. These partnerships are both contested and complex. The most important observation for the purposes of my study is that their activities, like those of indigenous leaders and communities, are often framed around the value of dignity. Of course I have been arguing that the universality of dignity, as a basic human need, readily lends itself to facilitating cross-cultural partnerships, and has therefore proven highly strategic. I believe that, in addition to the context of racism and poverty which indigenous communities continue to confront, and the political opportunity precipitated by the fall of the Stroessner regime, the need for such partnerships is a central reason explaining why the Dignity Frame occurred in the specific context of contemporary Paraguay. Specifically, once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame.

As I say, I will continue to observe here how contentious and complicated the relationship between the non-indigenous NGOs and indigenous leaders is. An inherent tension exists in assisting someone else to become less dependent. As we will see below, some indigenous leaders firmly believe their partners to be operating in ill faith. One

might thus find it startling that they continue such a partnership, but this just emphasizes once more the vastly asymmetrical nature of this struggle. So vital are these partnerships to the movement that one main thread of my analysis is that the opportunity for and need for them plays a major role in producing the Dignity Frame. To forge such cross-cultural partnerships, a common language was necessary, and the universality of dignity has lent itself to this purpose.

One must be careful, however, about assuming that indigenous leaders have simply been led and manipulated. I do not think a picture of NGOs unilaterally putting words into the mouths of indigenous leaders would be accurate. The truth, as ever, is more complicated. There is solid evidence that the advocacy witnessed in Paraguay (while it certainly does not occur in a vacuum) is not the “result” of indigenous community relations with NGOs. Needless to say, the officials I spoke with at NGOs do not think so (Personal Interviews CS, June 21, 2006; Personal Interview JC, June 2, 2006; Personal Interview OA, July 10, 2006; Personal Interview SAI, July 8, 2006; Personal Interview AR, June 13, 2006; Personal Interview MP, June 13, 2006; Personal Interview CV, July 11, 2006; Personal Interview SG, June 27, 2006; Personal Interview JS, June 16, 2006; Personal Interview MR, May 24, 2006; Personal Interview SR, June 14, 2006). I argue this for several reasons. For one, when I asked each indigenous leader if they would be advocating and organizing without the presence of the NGOs, each of them answered with a strong yes (Personal Interview CP, July 17, 2006; Personal Interview A, July 3, 2006; Personal Interview N, June 2, 2006; Personal Interviews LD, July 12 and 18, 2006; Personal Interviews H, June 7 and July 11, 2006; Personal

Interviews L, July 12 and 18, 2006). They are savvy about their advocacy mission, of course, so that alone is not sufficient evidence. I do notice, however, that not only “would” they organize without the support of the NGOs, they have. In Chapter 4, of course, I presented extensive anthropological evidence; for example, Richard Reed (1997) and John Renshaw (2002), describe petitioning, subversion and protests that indigenous communities have undertaken in defense of their land and dignity. National and international media provide further corroborating evidence (“*Nativos piden*”, ABC Online; “*Nativos Solicitan*”, ABC Online; “*Nativos dicen*”, ABC Online; Abent-Brun Online; “A Political Awakening” Online; “Plunging into Misery” Online). I described above the relentless marches, petitioning, occupations and demonstrations which indigenous activists have organized. Advocacy is of course easier with the resources, legal expertise and access working with the NGOs brings; nor is this an insignificant point, given the paucity of both in most indigenous communities. The structural power there is very real, even if we assume that the NGOs have the very best of intentions. In fact, I believe these partnerships go a long way toward explaining some of the major movement victories, such as the 1992 Constitution. (Recall the role of the Catholic Church, anthropologists and other advocates at the beginning of this chapter.) Yet it would be a distortion to state that such partnerships with NGOs are the “reason” that indigenous communities organize in the light of the evidence described just above.

That said, while still partnering with NGOs in numerous ways, indigenous leaders have also seized opportunities to speak out on their own behalf, as we have been seeing throughout the past chapters. Earlier in 2006, President Frutos met with a group of

indigenous leaders who oppose Law 2822 and vetoed it in response to their demands (“*Nativos Piden*”, ABC Online; “*Nativos Solicitan Apoyo*”, ABC Online; *Nativos Dicen*”, ABC Online). It is highly significant that this victory followed a large *manifestación*, during which indigenous representatives occupied the *Plaza Nacional*. These episodes suggest to some extent that as indigenous communities have increasingly partnered with NGO allies and increasingly organized, they have gained some measure of power and recognition by a government to whom they were once literally nonexistent (the opposite of dignity if there ever was one).

In many cases, there seems no reason to question the motives of the NGOs. In other cases, the indigenous leaders and government officials I spoke with gave examples of local NGOs receiving funds from larger organizations in Europe which never made their way to the indigenous communities they were meant to support. A and N in particular were certain of manipulation and corruption (Personal Interview A, July 3, 2006; Personal Interview N, June 4, 2006). RK, a rancher who argues that NGOs are explicitly the cause of the conflict, observed that he had seen NGOs literally placing indigenous communities on the roadside where, he implied, they could gain the sympathy of onlookers and advance the mission of the NGO (Personal Interview, RK, July 21, 2006). L and LD, as mentioned before, argue that it is important for indigenous communities to resist even well-meant guidance from NGOs, as it stands in the way of indigenous peoples themselves gaining capacity and being seen as their own advocates. This latter is a crucial goal if one is advocating for respect and dignity. At the same time, of course, the relationship is complicated. NGOs often do provide much-needed

resources, legal expertise, connections and logistical support, such as identifying for indigenous leaders which government officials or institutions to take a specific complaint to, or legal representation when a community makes a land claim. Yet even in the cases of L, LD, N or A, reality is complex. Even as they argue that the NGOs can be manipulative, counter-productive and even corrupt, they seek their legal, financial and political support. There is little choice.

Some have argued that NGOs must have had a clear hand in instigating (I choose that word quite purposefully) the violence, unrest and conflicts that Paraguay has seen recently. The reason often given is that the methods the indigenous communities chose, such as occupations of the *Plaza Nacional* or marches from *los campos* (the countryside), or direct petitioning of government officials, are developments of Western culture and hence foreign to indigenous communities. This view was heard mostly by some government officials or land-owners (Personal Interview, RK, July 21, 2006; SA, July 26, 2006). This argument draws, however, far too stark a line between “indigenous culture” and “Western culture”. The Spanish occupation began nearly 500 years ago! While there is merit to the argument that “neocolonialism” continues today through neoliberal policies, (in fact, I have argued this myself), it does not automatically follow that adapting ideas or incorporating language or frames from another culture is oppression. In point of fact, it can often be a successful strategy. Much like Martin Luther King, Jr., using the frame of civil rights and equality, so clearly enshrined in the United States constitution, the indigenous leaders struggling for recognition of their dignity use the language of Paraguay’s new 1992 constitution which does clearly

guarantee that indigenous cultural and legal (with land specified) rights will be protected. That provides a clear basis for human rights lawyers, indigenous leaders and non-indigenous civil society leaders to advance the claims indigenous communities are making.

Cultures encountering one another have adapted and adopted aspects of other cultures since the beginning of history. Indeed, evidence of such adaptation emerged in my data (see especially Chapter Two and Four). For example, one indigenous group detailed for me how they incorporated art, music and rituals from their various cultures (remember, there are seventeen different and distinct indigenous groups in Paraguay) into the “Western” marches and occupations they had participated in. They specifically incorporated what they described to me as protest music and religious rituals, and in fact had it playing softly on a little radio in an open window as we talked (Personal Interview LD, July 12, 2006; Personal Interview L, July 12, 2006). This is just one example of how indigenous communities have adapted “Western” protest techniques to express and assert their own indigenous identity and press specific political claims. For these reasons I do not agree, once again, that NGOs can be pointed to as “the reason” for the indigenous activism one can observe in Paraguay. This is an important nuance to emphasize, given that a major thread of my argument is that the very need for such partnerships with the NGOs, who provide legal expertise, financing and access, incentivized a universal value frame such as Dignity.

I have been asserting, of course, that the universality of dignity, which is a basic human need, has facilitated these key partnerships. I would therefore expect to see the

language of dignity featured as prominently by the NGOs as we see it advanced by the indigenous leaders themselves. And indeed, this is exactly what I observe. One NGO I examined is *Servicio Y Apoyo Indigena* (Indigenous Service and Support). Located in downtown Asunción, SAI provides such services as financial support for community development, expenses related to advocacy initiatives, and legal work on land tenure. They also keep rooms where indigenous community members can sleep for the night when they need to stay in the capital. Interestingly, SAI is in fact the organization that A accused of siphoning off funds from their European donors meant to go to indigenous communities. According to their literature, SAI receives funding from NORAD of Norway, ICCO of Holland and DKA of Austria. Their literature explicitly endorses the basic arguments that indigenous leaders themselves put forward. For example, it references Paraguay's new transition to a genuine democracy, and notes that both "Castellano" (Castilian or Spanish) and Guaraní are official languages of Paraguay, because "Las lenguas Indígenas, así como las de otras minorías, forman parte del patrimonio cultural de la Nación" (indigenous languages, like other minorities, form part of our nation's patrimonial culture). They describe their philosophy as "respect for cultural values" and vindication of "ancestral rights". They list among their objectives

1. promoting the active participation of indigenous people in the defense of their rights and interests
2. guaranteeing the security of their land and natural resources and
3. promoting an inter-ethnic organization.

The Dignity Frame is clearly advanced in the literature of SAI. While specific policies such as land rights are clearly referenced, they are placed by this organizational literature into the context of respect for culture and advancing indigenous autonomy. Note that the active participation of indigenous activists is also highlighted (SAI, Personal Correspondence, July 1, 2006). This emphasis also is consistent with the Dignity Frame, given that it focuses so explicitly on the worth and contributions of indigenous culture, land and empowerment, and exemplifies the common use of the Dignity Frame. There is a clear incentive for NGOs to present themselves in such a supporting, secondary role, given the ostensibly shared commitment to indigenous empowerment (difficult to achieve, naturally, if the NGO is dictating the terms of the partnership). NGO leaders are no less savvy about their advocacy mission than indigenous leaders. This, as I stated in my methods section as well, is why in addition to my own field data, I triangulate and corroborate my field data with the media, ethnographies and other scholarship detailed throughout both Chapters Four and Five to arrive at a more reliable, complete analysis.

*Tierra Viva* is another of the major NGOs working with indigenous populations. They undertake a number of activities focused primarily on legal representation of indigenous communities in court. Included within this effort is the documentation of human rights abuses. JC, a lawyer with *Tierra Viva*, for example shared with me the story of a father and son who were tortured to death as a warning to others in the community that they should leave quietly. They also facilitate indigenous advocacy by providing connections with government officials and basic legal training. Originally *Tierra Viva* was a project of the Anglican Church but became its own NGO shortly after

the new 1992 Constitution when land rights were officially recognized. According to employees, they arrange meetings with partner indigenous communities, and all are invited to discuss concerns. OA and JC both noted that, now that *Tierra Viva* has a record of having won some court cases, indigenous communities have approached them. *Tierra Viva* also exemplifies the common use between the NGOs and indigenous communities of the language of dignity. JC noted that the core of the problem she and indigenous communities face is an unwillingness to recognize and respect others who are different from them (JC, Personal Interview, June 2, 2006). OA, her colleague, also described the root of the conflict as discrimination against indigenous people (as opposed to being a “merely” economically-driven conflict over resources). He argued, for example, that they were in fact entitled to special protections on their land because of the unique nature of their connection to it, an argument in defense of the dignity of their culture and values (Personal Interview, OA, July 10, 2006). This is an argument that, in my observation, could just have easily come from the mouth of an indigenous leader. The ability to use a common frame has clearly helped facilitate these partnerships which have been so crucial to indigenous organizing.

As noted before, the role of faith-based organizations has also been prominent throughout. One such NGO, the *Comite de Iglesias Para Ayuda Y Emergencias*, has existed since 1976. A coalition of Catholic and Protestant church organizations, they undertake a number of humanitarian activities such as providing relief (as their name suggests) during floods, drought or other emergencies. They have also undertaken human rights work, for example advocacy for political prisoners under Stroessner.

Currently, with direct relevance to my own study, they support the advocacy efforts of H's organization. In addition, they support other indigenous organizations, with the goal of strengthening them. CV, a nun who has worked with them for years now, particularly emphasized to me the agency and intelligence of the indigenous communities with whom the *Comite* works. Of course, such an emphasis is an advancement of the Dignity Frame. As she said, "The Paraguayans used to think the indigenous were foolish, but they are not, they have knowledge of their own culture and how to defend their rights" (CV, Personal Interview, July 11, 2006). She also noted to me that no lawyers were at the recent meeting of indigenous leaders with President Frutos; accordingly the leaders won the victory of the veto of Law 2822 themselves. This also suggests that it is indeed correct that indigenous leaders would carry on their advocacy without the presence of the NGOs. In another example of the common use of the Dignity Frame, CV was clearly making use of her time with me to advocate that I should hold a certain view of indigenous people as dignified, autonomous agents.

One final way in which NGOs have presented the opportunity to mobilize new resources is the access NGOs can bring to the courts, both national and international. The Organization of American States, for example, often conducts legal representation and dispute resolution between indigenous claimants and member states. For example,

On March 25, 1998, a friendly settlement agreement that had been promoted by the Commission was signed in connection with this case; under this agreement, the Paraguayan State agreed to acquire a 21,884.44-hectare tract of land in Pozo Colorado district, Presidente Hayes department, in the Paraguayan Chaco, hand it over to the aforesaid indigenous communities, and register it with the competent authorities as belonging to them (OAS Report 90/99 Online).

In this specific case, an Enxet community detailed the history of occupation of their land, going back to 1885. This underscores a point I have repeatedly emphasized in my analysis, which is that most indigenous communities view the current conflict over land very much in the context of the original colonization (OAS Report 90/99 Online). Had the historical reality of Paraguay been otherwise—had indigenous communities been excluded or exploited for some reason other than their indigeness—the dignity of indigenous culture would likely not have the dominant role in this movement that it has. Because of this history (and present), framing their goals and actions in terms of dignity resonates with the racism and exploitation they continue to face. With the legal assistance of *Tierra Viva*, an indigenous land rights NGO, the Enxet were successful and regained their land, according to OAS documents (OAS Report 90/99 Online). Representing their communities, Tomás Galeano and Esteban López, the leaders of the community, submitted the petition with *Tierra Viva* and the Center for Justice and International Law. As they were successful in this instance, more contentious actions such as marches or rallies were not necessary.

Such success is far from always the case, however. The human rights lawyers that I spoke with often referred to two major land cases in which *Tierra Viva* and independent lawyers actually took the government of Paraguay itself to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR). The Court ruled that the state must return the lands of two specific indigenous groups, the Yakyé Axa and the Sawhoyamaxa. The IACHR specified additionally that “bilateral commercial agreements” were not a reason to ignore the courts ruling (IWGIA 2007, 213). The government has apparently paid 60

million Guaranís out of the 90 million required to the Yakye Axa. That said, the most recent information available unfortunately indicates that full implementation of the IACHR's ruling is unclear at best (IWGIA 2007, 213).

**LAND AND DIGNITY: *Como la Madre***

This dissertation has from the beginning focused on the connection for most indigenous communities between their ancestral land and their dignity. Such evidence, of course, demonstrates why indigenous communities consider the loss of their land as such an existential threat. I have been arguing that the Dignity Frame occurred in the particular context of contemporary Paraguay. The continuing dehumanization of indigenous people and their communities, through poverty, displacement and marginalization, of course, is the context I refer to and it is perpetuated currently by the dominance of neoliberal economic policies which incentivize land privatization. This may change, given the success of President-Elect Lugo, who we recall ran on an explicit platform of economic justice and land reform. If he does indeed successfully implement policies that complete the return of stolen land to indigenous communities, among other policies, his election will truly have been an historical turning point for indigenous people in Paraguay. Globally, the sharp rise in oil and food prices may challenge neoliberalism's hegemony, but only time can bear these factors out. For now, as Reed, Horst, Schmidt, Renshaw and my own field work make clear, neoliberal policies encouraging exports and the development of agribusiness remain hegemonic.

I emphasize this because I have been arguing that had the specifics of Paraguay's history, indigenous culture and economic context been other than what they are, another

frame might well have occurred. The connection between land and dignity goes back centuries, and is foundational to indigenous culture and cosmology (and by extension, as I have been examining, to the manner in which they sustain and provide for their communities). One Guarani myth exemplifies this. The myth explains how “their Great Spiritual Father had sent Sumé, an extraordinary wise man who was tall and had a long white beard, to teach them agriculture, moral and religious precepts, and the values of yerba mate (which the reader will recall is a strong, dark tea that is a veritable cultural institution for many indigenous communities throughout South America). Once the Guarani had acquired this valuable knowledge, Sumé returned to the other side of the ocean, leaving only his footprints on diverse hilltops as evidence that he had visited them” (Ganson 2003, 30). Particularly given the myth’s emphasis on specific crops and agriculture as knowledge imputed from the Father, the cosmological importance of land to indigenous peoples is clear. Reed’s ethnography provides further evidence. “Religious activity,” he writes, “has an annual cycle that peaks with the initiation of new members at harvest time....From the fields they bring beans, squash and sweet potato to be welcomed into the world” (Reed 1997, 36). A second part of this ritual which initiates new community members (especially children as they become adults) involves the creation of a “*téra ca’guý*”, or a forest name. Reed explains, “The Guarani describe the soul as having two elements, one human (*ayvú*) and the other animal (*asyiguá*). The human soul inhabits the body soon after birth and is socialized as a Guarani. The other aspect of the soul, that of the forest, comes in animal form....The leader must contact this forest soul and make it known to all members of the community. This new name then is

called the *téra ca'guý'* (Reed 1997, 37). Anthropologist Donatella Schmidt connects the resistance to the notion of land as a commodity to the traditional Guarani search for *tierra sin mal*, which rejected boundaries in search of a perfect land. "If my interpretation is correct," she writes, "the acceptance of a piece of legislation which, if properly applied would result in benefit to the Mybá, and would guarantee them a place to live, goes beyond the acceptance of a piece of paper; it represents a radical readjustment from a situation of uncertainty to one of restriction. It is no wonder that several Mbyá communities are still unwilling to take this step" (Schmidt 1994, 171).

Published indigenous prayers shed further light on this tension between pragmatically securing legal or financial gains for indigenous communities and preserving cultural tradition. Lorenzo, an indigenous leader, prayed

Ñamandu Father, the True One, the First, here I am complaining again. Only after selling these [baskets, flutes, bows, arrows] to the foreigners will I buy a little meat and sugar, some very salty salt, and some imperfect flour, to eat this with all my compatriots, without exception, around the few seats of our fires, we, the very few orphans of paradise who give courage to one another still, in order to keep living in your earthly place. Only after selling these to the foreigners. Listen to the protest I send you Ñamandu Father, the True One, the First" (Schmidt 1994, 172).

Other prayers similarly suggest the superiority of indigenous communal values, especially the view that the land and its bounty cannot really be owned. Schmidt quotes Antonio, a Guarani leader, as asserting that, "We were not made to sell trees, but the *señores*, they are fighting about a little green laurel tree" (Schmidt 1994, 172). Another indigenous leader, Benito Ramos, echoed the exact same theme:

Our Father Ñamandú, the True One, the First,  
Here I elevate and send you what I heard

As consequence, the foreigners, only they are stingy with  
Everything, unbelievably so.  
Because of this those to whom you gave the emblems of  
Masculinity and those to whom you gave the emblems of femininity  
They absolutely do not know where to set up their fires, where  
They can have their moments of happiness, where they can  
Elevate the sacred blazes (Schmidt 1994, 172).

A number of aspects of this prayer are relevant to my central analysis that once  
Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active  
social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Both of these men clearly position their  
cultural world view as superior to the view of the white man who does believe that the  
sacred earth can be owned. Ramos directly asserts that such a view is out of touch with  
the Divine.

Indigenous people have also expressed this connection to the land, and why they  
will defend their right to it based on their dignity as human beings, in their creative arts.  
Consider this poem, for example (*"Voces Indigenas" Noticias Online*).

“How can you survive if in your house you do not have wood,  
how would you build a fire? You become empty, spiritually empty...  
the forests are being destroyed , you are spiritually empty.  
When you are connected to nature, surrounded by the forests,  
you have life, you have everything.  
Our desire as indigenous people is to return, as we die, to where we were born.  
This is what we look for; this is the Guarani Kaiowa custom.  
We do not want to die outside, where we were not born.  
This is why our goal is to reclaim our lands.  
This is very important for our people, so that they can return  
from wherever they lived to the place they were born.  
Therefore when we die, our bodies will be buried  
but our hearts will return to the creator, our father.”  
~ Words of an old chaman Guarani

This again suggests a connection not just to “the land” as a spiritual concept but rather to a particular piece of land, often connected to historical events, religious myths and burial grounds. My own field data suggests the same. GT, for example, an indigenous leader with whom I spoke, shared a Guarani custom whereby pregnant indigenous mothers would give birth standing over a shallow hole dug in the ground. This way, the baby could literally be born into Mother Earth (Personal Interview GT, May 24, 2006). Her description of the Earth as a mother was common in my interviews (Personal Interview RF, June 28, 2006; Personal Interview SR, June 14, 2006; Personal Interview H, June 7, 2006; Personal Interview A, June 28, 2006). I dwell on this point because of its connection to the Dignity Frame. Why so? For one, despite the differences and diversity among the indigenous peoples of Paraguay, this connection to the land is a common experience of all of Paraguay’s indigenous groups. Hence the loss of land is a common threat, and something that indigenous leaders can organize together on. Land is more than a resource that provides food and shelter, though it certainly is that. It is a significant foundation of cultural identity. Hence a threat to it is more than a threat to food security or even community cohesion. It is a threat to one’s known way of life and to a community’s autonomy. It is therefore a threat to the basic human need of dignity. This is why it is the Dignity Frame around which social mobilization has crystallized within Paraguay’s specific context of centuries of colonial occupation and military dictatorship which so dehumanized indigenous peoples. If the policy goal around which indigenous leaders and their allies were mobilizing were more simple and discreet (health care and education for all indigenous communities, for example), I would not be able to

argue this. However, based on the language and movement actions I have described in these past two chapters, my analysis is that the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's dictatorship collapsed, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. Had the historical, economic and cultural specifics of Paraguay been otherwise, another frame might well have occurred.

### **ON OTHER FRAMES**

As my analysis throughout the past two chapters has focused on demonstrating why, how and when I think that the Dignity Frame occurred, it is important to discuss some other common frames and offer thoughts as to why they did not. We recall, of course, that my central analysis of the indigenous movement in Paraguay has centered on several main threads. Once the Stroessner regime fell, prior narratives around dignity crystallized into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. The fall of the Stroessner regime suddenly and dramatically ushered in an opening of social and political space in which indigenous leaders could press claims together, partner with NGOs and mobilize the resources which those partnerships could offer. The need for such partnerships made framing the movement through the language of the basic human need

of dignity strategic. Such universal values as dignity readily translate across cultural barriers. Finally, the dehumanizing reality of poverty and racism, especially as driven by continued loss of ancestral lands and related human rights abuses, is a third dynamic shaping this movement.

Why not perhaps a frame based on economic class? Several factors, I think, shaped this. For one, as Lambert (1997) and Alexander (2005) reminded us, the class organizing in Paraguay was primarily urban, occurring mostly either in Asunción (the capital) or Ciudad del Este. Hence this organizing literally did not reach many indigenous communities. Yet other possible explanations emerge. I am struck by the lack of universality inherent in traditional class-based organizing. While acknowledging the variety within Marxist thinking, it generally seeks to organize people based on their status as workers—that is to say, someone who is not an owner of capital. It is useful to recall here Reed’s (1997) observation that most of Paraguay’s indigenous people have no inherent problem with markets; they have successfully engaged with them in the past. Rather, it is the forced dependence on the market which results from land loss that is the problem. Hence a classic Marxist frame does not seem to be the best fit for the facts of indigenous experience. We remember from Chapter Three’s discussion of framing that frames, and indeed social movements themselves, are contingent on and specific to a particular context. Thus a final point I would make is this: given what we observed in Chapters Two, Four and Five, it is clear that indigenous people were not oppressed and marginalized as workers or a proletariat. They were exploited and excluded as indigenous people. Consider the explicit views of indigenous peoples as backward, lazy

and incapable of self-governance. Recall too the development projects undertaken by INDI and the DAI intended to integrate indigenous communities into the dominant culture, or the illegality of speaking Guaraní at one time. For centuries, indeed, murdering an indigenous person was not even illegal! These are attacks on a culture, not a class. (The two, of course, overlap, but I am speaking in terms of which facet of identity was attacked *primarily*.) Again, had these historical facts been otherwise, another frame might well have occurred.

Paraguay's history of nationalist autocracy, which found a particular expression as virulent anti-communism, is another part of the context in which the Dignity Frame occurred. This, I argue, is one more reason why we do not see class as the dominant frame of the indigenous movement in Paraguay. Medina and Lambert describe, for example, the co-option of a nationalist discourse by Stroessner and the failure of the Left to effectively respond. They argue that as Paraguay fought two devastating wars (the Chaco War and the Triple Alliance War), the Right adopted a coherent and powerful nationalist narrative (Lambert 2007). Rather than challenging that narrative and creating an alternative, the Left, according to Medina and Lambert, rather echoed the Right's narrative with limited, specific critiques. As they note, the Left's treatises also tended to be in Spanish, and hence not readable to many in indigenous communities, among other barriers (Lambert 2007, 345). Given the commitment of many leftist movements to the International, advancing a nationalist narrative was contradictory for the Left. This all meant that the Right's narrative remained dominant. Also, Paraguay's mostly agricultural economy meant that unions of urban, industrialized workers were small and

removed from most indigenous communities. According to Lambert, Paraguay's labor unions prior to Stroessner's regime considered electoral democracy elite and suspect, and hence "no major political party has arisen from either worker's or peasant movements" (Lambert 2007, 341). Further, the Colorado Party reached out to indigenous and peasant communities "through clientelism" and hence were far more successful in building relationships (Lambert 2007, 341). Finally, the Left under Stroessner, who prided himself on his anti-communist credentials, was perpetually abused and oppressed (Alexander 2005, 89-141), further weakening their ability to deploy a powerful, resonant class narrative. I noted this in Chapter Four as well. Ultimately, the Left turned to guerrilla warfare and was swiftly crushed by Gen. Stroessner. The Left did organize as described in Chapter Four through ecclesiastical communities and landless campesino movements, but remained atomized and weak. Nor did they challenge nationalism as a dominant political narrative in Paraguay throughout the 1970s or 1980s either, which allowed for continued *Partido Colorado* dominance. All of these factors, in my analysis, further disadvantage a classical class frame for the indigenous rights movement in Paraguay, which the Left in Paraguay would have been the one to advance. Had such contextual factors been otherwise, a class frame or other frame may well have been more dominant.

Why, then, not a "rights" frame, such as many scholars observe unfolded during the American Civil Rights movement, or the Women's Movement? Clearly legal rights, particularly land tenure and respect for human rights, have been a key element of indigenous advocacy in Paraguay. Human rights NGOs such as *Tierra Viva* have played

an important role in providing legal expertise and representation. And Chapters Four and Five make it clear that indigenous leaders and their allies often refer to domestic laws (such as Law 904), international law such as the U.N. Convention, and of course the 1992 Constitution. Despite these facts, why has the Dignity Frame been the primary frame to occur? Here I would point to the thread of my analysis which focuses on the dehumanizing reality of many indigenous communities, which of course includes not just economic exploitation but the racism which has served to “justify” it. Winning specific legal rights is crucial and an obvious goal of this movement, but I have been emphasizing throughout this dissertation that I believe, based on the totality of indigenous statements and actions as detailed throughout Chapters 4 and 5, that challenging the demeaning view which so many of their countrymen hold of them is a key objective as well. A frame *primarily* focused on legal rights seems less able to address these boarder sociocultural objectives. As U.S. history demonstrates only too well, one can offer a certain minority group legal protections, but there is no legislating public opinion. Minds and hearts must be changed. A broader frame which insists on the worth and dignity of a group of people is better suited, in my view, to this goal and goes a long way to explaining why it was the Dignity Frame, and not others, which primarily characterizes this movement.

Finally, I have spoken briefly of what social movements scholar de Volo calls the Obligation Frame. She observed this in Nicaragua, and analyses its use by the government to mobilize bereaved mothers who had lost their sons to the Civil War. The argument, according to de Volo, went that if the war was lost to the rebels who were responsible for their sons’ deaths, those deaths would then be in vain. Given the urgency

of the hunger, illness and homelessness that many indigenous communities face, why did this frame not occur? Several compelling reasons exist. One lies again in the need for partnerships to mobilize not just financial but social resources (such as legal expertise and connections) as well. The Nicaraguan state's Obligation Frame spoke to a very specific, limited group of people to mobilize support for their efforts against the Contras. As we saw throughout Chapters Four and Five, indigenous leaders and their allies are making their argument to their own communities, but also to the media, government officials, in international human rights courts and to the Paraguayan public. An Obligation Frame, such as was in use in Nicaragua according to de Volo, seems poorly suited to fostering partnerships cross-culturally. It does not speak to a universal value or basic human need. Nor would it, as described in de Volo's study, explicitly address the dehumanizing context of poverty and racism in the same manner that a frame based on the worth and dignity of indigenous culture does. The two frames, in my analysis, are meant for different audiences and different purposes. Hence they occurred, as social movements theory would suggest, in two different contexts.

## Chapter 6: Final Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this section is to offer final reflections on my analysis of the indigenous social movement in Paraguay. What does the above suggest about framing and conflict in general? What are the implications of the above for the field of conflict analysis and resolution? What are the implications for the future of Paraguay's democracy, particularly given the stunning upset victory of the "Bishop of the Poor"? As research often seems to raise as many questions as it answers, what might areas for future research be?

### **FRAMING, CULTURE AND CONFLICT**

Framing, of course, has been a major social process that this dissertation has examined. I have, throughout the preceding chapters, supported my analysis that it was the Dignity Frame which occurred in contemporary Paraguay, rather than other possibilities, for several central reasons. The fall of *el Stronato* precipitated the political opportunity for indigenous advocates (and Paraguayan civil society in general) to organize, mobilize resources and press claims towards the government without the fear of arrest, torture or being "disappeared". Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. This more open sociopolitical space enabled indigenous leaders to solidify and further essential partnerships with NGOs who have provided money, legal

expertise and representation, and media and political contacts. The need for such partnerships made the Dignity Frame, which as a basic human need resonates cross-culturally, a strategic choice. Finally, the specifics of Paraguay's colonial history, neoliberal economy and indigenous culture as I have been detailing them, constitute a dehumanizing context for indigenous communities even today, despite the real progress that they have made. It is worth reminding ourselves here though that the trajectory of social movements is always contingent; if circumstances for indigenous communities change dramatically, we can reasonably expect to see the frame they use to advocate for themselves change as well. For example, indigenous response to President-elect Lugo will be fascinating to study, as it would appear to represent another historic opportunity for the indigenous rights movement. To restate, I understand framing as a contested, iterative, contingent and inherently social process by which social identity groups maintain some internal cohesion and engage with outside groups and institutions. As I have noted previously, the "right" to be the group which frames a certain issue is itself often the battleground over which opposing groups struggle.

Can we draw general conclusions from this study about the role, if any, that framing of identities plays in conflict? With some cautions, yes. One cannot say that culture "causes" conflict. If this were so, we would see more serious conflict in places that we do not. Consider too the point made by, for example, Sadowski that even in the most extreme, genocidal "identity conflicts", the identity groups involved, the Bosnians and the Serbs in her example, worked together and intermarried commonly prior to Milosevic's stoking of Serb nationalism (Sadowski 1998, 81). It therefore seems more

accurate to say that structurally violent social and political systems “caused” that violent conflict, rather than framing. This point warrants some emphasis, given the popular misconception, especially in the mainstream media, that violence erupts “because of” culture.

The framing of the values at stake in a particular conflict is also significant. I have noted earlier that the modern capitalist systems of the IFIs, the Paraguayan government, and regional development institutions, and traditional economic systems of the indigenous peoples, both bring with them numerous values and assumptions about human nature and how people should relate to one another. Capitalism prizes individual rights and private property. It values hard work, efficiency and innovation. Traditional systems, including the indigenous communities of Paraguay, value community and harmony with nature above all else. Leaders will even often lose the support of their community if they begin to collect personal wealth (Miller 1999, 48). It follows therefore that effective frames will evoke salient values, as the Dignity Frame in fact does. In fact, a central component of my analysis regarding the workings of the Dignity Frame in this particular context was its ability as a basic human need to resonate cross-culturally with various indigenous groups and with their NGO partners.

Dignity, as John Burton theorized, is also a foundational socio-psychological basic need that, if threatened, can readily lead to violent conflict. Based loosely on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Burton proposed a number of “basic human needs” that have since had wide influence throughout the conflict resolution field. These identity needs include autonomy, dignity and recognition. Because these identity needs are so

basic, they can be expected to play a significant role in the dynamics of many conflicts. The conflict I have been examining in Paraguay is no exception. What might be gained from comparing the dynamics at work in this land conflict to others, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Sudan or Palestine? Is the Dignity Frame at work there? If so, what does this suggest for international policy organizations such as the UN, the OAS, the African Union or the Group of Eight? Such a study, I believe, would represent a significant contribution to the field of peace building.

### **CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION**

What are the implications of the above for the field of conflict analysis and resolution in general? A defining feature of this field is its commitment to problem-solving, even social justice; it does not stop at analysis. Hence a clear implication of the above five chapters is that interventions into conflicts must address basic human needs.

If indeed Burton is correct, as I believe he is, that basic identity needs of dignity are not negotiable, then the resolution we are looking at is not mediation or negotiation (though they might form a part of it). Rather, the intervention would be *systemic conflict resolution*—a reform of the unjust socioeconomic systems that are the source(s) of the conflict. As Burton's theory of basic human needs is not without controversy, I will briefly review here the arguments I made in Chapter Three in support of this theory. The most common critique of Burton's theory is that it is too broad. The argument goes, if it applies to everything, it really applies to nothing. While there is some logic in this, if an explanatory theory of conflict does not apply to at least most cases, one could question its utility. It is also important to bear in mind that being able to explain the reason for vastly

different conflicts is an explicitly stated goal of major scholars in this field (*Conflict* 2003, 6). Some sort of general theory will be necessary to accomplish this.

A second major objection to Burton's theory is that arguing that all humans essentially have the same set of basic physical, social, and psychological needs ignores the vast differences in culture that are apparent. Anthropologists in particular have made this objection. This, however, misunderstands or misapplies Burton's theory. There is little controversy over the assertion that all humans share the same physical needs (water, food, shelter). The next step, however, that all humans share a need for recognition, dignity, autonomy, and belonging, has been problematic for some. To this I would make several refutations. One, such concepts as dignity and belonging are broad enough that an infinite variety of cultural expressions thereof are possible. Autonomy, for example, does not have to be understood in the standard Western sense of a formal, institutionalized state charged with protecting individual rights. Secondly, I would raise this question: is there an example of a specific culture where such values have been found irrelevant? While not an anthropologist, I am not aware of one.

Burton's critique of the status quo was radical and suggested the need to reinvent our social, political and economic systems such that basic human needs could be met. What then does such "systemic conflict resolution" look like? What does one do to accomplish it? This is obviously a weighty question that could itself be the focus of a dissertation. It is also a growing conversation within the field as practitioners face mediations that seemed ineffective or peace negotiations that have fallen apart. Systemic conflict resolution implies a desire for social change. It recognizes that under conditions

of structural violence, positive peace cannot occur. Recall that positive peace is often defined as the presence of harmony, justice and equity in a society; so-called “negative peace” refers to the absence of violence (Galtung 1996). I would suggest that the advocacy and mobilization of those most impacted by the structural violence is itself “systemic conflict resolution”. The indigenous leaders organizing marches, demonstrations, meetings with policy makers and forming local community organizations are precisely seeking social change and social justice. Their actions, to my mind, are the essence of systemic conflict resolution.

Yet given the global power of the institutions indigenous communities are resisting, is it realistic to think that occasional meetings, marches and Plaza occupations are sufficient to bring about genuine, lasting change? While understanding that this is still a new and growing movement, can we identify concrete victories? The answer is as complex as this conflict itself, for most of the victories indigenous activists appear to have won are on paper. The most important victory might be the new 1992 Constitution with its clear enshrining of not only indigenous land rights but autonomy and cultural rights as well. Guarani has joined Spanish as Paraguay’s other official language. Some indigenous tribes have indeed secured legal title to their land. Of course, I have also been referencing the recent election of Padre Lugo, the first opposition (non-Colorado Party) candidate in around sixty years to win the presidency. Recall that he campaigned explicitly on a platform of economic justice and land reform. Surely this can be seen as a victory for Paraguayan civil society, including indigenous communities. On the night that President-Elect Lugo’s historic upset victory was confirmed, indigenous communities

devoted sacred dances for him, an obvious sign of their hope that he will be able to bring about genuine change in exactly this sort of marginalization (Estigarribia Online, 4/26/2008). Nor was it a forgone conclusion that the Colorado Party candidate would concede even if she had lost. Yet President-elect Lugo will not be inaugurated until August 2008, and he has nothing like a Parliamentary majority (“Victory for Lugo” Online). He will also still face a structurally weak position in MERCOSUR, a legacy of unequal land ownership, and the continuing hegemony of neoliberalism. Without discounting the historic nature of the election of a non-Colorado Party member, I consider it a very open question as to whether or not he will be able to deliver what he is promising. Only time will tell.

I say this in part because the changes referenced above, such as the 1992 Constitution, have not (yet) resulted in less poverty for indigenous peoples, as a recent BID report confirmed (IADB “Paraguay 2004-2008” Online). Nor has it seemed to consistently result in less harassment and abuse of indigenous activists. Other recent reports (such as the World Bank 2004 report, and Amnesty International reports) also confirm the abuses that continue to occur. These analyses emphasize that they will likely continue to occur until law enforcement and judicial reforms progress, and my own observations are consistent with this. As poverty and corruption are intimately related, fighting the poverty that is still endemic in Paraguay will be crucial as well and there is nothing like consensus on how to do so, in Paraguay or elsewhere.

Much conflict resolution theory centers around third-party intervention. Can there be a “systemic conflict resolution” intervention here? I would argue that this is

possible, and even necessary, if not sufficient. Advocacy for fighting poverty, increased transparency and the rule of law can and does occur, in the form of demonstrations, opinion articles in Paraguayan media, and formation of civil society organizations dedicated to this mission. NGOs such as *Desarrollo*, *Comite Paraguay-Kansas* and *CIRD (Centro de Información Y Recursos para el Desarrollo)* focus on these goals. This, however, does take us a considerable ways from the traditional negotiations and mediation many in the field conceptualize as intervening in a conflict. I believe this study, no doubt among others, suggests that the field of conflict analysis and resolution will find itself increasingly challenged by socioeconomic systems and public policy that require not brokering a deal but shaping a society.

## **THE CONSOLIDATION OF PARAGUAY'S DEMOCRACY**

What might all of this mean for the consolidation and future of Paraguay's democracy? Is the violence in Paraguay likely to escalate? Predictions are always risky and, ultimately, speculative. That said, based on all of the history and data presented in Chapters 1-5, I must conclude that this is likely if Paraguay is not able to reduce the levels of poverty its indigenous peoples and *campesinos* are suffering, as well as better protect them from human rights abuses. Particularly as civil society continues to organize, and as indigenous communities become better able to defend their rights, it is likely that their demands for land rights, health care, education and adequate representation in government, will grow. As this occurs, these demands will increasingly come into conflict with the interests of their opponents, particularly land-owners and agro-business. If, on the other hand, indigenous communities see tangible victories or

perceive that they soon will, there is little reason to think that the violence will escalate. For these reasons, especially such developments as the progress of the BID/INDI 2822 project (see Chapter 5), despite its Presidential veto in response to indigenous mobilization, was of concern. The matter remained in legal limbo for some months until both Houses of Deputies accepted the Presidential veto, resolving the overt legal issue, if not the deeper tension about who most authentically represents the indigenous community and how to best relate to the State. I must here note the irony that President-Elect Lugo's victory could well increase the likelihood of especially local violence as business and political elites see their interests increasingly threatened if he is not able to strengthen the rule of law. That said, such a clear victory for democracy in Paraguay should incentivize expressing grievance through peaceful means. All of this, of course, is contingent on Lugo's actual implementation of his policies.

Sheer government capacity is another obstacle to actual economic progress for indigenous communities impacting democratic consolidation (Personal Interviews RF, June 28, 2006; World Bank 2004, AR Personal Interview, June 13, 2006; MP, Personal Interview, June 13, 2006; Personal Interview SG, June 27, 2006; Personal Interview JS, June 16, 2006; Lambert 1997, 97-105). An official at INDI in particular described the difficulty in collecting the data needed to really begin to address the land rights and usage problem (Personal Interview RF, June 28, 2006). The most recent census was conducted in 2002, but there is little way to be sure that this is accurate, as the logistics of remote travel are difficult, and some indigenous communities prefer not to be contacted at all. Health records, levels of education and birth/death dates are difficult to establish for

certain. Also, indigenous communities still highly mistrust the government and are hence reluctant to give information about themselves.

Establishing land title is even more difficult, given its lucrative and politicized nature. Lacking what officials call “*personae judicia*” (legal personhood), indigenous communities are often simply unable to prove ownership of land they may have inhabited for generations. It is helpful to recall here that “owning” the land is a culturally foreign concept to begin with. Adding to all of these difficulties is pervasive corruption that crippled the very agency which was created to further indigenous welfare in Paraguay: INDI. For example, I learned that a past President of INDI was forced out because he had been selling “ghost land”, land that existed essentially only on a map (Personal Interview, RF, June 28, 2006)! These sorts of corruption, along with the bribes of local judges and police which often precipitate the expulsion of an indigenous community, continue to bedevil Paraguay’s new democracy.

As Paraguay is South America’s newest democracy, a tradition of democracy has only begun to form. Since Stroessner’s ouster in 1989, Paraguay has experienced possibly two attempted coups, and the assassination of the then-Vice President Argana. The presidency of Frutos has remained mired in the suspicion of the Paraguayan people, as well. As recently as in the past six months, he has been accused of two constitutional violations. One is related to his membership in the Colorado Party’s Committee as a sitting President, which is explicitly forbidden. Protests and demonstrations were immediate, as I witnessed myself many afternoons in downtown Asunción. The second relates to his attempts to reform the Constitution to allow him to run again (Rohter

Online). He, not surprisingly, argued that this is not illegal, in that the Constitution does not forbid it. Others dispute this, and of course the specter of Stroessner haunts the debate. Frutos has been openly accused of trying to establish a new dictatorship under himself. Perhaps the most positive sign for Paraguay's new democracy is the fact of indigenous (and other civic) organizing itself. An active, engaged citizenry can only be good for democracy. Recall from my Theoretical Framework that scholars have debated the implications of indigenous movements for the health and consolidation of democracy throughout Latin America. I placed myself with those, such as Yashar, who argue that indigenous movements have been reshaping the state itself with potentially positive ramifications for the deepening of democracy throughout Latin America.

One further conclusion I can begin to draw from my study, therefore, is why and when indigenous communities seem to be able to press their claims. A fundamental underpinning of the analysis I present in this dissertation is that there is no one theory or school of the social movements literature which alone can explain the emergence or trajectory of this or any other social movement. This dissertation has explored several, such as political opportunity theory, resource mobilization and framing, and how they interacted to produce the conditions in which the Dignity Frame occurred in contemporary Paraguay. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed, previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. Applying political opportunity theory to Paraguay's specific historical context allows us to conclude that (as one might anticipate) indigenous communities were much more able to organize and press their claims under conditions of democracy. Specifically, the new

1992 Constitution, which specifically guaranteed land and cultural rights, was crucial. Relatedly, the opening of political space helped to increase the access of indigenous peoples to greater resources than ever before, as civil society organizations such as *Tierra Viva* and OGAZU partnered with indigenous communities. Of course, such resources included money, but they also included access to media and political officials, as well as political and legal expertise. These resources and this newly open political space helped to allow indigenous leaders and their allies to begin organizing around indigenous dignity and humanity, and press the related legal land claims. For their part, frames serve to unify individuals into a more coherent whole able to collectively press claims by offering a central organizing value through which movement groups can understand and present themselves. The Dignity Frame, in my view, directly addresses the dehumanization indigenous communities have faced at the hands of generations of colonial and military governments. As dignity is also a universal value, the common use of the Dignity Frame allows indigenous communities to more effectively partner with those outside indigenous communities, such as NGO allies.

Does any of the above necessarily suggest the impending failure of Paraguay's democracy? I would argue no, particularly not in the light of a recent, clearly competitive election in which a powerful incumbent party lost—and conceded! The United States experienced several years of Civil War, two assassinated Presidents, many more assassination attempts, the impeachment of a President who broke the law to consolidate executive power, and what one can safely call pervasive corruption at the highest levels of national government. Yet the difference of degree and context between

a wealthy nation that has immense resources at its disposal and the most impoverished nation in South America with its constitution just over fifteen years old seems difficult to ignore. The next five to ten years will matter greatly.

### **AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Research inevitably raises at least as many questions as it answers. I would like to conclude this dissertation by offering some areas ripe for further research. One area that readily presents itself is quantitative research. While I gave my reasons in Chapter 3 for selecting qualitative research for this dissertation, and maintain that was the strongest choice, a quantitative survey of indigenous opinion on their priorities, satisfaction with the government, hope for the future, or sense of themselves as Paraguayan could be fascinating and revealing, especially if coupled with qualitative data. Specifically, such a quantitative survey could better establish broader indigenous opinion, which qualitative data that is deeper and narrower is less suited for.

Further research is also necessary on the complex relationship between the *campesinos* and the indigenous communities. They are often at odds, fighting over the land, and yet at times indigenous citizens have been known to join *campesino*-led marches and road occupations. As these populations are both landless, one might conclude that they have enough in common to mobilize together. Where this has occurred, what allowed it? Why has it not occurred more often? How does this impact the movement goals of both groups?

Women's roles and leadership in indigenous communities is also in flux. An indigenous woman, Margarita Mbywangi, was recently a candidate for Paraguay's

Senate; she is now on the short-list to head INDI (“Tres Candidatos” Online). H, during our second meeting, was careful to note to me that there were women on the council he led, and that they often have strong leadership roles in their communities. Yet when I visited CP, only the two male leaders would speak to me. Neither would the few women on H’s *consejo*. Is this typical? It is nearly a development cliché at this point to note that educating and empowering a mother feeds and supports a family. How many indigenous communities in Paraguay have women in leadership roles? How are their roles and views of themselves changing, if at all? What does this mean for the indigenous movement in general? What role have women played in shaping this movement?

Social movement scholars increasingly note the role of transnational organizing. As we recall from Chapters 2, 4, and 5, indigenous organizers have gained from partnership with NGOs who can represent them before international bodies such as the Human Rights Court. Their movement has also been strengthened by certification from the Catholic Church and the United Nations. One indigenous leader, A, even mentioned a meeting of Paraguayan indigenous leaders with Evo Morales, and he noted his efforts to connect with indigenous leaders in Argentina (Personal Interview, A, July 3, 2006). Will this continue, or even increase, as indigenous leaders within Paraguay continue to gain experience and connections? Will the historic victory of President-Elect Lugo be seen—or framed by indigenous leaders—as certification of their movement goals? If so, what will the result be for the movement? While no one can yet offer analysis of a president-elect’s administration, reports are consistent that indigenous communities were a vital part of his coalition, which also included student groups, labor, campesinos and (as one

may expect from a former Bishop) the Church. A post-Stroessner political party called Tekojoja (the Guarani word for equality), which includes women's groups, indigenous groups, farmers and socialists among others, played a key role in supporting Lugo's Patriotic Alliance for Change ("Indigenous Peoples" Online). Lugo is noted for a career's worth of work with indigenous groups. Further, he noted just after his victory was official: "Since 1992, the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Europeans, there has been a rediscovery of the indigenous peoples' dignity. And it's got a long way to go yet" (O'Shaughnessy Online). Of course, these are only words until he is able to govern, but no doubt indigenous leaders and their allies throughout Latin America find them welcome ones.

Another area, related to transnational organizing, that warrants further research to gain a deeper understanding of this movement is the so-called digital divide. It has been said that the Soviet Union was brought down by the fax machine. What role, if any, has technology played in the increasing ability of indigenous communities to organize? Would the movement look significantly different sans computers and cell phones? Given that the vast majority of indigenous access to technology is only via NGOs, what are the implications?

This dissertation has presented my analysis of why the indigenous movement in Paraguay unfolded in the particular manner that it did. In my analysis, the Dignity Frame occurred because of the dehumanizing context of successive colonial governments and dictatorships, the dramatically more open political landscape post-Stroessner, and the ability this provided to partner with NGOs. Once Stroessner's regime had collapsed,

previous narratives around dignity could crystallize into active social mobilization around the Dignity Frame. As a basic human need and universal value, framing one's movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships. These three central dynamics interacted such that it was the Dignity Frame to have occurred in the particular context of contemporary Paraguay.

## APPENDIX A

### **Researcher Questions** (to guide researcher in data collection)

1. What has the narrative been of the land conflict in Paraguay, and in the *barrios* outside the capital in particular?
2. How do my research partners, those who have experienced the policy of land privatization “from below”, explain and describe their experiences?
3. What have they done in response to land privatization? That is, what strategies for survival have been employed?
4. Do my research partners explain their experience primarily in terms of providing for one’s daily bread, defending a cultural identity, empowerment, all of the above?
5. Most particularly, as described in my hypothesis, is there evidence a consolidating Dignity Frame that is facilitating indigenous organizing?
6. What are the implications of the answers to the above for Paraguayan governmental policy, U.S. policy, and the policies of international financial institutions?
7. Are there broader implications or potential applications of this study? For example, might it shed light on “land privatization conflicts” in other countries and regions of the world?
8. What are the implications of the above for the theory, research and practice of conflict resolution?

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions For Indigenous Leaders and Citizens

While I plan for the interviews I conduct to be primarily open-ended, I will need more than the above to guide me. Below are the interview questions I will use to give the interview direction and focus, and to ensure that I am able to gather the data I need to draw solid conclusions regarding the issues I have raised throughout this proposal.

1. Where were you born? (to establish any patterns which might appear and confirm that dislocation due to land privatization policies did in fact take place with this particular research partner)
2. How did you come to this *barrio*? What made you decide to leave? Was where you lived important to how you thought or felt about yourself and your life? (If yes) Why?
3. What did you do to provide for yourself before? What do you do to provide for yourself now? Has that changed how you think about yourself? About Paraguay?
4. Have you worked with others here to deal with daily challenges? If so, tell me about that.
5. Do you basically think the government of Paraguay represents people like you?
6. Is life basically better or worse than it was five years ago? Do you think life will be basically better or worse five years from now?
7. If you have an opinion of the international organizations in Paraguay, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), what is it? Why do you think that?
8. What do you think of the government's land decisions? Do you think it's a good idea to sell the land to businesses to make money?
9. Do you think the new constitution of Paraguay basically protects the rights of indigenous people in Paraguay? Why or why not? Do you think people like you have the power to change things in Paraguay that you do not like?
10. Some citizens have participated in demonstrations, marches or land invasions to demand that the government establish and protect indigenous land rights. What do you think of this?
11. Do you know of anyone who has participated in anything like that? Have you? What was the result? Tell me about what happened.
12. If you did participate in a movement, what made you decide to do that? If not, why not? Have you done anything else like talking to government officials or supporting a candidate to help make the changes you want to see?
13. Do you think of yourself or look at yourself differently now because of how land privatization has effected you?
14. Has moving from the rural areas ("campos") made you think or feel differently about yourself than before? Tell me about that.
15. Is there any one special person or group that has made you think or feel a certain way about land privatization? Has any one special person or group caused you or neighbors to take action against land privatization? Do you think others like you

have been affected by land privatization in the same way you have? Have you worked with others like you to change Paraguay's land policies?

## APPENDIX C

### Questions for Civil Society Leaders in Paraguay

1. What is your involvement with the land rights movement here in Paraguay?
2. How did you become involved?
3. Do you identify with any particular faith tradition? Any particular ethnicity?
4. What is your opinion on land rights in Paraguay? Why do you feel that way?
5. Does agribusiness play a role in the land conflict, in your opinion? Tell me about that.
6. Do multilateral institutions such as the IMF or the World Bank play a role in the land conflict, in your opinion?
7. What sort of actions have you taken, if any, to help bring about the changes you would like to see?
8. Have any of those changes happened? Why or why not, in your opinion?
9. What do you think has been the most effective in making the changes you want to see?
10. What if anything in particular has prevented the progress in land rights that you would like to see? Why are those changes important?
11. Do you think that land has an important symbolic power for indigenous activists?
12. Why do you think so many indigenous people in Paraguay have gotten involved in this movement? With your organization specifically?
13. Do you think indigenous identity has been an important fact in mobilizing people?
14. Some indigenous people, of course, have not mobilized in marches, organizations, demonstrations. Why do you think this is?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share or think important to understanding the issue of indigenous land rights and why they have mobilized?

## APPENDIX D

### Questions for Ministers/Officials on the Land Rights Conflict

1. In what capacity do you serve the government of Paraguay? For how long?
2. Have you served in other capacities? Tell me about that.
3. How do you identify yourself ethnically? Do you identify with any particular faith tradition?
4. What is the government's policy on indigenous land rights? Why is this the policy?
5. Does agri-business have a role in why indigenous have lost much of their land? Multi-lateral institutions?
6. In what way have you been involved with the issues of land rights in Paraguay? What actions have indigenous activists taken and what actions have you taken? Tell me about that.
7. Does anything stand out to you as a step "forward" or "backwards" for Paraguay regarding policy on indigenous land rights? Or indigenous rights in general?
8. To what extent do you think indigenous activists are trying to preserve their identity, as well as the physical ownership of the land itself?
9. To what extent do you think land is symbolic of or connected to indigenous identity in Paraguay?
10. Do you think that identity is why people have mobilized for land rights? What might other reasons be, in your opinion, that indigenous people have mobilized for land and other rights?

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## Curriculum Vitae

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