The Siriono People of Eastern Bolivia: Cultural Survival Amidst Directed Social Change

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THE SIRIONO PEOPLE OF EASTERN BOLIVIA:
CULTURAL SURVIVAL AMIDST DIRECTED
SOCIAL CHANGE

by

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THE SIRIONO PEOPLE OF EASTERN BOLIVIA:
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This thesis is an ethno-historical reconstruction of the Siriono from their roots among the Paraguayan Guarani of the 16th century to the present Siriono lifestyles in eastern Bolivia. A description of the Siriono culture at the time of contact is juxtaposed with analyses of the current varying results of post-contact approaches to directed social change taken by outsiders among the Siriono.

The findings from this study indicate that: (a) to the extent that underdevelopment does exist among the Siriono it is not only the result of contact this century, but began as a process of deculturation long before contact; and (b) the condition of all the Siriono people is not one of underdevelopment. The condition of a particular community, Ibipto, provides an example of post-contact directed social change that succeeded in providing the Siriono with their own identity in Bolivian society.
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Ronald S. Scholte
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Siriono are a people indigenous to the jungles of eastern Bolivia who have lived in this area since at least the 16th century (see Figure 1). Of specific interest to this thesis is the analysis which Pitt gives to contact with "the outside

Figure 1. Siriono Territory in the Early 20th Century.

1

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world" experienced by the Siriono early in the 20th century. Pitt's description of what resulted is as follows:

Contact itself often produced a situation where underdevelopment was created . . . . Even those hunters and gatherers on the margins of very existence such as the Siriono of Bolivia . . . when isolated from the outside world seemed to have been able to live what one anthropologist called "a satisfying, integrated, non-alienated life" [Mangin, 1970:xix]. But after contact these people . . . became demoralized welfare dependents with a declining productive effort (1976:70).

A conclusion from this statement is that prior to contact they were not underdeveloped since they lived "a satisfying, integrated, non-alienated life" in the jungles of Bolivia. Another conclusion is that underdevelopment characterized by welfare dependency and a declining productive effort are now present among the Siriono and that such conditions are the result of contact with the outside world.

The premise on which these conclusions are based, that "contact itself often produced a situation where underdevelopment was created" (Pitt, 1976:70), is well illustrated by Bodley's (1982) Victims of Progress, and is not disputed. However, in this study I will demonstrate the following:

1. Prior to contact the Siriono were not living the romanticized non-alienated lives of which Mangin (1970) spoke but were involved in dynamic culture change which was part of a process of underdevelopment before the time of foreign contact.

2. Foreign contact produced a situation among the Siriono that resulted in contrasting outcomes: (a) a scattered population characterized by exploitation and a lack of a Siriono identity, and (b) a growing community that retains a strong
sense of Siriono identity. In the community of Ibiato, the Siriono exemplify a principle of stabilization:

When acted upon by external forces a culture will, if necessary, undergo specific changes only to the extent of and with the effect of preserving unchanged its fundamental structure and character (Harding cited in Bodley, 1982:21).

3. These differing outcomes result from various approaches taken by the missionaries and government officials who took upon themselves the task of transforming the Siriono culture during their "pacification" in the early and mid-20th century.

Before the time of accelerated contact between the Siriono and the encroaching white population early in the 20th century, the Siriono resisted any kind of permanent relations with the outside world. Bodley refers to three ways that indigenous peoples like the Siriono resist the encroaching populations: "(1) they totally ignore it, (2) they deliberately avoid it, or (3) they respond to it with defiant arrogance" (1982:16).

At first the Siriono chose to avoid the advance of the outsiders by retreating further into the jungle. However, they did not ignore these new inhabitants as they chose to become dependent upon the settlers' tools and readily available fire. The resistance of the Siriono became defiant only when their numbers became too small to support further migration to less affected areas.

Despite their resistance, the Siriono came under direct control of those who sought "to encourage the Siriono to become settled horticulturalists" (Stearman, 1986:6). What kind of "encouragement" was it that caused these people to give up
their ability to determine their own future and place their destiny in the hands of others? What is it that breaks down a group's autonomy?

The processes by which the resistance and autonomy of indigenous peoples like the Siriono are broken down are outlined by Bodley in his *Victims of Progress* (1982). These processes which cause the indigenous peoples to trade "their basically satisfying cultures for the dubious benefits of civilization" are: (a) the uncontrolled frontier, (b) military force, and (c) the peaceful extension of administrative control (Bodley, 1982:23).

The "uncontrolled frontier" process is characterized by a national attitude that vast areas of land with low population densities are actually unpopulated. Into this frontier, uncontrolled by any laws, venture settlers and government workers to exploit the new found resources. This encroachment, according to Bodley (1982), leads to a vast depopulation of the indigenous people due to the introduction of hitherto unknown diseases and direct physical violence.

The killing of indigenous peoples has been common throughout the colonial era up to the present time. This violence results from the attitude that the indigenous inhabitants are not people at all but "only Indians," a kind of subhuman species to be removed from this "unpopulated" area. Such genocide is a violent way of removing the indigenous peoples from the land (Bodley, 1982).

A less violent means of dispossession includes the use of a gift giving process. These gifts of sugar, salt, machetes and other tools are originally given unconditionally. Once the people become dependent upon these items, and are willing to move into closer proximity to the origin of the gifts, the gifts are given
only on the condition that the people stay in a designated area, such as a
government reserve or mission (Bodley, 1982; Lewis, 1978). Of course, this
process takes longer and requires more patience than direct violence. In the
settling of the Siriono, the process of gift giving was used more frequently by
missionaries than by the Bolivian military. However, both the use of violence and
the use of persuasion via gift giving are means of dispossessing the inhabitants of
their land. Without land and access to their normal means of subsistence, the
indigenous people become increasingly dependent on others and lose their
autonomy.

Bodley defines acculturation as "continuous first hand contact, with
subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups,"
whether this contact is "friendly or hostile" (1982:43). He stresses the importance
of the fact that this acculturation is often forced. This forced acculturation,
undergone by the Siriono, is "the process of military force."

Although similar to the frontier process, the military process involves direct
use of the national military. Military force is administered in two ways: (1)
punitive raids, and (2) wars (Bodley, 1982:44). The punitive raid is used to punish
a specific offence on the part of the indigenous people while a war involves
"protracted campaigns, often for the purpose of extermination or the forced removal
of native populations that are not themselves of direct economic value" (Bodley,
1982:44). The concept of economic value, both of the frontier's resources and the
exploitability of indigenous labor, is the motivation behind military force and leads
to the third process, the extension of government control (Bodley, 1982).
Once the indigenous populations are "decimated and defeated," it is not hard to assume political control (Bodley, 1982:61). This control brings to an end the frontier hostilities and allows for "legal means" of exploiting the indigenous peoples and the natural resources of the area. However, once political control has been extended by the national government over a group of indigenous people, these people lose their autonomy. Bodley states that:

Upon their official incorporation into the state, tribal peoples must conform to and become integrated with the social and political institutions characteristic of state organization. The tribe is no longer fully responsible for settling disputes and maintaining internal order, and certainly has limitations placed upon its political decision-making processes (1982:75).

These processes—the uncontrolled frontier, military force, and the extension of government control—played a central role in recent Siriono history, and began in the 19th century with the exploitation of resources in the rain forest. Colonization projects brought settlers into the frontier, decimating the Siriono population through disease, influenza and smallpox, and violence they directed against the Siriono.

In the early 20th century, the Bolivian military began "protecting" settlers from the Siriono. This protection was in the form of forced acculturation via the reduction of the Siriono onto government reserves. The Bolivian government's use of military force was augmented by the missionaries' more peaceful techniques of gift giving. Both techniques contributed to settling the Siriono.

Bodley's "process of extending government control" occurred on two levels in the Bolivian frontier: (1) the use of colonization projects to establish greater influence over existing mestizo cities, e.g. Santa Cruz; and (2) the organization of...
indigenous peoples found in the frontier unto government reserves, using military force against any resistance.

Settling the Siriono on reserves allowed direct political control of the Siriono, enabling the Bolivian government to use what Bodley describes as "deliberate programs designed to eliminate all unique aspects of tribal culture" (1982:103). These programs were designed by "government officials, missionaries, anthropologists, and other experts . . . [who] recommend[ed] integration [of the indigenous population] into the dominant society, perhaps blending 'the best of both worlds'" (Bodley, 1982:169). This idea of integration, implemented in most but not all Siriono settlements, had a profound effect on the Siriono.

The government reserves and missions formed several Siriono establishments, and in each was implemented a program of directed social change. These programs, administered by local government officials and missionaries with control over the reserves and missions, portray differing approaches to the problem of settling the Siriono. The contrasting results of these outsiders' different attitudes and actions are the basis for describing the present Siriono situation.

Effective efforts were made on the reserves and missions to assimilate the Siriono into highly acculturated indigenous peoples like the Guarayo who had become settled horticulturalists centuries earlier. However, there was one important exception for the Siriono to the policy of integration that led to assimilation. The Protestant mission of Ibiato carried on a policy of separation that stressed the importance of the Sirionos' unique culture.
Today, Ibiato's traditionally recognized leaders, the ererecuas, are officially recognized civil authorities. As a result, Ibiato has avoided direct government control and retains autonomy in settling disputes and maintaining internal order. In this manner, the Siriono have avoided the loss of "tribal" identity as Bodley (1982) defines it based on political autonomy. The existence of Ibiato, portraying a distinctive Siriono culture capable of coexisting with the Bolivian mestizo population surrounding it, defies the conclusion that contact has produced a situation among the Siriono that consists of a demoralized welfare state with a declining productive effort.

Bodley (1982) defines three categories of nonindigenous organizations that are involved in assisting indigenous peoples in their confrontation with progress:

(1) The Conservative-Humanitarian approach supports specific culture change projects "designed to facilitate integration with preservation of ethnic identity, whether or not such projects originate with the indigenous peoples themselves" (Bodley, 1982:194). There is an understanding of the need for self-determination, but this is not a major issue.

(2) The Liberal-Political approach builds on the need for self-determination among indigenous peoples. This approach supports the formation of a political voice by which the indigenous people can stop national projects that do not consider their interests or that they themselves have not originated (Bodley, 1982).

(3) The Primitivist-Environmentalist approach is the most aggressive in its call for the total protection of the indigenous peoples' culture. There must be a
formation of a "protected anthropological area, which would be specifically set up to allow a given people to continue traditional ways of life" (Bodley, 1982:209).

The unifying goal of these "nonindigenous organizations proclaiming support for indigenous peoples" (Bodley, 1982:191), is to interrupt the process of victimization brought on by progress. For the Siriono the process of victimization following contact was interrupted by Protestant missionaries from the Four Square Gospel Church. It is this successful interruption that warrants investigation as contact with indigenous peoples, in Bolivia and elsewhere, continues.

The intent of this thesis is not to promote such contact but to contribute toward ameliorating or easing the inevitable integration of the constantly shrinking world. This attitude places myself in Bodley’s (1982) Conservative-Humanitarian category. However, I acknowledge a greater need for self-determination than he credits the Conservative-Humanitarians as having.

Contact with the outside world is not a choice indigenous peoples now in the early stages of protracted contact are given. Such peoples will be contacted. I found this to be true when I visited a small group of the Yuqui people settled by the New Tribes Mission (NTM) in eastern Bolivia in 1979 and again in 1984. The Yuqui are culturally and linguistically similar to the Siriono, having separated from the Siriono during the last two centuries (Stearman, 1984). The 73 Yuqui at this mission outpost form one of numerous independent groups that make up the Yuqui as a whole.

During my visits I observed not only the missionaries’ desire for the Yuqui to become believers in Jesus Christ, but also that they survive as a cultural unit.
Toward achieving both of these goals, contact is sought with more independent groups of the Yuqui. In 1987, a second small group of the Yuqui was brought into the mission after an extended period of violent contacts (Decicio, 1991). Incorporating new groups produces a larger population base, providing wider mate selection for the Yuqui, leading to decreased infant mortality rates and population growth. This larger population also represents a larger number of potential "believers."

Contact and settling are by definition contrary to the nature of self-determination. However, the natural resources of the Bolivian jungle lowlands are increasingly exploited, and if contact is not made by those concerned with the survival of distinctive cultures, it will be made by those who wish only to remove indigenous peoples like the Siriono. What made the difference for the Siriono was the degree to which self-determination was given back to them after contact. This transition, occurring in an atmosphere of protectionism provided by the missionaries, allowed the Siriono to retain their "indigenous substrata, the Siriono culture that had never been totally suppressed or erased" (Stearman, 1987:106).

In the context of Ibiato, the Siriono do not portray a demoralized welfare dependency with a declining productive effort. The existence of Ibiato is a direct result of protectionist policies instituted by the missionaries that founded and controlled Ibiato as a mission as well as the continuing influence of missionaries in what is now the independent village of Ibiato.
CHAPTER II

A HISTORY OF THE SIRIONO

Introduction

The Siriono became fairly well known through an ethnography published originally as a Yale doctoral dissertation in 1947 by the graduate student Allen Holmberg. This study, Nomads of the Long Bow (1969), took place in 1940-41, during a time of rapid change among the Siriono as they were undergoing forced acculturation at the hands of the Bolivian government and various mission agencies.

More recently, the Siriono were restudied by Stearman in 1984 in an attempt to investigate their current situation. Stearman's book, No Longer Nomads: The Siriono Revisited (1987), presents the case for the continued cultural existence of the Siriono. Stearman's published works on the Siriono (1984, 1986, 1987) provide thorough descriptions of what has happened to the Siriono since the invasion of Europeans and the more recent forced acculturation of Siriono in missions and in Bolivian government reserves.

The history of the Siriono presented here is an ethno-historical reconstruction of the region, beginning with their 16th century territory. The description of the Siriono at the time of contact draws primarily from the research of Holmberg (1969) and Ryden (1941). Following is a discussion of the cultural transformations experienced by the Siriono in the 20th century. It is this period that closely follows the process of victimization described by Bodley (1982).
The Siriono’s present condition is assessed using Stearman’s (1987) description from her 1984 fieldwork among the Siriono as well as from newspaper articles and Bolivian government documents from the fall of 1990. Today, one indigenously identified community of the Siriono remains, Ibiato. Here the Siriono culture has had the opportunity to adapt to its newest environment according to Siriono choices.

An Aggressive Retreat

Mangin describes the reaction of indigenous peoples like the Siriono to European invasion in the following manner:

The European expansion into their territories pushed the primitives ruthlessly out of the way... In spite of the nature of this contact the primitives have been remarkably tenacious about survival (1970:xiii-xiv).

Despite Mangin’s reference to indigenous populations as "primitive," he is otherwise accurate that these people’s tenacity is the enduring quality that has kept them from disappearing as a distinct cultural entity.

Among the Siriono, this tenacity for "survival" is not through an aggressive offence, attacking problem situations that faced them but an aggressive defense which they were forced to take. Fabbro describes the Siriono as a peaceful society that does not engage in violence against other groups, has no civil wars or internal collective violence, and has "no inter-personal lethal violence" (1978:67).

This nonviolent tenet of Siriono culture is a major factor in their history. The entire history of the Siriono is a defensive retreat from warring neighboring groups and the encroachment of "civilization" (Holmberg, 1969; Steward and Faron,
This pattern continued until their physical existence was threatened due to increased contact with the encroaching white population which brought disease and the "slaughter of which [the Siriono] were the victims" (Metraux, 1942:111). This accelerated contact in the 20th century brought a violent reaction from the Siriono only inasmuch as they fought to live in a nonviolent area.

Once overcome and settled on Bolivian government reserves and missions it appeared that the Siriono had been pacified. In fact this "pacified" state was the nonviolent characteristic of the Siriono that had always been central to their culture.

By the late 1930s when Ryden (1941) and Holmberg (1969) studied them, the Siriono's "retreat from warring neighboring groups" had cost them such aspects of their culture as the manufacture and use of stone tools and the ability to make fire. This attitude of retreat persists after forty years of settled life in various villages. When queried by Stearman as to what they would do if squatters took their land, the Siriono living in the village of Ibiato replied: "We would just go further into the wilderness and build a new village" (1987:143).

A Brief Cultural Overview

The area inhabited by the Siriono during the last three hundred years in eastern Bolivia includes "an extensive tropical forest area of about 200 miles square" (Holmberg, 1969:1) (see Figure 1). This semi-nomadic people, living more by hunting and gathering than by farming, consisted of a collection of numerous independent groups (Holmberg, 1948:458; Martin, 1969:258). Each group had their own chief or headman called an ererecua (Stearman, 1984:646). Ideally, this position was passed hereditarily from father to son.
An important characteristic of Siriono leadership is that the group leader be a good hunter. Because hunting was the primary source of food it was important that the leader be able to track and find game for the group. If an ererecua’s son was not a good hunter or did not demonstrate leadership abilities, the position was passed to the chief’s brother (Holmberg, 1969:150). It was also possible for the ererecua to be replaced if "he failed to meet his responsibilities and obligations as a leader" (Stearman, 1987:91). Thus the position of ererecua was somewhat fluid and dependent on his meeting the needs of the group.

The only weapons used in hunting were bows and arrows, and when not on a hunt most of the Siriono men’s time was spent in bow and arrow construction. The bows averaged 7 to 8 feet in length and were made of black chonta palm. Arrows averaging 8 to 10 feet in length were constructed of chuchio reed or bamboo shafts with bamboo blades or sharpened chonta palm rods as arrow heads (Holmberg, 1948:458). Holmberg (1948) states that over 40 varieties of game were taken including tapir and peccary. The resulting catch was thrown on the fire, burning off the hair, frying the skin and cooking the meat (Garland, 1987). During the hunt the women and children followed along and collected various vegetables (Holmberg, 1948:457).

The Siriono generally set up camp at the sight of a successful hunt and ate all that was taken, moving on only when hunger once again set in (Garland, 1987). The camp consisted of temporary houses made of a few poles tied to trees and covered with palm fronds. Small fires were kept burning by each hammock to provide warmth and keep off insects (Holmberg, 1948:457).
At least one fire was going at all times because the Siriono lacked the ability to make fire. When the fire went out, they waited for lightning to strike in order to obtain fire again (Garland, 1987). The homesteads of settlers in their territory were also raided to obtain fire (Ryden, 1941:47).

Holmberg states that some farming occurred in the dry season with the planting of maize, sweet manioc, sweet potato, cotton, and tobacco (1948:456). After planting, the Siriono would move on to hunt, returning only to harvest those crops that survived unattended to maturity (Stearman, 1987:99). In this manner, agriculture was "a subsidiary in the total economy to both hunting and collecting" (Holmberg, 1969:67).

The Siriono women made cotton string used in arrow construction for binding feathers and arrow heads to the arrow shaft as well as for baby slings. Much of their time was also spent twining wood fiber for hammocks and bow strings. The women also made baskets of motacu palm leaves for carrying and storage of food stuffs (Holmberg, 1948:458).

A mild alcoholic beverage was made through the fermentation of cooked manioc, water and wild bee honey. This product, also made by the women, was most prevalent in the dry season when it was easiest to obtain the honey. During the time of abundance, frequent drinking parties would occur which often ended in accusations of laziness and poor hunting abilities.

These arguments rarely ended in violence and had little lasting effect on relationships (Holmberg, 1969). Violence was not an internal pattern of interaction among the Siriono (Fabbro, 1978).
The Siriono have also been described by Stearman (1984) in terms of cultural depravity, that is, in terms of cultural aspects considered common but missing in the Siriono cultural matrix. Most notably, the Siriono lacked any stone tools. Of course, there was little stone in the area they inhabited from which such tools could be manufactured (Ryden, 1941). Stearman (1986) also points out that they did not work with the bones or hides of game animals.

Old and sick people were generally left along the trail during migration because it was too difficult to care for them (Stearman, 1984). When the group returned after several months, the bones of these abandoned people were buried. Although there were no shamans or religious specialists (i.e., anyone with special curative powers) among the Siriono (Stearman, 1986), they did save and use the skull of a dead person for such medicinal purposes as relieving pain by rubbing the skull on affected areas of an ill person (Holmberg, 1948:461).

Pre-Contact Period: Outsiders’ Impact on the Siriono

In 1693 a Jesuit priest named Father Barrace first documented the Siriono’s presence in eastern Bolivia. After spending several days among them, he recorded his experiences in the mission records (Holmberg, 1969:11). However, cultural and linguistic evidence indicate that the Siriono migrated into this area during an earlier period.

Both Holmberg (1969) and Ryden (1941) mention that the Siriono’s lack of domesticated animals and lack of stone tools which are found in the peoples which surround them indicate the Siriono are displaced, but these authors never pursued
Steward and Faron (1959) use these cultural differences to suggest a migration from the savannah areas to the east. However, the Siriono speak a derivative of Guarani in the Tupi-Guarani language classification (Mason, 1950:238) which indicates a historical relationship with the Guarani people of Paraguay (see Figure 2).

The geographical area covering the Bolivia-Paraguay border is the Gran Chaco. The chaco is characterized by a thorny bush that provides a variety of fruit for the inhabitants of the area. The soil has a high clay content and in the dry season large portions of the ground are covered by a thin layer of salt (Metraux, 1946:198).

Across the chaco, from north-central Paraguay to south-central Bolivia, portions of the Guarani population migrated in the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Langer, 1989). In this area they became known as the Chiriguano. A large number of the Chiriguano settled south of Santa Cruz, in the chaco of southern Bolivia (see Figure 2). In the early 17th century these Chiriguano moved northwest towards central Bolivia. There they met the Baure people who "forced them to divide and scatter into the forests" (Stearman, 1984:640) east of the Andes mountains where they became known as the Siriono (see Figure 2).

This period in Siriono history, retreat from the Baure, demonstrates the Siriono's pattern of nonviolence. They scattered into the forest to find refuge and safety rather than war. Ryden notes that the Siriono bow and arrow were suited only for hunting, not defense, and were too long for hand-to-hand combat. In battle, "safety lay in a speedy retreat" for the Siriono (Ryden, 1941:36).
Figure 2. Migration of Peoples Ancestral to the Siriono.

These details of Siriono migration are supported by cultural evidence. Ryden (1941) used information gathered from mounds in the traditional Siriono territory to determine that the Siriono were not the original inhabitants. He inquired of the Siriono whether or not any of the excavated artifacts looked familiar or had any special significance. The negative response he received led him to
believe they were not the descendants of the mound builders and that they had probably migrated after that culture had disappeared (Ryden, 1941).

Ryden (1941) also found that a particular article of Siriono women’s clothing was of a material and style common among the peoples to the south, leading him to conclude that their migration had been from that area. He also noted that the practice of abandoning the sick or killing the elderly when they became too large a burden for migration was common to both the Siriono and the chaco groups to the south (Ryden, 1941:40).

Further support for this migration comes from Isaac (1977) who points out that the dog was domesticated by the late 18th century in groups to the east, such as the Mundurucu of western Brazil, but "prior to contact with whites the Indians of the Gran Chaco did not have the dog" (Isaac, 1977:143). Since the Siriono still feared the dog, they must not have migrated from the east but from the south.

Also unique to the chaco cultures and the Siriono is the absence of stone tools. The Guarani had "imported the stone for their axes from their neighbors" (Metraux, 1946:293). But if the Siriono were the remnants of a people that had only recently migrated to the north, and then met with hostilities they would not have had time to establish such trade networks (Isaac, 1977:141). This would explain the Siriono's lack of stone tools, and lack of trade networks, and thus supports the theory of their migration from the south (Ryden, 1941).

Stearman (1984) uses the practice of slavery to link the Siriono and the Chiriguano, the branch of the Guarani out of which the Siriono came. Since the Chiriguano kept a considerable number of the Chane people as slaves (Langer,
1989; Metraux, 1948), the Chiriguano incursion into the Baure region in the 17th century would have included a number of the Chane slaves. When the Baure forced them into the forest, the result was small mixed groups of the Chiriguano and Chane. Because of the small population of these mixed groups, it became necessary for the Chiriguano to intermarry with their Chane slaves. Whereas slaves in the past had always been acquired through the taking of captives, slave practice became hereditary as the Chiriguano and Chane merged (Stearman, 1984). This practice of hereditary slavery is still evident among the Siriono today (Stearman, 1984).

It can be concluded from the cultural data that the Siriono are most likely the remnants of the Chiriguano and the Chane that the Baure drove into the jungle from a more savanna-like ecological niche in the early 17th century (see Figure 2). The cultural data are also substantiated by the language of the Siriono. The Siriono language is a derivative of Guarani, indicating that the Siriono migrated from the savanna areas of Paraguay where Guarani is the major language classification.

From the time Father Barrace mentioned the Siriono in 1693 until the early part of this century, confrontations over land usage by the Baure and the Yanaygua (another people living in the chaco, now called the Ayoreo) with the Siriono continued and resulted in a shrinking of their territory.

These migrations and interactions with other indigenous populations demonstrate that long before the time of Siriono contact with European populations the Siriono were not, as noted by Isaac (1977), living the romanticized satisfied,
non-alienated lives spoken of by Mangin (1970). Metraux (1948) states that the purpose of the Guarani migrations in the 15th and 16th centuries was to reach the origins of the goods for which they traded. This demonstrates that four centuries prior to European contact a dissatisfaction with the resources their environment provided alienated the ancestors of the Siriono from their historical homeland.

The Politically Uncontrolled Frontier

The influx of nonindigenous peoples characteristic of the frontier process, as described by Bodley (1982), began in the area inhabited by the Siriono in the mid-19th century. It was at this time that the Siriono's history of retreat first gave way to resistance.

This resistance was not initially demonstrated in aggressive attacks on the invading populations. Jesuit mission records of raids carried on by the Siriono against the mestizo colonists indicate that these raids were "to obtain axes and other tools" (D'Orbigny, 1839 cited in Holmberg, 1969:14). The Siriono still sought to avoid prolonged contact with the "outside." Siriono raids only became directed towards the settlers themselves after the Siriono had become the victims of "slaughter" at the hands of the settlers (Metraux, 1942:111). The Siriono were not violent or defensive of land rights, but rather fought for the right to live in a nonmurderous area. Therefore, the initial fear that the encroaching European population had of the Siriono was largely unfounded.

By the mid-19th century, many groups of the Siriono were living in close proximity to populations of European descent and were becoming increasingly
dependent upon their tools and fire. During this period run-away black slaves, non-Siriono Indian slaves from plantations, and Spanish deserters from the Bolivian army sought refuge among the various indigenous peoples living in the jungle. Many of these peoples left their mark on the Siriono gene pool through intermarriage. The result was the occasional appearance of dark skinned Siriono as well as light skinned, blue eyed Siriono (Isaac, 1977).

The process of extending Bolivian governmental control into the frontier began in 1886. At that time the Ministry of Colonization was created by the Bolivian government and produced legislation in 1886, 1905, and 1910 to promote the migration of Bolivians to the unpopulated east (Heilman, 1982). These early attempts were not successful and led the Bolivian Government to begin giving financial incentives to immigrants in 1920. The first major colonies were established in eastern Bolivia shortly thereafter. The purpose was to "strengthen the bond between the remote areas and the capital," stemming an attitude of separatism in the area of Santa Cruz (Heilman, 1982:120). In 1931 roads for "motorized transport" were constructed from La Paz to these lowland colonies to facilitate the movement of goods needed for the impending war with Paraguay (Heilman, 1982:121). These roads further increased immigration from the highlands into the frontier.

Through colonization, government control over the frontier was established. Yet the idea that eastern Bolivia's "sparse population and rich, natural resource base could be exploited for agricultural purposes" has persisted (Heilman, 1982:122). In 1978, the Anglo Bolivian Land & Cattle Company advertised in
Natural History Magazine opportunities for agricultural development in the virgin forests of the "booming new frontier in Santa Cruz, Bolivia" (Lewis, 1978:14). Thus, while the uncontrolled frontier came to an end with the extension of government control, the territory of the Siriono and other indigenous peoples is still affected by the frontier process.

Settling of the Siriono: Forced Acculturation

A major change in the resistance of the Siriono came in the 1920s and 1930s. During this time a boom in the rubber market brought tappers further into the jungle and colonization projects significantly increased contact between the Siriono and outsiders. Outsiders brought epidemics of smallpox and influenza that dramatically reduced the population of the Siriono, a population already decimated from earlier contacts (Holmberg, 1969:12; Metraux, 1942:111; Ryden, 1941:26).

At the same time, the increased military presence by the Bolivian army to the south (due to impending war with Paraguay) had forced the Yanaygua north into traditional Siriono territory (Ryden, 1941:26-27). The invasion of the Yanaygua into Siriono territory also depleted the Siriono population as the Yanaygua fought their way north "killing [Siriono] men and taking women and children as slaves" (Stearman, 1987:13).

By the late 1920s, ranchers opening up the frontier for cattle raising wanted all indigenous groups removed from the forest. This removal of indigenous peoples was desired in order to protect savanna areas which bordered the forest and in some cases surrounded extensive areas of forest. The savanna could then be con-
verted to farms and pasture land. With Bolivian military help, the ranchers began to hunt the Siriono "either to capture them or exterminate them" (Stearman, 1987:13).

The choices available to the Siriono were limited. They could fight, try to find still unclaimed areas further into the jungle, or they could seek help from the outside. Entrapment by the frontiers people (settlers, ranchers, and rubber tappers), by the Yanaygua invading from the south, and by depopulation suffered from massive epidemics made further migration impossible and caused the Siriono to seek peaceful relationships with whomever they could beginning around 1925 (Ryden, 1941:26).

"Pacification camps" were set up by the Bolivian military (Ryden, 1941) with the expressed intent of "civilizing" the Siriono and protecting the frontiers-people from the Siriono (Stearman, 1986:6). The Bolivian military forced some groups of the Siriono out of the jungle and into these pacification camps officially called "Indian Schools" (Ryden 1941:8). In reality these schools were reserves where the Siriono were little more than government slave labor. The only purpose of these camps was to keep the Siriono (and other indigenous groups) out of the way of national interests.

The Franciscans and various Protestant groups set up missions specifically for the Siriono in order to protect them from the frontiers people. Unfortunately, the missionaries' protection was another form of "civilizing" the Siriono. Life on most of the missions for those groups of the Siriono who had avoided the military and their "Indian Schools" was an unpleasant existence. There were long hours of
work and beatings for behavior that was perceived to be laziness. As a result, Siriono migrated between the different missions, and between the missions and the jungle. During this time it was common for a family or larger group to escape and return to the life they knew in the forest. A retreat usually included the machetes, axes, and other tools that had been given them as enticements to come out of the forest (Stearman, 1987:14). Holmberg reports that during his studies in 1941 he met Siriono in the forest that had formerly been living in mission stations but had "reverted to a nomadic existence because of what had been regarded as unsatisfactory conditions of life" (1969:12).

However, conditions in the jungle were deteriorating as a result of encroachment from outsiders and their diseases. Over the course of a generation, the Siriono finally settled on the missions and reserves as a result of intermarriage, an increased dependence on the items they received, and a lack of "empty" land close enough for them to retreat to. By 1950 no groups of Siriono lived in the forest (Stearman, 1987:16).

Although there were many missions, government reserves for the Siriono, and ranches scattered across the Bolivian countryside where the Siriono were settled in those early years, my focus of study is on a representative few sites. Several early settlements of the Siriono which Holmberg (1969) described were mentioned also in a restudy of the Siriono by Stearman (1987). These settlements, about which the most is known, are the mission stations founded at Salvatierra and Ibiato, the government camp that existed at what is now the village of Casarabe, and a ranch near El Carmen (see Figure 3). A great number of the Siriono also lived in
"forced labor on farms and cattle ranches" throughout the area (Holmberg, 1948:456).

**Salvatierra**

In the central regions of the Siriono territory, several Franciscan missions existed for the Siriono, including one the Franciscans called Salvatierra, meaning "safe ground." The population of Siriono at this mission increased in the early
1930s in much the same way as other camps. Missionary "hunting parties" with gifts of clothing and food would lure small Siriono groups or families, often desperate for food because of their flight from frontiers people and the Yanaygua, out of the jungle and bring them to Salvatierra. By the late 1940s several hundred Siriono lived at the mission (Stearman, 1987:21).

In order to keep the Siriono out of the forest and at the mission, intermarriage with the acculturated Guarayo Indians was encouraged. For this purpose, the Fathers in charge of Salvatierra brought many Guarayo into the mission (Stearman, 1987:15). Once married to the Guarayo, many of the Siriono stayed in the mission and began to take on the cultural characteristics of the Guarayo, making it easier for the Franciscan Fathers to work with the Siriono.

Ibiato

In 1931 the Protestant mission of Ibiato was founded (Ryden, 1941:18) by Thomas Anderson, a Four Square Gospel missionary, who settled a small group of Siriono at an old Mojo Indian mound which the Siriono named "Ibiato" or "raised ground" (Stearman, 1987:57). These Siriono had previously worked at a Bolivian-run ranch in exchange for safety from the Yanaygua. Soon after, another group of forty Siriono who had escaped from a farm to the south near Santa Cruz joined the mission (Stearman, 1987:89).

Hard work was expected at this mission as it was at Salvatierra. At both missions, the Siriono worked three days a week to cover the mission's expenses that included a teacher's salary and building costs for a school for the Siriono and
worked another three days a week clearing and planting their own farm land (Stearman, 1987:57).

According to Ryden there were 140 Siriono living in Ibiato in 1938 (1941:18). Holmberg states that in 1940 there were only 60 Siriono residents at Ibiato (1969:12). The differences can be partially understood as a result of diseases which the missionaries in charge of Ibiato did not have the medicine nor the expertise to treat (Stearman, 1987:58). Moreover, there was also a great deal of migration back and forth to the jungle during these years.

While Holmberg did not foresee this mission's continued existence, it is the only one to have grown after the intra-mission and forest migrations of the 1940s ceased. Much of the growth came because of the actions of Jack Anderson, son of the mission's founder. After the Bolivian land reforms in 1952, he received permission to remove the Siriono from subjection on farms and bring them to Ibiato (Stearman, 1987:58). His action shows a concern on the part of the mission to strengthen the Siriono people, keeping as large a group of them together as possible, and to let them live in conditions that favored their interests.

Casarabe

In 1937 the Bolivian government established a small enclave for the Siriono called Casarabe. This camp was in the northwestern corner of the original Siriono territory only about six miles from Ibiato (Stearman, 1987). While the official title for this camp was "Indian School," its stated purpose was to neutralize the "Indian threat" through pacification and not to educate the indigenous population (Ryden,
1941:9). The Bolivian military sought groups of Siriono and forced them to live at Casarabe. In 1940 there was a population of 325 Siriono in the camp (Holmberg, 1948:455). However, by 1945, exploitation of the Siriono through maltreatment by the staff, disease, and migration cut the population in half (Holmberg, 1969:12).

El Carmen

The town of El Carmen is located along the Rio Blanco, a major water way through Siriono territory. Many Siriono lived in this area and the forests along the river were their escape from the mistreatment of the camps and missions (Stearman, 1987). Since the Siriono generally fled in small numbers and sought refuge at various ranches along the river, blending of the Siriono into the national culture via intermarriage or peonage created by indebtedness to the ranch owners, was, as a result, rapid.

Holmberg (1969) states that the most successful attempt to make the Siriono a sedentary group was the efforts of a rancher named Frederick Richards. His ranch near El Carmen was home to large numbers of Siriono who, according to Holmberg, by 1940 were "the most highly acculturated to Bolivian society" (1948:456).

This view by Holmberg reflects the problem that was to face the Siriono in most encounters with those who sought to settle them. Success in this endeavor was equated with acculturation and assimilation of the Siriono into the Bolivian
society. "Success," for them, was the elimination of a distinctly Siriono people and their self-defined identity.

Depopulation

Bodley (1982) includes depopulation as a major factor in the frontier and forced acculturation processes. This was certainly the case for the Siriono as well.

At the turn of the century, one estimate by Stearman (1986:6) suggests there were 5,000 Siriono in the jungle, but by the early 1940s there were fewer than 3,000 on reserves and missions (Holmberg, 1948:456; Steward and Faron, 1959:-427). Since the 1940s, the population of the Siriono has plummeted to the point that by the mid-1980s only about 500 Siriono remained with 267 of these living in the village of Ibiato (Stearman, 1986:6).

Much of this population decline can be attributed directly to death from disease, murder, and mistreatment. At the same time many of the Siriono have become indistinguishable from the Guarayo or other peoples of the area. They are in a complete state of assimilation as the result of actions taken by many of the missions and reserves as well as the many ranchers of the area. They no longer hunt, following game through the forest as was their form of nomadism prior to contact. They no longer manufacture their distinctive bows and arrows, nor speak their own language or turn to the ererecua for leadership. No longer can they be considered Siriono in identity.

However, while most of the Siriono were assimilated into the Guarayo and Bolivian mestizo populations, a small but distinctive Siriono group remains.
Although no longer nomadic, these Siriono still depend primarily on hunting for their subsistence. They also speak the Siriono language and look to the leadership of the ererecua. This varying condition of the Siriono has resulted from differing approaches taken by those charged with settling the Siriono and transforming their culture.
CHAPTER III

THE SIRIONO CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The history of the Siriono from the 1930s onward consists of a lack of consideration for their way of life by those with whom they came in contact, i.e., their forced acculturation on missions and reserves without regard to their cultural perpetuation. This recent period of Siriono history is the beginning of social change directed by outsiders against the Siriono people themselves. However, when one compares this current directed social change to the Siriono history in the 16th-19th centuries, one realizes that these transformations are part of a process that began centuries ago with deculturation. This process, which has led to what Pitt (1976) describes as the underdevelopment of some specific Siriono communities, will end with the total cultural disappearance of the Siriono in those specific communities. Fortunately, as seen in the previous section, this is not the case for all Siriono communities. Thus the prospect of an enduring, distinctly Siriono way of life remains.

In order to understand the distinctive outcomes of directed social change in the four Siriono communities, the different approaches used by the missionaries and government officials overseeing these communities must be considered.
Directed Social Change

Unlike the deculturation experienced by the antecedents of the Siriono culture, the Guarani and Chiriguano, in 16th-19th centuries, the transformations of the Siriono culture in the 20th century are the result of directed social change. There are two important variables in directed social change: (1) the purpose of the change, and (2) the agent or initiator of the change.

Directed social change is undertaken for a specific purpose. Because Pitt’s (1976) statement regarding the current disposition of the Siriono is my concern, his stated purpose behind directed social change is necessary to investigate:

(The purpose of directed social change is) the perceived increased effectiveness of social and economic activities and functions of the society or situation and the (increased) range of options open to the people. . . . (Directed social change results in) the perceived improvement in the quality of life, even when this means fewer goods and services (1976:8-9).

The problem with this statement lies in who is perceiving the increased effectiveness of social and economic activities. I argue that only the ones who are undergoing the social changes, e.g. the Siriono, have a right to this perception. However, it is often governments or individuals not directly affected by the social changes that determine this perception.

Inside-Out Versus Outside-In

Pitt’s (1976) statement of purpose centers on the perceptions of the people undergoing social change. Such a concern can only be addressed if the people are directly involved in the process. Participation of the people at a grass roots level
is important. This approach to social change is directed from the "inside-out," reflecting the people's use of their own power in deciding their future.

Another approach to social change, not concerned with the perceptions of people, focuses on the growth of the national economy within which those people function. This perspective starts with the economic interests of the larger national governing body. From this interest, social changes are dictated to the disadvantaged people, as in the case of the Siriono, that must undergo these changes which benefit the larger community or nation. This type of directed social change is not concerned with the perceptions of the Siriono people or their ability to make the choices on the options that directly affect their future. Such social change is directed from the "outside-in," reflecting the imposition of change without regard for the people group involved (see Figure 4).

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Inside-Out Transformations
Local Community --------> versus <-------- National Governing Body
Human (Individual) Interests -------> versus <-------- Economic (National) Interests
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Figure 4. The Origin and Purpose of Directed Social Change.

The "outside-in" approach to social change is not a form of cultural transformation. Rather, this approach is actually a form of destruction. The following sections will demonstrate this.
Social change programs directed from the outside-in are exemplified by the programs instituted by the Bolivian government after the revolution of 1952. The directed social change programs begun at that time had two interconnected goals: (1) population reduction, and (2) increased agricultural production.

The effectiveness of social and economic activities of the highland communities was perceived by the Bolivian Government to be hampered due to overpopulation. The relocation of large numbers of highland families to the eastern lowlands would alleviate population pressures and prevent predicted future overpopulation. The second aspect of these programs was the utilization of this excess population to increase the agricultural production of the eastern lowlands in order to decrease national dependence on imports of sugar, coffee, cattle, and rice (Heilman, 1982).

However, the people affected by these programs, the Quechua and Aymara, were not part of the formulation or enactment of these programs. The government enticed people to move to the lowlands with promises of wealth and economic security. The government told them where to move, what crops to plant, and what animals to raise. The government did not allow these people to make choices regarding their future.

In terms of reducing population growth in the highlands, the project was not successful. From 1952 to 1970, 48,000 families were moved to the eastern lowlands. Nevertheless, there was still an increase of 180,000 people in the highlands.
highland communities during that same period. Thus the project absorbed less than one fourth of the expected population growth (Heilman, 1982).

The major reason a dramatic population shift did not occur lies in a basic flaw in the project design. The project did not recognize "the role that traditional cultural institutions played in daily life" (Heilman, 1982:136). The Quechua and Aymara that moved to the lowlands were not prepared for the technical demands of this new environment. Isolation and the inaccessibility of the market due to poor transportation led to project abandonment rates of over 50% per year. Of the 2,815 colonists who entered the Alto Beni project between 1962 and 1964, only 1,464 remained in 1968 (Dozier, 1969:150).

However, despite high project abandonment rates, the government did become self-sufficient in beef, sugar cane, rice and coffee. But:

The savings of foreign exchange . . . are not benefits that the poorest majority rural population realized. The pattern of development investment, as it relates to the development of the [eastern lowlands] and dictated by the Bolivian Government and supported by the U.S. Government, is one that largely precludes the Indian from sharing in the benefits (Heilman, 1982:138, emphasis added).

This statement sets forth the results of the government's attempts at directed social change and illustrates the problem found in many outside-in oriented projects. While the "poorest majority" are stated as the recipients of assistance and the ones who benefit from such assistance, in this case the goal attained favored the government in terms of economic self-sufficiency in several areas. The people who were responsible for that national economic self-sufficiency did not benefit, and in real terms suffered conditions far worse than before the enactment of the program.
Although the Siriono had already been settled on the many reserves and missions by the time the highland projects were put into effect, residual effects from them exist. The highland relocation projects opened up the interior via new roadways and increased colonization in the areas traditionally occupied by the Siriono (Heilman, 1982). However, the influx of rubber workers and frontiers people that forced the Siriono onto the reserves has not been followed by more massive colonization (Stearman, 1987). This lack of colonization results from the failure of the highland colonization projects. Had these projects been successful, large numbers of people relocating to the eastern lowlands would have caused even greater destruction of the Siriono.

From Dozier's (1969) description of the Alto Beni Project, it is apparent that the lowland areas targeted for colonization were considered to be unpopulated. The existence of indigenous peoples was noted, but the impact the project would have on them was not included in the planning of the projects:

The colonization . . . of the tropical forested upper valley of the Beni River in Bolivia is the most recent wave in a penetration that effectively began only with the extension of an all-weather road. Areas eastward . . . were mainly occupied by scattered aborigines, living largely by hunting and fishing and assisted in some places by Franciscan missions which established some local subsistence agriculture (Dozier, 1969:117).

It is these "scattered aborigines" that would be directly impacted by the colonization of that area. Yet the project used this statement in order to clarify that the targeted colonization area was unpopulated.

The U.S. philosophy regarding directed social change generated the outside-in pattern in Bolivian projects of the 1950s and early 1960s via its financing.
During this time the colonization efforts were supported by paved road construction into the interior. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) financed the initial road construction in the early 1950s with $47 million. Between 1962 and 1964 USAID allocated an additional $40 million for the purpose of road construction in central Bolivia. These figures do not reflect the "provision of technical agricultural inputs" which would greatly inflate the value of USAID support (Heilman, 1982:138).

Aside from colonization, the U.S. was instrumental in aiding the rubber industry and the advance of the rubber workers into the forest beginning in 1942. This was done through the formation of the Interamerican Public Health Cooperative Service in Bolivia during WWII. The purpose of this cooperative was to increase health among rubber and tin workers in order to "bring increased production of [rubber and tin] critical to the success of U.S. war-time objectives" (Heilman, 1982:143). This "increased health" allowed rubber workers to penetrate further into territory occupied by the Siriono and allowed these rubber workers to force the last of the Siriono groups out of the jungle by 1950.

Later, the U.S. philosophy of directed social change altered as a result of the "failures" of the highland relocation projects as analyzed by the Rockefeller Mission on U.S. foreign assistance policy (Heilman, 1982:191). One of these changes in U.S. policy on Bolivian social change projects included the formation in Bolivia of the National Community Development Service (NCDS). The NCDS projects sponsored by USAID in the late 1960s reflected an inside-out perspective by centering on the "felt needs of the rural community . . . and . . . contributing
to the economic well being of the Aymara and Quechua in their traditional environment" (Heilman, 1982:160, emphasis added).

This change in philosophy shifted the purpose of directed social change, which is the "increased effectiveness of social and economic policies," from the national to the local level. In this manner directed social change programs in Bolivia became increasingly inside-out oriented. This orientation created the opportunity for indigenous peoples to consider their own needs, and to speak out in their own defence, rather than to be considered only in light of national interests.

Social Change Strategies and the Siriono

The Purpose of Directing Social Change Among the Siriono

The Bolivian government’s purpose in transforming the Siriono culture at the beginning of the 20th century was to get them out of the way of frontiers people and allow for the exploitation of the nation’s natural resources. The missions’ purpose in transforming the Siriono culture was to protect them from the frontiers people and convert them to Christianity.

The problem confronting both the government and the missions was the strong resistance of the Siriono people. The only way the Bolivian government’s and missions’ purposes could be fulfilled would be if the Siriono resistance was broken.
The Breaking of Siriono Resistance

Ryden (1941) states that by 1925 the Siriono began to seek peaceful relations with whomever they could. They did this in a desperate attempt to survive. The options they had were minimal at best. If they stayed in the forest, they risked death at the hands of other indigenous groups who were encountering the same decrease in territory as well as the possibility of death at the hands of frontiers people and the military. There would also be the continued presence of untreated diseases. Thus the Siriono were seeking to expand the range of options open to them as they sought peaceful relationships.

However, the Siriono could not know that this decision placed their future into the hands of others. The coercion of the uncontrolled frontier and military force had broken the Siriono's resistance. That the Siriono sought peaceful relations does not indicate that they recognized any probable rewards in a new way of life. The Siriono gave up their autonomy only as a last resort to gain physical survival.

Salvatierra: Social Change Directed From the Outside-In

The lack of cultural protection that caused the assimilation of the Siriono people at Salvatierra into the Guarayo is an example of social change directed from the outside-in.

Father Hildebert, the Franciscan missionary directly in charge of this mission, focused on removing the Siriono from frontier expansion (Stearman, 1987). However, his intent was to save each individual life, not to save their cultural life.
A plan, that is, a "program of directed social change," was instituted that called for a total cultural transformation due to acculturation and assimilation.

The policy used at Salvatierra encouraged intermarriage with the Guarayo. In this way the solidarity of each group of the Siriono brought into the mission broke down. Larger and larger percentages of individuals from each Siriono group began to stay at the mission, not fleeing back to the forest. The Siriono gave up their hunting for the farming of the Guarayo and became sedentary at the mission (Stearnan, 1987:15). Such a policy was easier for the mission to enact: eventually there would be only a larger number of culturally Guarayo people, not a combination of Siriono and Guarayo.

Concern for the Siriono as a distinct people did not exist. The Siriono were not given a voice in the decisions that would profoundly affect their way of life.

**Ibiato: Advocacy Approach**

A different approach was taken by the Protestant mission leadership of Ibiato. The "program of directed social change" in Ibiato fostered a community separateness that greatly slowed the process of acculturation and did not allow for assimilation. While Ibiato started in the same fashion as Salvatierra (extreme amounts of work and discipline), concern for the people as a whole was present from the beginning. Authority over the mission was still from the outside, in this case from the Four Square Gospel Mission. But priority was given to the individuality of the Siriono culture, to the Siriono language and way of life. This was the
beginning of a community development approach implicitly used by the missionaries there.

This approach was characterized by the continued utilization of the indigenous leaders, the ererecuas, who over time dissolved the importance of the missionaries' functioning there. The result would be a self-governing group of Siriono people.

At the same time the Siriono would have to learn to survive amidst the local mestizo population around them. Toward this end, the ererecuas had learned to deal with outside influences such as traders and squatters on their untitled territory. This was accomplished through both the founding missionary of Ibiato, Jack Anderson, and Perry Priest of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) who impressed upon the Siriono the need to occupy as much of their land as possible in order to retain it.

The presence of SIL missionaries in Ibiato was instrumental in getting the teachers' salaries needed to begin a formal education system in Ibiato (Stearman, 1987). SIL was officially recognized by the Bolivian Ministry of Culture and Education from the early 1970s until SIL left Bolivia in 1984. During that time a staff position in the Ministry was filled by a member of SIL as a result of SIL missionaries' technical knowledge and unique training in bilingual education (Lewis, 1978; Stearman, 1987). This relationship between SIL and the Bolivian government was crucial to Ibiato's educational system.

The missionaries' concern for the Siriono was not only as individual people but as a culture. The missionaries' use of existing Siriono leadership and their
acting on behalf of the Siriono in government matters demonstrated this. These characteristics are peculiar to the treatment of the Siriono at Ibiato and match the ideas reflected in applied anthropology, cultural brokerage, and advocacy anthropology (van Willigen, 1986). A complete discussion of these avenues of interaction utilized at Ibiato will follow later. It is the uniqueness of this approach among the Siriono at Ibiato that now makes Ibiato attractive to the Siriono still living elsewhere. As a result Ibiato now represents over half of the entire Siriono population (Stearman, 1986).

Casarabe: Military Directed Social Change

Only after the missions started bringing the Indians onto settlements with some success did the government change from a state of war with the Siriono to establish reserves for the Siriono. The reserves set up by the Bolivian military represent the government’s attempt at directed social change and are the pinnacle of the outside-in approach. The government’s camp at Casarabe was not concerned with the individual lives of the Siriono much less with the continuance of their cultural way of life. In fact the cultural life of the Siriono and other lowland indigenous groups stood in opposition to the goals of the government in the economic development of the rubber industry and later in the colonization projects in those areas. Therefore the Siriono had to be removed from the forest to allow for both the expansion of the national population and economic growth. Because of this the Siriono were given no voice on the reserves, and given no choices in their future. Rather, they were only acted upon.
Yet this manner of directed social change (the use of "pacification camps") was not the government's initial action toward the Siriono. Since the Siriono and other lowland indigenous people groups were not considered part of the national population, the lowlands were therefore officially unpopulated (Lewis, 1978). The original actions of the Bolivian government prior to the 1930s focused on the removal of the Siriono and other indigenous groups from the jungle via their extermination. While this policy never officially existed, the military has intervened when violence erupted between nomadic indigenous groups and frontier settlers. In 1978, following a violent altercation between settlers and a group of the Yuqui (a people that separated from the Siriono sometime after their dispersal by the Baure [Stearman, 1984]), the military attempted to exterminate that group with machine guns. However, this group of the Yuqui, as in the past, retreated back into the forest and to date remains uncontacted (Decicio, 1991).

**El Carmen: Economic-Driven Social Change**

From the perspective of Frederick Richards, the Siriono who settled on his cattle ranch were there for one reason: to work for him. Making sure that his ranch functioned well was his concern, and certain aspects of the Siriono way of life, such as going on extended hunting trips, were not conducive to his work ethic. Therefore, if the Siriono wanted the protection afforded them on his ranch, they would have to take on the cultural practices of more sedentary groups of the area like the Guarayo.
This exchange—protection from literal extermination for work on the ranch—cost the Siriono their culture. The sacrifices made were only on the Siriono side and represent an outside-in attitude to social change.

Underdevelopment Defined

Underdevelopment is not easily defined, but in order to say that directed social change within the Siriono communities resulted in underdevelopment (Pitt, 1976) some understanding of the concept must be reached.

The word "underdevelopment" can refer to economic and social traits which have not yet reached their full potential (the problem being who decides this potential) or to economic and social traits which have been altered in a negative fashion (or with negative results). Both of these meanings start with the idea that some action has already been initiated (Frank, 1969). Thus, according to Cockroft, Frank, and Johnson (1972), a culture in its original state cannot be underdeveloped.

How does one determine a culture's original state? The history of the Siriono people in the 16th-19th centuries reveals that at the time of contact the Siriono did not possess a culture in its original state. However, Pitt claims that the Siriono did represent an original state because a situation leading to underdevelopment was begun only after contact with the "outside world" (1976:70).

Another view of underdevelopment begins with the concept of acculturation, regardless of a culture's "original state." Prolonged contact between two cultures results in some kind of cultural transformation (whether the contact is solely cultural or environmental). Changes which result in what the people decide is the
"increased effectiveness of social and economic activities" (Pitt, 1976:8) are considered positive. Negative changes result from interactions leading to what the people involved consider to be the decreased effectiveness of social and economic activities and result in a state of underdevelopment. These negative changes are reflected in a community's general poor cultural health and inability to make choices between options regarding their present and future condition, i.e., the inability of the "agents of a particular culture [to make decisions] shaping local history" (Hastrup and Elsass, 1990:306).

MacPherson describes underdevelopment in the following manner:

Underdevelopment is not a position from which societies may move forward but the outcome of a continuing process whereby both their external and internal social and economic formations are perverted to ensure a progressively more profound integration as exploited parts of the international economy (1982:17, emphasis added).

These aspects of underdevelopment, continuation as process and resultant exploitation, and the relationship of these aspects to the Siriono are addressed in the following sections.

**Deculturation in the Process of Underdevelopment**

The term "deculturation" denotes a situation "in which significant cultural elements or even whole institutions have been lost to the group and not replaced by functional equivalents" (Isaac, 1977:139). The concept of deculturation is an important part of explaining the cultural complex of not only the Siriono but many other peoples of the tropical forest (Isaac, 1977; Martin, 1969; Service, 1971; Stearman, 1984; Steward and Faron, 1959). It permits one to go beyond the idea
that a "counterfeit paradise" did not allow a building of cultural complexity (Meggers, 1971). Rather, one finds that, in the case of the Siriono, flight into the jungle caused elements of their culture to disappear. Stearman indicates that the Siriono's "defeat, dispersal, and isolation in the forest . . . resulted in a drastic reduction in culture content" (1984:640-41).

Holmberg appears to agree with the centrality of deculturation in Siriono history when he states early in his monograph that "in the course of their migrations [the Siriono] lost much of their original culture" (1969:11). But later, in the same monograph, he rejects the idea of deculturation. Instead, Holmberg asserts that because of the time spent by the Siriono satisfying their hunger drive other aspects of their culture had remained "rudimentary" throughout their history (1969:254). He states elsewhere that "secondary growth within the culture has been reduced to a minimum" (Holmberg, 1948:463). Likewise, Ryden states that "the Siriono possess a stage of civilization lower than that of the Stone Age" and that they have "maintained their primitiveness through the ages" (1941:130). Looking beyond Ryden's ethnocentric terminology, it is clear that he thought the Siriono culture had existed unchanged for quite some time.

Both views by Holmberg and Ryden are ahistorical and explicitly treat the Siriono as functioning in an historical vacuum. The past three hundred years are extremely important for understanding the present Siriono. The effects on the Siriono of both their own past migrations and the influx of the European population have been great. What one must also emphasize is that for the Siriono the process of underdevelopment began in the 17th century with the flight into the jungle at the
hands of the Baure people. During this time large areas of the Siriono cultural matrix were lost, most notably, material culture traits and technology.

During the early years of the Siriono's flight into the jungle, the Siriono for example lost their ability to make fire. Holmberg states that the Siriono at one time could make fire by twirling a stick between their hands (1969:17). Stearman indicates how this cultural trait was lost: the change from the dry savannah to a much wetter tropical forest climate is enough to cause fire making by means of bow-drills almost impossible (1984).

Another cultural loss was in the area of agriculture. Stearman (1984) uses the total absence of horticulture in a splinter group of the Siriono, the Yuqui, to demonstrate that the Siriono's limited practice of horticulture is a result of deculturation. Having presented the ethnohistorical connection of the Siriono and the Yuqui, Stearman states that while no Tupi-Guarani speaking groups inhabit the Siriono-Yuqui territory they have retained the Tupian words for corn and manioc (1984:641). The limited horticultural practices of the Siriono and the lack of horticulture among the Yuqui, while retaining words for items they didn't have, thus represent different stages of the same process of deculturation.

The Siriono, once dispersed into the jungle, traveled in small groups. This population reduction made it difficult to defend themselves and they would not have been able to stay in one place long enough to plant and cultivate crops. The state of agricultural endeavor among the Siriono when Holmberg (1969) and Ryden (1941) studied them consisted only of a few scattered plots which were planted and harvested but were not cultivated in between.
Other examples of cultural loss are also hypothesized. The displacement into the jungle "when coupled with the social disruption resulting from warfare and isolation, may have contributed to the degeneration of fiber production, pottery making, basketry, and house building" (Stearman, 1984:644).

In other words, contact with the frontiers people, Bolivian military, and missionaries in this century was not the initial impetus for the process of underdevelopment as described here among the Siriono. Contact with the encroaching European (and later Bolivian) cultures has radically changed the relationship between the Siriono and their environment, but contact with other indigenous groups hundreds of years earlier also had a detrimental effect, forcing the Siriono from the savannah into the jungle. Thus recent contact did not create "the process" but was just one more step that intensified and made visible an already ongoing process.

This process of underdevelopment continued after European contact toward a "profound integration" of most, but not all, Siriono into the Bolivian mestizo population. Today the results of the processes of deculturation and underdevelopment vary greatly between the Siriono communities described earlier.

Post-Contact Siriono and Underdevelopment

The final results of the process of underdevelopment as brought on by deculturation and the approaches taken by those with authority over the specific Siriono communities are described below. I include descriptions of Salvatierra,
Casarabe and El Carmen as each represents some degree of underdevelopment. However, Ibiato will be dealt with later as it represents a different situation.

**Salvatierra: Degeneration**

Although hundreds of the Siriono were brought to Salvatierra during the 1940s, the population in 1984 numbered only 142 (Stearman, 1987). Only eleven of these were surviving original inhabitants. These eleven spoke the Siriono language, but only in the privacy of their own homes. Others had moved away and "the children and grandchildren of [these] eleven survivors were culturally, if not biologically, Guarayo" (Stearman, 1987:21).

Items related to the old way of life, such as the bees wax and feathers that were used in the construction of their traditional bows and arrows, existed, but were kept out of sight. Items like the bow and arrow were made only to be sold for cash income, and even then such a transaction occurred at night so that the non-Siriono people of the village would not know of these items (Stearman, 1987).

Stearman (1987) notes that while hunting was still the major occupation of the men little meat was consumed in the village. Instead the meat was salted, dried, and sold at the market in the city. The resulting income was used to buy "a few staples such as sugar or salt . . . but more frequently it [was used to buy] alcohol" (Stearman, 1987:23). Cane alcohol produced by mestizos was more inebriating than the wild honey mead made previously by the Siriono. Because of the extensive consumption of alcohol in Salvatierra, there were frequent arguments and violent confrontations between spouses and relatives (Stearman, 1987). This
violence, not present among the Siriono prior to contact (Fabbro, 1978), reveals a
degeneration in the inter-personal relationships of the Siriono in Salvatierra.

As a result of low meat intake and high alcohol intake, the nutritional health
of the community deteriorated (Stearman, 1987:144). Since other viable sources of
nutrition were sold to the outside economy, and the most prevalent exchange was
alcohol which encouraged continual disruptions in village life, Salvatierra has come
to represent a condition of underdevelopment.

Casarabe: Destruction

When Holmberg analyzed the structure of this government camp in the
1940s, he concluded that it would fail "for lack of funds and trained personnel"
(1969:12). He was right in that the Indian School did fail. Yet, why or how it
failed may not be known. By the early 1980s "most people living there had no
idea of Casarabe's origins [and] the Siriono were long gone" (Stearman, 1987:59).
This example represents the ultimate end of underdevelopment. Any effectiveness
of social and economic activities cannot be measured as Siriono members are
nonexistent. The government reserve at Casarabe succeeded in the total destruction
of the original Siriono.

El Carmen: Decomposition

Stearman (1987) found only six Siriono families living here in 1982. They
lived there only because of their indebtedness to the ranch owners. Yet they hoped
one day to move to Ibiato. Their indebtedness to the ranch owner is a means of
the ranch owner's exploitation of these Siriono. In order to keep from losing his labor force, the ranch owner charged higher prices for goods needed by the Siriono than the wages he paid them.

These few Siriono still spoke their language, but other than the string hammocks that hung in their "mostly open, thatched houses" they retained nothing of their previous way of life (Stearman, 1987:32).

Even though these Siriono form only a small group, they are underdeveloped in their present state. The assimilation of these Siriono at El Carmen is representative of those Siriono "scattered throughout the other missions, ranches and settlements [whose assimilation] is almost complete" (Stearman, 1987:66).

Conclusions

If the condition of the Siriono at Salvatierra and El Carmen, and the complete lack of Siriono existence at Casarabe, were representative of the situation of the entire Siriono people, then Pitt (1976) would be correct in his analysis of the Siriono situation. The total lack of effectiveness of social and economic activities clearly supports the idea that contact and subsequent cultural transformation inevitably destroys local cultures. However, "it is the duty of anthropology to show that other futures are possible" (Hastrup and Elsass, 1990:308).

For the Siriono, the alternative future was found in the village of Ibiato. The situation at the village of Ibiato, to be addressed next, now represents the only hope for the continued cultural existence of the Siriono.
CHAPTER IV

IBIATO: THE SIRIONO CULTURE OF THE FUTURE

Cultural survival implies not the conservation of a preconceived identity anchored once and for all in an objectively existing (reified) culture but continuing control by agents of a particular culture of the shaping of local history (Hastrup and Elsass, 1990:306).

Hastrup and Elsass' statement on cultural survival applies directly to the Siriono situation in Ibiato. Of importance is that "agents" of the Siriono culture are involved in the shaping of their identity. Only as this "involvement" becomes "control" is Siriono autonomy, lost in the contact process, regained.

Toward this end it must be noted that although founded as a mission, Ibiato is a town without permanent missionaries. In the early 1960s Jack Anderson, who took over Ibiato after his father founded it, left to pursue other mission works in Trinidad (Stearman, 1987:58). He still visits Ibiato frequently and advises the Siriono on major decisions.

Perry and Anne Priest, missionaries with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) lived among the Siriono from the early 1960s until 1984. Much of this time was spent translating the Bible into the Siriono language using language informants from Ibiato. However, as SIL cut back staff in Bolivia in the early 1980s, Perry and Anne Priest spent less time in Ibiato. Finally, in 1984, they left the country as SIL completed its work in Bolivia and began leaving the country.

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A Brief Cultural Overview

The most notable characteristics that mark this community as Siriono are the primary use of their own language, the prominent role played by hunting in daily activities for subsistence needs and prestige, and the continued leadership of the ererecuas.

The Bilingual Siriono: Siriono as Language of Preference and Spanish as Language of National Access

Siriono is the language of preference and is spoken at all times, publicly and privately, unless someone is present who does not speak Siriono. Lack of knowledge of the Siriono language occurs as a result of Siriono individuals who were raised in communities where Siriono was not spoken and who have only recently arrived in Ibiato. There are also members of the mestizo population present (six men married to Siriono at the time of Stearman’s 1984 study) who speak only Spanish.

The nearest market for their goods is the market in the town of Casarabe. Although founded as a Siriono reserve, Casarabe harbors no vestiges of Siriono culture or language and all transactions are in Spanish. Therefore, it is important that Spanish, both written and spoken, be well understood by the Siriono in Ibiato.

Toward this end, the educational system in Ibiato is bilingual. There are six grades; the first two are taught in Siriono only, the middle two grades—third and forth—are taught equally in Spanish and Siriono, and the last two grades—fifth and sixth—are taught entirely in Spanish. The school is funded through the Bolivian
government which pays the salaries of four teachers in Ibiato, three of whom are Siriono (Stearman, 1987).

Literacy is maintained after completion of formal education mostly through regular personal reading of the Siriono translation of the Bible completed by Perry and Anne Priest. As a result, "all but the old and recent arrivals can read [the Siriono language], and read well" (Stearman, 1987:117).

**Subsistence: Sedentary Hunting and Farming**

Although no longer nomadic in lifestyle, the Siriono have not given up their dependence on hunting. On the hunt shotguns and rifles replace the bows and arrows, and the hunt is now not only on foot but mounted on both horses and riding oxen (Stearman, 1986:10). The primary reason that the area does not become depleted of game is the limited use of the savannah areas by adjacent cattle ranchers. This allows the wild game to flourish with plenty of forage areas.

The use of pack animals for hunting also allows the Siriono to hunt further away from the village and still retrieve large game. Thus, their diet remains high in animal protein, "having meat in their houses an average of four days a week" (Stearman, 1987:102).

Further, hunting is still a major factor to determine leadership and to obtain respect. A good hunter, as in the days of their nomadic existence, commands respect for his ability to provide for the needs of his family and is a candidate for leadership. Even when a position of possible importance is bestowed on a man, such as a school teacher (receiving a minimal salary from the government), if that...
man is not a good hunter he fails to gain "any additional prestige in the village" (Stearman, 1987:116). Hunting is still the critical variable in deciding the qualities of leadership.

A secondary, but important, use of hunting for the Siriono is the procurement of animal hides for sale. While hunting protected species such as jaguars, pumas, and other predators is illegal, these animals are a source of irritation to the cattle ranchers in the area. Because of this, the Siriono hunt these predators off the cattle ranges as a favor for the ranchers and the hides bring in a substantial amount on the black market. There is also a wide variety of legal game with valuable hides including deer, peccary, and ocelot (Stearman, 1986:10).

When Ibiato was still a formal mission with Jack Anderson in direct control, hunting was only allowed two days a week and work in the fields was required four days a week (Stearman, 1987:104). But, once Anderson left Ibiato in 1964, hunting replaced farming, a form of subsistence with little interest to the Siriono.

Each of the Siriono men still plants crops, but only on a small area of land. They take two or three months to clear the land that by the standards of mestizo farmers ought only to take two or three weeks to prepare. This slow rate results from "taking frequent time off to hunt or gather" (Stearman, 1987:106). As a consequence, these agricultural pursuits contribute minimally to the Siriono food supply. Rice is grown as a market crop, but only in small quantities and does not provide much income (Stearman, 1987).

This contrast in the time spent in hunting and agricultural pursuits reflects the fact that the Siriono "have always been hunters and hunting continues to give
pleasure, satisfaction, and status in a way that farming never will" (Stearman, 1987:98).

Leadership: Dual Ererecuas

There are now two ererecuas in Ibiato. This resulted from the many independent groups of the Siriono entering the mission in the early days each with their own ererecua. At first each group was loyal to its own leader, but these loyalties "became more diffuse over time" (Stearman, 1987:90). However, two of the coexisting groups never melded the leadership into one person. The result was two ererecuas with the loyalties of the people shifting from one to the other depending on the matter at hand. At the same time, neither one could gain enough support to take complete control.

The dual system of leadership that has emerged functions quite well in the community. While the Siriono were nomadic, they were never without the ererecua in their midst. Now the advantage of two leaders is that when one ererecua may be out in his fields for an extended time or on a long hunt away from the community, there is still the authority of the second ererecua to arbitrate disagreements and make decisions (Stearman, 1987). This arrangement of leadership also provides a "system of checks and balances" that keeps either ererecua from becoming too powerful and allows the Siriono two alternatives in each situation (Stearman, 1987:91).
Directed Social Change in Ibiato

The main question is not whether culture and [social change] conflict but how they can be combined to the satisfaction of a particular people (Hastrup and Elsass, 1990:306).

The goal of directed social change as defined in the earlier chapters is to effect changes that will result in transformations that meet the needs of the people as they perceive them—that is, to increase the effectiveness of social and economic activities through the expansion of choices (options) available to the people from which they make decisions regarding their future.

Directed social change in Ibiato and other Siriono settlements differed in regard to goal orientation. The primary goal of the Bolivian government was to move the indigenous peoples out of the way of national economic development. At missions, the goal was to save individual lives but not the Siriono cultural life. However, at Ibiato, the concern of Anderson and the others was the protection of an entire people, both individually and culturally.

Although the goal at Ibiato was different from other settled Siriono villages, the initial step by Anderson was the same as the initial step by other missions and the government: the intervention and acquisition of power over the Siriono. This philosophy in Bolivian directed social change programs is also the same as the applied anthropologists' attitude toward power: to "assume it, where appropriate, and then dissolve it" (Van Willigen, 1986:91).

The difference between Ibiato and the other settlements came in the dissolution of power. In the settlements other than Ibiato, power was never intended to be relinquished to the Siriono. While one may question whether
Anderson originally intended to relinquish his power or authority when he first settled Ibiato, one cannot question that his leaving the village left the center of control in the hands of the Siriono.

Anderson’s first concern was to deter assimilation of the Siriono in Ibiato into the mestizo population. If as many mestizos as Siriono people were allowed to live in Ibiato, the same assimilation that occurred in Salvatierra would occur in Ibiato. Thus, strict rules were placed on residency in Ibiato. Only those individuals who could prove Siriono parentage or were married to Siriono could stay. This was still in effect when Stearman (1987) took a census of the village in 1984, finding that of the 267 residents only six were mestizo and these were men married to Siriono women.

This focus on Siriono identity also served to keep the Siriono uncorrupted by the local population’s Catholicism while Anderson began a Protestant church among them. Even though he sought to convert the Siriono to Christianity, he did not try to replace the leadership of the ererecuas with young Siriono men trained in Christianity. Anderson’s introduction of Christianity was not meant to destroy the Siriono culture and his recognition of the leadership of the ererecuas reflected this. He sought a way that Christianity might become uniquely adapted to the Siriono cultural way of life. Because he left the system of leadership in tact, the ererecuas have maintained their cultural style of authority.

While Anderson still expects to be consulted on major decisions, the Siriono have begun to exert a growing independence. For example, in 1980 they sold two head of cattle from the community herd and levied a head tax on all the residents.
to pay for a sugar cane press. This press allowed them to make a kind of sugar cane syrup which replaced the honey they had formerly spent much time collecting. The other alternative, the purchase of sugar in Casarabe, was extremely expensive. Through the use of the sugar cane press, they save time and effort in honey collection and remain independent of the outside economy for at least one more product. The press "remains the pride and joy of the community" (Stearman, 1987:108).

This type of project, initiated and carried through entirely by the Siriono, is important. Success at this local level promotes community solidarity, provides self confidence, and ensures cultural identity (MacPherson, 1982). Independent decision-making and resulting success keep the Siriono, not as a demoralized people but, with a secure, and self-selected cultural identity.

Cultural Advocacy

The missionaries among the Siriono have acted on a national level as advocates for the Siriono people. As a result of the high status held by SIL in the Ministry of Education, Ibiato has four salaried teachers for only seventy school age children. When two of these positions were to be terminated, Perry Priest successfully lobbied the Ministry to keep those jobs.

Earlier in their settlement history, Jack Anderson also pleaded the cause of the Siriono at the national level. Since it became theoretically possible for the Siriono to gain title to their traditional territory following the land reform revolution of 1952, Jack Anderson applied for it. Thirty-nine years later the Siriono have still
not gained this title. The indefinite delay is most likely due to the strong lobby against indigenous peoples on the part of the ranchers who desire more land (Stearman, 1987). In these situations, the missionaries have been "speaking for" the Siriono who play a passive role.

Fortunately this relationship has not continued unaltered. As the Siriono begin to speak out on their own behalf, they will gain a better understanding of their self-selected place in Bolivian society. Experience will give the Siriono confidence in themselves and the ability to defend their rights when the advocacy of the missionaries is gone.

Speaking of the relationship between the advocate and the "client," Hastrup and Elsass state:

Passivity need not be the ultimate outcome of the clients' side even when a professional temporarily takes the initiative. It may be part of the professional's strategy to raise the clients' consciousness about the situation so that they can re-assume responsibility for their actions, irrespective of the advocate's opinion (1990:303).

Although the missionaries' activities among the Siriono have extended over several decades, the end is coming. The Priests have left, and Anderson's direct authority is diminishing. The future of the Siriono regarding the issues in which the missionaries acted as advocates depends on how successfully they take responsibility for their actions. This is critical concerning Siriono land rights.

Cultural Brokerage

The concept of cultural brokerage relies on an individual, i.e., the broker, to act as a link between two cultures. In the case at hand, the link is between the
Siriono culture and the non-Siriono Bolivian cultures. Because of the Siriono's "separateness," they need this link to facilitate living as a part of the national society.

The cultural broker's role is played among the Siriono largely by Chiro Cuellar. Chiro was trained by the Priests to be a religious leader in the community. The training included travel that exposed him to the "outside world" unexperienced by the rest of the Siriono. As a result he is more acculturated than the others but still lives as a Siriono in Ibiato. One significant difference between Chiro and other Siriono is that he is more likely to save for the future while other Siriono are not interested in delayed gratification (Stearman, 1987).

Because of Chiro's greater acculturation and acquisition of material possessions (table and chairs, china dishes and silverware), outsiders visiting Ibiato feel most comfortable dealing with him. Yet, in matters of community interest, he refers these individuals to one of the ererecuas. In this way, he is the cultural broker for Ibiato. Even though Chiro is the most highly educated and acculturated of the Siriono, he is not marginalized and is thus in an excellent position to continue as their cultural broker. As his experience grows, he may be able to help the Siriono with the interests of Ibiato on a national level.

Another Siriono man has also been active in the role of cultural broker. Tomas Ticuasu Eritaruki recently participated in a march on the capital in which he represented the Siriono people (an issue to be addressed below). His newfound experience at the national level as an advocate for his people will no doubt also make him an important cultural broker as well.
Issues Confronting Siriono Cultural Identity in Ibiato

Although the population of Ibiato in 1984 was only 267, this figure represents at least one half of the entire Siriono population. The remainder of the population, scattered over many ranches and villages, is almost completely assimilated into the mestizo population (Stearman, 1986).

Generally, a small group of people is not a viable cultural unit (Stearman, 1987:146) when confronted with national social change programs more concerned with economic development. However, Stearman notes that the population of Ibiato is growing both by means of an influx of Siriono from other missions (and those few who are able to free themselves from debt peonage on ranches) and as a result of a lowered infant mortality rate. Because of these factors, the prospects for population growth are good. At the same time population growth may be detrimental to the carrying capacity of the land they have access to.

Bodley (1982) states the importance of nonindigenous groups supporting the rights of indigenous peoples in order to disrupt the process of victimization. While this role was played by the missionaries from the time of contact until the 1980s, the Siriono have recently been aided by Bolivian organizations in support of indigenous peoples. In 1984, the Ayuda para el Campesino Indigena del Oriente Boliviano (APCOB-Help for the Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia) took action regarding the Siriono's land rights (Stearman, 1987).

The results of the actions of the APCOB are uncertain. However, in October of 1990, an organization called the Central de Pueblos Indigenas del Beni
(CPEB-Indigenous Peoples’ Central of the Beni) coordinated the "March for Land and Dignity" from the city of Trinidad in eastern Bolivia to the capital, La Paz (360 miles). This march was designed to raise Bolivian and international awareness of the land rights of the indigenous peoples of eastern Bolivia. It was in this march that Tomas Ticusasu Eritaruki represented the Siriono.

This march to the capital ended with Bolivia’s president, Jaime Paz Zamora, signing Supreme Decrees No. 22609, 22610, 22611, and 22612 (Presidencia de la Republica de Bolivia, 1990). These decrees restore the traditional lands of indigenous peoples of the Beni region. The first of these decrees deals specifically with the Siriono. Article One of #22609 declares Ibiato to be an official Indigenous Territory as defined by its 36 natural landmarks. Article Two declares that an area of 30,000 hectares (75,000 acres) contiguous to Ibiato, the boundaries of which are yet to be defined, is to be a protected indigenous area for the Siriono. Article Five declares that these lands are inalienable and indivisible, and that the land and its flora and fauna are to be used by the Siriono in accordance to their customs and development needs (Presidencia de la Republica de Bolivia, 1990).

While Supreme Decree #22609 appears quite promising for the Siriono, there are problems. This decree is not a law and the government is backing down from its strong stand for indigenous peoples’ rights due to pressure brought to bear by the ranchers in the lowland area. Thus the issue of land rights for the Siriono is far from over.
I began this study by making reference to a description of the Siriono as "demoralized welfare dependents with a declining productive effort" (Pitt, 1976:70) which resulted from contact with the "outside world" earlier this century.

I have demonstrated that the forced acculturation of the Siriono did have drastic consequences. However, these consequences (i.e., the underdevelopment experienced by most of the Siriono) were only a magnification of a process of deculturation begun centuries before. While these consequences have led to the disappearance of large portions of the Siriono population and their culture, these results are not the same for the community of Ibiato, which continues to prosper. Because of this prosperity, Pitt's description is not completely valid.

The Ibiato Siriono are not a demoralized people. Although they have always been looked down upon by the mestizo population, they have developed a sense of "native consciousness" (instilled by the missionaries) (Stearman, 1987:148). This awareness allows them to take part in national rallies demanding their rights. This is not the action of a demoralized people. Hopefully, it will not be too much longer before they truly are recognized as Siriono Bolivians, "and not as second-class citizens" (Central de Pueblos Indigenas del Beni, 1990:1).

The Siriono maintain a subsistence economy based on the values they held before contact, and are not welfare dependents. Their form of economic living is often mistaken as poverty, but the Siriono do not see themselves in that light. In fact, the productive efforts of the Siriono are increasing. They have access to the cash economy of Bolivia through farming and hunting, both of which have allowed
them to participate above their previous subsistence level. The health of the people and decreasing infant mortality rate are strong indicators of Siriono cultural survival.

The cultural survival of the Siriono at Ibiato is a direct consequence of the missionaries who began Ibiato. These missionaries were instrumental in allowing the Siriono the opportunity to make the choice to continue as Siriono, a choice not offered anywhere else. However, as time passes and their independence continues, decision making regarding similar choices to try to maintain their cultural identity will continue. Their fight in the battle for land rights bears their will to continue as Siriono.

At the moment, the ranchers control the rights to the land the Siriono hunt on and control as well the usage of those lands. If Supreme Decree No. 22609 (Presidencia de la Republica de Bolivia, 1990) does become law, these lands will be turned over to the Siriono. However, if the ranchers retain these lands and also become hostile towards the Siriono (not allowing them to hunt off these lands) or if the ranchers decide to use these pasture lands for cultivation, vast changes in game availability would occur. But as long as cattle remains highly profitable in the area, the cattle ranges will remain unaltered and the Siriono will have game.

The situation of the Siriono continues to evolve. Thanks to the founding of Ibiato, the Siriono continue to evolve their cultural identity in a distinctively Siriono way.
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