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Traditional, transnational, and cosmopolitan:

The Colombian Yanacona look to the past and to the future

ABSTRACT

In this article, we analyze a crisis that resulted when a vehicular road was illegally cut through a corner of southern Colombia's San Agustín Archaeological Park, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage site, by a nearby reindigenizing Yanacona community and its neighboring campesino allies. In numerous meetings addressing the crisis, Yanacona leaders, performing on a transnational and cosmopolitan stage, have asserted and justified their position by creatively combining local and "authentic" discourses with significantly scaled-up heritage, developmentalist, and environmentalist ones. Yanacona articulate and adapt their ethnicity to an evolving global reification of diversity as well as fashion a symbolics of citizenship that critiques modernity but cannot be called "traditional." [*reindigenization, heritage, performativity, state-indigenous relations, politics of culture, cultural tourism, Colombia*]

In this article, we analyze an event that took place in southwestern Colombia on November 15, 2006, whose purpose was to resolve a conflict—some would say a crisis—that had already occasioned a series of complex confrontations and negotiations between multiple actors during the previous nine months. The event, a lunch and subsequent meeting attended by representatives of all the stakeholders and the public, constituted what Sally Falk Moore (1987:730) calls a "diagnostic event": one that reveals ongoing contests, conflicts, and competition as well as efforts to prevent, suppress, or repress such interactions. Stakeholders included vertically related institutions—regional, national, and international—as well as horizontally related local groups. At the event, members of a reindigenizing group known as Yanacona asserted and justified certain claims¹—related to the right to cut a vehicular road through part of a national archaeological park recently designated a UNESCO World Heritage site—by creatively combining discourses featuring a rural, marginalized, and traditional indigenous alterity with cosmopolitan heritage, environmentalist, and developmentalist discourses.

The Yanacona case speaks to several key issues in current research on Latin American multiculturalism, indigenous movements (in particular, territory and ancestral lands), heritage site management, governance and jurisdiction, and global-local interactions. Here, our main concern is with indigenous identity formation, in particular, how communities mobilize a language of indigeneity to push for their recognition and legitimacy. The case demonstrates Jane Cowan's insightful point that "being granted rights on the basis of having a culture and a cultural identity" can have "complex and contradictory consequences" (2006:18).

Conventional wisdom holds that, at any given time, some people are indigenous and some are not. Conventional wisdom also holds that an indigenous person (or community) can undergo a process of acculturation that may eventually call his or her indigeness into question. Reindigenization, which reverses this acculturative trajectory, occurs when people

who consider themselves to be descended from indigenous ancestors engage in a project to recover their indigenous culture and identity. Such projects may be celebrated or deplored, depending on local and national ideologies and politics.²

Colombian state functionaries, usually anthropologists, in the government agency charged with overseeing indigenous affairs (referred to here as the División de Asuntos Indígenas [DAI; Office of Indigenous Affairs]³) engage in performative actions that render some reindigenizing communities officially indigenous.⁴ (For a listing of acronyms that appear in this article, see Table 1.) This agency tends to reject claims of indigeneity, at least initially.⁵ As scholars such as Juliet Hooker (2005), Bettina Ng'weno (2007), and Peter Wade (2002a) have demonstrated for Afro-Colombian communities, a reindigenizing community will likely find it difficult to meet the ever-evolving requirements for proving that it has a distinct culture. Moreover, for the Yanacona and many other reindigenizing communities, securing official recognition is a necessary, although usually not a sufficient step, for achieving their goals—establishing a solid, uncontested indigenous identity can take considerable amounts of additional time and effort.

Although the San Agustín crisis ostensibly concerned an illegal incursion into a valuable piece of state-owned property, numerous other agendas clearly were in play. In part because the issue of reindigenization is complex and constantly evolving and in part because actors were multiple and conflicting in purpose, Yanacona indigeneity materialized “in an intricate dynamic among converging and competing agendas, visions, and interests” (de la Cadena and Starn 2007:12) that transpired at local, national, and global levels. The process revealed a complex and discordant state, illustrating the Foucauldian contention that the state is not a unitary center of power but an assemblage of institutions such as legislatures and judiciaries whose individual actors engage in discourses and practices of power, the multiple effects of which give the appearance of a state (see Abrams 1988; Aretxaga 2003:256, 261–263). Particularly because of an unstable notion of “indigeneity,” several significant contradictions internal to official discourses and practices concerned with indigenous policy were on view.

Agencies whose actions produced contradictions included the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, ICANH), the Ministry of Culture, the Office of National Patrimony, the Office of Ethnic and Minority Affairs, the Colombian Institute of Rural Development (Instituto Colombiano para el Desarrollo Rural; INCODER), and the National Police and army as well as other official institutions at the department and municipal levels.⁶

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, indigenous mobilizing occurred in many parts of Colombia (see Avirama and Márquez 1995; Gros 1991). Prior to this period, the state had ceded much of its responsibility for the nation's indigenous population, especially in remote areas, to the Catholic Church.⁷ However, during the 1980s the government's long-standing assimilationist policies began to give way to a vision of Colombia as a multiethnic and pluricultural nation, a vision that not only respected but also worked to maintain indigenous practices and customs (*usos y costumbres*). In response to these changes, nonindigenous organizations (including nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], certain government agencies, and some left-leaning sectors of the church) worked to develop programs to help the nation's indigenous communities (referred to here as *pueblos*, a word meaning both “peoples” and “communities” or “towns”) recover land, autonomy, and culture.

Responding to stepped-up land repossessions in the country's Andean regions and to demands that the land reform legislation passed in 1961 be implemented, in the late 1970s Colombia began handing over land, at times large tracts of it (in one case, the Predio Putumayo, five million hectares), to its pueblos. Today, pueblos collectively and inalienably own approximately 28 million fully demarcated hectares, over one-fourth of the national territory.⁸ However, 85 percent of this territory is found in the plains and tropical forest, and a continuing land shortage in the Andean region poses severe problems for pueblos located there. During the conflict described here, the issue of territory came up several times, even though the Yanacona stated they were seeking only a hectare of land and the vehicular access.

Table 1: List of Acronyms

CRIC	Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca)
CRIHU	Regional Indigenous Council of Huila (Consejo Regional Indígena del Huila)
DAI	Office of Indigenous Affairs (División de Asuntos Indígenas)
FARC	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia)
ICANH	Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia)
ICOMOS	International Council for Monuments and Sites
INCORA	Colombian Institute for Land Reform (Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria)
ONIC	Colombian National Indigenous Organization (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia)
ORIVAC	Regional Indigenous Organization of Valle del Cauca (Organización Regional Indígena de Valle del Cauca)
WHC	World Heritage Center (branch of UNESCO)

Although changes in both the legal status of the country's pueblos and mainstream society's perception of them (as well as pueblos' self-perception) had occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, the adoption of the 1991 Constitution can be seen as a watershed event in this process (Bonilla 2006; Borrero 2003; Laurent 2005; Sánchez et al. 1992, 1993; Van Cott 2000). This constitution is one of the most democratic of the charters that emerged in Latin America during the democratic transition of the 1980s and 1990s, and in indigenous matters the most radical (Sánchez et al. 1993). The constitutional reforms in the region challenged dominant imaginaries of the proper citizen as Spanish (or Portuguese) speaking, Catholic, and "modern." Intended to modernize the state and bring demobilized guerrilla armies into the political process, Colombia's 1991 Constitution acknowledged past abuses of the nation's ethnic groups and instituted several kinds of positive discrimination. For example, it established two seats in the Senate for indigenous legislators and a Constitutional Court, which has subsequently handed down some extremely significant rulings in favor of indigenous customary law (see Assies 2003; Jackson 2007; Laurent 2005; Padilla 1996; Sánchez 1998).

The transnational indigenous movement and its various allied NGOs have created a global indigenous rights discourse that is continually being incorporated and reworked at several levels,⁹ merging with preexisting local notions about indigeneity. Supporting Sally E. Merry's argument that the notion of "local" is "deeply problematic" (2006:39), the Yanacona case provides an instance of a transnational indigenous culture discourse penetrating into, and in turn being modified and transmitted out of, a very isolated and marginalized locale. Below we present examples of Yanacona articulating their ethnic identity in alignment with emergent reifications of diversity at these more inclusive levels.

Official multiculturalism (a set of institutionalized policies and practices that celebrate and work to protect ethnic and cultural diversity) opened up spaces for Colombia's citizens, indigenous and not, to rethink the state and to contest the parameters of government and other political institutions in novel ways. As opposed to an earlier official discourse that championed "universal and undifferentiated citizenship, shared national identity and equality before the law" (Sieder 2002:4–5), official multiculturalism resulted in some in the country acquiring the right to participate in civil society as ethnic citizens, which led to a consideration not only of what Colombian citizenship would consist of in the new era but also of how the identity of the state itself was being reformulated. To avail themselves of the special rights possessed by ethnic citizens, even well-recognized pueblos discovered the desirability of establishing and regularly reestablishing their legitimacy—legal and otherwise—through a rhetoric of cultural difference and continuity with a traditional past and place.¹⁰ Ensuring that

their leaders would be granted the authority to speak and would be listened to necessitated that pueblos engage in regular performances of their indigenous difference. Successful instantiations of these self-authenticating practices increasingly helped achieve political agendas such as titling a traditional collective land tenure system and strengthening national (multicultural, of course) belonging.¹¹ The advisability of using these strategies applies not only to Colombian pueblos; Nina Laurie et al. argue that the political culture within which indigenous struggles occur in Bolivia relies mostly on such representations of indigeneness "rather than on established criteria, self-determination and/or self-identification (in spite of what the legislation might suggest)" (2002:270). In sum, during the 1990s, many Colombian pueblos found that adopting an overall strategy of cultural and historical recovery and revival was crucial for achieving a degree of autonomy and self-determination as well as for convincing funders and legislators of the reasonableness of other kinds of claims.

The 1991 Constitution's characterization of an ethnic group is particularly important for the case at hand. It affirms that some of the country's citizens are indigenous, that the state "recognizes and protects the ethnic diversity of the nation," and that pueblo members possess certain rights as ethnic citizens that are not accorded to other citizens. But nowhere does it spell out how the state is to determine who is and is not indigenous. Most pertinent to our concern with reindigenization is the constitution's recognition of pueblos' rights to self-governance and autonomy "in accordance with their practices and customs (*usos y costumbres*)." Persuading the state to acknowledge the existence of a particular assemblage of unique and presumably traditional practices and customs has been the main route used by reindigenizing communities in their efforts to obtain state recognition and permission to constitute *cabildos*—the locally elected councils that govern the communities in accordance with their traditions.¹² Although some urban *cabildos* do not have *resguardos* (communally and inalienably owned indigenous territory, with distinct legal status),¹³ *cabildos* usually are formed with the assumption that, upon being recognized as officially indigenous, a community's request for land will have a significantly greater chance of being granted.

The criteria for evaluating a community's request to be recognized as officially indigenous have evolved in a highly dynamic fashion in response to changing government-indigenous relations and the overall multicultural zeitgeist. Interactions between indigenous leaders and state functionaries have periodically wrung concessions from the latter, which in turn have inspired activists to reframe their demands in novel, often more expansive ways, triggering retrenchment efforts on the part of the government.¹⁴ Since 2001, official recognition of indigeneity has required, first,

that a community organize a *cabildo*, indicating that its members see themselves as indigenous, and, second, that it petition local municipal authorities to publicly recognize the *cabildo*. The third step, recognition of the community as indigenous by the national DAI, requires an ethnographic study to verify that the community has “a common history as well as group cohesion, a deep-rooted affiliation with the ancestral territory, worldview, traditional medicine, kinship ties,” and a distinct value system that distinguishes it from the rest of the Colombian population (see Chaves and Zambrano 2006:16).¹⁵

Such solicitations increased after the passage of Law 60 in 1993, which enlarged indigenous authorities’ sphere of action with respect to obtaining economic resources from the state. One year after the law was passed, 80.4 percent of the country’s *resguardos* presented projects to be funded (Laurent 2005:342).¹⁶

The Yanacona case illustrates Cowan’s point that “the recent revision of political and legal structures to recognize ‘culture’ and ‘multiculturalism’ has its own transformative effects, shaping and at times creating that which it purports merely to recognize” (2006:17–18). Like all identities, indigeneity is a relationship, most often oppositional. Although Yanacona indigeneity is problematic, multidimensional, and overlaps with and intersects discourses of race, class, gender, and so on (see Wade 2002b:25), the indigenous–nonindigenous opposition took front stage during the San Agustín crisis. The Yanacona case provides an outstanding illustration of Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn’s argument that indigenous cultural practices, institutions, and politics become such “in articulation with what is not considered indigenous within the particular social formation where they exist . . . indigeneity has always involved enunciation, both conflicting and harmonizing, from indigenous and nonindigenous subject positions” (2007:4, 23). The case also illustrates Chaves’s point regarding the impossibility “of defining that which is indigenous as something not political, as well as the impossibility of defining the essentializations employed by the state as not ideological” (2003:134).

Neither of this article’s authors has carried out ethnographic fieldwork among the San Agustín Yanacona (to our knowledge, no one has). Ramírez had visited San Agustín in April 2006 and, being at the center of the conflict, learned a great deal over the course of that year. Jackson attended the November meeting as a guest of Ramírez and ICANH and played no official role during her two-day visit. We both consulted the extensive documentation on the case, and both have published on the relevant theoretical issues (Jackson 1989, 1995, 2007, in press; Jackson and Warren 2005; Ramírez 2002, in press). We believe the material we present in this article is adequate to the task we have set ourselves—an analysis of the November 15 meeting as a diagnostic event.¹⁷

We first briefly describe the nature of the conflict over the road, sketch in the larger national context, and provide more information about the *dramatis personae*. A précis of what transpired at the event comes next, followed by analysis and conclusions.

The conflict

On February 21, 2006, a group of 70 Yanacona Indians and some small-scale farmers (*campesinos*) began to cut an illegal road through the Predio La Estación (*predio* refers to a piece of land), part of the San Agustín Archaeological Park, located in the department of Huila in southern Colombia (see Figure 1). They also cleared adjacent land. In addition to property containing the community’s houses and fields, the Yanacona *resguardo* included land abutting the park, near the town of San Agustín.¹⁸ The new road directly connected this second plot of land, on which the Yanacona had established their *sede* (headquarters), with the state highway. Although work on the road stopped following the arrival of the park administrator and local police, it was resumed later that day. The next morning, more than 80 Yanacona and *campesinos* appeared and continued the work, finishing by the end of the day.¹⁹ Soon after the road’s completion, two trucks delivered a shipment of gravel to the *sede*.

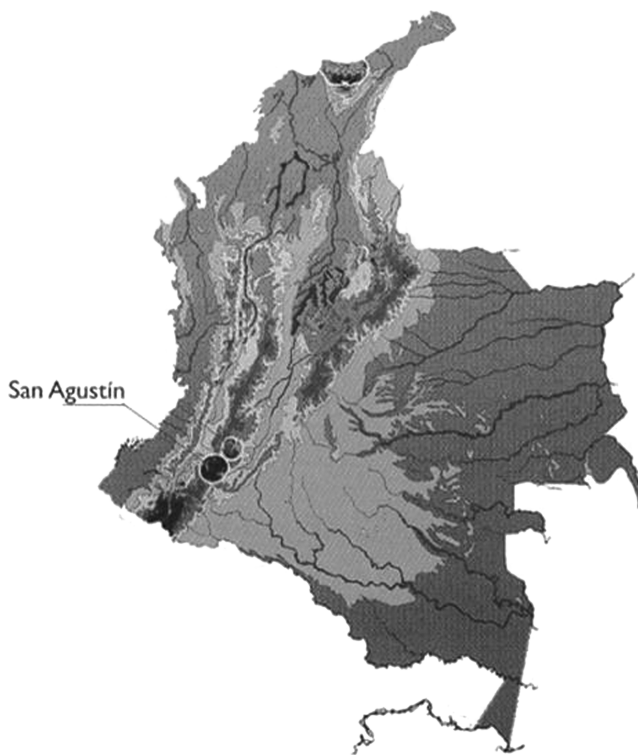


Figure 1. Map of Colombia showing location of San Agustín Archaeological Park.

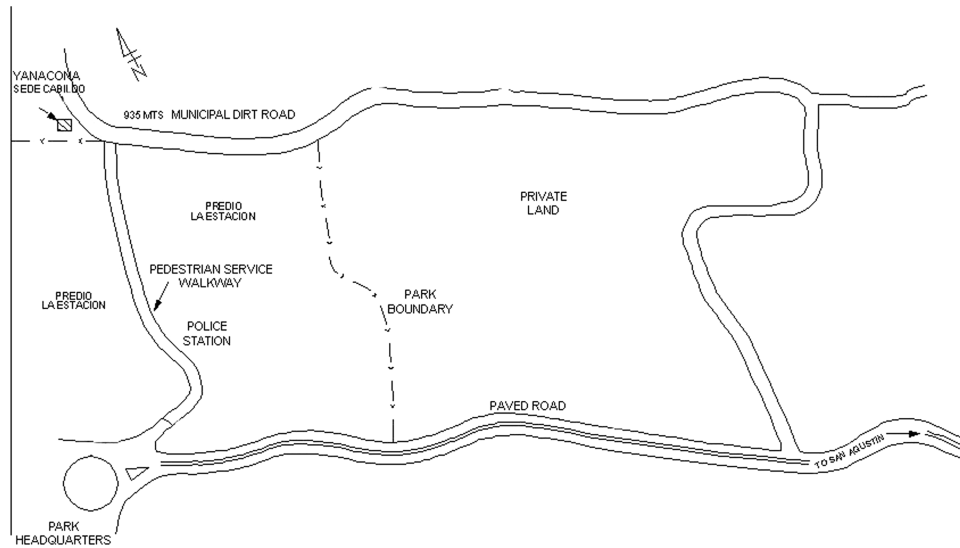


Figure 2. Location of Predio La Estación.

San Agustín Archaeological Park was established in 1935. The section of the park that subsequently came to be known as Predio La Estación (see Figure 2) had previously been under cultivation.²⁰ A National Police station had been built in the predio in 1974 during a period of fre-

quent confrontations in this section of Huila between state security forces and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces), the country's largest guerrilla army. The police station was abandoned in 1998. In 1995, UNESCO designated San Agustín Archaeological Park a World Heritage site (Patrimonio de la Humanidad), one of two sites in the country to have received this status. The World Heritage Center (WHC), headquartered in Paris, administers such sites in 185 countries. The park covers 78 hectares and contains evidence of human occupation spanning more than 3,000 years.

The Yanacona and their campesino allies justified their actions by pointing out that the road they cut greatly facilitated traffic between the state highway and the resguardo's sede (see Figure 3). The road was particularly necessary at that moment, the Yanacona said, because they were building a *maloka*,²¹ a communal structure that would be a center for teaching and, in the future, a Yanacona university. They were also constructing a "house of thought" (*casa de pensamiento*), a school for 64 community children, and a cockfight ring (the latter was not mentioned during the discussions about the road or in any of the related documents).

Yanacona complained that construction materials had to be brought in via a poorly maintained two-kilometer-long municipal dirt road that was steep in places, dangerous, and impassable in heavy rain. With the new road, the distance between the sede and the highway could be covered in five minutes (Silva 2006a). Yanacona and neighboring campesinos (who saw the road as helping them get their products to market) had decided to go ahead and construct the road without permission. For several years, they said, their leaders had unsuccessfully petitioned ICANH for

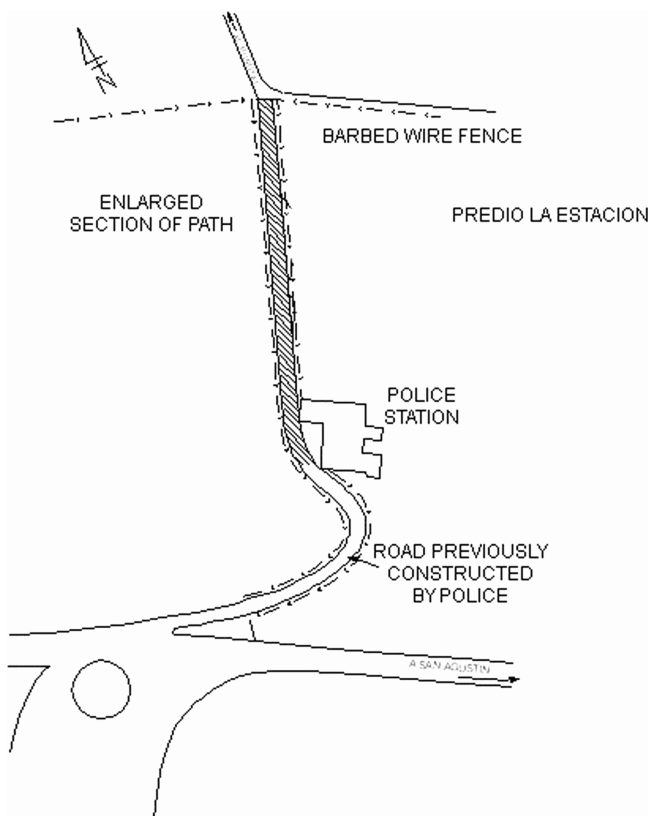


Figure 3. Affected area.

permission to turn the nearby abandoned police station into a cultural center. They envisioned this center as a place to make and sell crafts to park visitors and to teach them about Yanacona life. They had also requested a hectare of adjacent land to use for recreational purposes and for growing native food crops and medicinal plants. In a letter to ICANH written on December 5, 2005, Fredy Romeiro Chikangana, an advisor to the cabildo,²² pointed out that resguardo members had been requesting use of the police station for six years, during which time the station had deteriorated and become a danger to the community because people went there secretly to take drugs.

Ramírez had only recently assumed the directorship of ICANH and had been out of the country when the road was constructed. In a letter to the community, responding to the December 2005 request, she stated that the land on which the police station stood was protected as *patrimonio arqueológico* (national archaeological patrimony) and, furthermore, that only the National Police could decide what to do with the abandoned station.

Although, legally speaking, the Yanacona had no claim to that bit of territory, they clearly thought they might manage to get it. A February 12 letter from the cabildo's governor, Argemiro Omen, to the director of Municipal Justice states that the Yanacona were aware that the park is national patrimony but that Article 72 of the 1991 Constitution specifies that legal mechanisms are to be established for the purpose of regulating the special rights of ethnic groups living in archaeologically rich areas.

Various standoffs followed. On February 22, park administrator Alvaro Muñoz issued a *querrela verbal* (verbal suit) against Governor Omen and other Yanacona officials. In it, Muñoz complains that, when he informed the Yanacona and allied campesinos that their actions were illegal, they "acted in a very belligerent manner, saying 'we will leave here only as corpses.'" That same day, when park employees began constructing fences and replacing the barbed wire in the disputed area, they were impeded by Yanacona, including children. The police did not intervene. And although army personnel were present, "they said they could not do anything, as they had not received orders."

Then, on February 27, Alvaro Osorio, the coordinator for all the country's archaeological parks, carried out an examination to assess the damage from the road building and to evaluate the remaining archaeological potential of the area. Previous archaeological excavations there had unearthed house sites from various historical periods as well as the remains of a large structure (nine meters in diameter), which had probably served as a ceremonial center from C.E. 900 to 1300 (Gómez and Cubillos 1981). In a letter to ICANH, Osorio reported on the damage, noting that the Yanacona, having cleaned the vegetation from the predio, were now envisioning it as a soccer field for their children and as a site for an orchard. Townspeople were afraid,

he continued, that if ICANH gave in to the Yanacona, they would continue to invade not only public but also private land.²³ Townspeople were also worried that UNESCO might revoke the park's status as a World Heritage site.

Also on February 27, the press and radio and television stations interviewed Ramírez about the incursion (see Silva 2006b). The next day, Osorio's work was interrupted by Yanacona and campesinos, who covered over the trenches he had dug during his archaeological examination. Also, someone drove a Nissan vehicle belonging to the cabildo governor over the road and knocked down barbed-wire fences that had been installed to prevent further work on the road. One television report about the incident showed photographs of fallen statues as well as a backhoe loader, giving an impression of far greater damage than had actually taken place. The following day, Yanacona representatives, having seen the news broadcast, marched to park headquarters, cancelled a scheduled meeting with ICANH representatives, and demanded an explanation. They blamed ICANH for the misrepresentation, even though the agency had neither provided nor authorized the use of the photographs. Yanacona leaders told Ramírez that they would call off negotiations if such scurrilous accounts were not corrected. Ramírez asked journalists from the national daily *El Tiempo* and the TV station covering the story to interview Yanacona leaders, which they did. Clips of the interviews were broadcast the night of February 29, and negotiations subsequently continued. This unfortunate incident greatly increased Yanacona suspicions, and from then on, a major aim of ICANH staff was to increase Yanacona trust and improve relations in general.

On February 28, buses belonging to a private transportation company traveled the road, which resulted in an indictment against the company. María Ester Rivera, administrative subdirector of ICANH, wrote the National Police requesting authorization to tear down the police station, which was granted, and the building was razed. Two days later, participants in the conflict met and agreed that work on the road would cease.

A meeting was convened on March 2, attended by representatives from the church, the cabildo, various municipal offices, the police, and San Agustín park. Explaining the Yanacona position, Dídimo Astudillo said,

We've sent reports explaining our point of view, giving the reasons why we wanted to construct the road. . . . We haven't been listened to nor have we received any response. There aren't any statues there, it's only weeds. . . . We felt bad hearing the accusation saying that we destroyed statues and that we used heavy machinery to construct the road, when it isn't so.

Yanacona attendees also complained about how townspeople treated them: "We make propositions, but

unfortunately we aren't listened to. At a previous meeting the council president didn't even let us enter the council room—this is the first time we've been allowed in. We are taking legal avenues here because we hope to avoid conflict." Jair Quinayas, a former cabildo governor, added, "I'm happy to be here, for this is the first time we are able to be present in the council room . . . we now feel that we belong to this municipality. The previous mayor once even had the police kick me out. Well, they nominated some representatives and didn't take us into account." Quinayas also mentioned the newspaper and TV stories, stressing that Yanacona had never damaged any statues. A municipal councilor and a representative of the local coffee growers association then defended the road construction, saying the campesinos needed it.

The following days were filled with considerable tension. Workers began to build stairs below the station ruins where an already existing pedestrian service road meets the highway. Osorio wrote to Ramírez, commenting that "the mayor hasn't begun work [on the municipal dirt road] for fear of an armed strike."²⁴ Muñoz also wrote a letter complaining that his life had been threatened; Omen had said to him, "Guard your life, Don Alvaro, because you are against us and there is risk, so guard your life."

A March 21 meeting of the Municipal Council had barely begun when news came that, once again, Yanacona and their campesino allies were destroying the fences and covering over the stairs that workers had begun to build. Osorio, Muñoz, the mayor, and other town officials went to the sede. Osorio later wrote that when attempts were made to stop the destruction, Yanacona adolescent girls "armed with bastones de mando [staves of office], made a fence, while the adults continued to work." Some of them spoke to the mayor "in a loud and aggressive voice." Osorio immediately contacted the National Police. Although the park police were already there, he wrote, what could five men do against more than 80 people? Within the hour, 60 antiriot police arrived, "which caused a profound impact. The newcomers initially were booed, but upon seeing them get down from the two trucks, the adults went to the cabildo, with only the girls remaining. The National Police cordoned off the place, and the belligerent mood decreased substantially." A few Yanacona leaders went to the park headquarters to talk with administrators there. Town and park officials began to discuss possible alternative routes that would provide access from the sede to the highway, perhaps through private, rather than state, territory.

ICANH began designing a pedestrian road (see Figure 4) that would encourage park visitors to visit the sede and perhaps buy Yanacona crafts. Should the Yanacona impede this construction, Ramírez wrote in a memo, the park would be shut down "until the situation normalizes." The tension increased. In a letter written in late March to Ramírez, Benjamin Vinasco, secretary of culture

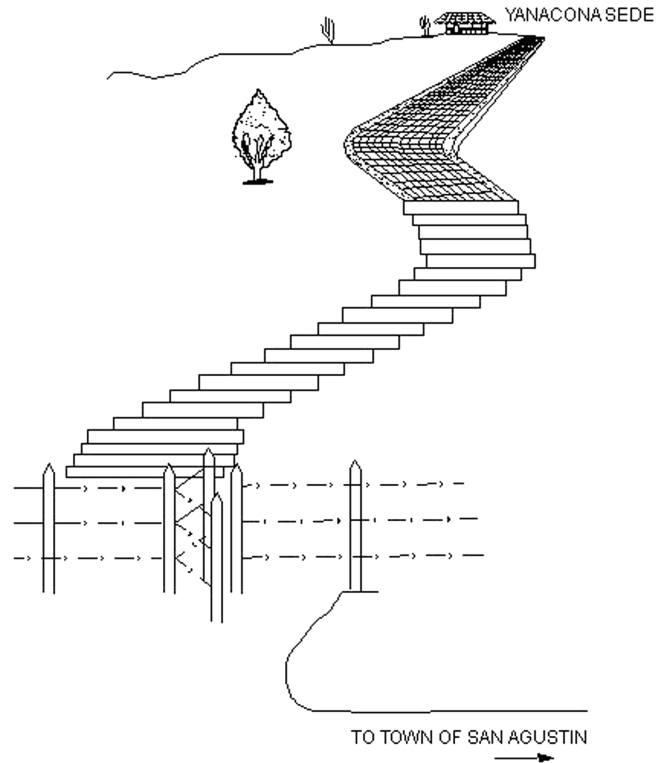


Figure 4. Proposed pedestrian walkway.

and tourism for the department of Huila, begged her to maintain a "low profile" with respect to giving information to the press, because ICANH's threat to close the park had generated minor outbreaks and "ethnic confrontations."

Ramírez rescinded this threat during the April 4 meeting at the Yanacona sede. This meeting was characterized by a substantial amount of hostility on the part of the Yanacona attendees and their allies—which included representatives from ONIC, the Regional Indigenous Council of Huila (CRIHU), and the Regional Indigenous Organization of Valle del Cauca (ORIVAC). The Yanacona had prepared a list of people who could attend, and their guards (*guardia*) prevented those not on the list from entering. Yanacona leaders and town authorities began shouting at each other. Ramírez finally had to mediate what was turning into a melee. A representative from the Huila governor's office reminded everyone that "hurling serious insults at our fellow townspeople and countrymen" is a kind of violence and that everyone should search for a solution. "I don't understand how this rivalry can exist within a community that has worked so hard for so many years, as has San Agustín." Yanacona authorities and the representatives from indigenous organizations mounted a fierce critique of official decision making up to that point. At the end of the meeting, an act of agreement was signed in which all parties agreed to refrain from further activity until WHC specialists visited the park.

On May 5, Elvira Cuervo, the minister of culture, wrote a letter to the director of WHC requesting a technical examination of the site, and Nuria Sanz Gallego, the WHC official in charge of Latin America and the Caribbean, scheduled a trip. WHC also arranged to send Carolina Castellanos, an independent consultant from the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which provides technical expertise to archeologists and architects about the condition of monuments, buildings, and sites.²⁵

On October 12, Columbus Day, Yanacona and their allies once again occupied the predio, but only for a day, a symbolic act to remind everyone of the April 4 agreements. An "Act of Agreement and Promise" (Acta de Acuerdo y Compromiso) was signed at the end of the day, opening the road to pedestrian and horse traffic.²⁶

The larger context

The 1960s and 1970s were highly conflictive years for many of Colombia's pueblos. In Cauca (the department to the west of Huila), after passage of the 1961 land reform law (Roldán 2000), carefully orchestrated takeovers of "landlord haciendas" (whose fields were being cultivated by indigenous tenant farmers) began in earnest. Significant amounts of land that had been illegally taken from the pueblos during earlier periods were repossessed. The pueblos that initially engaged in these battles were predominantly Nasa (also known as Páez) and Coconuco, with Guambianos subsequently joining in (see Field 1996; Rappaport 1990, 2005; van de Sandt 2007, Vasco 2002). These actions were supported by nonindigenous allies, including left-leaning lawyers, peasant organizations, and anthropologists (see Gros 1991; Jimeno and Triana 1985). The nation's first indigenous organization, CRIC, emerged from these struggles in 1971.²⁷

The Yanacona pueblo

Most Yanacona inhabit the department of Cauca's Colombian Massif,²⁸ where the Central Cordillera mountain range and the Magdalena, Caquetá, Cauca, and Patía rivers begin.²⁹ Yanacona were among the first pueblos to reindigenize, a process that began in the 1970s.³⁰ All of these early efforts were motivated by a need to forcefully defend collective land rights.

The name and origins of the Yanacona are complex issues, and space does not permit a comprehensive discussion. In 1990, an important leader in the indigenous movement, Juan Gregorio Palechor (see Jimeno 2006), a member of the group of communities that would become known as Yanacona but at that time were known simply as "indigenous communities of the Macizo" (Zambrano 2000:207), applied the name Yanacona to the group. He found this term in a 1944 publication by Juan Friede, an ethnohistorian-archaeologist working in the region, who

had "obtained this name from the archives of the colonial city of Almaguer" (Zambrano 2000:213). Carlos Vladimir Zambrano, an anthropologist who helped the Cauca Yanacona in their reindigenization efforts, says these communities definitely saw themselves as indigenous but previously had had no "interest in naming themselves or defining themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group" (2000:205). But by the late 1980s, "Yanaconization" was well under way, and adopting the ethnonym was one of several efforts by the communities to eliminate their "invisibility." The meaning of the term had shifted radically. In Incaic times, *yanacona*, a Quechua word meaning "servitor," was applied to "a servant class of full-time retainers alienated from local ayllus and communities" (Stern 1982:22; also see Salomon 1986).³¹ The entire process provides a superb illustration of Tania Murray Li's point that "a group's self-identification as tribal or indigenous is not natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is, rather, a *positioning* that draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle" (2000:151).

In a publication that critically analyzes the role of academic archaeology and history during the 1990s, when "Yanaconaness" (*lo Yanacona, Yanaconidad*) was being constructed (as well as when the groups in question were transforming into a "political community"),³² Zambrano sarcastically describes the various debates that took place in seminars and workshops: "Are they or are they not Indians? Are they or are they not Yanaconas? Did they, or did they not come from Peru? Did they or did they not speak Quechua? Do they or do they not have a right to their lands?" (2000:208)³³ More pertinent to our concerns is Zambrano's comment that, if the Yanacona suggest they have links with San Agustín, "archaeologists or historians can either deny or confirm it" (2000:213). In earlier publications, Zambrano finesses the links between the present-day population bearing the name Yanacona and earlier ones: "Long before the arrival of the Spaniards a human settlement existed in [several zones are listed], who were presumably Quechua speakers" (1995:127). And, "It's the voice of the Yanacona pueblo, which after 3,000 years of silence and invisibility authoritatively informs us about its own horizon" (Zambrano 1993:21).

Although the communities that adopted the name Yanacona had obtained title in the 1980s and 1990s to four of their traditional colonial resguardos, and, subsequently, recognition of their cabildos, it was not until the 2001 national census that they were listed as a pueblo, began to appear on maps, and began to receive assistance from governmental agencies and NGOs (Zambrano 2000:206). Neighboring indigenous communities also initially snubbed them as a pueblo. When the highest-ranking Yanacona cabildo (the *cabildo mayor*, which serves as the

overall authority) asked CRIC to recognize the Yanacona as a pueblo, it first refused but reversed its position in 1997. Examples can be found in other parts of Colombia of well-established pueblos refusing to recognize recently reindigenized ones (see Chaves 2003).³⁴

The families making up the San Agustín Yanacona had wanted to move from their Cauca homes because of an acute land shortage. When they petitioned INCORA to relocate them, the agency had originally planned to move them to the distant department of Arauca in the northeast part of the country. But following vigorous protests, INCORA asked the governor of Huila if he could help with resettlement. The families received the land they presently own in that department on December 27, 2000. However, this transfer did not include their official recognition as indigenous. At the November 15, 2006, meeting, Yanacona described how the government had “made things very difficult for us.” Their new territory was designated a resguardo on September 24, 2001, and in 2002 they received additional land.

A substantial number of people of Yanacona descent had already been living in the San Agustín area. Following the establishment of the cabildo and resguardo, San Agustín townspeople bearing Yanacona last names were invited to join the Yanacona pueblo.³⁵ We were told by a town resident with one of these last names (Astudillo), who had not joined (because he considered the whole thing foolish—he did not believe resguardo members were “really” indigenous), that various families had declined the offer and that others had joined but subsequently left the pueblo.

The role of anthropologists

As in the case of Zambrano, Colombian anthropologists have often played substantial roles in the reindigenizing process. Other anthropologists are employees in the government bureaus that deal with the petitions submitted by would-be indigenous communities—whose consideration, as we have described, is often a drawn-out affair because the state tends to discount such claims. During the last three decades of the 20th century, several communities, whose members were of indigenous descent but who had lost most of their indigenous identity, became reindigenized and were officially recognized, usually with the help of anthropologists.³⁶ The relationship between anthropology and the Yanacona pueblo is especially complex. Zambrano, an ICANH anthropologist, and his students carried out fieldwork among the Yanacona, championed their recovery efforts, and published essays about Yanacona culture. A booklet about the San Agustín resguardo (*Resguardo Yanacona de San Agustín* n.d.), which grew out of workshops held at the sede in 2003 and 2004 and was intended to fortify resguardo members’ ability to express themselves artistically and culturally, employs a “trait list” no-

tion of culture and cites publications by Zambrano and his students.

Municipality of San Agustín

Various documents related to the crisis refer to bad faith between townspeople and the cabildo. For example, the minutes of a March 10 meeting in Bogotá at the Council for National Monuments acknowledge the problem: “For seven years Yanaconas have experienced social conflicts with the inhabitants of San Agustín, who do not recognize them as belonging to the place.” The minutes also refer to another issue: Constitutional guarantees of indigenous rights have the potential to create friction. “Pueblos are protected by legal regulations that confer autonomy, allowing them to govern themselves, and so the Yanacona do not recognize the authority of the municipal administration.” By 2006, several specific disagreements between the municipality and the resguardo had arisen. One source of contention was illicit drugs: A town official told us that when he discovered a very large marijuana plant in front of a Yanacona house, the homeowners showed great surprise. Claiming they had not known what it was, they chopped it down with great ceremony. The same town official sardonically commented that the cabildo governor himself owned a one-hectare field of the stuff and that hippie types would come to town asking, “Where were the Indians selling marijuana?” Another problem stemmed from the location of the land the governor of Huila had assigned to the San Agustín Yanacona: at the source of the town’s water supply, which resulted in polluted water flowing into the town. A third issue was townspeople’s discontent with the leniency of the punishment meted out on occasion by the cabildo to pueblo members who had engaged in illegal acts. The 1991 Constitution grants cabildos the right to manage their communities’ internal affairs, including the authority to define violations and punish perpetrators in accordance with their practices and customs. A fourth source of resentment had to do with funds the resguardo was receiving directly from the government, funds unavailable to the town.³⁷ Finally, townspeople resented the Bogotá-based NGO Fundación Indígena Sol y Serpiente de América (American Indigenous Foundation Sun and Serpent), run by Chikangana. They took exception to its policy of seeking funding exclusively for resguardo projects and envied its success in obtaining financial support from the Netherlands, amply evident in all the construction taking place at the sede.

A complaint we heard several times during our visit, always out of earshot of Yanacona, was that they were not “authentic.” One town official used the word *artificial* to describe their culture recovery project and said the request for recognition of their cabildo had been politically and economically motivated. Because they had reindigenized themselves enough to be able to obtain land, have

it subsequently designated a *resguardo*, and have their *cabildo* recognized by the state, he said, “they are not going to admit that they don’t have a culture.”

UNESCO’s World Heritage Center

The type of problem faced by WHC at San Agustín was by no means unique. WHC’s policy regarding proposals from communities abutting its sites had, until recently, been to firmly reject those that in any way compromised the monuments and parks under its supervision. But WHC had begun to rethink this policy, revising its goals to include projects intended to convince local communities that they were important stakeholders in the fate of World Heritage sites, to educate them about the sites’ importance, and to foster pride that sites in their country had been so designated. The new policy is designed to ensure that interactions are structured in terms of an ongoing relationship characterized by two-way conversations—to treat local communities as more than simply potential sources of labor.

ONIC and other indigenous organizations

ONIC is often contacted when problems involving *pueblos* and nonindigenous parties arise, and members of its executive board—often the president—travel to conflict-ridden places to attend meetings and troubleshoot in other ways. As already noted, representatives from ONIC, CRIHU, and ORIVAC had attended the April 4 meeting. Although, overall, the part played by ONIC and CRIHU was slight, it nonetheless is noteworthy, as “indigenous versus non-indigenous” is one way to read the conflict’s discursive framework. A “speaking truth to power” discourse appears in the documents, linking current problems to past abuses. The documents reflect the politics and modalities of engagement frequently deployed by regional and national indigenous organizations such as CRIC and ONIC.

The complex relationship between indigenous organizations, the state, and Colombian anthropology is another important component of a conflict that can also be read as “indigenous versus anthropology.” Interactions between anthropology and indigenous organizations (local, regional, and national) are often complicated and sometimes difficult. Although milder and less frequent than the indigenous criticism of anthropologists in the United States and Canada, such criticism regularly surfaces in Colombia. All legally recognized organizations are required to have *asesores* (consultants, advisors) who do not belong to those organizations. In the case of indigenous organizations, such *asesores* have almost always been nonindigenous, for the most part lawyers or anthropologists. As noted above, many graduates with degrees in anthropology take jobs in government agencies charged with managing the nation’s indigenous communities. Finally, a not inconsequential num-

ber of indigenous activists have received anthropology degrees, among them, Chikangana, who had been a classmate of Ramírez in a seminar.

The event

Upon arriving at the town of San Agustín, the ICANH delegation (Ramírez, Castellanos from ICOMOS, ICANH archaeologist Margarita Reyes, WHC official Sanz, and Jackson) was taken to park headquarters, where we met with Governor Omen, Astudillo, and Chikangana. Sanz described some of the logistics of the process of evaluation that would ensue: The meeting that day would begin a bureaucratic process that would take until the following June to reach a decision. She also said that the problem that had brought her to San Agustín was not unique, for UNESCO was dealing with 30 similar cases, and the organization had come to realize that it needed to formulate new policies for managing relationships with neighboring communities of World Heritage sites. San Agustín would be one of the first sites to seriously take cultural and social rights into consideration, and for this reason WHC wanted to proceed carefully, because precedents would be established.

During this preliminary meeting and the one that followed, Yanacona officials were far more conciliatory than they had been at the April 4 meeting. Governor Omen told the ICANH delegation that it was important to conserve the good will resulting from the delegation’s presence, for the arrival of authorities from other countries demonstrated that, in contrast to previous administrations, ICANH was finally attending to Yanacona petitions: “We want you to listen and avoid the errors of past administrations.” We were invited to lunch: “Come, three hundred people are waiting.”

We were taken to the *sede*, where a large group of Yanacona, *campesinos*, and town officials were assembled. After lunch and the reading of the agenda, a Yanacona man picked up a small pot, suspended on a chain that contained

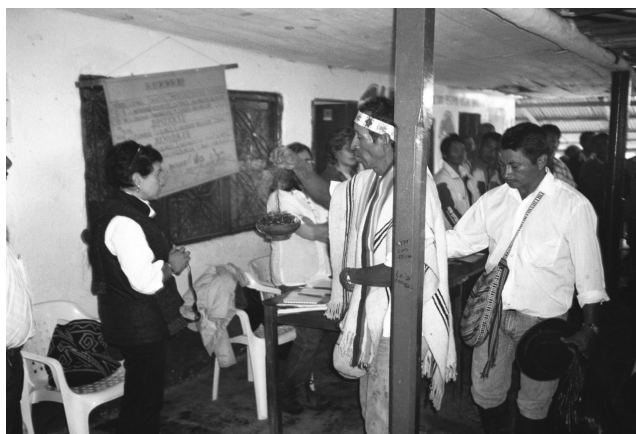


Figure 5. Opening ritual. Photo by J. Jackson.



Figure 6. Yanacona musicians. Photo by J. Jackson.

burning coca and copal; swinging it, he walked around the periphery of the room, followed by a second man sprinkling perfumed water from a plastic mustard dispenser (see Figure 5). Then eight musicians played the Colombian national anthem, the Yanacona anthem, and Yanacona traditional music (see Figure 6). A kind of master of ceremonies then gave a brief history of the *resguardo*. Speaking of the migration from Cauca, he mentioned that “the spirits were jealous at our crossing the *páramo*” (the mountainous region between Yanacona territory in Cauca and San Agustín). But

we maintained and reconstructed our *usos y costumbres*. With our governor we came, working, and our spirits, our gods, came with us and sustained us. We also have our traditional medicine and know how to conserve our lands. We aren't recent arrivals (*no somos de ahora*), we have existed for 5,000 years. But we had to move, as there was no land. We, the indigenous people, are living!

He also provided additional history, suggesting that Yanacona had, in fact, in olden times (*antiguamente*) lived near the territory now comprising the park. They needed a vehicular road, he said, because their current construction projects were well underway. He also tried to reassure non-indigenous participants about Yanacona intentions with respect to the park: “We want to help administer this area, but there's been a misunderstanding; we *do not* want to be the owners.” He presented a petition from the *cabildo*, which was read aloud by Ramírez:

ever since the park was established thirty years ago [it was, in fact, established in 1935] the area known as Predio La Estación has been very neglected. With the police station came trenches and military practices; for example, the area was used as a heliport. All of this was constructed with heavy machinery. Knowing that there already was a road, we decided to fix it. We only used

picks and shovels, not heavy machinery as some have claimed. We worked to enclose and protect the territory, work that should be done by ICANH, but which we have carried out as a form of celebrating our spirit of cooperation. The place was abandoned and represented a danger to the community because people went there to engage in improper activities.

The petition proposed that (1) the road stay open and be kept clean; (2) the Yanacona be in charge of cleaning up the site, especially the part previously occupied by the National Police; (3) the road and site be carefully maintained so as to discourage those who would use the space for unlawful activities; and (4) medicinal and aromatic plants be planted, which would benefit the general community and be agriculturally and ecologically attractive to tourists. It ended by pointing out that Yanacona were working to strengthen their cultural and educational institutions to preserve traditional medicine and “our own ceremonial activities; therefore it is important to provide harmony to these areas, to ensure security and tranquility for the community, our children, and tourism in general.”

This petition was followed by one from the *campesinos*, presented by President Silva of the Communal Action board and signed by four section (*vereda*) presidents and 113 members. It described the problems the municipal dirt road presented, especially during the rainy season, and noted that serious accidents had occurred. The poor condition of the road had negatively affected *campesinos*' ability to carry out their own necessary cultural, religious, educational, and commercial activities. They depended on these activities

to promote our own development. We have been soliciting [help] for more than twenty years, and we don't understand why [this is such an issue], given that part of the road we built was already a pedestrian service road used by everyone. This zone has already been excavated by different administrations with heavy machinery, so we don't accept that it might be virgin [i.e., an untouched archaeological site]. No monuments have been found in this section of the park, and even if there had been some archaeological vestige, by now it would have been destroyed.

Ramírez then spoke, first discussing the requirements that World Heritage sites must meet, then describing a plan ICANH had drawn up for a pedestrian path (see Figure 4), which would achieve some Yanacona goals. She reminded everyone that prior requests to ICANH had not been about constructing a road but about turning the police station into a cultural center. And, she continued, although the police had abandoned their station, ICANH could not approve a vehicular road that ran through park territory because, once again, the park is a World Heritage site. Furthermore, ICANH was not competent to deal with vehicular roads,

which are the responsibility of the municipal administration. She then reminded those in attendance that the area in question had been inhabited for over 3,000 years and that archaeological remains were present: dwellings, a ceremonial center, and a funerary site. She ended by conceding that, in her opinion, ICANH should indeed be faulted for not having responded to previous requests and that new policies should be developed regarding the relationships between the various national institutions in charge of the country's archaeological sites and the communities adjacent to them.

Sanz spoke next. She first pointed out that everyone present had an investment in the park, and she welcomed the rare opportunity to meet and discuss the issues. She mentioned numerous times that San Agustín was a sanctuary—not just a park of great natural beauty or an important historical site, and so, “as members of a resguardo, you need to save this sanctuary. We are very lucky here, because you are citizens of a multiethnic and pluricultural nation. There are very few localities of similar value. San Agustín is more than an exceptional archaeological site; there are great possibilities here, because it contains cultural and social capital for the residents.” The luck, she said, consisted of having been able to avoid falling into a situation of uncontrolled development. Machu Picchu was the best example of such a situation:

Because they are permitting 5,000 visitors a day, there is nothing there for the neighboring communities as communities, even though some families have prospered. It has now become so commercialized and big that the objects for sale to the tourists come from the exterior, and local inhabitants are a source of labor, nothing more. This kind of process is intensifying in many areas of the world. So, there is still time, we can save this sanctuary.

Castellanos then described the technical role she was playing and echoed, “Our main interest is in preserving this sanctuary for the future.”

Questions and answers followed. Tirso Polanco, the recently appointed park administrator, who had previously contracted with ICANH to work with the communities abutting the park, described how an upcoming celebration of the park's 11th anniversary as a World Heritage site would inaugurate “a new era.” There would be a parade and free guided tours of the park. He was followed by ICANH archaeologist Reyes, who described a large cake that would be provided by the mayor's office. It would symbolize San Agustín culture and, when eaten by all, “we will be symbolically taking in our culture . . . so that you will love your park.”

Various Yanacona and campesinos spoke, requesting that more studies be carried out before deciding against a vehicular road and urging the townspeople and the resguardo to work toward a more amicable relationship. One

commentator noted that, despite the 11 years of World Heritage designation, no benefits had gone to the indigenous and campesino sectors bordering the park. He was right: Although the town of San Agustín had benefited substantially from the park through craft sales and patronage of restaurants and hotels, the abutting veredas had not profited in any way.³⁸

In the meantime, Ramírez said, the road would remain a pedestrian path—which occasioned several complaints from campesinos about having been ignored and about the difficulty of transporting cargo economically. Repair of the municipal dirt road, still not undertaken, was mentioned over and over.

Chikangana then said that, whereas the campesinos wanted a vehicular road, the Yanacona would accept a pedestrian path. “We are aware of the [importance of] national patrimony. We have a little time. I'd say to ICANH, let's make sure what has happened in other places won't occur here.” Governor Omen confirmed Chikangana's statement: “Vehicles will be prohibited, cars and motorcycles. People and horses can pass.”

Ramírez then spoke about going forward together and undertaking shared projects. She would meet with the mayor and Polanco, who would take office on February 1. (Muñoz had been asked to resign, following discovery that his heretofore unknown ambitions to run for mayor of San Agustín had significantly influenced the manner in which he had handled the conflict.)

After the meeting had ended, Chikangana said, “We lost a bit but we gained a bit.” An e-mail he sent Sanz the following day speaks of the “Indigenous Yanacona Community of the Sanctuary of San Agustín.”³⁹ Chikangana's decision to abandon the resguardo's campesino allies would seem to indicate a shift to a more accommodating strategy. The following week, he visited Ramírez in Bogotá and proposed a deal: If she would permit use of the road to transport the large posts for the maloka construction, he would help persuade the campesinos to accept the pedestrian road. She gave permission for the work to be done in the very early predawn hours.

Analysis

The San Agustín conflict illustrates many of the issues that can arise when indigenous communities mobilize to contest the state in some way. Throughout Latin America, *tomas* (occupations) and *bloqueos* (blockades) are well-established weapons often deployed during indigenous and popular-sector protests (see Jackson 2002; Ramírez 2001; Sawyer 2004). Referred to by Doug Adams and colleagues (2001) as “repertoires of contention” (see also Wolff 2007:17), takeovers, blockades, strikes, and mass marches pressure governments to enter into negotiations over demands previously ignored. In several ways, the Yanacona

incursion represents a classic case of this kind of “participatory democracy.” Osorio’s description of rumors circulating about an “armed strike” provides an example of the power of such tactics, even when they are merely threats: Groups at the “margin of the law,” Osorio wrote, especially members of the transportation union, were saying that on February 28 at midnight, an armed strike throughout the south of Huila would begin, “a situation that would complicate the ability of any official ICANH commission to get to San Agustín.”

The success of these forms of protest depends on how such actions resonate with the larger public. In the Yanacona case, there is evidence of approval and guidance from certain quarters—for example, from ONIC, CRIHU, and ORIVAC. Support also came from several townspeople, such as the municipal councilor who stated, soon after the incursion, that the Yanacona had a “just cause” because the road would help “develop the sector.”⁴⁰ However, Yanacona strategies for garnering support from other sectors backfired. Fears about damage—to the park and to the nation—and about threats to townspeople’s livelihoods (fears that ICANH would close down the park or that UNESCO would rescind the World Heritage site status) trumped Yanacona counterdiscourses about “cleaning” “protecting,” “reforesting,” and “beautifying” the predio for the good of all.

Cauca Yanacona had faced multiple problems during their reindigenization,⁴¹ and the San Agustín Yanacona, because of their relatively recent arrival and isolation from other Yanacona communities, faced additional ones. The bedrock of ethnic claims is composed of “blood and soil” arguments. Both Cauca and San Agustín Yanacona have had to work hard at dispelling, or at least lessening, doubts about their indigeness. But Cauca Yanacona did have title to four traditional colonial resguardos, whereas San Agustín Yanacona, struggling with a double invisibility, could not even claim long-term residence in a homeland. And their only “blood” claim in their new home was the Yanacona last names possessed by some of the local families.

One strategy aimed at addressing these problems involved verbal assertions of indigeneity. San Agustín Yanacona discourse not only spoke of the group’s pre-Columbian roots in general but it also claimed kinship ties with the ancient San Agustín communities that had produced the stunning archaeological objects—an origin also favored by some Cauca Yanacona (Zambrano 2000:213). During the April 4 meeting, Chikangana reminded San Agustín townspeople that some among them were *guatequeros*, plunderers of archaeological sites. Present-day indigenous people were the inheritors of these sites, he continued; Yanacona, being indigenous, were thereby descendants of the ancestors who had built the ancient communities and, hence, were the natural guardians of the park. Moreover, they had never plundered anything. A townsman retorted

that, as he had been born in San Agustín, he was a real native, unlike the Johnny-come-lately Yanacona. Also during the April 4 meeting, after commenting on “the great difficulty many mayors have acknowledging that indigenous people exist,” the CRIHU representative stated that all indigenous people needed to return to their ancestral territory, just as the Yanacona had returned to San Agustín, “because they were the original, autochthonous people. San Agustín park is a historical patrimony for all of humanity, which is very nice, but where in the park do we find acknowledgment of San Agustín’s indigenous creators? We are the great protagonists in these spaces, our roots are here.”

Chikangana expanded on the CRIHU representative’s point: “When UNESCO speaks of material patrimony, immaterial patrimony [should also be] included, which involves customs, traditions, values.” Present-day pueblos are also part of the nation’s patrimony, he argued, and have special rights with respect to the park and similar patrimony.⁴²

At one point in the November 15 meeting, Chikangana described the great respect *resguardo* members had for their antecedents (*antepasados*) who had inhabited park lands; being indigenous themselves, he said, were they to do something that showed disrespect for those lands would be a terrible shame. This reasoning—because they are indigenous, they have a special investment in “conserving and being guardians of the nation’s cultural patrimony”—not only supports Yanacona claims regarding the disposition of Predio La Estación but it also, albeit somewhat circularly, bolsters their claim to indigeneity.

A second strategy involved convincingly demonstrating Yanacona indigeness in other ways, at times performing it. The 2003 workshop (and resulting booklet, *Resguardo Yanacona de San Agustín*) is one example, the display of Yanacona staffs of office another. Prominently exhibited on a table during the November 15 meeting, these staffs were deployed during the incursions on March 21, when, armed with them, Yanacona adolescent girls confronted two truckloads of antiriot police. In many parts of Colombia, staffs of office are iconic emblems of indigenous authority, in particular of self-determination and autonomy. Throughout Cauca, such staffs are carried by Nasa community volunteers known as the Guardia Indígena (Indigenous Civic Guard), which currently numbers some seven thousand men and women (Rappaport 2003:40–41). A traditional institution, the guardia is currently deployed to confront armed actors (guerrillas, paramilitaries, and the army) and defend human rights. This form of pacific civil resistance has occasioned very favorable commentary nationwide; for example, guardia members displaying these staffs have regularly appeared in the national media (see, e.g., Mercado 1993; Valencia 2001).

A third strategy was to appeal to shared interests. During the April 4 meeting, Astudillo argued that townspeople should not resent and discredit the Yanacona and their

projects because the entire community stood to benefit if they achieved their goals:

When we have recovered everything from the ancestors, when the tourists visit us here in the resguardo, by showing them all the culture we have, not only will they come to buy crafts and attend our ceremonies, they will also spend money in the town—we Yanacona don't have restaurants or hotels, we don't have anything. This way the town will benefit as a consequence of our activities.

A fourth strategy was to enlist the developmentalist,⁴³ environmentalist, and anticolonialist discourses that Colombian pueblos began utilizing during the 1980s. During the April 4 meeting, Chikangana spoke about the founder of the municipality of San Agustín, who had served as its first governor: "He was a Yanacona man from Cauca, and was followed by others. We have very ancient roots . . . ancestral roots." Yanacona wanted to

collaborate with the municipality and engage with tourism directly . . . we want our total identity to be seen. This road will help us recover our identity by building up tourism here, by having tourists come and visit us in the predio . . . as indigenous persons we are very conscious of the proposal we are making, and we know very well that we would be doing something very bad if we were to put our own history in jeopardy.

He complained that when other incursions into the park had occurred, the government officials in charge had done nothing—when the police station was built, when trenches were dug, when *guaqueros* damaged the site, nothing had happened.

But now, when we do something of great benefit to the community—indigenous and campesinos alike—there are complaints. . . . The danger of damage to archaeological objects simply does not exist in the predio. . . . For six years we have been requesting the abandoned police station and were never attended to. They preferred to let it deteriorate, and, just recently, to demolish it, rather than give us administrative responsibilities and enable us to carry out our cultural activities.

During that same meeting, the CRIHU representative chose an environmentalist discourse to argue for Yanacona guardianship, saying she did not understand why Yanacona could not own and administer the park—given that they were widely admired for their excellent resguardo conservation policies, which protected and sustained natural resources like forests and water. Finally, Omen's statement during the March 2 meeting that "we have been targets for more than five hundred years, and when we reclaim our rights we are like a stone in the shoe" is an example of anti-

colonialist discourse about the country's abusive treatment of its pueblos.⁴⁴

A tension existed between Yanacona attempts to label the Predio La Estación a "profane" site, despoiled by "the constant presence of armed groups" and heavy machinery, and their desire to associate themselves with a "sacred" site—the entire park, with which, by virtue of their indigenosity, they have a special relationship and special custodial obligations. In addition to practical reasons such as easier transport of schoolchildren and construction materials, the incursion might also have been motivated by a desire to create a greater connection to the park. Cauca Yanacona, in their publications, write of having been stewards of their territory for a long time. Their current high degree of control allows them to eject non-Yanacona from it (see Roa 2001; *El Tiempo* 2001). San Agustín Yanacona had a far weaker claim to such long-term territorial connections. But, were they to achieve their goal of administering part of the park (even if only one hectare), the benefits would be substantial, for their connection would not just be to páramos and mountains, as is the case for their Cauca counterparts, but to a sanctuary containing the remains and remarkable material culture of ancient indigenous peoples. Strengthening these connections would, in a sense, transform the Yanacona into quasi-patrimonial subjects themselves. Their status would doubtlessly improve following their increased ability to play certain roles: first, the role of quasi descendants of these forebears; second, that of still-vulnerable survivors of colonial and neocolonial oppression and erasure; and, third, that of participants in the park project, offering themselves and their living culture as objects for the tourist gaze, alongside their artisanal production.⁴⁵

Although San Agustín Yanacona (and campesino) actions in Predio La Estación produced mixed results, one goal was achieved in a spectacular way: group representatives finally were listened to by important outsiders who had made a very long trip to talk with them. In his summation of the March 21 meeting, Osorio comments that until February 21, Yanacona had failed to get ICANH authorities to attend to their requests, either to define the situation with respect to the predio and the abandoned police station or to arrange a meeting with them that would include ICANH's director. Only after they carried out an illegal action did the authorities involved pay attention. Osorio also notes that the ONIC consultants who had visited the cabildo immediately prior to the April 4 meeting had advised adopting an aggressive style, in keeping with the "participatory democracy" model mentioned above. At that meeting, Chikangana commented that Yanacona wanted to fight neither with campesinos nor with San Agustín townspeople: "We always say that when we native people fight, we fight for something and we fight for everyone." He then listed all the letters the cabildo had sent and requests it had

made to the Ministry of Culture, finishing with, “So, looking at this situation, we can see that it had to happen in order to make the authorities come to our territory. Just as happened in Cauca, for years they paid no attention to us. But when we engaged in actions like this, then they sat up and listened.” Importantly, such actions not only motivated authorities who had previously ignored the Yanacona to pay attention to them but also, during the November 15 meeting, prompted some of these same officials to speak sympathetically and acknowledge previous neglect.⁴⁶

Rather than see the international attendees and Ramírez and Reyes as even bigger guns being deployed to keep them in line, Yanacona and campesinos viewed their presence at the November 15 meeting in a positive light—as clear evidence that cabildo requests were finally being taken seriously. San Agustín Yanacona were obviously proud to host an event attended by international specialists who possessed more authority than the municipal government officials and the local ICANH employees with whom they had been interacting.⁴⁷ Linking themselves to these high-ranking officials, particularly to Sanz, allowed Yanacona (represented by Chikangana, as illustrated by his November 16 e-mail to Sanz) to draw on symbols of distant and powerful authority in a way that challenged the local status quo, in which townspeople refused to accept the Yanacona’s right to reside in the area. Yanacona leaders apparently saw maintaining a direct link to WHC to be potentially beneficial in other ways, for example, for securing potential employment as guardians of the patrimony.⁴⁸

The crisis produced by the incursion and the subsequent failure to find a solution vividly brought to the surface the deplorable relationship between resguardo members and townspeople. Muñoz’s reports of Yanacona threats against his life—because they considered him to be on the townspeople’s side—are a dramatic piece of evidence. Another is the town’s continuing failure to repair the municipal dirt road. From the beginning of the conflict, various authorities periodically urged the mayor to repair this road,⁴⁹ and its continuing wretched condition sent a loud and clear message about his priorities.⁵⁰ Yanacona leaders believed the road would not be repaired during his term.

Several of the more significant contradictions within state discourses and practices with respect to indigenous policy were on view during the conflict. As noted at the outset of this article, conventional wisdom holds that some people are indigenous and some are not; indigeneity might be hidden and then discovered, but it cannot be created. But, in actuality, in Colombia (and elsewhere) state agencies, in particular personnel in DAI, usually anthropologists, engage in performative actions that transform reindigenizing communities into officially indigenous ones. Prior to their rulings, community members can only claim indigenous descent.

Of course, such official indigenesness exists only on paper, and establishing new identities and statuses in the real world can take considerable amounts of time and effort.⁵¹ Any performance of indigeneity runs the risk of providing countervailing evidence that a reindigenizing group is indeed *de ahora* (recent). After the November 15 meeting, Jackson walked along the road with several campesinos who rejected Yanacona claims to indigeneity—feeling that the meeting had been “disordered” and that the rituals had not amounted to much.⁵² That the resguardo was receiving funds from Chikangana’s NGO (which received its funding from the Netherlands) to construct the buildings at the sede both reinforced Yanacona claims to being engaged in a serious project and fueled nonindigenous locals’ resentment and envy, sustaining their suspicions about instrumentalist motives concerned with acquiring land and accessing the other privileges that became available to the nation’s pueblos during the 1980s and 1990s.⁵³ We recall, however, that Yanacona relationships with their campesino neighbors differed in important respects from those between resguardo and town. Being rural and poor, Yanacona and neighboring vereda residents shared many problems, among them the lack of a decent road.

The San Agustín Yanacona’s relationship with national and regional indigenous organizations was complex as well. As we note above, when the recently reindigenized Cauca Yanacona had petitioned to join CRIC, they were initially refused, gaining admittance only in 1997. Zambrano complains in a 1993 publication about indigenous as well as nonindigenous people questioning Cauca Yanacona indigenesness: “Their rights are called into question and unjustly denied because today in Colombia, you practically have to put on a loincloth to be considered indigenous” (1993:83). However, ONIC, CRIHU, and ORIVAC supported San Agustín Yanacona efforts leading up to the April 4 meeting, and at that meeting the CRIHU representative severely criticized the government’s decision making, in particular Ramírez’s “unyielding” stance: If Ramírez states so categorically that there is no way to authorize the road, she asked, if she takes such a “radical and absolute position” in her discourse, “then where is the possibility for dialogue and reaching a consensus? What I see very clearly is a politics of globalization, where we have to obey the orders of an indifferent bureaucracy” (referring here both to national [ICANH] and international [UNESCO] institutions). She requested a meeting between UNESCO, indigenous representatives, and state functionaries so that Yanacona could speak directly to UNESCO representatives and then reminded San Agustín townspeople—who had been ready to mobilize to prevent the park’s closing and were blaming the Yanacona for this possible outcome—that “those who are closing the park are not Yanacona or campesinos.” Turning to Ramírez, she said, “It’s you, the government agencies that talk about closing the park . . . and therefore you

cannot blame the indigenous community. Nor was it the indigenous community or San Agustín residents who told the media that there are problems and that tourists should not come, because the park is going to be shut down.” She closed by saying that there was really no need to close the park when dialogue was possible and people could work to arrive at a solution.

The way officialdom reacted to such criticism and to the conflict in general illustrates how regional, national, and international institutions at times respond to such crises by crafting new policies that they hope will be acceptable to everyone. Sanz’s presentation to the November 15 assembly, which explicitly pointed out the new policies being developed at WHC, is an example of this type of response. Another is ICANH’s proposal to build a *vivienda*—to reconstruct a prehispanic house—at Predio La Estación. A display linking past inhabitants to present-day ones would encourage tourists to include the Yanacona as part of their park visit. ICANH sent the proposal, which described this vivienda in detail, to the Yanacona. It included a poster with a photograph of three children captioned “The Yanacona Community: Guardians of Archaeological Patrimony.” However, ICANH could not continue with this project because the agreement of April 4 prohibited any kind of activity at the site until WHC had carried out its examination and produced its report. Finally, transnational aid was suggested as a solution at several points; for example, in a letter to the cabildo, Ramírez suggested that ICANH might request resources from a Japanese fund via UNESCO to implement the plan for managing San Agustín Archaeological Park.

The San Agustín Yanacona case also illustrates some of the ways the Colombian indigenous movement has evolved over the past four decades. New political and juridical spaces opened up during this period, which, along with newly available logics and rhetorics, resulted in new kinds of claims being presented to new sets of state (and parasatal) agents. The conflicts of the late 1960s and 1970s were about identity politics in only an embryonic manner; the gritty fights during that period were concerned with basic rights to land and withstanding the government’s horrendous repression of the indigenous movement and its leaders. San Agustín Yanacona’s requests for use of the police station and predio land were not connected to repression or about repossessing alienated territory. Needless to say, the incursion would have been handled very differently had it occurred earlier.

Among these newer analytics are rights discourses, which, perhaps not surprisingly, appear in all the available documents written by the cabildo. However, the ways other actors also employed these discourses illustrate their wide appeal. For example, the San Agustín police commandant saw a need to cover himself when writing about implementing measures intended to “avoid any type of confronta-

tion . . . while also respecting the human rights of the persons involved.” His predecessor, writing in, say, 1986, would probably not have perceived a need for this kind of language.⁵⁴ The right to cultural difference, today claimed as an inalienable human right, was just beginning to be articulated in 1970s Colombia. Finally, several kinds of “rights to culture” arguments appeared during the conflict. Even the campesinos attending the November 15 meeting claimed that they, too, had a living culture (*cultura viviente*) and that a main reason they were asking for the road to remain vehicular was to be able to practice and maintain that culture, which they framed in terms of a right.

Culture discourses not couched in rights rhetoric also appeared in abundance. A basic kind of such discourse is an indigenous community’s pronouncements about cultural difference, cultural content, and so on. Such declarations were virtually absent in Colombia prior to the 1970s. San Agustín Yanacona sought to demonstrate, verbally and non-verbally, that they possessed and lived an indigenous culture. During the November 15 meeting, Chikangana, who had majored in anthropology (and doubtlessly had drafted most of the letters sent to various authorities), described their project as intended to comprehensively recover Yanacona indigeness. When ICANH delegates met with Yanacona officials prior to the meeting, he spoke of the great advances resguardo members had achieved, mentioning the school “where children will be taught about traditional medicine—traditional in the anthropological sense. Weaving, dances, we’re pursuing our goal in a comprehensive way, not along a single path.”⁵⁵ And although no representative from DAI was present at the November 15 meeting, the discursive work that office does with respect to culture was amply apparent throughout the event, for culture discourses inform and justify, at every step of the way, the bureaucratic performances that turn (or decline to turn) people descended from indigenous ancestors into present-day Indians.

As Mary Louise Pratt notes, indigeneity and similar descriptors that are “used to refer to indigenous peoples . . . all refer etymologically to prior-ity in time and place” (2007:398). The San Agustín Yanacona, by making claims both to land and history, endeavored to convince others that this “prior-ity” characterized them. The apparent weakness of any conventional “blood and soil” claims notwithstanding, the Yanacona linked themselves both to a World Heritage site—a “sacred” indigenous space—and to a culture from the distant past, by using the unique argument that their indigeneity meant that they were native to the territory and, thus, longer-term residents than their nonindigenous neighbors.

Elizabeth A. Povinelli’s discussion of Aboriginal Australians, who are considered by those in mainstream society to be “too hauntingly similar to themselves to warrant social entitlements—for example, land claims by indigenous

people who dress, act, and sound like the ... neighbors they are" (2002:13), applies to the Cauca Yanacona pueblo earlier on and the San Agustín Yanacona at present. Both Cauca and San Agustín Yanacona communities embody the "essence of indigeneity" proffered by de la Cadena and Starn, who "share a view of mixture, eclecticism, and dynamism ... as opposed to a falling off or 'corruption' of some original state of purity" (2007:3). The Yanacona provide an extraordinary example of a community creatively engaging "the slippages, dispersions, and ambivalences of discursive and moral formations that make up [its life]" (Povinelli 2002:29). Neither mainstream Colombian society nor the Cauca Yanacona's neighboring pueblos accepted their identity claims at first. But over several years, Yanacona indigeneity, official and otherwise, emerged out of interactions at local, regional, national, and international levels. The San Agustín Yanacona are hoping a similar degree of acceptance will be forthcoming in the future and are working hard to instantiate their indigeness so as to win over their neighbors and townspeople. Whether they succeed remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The remarkable number of meetings and exchanges of documents over most of 2006 that sought but failed to resolve the road conflict dramatically reveals San Agustín Yanacona laying claim to an indigenous past, present, and future. They claimed an indigenous past by demonstrating their "natural" role as preservers of the country's archaeological heritage, via rhetoric celebrating that past that asserted long-standing links between their new land, its former occupants, and themselves. They also sought to establish a positively valenced role for themselves in the indigenous present: Their assertions about rescuing Predio La Estación from abandonment by voluntarily cleaning, reforesting, and beautifying it pointed an accusing finger at the state, whose agents—the National Police—had despoiled the site by constructing a police station and heliport and by conducting military exercises. San Agustín Yanacona also sought to protect the predio through their efforts to eradicate the illegal activities that had taken place inside the station following its abandonment. Although both maintenance and protection were actually the jobs of ICANH, Yanacona leaders said, they nonetheless offered their surveillance efforts free of charge, as was the case with the labor they contributed in "beautifying" the predio. Through these efforts, they enacted a symbolics of citizenship that critiques modernity yet cannot be seen as "traditional." Yanacona self-positioning as exemplary Colombian citizens, by virtue of their efforts to provide much-needed stewardship of national territory and to protect its property in the context of an absent, indiffer-

ent, or corrupt state,⁵⁶ convinces us of the need to set aside dualisms such as "tradition" and "modernity" (see Jackson and Warren 2005; Rappaport 2005). Claiming that stewardship of the national patrimony was embedded in their indigeness, Yanacona were careful to distinguish themselves from certain residents of San Agustín who made their living as plunderers of archaeological sites. Having incorporated transnationally and nationally circulating notions of indigeneity, Yanacona arguments articulated and adapted the group's ethnic identity so as to align it with an emergent reification of diversity at these more inclusive levels. ICANH's proposal to establish a vivienda, discursively linking present-day Yanacona with San Agustín's ancient inhabitants through a transformational process that would turn them not only into patrimonial subjects but objects as well, constitutes one example of this kind of reification of diversity.

In their quest to become quasi-patrimonial subjects by enacting indigeneity for the benefit of UNESCO personnel, San Agustín Yanacona laid claim to a positively valenced indigenous future.⁵⁷ The site of Predio La Estación had become an object of desire for San Agustín Yanacona as a result of its location close to their sede but away from the parts of the park that contained statues and other monumental evidence of ancient inhabitants. The police station's closing and the absence (in Yanacona eyes) of any archaeologically important materials in the immediate area strengthened the arguments they had formulated prior to the incursion. Possession of a part of Predio La Estación would allow this process of patrimonial subject making, which enlisted heritage, developmentalist, and environmentalist discourses, to go forward.

Arjun Appadurai (2004) and Rappaport (see, especially, 2005) have written eloquently about the need for scholars to focus on indigenous projections into the future in addition to engaging in efforts to understand the past. A group's vision of its future, what Appadurai sees as its capacity to aspire, arises out of its embedded understandings of its past. An important element of the most effective strategies for securing that future is a community's ability to articulate its interests and values in optimal fashion to powerful individuals and institutions. Such articulations require discovering and strengthening cultural capacities in ways that will be instrumentally effective (Appadurai 2004:62). The San Agustín Yanacona's efforts to secure a better future—materially but also in the sense of obtaining the recognition and respect they have longed for—illustrate how they envisioned both that future and the optimal strategies for making it come about. The string of events that took place during 2006 reveals Yanacona aspirations and strategizing in fascinating detail. By articulating proposals that would benefit not only their children but also neighboring campesinos, townspeople, tourists visiting the park, and anyone else invested in

preserving such sites, they assumed a complex cosmopolitan, future-oriented subjectivity, albeit one firmly grounded in a quintessentially “out-of-the-way place” (Li 2000) and discursively linked to an “out-of-the-way” time.

Epilogue

On July 19, 2007, the administrative office of the park was scheduled to be the location of a *consejo comunal de gobierno* (a community meeting attended by government representatives), led by President Álvaro Uribe, specifically on the topics of culture and tourism. Holding such meetings throughout the country provided an opportunity for Uribe and accompanying administrative officials to hear complaints and entertain proposals from community residents and local officials regarding municipal and departmental affairs. The president’s helicopter landed on the top of the hill near the razed police station. Ramírez, waiting below and expecting to see the delegation walk down the hill, was extremely surprised to see a *chiva* (an intercity bus) coming down the road that had been illegally cut. The park administrator, Polanco, informed her that, a few days earlier, the army commander had told him that the well-being and security of the president were more important than any other consideration, and so the delegation would arrive by bus. Polanco had not mentioned this change to her earlier, he said, because he knew she would not like it.

In November 2007, WHC’s recommendations were officially made known to Orlando Omen, the new cabildo governor: The road was to be permanently closed to vehicular traffic, and an interpretative walkway would be constructed between the park gates and the sede. WHC also “invited” the mayor’s office “to submit proposals for improving the municipal road system for the benefit of local communities” (WHC 2007). Upon receiving the WHC communication, Omen’s first move was to refer to the use of the road by the president’s *chiva* as evidence of official approval of its construction. His second response was to argue that negotiations about the road should be reopened with a clean slate, given that he was a new governor and ICANH had a new director (Ramírez had retired in July 2007). His third response was to state that, as the Yanacona did not intend to take up the matter of constructing a walkway, the WHC monitoring commission’s recommendations were irrelevant.

Notes

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Agustín, many thanks to park administrator Tirso Polanco, the Cabildo Yanacona de San Agustín, Governor Argemiro Omen, and Fredy Chikangana for their generous hospitality. Thanks also to the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia (ICANH) for sponsoring the trip to San Agustín. We are grateful to institute staff for all their work, particularly Margarita Reyes and Emiro Díaz for their work on the original versions of Figures 1–4. Thanks also to Amberly Steward, Department of Anthropology, MIT, for help with the English versions of Figures 1–4. Finally, our thanks to the anonymous *AE* reviewers, Donald Donham, and Linda Forman for their helpful comments and editing.

1. Two spellings of the group’s name are found in the documents relating to the event: *Yanacona* and *Yanakona*. Other inconsistent spellings include *Freddy–Fredy* and *Ome–Omen*.

2. *Reindigenization* is an analytic term; for examples of its use, see Chaves 2005, Chaves and Zambrano 2006, and Jackson and Warren 2005. *Reindianization* is also used; see Rappaport 2005:44–48. As far as we know, *reindigenization* is not used by the communities involved in the process. Community members and their allies tend to use the Spanish and Portuguese cognates for *recovery* and *recuperation*. *Reivindicación* (demand, claim) is frequently used in Colombia to describe this kind of endeavor. Some scholars prefer *ethnogenesis* to refer to this process, but this term covers much more semantic territory; see Whitten 1979, Hill 1996, and Mallon 1996. Using the descriptor *posttraditional*, Jonathan Warren (2001) analyzes cases of mixed-race Brazilians choosing to identify themselves as Indians. Jan Hoffman French (2004:663) discusses Brazil’s recognition of 30 new indigenous communities in the northeast, a region previously seen to have lost its indigenous population. Also see Forte 2006 for Caribbean examples.

3. This agency has been reorganized and renamed several times. Originally the Office of Indigenous Affairs, in 1996 it became the Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas (National Office of Indigenous Affairs). In 2003 it merged with the Dirección General de Comunidades Negras, Minorías Étnicas y Culturales (National Office of Black Communities and Ethnic and Cultural Minorities) to become the Dirección de Etnias (Office of Ethnic Groups). As of May 21, 2008, there were two offices, both within the Ministry of the Interior and Justice: the Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas, Minorías y Rom (Office of Indigenous, Minority, and Roma [Gypsy] Affairs) and Dirección de Asuntos para Comunidades Negras, Afrocolombianas, Raizales y Palanqueras (Office of Black Community, Afrocolombian, Native Islander and Cimarron Affairs). This frequent reorganization demonstrates the growing importance of multiculturalism in the country.

4. Note that we do not examine the actual process by which state actions transform people of indigenous descent into “official” Indians, which would require another article.

5. As happens in the United States and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere; see, for example, Martínez 2006, Briones 2006, Ramos 1998, Sturm 2002, Niezen 2003, Speed 2008, and Nagel 1997.

6. A Colombian department is the equivalent of a U.S. state.

7. A concordat drawn up in 1953 put the church in charge of all indigenous education. Protestant missions such as the New Tribes Mission and Summer Institute of Linguistics–Wycliffe Bible Translators had also been working in some communities.

8. Colombia has 469 areas reserved for indigenous occupation (460 *resguardos* [see N. 13] and 9 indigenous reserves). Eighty-three percent of these are new *resguardos*, and 81 percent of Colombian Indians live in territory they collectively own (see Roldán 2000:xxiii, xxiv, 49, 50). According to Raúl Arango and Enrique Sanchez (2004:104), as of 2001, approximately 65 percent of indigenous peoples lived in new *resguardos*, and 22 percent lived in older ones, some of them from the colonial period.

9. The movement was, according to Allison Brysk, “born transnational” (1995:32; also see Brysk 2000).

10. Such performances—that is, for political ends—were not part of indigenous activism during the 1970s and 1980s, which occurred in a context of land repossessions, extreme racism, and state-sponsored violence. Many leaders in this activism were jailed, some of them multiple times, and many lost their lives.

11. Virginie Laurent (2005:250), for example, discusses clothing worn by indigenous politicians.

12. The 1991 Constitution reads, “In conformity with the Constitution and the laws, indigenous territories will be governed by councils created and regulated in keeping with the practices and customs of the communities” (Art. 330). Cabildos were part of the Spanish Crown’s attempt to centralize and urbanize the scattered “uncivilized” indigenous populations.

13. Decree 2001, promulgated in 1988, defined the *resguardo* as a special kind of legal and sociopolitical institution formed by an indigenous community or entire indigenous ethnic group (see Ramírez 2002; also see Jimeno and Triana 1985 on the history of the *resguardo*).

14. The nature of this back-and-forth interaction is analyzed in two Amazonian case studies. Ramírez describes the emergence of a new indigenous group in Colombia’s Putumayo, which, having realized that “Indians exist by virtue of the state’s legal system,” acquired legal ethnic-group status despite the argument by *pueblos* in the region that the claim was “imaginary” (2002:142–147). And Margarita Chaves (2001) describes a tug-of-war between Putumayo *colonos* (settlers) claiming to be indigenous and the directors of the regional and national DAI offices.

15. In similar fashion, prior to constituting a *resguardo*, the land reform agency, INCODER (formerly, the Colombian Institute for Land Reform [Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria; INCORA]), must conduct a study to determine the claim’s legitimacy.

16. In November 2006, Jackson was told by a DAI official that, as of October, the agency had received 150 formal petitions for recognition and knew of 250 additional petitions being prepared. In June 2008, Ramírez was told that 180 communities had submitted petitions, but because DAI employs only two full-time anthropologists, the agency can conduct only ten studies per year. Note the title of Margarita Chaves’s Ph.D. dissertation: “¿Qué Va a Pasar con los Indios Cuando Todos Seamos Indios?” (“What’s Going to Happen with the Indians When We’re All Indians?”).

A 2001 newspaper article illustrates the politicized and at times adversarial nature of these procedures. According to the article, DAI estimated that about three hundred fifty communities throughout the country were seeking recognition as *aborígenes* at that time:

The proliferation of communities that seek recognition as Indians in order to access the benefits that protect (*cobijan*) these ethnic groups is one of the problems that arose following the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution, according to the Ministry of Interior. The Constitution sanctified rights like the ability of *resguardos* to receive transfers of resources. According to DAI, it is estimated that 350 or more communities throughout the country are seeking recognition—currently about 1,200 are recognized. [Linares 2001]

The agency’s director, Marcela Bravo, is quoted as saying categorically that “indigenous *pueblos* that disappeared before the Spaniards arrived cannot reappear now.” Leaders from the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) countered by saying,

Communities that weren’t indigenous are now recognizing themselves as such because for 500 years they were told that to

be *indio* was shameful. But they now realize that this isn’t so and they are recovering their dignity. Nevertheless, this process is being delegitimized by the government. . . . We don’t agree that the Ministry of the Interior should be the one to recognize who is and isn’t indigenous. The community ought to define itself. What is really going on is a dispute over resources and lands. [Linares 2001]

17. Jackson began fieldwork in 1968 among Tukanos in the Vaupés, a department in the Colombian Amazon. In the early 1980s, she became interested in the indigenous-rights mobilizing that was taking place in the region and subsequently began to look at the indigenous movement at the national and international levels (see Jackson and Warren 2005; Warren and Jackson 2002). She last visited the Vaupés in 1993; deteriorating security in the region prevented her from returning thereafter. Ramírez joined ICANH as a researcher in 1977 and served as director from 2005 to 2007. She received a B.A. in anthropology from the Universidad de los Andes, an M.A. in history from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, and a Ph.D. in social anthropology from Harvard University. Her Ph.D. dissertation focused on the *cocalero* (coca growers and harvesters) movement in the Putumayo region of the Colombian Amazon (Ramírez 2001, 2002, in press). She currently is an associate researcher at ICANH and continues to conduct research in the Putumayo.

18. The town has a population of 29,699, according to the national census of 2005 (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de la Estadística [DANE] n.d.).

19. The road was 110 meters long, 1.5 meters deep, and its width varied from 8 to 17 meters.

20. The area was given its name by Luís Duque Gómez and Julio César Cubillos, archaeologists who assessed the site in 1976 (see Gómez and Cubillos 1981:15).

21. *Maloka* is a Tupian word that originally referred to the large communal tropical forest dwellings found in parts of Amazonia. More recently in Colombia, the word has come to refer to an indigenous ceremonial center anywhere in the country.

22. Chikangana resided in a Yanacona village in the neighboring department of Cauca.

23. Such fears were justified; Yanacona in the Cauca Macizo (Cauca Massif) to the west had succeeded in reclaiming traditional lands through coordinated invasions. An event that took place in northern Cauca on September 2, 2005, doubtlessly influenced actions at San Agustín during 2006. On that morning, 500 Nasa took over a farm (“La Emperatriz”) in the municipality of Caloto. The Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca; CRIC) directed the action, arguing that the government had dragged its feet on land transfers for 15 years and had failed to comply with an agreement that had been signed on December 23, 1991, seven days after 20 Nasa had been massacred on a farm called “El Nilo.” At that time, the state had promised to obtain 15,663 hectares of land to parcel among various Nasa communities. In 1995, the government had signed another agreement, known as the Accord of La María Piendamó, again promising to hand over the land. Despite numerous assurances from various subsequent administrations, nothing had happened, and Nasa leaders concluded that the only response to such state inefficiency was to take over the farm. A standoff followed: Nasa claimed that the governor of Cauca was abrogating his responsibility to repair the damage resulting from the El Nilo massacre and cited various human rights conventions Colombia had signed. Indigenous representatives arrived from other communities to support the invasion, and the Nasa, holding staffs of office (*bastones de mando*), declared that the land was their ancestral territory and that “from here we will not

move." They were brutally evicted by police (without offers of negotiation) on September 10. Echoes of this action can be found in the Yanacona one: The municipal dirt road's continuing disrepair and ICANH's nonresponse to Yanacona petitions revealed state inefficiency and indifference. Yanacona saw themselves to be left with only one option: to carry out a dramatic illegal act that would virtually guarantee they would be heard. The "we will leave here only as corpses" statement is another echo (see Rappaport 2005; van de Sandt 2007; Zamosc 1986).

24. The mayor had sent a letter to Osorio that same day saying that it would be impossible to move the machinery needed to repair the municipal dirt road because of public security risks.

25. That same day, the cabildo sent a letter to Cuervo: "At our meeting we came to realize that the director [of ICANH] does not have the power to make a decision in this matter. And, upon contacting the Bogotá office of UNESCO, we found out that that institution does not have decision-making power either, and so we beg you as an authoritative national entity to attend to our request." The letter writers then spell out why they need a vehicular road (noting that only "small cars" would travel on it) and why it would not harm the predio—which had already been damaged by "the constant presence of armed groups" and by *guaqueros* (looters). On May 19, Ramírez wrote to Governor Omen, informing him that the Ministry of Culture had sent her copies of the letter it had received from the cabildo. She outlined a "chronology of steps taken by this institution with the goal of finding a prompt solution to what you proposed during the meeting of April 4." She had "presented the information to the National Intersectoral Commission for World Heritage Sites, which unanimously recommended that ICANH do everything necessary to preserve the integrity of the park. . . . As is evident, ICANH has voiced your necessities and presented your proposal to all the appropriate national and international bodies." She added that the Ministry of Culture had sent a letter to the mayor urging him to repair the municipal dirt road.

26. Representatives from indigenous organizations did not attend this meeting or the November 15 one.

27. See CRIC 1978. CRIC had left the mass movement known as Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC; National Association of Peasants) because it saw indigenous campesinos basically as an oppressed rural proletariat, their indigenous identity either of no consequence or, in fact, a hindrance to indigenous goals, something that needed purging (Laurent 2005:70; Zamosc 1986).

28. As usually happens, Yanacona population estimates vary widely; one reporter gives a figure of 35,000 (Roa 2001), as does Joanne Rappaport (2003:42). Arango and Sánchez (2004:50) give the figure 21,457.

29. Yanacona communities are also found in the departments of Valle del Cauca and Nariño. Cauca is the western neighbor of Huila, where the San Agustín Yanacona live.

30. In addition to the Yanacona, Chaves and Zambrano (2006:10) list Zenú, Pasto, Kankuamo, Wiwa, and two Andean communities, Natagaima and Coyaima, among the early reindigenizers.

31. According to some scholars and Yanacona leaders, the ancestors of present-day Yanacona accompanied the Spaniards during the 17th century (Buenahora 2003:225–229) through the Macizo on their trips to and from the two colonial capitals (Cusco [Peru], and Popayán [Colombia]) of the Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada. Gonzalo Buenahora (1995) also says that "the Macizo Indian adopted western lifeways and by the end of three generations they became extinct" (Zambrano 2000:217).

32. Which occurs when a group of people organizes itself in accordance with "a nation's legal indigenous model" (Zambrano 2000:200).

33. Still other debates concerned "historical profundity vs. opportunism and ladinism, invisibility vs. non-existence, acculturated vs. pure, etc." (Zambrano 2000:208). The Yanacona were either (1) from Peru; (2) descendants of the Guanacas and inhabitants of San Agustín; or (3) acculturated campesinos (Zambrano 2000:209).

34. *Reindigenization* here refers not only to accepting the name Yanacona but also to the formation of the cabildo mayor, the replacement of the notion of "Indigenous Communities of the Macizo" by that of "Pueblo Yanacona," and territorial unity (a still unmet goal; Zambrano 2000:207). Also see Sotomayor 1998 on the distinction between generalized "indigenous" identity and an indigenous "ethnic group" (etnia; pueblo).

35. See Zambrano 1993 and *Resguardo Yanacona de San Agustín* (n.d.) regarding earlier Yanacona adoption of certain Spanish last names that subsequently came to be seen as Yanacona names. Richard Muñoz discusses the traditional patterns of transmigration over the mountain range separating Huila and Cauca: "In the past, people travelled by horse, mule, or burro on trails between the resguardo and San Agustín" (1993:54).

36. A well-known example is the Kankuamo of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the north (see *Unidad Indígena* 1993).

37. Article 357 of Law 60 of 1993 (which was incorporated into Law 115 of 2001) increased cabildo autonomy in this sphere (see Laurent 2005:343), and petitions from communities requesting cabildo status increased considerably following its passage. See Ramírez 2002 and Chaves 2001, 2003.

38. This point had been made during the meeting on March 21, when Yanacona and campesinos stated that they did not care whether the park closed or stayed open, as it had not benefited them at all.

39. He also thanks her for her words, which "encourage the work and generate hope in order to be able to advance in our common defense of this cultural patrimony and the re-valuation (reivindicación) of knowledges and communal unity."

40. This councilor, preparing his election campaign for 2007, was courting votes from both Yanacona and campesinos. When Ramírez spoke with this individual, he said that, given that he represented the section of the municipality needing a decent road, he had to defend the interests of the campesinos. A radio commentator had made a similar argument.

41. The following statements hint at some of them:

We Yanacona have lived in the Colombian Massif from very ancient times, although until now they haven't included us in their maps. This fact doesn't mean that we have only recently appeared (*somos unos aparecidos*). What we want to say to the country and residents of Cauca is: come to know the Yanacona pueblo, recognize that for a long time we have been, we are, and we will continue to protect the Colombian Macizo for ourselves and for all Colombians, and that we are united in our efforts to resolve our problems, satisfy our necessities, and advance our aspirations for a dignified life. [Ruales et al. 1993: 86]

And, "even though we appear neither in books nor maps, we exist" (Ruales et al. 1993:85).

42. On another occasion he had told Ramírez that a Yanacona representative should sit on the National Patrimonial Committee.

43. The state requires all pueblos to formulate a "Life Plan" that describes who they are and how they are planning for their community's future. In a March 5 letter to Ramírez, San Agustín Yanacona

use this kind of language to describe their efforts to reforest and beautify the predio

to make it attractive as an ecological and landscaped path. With these proposals, contained in the San Agustín Yanacona Life Plan, and in the communal project of the inhabitants, we want to contribute to the development of the National Plan of Culture, to the formation of our sense of identity and membership in the culture of the Colombian Macizo, and to the conservation of the archaeological, ecological and cultural patrimony.

44. Indigeneity played a more nuanced role in the Yanaconacampesino alliance, for both groups are poor and marginalized. But campesinos knew they could play only a supporting role; the front-stage actors had to be indigenous if the alliance was to have the highest probability of attaining its aims. Campesinos almost certainly would have been arrested had they initiated such an action.

45. An additional explanation, perhaps not too far-fetched, of the Yanacona decision to cut the road and “beautify” the surrounding area sees it in terms of a desire to inscribe themselves physically onto the landscape that constitutes their new home. True, they had already inscribed their presence with their buildings and agriculture. But the vehicular road differs in several respects. One difference is the road’s location closer to where their “antepasados” had lived. Osorio writes of his and townspeople’s fears that, despite Yanacona leaders’ statements about stewardship rather than ownership, resguardo members wanted full possession, and he notes that they already were treating the predio as if it were theirs. Ironically, Yanacona characterizations of their actions in the predio (i.e., improving it) evoke Western colonial notions about the right to ownership being significantly strengthened by actions that “improve” the land. The Spanish Crown’s designation of its New World territories as *terra nullius* (*baldo*, without inhabitants) relied on the fiction that, because indigenous land tenure systems did not improve the land, the territory was, to all intents and purposes, uninhabited. See Frank Hutchins’s (2007:91) discussion of how lowland Ecuadorean Kichwa understand their environment and their relationship to it as a consequence of their having inscribed their presence on it.

46. The director of WHC, Francesco Bandarin, wrote from Paris about the necessity of developing nonhierarchical relationships, and Ramírez spoke of initiating educational programs and development of a *plan de manejo del Parque Arqueológico de San Agustín* (plan for San Agustín Park management), “which will allow interested communities to understand the objectives of the work and submit suggestions for achieving them.” Apologetic language also came from municipal officials: At the March 2 meeting, the mayor apologized about the Yanacona being misrepresented by the TV station: “Unfortunately, sometimes the news is exaggerated.” Another official added at that same meeting that he felt bad because “we know that heavy machinery wasn’t used.”

47. Jackson is not including herself here, although given her gringa appearance, perhaps some of that international cosmopolitan aura rubbed off on her.

48. We also saw that campesinos increased their demands in the presence of these nonlocal authorities. During the April 4 meeting, the presidents of the neighboring campesino communal councils explained they were supporting the road building because “it’s not just our community but many more that need this road . . . unlike the cabildo, which has proposals about other matters, what we need, plain and simple, is a vehicular road.” But as the November 15 meeting progressed, campesinos requested that ICANH and WHC include them in any programs involving the communities liv-

ing near the park and arrange for new land allocations, which were necessary because of population increase.

49. For example, Rivera wrote to the mayor, “I call your attention to the importance of the promises the Mayor’s Office made in order to avoid irremediable harm to the Nation’s archaeological heritage”; in a May 18 letter to the mayor, Cuervo wrote, “I beg you in an attentive manner to see to all the necessary steps to repair the municipal dirt road and thus avoid alterations in the public order like this situation.” At times, the mayor had made excuses; for example, on March 8 he wrote to Osorio that neither public nor private vehicles could operate for fear of the “armed strike.” In another communication, he described the heavy rains and the urgent tasks elsewhere that demanded attention, but “we’ll do it right away as soon as these inconveniences have been taken care of.”

50. At the beginning of the April 4 meeting, the mayor announced that the necessary machinery was “at that very moment” beginning to repair the road, a gesture to show his “good will.” This announcement backfired, as it was seen by all to be purely political, and it only served to reinforce the general mistrust. Chikangana subsequently described it as nothing but manipulation to make the attendees reach an agreement.

51. See Greene 2007 on the politics of such performativity. Also see Tilley 2005.

52. Earlier that day, a San Agustín town official described to the ICANH delegation how “atypical” the resguardo was: “They’re going through a process of recuperation of culture: they’re not authentically indigenous, they’re barely learning it.”

53. We note here the hybridity of the sede’s cockfight ring; perhaps this structure was another piece of evidence supporting townspeople’s assertions that, although Yanacona “used to be indigenous,” they were too assimilated at present to ever be able to recover their culture.

54. Compare Speed 2002, which provides a Mexican example of the entrance of human rights discourses into struggles in Chiapas. Sanz, as well, spoke of the need to recognize the social and cultural rights of members of the communities abutting World Heritage sites, a new concern in heritage management policy.

55. A Yanacona man showed Jackson the buildings under construction. He was careful to point out all the ways the architecture followed traditional patterns and incorporated traditional symbols, one of which was an ear of corn: “The corn grows with the sun and water—no chemicals—and provides nutrition to help us think. It is spiritual, too.”

56. As their Cauca relatives have also done: “We will continue to protect the Macizo Colombiano for ourselves and for all Colombians” (Ruales et al. 1993:86).

57. For a contrasting scenario involving indigenous identity and a heritage site, see Castañeda 2004.

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