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Declaration

I, Kari Vaage, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Place & Date.....

Acknowledgements

Finally, here it is. Along the journey I have travelled with this thesis I have spent time with so many wonderful people. My warmest thanks to Josè Carlos, his family and their organization Kus Kura, I admire the work you are doing very much and wish you all the best for the future. Thank you for facilitating contact with the peoples in Boruca and Térraba. The family of Don Demetrio and Doña Daisy, thank you so much for welcoming me into your family, for the meals and talks, trips and meetings you accompanied me on, and letting me be part of your life. I will always remember you. The Rivirea family, thank you for introducing me to your village, including me in your work, your thoughts, and way of life. It has been an experience I will never forget. Special thanks to Byron and Asdrubal.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the Brunca and the Teribe, two indigenous groups in Costa Rica, and their response to a proposed hydropower development on their territories. The Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE) started the first attempt in order to extract the hydropower resources on the indigenous territory in 1970 with the Boruca – Cajón Project. However, this project stagnated and today the Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís (PHED) is the current alternative of the same project, affecting Téribe territory. A conflict-line can be drawn between the Téribe fighting against the PHED, and those in favour of the plans.

The aim of this study has been to investigate the resistance against the hydropower development in the indigenous communities and their arguments for fighting the project. I carried out a fieldwork in Costa Rica, doing interviews with the people involved in the struggle against the project, in addition to informal conversations, observations and literature review.

The study present the narratives of the indigenous people fighting the hydropower, which finds the fear of destructive environmental and social impacts in the community to be the main argumentation against the dam. As such, the investigation discusses the concept of identity, in the context of the Brunca and the Téribe. In Boruca, my study shows how the Brunca have been able to visualize their indigenous identity, and developed a successful tourism industry in their community. Moreover, the indigenous identity appears to have become more important in the meeting with the hydropower development.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADI	Association for Integral Development <i>Asociación de Desarrollo Integral</i>
CONAI	National Commission on Indigenous Affairs <i>Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas</i>
ICE	Costa Rican Institute of Electricity <i>Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad</i>
IDA	Institute of Agrarian Development <i>Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario</i>
ILO	International Labor Organization
IWGIA	International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs
MEP	Ministry of Public Education <i>Ministerio de Educacación Pública (MEP)</i>
PHED	The Diquís Hydroelectric Project <i>Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís</i>
UCR	Universidad de Costa Rica
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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1 Introduction

In Costa Rica, the Teribe and the Brunca are two indigenous groups in the southern part of the country facing plans of hydropower development on their territories. The state owned Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE) have been planning a large-scale hydro-electrical project in the Region of Buenos Aires since the 70s in order to extract the countries hydropower resources on the Rio General that runs through the southern region. The Brunca faced the first plans for a hydropower project on their territory with the Boruca-Cajón Project in 1970. In Boruca, the community protested against the hydropower plans and the project stagnated. Today the Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís (PHED) is the current alternative of the proposed Boruca-Cajón Project, situated on the same river, Rio General (ICE 2011). In Térraba, the inhabitants have divided opinions concerning the hydropower development. The community is separated between those who fight against the PHED and those who are in favour of the plans. If the project is to be constructed in Terraba it will flood 734,1 hectares of land and lead to severe social and environmental impacts for the indigenous territory.

The Association for Integral Development (ADI), in Terraba is holding the mandate to represent the members of the community and is functioning as the local government. The ADI are in favour of the PHED and has allowed ICE to start preparatory construction work on Teribe territory. The group of Teribe fighting against the dam claim they have not been consulted as they have the right to according to law, and that the ADI is not functioning as a legitimate organ for representing the community. Those members of the community fighting against the PHED fear the hydropower development will destroy their indigenous identity and traditional way of life. Furthermore, they fear that the PHED will develop the indigenous territory into a modern society, by which I mean a post-traditional society, oriented towards capitalism and industrialization, made possible with the PHED. Hence, the PHED would make the Teribe unable to continue their traditional life as they wish to. As such, the Teribe fighting against the PHED have organized them selves in a struggle against ICE and the project, in order to make their point of view heard and stop the construction of the dam. They see it as a struggle for the survival of the indigenous culture, and their identity.

1.1 Objectives and research questions

My overarching aim in this study was to investigate the resistance from the indigenous communities of Boruca and Térraba in response to the hydropower development on their land and moreover go in depth of the arguments for the opposition, deepening the understanding about the indigenous identity and peoples. The objectives and my research questions have been:

1. To investigate the resistance in the indigenous communities of Boruca and Térraba against the planned hydropower development on their land.

A: Why are they resisting the hydropower development?

B: How have they been in Boruca and how are they in Térraba protesting against the project?

2. To investigate how the indigenous community of Térraba have been consulted as they hold the right to according to the ILO Convention 169.

A: How have they been consulted about the plans for hydropower development?

3. Identify the narrative presented by the indigenous peoples protesting against the plans for hydropower development on indigenous territory.

A: How do the indigenous peoples in Boruca and Térraba see themselves as indigenous peoples?

B: What is important for them in order to preserve their indigenous identity, and why is this important?

1.2 Outline of the thesis

In Chapter 2, I present the background for the PHED and some key concepts and definitions which are essential in order to understand the thesis. Chapter 3, introduce the research methods and design for analyzing and collecting information I have made use in this thesis. In chapter 4, I briefly present the theoretical framework for the analysis I have carried out in Chapter 5 and 6. Here I present and discuss my findings. In Chapter 7, I propose a conclusion for the study.

2 Background

In this chapter I present some key concepts and definitions that are essential throughout the thesis and at the core of this study, and subsequently the analysis and discussion.

2.1 Indigenous peoples in Costa Rica

Indigenous peoples in Costa Rica constitute around 1,7 % (Solano 2002) of the total Costa Rican population of approximately 4,6 million inhabitants (Jenkins et.al 2010). The principle of self-identification is applied by the Costa Rican National Census from 2000, in which the total percentage of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica also includes indigenous immigrants from neighbouring Panama and Nicaragua. All together the total number is about 63,876 individuals, and among these, 42,3 percent of them live within the indigenous *reservas* or territories (Solano 2002:348). The term indigenous peoples can be defined in different ways. According to the Costa Rican *Ley Indígena No. 6172* (Indigenous Law) from 1977, indigenous peoples are defined as “*people that constitute ethnic groups descending directly from pre-Columbian civilizations and conserve their own identity*” (Artículo 1, Ley Indígena 1977)¹.

As the number of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica shows, they are a small group compared to indigenous populations in other Central American countries. There are not many studies available in English about indigenous groups in Costa Rica, and it is also worth noting that the peoples themselves make references to experiences from indigenous peoples in other countries. The Teribe² have their network in Panama connected to their relatives there. The Brunca³ gained a large international network during the time of protests against the dam, learning from international experiences in other countries. Today the indigenous people of Costa Rica consist of eight different ethnicities, divided into 24 different *reservas*, or territories, as these areas are preferably

¹ My translation from Spanish.

² Térraba and Teribe - some sources use the term Térraba and Téríbe interchangeably, in this thesis I use the term Térraba to denote the territory where the Teribe live, and the term Teribe to refer to the peoples themselves.

³ Brunca/Boruca – the two names are used to refer to the peoples. I use the term Brunca referring to the peoples, and Boruca to mark the territory. The Brunca people call themselves Bruncaj, and the word Boruca is a Spanish version of the first.

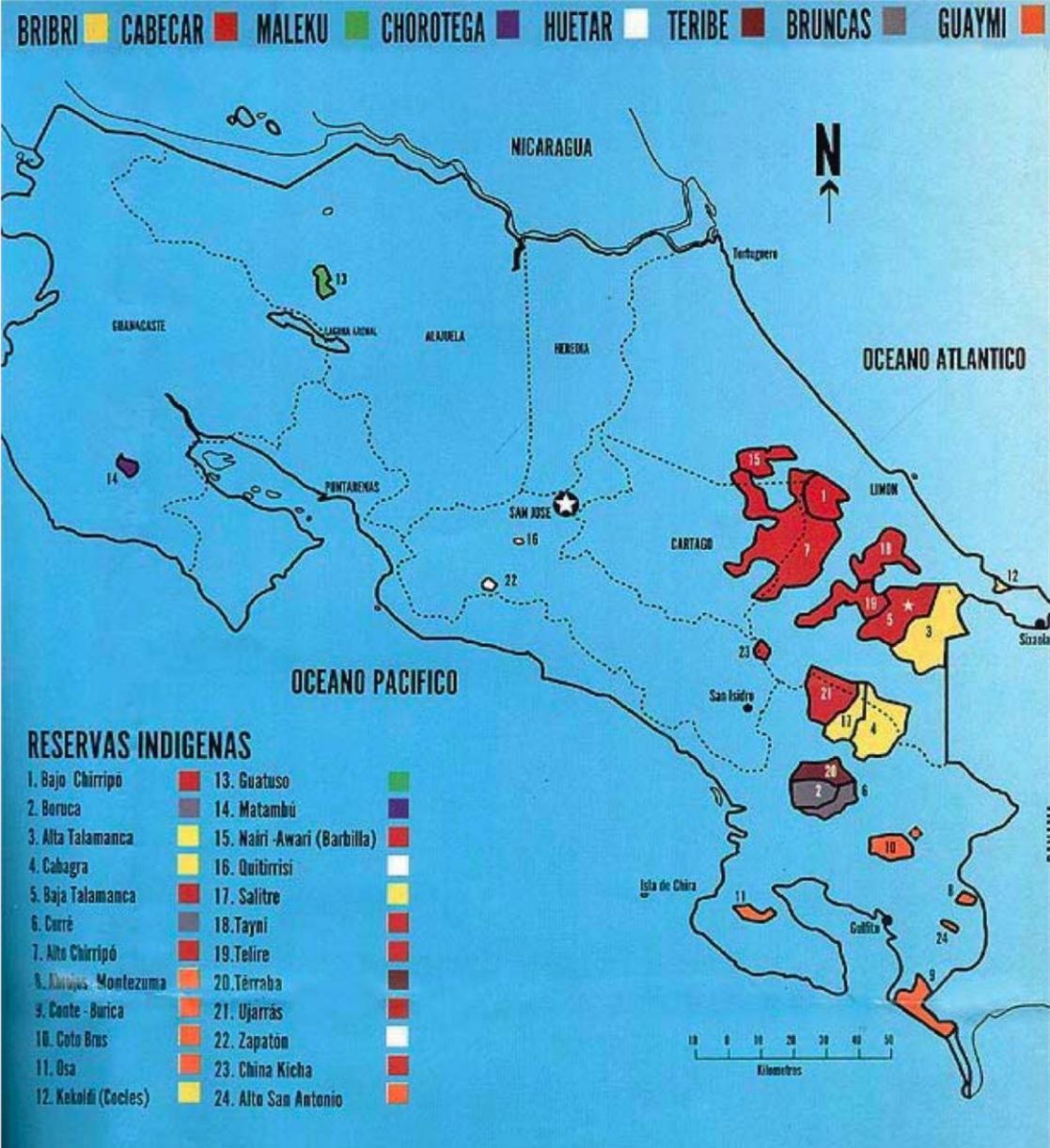
named by my informants. These are the eight indigenous groups and the territories they live on are:

TABLE 1: INDIGENOUS GROUPS AND RESERVES/TERRITORIES

Indigenous group	Reserves/Territories
Huetar	Quitirrisí y Zapatón
Maleku	Guatuso
Chorotega	Matambú
Bríbri	Salitre, Cabagra, Talamanca Bribri y Kekoldi Cocles
Cabécar	Alto Chirripó, Tayni, Talamanca Cabécar, Telire, Bajo Chirripó, Nairi Awari y Ujarrás
Brunca	Boruca y Rey Curré
Guaymí	Abrojo Montezuma, Coto Brus, Conte Burica y Osa
Teribe	Térraba

Source: (Solano 2002)

MAP 1: THE INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES IN COSTA RICA



Boruca is reserve number 2, right next to Térraba, reserve number 20.⁴

⁴ Comisión Costarricense de Cooperación con la UNESCO, “Grupos indígenas,” *Portal de Cultura Costarricense*, available at <http://www.unesco.or.cr/portalcultural/indigenas.htm>.

2.2 Socio-Economic context

The indigenous peoples in Costa Rica have experienced their cultural heritage being threatened partly due to the national assimilation policies that dominated in the decades before the implementation of the ILO 169 in 1993. The assimilation and integration policies showed no special consideration to indigenous culture and tradition, and the unique context in which indigenous groups are found. An example of this is how the indigenous languages have almost been lost, due to the Costa Rican governments attempts to promote Spanish as the common language (Jenkins et.al 2010:17). Loss of land from the indigenous territories to non-indigenous peoples is another threat facing the indigenous culture and tradition. Loss of land has an obvious economic effect on people, and the issue of land is an important aspect to understand, in order to fully grasp the situation in the indigenous territories. I will elaborate more on this issue of land tenure in 2.4.1. There are differences between the indigenous territories, however most of them are based on subsistence agricultural farming with crops of beans, rice and maize. Lately, another important economy has appeared, the selling and making of indigenous arts and crafts, and also tourism.

The marginality of the indigenous population is according to Guevara Berger (2000) visible in the lack of interest and effort from the state government to cover social services as healthcare, electricity and telecommunication services. Access to education is about 90% on elementary level in the indigenous territories. However, there is a debate about the quality of the education provided. The curriculum is according to Guevara Berger (2000) not providing any stimulation to reproduce the indigenous tradition and culture for future generations. The indigenous languages are hardly used in the education and neither is traditional knowledge. There have been several attempts by indigenous teachers in the *Departamento de Educación Indígena* in the *Ministerio de Educacación Pública (MEP)*, to create bilingual and multicultural education but this has never happened. According to Guevara Berger, it because of how the governmental institutions in Costa Rica do not bear in mind the special situation in the indigenous communities, and do not provide funding for developing an indigenous curriculum (Guevara Berger V:2000).

2.3 Geographical context

The geographical landscape in Costa Rica varies in climate and vegetation. Humid tropical climate is found between 0 and 600 metres of altitude, subtropical moist between 600 and 1 600 metres, and colder on higher altitudes. The climate is influenced by winds from the Caribbean, Pacific monsoon winds and the mountain range that determines its regional variations. The climate in Costa Rica is tropical and subtropical and has two seasons. The dry season lasts from December to April, and the rainy season from May to November (UN 2011). In the the north the country is bordered by Nicaragua and in the southeast by Panama. In the east the coastline of 212 km meet with the Caribbean Sea, in the west the coastline of 1 254 km borders the Pacific Ocean. The Cocos Island (24 km²) out in the Pacific is also part of Costa Rican territory (FAO 2011).

The Cordillera Guanacaste-Tilarán crosses the northwest to the southeast to the middle of the country. In the Cordillera Central lie two of the most visited volcanoes, Irazu and Poas. Between the mountain ranges lies the Central Valley, the seat of the major cities of Heredia, San José, Alajuela and Cartago. In the northeast and along the Atlantic coast the climate is humid and forested plains extend, while in the far northwest and southwest the Nicoya and Osa Peninsulas are found. Between the two peninsulas lies the Pacific coastal strip, bound on the east by the mountain ranges above. Administratively, the country is divided into seven provinces and six planning regions (FAO 2011).

MAP 2: COSTA RICA



The indigenous territories of Boruca and Térraba are situated in the southern region of Buenos Aires.⁵

⁵ <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/central-america/costa-rica/>

2.4 Legal context

The International Labour Organization Convention 169, the Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries from 1989 (ILO 169)⁶, and The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁷ adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007, are the main legal convention and declaration concerning all countries with an indigenous population. Costa Rica signed the ILO 169 in 1989 and ratified it in 1993 (ILO 2011). The ILO 169 came into being as an attempt to change the earlier assimilationist orientation that The International Labour Organization Convention 107, the Convention concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries (ILO 107) from 1957 represented. The ILO 107 reflected a policy strategy promoting integration and assimilation (Jenkins et.al. 2010:17). That meant, policies seeking to integrate the indigenous peoples into the Costa Rican society with no special consideration for the special indigenous context. One of the means to do this was to promote transition to Spanish, as one national language. This led to the different language spoken among the indigenous groups almost being lost. The ILO 169 on the other hand, seek to fulfil the aspirations for indigenous peoples to “exercise control over their own institutions, way of life and economical development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States they live in (...) (ILO 2011)”

Article 6 and 7 are especially important in relation to my case study and therefore I chose to reword the two articles here in order to keep them in mind while continuing to read: According to ILO 169, governments shall:

Article 6:

1. (a) consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures in particular through their representative institutions whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly;

⁶Hereafter ILO 169

⁷Hereafter UNDRIP

(b) establish means by which these peoples can freely participate to at least the same extent as other sectors of the population, at all levels of decision-making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programs which concern them;

(c) establish means for the full development of these peoples own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose.

2. The consultation carried out in application of this Convention shall be undertaken, in good faith and in a form appropriate to the circumstances, with the objective achieving agreement or consent to the proposed measures.

Article 7:

1. The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use and to exercise control to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.
2. The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit. Special projects for development of the areas in question shall also be so designed as to promote such improvement.
3. Governments shall ensure that, whenever appropriate, studies are carried out, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact on them of the planned development activities. The result of these studies shall be considered as fundamental criteria for the implementation of these activities.
4. Governments shall take measures, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to protect and preserve the environment of the territories they inhabit (ILO 2011).

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007. 144 states voted in favour and 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States) and 11 states remained neutral. However, since the adoption of the declaration, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States have all reversed their positions and now endorse the Declaration (UNPFII 2011). The Declaration is a result of more than 20 years of negotiation between nation-states and representatives of indigenous peoples. According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), the Declaration is one of the United Nations most important initiatives for indigenous peoples. It is a clear indication of the international communities will to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The declaration is not legally binding on any states and therefore does not hold any legal obligations to governments. But it does carry with it moral force that holds much importance (IGWIA 2011).

In the declaration, The General Assembly of The United Nations state that they are:

Concerned that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests,

Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs,

(UNDRIP 2007)

Two articles in the declaration are of special concern in this case study:

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

(UNDRIP 2007)

Costa Rica's constitution, namely the Political Constitution of Costa Rica (*Constitución Política de la República de Costa Rica*) was adopted in 1949, but did not make any references to the rights of indigenous peoples. The only reference to indigenous peoples was added to the constitution in 1999, in Article 76, which states that the state supports the maintenance of the indigenous languages, even though Spanish is the official language of the country (Jenkins et.al 2010:20). As such, the rights of indigenous peoples are declared in various laws and supplemented by executive decrees (Jenkins et.al 2010:20). The law dominating in the national legal framework concerning indigenous peoples is the *Ley Indígena No. 6172* (Indigenous Law) from 1977. The *Ley Indígena* marks a major change in the legal rights of the indigenous population in the country. It declares indigenous territories as "inalienable and imprescriptible, nontransferable and exclusive for the indigenous communities that inhabit them" (Artículo 3, Ley Indígena 1977)⁸. In addition, the law states that the indigenous territories are to be governed through their own traditional communal structure or by the law of the governing state, under the coordination and advice of CONAI (Artículo 4, ley indígena 1977).

⁸ My translation from Spanish.

However, in 1978 the indigenous territories was obliged to establish Associations for Integral Development (ADIs) within each indigenous community through the executive decree N°8487- G. The ADIs were established in order to serve as a coordinator between the government, municipal, and communal interest. One of the main purposes of the ADI is to create projects in the common interest of all parts, contributing in the social and economic development of Costa Rica (*Ley sobre el Desarrollo de la comunidad N°3859, Artículo 14*). According to Costa Rican law, the ADI is the legal representative for the peoples in the indigenous territories⁹.

The *Ley Indígena* state that; Indigenous communities have full legal capacity to acquire rights and obligations of every kind, and that they are not state entities, but declared the property of indigenous reserves referred to in the first article of the law, which states that indigenous reservas are declared those in the executive decree number 5904-G of the April 10, 1976, 6036-G June 12, 1976, 7267-G and 7268-G 20 August 1977, and Indian Reservation Burica Guaymi (Guaymi)(Article 1 and 2, *Ley Indígena* 1977).¹⁰ During the time period of 1976-1977 various decrees demarcated various indigenous territories. The first three indigenous reserves was demarcated already in 1956 with the executive decree number 34, and that was when the reserves of Ujarrás-Salitre-Cabagra, China Kichá and Boruca-Térraba were created (Jenkins et.al 2010:21).

Furthermore, the lands within the reserves which are suitable for forestry shall be kept in trust, in order to keep the hydrological balance of watersheds and wildlife conservation in these regions. In addition, the law states that renewable natural resources must be used wisely. Only programs may be implemented by institutions of the state in order to ensure the constant renewal of forests, under the authorization and supervision of CONAI. The indigenous territories appointed by the government shall be responsible for forest protection and monitoring. CONAI is expressly empowered to revoke or suspend at any time, permits issued, when it considers that there is abuse or exploitation when endangering the ecological balance of the region (*Artículo 7, Ley Indígena* 1977).

⁹ I will elaborate more about the ADI in 2.5.

¹⁰ See table over indigenous reserves.

2.4.1 Land tenure

According to the *Ley Indígena*:

The Indigenous Reserves are inalienable and not transferable, and exclusive for the indigenous communities that inhabit them. Non-Indigenous people may not rent, lease, purchase or otherwise acquire land or properties included within these reserves. Indigenous people can negotiate only with other indigenous individuals. Any transfer, or negotiation of land or improvements of them on Indigenous reserves, between indigenous and non-indigenous, is to be absolutely zero, with legal consequences if trespassed. Land and improvements, and the products produced in the indigenous reserves are exempt from all national or municipal taxes, present or future ones.

(Artículo 3, Ley Indígena 1977)¹¹

In 1982 the Mining Code, law number 6797 was passed, eliminating the co-ownership by indigenous peoples and the state of subsoil resources in indigenous territories transferring these rights to the state. This change in rights was carried out without any participation, consultation or consent by the indigenous peoples, neither where they given compensation for the land taken (Jenkins et.al 2010:25). The Mining Code was notably passed before the implementation of the ILO 169. In addition, *Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario* (Institute of Agrarian Development) IDA was created in 1982 by law (Jenkins et.al 2010). The institute was given the mandate in managing indigenous land and holds the position to grant land possession to indigenous individuals. However, today, it is suggested the ADI should be the entity to hold title to indigenous land and grant individual rights of possession and IDA to hold a central role in the recapture land lost to non-indigenous peoples. Importantly, some indigenous land continued to remain public in the hands of IDA, and this is the case in Boruca and Térraba. Both communities have tried to remedy by legal action against the institution in order to force through transfer of land (Jenkins et.al 2010:25).

Indigenous territories in Costa Rica have lost large areas of land to non-indigenous peoples (Jenkins et.al 2010). In Térraba, illegal sales and incursions of indigenous land,

¹¹ My translation from Spanish.

to non-indigenous individuals, has led to the indigenous population here being a minority when it comes to landownership (Jenkins et.al 2010:4). In several territories, even though the land is formally entitled to the ADI, it is divided internally into individual parcels (Cajiao Jiménez 2002). Where this is the case, people who do not have these individual rights to land, do not have the right to use the land for any purpose within indigenous territories. The individual possession of land rights has opened up the opportunity of selling land. This was prohibited by the introduction of the Indigenous Law, but has shown to be a persistent problem within indigenous territories (Cajiao Jiménez 2002).

In Térraba, the fact that the indigenous population holds only 90% of the land makes the anticipated loss of land in relation to the PHED a major issue for the peoples. The land along the Río General is unique for the Teribe, it is the foundation of their culture and economical survival (Jenkins et.al 2010:18). Because of previous losses and also the special significance this land has to the Teribe, it makes the potential loss of land irreplaceable (Jenkins et.al 2010:18).

2.5 Political administrative structure and representation

Most of the institutions representing the indigenous peoples in Costa Rica today were created before Costa Rica ratified the ILO169 in 1993. At the time, The International Labour Organization Convention 107, the Convention concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries (ILO 107) from 1957 was in effect. As mentioned, the ILO 107 represented a policy strategy promoting integration and assimilation (Jenkins et.al 2010:17). In 1993 Costa Rica ratified the ILO 169, a convention that emphasised to a larger degree autonomy and self-governance in the indigenous territories (Jenkins et.al 2010:17).

The national indigenous representative entity is the National Commission on Indigenous Affairs (*Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas CONAI*) created in 1973. CONAI have a coordinating position at a national level between the indigenous population and the state government. Their task is to coordinate state actions towards indigenous communities (Jenkins et.al 2010:22) There has been, and still is, debate concerning

CONAIs role, and the institutions lack of ability as a coordinator, concerning how they represent the indigenous communities and show no will to change in order to do a better job (Guevara Berger 2000).

The ADI is the legally recognised governmental institution representing the indigenous communities. Jenkins et.al (2010) points at the problem that the ADIs are state created institutions, and the fact that the governing structure in the indigenous territories are created by the Costa Rican state, is a contradiction in itself when the ADIs are supposed to serve as the traditional communal structures of governance in the communities (Jenkins et.al 2010:23). There is one ADI in each indigenous territory. There are several problems related to the ADIs, their ability to represent the indigenous people and the lack of potential in being an institution able to secure meaningful self-governance, especially in Térraba. The large number of non-indigenous members in the ADIs in indigenous communities and the exclusion of dissenting voices through denial of membership in the ADI are some of the problematic factors (Jenkins et.al 2010:18). The role of the ADI is especially important concerning development projects like the *El Diquís* (PHED), a project that will affect the community on large scale, and consultation of the indigenous population is mandatory according to law¹². The dysfunctional role of the ADI hinders it to ensure effective self-government, and makes the people of Térraba unable to participate fully in consultation concerning the PHED. Moreover, since the ADI hold the legal antecedents and responsibility of practical operation in relation to the issue of land, the process of preventing further land loss, and redress past losses, is not working out efficiently (Jenkins et.al 2010:18).

The ADI is made up of a general assembly and a board of directors. Members of the community over 15 years of age can become members of the association, but they have to pass an application process first. In order to participate in the general assembly they have to be affiliated in the ADI. According to law, the ADI must have over 100 members, but not more than 1,500 individuals. Indigenous individuals who are not residents in the indigenous communities cannot participate in the decision-making processes. This issue is of concern especially to indigenous people living near the borders of the territories as

¹² ILO 169

a result of how the reserves were delimited. The members of the ADI elect the members of the board of directors (Jenkins et.al 2010:23). The history of how the ADIs have been constructed illustrates that the ADI are not a specific indigenous form of organization or a traditional form of governance of the indigenous peoples. Today there are over 300 ADIs in Costa Rica and among these 24 represent the indigenous communities. The intention of the ADI was not to replace the existing traditional community organization, but rather to exist alongside these traditional organs in the communities. But the result of the implementation of the ADI is that the institution holds many of the responsibilities originally held by the traditional local government, responsibilities that the ADI lack funding to carry out (Jenkins et.al 2010:25). Today, the ADI is the institution holding title to land, and grants individual rights of possession within the indigenous territories in Costa Rica (Jenkins et.al 2010).

2.6 Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís (PHED)

The *Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís* (PHED) is the current alternative of a proposed hydro-electrical power plant situated on the Rio General (ICE 2011). The PHED is the current result of thirty years of studies by ICE in the river basin in order to find the hydro-electrical potential in the river. See the table of the history of the project:

TABLE 2: HISTORY OF THE PROYECTO HIDROELÈCTRICO EL DIQUÌS (PHED)

1970	Studies in the basin of the Río Grande were initiated by ICE and the Boruca-Cajón Project was identified. Opposition from the population. The project stagnated.
1980	Another study was carried out by ICE in cooperation with a Canadian company to develop the Boruca Cajón Project. But the plans were once again wasted due to lack of economic funding and compliance over the contracts.
1993-1994	A Japanese company reevaluate the proposed projects from 1970 and 1980 again, in order to sell energy to México.
2001	Another study is carried out by ICE and selects the PHED to be the best option for making use of the hydropower possibilities in the south.
2004	The new option is identified and initially given the name P.H. Boruca Opción Veraguas.
2005	ICE carries out feasibility and preliminary environmental impact studies of the P.H. Veraguas.
2006	The name of the project is changed to P.H. El Díquís after inviting the elementary schools in the region into a competition for naming the project.

(Source ICE 2011)¹³

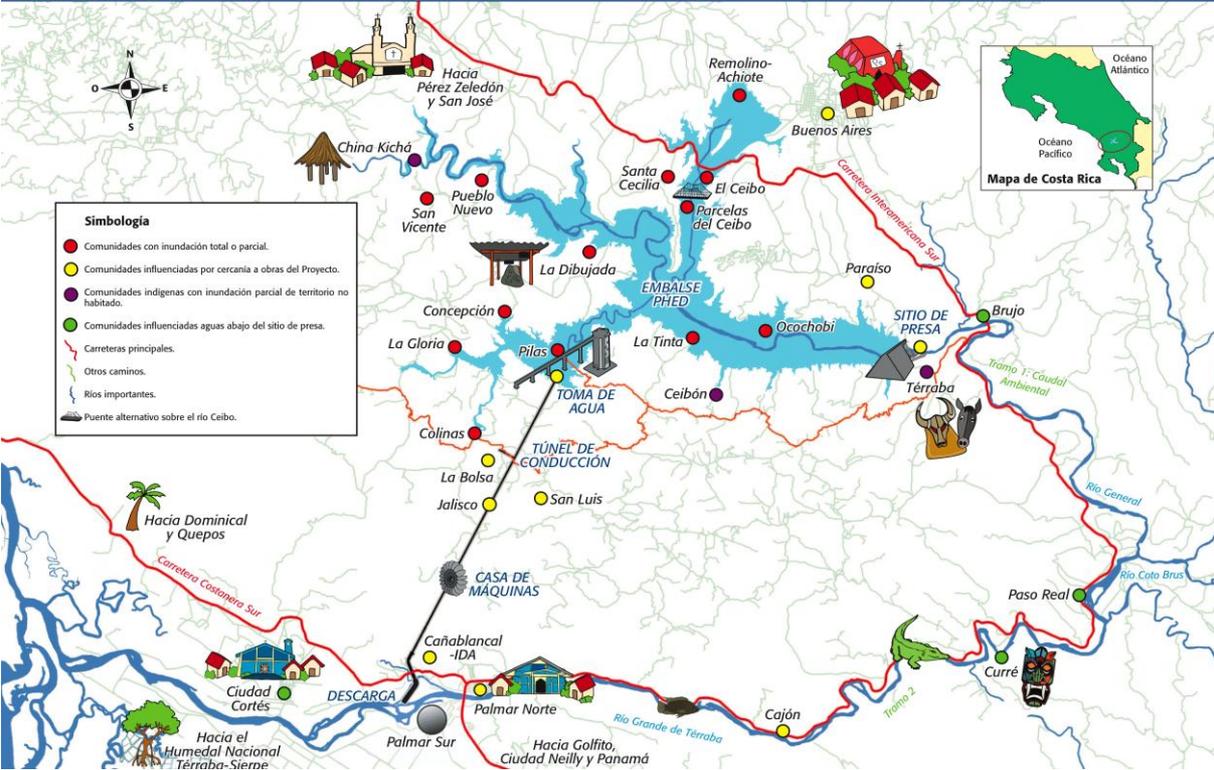
As illustrated in the table, the process to construct a dam in the south of Costa Rica started in the early 1970s. According to (Jenkins et.al 2010) the plans moved slowly forward until Costa Rica signed and ratified the Framework Treaty of the Central American Electrical Market, witch opened up for Costa Rica to sell electricity to other Central American countries (UNTREATY, Jenkins et.al 2010:31). The initial plans of the dam located at Cajón, between the communities of the Brunkas, Boruca and Curré, would have led to severe impacts, both socially and environmentally. It would have led to the inundation of about 4, 000 hectares of indigenous territories and relocation of indigenous people situated along the Río Grande de Térraba (Jenkins et.al 2011). The Boruca – Cajón Project was rejected after protests from indigenous communities and

¹³ *!Dejanos Contarle!* available at:

http://www.grupoice.com/esp/ele/infraest/proyect/icelec/proy_diquis/proy_diquis_doc.htm

studies that showed severe economic, social and environmental impacts. In 2001 ICE found what according to the company is the optimal option to secure electricity supply in Costa Rica, namely the PHED (ICE 2011). Despite being a smaller version of the previous plans, the PHED is going to be the largest dam ever constructed in Central America. The project is going to flood 6, 815 hectares to create a reservoir in Costa Rica's largest river basin, the Rio General. The project will be able to generate energy for more than a million users annually (Jenkins et.al 2010:13).

MAP 4: SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PHED PRESENTED BY ICE.¹⁴



The main differences between the Borica Cajón and El Diqúis project can briefly be described as following in table 3:

¹⁴ *!Dejanos Contarle!* available at: http://www.grupoice.com/esp/ele/infraest/proyect/icelec/proy_diquis/proy_diquis_doc.htm

TABLE 3: THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BORUCA-CAJON PROJECT AND EL DIQUIS PROJECT¹⁵

	Boruca-Cajón	El Diquís (formerly Veraguas)
Power Generated (Megawatts)	832	631
Reservoir Size (Hectares)	12581,6	6815
Area of Inter-American Highway Affected (Kilometres)	37,25	3,6
Indigenous Territory Inundated (Hectares)	4039,7	734,1

2.6.1 Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE)

The Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE) is the state company providing electricity and telecommunication services in Costa Rica. In 1948 a group of engineers submitted to the National Bank Board a document entitled (General Plan of Electrification of Costa Rica). The result of this initiative was the creation of the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity *Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE)*, an autonomous state institution on the 8th of April 1949, and today the company have monopoly on electricity and telecommunication services in the country. According to ICE, their goal is to direct the country's power development in accordance with the social and economic needs of the Costa Ricans, and in order to solve the problems of power shortage they propose commissioning more hydroelectric power plants. As ICE is concerned not only to electrify Costa Rica, but to develop the country, and see the use of hydropower as a

¹⁵ *!Dejanos Contarle!* available at: http://www.grupoice.com/esp/ele/infraest/proy/icelec/proy_diquis/proy_diquis_doc.htm

sustainable and effective alternative securing sufficient electricity supply in Costa Rica (ICE 2011).

Briefly explained by ICE, a hydroelectric plant operates with water. Since the river flow varies throughout the year, it is necessary to form a reservoir in order to keep generating evenly, and reduce the flow. For example, shifting some of the surplus flow of the rainy season for the next dry season, or storing water for several years. To form the reservoir it is essential to build a dam. And the best option for a dam in Costa Rica, is according to ICE, the PHED.

3 Research methods

In order to answer my research questions I chose to use qualitative methods of data collection. I have collected the personal stories presented to me by individuals in Boruca and Térraba, and heard their own accounts and experiences in relation to the hydropower project and their indigenous identity. My reasons for focusing on the narratives in this thesis was my wish to recollect the local people's views on the case and on the major institutional actor related to the project, namely ICE. Qualitative research emphasises the personal stories of individuals and their own perceptions rather than focusing on quantification as such (Bryman 2008:20). I therefore found it most useful to apply a qualitative approach to my research in order to be able to recollect and present the narratives presented to me. The research design I chose for this thesis is a case study design and according to Bryman (2008:28) such a design offers the possibility to go in depth and do a detailed analysis of a certain case. I have in this thesis dedicated my focus on the case of the PHED and the indigenous communities' response and opinion in relation to the project in regard of their indigenous identity and special rights. I conducted fieldwork on the two indigenous territories, Boruca and Térraba.

In order to collect information about the case I gained most of my data through primary sources. Data collection can be divided into two categories, primary data, which is data gathered personally, i.e. through interviews, and secondary data, which is information collected from other sources, documents, newspapers and other publications (Bryman 2008). Most of my data I have gathered through interviews and informal conversations in addition to participating in meetings and participative observation. My aim is to recollect the personal stories and I therefore chose to focus on primary sources.

However, I have also gathered information from secondary sources such as the internet, newspapers, documents, articles, reports and books in the investigation. I have made use of one important source for my thesis, namely the report *Swimming Against the Current. The Teribe Peoples and El Diquis Hydroelectric Project in Costa Rica* (Jenkins et.al 2010). The report was published at the Human Rights Clinic at the University of Texas School of Law in 2010. I have with this report been able to unravel information about the Teribe and the administrative and representative structure in the community that

was hard to fully grasp without the thorough investigation carried out by the authors of the report.

3.1 Access to information

I conducted fieldwork in the indigenous territories of Térraba and Boruca in September/October 2009. The first part of my study I undertook in Boruca from Wednesday the 16th of September to Sunday the 20th of September 2009. The second part of my fieldwork I conducted in the neighbouring community of Térraba from the 15th of October to the 17th of October. I was matriculated at the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) in San Jose as an exchange student the autumn semester 2009 and attended courses fulltime at UCR, making up 30 credits altogether. Through my time in San Jose I developed a network of contacts and gathered important information about the case before I visited the indigenous territories of Boruca and Térraba. Relevant and updated information was hard to find in Norway before leaving for Costa Rica, and I spent time in San Jose searching for material about the indigenous communities and the PHED, preparing for my fieldwork. Through the contacts I developed in San Jose, I then got access to their contact-network in the two communities. My selection of informants in the communities, are mainly based on names and contacts given by my hosts in the communities. I have applied snowball sampling, which is one of many sampling methods within what is defined as non-probability sampling. That means that among the inhabitants in the indigenous territories, some had a greater chance of being selected for interviews than others (Bryman 2008). Snowball sampling means to randomly choose informants with which to start the investigation and then from this selected group of interviewed individuals being directed to possible relevant informants identified by the first random informants. I chose this method, because I did not have any contacts in the indigenous territories before I arrived, and I was dependent on developing a network of contacts in order to get access to the territories. Due to these circumstances I made the choice to focus my investigation on the narratives presented by this one group of informants.

During fieldwork in Térraba I first intended to get access and interviews with representatives from the other side of the PHED. But the level of conflicts in Térraba is high and these conflicting interests made it hard for me to get contacts “on the other

side” as I was associated with the group fighting against the project. An example of this is when I tried to make an appointment with the leader of the ADI in Térraba during my stay in the village. One of the first things I did when arriving in Térraba was to contact his secretary in hope of getting an interview. At first the secretary appeared curious about me, friendly and welcoming. She then asked me where I was staying and when she got to know I was staying at my given family she was no longer interested in continuing the conversation. The leader of the ADI was away travelling and I did not get the interview with him. I therefore focused my interviews on the contacts I had developed, as it seemed difficult to change the perception of me as someone siding with the protesters in the amount of time I had in Térraba. As a result of the community being divided this way, I mainly talked to the individuals who were against the PHED.

3.2 Interviews

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. (...) ... an interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:1).

I carried out interviews as part of my methods for collecting data. Interviews can have different degrees of structure ranging from well organized with pre-set questions in a structured order, to more open focusing on selected subjects of interest but in no specific order (Kvale 1997). My aim was to investigate the point of view of the indigenous people in the communities. Therefore I saw it as important to let them take part in leading the interviews, and in this way telling me what they emphasized as important. Conducting interviews in this way also created a more informal setting as it appeared more like a conversation. I saw myself as a listener first of all in the interview setting, as my goal was to gain knowledge about the point of view of the person being interviewed. I started every interview asking about relevant personal information, age, occupation and place of residence. This information was important in order to understand who the actors presenting their stories to me were. However, I also led the interview on to the subjects of interests in my investigation, and as most interviews were carried out like a structured conversation I also had the possibility to ask follow-up

questions throughout the session. As such, I have reflected on the fact that the information received through the interviews is a result of the interaction between myself, and my informants, and that can have affected the material. However, my aim was to listen to the stories and the material from the interviews presents the narratives of my informants.

I developed an interview guide with my main themes of interest and kept my questions clear, short and easy to understand. This was to motivate the person being interviewed to open up and share their knowledge. Kvale (1997) suggests using an interview guide containing the main subjects of the investigation as a baseline before conducting the interviews. This method was good help in keeping structure during my interviews, but I worked freely around it as the different interviews developed, based on what the interviewees emphasised as important to them. The structured questions of the guide were thematically related to the objectives of my study. Moreover, what Kvale (1997) identifies as briefing and debriefing, developing a framework both before and after the interview session is an important part of the process of interviewing. Meaning, briefing beforehand what the interview is all about, being used for etc., and also presenting myself as a student and my role in the field. Afterwards, I did a debriefing (Kvale 1997) to wrap up the session and also open for the person being interviewed to add comments to the data collected.

I had brought a tape recorder to the field, but decided not to use it. Under the first interviews my experience was that the interviewees felt uncomfortable with the tape recorder and I decided to only take notes instead. That was a decision I made during fieldwork that had both advantages and disadvantages. It made me able to create a more informal and relaxed setting and come closer to the people I was talking to. On the other hand it would have been an advantage to have a tape recorder in order to have exact transcripts of all interviews conducted. However, I rewrote my notes from the interviews right after they were conducted with a fresh memory of what had been said, and this way I was able to guard all information received in the interviews. All together I conducted seventeen interviews, in addition to the informal conversations and participation during fieldwork.

I received much knowledge and information by spending time together with my host families in both Boruca and Térraba. I got to be part of the daily life in the village, playing with the kids, participating in their farming activities and daily chores which extended my understanding about the indigenous way of life. I saw it as important to participate in these things for several reasons. I was interested in their way of life and wanted to follow up the invitations when they clearly wished to show me different aspects about their life. These activities were part of broadening my understanding about the society and moreover it was a good way to break up the day and interviews. I did not carry out more than four interviews in one day because I wanted to be fully focused during the session and also have enough time to rewrite my notes the same day.

I have analyzed my data by searching for commonly shared arguments and statements in the interviews conducted. My analysis can be placed within what is defined as qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2008). By looking at the information I gathered through all of my interviews and comparing the data and categories found, I have searched to find similar motives and arguments in order to better the understanding of the case. In addition, I have made use of narrative analysis, which gives me the possibility to investigate what has been said how, and by whom as narrative analysis looks at how different actors produce and reproduce different stories of a given case (Adger et.al 2001). As such, narrative analysis also offers the opportunity to look at the frequency of statements within my data, and importantly by whom it is produced and reproduced.

3.3 Ethical considerations and challenges to qualitative research

I have made all of my informants anonymous in order to ensure their identity is kept hidden. I have done that by changing the names of the individuals I talked to. In addition, I have changed personal relations, family connection and location in the communities and additionally switched these new identities around again, several times. But I have made sure that the changes of personal information do not affect the statements given by the interviewed people. I have not changed personal information that is relevant for the content of the given statement. For example, the level of political knowledge and engagement in the struggle against the PHED, and the information level of the legal

rights of the interviewees are aspects I have not changed, as they are important in order to carry out a narrative analysis.

It is important to ensure informed consent among the interviewees involved (Bryman 2008) which means to inform the participants how long the participation is going to take, what is going to happen to the data and how it is going to be kept and used (Bryman 2008). Moreover, to be clear on how the participants can withdraw from the interviews at any time, and that all participation is voluntary. When conducting fieldwork in Térraba it was especially important for me to be clear on my role as a researcher and student in the community. Since the people I got to know here had formed a social movement fighting against the PHED, they showed early that they also hoped I would be able to assist them in their struggle. I understood that they hoped for me to bring their case to Norway in order to gain support internationally. It became important to be distinct on what I was able to do and my intention for being there. I underlined the fact that I was a student writing a thesis about the PHED and the indigenous people in Boruca and Térraba. Moreover, I made sure to communicate that I was not able to assist them in their struggle and that was not my intention for being there. However, the fact that I showed interest in their life and points of view, my informants appreciated. As such, my interest in Latin America and indigenous peoples clearly was affecting my choice of topic and location for this thesis. Hence my preconceived notions about indigenous group and the PHED, may have affected my work. However, I have been aware of this fact and during my fieldwork. As such, one of the main criticisms of qualitative research is the subjectivity of the material and how my feelings, opinions and perceptions are hard to keep separated from my data and will influence the findings, in addition to the critique of how data from a qualitative study cannot be generalized.

However, the data I have gathered is highly relevant to the theory applied in the analysis and discussion. Cuba and Lincoln (in Bryman 2008) have presented two primary criteria for assessing qualitative research, namely *trustworthiness* and *authenticity*, which I have made use of in the thesis. By the term trustworthiness they state that by making sure that the fieldwork and research is conducted by following good practice (credibility) and moreover submit research findings to the individuals being studied in order to make

sure the investigator have understood the findings correctly (Bryman 2008:377). Moreover, the researcher should make sure the findings can possible be transferred by others, and still valid in other contexts (transferability). By making sure that detailed records are kept of all phases of the research process (dependability). Cuba and Lincoln recognize that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, however the researcher should act in good faith and not allow personal perceptions to influence the research (confirmability). By acting according to these aspects the researcher ensure trustworthiness of the research (Bryman 2008:379). Moreover, Cuba and Lincoln suggests four criteria for ensuring authenticity of a study. The first is to make sure the research fairly represent the different viewpoints within the selected society being studied (fairness). In addition, give the members of the social society a better understanding social context and each other (ontological and educative authenticity). And last, by the research empowering the community members to engage them selves and take action to change their circumstances, and enabling them to take the steps necessary for action (catalytic and tactical authenticity). Following these criteria authenticity of the study can be ensured (Bryman 2008:380). As such, I have kept these aspects in mind in order to ensure the quality of my study. At times, it could be difficult when I experienced how the Teribe had the hope for me to be able to make their case known in Norway, and for me to assist them in their struggle. Though I have been aware of this, it can have influenced my research. However by keeping in mind the guidelines presented by Cuba and Lincoln I have assures the quality of the study.

3.4 Triangulation and saturation

I have in addition to interviews also correlated my findings with material from reports, articles and documents available in order to fill the gap in parts where I lacked information from my fieldwork. According to Bryman (2008:379) “triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena.” During fieldwork I realised the contradiction in information available concerning the case, as the different actors presented varying information about the case. I therefore searched for more thorough material, especially in relation to facts about the PHED, the ADIs representative role and the consultation carried out in Térraba. The contradiction in the material I have gathered is also part of why I have chosen to present my material as narratives, in order to illustrate how the actors argue for their case and tell their stories.

As mentioned, I have in addition to doing interviews in the field also received material through informal conversations and participation, as well as attending a meeting arranged by the movement against the PHED in order to grasp the varying aspects of the case.

4 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will briefly present political ecology, which is one of my main theoretical framework for the analysis and the theoretical concepts of narratives and identity. Subsequently, I will apply these concepts in the analysis and discussion of my findings.

4.1 Political Ecology

Political ecology is a field that “seeks to unravel the political forces at work in environmental access, management, and transformation” (Robbins 2004:xvi) of land and resources, and studies within the field often use narrative analysis as a tool in research. My study, in line with much work within political ecology, focuses on narratives, a concept which I will elaborate more on in section 4.2. Moreover, political ecology tends to emphasise the situation of marginalized groups in society, i.e. indigenous peoples and poor landholders, and research often has a normative approach. As such, my study stresses the perspective of the indigenous peoples in the case area with a focus on narratives.

The roots of political ecology can be dated back to the 1970s, when the term was first coined by journalist Alexander Cockburn, anthropologist Eric Wolf, and environmental scientist Grahame Beakhurst, as a way to think about access and control over resources. The three writers commented on the twosome of *politic* and *ecology*, and how access and control over resources are factors interconnected, and have to be considered for understanding environmental degradation and the lookout for other sustainable alternatives (Peet and Watts 2004:6). Political ecology is a relatively new approach and one of the founding works in the field was published in 1987, namely Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookenfield’s *Land Degradation and Society*, a book that is perceived as one of the founding works of political ecology. With this book they also defined one of the most used definitions within the field:

Political ecology combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself.

(Blaikie and Brookenfield 1987:17)

Political ecology is a theoretical approach that enfolds various fields of study within the social sciences and embrace varying definition (Robbins 2004). It has roots in different fields of study as; common property theory, peasant studies and critical theory, and springs as a reaction against neo-Malthusianism and the accounts of “ecoscarcity” and “modernisation” that dominated the environmental debate in the 1970s. The emphasis ranges from a focus on political economy, to formal political institutions, environmental change, social movements and environmental narratives. Though there are different definitions within the approach, all have in common that they represent an alternative to what Robbins (2004) terms as “apolitical ecology”. The most pronounced apolitical approaches dominating global discussions about environment are “ecoscarcity” and “modernization” accounts, used in order to explain environmental changes as land degradation, environmental conflicts, or conversation failures due to neo-Malthusian explanations such as population growth and the tragedy of the commons. Political ecology provides an alternative to these explanations of environmental issues by looking at the relation between nature and society. Moreover political ecologists focus on the different knowledge claims about the environment and development, in addition to the power relations within society in relation to access and use of natural resources (Robbins 2004). The framework can be used in order to understand the complex relationship between nature and society and an assumption shared among political ecologists is that environmental change is a product of political processes. Research tends to discover winners and losers, distinguishing the different power-relations among the actors involved in the processes of environmental change (Robbins 2004).

In line with the framework of political ecology, my study seeks to investigate, and present, one of the most outspoken actors fighting against the PHED in Costa Rica. In order to investigate how the different actors perceive changes in their environment differently, many researchers within the field of political ecology use narrative analysis

in order to understand the interaction between people and environment better. Development plans and environmental change have also created opportunities for local people to organize themselves in new coalitions in order to protect their natural environment (Robbins 2004). Most political ecologists place themselves within what can be defined as “soft constructivism” which implies recognizing empirical facts as real but questioning the interpretation of the reality, and hence the environmental policies resulting from this interpretation (Robbins 2004). Moreover, political ecology focuses on how knowledge is constructed through the varying understanding of environmental and social aspects. As such, political ecologists claim that the environment is constructed. However, political ecology do not seek to unmake all things that are perceived as real, but rather to point attention to those things that are taken for granted (Robbins 2004: 110). Hence, indicating that political ecology is a constructivist approach.

4.2 Narratives and identity

“Narrative studies are a way to understand social reality and how social structures, relations and identities are created and transformed (own translation, Johansson 2005:18)“

Narratives can be understood in different ways, and are often used within the framework of political ecology. I understand narratives as commonly shared stories consisting of various arguments and opinions within a specific discourse. By a discourse I mean what can be defined and explained as a knowledge or truth regime about a certain subject (Adger et al 2001). A discourse can be understood as a “ realm of understanding that may be shared by a small or large group of people on the local, national, international or global level” (Svarstad 2004:243) A narrative can be used to form and visualize distinctive circumstances that are produced and reproduced within a discourse (Svarstad 2004). Narratives can also be defined as stories (Johansson 2005) and used as reasons for action against development, as in Térraba.

Stories commonly used in describing and analyzing policy issues are a force in themselves, and must be considered explicitly in assessing policy options.

Further, these stories (...) often resist change or modification even if the presence of contradicting empirical data, because they continue to underwrite and stabilize the assumptions for decision making in the face of high uncertainty, complexity and polarization

(Roe 1994:2)

According to Roe a narrative follows the common structure of a story, meaning that it consists of a beginning, middle and end. The end is often in the form of a conclusion and formed as an argument. A narrative is often told in order to convince the listeners to believe or do something as a result of the story (Roe 1991).

Rural development is a genuinely uncertain activity, and one of the principal ways practitioners, bureaucrats and policymakers articulate and make sense of this uncertainty is to tell stories or scenarios that simplify the ambiguity.

(Roe 199:288)

I will argue that my findings indicate that the indigenous people protesting against the dam are making sense of the uncertainty in the project by holding on to their narrative. According to Svarstad, “actors involved in the discourse participate (in varying degrees) in its production, reproduction and transformation by written and oral statements”, a discourse analysis implies the examination of statements to identify and depict the discourses (Svarstad 2004:243). I intend, in line with Svarstad, “to go beyond describing social constructs such as discourses to get a picture of the actors involved in constructions, reconstructions and practices” of the discourses and narratives (Svarstad 2004:243).

4.3 Ethnicity and culture

Fredrik Barth wrote in 1969, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, a book that has had great influence in the way the concept of ethnicity is perceived (Hylland Eriksen 2000). With his book, Barth changed the general understanding of culture and ethnicity, from an earlier emphasis of the content, - to the boundaries within the social sciences. Barth

point attention to the boundaries between distinguished ethnic groups in difference to the cultural content e.g. language, common traditions and history of the peoples (Hylland Eriksen 2000:248). Ethnic groups had before generally been understood as a group largely biologically self-perpetuating, sharing fundamental cultural values and with a membership in which group members identified themselves and were identified by others. This way it was perceived that an ethnic group constituted a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order (Barth 1969:11). What Barth emphasises as problematic perceiving ethnic groups in this way, is how it leads us to believe that the question of boundary maintenance is in no way a problem, as it comes as a natural result of isolation; resulting from racial differences, cultural separation and language barriers (Barth 1969:11). This implies that different cultures are developed in isolation responding to ecological factors in the natural environment. Barth argues that the shared culture of a group is a result of, rather than a primary definitional characteristic, the varying ethnic groups. According to Barth, if one chose to consider culture as one of the most important aspects in defining ethnic groups, this implies distinguishing ethnic groups in the way they bear their culture. And differences between ethnic groups are focused on the way they their culture is viable, not of ethnic organization (Barth 1969). Two significant positions in how to view culture can be identified. Cultural essentialism can be defined as *the practice of regarding something (as a presumed human trait) as having innate existence or universal validity rather than as being a social, ideological, or intellectual construct* (Merriam Webster Dictionary). An opposite approach to an essentialist view on culture is depicted in social constructivism¹⁶.

Barth (1969) rejects the common notion from earlier studies, that ethnicity is due to cultural differences. He supports his statement in the work of Jan-Petter Blom (1969) and Harald Eidheim (1969). Blom writes about peasants in the Norwegian mountains and in the lowlands of Norway. These peasants are in many ways marked different in terms of culture, especially due to the different ecological context they find themselves in. But they do not see themselves as different ethnicities. Eidheim describes an opposite situation in the northern coast of Norway. Here, the cultural differences between the

¹⁶ See 4.1.

Sami People of Norway and Norwegians are minimal. However, the ethnical differences are important in their daily life (Hylland Eriksen 248:2000).

Furthermore, Hylland Eriksen emphasises, based on Barth (1969), how the ethnic boundaries between ethnic groups are maintained, despite the contact and flow of information, and peoples, across these social borders. There are no societies, no cultures or languages that can consist of only one isolated individual. The content and true meaning of culture first emerges as a result of contact between different individuals (2000:240 Hylland Eriksen). Identity separates peoples in relation to others, but it also unites individuals in the way it creates a unity among the people included. Two important terms in this context are national and ethnic identity. National identity is related to politic and civil rights, among them citizenship, and can briefly be defined as the identification with a certain state and its citizens. Ethnic identity is related to origin, history and shared mythical ancestry. People who account for having common origin and strain to survive as a cultural group through generations, make up an ethnic group. It is the people themselves that account for their common origin, if they have biological origin or not is irrelevant in this context (Hylland Eriksen 2000:243). Ethnic identity has shown to become more important in the meeting between different people, and in the meeting with modernisation. There are several cases showing that in time of scarce resources and competition, ethnic identity appears more important than before. Hylland Eriksen (2000) makes references to the work of David Parkins (1969) and Abner Cohen (1969). Their studies show how identity-carrying symbols, rituals and forms of organisation, can be revitalized in the meeting with the modern society and still work effectively. Ethnicity has this way shown to be flexible (Hylland Eriksen 2000:248).

5 Culture, identity and mobilization

Don Alvaro relaxes in his hammock on the porch of his house in Boruca. The rain is pouring and raindrops fall on the corrugated iron roof of the house, making a heavy noise. We are surrounded by hens looking for food among the wood chips covering the ground around us. Don Alvaro is one of the most recognized woodcarvers in the village, famous for making the traditional wooden masks of the Bruncas. The carved masks are used during the festival called the "Juego de los Diablos", a traditional festival celebrated from the 31th of December to the 2th of January. The celebration represents the defence by the indigenous ancestors of the Bruncas against the Spanish during the time of the conquest. The Spanish believed the indigenous people worshipped the devil and the people wearing the masks during the festival are called devils. During the celebration, the Spanish are depicted as a bull, the "toro", and the relationship between the "toro" and the "diablos" represent the historical struggle between the indigenous people and the conquistadores. The "diablos" triumph at the end of the festival, symbolizing the survival of the Bruncas.

The wife of Don Alvaro offers me a chair and tells us that a buss with American tourists has just arrived to the village, and soon after an American woman is shown the way into the house. Don Alvaro and his family are renting out rooms to tourists wishing to stay with a Brunca family. Tourism has become more important lately and several families are receiving parts of their income from renting rooms to tourists who want to experience the Brunca culture.

In this chapter I will briefly present the Brunca and reword the stories presented to me by my informants in Boruca.¹⁷ My aim in this study is to collect accounts of the community members, their personal point of views, experiences and perceptions about the PHED, their culture, identity and how they mobilized against the Boruca-Cajón Project.

¹⁷ The text is the result of my notes from interviews conducted in the two villages, Boruca and Térraba. The stories are reproduced orally to me by the villagers and translated by me from Spanish to English.

5.1 Boruca and the Brunca

The Brunca population is estimated to make up of about 3630 people (Guevara Berger 2000:107) and most of them are situated in the Brunca reserves of Boruca and Curré. It is noteworthy that an estimate from 1946 set the Brunca population to be only 616 people at the time. Given that the Brunca today make up more than 3,000 persons, one can estimate that the population has become nearly 5 times larger in 50 years (Guevara Berger 2000). Only 0, 3% of the Brunca are still able to speak the original Brunca language. These are elderly individuals and the language is practically lost. But there have been held courses by these elders in order to save and revitalize the language for future generations (Guevara Berger 2000:22). It is considered to have been 51 Brunca people still speaking their language in 1961 (Guevara Berger 2000:108). The opening of the Inter-American Highway in the 40's directly impacted the Brunca, because it passed over their land. The highway actually crosses straight through the community of Curré, and additionally had large impacts on Boruca. With the road the contact with the rest of the Costa Rican society developed, as such progressive, modern sets of ideas and way of thinking, in addition to the introduction of institutions such as schools and churches. The loss of the Brunca language can be linked to this development. As such, the loss of the language has with it led to additional loss of other traditional and cultural aspects of the Brunca culture.

However, today there is a revitalization of the traditions in the Brunca community of Boruca. The traditional arts and crafts have been brought back to life, and today the making and selling of wooden masks, weaving and making of fabrics, carpets and clothes made of cotton and natural tint in relation to tourism, has grown to become one of the main sources of income in the community. The arts and crafts made are sold to tourists visiting the community, or sold in various shops in the San Jose and the larger cities. Small scale agricultural activities are the other main source of living in Boruca, mainly production for own consumption.

5.2 Protests and mobilization

We simply did not want the project here, as they (ICE) could not promise us any benefits from it. When ICE could not tell us with certainty that the project would benefit us, we did not want it here. Boruca said no.

(Interview, Pedro, Boruca 17.09. 2009)

In the 1970s the Boruca-Cajón Project was proposed. My informants in Boruca have shared their stories of how they fought together in the community against the dam and how they organized themselves in different groups and organisations. From my findings, there are two main reasons perceived by my informants for why the Boruca-Cajón project was never constructed. What appear to be the most important reasons pointed out are the tests and studies carried out by ICE on the ground, and the results showing that the land was not suitable for the construction. Second, my informants emphasise the point of how, if the dam had been constructed in Boruca, much indigenous land would have been affected. This would have led to large impacts, socially and economically for the Brunca. All my informants in Boruca made it very clear that they were against the hydropower plans, and I did not meet with anyone during my time in the community who wished for the project to be built. Of course this does not mean that nobody wished for it, and my informants also told of the benefits. But according to them, the general opinion in Boruca was, at the time, a shared resistance against the Boruca-Cajón Project. Importantly, the ADI in Boruca took a clear stand against the dam. It is made clear to me how important the shared consensus was in the mobilization. Some seem to give more importance to the protests in the work to stop the dam, but nobody appears to believe the protests alone was the reason the project was stopped. Rather, an interaction of the protests and the test results played part in the decision.

Alma is a Brunca woman in her mid-70s living in Boruca. She has been a member of the ADI in Boruca and is well oriented about the legal framework concerning indigenous people. She is married with a Brunca and has lived all her life in the village. She points at the issue of indigenous versus non-indigenous land as an important aspect for changing the site of construction:

It all started here in Boruca about 25 years ago. They undertook different technical samples on the land, started the process and then, stopped it all. Part of what stopped them was that much of the land on which the project was to be constructed was land belonging to the indigenous reserve. And there are special laws that have to be considered if one is building on land in the indigenous reserve, the ILO Convention and La Ley Indígena. I believe we have the legal framework in order – what is missing is for the government to follow the laws protecting us, the indigenous people. I was part of a group organizing against the hydropower project, the “Comición Contra el Proyecto Boruca”. When they now have proposed the PHED in Térraba, 80 % of the land where the project is to be constructed is nationally owned land. Therefore they do not have to pay as much.
(Interview, Alma, Boruca 18.09.2009)

Alma is a woman with good knowledge of the ILO169 and the Ley Indígena. The majority of my informants in Boruca mention the two laws, also people who are not as well oriented and interested in politics and rights on a general level the same way as Alma. Hence, it is clear the knowledge of the legal framework is well established in Boruca. The community here organized themselves together with their Brunca relatives in Cúrrre against the Boruca-Cajón Project. People from outside the communities, from San José the capital and from all over Costa Rica marched in demonstrations together with the Brunca. My informants in Boruca tell me that there was much international engagement in the protests. There came representatives from abroad, Peru and Germany among others, to support and participate. The protests were marked by organizing demonstrations and closing off the Inter-American highway, and documents were made for the government arguing their reasons for the protest (Interviews, Boruca 18.09.2009). My informants are clear on the duality in protest and the importance of the analysis done on the land by ICE as an important element for not constructing the hydropower in Boruca. However, they emphasise how important it was for them to make their voices heard and their stand in the case to reach out. This indicates a strong wish from the Brunca to take part in decision-making processes on issues affecting them and let their opinions and views of point to be heard. As such, they have the right to be heard as stated in ILO 169.

Moreover, another point that is made clear through my interviews in Boruca is how there exists a notion among the Brunca that ICE proposed the dam to be constructed on indigenous land because they, as indigenous peoples, do not know their rights. This assumption is expressed in the words of Irma:

Indigenous people do not know so much about how the capitalist system works. In other communities, with "blancos", they know more about the system, which is why they wish to construct the project here.

(Interview, Irma, Boruca 18.09.2009)

It becomes clear during my interviews that among the Brunca, not all of them feel themselves fully aware about how the system leading on changes affecting them is functioning. Even though this statement expresses an understanding among the Brunca that companies like ICE can see them as an easy target to exploit because they are perceived as uneducated about their own rights, my findings indicate that the Brunca on a general level have much knowledge of their rights. All of my informants have expressed knowledge of the ILO 169 - the degree of thoroughness varies, but the right to consultation is mentioned by most of those I spoke to. In addition, everyone knows about the *Ley Indígena* and how this is the main legal framework protecting their special rights as indigenous peoples in Costa Rica. These findings indicate that the inhabitants in Boruca are well informed on the issue of indigenous rights. However, this does not mean that ICE does not see the indigenous population as more easy to influence due to lack of knowledge and therefore easier to get through their projects on indigenous land, rather than in other areas mostly inhabited by non-indigenous people. Though there are no such indications in the information available from ICE, it becomes clear through their publications that the area of the indigenous territories and the *Rio General* is the best option for developing the hydropower possibilities in Costa Rica (ICE 2011).

5.2.1 Environmental and social impacts – fuel for the protests

The nature can be destroyed. A man told me that in Brazil the natural diversity of species were destroyed when a similar hydropower plant was built there. Had the plans to construct the hydropower not been changed from here, all people in Cúrrre would have to be removed.

(Interview, Jorge, Boruca 17.09.2009)

It is evident that if the planned Boruca-Cajón Project had been constructed it would have led to the destruction of large areas of land. It was estimated that 4039,7 hectares of indigenous land would have been inundated as a result of the project. The environmental change that would affect Boruca was an important aspect in the protest and mobilization against the dam in the 70s. Most of the inhabitants in Boruca are involved in subsistence farming and dependent on their crops in order to make their living. They feared the environmental impacts and how the nature would be affected and impact the agricultural production. My informants in Boruca point at the possibilities for a change in vegetation and the effect such sudden changes would have on the environment. They saw it as impossible to predict the result of the river changing its streams in such a sudden and unnatural manner that the dam would present. Furthermore, they mention possible consequences that could have resulted from the dam; lack of water and droughts that would influence the crops and agricultural production is one of their main concerns. Another issue of concern was the natural life in the river. Fish would most likely disappear or the amount of fish would be heavily reduced, they feared. In addition, there is one impact of the proposed Boruca-Cajón that all of my informants mention as a factor for the protests; the fear of losing their identity and traditional way of life, and with it their identity as indigenous people. Expressed with the words of Irma:

We will see more mixed marriages and finally we won't have any more indigenous people left here. My daughter is married to a "blanco", there is no law forbidding indigenous people to marry people from other tribes. But I fear losing my culture.

(Irma 18.09.2009)

5.3 Culture and identity

We do not want to be modernized. We want to keep our community and way of life as it is. I wish for my children to marry other Brunca, it is important to preserve our indigenous culture. Some of my children are marrying "blancos" and their children become a mix.

(Interview, Benicio, Boruca 17.09.2009)

I introduced this chapter with a scene from the house of Don Alvaro. Through his craft the traditional wooden masks continue to be part of the Brunca cultural life. The masks picture different animals, strong animals as the jaguar, colourful parrots and the black jaguar, all of which symbolize the Brunca culture and tradition. The statement above clearly illustrates what I found to be the shared point of view of my informants. They all emphasise how they fear losing their culture and identity. If the hydropower Boruca-Cajón would have been built in the 70s they feared the large number of immigrants the project would bring to the community. For the same reasons the Brunca are not in favour of the PHED. Another Brunca preoccupied that the hydropower would lead to the loss of tradition in the Brunca community is Oscar. He is accompanied of his son when I meet him outside his home, where the musical band of his son practices. The band is preparing for a concert the next day held on the same property. The concert is part of a cultural event and there is much excitement about the forthcoming concert. The music presented is traditional indigenous music, another important part of the Brunca culture.

More people will arrive from the outside. Because of that I fear the Brunca culture will be lost.

(Interview, Oscar 18.09.2009)

Music and arts are both important aspects of the Brunca, and part of the tradition they wish to keep alive. Many people would have arrived here from the outside in relation to the hydropower project. The need for labour would attract people from outside, non-indigenous people. And with so many people immigrating, Oscar fears that this immigration will lead to the Brunca losing their culture and identity as indigenous people. There would be more chances for mixed marriages, and the protection of the Brunca culture and identity are important aspects in the resistance against the hydropower. The project represents a modern development that will bring with it

encompassing changes in the traditional way of life in the community. As I have tried to illustrate, the Brunca want to keep their traditional music, art and way of life alive as it is today. Moreover, they fear the people who will arrive in the community as part of the construction. Most importantly, what is mentioned are the mixed marriages. Many of the young Brunca are married with non-indigenous, and it appears to be of great concern to the parenting generation. My informants express great concern in relation to the mixed marriages and how this leads to the eradication of the indigenous culture.

Barth emphasises how the true content of a culture will emerge when it comes in contact with others (Barth 1969). Furthermore, he talks of how ethnic boundaries are maintained despite contact and flow of people and information across the social borders separating different communities and cultures. In the case of the Brunca, it appears they are gathering in order to protect their indigenous identity against the threat of cultural destruction they fear the project would bring. As such, the immigration of people with other traditions and sets of minds that would follow the hydropower development, represent a trigger which makes them more aware of their cultural identity and the set of ideas they share as an indigenous group. Identity separates people from each other, but importantly it also unifies those included, the way they are sharing common values and traditions (Hylland Eriksen 2000). The statement above is very clear on the stand taken by my informants in Boruca. They do not wish to be modernized; meaning a development that makes them a more integrated part of the economic and social society of the rest of Costa Rica. In difference, what they wish is to keep their cultural traditions and continue their life the way they have done before. I argue that from my findings, the project of the dam has been the trigger initiating and reinforcing the shared emphasis among the Brunca to protect and keep their indigenous identity the way it is.

Though one of the impacts most feared by the Brunca is the introduction of strangers to the community, and how this would lead to losing their tradition and culture, it appears as if they have succeeded in keeping their indigenous identity alive in their meeting with tourists in the community. Today they are able to live their traditional life, at the same time as they welcome tourists in what appears to be a successful source of income for many Brunca. I argue based on my findings, that as the tourism is happening on their own premises, it is the Brunca themselves who decide when they will arrive, how many,

and how long they are staying. Moreover, it actually seems to create an opportunity for the Brunca to dedicate time on their traditional arts and crafts. I will argue that, since the tourism represents such a large source of income, it makes it attractive to carry out and preserve the indigenous traditions and also argue for the time spent on activities related to this, rather than working on the fields to make a living. Moreover, as I see it based on my findings, the Brunca defines themselves within the essentialist perception of cultural identity, making themselves visible as an indigenous group in Costa Rica.

Even though the impacts mentioned by my informants are negative in regard of the hydropower development, some also mention possible positive impacts that such a development could bring with it to the community. I met Gabriella who points to the positive aspects of the modern healthcare.

5.4 Possible positive impacts of the project

Gabriella is a 44 years old woman and member of the ADI in Boruca. She works with indigenous arts and crafts and her house is decorated with colourful blankets and indigenous arts. When I arrive she tells me the happy news that today she has become a grandmother; one of her daughters has given birth to her first baby. She tells me about the traditional way of giving birth in the community and how it before was common to give birth at home. But today her daughter has given birth in the hospital in Buenos Aires. That is a more secure way to give birth, she says. If anything should happen, there are doctors available to assist immediately.

There are positive aspects of the modern society such a development as the hydropower project would bring to the indigenous territories, and aspect mentioned by my informants is health care. There is a need to expand the access to healthcare services in the indigenous territory, according to my informants. And with the project, they see better healthcare services to be one of the possible positive impacts. With the immigration of workers a consequence would be to expand the access to healthcare and possibly a stationary medical consultation in the community. Another positive impact mentioned by my informants in Boruca is the access to employment in the community.

The project could lead to more job opportunities. They (ICE) talked about employment of thousands of people related to the construction.

(Interview, Alfredo, Boruca 18.09.2009)

Today the main source of employment in Boruca is agricultural activity. With the project new and different job opportunities would arrive. But the Brunca are sceptical to the long term of any eventual employment. During the construction they picture it could be a need for unskilled manual labour, but after the construction is finished my informants point at the likely possibility of the positions being filled with educated people, not the indigenous community members.

Secure and sufficient water supply is a problem in the community, and so is supply and network for electricity. If the project was to be constructed ICE have promised to improve these issues and the emphasis of this aspect is positive for the Brunca. These are important issues to people here, and electricity and water are of great concern in everyday life. The river is the main source of water in the community today, and the changes in the river stream are therefore of concern. These issues were relevant for the Brunca when the Boruca-Cajón project was proposed and still are important in relation to the PHED today.

5.5 The Brunca and Teribe - differences and relation

The Brunca and the Teribe are neighbouring communities but my informants tell me there is not much contact between them. In the 70s the engagement in Bourca was high and the protests against the Boruca-Cajón project mobilized all levels of the Brunca community. Today the mobilization in Boruca is not high in relation to the PHED proposed in Térraba. My informants in Boruca take a clear stand against the PHED and tell me that the same arguments against the dam in the 70s are valid for the PHED today. But they do not fear the changes affecting their community today, as it would have done in the 70s.

In Boruca we are not so preoccupied of the plans about the Diquis dam today as they are in Térraba. But when they wanted to construct the plant here, we did care a lot.

(Interview, Boruca 18.09.2009)

My informants in Boruca argue that the PHED cannot be stopped. The president of the ADI in Térraba went directly to the office of ICE and signed the permit for the construction, and therefore the decision is already finalized they say. Moreover, they argue that the Téribes are not able to organize the same fight against the project as they did in Boruca. First, because there are less people in Térraba, and most importantly, they are not united against the PHED the same way the Brunca mobilized against the Boruca-Cajón project. There are more people in favour of the plans in Térraba, hence the Téribes value other aspects of life than the Brunca. Indicating that the Brunca are concerned to preserve their culture and traditional life as indigenous people, in difference from in Térraba where the opinions differ within the community (Interviews Boruca, 17-18.09.2009).

It is important to note the separation between the Brunca and the Téribes and the lack of contact between them. According to Barth (1969) the true identity and culture first emerges in the meeting with others and my information from the field shows how this also can be applied in the meeting between different indigenous communities. It seems evident from my findings that the Brunca and Teribe define themselves as distinctively different people and the fact that they are indigenous groups and share the same resistance against the hydropower does not bring them much closer. The Brunca are preoccupied with clarifying the differences between them and the Téribes, while it appears that in Térraba they look at Boruca as an example of how they wish to make their voice be heard and become more visible as indigenous peoples in Térraba.

6 Representation, consultation and mobilization

Hilda welcomes me at her house in Térraba. She lives somewhat outside the village centre, in a little house close to the river. From her garden we hear the river from across a little forest. Hilda gets her machete and takes me through the wood to see the river. We walk down as she cuts away bushes to make a road as we walk. "Everything grows so fast here," she tells me. Hilda lives together with her children, her mother and sister, with no husband and she has to do the work in the forest herself. If ICE comes to the village with the project, she fears all of the forest around her property will be destroyed. She is also preoccupied concerning the safety in the community and the social environment. "The tranquillity is important for me and my family, and I fear we will lose it if the project is constructed here. I can sleep feeling safe in my house today, but I fear that will change. They are building new roads and more people will arrive," she says. Hilda has not been much involved in the struggle against the dam, she has a lot of work and responsibility in the house and does not have the time for it. But she supports the struggle, and is convinced it is the right thing to do, fighting the PHED.

(Hilda, Interview, Térraba 16.10.2009)

In this chapter I briefly introduce the Teribe and their history. Moreover, I will reword their stories, presented to me by my informants in Térraba. My aim has been to collect the personal accounts of the community members, their point of view, experiences and perceptions about the PHED, their culture and identity. In addition, I have investigated how the community members have been consulted in Térraba, fighting against the project and identified the local governmental structure and the challenges concerning representation through the ADI.

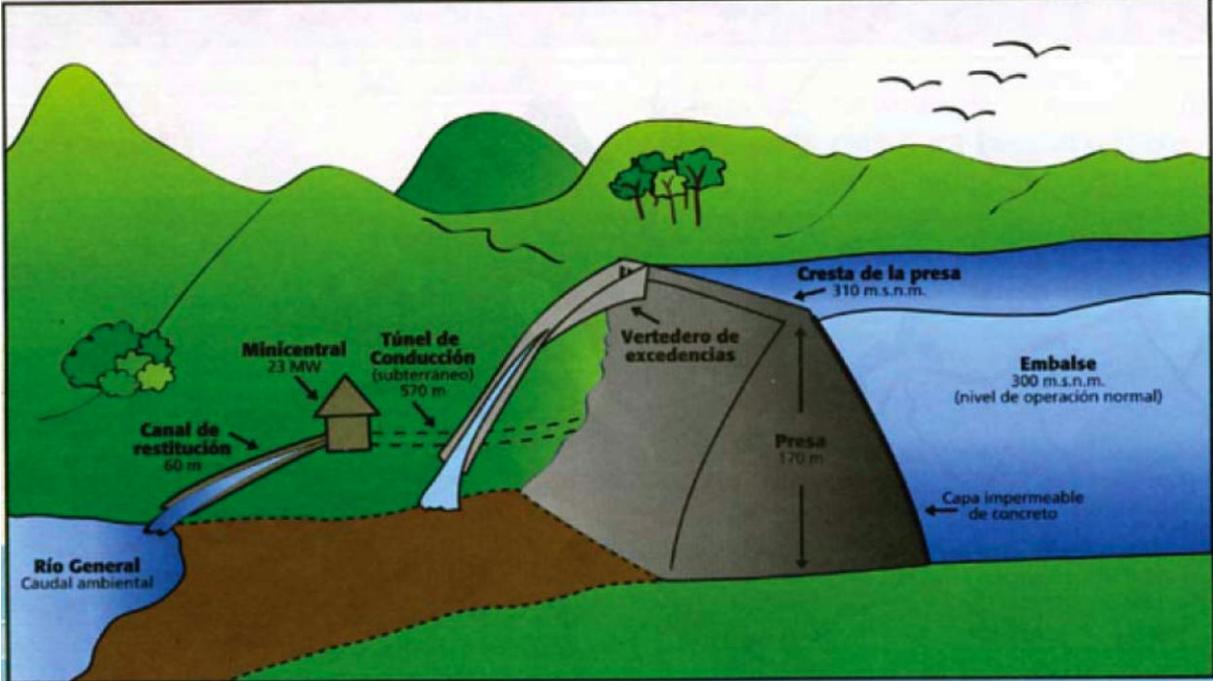
6.1 Térraba and the Teribe

Within the eight indigenous groups in Costa Rica, the Teribe of Térraba constitutes around 750 people (Guevara Berger 2000). The Teribe people were forced to migrate to Térraba from Panama by the Spanish in the eighteenth century and the relocation partly led to the loss of their language and cultural traditions (Guevara Berger 2000, Jenkins et.al 2010). They had to recreate their culture in Térraba, an unknown region they were not familiar with. They borrowed much in the creation of their new life from their neighbours, the Brunka tribe, like for instance the way to build their houses with roofs covered with palm leaves (Guevara Berger 2000:7). Today hardly anybody speaks the original Teribe language in Costa Rica. In the year 2000 it was estimated to be only 5 of the 750 Teribe in Costa Rica remaining who still speak it. But the possibility to revitalize the language is present due to the contact between Teribe peoples in Costa Rica and their Teribe relatives in Panama, where the language has survived (Jenkins et.al 2010, Guevara Berger 2000:7). Today there is extensive contact between the Teribe in Costa Rica and their relatives in Panama. There are exchange programs between youth from the two countries and marriages have been happening as a result of these meetings.

According to the report published by the Human Rights Clinic at The University of Texas School of Law (Jenkins et.al 2010), a high pressure for development has been the cause for substantial loss of indigenous lands. The Inter-American Highway was built in the mid-twentieth century crossing through Teribe territory and led to great loss of land, both due to the construction itself and in addition to the migration that came south with the highway. The experience of the Teribe from the development of the Inter-American Highway has been how it led to the dispossession of their land, and loss both economically and spiritually (Jenkins et.al 2010:17). The large number of people coming from outside started the process of indigenous peoples losing their land (Jenkins et.al 2010). In Térraba the situation is especially severe regarding landownership. On a national level 40 – 60 % of indigenous land is estimated to be controlled by non-indigenous people. In Térraba, the amount of land controlled by non-indigenous exceed 90% (Jenkins et.al 2010, Guevara Berger 2000:3). The proposed PHED, is according to the report from the Human Rights Clinic (Jenkins et.al 2010), the most recent threat to indigenous land in the way it will lead to flooding of land, and attract more people from outside to the

indigenous territories. In this regard, PHED is another example of a project in the interest of national development, with negative impacts for the indigenous peoples (Jenkins et.al 2010:17).

FIGURE 1: ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROPOSED PHED



The figure above illustrate the proposed PHED on the Rio General.¹⁸

¹⁸ Una Mirada al Proyecto Hidroeléctrico available at: http://www.grupoice.com/esp/ele/infraest/proy/icelec/proy_diquis/proy_diquis_doc.htm

6.2 Importance of the protests

The location changed because of how the studies carried out in Boruca showed that the rock in the tunnel had been cracking up. That is why the construction site changed to be built here in Térraba. Another important factor for the project to be stopped was the pressure from the communities.

(Miguel, Interview, Térraba 16.10.2009)

ICE changed the site of the dam because of the studies done on the ground in Boruca, and the great pressure from the village, my informants in Térraba tell me. The Teribe emphasize the protests from the community in Boruca and how it played an important part in order to stop the Boruca-Cajón project from being constructed in 1970. From my interviews it becomes clear that the Teribes fighting the PHED today, see the protests in Boruca in the 70s as a success, and gather inspiration from these events in order to continue their struggle against the PHED. However, they are very much aware of the results from the studies done on the construction site and how the results showed that the land was not suitable, which impacted the decision not to build the Boruca-Cajón dam. As such, they are clear on the point argued by ICE, that the proposed PHED today will lead to significantly less environmental and social impacts than the Boruca-Cajón would have. Having said this, the impacts are severe for the Téribes, even though they are of smaller scale than would have been the case in Boruca.

The Téribe are organizing themselves against the PHED through meetings and workshops, organizing demonstrations and publishing appeals in the newspapers. They have gained support from outside the indigenous community and people are joining the protests from the capital of San José and also from abroad. According to my informants, there has not been done any study on how many are against, and how many are in favour of the PHED in Térraba. In the community there have emerged two confronting positions among the inhabitants. On one side are the *ADI* and those associated with them holding one position in favour of the PHED, and on the other those who fight against the project (Interviews, Térraba, 2009). An important part of the struggle against the PHED, is to inform the indigenous peoples of the “real story” about the PHED. According to several of my informants, they see it as crucial to inform the members of the community that have not taken a stand against the project, arguing the reason for

their reluctance is the fact that they do not have real information about the case and the impacts. The Teribe fighting against the project present their stories about the PHED, stories that are different from the story presented by those in favour of the project and ICE. They want another development for the community than the one ICE and the PHED stand for. To say it with the words of Jorge, one of my informants living in Térraba “ICE say they will bring development, but there are other ways of development” (Jorge Interview, Térraba 17.10.2009). Moreover, the protests against the PHED in Térraba are important to my informants. They have a strong hope to win through and let their voice be heard.

If I did not feel there was any hope to change the plans, I would not continue the fight. The struggle is first of all important to me as a person, and second for the collective good. The fight continues. We can win - the hope is always here. If not, we would have left our houses by now.

(Fernando, Interview, Térraba 17.10.2009)

6.3 Cultural and environmental impacts

We have had the experience of getting to know other similar projects and we are worried about our culture and life as a village. The village and the whole of our society will change in a negative way in terms of our culture. There are forces very strong that wish to construct the dam and continue the process started here. There will arrive people with another set of ideas, another way of thinking. As a village we have something unique here. We are going to lose the identity we have. More than 5000 people are estimated to come here to construct the dam. This is a problem. We fear they will bring alcohol, drugs and prostitution. In addition, it is all building up to an enormous dependence on one source of income. What is the economic future we can expect from this project? And then we have the environmental aspect. 7000 hectares will be affected here. They have said nothing about the land we are going to lose. They, the government and ICE, are not offering us any warranties. They say the project will bring development. More houses, more bars, more cantinas and hotels. But we do not want to develop in this way. Our identity, our culture; the dam is going to destroy all of this.

(Javier, Interview, Terraba 17.10.2009)

The Téribe have a large network of relatives in Panama, and they have been visiting similar projects there in order to investigate the impacts of these and how it has impacted the indigenous population there, in order to learn more of what they can expect from the PHED if it is to be constructed as planned. The Teribe fear the consequences of such a project, based on experiences from Panama. They tell me how they fear the environmental impacts resulting from the PHED. They fight against the project because they are afraid the natural fauna and animals in the indigenous territory of Tèrraba will disappear. In the river there is a lot of fish today and that fish will probably disappear as the project is going to dry out the river and the water is going to be dammed up. They are very clear on the kind of development they wish for their community. Said in the words of Fernando:

We want a development that can ensure us to be here for at least a 100 years longer, with our culture and the environment intact. What is special for us is that we have always been here, and we wish to continue living here. This is what is special for Tèrraba and that is why this land is special to us.

(Fernando, Interview, Tèrraba 17.10.2009)

Fernando is a young man, well-oriented about indigenous rights and active on several forums fighting against the PHED and for stronger indigenous rights. He formulates the statement above during my interview with him. However, his point of view is shared by most of my informants. They are all clear about the development ICE can bring to the community, and that there are indigenous peoples in the community who wish for a modern society as such. I will therefore argue here that a conflict-line can be drawn between those who wish for a modern society, by which I mean a post-traditional society, oriented towards capitalism and industrialization, which is made possible with the PHED. On the other hand we find the position held by the Teribe who wish to continue their traditional life as they know it. It comes down to the question of what kind of development the Téribe wish for the future.

ICE says they will bring employment to the community and it might lead to more tourism, more job opportunities. They have promised to improve and build new roads here. But so far they have only constructed roads to get to the construction site where they are building the tunnels. They (ICE) spend a lot of money here, but we won't gain on this.

(Carlos , Interview, Térraba 16.10.2009)

However, according to ICE they have already started working on improving the roads in the area. An example they provide in order to illustrate this is how the (PHED) have set off 500 million Costa Rican colones to this purpose. The road to the village of Térraba from the Inter-American Highway has been improved with 700 meters new concrete. This price was 57 million Costa Rican colones. As a result, the inhabitants in Térraba can drive more safely on the roads, making access to the community easy. The roads tend to deteriorate especially in winter, making it difficult to drive (ICE 2009).

The environmental impacts are one of the aspects concerning the Téribes, especially how the PHED will affect the life in the river. They tell me how they and their culture depend on the river, and how they through generations have built their life in relation to the river and moreover emphasise the importance of the river and how their traditions and cultural life have developed in harmony with it. The PHED will affect the life in the river and the Teribes fighting against the project are very clear about what they fight for; a development for the community in harmony with nature. They cannot say yes to the development ICE and the project stands for, that would mean the destruction of the cultural life of the Téribes (Interviews, Térraba 16.10.2009). However, one of the main arguments given by ICE in favour of the PHED, is how the dam will produce energy for the Costa Ricans, energy needed in order to develop the country. On the other side, my informants in Térraba claim to know that the energy produced here is for exporting elsewhere, and will not benefit the community of Térraba.

There are positive aspects of the planned development as well. But it is all in the control of ICE. And what is lost of humanity and nature cannot be paid for. ICE will bring employment and improve the roads here. But this will only last for a few years.

(Jorge, Interview, Térraba 17.10.2009)

The main argument among the Tóribes fighting against the PHED is the fear of losing their indigenous culture. The aspect of the indigenous culture is emphasised by all my informants in Térraba that have defined themselves as opponents of the project. What they tell me is how the dam will bring with it large-scale immigration to the community, i.e. workers will arrive from outside the indigenous territory. The Teribe protesting against the PHED fear these people will bring with them their modern way of thinking and social conduct that will challenge the indigenous lifestyle in Térraba. One of the aspects mentioned by several of those I speak to is the fear of more bars in the area, and the life style that could follow, consequently alcohol and prostitution. This would lead to a severe change in the lifestyle of the indigenous peoples in Terraba.

6.4 Culture and identity in Térraba

Jorge presents himself as a woodcarver from Térraba. I meet him in his workshop where he is carving masks in wood. He tells me that this is an ancient tradition of the Teribes, just as it is in Boruca, and that they have their own celebration similar to the one held in Boruca every year. Jorge tells me that today Teribes are coming back from the big cities to live here in the community again, and that the revitalization of the arts and crafts of the Teribe happening in the community now, is one of the reasons. The artwork represents our indigenous identity and is important in order to maintain our identity and ourselves as a village of Teribes he tells me. The Tóribe language is only spoken here in Costa Rica and it is important to maintain in order to continue our traditional life. The youth here in Térraba, many of them have left the community because there are no opportunities here, they wish to continue their studies and educate themselves.

(Jorge, Interview, Térraba 17.10.2009)

Barth (1969) emphasises how ethnic boundaries are maintained despite contact across these social borders. In Térraba it appears from the information received by my informants that the Teribe culture has become stronger due to the threat of large-scale immigration to the community, represented by PHED. As Jorge tells me, Teribe people are returning back to Térraba from the larger cities in Costa Rica. Jorge and my informants tell me that they hope to create a society with opportunities for youth on the indigenous territory. However, they wish a development based on the Tóribe culture

and tradition, a development defined by themselves, not the future represented by PHED. Many young people have left the community because of lacking opportunities, but today there is a wish among Teribe youth to return back to their indigenous roots. As mentioned, there is extensive contact between Teribe in Panama and Costa Rica, including an exchange program between Térraba and Teribe communities in Panama. Jorge also tells me how there are several marriages resulting from this exchange program. Among my informants, one of the families the couple met in Panama arranged by the exchange program, he a young man from Térraba, she is a Teribe woman from Panama, now living in Costa Rica with her husband.

The Téribes are today revitalizing their culture and tradition, and it appears to be related to the threat against their traditional life represented by PHED. The emphasis on making their arts and crafts vivid can be linked to the attempt to make their indigenous identity more visible, in order to use it as an important aspect in the protests against the PHED. According to Barth (1969) if one chose to consider culture as one of the most important aspects in defining ethnic groups this implies to distinguish ethnic groups in the way they bear their culture, the way they are able to make their culture stand out and be visible to others. There are two main positions on how to view culture. Cultural essentialism can be defined as the practise of regarding culture as something having innate existence or universal validity rather than being as social, ideological or intellectual construct (Merriam Webster Dictionary). By defining culture in an essentialist view, looking for the content of the indigenous culture and the way it is visible becomes important. Also, the way the Teribe are able to stand out as a visible cultural group becomes important. Through my research I find it interesting to note the differences between Boruca and Térraba as such. In Boruca the culture is visible in the community, the arts and crafts makes the community colourful, and tourist who visit are met by women weaving carpets on their porches while the men are out in the fields working, continuing their traditional way of life. Moreover, this is the pre-perceived view many tourist and non-indigenous people have of indigenous groups. They are set out as keepers of traditions, living in a special relationship with nature as they have done for centuries. When the Brunca mobilized against the Boruca-Cajón project, they defined themselves as a distinct culture according to an essentialist approach, and made it an important aspect in the protests. I argue it becomes easier to gain support for their

case, as people from outside can relate to the picture of the Brunca as a visible indigenous group with their cultural tradition to show. Hence, an essentialist view on culture would mean that culture is something that could fade away over time, and in meeting with modern development as the Boruca-Cajón project and now the PHED represents. As a result, it then becomes important to protect the culture from threats and therefore used as an argument in the protests.

The Téribe are an indigenous group who do not have the same visibility of their indigenous culture as the Brunca, if one is to define culture according to an essentialist approach. The community of Térraba is inhabited by more non-indigenous peoples than in Boruca, and of course the minority position of the Téribe in their community is influencing their visibility. However, the fact that the visibility of the indigenous culture in Térraba is not as obvious as it is in Boruca, does not make the Teribes less indigenous as a group. The revitalization of the arts and crafts in Térraba can be related to the hope to become more visible as an indigenous community. My informants tell me how they have been looking at Boruca and seen how the Brunca have been able to develop tourism on their own terms, and also how they succeeded in their protests against the Boruca-Cajón project. It appears to have been an inspiration for the Téribes for the development they now seek for their community.

Social science perspective on culture has changed from the essentialist approach after Barth's book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Identity and culture are not perceived as something that is defined in line with visible artefacts and presence of traditions. An opposite approach to an essentialist view of culture is depicted in social constructivism, meaning that culture is a flexible concept constructed in order to pursue certain interests that could be political or environmental. According to a constructivist approach of culture, the concept is not a defined closed entity, but something that is flexible and being developed. As such it can be claimed that the indigenous culture is constructed in order to frame certain interests. On one hand, it can be argued that the Brunca and Teribe have revitalized their arts and crafts in the interest of using the concept of culture in the protests against the project. They wish to stand out, as an ethnic group and define themselves as different from other groups. On the other hand, it can be argued how non-indigenous peoples wish to define the indigenous culture the

very same way, in order to make indigenous peoples fit into the nostalgic picture as a group of people living in harmony with nature and something that needs protection against the modern development. Saying no to the project becomes part of saying yes to the uniqueness of the Téribe, and their own identity.

My informants in Térraba have mainly been from the group fighting against the PHED, and therefore obviously focused on the negative environmental and social impacts they fear will come with the project. However, I did get an interview with a couple finding themselves in the middle of the conflicting parties in the community. They tell me about some of the possible positive impacts the PHED could bring with it.

6.5 Possible positive impacts of the PHED

Wilma and Pedro are a married couple living in the centre of Térraba. Their house is open and friendly, their garden is large and welcoming and they receive visits from people on both sides of the conflict in Térraba. Wilma and Pedro tell me that according to their point of view, the construction of the dam is not going to affect them in any negative way. They never go fishing in the river so the fact that the fish are going to disappear will not mean much to them. However, they point at the fact of how the PHED are going to lead to improvement of the roads and make it easier to travel by car. There are environmental impacts of the project that are destructive, but also job opportunities for Térraba they say. ICE have already employed local people from the community, though on long term most of these jobs will most likely need educated people, not the unskilled labour ICE are employing today.

Wilma and Pedro are both Teribes from Térraba. On the issue of indigenous identity and the concern of losing their cultural identity, they tell me they do not believe they are going to lose their indigenous identity because people from outside are moving to the community. To express it with the words of Wilma:

We are not going to lose our identity only because people from other places are moving here. The identity is in our blood and is hard to lose.

(Wilma, Interview, Térraba 19.10.2009)

Pedro tells me that the way he sees it, they are not going to lose their identity as indigenous peoples but rather get improved roads, better infrastructure and job opportunities from the PHED. He says the project will lead to a good development for Térraba if they have the mind to negotiate. As the situation is today, the Teribe do not have a good source of employment in their community. PHED could be a solution to that. The couple continue by defining what they see as a good development for Térraba, saying better schools and more jobs. They find it to be people who are very conflict-oriented in the community and also in the mobilization against the project. They never attend meetings about the project, because it always ends in what they define as a fight between the groupings in a non-constructive manner. Wilma and Pedro see the best option for a better development in Térraba to be negotiation with the PHED, for the good for the village. They see it as almost impossible to stop the PHED, and it would be best to negotiate and receive benefits rather than just fighting against it. According to them, the Teribe fighting against the project are not many, most are interested in negotiation and receiving benefits. However, they point to the difficult issue of ICE being interested in economic aspects, more than the environmental side of the project, and that is of concern (Wilma and Pedro, Interview, Térraba 19.10.2009).

6.6 ADI and representation

The local government, ADI in Boruca acted united against the Boruca-Cajon project and this point is emphasised by my informants in Térraba. The Teribe see the way the Brunca united the whole community together with the ADI that represented the community against the project, as an important factor for the success they had fighting the project. However, in Térraba it was the ADI that gave permission for ICE to start doing studies in the area (Interviews, Térraba 17.10.2009). The decisions made by ADI in Térraba are not the decisions of the community according to my informants. They claim that it is a problem how the ADI in Terraba does not function as a legitimate body for representation and that there is no institutional body able to represent the varying opinions within the community of Térraba today. As mentioned, the ADI is the legally recognized governmental institution representing the indigenous community. The Teribe fighting against the PHED claim that the ADI lack the ability to serve as an institution able to secure meaningful self-governance in Terraba. According to (Jenkins et.al 2010), one of the problematic issues is the large number of non-indigenous

members in the ADI and how individuals with dissenting voices are excluded and denied membership in the ADI.

The problematic issue of the ADI in Térraba and how they are claimed by many to be selling out the community is mentioned by all of my informants. The ADI are in favour of the project and my informants do not have confidence in them. The ADI have given ICE permission to start carrying out tests in the community, but do not represent the Téribe in Térraba as they should according to law (Interview, Térraba 16.10.2009). There are accusations at the president of the ADI in Térraba, and how he has been buying himself continued office. There are claims of how he has offered people to vote for him, buying votes by offering houses, money or jobs in return according to my informants (Interviews, Térraba 16 - 17.10.2009). They say ADI is in favour of the plans, claiming ICE will build roads, secure telephone coverage and bring benefits into the community, but they do not have the village with them on this issue, according to the Teribe who I speak to. They point at how those who have not taken a stand against the project, do not see the long-term consequences of the dam. According to the Téribe I meet, it is not enough for the ICE to only build new roads in the community and by that claim the project will bring development to the territory. They mention how many of the Téribe in the village do not know about their legal rights, and ask how these people can defend their rights by law when they do not know the legal framework protecting their own rights. Politically, the Téribe fighting the PHED do not see themselves as a strong voice in the debate. They tell me how the village is divided and how it is partly due to ICE and the PHED that have divided the community. The problem of the ADI not serving as the representative body it has set out to do, makes it hard for the Teribe to be represented the way they have the right to according to ILO 169 and the *Ley Indígena*.

As mentioned, the indigenous territories are to be governed through their own traditional communal structure or by the law of the governing state, under the coordination and advice of CONAI (Artículo 4, ley indígena 1977). When the ADI was established in each territory it was in order to serve as a coordinator between the government, municipal and communal interests holding the mandate representing the peoples in the community. And the lack of legitimacy of the ADI in Térraba makes consultation it hard to carry out fair and in good faith.

6.7 Consultation

Consultation of indigenous peoples is mandatory in projects that affect indigenous peoples such as the PHED. The ILO Convention No 169 Article 6(1)(a), states that;

governments shall consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever considerations being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly.

Moreover the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also states that;

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures... and that; States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them (UNDRIP 2010 Articles 18-19).

According to my informants in Térraba, the government have not consulted them about the PHED. They tell me how the ADI, is the institution which manage the land and how the institution is not functioning as their local government as it set out to do. Because Térraba is indigenous territory they have special rights, the ILO 169 and *La Ley Indígena* secure the right to be consulted my informants tell me. Moreover, they put strong emphasis on the right to be consulted as a village.

Fernando is a Téribe, much engaged in the protests against the PHED. He describes to me, how he believes the consultation should have been carried out. First of all, ICE should inform the whole of the community about the project, all impacts, and what he defines as real information. By that he means not only the benefits of the project, but all sides of the dam, based on facts. As a whole village, the community should then come together to analyze the project, based on the information received by ICE. He puts emphasis on how also the government should hold consultation in the community in

good faith. The future of all the population in the community, on short- or long-term basis, should be taken into consideration. And the state has to establish, and follow, all national and international laws concerning indigenous rights before planning and starting to construct the dam. Then, after consultation is carried out, including all of the community, dialog about the PHED should take place, between the different actors. The community would then be able to negotiate about political and economic benefits. Fernando tells me he believes negotiation would then be the best option for the Téribe, as they would be able to negotiate on fair terms based on the information received (Fernando, Interview, Tétraba 17.10.2009).

There has been individual consultation of certain individuals in the community according to some of my informants, but not collective consultation. In order to consult a village as Tétraba, my informants see it the following way; if there are 200 people living in the village, then 200 people have to participate in the consultation. And they find it crucial to be informed of the social and economic impacts. They experience the way ICE has been informing the community more as a campaign. ICE has been saying the PHED will bring employment, better infrastructure and development for Tétraba. However, there have been made promises by ICE to the community that are still not fulfilled and this is the base for much of their scepticism in relation to ICE and their will to fulfil their promises. Those of the Teribe aware of their rights, feel they have not been consulted as they hold the right to. They strongly feel that ICE and the government do not fulfil their legal obligations as they should do.

I have not been able to talk to the ADI and ICE, therefore I have not presented their side of the story here. Hence, I am not making any conclusions concerning the project and the degree of consultation carried out. It has become clear through my investigation that there is contradicting versions about what kind of consultation has been carried out. However, I present the point of view of my sources, the Teribe protesting against the PHED. In their opinion, they have not been consulted as they have the right to in relation to large development projects on their land, as the PHED. I have chosen to present my findings in narratives and it is interesting to note who the individuals presenting the different points of view are. In Terraba, it seems clear how not all members of the community are informed about their rights in the same way. Those who are most

dedicated in the struggle against the PHED, hold more knowledge about the rights concerning indigenous peoples. However, these individuals have no special education indicating that they should know more than the average Teribe in the community. Nevertheless, these well-informed Teribe have a strong interest and dedication in the future of Térraba and the Teribe. They formulate their opinions as narratives, where they claim not to have been consulted and moreover argue how the dysfunctional ADI hinders the community of Térraba to make their opinions heard through the local government.

According to Johansson (2005:18) “narrative studies are a way to understand the social reality and how social structures, relations and identities are created and transformed.” In this thesis I have presented the narrative described to me by my informants. Moreover, according to Roe (199:288) rural development is a genuinely uncertain activity and a way to make sense of the uncertainty is to tell stories that simplify this uncertainty. Hence, I have presented the narrative of the Teribe protesting against the hydropower development in this chapter. Although I have not been able to investigate the point of view presented by ICE, one of the main actors in the case, through primary sources, I will though briefly introduce the narrative proclaimed by ICE through literature available.

6.8 Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE)

“Costa Rica needs electricity and the Hydroelectric Project *El Diquís* is part of the solution” (ICE 2011). According to ICE, the company is working in order to keep its main responsibility, that is to provide clean and reliable energy-supply to the inhabitants of Costa Rica, and the Hydroelectric Project El Diquís (PHED) is essential for making this possible. The name of the project El Diquis was chosen as a result of a contest between all elementary schools in the Regions of Buenos Aires and Osa in 2006. The name means “Rio Grande” in the Térribe language, Di - river and Quës - big. ICE claim the company has since the first studies in relation to the Hydroelectric Project Boruca-Cajón started in 1970 they sought to find a way to reduce the social and environmental impacts according to what they claim. They found El Diquís to be the best option suitable to fulfil the requirements necessary in the southern zone (ICE 2011).

ICE puts emphasis on how the PHED will bring development to Térraba and the company has already started working on improving the roads in the area. Since 2005 a team from *Área Social del Proyecto Hidroeléctrico El Diquís*, which is a team organized and made up by people employed by ICE, working in different forms in the communities influenced by the project. They have gotten to know the social and cultural reality prefunded in the community of Térraba and established a participative strategy for the people (ICE 2011). The communal infrastructure is an area that ICE has given much attention. In order to help the local community they have invested in improving the working possibilities and conditions in the affected communities influenced by activities and work, related to the PHED. One example of the themes ICE has given high priority is education. Because of the positive impact education generates in the whole community this has become an important part in the work of ICE. They have built Education Centres in several of the affected communities, among them Térraba.

ICE is temporary doing excavations on 20 hectares of the land belonging to the Reserve of Térraba and the rights to do the excavations here ICE got from a contract signed in 2008 with the president of ADI in Térraba (La Nación 26.04.2011). On this land ICE are working in tunnels as part of doing environmental impact studies on the land. The work going on is not definitive work but part of the preparation studies. Employees from ICE have been sent to do preparation studies and promote the hydroelectric project in Térraba. However, the studies done showed the need for the government and state institutions to take part in the development, as the lack of potable water and sufficient healthcare services in the communities needed be addressed, and this is state responsibility, not a task for ICE according to the company (La Nación 26.04.2011). ICE presents a one-sided story about the project in their information flyers, claiming the planned construction of the dam will create new opportunities, employment and better the conditions in Térraba. The narrative presented by ICE about the PHED in the written papers available and its impacts appears like a campaign, according to my informants in Térraba. The way ICE presents their side of the case, they only point at the positive impacts, and that makes the information not credible for my informants. Obviously, it is in the interest of ICE to present the project in its most attractive form.

Within the framework of political ecology there is a focus on the different discourses and narratives presented by the different actors and stakeholders, and how they perceive the relationship between environment and nature differently. Several political ecologists are concerned with the politics of social action and they see knowledge to be constructed in order to frame certain interests, and due to different understandings of environment and society and the relations between the two aspects. The narrative my informants in Boruca and Térraba have presented is clear on their stand against the PHED. They express concern over the motivation for ICE and their reasons to construct the dam. Moreover, they present an alternative story to what ICE proclaims, that the electricity produced is not for securing the Costa Rican need for electricity, but rather produced for exporting abroad. However, ICE claim they are constructing the PHED in order to fulfil the company obligations to the Costa Rican society and additionally contribute in developing the indigenous territories.

Political ecology seek to focus on revealing the motivations, actors and “the constructions that contribute to constructing the objects of the world” Robbins (2004:110). Based on the narratives presented it becomes clear that the Téribes protesting against the hydropower do not believe in the motivation of ICE, and they present counter narratives of their own in order to de-mask the story presented by ICE. The narrative presented by the iTéribes fighting against the PHED tell another story, a story about the hope for another development, based on their identity and culture.

7 Conclusions

My overarching aim in this study has been to investigate the resistance from the indigenous communities of Boruca and Térraba against the proposed hydropower development on their territories. My research shows how the community of Boruca appear to have met the plans about the Boruca - Cajón Project with shared resistance. The community members in Boruca today, all tells of how the community united in the struggle, and moreover, how the ADI led the fight from the village. In Térraba today, the members of the community have different views regarding what kind of development they want for the future. A conflict line can be drawn between those who see modern development as the best option, and the PHED as part of this when such a project could bring better infrastructure, roads, education and jobs to the community. On the other hand one can identify those who fear this will lead to the destruction of their indigenous culture and the traditional way of life. I have told part of the stories of the Brunca and the Téribé in this thesis, and presented their narratives about the hydropower project, their indigenous identity, right to consultation and representation, in order to deepen the understanding of their resistance against the project and their indigenous identity.

According to my informants they have not been consulted as they have the right to according to law. In Térraba, the Teribe fighting against the PHED claim the consultation has not been carried out in a satisfying manner. Today ICE is doing what they define as preparatory excavations on 20 hectares of land in the indigenous territory of Térraba. However, the Téribé feel that consultation should be carried out before preparatory work is initiated. Moreover, they also provide a set of recommendations for how they believe consultation should be carried out, and these are as follows: First of all, ICE should inform the whole of the community about the project, all impacts, based on real information, meaning all aspects of the project. As a whole village, the community should then come together to analyze the project, based on the information received by ICE. Moreover, the future of all the population in the community, on short- or long-term basis, should be taken into consideration. And the state has to establish, and follow, all national and international laws concerning indigenous rights before planning and starting to construct the dam. Then, after consultation is carried out, including all of the community, dialog about the PHED should take place, between the different actors

involved. However, the lack of legitimacy of the ADI in Térraba makes it very difficult to carry out consultation in the community, and moreover to have a functioning local government able to let all different positions within the community to be heard. There is a clear need to improve the representative institutions in Térraba.

The Brunca and the Téribé see their indigenous identity as being threatened by the proposed project. However, in Boruca, the Brunca have managed to make their indigenous identity part of the tourism activity in the community. They have made their indigenous culture visible to visitors from outside, by revitalizing arts and crafts as part of their daily life. It appears that the tourism to Boruca is happening on the terms decided by the Brunca themselves, and that the economic income from the tourists is enabling them to lead the life they wish to live. In fact, I argue that the tourism is actually part of what enables the Brunca to continue their traditional life. According to an essentialist approach to culture, the visibility of the indigenous identity is important. Tourists arriving to Boruca wish to see the “picture” of indigenous people in their traditional settings; living in harmony with nature and dressed in colourful clothes that clearly show their Brunca identity. Through my research I have found that the Brunca have adopted an essentialist approach to culture, which may be part of preserving their cultural identity. Moreover, it seem as the indigenous identity has become stronger in the meeting with the project.

In Térraba, the indigenous community has not been able to develop the same success with tourism to the village. It becomes clear that they have been looking at Boruca in order to follow the example from the Brunca for developing a tourist industry of their own. The indigenous culture in Térraba is not visible in the same way as it is in Boruca. However, that does not mean the Téribé are less indigenous in their identity and culture. One of the main arguments for protesting against the hydropower project is the fear of losing the indigenous culture and tradition. The Brunca and the Téribé fighting against the project want another development than what is represented with the hydropower development. They want a development that can make sure that the traditional way of life and cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. In short, saying no to the project becomes part of saying yes to the uniqueness of their indigenous identity.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE IN BORUCA

FACE SHEET

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. Occupation:

4. Civil Status:

5. Place of Birth:

THE HYDROPOWER PROJECT

6. Are you familiar with the Boruca-Cajón Project?

7. What was your opinion about the project?

8. Which impacts do you believe the project would have led to?

9. Why did the plans stagnate, and the location changed to Térraba?

10. What is your opinion about the PHED?

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

11. What does it mean to be a Brunca to you?

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

12. How is the community organized?

CONSULTATION

13. Did you get consulted in relation to the Boruca-Cajón project?

THE RESISTANCE

14. How did you fight against the project?

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

15. Which legal framework exists in Costa Rica in order to protect the rights of the indigenous peoples?

Appendix 2. INTERVIEW GUIDE IN TERRABA

FACE SHEET

1. Name:

2. Age:

3. Occupation:

4. Civil Status:

5. Place of Birth:

THE HYDROPOWER PROJECT

6. Are you familiar with the PHED?

7. What was your opinion about the project?

8. Which impacts do you believe the project will lead to?

9. Why did the initial plans for the Boruca-Cajón project stagnate, and the location changed to Terraba and the PHED today?

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

10. What does it mean to be a Teribe to you?

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

11. How is the community organized?

CONSULTATION

12. Have you been consulted in relation to the PHED?

THE RESISTANCE

13. How are you fighting against the project?

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

14. Which legal framework exists in Costa Rica in order to protect the rights of the indigenous peoples?

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