The Current State of the Alcaldia Indigena in Light of its Historical Precedents: The Case of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán

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The Current State of the *Alcaldia Indigena* in Light of its Historical Precedents: The Case of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán

Thesis: The military governments of 1957-1986 abolished all forms of Maya self-government. With the signing of the Peace Accords in 1994, Mayan communities have resurrected the institution of the *Alcaldia Indigena*, drawing on cultural memory to reorganize it. The new manifestation builds on the *Alcaldía*’s former structure and seeks to connect internationally to the indigenous rights movement and gain official recognition as a local government body representing indigenous interests.

### Historical Precedents

- **Official divide of ladinos and Indians**: Spanish Crown authorizes the creation of *Alcaldías Indígenas* in 1512

- ***Alcaldías Indígenas*** adjudicate in local Indian disputes according to Mayan custom

- **Disbanded during twentieth century liberal administrations** and in the 1957 constitution

- **Despite official efforts during the Civil War**, indigenous authorities remained influential in heavily indigenous communities

### Current Manifestation

- **The 1994 Peace Accords** called for new Indian policy and rights

- ***Alcaldia Indígena*** established in Antigua Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán in 2007—against an Indigenous local government

- **In addition being a local judge and leader**, the *alcalde indígena* serves as an ambassador to connect Ixtahuacán to the broader indigenous rights movement and treat with the national government.