

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE:
ROLES OF NORTH AMERICAN NGOs IN COLOMBIA'S INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

by

Freya Kristensen

B.A., University of Western Ontario, 2003

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 2005

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ISBN: 978-0-494-28394-3

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-28394-3

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Abstract

Despite the violence resulting from its internal armed conflict, Colombia's indigenous movement is among the most organized in Latin America. NGOs based in North America play a number of roles within the movement, in an effort to bring the movement closer to achieving its goals. This thesis investigates four such NGOs - Inter Pares, Rights and Democracy, Colombia Support Network, and En Camino - and assesses the effectiveness of programs run by each NGO. Information was gathered through first-hand interviews with representatives from these NGOs, from the websites of the NGOs, and through a literature search. Based upon this assessment, three roles are prescribed for North American NGOs to play within Colombia's indigenous movement: research and advocacy, lobbying, and building networks of solidarity. Overall this thesis urges NGOs to focus foremost on developing a networking role with social movements to form long-term, reciprocal relationships.

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List of Acronyms

ACIN	Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca (Association of Cabildos of Northern Cauca)
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia)
CCSC	Canada-Colombia Solidarity Campaign
CENCOOSER	La Central Cooperativa Servicios (The Central Service Cooperative)
CONAIE	Confederación Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador)
CONFENAIE	Confederación Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana (National Indigenous Confederation of the Ecuadorian Amazon)
CNTCB	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia)
CRIC	Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca)
CSN	Colombia Support Network
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Confederation of Peasant Workers' Unions of Bolivia)
ECUARUNARI	Ecuador Runcunapac Richarimui (Awakening of the Ecuadorian Indian)
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
ETI	Entidades Territoriales Indígenas (Indigenous Territorial Entities)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GONGO	Governmental Nongovernmental Organization
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization

MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement toward Socialism)
NGDO	Nongovernmental Development Organisation
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
ONIC	Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia)
OREWA	Organización Regional Embera-Waunan (Embera-Waunan Regional Organization)
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network
TSMO	Transnational Social Movement Organisation
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Heather Smith, for her support and encouragement despite the long distance. Thank you also to my committee members Dr. Jacqueline Holler and Dr. Fiona McPhail for accommodating me and meeting quick deadlines. I also wish to thank my external advisor Dr. Catherine Nolin. Because emotional support is equally important as academic support for grad students, Mike deserves much thanks here for not letting me quit, being the most thorough proof-reader imaginable, and fixing my bikeⁱ. The support network provided by the regulars in the grad office was incalculable. Thanks especially to Jenn, Donna, Adam, Charles, Laura, and Brenda. Finally, I owe a debt (bigger than my financial one) of thanks to my parents for financially supporting me through all of this and being ceaselessly encouraging.

ⁱ Mike fixing my bike meant that I didn't have to, leaving much more time to spend with my thesis.

Introduction

Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) are often exalted as being the answer to modern problems of poverty and inequality due to their supposed separation from government, because many are non-profit and because they may be perceived as tireless do-gooders. While this thesis certainly does not intend to challenge the usefulness of NGOs working on specific campaigns, the main goal here is to find out what roles NGOs have and can play within social movements. The uncertainty about what roles NGOs play with social movements stems from the nature of these movements themselves. Often the aims of social movements are long-term and involve somewhat intangible goals such as building solidarity between different countries and among various social movements. This is certainly true of the indigenous movement in Colombia, which is the social movement of relevance to this thesis. Working under unbelievable repression and violence, the Colombian indigenous movement has accomplished extraordinary things, such as reclaiming traditional lands and defending them without the use of weapons or violence. However, the movement still has a long way to go toward both compelling the government to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples and creating a space within Colombia where indigenous communities will not be threatened with violence by Colombia's many armed groups. While the goals of the movement include defending indigenous land rights and defeating free trade initiatives currently under discussion between Colombia and the U.S., one of the over-arching aims of the movement is to build and strengthen relationships between other indigenous and marginalized peoples around the world. Ultimately this thesis will answer the question: 'What roles have North American NGOs played in Colombia's indigenous movement and what roles should they play?' After investigating the programs that have been initiated with the Colombian indigenous

movement by four North American NGOs, three roles will be prescribed for North American NGOs to play with the movement: research and advocacy, lobbying, and building networks of solidarity.

There are four main reasons for which this thesis question was undertaken. First, the relationship between NGOs and social movements is one that is under-explored in both NGO and social movement literature. This thesis will be a contribution towards understanding this relationship. Second, because indigenous communities in Colombia face a variety of economic, physical, and legal threats, it is imperative to investigate ways in which these threats can be removed or minimized. Involving NGOs in the indigenous movement may be a means to accomplish this. Third, it cannot be assumed that NGO involvement in the movement is necessarily beneficial. This thesis seeks to determine which roles are the most worthwhile for NGOs to play with the movement, and will base this assessment on critiques of NGOs contained in NGO literature and on the previous experiences of the case study NGOs, outlined in Chapter Four. Finally, an underlying theme examined in this thesis is the potential for a social movement to transcend the borders of a nation-state. A foundation for such a transnational movement based on common identity and marginalization exists already; this could unite the world's indigenous peoples through the hardships that they suffer in countries around the world. The case study of the indigenous movement in Colombia was chosen because it represents one of the strongest, most organised contemporary indigenous movements, despite the atmosphere of brutality within which it exists.

The impetus for this thesis came from my interest in the tactics used by the movement to organize in the midst of Colombia's conflict, which involves a variety of armed actors and makes Colombia the most violent country in the hemisphere. I

chose to study the indigenous movement (as opposed to other active social movements such as the labour movement or the women's movement) because I was interested to discover how indigenous communities in Colombia deal with violence on their lands as well as mobilize to achieve what other indigenous movements in the world are striving for: autonomy and secure land rights.

The Colombian indigenous movement is engaged in a variety of non-violent activities in defence of their communities, making it one of the best organized and most active indigenous movements in Latin America. I assumed that there would be many opportunities for NGOs to become involved in the movement and that there would be many roles for them to fill, owing to the situation faced by indigenous peoples in Colombia. Assumptions were not enough and so I set out to investigate the interface between NGOs and the indigenous social movement in Colombia.

There are several reasons why I find the Colombian situation so fascinating. My hometown of London, Ontario is home to one of the largest Colombian refugee populations in North America, so throughout high school and university I was exposed to the situation in Colombia via Colombian friends and acquaintances. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Nobel Prize-winning Colombian writer, as had an enormous influence on my desire to study Colombia since I read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* at the age of 21. Finally, my interest in pursuing this topic came about because of my involvement with an organization known as Enlaces Canada-Colombia, which is a group that aims to build solidarity between youth movements in Canada and Colombia. Since Enlaces is only three years old, I hoped that by undertaking a case study of the relationships between four North American NGOs and the indigenous movement in Colombia, I could help Enlaces better develop its own programs by learning from the successes and failures of the four case study NGOs.

Chapter One will explain that NGOs are those organisations situated conceptually in the space that exists in between the state and the market known as 'civil society'. While the body of literature surrounding the difficulties of defining the NGO as a concept is large (elaborated upon in Chapter One), for the purposes of this thesis, the term 'NGO' will be used to refer to organisations which are not-for-profit, autonomous, non-market-oriented, nongovernmental organisations whose purpose is to benefit the poor and underprivileged members of a population. Part Two of Chapter One explores the various roles played by different NGOs, including advocacy, lobbying, welfare, capacity-building, and networking. Part Three looks at the literature surrounding criticisms of and obstacles to NGO effectiveness.

In Chapter Two, the term 'social movement' is explored and ultimately defined as a self-organised and self-aware mobilization of a group of people that is actively confronting specific power structures and that is concerned with bringing about political and social change. Chapter Two also includes a brief history of social movements and summarizes theories about how they grow. Information that supplied Chapters One and Two was obtained through a review of recent and relevant literature, contained in monographs and scholarly journals.

Chapter Three moves away from theory to describe the situation in Colombia and the actors who are at the forefront of the conflict, including guerrilla factions, the paramilitaries, and the Colombian Armed Forces. A description of the U.S. funded *Plan Colombia* follows, explaining the rationale behind its inception and the destination of its funds. The second portion of Chapter Three is dedicated to the indigenous movement in Colombia, concentrating on those that represent indigenous communities within the department (Colombia's equivalent of provinces or states) of Cauca as well as the national indigenous organisation. The context within which these

groups organize is one of intense violence. Guerrilla groups, the paramilitary organisations, and the Colombian Armed Forces are at the forefront of this conflict which is fueled by the illicit drug trade and characterized by competing political beliefs. Neutrality is not recognized within this conflict; those who refuse to take sides are constantly under threat and are often assassinated or disappeared. Around 20,000 people are murdered in Colombia each year, often as a consequence of organizing within unions, feminist groups, peace communities, or other organisations that condemn violence in Colombia and work to create a space therein where human rights are respected.

This thesis will focus on three organisations within the indigenous movement: the *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (ONIC) (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia), the *Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca* (ACIN) (Association of Cabildos of Northern Cauca), and the *Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* (CRIC) (Regional Indigenous Council of Colombia). The latter two groups were chosen for study because they are regarded as the most politically active indigenous organisations in Colombia; ONIC was chosen as it encompasses all of the regional indigenous organisations in the country. Recognizing that two of these organisations are based in the department of Cauca, Chapter Three will explain why this small department has become a model for indigenous organizing. Because of the extent to which these three groups mobilize, ONIC, ACIN, and CRIC will be used as representatives of the broader indigenous movement in Colombia and will be referred to in this thesis as the ‘Colombian indigenous movement’. By also describing the histories and mandates of ONIC, ACIN, and CRIC, the latter half of this chapter will synthesize information from Chapter Two to explain why the indigenous movement in Colombia constitutes a social movement. Facts, statistics, and descriptions of the

situation in Colombia and of the three indigenous organisations were obtained from a number of sources, including monographs, journals, the U.S. Department of State website, Human Rights Watch, and the websites of ONIC, ACIN, and CRIC. This last section of Chapter Three will also include a brief history and describe current activities of two prominent indigenous movements in Latin America: those of Bolivia and Ecuador. This section was included as to contextualize the Colombian indigenous movement, in an effort to show the similar factors that compel indigenous communities around Latin America to mobilize.

The final chapter investigates the roles played by four North American NGOs: Rights and Democracy, En Camino, Inter Pares, and Colombia Support Network, in relation to the Colombian indigenous movement. Upon starting this project I assumed there would be many North American NGOs working with the Colombian indigenous movement, I discovered that this was not the case. While there quite possibly are smaller grassroots groups working with the movement, these four case study NGOs had a website (which I used to contact them) and each had a representative who was willing to be interviewed for this thesis. Although I contacted three other NGOs - Amazon Alliance, Peace Brigades International, and Development and Peace - no representatives from any of these organizations agreed to participate in my research. However, the four NGOs chosen present an interesting and relevant case study. Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy are well-established NGOs and are among the most active Canadian development NGOs. These two NGOs are contrasted by En Camino and Colombia Support Network which are more grassroots based and less well-known to the general public. Upon starting this project I hoped that by examining NGOs with such different approaches to working with the movement this thesis would make more

meaningful statements about what roles North American NGOs should be playing with Colombia's indigenous movement.

This thesis looks exclusively at North American NGOs (as opposed to Colombian or European NGOs) for several reasons. First, in order to avoid the language barrier that would be faced by studying Colombian NGOs. Second, because the U.S. has a significant role in Colombia's conflict via Plan Colombia (explained in Chapter Three) and because Canada enjoys a close relationship with the U.S., I assumed North American NGOs would be very involved with social movements in Colombia which are working to combat the ill effects of Plan Colombia. Since the U.S. has such a strong influence in Latin America, I expected North American NGOs to be working fervently to induce the U.S. to change its harmful policies which directly and indirectly affect Colombian indigenous communities. (One of these policies is the Plan Colombia which will be addressed in Chapter Three.) Thirdly, the Colombian conflict has caused massive internal and external displacement. Since a huge number of these refugees have fled to Canada and the U.S. (3,631 asylum applications were received in Canada, 2,759 in the U.S. in 2004), I assumed that this very visible consequence of Colombia's conflict would motivate individuals and organizations within North America to become involved in Colombia (UNHCR 2004:14).

Specifically, these four North American NGOs were chosen because each NGO stated clearly on its website that it works with either ONIC, ACIN, or CRIC, because a representative from each NGO readily agreed to be interviewed about his/her NGO, and because together these NGOs act in a variety of roles, allowing for a more interesting and relevant study. As will become clear in Chapter Four, clear differences exist between these four case study NGOs. Despite these differences, all four NGOs still fit within the confines of my NGO definition, outlined in Chapter One.

Whether or not the NGO definition is appropriate or useful will be examined in the Conclusion chapter.

Information on these four NGOs was obtained through phone interviews and mail correspondences; six were conducted with representatives from each of the four case study NGOs and with one expert who has worked in Colombia with the indigenous movement. All interviews were conducted between November 2004 and February 2005, tape recorded (in the case of telephone interviews), and transcribed by the author. The transcripts were then emailed to each participant in order to verify the accuracy of the transcription. I received written permission from all interviewees that the information communicated to me in the course of the interview could be used in the thesis. Upon completion of the thesis research each recorded interview was erased and each email interview deleted. Approval to conduct these interviews was granted to me by the ethics board at UNBC in April 2004. Although I had intended the interviews to be semi-structured in format, in practice they were closer to being unstructured. Interview questions may be found in the Appendix. The goal of this thesis was to focus on the roles that North American NGOs have and should be playing with the Colombian indigenous movement. I therefore chose to focus on the programs run by these NGOs and look at them from each NGOs' perspective. For this reason I decided to base my research around interviews with NGO representatives instead of with Colombian indigenous community members.

This thesis advocates around the need for NGOs to expand their vision of what development means. In the case of social movements, NGOs must adopt long-term working relationships that involve other NGOs and social movements working in solidarity to change the root causes of social movement grievances. The underlying theme in this thesis emphasizes the strengthening of linkages between NGOs and

social movements to build a strong civil society that can effectively challenge issues of inequality, injustice, and violence.

CHAPTER ONE

Understanding NGOs

In the last few decades, entities known as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been increasingly studied and at present are considered to be of relevance to a variety of disciplines, including political science, international studies, anthropology, and economics (Parker, 2003). Not only are more and more studies being conducted on and around NGOs but these organisations have proliferated over the past few decades (Malholtra 2000, Lindenberg & Bryant 2001, Karns & Mingst 2004, Doh 2003). According to Fernando and Heston (1997:9), “NGOs have arisen as a response to attempts by social groups to secure social, economic, and political equality; a sustainable environment; and peaceful ethnic, religious, or national relations and as a resistance against all forms of exploitation and domination.” NGOs have come to fill the space between state and market—civil society—and have developed as a whole to be very versatile indeed. As suggested above, NGOs can be secular or religious, dedicated to one ethnic group or multicultural, committed to the protection of the environment or to indigenous peoples, have a mandate to reduce poverty, or be any combination of these.

The roles filled by NGOs are incredibly varied, making it difficult to define NGOs clearly and concisely. This chapter attempts to briefly review pertinent literature about the nature of NGOs and their roles in order to identify the types of discourse and debate that surround them. The first section will attempt to define the term NGO based on the work of theorists such as Vakil (1997), Korten (1990), and Willetts (1982). Section two will draw upon these definitions in order to categorize some of the roles of NGOs. Third, the chapter will review a number of academic

criticisms of NGO roles. The ultimate goal of Chapter One is to situate the present case study of North American NGOs within the established NGO literature.

The Search for a Definition

The task of defining the term 'NGO' is not a simple one, a fact acknowledged widely in the academic literature (Rosenau 2002, Vakil 1997, Jordan & van Tuijl 2000). In order to lessen the confusion surrounding the term, this section will draw from the work of a number of theorists, each of whom contribute to various facets of an NGO definition. For example, Hilhorst (2003) provides a definition of 'NGO' based on the overall purpose of an organisation while Landim (1987) categorizes NGOs based on the nature of the groups to which they are committed. Korten (1990) and Vakil (1997) both feature prominently in this section as both theorists have devoted much thought to the question of how to define an NGO.

The difficulty of defining the term 'NGO' stems from the fact that it is very broad and encompasses most organisations that are not an arm of government. Confusingly, some groups strongly affiliated with government are still considered to be a form of NGO. These organisations have come to be known as 'governmental nongovernmental organisations' (GONGOs), which are "creations of government and serve as instruments of government policy" but closely resemble NGOs in purpose and in structure (Korten 1990: 2). The vagueness of the definition of 'NGO' means that "hospitals, schools, charities, clubs, religious fraternities, development agencies, professor associations, cooperatives, mutual aid agencies, and trade associations" can all be included (Fernando and Heston 1997:10). NGOs therefore range "from loosely organised groups with a few unpaid staff members to organisations with multi-billion dollar budgets employing hundreds" (Fisher 1997:447). Members can be individuals or

associations (Karns & Mingst 2004: 10). A unifying factor is that they are values-driven organisations that do not seek profit and are voluntary (Kaldor 2003:86). Vakil points out that the multidisciplinary nature of NGOs creates further ambiguity in the definition as “the literature on NGOs [...] spans nearly all of the pure and applied social sciences” (Vakil 1997:2060). Recognizing that so many different types of organisations fall under the NGO umbrella, Ginsburg (1998:online) divides NGOs into three categories. First, NGOs can exist as grassroots movements, which are often closely linked to social movements with the broad goal of reforming social norms; second, they can be non-profit businesses; third, locally-based institutions or international entities, operating with either very little funding or large budgets fueled by government/private sector grants and contracts. According to Willetts (1982:3), pressure groups (including communal groups and promotional groups) also fall under the heading ‘NGO’.

Pressure groups are so called because they seek to influence political decision makers. Under this sub-heading fall communal groups and promotional groups. While promotional group category includes welfare agencies, communal groups are “distinct segments of society” that promote group identity and group status (Willetts 1982:3,5). Some have specific interests but others are concerned more with wider political questions. Few have formal links with international NGOs (INGOs) but many have “strong informal bilateral transnational communications with their ethnic kin” or “with governments which are hostile to the government in their own country” (Willetts 1982:3).

Vakil (1997:2058) points out that a major problem with finding a good definition for ‘NGO’ is that there is no consistency in the use of the term. For instance, the terms ‘NGO’, ‘private voluntary organisation’, and ‘non-profit

organisation', are often used interchangeably even though their intended meanings can be quite varied.

Thus it is clearly demonstrable that 'NGO' is a multi-dimensional term that conveys little specific meaning if not more explicitly defined. It is apparent that a number of diverse groups and organisations can fit within the term 'NGO'. Although Fisher (1997:449) contends that it is unproductive to spend much time studying the distinctions between different types of NGOs and that it is more important to understand "what happens in specific places and at specific times", it remains vital to clearly understand the nature of the object under study. It is therefore important to narrow down to a specific definition. This section will present several different appropriate definitions and choose one to be used as a reference for the case study NGOs.

This thesis is concerned with those NGOs that may be termed 'development' NGOs. For the purposes of this particular study, therefore, the term 'NGO' and 'development NGO' are interchangeable. Although, traditionally, development NGOs were considered to be those NGOs carrying out development projects in a specific community or region, most development NGOs today work in several different arenas, including the environment, human rights, women, advocacy, and development (Nelson & Dorsey 2003:2018). Therefore the term 'development NGO' is meant to include NGOs working in any of these areas. Hilhorst presents a very general definition of a development NGO in her book entitled *The Real World of NGOs*. She writes: "I define the term of NGO as a label claiming that the organisation does good for the development of poor and marginalized others (2003:215)". While this is of course a vague description of what a development NGO is, Hilhorst's definition does nonetheless exclude a number of organisations and groups. Because all of the NGOs

used in my case study meet the qualifications of Hilhorst's development NGO, her definition can be used as a departure point for the broader study of NGOs working with social movements.

However, a more specific definition is still needed in order to fully encompass which NGOs are being examined here. Landim presents a useful definition that is particularly relevant to this project: "[NGOs] are entities that think of themselves largely in terms of autonomy and individuality, stressing their direct relationships with social groups and movements within which they act: NGOs are not an end unto themselves, existing rather 'at the service' of the exploited and underprivileged sectors of the population" (1987:30) NGOs therefore do not merely 'aim to help' subaltern groups, their very existence indeed depends upon such groups. Yet still a more explicit definition is needed.

In his 1990 work *Getting to the 21st Century*, David Korten distinguishes between four main types of NGOs: voluntary organisations, public service contractors, people's organisations, and governmental nongovernmental organisations. While all are considered legitimate NGOs, Korten's definition of a voluntary organisation (VO) is the most pertinent to this project. VOs "pursue a social mission driven by a commitment to shared values" (Korten 1990:2), which are relied upon "as the basis for mobilizing human and financial resources. Citizens contribute their time, money and other resources to a VO because they believe in what it is contributing to society" (Korten 1990:98). VOs differ from Korten's other three classes of NGO because they do not act as market-oriented non-profit businesses like public service contractors, do not exist solely to serve the needs of its members as do people's organisations, nor are they created by governments to serve as instruments of official policy as are governmental nongovernmental organisations (Korten 1990:2).

Anna Vakil takes the argument a step further than Korten and devotes a lengthy article entirely to the subject of NGO classification and definition, narrowing down the definition of NGO to include only organisations that are “self-governing, private, not-for-profit organisations that are geared to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people” (1997:2060). Notably, this definition differentiates between ‘not-for-profit’ and ‘non-profit’ groups; the term ‘not-for-profit’ is used to specify that the goal for NGOs is not to earn a profit but that organisations who do turn a profit should not necessarily be excluded from the NGO category. Specifically, this term is used so as to include cooperatives, which, although unintentionally, sometimes earn and distribute profits (Vakil, 1997:2059).

To draw from the previous four definitions and synthesize a meaningful categorization appropriate for this thesis, NGOs will hereafter be understood to be *not-for-profit, autonomous, non-market-oriented organisations that exist in order to benefit the poor and underprivileged members of a population*. These dimensions were chosen as they form a concise and inclusive description of the four NGOs that will be studied later in this thesis. All NGOs to be studied are based in either Canada or the U.S. thus here the term ‘NGO’ will reflect as such.

Roles Filled by NGOs

NGOs have proliferated exponentially in recent decades. One writer has calculated that there are 50,000 non-profit NGOs at the global level, and that almost 90% of these were formed since 1970 (Keane 2003:5). What is it about NGOs that has caused them to multiply both nationally and internationally? Several writers (Frantz 1987, Whaites 2000, Teegen & Doh 2003, Hudock 1999) have observed that NGOs operate within a space in society left vacant by both the state and the market.

Businesses function within the market to distribute goods and services to the population, however, since there is no natural mechanism within the market to ensure that these goods and services be produced ethically and environmentally soundly, it is the state's job to create and enforce laws that oblige businesses to conform to national standards. With government and business fulfilling their respective roles, NGOs have found a niche—a space between these two sectors of society—in which lie important roles to be filled. This space is generally known as 'civil society' and encompasses everything in society that is neither government nor business. While NGOs are often equated with civil society, it is important to recognize that they are really just one set of actors which operate within civil society (Karns & Mingst 2004:223).

Distinguishing himself from writers who see the state, the market, and civil society as separate, individually acting entities, Robert Cox suggests that such a fragmented view of the global order is rooted in traditional international relations theory and does not reflect today's reality that the state and civil society are "interpenetrated" and "only very vaguely and imprecisely indicative of distinct spheres of activity" (Cox 1996:86). I am inclined to combine these two views and concur with Fowler's (2000) analysis: that NGOs, while they are indeed actors bonded to civil society, cannot be analyzed on this basis alone. The state, the market, and civil society interact with each other in a regular way. In this case, NGOs interact with the state to induce policy reform and to act as a watchdog, and with the market to influence corporate behaviour and ensure that businesses comply with their own codes of conduct. Within civil society, NGOs gain legitimacy, accountability, and resources that they use as leverage in their interactions with the state and the market (Fowler 2000).

Despite these interactions, NGOs still have unique roles to fill outside of the state and the market. The roles NGOs fill are numerous: they do what businesses deem unprofitable and what government lacks the expertise or ability to do (Ng & Lindenberg 2002, Teegen and Doh 2003, Johnson 2002, Karns & Mingst 2004). Whaites (2000:134) writes that filling the gap between government and business can entail anything from running schools and hospitals (in the case where civil society is strong and the state is weak) to aiding agricultural workers or providing training in the health sector. Ilon (1998:online) concurs that NGOs exist in the space between government and business and explains why society needs these types of organisations:

Generally, market-based entities do not fulfill people's needs to pursue opportunities or validate their cultures and unique histories. Both market-based and non-market-based sectors of global society require that these needs be addressed. These desires require a non-market based system of organisations. Many NGOs can and do speak to these needs (Ilon 1998:online).

Korten (1990) points out that because NGOs often specialize in one area or reflect a particular interest, it is often easier for citizens in a democracy to express their interests via a particular NGO than through representative government. NGOs can articulate the momentary interests and needs of a country's population and communicate this to government. While Hudock (1999) agrees that alerting government to the changing demands of the public is one function performed by NGOs, she adds that NGOs are better than governments at working cost-effectively, learning from and applying field research to develop solutions to problems, responding to people's needs flexibly, and undertaking people-centred research. Recognizing that NGOs possess definite advantages over the state, Tembo writes that NGOs are "more flexible, better attuned to learning from experience and experimentation, innovative, participatory, low cost and efficient, and responsive to the needs of the

poor” (2003:2). NGOs possess qualities that set them apart from business as well. Johnson writes that NGOs are generally perceived as being more altruistic than the market and more flexible since they put less emphasis on rigid codes of behaviour. They also “provide goods and services that are not subject to the ‘logic’ of price incentives and competition” (Johnson 2002:89). Frantz describes why social groups within a country seek out or form NGOs:

It is clear that NGOs can translate local needs and peculiarities into the formulation of their objectives and methods of action. This is because, when they are national, NGOs tend to have a closer relationship to the social movements, groups, or projects that they support. They are capable of quicker and more objective action than governmental agencies because their administrative structures are less cumbersome and because their character is more militant. (Frantz 1987:126).

The remainder of this section will explore some of the different roles played by NGOs within the space between the state and the market. Although NGOs of course play a diversity of roles, those functions discussed below were chosen because they are most relevant to this thesis and relate best to the four case study NGOs presented in Chapter Four. It is important to note that none of these roles are mutually exclusive. Most NGOs in fact operate in several different roles.

Research and Advocacy

Advocacy is one role played by NGOs which falls in the aforementioned space between government and business. According to Vakil, advocacy is “the intention of influencing policy- or decision-making related to particular issues and building social support both among like-minded organisations as well as the wider population around these issues” (1997:2063). Similarly, Lindenberg & Bryant write, “advocacy work entails moving beyond implementing programs to help those in need, to actually taking up and defending the causes of others and speaking out to the public on

another's behalf" (2001:173). Jordan & van Tuijl (2000:2052) criticize definitions of advocacy that feature policy influence as a major characteristic since these definitions ignore other functions of advocacy such as enhancing the self-respect of weaker communities, promoting mutual trust, and moderating unequal power relations. In the case of this thesis, advocacy is generally understood to mean promotion of specific policies and steps to benefit indigenous communities and other marginalized groups in Colombia. This concept of an advocacy role responds to Jordan & van Tuijl's above criticism, since several of the case study NGOs in Chapter Four strive to build reciprocal relationships of solidarity and trust with indigenous communities in Colombia and exchange information on that basis.

NGOs that focus on advocacy also tend to play a prominent research role as well, promoting policies and opening up new development discourses which result from this research. As Welch explains in the context of human rights NGOs, "research by itself accomplishes little in terms of direct impact on victims and changes in conditions. Study precedes action, but does not substitute for it. [...] Research must be linked to improved conditions, to campaigns of advocacy, and to support from appropriate resources" (2001:10). It is for this reason that advocacy and research go hand-in-hand.

NGO focus on advocacy is becoming increasingly common, as is evident in Latin America. This shift has been observed by Grugel (2003), who notes that such a trend is occurring among NGOs that were previously focused on project-based, small-scale development work, that began to realize that such project-based initiatives actually help relatively few people and any benefits to communities often only last as long as the project itself. In other words, project-based work is a limited and superficial solution to a problem that is systemic in nature. Because advocacy focuses on the

root causes of poverty instead of merely trying to bandage the wounds that are a result of a flawed world system, it is an approach that is beginning to appeal to many more NGOs. NGOs working in Latin America that have chosen an advocacy path, writes Grugel (2003:46), either promote a total overhaul of the world system or challenge the global economy “to undercut the legitimacy of Latin American governments that do not take the needs of the poor into account or listen to poor communities in terms of policy making”.

In the case of NGOs based in North America but that work in Latin America, the advocacy role is crucial. Brodhead (1987:2) writes that NGOs in industrialized countries have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of Third World countries, both to change public opinion in industrialized countries and to give rise to change in official government policies which affect Third World countries. It is vital, continues Brodhead, that northern NGOs engage in advocacy: “Given the preponderant control exercised by industrialized countries in the multilateral system and in the management of the global economy, it is incumbent upon NGOs to take on a constructive advocacy role” (Brodhead 1987:4). Korten (1990:99) agrees, writing that voluntary organisations have “a distinctive role as catalysts of system change in defining, articulating, and advocating positions that are not in the established political mainstream and therefore not supported by existing public policy”. Beyond advocating for such broad and revolutionary changes as the overhaul of the current global economic system, NGOs advocate for changes in the way development itself happens. Recognizing that NGOs act as links between governments, donors, communities, and even other NGOs, Keese (2003:8) observes that NGOs are in a good position from which to actively create a better global context for development. To this end, NGOs will often form *advocacy networks*, consisting of “those relevant actors

[...] who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services” (Keck & Sikkink 1998:2). Advocacy networks are beneficial for both small and large NGOs; smaller NGOs are supported financially and institutionally by the larger, better established NGOs, while the smaller NGOs who work at the grassroots are better equipped to provide information about the situation on the ground to the larger NGOs (Karns & Mingst 2004:218).

Lobbying

While similar to advocacy, lobbying deserves its own category. Lobbying is a more direct form of advocacy in that it exerts direct pressure on governments, international bodies, and media to promote a specific viewpoint (Willetts 1982, Welch 2001, Molyneux and Lazar 2003). Welch writes that lobbying is the act of working with government with the aim of eventually changing state policy or drafting treaties. To get to this stage, NGOs typically must build support for a cause through coalition-building with other NGOs and with states sympathetic to the cause. “The information NGOs so sedulously gather, verify, and disseminate is their major weapon in lobbying governments to change policies” (Welch 2001:6). In order to be effective, however, Edwards and Hulme believe that lobbying must “grow out of grassroots experience” and that this experience be linked “with lobbying and advocacy at the national and international level” (2000:53-4).

As a concrete example of what lobbying can achieve, Molyneux and Lazar (2003:3) write that human rights NGOs have done a terrific job of narrowing the gap between such ‘international instruments’ as the Declaration of Human Rights and “local populations’ awareness of their import”. Of course, modern communications media and improved literacy levels can be attributed to this trend, but Molyneux and

Lazar believe that “civil society organisations and NGOs must also take much of the credit. They have lobbied governments to respect their commitments, they have worked closely with social movements to advance programmes of reform, and they have taken rights discourses into communities and into homes where they are debated, discussed, and acted upon” (2003:3).

Welfare

A traditional role played by NGOs is welfare, which includes needs-based development, emergency relief, and service delivery. Mohan (2002:16) writes that NGOs which play a welfare role are those through which “charity, bilateral and multilateral aid is channeled [...] in order to support welfare programmes and micro-scale development”. Welfare NGOs, write Vakil (1997) and Willetts (1982) provide for basic needs of poor populations, after or during wars or environmental catastrophes. Korten fits welfare NGOs as ‘Generation One’ NGOs within his voluntary development action model. According to Korten (1990), Generation One NGOs are those that are involved with relieving immediate deficiencies in supplies of food, health care, or shelter. In this category the beneficiary is passive and it is assumed that all people need is limited short-term assistance to get them back on their feet. This role is easily distinguished from research and advocacy in that the NGO is directly involved with meeting the needs of the poor, the persecuted, or the hungry at a particular moment (Korten 1990:115-118).

Grugel differentiates between advocacy/research-based NGOs and welfare NGOs by asserting that organisations that fit in the latter category feel that they cannot wait for change in the global system to occur and must act immediately to help relieve suffering of the poor and disadvantaged (2003:46).

Capacity-Building

While a welfare role concentrates on relieving immediate hardship, NGOs that operate in a capacity-building role go a step beyond welfare NGOs in that they try to ensure that target communities will not face hardship again in the future. Hudock defines capacity-building as “an explicit outside intervention to improve an organisation’s performance in relation to its mission, context, resources, and sustainability, achieved through a process-oriented approach of assisting the organisation to acknowledge, assess, and address its external environment” (1999:126). While this definition refers to building the capacity of local organisations, capacity-building can also take place within villages, grassroots movements and governments. For Meyer, capacity-building “typically includes increasing participation, transparency, and accountability. Improving technical and managerial abilities is also part of the package, as is promoting self-sufficiency” (1999:126). In addition to working with local grassroots groups, Whaites writes that NGOs should strive to improve the capacity of the state, unless the NGO is working in the context of a “particularly regressive regime.” This can be accomplished by providing training and assistance to government ministries and project managers (Whaites 2000:134-5). Molyneux and Lazar agree, noting that NGO-government collaboration has been on the rise in Latin America in recent years: “For the NGOs themselves, the chief means of engaging with the state were through raising cases with the relevant authorities, conducting campaigns among civil servants, collaborating on a local level for local development purposes and capacity-building workshops for state employees” (2003:57).

NGOs operating with a capacity-building role in mind fall under Korten’s

Generation Two category within his voluntary development action model. Generation Two NGOs focus “on developing the capacities of the people to better meet their own needs through self-reliant local action” (Korten 1990:118). These NGOs tend to focus on groups such as a village or some sub-group therein in order to build partnerships. Differing from the welfare role, capacity-building NGOs, or Generation Two NGOs, act typically as the mobilizer rather than as the on-the-ground implementer in order to “[help] the community realize its potential” (Korten 1990:119). Korten also offers a Generation Three NGO category that is somewhat related to Generation Two NGOs. Generation Three NGOs assume “that local inertia is sustained by structures that centralize control of resources, keep essential services from reaching the poor, and maintain systems of corruption and exploitation” (Korten 1990:121). Both Generation Two and Generation Three NGOs work to build the capacity of local people, but differ from each other in that Generation Two NGOs see underdevelopment as the result of a community’s inability to realize its potential on its own, while Generation Three NGOs believe the structures of global or national systems are at the root of underdevelopment (Korten 1990). If Generation Two NGOs act as ‘mobilizer’ for communities, Generation Three NGOs operate as catalysts for systemic change that aims to overturn the conditions that cause underdevelopment. While both Generation Two and Generation Three NGOs can be classified as ‘capacity-building NGOs’, the differences between the two are significant. Generation Three NGOs strive to build partnerships that could last decades, tend to focus on regions or nations rather than individual communities, and try to include all relevant public and private institutions within their projects (Korten 1990). Korten’s voluntary development action model will be used in Chapter Four in order to classify the four case study NGOs.

Networking and Strengthening Civil Society

The final role filled by NGOs that will be explored in this first section is networking. Networking necessarily leads to the strengthening of other groups within civil society, including other NGOs, grassroots groups, and social movements. Korten defines networking as “the organisational mode of lateral communication, self-direction, rapid adaptation and social movements. It frees the flow of creative and voluntary energies and unlocks the barriers to change imposed by hierarchy” (1990:106). Often a network will arise when several advocacy NGOs converge around a single issue area. Willetts writes that co-operation among such groups occurs through informal division of tasks for greater efficiency and increased accomplishments, through coordinating activities and exchanging information. “The result can be not only a great deal of communication and co-operation but also a complex network of country-wide and transnational organisations” (Willetts 1982:10). Furthermore, such networking can allow a smaller NGO to deal with diverse challenges without necessarily enlarging its formal structure (Meyer 1999:27) and has led to what Keane (2003) calls ‘global civil society’ and what Keck and Sikkink (1998) call ‘transnational advocacy networks’. While these terms will be discussed briefly later in this chapter, it should be mentioned here that ‘global civil society’ and ‘transnational advocacy networks’ involve broad networks and coalitions of NGOs and social movements, the strengthening of which also falls within the purview of NGOs.

NGOs that play this role are coined by Korten as ‘Fourth Generation NGOs’, which he explains are NGOs “that engage in movement facilitation as a major program strategy” (Korten 1990:131). Fourth Generation NGOs aim to “energize a critical mass of independent, decentralized initiatives in support of a social vision” (Korten 1990: 127). Within the social movement realm, Frantz differentiates between two types of

NGOs: those supporting social movements with the goal of building a collective, all-inclusive society and those that have arisen from social movements and represent “a certain degree of their institutionalization” (1987:123). This thesis will concern the former type of NGO and ask what roles have North American NGOs played in Colombia’s indigenous movement and what roles should they play?

The following section is intended to balance this chapter by demonstrating that many doubts exist as to the effectiveness of NGOs. Such doubts tend to centre on sources of funding received by NGOs, but also concern the capacity of NGOs to address the root causes of the problems they seek to address. In light of these criticisms, the following section concludes by presenting ways for NGOs to become more effective.

NGO Critiques and Obstacles to NGO Effectiveness

Among the many different categories and functions of NGOs, academics also portray NGOs as either useful or as a hindrance to the communities they are trying to help. Some observers (Ilon 1998, Johnson 2002, Commins 2000, Edwards 1998) have remarked that NGOs simply cannot and do not perform as well they are perceived. Ilon explains that this may be because it is difficult for NGOs to maneuver around the traps inherent in the global economic system. Specifically, two major problems for NGOs exist: first, “community-based funding is frequently weak and unreliable relative to funding driven by profits” and second, it is difficult for NGOs not to conform to the values and goals of donor organisations (Ilon 1998). The overarching danger is that an NGO’s goals may be subordinated, however minorly or majorly, by the NGO’s need to secure funding. Often this “merging” of an NGO’s interests with those of its funders happens insidiously (Ilon 1998). Mohan agrees with Ilon, and points out the frustrating contradiction faced by NGOs: that it is difficult for NGOs to

carry out projects with little funding, but if an NGO gets too much funding from one source, that NGO becomes too concerned with fulfilling demands of donors and risks becoming no longer able to deliver effective programs at the grassroots (2002:17). The underlying question here is: where should NGOs obtain their funding? The problem is particularly evident with government sources of funding. Even though an organisation may be considered to be 'nongovernmental' (not formed or contracted by government), many NGOs still receive government grants or other forms of government (financial) support. Fowler writes, "when official funds predominate in their resource base an [NGO] has, in effect, traded a legitimacy and moral authority derived from civic rootedness for legitimacy by association with governments, i.e. legitimacy from the public domain" (2000:641). In addition, "a growing association with and dependency on official aid brings with it the danger that NGOs act as conspirators, rather than partners, in a questionable approach to development and to promoting the interests of (poor and excluded) civic groups" (Fowler 2000:643).

Kaldor fears that the predominance of government funded NGOs causes smaller grassroots organisations and community-based organisations to disappear. Local values are overshadowed by those of the government-funded NGO (Kaldor 2003:92-93). Grugel also addresses the funding dilemma by pointing out that NGO professionalization causes marginalization; an independent voice from government is no longer present in society when NGOs become increasingly reliant upon government funding. The danger is that NGOs slowly become embedded within government networks, rendering themselves incapable of raising a critical voice to government. Grugel warns that while this problem may only apply to some NGOs, the whole NGO community is at risk of being painted with the same brush (2003:31).

James Petras, in a fierce critique of NGOs in Latin America, goes further than

Fowler, Grugel, and Kaldor, writing that NGOs are undemocratic, do not respond to the needs of local people and, overall, do more harm than good. “[NGOs’] programs are not accountable to the local people but to overseas donors. In that sense NGOs undermine democracy by taking social programs out of the hands of the local people and their elected officials to create dependence on non-elected, overseas officials and their locally anointed officials” (Petras 1997:13). This type of criticism has obvious, far-reaching implications: can NGOs in fact be as effective as they intend (or useful at all) if they lack credibility with grassroots groups? Do their legitimacy and effectiveness decline if they can only become involved with projects that meet with donors’ approval?

In addition to being tied to government and unable to escape the funding dilemma, NGOs face a more troubling structural critique. The argument is that NGOs are fundamentally incapable of addressing the root causes of the problems facing marginalized people everywhere. Stephen Commins succinctly explains the problem:

To put it in stark terms, they [NGOs] are becoming the delivery agency for a global soup kitchen, handing out meager comfort amidst harsh economic changes and complex political emergencies, in a world that is characterized by global economic integration and the social exclusion of low-income communities, as well as continuing and widespread levels of civil strife. In effect, NGOs are handing out bits of comfort, doling out cups of soup, to the victims of massive economic changes and to the survivors of brutal civil wars. While NGOs have claimed the right to a moral as well as programmatic voice in international affairs, their organisational legitimacy and operational impact are in fact being weakened (2000:70-1).

Although “doling out cups of soup” is important in the short-term, Commins’ critique is that welfare roles or even advocacy roles do little in the long-term to alter the root causes of suffering. Grugel writes that those NGOs fulfilling an advocacy or welfare role face the difficulty that projects are rarely long-term. NGOs operating in an advocacy capacity, trying to address structural issues, may find that they are being

pushed towards emergency relief efforts because it is hard to convince the public and donors that advocacy is worthwhile (Grugel 2003:38). Keese observes that one of the major difficulties facing NGOs is how to translate “local-level successes into larger scale social change” (2003:7).

Also arguing that NGOs fail to address the root causes of the problems that they denounce and rather only scratch their surface, Petras writes, “NGOs emphasize projects, not movements; they ‘mobilize’ people to produce at the margins but not to struggle to control the basic means of production and wealth; they focus on technical financial assistance of projects, not on structural conditions that shape the everyday lives of people” (1997:11). Michael Edwards also presents a critique of NGOs, believing that NGOs are ineffective not for the many reasons stated by the authors above, but because NGOs have always been unsure of their place in society:

NGOs have always been confused about their identity—part market-based actors providing a service at a competitive price; part social actors pushing for more radical changes in systems and structures. Although these two identities can sometimes be combined, they have very different implications for NGO roles and relationships. At some point all NGOs will have to make a clearer choice (1998:online).

This choice involves either becoming a firmly market-oriented NGO with a particular focus (humanitarian aid, micro-finance) or becoming more rooted in the community in which the NGO serves, while adopting clearer and better-defined stances on issues in order to aim for social and political change. This second route often involves forgoing funding opportunities (Edwards 1998). Edwards agrees with Petras that the pressure on NGOs to conform to the standards of donor agencies is great, however Edwards believes that this standardization is not inevitable: “it is possible for NGOs to play a creative and radical role in social policy without being co-opted or stifled by bureaucracy” (1998). Ilon as well suggests that it is possible for an NGO to remain vigilant in its original goal to provide the best services and avoid the temptation to

focus on increased market-share of funds. According to Ilon, the traps in the global economic system can be avoided by

hav[ing] a goal that is non-market-based and retain[ing] this goal; build[ing] power, influence and size (market share) on knowledge (about the goal and with an eye towards empowerment) rather than market value (financial size); reinvest[ing] in human resources rather than in marketing strategies; [and by] recogniz[ing] that its empowerment strategies may overlap with those of market-based donors but the long-term goals differ (Ilon 1998).

Commins also acknowledges that there is still hope for NGOs. The challenge for NGOs is to recognize their shortcomings and to adapt accordingly. Commins suggests that if NGOs could form partnerships with like-minded research groups and donors, as well as with other NGOs, the resulting network could strengthen each NGO's ability to construct meaningful policies and alleviate some of the problems discussed above (Commins 2000:73).

For Fowler, the solution for NGOs is to reinvent themselves in a role Fowler calls "civic innovation". "Civic innovation is the creation of new or modification of existing conventions, structures, relations, institutions, organisations and practices for civic benefit demonstrated by ongoing, self-willed citizen engagement and support" (Fowler 2000:649). The goal for an NGO that defines itself as a civic innovator is similar to Commins' networking suggestion. Solutions to social problems can be addressed if NGOs both support and are supported by individuals and organisations who are committed to looking at these problems from a structural perspective (Fowler 2000:651). These critiques have relevance for this thesis and will be referred to in Chapter Four. There three roles are suggested for NGOs to play in Colombia's indigenous movement; these roles take into account the above critiques.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter has been to familiarize the reader with recent literature on the identity and roles played by these ever proliferating entities known as NGOs. The NGOs examined in this thesis are those which could be called 'development' NGOs; they explicitly do not have a profit motive and work to benefit poor and underprivileged members of a population. Development NGOs often work within several different areas, including human rights, women's rights, the environment, education, as well as development. Because this thesis focuses on development NGOs, several roles were identified within which such NGOs often work. These include research and advocacy, lobbying, welfare, and capacity-building, which are representative of the roles filled by the case study NGOs in Chapter Four. As NGOs increasingly enter mainstream development discourse, however, more and more critiques surface surrounding the actual impact NGOs have, stemming from some NGOs' over-reliance on government funding and their tendency to operate only in the short-term. This chapter was designed to function as a basis from which to understand the case study and the questions posed by this thesis. How have North American NGOs interacted with the indigenous movement in Colombia and what roles should they play? Do the above critiques have specific relevance to these NGOs? Chapter Two seeks to bring the reader to an understanding of what is meant by the term 'social movement' and to answer such questions as: 'How does a social movement work?' and 'How can one recognize a social movement?'. These are crucial questions as one of the stated aims of this thesis is to fill the identified gap in current knowledge about the relationship between NGOs and social movements.

CHAPTER TWO

Social Movements: Origins and Characteristics

The relationship between NGOs and social movements is understudied and poorly understood. Although extensive work has been done on defining NGOs and categorizing their activities, Fisher writes that the relationship between NGOs and social movements has been ignored because NGOs working in this realm are often stereotyped as 'social development agencies', "which ignores evidence that NGOs often initiate or sustain social movements or are the institutional vehicles that articulate protest and collective action" (Fisher 1997:45). Korten as well writes, "the power of people's movements has largely been ignored in the field of development. Attention has been focused on money rather than social energy as the engine of development" (1990:124). This thesis contributes to the filling of this identified gap in current knowledge about NGO activities by concentrating on the example of indigenous movements in Colombia.

In order to adequately explore the relationship between social movements and NGOs, an understanding of the meaning of the term 'social movement' is required. This chapter will first draw upon the work of several social movement theorists, including Wilson (1973), Tilly (2004), and Colás (2002), who each supply an understanding of the concept of a social movement. This first section will also take stock of the many terms that are closely related to the term 'social movement' such as 'social movement organisation', 'transnational social movement organisation', and 'global civil society' and then clarify what the term 'social movement' will mean in the context of this study. Next, the origin of social movements will be explored leading into a discussion of what factors must necessarily be present for a social group

to transform into a social movement. This discussion is an introduction to the eventual explanation of why Colombian indigenous groups together fit the criteria of social movement. The final section will explore what causes a social movement to become transnational and how information flows within small social movements and transnational social movements. This entire chapter is intended to act as a framework within which to situate my case study of the indigenous movement in Colombia.

What is a Social Movement?

Understanding the meaning of the term ‘social movement’ and some basic theories of social movement emergence and growth is crucial for later chapters. Although much has been written about what a social movement is (for example see McAdam 2003, Diani & McAdam 2003, Wilson 1973, Tilly 2004), I will highlight only select definitions here as others are beyond the scope of this thesis. First, John Wilson writes, “a social movement is a conscious, collective, organised attempt to bring about or resist large-scale change in the social order by noninstitutionalized means” (1973:8). Wilson believes that the evolution of a new social movement means that the current order is being challenged, that people have new hopes and desires and strongly believe that the world can be a better place. Charles Tilly recognizes that the term ‘social movement’ is a variable term, owned by no one, open to interpretation, and free to be used by many different actors (Tilly 2004:7). Tilly, an influential social movement theorist, then lays out his criteria for what a social movement means within the context of his work. Although Tilly is referring to social movements that have evolved in Europe and North America, his writings on what constitutes a social movement are applicable in other regions, including Latin America. Tilly writes that a social movement is “a political complex” which combines

“campaigns of collective claims on target authorities, an array of claim-making performances including special-purpose associations, public meetings, media statements, and demonstrations, public representations of the cause’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment” (2004:7). Alexander Colás’ definition is similar to that of Tilly and Wilson: “a sustained and purposeful collective mobilization by an identifiable, self-organised group in confrontation with specific power structures, and in pursuit of socio-economic and political change” (Colás 2002:67). Colás, like Tilly, recognizes that there are many expressions of collective agency and identifies three ways to distinguish social movements from political parties, religious associations, and NGOs. First, “a social movement must have the capacity to mobilize its constituency or membership, second, such mobilization must be sustainable over a period of time” and third, it must be “steering history into specific directions through self-conscious collective action” (Colás 2002:67-8). Tilly cautions his readers against associating organisations and networks that *support* a movement as constituting the movement itself. He argues that the rich social fabric of a social movement, made up of complex relationships between various social actors—“activists, constituents, targets, authorities, allies, rivals, enemies, and audiences”—is easily overlooked by those who consider a social movement to be a “single unitary actor” (Tilly 2004:6-7).

At what point do a group’s actions coalesce to form a social movement? According to Mario Diani (2003:301), there are three criteria for a social movement. First, there must be the presence of a social conflict around which a network organizes activities designed to oppose other social actors with whom the network is conflicting. Second, the members of the network, whether they be organisations or individuals, must recognize that a collective identity necessitates a collective effort. This means that the different factions that make up a network must see the broader

whole and realize that everyone shares the similar goals and long-term interests. Finally, Diani writes that there must be an exchange of “practical and symbolic resources through informal networks” (2003:301). Doug McAdam (2003:291) also attempts to answer this question and notes that two prerequisites for a group to mobilize are adequate resources and a strong organisational base. McAdam also recognizes that there are several factors which motivate a group to organize. First, a social group must recognize the presence of a threat or opportunity for that group to act upon and around which to mobilize. Next, McAdam argues that local leaders have a crucial role to play in rallying existing networks of social groups around relevant contentious issues. Finally, innovative action is key to mobilization—“action that, by its contentious nature, departs from previous collective routines” (McAdam 2003:293). In Chapter Three it will become apparent that all of these factors are present within the indigenous movement in Colombia.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will take Alexander Colás’ definition of a social movement: “a sustained and purposeful collective mobilization by an identifiable, self-organised group in confrontation with specific power structures, and in pursuit of socio-economic and political change” (Colás 2002:67). I believe this definition encompasses the social movement criteria discussed above, and fits within the writings of Tilly, McAdam, Diani, and Wilson, outlined previously. In particular, Colás’ definition acknowledges Tilly’s requirement that a social movement address target authorities through public demonstrations and other gatherings (Tilly 2004:7), McAdam’s recognition of the importance of adequate resources and local leaders (ability to self-organize) (McAdam 2003:291), Diani’s condition that a social movement organize around a collective identity (Diani 2003:301), and finally, utilizes Wilson’s component that a social movement must aim to bring about or resist large-scale

change in the social order (Wilson 1973:8). Colás' definition is clear and concise and adequately describes the indigenous movement in Colombia, as will be shown in the following chapter.

Within social movement discourses, several related terms frequently emerge which can create confusion about the meaning of the term 'social movement'. For example, 'transnational advocacy network' (TAN) is a term coined by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their 1998 book *Activists Beyond Borders*. According to the authors, a TAN "includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services [...] Activists in networks try not only to influence policy outcomes, but to transform the terms and nature of the debate" (1998:2). Within such a network, values and ideas are central, it is believed that individuals can make a difference, and information is used creatively in order to advance the common cause. Some characteristics of a TAN, write Keck and Sikkink (1998), are that they are composed of a small number of activists from each organisation involved in the network, mass mobilization is rare (with the exception of boycotts), they work to promote a cause or idea, and they advocate policy change. A TAN is not a social movement: social movements are not necessarily transnational (although they can be); TANs can arise suddenly around a pressing single issue and disappear just as quickly, whereas social movements are more sustainable over a longer period of time; the main function of a TAN is to share information about an issue in order to build support for a policy which the TAN can then advocate while social movements are more concerned with mobilizing and organizing collective action (Keck & Sikkink 1998:various pages).

Another term often found within discussion of social movements is 'social movement organisation' (SMO). Smith et al. specify that SMOs are "formal groups explicitly designed to promote specific social changes" and are the "principal carriers of social movements" (Smith et al. 1997:60). Mario Diani adds that SMOs are "those groups who identify themselves and are identified by others, as part of the same movement and exchange on that basis" (2003:305). More specifically, transnational social movement organisations (TSMOs) are those social movement organisations which "work specifically for some social or political change and operate an international office or secretariat to serve a membership active in more than two states" (Kriesberg 1997:22), examples of which are Greenpeace and Amnesty International (Kriesberg 1997:16). The obvious difference between social movements and SMOs or TSMOs is that social movements are more general, encompassing the latter two groups as well as other actors.

Finally, within the rubric of 'social movement' is the term 'global civil society'. Keane defines global civil society as "a vast, sprawling non-governmental constellation of many institutionalised structures, associations, and networks within which individual and group actors are interrelated and functionally interdependent" (2003:11). It is clear from Keane's definition that global civil society is actually the aggregate of the many different social movements and other non-state actors that exist on the world stage. The term 'global civil society' has little relevance for the current discussion in this chapter, but I mention it so that confusion due to these many terms may be lessened.

Origins of Social Movements

The question of where social movements come from and how they emerge is important to answer in order to give a more thorough understanding of what social movements are and what their significance is in political science and international relations discourses. McAdam, in his 2003 work *Beyond Structural Analysis*, takes us through several theories behind the emergence of social movements. In the 1950s, it was believed that, in order for a social movement to form, a dramatic change in society needed to take place, for example industrialization or urbanization, since such dramatic changes in society inevitably produced the requisite winners and losers and disintegration of societal norms. Social movements were thought to arise with the intention of restoring social norms after such a breakdown of social order. However, the arrival of the 1960s and the events that took place during this decade challenged this prevailing theory coming out of the 1950s. Social movement theorists began to hypothesize that it is not the most disorganised factions of society who organize but rather pre-existing, established groups and networks (known as mobilizing structures). This new theory, however, does not challenge the hypothesis that social movements emerge during times of societal instability and change (McAdam 2003: 282).

For some issues, the aim of a small social movement may be to grow into a transnational social movement. Halperin & Laxer write that a social movement becomes transnational when there is regular, frequent interactions across nations and when a consensus is formed in a universal language (2003:8). A good example of a transnational issue is human rights, and the many organisations around the world that are working to advance the concept of an internationally enforced and respected standard of human rights. Amnesty International is at the forefront of this social movement and is active in many countries. With perhaps the exception of the

movement around reform of international institutions such as the World Bank or International Monetary Fund, social movements are (generally) restricted to change at the national level, regardless of whether or not it operates at the small community level or at an international level. Although the human rights movement seems to transcend the auspices of any particular state (the movement involves people from numerous countries and organisations all over the world and the issue itself seeks to surpass the state level), due to the absence of any global state, the movement must still work within state boundaries to advance its goal (Halperin & Laxer 2003:9).

McAdam argues that growth of a movement has everything to do with how information is spread and transferred within the movement. According to McAdam, two types of localized action exist, which he calls brokerage and diffusion. Brokerage consists of “information transfers that depend on the linking of two or more previously unconnected sites” (McAdam 2003:294). This type of localized action allows a movement “to transcend the typically segmented lines of interaction which characterize social/political life” (McAdam 2003:294). Diffusion differs from brokerage as information is transferred “along established lines of interaction” (McAdam 2003:294). Although a movement that spreads via diffusion “will almost always remain narrower in [its] geographic and/or institutional locus than if it had spread via brokerage”, diffusion and brokerage will often combine in large-scale movements (McAdam 2003:294).

“Attribution of similarity” is another mechanism identified by McAdam through which social movements grow. McAdam defines ‘attribution of similarity as “the identification of actors in different sites as being sufficiently similar as to justify a common action” (McAdam 2003:295). In other words, a common identification is essential for the growth of a movement and most people need more than just

information to cause them to “adopt a new idea, cultural object, or behavioural practice” (McAdam 2003:295). In this present case study, identification as a member of an indigenous group is such an “attribution of similarity.”

The final mechanism that allows social movements to grow is “emulation”—that is, emulation of the collective actions of others. Groups will likely engage in action that is known to be not only effective, but safe. Groups frequently weigh the costs and benefits of engaging in any action, even one that the group strongly identifies with, “out of fear or a sensible desire to monitor the reaction of authorities” (McAdam 2003:296). While many social movements engage in what might seem to be dangerous actions, groups will only engage in such activities if the benefits are seen to be great enough. In short, the effectiveness of dangerous actions are weighed against the dangers of such actions and the potential rewards to be gained.

Conclusion

The relationship between social movements and NGOs is one that has not been investigated thoroughly by either NGO or social movement theorists. As was discussed in Chapter One, NGOs who work with social movements have been classified by Korten (1990) as ‘Fourth Generation NGOs’ (those organisations that work to mobilize groups and individuals around ‘a social vision’), however, little work has been done to determine in what roles these NGOs operate and how effective they can be. In this second chapter I have briefly explored the topic of social movements, using the writings of well known social movement theorists to explain what social movements are, where they come from, and how they grow. I have settled on Colás’ definition of a social movement - “a sustained and purposeful collective mobilization by an identifiable, self-organised group in confrontation with specific power structures, and

in pursuit of socio-economic and political change” (Colás 2002:67) - as a basis upon which to analyze the indigenous movement in Colombia. Chapters One and Two are the foundation for a small-scale study which contributes to understanding of the relationship between social movements and NGOs. Chapter Three will draw on the present criteria used to characterize a social movement in order to explain how the indigenous movement in Colombia fits within these parameters.

CHAPTER THREE

The Political Situation in Colombia and Indigenous Movement Mobilization

In order to begin to comprehend what the situation is like for Colombia's indigenous peoples, it is first necessary to learn about the violence that has come to characterize the country. It would likely be very difficult for an American or Canadian citizen to identify with daily life in Colombia, for one would have to imagine a country in near chaos. Although Colombia is considered a democracy, the elected leaders in the country can do little to enforce laws on an unruly country that has some of the most varied territory of any country in the world. As Michael G. Roskin writes, "if you don't like the state in Colombia, you have some of the earth's best terrain to avoid it" (2001:127). As a result, there are a few powerful groups in Colombia over which no one has control and all of which are violent. Buscaglia and Ratliff observe, "from the early 19th century to today, people in many parts of Colombia have been and are indifferent to, when they are not downright contemptuous of, the activities of the central government" (2001:6). Different parts of Colombia are controlled by different groups, so the average Colombian is represented by whichever group is the most influential in his/her particular region. This fractious balance of power is fueled by the drug market, in which every group has an interest.

In order to appreciate exactly what the indigenous movement is mobilizing around and in spite of, a more in depth explanation of Colombian national politics and the major actors in the present conflict is needed. Therefore, the first section of this chapter will bring the reader to a basic understanding of the main actors involved in the conflict and their interrelationships, starting with the guerrillas and moving on to the paramilitaries and the Colombian armed forces. This first section also details the U.S.-funded Plan Colombia and explains how it is changing the face of Colombia.

Concluding the first section of this chapter is a description of the human rights violations that are an everyday reality in Colombia. Section two of Chapter Three is an explanation of who comprises the indigenous movement, explaining its membership and significance. This section draws on the criteria used to define what a social movement is, and using examples, demonstrates how the Colombian indigenous movement fits within these criteria. Chapter Three concludes with a brief section exploring the indigenous movements of Bolivia and Ecuador, highlighting the similarities among the factors that provided the impetus for indigenous communities in these two countries and Colombia to mobilize.

Politics and Violence in Colombia

Actors in the Conflict

This section will give a brief description of the main actors involved in Colombia's armed conflict. While there exist a number of external forces and players that influence and impact the Colombian conflict, for example international institutions such as the World Bank or multinational corporations which have an interest in Colombia's rich resources, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explain them here. Instead I focus here on the internal actors because they have a direct and often devastating effect upon indigenous communities in Colombia. This focus upon the internal actors will allow the reader to become familiarized with the most immediate threats to indigenous communities, which is the concern of this thesis. These actors include the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC)(Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) (National Liberation Army), the Colombian Armed Forces, and the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) (United Defence Forces of Colombia).

The Guerrillas

The largest and most powerful guerrilla group in Colombia is known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and comprised roughly 18,000 fighters in 2003 (BBC News 2003:online). The FARC was formed in 1964 by Communist Party peasant groups that had rebelled against the government throughout the 1950s (Pardo 2000:65). The FARC is responsible for the largest number of kidnappings in Colombia, amounting to about 21% of all kidnappings in 2003 (BBC News 2004:online). Although the FARC began as an alternative to the two traditional political parties—the Liberals and Conservatives, which have polarized Colombian society—today guerrilla warfare has become the principal occupation of FARC members. Kirk (2004) writes, “for the young men and women who continue to join [the FARC], war is now a culture and a reason for being—war as an end in itself, and an identity through which to view the world” (Kirk 2004:66).

The second most powerful guerrilla group is the National Liberation Army (ELN) which was formed by student movements inspired by the Cuban Revolution. Founded in 1965 and comprising about 5,000 members as of 2003, the ELN focuses on blowing up pipelines and destroying energy infrastructure (BBC News 2003:online). The ELN is largely financed through kidnapping and extortion (Center for International Policy, 2002, online) and was believed to be responsible for 11% of all kidnappings in Colombia in 2003 (BBC News 2004:online).

In the 1970s, drug trafficking became a huge business in Colombia where drug exporters were producing 70% of the world’s supply of marijuana and turning the traditional Andean crop of coca into two of the most addictive and dangerous drugs in the world, cocaine and crack cocaine. During this time, three main drug cartels (Medellín, Atlántico, and Cali) were formed in Colombia and these groups controlled

the vast majority of the drug exports. By 1985, Colombia's drug revenue was \$3 billion of the country's \$40 billion GNP (Pardo 2000:66). In the late 1980s, however, massive anti-cartel operations led by the Colombian National Police and U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies managed to break up these cartels (Buscaglia and Ratliff 2001:5). Today the FARC and the ELN exert control over many coca-growing regions throughout Colombia and have direct and indirect control of more than 75% of the distribution and 42% of the production of cocaine grown on 136,000 hectares of coca fields. 50-65% of the FARC's financing comes from drug-related activities while this is true for 63% of the ELN's financing (Buscaglia and Ratliff 2001:5).

Drug trafficking has become a very lucrative business for the guerrilla movements. In FARC-controlled areas, the guerrilla group acts as a government and is able to levy taxes on every step of the drug trafficking process, from the chemicals used to manufacture base (raw cocaine) to the product sold in weekly street markets. It is unclear how much the FARC actually earns from the coca trade, but estimates range from U.S. \$36 million to U.S. \$200 million (Kirk 2004:235). The FARC uses its money to buy weapons, to fund the movement as well as to set up municipal services for the people in FARC-controlled areas (Roskin 2001:131).

The Paramilitaries and the Colombian Armed Forces

The largest paramilitary group is known as the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) and is an umbrella organisation of 10,000 members (BBC News 2003:online). Paramilitary groups, which by and large support and protect right-wing interests, were formed in several different ways. Some were organised and financed by drug traffickers, others by local landowners and military officers looking to protect

their interests against guerrilla incursion and to suppress peasant demand for land reform. Lastly, a number of paramilitary groups were organised by the Colombian Armed Forces, aided by U.S. military advisers, as part of a national counterinsurgency strategy to confront the guerrillas in places where the military was weak (LeoGrande and Sharpe 2000). The AUC claims to provide security in the absence of a Colombian state and has largely won the approval of Colombia's middle class (Roskin 2001-02:131). Ironically, just like the guerrillas, paramilitary groups are heavily financed by drug money in one way or another: by trafficking drugs themselves, accepting payment directly from drug traffickers, or by collecting taxes from drug commerce in places they control (LeoGrande and Sharpe 2000). The AUC was responsible for approximately 9% of total kidnappings reported in 2003 (BBC News 2004:online).

Some logistical support to the paramilitaries is given by the Colombian Armed Forces; such support is clandestine although the military-paramilitary relationship is well-documented (Human Rights Watch 2005, UNHCHR 2005, U.S. Department of State 2004a). The ties between the military and paramilitaries is a very serious concern because paramilitary groups are blamed for about 75% of human rights violations in Colombia (Delacour 2000:63). Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have criticized the U.S. government for blatantly ignoring its own human rights conditions on military aid to Colombia. For instance, in 2000, U.S. President Bill Clinton exercised the option to waive the human rights stipulations upon \$600 million in funding to the Colombian army forcing him to concede that the military does not meet even the most basic human rights requirements (LeoGrande and Sharpe 2000:9). On January 10, 2002, President George W. Bush signed public law 107-115 authorizing \$380.5 million in aid to Colombia, mostly for its military; the military aid carried human rights conditions similar to those attached to the funding

authorized in 2000 by the Clinton administration. On February 1, 2002, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) met with State Department officials to present their findings that none of the human rights conditions had been met by the Colombian army (Human Rights Watch et al. 2002:online). For example, condition (1)(1)(A) required the Commander General of the Colombian Armed Forces to suspend ranking security force members in cases where there is credible evidence that they have committed “gross human rights violations” or “to have aided and abetted paramilitary troops.” Reports show that such officers typically remain in active duty and still command troops (Human Rights Watch et al. 2002:online). Condition (a)(1)(c) required the military to break ties with the paramilitaries. According to the report, “solid and abundant evidence shows that collaboration between members of security forces and paramilitaries is the rule, not the exception” (Human Rights Watch et al. 2002:online). Despite this condemning report of the Colombian military, Secretary of State Colin Powell went ahead and released 60% of the available funds to Colombia (Human Rights Watch et al. 2002:online).

What is Plan Colombia?

Plan Colombia is an extension of a plan laid out by President George Bush in 1989 called the Andean Initiative. The Andean Initiative embodied the U.S. strategy of fighting the drug problem at its source—in foreign countries where drugs are produced. This was a five-year strategy which aimed to encourage Andean countries to fight drug production through institutional capacity-building, increasing the capabilities of local law enforcement and the military, and enabling these countries to break up drug cartels. The rationale behind this strategy was that these measures

would make it more difficult and thus more costly for drugs to be produced, thus reducing the illicit drug supply. As a consequence of direct price increases and the additional effects of supply and demand economics, it was hoped that the street price of drugs would increase dramatically in U.S. cities, and thus discourage drug use. When Bill Clinton became President of the U.S., he initially declared that he would approach the drug problem differently than Bush by concentrating on treatment for drug users and education programs at home (Youngers 2004:129-130). However, by the mid-1990s, the Clinton administration had back-tracked on its plan to fight the drug problem at home and instead “dramatically increased funding for international counternarcotics assistance” (Youngers 2004:130). In 2000, Colombia became the third-largest recipient of U.S. military assistance in the world when the Clinton administration approved U.S. \$1.3 billion over two years for a supplemental aid package specifically for Colombia which became known as ‘Plan Colombia’ (Youngers 2004:130). In spring of 2001, George W. Bush created the Andean Regional Initiative, an approach to the drug problem that is similar to his father’s Andean Initiative. U.S. \$1 billion in funding was approved for the Andean Regional Initiative in 2002, which still primarily targets Colombia but is “designed to address the spillover effects of the U.S. war in Colombia by providing assistance to its neighbors, including Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, and Panama” (Youngers 2004:130). The strategy to combat drugs at the production source in Latin America is called the Andean Regional Initiative while the funding that specifically targets Colombia is still known as Plan Colombia.

While Plan Colombia focuses heavily on military funding, it is possible to divide funding into two main categories: military and non-military. The U.S. states that its support focuses on helping “to fight the illicit drug trade, to increase the rule of law,

to protect human rights, to expand economic development, to institute judicial reform, and to foster peace” (U.S. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law 2000:online). The military component of U.S. assistance to Colombia in 1999 was \$390.5 million and was given with the goal of taking control of drug-producing regions in southern Colombia (U.S. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law 2000:online). More specifically the money was used to support and train advanced counter-narcotics battalions, to purchase 30 UH-1H Huey II helicopters, 16 U6-60 Blackhawk helicopters, and 15 UH-1N helicopters. \$115.6 million of the military funding also went to support the Colombian National Police and to provide them with two more U6-60 Blackhawks and 12 more UH-1H Huey II helicopters. In addition, \$60 million was given to upgrade radar systems in four U.S. customs service P-3 airborne early-warning interdiction aircraft that detect and monitor suspected targets destined for U.S. and Colombia (U.S. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law 2000:online). Under the category of non-military funding, the U.S. is much more conservative with the national wallet. In 1999, the U.S. set aside just \$122 million for non-military aid (less than one-third of the almost \$400 million military component that same year) which included technical assistance in areas such as human rights, judicial reform, and “other programs designed to support the peace process and strengthen democracy and the rule of law in Colombia” (U.S. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law 2000:online).

In 2000, funds for military spending were allocated more specifically than the previous year. \$51.4 million was allocated to the Department of Defense for the training and equipping of counter-narcotics battalions, Colombian army aviation support infrastructure, and military reform. \$365.5 million went to the Department of State to help with the purchases of more Blackhawk, Huey II, and UH-1N Huey helicopters, improvement of logistical support, and training and equipping of counter-

narcotics battalions. The third category of military funding in 2000 was support for the Colombian National Police at \$115.6 million. The money in this category went towards the purchase of weapons and ammunition, air mobile units, aviation facilities, spray aircraft for fumigation campaigns, and upgrades to the Huey II helicopters (U.S. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs 2000:online). In 2000, the non-military component of U.S. funding equated to just \$321 million (less than one-third of the \$998 million spent on military funding this same year) which focused once again on promotion of human rights and the reform of the justice system, support for regional programs and the peace process, and support for alternative and economic development (U.S. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs 2000:online).

More current funding figures for Plan Colombia are not presently available from the U.S. Government website. However, the San Francisco Chronicle has recently reported that in the last five years the U.S. has given \$3 billion dollars in military aid to Colombia, amounting to one-seventh of Colombia's entire military budget (Karsin 2004). More specifically, the Center for International Policy reports that, in 2004, the U.S. government spent \$549.7 million on military and police assistance programs in Colombia while spending just \$149.3 million on economic and social assistance programs (Center for International Policy 2005:online). Colombia is consistently considered a country of strategic importance for the U.S. and in the years following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, guerrilla groups in Colombia are increasingly referred to by the U.S. and Colombian governments as 'terrorist groups' or narcotraffickers as opposed to 'guerrillas'. This changing discourse is evident in the RAND Corporation's report on terrorist organisations, where the FARC is placed in the same category as Hezbollah and al-Qaeda; groups which the RAND Corporation believes present hostile intentions to the U.S. and are capable of a high degree of

violence towards the U.S. and U.S. interests (Cragin & Daly 2004:20). Despite the extraordinary amount of U.S. money flowing to Colombia, the U.S. still has not clearly articulated its present and future goals there nor has it defined conditions of success and disengagement: “Three years into Plan Colombia, the Departments of State and Defense have yet to develop estimates of future program costs, define their future roles in Colombia, identify a proposed end state, or determine how they plan to achieve it” (U.S. Department of State 2004a:30).

Understanding the types of weapons and the amount of funding available to the Colombian military is essential to gather a clear picture of what everyday life is like in Colombia. This knowledge underpins greater comprehension about how this conflict is being fought and what civilians, including indigenous peoples, face in trying to create a more peaceful society. The following section provides more detail on the human rights situation in Colombia and focuses on the position of indigenous people in this conflict.

The Human Rights Situation in Colombia

According to the U.S. Department of State, in the twelve months prior to April 2004 there were 1827 kidnappings in Colombia (U.S. Department of State 2004b:online) and the conflict caused the deaths of between 3,000 and 4,000 civilians in the year 2004 (U.S. Department of State 2005:online). Between January and September of 2002, an estimated 200,000 Colombians were forcibly displaced, mostly by the paramilitaries. In addition, 1.2 million Colombians have permanently left the country between 1999 and 2003 (Human Rights Watch 2003:online). The violence in Colombia has given the country one of the largest internally-displaced populations in the world (Human Rights Watch 2003:online). The number of yearly murders in

Colombia is staggering; there were 23,000 homicides in 2003 alone (U.S. Department of State 2004b:online). The political assassination rate is also incredible at fifteen per day; most of the victims are unionists and human rights activists (Helweg-Larsen 2002:online). Many rural people flee to the cities, away from the guerrillas and paramilitaries that control the countryside. While some of the displaced choose to flee to nearby Venezuela and Ecuador, internally displaced people often flee to city centres, causing increased poverty and overcrowding there (Pardo 2000:67). As a representative from the organisation MADRE explains, women are disproportionately affected. "Women account for more than 55 percent of all displaced people, and more than half of displaced households are headed by women...Most displaced families end up in overcrowded and impoverished urban slums. Almost 60 percent of displaced women have no job or source of income" (Kosek 2003:48)

Indigenous groups are affected as well, despite their constant declarations of neutrality. As an anonymous indigenous person related to Edeli & Hurwitz,

We have faced difficulties with a front of the FARC up to such a point that we had to go retrieve the bodies of seven massacred indigenous brothers on one occasion. They killed them simply because it's not convenient for the FARC for us to organize ourselves and resist the politics that they have tried to impose on us, and which go against our principles as indigenous peoples (Edeli & Hurwitz 2003:26).

Many indigenous peoples live in FARC-controlled regions, and often the guerrillas will force indigenous groups to grow coca for them and will coerce indigenous youth into joining their forces. Indigenous peoples have no stated desire to join the conflict as they are more concerned with securing land rights, campaigning against free trade, and developing social, educational, and health infrastructure in their communities. However it is extremely dangerous to stay neutral in this war. A declaration of neutrality to any of the armed actors is often seen as the equivalent of a statement of

support for the other side. Both sides of the armed conflict - the guerrillas and the paramilitaries - wish to exploit the resources available in Colombian indigenous communities. Particularly for the guerrillas, support from the indigenous movement would lend legitimacy to the guerrilla cause. Refusal by indigenous communities to give this kind of support can result in violent retaliation. Therefore, a declaration of neutrality is a danger to the security of indigenous communities (Chomsky 2002:online).

It is in the face of such fear and violence that indigenous peoples are mobilizing. The following section will describe the indigenous movement in Colombia; its goals, challenges, and successes. As will be shown, the determination and courage of the movement is remarkable.

The Colombian Indigenous Movement

The Colombian indigenous movement is a part of the 'invisible struggles' in the country. These are the struggles which are on-going, require perseverance and courage, and which are rarely noticed by the mainstream media in North America. While the death toll and drug statistics are featured prominently in media coverage of the Colombian situation, rarely does the North American public hear about the organizing and mobilization of social movements, including the indigenous movement. The Colombian indigenous movement represents some of the most creative and dramatic organizing in Latin America. This thesis hopes to make those struggles a bit more visible.

The Colombian indigenous movement is by no means one homogenous, identifiable entity. It is made up of many different organisations and individuals with a plurality of ideologies and beliefs as to what direction the movement should take.

Gow and Rappaport describe the movement as “a factionalized assembly of proponents of a broad array of forms of ethnic identity, organizing strategies, and tactics for struggle” (2002:47-48). However, indigenous peoples derive strength and unity from the reality that they are all threatened by the same violence and terror put forth by the guerrillas, the military, and the paramilitaries, as was discussed above. While the Colombian indigenous movement is for the most part embodied by the organisation known as the National Indigenous Movement of Colombia (ONIC), two other organisations are relevant to this study and also spearhead the movement: the Regional Indigenous Cabildo of Colombia (CRIC) and the Association of Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN). These latter two groups were chosen for study because they are generally considered to be the best organised of all the regional indigenous groups in Colombia (personal telephone interview with Nicole Schabus, November 29, 2004 personal telephone interview with Justin Podur, March 28, 2004). How is it that these two groups are both based in the same region? Before the three selected indigenous groups are described, the region of Cauca (where CRIC and ACIN are based) will first be discussed, in order for the reader to understand the importance of the region and why it may serve as a model for other indigenous groups in the country.

The tiny region of Cauca, located in the southwest of Colombia, is the birthplace of the broader Colombian indigenous movement. Joanne Rappaport best describes why the department (or province) of Cauca is so important: “the broadest and most inspiring array of alternatives has been presented by the various indigenous organisations of Cauca, a mountainous province with a considerable indigenous population in southwestern Colombia, whose ethnic movement has served as a model for organizing Native peoples throughout the country” (Rappaport 2003:39). Cauca is home to around 300,000 indigenous people, including Nasa, Guambiano, Yanacona,

and Coconuco people (Rights and Democracy 2001:30). However, the most instrumental group in organizing and mobilizing the indigenous movement has been the Nasa. The second largest indigenous group in Colombia, the Nasa have been resisting domination in an organised way since the Spanish conquest. A quote from Arquímedes Vitonas, the mayor of Toribio, the town that is at the heart of the Cauca indigenous movement, illustrates both the resilience and bravery of these people as well as the horrific situation they find themselves in: "With this war, they can kill many of us, but they cannot kill all of us. Those of us who live will continue with our work. Those of us who die, will have died defending our process" (Vitonas, cited in Podur 2004a:online).

In August 2004, Vitonas and several other individuals involved in the indigenous movement were kidnapped (Podur 2004a:online). Justin Podur, who reported this news on ZNet, had this to say about the effect on the Nasa of having their leaders kidnapped:

If he [Vitonas] were to read this, [...] he would probably remind me that the process is a collective one, that the power is not in the leaders, but in the people, and that no one can claim ownership from the movement's collective effort of resistance and autonomy. Maybe he would remind me, too, of the saying the Nasa live by: "Words without action are empty, actions without words are blind, and words and actions outside of the spirit of community are death." Kidnapping him won't stop the Nasa from resisting, building, or dreaming. But him and the others should be returned immediately (2004:online).

Shortly after the kidnapping, a large delegation of several hundred indigenous community members—including members of the *Guardia Indígena* (Indigenous Guard, see below)—marched to where Vitonas was being held and successfully brought him and the others home (Vieira 2004a:online).

The reason that the region of Cauca has become such an epicenter of indigenous organisation has to do with land rights issues in the area. Before the

1970s, land in Cauca was divided into *haciendas*, or country estates, owned by wealthy landowners. These *haciendas* existed on *resguardo* lands: lands with limited autonomy given to indigenous communities by the Spanish to be governed by an elected council, known as a *cabildo*. The *resguardo* situation is one that is unique to Colombia and does not exist in any other Latin American country (Findji 1992:116). Historically, in Cauca indigenous workers (*terrajeros*) paid the landowner for the privilege of working on his land, the landowner selling the surplus produce. Although the *cabildo* governed the communities, it was usually loyal to the local priest and other local political authorities (Findji 1992:116). Both local power structures, the *cabildo* and the municipality of the region (the local link to the state), were weak in comparison to the *hacienda*. The indigenous *cabildo* was constantly clashing with the municipality, which, under the law, could legally set apart some of the *resguardo* lands for settlement by non-indigenous people (Findji 1992:116). Cauca was the starting point for the wider Colombian indigenous movement because this *hacienda* system was a source of major humiliation and shame for indigenous peoples. In other parts of Colombia the *hacienda* system existed, but it was only in Cauca that it acted not only as “a unit of production but a territorial unit of domination as well” (Findji 1992:116).

After independence from Spain in 1819, the national constitution did not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples and the aim of the Republic after independence was to co-opt them and transform them into peasants. As a result, the indigenous communities in Cauca existed under very difficult living conditions and many were forced to leave their lands to find more profitable work, often as labourers or domestic servants (personal telephone interview with Manuel Rozental, April 12 2004). These terrible conditions were the fuel that was needed for a resistance

movement in Cauca where indigenous people began to fight for their rights (Findji 1992:116).

Today the struggle for land rights has culminated around the new Colombian Constitution, adopted in 1991, which guarantees an unprecedented number of new rights for indigenous communities. Despite the new Constitution, much protest and mobilization by the indigenous movement has occurred, because to date, few of the articles in the Constitution have been implemented (Jackson 2002, Dover & Rappaport 1996). This failure has mobilized not only Nasa communities, but most, if not all, indigenous communities in Colombia. The most important part of this new Constitution was the creation of *Entidades Territoriales Indígenas* (ETI) (Indigenous Territorial Entities) that would act as distinct jurisdictions for indigenous peoples. Dover and Rappaport explain that an ETI is an area “within which particular social groups are expected to govern themselves according to their own cultural criteria by an Indigenous Council. [...] The ETI will serve as the intermediary between the national government or other entities, and the constituent communities” (1996:6). An ETI could include municipal centres, *resguardos*, rural neighborhoods, private property, and indigenous people as well as non-indigenous people (Dover & Rappaport 1996:6). However, much ambiguity surrounds the ETI legislation, which has caused much debate in indigenous communities across Colombia. For instance, it is unclear if *resguardos* and ETIs could co-exist, if the ETI would replace the authority of the *cabildo*, or what would become of non-indigenous people living within an ETI. The ETI seems to be but the continuation of the age-old indigenous struggle for land rights (Dover & Rappaport 1996:6).

Along with land rights, indigenous people struggle against violence and oppression and for autonomy and peace on their territories. Most urgently in late

2004, indigenous organizing has culminated around opposition to proposed free trade agreements between Colombia and the United States as well as opposition to the Colombian government's constitutional reform proposals. At the forefront of these struggles are several indigenous organisations, explained below. The first regional indigenous organisation in Colombia began in the region of Cauca and is known as the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC). CRIC's founding purpose was "to fight for land rights as a defense against severe repression from guerrilla armies and the national armed forces" and has since expanded to include the fight to preserve indigenous history, language, and customs (Jackson 2002:82). On February 24, 1971, CRIC was formed when indigenous people from all over the region of Cauca gathered in order to discuss how to win back their land from the *hacienda* system. The second gathering occurred seven months later, on September 6, 1971 and was attended by even more representatives from all over the region (CRIC Bulletin 1973: online). Since its inception, CRIC has been independent of political parties and government, and is controlled by elected Indian peasants. It is directed by an executive committee made up of three members and a governing board formed of two delegates (CRIC Bulletin 1973:online). Since its inception in 1971, CRIC's platform has consisted of seven goals:

- 1) Recover *resguardo* lands
- 2) Increase the size of *resguardos*
- 3) Strengthen the *cabildos*
- 4) Stop paying land-rents
- 5) Make known the laws concerning indigenous peoples and to assist in their proper application
- 6) Defend indigenous history, language, and customs

7) Train indigenous teachers to teach in accordance with the situation of indigenous peoples and in their respective language. (ACIN online)

An over-arching goal of CRIC was to unite all indigenous communities in Cauca “around a program of defending social and cultural traditions, particularly the *resguardo* and the *cabildo*. CRIC’s ideology has also defined Cauca’s indigenous peoples as an economically exploited peasantry, seeking to make common cause with the broader movement of poor rural farmers in Colombia” (Field 1994:99). The NGO Rights and Democracy notes that “CRIC is like a mother-figure for indigenous organisations in Colombia, an inspiration to those struggling for their rights” (Rights and Democracy 2001:30). Today, CRIC’s platform has expanded and adapted to include such points as defending natural resources, strengthening the role and participation of women, and developing programs for youth and children (Rights and Democracy 2001:31). “CRIC is not only concerned with protest and denouncements but also with long-term, life-sustaining strategies related to agricultural development, an indigenous university, indigenous environmental protection, and legislation to protect indigenous rights” (Rights and Democracy 2001:3).

Within CRIC is a regional grouping known as the Association of Cabildos of Northern Cauca (ACIN). Basically a sub-organisation of CRIC, ACIN was formed in 1992 and recognized by the Colombian government in 1994. The organisation functions as a support entity for the process of organizing northern *cabildos* in Cauca, shaping the ETI, and creating appropriate systems of education, health, and natural resources management. ACIN’s mandate includes developing and strengthening the justice system in indigenous communities, building a health and education system according to indigenous customs, morals, and cultural values, driving traditional economic

development in trade and industrialization, and defending and conserving natural resources (ACIN website, translated by author). ACIN embodies seven large community projects in northern Cauca which are collectively known as *Proyecto Nasa* (Project Nasa); the significance of which will be explained in the next section of this chapter. ACIN has been instrumental in organizing a united opposition to free trade agreements (the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as well as the proposed bilateral agreement between Colombia and the U.S.), to the Uribe government's proposed constitutional reforms, as well as to the ongoing armed conflict in the country. Recently, in March 2005, ACIN organised a forum and consultation on the proposed free trade agreements, to conclude with a vote on the question of whether indigenous communities should support or oppose these free trade agreements. Of a voting population of 68,448 people, 51,330 voted: 50,305 voted in opposition to the free trade initiatives and 691 voted in support of them (ACIN website). According to a Council of Canadians fact sheet, the FTAA would weaken the power of governments to create laws that would protect the environment, social services, and culture within its borders, essentially placing democracy under corporate control and that of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Council of Canadians 2002:2). This is problematic for indigenous communities as it is doubtful that the World Trade Organization would have any interest in protecting indigenous lands and instead of negotiating with the Colombian government, the indigenous movement would instead have to deal with the WTO. Likewise, indigenous communities fear that the authority of the Colombian government would be eroded if a bilateral free trade agreement were to be signed with the U.S., threatening the autonomy of indigenous communities in a similar manner as would the FTAA (Public Declaration of the Indigenous and Popular Congress 2005:online).

The creation of the nation-wide indigenous organisation known as ONIC (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia) came about at the First Indigenous Congress in 1982 in Bogotá, which was attended by more than 2,000 delegates (Jackson 2002:83). The mandate of ONIC, decided upon at the Congress, is “to defend indigenous autonomy, history, culture, and traditions and to continue the campaign to recuperate the lands of *resguardos*” (Jackson 2002:83). In 1983, ONIC was officially recognized by the national government and from this point became active in government programs (Jackson 2002:83). Jackson explains ONIC’s structure and composition:

ONIC’s structure, with its national office and thirty-five regional affiliates, has been likened to that of a labor union. Most of its regional affiliates represent more than one *pueblo* [people], and many are formed along departmental, rather than ethnic, lines (e.g. CRIC), an arrangement that sometimes results in a *pueblo*’s communities belonging to more than one regional affiliate. ONIC and its affiliates see themselves as transcending a territorial-based ethnicity, achieving a superior, supracommunity administrative level (Jackson 2002:83).

Representing 84 different peoples, “ONIC is the legal and legitimate national organisation representing Colombian indigenous peoples” (Rights and Democracy 2001:14). ONIC’s platform consists of similar points as that of CRIC, among them defence of indigenous autonomy, collective ownership of land in *resguardos*, indigenous directed bilingual and bicultural education, control over natural resources located on indigenous lands, and solidarity with other social actors (Rights and Democracy 2001:14).

These three organisations - ONIC, CRIC, and ACIN - will be the focus of the case study of the roles that North American NGOs have played and should play in social movements. Because ONIC represents all regional indigenous organisations in Colombia and because CRIC and ACIN are among the most organised and influential of

these regional organisations, I have focused on these three as representative of the broader Colombian indigenous movement. Each of the NGOs I examine in the next chapter work either with ACIN, CRIC, or ONIC. But what makes ONIC and its regional affiliates a *social movement*? That question will be examined in the next section of this chapter.

The Indigenous Movement as a Social Movement

Based on the 'Social Movement' chapter earlier in this thesis, it can be determined that the indigenous movement in Colombia does constitute a social movement, according to the theorists who were reviewed in that chapter. In Chapter Two, Diani (2003:301) saw three criteria for a social movement: presence of a social conflict, recognition by the members of the group that a collective identity necessitates a collective effort, and finally that the presence of informal networks allows the exchange of practical and symbolic resources. Colás observed that "a social movement must have the capacity to mobilize its constituency or membership and, second, such mobilization must be sustainable over a period of time" (Colás 2002:67). Along with Diani, McAdam included three criteria in his analysis: a social movement must recognize the presence of a threat or opportunity around which to organize, this action must be innovative, and local leaders play a crucial role in such organizing (2003:293). Tilly saw that a social movement must display "public representations of the cause's worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment" (2004:7).

The first example presented to show how the Colombian indigenous movement fits within the social movement framework from Chapter Two are the land reclamations that took place throughout the 1970s. Land reclamation operations in

Cauca began in 1971 after Guambiano and Nasa farmers attempted and failed to resolve the land problem through the authorities. These farmers and members of the newly-formed CRIC decided to undertake land reclamation operations themselves, through the *cabildo* (Findji 1992:117). They secretly organised a platform based on four principles: unity, land, culture, and autonomy. Next the farmers would investigate the *haciendas* and find out who lived there and who owned the land. Armed with this information the farmers planned strategies to move into these large *haciendas*. However, it was not just farmers who would do the actual reclamation. Thousands would participate, including men, women, and children. The reclamations would occur during the night and would take the form of building, digging the soil, and cultivating this land so that within weeks it looked as though they had lived there for a long time (personal telephone interview with Manuel Rozental, April 12, 2004). Although the communities knew that the land was their right, they still recognized that there were other rights to be respected. As a result of this recognition, no property was ever destroyed during the land reclamations. Findji explains:

Community members came and dismantled the house, roof tile by tile, window by window, door by door. They piled everything up outside, and nothing was destroyed. Finally, the occupants were told, 'Take with you what you brought in, but the land is ours.' The landowners' cattle was also removed from the *hacienda* so that its occupants would leave (Findji 1992:118-119).

As can be imagined, the landowners did not retreat quietly in the face of the takeovers. They fought back violently, and in the course of the reclamations, more than 2000 indigenous community members were murdered. Despite constant attacks, the communities never backed down (Findji 1992:120).

Findji describes the Guambiano takeover of the Las Mercedes *hacienda*, which was owned by a senator. Her description shows the determination and strength that

the communities derived from each other:

they [Guambianos] started by removing the pasture grass, cutting it into squares that they would then roll up and easily carry away. They did this as communities, organised by locality and supported by Paeces [Nasa] on several occasions. When the army showed up to remove them, the cabildo confronted the troops; with the massive strength of the community behind it, the cabildo then imposed a two-month deadline for the national government to consider not only a senator's right to private property but the 'principal right' of a people who predated the Colombians in their territory, not merely brandishing the colonial *resguardo* title. The solidarity movement aided in the legitimation of this struggle. It assumed the need to recognize the rights of the Guambiano people, and it expressed this publicly by handing to the cabildo of Guambia in Popayan [the largest city in Cauca] a document signed in several cities of the country. The rejoicing came one year later, when the landowner sold or relocated his cattle and the community effectively gained permanent possession of Las Mercedes. (Findji 1992:123.)

These land reclamations were peaceful on the part of the movement and power was drawn through presence in numbers and spirituality rather than through violence. Referring back to the aforementioned social movement criteria, not only was this action innovative and conscious but it clearly demonstrates the capacity of the movement to mobilize its membership in great numbers and in a committed, united fashion. As was mentioned above, even women and children took part in the reclamations. This action was effective as well: close to 500 hectares of land were recovered in less than ten years (personal telephone interview with Manuel Rozental, April 12, 2004).

The indigenous defence system, known as the *Guardia Indígena* (Indigenous Guard), developed and practiced in Nasa communities in Cauca, is also evidence of innovative, conscious, and collective action. Since it is a response to violence and human rights violations in indigenous communities, the *Guardia Indígena* is also evidence of the presence of a social conflict or threat around which to organize. The *Guardia Indígena* is, according to Rappaport, "a specifically indigenous strategy for

expanding *cabildo* control to confront armed actors and to defend human rights in communities” (Rappaport 2003:41). The *Guardia* is intended to protect indigenous communities in Cauca and indirectly presents a solution to the problem of militarization on indigenous lands. This system of defence is both spiritual and confrontational, but always based on indigenous principles. It functions as a system of early warning. Guards are positioned around the village, at good vantage points in order to alert the community of approaching guerrillas, paramilitary, or army soldiers. When any of these armed actors approach the village, the guards shoot off a flare and ring bells to alert villagers so that everyone can come out, including women, children, and the elderly, to confront the intruders. Armando Valbuena, President of ONIC in 2003, explains what happens next and the profound effect of the action:

They just tell the guerrillas that they must leave; with just sticks and words, they push them out. The conviction is their strength. They say that they will not allow themselves to be displaced. They don't fight for recognition or resources, but for the respect for their territory. [...] By strengthening this cultural-ideological aspect, the Nasa have more tools (Armando Valbuena 2003:14).

Often during such confrontations music and speeches are broadcast over a loudspeaker (Rappaport 2003:41). None of the guards carry weapons, instead each guard carries a staff made of chonta wood and from which hang different coloured ribbons; the staff is highly symbolic. The ribbons hold high spiritual value for many Colombian indigenous communities (Rappaport 2003:41). In addition to guarding indigenous communities, the *Guardia Indígena* is also responsible for controlling the movement of people and vehicles in and out of indigenous territories, spreading information to the communities, taking charge of events that occur in the territories (such as marches and assemblies) as well as defending human rights (ACIN website).

Becoming a member of the *Guardia* is a reinforcement of what it is to be Nasa. The strengthening of Nasa communities is a direct form of resistance and is of central importance to the movement. *Guardia* members attend events that reinforce their identity as ‘modern Nasas’—a particularly important exercise for younger members of the group (Rappaport 2003:41). Training to be a member of the *Guardia Indigena* involves attending workshops run by the *resguardos* which teach the trainees about indigenous history and human rights and “provide a broad new arena in which the ideologies of indigenous organizing can be aired” (Rappaport 2003:41).

Spiritually defending Nasa communities is almost as important as a physical defence, explains an anonymous indigenous community member in a 2003 edition of Cultural Survival Quarterly. Spiritual defence includes using traditional natural herbs to protect against enemies since such practices reinforce indigenous identity and emphasize the peacefulness and harmony of indigenous communities. The belief that promoting spiritual, non-violent defences and showing deep respect for Mother Nature will ensure that Mother Nature will in turn protect communities, saturates Colombian indigenous thinking (Edeli & Hurwitz 2003:27). Edeli & Hurwitz explain:

While territoriality is vital to the survival of indigenous communities, cultural rules and regulations are also required for successful social reproduction and the maintenance of the physical environment. These cultural aspects of the existence of indigenous peoples are intricately related to the spiritual guidance provided by elders and the unique cosmovision of communities. Thus the strategies communities have devised for the defense of land and culture have often located physical resistance—violent or non-violent—within a spiritual-cultural context. The resulting spiritual resistance, while at times ineffective against violent physical incursions, has at least the effect of reinforcing the cultural-spiritual cosmovision that remains a critical aspect of survival (Edeli & Hurwitz 2003:26).

Recently, in September 2004, the *Guardia Indigena* played an instrumental role in a massive march that took place in Colombia. While a march may not seem

innovative (marches are often used by social movements as a show of solidarity and to raise public awareness of various issues), this particular march had unique features which are indicative of the indigenous movement's ability to mobilize in large numbers. The march, which took place between September 14 and 18, 2004, began in Santander de Quilichao and ended in Cali, a 100 mile distance along the Pan-American Highway. While about 25,000 people began the march, by the time the march reached Cali, that number had almost tripled to reach 70,000, constituting the largest example of indigenous mobilization in the history of Colombia (Vieira 2004a:online, Murphy 2004: online). Although the march was organised by indigenous organisations in Cauca, Afro-Colombians, *campesinos*, farmers, and trade unionists were among the marchers. The march was organised as a '*minga*', a Nasa word that has no direct translation into English but essentially means 'an urgent meeting'. If a *minga* is called, all the members of a community forgo whatever they are doing at the time to join together and do whatever is required of them (Vieira 2004b:online, personal telephone interview with Janeth Muñoz, November 19, 2004). Importantly, this mobilization occurred in response to several threats: human rights abuses and violence on indigenous lands and across Colombia, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as well as the bilateral free trade agreement proposals currently being discussed between the United States and Colombian governments, and the constitutional reforms being proposed by Colombian President Uribe which include making Uribe's re-election possible and limiting the power and authority of the Constitutional Court (Vieira 2004a: online). The march made stops in towns along the way, garnering support for "a political pact between indigenous peoples and social organisations, and towards a national agenda with which we will go out and traverse the country" (Valencia, quoted in Vieira 2004a:online).

Innovation was present in two forms at this march, first in the form of *Radio Payumat*, a small indigenous radio station. *Radio Payumat* mounted a radio to a tandem bicycle, enabling the station to move freely about the march, interviewing those marching and broadcasting information and interviews to listeners directly from the march (Vieira 2004b:online).

Second, the march was unique because of the role that the *Guardia Indígena* had to play. As well as escorting the crowd and maintaining the peace, the *Guardia* watched over the tens of thousands of people while they slept at the gathering place in a stadium in Cali (Murphy 2004:online, Vieira 2004a:online). As well, some members of the *Guardia Indígena* remained in their communities in order to watch over those who were unable to march, such as the elderly, disabled, or small children. This last action was necessary as indigenous communities had been threatened by the guerrillas that if they left to participate in the march, the guerrillas would seize those communities (Vieira 2004a:online). Like the above two examples, this third example of indigenous organizing shows innovation, ability to mobilize in huge numbers, and a consciousness about the effects of their action. Importantly, this march also displayed a further characteristic of a social movement: that a collective identity warrants a collective effort. It was not only indigenous people who participated in the march: peasants, Afro-Colombians, and *mestizo* people were all represented. Those present at the march were organised around the common identity of being victims in a civil war, as marginalized people who felt powerless individually against the perceived threat of free trade and President Uribe's proposed constitutional reforms. Furthermore, because the march encompassed indigenous as well as non-indigenous groups, the *minga* displayed the presence of informal networks between such groups

and the ability of these groups to exchange practical resources (*Radio Payumat* and the *Guardia Indígena*) as well as symbolic ones (information and strength).

A fourth inventive and innovative form of resistance by the Nasa takes the form of plans for the direction and future of the community. This last example of Nasa organizing began in the early 1980s, when a Native priest named Alvaro Ulcue began what is known as Proyecto Nasa (Project Nasa), a series of Life Plans for the indigenous communities of Cauca. Distinct from what might be termed 'development plans', Life Plans are community projects designed around each community's own concepts of education, justice, economy, government, and environment. Although Ulcue was assassinated in 1984 by the paramilitaries, the Nasa continued to build and develop their Life Plans. Just this year, on February 19, the Nasa community in Toribio, Cauca won worldwide recognition for its Life Plans from the UNDP's prestigious Equatorial Initiative for Sustainable Development, which recognizes development plans that reduce poverty by conserving and restoring ecology. The Nasa plan was given the top prize out of 600 entries from all over the world (Podur 2004b:online). Although Life Plans encompass many different areas, including education, health, history, and language, only two examples of specific plans will be given here. The first is reform of the primary school curriculum. The Nasa felt that reform was necessary in order to inject more Nasa character into the curriculum, stem the flow of culture loss from the community, and reverse the discouraging trend of more and more children dropping out of school. David D. Gow, who has done extensive work in Cauca studying indigenous Life Plans, elaborates upon the exact changes made in the curriculum. According to Gow, the curriculum concentrates

on a mixture of the historical, the cultural, and the practical: the Nasa world view; indigenous systems of work; the Nasa language; the conservation and recovery of culture; and conservation of the environment. The proposal offers methodological suggestions, such as

the importance of working with children's dreams, of recapturing the rhythms of nature, of 'rescuing the reality and the origin of things,' all the while bearing in mind that these efforts are directed towards 'the rescue and strengthening of the Paez [Nasa] ethnic group and their importance in the national arena' (Gow 1997:271).

Second, the Nasa have identified traditional artisanal crafts as an important way to recover a fading culture. Gow writes that supporting the production of handicrafts can "satisfy cultural, social, and economic objectives" (Gow 1997:271). CRIC, which had been encouraging such activity for some time before the idea became part of a Life Plan, had been supplying the community with wool, ideas, and designs. (Gow 1997:272). So far, the development of handicraft microenterprises has contributed to "social cohesion and solidarity" as well as a renewed interest in learning the Nasa language (Gow 1997:272). These two examples of components of Life Plans represent resistance to those who are intent on destroying indigenous communities. They are a means to reassert what it means to be Nasa, to strengthen Nasa communities, and, as a consequence, greatly increase the chance of surviving this difficult period in Colombian history.

The final requirement to be satisfied for the Colombian indigenous movement to be considered a social movement is the crucial role of local leaders, specified by McAdam (2003). Since the Nasa are so influential in the indigenous movement, I will focus on past leaders of Nasa communities who embody local leadership. The Nasa have had many notable leaders, the first of whom was a woman known as La Gaitana, in the mid-17th century. La Gaitana was the mother of a man killed by Spanish conquistador Pedro de Anasco, when he refused to submit to the Spanish crown. After his death, La Gaitana emerged as a warrior and led the first armed resistance movement against the Spanish (Weinberg 2003:online). The next major leader, Juan Tama, was the architect of the first political resistance movement by the Nasa. Tama

petitioned the crown in 1670 to establish five Nasa *resguardos*. Three were eventually established in 1701 - those of Toribio, Tacueyo, and San Francisco - and still exist today. Manuel Quilo y Ciclos was another leader who was instrumental in the establishment of these *resguardos* (Weinberg 2003:online). Manuel Quintin Lame, possibly one of the most famous indigenous leaders, emerged in the early 20th century. Lame was responsible for the land reclamation movement to regain *resguardo* lands and empower the *cabildos*. Lame's mostly unarmed movement, *La Quintinada*, was partly successful to this end (Weinberg 2003:online). In 1975, a Nasa named Alvaro Ulcue (who was mentioned above in the Life Plans discussion) became the priest of Toribio. Ulcue began holding meetings to discuss land recuperation and empowering the *cabildos*. At the beginning, these meetings would take place at night or in very secluded areas in order to be as secret as possible. In the 1980s, the meetings took the form of open assemblies, and gave birth to Proyecto Nasa (Weinberg 2003:online). In November 1984, Padre Alvaro Ulcue was assassinated and no one has ever been convicted of his murder. Today one of the most influential leaders in the indigenous movement is Arquimedes Vitonas, mayor of the town of Toribio in Cauca. Vitonas was mentioned earlier in this chapter; he was one of the indigenous leaders kidnapped in August of 2004. Recently recognized as 'Master of Wisdom' by UNESCO and 2004 Person of the Year by Colombia's daily newspaper *El Tiempo*, Vitonas is representative of a Colombian indigenous leadership today that has nurtured the indigenous movement into one with an unprecedented amount of "strength, unity, and solidarity at the grassroots level" (Podur 2004a:online).

All of the above examples certainly demonstrate the indigenous movement's ability to mobilize large portions of its membership over a period of time and to partake in conscious, innovative action. The above examples also show the movement

to exhibit other traits of social movements mentioned in Chapter Two, including McAdam's criteria of presence of a threat (violence on indigenous lands, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, Uribe's proposed constitutional reforms), Tilly's (2004) public representations of the cause's worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (land reclamations, the march), Diani's criteria that the movement recognize that collective identity necessitates a collective effort (the march) and that practical and symbolic resources be exchanged through informal networks (the march and *Radio Payumat*, the *Guardia Indígena*, strength, and information—specifically the educational initiatives).

This section of Chapter Three has demonstrated that the indigenous movement in Colombia embodies a social movement, based upon the criteria offered by social movement theorists represented in Chapter Two. By describing the indigenous land reclamation efforts, the invention and work of the *Guardia Indígena*, the immensity of the September 2004 march, and the Life Plans, Chapter Three has shown that the indigenous movement is sustainable and that its mobilization is conscious and collective. In the context of the political situation in Colombia and the violence under which the movement must do its work (described in the first part of this chapter), the coherence and organisational ability of the indigenous movement becomes all the more remarkable. The final section of this chapter will briefly describe the indigenous movements of Bolivia and Ecuador, in order to contextualize the situation of indigenous communities in Colombia.

Other Indigenous Movements in Latin America

In an effort to demonstrate that there are other active and well-organised indigenous movements in other Latin American countries, and place Colombia's

indigenous movement in this wider geopolitical context, the activities of two such movements are briefly described below. While indigenous movements exist in most Latin American countries, I have chosen Bolivia because of the momentous events occurring in the country at the time of this writing and Ecuador because it is home to one of the most influential indigenous movements on the continent. It is worthwhile to note the similarities surrounding the economic and political conditions that provided the impetus for these movements (including the example of Colombia) to organize as well as the similarities of tactics used in such mobilizations.

Bolivia

Although Bolivia's history of peasant organizing began in the 1950s, indigenous mobilization commenced in 1964 when Rene Barrientos' military government came to power and began to erode the autonomy of indigenous and peasant communities. This was due to the new government's Military-Peasant Pact which moved resources and funding away from peasant interests to those of agro-business and generally introduced policies that benefited large landowners (Yashar 2005:164). A huge monetary devaluation in 1974 coupled with dramatic economic reforms that increased the price of staples such as sugar, rice, noodles, flour, and oil and froze the price of agricultural goods led to major peasant protests and strikes (Yashar 2005:165). When the government responded to such protests with massacres, indigenous peasants in La Paz saw the need for autonomous organizing along ethnic lines (Yashar 2005:166). The most influential indigenous movement to arise at this time was known as the Kataristas, a group that emerged among secondary school and university students who were able to engage union networks in the countryside (Yashar 2005:169). The Kataristas, largely composed of Aymara Indians, organised around indigenous identity

and built a platform around reinforcement of indigenous practices and customs, emphasizing the importance of being Aymara (Yashar 2005:170).

After the death of Barrientos, the Kataristas began to reorganize the national peasant confederation, known as *Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CNTCB) (National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia), which was later renamed *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB) (Confederation of Peasant Workers' Unions of Bolivia) by its leader, Jenaro Flores (Yashar 2005, 178). Between 1983 and 1984, CSUTCB put forth an Agrarian Reform Proposal which contained provisions for cultural pluralism, communal labor, and communal authority for all of Bolivia's indigenous movements. Although the Agrarian Reform Proposal was never brought to a vote, today it has been adopted by the new secretary general of CSTUCB, Felipe Quispe (Yashar 2005: 180-181).

In 1985, the Bolivian government began to introduce neoliberal reforms which dismantled many programs previously implemented to support peasant communities: wages were frozen, price controls and subsidies were removed on gas, petroleum, and agricultural products, and health and education spending was slashed (Yashar 2005:182-183). Tin mines were closed, putting some 30,000 people out of work. Many of the now unemployed miners were indigenous, but could not return to their communities because of lack of land and lack of work. The only viable alternative was to enter the coca industry. In 1991, the first Andean Council for Coca Production was held, which elected Evo Morales as President. The movement which emerged from the increase in coca production and the 1991 Council became known as the *cocalero* movement. The mandate of the movement, which has only grown in strength since the 1991 Council, is to defend coca production as part of indigenous culture and tradition and has integrated many of the tenets of the Katarista movement such as

cultural rights and autonomy (Yashar 2005:185). In 2002, Morales campaigned for the Bolivian presidency under the banner of a political party known as the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) Movement to Socialism, which is now the second largest in the legislature (Yashar 2005:186).

In 2003, popular movements, including the indigenous movements, united to overthrow the government of Sanchez de Lozada, mainly due to massive opposition to Lozada's proposals to privatize Bolivia's gas reserves (Dangle 2005:online). When the government of Carlos Mesa took power, the MAS and the *cocaleros* took a conciliatory approach to the new government, providing bases of support (Zibechi 2005:18). The issue of Bolivia's gas reserves remained a contentious issue for Mesa's government. Mesa decided to hold a referendum on the issue, in an attempt to pacify the social movements opposed to privatization. The referendum caused a marked divide between the *cocaleros*, who supported the referendum and the Aymara indigenous movement, led by Felipe Quispe and the CSUTCB, who advocated a boycott of the vote (Dangle 2005:online). Although 75% percent of people voted 'yes' to the referendum, no major decisions were made about what to do with the gas reserves. Frustrated, the once divided social movements came together to stage massive protests, including strikes, road blockages, and marches, to push for nationalization of the reserves. On June 7, 2005, these protests culminated in Mesa's resignation (Dangle 2005:online). The insecurity and chaos that characterizes present-day Bolivia lends uncertainty to the future of the popular movements. However, one analyst believes that the popular movements will not relent in their struggle and will eventually bring about nationalization of the gas reserves (Friedsky 2005:online).

Ecuador

The indigenous movement in Ecuador began in two distinct regions of the country: the Andes and the Amazon. In 1973, land reform laws abolished the Ecuadorian version of the *hacienda* system and included provisions for the introduction of education, health, and social security programs for the peasant population, overwhelmingly in the Andes (Yashar 2005:92). However, many of the promises enshrined in the land reform laws were never fully delivered, or in many cases, were unevenly accessible. Indigenous people, for example, although considered formal members of society, were subjected to racial discrimination, including segregation or exclusion from “public schools, hospitals, workplaces, markets, and state offices” (Yashar 2005:98). In response to such inequality, indigenous people began to organize, using social networks established within churches and unions (Yashar 2005:100). In 1972, an organisation known as *Ecuador Runcunapac Richarimui* (ECUARUNARI) (Awakening of the Ecuadorian Indian) was formed, which was supported and funded by the military government of Rodríguez Lara, and focused mainly on land reform and distribution (Yashar 2005:107-8).

In the Amazon, indigenous communities politicized in the 1960s as the Ecuadorian state began to open up the Amazon to land developers, including agriculturalists and cattle farmers. Oil exploration saw a dramatic increase upon the discovery of oil reserves in 1967 (Yashar 2005:113-4). The negative environmental consequences of oil exploration provided the necessary drive for indigenous mobilization, which centered around the defence of indigenous communities (Yashar 2005:116, Candial 1995:online). As in the Andes, churches provided the networks necessary to organize, and several local federations emerged as a result. The most prominent of these organisations was *Confederación Nacionalidades Indígenas de la*

Amazonía Ecuatoriana (CONFENAIE) (National Indigenous Confederation of the Ecuadorian Amazon), which formed in 1980 in order to defend cultures and land, to demand the end of agricultural development in the Amazon, and to demand implementation of social programs such as education and health (Yashar 2005:129).

In the early 1980s, the two main regional indigenous groups - ECUARUNARI and CONFENAIE - began to discuss the formation of a national indigenous organisation. In 1986, these discussions led to the founding of *Confederación Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE) (National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador) (Yashar 2005:130). CONAIE's platform includes a number of demands of the government, including recognition that Ecuador is a plurinational country, the granting of lands and titles to these nationalities, the nonpayment of rural land taxes, officialization of indigenous medicine, and funding for bilingual education (Yashar 2005:146).

To date, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement has succeeded in toppling two presidents: Abdalá Bucaram in 1997 and Jamil Mahuad in 2000 (Zibechi 2005:19). CONAIE then put its support behind Lucio Gutiérrez, even forming part of his administration for six months before withdrawing (Zibechi 2005:20). This support for government and subsequent withdrawal has caused divisions within the movement and a corresponding uncertainty about its future. However, CONAIE held a Congress in 2004 where the new leadership began to steer the organisation back to the grassroots, to the core of the movement (Zibechi 2005:20). Once considered "the chief social and political actor [...] and an obligatory point of reference for social movements throughout Latin America", it is likely that CONAIE will soon be able to regain its former power (Zibechi 2005:19).

Many similarities exist between the movements in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia. In all three cases, indigenous peoples were considered inferior members of

society and subjected to a variety of discriminations, including lack of land, poor economic conditions, social inequality, and little or no access to resources such as health and education programs. The indigenous movements in all three cases mobilized to reverse such conditions, organizing around the concept of plurinationality and indigenous rights and autonomy. This final section exists as a reminder that poor conditions existed and persist for indigenous communities around Latin America and that indigenous communities are active and organised, rejecting complacency and striving to improve conditions for not only themselves but for other marginalized people in their respective countries.

Chapter Three has provided a political context within which to consider the indigenous movement in Colombia. The first section of this chapter examined the Plan Colombia and the human rights situation in the country in order to build a basis of understanding for section two, which concentrated on the different actions taken by the Colombian indigenous movement to show how it can be considered to be a social movement. The final section of this chapter acknowledged the existence of other vibrant indigenous movements in Latin America, focusing on those in Bolivia in Ecuador. Chapter Four will build upon Chapter Three by examining the four North American NGOs and their relationships to the Colombian indigenous movement.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A Case Study of Four North American NGOs in Colombia's Indigenous Movement

This chapter represents the culmination of all the research completed for this thesis and analyzes interviews conducted with representatives of four case study NGOs: Inter Pares, Rights and Democracy, Colombia Support Network, and En Camino. Part one of this chapter addresses the question of what roles these NGOs are currently taking on with the indigenous movement in Colombia. For each NGO, the underlying philosophy and principles of the organisation is examined (information is obtained directly from statements made on each NGO's website - see bibliography for exact website addresses); the major challenges facing the indigenous movement according to the NGO's perspective; what programs and what kind of work is being done with the indigenous movement and the successes and failures of such work and programs.

Part two of this chapter places the above analysis into the framework established in Chapter One. Based upon the different NGO roles investigated, the four case study NGOs are categorized and their work related to the criticisms also discussed in Chapter One. I discuss what roles these NGOs are playing or have played within the Colombian indigenous movement and based upon the positive or negative outcomes and the aforementioned NGO criticisms, I propose three roles within which I believe NGOs can operate most effectively in the context of the Colombian indigenous movement. The above assessments will be based both on the research contained in the first three chapters as well as interviews conducted with an expert unaffiliated with any particular NGO but who works in the field with elements of the indigenous movement.

Part One: Case Study of Four North American NGOs

Inter Pares

Inter Pares is a Canadian organisation that was formed in 1975. With a broad mandate to address poverty and underdevelopment caused by structural inequities, Inter Pares provides humanitarian assistance and human rights protection for those living in violence and attempts to “[link] social and economic issues at home with social change work globally” (Inter Pares website June 6, 2005).¹ Underlying this mandate is the firm belief that the communities and individuals with whom Inter Pares works are equal partners working for the common cause of improving the world. The overall aim of Inter Pares is to establish “long-term commitment projects with people and groups working in mutual respect.” Inter Pares also believes that one of its most important contributions is “linking local communities with similar problems and experiences”.

In Latin America, Inter Pares works indirectly with local organisations through a consortium known as PCS (Project Counseling Service) which is made up of Action by Churches Together (Holland), Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council, and Swiss InterChurch Aid. PCS works mainly in the realm of capacity-building for Latin American organisations “to respond to the needs of uprooted and other populations affected by political violence” with an emphasis on the capacities and leadership of women. More specifically, in Colombia PCS works with *Agenda Indígena*, a group comprised of three organisations: *La Central Cooperativa Servicios* (CENCOOSER) (The Central Service Cooperative), *Planeta Paz*, and *Fundación Mujer y Futuro*. The goal in working with *Agenda Indígena* is to “create opportunities for our counterparts to learn directly from each other, by supporting mutual support networks and exchanges.”

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all information and quotes contained under the heading ‘Inter Pares’ was obtained from the Inter Pares website and verified as accurate as of June 6, 2005.

This is done by helping colleagues to secure funding from international donors and directly financially supporting local project initiatives, notably both where the local organisations believe it would best help.

Inter Pares also has membership in a number of organisations in Canada, in an effort to form networks of advocacy and support for policy changes at home and abroad. These organisations include the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Project Ploughshares, and the Canadian Council for Philanthropy. While it classifies itself as an NGO, Inter Pares routinely participates in government committees and produces policy papers and presentations for government agencies.

In terms of concrete organisation, Inter Pares is made up of fifteen full-time staff members who are divided into groups working in one of several areas: Latin America, Africa, Asia, and donor relations. The group operates around consensus-based decision-making processes. Because all staff collaborate in fundraising, programming, and financial management aspects, Inter Pares is highly transparent. Funding to Inter Pares is provided through both private supporters and the Canadian International Development Agency, “not through major publicity and fundraising campaigns.”

The relationship between Inter Pares and the Colombian indigenous movement is a somewhat distant one: the NGO does not work directly with indigenous communities in Colombia but rather funds programs through PCS, which has been working in Latin America for fifteen years. Despite what one is led to believe upon reading Inter Pares’ website, currently the organisation does not fund any programs (through PCS or otherwise) with or on behalf of Colombian indigenous communities. According to David Bruer, an Inter Pares staff member who focuses on the Colombia program, a program was initiated several years ago between PCS and three indigenous

groups in the Chocó region of Colombia - *Organización Indígena Antioqueña*, the *Organización Regional Embera-Waunan* (OREWA) Embera-Waunan Regional Indigenous Organisation, and the Alto Sinu, all three of whom are members of ONIC. However, at the end of the first three years of the program, the indigenous groups came to the decision that they could not work with one another and the program ended (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004).

At its inception, the goal of that program was to bring the three indigenous organisations together in order to build their capacity to negotiate with the Colombian government and with other armed actors; ultimately, to increase participation from the Chocó region in the national indigenous peace agenda. Simply put, the goals of the program were to improve negotiating capacity at the regional level (Chocó) and increase the groups' participation in national forums through ONIC (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004). In order to accomplish these goals, PCS hired people with negotiating skills to train the organisations in negotiation and in capacity-building, in order to strengthen them and their administrations. Funding was given directly to the indigenous organisations as well so that they could design their own policies and manage themselves (personal interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004).

According to Bruer, the challenge of this program—and in any program that deals with grassroots organisations—was the volatility of the groups: such organisations, with little administrative expertise, undergo constant leadership changes that sometimes include the upheaval of the entire leadership body. Bruer remarked that it is very difficult to build partnerships with organisations whose identity can change so suddenly. However, an alternative explanation for the project's ultimate failure has to do with the very different realities of the indigenous

groups. For instance, *Organización Indígena Antioqueña* was very well funded and had a more developed infrastructure than the other two organisations. The organisation is based in Medellín, a major city centre, and its staff was well educated. In contrast, the Alto Sinu group had no office and consisted of loosely-linked communities along the river. Since only one of the three organisations had the capacity to manage funds and produce reports, jealousies formed among the other two groups and grew to the point where the three groups could no longer work together (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004).

Although the program collapsed, Bruer believes that there were successes achieved within the three years that the program was functioning. Useful and productive discussions occurred between representatives of the three groups, certain members of the organisations were trained in the areas of administration and negotiation, and all three groups increased their contact with ONIC (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004).

Despite this somewhat distant relationship between Inter Pares and the indigenous movement, the organization has been included in this study because there is much to be learned about Inter Pares' experience with the project in the Chocó region. This was a capacity-building program that did not take into consideration the discrepancies between the indigenous communities who were forced to collaborate on the project. While some gains were made in the course of the project, as Bruer pointed out, its overall failure calls into question the effectiveness of capacity-building programs. Can NGOs based in North America carry out successful capacity-building programs in the South? While this thesis is unable to answer this question, a capacity-building role is not among the roles I recommend that North American NGOs play with the Colombian indigenous movement.

Rights and Democracy

Although it defines itself as non-partisan, the organisation Rights and Democracy was formed by Canada's Parliament in 1988. It is funded almost entirely by Canada's Overseas Development Assistance Budget and its financial accounts are inspected by the Auditor General (Rights and Democracy website: June 6, 2005)¹. However, Rights and Democracy does not strictly fit David Korten's criteria for a Governmental Nongovernmental Organisation (GONGO), that is that they are "creations of government and serve as instruments of government policy" (1990:2). Rights and Democracy certainly was formed by government, but it is unclear whether or not they actually serve as direct instruments of government policy. For the purposes of this thesis, Rights and Democracy will be considered an NGO for several reasons. First, Rights and Democracy declares itself to be a non-partisan, non-profit charitable organisation and states on its website that it "is an independent organisation at arm's length from the Government of Canada." It is also considered an NGO by the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. For these reasons, this thesis will consider Rights and Democracy to be a 'pure' NGO (in contrast with a GONGO, a subclass of NGO).

Based in Montreal, Rights and Democracy works around four main themes: women's rights, globalization and human rights, democratic development, and rights of indigenous peoples. These four themes are addressed through urgent action alerts and 'important opportunities' bulletins as well as through international human rights advocacy work. This latter aspect of Rights and Democracy's work consists of

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all information and quotes contained under the heading 'Rights and Democracy' was obtained from the Rights and Democracy website and verified as accurate as of June 6, 2005.

partnering with human rights, women's, and indigenous groups around the world, as well as with democratic movements and governments in order to enhance the work of human rights advocates.

The two roles filled by Rights and Democracy are (a) advocacy: "to inform public opinion and to call for policy changes with respect to the promotion and defence of human rights and democratic development" and (b) capacity-building: "of human rights institutions and programmes, especially with partners in developing countries, to enable them to pursue their advocacy activities effectively" (Rights and Democracy website: June 6, 2005). Concretely, Rights and Democracy provides technical assistance, training in popular education, action-oriented research, institutional strengthening, and actively encourages dialogue and networking between NGOs and their respective governments.

Rights and Democracy's work with the indigenous movement in Colombia began about ten years ago and consists mainly of funding the women's section of ONIC. The first project initiated between Rights and Democracy and the indigenous women was to build a continental indigenous women's network across South America. Now known as the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas, this project began in July of 1995 with a conference for women from indigenous groups around South America. At first, the goal of the project was to make sure that ONIC would be part of this continental network. Since that goal was achieved, Rights and Democracy's focus has shifted to addressing entrenched violence; to developing programs designed to help indigenous women in the region cope with Colombia's armed conflict. This shift in focus has resulted in the continental network creating a commission on violence. Although this commission is in its early formative stages, it intends to involve Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama (personal telephone interview with a Rights and Democracy

representative who wished to remain anonymous [hereafter referred to as *anonymous*], November 22, 2004). According to *anonymous*, Rights and Democracy's primary role within the women's indigenous movement involves financially supporting the programs conceived and designed by the women, who submit funding proposals to Rights and Democracy, which reviews them and makes funding decisions.

Other work relating to Colombia that Rights and Democracy has been involved with includes a large joint mission to Colombia in 2001. This mission, formed by representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, Canadian Members of Parliament, and members of Rights and Democracy, had several objectives. These included promoting awareness of the situation of indigenous peoples in Colombia within Canada's First Nations' communities, strengthening policy and advocacy capacity in Canada, and supporting the peace efforts in Colombia, particularly among indigenous communities (personal telephone interview with *anonymous*, November 22, 2004). Although the report released after this mission contained many recommendations by Rights and Democracy, there is little evidence that any of these recommendations have since been implemented. However, the mission did result in greater publicity around the human rights situation in Colombia (personal telephone interview with *anonymous*, November 22, 2004). Rights and Democracy's role with Colombia's indigenous movement can thus far be characterized as one of capacity-building (developing the continental network) and advocacy and research (the joint mission).

As for successes that Rights and Democracy has seen in its role with the indigenous movement, *anonymous* believes there have been some small ones. For instance, projects that Rights and Democracy was involved with helped raise the profile of the women's movement within ONIC and helped the women's desk within ONIC to become more respected. Also, there have been successes with certain ad hoc

urgent action bulletins sent out by Rights and Democracy. Most recently, a bulletin was sent out to advocate protection for the large mobilization of indigenous people that took place in September, described in Chapter Three of this thesis (the march was not attacked).

As for failures, *anonymous* considers Rights and Democracy's involvement in Colombia to be too small to have had any meaningful results. In order to improve Rights and Democracy's effectiveness in working with the Colombian indigenous movement, *anonymous* proposed that the NGO should focus on one specific area. The project focusing on women and violence was a good first step, but *anonymous* would like to see Rights and Democracy establish a more certain and long-term role for itself in the country (personal telephone interview with *anonymous*, November 22, 2004).

Despite *anonymous'* claim that Rights and Democracy's involvement has been too small to have had any meaningful results, I feel that the organization's involvement is valuable for this thesis. (It is interesting to note that *anonymous* only felt that Rights and Democracy's involvement was too small to comment on failures, not successes.) The NGO is involved with connecting indigenous communities in Canada with indigenous communities in Colombia and raising the status of the Colombian situation among Canadian government officials. Although Rights and Democracy is faced with some problems due to its reliance on government funding (this will be addressed in section two of this chapter) I believe it is operating in roles that are useful for the indigenous movement.

Colombia Support Network

Colombia Support Network (CSN) is a grassroots organisation that relies on members and individual private donors for its funding (personal telephone interview

with Cecilia Zarate, December 1, 2004). Based in Madison, Wisconsin, CSN strives to bring about a negotiated solution to the conflict in Colombia by strengthening civil society (including women's groups, teachers' cooperatives, unions, environmental groups, and indigenous movements). CSN is attempting to build an organised movement throughout the U.S. with chapters around the country (CSN website June 6, 2005)¹.

The main focus of CSN chapters is the 'sister city project' which links each chapter in the U.S. with one or more communities in Colombia. States the CSN website, "we support the sister cities concept because we believe that it reflects the idea that civilian societies have a duty to be an integral part of the reconstruction of a social fabric that has been destroyed by the war. [...] Sister cities reflect a 'people to people' diplomacy that expresses the most beautiful qualities of a nation." CSN chapters are involved in email, fax, and letter-writing campaigns to challenge the U.S. government's policy on Colombia, as well as campaigns to pressure the Colombian government to honour agreements it has made with Colombian communities. CSN is also involved in providing material assistance for small projects that help to strengthen Colombian communities and sponsors delegations to Colombia every year, encouraging members of the press, U.S. policymakers, representatives from peace and justice organisations and labour leaders to take part. Another major aspect of CSN's mandate is advocacy and publicity campaigns to make representatives in the U.S. Congress aware of the situation in Colombia and what impact the U.S. is having there.

The overall goals of the sister city projects, and of CSN broadly, are ambitious; some relate to Colombia and others to the U.S. First and foremost, CSN aims to

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all information and quotes contained under the heading Colombia Support Network was obtained from the Colombia Support Network website and verified as accurate as of June 6, 2005.

change the foreign policy of the U.S. government as it affects Colombia. Second, CSN is working toward a negotiated solution to the conflict and the strengthening of Colombian civil society. Patricia Dahl, who heads CSN's New York City chapter, pointed out in an email interview that providing solidarity with CSN's Colombian counterparts and providing international (human rights) accompaniment (protection) are very important as well (personal email correspondence with Dahl, January 6, 2005). CSN's strategy for accomplishing these goals is to create a grassroots movement in the United States which would be able to influence representatives in Congress and in the Senate. Creating CSN chapters across the U.S. is part of this process. Educating the public in the U.S. about the effects of their government's involvement in Colombia is essential: Cecilia Zarate, founder of CSN, feels that most people in the U.S. have little idea of the realities of war, nor do most have an analysis of the situation in Colombia (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004).

CSN has initiated sister-city projects with several indigenous communities in Cauca and in Putumayo, including one between the CSN chapter in New York City and two small displaced communities in the Alto Naya in Cauca. In order for a community in Colombia to become involved with CSN's sister city project scheme, it must be organised politically, and although these two communities in the Alto Naya are very poor, they are quite organised (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004). Both Cecilia Zarate and Patricia Dahl visited these communities in the summer of 2004 and Zarate told me that although the communities were living in very poor, materially primitive conditions, the people had organised themselves well. According to Zarate, they are looking to the future, building homes for community members, creating a food program to provide vegetables for the families there, and

operating a radio station that unites the community (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004).

Although the relationship between the New York chapter and the Alto Naya communities has just recently begun, the New York chapter is backing these communities politically. Such support is often crucial for small indigenous communities in Colombia as it acts as a kind of protective political shield; the fact that an American organisation is supporting these communities is often enough to cause the paramilitaries and guerrillas to keep their distance. Dahl says that this kind of support is effective because, as she put it, “the forces that oppress them [the indigenous communities] now know that we are in daily contact with them, and that we know what is happening there, and we will alert the authorities, the press, and the general public, if crimes against humanity continue” (personal email correspondence with Dahl, January 6, 2005).

To summarize, the roles that CSN plays with the indigenous movement are two-fold. Networking is the primary role in which the organisation operates, sending delegations to Colombia and keeping constant contact between sister cities. Lobbying is also a role in which CSN is heavily involved, focusing on letter-writing, email, and fax campaigns to the U.S. Congress in order to bring about a change in U.S. policy towards Colombia.

Cecilia Zarate related that she perceives the major challenge facing indigenous communities and the indigenous movement to be overcoming the threats posed to indigenous territories by natural resources interests. Many indigenous territories are rich with minerals and crude oil, complicating the movement’s quest for true autonomy on indigenous lands and implementation of the ETI legislation. An overarching threat is globalization, manifested in the proposed Free Trade Area of the

Americas (FTAA) agreement (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004). Indeed, September's huge march in Colombia was also a show of united resistance to the FTAA and the perceived threat that the agreement poses to peasants, workers, union members, and ethnic minorities. Patricia Dahl, head of CSN's New York City chapter, concurs with Zarate that indigenous communities fear corporate control of their land. In an email interview, Dahl wrote to me that foreign corporations are increasingly interested in Colombia's resources, including gold, emeralds, coal, oil, coffee, flowers, gas, and water. According to Dahl, indigenous communities predict that foreign control over Colombia's natural resources will force local people into deeper poverty. Therefore, the indigenous movement is struggling constantly for the right to life, including the constant struggle for land rights and cultural sovereignty (personal email correspondence with Dahl, January 6, 2005).

When asked about successes that CSN has seen throughout its 17 years, Zarate seemed somewhat discouraged. She is proud of the fact that CSN's urgent action bulletins have saved threatened individuals in Colombia, but acknowledges the fact that CSN has a long way to go in its education campaigns; she cites the results of the recent U.S. election as an example of why CSN needs to keep working hard (personal interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004).

CSN has also experienced some failures in its attempts to set up sister communities in Colombia. The NGO had started up a sister community relationship in an area of Colombia where there were large projects underway that involved the EU and the U.S. government. The sister community relationship ended after three years because the communities were not sufficiently organised politically. Zarate has learned not to build sister community relationships with communities who have already accepted economic development projects through government on their land

because they are forced to accept the policies of the government. CSN's policy is to work with communities who are mindful of globalization and the environment and who have taken these issues into their own hands and begun to organize themselves. Working with communities who are receiving money from the government, says Zarate, simply will not work (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004). Communities who accept funding from the government equate to tacitly supporting government policy, which indigenous organisations like ACIN, CRIC, and ONIC believe harm indigenous communities.

En Camino

En Camino, which means 'on the way' in Spanish, is a grassroots group based in Toronto which provides information and analysis and "space for strategic discussion and exchange" about war and terrorism around the world (En Camino website June 6, 2005)¹. En Camino describes itself as a network of people and organisations from around the world which focuses mainly on issues relating to Iraq, Palestine/Israel, and Colombia. Broadly, En Camino's work consists of working towards a political and negotiated solution to military conflicts, criticizing the underlying social, economic, political models that it argues fuels conflict, and making what it terms the 'invisible struggles' (resistance and alternative movements) visible (En Camino website). In practice, this work involves giving workshops and interviews, sending out bulletins for letter-writing and phone-in campaigns around human rights issues, and developing information exchange networks between movements in Canada and abroad. En Camino believes "that by offering what we can do and opening up to others, we can contribute to a much bigger and more comprehensive effort" (En Camino website). En

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all information and quotes contained under the heading 'En Camino' was obtained from the En Camino website and verified as accurate as of June 6, 2005.

Camino was born after the collapse of an organisation known as the Canada-Colombia Solidarity Campaign in 2003 (CCSC) and encompasses many of the same principles of CCSC as well as many of the same people (En Camino website).

Manuel Rozental, one of the people at the forefront of En Camino and a former member of CCSC, explained that the biggest challenge facing the Nasa people, and the indigenous movement broadly (especially in terms of securing indigenous autonomy), is corporate interests (personal telephone interview with Rozental, April 12, 2004). Like Zarate, Rozental described that En Camino believes social movements and indigenous movements are in conflict with capital and corporations, a polarization that Rozental believes will become increasingly obvious. Governments are not the problem, stated Rozental, rather it is capital that stands in opposition to justice and autonomy. For indigenous people, wealth has to be generated, but the purpose of the generation of wealth is the protection of life and the attainment of justice and of autonomy. With capitalism, the reason to exist is to accumulate, with little regard for justice and the protection of life (personal interview with Rozental, April 12, 2004). Justin Podur, also at the forefront of En Camino, explained that the major challenge facing the indigenous movement is the fact that the struggle for autonomy is an invisible one. Because the indigenous movement opposes the agenda proposed for it and for indigenous land by state institutions and capital (manifested in trade agreements like the FTAA and corporate interests in general), explained Podur, it is a challenge for the movement to find allies within the state apparatus or internationally because it is difficult for the indigenous movement to distinguish itself from the armed actors - the guerrillas and the paramilitaries - within the Colombian context. While the movement would like to work in solidarity with other autonomous movements like the Zapatistas in Mexico and the MST (Landless Peasant Movement) in Brazil, the

Colombian context makes this difficult; the challenge is convincing international organisations and other states that the movement is not affiliated with any of the armed actors (personal telephone interview with Podur, March 28, 2004).

En Camino's mandate takes these challenges and struggles into account and is guided by principles that reflect this. Among En Camino's principles is the strong belief that capital is a problem faced globally and that greed and resulting violence go hand-in-hand with capital. The solution to the problem of capital, believes En Camino, must be found in both the South and the North; instead of doing charity work in the South, it may be more effective to stop "aggressive and damaging policies" in the North that have an impact on people in the South (En Camino website). Such policies include foreign policies like Plan Colombia as well as the freedom given to multinational corporate interests in the South. Like the other NGOs examined here, En Camino supports a negotiated solution to armed conflict (in Colombia and elsewhere) but that the negotiating table must include social movements and organisations (En Camino website). To these ends, En Camino encourages as many people and organisations to endorse a platform based on these principles; a campaign that has come to be known as the 'Minga'. Explained in Chapter Three, *minga* is a Nasa term which refers to the collective effort that occurs when an urgent action is required. In the case of En Camino's Minga, organisations and individuals have come together to support the principles mentioned above. What makes the Minga unique is that the collective effort revolves around a set of principles and ideas rather than joining a particular institution to bring about change (personal interview with Rozental, April 12, 2004).

En Camino's means to implement this platform is to further the construction of a web of like-minded social movements and organisations. Rozental explains that this

network is a weaving of diverse autonomies across the globe so that the whole planet becomes like a living organism made of distinct cultures in their own territories, offering their own solutions to problems of poverty. Subcommandante Marcos of the Zapatista movement (an identifiable member of this informal global network) put it simply: “One no, and many yeses”: the different components of the web are united around their opposition to capital but are conscious that there are many yeses - many alternatives to capitalism - that all have equal validity. In a letter published by the French newspaper *Le Monde* on April 1, 1995, Marcos wrote, “so they talk to us about globalization. And we realize that this is what they call this absurd order, where there is only one country—the country of money. Where the frontiers will disappear, not as a result of brotherhood, but through the haemorrhage that fattens the powerful who have no nation” (Marcos, cited in Esteva 1997:305).

En Camino operates in two roles with the indigenous movement in Colombia: advocacy and networking. Advocacy is the work accomplished through giving workshops, interviews, and sending out bulletins about the situation in Colombia. Networking is essentially done through the Minga, which facilitate the weaving between social movements and brings more organisations and social movements into the network. As was mentioned earlier, En Camino is working with the Palestinians in Israel, the Zapatistas in Mexico, and the Nasas in Colombia, exchanging information, analyses, and knowledge, helping people build contacts and stay in touch with each other. Linking these three movements is viewed as the beginning of the web of solidarity.

In August 2001, a delegation of around thirty Minga members visited Colombia, seven of whom visited the region of Cauca. At this time the Minga was consolidated in the CCSC, prior to its collapse and the formation of En Camino. One of the

participants who visited Cauca was Nicole Schabus, an International Relations lawyer with the Shuswap Nation in British Columbia and the Assembly of First Nations. Schabus told me, in a phone interview, that the delegation acted as human rights observers at a congress entitled “Against the War: Dignity in Resistance”. This was a convergence of about 17,000 people representing most of the 84 indigenous nations in Colombia as well as their umbrella organisations. Also present were international delegations from Europe, the United States, Canada, and other Latin American countries (personal telephone interview with Schabus, November 29, 2004). According to the report published by the Minga after the delegation’s return, the purpose of this congress was to “discuss, address and outline the principles and strategies required to take concerted and disciplined action regarding Colombia’s war, its determinants and impacts while maintaining the integrity of their cultures and ancestral rights, and, in five days, reach consensus on a final declaration” (Cauca Regional Delegation Report 2001:online). Schabus says she was amazed by the level of organisation demonstrated at this congress, how 17,000 people could reach a consensus in such a short time-frame (personal interview with Schabus, November 29, 2004). The Minga report explains that everyone was organised into sub-commissions consisting of 50-100 people which were led by trained, local facilitators. A guideline for each sub-commission was the basis of discussion, which commenced by everyone sharing their personal experiences. Eventually each group formulated conclusions and recommendations for action which were incorporated into larger commissions and eventually into a plenary session. “People came away with an in-depth understanding of the situation and their position, and a full commitment to the actions agreed upon. The final declaration was a synthetic and comprehensive document outlining their grievances, their plans of action, and demands to the government” (Cauca Regional Delegation Report

2001:online). Having been witness to much of the testimony and videotapes shown at the congress, Schabus said she was very inspired by the process, saying that the Colombian indigenous movement was the most organised indigenous movement she has ever seen (personal telephone interview with Schabus, November 29, 2004).

Part Two: Analysis of NGO Programs and Prescriptions for Future NGO Roles

The descriptions of these four NGOs highlights some obvious similarities and differences between them. By analyzing these discrepancies it becomes possible to group these NGOs into two categories; Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy fall into one category of NGO whereas Colombia Support Network and En Camino fall under a second. Despite the fact that these four case study NGOs represent a variety of different organizational types - a charity (Inter Pares), solidarity movement (En Camino, CSN), and a quasi-governmental organization (Rights and Democracy) - it is more important to focus on Chapter One's NGO definition rather than how these groups self-identify. Recalling the definition of an NGO set forth in Chapter One - a not-for-profit, autonomous, non market-oriented organisation that exists in order to benefit the poor and underprivileged members of a population - it is clear that all four organisations are NGOs. However, they act in many different capacities, fulfilling a variety of roles. Recognizing this, I still believe that Chapter One's NGO definition is a useful one. It excludes businesses and those organizations that exist to make a profit and it excludes those organizations that are a function of government. Essentially, this definition encompasses those organizations that epitomize the characteristics of the term 'NGO'. That the term happens to include such a variety of NGOs is an interesting find that serves to highlight the diversity of NGOs that exist and reinforces Chapter One's discussion surrounding the difficulties of truly defining the term 'NGO'.

Both Chapter One as well as the interviews conducted for this thesis emphasized the difficulties with defining the term 'NGO'. Although defining oneself is based both on self-perception and the perception of others, I feel it is necessary to highlight the fact that none of the NGO representatives interviewed disputed his/her organization being referred to as an 'NGO'. Recognizing that self-identification is important, this thesis was guided overall by the definition set forth in Chapter One. An important discovery that will be mentioned throughout this chapter was that while all of these NGOs initially fit within the confines of Chapter One's NGO definition, upon closer examination, the NGOs themselves may not necessarily link their organization with every facet of this definition. A deeper discussion of self-identity is beyond the scope of this thesis, but will be briefly discussed in this section.

This section will summarize the activities and programs initiated by each case study NGO and place them into the NGO role framework established in Chapter One. In order to best understand the categorizations, Korten's voluntary development action model, also explained in Chapter One, will be used.

To begin, Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy should be placed in the same category as they both play similar roles with Colombia's indigenous movement and fit somewhere between Korten's Generation Two and Generation Three categories. The Generation Two quality most apparently demonstrated by these two NGOs is the capacity-building role they played by acting as mobilizers: providing loans, education, and training, to help communities realize their potential. The Generation Three qualities most prevalent within Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy include their recognition that structural problems in the world system are the cause of local inequalities and their work with other organisations and government to build peoples' organisational capacities. While both NGOs demonstrate a combination of Generation

Two and Generation Three qualities, Rights and Democracy is much more firmly rooted in a Generation Three framework than is Inter Pares in the scope of its projects. Rights and Democracy focused on the entire continent of Latin America in an effort to unite indigenous women and increase their profile and influence within ONIC and during the mission to Colombia in 2001 sought to promote awareness of the situation of indigenous peoples in Colombia and Canada, activities which fall under the roles of capacity-building and advocacy, respectively. Inter Pares, in its program with PCS, did focus on the region of Chocó (rather than a specific community or village, a Generation Three trait) but the program was designed to increase negotiation capabilities within ONIC, a capacity-building program not lofty enough to be considered Generation Three. Outside of Korten's framework, similarities between these two NGOs include being financed largely by the Canadian government (a concern I will address shortly), using this financing to support local initiatives in developing countries, and partnering with other organisations to form networks of advocacy. Both organisations have operated in capacity-building roles within the Colombian indigenous movement.

Colombia Support Network and En Camino differ from Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares in that the former two NGOs fit into Korten's Generation Four NGO category. Therefore, I group CSN and En Camino in together, apart from Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares. A Generation Four NGO is one that is involved with "movement facilitation as a major program strategy" (Korten 1990:131) and which "coalesce[s] and energize[s] self-managing networks over which [the NGO] has no control whatever. This must be achieved primarily through the power of ideas, values and communication links" (Korten 1990:127). The similarities between En Camino and CSN are numerous and include lack of reliance on a solid funding base (neither are

funded by government), working towards a negotiated solution to the conflict in Colombia, creating reciprocal relationships with partner individuals and groups, and criticizing the policies of both the Colombian government and their own respective national governments. En Camino is striving to form lasting and strong links between marginalized peoples around the world, while CSN is attempting to build a nation-wide movement in the United States that would pose an effective opposition to U.S. (foreign) policy in Colombia. These operations fit under the 'networking and strengthening civil society' role laid out in Chapter One. Both NGOs are, therefore, Generation Four organisations with respect to their long-term commitment to their projects and in their determination to build a wider movement out of the relationships established in their project work.

In Chapter One I identified criticisms of NGOs and obstacles to NGO effectiveness articulated by writers working in the NGO field. These criticisms are relevant as I examine how effective these four NGOs have been within the Colombian indigenous movement. While all four NGOs have struggled with failures and problems with their respective programs, it is Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares to whom these criticisms for the most part apply.

To explain, first is the general issue of funding. Ilon (1998), Mohan (2002), Fowler (2000), and Grugel (2003) all point out the difficulties faced by NGOs who get most or all of their funding from a government source or from any single influential donor. Among the challenges faced by such NGOs are how to resist conforming to the values and goals of donors or government, how to retain moral autonomy and thus credibility in the communities with which the NGO is working, and how to avoid becoming embedded within government networks. Inter Pares states on its website that it receives funding from the Canadian International Development Agency and that

it routinely participates in government committees and produces policy papers and presentations for government agencies. Rights and Democracy was formed by Canada's Parliament, is financed almost entirely by Canada's Overseas Development Assistance Budget, and is accountable to the Auditor General. While it is difficult to discern whether these realities have had any noticeable or measurable impact upon programs run by these two NGOs, Bruer suggested that Inter Pares has experienced difficulties in developing programs or receiving funds for programs that do not conform to Canadian government policy. By working through another group, the Project Counseling Service, such conflicts were circumvented in the case of Inter Pares' work with Colombian indigenous communities.

Rights and Democracy has also experienced difficulties due to its funding sources in the case of its joint mission to Cauca. Nicole Schabus of En Camino reported in her interview that the Minga trip to Cauca occurred shortly after Rights and Democracy's joint mission to the region. As a result, she said, her and her group were faced with apprehension from indigenous groups who had already been visited by the Rights and Democracy delegation. Apparently, indigenous communities were aware that the Rights and Democracy mission was endorsed by the Canadian government and believed that the delegation had come to the region to promote the Canadian petroleum industry (personal interview with Schabus, November 29, 2004). Although there is no reference to the petroleum industry in the report that was released after the Rights and Democracy mission, it is worrisome that the indigenous communities would display such unease toward a delegation endorsed by Canada and represented by the Canadian government. It is possible that indigenous communities in Cauca perceive Rights and Democracy to be acting, in the words of Fowler (2000), "as conspirators rather than partners", intending to further Canadian interests in

Colombia rather than support indigenous communities. This experience with the Rights and Democracy mission raises another criticism discussed in Chapter One; that NGOs are not accountable to local people but instead to overseas donors (Petras 1997). While there is no available evidence that indigenous communities in Colombia distrust Inter Pares for this reason, Rights and Democracy does seem to be facing this credibility issue with indigenous communities. Can NGOs be effective if they lack the confidence of local grassroots groups? While it is not within the scope of this project to answer this question, it appears that neither En Camino nor CSN struggle with these issues, nor is either funded by government. Instead, these latter two organisations are accountable to individual donors, the organisation's membership base, as well as to those communities with which they work. This gives En Camino and CSN a degree of flexibility that Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares do not have, allowing the former two NGOs to adapt their programs according to changing realities and needs at the grassroots.

Additional criticisms introduced in Chapter One include the observations that NGO projects are rarely long-term, that the changes made in the course of a project may only last as long as the project itself, that it is hard for an NGO to secure funding to operate in an advocacy capacity, and that it is challenging to translate "local-level successes into larger scale social change" (Keese 2000:7). Sundberg, in a study of conservation NGOs in Guatemala, writes that indigenous communities who wish to earn the support of NGOs must "enact helplessness and create the space for the NGO to provide help" (2004:51). Indigenous communities must be "attractive" and "compatible" to potential NGO funders (Sundberg 2004:41). This kind of discourse reinforces the perception that indigenous communities are helpless and incapable of guiding their own development and reliant upon Northern NGOs for aid.

In light of these many criticisms and the dubious effectiveness of the Colombian programming funded by Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares, I wanted to find out what roles (if any) the NGO representatives feel that North American NGOs can best fulfill with the Colombian indigenous movement. This question was asked of each NGO representative and expert in the field in a personal interview, with mixed responses. Almost every respondent, including Cecilia Zarate (founder of CSN), David Bruer (Inter Pares), *anonymous* (Rights and Democracy), Betsy Marsh (former Program Coordinator with the NGO Amazon Alliance, now an independent consultant), and Patricia Dahl (head of CSN's New York chapter), believed that North American NGOs could have a role to play in the indigenous movement but that this role should be limited to advocacy and lobbying. These respondents suggested that the most effective role was to lobby governments directly, both in North America and in Colombia, in order to protect indigenous rights and change government policy in and towards Colombia. North American NGOs could also work to raise the profile of the indigenous movement in the media and conduct educational outreach programs to publicize the issue. Patricia Dahl saw a role for NGOs in human rights and security accompaniment activities (personal email correspondence with Dahl, January 6, 2005) while David Bruer, differing from the other respondents, pointed out that emergency relief efforts are needed in the area (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004). Interestingly, only Bruer and Marsh mentioned that northern NGOs could play the role of capacity-builder in the movement (personal telephone interview with Bruer, November 11, 2004; personal interview with Marsh, December 9, 2004).

Justin Podur (En Camino) and Nicole Schabus (En Camino) were both opposed to the idea that North American NGOs could be involved with the indigenous

movement in any capacity. Podur's opposition relates to the funding issue, mentioned earlier. Because so many NGOs are funded by government, Podur is wary of whose agenda a given NGO might be pushing within the movement; i.e., is the NGO acting in the best interests of the movement and indigenous communities or in the best interests of the government funding that NGO? Podur also explained that since the movement has built itself from the ground up with no outside help thus far, he believes that it does not need the assistance of North American NGOs at this point. Although it may seem as though Podur is contradicting himself by stating that there is no role for North American NGOs while working for a North American NGO that aims to assist the movement, Podur does not see En Camino as an NGO but rather more as a collective or solidarity group (personal email correspondence with Podur, May 25, 2005). However, recognizing that the situation may worsen for indigenous communities in Colombia, Podur added that international support and solidarity from North American NGOs may become necessary one day for the indigenous movement to survive (personal telephone interview with Podur, March 28, 2004).

Nicole Schabus was much more firm in her opposition to northern NGOs' involvement. Schabus' criticism is related to that of academic Mary Kaldor, mentioned in Chapter One. Kaldor observed that government-funded NGOs have a propensity to overtake grassroots organisations, causing local values to be overshadowed (Kaldor 2003:92-93). Supporting Kaldor's observation, Schabus explained that CIDA-funded NGOs have caused indigenous organisations in Canada to be put out of work. Because of this, remarked Schabus, indigenous people in Colombia wish to work with indigenous leadership and peoples in Canada directly, not through NGOs. In response to the suggestion that North American NGOs may be of use in building international solidarity with the indigenous people of Colombia, Schabus

thought this possible only if the attitude was one of learning and sharing and not a patronizing, 'we are here to help you' position (personal telephone interview with Schabus, November 29, 2004). It is important to note that Schabus, as a lawyer working with the Shuswap nation, is operating from an indigenous perspective, as a liaison between First Nations communities in Canada and indigenous groups in Colombia in order to strengthen relationships of solidarity. Like Podur, Schabus does not see En Camino as an institutionalized NGO but rather a solidarity organisation, an outlet through which to build these meaningful relationships.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, how these organizations identify themselves is important. The two NGOs Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy have much more to be gained by calling themselves NGOs than does CSN or En Camino. If the former two NGOs adopted an identity that incorporated the fact that they receive government funding, it is possible that they would lose the support of individual donors who have no interest in participating in a quasi-governmental organization. As was suggested by Fowler (2000:641) in Chapter One, a truly non-governmental NGO possesses more moral authority at the grassroots than does an NGO with government ties. In the case of En Camino, an organization which does not receive government funding, its representatives were much more wary of identifying En Camino with the term 'NGO' under which so many organizations can fall. As a result, Podur and Schabus specified that En Camino is a solidarity organization, thereby distancing the organization from the broad and variable term 'NGO'.

To return to the original thesis question, in what roles, should NGOs operate with the Colombian indigenous movement? My conclusion, based on these interviews and the criticisms of NGOs in general, is that North American NGOs have the capacity to play three roles within the indigenous movement in Colombia, detailed below.

NGOs working in these roles have the capacity to align with the indigenous movement and further the movement's collective goals. Reviewing from Chapter Three, these goals can be divided into four groups. First, indigenous communities strive for the implementation of indigenous-directed development programs. Such programs include bilingual and bicultural education programs, programs directed at youth and children and towards the strengthening and participation of women, agricultural development, the development of a strong indigenous justice system, and health and education programs which reflect indigenous values and knowledge. A second subset of goals of the indigenous movement are to defend against threats to indigenous autonomy, traditions, language, and culture and prevent the exploitation of natural resources found on indigenous lands. This can be done specifically through strengthening the *cabildos* and struggling to implement the articles in the 1991 Constitution that support indigenous rights. A third category of goals include fighting against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a bilateral free trade agreement between Colombia and the U.S., and Uribe's proposed reforms to the Constitution. This third category requires yet another goal of the movement to come into play: solidarity with other social actors. That this last goal is being actively pursued is made clear by the example of the September march, which included peasants, farmers, Afro-Colombians, and unionists. Within the context of these four categories of goals, I believe that NGOs can operate within three roles, as indeed the four case study NGOs have shown.

(1) Research and Advocacy

As was mentioned in Chapter One, research and advocacy tend to go hand-in-hand: an NGO advocates creation of or change in a certain policy based on evidence gained from research. In the context of Colombia, the role of research and advocacy is one that can be quite varied. For instance, an NGO could advocate that the

Colombian government respect indigenous rights, an end to the violence in the country through a negotiated solution, cessation of U.S. funding to Colombia, or for the Colombian government to implement articles in the 1991 Constitution. To these ends, En Camino, Rights and Democracy, and CSN have been the most active. CSN and En Camino are strong and outspoken opponents of the Plan Colombia and all three NGOs advocate a negotiated solution to the conflict in Colombia. In terms of research, Rights and Democracy released a report following the 2001 mission to Colombia, which contained a comprehensive guide to the situation of indigenous peoples in the country. CSN and En Camino maintain their websites regularly, featuring frequent updates about the situation of indigenous (and non-indigenous) marginalized peoples in the country. All three NGOs post urgent action bulletins on their websites. Inter Pares also does a good deal of research on various pressing and pertinent topics related to international development, however, to date only one document on Inter Pares' website concerns Colombia, a photo essay on confined communities (those communities that are surrounded and controlled by an armed group, preventing members from leaving).

Of the many issues around which NGOs can research and advocate, I believe that NGOs could work most effectively, first and foremost, by seeking to change U.S. policy towards Colombia. Specifically, NGOs should concentrate on ending U.S. military funding to the region and advocate for funding for alternative development projects such as voluntary coca eradication schemes. Since the situation in Colombia is not widely discussed in North America, few people are aware of the huge amount of funding that the U.S. gives to Colombia's military through Plan Colombia and how as a result the U.S. government so directly contributes to the violence and volatility in the country. NGOs should work to educate the broader public on these issues and

advocate for related policy change. Adopting a research and advocacy role that concentrates on military spending through Plan Colombia is fundamentally important to the indigenous movement as many of its goals depend on the cessation of violence in Colombia. For example, a respite from violence in indigenous communities would open a space for the implementation of the numerous development programs outlined above.

(2) Lobbying

Lobbying, as was explained in Chapter One, differs from advocacy as it exerts pressure on governments, international bodies, and media directly. As with advocacy, NGOs lobby government, media, and international bodies in a variety of contexts. NGOs based in North America, especially American NGOs, should concentrate on lobbying the U.S. and Colombian governments for policy change. Specifically, NGOs should push the U.S. to reassess its role in Colombia and to consider the outcome of its massive military spending in the country. Since the U.S. so heavily funds Colombia, American NGOs have some credibility when they demand that the Colombian government uphold human rights standards and respect indigenous rights as laid out in the 1991 Colombian Constitution. Lobbying also garners media attention which in turn has the potential to bring about increased public awareness surrounding the U.S.'s role in Colombia and the situation of indigenous people there; heightening the status of the issue in public discourse will serve to boost NGOs' lobbying capacity. CSN is the only NGO of the four case study NGOs to engage in lobbying activities in the case of Colombia, indeed it is an integral part of CSN's work. A statement on CSN's website illustrates how crucial lobbying work is for this NGO:

CSN chapters participating in the sister cities program organize events to make their representatives in Congress aware of what is happening in

Colombia and how US government policy has an effect on events in the Colombian sister community. The sister community relationship provides a concrete example of the effects of US policies, such as support for the military and police in Colombia or chemical spraying of drug crops there. And Senators and Representatives who hear of the negative effects of US policies upon Colombian peasants and townspeople from their own constituents in the US sister community are much more likely to react to change those policies than they would be without such direct pressure (CSN website).

In this case, lobbying brings the issues closer to home and has an impact on those who have the power to change harmful policies. In the case of the indigenous movement, lobbying activities by NGOs could help to further similar goals as advocacy: changing U.S. policy towards Colombia, thereby reducing violence in the country and opening spaces for development of indigenous programs, as described above.

(3) Building Networks of Solidarity

In Chapter One I briefly outlined the role of networking and strengthening civil society and how NGOs playing this role facilitate co-operation, communication, and coordination between social movements and other organisations. Building networks of solidarity is arguably the most important role that an NGO can play within the indigenous movement in the long-term. If the work of En Camino and CSN are any indication, a relationship of solidarity with indigenous communities in Colombia is long-term, reciprocal, and not reliant upon funding. En Camino's Minga project, while started through the Canada-Colombia Solidarity Campaign in 2000, continues to be strong today. Colombia Support Network has existed for around 16 years and is developing new relationships between its chapters and Colombian communities. A key to these relationships is that neither CSN nor En Camino dictates how its partner communities in Colombia should operate or design their projects. These are relationships of learning and knowledge-sharing and intended to be reciprocal; the

organisations involved recognize that they have as much to teach as they have to learn.

There are several reasons why I believe this third role to be the most important. Of course the sustainability and reciprocal nature of the relationships built are key, but another reason is the self-strengthening and regenerating quality of a solidarity network. As Rozental from En Camino put it, individuals and organisations join a platform, not an organisation. Those affiliated with the Minga recognize the urgency with which they must act in order to halt the violence in Colombia (personal telephone interview with Rozental, April 12, 2004). By posting analyses of the situation in Colombia on En Camino's website, anyone with access to the internet can learn about the situation of indigenous peoples in Colombia and about the struggles of marginalized people in other countries as well. By visiting En Camino's website, a person can strengthen his/her understanding of the situation in Colombia and pass this information onto others. Simple awareness of struggles such as the one being fought by Colombian indigenous people strengthens the solidarity network.

Activities like knowledge-sharing, political analyses, and strengthening of relationships between organisations, all of which occur across borders, constitute what Thomas Olesen (2004) calls 'global solidarity'. Although Olesen discusses this term in relation to the Zapatista indigenous movement in Chiapas, Mexico, it is a highly relevant term in the context of the indigenous movement in Colombia. Olesen writes that global solidarity "is a form of solidarity that emphasizes similarities between physically, socially, and culturally distant people, while at the same time respecting and acknowledging local and national differences" (Olesen 2004:259). Global solidarity is a reciprocal relationship which "blurs the distinction between providers and beneficiaries" (Olesen 2004:258) and "is an expression of a more

extensive global consciousness that constructs the grievances of physically, socially, and culturally distant people as deeply intertwined” (Oleson 2004:259). Applying this concept of ‘global solidarity’ to the present case study, the grievances of the indigenous movement in Colombia are free trade, manifested in the FTAA and proposed bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Colombia, and violence in indigenous territories and in the rest of Colombia. These are grievances that are not only shared by other social movements in Latin America (e.g. in Bolivia and Ecuador) but are felt around the world. If strong enough, networks of solidarity formed between marginalized people and a *mélange* of NGOs around the world could pose an effective opposition to these threats. En Camino has already initiated a small-scale version of such a network by providing analyses and first-hand accounts of the situation of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Israel, and of course, the indigenous movement in Colombia. On an even smaller scale, CSN has built solidarity networks between communities in the U.S. and in Colombia. But according to Cecilia Zarate, this small amount of political support that CSN provides to threatened communities in Colombia is working and has prevented violence in those communities (personal telephone interview with Zarate, December 1, 2004).

Within the role of building networks of solidarity is the aspect of human rights protection. As was mentioned in the case of CSN and its indigenous sister communities, the presence of an international organization can have a positive effect on the human rights. Peace Brigades International is one organization that works around the idea of protective accompaniment, a concept which “rests on the idea that the presence of unarmed international escorts alongside local activists can deter attacks. Violence and threats directed at foreign nationals, or those they are escorting, often result in higher political costs for the transgressors than the same

actions directed at unaccompanied local citizens” (Coy 1997:81-2). En Camino has also been involved with accompaniment activities in Colombia; Schabus remarked that one of the reasons for the Minga trip to Colombia was to provide protection to the large indigenous congress taking place at the time. Rights and Democracy has also played a human rights protection role, although to a lesser degree than En Camino and CSN, through sending urgent action bulletins regarding serious threats to human rights. Because none of the case study NGOs were engaged deeply in human rights accompaniment, this thesis does not explore the role in depth. However, it is a role that could be the focus of future studies on the relationship between NGOs and the Colombian indigenous movement.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the roles and relationships of four North American NGOs in the context of the indigenous movement in Colombia. By reviewing interviews held with representatives from each NGO, I have uncovered successes and failures of NGO work with the movement. This information was used to group the four NGOs into two categories: Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy in one, En Camino and Colombia Support Network in the other. This categorization was appropriate as those NGOs in group one received government funding, operated overall in a capacity-building role, and could be characterized as a mixture of Korten’s Generation Two and Generation Three categories. Those NGOs in the second group, however, closely fit Korten’s Generation Four NGO category, focusing on building a wider movement based upon the linkages made between indigenous communities in Colombia and concerned groups and individuals in North America. These analyses have led me to conclude that there are three roles that NGOs should play within the indigenous movement in

Colombia: research and advocacy, lobbying, and building networks of solidarity. The goals of the Colombian indigenous movement are ambitious. They include developing a variety of indigenous community programs, defending indigenous autonomy, culture, protecting natural resources on indigenous lands, fighting free trade, and ending violence in indigenous communities. NGOs based in North America are best suited to helping the indigenous movement come closer to achieving the latter two goals. Through advocacy, research, and lobbying campaigns at home in Canada and the U.S., NGOs may be able to create the space necessary for the other goals to be achieved. Building networks of solidarity is a long-term strategy that could broaden public awareness of the situation of marginalized peoples in Colombia and elsewhere, centred around a common struggle against global threats like free trade, environmental degradation and violation of human rights.

Conclusion

The motivation for writing a thesis on this topic comes from my deep interest in how Colombian social movements mobilize in the midst of such intense violence and from my curiosity as to what relationships North American NGOs have with such struggles. Through this research I ultimately hope to provide a partial answer to the question of how to effect meaningful change and ameliorate the situation of indigenous peoples in Colombia. In the course of attending public political demonstrations surrounding a number of so-called “anti-globalization” issues, one often hears the refrain, “another world is possible”, a mantra which underscores the belief that the state of affairs of the world can be improved. If civil society with its many actors is to be the vehicle for such change (as participants at such protests are wont to believe), then it is important to understand how NGOs and social movements interact, since both are active components of civil society. However, there is very little to be found on this subject in current academic literature. This thesis, concerning the roles that NGOs based in North America have and should play within the Colombian indigenous movement, is intended to be a small piece in this puzzle.

Summary of Chapters

The main thesis question was broken into two parts: what roles *have* North American NGOs played with the Colombian indigenous movement and what roles *should* these NGOs play in future? These questions were answered in the course of four chapters. Chapter One settled on a definition of ‘NGO’ as appropriate for this thesis - ‘not-for-profit, autonomous, not market-oriented organisations that exist in order to benefit the poor and underprivileged members of a population’ - and determined that the term ‘NGO’ in this thesis would include only Canadian and

American development NGOs. As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, North American NGOs were chosen as a case study because of their proximity to Colombia and their presumably more intimate relationship with the indigenous movement than European NGOs. Chapter One also discussed the different roles that NGOs play in general and included a large section addressing obstacles to fulfilling these roles as well as fundamental NGO critiques found in the literature.

Chapter Two dealt with the issue of social movements and reviewed literature about what social movements are, how they form, and how they grow. Chapter Two adopted Colás' definition of a social movement: "a sustained and purposeful collective mobilization by an identifiable, self-organised group in confrontation with specific power structures, and in pursuit of socio-economic change" (Colás 2002:67). Chapters One and Two built a framework within which to situate the remaining two chapters.

Chapter Three provided an overview of the political situation in Colombia, including the major actors in the violent civil conflict and a brief explanation of Plan Colombia. These first few sections provided the proper context within which to analyze the indigenous movement in Colombia. The second half of Chapter Three described the different factions that comprise the movement and, based upon analysis in Chapter Two, explains why this collection of indigenous groups can be called a 'social movement'.

Finally, Chapter Four looked at four North American NGOs that work with the indigenous movement in Colombia: Inter Pares, Rights and Democracy, Colombia Support Network, and En Camino. For each NGO, I investigated the underlying philosophy and principles, programs both underway and concluded with the indigenous movement, and successes and failures of these programs, in order to answer the question of what roles North American NGOs have played with the Colombian

indigenous movement. An analysis of this information began with the grouping of the NGOs into two categories: Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares in one, En Camino and Colombia Support Network in the other, based on Korten's (1990) voluntary development action model from Chapter One. Finally, in order to answer the question of what roles North American NGOs should play with the Colombian indigenous movement, I proposed three principal roles for these NGOs: research and advocacy, lobbying, and building networks of solidarity, based upon the analyses of the work done by the four North American NGOs investigated in the first half of Chapter Four. All three roles were conceptualized with the intention of moving away from 'traditional' NGO work such as welfare and relief. While such emergency-response roles are important in situations such as environmental catastrophe and refugee crises, these are insufficient roles for NGOs to play within social movements. By their nature, social movements are sustained and purposeful, able to mobilize members, and concerned with effecting social and political change. NGOs who become involved with social movements must exhibit a similar orientation and pursue similar goals. Research and advocacy and lobbying are two interlinked roles which can be used to leverage a shift in U.S. government policy towards Colombia, crucial, if the situation of indigenous peoples in Colombia is to be ameliorated. Building networks of solidarity, identified in Chapter Four as being a crucial role for North American NGOs, would engage those unfamiliar with the situation in Colombia, garner support for the cause, and heighten awareness of the situation of other marginalized peoples in the world, thereby contributing to a global solidarity network.

Conceptual and Practical Challenges

In the course of writing this thesis, several conceptual issues arose. First was

the problem of how to properly define an NGO. More specifically, what exactly does the term 'nongovernmental' imply? Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares were both included in this study, however, as was noted in Chapter Four, both NGOs receive government funding. Can an organisation that receives government funding truly be considered 'nongovernmental'? In this thesis it has been argued that yes, it can be, as long as the organisation remains autonomous: not an arm or branch of government. However, the opposite could easily be argued, and indeed has, but the issue here is not the source of funding, but rather the effectiveness with which the organisation works with those funds, and the constraints and conditions under which the funding is accepted. Similarly, it was discovered upon closer examination of these groups that while all four of the case study organizations are NGOs (as defined in Chapter One), they vary greatly within the NGO definition. Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy are reliant upon government funding to carry out their activities and En Camino and CSN identify themselves as being solidarity organizations rather than NGOs. While this find is important, this thesis was guided by the literature review undertaken in Chapter One and therefore includes all four organizations under the heading of 'NGO'.

In outlining three roles that NGOs should play within the Colombian indigenous movement, I assume that all four of my case study NGOs can operate with freedom in those roles. However, it must be acknowledged that lobbying in particular may be difficult for those NGOs that receive government funding, since directly and consistently challenging government policy could have consequences for future funding by that government.

A significant problem lies in the study of the Colombian indigenous movement, given that the movement is composed of a number of various sub-groups, which are not officially defined. However, this is an inherent problem in studying social

movements in general, as few are monolithic in nature or concretely organised. In this case, two of the most active and organised regional indigenous organisations in Colombia were studied, as well as the national indigenous organisation which embodies most of the regional indigenous organisations, ONIC. It must be noted as well that Colombia is comprised of 32 administrative departments, each of which has its own *resguardos* and indigenous *cabildos* and all of which are organised politically to varying degrees. As in Cauca with CRIC and ACIN, most of the *cabildos* within these departments have organised into regional indigenous organisations themselves. However, this thesis represents only a specific case study, incorporating just three indigenous organisations, and it is beyond its scope to examine every sub-organisation that is part of the movement. To study the linkages between these different organisations and their relationships with North American NGOs represents a rich opportunity for future research.

The four case study organizations examined here represent a wide variety of NGOs that exist in North America. Despite their diversity, all fell within the constraints of the NGO definition set out in Chapter One. While it might be argued that the usefulness of this study could have been enhanced had it focused exclusively on more traditional NGOs or exclusively on solidarity movements, I believe it is both important and useful to compare the programs run by these different types of NGOs. By comparing and contrasting their work, it is possible to reveal more dramatically the successes and failures experienced by these NGOs and therefore this study is much more representative of the work that North American NGOs actually do with the Colombian indigenous movement.

Finally, it should be noted that this research is not based on any fieldwork done in Colombia or on any interviews with representatives from the Colombian

indigenous movement itself. While research like this would of course have added depth to this thesis, this study only ever intended to investigate NGO roles with the movement by looking at programs run by these NGOs. While interviews with Colombian indigenous movement members would have been interesting, they are unnecessary to understand the activities of each NGO and the successes and failures of these programs.

Implications of Research and Opportunities for Further Study

Upon starting this project I was of the frame of mind that NGOs were the most effective vehicle of development and that by working with social movements their effectiveness could only be heightened. In the course of researching NGOs and interviewing their staff, I have become somewhat disillusioned by the work of NGOs. This disillusionment stems from the critiques and obstacles to NGO effectiveness, explained in Chapter One, as well as from the primary analysis of the two more institutionalized NGOs in the case study, Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy. As was evident in the Chapter Four analysis, there is a huge division between the two NGOs Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares, and CSN and En Camino. This unexpected find caused me to incorporate Korten's NGO voluntary development action model more deeply into Chapter Four. Korten developed this to reflect the evolutionary trend among NGOs as they move away from more traditional relief activities (Korten 1990:15). Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy fit somewhere in the middle of Korten's scale, sharing characteristics of both Generation Two and Generation Three NGOs. CSN and En Camino were much more distinct in their categorization, matching Korten's Generation Four qualities. The separation between the two groups became more obvious as I analyzed the programs and principal goals of

the organisations. However it is important to point out that this distinction only necessarily applies in the case of the work these NGOs do with Colombia and it is entirely possible that Rights and Democracy or Inter Pares work in a Generation Four capacity in other contexts. Regardless, it was this division that caused me to question the overall effectiveness of the institutionalized NGOs and be more highly critical of Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares in the analysis section, given that Rights and Democracy has no long-term or short-term projects or goals with the Colombian indigenous movement despite the 2001 mission, and Inter Pares' project with the movement ended prematurely.

Three roles - research and advocacy, lobbying, and networking - were proposed in Chapter Four as those that North American NGOs should play with the Colombian indigenous movement if they are to have a constructive effect. Networking was emphasized as being the most important of the three, because of the potential for this role to strengthen relationships between social movements and NGOs situated in different countries. In the present case, North American NGOs must ensure that relationships with indigenous counterparts do not emphasize power dynamics nor reinforce neocolonial attitudes. Writing on her experiences in Guatemala, Sundberg reflects that histories of racism in Latin America make it difficult for Northern NGOs to work with indigenous peoples in the South. These relationships encourage indigenous communities "to enact discourses of humility, helplessness, tradition, and authenticity" (Sundberg 2004:51-2). Based upon the information on each NGO's website and upon interviews conducted with NGO representatives, I do not believe that any of the four NGOs studied in this thesis are creating or operating in such a relationship. Inter Pares and Rights and Democracy use language such as "equal partners" and "mutual respect" when discussing communities with whom they work.

CSN and En Camino are explicitly solidarity groups, implying that they are working as equals with their counterparts. Because of the history of colonialism in Latin America, power is always an issue when a North American NGO attempts to work with indigenous communities in the South. However, the language used by these four case study NGOs demonstrates that these NGOs are aware of the power dynamics created as a result of colonialism and are actively working to avoid becoming embedded within a neocolonial relationship.

Despite this inherent risk, networking is a role that carries much potential in bringing about awareness of the struggles of social movements. Yet it is a role that is under-explored in both NGO and social movement literature. The potential impact of bolstering this role in any social movement/NGO collaboration is enormous. Within the present case of the Colombian indigenous movement, Colombian NGOs would gain knowledge and valuable resources from networking with NGOs based in the North. The indigenous movement gains from having the profile of its struggle heightened in public discourse in the North. However, the success of a networking role cannot be taken for granted and hinges upon Northern NGOs working cooperatively and humbly with their Southern partners. A possibility for further study and research lies in studying the effectiveness of Northern NGOs that engage heavily in networking. Investigating the credibility that such NGOs hold at the grassroots would be worthwhile in order to discover whether they are operating within truly reciprocal, equal relationships.

In recognition that Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares enjoy a more secure funding base than do En Camino and CSN, I posit a fourth role for NGOs within the Colombian indigenous movement, that of 'funding'. While a funding role pertains mainly to Rights and Democracy and Inter Pares which have a larger funding base than

either En Camino or CSN, it is not beyond En Camino or CSN's scope to participate in direct funding activities. For instance, specific fund-raising campaigns run by these NGOs could yield positive results with the proceeds going to a specific organisation or community in Colombia. In order to be the most meaningful, projects funded by northern NGOs must be designed and implemented by local people or these projects run the risk of being co-opted by foreign interests. The danger is that indigenous communities and organisations begin to tailor their projects to match the interests of NGOs abroad, in order to secure funding. While I realize the funding role is altruistic, I also believe that redistribution of wealth, from an area as rich as North America to a country that was rated 73rd in the world on the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index in 2004, is a worthwhile endeavor for an NGO.

Earlier, three opportunities for further research on this topic were identified: a more comprehensive study that examines the relationships between the many indigenous organisations that make up the indigenous movement in Colombia and NGOs working there, the effectiveness of Northern NGOs that are heavily engaged in networking activities in the South, and an investigation of the human rights accompaniment role played by some NGOs. Other possibilities for further research include comparing the work of local, Colombian NGOs and international NGOs within the realm of the indigenous movement, or performing a study similar to this thesis but in a different country. By then comparing and contrasting the effectiveness of various North American NGO roles based on different national contexts, it may be possible to indicate whether these roles seem to be universally and widely applicable or highly dependent on national situations.

Finally, further exploration of the potential for international solidarity as a means to improve the situation of indigenous communities in Colombia is a last

opportunity for further research that I wish to mention. Brecher et al. cite many examples of where solidarity among individuals and organizations has converged around specific issues in order to reverse or alter injustices. These examples include the international responses to the Bolivian government's sale of the public water system in the country and the high prices of AIDS drugs in Africa set by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, as well as the multi-country strike of Bridgestone/Firestone workers as a result of wage cuts in U.S. factories (Brecher et al. 2000:27-8). A study examining the international collaboration of NGOs around the Colombian conflict would be well worthwhile. Any of these studies would help to bring about a more complete picture of the relationship between NGOs and social movements.

The most important contribution this thesis makes is to challenge the usefulness of NGO projects. In the short-term, NGOs seek to reach specific goals within a specific amount of time, within the constraints of a fixed budget and stated project goals. If the NGO manages to accomplish this, the work is exalted and often used as a basis with which to secure further funding and begin new projects. I have argued that within the realm of social movements, specifically the Colombian indigenous movement, NGOs must refocus this very short-sighted lens in order to become more intimately and lastingly involved in the communities and organisations with whom they work. Because of the nature of social movements, NGOs cannot be effective in working with social movements if they are focused on the short term. Fostering meaningful, long-term relationships based on trust and reciprocity should be the basis for any NGO-social movement collaboration.

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Appendix

Questions asked of NGO Representatives:

- 1) Which indigenous groups do you work with in Colombia? Would you say these groups are part of the indigenous movement?
- 2) How long has your NGO been working with the group(s)? How long do you intend to work with this/these group(s)?

- 3) How would you characterize your NGO's role with the group(s)? Is it one of advocacy? research? welfare? capacity-building? other? a combination?
- 4) What are your NGO's goals in working with that/those group(s)? How is your NGO going about achieving those goals?
- 5) What are the goals of the indigenous movement? How do your NGOs' goals and that of the movement intersect?
- 6) Do you feel your NGO is effective in this context? What are some successes you have had? Failures?
- 7) What are some of the major challenges your NGO is facing/has faced in working with the Colombian indigenous movement? How have you worked to overcome the challenges?
- 8) Do you see any way to improve your NGO's effectiveness in working with the indigenous movement?
- 9) Do you feel that it is important for northern NGOs to support the indigenous movement? Why or why not?

Questions asked of Betsy Marsh, an expert involved with the movement in a non-NGO capacity:

- 1) What group(s) have you worked with within the indigenous movement in Colombia? What did you do?
- 2) What are the long-term and short-term goals of the groups you worked with, and the indigenous movement broadly? How are these goals being achieved?
- 3) What challenges does the movement face and how are they being overcome?
- 4) Do you believe that northern NGOs have a role to play in aiding Colombia's indigenous movement to achieve their goals? If so, what roles?