



Changing Development Discourses over 40 Years of Swiss-Bolivian Development Cooperation

Andrea Weder and Claudia Zingerli

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dialogue

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Cover photos

Left: Swiss cows at the faculty of agronomy at the University of Cochabamba. *Middle:* Women selling potatoes at the market in Tiraque, Bolivia. *Right:* Hydraulic control of riverbeds and torrents for protection against floods and preservation of water resources in the Cochabamba area. (Photos by Andrea Weder, 2008)

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Abbreviations

AND	Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action)
CAF	Corporación Andina de Fomento
CBF	Bolivian Development Corporation
CBF	Corporación Boliviana de Fomento
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina
COMIBOL	Corporación Minera de Bolivia
COSUDE	Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación (formerly COTESU)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCH	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (now SDC)
ESF	Emergency Social Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HICP	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IBTA	Instituto Boliviano de Tecnología Agropecuaria
IDB	Inter–American Development Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Bolivia
MAS	Movement Towards Socialism
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement)
NPV	Net Present Value
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co–operation and Development
SAGUF	Swiss Academic Society for Environmental Research and Ecology
SAP	Structural adjustment programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (formerly DCH)
SECO	(Swiss) State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIBTA	Sistema Boliviano de Tecnología Agropecuario
SNDC	Servicio Nacional de Desarrollo de Comunidades
TPP	Transversal Package Project (of the NCCR North–South)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos

1 Introduction

Development cooperation is a tension-filled topic. Competing interests and views about development clash because development is not a firm, unchangeable and clearly defined concept. There have been different definitions of this concept and over the years, and these definitions have also changed. Given the varying meanings of development, development cooperation has undergone various changes in concept, guidelines, and aims. In this dialogue paper, we investigate these changes by analysing development as a discourse. According to Grillo (1997: 12) “a discourse [e.g. of development] identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practising development as well as speaking and thinking about it”. Using the example of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, we explore ways of practising development and speaking about it by conducting a discourse analysis. The focus lies specifically on discursive and actual changes in practising development in Bolivia.

1.1 Objective and guiding questions

Bolivia is one of the priority countries of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In 2009, Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation entered its 40th year. Bolivia has experienced several political and economic transformations over the past four decades which have influenced Swiss–Bolivian collaboration. As cooperation between these two countries has endured for such a long time, turning points in discourses, triggers of change, and their implications for development cooperation can be identified and analysed. The focus of this dialogue paper is on changing development discourses at the international, national (Bolivia and Switzerland) and institutional level (SDC). The main objective is to reveal how ongoing development discourses at different levels (institutional, national, international) have changed, how debates at different levels have affected each other and, most importantly, what impact these development discourses have had on Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. In addition, we identify and illustrate the events that triggered a change in development discourses. By investigating changing development discourses and their effects, this dialogue paper helps to point a way forward in development studies, which according to Nustad (2001: 485) lies in “[examining] how development interventions are transformed, reformulated, adopted or resisted in local encounter”.

The following two main questions guided the analysis of interlinkages between development discourses and Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation:

1. How have development discourses changed over the last forty years?
2. How have changing development discourses influenced Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation?

The following sub-questions were of subsequent importance in analysing the data and ultimately answering the two main questions:

- What role has Swiss development assistance played in Bolivia since the late 1960s?
- How has development cooperation changed over time? And why did it change?
- What were the priorities of Swiss development cooperation?
- Who was involved and with whom did the SDC successfully collaborate?
- How has the political and economic situation in Bolivia influenced development cooperation between these two countries?

1.2 Approach and limitations

Development discourses and the practice of development are at the centre of this dialogue paper. The methodological approach developed draws on the discourse theory of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. This theory and discourse analysis seems to be especially fruitful as a theoretical and methodological basis because it can identify discontinuities and breaks in discourses.

The paper draws on a comprehensive programme document analysis as well as recently collected empirical material from interviews with current and former staff of SDC projects. Interviewees who had been working for the SDC for a long time were a special source of information and insight. Most worked in the agricultural sector, which SDC supported for many years and with many projects. Consequently, there is less information available about other sectors in which the SDC was involved.

While this paper concentrates on analysis of as well as implications of changing development discourses in development cooperation between Switzerland and Bolivia, it does not analyse the effectiveness of this long-term cooperation. Within Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, we concentrate particularly on the SDC and include only partially the activities of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco), which began only in the second half of the 1980s. Moreover, we pay little attention to the numerous Swiss development organisations active in Bolivia; we integrated them only when they had been involved in SDC projects. Since our focus is on long-term cooperation, we completely excluded humanitarian aid for Bolivia provided by Swiss organisations and the SDC.

1.3 Structure

In this introduction we present the research topic, objectives and research questions. The next chapter provides more detail about the foundations of our approach, which combines development and discourse. It discusses concepts of development and development cooperation as well as the history of development. It also presents the theoretical lines relevant to discourse analysis carried out for the 40-year period of Swiss–

Bolivian development cooperation. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the development path and the role of international development in Bolivia. It is followed by an analysis of changing development discourses during the past four decades and the implications for Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 summarises the main results, provides answers to the research questions, and formulates some recommendations for future research in the context of changing development discourses in long-term development cooperation, such as that between Switzerland and Bolivia.

2 Development and Discourse

The two primary concepts in this dialogue paper are development and discourse. This chapter offers a discussion of these two concepts. It examines the history of development and development cooperation and prepares the theoretical basis for subsequent discourse analysis.

2.1 Development, cooperation and post-development

2.1.1 Notions of development and development cooperation

Development is a complex notion that has been applied in different ways. Photographers speak of the development of a film, doctors of child development and mathematicians of the development of an equation (Rist 1997). Linguistically, development describes the act of uncovering something, an inherent feature (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Leibnitz's and Kant's understanding of development described in Nuscheler (Nuscheler 2005: 226) is very similar. According to Leibnitz, 'to develop' means to unwrap something that is enveloped and to unfold slumbering talents. Kant states that it is in the nature of all creatures to unwrap completely and appropriately. Of special interest is Kant's statement that all creatures have to attain development through their own actions (Nuscheler 2005: 226).

While it is absolutely clear for any photographer what is meant by development, the same word becomes an unclear concept when it comes to describing the state or process of a country and its inhabitants. Although countless definitions have been proposed, none is generally accepted. In the words of Gustavo Esteva, "the word development [has been transformed] step by step into one with contours that are about as precise as those of an amoeba" (Esteva 1992: 10). Most definitions of development refer to a desired state, a target situation. According to Ihne and Wilhelm (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006: 3), most development concepts have in common that development is seen as a socio-economic-cultural process with a complex spectrum of targets (e.g. respect for human dignity, satisfying basic needs, gender equality, democratisation of political structures/political participation, equally distributed resources and income, economic growth, humane labour conditions, functioning health care, an intact environment and access to education). Most of these development targets can be found in international conventions on human rights (Nuscheler 2005).

Another concept of development, which was later adopted in the human development report for 2000 (UNDP 2000), was put forward by Amartya Sen. He conceived of development "as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen 1999: 3). There are different forms of freedom, encompassing political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. These different types of freedom can mutually strengthen each other (Sen 1999). Different types of targets or freedoms should be rendered possible by development. This point of view gives development a positive connotation.

However, there is also a school of thought which considers development as a hegemonic concept of the West which has been imposed on two thirds of the world population, often referred to as the “Third World” (Esteva 1992). Instead of being realised as freedom, development according to this view has produced “massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression” (Escobar 1995). While the West is considered to be developed, the rest of the world, which is not like the West, is denominated as underdeveloped. The underdeveloped countries are most often described by what they lack compared to the developed West (they are less democratic, less industrialised, etc.). Yet, with the right policies (in line with the Western development model), underdeveloped countries can also become developed (Ziai 2006). According to Esteva (1992: 7) the denomination “underdevelopment” “is a threat that has already been carried out; a life experience of subordination and of being led astray, of discrimination and subjugation”. Apart from the criticism that development is a hegemonic concept which has brought underdevelopment instead of development, critics also argue that it is absolutely impossible to universally reach all development goals (Esteva 1992). This perspective gives development a negative connotation (see also section on post-development 2.1.3).

We can thus conclude that development is most often a highly normative concept, which can be positively or negatively connoted. It is obvious that most development agencies, the SDC included, conceive of development with a positive connotation. Development cooperation is described as the operative business, the planning and execution of programmes and projects of development policy as well as their evaluation, and is considered a possible way to achieve development goals and expand the freedoms people have. However, development cooperation, like development aid, is also considered to be paternalistic. It alludes to a higher hierarchical position of the “helping” industrialised countries. The modern idea of development cooperation emphasises the cooperative relationship between the donor country and the partner country in which both seem to be on the same hierarchical level (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Nohlen (2002: 231) describes development aid as a collective name for all performance involving development by governmental and non-governmental actors who are directed from the industrialised countries and focus on developing countries. Not only is development cooperation often described as development aid, it is also often equated with development policy. According to Nohlen (2002: 231), however, development policy is a more comprehensive notion, which encompasses all instruments, measures and strategies planned and used by developing countries or industrialised countries with a view to economic and social development.

The following section looks at the history of development and the changes in development policy.

2.1.2 The history of development

The notion of development is not an invention of the 20th Century, although development policy as we know it today did not begin before the end of the Second World War (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). According to Rist (1997: 28–43), the roots of development lie in ancient Greece and Rome and were consolidated during the Enlightenment in the 18th Century. According to Cowen and Shenton (1995: 29), “the modern idea of development is necessarily Eurocentric because it was in Europe that development was first meant to create order out of the social disorder of rapid urbanisation, poverty and unemployment”. The first comprehensive aid programme, known as the Marshall Plan, was launched after the Second World War in order to help European countries regain social, political and economic stability. However, the event that went down in history as the initiation of a new era in how to deal with economically challenged countries was Harry Truman’s inauguration speech as president of the United States on January 20th 1949. This speech contained four points. It was the fourth point that became known around the world. It began as follows: “Fourth, we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (cited in Rist 1997: 70–71). This was the first time that a document that reached so many people used the adjective “underdeveloped” as a synonym for economically challenged areas (Rist 1997).

One way to structure history with the central ideas and concepts of development from the 20th Century is the decade model of the United Nations. In different decades different development theories, namely the dependency theory and the modernisation theory, were dominant and influenced development cooperation and policy (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Because we will refer to these decades in our analysis of 40 years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, they are each briefly described in Table 1.

Table 1: Development decades.

Decade	Characteristics
Decade I 1961–1970 Development through growth	Trade not aid was the credo of development policy in the 1960s (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Economic growth in developing countries was to be spurred by their integration into the World market. But the predicted trickle down effect of growth was not achieved. Instead of the poor it was mainly the rich who benefited from the promotion of growth.
Decade II 1971–1980 The basic needs strategy	The 1970s were marked by the fight against poverty and the so-called basic needs approach. This approach specified the minimum requirements for food, shelter and clothing for a family, services such as the provision of drinking water, access to health and education centres, and an adequately paid job. Also included were a satisfying environment and the participation of people in decisions concerning their lives, livelihood and individual freedom (Nuscheler 2005). The 1970s were also the decade in which various North-South conferences took place and when the voices of the advocates of the dependency theory grew louder, demanding a new world economic order (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). However, as a result of the oil crisis in 1979, world economic conditions began to worsen and developing countries slid into insurmountable payment problems.
Decade III 1981–1990 The lost decade – debt	Out of these massive troubles arose the neoliberal era and the Washington Consensus, propagated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the US government and internationally operating financial institutions. Key elements were denationalisation, deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation brought about by rigid structural adjustment programmes. These led to a deterioration in the living conditions of many people. Due to the social consequences of the structural adjustment programmes, the strict course of the Washington Consensus had to be adapted (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006; Nuscheler 2005). The 1980s became known as the ‘lost decade’ of development policy. Development undertakings had to deal with setbacks and emerging criticism.
Decade IV 1991–2000 Sustainable development	The end of the Cold War at the beginning of the 1990s brought about a change in development policy. Also the world conferences of the 1990s placed new aims, foci and priorities on the agenda of international development policy. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro leveraged the sustainable development concept, delineated in the Brundtland report of 1987 (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: 54). During the 1990s, donor countries imposed stronger conditions on developing countries in order to reach improvements in basic conditions such as human rights, democratisation, good governance, rule of law and market orientation (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Poor people again moved to the centre of attention and pro-poor growth was propagated (Nuscheler 2005).
Decade V 2001–2010 Global human security and aid effectiveness	One of the most influential conferences in the new decade was the UN Millennium summit in New York where eight Millennium Development Goals for the year 2015 were formulated. The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 in the USA also had an enormous influence on development policy. Security policy moved to the top of the agenda and was integrated into development policy under the assumption that growing poverty would always be a threat to human security (Ihne and Wilhelm 2006). Most recently the Paris Declaration of the year 2005 has influenced development policy, giving developing countries the lead in formulating, implementing and coordinating development actions. The buzzwords are ownership, alignment, and harmonisation (High Level Forum 2005). The Accra Agenda for Action followed in 2008 and built on the agreements of the Paris Declaration. Predictability, conditionality and untying were to provide the recipient countries more freedom of decision (Third High Level Forum 2008).

2.1.3 Post-development

Post-development is a school of thought that appeared in the mid 1980s, the decade known as the “lost decade” in the history of development because it was marked by an

economic crisis that hit the so-called developing countries particularly hard. The social consequences of this crisis and of the structural adjustment programmes that followed gave rise to a school of thought that began to question the development endeavour (Esteva 1992). Yet the word “post-development” did not appear until the early 1990s (Rahnema 1997b).

We examine the post-development perspective here for two reasons. First, post-development has been a frequently debated topic in the development literature of the last 20 years. Second, in the words of Nustad (2001: 480): “Most of the post-development writing is in some way inspired by Foucault, and tends to see development as a discourse that orders and creates the object that it pertains to address.” As Foucault’s ideas and development discourse are important for our approach, it is expedient to give a brief outline of the post-development perspective.

The literature on post-development can be divided into three perspectives: the proponents of post-development (e.g. Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1990, 2004; Escobar 1995; Esteva 1992; Ferguson 1994; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Rist 1997; Sachs 1992), the critics of post-development (e.g. Corbridge 1998; Kiely 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 1998; Schuurman 2000) and the advocates of post-development (e.g. Brigg 2002; Nustad 2001).

The proponents of post-development criticise the concept of development and declare the end of the era of development (Sachs 1992). Development is seen as a continuing post-colonial project, as an endeavour which “did not work”, which constitutes “the Westernisation of the world” (Sachs 1992: 1, 3), as “an ideology that was born and refined in the North, mainly to meet the needs of the dominant powers in search of a more ‘appropriate’ tool for their economic and geopolitical expansion”, as “a deceitful mirage” and “a factor of division, of exclusion and of discrimination rather than of liberation of any kind” (Rahnema 1997b: x; 1997a: 379). As the historical conditions that boosted the idea of development and also the aspirations pinned on development have disappeared, development has become “obsolete” (Sachs 1992). According to the proponents of post-development, taking into account what the consequences would have been if development had been successful, one can be satisfied that it did not work (Rahnema 1997a; Sachs 1992). A further critique is that development activities have not coincided with the needs and aspirations of target populations (Rahnema 1997a). Most promoters of post-development do not want a development alternative, but an alternative to development (Escobar 1995). Rahnema (Rahnema 1997a: 401–402) states that “the post-development era should not be focused merely on operational or spectacular “plans of action” or “strategies”. It will represent a different age only if it is in harmony with the existential need of all the ‘good’ people in the world to live differently, to witness their truth, and to cultivate friendship. And this can come about only if we all begin with ourselves and learn to face our truth and live with it as an artist does with the object of his or her creation”.

This post-development perspective has been criticised on many points. The most frequently mentioned criticism is that post-development authors do not offer an alternative to development (Kiely 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 2000). Instead, pre-modern, “undeveloped” life is romanticised (Corbridge 1998; Kiely 1999). Another criticism is that various post-development authors homogenise and essentialise development instead of acknowledging different concepts and changes over the years (Kiely 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 2000; Ziai 2004) and ignore the various positive aspects associated with modernity and development and the accomplishments that have been achieved since 1950, such as the increase in life expectancy (Corbridge 1998). Last but not least, the target population for development is always depicted as oppressed by development. Consequently, the sometimes decisive role of local elites as well as the agency of the target population is not addressed (Everett 1997).

An answer to the expressed critique of post-development was soon formulated. Nustad (2001: 479) as well as Brigg (2002: 433) argue that the post-development concept should not be discarded because it does not offer an alternative to development. According to Nustad (2001: 479–480), the main achievement of the post-development concept is that it demonstrates an answer to the question of why so many development endeavours have failed over the last 50 years. Brigg (2002: 433–434) also points to the ability of the post-development concept to understand and analyse development better. However, unlike Nustad, he believes that post-development offers more than just a possible explanation of the failure of development, especially when taking Foucault into consideration along with indigenous and marginalised knowledge.

The post-development perspective might appear uniform in light of this short introduction to post-development. However, especially the opinions of the proponents of post-development differ on major points. According to Ziai (2004: 1053–1054), there are two conflicting discourses within post-development: the sceptical and the neopopulist discourse. The neopopulist discourse, “which romanticises traditional culture, portraying cultures as static and rigid, is based on a complete rejection of modernity and promotes the return to subsistence agriculture” stands in contrast to the sceptical discourse, “which is more sceptical in evaluating local communities and cultural traditions, more cautious in criticising modernity, employs a constructivist perspective on culture, and avoids sketching models of future transformations of society”. The neo-populist discourse will reappear in the course of this dialogue paper, as the current development discourse in Bolivia shares several elements characteristic of this discourse.

2.2 Discourse theory and discourse analysis

Changing development discourses are at the centre of this dialogue paper. To deconstruct these discourses and show how they have changed over the years, we carried out a discourse analysis. In this section we give an overview of the different traditions in discourse theory and discourse analysis. We discuss the notion of discourse and deal specifically with aspects of Foucault’s discourse theory that are relevant for our analysis.

2.2.1 The notion of discourse

Similar to the notion of knowledge, there is also no simple universal definition of discourse. Depending on the disciplinary context in which the notion of discourse is used, a different meaning is ascribed to it. Moreover, there is also a difference between the everyday use of the term and its theoretical application (Mills 2007). What the various meanings of the notion of discourse have in common is merely that discourse is concerned with forms of language use – oral and written forms of communication (Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005).

The origins of the notion of discourse stem from the old Latin words ‘discurrere’ and ‘discursus’ which originally described a movement of pacing around and disoriented errantry (Keller 2008). While in everyday Anglo-Saxon language the notion of discourse means a simple conversation between people, the French ‘discourse’ or the Italian ‘discorso’ is an often-used term for an academic speech, a recital, a treatise, a sermon, a lecture or the like. In recent years the notion of discourse has also appeared in everyday language in German to describe a publicly discussed topic, a specific line of argument (e.g. neoliberal discourse) or the positions of politicians, etc. in a current debate (Keller 2008).

In the academic field, nearly every discourse researcher creates his or her own definition of the notion of discourse. Maarten A. Hajer, for example, defines it as follows: “Discourse is here defined as a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practises and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer 1995, quoted in Mattisek and Reuber 2004: 232). This definition comprises an important characteristic of the notion of discourse to which various discourse researchers refer. It is the link between discourse and practice. Discourses are not understood as mere linguistic constructs that exist in isolation from the social and material world. The effect of linguistic constructs only develops in a temporal, spatial and social context (Mattisek and Reuber 2004). Jürgen Link adds another component to the notion of discourse by saying that discourses are institutionalised and regulated modes of talk that determine our acting and therefore exercise power (Jäger 2004). This definition indicates that discourse and power are intertwined. What is sayable in a society and the meaning and consequences of statements is determined by discourses (Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005). Consequently a discourse “[...] restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it” (Hall 2001: 72). What is sayable in a society also decides what is denominated and understood as truth. As discourses are context-sensitive and change over time, the sayable, or ‘true’ knowledge, is also subject to modification. Truth is therefore not an absolute, but a relative concept (Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005). As mentioned above, there are rules which delimit the sayable. Yet, in order for discourses to change at all, these are not “rules of closure” (Kendall and Wickham 2003: 42). Sooner or later, nearly every hegemonic discourse faces a counter-discourse.

2.2.2 Discourse Theory / Discourse Analysis

Discourse is the subject of the heterogeneous field of discourse theory and discourse analysis. Discourse theory and discourse analysis vary depending on theoretical conceptions, worldview, research questions, methodological approach and practical implementation (Mattisek and Reuber 2004). Despite heterogeneous approaches and traditions, some consistencies can be identified. According to Reuber and Pfaffenbach (2005: 206), there is agreement that a discourse analysis investigates speech formations in society and demonstrates how themes are constituted, defined and changed in discourses. The approach used in this study is informed by socio-scientific discourse analysis. It mostly uses text, grammar, and syntax as an empirical foundation. Rhetorical instruments such as metaphors are of minor importance (Keller 2007).

Several authors have tried to give an overview of the different traditions of discourse analysis and discourse theory. Wetherell (2001: 382) delineated six research traditions which seem most relevant to her in the social sciences: conversation analysis, discursive psychology, Foucauldian research, critical discourse analysis and critical linguistics, interactional sociolinguistics and the ethnography of speaking, and Bakhtinian research. Mattisek and Reuber (2004: 233–234) systematised the different theories and methods of discourse analysis from a geographer's point of view as follows: action-oriented, structuralist and post-structuralist discourse analysis. The status of the subject makes a decisive difference among these three traditions of discourse analysis. In action-oriented discourse analysis, the subject is seen as an independently thinking and acting individual which can intentionally influence discourses, while in the structuralist tradition, the subject is determined by the surrounding structures. Consequently, discourses precede human action and the individual statements and actions can hardly change discourses. From a post-structuralist point of view, the discourse produces the subject. Through their statements and actions, the subjects appropriate discourse positions. Yet the process of appropriation is never fully accomplished. The subject does not appropriate an identity which outlasts the moment of a statement. Therefore, individuals have to constitute themselves as subjects time and again through consistently different actions and statements (Mattisek and Reuber 2004).

Various approaches in discourse research have been elaborated on the basis of Michel Foucault's discourse theory. Below we discuss the strands that are relevant for our study.

2.2.3 Foucault's approaches to discourse and discourse theory

Foucault's work consists of his more empirically oriented books such as *Madness and Civilization* or *The Birth of the Clinic* and his analytical and theoretical contributions (e.g. *The Order of Things* or *The Archaeology of Knowledge*) (Keller 2007). His work is often divided into the three phases of the Archaeology of Knowledge, the Genealogy of Power, and Governmentality (Keller 2008). For our approach to discourse and development, the first phase of Foucault's work, the Archaeology of Knowledge, as well as Foucault's concept of power are especially important. In this section we describe and

discuss the theoretical and methodological basis provided by Foucault's work relevant to subsequent analysis of the changing development discourses in Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation.

Although Foucault delineated his discourse theory in various writings, he did not go as far as to present a clearly outlined theory let alone a methodology. His writings instead portray a loose alignment of conceptual considerations which can be used to derive an empirically applicable method (Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005). The secondary literature based on Foucault's work is mainly concerned with explanations of Foucault's notions and theory, and not so much with concrete strategies of how to empirically apply his theory. Further, the few existing guidelines on how to conduct a discourse analysis according to Foucault (e.g. Kendall and Wickham 2003) are heterogeneous and rather generally formulated.

According to Keller (Keller 2007: 43), Foucault's perspective is based on Durkheim's and Mauss' sociology of knowledge and constructivism. According to Foucault, the existence of the objects of research originates in various formations of knowledge and practice. As a result of Foucault's understanding of the relationship between subjects and discourse, Keller (2008:98) describes Foucault's perspective as a "discourse constructivism without designers". The rules that structure discourses and practices are an emergent result of linguistic utterances and courses of action which cannot be ascribed to the intentionality of the subjects (Keller 2008: 128). Foucault's work is also often linked to Ferdinand de Saussure's Theory of Signs. This theory lies at the heart of structuralism, a tradition to which Foucault's earlier works such as *The Order of Things* have often been related although Foucault repeatedly denied being a structuralist (Olssen 2003). Yet Foucault did not deny that there are similarities between the works of structuralists and his own work. Foucault's negation of a "sovereign rational subject" for example is also a structuralist concern. Unlike de Saussure, however, Foucault was not interested in linguistic questions but in the social transformations of knowledge regimes (Keller 2008).

In the **Archaeology of Knowledge**, Foucault excavates knowledge regimes of the past without giving an opinion about their truthfulness and meaning. These knowledge regimes encompass what was said or has been said and not what could have been said (Howarth 2000). Foucault is concerned with the reconstruction of institutional regulations of discursive practices on the grounds of real statements (Keller 2008). He describes a discursive practice as "a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function" (Foucault 2008: 131). In contrast to other discourse researchers such as Keller or Jäger, Foucault does not provide a clear definition of discourse. He uses the notion with a threefold meaning: first as a "general domain of all statements", second as "an individualizable group of statements" and finally as "a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements" (Foucault 2008: 90).

Foucault does not analyse the origin of an event in a discourse. According to him, the origin can hardly be found, as every discourse is based on statements already made. Of interest are rather the breaks, ruptures and discontinuities which mark the transition between one period and another, and questions such as why a certain statement appeared and not another, what influence a statement has, and how it is related to other statements (Foucault 2008; Hall 2001).

At the end of the 1960s, a new phase of Foucault's work started with the concept of a genealogy of knowledge and power. This concept is also of interest for this study, as development discourse in Bolivia is highly influenced by various power structures.

With the **Genealogy of Power** Foucault's focus shifted. While the Archaeology specifies the rules of formation which structure discourses, the Genealogy concentrates on discursive practices, the development of discourses, processes of power, and especially the relationship between knowledge and power (Howarth 2000; Keller 2007). Foucault's understanding of knowledge includes all epistemological processes and effects accepted at a certain moment in a certain area. Knowledge is therefore only temporarily persistent (Jäger 2004). Foucault's concept of power includes various facets. Designated as power are the diversity of power relations which exist in an area and organise it; the process which changes the power relations; the inconsistencies, on the one hand, which isolate power relations against each other and the mutual support of power relations, on the other hand; and, finally, the strategies by which they make an impact and become inscribed, e.g. in laws and society (Jäger 2004). An important feature of power is that it is not a monopoly in the hands of a powerful elite. Power relations act on all social levels (Hall 2001). Power is often negatively connoted. Foucault indicates, however, that apart from this negative, repressing side, power is also productive. Power "traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault cited in Hall 2001: 77). According to Foucault's understanding, knowledge and power are inextricably interwoven and depend on each other. In the words of Foucault: "[...] there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault cited in Howarth 2000: 77). For a discourse researcher, an interesting question that remains is the relation between discourses and the power-knowledge nexus. As discourses are the bearers of knowledge, they themselves exert power. Consequently, discourses may exclude, but at the same time they can also empower. Further, discourses can enforce power as well as undermine it. Yet discourses can not only exert power, they can also be the effect of power (Jäger 2004).

Foucault's work has doubtlessly had an enormous influence on various human and social disciplines. Consequently, it has been widely analysed, discussed and also often criticised. One of the most frequently mentioned criticisms is that Foucault did not come forward with a proposal about how to carry out a discourse analysis. According to Keller (2008: 143), the points of criticism can be roughly classified into philosophical and sociological objections. While the former is concerned with the consistency of the basic epistemological position, the latter is related to the role of the actors and to

methodological and empirical implementation. The most frequently mentioned point of criticism is Foucault's understanding of the role of the subject in discourse. According to Foucault, the subjects are not outside the discourse but are produced within discourse. Subjects can only marginally, if at all, change discourses through their actions (Mattisek and Reuber 2004). Over the years, however, Foucault steadily admitted more freedom of action to the subjects.

In Foucault's second phase, which is characterised by his power concept, he is often criticised for not explaining why power should be opposed and not just be accepted. Moreover, Foucault's generalisation of the notion of power has been challenged. These are just two of the points of criticism put forward by Jürgen Habermas, one of the most influential critics of Foucault (Lemke 1997). Despite the criticism, the importance of Foucault's work in various sciences is beyond doubt.

2.3 Foucault and development

After having delineated some important traits of Foucault's approaches to discourse, knowledge and power in the previous sections, we shall now establish a link to development. Actually, none of Foucault's studies dealt with development theory or development policy. However, in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault made the following statement about development: "There are the notions of development and evolution: they make it possible to group a succession of dispersed events, to link them to one and the same organising principle, to subject them to the exemplary power of life (with its adaptations, its capacity for innovation the incessant correlation of its different elements, its systems of assimilation and exchange), to discover, already at work in each beginning, a principle of coherence and the outline of a future unity, to master time through a perpetually reversible relation between an origin and a term that are never given, but are always at work" (Foucault 2008: 24). Foucault formulates the following task for dealing with notions such as development: "What we must do, in fact, is to tear away from them their virtual self-evidence, and to free the problems that they pose; to recognize that they are not the tranquil locus on the basis of which other questions (concerning their structure, coherence, systematicity, transformations) may be posed, but that they themselves pose a whole cluster of questions (What are they? How can they be defined or limited? What distinct type of laws can they obey? What articulation are they capable of? What sub-groups can they give rise to? What specific phenomena do they reveal in the field of discourse?) We must recognize that *they may not, in the last resort, be what they seem at first sight*" (own emphasis) (Foucault 2008: 28–29).

What Foucault formulates as a task is exactly what post-development writers try to do (Ziai 2006). They try to uncover the "hidden" characteristics of development. According to Escobar (1995: 9), in examining development as a discourse, we get an idea of how the "Third World" was created politically, economically, sociologically and culturally and has since been controlled and dominated by the West. Ferguson (1994), another important post-development author who worked on the basis of Foucault's concept, elaborated on the questions of how and why development became such a central, unquestioned

value, the dominance of development work in practice, and what its effects are. His answer to the latter question of what development does is found in the title of his book: “it is an “anti-politics machine”, depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power” (Ferguson 1994: xiv). However, power not only works on the macro but also on the micro level. Dubois (1991: 10) argues that the main aim of development is “the restructuring of the behaviour and practices of individuals and populations (or the introduction of new ones)”. People get disciplined, controlled and normalised by development.

Many authors refer to the colonial era when talking about development. Dubois (1991: 25) argues that there is certainly some truth in the notion that development “is being employed as a neo-colonialist tool”. Brigg (2002: 421, 433), however, argues that using Foucault’s work, a clear difference between the operation of power in colonial and development eras can be delineated. Further, he criticises several post-development authors for failing to adopt Foucault’s concept of power properly by ignoring the fact that power is not only repressive (Brigg 2002). This is just one of the criticisms of other writers who deploy Foucault’s concepts. What nearly all papers adopting a Foucauldian approach entail is a description of the opportunities that Foucault’s concepts offer – they make it possible to reveal the characteristics of development. Foucault’s concept of power, for example, allows us to better understand “the operation of power through development” (Brigg 2002: 422). We get an understanding of how power works in development institutions and practices (Rossi 2004), and “how power shapes the conditions in which lives are lived” (Li 2007: 25).

Although Foucault’s concepts are fruitful for unravelling how power works in development, his concept is limited in terms of explaining certain mechanisms. Foucault did not give an answer to the question of how and why some individuals rebel against their suppression (Li 2007). According to Rossi (2004: 6), by equating power and knowledge, Foucault “limits the extent to which actors can be seen actively to manipulate knowledge in power games which do not take place between equals”. Bebbington (2000: 499) goes even a step further by saying that “poor” people may be discursively constructed as objects of development (or even as subaltern subjects of resistance), but they also act individually and collectively, creating their own room for manoeuvre within and beyond any constraint these categories may place on them”. He further argues that by focusing too much on discourse, one fails to take into consideration important parts of the rural life (Bebbington 2000). Consequently, one must be aware that “development as a discourse (...) orders and creates the objects that it pertains to address” (Nustad 2001: 480). As it is the case in the present study, not all facets of the mechanisms of development can be unravelled.

2.4 Outlining the approach

Foucault always emphasised that his books can be used as a tool box. Anyone can take and use the tools they want (Keller 2008). After various sections devoted to development, discourse and Foucault, this section specifies how the study incorporated strands

of Foucault's discourse theory and outlines the approach of discourse analysis. The focus of this study is on detecting the changes of discourses, specifically the discontinuities and ruptures. It is of great interest to understand why the discourses changed. Apart from this main focus, the analysis also focuses on enunciative modalities and how these are related to power. Enunciative modalities refer to questions such as: Who speaks? From where do subjects get the right to speak? From which institutional sites and subject positions do they speak?

In line with an often-mentioned point of criticism of Foucault's approach, we agree that Foucault did not take the agency of people sufficiently into consideration. With our analysis of the changing discourses in the context of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, we demonstrate that within the structure of discourses, people create room for manoeuvre that can influence the hegemonic discourse.

2.4.1 Empirical material

The discourse analysis carried out for this study drew on recent empirical data, collected in interviews with experts from development cooperation in Bolivia and Switzerland. Numerous programme documents were another important source of data. These contain information about the development discourses at different levels and also information about Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation.

Interviews were conducted between October 2008 and December 2008 in Switzerland (3 interviews) and Bolivia (24 interviews). The interviewees are experts in their respective fields. Of the 27 interviewees, 24 were directly involved with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The remaining three provided general information about development cooperation in Bolivia but did not know much about Swiss–Bolivian cooperation. Table 2 gives an overview of the institutional background of the individuals interviewed.

Table 2: Institutional background and position of interviewees.

Position	Number of people interviewed
SDC staff or former SDC staff in Bolivia (Switzerland)	3
SDC staff (Bolivia)	2
Staff of Swiss SDC partner organisations in Bolivia (Swisscontact, Inter-cooperation, Swiss Workers' Aid) (Bolivia)	4
Directors and other staff members of SDC projects in Bolivia (Bolivia)	15
Others (Bolivia)	3
Total	27

The interviews were semi-structured as well as semi-standardised. Because the interviewees had different backgrounds in terms of culture, education and position, it was also important to ask specific questions apart from the more standardised questions. Most questions were rather open; this had the advantage of inviting interviewees to

answer in more than just a few words (Meier Kruker and Rauh 2005). Yet an often noted risk of this openness is that the interviewees digressed from the original question and ended up talking about something that was not the focus of a question. This happened quite often in the field research. These digressions, however, often provided very valuable information.

Since the beginning of Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia, SDC has been implementing projects in the agricultural sector. SDC activities in all other fields started later. Therefore the evolution of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation can best be analysed through the different agricultural projects carried out over the years. As a consequence, the majority of interviewees were selected from among the personnel of SDC projects in the field of agriculture.

Another important source of information was SDC country **programme documents** for Bolivia. The documents normally describe the context of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation and refer to the political, economic and social situation in Bolivia as well as international cooperation in Bolivia. Moreover, these documents provided an analysis of present Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia and an outlook on future development programmes. Most programmes are designed for a four-year period. Yet due to political changes in Bolivia, some programmes already had to be adapted at an earlier stage.

The available programme documents do not cover the entire 40 years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. Documents from the 1970s could not be accessed. Yet, as the later country programmes entail a retrospective of the previous years, information from the first few years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation could be reconstructed and complemented with empirical material from interviews. Two programme documents for the years 1982 and 1984, as well as the country programmes for 1985, 1986, 1987, 1992, 1998–2003, and 2004–2008, were used in the analysis. Also, recent documents, i.e. an interim strategy for the year 2006 and a draft of the cooperation strategy for 2008–2012, were included.¹ At the end of 2009 Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación (COSUDE), as the cooperation office of SDC in La Paz is known, published a document commemorating the 40th anniversary of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation (SDC 2009).

2.4.2 Data processing

For data analysis, all the interviews were transcribed and transformed into written text using normal literary language. In comparison to other transcription types, texts that use normal literary language are easier to read and to analyse (Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005). Here, the content is more important than the linguistic expression. Although there were attempts to transcribe the interviews as literally as possible, transcription into normal literary language already represents an interpretation because not every

¹ The country programmes are now called “cooperation strategy.”

expression can be literally transcribed. Finally, the transcripts of the interviews constituted the empirical basis for the analytical process.

Both the interview transcripts and the programme documents were structured, ordered and processed with the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. ATLAS.ti is based on the methodology of Grounded Theory (Diaz-Bone and Schneider 2004). It provides coding and retrieval functions. Applied to the discourse analytical process, the coding and the writing of memos are very important. Through coding, parts of text that indicate elements of a discursive practice can be marked. The relations between identified discourse elements can also be marked. The codes and the relations between them facilitate the search for order, rule and classification principles.

2.4.3 Step-wise approach to a discourse analysis

Foucault provides little guidance about how to carry out a discourse analysis. For the analysis presented here, we adapted a concept developed by Diaz-Bone (in Reuber and Pfaffenbach 2005). It divides the discourse analytical process into four phases, as follows:

- 1) *Compilation of the sources of data*: We discussed the compilation of data by means of interviews and programme document reviews in the above section. This provides a basis for the discourse analysis that was finally carried out by working with the transcripts and the documents.
- 2) *Surface analysis / codification*: The surface analysis involves identification of relevant objects, concepts and ideas that represent the segments of a discourse and corresponding discursive practice. We used the sub-questions formulated in section 1.2 to define the different codes for working with and analysing transcripts and documents. Further codes were added on the basis of information given in the interviews and during the coding process itself.
- 3) *In-depth analysis*: In this phase, the different codes were analysed in detail. Guiding questions for the analysis process were: What regularities can be discovered in the statements? Which codes, concepts, objects and ideas appear together and which in opposition to each other? What was the hegemonic discourse at a certain time? What elements characterise it? What were the marginalised discourses? What continuities and discontinuities in the discourse can be identified? Who or what has an influence on the discourse?
- 4) *Summary and display of the results*: The aim of the last phase was to summarise the results and to visualise them.

After having outlined the conceptual and theoretical basis of this study, the following section will prepare the contextual ground for discourse analysis by providing selected background information on development and international cooperation in Bolivia over the last four decades.

3 Development and International Co-operation in Bolivia

Various discourse researchers (e.g. Apthorpe 1996:30) point to the importance of contextual information in the process of conducting a discourse analysis. To understand how development cooperation between Switzerland and Bolivia has changed over time, some contextual information about Bolivia is essential. This chapter gives a brief overview of the geographical features and the political, historical, economic and social context of Bolivia. It also provides a short introduction to development cooperation in Bolivia and more specifically to Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation.

3.1 Bolivia's geographical features

Bolivia is a landlocked country situated in the central part of South America with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Peru as neighbouring states (Fig. 1). With a total surface area of 1,098,580 km², Bolivia is about 25 times larger than Switzerland (CIA 2009). The country is divided into nine departments: La Paz, Potosí, Oruro, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija, Pando, Beni and Santa Cruz.



Figure 1: The territory and political departments of Bolivia. (Sources: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/bolivia.html> and http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/cf/Bolivia_Departments.png/300px-Bolivia_Departments.png)

Bolivia has a very diverse landscape characterised by seven different macro-ecological zones: the high mountains of the Andes, the high plateau of the Altiplano, the subpuna, the Yungas, the rain forest, the wet savannah and the Chaco (Pampuch and Echalar 2009). The inhabitants of Bolivia are as multifaceted as its landscape (see section 3.4).

Table 3: The seven macro–ecological regions of Bolivia. (Source: Pampuch and Echalar 2009)

Macro–ecological zone	Characteristics
High mountains of the Andes	Divided into East and West cordilleras. The latter extend from the Titicaca Lake in the North to the border with Argentina in the South. The average altitude of this area is over 5,000 meters; the land is dry and unfertile. The East cordilleras are a natural border for the moist winds coming from the lowlands of the east. This is one of the reasons for the dry climate of the Altiplano. This area hosts the largest amount of mineral resources.
Altiplano	Area with an average altitude of 3,800 m, situated between the two cordilleras. The northern part is characterised by Lake Titicaca moderating the cold and dry climate of the high plateau. For centuries, quinoa, potato and corn have been cultivated and llamas, alpacas and vicuñas were domiciled. The southern part of the high plateau is a hostile, dry and cold area marked by salt deserts such as the Salar de Uyuni.
Subpuna	Very fertile area of the subpuna with the city of Cochabamba as its centre. The temperate climate provides ideal requirements for the cultivation of corn, wheat and in some areas even fruits and wine.
Yungas	Fertile area of subtropical canyons at an altitude between 1,000 and 2,800 m. Here, the coca plant, wheat, cacao, coffee and a large variety of subtropical and tropical fruits are cultivated.
Rain forest	Lowlands of Bolivia, called “Oriente”, with tropical rainforest in the North, where tropical timber and rubber bring revenues. South of the rainforest, in the area of the wet savannah and the pampas, in the department of Beni, many people earn a livelihood from cattle breeding. During the three months of the rainy season, this area is barely accessible due to flooding. Towards the south, the savannah gets drier. However, in the area of Santa Cruz, the biggest city in the lowlands, intensive agriculture is practiced. Cultivated products are cotton, sugar and peanuts.
Chaco	Dry thornbush savannah with hardly any inhabitants. Nonetheless, this area is of great importance because of substantial oil and gas resources.

3.2 Historical and political context

Bolivia has a long history of political turmoil and discontinuity. The historical and political context has had an enormous influence on the development path of Bolivia and on Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. This section highlights the political context since 1969. Earlier historical and political events are important, however, for an understanding of the country’s current political context (see Table 4 for a brief overview).

Table 4: Historical and political context before 1969.**Bolivia over the centuries**

Over centuries, the Andean region has been shaped by various ancient civilisations which appeared and disappeared. Among the most famous of these is the Tiahuanaco culture, which has its origins in the area of Lake Titicaca and is considered to be the foundation of Bolivian history. With the disappearance of the Tiahuanacos at the beginning of the 13th Century, the different tribes began to organise themselves in principalities and federations. The most powerful status was acquired by the Aymara-speaking tribes. Yet the principalities were soon incorporated in the Quechua speaking Inca Empire that had its centre in Cuzco. The Incas maintained a religious military system which was very well organised, but also highly hierarchical. They constructed a sophisticated supply system with paved streets, bridges, forts and supply depots. Every tribe and ayllu (village community) had to produce for itself and the community according to a given plan. Further, the people regularly had to fulfil an obligation to perform work, the so called *mita*. Yet this seemingly strong empire was quickly defeated by the Spanish conquistadors because of its interior disruption. The following three colonial centuries, between 1532 and 1825, were influenced by silver. The vast silver resources which were found in the Bolivian Altiplano were exploited without bringing any advantage to the country. On the contrary, the indigenous people were exploited to work in the mines under dreadful conditions.

As the political situation in Spain changed through the nomination of Napoleon's brother as king of Spain, the possibility of rebellion in South America became real. The revolt which started in what is today Bolivia under the leadership of Pedro Domingo Murillo expanded to other areas of South America. The result of 15 years of conflict was the independence of various countries in South America. On the 6th of August 1825, Bolivia's independence was proclaimed. Despite independence, the status of the indigenous people in Bolivia worsened. They were treated as bondsmen. The years after independence were shaped by a permanent state crisis combined with frequent changes of president. In the year 1879, the so-called saltpetre war between Chile and Bolivia broke out. The cause of this war was the saltpetre resources on the pacific coast of Bolivian territory which had been exploited by Chile over the years. The consequences of this war, which was won by Chile, were that Bolivia lost territory and above all access to the ocean. Resentment against Chile still persists in Bolivian society today. The lost war led to a change in the country's leadership. The barons of the mining industry became the most powerful men in the country. The discovery of vast tin resources triggered a new boom in Bolivia. The election of a leftist government in 1951 was regarded as a threat to the mine owners and the great landowners. The election was therefore revoked. The leftist forces decided to fight for their rights in a revolution that was successful. The most important measures of the new government were the introduction of the right to vote for all people, nationalisation of the mines, and agricultural reform which envisaged the reallocation of land in favour of the rural indigenous people. The United States was an important partner of the new government. Between 1952 and 1964, the USA spent more than USD 300 million in Bolivia, enabling it to gain political and economic influence in Bolivia. The army, which had been suspended after the revolution, was also an important ally of the new government. This reincorporation of the armed forces constituted the cornerstone of two decades of dominance by military regimes in Bolivia.

(Source: Pampuch and Echalar 2009)

Over nearly two decades, from 1964 to 1982, military generals held power in Bolivia. The first of these generals, René Barrientos, expelled the former forces of the revolution in Bolivia. Different generals usually replaced each other by means of a coup, usually accompanied by violence. Brief democratic interludes never lasted long. The longest presidency during these two decades was that of Hugo Banzer which lasted for eight years. With financial and military support, Banzer's coup succeeded on its second attempt in 1971. In 1974, Banzer launched a coup against his own administration. From then on, he was associated almost exclusively with the military, which was generously funded. Banzer suppressed all opposition, prohibited labour unions and all left-wing parties, incapacitated those who opposed his system, and censored the media. Luis García Meza's presidency, however, made history of a different sort. Meza came to power in a bloody putsch, which he initiated through several political murders. Meza was the most criminal dictator Bolivia has ever seen. His agenda included massacres, murders and torture. His extremely corrupt regime had close links to the cocaine mafia. Due to the high number of scandals, murders and economic crises, the army forced

Meza to resign. This brutal dictatorship led to intensified protests in favour of the reestablishment of democracy.

The collapse of the military dictatorship occurred with the appointment of Siles Zuazo as president in 1982. Democracy was re-established in Bolivia. Yet Siles Zuazo failed to deal with the economic chaos resulting from dictatorship had left. Moreover, leftist forces could not agree on the focus of policy. Elections were scheduled for 1985. After the failure of the leftist government, only the right was in a position to win elections. None of the candidates achieved an absolute majority. Therefore, the congress elected the new president, Victor Paz Estenssoro. Paz Estenssoro's radical restoration of the Bolivian economy, in line with the requests of the International Monetary Fund, is an unforgettable period in Bolivian history. Banzer's influence on the policy of the government grew through a pact between his party and the government. In the future, a rotation of government was envisaged between the two parties. The pact between Banzer's *Acción Democrática Nacionalista* (ADN; Nationalist Democratic Action) party and the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR; National Revolutionary Movement) of Paz Estenssoro was broken by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who was also a member of the MNR. In the election of 1989, the three candidates Sánchez de Lozada, Banzer and Paz Zamora achieved similar results. After intense negotiations, Banzer agreed to support Paz Zamora as president. The young president brought a new style to Bolivian politics. Politics was shaped by unconventional cooperation between politicians of the left and the right. Nonetheless, the government's social policy and promised decentralisation barely advanced. The next elections were therefore won by another party.

The new president was Sánchez de Lozada. His government turned out to be one of the most innovative. With the enactment of the law of popular participation, Bolivia was divided into 311 villages which each received their own resources to administer. Another act of the government was the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. With the bonus generated through the sale of enterprises, an annual pension of USD 250 was paid to all people 65 years old and above. Another achievement was the introduction of a ministry of justice. As the same president could not be consecutively elected to a second term and Sánchez de Lozada's party had no other convincing personalities, Banzer was again elected as president of Bolivia in 1997. A coalition of four parties was built, partially representing totally different strands of thought. One of the aims of Banzer's government was the total eradication of the illegal cultivation of coca. This led to major confrontations with the coca peasants under the leadership of Evo Morales, who was already a member of the assembly. Scandals involving the misappropriation of international aid and the fact that important government posts were assigned to family members also did not help his reputation. The water war in Cochabamba and the blockade of roads in the area of La Paz were the culmination points of the people's dissatisfaction with the government. Owing to poor health, Banzer handed over the presidency to his vice president, Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, before his term officially ended.

The new president was described as a mixture of efficiency, honesty and juvenileness. During Quiroga's short term, people suspected of corruption were excluded from the parliament. One of these was Evo Morales, who was linked to several murders. This exclusion was interpreted by many, however, as an act of obedience to the U.S. government. In the election of 2002 in which Quiroga was not allowed to participate, Sánchez de Lozada emerged as the winner. Yet Evo Morales had nearly as many votes as Sánchez de Lozada. The formation of the new government took a long time and was marked by arguments between the partners. The new government was ill-fated from the beginning. Apart from internal difficulties, it had to deal with growing indigenous opposition under the leadership of Evo Morales and with a deficit of 10%. It did not take long before the first protests occurred. Sánchez de Lozada proposed a law which envisaged raising taxes on all incomes higher than twice the minimum wage. This proposition was the trigger for severe agitation in the country which eventually prompted the military to force the president's resignation. The vice president, Carlos D. Mesa, took over. Mesa's party and Evo Morales' party MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) cooperated to pass a law on the extraction of oil and natural gas. Mesa did not agree with the proposal for this law and did not approve it. As a consequence of growing demonstrations, Mesa soon stepped down. Mesa's successor was the president of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodríguez Velzé. Velzé's main task was to organise the elections which took place in 2005. Evo Morales won the elections with 53.7% of the vote.

Evo Morales' leftist movement was composed of leaders and activists from the indigenous movement, peasant labour unions (above all coca peasants) and other social movements. Morales is striving for social revolution a democratic path. One important landmark was the enactment of a decree that envisaged the nationalisation of oil and natural gas companies. Existing agreements were renegotiated with companies in these sectors. Yet at the centre of Morales presidency was voting on a new constitution for the country in January 2009. The new constitution, which was approved with 60% of the vote, brought about fundamental changes (Pampuch and Echalar 2009). Two of its most prominent characteristics are the strengthening of the rights of indigenous people and a more powerful role of the state in the economy and in relation to natural resources (e.g. Art.1, 5, 289, 351, 353, 359 of the constitution) (Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia 2009). Although the constitution was accepted by a majority of Bolivians, the departments in the lowlands, called the 'media luna' (half moon) clearly voted against the new constitution. As most natural gas resources are found in the lowlands, these departments demand a higher share of the state revenues. According to the new constitution, however, the state revenues are distributed equitably to all departments (Art. 353 of the constitution). Further, the constitution also restricts the size of privately owned land (Art. 398 of the constitution) (Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia 2009). Most big landowners live in the media luna departments. They also voted against the new constitution. Although Morales was re-elected in December 2009, getting the division of the country and the urge for autonomy in the lowlands under control remain will be future challenges for Evo Morales.

3.3 Economic context

In the 1970s, president Banzer's aim was economic growth and modernisation. The annual growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the boom years of an export-oriented economy during Banzer's regime was 7% (Pampuch and Echalar 2009). However, this resulted from an unsustainable economic structure which led to a surge in foreign debt from USD 671 million in 1971 to over USD 3 billion in 1978 (DCH 1986). As a consequence, the IMF imposed tough conditions for further credits. After the dictatorship of García Meza, inflation was high and the state had to declare bankruptcy. One sector boomed, though – the black market, where the most successful good was coca paste (DCH 1985). Export revenues from coca paste were higher than the revenues for all legal exports. Meza's successors did not find a solution to the devastating economic situation. The inflation rate rose to 14,000%, the price of tin dropped, subsidies were cancelled, salaries frozen, fixed prices for various goods abolished, public companies privatised or closed, and social expenditures dramatically cut.

Only in 1986 did the Bolivian peso, which was then traded at 2 million for one dollar, cease to drop and inflation stopped. The economic policy of 1986 was very much in line with the ideas of the IMF and after the IMF requirements and international donors' requirements were met, money was transferred to the country again. However, rigorous measures were enacted at enormous social cost (Sottoli 1999). The extremely poor were particularly neglected and social conditions only improved marginally (Grütter 1993). To mitigate the social consequences of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) and to increase the political acceptance of the SAP, an emergency social fund (ESF) was established. The compensation measures entailed projects mainly in the domain of employment and basic social assistance (health, education and food security). The ESF partially alleviated social pressure in the employment sector and with respect to social services, yet the measures did not reach the poorest people (Grütter 1993). Economic policy continued in the same way, and the government of Sánchez de Lozada began to privatise state-owned enterprises. Dividends from the augmented pension fund were disbursed to all Bolivians over age 65 in the form of an annual pension of USD 250. Costly pension reform, low mineral prices and the strict anti-coca policy of the succeeding government resulted in a complete dependence of Bolivia on international institutions and the USA (Pampuch and Echalar 2009).

In 1997, Bolivia began to participate in the heavily indebted poor countries' initiative (HIPC initiative), which was launched by the IMF and the World Bank in 1996 to reduce a country's debt/export ratio and support it in adjustment and reform programmes in order to reduce poverty. Soon Bolivia reached the completion point and was granted debt relief with a net present value (NPV) of USD 448 million. In view of the worsening terms of trade for many developing countries, the so-called enhanced HIPC initiative was launched. In comparison with the initial HIPC initiative, the aim was to reduce the debt/export ratio to a value of 150 instead of around 225 (Andersen and Nina 2000). Bolivia was also part of the enhanced HIPC initiative and reached its completion point in 2001. In order to obtain granted debt relief, Bolivia had to fulfil three con-

ditions, 1) the continued implementation of strong macroeconomic and structural policies, 2) the establishment of a fully defined Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and 3) the confirmation of participation in the enhanced HIPC framework from Bolivia's other creditors. The debt relief of the enhanced HIPC initiative amounted to USD 854 million in NPV terms by the year 2016 (World Bank 2001; Andersen and Nina 2000).

While Bolivia was granted debt relief, the country continued to battle economic problems. The recession was inexorable, the prices for natural resources continued to drop, and the deficit rose to nearly 9% of GDP in August 2002. Only in 2005, owing to Mesa's austerity programme, other measures that were taken and the favourable international context, did the government's macroeconomic measures bear fruit. The fiscal deficit declined from 8.1% of GDP to 2.3% in 2005. The economic situation remained just as stable under the government of Rodríguez so that conditions were very favourable when Evo Morales became the new president in 2005. Prices for natural resources and agricultural products were at a record high, export revenues rose to over USD 4 billion, and the budget surplus reached 4.5% of GDP in 2006. Yet, at the same time, the inflation rate rose steadily to over 11% in 2007 (de Mesa et al. 2008). For 2009, the Central Bank of Bolivia anticipates an inflation rate of 9.5%,² and the Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL) predicts a GDP growth rate of about 3%.³ Yet economic conditions are not as favourable as they used to be. It is predicted that petroleum revenues for 2009 will halve compared to 2008 (Sánchez 2009). Also, external debt rose again in 2008.⁴ Morales will certainly also have to deal with some economic problems in the future.⁵

3.4 Social context

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America and also the one with the region's greatest income inequality (Gini-coefficient of 60%) (SDC 2007). In 2006, 37.7% of the population lived in extreme poverty and 60% in poverty. Of all people living in urban areas, 23.4% were extremely poor, while in rural areas this percentage reached 62.3%.⁶

The population is divided into 30% Quechua, 30% Mestizos (mixed white and Amerindian ancestry), 25% Aymara and 15% white (CIA 2009). In recent decades, the population has grown enormously. While in 1950 the population of Bolivia was 3 million, it steadily grew to 4.6 million in 1976, 6.4 million in 1992 and 8.3 million in 2001. Today, the population exceeds 10 million. While in 1950 66.1 % of the popula-

² <http://www.bolpress.com/art.php?Cod=2008122210>

³ <http://www.bolpress.com/art.php?Cod=2009040213>

⁴ <http://www.bolpress.com/art.php?Cod=2009020507>

⁵ Appendix C gives an overview of some important economic key data between 1969 and 2007.

⁶ Which poverty line the INE takes as a basis for its calculations is unfortunately not mentioned. It is just indicated that the INE measures poverty on the basis of income.

<http://www.ine.gov.bo/indice/visualizador.aspx?ah=PC3060101.HTM>

<http://www.ine.gov.bo/indice/visualizador.aspx?ah=PC3060102.HTM>

tion lived in rural areas and 33.9% in urban areas, in 2008 only 23.3% of the people lived in rural areas and 66.4% in urban areas (de Mesa et al. 2008). A massive migration from rural areas to urban areas has taken place. Of the 3.1 million people in the year 2001 who lived in rural areas, 73% were indigenous people. In contrast, in the same year only 36% of the indigenous people lived in urban areas. As in 2001 indigenous people represented more or less 50% of the whole population. These data clearly show that the percentage of indigenous people in rural areas is disproportionately high. The ratio of indigenous to non-indigenous people is very different in the different departments of the country. Non-indigenous people were a majority in the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and Tarija, while in the departments La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Chuquisaca and Cochabamba indigenous people represented more than 50% of the population.⁷

3.5 International cooperation in Bolivia

Bolivia has been a net recipient of foreign aid since the beginning of the 20th Century. However, development efforts and interventions, which have a direct influence on the natural and human resources available to the government of Bolivia to raise the standard of living, did not begin before the revolution of 1952 (DCH 1985). At the beginning of the 1950s, the United Nations realised the first technical mission in Bolivia and the USA began bilateral assistance (mainly agricultural donations) in the country (Machicado 1990). Also various missions by churches provided development assistance in different fields. In the 1970s, the first NGOs were created and due to their support by multilateral and bilateral donors, they proliferated rapidly (Machicado 1990).

External financing was already substantial in the 1960s – it was three times as high as the country's trade deficit – and increased during the 1970s. At the end of 1983, about 800 projects were financed externally at a total cost of about USD 650 million. This accounted for about 20% of Bolivia's GDP. Most projects executed with institutions in official sectors (about 330 out of the 800) supported the agricultural sector or the mining, transport and communication sectors. In 1982, only about USD 40 million was non-refundable financing, while in 1982/ 83 loans and credits amounted to USD 600 million (DCH 1985). In the years before 1992, official development assistance (ODA) amounted to USD 700–800 million which represented around 15–17% of GDP (DCH 1982). From the beginning of the 1990s until the mid 1990s, ODA was between USD 660 and 760 million (12–14% of the GDP), reaching its peak in 1992 (USD 760 million). In that year, nearly 60% of the USD 760 million in ODA consisted of loans and 40 % of donations. From the mid 1990s onwards, ODA decreased (Méndez Ferry 1997; Arauco 1997), but was still around 600 million USD, accounting for 9% of GDP (SDC 1998). It remained at around 8% of GDP until 2002. Then ODA substantially increased again, from an average of USD 576 million between 1998 and 2001 to an estimated USD 784 million in 2002. While the financial contributions of bilateral

⁷ <http://www.ine.gov.bo/indice/visualizador.aspx?ah=PC20501.HTM>

agencies remained the same, multilateral aid rose from an average of USD 316 million between 1998 and 2001 (55% of total ODA) to an estimated USD 523 million in 2002 (67% of ODA) (SDC 2004). As the GDP of Bolivia did not grow substantially in the year 2002 and the following year, there was also a high increase in the proportion of external financing to GDP (Fig. 2).

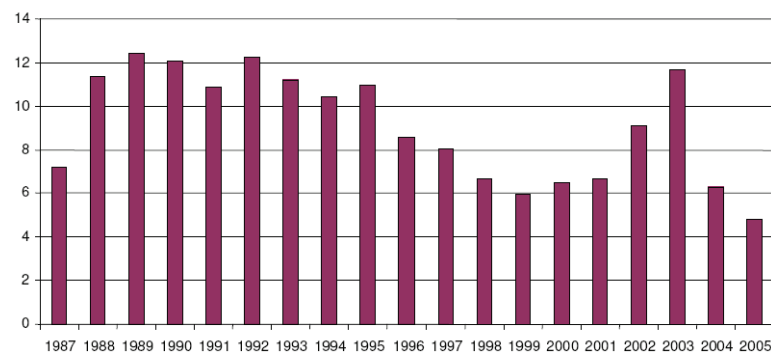


Figure 2: Foreign aid to Bolivia as a percentage of GDP, 1987–2005. (Source: De Grave 2007)

Bolivia classifies its donors into bilateral, multilateral, United Nations donors, and donors from other developing countries (Ministerio de Hacienda 2001) (Tab. 5). The most important multilateral donors are the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF). The USA, Japan, Germany and Holland are the biggest bilateral donors (SDC 2004). There are also 10 United Nations organisations working in Bolivia.

Table 5: Multilateral and bilateral donors to Bolivia. (Source: Ministerio de Hacienda 2001)

Multilateral donors	Bilateral donors	Technical cooperation between developing countries
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Germany	Brasil
World Bank	Belgium	Colombia
Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF)	Canada	Chile
Plata Basin Financial Development Fund	Korea	Ecuador
International Monetary Fund	Denmark	Mexico
European Commission	Spain	Peru
Nordic Development Fund	France	Uruguay
United Nations	Holland	Venezuela
	Italy	
	Japan	
	Great Britain	
	China	
	Sweden	
	Switzerland	
	USA	

Moreover, there are numerous NGOs working in Bolivia. Between 1999 and 2004, the number of NGOs grew steadily. In 2004, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Bolivia (INE) registered 729 NGOs. Between 2005 and 2006 this number drastically diminished to only 436, corresponding to a decline of about 40%.⁸ An explanation for this decline may be found in connection with the Paris Declaration enacted in 2005. Since then, bilateral agencies have tended to directly support the government instead of NGOs. Further, the current president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, considers the state to be the promoter and protagonist of development rather than private institutions, which also include NGOs and foundations (Government of Bolivia 2006).

3.6 Development cooperation between Switzerland and Bolivia

Bolivia is one of the countries with the longest history of development assistance and cooperation in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This partnership began just eight years after the creation of the Swiss Service for Technical Cooperation in 1961. For a long time, the Swiss Service for Technical Cooperation engaged in agriculture and forestry projects in Bolivia. While the Service for Technical Cooperation was renamed the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DCH) in 1977, it was only in the mid 1980s that the programme was complemented with the support of initiatives supporting the reformation of the state. Since 1995, the DCH, which was later again renamed the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), has been advocating decentralisation. Since 1998 business support programmes and the micro finance sector have also been important topics in the SDC programme in Bolivia. Activities by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco), which have mainly promoted business and investment, were implemented in 1986. Switzerland also offers humanitarian aid to Bolivia⁹ (SDC 2004).

The current SDC cooperation strategy (2009–2012)¹⁰ (SDC 2009) was elaborated on the basis of the national plan of development of the Bolivian government and is different from the former country programme of 2004–2008, which was set in accordance with the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy and the Millennium Development Goals. Swiss development cooperation aims to support improvement in the conditions of the poor in many areas, such as finding work, generating income and strengthening their participation in political processes. SDC concentrates its activities in Bolivia on the rural areas of the highlands and the adjacent valley regions. SDC implements projects in 107 of the 230 villages in this area (SDC 2004).

SDC coordinates its activities with different bilateral and multilateral agencies such as the Bolivian government, municipalities, private Bolivian organisations, Swiss aid

⁸ <http://www.ine.gov.bo/indice/visualizador.aspx?ah=PC100102.HTM>

⁹ http://www.sdc.admin.ch/en/Home/Documentation/History_of_SDC

¹⁰ So far, there is only a draft available of the SDC cooperation strategy 2009-2012 (SDC 2009).

organisations and international organisations including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).¹¹ Furthermore, SDC works together with countries such as Holland, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and the USA (SDC 2004) (see also section 4.2).

Apart from SDC and SECO, many Swiss NGOs have been active in Bolivia. The following Swiss NGOs receive financial contributions from SDC for their programmes: Swiss Workers' Aid, the Red Cross, Swisscontact, Caritas, Fastenopfer (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund), Unité-voluntary programme, Brücke/Le Pont and Terre des Hommes. Programmes of other Swiss NGOs are supported by minor contributions. Current SDC projects are partly executed by Swiss Workers' Aid, Swisscontact and Intercooperation (SDC 2004).

SDC has been going through a process of reorganisation since 2008. The trigger for this restructuring was the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review for Switzerland in the year 2005, in which it was noted that the number of Swiss partner countries was rather large compared to the size of Switzerland. The DAC suggested concentrating SDC activities in order to strengthen the impact of Swiss development cooperation (OECD 2005). This reform entails a stronger thematic and geographical focus of SDC's activities. As a consequence the number of priority countries was reduced. Bolivia, however, remains a priority country of SDC. SECO has also been in the process of concentrating its activities. In 2008, it was decided that Bolivia will no longer be a SECO priority country.¹²

In accordance with the different SDC projects and programmes over the years, the financial commitment of Switzerland has changed as well. Between 1969 and 1986, the Swiss development budget for Bolivia hardly ever exceeded the USD 5 million mark. This rose to USD 20 million within one year in 1987. Between 1987 and the beginning of the 1990s, expenditures ranged between USD 20 and 25 million. During the 1990s, the average budget for Bolivia was around USD 20 million (SDC 1999). In the last few years, the budget shrank by approximately USD 5 million (SDC 2004). An increased financial commitment has been designated for 2009.¹³ Figure 3 shows SDC's financial contribution to Bolivia over the last 40 years.

¹¹ http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Countries/South_America_the_Caribbean/Bolivia

¹² <http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch/aktuell/00154/00575/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=17694>

¹³ http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Countries/South_America_the_Caribbean/Bolivia

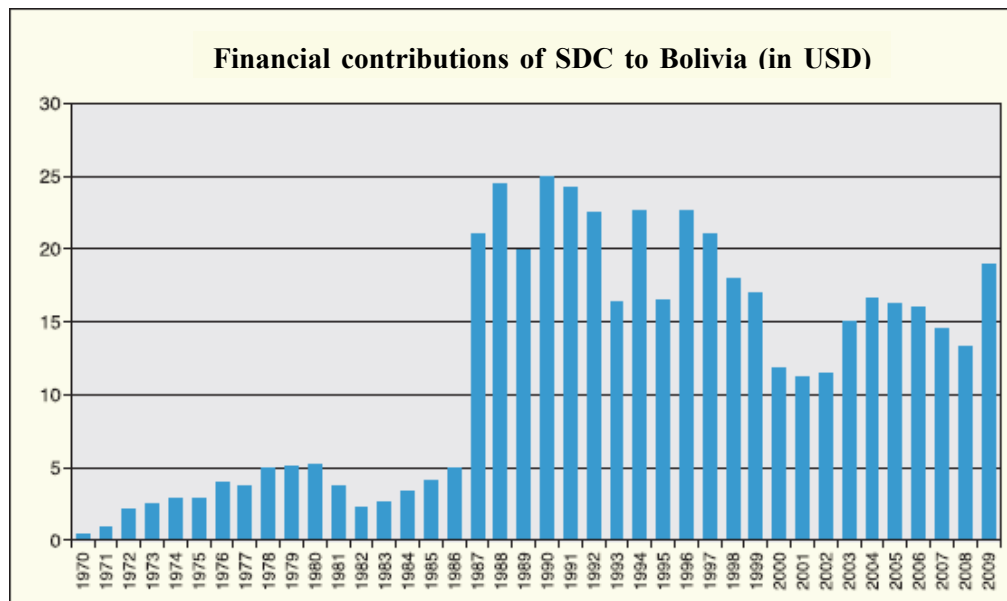


Figure 3: SDC's financial contributions to Bolivia over the last 40 years. (Source: SDC 2009)

4 Changing Development Discourses and Swiss–Bolivian Development Cooperation

This chapter presents the results of the discourse analysis. The first few sections are concerned with the role of Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia, SDC's partners, and the evolution of the SDC programme in Bolivia over the last 40 years (sections 4.1 to 4.3). They are followed by a section devoted to changes in the development discourses of Bolivia and Switzerland (section 4.4), which have been influenced by important international declarations (section 4.5). The 40 years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation are marked by several challenges in Bolivia, which sometimes also caused changes in SDC programmes (section 4.6). Section 4.7 analyses the role of power in development cooperation between Switzerland and Bolivia. Finally, a brief glance at the possible future of development cooperation in Bolivia is presented (section 4.8).

4.1 Characteristics of Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia

Every development agency has specific characteristics which have an influence on how it acts and how it is perceived by others. To better understand the evolution of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, this section provides a brief overview of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of the SDC and compares SDC with other bilateral development agencies.

In general, SDC has quite a good reputation in Bolivia. SDC's hallmarks are its flexibility, transparency, reliability, responsibility, process orientation, promotion of innovation, and the ability to bring together different stakeholders (DCH 1982: 14:25, SDC 1998: 22:1, SDC 2004: 20:34, SDC 2007: 10:17).¹⁴ These qualities were also mentioned by the interviewees (P7: 7:30, 7:33).¹⁵ SDC has shown an ability to respond rapidly to a changing political, economic and social environment, to adapt programmes, and to take appropriate action (DCH 1992: 19:64, 19:68; SDC 1998: 22:27). It is also appreciated for the continuity in its work, programmes and guidelines (DCH 1986: 18:47, SDC 1998: 22:1). SDC also achieved prominence through diverse projects which were considered innovative. It was a pioneer in a number of new project areas (e.g. watershed management), perspectives and approaches (P7: 7:11, 7:33). Considering its budget, SDC has had a significant influence and some extraordinary results (DEH 1992: 19:63, P8: 8:16).

¹⁴ As the country programmes of SDC were coded, the number for a coded section of the text (e.g. 14:25) is indicated instead of the page number of the document.

¹⁵ The sources of data that are indicated with a 'P' are interviews. Every interview has a different number (number behind the P). The coded paragraphs in the interview transcripts are marked by a number (e.g. 7:30).

Many project partners have appreciated the quality of SDC personnel. The staff is described as competent, open and willing to discuss and respect the decisions of their partners (DCH 1982: 14:13, P8: 8:22, 8:30). Still highly respected are a number of key persons with a good understanding of conditions in Bolivia who left their mark on Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia, in some cases over many years (P8: 8:37, 8:53, P20: 20:20; DCH 1984b: 16:8, P8: 8:30). SDC also supported capacity development among its Bolivian staff members. In earlier times some were trained by Swiss experts in Bolivia, while others received scholarships for further education elsewhere (DCH 1982: 14.13, P15: 15:47). Cooperation with partners is described by the informants as open and horizontal (P19: 19:14, P21: 21:14, P7: 7:34). This openness and equality has also been displayed in a certain liberty among the partners to work rather independently and to adapt their projects according to their own demands (P8: 8:16, P16: 16:13).

Over the years, SDC has mainly worked at the local, municipal level (P7: 7:17). From this local level, SDC has also tried to intervene at the meso and macro levels (P22: 22:20). While earlier SDC projects were characterised by great persistence and sectoral concentration, later projects were more diversified and tended to be of shorter duration (DCH 1992: 19:64, P26: 26:32, P18: 18:33). This change also entails criticism; SDC has been criticised for operating in too many and too diversified projects in relation to its budget (P18:33, P14: 14:61). A characteristic of SDC mentioned most by the interviewees was its protective function. Due to SDC's unconditional support of its projects and partners, the projects were far less vulnerable to political changes and external interference (P16: 16:33, P8: 8:11, P15: 15:38). This again triggered criticism: SDC struggles to terminate projects, i.e. stopping support for a project or achieving the scaling-up of a project (P18: 18:33, P14: 14:55, P20: 20:22, SDC 2007: 10:17).

In its history of 40 years of development cooperation, there was just one distinct discontinuity in the 1980s, when SDC closed down nearly all projects due to political instability (see also section 4.4.1). This incident, however, strengthened the credibility of SDC and Bolivian public authorities and institutions became more aware of it (SDC 1998: 16:11, DEH 1986: 18:47). Apart from this incident, SDC has been rather discreet and never produced much publicity (DEH 1985: 17.47). It has always tried to align with the Bolivian government, even more so in recent times in response to the Paris Declaration. As a consequence, SDC has always stayed away from polarising topics and has been very cautious in supporting alleged anti-government movements or areas (P22: 22:71).

Overall, SDC appears in Bolivia as an important bilateral donor with major experience and is widely accepted and well regarded. In comparison to other bilateral agencies it appears to be participatory and close to the terrain. It has a respectable level of communication and respects local decisions. While the projects of most agencies were limited to four years, SDC decided phase by phase if a project should be continued and instead aimed to achieve long-term goals (DCH 1984b: 16:8). SDC even institutionalised many projects in the form of mixed enterprises and foundations (P7: 7:21). Today, however,

SDC also envisages shorter programmes and is determined to assign more projects to external implementation. Other agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have been working in this manner for a long time (P21: 21:47). The same applies to the so-called basket funds, a form of financing a programme by various agencies (bilateral and/or multilateral). Switzerland has financed programmes by means of basket funds but this form of financing is not yet as important as it is in other agencies (P25: 25:6).

4.2 SDC's partners

SDC has been working with partners since the inception of Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia in 1969. However, over the 40 years of cooperation, the type of partner has changed substantially. Today, SDC works with international and national partners. The international partners can be classified as multilateral and bilateral agencies. The national partners in Bolivia can be divided into governmental and non-governmental partners. While some partners work on all levels, others merely act on the local level.

In the first decade of Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia (1969–1979), SDC maintained only a few partnerships. On the national level, SDC worked with governmental institutions such as Corporación Boliviana de Fomento (CBF) (Bolivian Development Corporation), Instituto Boliviano de Tecnología Agropecuaria (IBTA) (Bolivian Institute of Agricultural Technology) and the Servicio Nacional de Desarrollo de Comunidades (SNDC) (National Service for Community Development). On the regional level, SDC has worked with the faculty of agronomy of the University in Cochabamba and at the local level with peasant cooperatives (DCH 1986: 18:56).

From the mid 1970s onwards, SDC put greater emphasis on partner diversification in order to minimise the risk of further political turmoil and change (DCH 1985: 17:50). It started to incorporate private development organisations in its projects. The combination of governmental and private partners produced good results (DCH 1986: 18:42). In 1983, SDC launched an NGO programme. A further expansion and diversification of private partners, with up to 12 NGOs, was therefore envisaged (DCH 1985: 17:75).

In 1986, the institutional structure in Bolivia changed as a consequence of the economic crisis and the subsequent radical changes in economic and development policy. Bolivian Development Corporation (CBF) was dismantled. The SDC projects that were executed with the CBF as partner were handed over to the regional development corporations. In the course of downsizing the power of the central government, the regions and their institutions (such as the regional development corporations) became more important (DCH 1986: 18:56). The internal and external restrictions on the financing of development activities in the mid 1980s forced Bolivia and the bilateral agencies to better coordinate, prioritise and harmonise their instruments (DCH 1986: 18:57). SDC, which so far had also not had much experience either with other bilateral agencies or with multilateral agencies, changed its instruments. While in the country programme for the year 1986 SDC appeared to act conservatively concerning the co-financing of

multilateral agencies, just a few years later more than one co-financing project was supported by SDC (DCH 1986: 18:74, DCH 1992: 19:23). One of the most famous and financially extensive SDC projects conducted in coordination with various bilateral partners was the Sistema Boliviano de Tecnología Agropecuario (SIBTA), an innovative agricultural programme. The programme was financed by the Bolivian government, IDB, Germany, USA, and the basket fund created by Switzerland, Holland, Denmark and Great Britain, into which each of the four countries deposited its money. Later, the SIBTA was also supported by Japan. The SIBTA, which started in 1998, was the first experience with a basket fund in Latin America (P26: 26:17) (Nuñez et al. 2003). The constitution of the SIBTA took a lot of time and was intensive work. The process of signing the contracts with the four governments of the basket fund was an especially difficult task, as all countries had to agree on the same conditions (P26: 26:17). In 2004, the following countries were the most important bilateral partners of the SDC: Holland, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and USA (SDC 2004: 34). As a result of the Paris Declaration, it can be assumed that coordination and cooperation between bilateral agencies will be strengthened in the future.

SDC not only extended the partner network to multilateral agencies but also started to hand over the management of some projects to Swiss NGOs such as Intercooperation and Swisscontact (DCH 1992: 19:23). Cooperation between the SDC and the Swiss NGOs is very participatory (P18: 18:47). An advantage that the Swiss NGOs have compared to the local ones is that they share the same institutional thinking with the SDC (P21: 21:17). This facilitates partnership. Apart from this close cooperation between the Swiss NGOs and the SDC, experience made with local NGOs, especially in earlier times, was not been very positive. During the 1980s, the NGOs were described as self-referential and ideological. The NGOs often only cooperated if the SDC project or programme correlated with the agenda of the NGO (P24: 24:13). Moreover, the capacities of the NGOs were also criticised (DCH 1986: 18:43). The local non-governmental partners in particular are often not the direct partners of the SDC head office, but partners of the projects of the SDC or of the projects managed by the Swiss NGOs. Over the last few years the role of some movements and organisations has changed. This is apparent from the example of the partners of Swiss Workers' Aid. Swiss Worker's Aid has always had a rather close relationship with the peasant union. Since the year 2000, however, cooperation has waned as a consequence of the development of a more and more radical indigenous discourse within the peasant union. Yet the relationship with the local unions remained strong (P21: 21:4).

During the 1990s, cooperation with governmental institutions diminished as the government focused more on its core business. As a consequence, NGOs and private companies gained influence. Furthermore, in the same decade other partners such as social movements, trade associations and producer and business organisations also became more important (DCH 1992: 19:58, SDC 2007: 10:29). The selection of partner organisations has since been conducted more and more on the basis of calls for tender (SDC 1998: 22:64). There is also a tendency to cooperate more with local institutions instead of NGOs (P22: 22:25). As the role of the government has again strengthened since the

election of Evo Morales, the governmental partners have become more important and will probably become even more so in the future. However, experiences and views about cooperation with governmental partners are controversial. Cooperation with centralised authorities has been perceived as rather difficult and not very constructive (P24: 24:13). Therefore, the SDC soon focused more on either decentralised authorities such as local governments or municipalities or semi-autonomous sub-organisations of ministries such as the IBTA or regional development corporations (P23: 23:18, DCH 1982: 14:60). Experiences with these entities have been much better. The decentralised institutions were perceived as more stable (continuity of personnel), competent, more flexible in project management, and knowledgeable about the project environment. They also had a better ability to understand the development concepts of SDC (DCH 1985: 17:57, 17:74). Experiences with the regional development corporations were mixed. One informant who worked in close cooperation with one of these corporations stated that relations with its personnel were fruitful and access to important political circles was facilitated through them. However, close cooperation also brought SDC to the brink of partisanship. There was a small group of influential people among whom nearly all occupied a political position and in some way or another were dependent on each other. As a consequence, the development planning process that SDC supported was not a value-free process (P24: 24:12).

Many SDC projects were targeted at the local people, the peasants. These projects were of great interest for the communities (P6: 6:2). The adjustment of the projects to local conditions and policies often granted easy access to the communities. (P1: 1:8, 1:9). Local authorities sometimes exerted influence on the planning process of SDC projects (P24: 24:6). In general, cooperation with the local authorities was described as fairly good (P6: 6:2).

According to the interviewees, governmental partners tend to be more fruitful the more decentralised the institution is. Non-governmental partners encompass the full range from good to bad. Decisive for the success of a partnership is not least of all the personnel in charge (see also section 4.6.1). In addition, the circumstances in a country also influence partnerships. One respondent said that in tense political times, coordination with partners becomes more difficult as no one knows what is permissible to say and what is not (P26: 26:23). As Bolivia is a rather unstable country, the agencies most often have to deal with a difficult environment for a partnership.

The following chart (Fig. 4) displays a panorama of the various partners of the SDC during the last 40 years. As the SDC has worked with so many partners, it is not possible to name all of them. The partnership network that is presented is a summary of the partners that were mentioned in the interviews and in SDC country programmes.

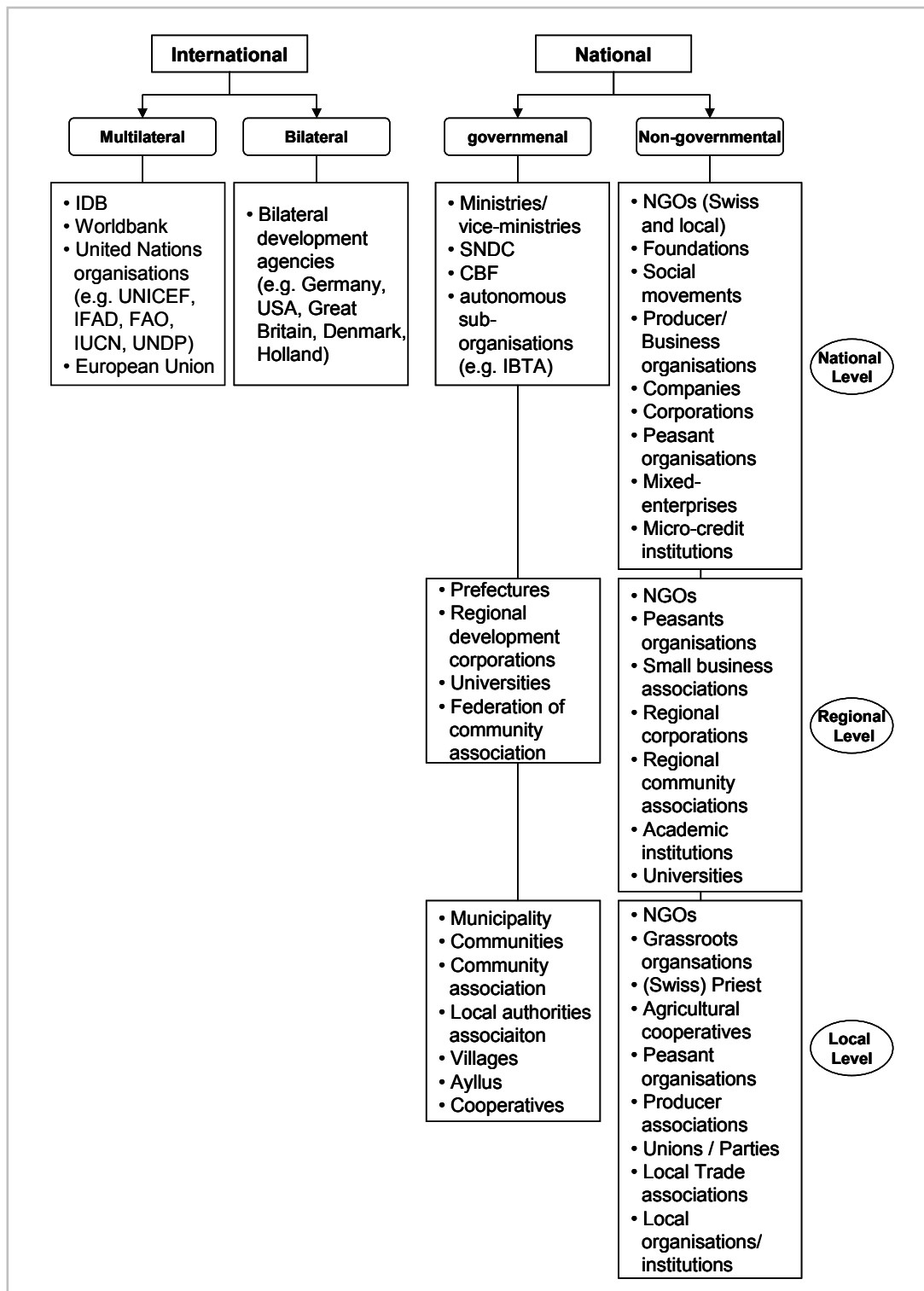


Figure 4: SDC's partners over the last 40 years. (Own illustration)

4.3 The evolution of the SDC programme in Bolivia

Following presentation of some of the characteristics of SDC and some of its partners, this section will provide an overview of the evolution of SDC projects and programmes in Bolivia in the past 40 years. In accordance with the development decades presented earlier, changes in the programmatic priorities and the changing development concepts are identified for each decade.

4.3.1 The 1970s – the agricultural decade

The first commitment of the former Swiss Service for Technical Cooperation in Bolivia was a financial contribution to NGOs dating back to the early 1960s. However, the actual beginning of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation goes back to a trip by the head of the Latin American department of Swiss cooperation in 1968. One year later, the first projects in the milk, livestock and fruit-growing sectors were initiated in Bolivia (DCH 1984b: 16:1, P4: 4:1). In the framework of the livestock project, Swiss cows were allocated to the three greater areas of Bolivia: the Altiplano (Belén), the valley (Cochabamba) and the lowland (Reyes) in order to become familiar with the regional differences in cultural and environmental conditions as well as with economic possibilities (DCH 1985: 17:28). Despite the cooperation arrangement, the livestock projects in the three regions largely failed due to technical difficulties, conflicts between local and Swiss personnel and external interferences. The most promising activities were the ones with the University of Cochabamba in the milk sector and later in forage production (DCH 1985: 17:28, DCH 1984b: 16:1). In 1974, a thorough evaluation of all projects in Bolivia was initiated. This evaluation, together with the Swiss federal law of 1976 governing development cooperation, which stipulated stricter norms for the implementation of projects, led to changes in the programmes of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) which was called Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DCH) at that time. As a consequence, various projects had to be reorganised or suspended. However, new projects emerged from these previous projects. At around the same time, Bolivia was declared a DCH priority country (DCH 1982: 14:22, DCH 1984b: 16:1).

As the Bolivian government and its development planning and policy were rather weak in this decade, international cooperation was virtually unrestricted in developing projects in respective sectors of interest (DCH 1985). For the DCH, this was the agricultural sector. Many of the projects in this sector complemented each other. As a consequence of the strong focus on the agricultural sector, financial contributions to this sector were by far the highest in this decade, as Fig. 5 shows. Very small contributions were assigned to the sectors of capacity building, infrastructure, forestry and health.

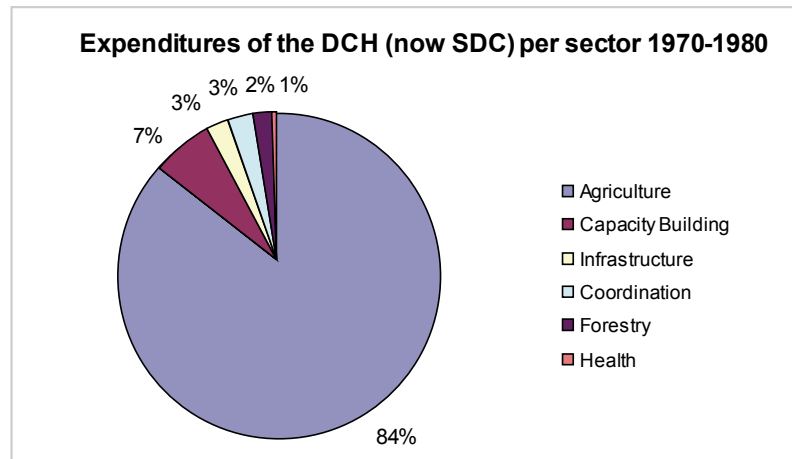


Figure 5: Expenditures of the DCH (now SDC) in Bolivia per sector, 1970–1980.

(Source: DCH 1989: 9)

4.3.2 The 1980s – the crisis

The 1980s were probably the most turbulent years of the four decades of SDC presence in Bolivia. As a consequence of García Meza’s undemocratic and brutal actions as president, the Swiss Federal Council took the decision to dismantle the DCH programme in Bolivia (P20: 20:56). Various projects were stopped, phased out or supported with smaller financial budgets. Expenditures for Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia dropped from around USD 5 million to only USD 1.5 million (P20: 20:4).

After the resignation of García Meza, the institutions again gained more freedom under the new military regime (DCH 1982: 14:52). Yet development planning efforts did not begin before the establishment of the democratic government in 1982 (DCH 1984a: 15:11). The DCH gradually increased the budget for development cooperation in Bolivia. In 1983, the first NGOs were supported by the DCH. In addition, new projects emerged, such as a forestry project, a potato seed project in Cochabamba, an agrobiology project with the University of Cochabamba, and a project to support the planning processes of regional development corporations in the south of Bolivia (DCH 1984b: 16:17, DCH 1986: 18:48).

The country’s economic situation was greatly aggravated after the start of the decade. With decree 21060, the government of Estenssoro launched a radical turnaround of the previous 30 years of government policy (DCH 1987: 13:2, DCH 1986: 18:27). The rigorous structural adjustment programme of the Bolivian government was massively supported by the IMF, the World Bank and bilateral donors such as Switzerland (SDC 1998: 22:7). In the mid 80s, Switzerland granted a balance of payments support of CHF 10 million and co-financed the social emergency fund with CHF 15 million. These new forms of development cooperation constituted a new era in Swiss development cooperation. Due to these new forms of development cooperation, a diversification of the DCH programme took place, which also led to a change in the sectoral disbursement of the DCH’s expenditures (Fig. 6). Agriculture as the previously most important sector of support was replaced by the macro-economic sector. While the livestock and milk

farming projects were gradually phased out, seed projects (forage and potato) as well as a forestry project were geographically extended (DCH 1986: 18:70, DCH 1987: 13:12, 13:16). Apart from the macro-economic projects, projects to support small enterprises, urban areas and the planning processes of regional development corporations were established (DCH 1987: 13:27, 13:28). Furthermore, new concepts and concerns, such as ecology and gender issues, began to have a greater influence (DCH 1986: 18:53).

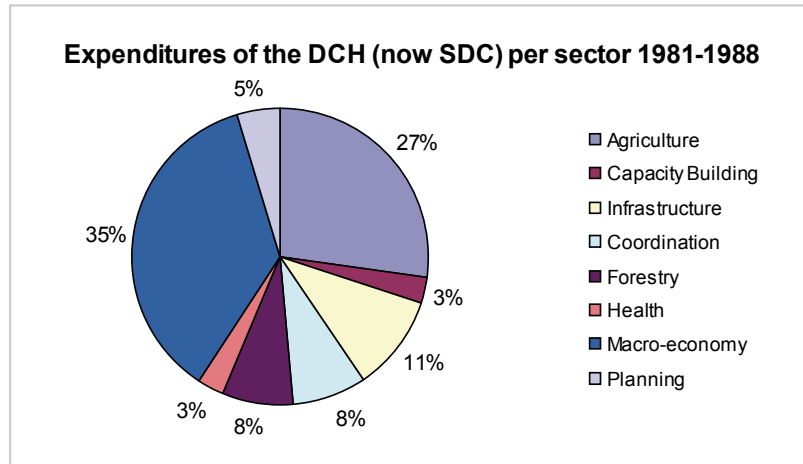


Figure 6: Expenditures of the DCH (now SDC) in Bolivia per sector, 1981–1988.

(Source: DCH 1989: 9)

Overall, the 1980s were a decade in which development discourses and concepts changed at all levels – international, national (Bolivia) and institutional (SDC). In contrast to the 1970s, all three levels followed the same development discourse, which was a neoliberal one.

4.3.3 The 1990s – a new focus

The economic crisis and the subsequent structural adjustment programme of the mid-1980s influenced development policy and cooperation in the 1990s. The macro-economic projects of the 1980s were continued in the following decade (DCH 1992: 19:26). Debt relief was a new instrument adopted in the 1990s. All in all, Switzerland spent over CHF 100 million on macro-economic measures in the 1980s and 1990s (SDC 1998: 22:53).

The second generation of reforms was launched in the country with the election of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993–1997) (SDC 1998: 22:2). These reforms had major implications for the country as well as for development cooperation. The most important reform for the DCH was the ‘Ley de la Participación Popular’ of the year 1994, which strengthened the authority of the villages (P4: 4:17). This law, together with the decentralisation law of 1996, led to the launching of many new DCH projects to strengthen the decentralisation process and judicial reform (SDC 2004: 9, 20:32).

Two sectors that were developed and expanded in the early 1990s were support for small industry in urban areas, and the environmental sector (DCH 1992: 19:19). Since

1998, the Swiss development agency has supported the promotion of business and micro finance. In general, during the 1990s, the DCH began to advance productive value-added chains (SDC 2007: 10:16). The SECO programme was gradually transformed from support of the macro economy to a programme that advances trade and investment (SDC 2004: 20:32). Figure 7 shows that in the early 1990s, the DCH still directed a great deal of money into the macro-economic sector. Later during this decade, expenditures became more diversified (Fig. 8).

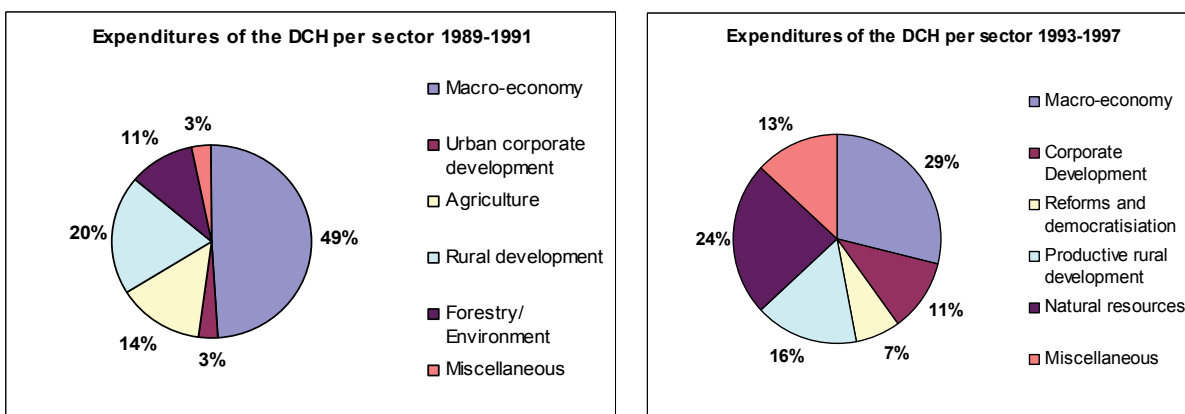


Figure 7: Expenditures of the DCH (now SDC) in Bolivia per sector, 1989–1991.

Figure 8: Expenditures of the DCH (now SDC) in Bolivia per sector, 1993–1997.

The transversal topics of this decade, which the DCH took into consideration in all projects and programmes, were gender, empowerment, environment and rule of law (SDC 1998: 22:30, 22:83). The overall aim of the 1990s remained satisfaction of the basic needs of disadvantaged people (DCH 1992: 19:48).

4.3.4 Since 2000

The foci of the SDC programme at the end of the last decade (reforms and democracy, productive rural development, business development programmes and financial service, promotion of trade and investment) were still relevant topics for SDC after 2000 (SDC 2004: 20:35). The value-added chain approach, already advanced in the 1990s, became much more important after 2000 (SDC 2004: 20:85). Furthermore, conflict resolution was taken up as a new topic in this decade (SDC 2004: 20:75). Apart from the two main foci, SDC also supported actions in Bolivia in the framework of SDC’s global environment programme. These actions were mainly concerned with the conservation of biodiversity and natural resource management (SDC 2004: 20:80). While the macro-economic measures were gradually reduced, corporate development and the reform and democratisation sectors became more important for the SDC. Figure 9 shows how SDC expenditures were distributed per sector between 2001 and 2003.

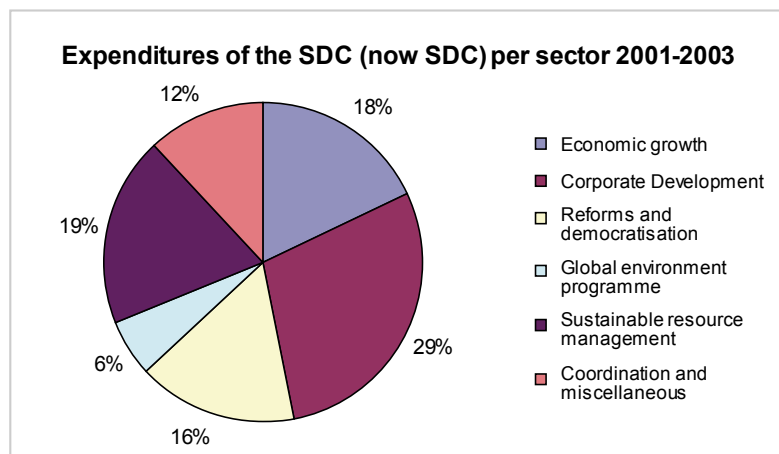


Figure 9: Expenditures of the DCH (now SDC) in Bolivia per sector, 2001–2003.

(Source: SDC 2004: 27)

In all its activities, SDC took account of six transversal topics. These were empowerment, sustainability, promotion of individual and institutional capabilities, good governance, intercultural communication, and integration of ethnic groups and equal development of men and women (SDC 2004: 20:9).

In 2005, Bolivia experienced a radical change in national policy after the election of the new president, Evo Morales. The new government brought about a break in national policy as well as in development cooperation with Bolivia (P11: 11:92). As the political situation changed so drastically, SDC’s country programme for the year 2004 was no longer valid (SDC 2006: 21:3). Therefore, SDC made an evaluation of the new circumstances in 2006. Since then, SDC has worked with scenarios (SDC 2006: 21:20). This allows for a flexible reaction to a changing environment.

In accordance with the national development plan of the Bolivian government, the Millennium Development Goals, enacted in 2000, and Swiss development policy, SDC formulated a new cooperation strategy for Bolivia (2008–2012). The Swiss agency focuses its interventions on three areas. These are the same as in the country programme for 2004–2008 (promotion of good governance and democratisation and promotion of poverty-oriented economic growth) but are complemented by the sustainable use of natural resources (SDC 2007: 10:23, 10:24). The transversal topics in the new cooperation strategy are good governance, gender and youth. While good governance and gender have been transversal topics for a long time, youth is a new focus of SDC.

4.3.5 The SDC programme – a synthesis

As the SDC has initiated and supported many projects over four decades, the spectrum of programme activities is large and the changes have been numerous. It is difficult to give an overview of the programme as SDC changed the name of the sectors of intervention (e.g. the forestry projects which were separately accounted for were later included in the natural resources sector). In addition, some projects are diversified and focus, for example, on the educational sector as well as the agricultural sector. None-

theless, it is important to try to create an overview of the SDC programme over the last 40 years to better see the major changes (Fig. 10). Yet for the reasons mentioned above, this overview cannot be taken as a precise depiction of reality.

Of the various areas of intervention, the following nine sectors can be distinguished:

- Agriculture: Projects in the livestock sector, milk sector, seed production (forage, potato), agricultural mechanisation, investigation, etc.
- Infrastructure: Streets, etc. rather than huge infrastructural projects.
- Health
- Capacity building/education: mainly in rural areas, e.g. education about agriculture
- Natural resources: Forestry, biodiversity projects, etc.
- Planning: e.g. support for the formulation of a development plan in a department
- Macro-economy: e.g. co-financing and balance of payments support
- Micro-economy: Corporate development, support of small industries, micro-finance, etc.
- Reforms and democratisation: e.g. support of the decentralisation process, advocacy of simplification of juridical procedures, support for new forms of conflict resolution, etc.

The intensity of SDC’s engagement over the last 40 years is indicated for each of the nine sectors. The importance of a sector at a given time is demonstrated with different shades of the colour blue.

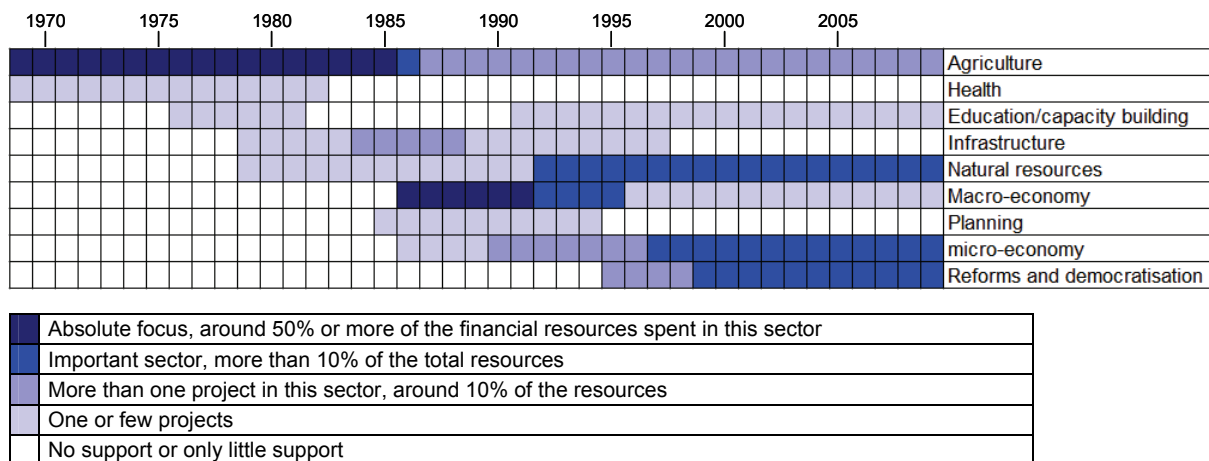


Figure 10: Thematic changes in the SDC country programme, 1969-2009. (Source: interviews)

Major thematic changes over the years are clearly visible in Figure 10. After 1985, the agricultural sector was no longer the most important sector. Due to the economic crisis, the macro-economic sector became the most important one. During the early and mid-1990s, the natural resources sector, reform, and democratisation became prominent. The micro-economic sector, which had been an intervention sector for SDC since the late 1980s, became more important several years later. The only sector SDC has supported steadily since 1969 is the agricultural sector.

Concerning the geographical extension of the SDC programme, the focus has changed over time, although not drastically. In the beginning, SDC started projects in all three major areas of Bolivia (the Altiplano, the valley and the lowland). Towards the end of the 1970s, an increasing concentration of projects in the department of Cochabamba took place. In the mid 1980s, SDC extended its activities towards the southern departments (Chuquisaca, Tarija). Yet, engagement in this area did not increase as much as it was formerly intended due to emerging new priorities. Due to the completion of the livestock project in the tropical zone and another project in this area, there were hardly any projects left in this area in the beginning of the 1990s. Nonetheless, in the framework of the growing engagement of SDC in the natural resources sector, some new activities were supported in the tropical zone. New projects in urban areas since the end of the 1990s have also slightly extended the geographical focus of the SDC programme (e.g. city of Santa Cruz). Until now, however, the focus of the SDC programme has still been on the valley and Altiplano region, in the area where most rural people live. Therefore, the SDC target population has always been the rural people and since the end of the 1990s poorer urban dwellers as well.

Apart from the thematic changes in the SDC programme, development concepts and the understanding of how development cooperation can be best carried out have also changed. Some tendencies in development cooperation have become increasingly important. These have entailed a gradual decrease of technical projects, resulting in a reduction of Swiss experts in Bolivia. Furthermore, SDC nowadays pursues a more programmatic approach (various interrelated projects) instead of a project-based approach (one single project). Projects, which have gradually become shorter in duration, are now carried out less by SDC itself (more mandate projects). SDC has also diversified its partners and the participation of local people has become more important. As the obligations of SDC have increased at all levels (guidelines, laws, declarations), external communication and display of results have become more important.

4.4 Influential changes

The evolution of the SDC programme shows that various changes at the international and – most importantly – at the national level took place that influenced Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. This section highlights these moments of change in more detail and explains the extent to which they had an effect on Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. Distinctions are made between changes at the national level in Bolivia (section 4.4.1) and changes within SDC (section 4.4.2).

4.4.1 Moments of change in Bolivia

Over the last 40 years, four moments of change in Bolivia that had a considerable influence on Swiss-Bolivian development cooperation can be identified (Fig. 11).

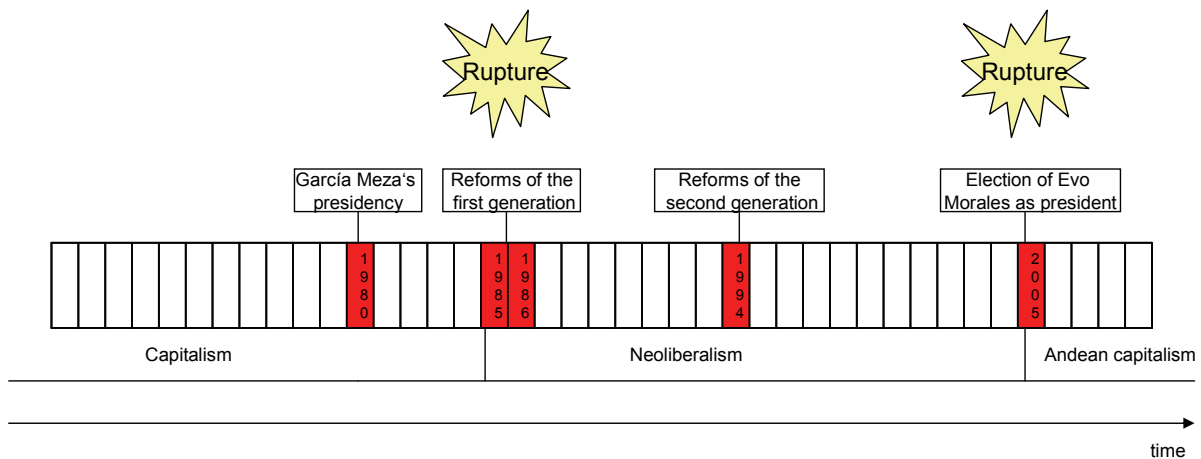


Figure 11: Influential moments of change in Bolivia with two ruptures in development discourse.

The first moment of change was a shock for Bolivia, but also for SDC. It began in July 1980 with García Meza's political coup (DCH 1982: 14:52). The high hopes raised after the election of Siles Zuazo that democracy would finally be re-established were dashed. Meza's regime was marked by political persecution (e.g. members of other political parties and unionists), repression, administrative incompetence, arbitrariness and corruption to an extent that has never been greater (DCH 1985: 17:32). Torture and other human rights abuses occurred openly. Within one year, Meza destroyed all existent democratic structures, totally ruined the already weak economy, and manoeuvred Bolivia into political isolation (DCH 1986: 18:45, DCH 1982: 14:52).

During Meza's presidency, no development policy can be identified in Bolivia. Meza was occupied with consolidating his power. Hence the change in development discourse that occurred was that the country's development policy was destroyed. Meza also brought about a change in development cooperation. Both national and international development institutions had to deal with major impediments to their actions. Every action that entailed the participation of disadvantaged people was considered suspicious and development activities were often controlled and threatened. The personnel of national and international development institutions, priests and social workers were terrorised and arrested (DCH 1982: 14:52). Nor could the SDC escape interference by the government. On 23 July 1980, soldiers of a commando unit established by Meza to consolidate his coup arrested an SDC expert and the SDC coordinator who was visiting the expert at that time. The two were interrogated and released after two days (Anceaux 1989; Hadorn 1989). Although conventions were prohibited, the two SDC staff members organised a meeting in Cochabamba to discuss the current situation. A report on circumstances in Bolivia was written for the Federal Council in Switzerland (P20: 20:80).

Less than one month later, the Federal Council protested against the temporary arrest of SDC staff members, demanded security guarantees for SDC personnel in Bolivia, and requested a re-examination of the technical cooperation programme. Humanitarian aid was to be continued (Hadorn 1989). Assessment criteria for the re-examination were the security of the staff, the possibility of achieving project aims, the chance of survival of partner organisations, and overall aspects of development policy. In accordance with the results of the assessment, the SDC programme was scaled back (DCH 1982: 14:52). As already mentioned in section 4.3.2, support for various projects was either reduced or projects were shut down altogether. Furthermore, a majority of the Swiss experts left the country and the financial volume of the SDC programme was reduced drastically. SDC staff members who stayed in the country were faced with various difficulties caused by reduction of the SDC programme. They had to deal with many organisational and administrative tasks and find ways to sustain the achievements of the projects, and the projects had to be protected from negative interventions (SDC 1982: 14:52).

In early 1983, after the reestablishment of democracy in Bolivia, SDC re-launched its programme in Bolivia. The aim was not only to consolidate the remaining projects, but also to find new ways of development cooperation. After the incidents of 1980, it was clear that SDC could not operate only with official partners. SDC therefore began to support various NGOs in order to spread risk and carry out more work at the grassroots level (Anceaux 1989). In sum, the occurrences of 1980 caused a reorientation of the SDC programme and procedures.

Owing to the growing economic crisis in Bolivia, a change in the country's policy loomed. In the mid 1980s, the country's economic situation became unsustainable. Victor Paz Estenssoro, who was elected in 1985, adapted a radical policy that surprised everyone. The same man who had advanced the revolution in 1952 now pursued a policy that broke with the basic principles of the revolution (P11: 11:104, SDC 2004: 20:13). The introduction of this radical policy marked a transition from capitalist discourse to neoliberal development discourse. The economy and the market were liberalised and enterprises were privatised (P4: 4:20, P17: 17:24). To reduce the country's budget deficit, mainly social expenditures (health and education) were reduced (DCH 1986: 18:27). There was a freeze on pay raises and many Bolivians also lost their jobs. The mining industry was especially affected by the new policy. As a consequence of this radical policy, social tensions in the country increased. An adjustment of the policy was inevitable (P20: 20:61, 20:66).

In 1986, the government launched the emergency social fund (Sottoli 1999), which entailed a comprehensive job creation programme (P20: 20:65). With the introduction of the emergency social fund, the government embarked on a new strategy within the neoliberal discourse. SDC, which was still in the process of reconstructing its programme at the time, adapted its programme to the new discourse. It began to support the policy of the government in 1986 (SDC 1999). SDC's financial expenditures increased enormously in the following years as the focus of the SDC programme shifted from agricultural projects to macroeconomic measures and new instruments such as

balance of payments support were introduced. Thus the new policy marked not only a rupture in national policy and in development discourse, but also in the SDC programme. Neoliberal development discourse in Bolivia at that time was in line with international development discourse.

After the first generation of reforms in the mid 1980s, the second generation of reforms within the neoliberal discourse followed ten years later. These reforms strengthened those of the first generation (P4: 4:21). The most prominent reforms were the privatisation of state-owned enterprises which provided revenue for the establishment of a pension system; the law of popular participation; and education reform. The law of popular participation proved to be especially important for SDC. In accordance with this law, Bolivia was divided into 311 villages. The villages were granted responsibilities in various sectors such as education, health, water management and road construction. To fulfil these new responsibilities, 20% of the tax revenues were transferred directly to the villages. Participation by the population in the planning and controlling process was granted through grassroots organisations. Many indigenous organisations that had always been marginalised were finally recognised (SDC 1998: 22:16).

This second generation of reforms also prompted SDC to adapt its programme and to develop a new thematic focus on reforms and democratisation. SDC supported the decentralisation process e.g. by strengthening grassroots organisations (SDC 2004). Judicial reform that was intended to overcome deficits in the country's legal system (e.g. lack of autonomy among judges and the courts of justice and problems in judicial proceedings) was also supported by SDC.

Over the years, it became apparent that the results associated with neoliberalism could not be achieved. Economic growth, social inclusion, poverty reduction and better living conditions were all promises that could not be fulfilled as hoped. At the same time, indigenous people became more and more powerful. Indigenous actors consider the neoliberal model to be an incarnation of the colonialism that had excluded them over centuries (P17: 17:25). The empowerment of indigenous and peasant organisations supported by many development agencies such as SDC certainly also contributed to the rise of the social movement and its leader, Evo Morales (P21: 21:26).

In 1997, Morales was elected as a member of the parliament (Pampuch and Echalar 2009). Since then, he has represented a counter discourse to the hegemonic neoliberal discourse. This counter discourse, which could be called Andean capitalism or capitalism with a strong indigenous character, steadily became more and more powerful for the above-mentioned reasons until the moment of change occurred: Morales was elected president in 2005. The former counter discourse replaced neoliberalism as the hegemonic discourse. To a certain degree, the present hegemonic discourse features traits of the former capitalist era that preceded the neoliberal era. The state has again become an important economic actor. Yet whereas both capitalism and neoliberalism share a similar development vision, Morales proposed a different development model. He questions the occidental development vision of former eras, a model that aims at

total modernisation and is based on a capitalist and culturally homogeneous society. Non-economic dimensions (e.g. cultural, ethnic and environmental) are more dominant in the new vision. The overall aim of this new vision is to reach a state of “vivir bien”, or “good living” (P17: 17:24). Figure 12 summarises the vision of the current government and the strategies to achieve the overall goal of good living.

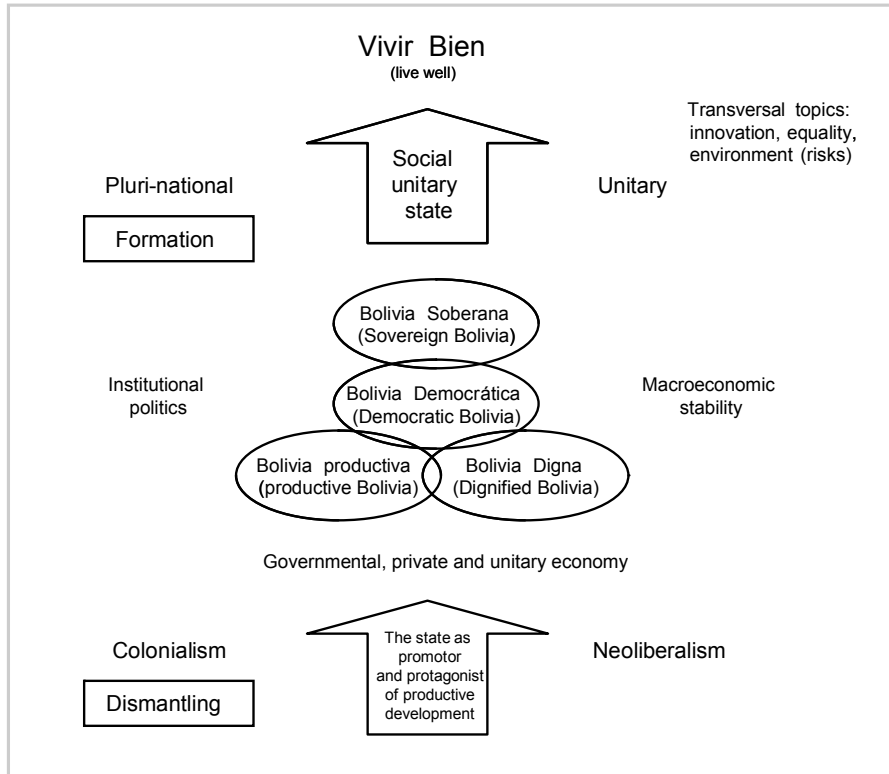


Figure 12: Development vision and strategies of the current government (source: Government of Bolivia 2006)

According to the current government, the long domination of colonialism, intensified during the final 20 years of neoliberal policy, had severe consequences for the life of the majority of the Bolivian population. The country’s vision and, more important still, appreciation of the value of individuals and of peoples, were lost. Therefore, the country needed to be reconstructed. Colonial and neoliberal structures had to be dismantled in order to establish a multinational unitary state that would strengthen social movements and indigenous people (Government of Bolivia 2006). The state took on the role of promoter and protagonist of development and distributor of riches and opportunities.

The following four strategies were formulated to achieve the desired reconstruction of the state:

- Economic strategy (productive Bolivia): This strategy is based on the sectors that constitute the productive foundation of the country and on those that support its functioning.
- Social unitary strategy (dignified Bolivia): This strategy includes the sectors that distribute the factors and means of production as well as social services.
- Strategy of international relations (sovereign Bolivia): This strategy entails economic, political and cultural relationships. It also includes the sectors related to commerce and the interchange of goods, services and capital.
- Strategy of social power (democratic Bolivia): This strategy includes the sectors that foster social territorial power.

Macroeconomic stability and the new institutional structure of the state are the instruments that support the implementation of the strategies. Innovation and social, cultural and gender equality, as well as appropriate handling of the environment, are the transversal topics in these strategies. These strategies are intended to promote the overall aim of “Good living” (Government of Bolivia 2006).

The development vision of the current government includes some aspects that are in compliance with neopopulist post-development. These include description of the development model of the former governments as neo-colonialist, accentuation of the destructive force of this model (e.g. destruction of the environment) and the revaluation of traditional knowledge, technologies and techniques in the current development model.

Of special interest to international development cooperation is the government’s relations with the international community. The current government accuses the Bolivian governments of the neoliberal era of not having defended the sovereignty of the country, instead submitting itself to international interests. The adoption of economic measures imposed by international financial institutions (Washington Consensus) led to international interference with actions taken by the state of Bolivia. Economic and political dependency grew during the neoliberal era and caused impoverishment of the population and an increase in internal and external migration. In addition, the country was dependent on international cooperation that repressed traditional productive sectors such as the coca sector. The new Bolivia is leaving the past behind and integrating itself in the international context as a dignified, sovereign and independent country that does not accept any sort of international conditions or intervention (Government of Bolivia 2006).

Interestingly, the current government accuses the former governments of disorganising the state apparatus, destroying institutionality, impairing the economy, and not sufficiently valuing national identity. These allegations, however, are exactly the same as those now being put forward by critics of the current government.

So far, the new development model has not become apparent in the implementation of specific policies (P17: 17:24). Therefore, it remains to be seen how the government will embark on this endeavour. Within SDC, the rupture in development discourse in Bolivia led to revision of the country programme for 2004–2008 in 2006 (SDC 2006). SDC is also trying to align itself to the new policy of the current government. Yet so far no fundamental thematic shift in the SDC programme has taken place due to the rupture in development discourse.

While some aspects of the current development plan are appreciated by nearly all actors in development cooperation (e.g. the stronger focus on the environment), other aspects are more controversial. Some of these more controversial aspects are delineated in section 4.8.2 on future challenges.

4.4.2 Changes within SDC

This section is concerned with changes within SDC. These may be changes that affect the entire agency or just SDC in Bolivia. On the basis of interviews and SDC country programmes, four major changes within SDC were identified (Fig. 13). It is, however, possible that more changes took place that cannot be discerned by means of the evaluated data.

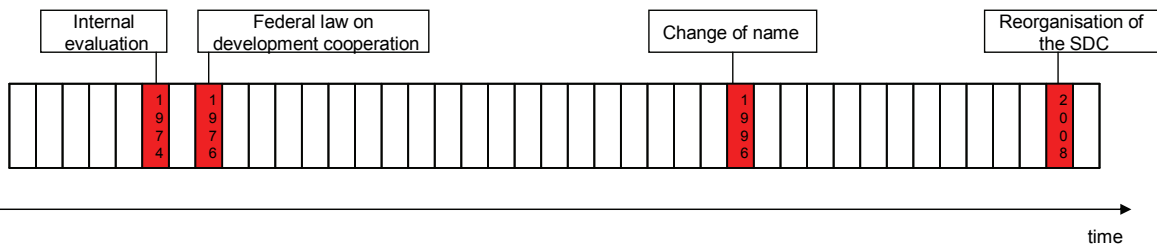


Figure 13: Changes within SDC or SDC in Bolivia.

Due to an increase in the extent and dynamic of little-coordinated Swiss development activities, a thorough evaluation of all SDC projects in Bolivia was conducted in 1974. This critical evaluation was the basis for a reorientation that can be seen as the beginning of efforts to develop a coherent country programme (DCH 1982: 14:10). At the same time, this evaluation marks the first change in the SDC programme in Bolivia. The findings were mixed. Although the goals of the projects were mostly in line with the ideas of the Bolivian government, they were often too ambitious, optimistic and unrealistic in terms of insufficient knowledge about the project environment. This led to a shortfall in achieving project goals. Room for improvement was identified in the planning of expenditures and accounting, in the training of local personnel to take over responsibility, in the involvement of the local people in the projects, and in the coordination of similar projects. In addition, various recommendations regarding the reorientation of single actions and the whole programme were formulated. According to these recommendations, SDC should focus on personnel-intensive technical cooperation with qualified experts. Three project types should be promoted (DCH 1986: 18:36):

- Agricultural enterprises that should not be affected by the institutional instability in the country
- Sectoral projects that have the capacity to solve certain problems (e.g. seed production, agricultural mechanisation)
- Regional and cooperative projects that could access the services of the first two project types.

Apart from these adaptations, Bolivia was also declared a priority country of SDC, and personnel in charge of the whole Bolivia programme were sent to La Paz (DCH 1982:14:17).

Further adaptations of the SDC programme were required due to the federal law on development cooperation enacted in 1976. The defined tasks of development cooperation and stricter norms for the implementation of projects led to drastic restructuring measures. Certain projects had to be realigned, others even had to be closed down (DCH 1982:14:17). The focus on agricultural projects, however, was preserved.

Technical cooperation steadily lost ground once SDC began to support macro-economic measures in Bolivia in 1986. According to one interviewee, at the beginning of the 1990s, SDC began to notice that an agency cannot just do technical and economic cooperation. It was also indispensable to create political conditions that allow for development processes (P21: 21:9). Yet it would take some years until the technical component would disappear in the Spanish name of SDC. The change from COTESU to COSUDE in 1996 was not just a change of name, but also a change in the philosophy of SDC (P8: 8:45, P14: 14:36). With the decline of technical cooperation, fewer Swiss experts worked in Bolivia. Opinions about this change of philosophy differ. Personnel of the former technical SDC projects greatly regret this change (P14: 14:30). They dream of the good old days when SDC staff worked in rural areas together with the local people, “got dirty and sweat in the sun”. According to these people, SDC staff members today work primarily on paper. They take decisions on the basis of reports and do not have the time to go to the field and talk to the people (P8: 8:45). This opinion may be somewhat exaggerated, but it is a fact that SDC does not have the staff resources to go to the field often and meet the beneficiaries (P21: 21:43). One interviewee also said that SDC staff members are less experienced than they used to be (P12: 12:32). A neutral observer would say that SDC personnel of today have experience in other fields than former SDC staff members. One interviewee aptly expressed this by saying that earlier SDC staff members were “doers” while those today are “facilitators”. Staff members today are no longer the protagonists of development cooperation. This role should be taken over by the beneficiaries. If local people do not show any initiative, projects are prone to fail (P22: 22:44).

The next impulse for change within the SDC was the DAC Peer Review for Switzerland of 2005, which suggested that the SDC should concentrate its activities (OECD 2005). This suggestion triggered a discussion in Switzerland. At the end of 2006, a motion of the oversight committee of the Council of States requested a thematic and

geographical concentration of the SDC programme.¹⁶ The Federal Council proposed the adoption of the motion. In May 2008, the Federal Council charged the director of SDC, Martin Dahinden, with the reorganisation of SDC. The aim of the reform has been to achieve a more effective and more operational SDC. In the medium term, the presence of SDC is to be strengthened and cooperation offices abroad are to be assigned more responsibility. In addition, SDC should advocate leaner decision-making structures.¹⁷ The requests of the Parliament, the oversight committee and the Federal Council were included in the reorganisation process of SDC that began in mid 2008. In October 2008, the reorganisation process at the central office of SDC was completed and the second phase of the reorganisation process that includes the redefinition of missions abroad was initiated. The reorganisation entailed structural changes within SDC and a reduction of priority countries from 17 to 12 (P22: 22:35).¹⁸

The reorganisation of SDC triggered uncertainty, but also expectations among SDC personnel in Berne as well as abroad (P21: 21:18, P7: 7:28). It is assumed in Bolivia that the reorganisation had greater impact in the central office than it will abroad (P21: 21:18). As the interviews for this dialogue paper were conducted between October and December 2008, there was no information about how the reorganisation was perceived now that it is in process in the cooperation offices. Yet one SDC interviewee in Switzerland assumes that SDC's Bolivian programme will not be greatly affected as Bolivia remains a priority country of SDC (P24: 24:36).

Apart from the four changes mentioned in SDC, various adaptations have taken place due to a change of directors of SDC in Berne or in Bolivia (P21: 21:20). In addition, new SDC guidelines have caused several smaller adaptations of the SDC programme in Bolivia. Changes within SDC have triggered adaptations of the SDC programme in Bolivia, but the major thematic changes of the SDC programme in Bolivia were triggered by political changes in Bolivia.

4.5 International declarations

Following presentation of the important role of Bolivian and Swiss laws and edicts in Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation in the previous two sections, this section demonstrates that international meetings, and especially the declarations enacted during such meetings, have also had a considerable influence on the topics and guidelines designated by multilateral and bilateral agencies. To support this argument, the influence of the three most important international declarations on the SDC programme in Bolivia is presented.

After the structural adjustment programmes of the mid 1980s and early 1990s, there was again room for new development concerns. The new buzzword in the early 1990s

¹⁶ http://www.parlament.ch/d/Suche/Seiten/geschaefte.aspx?gesch_id=20063667

¹⁷ <http://www.admin.ch/aktuell/00089/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=19131>

¹⁸ <http://www.admin.ch/aktuell/00089/index.html?lang=en&msg-id=21750>

was ‘sustainability.’ As already mentioned above, the notion put forward in the Brundtland report of 1987 was again taken up by the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. During this United Nations Conference, Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests were adopted by more than 178 governments.¹⁹ The most prominent of these was Agenda 21. Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims to prepare the world for the challenges of the next century. It reflects a global consensus and a political commitment to development and environmental cooperation at the highest level. Its successful implementation is first and foremost the responsibility of governments (United Nations 1992: para. 1.3). Apart from emphasis on the conservation and management of resources, strengthening of the role of major groups is also an important focus of Agenda 21. These groups include women, indigenous people and workers. If one takes the SDC programme into consideration, it is clear that between 1992 and the mid 1990s, SDC started several programmes in the conservation and resources management sectors. The intensified focus on these sectors was clearly initiated at the Earth Summit in Rio and especially by Agenda 21. In addition, gender mainstreaming, an important issue in Agenda 21, also became more important in the SDC programme in this decade. Due to the Bolivian law on popular participation, SDC also started to empower workers and indigenous people, which is also absolutely in line with the Agenda 21.

After the various international conferences of the 1990s, where many aims and action plans were delineated, it seemed to be time to formulate some key indicators for development at the beginning of the next century (P20: 20:35). With the enactment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2000, the focus of development policy shifted from sustainability to poverty reduction (P26: 26:49). Sustainability, however, remained important (MDG 7). The MDGs were also taken as a frame of reference for the SDC programme. In the country programme for 2004–2008, SDC took the poverty reduction strategy of Bolivia as a frame of reference for its actions, which were mainly aimed at reducing poverty (MDG 1), but also at promoting gender equality (MDG 3) and environmental sustainability (MDG 7) (SDC 2004). One interviewee argued that the Millennium Development Goals have been very important for SDC, but more in a supporting sense. The MDGs were a reassurance for SDC that they were on the right track with the sectors they supported and with their projects (P24: 24:35). The MDGs were also incorporated into the new development plan of the Bolivian government. The aim of the Bolivian government is to achieve the MDGs by the year 2015, to reduce poverty (extreme poverty from 35% to 22% and relative poverty from 60% to 55%) and to reduce differences in income (SDC 2007: 10:10).

After the formulation of the MDGs, there was discussion about how these goals could be achieved. Various conferences were held where topics such as the percentage of GDP that industrial countries should grant for development cooperation were discussed. Although discussions about the “how” had been going on for years, it was not

¹⁹ <http://worldinbalance.net/agreements/1992-rio-agenda21.php>

until 2005 that concrete measures were formulated in the Paris Declaration (P20: 20:35) (see also section 2.1.2). The buzzwords of the Paris Declaration, such as ‘harmonisation,’ ‘alignment,’ ‘ownership’ and ‘accountability,’ and the ideas behind those notions, had appeared in SDC documents already before the Paris Declaration was enacted (e.g. donor coordination, harmonisation of procedures in SDC 2004). Yet these notions became considerably more important after 2005, and especially since the new cooperation strategy of SDC for 2008–2012 was presented to project staff and partners. Various SDC partners interviewed in the framework of this dialogue paper reported that they were informed by SDC in 2008 about the content of the Paris Declaration, as this declaration is one of the basic principles in the new cooperation strategy of the SDC (SDC 2007). The adoption of the Paris Declaration in the cooperation strategy of SDC is based on the Swiss Implementation Plan for the Paris Declaration enacted in 2005. This plan entails a mandate for cooperation offices in partner countries to implement the Paris Declaration (SDC 2005).

The examples presented here clearly show that the content of international declarations was often adopted in the development strategy of SDC as well as in Bolivian development plans. However, the question that remains is whether the aims of such declarations can actually be achieved and can make a difference. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2009 clearly states that the achievement of the goals is being threatened by the economic crisis and its consequences (United Nations 2009). A point of criticism that can be applied to all declarations is concerned with the operative implementation of the goals delineated in declarations. Often, an agenda on how to jointly implement a declaration in a country is missing (P7: 7:16, 7:18). This also applies to Bolivia. Furthermore, implementation of the Paris Declaration has been a difficult task in Bolivia. According to the Paris Declaration, development agencies should align with national policies. However, in Bolivia, there has never been a national policy. There has always been only the policy of a particular government, a policy that is usually fuzzy and changes quite often (P21: 21:37). Consequently, it is often not clear with which policy development agencies have to align. A jointly developed agenda that clearly delineates which principles different actors must align with is lacking (P7: 7:16). Further, according to one interviewee, the current government interprets the Paris Declaration very opportunistically. The government accepts the parts that serve its purpose and insists on the implementation of those parts, but ignores the fact that this declaration also entails requirements for the receiving countries (P21: 21:57). Under such conditions, it is obviously difficult to achieve any goal. Although the success of such declarations is controversial, they influence and shape development discourses on all levels, which in turn have an effect on development cooperation. The international declarations entail new development concepts, themes and notions that are adopted by development agencies. Yet, what is obvious is that not all declarations become important and are incorporated in the development plans of multilateral and bilateral agencies. What factors are decisive for a declaration to become influential or not would be an interesting topic of investigation.

4.6 Challenges in Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation

There are many difficulties in Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. The most frequently mentioned challenges, however, were those involving SDC and the Bolivian government and the internal challenges between SDC and the project staff and its partners. These challenges are accordingly further described in the following two sections.

4.6.1 Challenges involving project partners or SDC and Bolivian governmental institutions

Since SDC began working in Bolivia, its activities have been influenced by political instability in the country. This instability has been a poor precondition for development policy and cooperation (DCH 1982: 14:51, DCH 1985: 17:87). The most frequently mentioned characteristic of this instability has been frequent change of personnel in high public positions (DCH 1985: 17:30, P5: 5:27, P8: 8:31). It is not unusual for the responsible public contact person for an SDC project to change twice a year (DCH 1982: 14:51). Personnel change not only every time a new president is elected, but also during a presidency. Development cooperation must start from zero every time a new officeholder is designated. As former officeholders tend to take all information with them, SDC must once again hand out all the project documents to the new contact person and explain what they are doing (P18: 18:54, P19: 19:11). Due to political instability, no policy is applied for a long time (DCH 1985: 17:87). This makes it difficult for international cooperation to plan for the long run and maintain its activities (P11: 11:83, DCH 1982: 14:15). As international cooperation often has to redesign its activities, the efficiency and effectiveness of projects decreases (P9: 9:48, P11: 11:84). Processes slow down even more, as it sometimes happens that projects do not have a contact person in the government for two to three months (P5: 5:27).

Apart from frequent changes of personnel, SDC's governmental partners have also frequently proven not to be good partners. In the mid 1980s, SDC for example, criticised that there was considerable 'friction loss' from the arrival of the money until the project was actually executed. Furthermore, the capacity of the state regarding planning, organisation and financing was considered insufficient to arrange projects, and their actions were described as unqualified (DCH 1986: 18:51). As a consequence, SDC began to work more with NGOs and other private partners (P20: 20:74). However, at the moment, international cooperation is obliged to work more with the government again, which is sometimes not an easy task.

Over the years, the government has also often arbitrarily and improperly intervened in ongoing SDC activities (DCH 1982). Governmental instances, for example, arrested SDC staff, stole material and closed down partner organisations (DCH 1984b: 16:10). More than one internationally financed project supported by the government and sometimes even initiated by the government was closed down by the next government (P22: 22:53). In addition, it happened several times that the director of an SDC project was removed by a governmental instance and replaced by a person in the government who was unqualified for the position. Such interference, of course, paralyses all project ac-

tivities. As SDC has had good relations with some of the governmental members of staff, the Swiss agency was able to ease some difficult situations (P15: 15:36, 15:42, 15:43). Often SDC was also able to repel different types of interference through its presence (DCH 1982: 14:15).

Frequent changes of personnel foster irresponsibility and corruption. As the holders of government positions know that they will probably not stay in their position for a long time, many try to enrich themselves (DCH 1985: 17:31). In addition, owing to a lack of knowledge about the rules of public administration or the fear of later being made liable, holders of high governmental positions often do not want to take decisions concerning development cooperation and are therefore rather passive (DCH 1985: 17:31, P19: 19:11).

While most of the interviewees mentioned that they have had problems with the government, few said that they never had any problems with the government (P1: 1:31, P10: 10:15, P9: 9:4). This may be partly due to the fact that the development agencies adapt to the government and also avoid controversial topics (P1: 1:31, P10: 10:20). Further, one interviewee admitted to having never had any problems with the government owing to a role as a facilitator in development cooperation (P9: 9:4). Nonetheless, the majority of the interviewees stated that they have had difficulties with the government. The relationship between SDC and the government has become more difficult, especially since the new government has been in power (P5: 5:4, P22: 22:62). The current government wants to have more influence on development cooperation. All development actions as well as the money for these actions should be processed through the government, and the persons responsible for a project should be assigned by the government (P26:26:20, P22: 22:62). It seems completely legitimate that the government wants to have more influence on development cooperation. However, voices critical of the Bolivian government say it is incapable of administrating all the money that would be processed through the government (P26:20). Furthermore, it is already noticeable that development actions in which the government is directly involved are processed much more slowly (P13: 13: 8, 13:29).

Criticism of the new government has also arisen due to the position it has taken against private institutions, such as foundations and NGOs. The government has also retreated from various positions in the directorates and assemblies of private institutions (P1: 1:39, P3: 3:37). Some interviewees even fear that the government will close down the foundations in the country, as has already happened in Venezuela (P15:15:43).

Notwithstanding the strong criticism of the new government, some interviewees stated that they appreciated the new government. One said that it is easier to work under the new government as the former neoliberal governments were not receptive to certain topics such as the investigation and support of local knowledge (P12: 12:37). The same interviewee also believes that SDC does not really want to align with the new government as its policy does not seem convincing to SDC (P12: 12:44, 12:45).

These examples show that political instability and the highly political environment in Bolivia generate many challenges involving SDC, its partner institutions, and governmental institutions. However, more decisive than the policy of the government are the people who occupy certain positions within the government. These people determine the nature of the relationship between the government and SDC (P5: 5:33, P6: 6:25, 6:26). As a consequence, SDC may, for example, agree with the policy of the government, but still have considerable problems with the government, as it is difficult to come to terms with the official contact person in the government. This illustrates that the subjects have considerable influence within the discourses.

4.6.2 Challenges between the project staff/partners and SDC

Primarily in early documents (1980s), SDC mentioned certain challenges between project staff and Swiss experts. Among these were, for example, the dominant behaviour of some of SDC personnel, unrealistic demands made vis-à-vis the project staff on the part of Swiss personnel concerning technical and administrative questions, and neglect of local structures (DCH 1985: 17:45). Some of these earlier challenges still remain today. One informant criticised SDC for demanding that the projects work exclusively with small and medium-size producers, as this was the target population of SDC; at the same time, they wanted the project to be sustainable. According to the interviewee, sustainability and working with small producers are two parallel lines that will never meet. In addition, Switzerland's inconsistency was criticised. A country which grants enormous subsidies to its own farmers cannot oblige its partners to work exclusively with small farmers and at the same time demand sustainability if this does not work in the home country either. SDC accepted this criticism and also allowed the project staff to implement additional activities that promised more revenues (P8: 8:38).

A further challenge is that SDC attempts to incorporate its approaches into all projects, although the project environment and circumstances vary substantially. One project employee explained that it was impossible for his project to comply with SDC's gender approach. It was difficult to involve as many women as men in the project because women in the area tend to get married early and often leave the area, so that the project constantly lost many trained women who no longer used the techniques they had learned (P19: 19:32). Consequently, although pursuing a gender approach is certainly important, it may not be expedient to adopt this or other approaches universally.

A more controversial approach is the value-added chain approach that SDC adopted some years ago. This was questioned by one interviewee, who felt that this approach really fosters poverty reduction (P11: 11:74). This example shows that the project partners do not always agree with the approaches or ideas of SDC. It also happened that a project partner lobbied against an idea which was highly supported by SDC. This, of course, created tensions between SDC and the project partner (P11: 11:89, 11:90). In addition, what sometimes complicates communication between the SDC and some of its partners is that the Swiss agency often does not take sides in a matter or present a clear opinion, which is not appreciated by all partners (P6: 6:9, 6:10, P11: 11:88).

Further, due to staff changes at the SDC cooperation office in La Paz and changes at SDC in Switzerland, partners often have to adapt to new circumstances. Recently, the director of SDC in Switzerland was replaced. As with every change of director, some adaptations in the programme took place within the guidelines and strategies of SDC. Every new director of SDC, be it in Switzerland or in Bolivia, in some way wants to put his stamp on the SDC programme (P21: 21:19). As there is room for manoeuvre within the guidelines of SDC for its staff members, and especially for the director of SDC in Switzerland as well as abroad, such adaptations are also possible. Such reorientations of SDC in Switzerland, however, always require a lot of time until the SDC cooperation offices in all countries know what the new orientation is all about, and even more time is needed until SDC partners in all countries are informed. This process is perceived as rather difficult and annoying (P23: 23:31). In addition, the project partners also have to deal with changing Swiss staff in Bolivia every three to four years. Every employee obviously has different capabilities and interests. Therefore it may be that an employee is a competent exchange partner for a partner institution, but the staff members who replace this employee after some years do not know a lot about the partner institutions' projects (P23:48, 23:51). An employee or a small group of employees sometimes even have a decisive influence when it comes to deciding on the future of an SDC project or a project administered by a partner institution. Whether a project is continued or not may therefore be highly dependent on the interests and ideas of the respective employees (P14: 14:43).

The most prominent current challenge, however, is that the project partners are often not able to provide the results required by SDC. Various informants mentioned that the project phases are often too short and the budget too small to effect change. That the partners cannot provide results, however, does not mean that a project does not work. Many projects are concerned with topics that necessitate a long-term intervention. Therefore, certain results cannot be achieved in a short time (P18: 18:41, P11:11:69). The situation will probably become even more difficult in the future, as SDC plans to reduce contractual obligations with partners to shorter time periods. This makes it impossible for the partners to plan in the long run. Discontinuous mandates will probably increase, making it difficult for NGOs to retain staff at a time of fewer mandates. This in turn leads to a loss of knowledge within SDC partner institutions (P11: 11:71). Yet this is just one part of the story. National and international pressure for SDC to show results and prove the effectiveness of projects is increasing. Furthermore, SDC has to align with the national policy of the government of Bolivia. In order to fulfil this requirement, SDC must opt for shorter contract obligations to have the flexibility for required adaptations of its programme. Solving this discrepancy will be a difficult task.

Furthermore, SDC's increasing support for a programmatic approach was not received enthusiastically by the partner institutions, as this meant more competition with other institutions (P19: 19:15). In particular, Swiss partner institutions that generally have higher basic costs because they have some Swiss employees will probably face harder times (P23: 23:33).

4.7 Power in development cooperation in Bolivia

Another challenge for international development cooperation is dealing with the power that is exerted on the international and national levels. Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation is influenced by various power structures. These power structures are decisive when it comes to deciding on who is a legitimate speaker in the development discourse. These power structures, however, are not stagnant; they change over time. Distinctive changes in power structures may even trigger a change in discourse, as shown by the political change in Bolivia in 2005.

This section aims to give an overview of some of the most prominent power structures that pervade Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. It first addresses the power structures in which SDC is directly involved. This concerns on the one hand the relationship between SDC and the beneficiaries, and on the other hand the relation between SDC and project partners.

In the first ten years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, the relationship between SDC and the beneficiaries as well as between SDC and the project partners was marked by the dominant role of Swiss experts (see also section 4.6.2) (DCH 1985: 17:44). Moreover, the participation of local people in project planning was marginal and the various needs of small farmer families and rural villages did not receive enough attention (DCH 1986: 18:54). Nonetheless, in some cases (e.g. education project in Alto Beni), rural people expressed their reservation about a project. SDC tried to convince people of the importance of the specific project, with partial success. Yet this is of course also a subtle form of exertion of power. Nowadays, SDC is convinced that a development project can only succeed if the people show initiative, and it also ascribes more importance to the participation of local people. The needs and wishes of the people are included in the planning process, but ultimately it is SDC and its partner organisations that decide on the content of a project (P13: 13:18, P16: 16:17).

The relationship between SDC and project staff members changed due to the scaling back of the SDC programme in 1980. Project personnel had to assume responsibility for the projects after Swiss experts had left the country. After the reestablishment of the SDC programme and the return of various experts, project personnel criticised the dominance of the Swiss experts. As a consequence of this criticism, SDC experts tried to be less dominant. With the reduction of Swiss experts in Bolivia, project partners were granted more leeway for own decisions, which were also accepted by SDC (P8: 8:21). Yet within the margins of the SDC guidelines and development discourse, single members of SDC staff still have considerable influence on some projects. In addition, they also have room for manoeuvre within SDC guidelines. The gender aspect in SDC projects, for example, gains in importance when there are more women among SDC personnel in Bolivia (P21: 21:45).

Apart from the local people, public partners also did not always agree with SDC. One project had to be closed down as the public partner did not accept the SDC member of staff who was responsible for the project. While a public partner is not dependent on

SDC, private institutions such as NGOs rely more on bilateral development agencies. In order to receive financing, they adjust their project offerings in accordance with the guidelines, topics and programmes of the bilateral agencies and the international topics that are in vogue at a certain time (P9: 9:8, P1: 1:20).

For a long time, the bilateral agencies could plan their projects as they wanted because government development planning and policy were weak (DCH 1985: 17:37). Various Western countries also intervened in national policy. They even employed and dismissed ministers. The United States was especially known for intervening in Bolivian policy (P11: 11:108). According to many Bolivians, former governments submitted themselves to international cooperation (P17: 17:8). Government officials often felt too weak to hold to their own criteria (DCH 1984a: 15:28). It is certainly true that former governments submitted in many respects to international development cooperation. However, the development agencies also had to deal with government intervention in their projects. Project directors were dismissed and whole projects supported by international cooperation were closed down (P8: 8:34). Since the election of Evo Morales, the relationship between international cooperation and the government has changed. Morales does not accept any external interference with Bolivian policy. In accordance with the Paris Declaration, international agencies must align with the policy of the government. The dominance of international cooperation has therefore diminished. SDC and their partner institutions even try not to touch on this delicate topic (P10: 10:20).

Power relations among the various powerful groups within Bolivia are often underestimated. These have considerable influence on the country's development policy. Over the years, power relations within the country have shifted. Until 1985, the armed forces as well as the central bank, which financed and implemented its own projects, had a powerful position in Bolivia. In addition, other large public institutions such as the YPFB (petrol), the COMIBOL (mining) and ENAF (smelteries) occupied strong positions. Approved projects carried out by these institutions soon became independent of the national planning system and new projects, over which no planning authority had control, were initiated (DCH 1984a: 15:22). Also, certain economic sectors (particularly in Santa Cruz), the drug mafia in Cochabamba and Beni, and the natural gas and petrol companies that were often owned by international concerns have had the power to blockade decisions of the government. By striking and blocking roads, other actors such as unions have intervened in national policy (P24: 24:30, DCH 1985: 17:12).

The development policy of Bolivia has therefore mainly been a function of the interests of the owners of power, which are to a great extent the different lobbies (DCH 1984a: 15:13). These lobbies not only hamper national development planning and implementation, but also international development cooperation. In an SDC development planning project in the south of Bolivia, it was not possible to create a development plan that was value-free and that was based on the needs, potentials and resources of the region (P24: 24:31). Further, development plans (national and regional) have often not been considered. Many decisions have been taken "under the table and behind the curtains" (P24: 24:30). With the start of the neoliberal era in 1985, union movements and the

armed forces lost considerable influence, while national entrepreneurship began to exert an influence on government policy (SDC 1998: 22:11, 22:18).

Today, the tide has turned again. Social movements, mainly comprised of peasant unions and indigenous organisations, are now at the top of the political power pyramid (SDC 2007: 10:3). These organisations feel very much empowered. They want control and they are capable of controlling institutions (P12: 12:38). This has already had an influence on international cooperation. The pressure on international cooperation to align with the policy of the government has increased. If the development agencies and their countries do not act in accordance with government requirements, they run the risk of being expelled. This already happened to USAID and the ambassador of the United States.

Although the owner of political power in Bolivia is omnipresent in the cities and villages in the valley and highland regions, the current government also has to deal with countervailing powers. These are based mainly in the lowland departments of the country. The regions have had quite a powerful role since the mid 1970s. They had a significant share in the downfall of García Meza's regime at the beginning of the 1980s. Due to the inability of the governments to implement a development policy that takes the needs of the regions into account, regional elites demanded a more decentralised structure in the country that was gradually introduced by granting the departments independent financial resources. Already in the 1980s, the regions tried to implement their intentions by lobbying the parliament or the government when they did not agree with some of the central government's decisions (DCH 1984a: 15:16, 15:18, 15:19). Even today, some regions, especially the lowland departments, are very powerful and greatly obstruct the implementation of Morales's policy. The power of the lowland departments stems to a great extent from the economic importance of these regions to the country. The lowlands have a strong agro industry and above all vast natural gas and oil resources.

The power of the lowland departments was revealed clearly in the process of developing the new constitution of Bolivia. Evo Morales had to make many concessions to his opponents. Yet, notwithstanding the strong opposition of the lowland departments, Morales was still able to put through many new laws. However, the absence of a nationally accepted policy impedes the development of the country and also hinders international development cooperation. In order not to upset the central government, SDC is limited to developing new activities in the lowland departments. As long as there is no balance in allowing for the needs and wishes of the different groups within the country, progress in any form is difficult. Therefore, the current government should take the demands of the lowland departments into closer consideration instead of only advocating on behalf of indigenous and peasant groups. Of course this is easier said than done. Earlier governments did not succeed in achieving this balance.

Apart from the power structures already mentioned, multilateral institutions have also played a powerful role in Bolivia over the last 40 years due to their financial capacities.

The most powerful multilateral institutions in Bolivia have been the Bretton Woods Institutions. The structural adjustment programme in particular was closely guided by these institutions. The Bolivian government acted mainly on the basis of suggestions advanced through international cooperation. As a consequence, the prevalent development topics in Bolivia have hardly ever been initiated by the country itself (P1: 1:37). The dominant topics in development cooperation are decided by the multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (P9: 9:24, P21: 21:39). Bilateral agencies as well as the receiving countries have to adapt to trends in development cooperation (P25: 25:7, P14: 14:57).

Nonetheless, since the inauguration of the current president, the power of bilateral and multilateral agencies as well as foreign countries has slightly dwindled in the country. It seems that development discourse in Bolivia in the future will be more shaped by the Bolivian government and powerful groups within the country.

4.8 The future

Following the presentation of some aspects of past and present Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, this section will shed some light on the future of international development cooperation in Bolivia. Section 4.8.1 provides an overview of the areas in which needs are still great. These areas may also constitute future areas of support for international development cooperation. Section 4.8.2 delineates some of the possible future challenges for the development cooperation in Bolivia.

4.8.1 Future needs in Bolivia

Various needs can be identified in Bolivia. However, the needs seem to be greatest in the educational sector. This sector must thus be interpreted in the broadest sense of the word. Apart from classic school education, higher education and vocational training where needs are still high, education may also involve supporting people in organising their ideas and knowledge. It may include awareness-raising in different fields such as the environment, as well as supporting people in understanding their role as citizens of Bolivia (P1: 1:41, P13: 13:37, P5: 5:48). Citizens are often not aware of their rights and duties. Also, the sense of empowerment in Bolivian society is high compared to other countries. People want to participate in everything. However, in order to do so, they need to be more qualified and better informed (P10: 10:71). Many agree that the focus should be on the education of young people as the young will later make a difference. Currently, there are too many young people without work, without a perspective and without any education. This is a source of conflict today and will be one tomorrow (P11: 11: 116). As it has been proven that education has the greatest direct influence on poverty reduction, more resources should be invested in education (P21: 21:35). SDC identified this need already in the 1980s, but has never focused on this sector as conditions for greater investment in this sector have not been favourable. Yet one of the transversal topics of the new SDC cooperation strategy is youth. This raises the hope that SDC might invest more resources in education in the future.

A second relevant area of need is the productive sector (P7: 7:6, P10: 10:69, P12: 12:49). The productive sector should be fostered in order to reduce Bolivia's dependency on natural resources. Apart from support for existing enterprises, income could be potentially generated by establishing and promoting production in various industries including handicrafts, food (biological products and speciality goods such as *quinua*), and the health industry. Development cooperation can make a contribution by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and by helping to establish a link between Bolivian industries and the market. In addition, tourism could be promoted more intensely (P23: 23:65). Often, however, it is not access to the market that is missing but the technology to produce the quality and quantity demanded (P8: 8:49). Thus technology transfer is a good area of investment for international cooperation (P1: 1:41, P21: 21:35). One interviewee, however, argued that there is less need to support technologies than capacity building. People should be trained in order to be able to manage and develop their own future. Solutions should not be dictated by international cooperation and people should not be told what to do (P19: 19:37, P1: 1:41). However, if development agencies act consciously, technology transfer and people's freedom to decide on their own development are not mutually exclusive.

Health, food, and the management of natural resources are further concerns in Bolivia (P12: 12:49, P9: 9:82, P5: 5:46). Climate change will probably increasingly have an impact both on food security and on the management of natural resources such as water (P3: 3:68, P25: 25:35) and will in turn boost migration, which is already a concern in Bolivia (P25: 25:35, P9: 9:79).

Last but not least, Bolivia is in need of a stable state, a good government and stable institutions. Support in these areas, however, will probably be the most challenging, as delineated in the next section.

4.8.2 Future challenges for international development cooperation in Bolivia

Bolivia has undergone a governance and identity crisis. Institutions have been virtually destroyed (legal system, electoral authority, congress, police) (P21: 21:53). Many formerly invulnerable institutions have lost their prestige (e.g. central bank). This is seen as a dangerous development (P11: 11:117). Although weak institutions are nothing new in Bolivia, the situation has been aggravated in the last few years. This is due to the fact that the president rules together with the social movements and not via institutions (P21: 21:53). As explained in section 4.7, social movements have gained enormous influence. On the one hand it was important to empower them, as most of the members of these movements, often peasants, had been oppressed over the years. On the other hand, there is a risk that an empowered segment of society will suppress the rights of others (P4: 4:33). Social movements are already capable of exercising control over institutions. They interfere and make demands that are impossible to meet (P12: 12:38). It will be a challenge for international cooperation to be accepted by these movements in the future (P12: 12:50). The government needs to find a balance in this sizzling conflict, as Bolivia is unquestionably still dependent on international cooperation. More-

over, the country's weak institutions need to be stabilised and supported by international cooperation (P11: 11:117, P5: 5:52). Without democratic institutions and a civil society that knows what its rights and duties are, it will be virtually impossible to achieve peace in the country (P21: 21:53).

A further challenge arises from the identity crisis in Bolivia. Many people have lost their identification with the country. They do not identify themselves as Bolivians, which has been a problem for years. The hope that the current government would once again unite the inhabitants of Bolivia is unlikely to be fulfilled. On the contrary, several interlocutors criticised the current government for dividing society by creating ethnic islands within Bolivia (P5: 5:49). The conflict between the lowlands and the highlands aggravates the situation. The east does not know the west and vice-versa. There is a lack of communication (P11: 11:115). Development agencies can try to help prevent polarisation in the country from resulting in an outbreak of violence. Peace building is therefore an important but very challenging task for international development cooperation (P21: 21:53).

An additional challenge for development agencies will be to understand not only the policy, but also the structure of the mentality of the current government and to maintain a constructive political dialogue with the government (P1: 1:44, P6: 6:33). The government, on the one hand, sets increasingly stricter rules for development cooperation in Bolivia. By arguing that Bolivia is a sovereign country, the government wants to control or dispose of all the money spent by development agencies in the country. The development agencies on the other hand fear that all their efforts in the country will be diluted if the government disposes of all the money. They cannot control how money is spent by the government. Some Nordic agencies have been responsive to the demands of the Bolivian government. They have virtually stopped supporting NGOs and process nearly all their money through the government (P19: 19:40). In addition, Bolivia receives considerable resources from the government of Venezuela. This untied financial support does not appear in the cash-flow budget of Bolivia. It is obvious that these transactions are prone to corruption. International cooperation also provides money for the country. However, until now, most of this money has been tied to conditions. Most agencies request support or co-financing by the Bolivian government (P22: 22:68). It is evident which support is preferred by the Bolivian government. Conflicts between the different ideals are growing. It is also questionable how far the development agencies are prepared or allowed (by their laws and principles) to support the development model of the Bolivian government. Most countries whose development agencies work in Bolivia maintain a different development model and have other principles and laws (P11: 11:118). Development agencies have to align with the government of Bolivia to fulfil the Paris Declaration. Yet what happens if certain activities or demands of the Bolivian government violate certain principles – or even worse, certain laws – of the donor countries? This question is not answered in the Paris Declaration.

The dispute is not actually about allocating money to the government, but under which conditions. In the experience of SDC over the last 40 years, the government has not

proven to be very efficient in the operation of projects. Therefore, if money is allocated to the Bolivian government by development agencies, which will be the case in the foreseeable future, a flexible system must be established that allows for more efficient operation of projects (P19: 19:42). Better cooperation and coordination between donors is also necessary. Instruments such as basket funds will probably be applied more frequently. Cooperation between various donors, however, is challenging, as every agency has its own principles and different ideas about how a basket fund should be organised and who should lead it (P7: 7:37). In addition, basket funds are not ideal programmes for the agencies to market their achievements, as other agencies also contribute to the programme. Given the growing demand to present results, marketing is becoming more important. It will be a great challenge for development agencies to present results and verify the sustainability of their actions, given the fragile environment in Bolivia and the increasing national and international requirements for development cooperation (P24: 24:39, P13: 13:36, P7: 7:41).

Last but not least, it will be a challenge to decide who should be supported by development cooperation. Poor rural people have always been the target population of most agencies. According to one interviewee, however, international cooperation has given too much support to people who extend their hand rather than assisting people who may be a bit less needy but show initiative and want to achieve something (P18: 18:21). Another interlocutor argues that it is easier to make a change in an area by supporting, for example, small enterprises and services than by supporting agricultural projects. However, this does not necessarily support the poorest people in the area, which is against the principles or the mandate of most development agencies (P24: 24:34). Hence most agencies still support the poorest people. Long-term support of these people has unfortunately also had an influence on their mentality. Some assume that development agencies should provide them with everything and ask nothing in return, or they assume that support will be continued for an unlimited period of time (P5: 5:37, P24: 24:39). Changing this mentality will be a demanding task.

The challenges delineated here, and certainly many others, will necessitate concessions from all sides if development cooperation is to bring about change in Bolivia.

5 Conclusions

Following presentation of the results of discourse analysis, this chapter draws conclusions relating to the entire thesis and answers the two main questions, which are the following:

- How have development discourses changed over the last forty years?
- How have changing development discourses influenced Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation?

The first moment of change in Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation was in 1980 when García Meza became president of Bolivia by means of a putsch. Meza's brutal and corrupt regime created a hostile environment for all development processes. The arrest of two SDC staff members triggered a report to the Federal Council in Switzerland about the situation in Bolivia. The Federal Council demanded an examination of the SDC programme. The results of this examination led to a downsizing of the SDC programme in Bolivia. Two years later, SDC re-established its programme. While the focus was still on agricultural projects, SDC diversified its partners to disperse the risks.

Just five years later, in 1985, the first rupture in development discourse regarding Bolivia took place. At that time, the growing economic crisis got out of control. Measures had to be taken immediately. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, who was elected president in 1985, initiated a radical reform process. This process was shaped by the structural adjustment programme advanced by the Bretton Woods Institutions. Radical structural adjustment programmes were introduced not only in Bolivia but also in many other developing countries. The 1980s became known as the lost decade of international development cooperation. SDC adapted to the development discourse in Bolivia. The focus of the SDC programme shifted from agriculture to macro-economy. This thematic shift also entailed the application of new development instruments (e.g. co-financing, balance of payments support) and the establishment of major projects with multilateral agencies. Summing up, with the beginning of the neoliberal era in the mid 1980s, development discourses concurred at the international, national and institutional levels.

Ten years later, the reforms of the second generation again brought major adaptations in development discourses at the national and institutional levels. Yet as these adaptations were still in line with neoliberal ideas, this moment of change cannot be denominated as a rupture in Bolivian development discourse. Of particular influence was the law of popular participation, which strengthened the role of the villages. SDC adjusted its programme to this new orientation within the neoliberal era. Apart from the decentralisation process, the SDC also supported judicial reform.

The most fundamental rupture in development discourse in Bolivia, however, occurred in 2005 with the election of the indigenous president Evo Morales. Beginning in the late 1990s, Morales was the leader of a counter development discourse that became

increasingly more powerful. Whereas both the capitalist and the neoliberalist eras shared a similar development vision, Morales’s development vision was totally different. His vision disclosed various similarities with neopopulist post-development. For example, he classifies the neoliberal development model as neo-colonialist. The break in development discourse in Bolivia has so far not triggered a fundamental thematic change in the SDC programme. Yet SDC has taken consideration of the new policy and adapted its actions to the new circumstances. The transversal topic of empowerment, for example, that was very prominent in the country programme for 2004–2008, no longer appears in cooperation strategy for 2008–2012, as social movements have become even more powerful through the election of Evo Morales.

Summing up, it can be said that the changing development discourses in Bolivia have greatly influenced Swiss-Bolivian development cooperation. As Fig. 14 shows, SDC has more than once changed the thematic focus of its programme after an adaptation or a rupture in development discourse. SDC has also adapted its programme to new trends in international development discourse. These new trends often consolidate after international conferences and as a result of the declarations that are constituted during such conferences. In Swiss-Bolivian development cooperation, the influence of declarations is especially visible after 1992. Agenda 21 enacted in 1992 in Rio prompted SDC to put even more emphasis on the natural resources sector and on the concept of sustainability.

Changes within SDC also caused several adaptations in the SDC programme and sometimes abandonment of certain projects as well. However, unlike the changes in Bolivia, these adaptations never caused a fundamental thematic change in SDC’s programme.

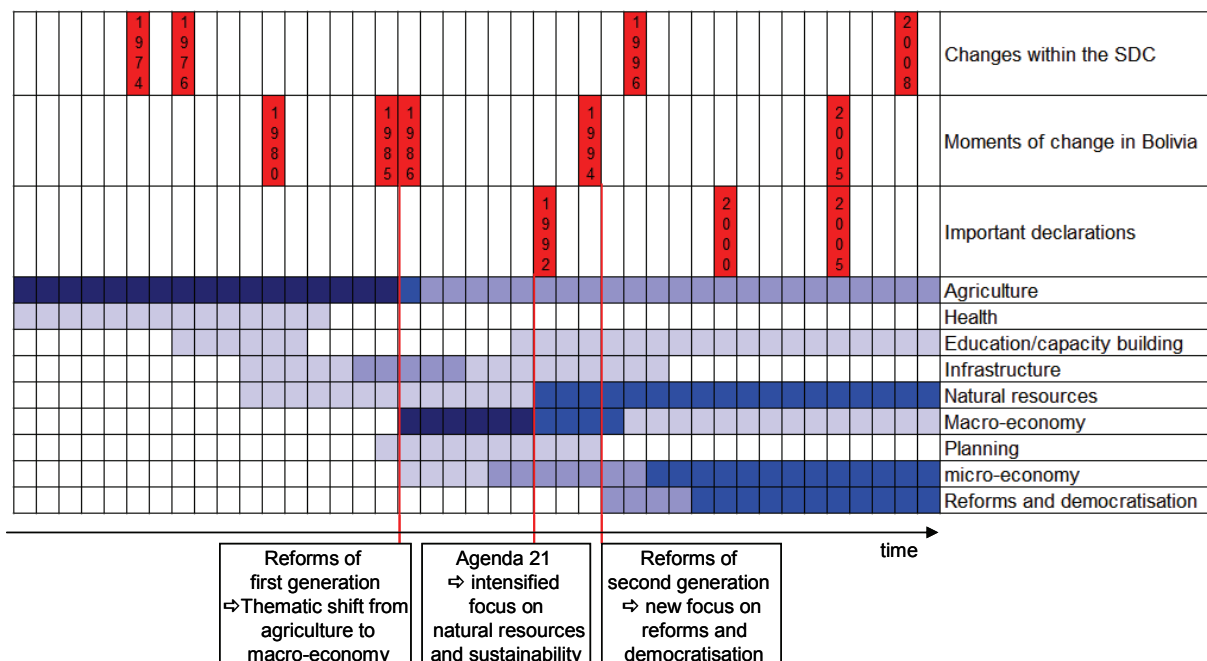


Figure 14: Changing development discourses in Bolivia and at the international level have triggered several thematic changes in SDC’s programme.

If one takes the moments of change in Bolivia into consideration, it is apparent that economic, political and social circumstances in Bolivia have had an enormous influence on development cooperation in the country. In 1985, it was the economic situation in Bolivia that necessitated a fundamental reform. The social consequences of this reform demanded an adaptation of the structural adjustment programme. The fundamental change in 2005 was a strong political change that was not least a consequence of long discrimination against the indigenous people of the country and the inability of previous governments to improve social conditions. These political, social and economic conditions thus determined development processes in Bolivia to a great extent.

Foucault's concept of discourse proved very valuable in identifying and elucidating moments of change in development discourses. The discursive formations within the discourse (objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, strategies) often change. Regularities in the transformations of these discursive formations facilitate the discerning of ruptures in discourses. The rupture in the development discourse in Bolivia in 2005 could be identified because the discursive formations changed when Morales was elected. New concepts were proposed and new legitimate speakers appeared. Morales also pursued a different strategy than his predecessors although he aims to achieve the same goal, the reduction of poverty. The concept of discursive formations in combination with Foucault's concept of power also enables description of the power structures in the discourses. However, by analysing only discursive formations, the reasons for a change in development discourse can often not be identified. In addition, in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault takes too little account of the role of the subject within discourses. Different examples in this study showed that the subjects have considerable room for manoeuvre. Various interviewees, for example, indicated that the mode of cooperation and the orientation of activities depend greatly on people in a certain position. The example of Evo Morales also shows that one person can become very powerful and through the aid of collective action can even change the development discourse of the country if the conditions (e.g. discontent with the government) are favourable. These are just some examples. It would be interesting to investigate more thoroughly the role of the subjects in discourse. This was, however, not possible in the framework of the present study, as the data did not provide enough information for such an analysis.

Fascinating new insights into development cooperation in Bolivia would certainly also be generated if other important stakeholders within development discourse such as governmental officials and powerful lobbies were interviewed. Concerning Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation, it would be interesting to see how SDC projects are assessed by the beneficiaries. Under the present government that increasingly determines the development policy in Bolivia, various adaptations in the guidelines and programmes of the development agencies will probably be necessary in the future. Yet, today it is not yet foreseeable how rigorous these adaptations will be. Thus, it would be of great interest to investigate the influence of this change of discourse on international development cooperation several years hence.

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Claudia Zingerli has a PhD in development studies from the University of East Anglia and was the project leader of the NCCR North-South Transversal Package Project (TPP) “Knowledge, Power, Politics”. Together with her research partners, Andrés Uzeda and Tô Xuân Phuc, she studied the political nature of knowledge production and knowledge exchange at the interfaces between development research, policy and practice. The TPP focused particularly on knowledge production and power relations in academic networks and international research partnerships, as well as on knowledge dynamics and the role of scientific knowledge in the fields of technological innovation for agriculture and biodiversity conservation policy. Claudia Zingerli is currently the executive secretary of the Swiss Academic Society for Environmental Research and Ecology (SAGUF) and is involved in new projects at the interfaces between academia, industry and state.

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This Dialogue paper looks back on the history of 40 years of Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation. Adopting a discourse analysis approach, the study detects moments of change and ruptures in the international, Swiss, and Bolivian development discourses, and analyses the implications of these changes for Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia during the four decades submitted to scrutiny.

In Bolivia, four moments of change can be identified. Two of them constituted a rupture in the development discourse of Bolivia. The first rupture was in 1985 with the beginning of the neoliberal era. At the centre of this new policy were the globally advocated structural adjustment programmes. The most fundamental rupture in the development discourse in Bolivia was marked, however, in 2005 by the election of the indigenous president Evo Morales. His election heralded the end of the neoliberal era in Bolivia and the beginning of a different hegemonic development vision in the country.

Changing development discourses in Bolivia strongly influenced Swiss–Bolivian development cooperation in the past 40 years. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) often changed the thematic focus of its programme after an adaptation or a rupture in the existing development discourse. In addition, the SDC also adapted its programme to new trends in international development cooperation. Such new trends were often consolidated after international conferences and under the influence of declarations constituted during such conventions. While development discourses in Bolivia and at the international level had major implications on Swiss development cooperation in Bolivia, changes within the SDC only had minor consequences.