

Borders, Development, and Territory in Argentina

Indigenous Mobilization in the Central Chaco

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One of the bases for the mobilization of indigenous peoples in Argentina in recent years has been access to, use of, and ownership of the natural resources contained in the territory they occupy or claim. Political mobilization among the Qom of Potae Napocna Navogoh in the central Chaco is a response to the modalities of intervention for development and territory configurations involved in capital accumulation that have threatened the possibility of their reproduction, and it involves conflict with both private capital and the state for territory rather than for land.

Una de las bases para la movilización de los pueblos indígenas en Argentina en los últimos años ha sido el acceso, uso y propiedad de los recursos naturales contenidos en el territorio que ocupan o reclaman. La movilización política entre los Qom de Potae Napocna Navogoh en el Chaco central es una respuesta a las modalidades de intervención para el desarrollo y las configuraciones territoriales involucradas en la acumulación de capital que han amenazado la posibilidad de su reproducción, e involucra conflictos con el capital privado y el estado por el territorio antes que por la tierra.

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Notably since the 1990s, Argentina has seen the emergence and spread of indigenous political action emerging from the assertion of ethnic identity and centered on claim making on the local, national, and/or transnational level. This action is taking place in the framework of the current recognition of a pluralist national identity. Together with the recognition of difference, the struggle for territory and natural resources is the main issue underlying indigenous

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mobilization and collective demands. These resources and territories are the targets of the encroachment of capital in the form of agro-industry, mining, oil and gas projects, and the permanent infrastructure that these activities require. Given that the intensive exploitation of natural resources, largely under the control of transnational capital, results in conflict, social movements based on territorial and sociopolitical convergences at the local, regional, and national levels are typical of Latin America today (Seoane, 2006).

The struggle of the Qom of Potae Napocna Navogoh in the central Chaco has been no exception in this regard.¹ Formosa, in the extreme north of Argentina, is considered a “border province” (Gordillo and Leguizamón, 2002: 131). This character may be read either as a political boundary between state jurisdictions, as the limit of colonization of the country’s interior (both current readings) (Bartolomé, 2005), or as a process of connection between heterogeneous spaces in which specific relations of capitalist production unfold in close historical connection with the process of construction of the nation-state (Trincherro, 2000). Formosa has not been able to avoid, in its production as a provincial state, the presence of indigenous peoples in its territory. According to the 2010 census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, 2012), 32,216 people, representing 6 percent of the province’s population, identify themselves as descendants of or members of indigenous peoples. With the return of democracy in 1983, the policy of integration of the indigenous population had its first legal expression in the 1984 approval of Comprehensive Aboriginal Law 426. The legislation identified indigenous subjects as special objects of state policy, granting them a series of rights based on cultural difference. However, as I have said, indigenous mobilization is also aimed at defending territory and managing natural resources in the context of regional expansion.

Along with the profusion of indigenous political experiences, studies of them have multiplied in recent years. According to Gordillo (2009: 249), “the majority of anthropological analyses of indigenous political practices on the [American] continent has tended to focus on organizations or indigenous movements with agendas mainly based on ethnic criteria.” This observation emphasizes the need to distinguish, beyond their agendas, the presence of workers in these organizations or movements and examine cases in which their ethnic condition intersects with their general condition as workers.² Here I examine the relationship between indigenous political mobilization and the encroachment of capital on land that has historically been considered marginal and recently strategic and the intervention for the development of territory that this implies. The objective of this study is not the analysis of the political practices of a particular indigenous organization or movement, which have been the object of other studies (V. Iñigo Carrera, 2012a; 2012b; 2015), but the relationships (historical, structural, contextual, institutional) involved in their production. My argument is that people who see the possibility of their reproduction as small producers of agricultural goods and waged workers threatened are mobilizing against both the private agents of production and the state, as the political representative of the society’s capital (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2013),³ and its policies regarding the identification of land as susceptible to being incorporated into production and of natural resources as susceptible to

being appropriated that have an immediate, direct, and negative impact on the indigenous population.

THE NATURE OF THE DEMANDS: CLASS AND ETHNICITY

The political consciousness and forms of action of the Qom are distinguished by their involvement in a struggle beginning in the mid-2000s among the small agrarian producers and creole rural workers (descendants of those from the provinces of Chaco and Corrientes and from neighboring Paraguay) of the *Movimiento Campesino de Formosa* (Formosan Peasant Movement—MOCAFOR).⁴ Indeed, they were part of all the actions and demands (assemblies, protests, mobilizations, roadblocks) carried out by the peasant organization between 2004 and 2006. The July–August 2005 mobilization for Land, Work, and Democracy demanded subsidies for small producers of cotton, technical support and fair prices for farmers, agro-industrial work for the unemployed, potable water and electric energy for rural communities, scholarships for low-income students, increased investment in public health and education, regulation of genetically modified products, the return of expropriated land to indigenous communities, land for the landless, and the defense of natural resources in the face of concentration, foreign ownership, and destruction (MOCAFOR, press release, July 20, 2005). In a year that was very unproductive for producers of cotton (the main if not the only commercial product of middle-sized and small producers among the Qom), the demands came from a population that had been displaced from agricultural production both as seasonal workers and as independent producers of cotton.

Together with the struggle for basic rights (housing, education, health care, and work), land, and assistance in the production, marketing, and industrialization of agricultural commodities, they also demanded access to social benefits in response to poverty and unemployment. In 2004, at the provincial level, 51,477 persons, 18 percent of the population over 18, benefited from employment programs. The level of coverage of the Unemployed Heads of Households Program (created in 2002 after the declaration of a national state of emergency in employment) was the highest in the country (Dirección de Análisis de Gasto Público y Programas Sociales, 2009). Already high levels became dramatic among the Qom.⁵ Significantly deprived of their productive subjectivity, they had to resort to their political subjectivity as a way of participating in social consumption.

Beyond their status as workers, the claims around which the Qom mobilized also responded to the particularity of their ethnic condition. Some months before the 2005 mobilization, they had blocked national route 86, which borders the community's land, demanding schools and community dining centers, potable water, jobs, and the repair of agricultural machinery but also the appointment of special teachers of native ways, recognition of the right to land ancestrally occupied by the community and the demarcation of its territory, and the establishment of a secretariat of indigenous affairs in the municipality of Laguna Blanca (where the community is located). In short, the roadblock was a way of demanding not just better living conditions and opportunities for

work but also recognition of special rights based on their condition as indigenous people.

Since then, the Qom of this community have carried out a series of direct actions with high visibility at the provincial and national level.⁶ They began blocking national route 86 again some 5 kilometers from Laguna Blanca on July 25, 2010, demanding the end of capitalist and state encroachment on their lands. The 800 families of Potae Napocna Navogoh and other indigenous communities own the lands they occupy under communal title. In 1985, after the passage of Comprehensive Aboriginal Law 426, ownership of about 5,187 hectares was deeded to the La Primavera Aboriginal Community Civic Association (de la Cruz, 2000), but the land in question was less than that traditionally occupied by the community.⁷ The remaining lands are being disputed between private capital with ties to local government, which took control of them for cattle ranching, and the state, which used them to create the Rio Pilcomayo National Park in 1951 and the National University of Formosa's Agricultural Institute in 2009.

The provincial police violently put an end to the roadblock four months after it began. Conflict broke out next in Buenos Aires after indigenous protesters camped there for about six months, and a roundtable was held between national and provincial authorities and representatives of the Potae Napocna Navogoh Qom. The agenda included authorization of a technical study by the National Parks Administration to resolve the overlapping of the national park with the lands claimed by the community, the application of Law 26.160—enacted in 2006 and extended until 2021—with regard to the ownership of lands traditionally occupied by indigenous communities, and the performance of a cadastral survey of the land and these communities' ownership status. Since then, the community's demands have continued.⁸

DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHACO

Ever since early in the historical course of capital accumulation, the Argentine Chaco has been represented as practically impregnable because of its soil and its native inhabitants. Even as late as the end of the nineteenth century, it was considered an area that resisted subjection to the domination of capital and its geopolitical project. At the same time, it was emerging as an area with economic potential and political importance because of its environmental riches and its proximity to other Latin American nations. Private appropriation of land and resources was made possible by the development of various systems of production in the region (forestry, ranching, sugar, cotton) and the availability of labor. The subjection of indigenous people and their transformation into a labor force for agricultural capital was a clear objective of those with political, military, scientific, and spiritual interests (N. Iñigo Carrera, 2004), who benefited from transforming the Chaco from a barbaric desert (Lois, 1999) into an area of progress. This change took place through the consolidation of the relationship between wage labor and capital through colonization of the region and the organization and control of the area and its population through the territorial institution of the nation-state. These were the terms in which the capitalist mode was imposed as the general social form of the production pro-

cess, transforming any previous social form in another concrete one, that operated and operates for the capital's valorization.⁹

Today, with the spread of soy cultivation, capital accumulation in the Chaco is characterized by the appropriation of land at a price below that of the future flow of capitalized income, the proliferation of concentrated capital from outside the region, and investment in fixed infrastructure on a large scale (some of its primordial drivers) and the displacement of traditional crops, the expulsion of agricultural labor, the exodus of the rural population, increasing deforestation, and the threat of displacement of indigenous communities (a few of its downsides). The area is experiencing high capital investment for intensive agricultural production and the concentration of capital through the conversion of surplus value. However, in comparison with what has occurred in other provinces of the Chaco, the spread of soy production has not been so dramatic in Formosa. Historically alternating between expansion and contraction, according to agricultural estimates of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ranching and Fishing of the Nation, in 2010–2011 the amount of land under cotton cultivation was more than triple that planted in soy.

From the beginning in the hands of a multiplicity of small producers, in principle, with a precarious tenure of the land and with little possibility of accumulation, in the 1990s cotton production contributed to the promotion of the concentration of agricultural capital.¹⁰ As tax deferral laws encouraged an increase in the size of economic agents, the survival of small farmers came under increasing threat. In 2002, the area planted in cotton was distributed as follows: while 89 percent of the farms had fewer than 5 hectares and represented 45 percent of the area, 0.6 percent had more than 50 hectares and covered 28 percent of the area. Compared with the situation in 1988, this represented an 80 percent reduction of the area and a 59 percent decrease in the number of farms. At the same time, there was a 51 percent decline in the average size of a farm, but, far from participating in this reduction, the stratum with the largest holdings evidenced a contrary trend.¹¹ Smallholders lost their ability to compete with more concentrated cotton producers, who were increasing in scale and using machinery.

In the context of this process, increasing highway infrastructure and the management of water, energy, and urban resources were key problems. The provincial government's Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan assigned 75 percent of public investment to economic or productive infrastructure (roads, transport, electricity, water) and the remaining 25 percent for social infrastructure (education, health, housing, potable water, sanitation). Historically deficient in basic infrastructure, the state had long been concerned with generating the conditions for capital investment, and this concern has acquired a new dynamism since the 1990s with the creation of the Southern Common Market, the Integration Zone of the Center-West of South America, the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America, and the South American Council of Infrastructure and Planning. The participation of the province in these projects has led to the paving of roads, the rehabilitation of rail routes, the extension of infrastructure and the capacity for border control, and the construction of new energy interconnections such as the Northeastern gas pipeline.

The objectives of these many instances of development revealed identical in their statement: improve the living, working, and production conditions of the local population by providing basic services, reducing transport costs, and employing new productive technology and increase provincial productive factors by providing more electricity, gas, and water. Lins Ribeiro (1987: 5) points out that these large-scale projects are “presented as promoting development for all social classes or ethnic groups that are impacted or affected by them,” but, far from achieving this, they “largely favor large economic national and international concentrations, to the detriment of local populations.” Clearly, in a context of the reduction of smallholders’ agrarian production, the supposed benefits of these projects fail to reach them. The Formosa 2015 Strategic Plan says of the construction of hydraulic works intended to bring agricultural production to the western part of the province that “this possibility is beyond the reach of small producers . . . because the beneficiaries of this canal are mostly the middle and large property owners who have sufficient capital to make rational use of available water resources and the capacity to put their fields into agricultural production” (Gobierno de la Provincia de Formosa, n.d.: 20). Those who produce with the direct work of the family, with use of precarious and worn-out tools, unable to repair them when they are no longer usable, and limited to selling their products in small local outlets—conditions that are typical of small indigenous producers—are far from benefiting from development.

LAND, TERRITORY, AND TERRITORIALITY

The land around Potae Napocna Navogoh is agro-ecologically suitable for the development of extensive ranching and dry-land agriculture and the production of native timber. Today a large proportion of small farmers coexist there with a small number of large farms, and this situation is not new. One of the characteristics of the initial private allocation of public land in the late nineteenth century was the concentration of enormous areas in the hands a few. According to Beck (2007), another characteristic of the initial distribution of land that continued over time was that the majority of producers were tenants on public land. This was still the case in 1960, when Law 113 on Land and Colonization, which regulated the situation of these precarious tenants, was enacted. At first the transfer of public land resulted in land’s remaining in the hands of middle-sized and large local ranchers. In the mid-1980s regulation began of farms under 100 hectares and of indigenous communities,¹² but the situation remained markedly bipolar during the 1990s, when a plan for rezoning parcels was implemented in the far West of the province and individual capital was sold large areas of land at very low prices. Between 1990 and 2003 more than 340,000 hectares were transferred to the private sector, benefiting more than 4,000 producers with an average of 83 hectares each (Beck, 2007). In 2002, 87 percent of farms were privately owned, 4 percent were rented, and 7 percent were occupied with permission or *de facto*.

The increasing differentiation among agents of agricultural production during the 1990s was also apparent in tenancy. While 32,187 hectares consisted of

agricultural enterprises of up to 25 hectares, of which 74.5 percent were owned, 2.9 percent rented, and 16.5 percent occupied with permission or *de facto*, 1,460,561 hectares made up of farms larger than 5,000 hectares were 81 percent owned, 7.7 percent rented, and 3.1 percent occupied. The larger proportion of the latter in the area under rent shows that the redistribution of land favored large farming enterprises (Slutzky, 2008).

In addition to the changes in tenancy, the recent implementation of the Territorial Regulation of Rural Program formally began in July 2008, after the 2007 enactment of Law 26.331 on Minimal Budgets for Environmental Protection of Native Forests and the accompanying Provincial Law 1.552. It aimed to ensure balanced and sustainable socioeconomic development of the territory while promoting improvement in the quality of life of the local population (indigenous and creole small producers) and the conservation of the province's natural resources, valorizing the territory strategically, promoting the territory's productive capabilities (in particular, achieving a significant increase in cultivated lands), taking into account its environmental constraints, agronomic potential, and the preservation of ecosystems, and fostering the use of rural land according to its social function. To this end, the province classified the territory under its jurisdiction in terms of zones based on their geography, predominant productive uses, and characteristic ecosystems.

The program established two zones, the corridors and the central and eastern, the first priority areas for the conservation of biological diversity and the second for the support of the main current urban and productive centers. Maximum percentages of natural coverage allowed to be replaced by agricultural or pastoral uses—20 percent for the corridors and 60 percent for the central-eastern zone—were established for each zone. These percentages allowed for the expansion of cultivated areas (amounting to 400,000 hectares at the time) by some 2,600,000 hectares, which, with the addition of the 10 percent set aside for changes in land use connected with projects of sustainable development, meant a potential expansion of cultivated areas by 3,328,000 hectares (Ministerio de la Producción y Ambiente, 2009).

The initial proposal had close to 90 percent of the forest assigned to the category of lowest conservation value (Category 3), thus enabling the possibility of incorporating large areas of land into agricultural production. Even after the modifications introduced between December 2009 and March 2010 74 percent of the forest area (a total of 4,387,269 hectares) was assigned to that category, 16 percent to Category 2 (of medium conservation value), and only 9 percent to Category 1 (of very high conservation value) (Secretaría de Ambiente, 2013). Category 2 of this classification of native forests provisionally included forests located on indigenous land, subject to ratification by the indigenous communities themselves. This applied to communities with property titles listed in the provincial registry, with conservation being limited to the native forests that fell within the boundaries established by the various surveys. This means that the passage of the law resulted in the same territorial fragmentation that indigenous people had experienced since colonial times and the ensuing encapsulation of the notions of "people" and "ethnic territory" at the community level (Barabas, 2004).

Thus, as before, the individual owns land (as both the means and the object of labor) only as a member of his community, but now the community is a legal entity. The recognition of special rights on which land distribution for indigenous peoples in Formosa is based has established the community as a form of organization and as a nonprofit civic association. The occupation is then of the lands included in community property defined in this way, and this is because of the successive deprivations suffered by indigenous territoriality—which differs in historical, material, and symbolic ways from the territoriality constructed by private capital and the state.

CONCLUSION

As Díaz-Polanco (2006) has pointed out, identities are historical, dynamic, and intensely heterogeneous. In addition, they are forms of political action, that is, ways in which subjects govern their action by ideally appropriating its potentiality with respect to the potentiality of the environment (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2013). The claim making of the Qom of Potae Napocna Navogoh has been based on a double fold of their political action. The first of these, on the community as a collective level (Briones and Ramos, 2010) and no longer or at least not visibly on an organization that transcends it, occurred in a political context in which MOCAFOR had developed internal fractures and reduced its public presence, and the Qom's political action was based on the revitalization of a form of indigenous sociopolitical organization. When applying for legal status with the National Registry of Indigenous Communities, the community decided to take the name its ancestors had called it, Potae Napocna Navogoh (Anteater's Spring), designated its maximum authority as *qarashe* (leader with his people), and created councils of elders, youth, women, and men. In short, it established community norms and guidelines. The second fold of political action had to do with their political consciousness of their ethnic identity and led to the demand for territory (understood as an area bringing together the material aspects and ideals of their historical character as a distinct people) rather than for land (understood as a means and object of work) (Barabas, 2004).¹³

Díaz-Polanco (2006) stresses that it is a mistake to overlook the socioeconomic determinants of identity. As forms of consciousness and political action, it constitutes a concrete expression of the existence of capital. While the admission of indigenous people to citizenship during the first presidency of Juan Domingo Perón (1946–1952) was based on their status as workers, since the end of 1980 a new conception of citizenship for them has emerged in the guise of a neoliberal multicultural identity that promotes the recognition of differentiating rights (cultural and collective) by sectors of the population on the basis of the exaltation of their cultural difference. This is the case not only in Argentina but in many other Latin American countries as their governments privatize the production of goods and services, decentralize their administration to the subnational level, and transfer the responsibility for production to civil society (Richards, 2013; Webber, 2011). I am referring here to two historical moments in the process of capital accumulation, one that required the production of relatively universal workers, no matter how mutilated their productive attributes

were, as bearers of equal rights as citizens of the nation-state and another with increasing differentiation based on skills, which amounted to differentiation of citizenship within the working class (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2013).¹⁴ Indigenous mobilization in the central Chaco, based on the struggle for territory and the natural resources it contains, is being conducted by a population of workers displaced from agricultural production or, what is the same, whose productive attributes are seen as increasingly mutilated.

I have traced the historical course of capital accumulation in the central Chaco and described the concentration and centralization of agrarian capital, its promotion through the implementation of the infrastructure projects it required, and the consequent reduction of agrarian production by smallholders—among them, the Qom. Finally, I have analyzed the initial allocation to private individuals of public land, the increasing differentiation among agents of agrarian production in the realm of land tenancy, the implementation of programs for territorial regulation, and the resulting displacement of the Qom from their territory. In sum, the demands of the Qom of Potae Napocna Navogoh refer directly to the modalities of intervention for development and configuration of the territory, both expressions of capital accumulation. Given the state's identification of land available for agro-industrial production and the appropriation of natural resources, the reproduction of small agricultural producers, waged workers, hunters of small animals, fishermen, gatherers of wild fruits and honey, and sellers of shellfish by-products is clearly threatened, and this is the basis of the Qom's political action.

NOTES

1. The central Chaco is the area between the rivers Bermejo and Pilcomayo (forming the border between Argentina and Paraguay), including the entire province of Formosa and northeastern Salta. Numerous indigenous peoples inhabit the central Chaco: Qom, Mocovi, and Pilaga (of the Guaycuru linguistic family); Wichi, Chorote, and Nivacle (of the Mataco-Mataguayo linguistic family); Guarani, Chane, and Tapiete (of the Tupi-Guarani linguistic family) (see Gordillo and Hirsch, 2010). The community of Potae Napocna Navogoh, also known as La Primavera, is located on national route 86 near the Pilomayo River and 140 kilometers from the capital city of the province. Its inhabitants are members of an ethnic group known as Takshek Qom (people of the East).

2. The relationship between class and ethnicity as dimensions that configure political action has been a central topic of theoretical discussion in Latin American social science (Bartolomé, 2010). I shall not review the various conceptualizations of this relationship, which have frequently involved the reduction of one of the terms to the other. I will just point out this is not a matter of assigning primacy to one pole over the other according to the criteria of each researcher. Far from denying the need to consider the specificity of the ethnic in the explanation of political action or reducing that specificity to a purely economic one, I inscribe it in the general of organization of social production, that is, in the capitalist organization of social production. In this sense, in analyzing the Qom of the central Chaco as a social subject, I recognize a double starting point: first, that every economic relation is necessarily realized in the form of a political relation or, what is the same, every political relation contains an economic relation (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2012); and, second, that to explain their specificity as a social subject one should start from the general social relation that governs the capitalist organization of production and social consumption and go on to the mediation that determines that specificity in terms of their character as an indigenous population (J. Iñigo Carrera and V. Iñigo Carrera, 2017).

3. The historical specificity of the state as a political representative of the total capital of society is based on that capital's need to have its own political representative in the class struggle and to assume the appearance of its opposite. This need takes the form of the state-citizenry relation:

"The state is that objectified social relation that stems from the abstract free will of those who see that they naturally receive the attributes of being citizens from blood or land and act as general political representatives of social capital" (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2013: 97).

4. Emerging at the end of the 1990s, MOCAFOR recognizes a trajectory in the development of the United Leagues of Formosa Peasants from 1971 until the establishment of the military dictatorship in 1976 (Ferrara, 1973; Roze, 1992) and, with the return of democracy in 1983, of the Formosa Agrarian Movement (Sapkus, 2002).

5. The Qom's trajectory as subjects of these demands has been symptomatic and paradigmatic. Historically organized into nomadic groups of hunters and gatherers, at the end of the nineteenth century they were objects of military aggression. Having become small farmers and a rural and urban proletariat as a result of capital expansion, today they struggle to survive by producing merchandise or working for wages and, to a lesser degree, on their original hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild fruits and honey, increasingly becoming beneficiaries of the direct provision of services and livelihoods. The gradual mutilation of the productive attributes of the indigenous labor force has multiple expressions: limited participation in cotton production as independent producers of textiles in the face of concentration and centralization of capital in cotton production; renting land to third parties for lack of the tools and equipment for agricultural production and becoming waged workers on their own land; limited participation as seasonal workers in cotton cultivation because of declining production in Formosa and the increasing use of chemical herbicides and harvest machinery; declining wages, which barely represented physical reproduction during the work period; the sale of handicrafts and the products of hunting, fishing, and gathering at below-market rates; and the receipt of social assistance.

6. See <http://comunidadlaprimavera.blogspot.com/> for a detailed explanation.

7. This is generally true of all indigenous communities. As de la Cruz (2000: 35) notes, "the transfer of rights has been limited to small areas . . . minimal compared with the spaces occupied by the development of traditional economic, social, and symbolic practices."

8. While the claims are essentially the same, it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss what happened after the period of my ethnographic fieldwork. In this regard, see Cardin (2013).

9. Since much of the anthropological literature of the late 1980s is critical of development (Escobar, 1997; Ferguson, 1990; Sachs, 2010), I not examine its discursive formation. Rather, I focus on the material dimension of capital accumulation, bearing in mind its historical necessity.

10. The 1990s were characterized by growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in constant prices, stagnation of the GDP in terms of purchasing power below the levels reached in the mid-1970s and 1980s, expansion of net surplus value at the cost of a decline in wages and the contraction of employment, the systematic sale of the labor force at less than its value, a tendency toward increase in the surplus worker population, acceleration of the centralization and concentration of capital, appropriation of the differential rent of land by industrial capital through the overvaluation of the national currency, and an increase in foreign public debt (J. Iñigo Carrera, 2003).

11. The data provided here come from the national agricultural censuses of 1988 and 2002. The census of 2008 did not cover the same amount of land as in 2002, and therefore its results are not comparable with those of previous ones (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, 2009).

12. Between 1984 and 1991, 290,723 hectares were distributed to 83 communities.

13. The territorial struggle has varied in emphasis over time (V. Iñigo Carrera, 2015). In 2007 the demand was access to the lagoon, and the Qom demanded the requirement of a fishing permit and limits on the catch. Four years later, the community was calling the territory "much more than economic resources. . . . The most important thing is that there is a lagoon, which is fundamental for us, because it is a sacred place." A dominant approach in the literature on indigenous struggles for rights conceives identity as something constructed essentially and strategically as part of claim-making actions (Conklin, 1997; Hale, 1996; Li, 2003; Mallón, 1996). Here, the public (re)presentation of ethnicity in terms of certain biological and/or cultural characteristics legitimizes political intervention demanding rights derived from that condition (Restrepo, 2004). Understanding ethnicity in this way requires rethinking the terms of its construction as part of the dynamic of indigenous social movements as collective political subjects.

14. In his analysis of the emergence of indigenous identity in Latin America, Bengoa (2009: 12) coincidentally contends that “ ‘Indian peasantization’ was the main identity objective in the period of popular national states in Latin America. It was about affirming a unique national citizenship, and therefore ethnic dimensions remained in the background.” Not until the 1980s did the emergence of indigenous identity take into account the transition from “peasant” to “indigenous.”

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