

Territory, Resistance and Struggles for the Plurinational State: The Spatial Politics of the TIPNIS Conflict

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Marching Towards the Plurinational State: The Intermingling Republican, Highland and Lowland Flags on the Ninth Indigenous March named in ‘Defence of Life and Dignity, Indigenous Territories, Natural Resources, Biodiversity, the Environment, Protected Areas, Compliance with the State Constitution and Respect for Democracy’.



Source: Author's photograph, 02 May 2012.

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analytical framework for understanding the changing relations between the state and left-indigenous movements in Bolivia and Latin America, more generally. Bolivian citizens have been witness to a number of progressive changes since the inauguration of the country's first indigenous President, Evo Morales, in 2006. The MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo; Movement Towards Socialism) Party administration pushed through a Constituent Assembly process that granted unprecedented indigenous and environmental rights. Fundamentally, the Constitution renamed the Republic the 'Plurinational State of Bolivia' in recognition of the nearly two-thirds of the population that identified as indigenous in the 2001 census. Tensions between the state and social movements remain, however, with many questioning the government's national development model based on environmentally degrading neo-extractivism and infrastructural projects, which often take place within collectively titled indigenous territories.

Through a nine month period of extensive ethnographic research I explored a conflict that emerged in 2011 when the MAS government announced plans to build a road through a national park and legally recognised indigenous territory located in the Amazon Basin, known more commonly as the TIPNIS (Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré; Isiboro Sécuré Indigenous Territory and National Park). Expanding on the theoretical traditions of the geographies of social movements literature alongside postcolonial studies, I present a new framework for understanding social mobilisation. Specifically, I contend that the practices of contentious politics are generative of emerging spatio-political imaginaries. By locating myself amongst the daily geographies of movement/solidarity building, I engage with the ways in which a self-defined 'indigenous movement', and urban solidarity networks broadly associated with the 'left', re-articulated notions of territoriality, the nation-state, democracy and development during the TIPNIS conflict. Fundamentally then, this thesis highlights the contingent nature of state-social movement dynamics and political identity formation, more broadly.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

LIST OF FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

APCOB	Apoyo para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano (Support for the Indigenous Peasant of the Bolivian East)
APG	Asamblea del Pueblos Guaraní (Assembly of the Guaraní Peoples)
ASP	Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples)
CDAPMA	Coordinadora de Defensa de la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos y Medio Ambiente (Coalition of Defence of the Environment and Self-Determination of the People)
CEDIB	Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (Documentation and Information Centre Bolivia)
CEDLA	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (Centre for the Study of Labour and Agrarian Development)
CEJIS	Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social (Centre of Legal Studies and Social Investigation)
CENDA	Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino (Andean Communication and Development Centre)
CIDOB	Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonía de Bolivia (Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian East, Chaco and Amazon)
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado (Peasantry Investigation and Promotion Centre)
CIPOAP	Central Indígena de la Pueblos Originarios Amazónicos de Pando (Central of the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon region of Pando)
CIRABO	Central Indígena de la Región Amazónica de Bolivia (Indigenous Central of the Amazon Region of Bolivia)
CMIB	Central de Mujeres Indígenas del Beni (Central of Indigenous Women of Beni)
CMPPC	Conferencia Mundial de los Pueblos sobre el Cambio Climático y los Derechos de la Madre Tierra (World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth)
CNAMIB	Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia (National Federation of Indigenous Women in Bolivia)
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers' Central)
COD	Central Obrera Departamental (Departamental Workers' Central)
COICA	Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (Coordinating Body of the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin)
COMIBOL	Corporación Minera de Bolivia (Bolivian State Mining Company)

CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyo (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qollasuyu)
CONISUR	Consejo Indígena del Sur (Indigenous Council of the South)
COPNAG	Central de Pueblos Nativos Guarayos (Central of the Native Guarayo Peoples)
CPEM-B	Central de Pueblos Étnicos Mojeños del Beni (Central of the Mojeño Ethnic Peoples of Beni)
CPESC	Coordinadora de los Pueblos Étnicos de Santa Cruz (Coordinating Body of the Ethnic Peoples of Santa Cruz)
CPIB	Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Beni (Central of the Indigenous Peoples of Beni)
CPILAP	Central de Pueblos Indígenas de La Paz (Central of the Indigenous Peoples of La Paz)
CPITCO	Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Trópico de Cochabamba (Coordinating Body of the Indigenous Peoples of the Tropic of Cochabamba)
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (Trade-Union Confederation of Bolivian Peasant Workers)
EAE	Evaluación Ambiental Estratégica (Strategic Environmental Assessment)
FEJUVE	Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighbourhood Councils)
FOBOMADE	Foro Boliviano sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo (Bolivian Forum on Environment and Development)
FSTMB	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Trade-Union Federation of Bolivian Mine-Workers)
IIRSA	Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure in South America)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INRA	Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria (National Institute of Agrarian Reform)
IPSP	Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples)
LPP	Ley de Participación Popular (Law of Popular Participation)
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism)
MIP	Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (Pachakuti Indigenous Movement)

MIR	Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left)
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement)
MST	Movimiento Sin Tierra (Landless Peasant Movement)
NEP	Nueva Política Económica (New Economic Policy)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OICH	Organización Indígena Chiquitana (Chiquitano Indigenous Organisation)
OMIT	Organización de Mujeres Indígenas de Trinidad (Organisation of Indigenous Women of Trinidad)
ORCAWETA	Organización de Capitanías Weenhayek – Tapiete (Organisation of the Weenhayek Capitanías of Tarija)
SERNAP	Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (National Service of Protected Areas)
TCO	Tierras Comunitarias de Origen (First Nations or ‘Original’ Communal Lands)
TIM I	Subcentral Territorio Indígena Multiétnico Multiethnic Indigenous Territory Subcentral
TIOC	Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino (Original Indigenous and Peasant Territory)
TIPNIS	Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore (Isiboro Sécore National Park and Indigenous Territory)
UAGRM	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno, Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Autonomous University of Gabriel René Moreno, Santa Cruz de la Sierra)
UMSA	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz (University of San Andrés, La Paz)
UMSS	Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba (University of San Simón, Cochabamba)
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivia (Bolivian State Petroleum Company)

GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED SPANISH TERMS

<i>cacique</i>	Traditional authority of some indigenous communities.
<i>campesino</i>	This term is variously used to describe rural small-scale farmers, predominantly in the highland areas of Bolivia. After the 1952 revolution, the term ‘indians’ was replaced with ‘ <i>campesinos</i> ’ as a way to integrate indigenous peoples into the corporatist state structure as ‘producers’ (Albó 1987; Canessa 2012). In reality, though, identities of class and ethnicity often overlap in Bolivia where the working class poor are almost categorically indigenous.
<i>cocalero</i>	A person that grows coca. The <i>cocalero</i> movement is a powerful sector in Bolivia and developed its own political party; the MAS.
<i>corregidor</i>	Refers to the administrative officials of the Spanish colonial period. Today it is used for the traditional authority of an indigenous community.
<i>criollo</i>	Refers to people of ‘predominantly European ancestry’ (Hylton & Sinclair 2005: 44).
<i>indígena</i>	Indigenous person that shares a historical continuity with pre-colonial societies.
<i>Indio</i>	An ‘Indian’ person. This word has racist connotations within Bolivia and is sometimes used as a derogatory term for the lowland indigenous peoples. Canessa continues to use this term as it ‘jars’ and ‘refers to a long history of colonial opposition’ (2012: 7). I prefer to use the term <i>indígena</i> since this is the terminology used by the movement studied.
<i>Indígena- Originario- Campesino</i>	This term meaning ‘indigenous originary peasant’ has been mobilised by the MAS administration to describe people and nations of pre-colonial descent. Article 30 of the 2009 Constitution describes the term as ‘all the human collectivity, which shares a cultural identity, language, historical traditions, institutions, territoriality and worldview whose existence predates the Spanish colonial invasion’ (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; author’s translation).
<i>mestizo</i>	Person with Spanish and indigenous ancestry. It is, however, more of an ethnic category rather than a racial one and people may move between self-identification as <i>mestizo</i> and indigenous.
<i>sub-central</i>	The term refers to the cross-territorial organisation of a region.

INTRODUCTION

The 500 years of Indian resistance have not been in vain. From 500 years of resistance we pass to another 500 years in power [...] we have been condemned, humiliated [...] and never recognised as human beings. We are here and we say that we achieved power to end the injustice, the inequality and oppression that we have lived under. The original indigenous movement, as well as our ancestors, dreamt about recovering the territory.¹ (President Morales' inaugural speech in La Paz, 22 January 2006)

On 18 December 2005 the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo; Movement Towards Socialism) Party won the general elections with an unprecedented 54 percent of the votes ushering in a new period of Bolivian politics (Kohl & Bresnahan 2010). As Latin America's first indigenous² president the election victory of Evo Morales was widely hailed, both nationally and internationally, as signifying great strides for the rights, recognition and representation of indigenous peoples. Morales made his name as the charismatic leader of the *cocalero* (coca grower) movement and designed the MAS as a 'party of social movements' (Dangl 2010: 9) with the express goal of acting as a political instrument for the national sovereignty of the people. The foundations for this development were laid during the insurrectionary cycle of 2000-2005 when the 'Water and Gas Wars' managed to overthrow two presidents and oust a transnational corporation in an upsurge of popular resistance to neoliberal hegemony (Kohl & Farthing 2006). The political rhetoric of the MAS accommodated the demands of this period and was able to crosscut class with ethnic identities to gain broad support across a wide variety of citizens and social movement sectors. During his first administration period Morales retained popular support and received 64 percent of the votes when he was re-elected in 2009 (Kohl & Bresnahan 2010; Webber 2011).

¹ Cited in BBC News 2006.

² The term '*indígena*' (indigenous) or 'indigenous peoples' eludes a clear definition. Both the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 (1989) and the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Indigenous Rights (2007) declare self-identification to be fundamental. That said, the ILO Convention offers some defining elements of indigenous peoples, namely: traditional lifestyles; a culture and way of life different from other sectors of national society; respective forms of social organisation and political institutions; and historical continuity in a certain area, or before others 'invaded' or came to the area (ILO 1989a). More broadly, the UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya describes indigenous peoples and nations as 'culturally distinctive groups that find themselves engulfed by settler societies born of the forces of empire and conquest' (2004: 3). In Bolivia, indigenous peoples can be defined by an ancestral or cultural relationship to societies that existed before Spanish colonial rule. In other parts of the globe, indigenous peoples are variously referred to as 'first peoples', 'native peoples', 'first nations', 'aboriginals' and 'fourth world peoples'.

1.1 The MAS Administration

The election of a social-movement-turned-multi-sectoral political party reflects a post-neoliberal trend across Latin America that could be said to constitute ‘twenty-first century socialism’ (Kennemore & Weeks 2011: 267). In 2009 nearly two-thirds of Latin Americans lived under a national government influenced by ‘left’ politics.³ The ‘pink tide’ swept across the continent in diverse countries, namely: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (see Levitsky & Roberts 2011; Seligson 2007). Of these national governments, Bolivia and Ecuador have been heavily influenced by indigenous ideologies.⁴ The day before being officially inaugurated at the Congress in the capital city of La Paz, Morales held a ceremony at the pre-Inca ruins of Tiwanaku, in a display of his Aymara heritage (Crabtree & Whitehead 2008; Postero 2007a). The next day Morales made his inaugural speech asserting the importance of the recuperation of the nation-state by indigenous peoples. The MAS strive to ‘re-found’ Bolivia from the hands of colonial powers (Dunkerley 2007: 146). This project, dubbed the ‘*proceso de cambio*’ (process of change), can be said to be part of a wider decolonial trajectory (Howard 2010).

The project of the MAS has been marked by an ability to subsume heterogeneous identities under an ‘indigenous nationalism’ (Stefanoni 2006: 37). Postero notes that Morales has brought diverse indigenous and peasant sectors together ‘by articulating a platform of anti-neoliberalism, anti-racism, social justice, and state control of natural resources, especially natural gas’ (2007a: 4). Similarly, Mayorga (2009) has argued that the MAS has forged a national-popular and culturally ethnic project in order to bring together various social movements. Albro suggests that the party ‘uses regional, national, and international coalition building to equate indigenous with non-indigenous issues through resonant political analogies’ (2005a: 433). Madrid (2008) praises the political party for its more

³ Within this thesis I define the ‘left’ as a political ideology that seeks social and economic justice alongside the redistribution of power. This follows from Webber and Carr’s definition of the ‘left’ as ‘regimes, political parties, and social movements that challenge, in different ways and to different degrees, neoliberal capitalism, imperialism, and class exploitation, as well as oppose sexual, gender, class, ethnic, and racial oppressions’ (2013: 4). In Bolivia, left politics are broadly defined through Trotskyist brands of Marxism and a strong history of organised labour. To some degree, it also incorporates indigenous ideologies of communitarian ownership and decision-making. The concept of the ‘left’ is retained throughout the thesis, as left-right binary politics are central to discourses and political organisation within Bolivia and Latin America more generally.

⁴ In Ecuador, the Confederation of Ecuadorian Indigenous Nationalities (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador; CONAIE) has been the most active indigenous organisation and has successfully mobilised to gain indigenous rights and changes to the Ecuadorian Constitution. Zibechi argues that the situations in Bolivia and Ecuador have been like ‘two peas in a pod’ (2010a: n.pag.) since both countries have pushed through demands for plurinationalism but have faced serious difficulties in applying the policies of their new constitutions.

inclusive ethno-populist discourse that appeals to both urban *mestizos* (person with Spanish and indigenous ancestry) and rural indigenous peoples. Indigenous identity is therefore an inclusive and ‘extensive cultural means of constituting plural popular coalitions, rather than a distinctive and restrictive marginal category for a stigmatised, dangerous, internal cultural “other”’ (Madrid 2008: 450). In this respect, the discourse of the MAS is more inclusionary than previous ethno-nationalist projects in Bolivia (Albro 2005a).

From early on the MAS was conceived as a party of social movements that would obey the political will of the people through the concept of ‘*mandar obedeciendo*’ (rule by obeying) (Stefanoni 2006). In this way, the MAS signified a move away from previous political parties with centralised organisational structures (Dangl 2010; Postero 2010a; Zibechi 2010b). Albro argues that the ‘MAS’s organic structure is half party and half social movement’ and ‘presents itself as a clear alternative to the vertical politics, corruption and broken promises of national politicians, contrasting the “political mafia” with the “people’s power”’ (2005a: 440). The Morales administration has focused on three central programmes as a part of its *proceso de cambio*: (i) the nationalisation of the hydrocarbons industry and other sectors; (ii) the establishment of a Constituent Assembly to ‘re-found’ the Republic as the Plurinational State of Bolivia; and (iii) the redistribution of land through an agrarian reform. All three programmes have been praised and critiqued in equal measure giving some indication of the complex processes embroiled in by the MAS.

First, one of Morales’ first acts as president was to nationalise the country’s hydrocarbons industry announced in the ‘Heroes of the Chaco War’ Decree 28701 on 01 May 2006 (Haarstad 2009a; Kaup 2010). This move sought to revoke the neoliberal capitalisation policies implemented in the 1990s and legally regain control of the country’s gas and oil resources, thus fulfilling popular demands for national patrimony. Haarstad explains that the reference to the Chaco War ‘linked it to national-popular struggles for natural resources’ in the memories of Bolivian citizens (2009a: 178). The introduction to the Decree states that nationalisation will ‘reclaim our natural riches as a fundamental base to recuperate our sovereignty’ (cited in Haarstad 2009a: 178). In reality, the Decree initiated a renegotiation of contracts with its primary purchase countries and an increase in taxation rents on hydrocarbon enterprises (Kaup 2010). Consequently, the government saw a dramatic rise in funds from US \$287 million in 2004 to US \$1.572 billion in 2007 (Ministerio de Hacienda 2008, cited in Kaup 2010: 129). Regaining control over this industry is crucial to the country’s future economic development considering that 55 percent of Bolivia’s national territory is a potential hydrocarbon interest (Bebbington 2009:

14). In addition, the Decree sought to re-establish the YPFB (Yacimientos Petrolíferas Fiscales de Bolivia; Bolivian State Petroleum Company) as a viable actor in the country's exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons. Since 2006, the MAS administration has further nationalised the leading telecoms company ENTEL (Empresa Nacional de Telecomunicaciones; National Telecommunications Company) in 2008, the country's main hydroelectric plants in 2010 and an electricity company previously operated by REE (Red Eléctrica de España; Electric Grid of Spain) in 2012. The MAS has also resurrected the national airline (see Achtenberg 2012; Cunha Filho & Gonçalves 2010).

The government has used the revenues created through the nationalisation of hydrocarbons to enact a number of social welfare programmes that redistribute incomes to the poorer sectors of the population, namely: the 'Bono Juancito Pinto' aimed at children in primary education; the universal pension project 'Renta Dignidad'; and the 'Bono Juana Azurduy' for pregnant women without social insurance payable on each medical supervision until the child is aged two (see Medinaceli & Mokrani 2010; Müller 2009). These social payments have dramatically reduced the rates of people living in absolute poverty (less than US \$2 per day) from 60 percent in 2006 to 30 percent by 2011 (Kohl & Farthing 2012). The effective use of hydrocarbons, mining, electric power and natural resources for the equitable distribution of wealth is outlined in the National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo) 2006-2010 promulgated in 2007 (Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo 2007; also see Cunha Filho & Gonçalves 2010). In this document, national sovereignty is outlined as the ability to act in the international arena according to Bolivia's own directives and goals. Postero has described this as 'a national sovereignty free from the strictures that U.S. imperialism and neoliberal capitalism had imposed' (2010a: 24).

Despite the revenues created, scholars have critiqued the nationalisation of resource sectors on a number of fronts. Kaup argues that the MAS has administered a 'neoliberal nationalisation' as the state has merely renegotiated contracts leaving transnational corporations in charge of the majority of Bolivia's hydrocarbons (2010: 135; also see Zibechi 2007). In turn, this has meant that the nationalisation process has not significantly reinstated the YPFB as the primary agent of the hydrocarbons sector and has thus circumvented the interests and demands of the labour unions for more employment and direct control over its operations (Haarstad 2009a; Webber 2011; Zibechi 2007). Webber has even gone as far as to contend that nationalisation 'amounted to little more than rhetorical flourish and populist theater' (2011: 80). The Vice-President Álvaro García Linera (2006a), who is a prominent Bolivian intellectual and former leader of the Tupac

Katari Guerrilla Army, has contended that the move towards socialism is a medium to long term project and that, for the moment, the government is enacting an ‘Andean-Amazonian Capitalism’. As such, Kennemore and Weeks suggest that the Morales government is not a dramatic break from the past ‘but rather a pragmatic way for centre-left governments to better capture capitalist surplus in the exploitation of natural resources’ (2011: 278; see also Madrid 2011). A further criticism is that state-led nationalism does not distribute decision-making powers to the Bolivian people, leaving demands for national sovereignty of the people that emerged during the 2000-2005 Water and Gas Wars unfulfilled (Almaraz et al 2012; Cuba Rojas 2006; Quijano 2006). Other authors have observed that national development does not necessarily match up with the welfare of local communities who bear the burden of environmental and social costs caused by extraction and the construction of major infrastructure (Gustafson 2011; Kohl & Farthing 2012; Perreault & Valdivia 2010). Rather than being post-extractivist, social ecologist Eduardo Gudynas argues that the government of Evo Morales advances a type of ‘*neoextractivismo progresista*’ (progressive neo-extractivism) that gains popular support by nationalising extractive industries and redistributing state revenues (2012: 132). This model of national development, however, reifies understandings of progress based on the colonial domination of nature, as well as negating alternative understandings of territoriality, governance and development postulated by many indigenous peoples. Bebbington et al therefore argue that ‘notwithstanding the incumbency of a government committed to indigenous empowerment, the sense remains that resource extraction blessed by the government trumps all other considerations’ (2010: 313).

Second, in the first few months of the new administration a Constituent Assembly had been announced. The decolonialisation of the nation-state was substantiated in 2009 with the new Constitution that renamed the ‘Republic’ the ‘Plurinational State of Bolivia’, in recognition of the nearly two-thirds of the population who self-identified as indigenous in the 2001 national census (INE/UMPA 2003: 157). Plurinationalism can be defined as ‘a state that merges constitutive sovereignty rooted in the national people (*pueblo*) and indigenous plurality and self-determination’ (Gustafson 2009a: 987). Indigenous plurality has been recognised and territorial rights granted under the new Constitution that names 36 national ethnic languages alongside Spanish. The Constitution offers unprecedented indigenous rights, such as territorial self-determination and autonomy (Art. 2) and recognises indigenous groups’ cultures and world-visions, as well as their political, legal and economic structures (Art. 30). Furthermore, Article 30 guarantees prior consultation in regard to the exploitation of non-renewable resources within indigenous territories

(Gobierno de Bolivia 2009). The document was approved by a majority of 61 percent after a process lasting from August 2006 to December 2007, which was followed by a year of tensioned confrontations and negotiations in Congress and in the streets (Regalsky 2009; Webber 2009). These tensions emerged over different interpretations of the Bolivian nation-state. In particular, fierce debates arose over whether the nation should be unitary or plurinational, whether to incorporate indigenous calls for autonomy, the nature of state institutional structures and the management and control of natural resources and land (Webber 2011). Traditional political and economic elites exerted pressure on the Constituent Assembly, which eventually forced the Bolivian Congress to ratify a modified and moderated version of the Constitution. Certain actors, such as large-scale cattle ranchers and farm owners, in the eastern departments⁵ have been opposed to the nationalisation of natural resources and the greater collection of central taxes from the wealthy region of Santa Cruz. This concern fostered a regional autonomy movement within the wealthy region of the Media Luna (Half Moon)⁶ (see Eaton 2007, 2011; Fabricant & Postero 2013a; Gustafson 2006).

However, the MAS's conception of national identity is 'decidedly Andean' (Postero 2007a: 21). This disclaims the world-visions of the historically more marginalised lowland indigenous peoples. Canessa contends that Morales is asserting a vision of indigeneity based on 'a homogeneous national culture for the majority' (2012a: 15). Similarly, Perreault asks 'whether the interests of small and less-influential lowland indigenous groups will be adequately represented by the MAS government and its social movement allies' (2012: 76). I have thus argued that 'a colonial epistemology remains embedded within the State' (Laing 2012: 1051). In addition, Albro states that the Constitution recognises the collective indigenous subject but has little to say for the 'growing diversity of kinds of indigenous experience', especially for urban citizens (2010a: 77).

Third, the MAS instigated a large-scale redistribution of land (see Botazzi & Rist 2012; Brabazon & Webber 2013; Zamora 2012). This sought to fulfil the failed promises of the 1996 Ley del Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (Law of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform; Ley INRA) No. 1715. Morales stepped in and promised to fulfil a full-scale 'agrarian revolution' (Brabazon & Webber 2013: 16). This was initiated in two major pieces of legislation: the Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria de la Reforma Agraria (Law for the Communitarian Renewal of Agrarian Reform) passed in late 2006 and the Ley de la Revolución Productiva Comunitaria Agropecuaria (Law of Productive Communitarian

⁵ The Bolivian state consists of nine primary subdivisions called 'departments'.

⁶ The 'half moon' refers to the geographic shape of the departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando and Tarija.

Agricultural Revolution) passed in 2011 (Botazzi & Rist 2012; Brabazon & Webber 2013). As a result, the MAS administration had titled 28.4 million hectares of land in the four years prior to 2010, substantially more than the 9.2 million hectares titled in the previous decade (Veiga 2009). However, in an effort to appease large and medium scale landholders in the Media Luna the MAS faced difficulties in pushing through the reforms in the Constituent Assembly process (Valdivia 2010). As Regalsky has pointed out, the resulting Constitution is a ‘patchwork of overlapping and often conflicting claims’ (2010: 36) that protect the communally owned territories of indigenous peoples (Art. 2) and the private property rights of individual land owners (Art. 315) (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009). Madrid therefore contends that the MAS agrarian reform is ‘largely in keeping with the land reform principles laid down in the Sánchez de Lozada administration’s 1996 land reform measure’ (2011: 249-250). Furthermore, Brabazon and Webber argue that the reforms introduce a ‘reconstituted agrarian neoliberalism’ (2013: 4) that partially acts to contain social movement resistance. Most notably, the granting of collective indigenous titles is limited by the fact that sub-soil resources remain the property of the state.

In addition, the MAS Party administration has been an outspoken advocate for environmental rights. Bolivia was one of five countries that opposed the Copenhagen Accord at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2009 arguing that the main cause of climate change was not being addressed i.e. capitalism (Building Bridges Collective 2010). At the conference, Morales made the most radical demands of all presidential leaders by advocating a one degree Centigrade limit on temperature rises and proposing an international court for climate crimes. He also introduced the concept of climate debt, suggesting that economically advanced countries compensate developing countries that bear the brunt of climate change whilst emitting minimal carbon emissions (Shultz 2010). The following year Morales brought together climate justice and anti-neoliberal movements in an alternative climate summit in Bolivia, the Conferencia Mundial de los Pueblos sobre el Cambio Climático y los Derechos de la Madre Tierra (CMPCC; World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth). At the CMPCC President Morales declared:

We have two paths: either *Pachamama* or death. We have two paths: either capitalism dies or Mother Earth dies. Either capitalism lives or Mother Earth lives. Of course, brothers and sisters, we are here for life, for humanity and for the rights of Mother Earth. (cited in Webber 2011: 156)

The Bolivian government has amalgamated the notion of an environmentally sustainable model of development to indigenous identities through conceptualisations of the *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) and *vivir bien* (living well), the Spanish name given to the Andean worldviews of *suma qamaña* in Aymara and *sumac kawsey* in Quechua (Gudynas 2011). *Vivir bien* (more popularly known as *buen vivir* in Ecuador) describes a ‘system of knowledge and living based on the communion of humans and nature and on the spatial-temporal-harmonious totality of existence’ (Walsh 2010: 18). Gudynas argues that this perspective collapses the ‘classical Western dualism that separates society from Nature’ (2011: 444). Such imaginaries have been written into political legislation. For instance, the preamble to the 2009 Constitution establishes the basis of the state as ‘*la búsqueda del vivir bien*’ (the search for living well). Environmental rights have been broadened within the Constitution to include the obligation of economic organisations to protect the environment (Art. 312: III), the right of individuals to a healthy environment (Art. 33) and the duty of the state to promote the responsible use and industrialisation of natural resources alongside the preservation of the environment (Art. 9: VI) (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009). On 15 October 2012, the government also ratified the Ley Marco de la Madre Tierra y Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien (Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well), which states that *vivir bien* necessitates living ‘in harmony and balance with Mother Earth and its societies’ (Art. 5: XIV; author’s translation). Despite these advances, however, critics have highlighted a number of failures or contradictions within Morales’ external rhetoric on capitalism and indigenous and environmental rights, alongside the internal pursuit of a development model based on neo-extractivism and major infrastructural projects (Building Bridges Collective 2010: 35). As such, the domestic policies of the MAS administration have been increasingly contested.

1.2 Conflicting Resource Sovereignties in Bolivia

Land and resource conflicts have been a feature of the two administrative periods of the MAS Party. Indeed, the Morales government holds the Bolivian record for the number of conflicts arising per month (El Deber 2013a). A number of scholars have argued that the extraction of non-renewable resources alongside major infrastructural projects comes at the expense of indigenous territorial rights and environmental sustainability (Humphreys Bebbington & Bebbington 2012; Perreault 2012; Stefanoni 2012; Hindery 2013). In fact, foreign direct investments to Bolivia increased by 52 percent between 2008 and 2010 due to rapidly expanding extractivist industries (Bebbington & Bury 2013). These territorial disputes have provoked debates over interpretations of development, environmental

governance and resource management or what social anthropologist John-Andrew McNeish calls ‘resource sovereignties’. McNeish uses this term to denote ‘inter-connecting understandings of territoriality, identity, rights, use and nature’ (2011: 20).

Although the MAS has retained the support of the majority of the *campesino* (peasant) and *cocalero* movements, it has faced a number of protests by lowland indigenous groups from the Amazon Basin and Chaco as many hydrocarbon concessions and infrastructure projects overlap with indigenous territories and national protected areas. These controversial projects include, but are not limited to: the Cachuella Esperanza hydroelectric dam in the Beni region of the Bolivian Amazon; El Bala hydroelectric dam that sits within the Madidi National Park; a geothermal power plant at Laguna Colorada in Potosí; and gas exploration in the Aguaragüe National Park that has caused conflict with the Guaraní ethnic peoples (see Bebbington 2009; Postero 2013; Zimmerer 2013). In many of the above cases, conflicts arise because of failures on the government’s part to abide by indigenous people’s rights to prior consultation as outlined in the 2009 Constitution and under Supreme Decree No. 29033 (see Haarstad & Campero 2011; Radhuber 2012). Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington have argued that this expansion into the lowlands is part of a broader trend in Latin America that ‘translates into replays of long histories of colonialism, of violent incorporation of peripheries, and of resource dependence’ (2011: 142).

Tensions culminated in 2011 when the government announced a proposal to build a road through the Isiboro Sécore National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS; Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore), which carries the dual status of a national protected zone and a legally recognised territory home to the indigenous Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré and Chimane peoples. The lowland indigenous organisation CIDOB (Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonía de Bolivia; Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian East, Chaco and Amazon) responded to the announcement by organising a non-violent protest march from Trinidad, the capital of Beni in the Amazon Basin, to La Paz, the highland capital of Bolivia (a distance of 600 km). On 15 August 2011, approximately 2000 marchers set off from Trinidad to follow a route that would take them 66 days. On 25 September, the government gave the orders for a police raid on the indigenous protestors just outside of Yucumo in an event known as ‘La Chaparina’.⁷ The government’s use of violent force catapulted the TIPNIS conflict into national and international headlines. McNeish suggests that:

⁷ So-called because the police intervention occurred in Chaparina, near the town of Yucumo.

[t]he violence of this event broadened awareness of the TIPNIS protest in Bolivia and abroad, and sparked both a national political crisis and debate about the validity of the government's credentials as a progressive government that supports indigenous rights (2013: 221).

As noted by an interview participant, the TIPNIS conflict became a '*tormenta perfecta*' (perfect storm).⁸ This thesis draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Bolivia conducted from September 2011 until June 2012 to analyse the case study of the TIPNIS conflict. The research focused specifically on a 'left-indigenous' alliance, which broadly coupled the demands of the lowland indigenous movement represented by the organisation CIDOB and urban solidarity movements located in the cities of Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz.

1.3 Legal Framework and Background to the TIPNIS

The TIPNIS carries a dual status as an Área Protegida (protected area) under state jurisdiction and an indigenous territory home to the Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré and Chimane peoples. The proposal for the road contradicted government legislation for both legal classifications. Firstly, the government failed to comply with the procedures established within the National System of Protected Areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas; SNAP) created in 1992 under Ley de Medio Ambiente (Environmental Law) No. 1333 that created a systematised approach to the management of protected areas. In 2004 this established a legislative system for the implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessments (Evaluación Ambiental Estratégicas; EAE) prior to any investment, implementation or expansion of a public or private activity that may have a socio-economic or environmental impact. Despite this, government representatives did not take heed of concerns raised in the EAE prepared in 2011 by the National Service of Protected Areas (Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas; SERNAP), which concludes that, 'road policies, tied to the political extension of hydrocarbon activities, presents cumulative negative effects on the environment which, as mentioned, is the fundamental condition for the survival of the adapted indigenous model' (SERNAP-Rumbol 2011: 7; author's translation). As a result, the Vice Minister of the Environment Juan Pablo Ramos resigned rather than approving the environmental license for the project. Secondly, the government did not fulfil the obligatory prior consultation process with inhabitants of the park. On 4 August 2008 the particulars of the project were established between the Bolivian Administrator of Roads (Administradora Boliviana de Carreteras; ABC), the Brazilian

⁸ Personal interview with Rosario Ribera, a member of the activist group Mujeres Autoconvocadas, 17 March 2012.

construction company OAS⁹ and the Brazilian National Bank of Economic and Social Development (Banco Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social; BNDES) who agreed a loan for 80 percent of the \$415 million construction price (Webber 2012a).

Isiboro Sécore National Park

The region now legally named the TIPNIS was formerly the Isiboro Sécore National Park defined under Supreme Decree No. 07401 on 22 November 1965 under the administration of President René Barrientos Ortuño (1964-1966; 1966-1969). The region was designated a protected area in order to conserve its hydrological flows, wealth of natural resources and scenic beauty (SERNAP 2005: 3). Sarela Paz (2012) notes that the conservation of the area was particularly important at this time as the 1952 agrarian reform law had the effect of increasing land colonisation in the Amazonian region of Bolivia. Consequently, local leaders campaigned for the state to establish a place of refuge for the local indigenous peoples. Furthermore, during the 1960s there were road projects in the Beni area that heightened the need to protect the area of the TIPNIS.

The TIPNIS lies across the departmental boundaries of Cochabamba and Beni occupying a position of transition between the Andean foothills and the plains of the Amazon Basin. It thus varies dramatically in altitude and rainfall possessing great biodiversity. It contains three main geological areas: the sub-Andean area, the piedmont and the plains of southern Beni. The TIPNIS, according to the 2011 EAE:

has enormous environmental importance in a regional and national context because it is the area that regulates the bio-geographic space of the piedmont and the Amazon and has key functions for the regulation, distribution and storage of natural hydrological flows (SERNAP-Rumbol 2011: 4; author's translation)

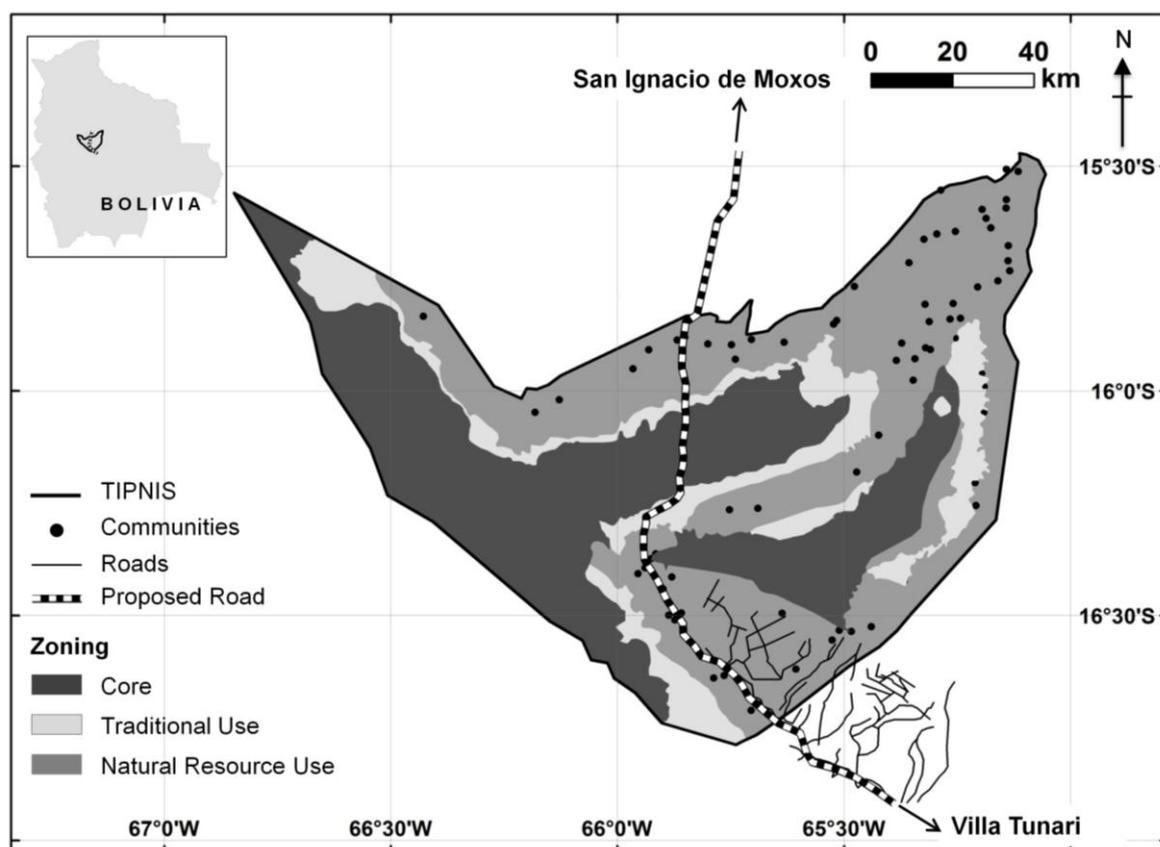
The hydrological characteristics of the park are integral for the ecological balance of the region and the socio-economic conditions of the indigenous communities living there (SERNAP 2005: 14). The TIPNIS contains a large diversity of ecosystems and species, with 858 vertebrates and 2,500-3,000 plant varieties (SERNAP 2005: 17-18).¹⁰ The area also sits at the Andean-Amazonian interface making it part of an oil and gas rich arc that stretches through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela (Hindery 2013).

⁹ The government rescinded the contract with OAS in May 2012 arguing that the company was not meeting its deadlines for the construction of sections 1 and 3 of the road (FIDH-APDHB 2013). In November 2012 the contract was instead rewarded to two Bolivian firms.

¹⁰ This includes 108 species of mammals (30 percent of Bolivia's mammal populations), 470 species of bird, 39 species of reptile, 53 species of amphibian and 188 species of fish. Of note are threatened species such as the spectacled bear, giant otter and jaguar (SERNAP 2005).

The protected area is co-managed by SERNAP and the indigenous communities of the TIPNIS. In 2001, they worked together to formulate a management plan and zoning system of three areas (Map 1). The first is the Core Zone (Zona Núcleo), an area of high biodiversity and therefore a priority for conservation, where any type of commercial exploitation of natural resources is prohibited, as well as public activities including tourism and education, and fundamentally ‘any activity or infrastructure that alters or modifies habitats (e.g. construction of infrastructure, hydrocarbon exploitation)’ (SERNAP 2005: 106; author’s translation). The second is the Zone for Traditional Management and Use (Zona de Manejo Tradicional) where the traditional and sustainable use of resources is allowed but the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources is not. The third is the Zone for the Use of Natural Resources (Zona de Aprovechamiento de Recursos Naturales) where resource usage and public use for eco-tourism, environmental education and recreation is allowed subject to environmental legislation and regulation (SERNAP 2005: 106-108). As shown in Map 1 the proposed road would cut through all three zones, including the Core Zone where infrastructure of any kind is prohibited.

Map 1. Route of the Proposed Road through the TIPNIS



Source: Created by Andrew Singleton (School of Geographical & Earth Sciences, The University of Glasgow) for this research project based on public data by SERNAP 2005.

Indigenous Territory of the Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré and Chimane Peoples

The area is also legally recognised as an indigenous territory under Supreme Decree No. 22610 awarded on 24 September 1990 by President Jaime Paz Zamora (1989-1993) as a result of a historic indigenous march led by CIDOB from Trinidad to La Paz. The legal titling was made more concrete through the process of '*saneamiento de tierras*' (land cleansing) under Ley INRA. On 25 April 1997, this resulted in the granting of a TCO (Tierras Comunitarias de Origen; First Nations or 'Original' Communal Lands) communal title to the Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré and Chimane peoples. At this time a '*línea roja*' (red line) was established separating the TCO from the colonised area to the south of the national park, known as Polygon 7, that is predominantly inhabited by peasant farmers of highland Aymara and Quechua origin who have migrated to the Chapare region since the 1960s (SERNAP 2005). Job losses by the state mining company COMIBOL (Corporación Minera de Bolivia; Bolivian State Mining Company) as part of the neoliberal restructuring of the 1980s, as well as severe droughts that hit the country in 1983-1987, have necessitated migrations by disenfranchised *mineros* (mine workers) and *campesinos* to the area in search of an income source (Albó 2008b; García Linera et al 2004; Paz 2012). For most of the peasant farmers that migrated to the area, livelihoods have relied on the cultivation of coca resulting in a rapid growth of this sector between 1980 and 1987. This has converted the Chapare province into the biggest coca producing area of Bolivia (Healy 1991; Dangl 2007).¹¹ The coca growing unions are represented by the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba (Seis Federaciones del Trópico de Cochabamba), an organisation that Evo Morales remains President of despite his role as head of the Bolivian state (Bolpress 2012). Many of the communities in Polygon 7 are also represented by the Indigenous Council of the South (Consejo Indígena del Sur; CONISUR), which has actively supported the road proposal.

In 2009, the TCO legal title was renamed Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino (Original Indigenous and Peasant Territory; TIOC)¹² and in June of that year the government decreed TIPNIS an executive land title of 1,091,656 hectares (Fundación Tierra 2011a). Article 403 of the Constitution recognises TIOCs as including:

¹¹ The other coca-producing region is the Yungas to the north and east of La Paz, which is a traditional area of cultivation dating back to Inca times. The coca produced in the Chapare is distinctive for its bitter taste and is predominantly used for cocaine production rather than traditional use (Grisaffi 2010).

¹² This is a contentious change in title since it recognises *campesinos* as subjects of communal land rights. Although this sector has indigenous heritage, individual property ownership is the norm. These competing land and territory claims will be discussed in chapters V and VI.

the right to land; to the use and exclusive exploitation of renewable natural resources under conditions determined by law; to prior and informed consultation; to participation in the benefits of the exploitation of the non-renewable natural resources that are found in their territory; the authority to apply their own norms, administered by their structures of representation; and to define their development in accordance with their own cultural criteria and principles of harmonious coexistence with nature (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; author's translation)

According to the 2001 national census, 12,388 indigenous people inhabit the TIPNIS TIOC, which is split into 64 communities (Crespo 2010; Paz 2012). Of this total, the Chimane, Mojeño-Trinitario and Yuracaré peoples represent 51.3, 34.1 and 14.6 percent, respectively (Fundación Tierra 2011a: 269). The communities exist beside the main rivers and use them to support livelihoods based on activities such as hunting, fishing, agriculture, small-scale animal husbandry and the collection of forest foods and supplies. Waterways also provide essential means of transportation, as there are few roads or tracks within the TIPNIS. Subsistence farming based on securing food for family units is supplemented by the sale of products or labour to access basic goods and services, including education and health. Inter-family redistribution is commonplace but increasing contacts with outside market relations, through interaction with the coca growers, cattle ranchers and timber harvesters, has led to an increase in the sale of labour as part of the livelihood strategies of indigenous communities (SERNAP 2005). Community development initiatives exist on a small scale and include cocoa production, caiman hunting and eco-tourism (Achtenberg 2011; McNeish 2013).

There are significant differences between the histories of the three ethnic nations. The Mojeño-Trinitario communities are the result of millenarian movements into the TIPNIS from the late nineteenth century in search of better conditions than the ex-mission towns of Loreto (established in 1682), Trinidad¹³ (1687), San Ignacio de Mojos (1689) and San Javier (1691) (Lehm Ardaya 1999; Van Valen 2013).¹⁴ These settlements largely exist in the north east of the park and it is this ethnic group that is the most actively involved in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. Conversely, Chimane communities are relatively isolated taking great pains to protect their cultural identities (Fundación Tierra 2011a). Finally, the majority of Yuracaré peoples live in the south of the park in close proximity to the colonising populations in Polygon 7. As a result of environmental destruction and occupation of their ancestral lands many of the communities sell their labour to coca

¹³ The majority of the Mojeños that live in TIPNIS used to inhabit Trinidad and are hence called 'Trinitarios'.

¹⁴ The history of these movements will be discussed in chapter VI.

growing populations (SERNAP 2005). Although it is pertinent not to give in to romanticised assumptions of indigenous peoples, it is clear that the communities within the TIPNIS traditionally operate on the condition that the use, access and management of forest resources is collective, which contrasts the visions of the *cocaleros* who operate an individual economic model of property ownership (Paz 2012). Two regional branches of CIDOB represent these communities: CPEM-B (Central de Pueblos Étnicos Mojeños del Beni; Central of the Mojeño Ethnic Peoples of Beni) and CPIB (Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Beni; Central of the Indigenous Peoples of Beni).

1.4 The Villa Tunari - San Ignacio de Moxos Road

Government discourse established the need to construct a road for the integration of the eastern and western regions of Bolivia since there is no direct route from Cochabamba (department of Cochabamba) to Trinidad (department of Beni). Indeed, the improvement of national infrastructure was an integral component of the National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo) for 2006-2011 (Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo 2007: 201). Cunha Filho and Gonçalves note that the construction of roads ‘has increased from an average of 113 kilometers per year in the 40 years before Morales’s election to 276 kilometers per year during the first three years of his administration’ (2010: 187). The new route would also bypass Santa Cruz, the department that poses the greatest threat to the political power of the MAS. The proposal consists of three sections: section one from Villa Tunari to Isinuta (47 km); section two from Isinuta to Monte Grande (177 km); and section three from Monte Grande to San Ignacio de Moxos (82 km). During the fieldwork, sections one and three were underway. However, section two (the segment that traverses the TIPNIS) became the source of the conflict.

Plans for a road that connects the two departments have existed for a number of years. For example, the social anthropologist Tristan Platt writing for the Bolivian newspaper *Los Tiempos* (2012a) notes that there was a proposal in 1780 by the Spanish governor of the region, Ignacio Flores, for a similar road. The reasons given were threefold: to modernise the area by opening it up to people from Cochabamba for the production of coca, sugar, and other crops; in order to civilise the Yuracaré peoples; and to bypass Santa Cruz reducing the city’s control of the area. Platt states that ‘[t]he ideas illustrate that colonial progress has, evidently, much in common with the aspirations of “CONISUR” and the sectors that currently support the opening of the road’ (*Los Tiempos* 2012a; author’s translation). President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993-1997; 2002-2003) put the project back on the agenda in 2003, as part of Decree No. 26996.

Motivations for the Proposed Road

The importance of a road that connects the two departments is not disputed. That said, official discourses are ambiguous about the specific reasons for pursuing a route that cuts through the Core Zone of the TIPNIS, despite the fact that engineers have suggested alternative proposals that would skirt the park on the eastern and western flanks (INSERCOM 2011). Three broad motives have been suggested (see McNeish 2013).

First, it would give *cocaleros* greater access to the park to attain land for cultivation. Over time, these communities have expanded into the indigenous territory crossing the *línea roja*, which is a source of continual confrontation (SERNAP 2005).¹⁵ Polygon 7 represents 52 unions and 20,000 families, which makes it far bigger in population than the TIPNIS TIOC (Fundación Tierra 2011a: 271). The fact that the route of the road would directly connect Polygon 7 with the TIPNIS shows that the current government administration remains loyal to the coca growing union movement that co-founded the MAS.

Second, critics of the plans state that the road would open up new avenues for an emerging Brazilian sub-imperialism in Latin America (Crespo 2010; FOBOMADE 2011; Zibechi 2011a). Matthew Flynn (2007) has noted that the Brazilian Development bank BNDES acts to increase the internationalisation of Brazilian capital in two ways. Firstly, requiring that the finances awarded by the bank are spent on Brazilian goods and services benefits Brazilian construction companies such as OAS in the TIPNIS case. Secondly, funding infrastructure accelerates the regional and international flow of Brazilian commodities. The TIPNIS road is one of many investment projects in the Amazonian region financed by BNDES, such as the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant in Brazil that has raised a number of environmental and human rights concerns (Verdum 2013). The road is also part of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure in South America (Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana; IIRSA), which has the goals of developing transport, energy and communications infrastructure (FIDH-APDHB 2013). In the first meeting of the IIRSA the idea of an inter-oceanic highway was put forward that would provide Brazil with better access to markets in China (FIDH-APDHB 2013; FOBOMADE 2011).¹⁶ In 2000, when IIRSA was founded, Brazil was seen as an ally in the fight against US imperialism and neoliberalism (Perrier Bruslé 2012). Zibechi

¹⁵ In 2009 a coca grower died and three people were injured after a conflict between the coca growers and the Yuracaré peoples. According to the Yuracarés this was because roughly 800 growers had started to settle within the indigenous territory (Fundación Tierra 2011a).

¹⁶ Though it must be noted that the prevailing belief that the road is part of this inter-oceanic highway is unproven because the route is not a perfect fit with the overall pattern of these plans (Perrier Bruslé 2012).

(2011a) claims, however, that Brazil has since become a new imperial power. Zibechi (2011a) states that it is evident that the road is of more interest to ‘*expansionismo brasileño*’ (Brazilian expansionism) than to Bolivia itself. Thus, the road is part of a wider reordering of the regional geopolitical landscape. Furthermore, the road would facilitate the expansion of oil exploration and exploitation by the Brazilian energy corporation Petrobras who operate in the TIPNIS. This leads us onto a third motivation.

Third, the road would facilitate the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons. Recent discoveries of natural gas deposits mean that Bolivian reserves now stand at 11.2 trillion cubic feet (La Razón 2013). The organisation CEDLA (Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario; Centre for the Study of Labour and Agrarian Development) found that 25.5 percent of the TIPNIS is subject to hydrocarbon exploration concessions. This includes 17.7 percent granted to a single enterprise: YPFB Petroandina SAM, a joint enterprise of the state oil company YPFB and PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela; Petroleum of Venezuela) established in July 2008 under Ley 3911 (CEDLA 2012). In addition, Brazilian Petrobras and French company Total were granted a 30-year contract for oil exploration in Río Hondo, part of which cuts into the TIPNIS, under Ley 3672 approved in April 2007 (CEADESC 2008). Hydrocarbons are a fundamental component of the National Development Plan and in May 2013 Vice-President García Linera announced that the YPFB would enter national parks to explore hydrocarbon reserves. In response to this, the Executive President of YPFB, Carlos Villegas, specified that the state enterprise ‘will raise the awareness [of indigenous peoples] for the benefit of all Bolivians’ (La Razón 2013; author’s translation). This statement makes it clear that the neo-extractivist development model supersedes the development visions of indigenous communities.

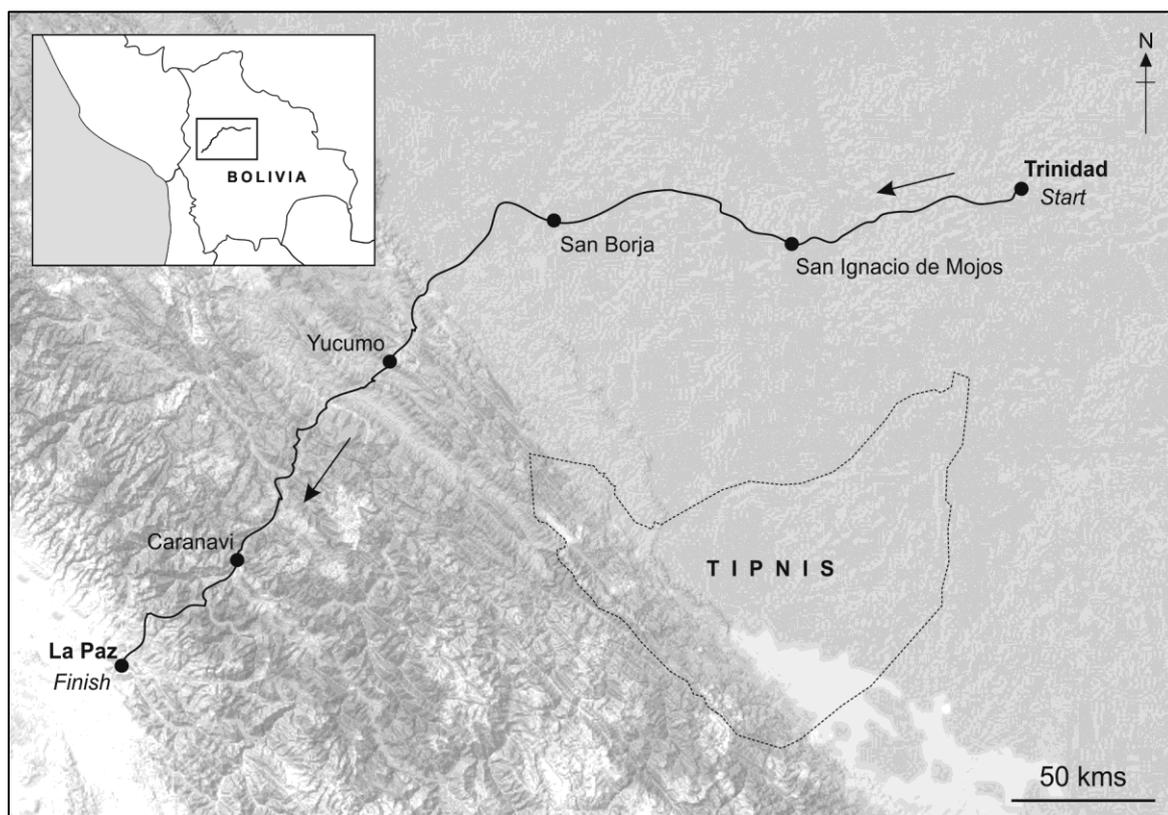
The agendas outlined show clear continuations with neoliberal economic models based on the appropriation of land and resources and the internationalisation of capital. In this way, the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS can be viewed as contestations to what Harvey (2003) calls ‘accumulation by dispossession’. Harvey’s adaptation of Marx’s ‘primitive accumulation’ is usually deployed to understand neoliberal forms of privatisation as a new form of ‘enclosing the commons’. Here, I use it in reference to the continuation of transnational corporate interests within the state-led neo-extractivist project of the MAS.

1.5 The TIPNIS Conflict

On 18 May 2010 the *corregidores* (community leaders) of the TIPNIS declared a ‘*estado de emergencia y movilización inmediata*’ (state of emergency and immediate mobilisation)

in response to the government's proposal to build the road (XXIX Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS). Over the following year attempts to negotiate with the government were unsuccessful. President Morales made his feelings clear when he declared on 29 June 2011 that '*quieran o no quieran vamos a construir este camino*' (whether they want it or not, we are going to build this road) (Los Tiempos 2011a). After a period of internal organising the decision was made to set out on an indigenous march mirroring the route of the 1990 historic route that succeeded in establishing TIPNIS as a communal indigenous territory (Map 2). The march (the eighth of its kind) was named '*por la defensa del TIPNIS, por la vida, la dignidad y los derechos de los pueblos indígenas*' (in defence of the TIPNIS, for life, dignity and the rights of indigenous people). The highland indigenous organisation CONAMAQ¹⁷ (Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyo; National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qollasuyu) also participated in the march as the communities under their jurisdiction are suffering similar resource conflicts.

Map 2. Route of the Indigenous Marches in Defence of the TIPNIS



Source: Created by Les Hill (School of Geographical & Earth Sciences, The University of Glasgow) for this research project.

¹⁷ The *ayllu* is an Andean indigenous community of extended families that occupies a particular territorial space. The *marka* consists of multiple *ayllus*. Qollasuyo is a highland region of Bolivia, once a region of the Inca state. CONAMAQ therefore represent the *ayllu* movement that aims to recover indigenous meso-scale identities and territorial spaces (see Andolina et al 2005).

The dual status of the TIPNIS enabled the solidarity of a number of environmental, indigenous and human rights organisations. The events of La Chaparina garnered a significant amount of support from diverse social movements and individual actors, such as environmentalists, left-leaning intellectuals, feminists, MAS Party dissidents, sectors of the conservative economic powers and self-titled Trotskyites. Popular discontent was evident during the judicial elections that took place on 16 October, just three days before the Eighth March reached La Paz. Bolivian citizens engaged in a collective political act of abstention (20.3 percent) and spoiling ballots (57.8 percent) in a country where voting is compulsory (Los Tiempos 2011b). When the Eighth March reached La Paz on 19 October 2011 tens and thousands of Bolivian citizens greeted the indigenous protestors and the government had no choice but to cancel the road contract under Ley Corta (Short Law)¹⁸ 180 promulgated on 24 October 2011.

However, on 20 December 2011 a counter-march was instigated by CONISUR, representing Polygon 7, which demanded the repeal of Ley 180 and the construction of the road. The day after the counter-march arrived into La Paz García Linera announced that the Plurinational Legislative Assembly would sit down with CONISUR and draft a new law. On 01 February Ley 222 was promulgated that re-opened the possibility of the road subject to a consultation with inhabitants of the TIPNIS. During this process CIDOB continually warned that if Ley 180 were rescinded they would set out on another march. Thus, in response to this new violation of their indigenous rights, CIDOB convoked a ninth indigenous march between 27 April and 27 June 2012. The Ninth March welcomed the participation of all Bolivians (outside of political party interests) and was named '*por la defensa de la vida y dignidad, los territorios indígenas, los recursos naturales, la biodiversidad, el medio ambiente, las áreas protegidas, el cumplimiento de la Constitución Política del Estado, y el respeto de la democracia*' (in defence of life and dignity, indigenous territories, natural resources, biodiversity, the environment, protected areas, compliance with the state Constitution and respect for democracy). This time, the government refused to enter into dialogue with the marchers and they were forced to return to their ancestral territories empty handed.

Government representatives carried out a consultation process with the inhabitants of the TIPNIS towards the end of 2012. Although the process was dubbed a '*post consulta*' (post-consultation), it was hailed a success by official documentation that deemed 80 percent of the communities consulted to be in agreement with the road project. However,

¹⁸ This is a declaratory statement that ultimately has no legal force behind it until it is ratified into law.

communities from Polygon 7 were included in the process and it has been deemed unconstitutional and undemocratic by the Permanent Assembly of Human Rights in Bolivia and the Catholic Church in Bolivia (APDHB/FIDH 2013). For now though, in the lead-up to the 2014 presidential elections where Morales will run for a third term, the government has taken the decision to suspend the road project through the TIPNIS.

1.6 (Re)territorialising Latin America

‘Territory’ is gaining ground as a theme in geographical analysis (see Agnew 2013; Bryan 2012; Elden 2013; Murphy 2013). These discussions are salient for analyses in Latin America where there has been a recent ‘territorial turn’ with the state recognition of communal indigenous property and land rights (see Bryan 2012; Larson et al 2008; Offen 2003). In countries such as Bolivia, the recognition of indigenous peoples’ territorial demands has been an integral component to *both* the neoliberal multicultural reforms of the 1990s *and* the post-neoliberal regimes of the twenty-first century. More recently, constituent assembly processes in Ecuador and Bolivia have recognised the plurinational characters of these countries and combined the recovery of state sovereignty from US imperialism with indigenous plurality, autonomy and self-determination (Gustafson 2009a). These developments necessitate a rethinking of the state as the central scalar unit of territorial analysis since social/indigenous movements differently conceive the concept of territory. Therefore, it is imperative to consider the ways that de- and re-territorialisation are on-going processes made possible through the pressure of contentious politics. It is also important to analyse how political action might reconfigure alternative imaginaries of national spaces. This thesis offers a geographically informed exploration of how the left-indigenous movements in defence of the TIPNIS contested, re-examined and re-appropriated hegemonic conceptualisations of territory.

Certain scholars have begun to talk of territory as a process, rather than a fixed spatial dimension (Agnew & Oslender 2010; Bryan 2012; Haesbaert 2013). As such, Haesbaert contends that ‘[t]erritory is not just a “state question”’ as ‘struggles/social practices themselves continually remake the concept of territory’ (2013: 148). The author calls for a ‘multi-territoriality’ approach in which ‘every social relationship implies territorial interaction, an intersection of different territories’ (2004: 344). Geographical approaches are well placed to analyse such changes since scholars of the discipline now widely recognise space as a relational construct (see Doel 1999; Harvey 1973, 2006a; Massey 2005; also see Jones 2009). The geographer Doreen Massey has described places as ‘articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings’ rather than ‘areas

with boundaries around’ (Massey 1993: 66). Massey also states that ‘[t]erritories are constituted and are to be conceptualized, relationally’ (2011: 4). Similarly, Stuart Elden argues that ‘[t]erritory is not simply an object: the outcome of actions conducted toward it or some previously supposedly neutral area. Territory is itself a process, made and remade, shaped and shaping, active and reactive’ (2013: 17). Thus, territory is a dynamic concept that is fundamentally enmeshed in social, political, economic and environmental relations linked to space and place. Perreault thus states that territorialising projects are ‘the spatial expression of political ideologies’ (2013: 69).

Indigenous territorial claims have been articulated and substantiated through the language of international legal rights. Two of the most important frameworks are the ILO Convention No. 169 of 1989 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 (see Brysk 2000; Canessa 2006; Yashar 2005). Both recognise some form of self-rule, the right to retain customs, institutions and customary law and the rights of indigenous peoples to be consulted in development proposals. The ILO Convention defines territory as the ‘total environment of the areas which the [indigenous] peoples concerned occupy and use’ (Art. 13.2) (ILO 1989b). These changes, alongside pressure from indigenous movements, led to a number of constitutional reforms in the Latin American region, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru (Van Cott 2000a). As such, there is a substantial literature regarding the changing relationship between the ‘state’ and ‘civil society’ in Bolivia as part of the multicultural reforms of the 1990s (see Albro 2010a; Canessa 2005; Goldstein 2004; Kohl 2003a; Lazar 2008; McNeish 2008; Postero 2007b). In Bolivia, CIDOB has been at the forefront of lowland territorial claims. The umbrella organisation was founded in 1982 and now represents the 34 indigenous nations of the Amazon Basin and Chaco (Yashar 2005; Postero 2007b). CIDOB united diverse ethnic communities in a political project for the legal protection of indigenous lands in the face of increasing colonisation through farming, logging, coca growing and the exploitation of hydrocarbons. These demands circulated around the concept of *territorio* (territory), which ‘became an icon of indigenous-state relations’ (Postero 2007b: 49).

That said, the legal recognition of indigenous territorial rights does not substantially change power relations and can act to extend the state’s arm of governance (Bryan 2011, 2012; Hale 2011; Mollett 2006). Anthropologist Charles Hale (2002, 2004) has used the term ‘*indio permitido*’ (authorised Indian) to describe the reform measures of multiculturalism as a ‘mode of governance based on a unitary package of citizenship rights

and a tendentious premise that people could enjoy these rights only by conforming to a homogenous mestizo cultural ideal' (2004:16). Other scholars have reasoned that the reforms have done little to change colonial relations of power and structural racism (McNeish 2008; Povinelli 1998; Žižek 1998). Goodale (2009) argues that the adoption of a rights based framework concedes other more important objectives, such as the recognition of difference and plurality and the reimagining of the modern nation-state. The author contends that participants in the indigenous marches led by CIDOB were '(re-)constituting themselves as rights-bearing modern subjects in the way liberal Bolivia had always envisioned', that is 'in terms of contract rights, private property, and the liberal pursuit of enlightened self-interest' (2009: 19). Furthermore, Gustafson asserts that neoliberal interculturalism 'represents a transformative renewal of discourses and institutions through which elites seek to insulate centralized power (spatially, conceptually, and institutionally) from various forms of "indigenous" and other "popular" forms of political engagement' (2002: 270). Robert Andolina, Nina Laurie and Sarah Radcliffe (2009) illustrate that the institutionalism of indigenous agendas in development policy, whilst offering some opportunities, fails to address inequalities structured by neoliberal agendas. Thus, Bryan concludes that 'territorial claims do not challenge the existing socio-spatial order so much as they help to create it' (2012: 216).

Nevertheless, movements have capitalised on the legitimacy afforded to them by organising under an indigenous rights banner and have effectively pushed *at* and *beyond* the limits of Hale's 'authorised Indian'. Furthermore, indigenous peoples and nations have coalesced into a transnational social movement through their collective colonial and neo-colonial histories and experiences of disenfranchisement (Hodgson 2002). Indigenous movements in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, for example, have been successful in overturning assimilationist development policies and have pushed for greater recognition and central state power (Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005). Greater visibility and political legitimacy have been secured through the concept of territory and the implicit assumption that indigenous peoples have an integral cultural and material relationship to place. Yet, demands push beyond the notion of territory as a geographically bounded area instead conceiving territory as 'an ethnic group's right to autonomous self-government and the inherent value of its cosmivision about the collective rights to natural resources' (Healy 2001: 81). This was central to demands for plurinationalism, which rearticulated claims for the recognition of ethno-cultural difference towards greater political participation and representation in the state. In Escobar's study of ethnic struggles for territory in the Colombian Pacific, for example, the concept of territory involves 'the

definition of life itself, in particular the defence of what they [Afro-Colombians] called [...] *cosmovisiones* (worldviews)' (2008: 2). Gustafson argues that this reframing of multicultural agendas is a 'decolonizing move' (2009a: 991).

Gustafson contends that indigenous-state relations in Bolivia have been framed through spatialising claims, as a 'deeply questioned set of norms tied to *de jure* national sovereignty confronted multiple *de facto* claims for the reconfiguration of the state's territorial order' (2011: 222). The author states that:

While the 'nation' itself is frequently the anchor of spatialising spectacle and discourse in hydrocarbon-rich states, alternative scales and spaces are frequently imagined as having privileged or subversive significance in relation to national narratives and imaginaries, in effect, bringing state-centred patterns of uniform territory, authority and sovereignty into question. (2011: 223-224)

Indigenous movements have actively negotiated, contested and reconstituted the centralised logic of the Westphalian state model and recrafted the nation-state. For instance, recent recognitions of indigenous autonomy open up a 'new phase of reterritorialization' (Do Alto & Fontana 2013: 33; author's translation). The claim for politico-territorial autonomy is the 'articulating demand' for a host of other objectives, such as the protection of cultural symbols and artefacts, bilingual education, the distribution of political power and the formation of state institutions to facilitate political participation and representation of indigenous groups (Díaz Polanco 1998: 216-217; also see Becker 2011; Gustafson 2009a; Jameson 2011). Agnew and Oslender offer the term 'overlapping territorialities' to understand that different sources of territorial authority exist within nation-states in Latin America. They argue that this is particularly important when 'statehood is a contested acquisition and conquest rather than consensual union' (2013: 121) i.e. in post-colonial states. They use the example of indigenous territories to illustrate the 'necessary re-thinking of the links between state sovereignty and territoriality' (2013: 122). In Bolivia, the MAS project of state-led resource nationalism and the recovery of national patrimony from US imperial interventions 'generates a complex scenario for the reconfiguration of territorial orders' (Gustafson 2011: 225). In particular, state-granted hydrocarbon and mining concessions to private corporations acts to enclose spaces important for the cultural reproduction of ethnic nations. This is particularly important considering that hydrocarbon deposits are predominantly located in a broad arc covering Bolivia's Amazonian and Chaco lowlands (Perreault 2013). Incidentally, this geography of resources maps directly onto the nation's communally owned indigenous territories and

several of the country's national parks. These changes engender the construction and articulation of new territorial claims, conflicts and struggle. In turn, I contend that this generates changing territorial configurations of the state. Understanding these processes and the relationships between differently articulated claims is the fundamental interest that runs throughout this research.

Within the thesis, I will consider competing claims for *de facto* territorial and resource sovereignties postulated by three sectors in Bolivia: (i) lowland and highland calls for self-determination over communally owned indigenous lands *and* increased access to state machinery; (ii) demands for 'popular sovereignty' of *el pueblo* (the people) by individuals and movements on the political 'left'; and (iii) regional movements for 'autonomy' in the Media Luna. I explore the following questions: to what extent does left-indigenous solidarity networks in defence of the TIPNIS constitute a *re-territorialisation* of the Bolivian nation-state? Do spaces of contentious politics act to reconfigure *colonial epistemologies* of nature, development, modernity and progress? What role, if any, does the vision of *plurinationalism* have on the reconstitution of notions of democracy, citizenship, governance and the nation-state? In what ways have the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS been articulated and how have internal dynamics shaped emerging *political and cultural identities*? How have left-indigenous solidarity networks been shaped and in what ways has this impacted on the *relationalities of power* surrounding identities of class, ethnicity, gender and urban/rural divides?

1.7 Mapping Out the Thesis

Here, I will provide a systematic outline of the thesis chapters:

❖ *Foundations*

THE HISTORY OF LEFT-INDIGENOUS POLITICS IN BOLIVIA will situate the contemporary politics of the MAS Party and the TIPNIS conflict in historical perspective. Fundamentally, the chapter highlights four interrelated and recurring themes central to collective memories of colonial and neo-colonial struggle: the appropriation of natural resources by national elites and foreign corporations; US intervention in economic policies and military violence; the failure of different government administrations to address indigenous concerns; and the divergent histories of labour unionism and indigenous anti-colonial resistance. This chapter provides the background for understanding the broad antecedents of the lowland indigenous movement and its relationship to the state, as well

as contextualising contrasting resource sovereignty claims that have shaped political action during the TIPNIS conflict.

A MULTIPLE RELATIONALITIES APPROACH TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT STUDIES AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY will evaluate the key literatures, all the while seeking to show a ‘gap’ where geographical approaches can advance existing research on left-indigenous movements in Latin America. Furthermore, whilst many scholars have analysed Evo Morales’ presidential period as part of Latin America’s ‘left turn’, I aim to dig deeper in order to understand how left-indigenous solidarity networks are part of a wider decolonial transition. Territorial movements may question the inherited ‘modes of ordering’ (Law 1994) that have worked to oppress the majority indigenous population of Bolivia over a five hundred year period of ‘coloniality’. At stake therefore, is a politics of knowledge production that recognises alternative epistemologies (conditions of knowledge) and ontologies ‘otherwise’ (the nature of social reality). To conclude I sketch out a multiple relationalities approach that advances a theoretical foundation for a spatial analysis of the TIPNIS conflict in four ways: re-thinking the binary between the state and civil society through the recognition that there are multiple co-existent spatial registers at play and that these are shaped within the practices of political action; re-conceptualising subaltern identities by acknowledging that subalternity is a product of geometries of power and not a fixed identity position; re-constructing political identities in solidarity/movement building by asserting that collective political action is generative of emerging socio-spatial relations; and researching ‘articulated assemblages’ in order to be alert to the ways that political articulations are fashioned as part of the shifting and materially heterogeneous assemblages produced within political activity.

❖ *Methodology*

POLITICS OF RESEARCH, CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND MULTIPLE POSITIONALITIES outlines the research methodology. The study and representation of subaltern indigenous actors is discussed as a potential problematic of the thesis. I outline a methodological toolbox for conducting ethically and politically engaged research grounded in feminist and poststructuralist approaches. This leads on to a discussion of the design and implementation of the critical ethnographic approach that included: participant observation of the meetings, events and protests of the left-indigenous solidarity networks in defence of the TIPNIS; semi-structured interviews with indigenous leaders and protestors, urban activists, non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers, academic-activists and intellectuals involved in the conflict; and document analysis of the material gathered

during the nine-month research period in Bolivia. I evaluate these methods and consider the effects of my positionality on research encounters in the postcolonial setting. I outline a commitment to the ideas of forthrightness, reflexivity and modesty and to learning from the inter-subjective spaces of fieldwork in the hope that I might in some modest way be able to ‘occupy the subject position of the other’ (Spivak 1990: 121).

❖ *Empirical Chapters*

RE-WORKING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND INDIGENOUS MOVEMENTS engages with the notion of the MAS administration as a ‘government of social movements’. This chapter seeks to bridge the gap in the literature between the geographies of social movements literature and the question of what happens when social movements come to power. I conclude that the MAS has made important strides in reclaiming national sovereignty, empowering indigenous peoples as active citizens of the Bolivian state and reducing poverty. However, I argue that the state-led neo-extractivist model has come at the expense of minority indigenous groups and environmental rights. To this extent, the MAS has acted to represent the interests of some social movements but has centralised power when it comes to those that challenge the government’s development agenda. In this way, the *pueblos* (peoples) of the lowland ethnic nations are subalternised as they are refused access to state machinery.

NEGOTIATING IDENTITY POLITICS OF LOWLAND INDIGENEITY explores the shifting and multiple identity claims of the lowland indigenous movement represented by CIDOB. I evaluate how political identities have been shaped by articulations of indigeneity by the MAS, which has shown a marked ability to subsume heterogeneous identities under an ‘indigenous nationalism’ that crosscuts class and ethnicity (Stefanoni 2006: 37). Recognising the inherent tensions and conflicting understandings of indigeneity within CIDOB, I examine how essentialist discourses get imagined, reiterated and brought into contestation through political action. Finally, I argue that demands for ‘territory’ are restricted within the hegemonic framework of legal rights and through the mediation of NGOs and media agents. As such, indigenous voices, experiences and knowledges remain subaltern. These problems of representation could dilute the emancipatory potential of indigenous collective action.

LEFT-INDIGENOUS SOLIDARITY NETWORKS: RECOVERING THE *PROCESO DE CAMBIO* explores the events, practices and moments that produced an alliance between the urban ‘left’ and the lowland indigenous movement during the TIPNIS conflict. I

evaluate the ways that these solidarity networks created distinct ‘maps of grievance’ (Featherstone 2003, 2008) that contest unequal geographies of power in Bolivia. I also engage with the uneven power relations embedded in the movement itself. Rather than concluding that these differences were intractable, I contend that these tensions were generative of new political ideologies and identities that could work towards an enacted Plurinational State of Bolivia.

❖ *Conclusion*

RE-TERRITORIALISING THE PLURINATIONAL STATE outlines the theoretical contributions of the thesis and reaffirms the productivity of a geographical approach to the study of indigenous movements in postcolonial settings. With this in mind, I situate the overall empirical conclusions of the thesis in the broader context of contemporary Latin American political change. I argue that much of the region is being re-territorialised through the dialectical relations of neo-extractivist models of development pursued by popular governments and insurgent citizenship practices enacted by left-indigenous movements. I conclude that plurinationalism is a process, rather than an established model. Thus, decolonial projects will inevitably be shaped by resource conflicts in the years to come.

THE HISTORY OF LEFT – INDIGENOUS POLITICS IN BOLIVIA

This chapter examines the ways in which long histories of capitalist development, nation-state building and structural racism in Bolivia have given rise to left-indigenous traditions of resistance. The country is marked by political turbulence and is even able to ‘boast’ the world record of *golpe de estados* (coup d’états) with over 150 since 1825 (Kohl & Farthing 2006). The ‘Indian question’ has been at the forefront of state-formation in colonial and post-colonial periods. For the most part, *mestizo-criollo* (mixed race or of Spanish descent) elites have attempted to acculturate indigenous and peasant populations into a homogenous model of the nation-state (Kearney & Varese 1995). As a result, the lives of indigenous peoples were ‘shaped by their subordinate position as colonized subjects’ during Spanish imperial rule and ‘as subordinated ethnic groups within the postcolonial nation-states dominated by non-*indígenas*’ after independence (Kearney & Varese 1995: 208). Yet, ethnic resistance has periodically broken out and indigenous movements have emerged as important social actors capable of forcing political change. The 2009 Constitution recognises 36 different ethnic communities of which the Quechua and Aymara peoples of the Andean Altiplano (high plain) make up the largest groups, representing 31 and 25 percent of the population respectively (Albó 2008a). Conversely, the population density of indigenous peoples in the *tierras bajas* (lowlands) is low with just four percent in 34 different ethnic nations (García Linera 2012). Bolivia is widely described as an Andean nation despite the fact that 70 percent of its territory lies in the lowland Amazonian region (Jones 1984) (Map 3).

Bolivia is economically divided and has one of the most unequal income distributions in Latin America (Gasparini et al 2009). The majority of economic wealth is based in the agricultural and mining areas of the Media Luna whereas the highest rates of poverty exist in the Altiplano where small-scale subsistence farming remains the norm (Klein 2011). This is echoed in large inequities in land distribution with 66 percent of agricultural land owned by just 0.6 percent of landholders (Weisbrot & Sandoval 2008). Significantly, poverty and unequal land distribution have disproportionately affected indigenous populations. Economic exports increasingly rely on hydrocarbon revenues, resulting in further disparities. The majority of natural gas, around 60 percent of overall production, lies within the department of Tarija with the greatest share of these revenues ending up in the Media Luna (Weisbrot & Sandoval 2008). Furthermore, the exploitation and exploration of natural gas has deeply impacted some indigenous communities, especially

those located in the departments of Santa Cruz and Tarija that form part of the Chaco (Perreault 2008a). Given the demographic diversity and economic disparities in Bolivia it is unsurprising that there are enduring tensions over the management of natural resources and land. These historical grievances have been articulated through demands for national patrimony over natural resources, land redistribution and greater self-determination over decision-making powers.

Map 3. Topographic Map of Bolivia



Source: Adapted from Google Maps 2013.

This chapter examines the oral narratives and/or written accounts of oppression and resistance that are recollected, and in part reimagined, in the ‘long memory’ of ethnic struggles. Bolivian anthropologist and Jesuit priest, Xavier Albó, has described this as a ‘collective subconscious’ (2008a: 21). Additionally, Hylton and Thomson argue that Bolivia’s movements have borrowed ‘a set of signs and scripts’ from past struggles in order to understand ‘their world, their actions and their aims’ (2007: 6). In the following sections I discuss five epochs of Bolivian history: Spanish colonialism and the struggle for

independence; the consolidation of the Republic between 1825 and 1952; the 1952 national revolution; military dictatorships between 1964 and 1982; and the reign of neoliberal hegemony and counterhegemonic resistance between 1982 and 2005.¹⁹

2.1 Spanish Colonialism and the Struggle for Independence

In 1532 the Spanish colonised the region known as Upper Peru. Spanish colonialism instigated a shift towards private capital, integration into the world market and imperial structures of power (Klein 1992). The rich mineral reserves found in Potosí soon established it as the largest city of the viceroyalty of Peru (Alexander 2005). From 1573 labour shortages resulted in the introduction of the forced *mita* system where indigenous peoples were drafted into working the gold and silver mines (Cole 1985). In addition, great swaths of indigenous lands were granted to individual conquistadors (Alexander 2005). Yet, the colonial powers largely preserved indigenous ways of life including the *ayllu*, a communal form of socio-political organisational structure present in the highlands (Choque & Mamani 2001; Klein 2011). Indirect rule was thus maintained by what Platt (1982) refers to as a ‘colonial pact’ where Andean indigenous communities agreed to pay tributes and serve the Spanish Crown in return for retaining their ancestral lands. This relationship also meant that Andean indigenous peoples were able to preserve a certain amount of autonomy from the colonial state.

Tensions emerged in the 1770s, however, as a result of reforms prepared in Spain that prompted a number of unpopular changes, including an increase in taxation. Therefore, the late eighteenth century became a period of insurrection in which indigenous and peasant

¹⁹ The official and widely popularised chronicles of Bolivia would, however, be more accurately referred to as the history of the Andean region. Indeed, Jones points out that ‘[t]he Oriente has rarely figured more than marginally and fleetingly in the mainstream of national history’ (1984: 63). Historians and political scientists make this evident in statements about Bolivia. For example Robert Alexander, the prominent American political activist and academic, has written extensively on Latin American trade union movements and notes of Bolivia that ‘[t]o this day, the Indians, who make up the majority of the population of Bolivia, are divided between the Quechua and Aymara, the descendants of the Incas and their predecessors, respectively’ (2005: 5). He consequently ignores the 34 ethnic nations present in the Amazonian regions. To some extent, the absence of the lowland indigenous peoples in scholarly accounts of left-indigenous politics reflects the predominance of class-based analytical frameworks. Yet, lowland indigenous communities rarely self-identify in terms of class as they have a limited history of organised labour and have maintained a substantial level of independence from the bureaucracy of the state and capitalist modes of production. Healy notes that neither the Incas nor the European invasions effectively colonised the Bolivian lowlands and that ‘there has been little public recognition, interest in, or knowledge about the customary rights and practices of forest-dwelling ethnic groups’ (2001: 7). Even in the work of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, the renowned Aymara sociologist, historian and subaltern theorist, she admits that a limit to her work is the lack of analytical focus on the lowlands as ‘[s]tudies on the eastern region of Bolivia are few and far between, and my own knowledge of this vast and complex region is limited’ (1987: 5-6). Fabricant thus concludes that the ‘Andeanization of Bolivia has left a lasting mark on internal cultural politics and academic frameworks and continues to influence policy-making’ (2012: 22).

rebellions became increasingly anti-colonial (Thomson 2002). Of particular note were the rebellions led by the Aymara Túpac Katari who laid siege on La Paz, Bolivia's contemporary capital, in 1781 alongside his wife Bartolina Sisa and over one hundred thousand rebels (Albó 1987; Klein 2011). After 184 days of the siege Túpac Katari was caught and executed. The rebellion was a departure from more localised struggles and fought for a specific objective; autonomy free from the strictures of Spanish rule (Klein 2011). Thomson argues that unlike other liberation struggles in the region, this 'was a movement against colonial rule and for self-determination in which *native American* political subjects made up the fighting corpus, held positions of leadership, and defined the terms of struggle' (2002: 8; original emphasis). The legacy of this insurgency is mobilised in the collective memory of recent struggles centred on indigenous nationalism, anti-colonialism and anti-neoliberalism. Although the indigenous rebellions were for the most part quashed, Upper Peru fostered the first explicit liberation movement in Latin America. In 1825, after a sixteen-year struggle, the region gained independence from Spain and was named Bolivia after the regional revolutionary Simon Bolívar (Dangl 2007).

2.2 The Consolidation of the Republic: 1825 to 1952

Independence, however, did not result in a return to pre-colonial times since it was the *criollo* population that led the independence movement making it 'a distinctly upper-class and largely non-Indian affair' (Klein 2011: 78). Although Bolívar eliminated the *mita* system of forced labour, Healy argues that 'Bolívar himself perceived nothing of value in the highland indigenous communities and created strategies to undermine them' (2001: 8). Instead, independence brought about the attempted consolidation of a nation-state model based on Western ideals of liberal representative democracy and citizenship rights. However, voting was restricted to a 'limited-participation political system' representing an electoral body of just 30,000 to 40,000 people in 1900 (Klein 1992: 154). In this sense, the majority peasant and indigenous populations remained disenfranchised.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the loss of the forced labour system and the inheritance of an economy in ruins resulted in the state imposing a tribute tax on indigenous communities to raise central funds. This had the somewhat paradoxical effect of committing the government to protecting these communities from external threats (Klein 1992). Between 1880 and 1932, the tin and silver industries boomed and the importance of the tribute tax declined, however (Platt 1982). Consequently, the financial incentive to maintain communally held indigenous lands was diminished and the government brought in a confiscation decree that 'declared that all community properties were really state-owned

lands and that Indians residing on them were now required to purchase individual land titles' (Klein 2011: 136). Healy contends that:

Denouncing communities and ayllus as backward and obsolete institutions became a convenient way of justifying the transformation of corporate indigenous landholdings under traditional authority structures into private, individually owned landed estates (2001: 8)

This feudal system of large landholdings owned by *mestizo-criollo* elites resulted in an increase in indebted labour, which brought poverty and poor living conditions to indigenous populations (Klein 2011).

The transition to an open economy based on resource extraction meant that 'free trade' became 'a major issue of contention' during the nineteenth century (Alexander 2005: 6). For instance, in 1899 Zarate Willka, an officer in the Bolivian army, led one of the largest indigenous rebellions in the Republican era. Though the indigenous forces were decimated, the open insurgency against the *mestizo-criollo* class remains prevalent in the narratives of contemporary movements (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). Moreover, between 1899 and 1931 the Bolivian labour movement, dominated by the miners, developed a stronger political ideology based on socialism, Marxism and anarcho-syndicalism (Smale 2010). This was influenced by worker repression, such as at the Massacre of Uncía in 1923 when the military fired machine guns into a crowd of striking miners.

This period was also significant as a number of wars resulted in the loss of over half of Bolivia's territory to neighbouring countries. Klein argues that the 'year 1880 marked a major turning point in Bolivian history' (2011: 144). This was the year that Bolivia was defeated by Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883) resulting in the loss of its access to the sea, a contentious issue today (Crabtree 2005). In addition, territory was lost to Brazil in the War of Acre (1899-1903) in a dispute over land important for the production of rubber (Alexander 2005; Crabtree 2005). The most significant conflict, in terms of initiating rebellious insurgency, was the Chaco War (1932-1935) that 'marked a new phase in the history of Bolivia, particularly in the history of its labor movement' (Alexander 2005: 9). The war resulted in the death of an estimated 25 percent of Bolivian soldiers (approximately sixty-five thousand people²⁰) and the loss of large swathes of the Chaco to Paraguay (Klein 2011: 182). For many of the soldiers the war provided the first contact experiences between the highland peasantry and the urban middle-class who served as

²⁰ Dunkerley (1984) puts this figure at 50,000 deaths.

non-commissioned officers. The peasant rank-and-file soldiers engaged with national politics and the officers learnt of the struggles of their rural peasant neighbours and of the labour movements in the mines. As a result, a vibrant nationalism emerged that questioned the legitimacy of the government and its allegiances to the elite powers of the socioeconomic ruling class (Alexander 2005; Dunkerley 1984). This post-war popular sentiment 'combined to erode liberal hegemony and its broader sense of an order of things, providing the cultural matrix within which new nationalist and radical political ideas took shape' (Dunkerley 1984: 28). As such, Alexander argues that 'reactions to the war were to be one important part of the background to the national revolution that was to begin in April 1952' (2005: 33). Furthermore, although the causes of the Chaco War are disputed, it was considered to be a resource conflict between the Standard Oil Company and Royal Dutch Shell 'in which Bolivia and Paraguay were used as pawns' (Malloy 1970: 90). This remains a widespread belief and has served to foster a robust nationalist identity based on the patrimony of natural resources unhindered by foreign interests. In 1937, Standard Oil was accused of illegal transportations of petroleum to Argentina and was consequently nationalised, which formed the Bolivian State Petroleum Company YPF (Philip 1989).

Indigenous soldiers came back from the Chaco War with a greater awareness of the nation and their rights as citizens (Dandler & Torrico 1987; Gotkowitz 2007). As a result, post-war indigenous politics 'became less classic caste wars and more social protest movements in which pan-Indian rights were the prime issue' (Klein 2011: 185). To some degree, these movements also began to form connections with the political left (Grandin 2004). For instance, in 1945 the first highland Indian Congress was held in La Paz, which provided a space for the development of inter-community ties and made the government more aware of the peasant issue (Alexander 2005). Two years later peasant rebellions in Ayopaya, Cochabamba, staged the way for agrarian land redistribution (Dandler & Torrico 1987; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). Gotkowitz thus calls the insurgences of the late 1940s the 'revolution before the revolution' (2007: 286).

In addition, the Chaco War fostered support for an emerging radical left influenced by Marxist thought that sought to overturn the current system and the prevailing power of the tin oligarchy (Dunkerley 1984; Alexander 2005). In 1934, the Revolutionary Workers' Party (Partido Obrero Revolucionario; POR) was formed, which was shortly followed by the Party of the Revolutionary Left (Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria; PIR) in 1940 and the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario; MNR) in 1941. Although the PIR ruled left politics in the 1930s, it was the MNR that

dominated national politics in the second half of the twentieth century. During this period, the *mineros* became more ideologically focused and formed the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Trade-Union Federation of Bolivian Mineworkers; FSTMB) in 1944, stimulated by the MNR (Dunkerley 1984). During the presidency of Gualberto Villaroel (1943-1946) the government sought allegiances with the labour sectors. They were scorned by the PIR, however, and eventually joined with the MNR (Dunkerley 1984). This would be a decisive moment in Bolivian history since POR and the PIR went much further in addressing the ‘Indian question’ and on this issue the ‘MNR program was silent if not hostile, reflecting its white middle-class origins’ (Klein 1992: 213). This negation of indigenous concerns can be seen in the Thesis of Pulacayo established in 1946 by the FSTMB. This overtly Trotskyist proclamation ‘defined Bolivia as a backward capitalist country, identified the proletariat as the only truly revolutionary class, [and] called for an alliance under its leadership with peasants, artisans and the petty bourgeoisie’ (Dunkerley 1984: 17). Thus, the MNR and the *mineros* viewed the ‘Indian question’ as the need for acculturation and civilization, rather than the recognition of indigenous cosmologies within the nation-state (Malloy 1970).

On 09 April 1952 the mining sectors instigated ‘three days of intensive fighting, during which the armories were opened to the public and the miners marched on La Paz’ defeating the army (Klein 2011: 207).²¹ The national revolution was part of a trend in Latin America, starting with the Mexican revolution of 1910. This was followed by revolutions in Guatemala in 1944, Cuba in 1959, Chile in 1970, and Nicaragua in 1979. Regional momentum had significant impacts on left-indigenous politics during this period, with the revolutions in Bolivia, Cuba and Mexico playing a central role (Alexander 2005).

2.3 Post-Revolutionary Politics After 1952

The MNR regime under President Víctor Paz Estenssoro (1952-1956; 1960-1964; 1985-1989) instigated three radical reforms. First, the new constitution granted universal suffrage recognising illiterate and female voters. Thus, for the first time indigenous populations were legally recognised as citizens (Kohl & Farthing 2006). This transformation marked a substantial break from the fiercely oligarchic nature of previous governments. Second, the 1953 Agrarian Reform abolished the *latifundio* (large privately

²¹ During this period, the emergence of class based movements and pan-indigenous movements were largely restricted to the highlands. In 1846, the first national census estimated the population at 1.4 million people ‘with an additional estimated 700,000 ungoverned Indians scattered throughout the eastern lowland territories’ (Klein 1992: 122). As this time, the lowland indigenous communities had not been effectively brought under government administration. That said, lowland indigenous peoples were involved in localised struggles against natural resource extraction and systems of servitude (Jones 1984).

owned land estates) system, as well as *pongueaje* (a system of servitude to a landowner based on unpaid domestic labour). Furthermore, this land was redistributed to peasant labourers on the *latifundios* (Klein 2011). Third, the MNR nationalised the country's three largest tin mines under the new Bolivian State Mining Company COMIBOL (Alexander 2005; Crabtree 2005; Gotkowitz 2007). In 1952, the Bolivian Worker's Central (Central Obrera Boliviana; COB), Bolivia's chief trade union federation, was also formed (Crabtree 2005). At this time, the COB was part of a *co-gobierno* (co-government) with the MNR and played a fundamental role in national politics (Dunkerley 1984; Alexander 2005). Since its inception COB has been 'arguably the strongest independent labor movement in the world' (Kohl & Farthing 2009: 68). Thus, the 1952 revolution recognised many of the emancipatory demands of the post-Chaco War ideologies of the political left.

The 'Indian question', however, was not fully addressed since class based interests superceded ethnic demands. Rivera Cusicanqui states that indigenous movements were 'considered to be an obstacle to the sovereignty of the State' (1987: 93). This is evident in a speech on 11 April 1952 by Hernán Siles Zuazo (1952; 1956-1960; 1982-1985) who served briefly as acting president for six days:

We are going to work so that the Bolivian economy belongs to Bolivians and not to exploiters who live abroad. We are going to incorporate the *campesinos* into the Bolivian economy and national life so that they are no longer the objects of derision. (El Diario, quoted in Dunkerley 1984: 41)

The MNR intended to incorporate the peasantry into economic life and the nation-state and 'create an ethnically homogenous nation where all would be mestizos' (Canessa 2012b: 188). This was fostered through mass education in the colonial Spanish language and the legal prohibition of the word '*indio*' to be replaced by the word '*campesino*'. Additionally, the COB started to heavily impact on indigenous communities organising them into *sindicatos* (trade unions), rather than the pre-colonial *ayllu* system that had managed to be preserved in some parts of the Andes (Lora 1977). Fundamental to this process was the newly established Ministry of Peasant Affairs (Alexander 2005). Thus, the ideology of class supplanted ethnic demands. Hale describes this as a system of 'mestizaje' (mixing racial categories) embedded within governments of the mid to late twentieth century (2004: 16). Therefore, although the revolution marked a significant move away from colonial visions of the state, it also acted as a 'defeat of specific visions of the polity that Indian and peasant movements espoused' (Gotkowitz 2007: 287). Additionally, the MNR administration did not recover national sovereignty and instead paved the way for capitalist

development (Mayorga 1978). Eventually this model of economic development would break the post-revolutionary allegiances between the union organisations and the MNR (Dunkerley 1984). In this light, contemporary debates over the meaning of the nation, citizenship, natural resources and indigenous rights can be understood as a product of the failure of the 1952 revolution to overturn the neo-colonial state.

The 1952 revolution had a very different impact in the Amazonian tropics of Bolivia, sparking what Jones has referred to as the ‘colonization of the Oriente’ (1984: 71). The Agrarian Reform did not redistribute lands to lowland indigenous peoples instead encouraging the expansion of large-scale agricultural activity, particularly within the department of Santa Cruz (Gotkowitz 2007). Under Article 129 of the land reform decree indigenous peoples were referred to as ‘in a savage state and with a primitive organization’ (Villaroel & Barrios Ávila 1969: 41; cited in Jones 1984: 76). Indigenous communities were therefore placed under the protection of the state and not given full-fledged citizen status (Crabtree 2005). Although the law was later changed, the view that the Oriente (eastern lowlands) was *tierras baldías* (public or vacant lands) served to awaken agriculturalists and ranchers to the opportunity of obtaining land titles from the newly formed National Agrarian Reform Service, something that the indigenous did not have the resources to do (Jones 1984). Moreover, newly constructed roads from La Paz to the lowland city of Trinidad and from there to Santa Cruz resulted in the colonisation of the Amazonian region, which became a new frontier for development and expansion (Lehm Ardaya 1999). As a result, ethnic nations suffered from an onslaught of large-scale land acquisitions. Yet, communities did not undergo the same extent of peasantisation or mestizaje as in the highlands. For this reason, the term ‘*campesino*’ is more often reserved to highland indigenous peoples and the lowland indigenous are still referred to by the derogatory term ‘*indio*’ that denotes a backward and savage state of being.

In 1956-57 Bolivia found itself in a severe economic crisis that forced President Paz to turn to the US for aid. President Eisenhower responded with \$9 million for the relief of famine and for essential goods (Dunkerley 1984). Resultantly, by 1958 over a third of Bolivia’s national budget came from the US whose financial institutions began to have an important influence over domestic economic policies. For instance, the IMF-backed Stabilisation Plan of 1956 consisted of austerity measures, a unitary exchange rate, deregulating foreign trade and a reduction in the COMIBOL workforce. In addition, the Triangular Plan of 1961 restructured the tin-mining industry by ending workers’ control over operations, firing employees and reducing wages (Mayorga 1978). The MNR tried and failed to control the

labour movement as a result of US pressure, ultimately resorting to the restoration of the military (Dunkerley 1984; Alexander 2005). The decisions made as a result of US intervention culminated in a military coup in 1964 (see Siekmeier 2011).

2.4 Military Dictatorships: 1964 to 1982

The military coup d'état brought General René Barrientos Ortuño (1964-1965; 1965-1966; 1966-1969) into power and his rule was followed by a series of dictatorships. This development echoed across the Latin American continent in countries including Argentina (1962), Guatemala (1963), Brazil (1964) and Chile (1973) (Grandin 2004: 10). Fearing the potential threat of mass politics in their Cold War foreign policies, the US intervened in Latin America through clandestine CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) operations that targeted nationalist governments. Although these interventions occurred in the name of democracy, Grandin (2004) contends that the military regimes were indispensable in paving the way for a new neoliberal era and for securing the economic interests of the US. Yet, the early Bolivian military regimes managed to gain semi-populist support from peasant populations through promises to continue land redistribution (Klein 1992). President Barrientos spoke Quechua and gained significant popular support in the Andean countryside by presenting gifts and official roles to peasants, as well as arming them with rifles. This became the Pacto Militar-Campesino (Military-Peasant Pact) of 1966-1979 (Albó 1987). This period saw the increased liberalisation of the economy, the encouragement of foreign investment, reduction in the real wages of state miners and the violent repression of labour union rebellions (Alexander 2005; Dunkerley 1984; Klein 1992). Mayorga argues that the 'military regime imposed an open dictatorship against the working class and to that end dissolved the COB, prohibited leftist trade unions and parties, outlawed strikes and implemented a military occupation of the mines' (1978: 105).

Campesino sectors began to resent the paternalistic style of state-peasant relations made by Barrientos and opposition emerged from various sources. In the 1970s, the most significant of these new movements were the Kataristas in the department of La Paz that were named after the eighteenth-century rebel leader Túpac Katari. This group of Aymara nationalists were aggrieved by the continuance of peasant marginalisation in the state despite the hopes of the 1952 revolution and the Military-Peasant Pact (see Canessa 2000). The Kataristas postulated a number of ethnic demands that gave prime importance to the necessity of equal treatment of peasants by the state and the recognition of indigenous peoples in the country (Klein 1992; Ticona Alejo 2003). The current Vice-President Álvaro García Linera was a member of this movement and has subsequently argued that '[t]he main

contribution of this period was the reinvention of *indianitud* (Indianess), but not as stigma, but as a subject of emancipation, as a historical design, as a political project' (2008: 51; author's translation). The Tiwanaku Manifesto, a founding statement issued in 1973, outlined a number of core demands including peasant autonomy and self-determination in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the country. The document also spoke of the need to renovate the labour movement to incorporate ethnic demands since the union structure was beginning to be conceived as externally imposed (Postero 2004; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987). In many ways, *katarismo* challenged the prevailing coloniality of power and 'represents an attempt to produce a meaningful indigenous alternative to the Western model of modernity' (Canessa 2000: 121). Fundamentally, this highland ethnic resurgence marked a shift towards the re-signification of the 'indigenous' label.

The failure of class politics to change peasant-indigenous relations with the state, alongside the emergence of the cultural politics of Andean nationalism brought about a marked shift in Bolivian politics. Over the next few years *katarismo* would lead to an 'ethnicisation' of labour unions politics (Canessa 2006). Fundamentally, movements began to reject the class term '*campesino*' in favour of '*pueblos indígenas*' (indigenous peoples) or '*pueblos originarios*' (original or native peoples) (Dunkerley 1984). Whilst indigenous politics continued to seek economic and land redistribution, it also sought the recognition of indigenous world-visions and alternative political and organisational structures. At this time, decolonial ideologies supplanted Marxism as the language of contention for some factions of left-indigenous organisation. In 1979 the Kataristas would influence the decision at the Fifth Congress of the COB to establish the Trade-Union Confederation of Bolivian Peasant Workers (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia; CSUTCB) (Albó 1987; García Linera et al 2004). A year later the Bartolina Sisa²² was founded as a female branch of the CSUTCB named after the wife of Túpac Katari. The CSUTCB mobilised the theory of analysing reality with two eyes: 'as *campesinos*, together with all the exploited classes, and as Aymaras, Quechuas etc., together with all the oppressed nations of the country' (Albó 2008b: 242; author's translation). Andean nationalism would therefore have an important impact on the ideologies of contemporary indigenous movements that call for the liberation of the nation-state from the Eurocentric rationality of modernity, alongside demands for the re-foundation of the nation-state based on the recognition of plurality and difference.

²² The full name is the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia (Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa").

2.5 Neoliberal Hegemony & Counterhegemonic Resistance: 1982 to 2005

In 1982 popular pressure through a series of nonviolent actions forced the military regime to step down marking the restoration of a democratic political system. However, by 1985 the country faced severe hyperinflation forcing President Paz to instigate economic reforms as a result of structural adjustment programmes encouraged by the IMF and the World Bank. Echoing a trend across economically developing countries, loans were granted on the condition of reducing the economic role of national governments and opening markets for international capital (Peet 2003; Veltmeyer et al 1997). These policies came together under the umbrella of ‘neoliberalism’ described by David Harvey as:

[a] theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (2005: 2)²³

Under the New Economic Policy (Nueva Política Económica; NEP) neoliberal reforms included ‘closing state mines, reducing social spending, floating the currency against the U.S. dollar, privatizing state-owned enterprises, opening the country to direct foreign investment, and ending protectionist and import substitution policies’ (Kohl & Farthing 2011: 181). The national electricity, telecommunications, air-flight, railway and oil companies were consequently sold to private corporations (Crabtree 2005). Although the reforms were hailed a success in Washington DC, privatisation led to the stripping of assets and large-scale labour cuts. To illustrate, between 1985 and 1987 the state mining company COMIBOL reduced its employees from 30,000 to 7,000 (Klein 1992). As such, ‘Bolivia gained very little in terms of either jobs or economic growth’ (Kohl & Farthing 2009: 67). These changes also had the critical effect of breaking the power of the COB and class-based movements, which followed a more general trend across Latin America and worldwide as neoliberalism impacted on divisions of labour, the provision of welfare and social relations (see Alexander 2005; Harvey 2006b; Kay 1993).

In the early 1990s, class politics were further supplanted by an emerging politics of ethnicity or what Albó has described as ‘*el retorno del indio*’ (the return of the Indian) (1991: 299). This ethnicisation of political activity was a result – in part – of the growing language of indigeneity at the international level (see Brysk 2000; Postero & Zamosc

²³ Though it should be noted that Harvey (2005) observes that neoliberalism is a flexible toolkit for justifying unequal class relations and not a purist theory that guides the individual policies of nation-states.

2004a; Van Cott 2005; Yashar 2005). Crucially, the 1989 ILO Convention No. 169 moved away from assimilation policies towards a model of indigenous self-determination. ‘Recognising the aspirations of these peoples’ the ILO explains, is integral ‘to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions’ (1989b; n. pag.). Indigenous recognition was also bolstered by the ‘500 Years of Resistance’ (Anti-Quincentary) Campaign in opposition to the celebratory rhetoric of the 1992 anniversary of the ‘discovery of the Americas’ (Brysk 1996; Goodale 2006; Hill 2009; Meisch 1992). Ethnic struggles increasingly called for the decolonisation of the nation-state through the re-constitution of Bolivia under plurinationalism (Brysk 2000; Warren & Jackson 2003).

National politics were also shaped by the establishment of the first pan-indigenous organisation of the eastern lowlands in 1982; CIDOB. Canessa argues that despite the history of greater political organisation in the highlands ‘[i]t was nevertheless the lowlands, where indigenous people were much more marginalised, much more dispersed and much more heterogeneous, that produced the most dramatic and powerful example of indigenous mobilisation in the 1990s’ (2006: 246). This development followed a period of political organising in the late 1970s aided by several NGOs (see Hirsch 1999; Lehm Ardaya 1999; Yashar 2005; Postero 2007b). The intervention provided the resources to create trans-local connections in order to pursue the legal protection of indigenous territories, as well as providing the financial means for lowland leaders to attend international indigenous rights meetings (Healy 2001; Postero 2004; 2007b; Yashar 2005). Within these spaces an agenda was formed that sought to reclaim the term ‘*indígena*’ and instil it with a new sense of pride. NGOs pushed the indigenous identity framework ‘as a way of constructing a new identity, to support modern political and developmental activism and to rally dispersed ethnic minorities toward a common cause’ that was distinct from the dominant highland movements based on *campesino* and *originario* identifications (Healy 2001: 79). Jones suggests that until this point, the indigenous peoples of the lowlands had ‘played only a marginal role in matters of policy’ (1984: 64).

As discussed in chapter I, the supra-local agenda of CIDOB was – and remains – centred on the concept of ‘*territorio indígena*’ (indigenous territory) (Postero 2007b). Escobar suggests that the concept points to the existence of postliberal social orders ‘that go beyond the foundational liberal notions of the individual, private property, and representative democracy’ since it connotes a collective rather than individual unit of decision-making, property ownership and resource management (2012: xxviii). Fundamentally, the term also

implies the right to autonomous self-governance, the recognition of alternative world-visions and self-determination over natural resources located in indigenous territories (Healy 2001). Peaceful protest marches have been the most pervasive political tool to achieve these objectives (Postero 2004). In particular, the lowland indigenous movement gained significant visibility through the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity that resulted in the first legal recognition of the concept of 'indigenous territories' by the Bolivian government (Albó 2002). Yashar argues that the marchers were '[c]hallenging the idea that there were no Indians in the Amazon or, at best, that those living in the Amazon were not savages and uncivilized' (2005: 204). Since 1990, there has been a further eight marches (see Table 1). Fundamentally, the 2002 March for the Constituent Assembly, Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources was the first time that an indigenous mobilisation had demanded a reform of the political constitution to recognise the multiethnic and pluricultural character of the nation-state (Chávez & Mokrani 2007).

Table 1. A Summary of the Demands and Achievements of the Nine Historic Indigenous Marches of Lowland Bolivia

March	Year	Title	Route	Objective	Achievements ²⁴
First	1990	For Territory and Dignity	Trinidad, Beni to La Paz	State recognition of indigenous peoples and the right to indigenous territory.	The creation of four indigenous territories, including the TIPNIS. Steps were taken to recognise the multicultural nature of the country.
Second	1996	For Territory, Land, Development and Political Participation of Indigenous Peoples	Samaipata, Santa Cruz to La Paz	The legal recognition of all lowland indigenous territories. The removal of the historic social, economic and political exclusion of indigenous peoples.	The legal recognition and certification of indigenous collective territories (TCOs), through the Ley INRA.
Third	2000	For Land, Territory and Natural Resources	Montero, Santa Cruz to La Paz	The legal recognition of decision-making powers over natural resources existent within indigenous territories. To accelerate the titling of indigenous territories.	Progress was achieved in the recognition of related rights, including the modification of Ley INRA and the official recognition of 33 lowland ethnic languages.
Fourth	2002	For Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources	Santa Cruz de la Sierra to La Paz	The re-foundation of the mono-cultural state as a 'plurinational' state through a Constituent Assembly.	A political commitment to a Constituent Assembly.
Fifth	2006	For the Communitarian Renewal of Agrarian Reform	Santa Cruz de la Sierra to La Paz	The completion of the land-titling process; changes to the Ley INRA, redistribution of public lands to indigenous- <i>campesinos</i> without land or insufficient land.	The Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria de la Reforma Agraria (Law for the Communitarian Renewal of Agrarian Reform) that redistributes expropriated lands to indigenous peoples.
Sixth	2007	For an Indigenous Assembly and the Constituent Assembly	Santa Cruz de la Sierra to Sucre,	A plurinational state, participation of indigenous peoples in all levels of government, recognition of indigenous autonomy, the collective benefit of natural	These demands were incorporated in the new Constitution, except with regard to the demand for the direct representation of indigenous peoples

²⁴ The aforementioned achievements are those signed with the government at the time, but do not necessarily represent materialised achievements in practice.

			Chquisaca	resources located in indigenous territories and direct representation of indigenous peoples within the legislature.	within the legislature.
Seventh	2010	For Territory, Autonomy and the Defence of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Trinidad, Beni to La Paz	Respect of rights in the ILO 169 Convention, such as the right to consultation, the right to autonomy over economic and natural resources and a mechanism to redistribute seats in the Plurinational Assembly.	The Ley Marco de Autonomías (Framework Law of Autonomy) was approved but few definitive agreements were made with the government.
Eighth*	2011	For the Defence of the TIPNIS, Territory, Life, Dignity and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Trinidad, Beni to La Paz	The cancellation of section II of the Villa Tunari – San Ignacio de Moxos road through the TIPNIS. A platform of 16 demands.	Cancellation of the road project through Ley Corta (Short Law) No. 180 and agreements with the government on the 16 demands. (However, Ley No. 222 later rescinded the original law and opened the possibility of the road project).
Ninth*	2012	For the Defence of Life and Dignity, Indigenous Territories, Natural Resources, Biodiversity, the Environment, Protected Areas, Compliance with the Constitution and Respect for Democracy	Trinidad, Beni to La Paz	Nine demands that included the full enforcement of Ley No. 180, the recognition of indigenous peoples and environmental rights.	The government did not meet the marchers upon arrival in La Paz. However, important alliances have been made with CONAMAQ and urban movements on the political left.

Source: Adapted from CIDOB (2012a).

* For full outlines of the demands of the Eighth and Ninth Indigenous Marches see Table 2 in chapter VI.

The ethnicisation of Latin American regional politics also instigated a period of ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’ during the Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993-1997; 2002-2003) presidential period (Postero 2007b, 2010b). ‘Roll-back’ neoliberalism began a dual process that included the cultural recognition of indigenous populations and the decentralisation of state responsibilities (Kohl 2003a, 2003b). The 1993 Plan For All (Plan de Todos) established a second generation of neoliberal reform measures aimed at expanding citizenship to include indigenous peoples and counterbalancing the negative impacts of the structural adjustment programme (Haarstad & Anderson 2009; Kohl 2003a). At this time, traditional parties needed ‘to recognize cultural diversity and court the indigenous vote’ (Van Cott 2000b: 168). This can be seen in President Sánchez de Lozada’s decision to invite Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, an Aymara leader of the Kataristas, to be Vice-President.²⁵ In 1994, indigenous rights were further bolstered through a reform of the 1967 constitution to recognise Bolivia as ‘multiethnic and pluricultural’ (Albro 2010a; Van Cott 2000a; Sieder 2002). This mirrored constitutional reforms in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru that ‘elevated a struggle for particular rights to the level of a discussion on the meaning of democracy and the nature of the state’ (Van Cott 2000a: 2).

Additionally, the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (Ley de Participación Popular; LPP) saw state powers devolved to 311 municipalities that now controlled 20 percent of the national budget (Kohl 2003b). The Ley also meant that almost two-thirds of 1,624 municipal mayors and councilmen elected to office were peasant or indigenous peoples (Klein 2011: 258). As well as providing greater autonomy to municipal institutions, these changes provided a means of indigenous political representation through Grassroots Territorial Organisations (Organizaciones Territoriales de Base) and a degree of indigenous political autonomy under ‘*usos y costumbres*’ (customary law) (Albro 2010b; Kohl 2002; Regalsky 2010). In 1994, the Ley de Reforma Educativa (Law of Educational Reform) introduced a bilingual and intercultural curriculum (Hornberger 2000). Later, in 1996, the Ley INRA granted legal TCO titles to communally owned indigenous territories (Postero 2007b). The government enacted this law after political pressure by CIDOB, CSUTCB, Bartolina Sisa and CSCIB (Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia; Confederation of Unions of Intercultural Communities of

²⁵ However, the decision of Cárdenas to enter formal state politics caused a permanent division in the Kataristas. One group, led by Cárdenas tried their hand at producing reforms from within the government. Another group, led by Felipe Quispe was much more radical and pushed for a separatist Aymara nation. This latter group formed the Túpac Katari Guerrilla Army (Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari), a guerilla group that the current Vice-President García Linera was part of (Postero 2010a). His involvement in guerilla attacks led to his imprisonment for five years.

Bolivia) in the 1996 March for Territory, Land, Development and Political Participation of Indigenous Peoples (García Linera et al 2004; Yashar 2005) (Table 1).

These demands were reiterated by CONAMAQ, an organisation founded in 1997. This union of highland groups represents the territorial claims of the indigenous peoples of La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Cochabamba and Chuquisaca. It was established to gain land titles for traditional *ayllu* communities based on collective kinship and territorial affiliations and further state recognition of indigenous peoples (García Linera et al 2004; Kohl & Farthing 2011; Orta 2001). In this respect, CONAMAQ emulated the territorial demands of CIDOB and the two organisations even shared office space between 1997 and 1999 (Andolina et al 2005). Again, NGOs have supported this process and positioned liberal forms of individualised citizenship as an affront to the collective bodies of indigenous communities, such as the *ayllu* (Rivera Cusicanqui 1990). Most notably, the Taller de Historia Oral Andina (Andean Oral History Workshop) has encompassed a ‘methodology of decolonization based on revisionist Andean historiography, territorial demands, and collective political action’ (Stephenson 2002: 99). Fundamentally, CONAMAQ has articulated an ideology critical of the union structures and class discourse of other organisations, such as the CSUTCB (García Linera et al 2004). As a result of the symbolic capital of indigenous territorial claims at the international level, Albro contends that CONAMAQ ‘has begun to supplant the CSUTCB as the public and international face of Bolivia’s indigenous movements’ (2006a: 400). CSUTCB has responded to these developments by making greater efforts to ‘Indianize’ their discourse (Lucero 2006: 39).

Concurrently, the *cocalero* movement began to alter the direction of Bolivian politics. By the late 1990s, there were roughly 300,000 highland migrants in the Chapare adjacent to the TIPNIS (Van Cott 2003). During the second presidential period of Hugo Banzer (1997-2001) the US-financed ‘war on drugs’ and the ‘Zero Coca’ eradication policy in Bolivia resulted in the militarisation of the area and the violent repression of local struggles. Nevertheless, coca leaf producers became a formidable political force due to their upward economic mobility, traditions of strong unionism and ability to build allegiances with other sectors (Healy 1985, 1988, 1991). As such, by 1992 the *cocalero* movement had seized control of the CSUTCB and by 1995 had founded a political party, named the Assembly for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos; ASP) (Stefanoni 2004; Van Cott 2003). Disputes between Evo Morales and the President Alejo Véliz provoked the division of the ASP and the creation of the Political Instrument for the

Sovereignty of the Peoples (Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos: IPSP) led by Morales (Stefanoni 2004). Problems with their registration in the 1997 congressional elections meant that they adopted the legal registration of a defunct leftist party named the Movimiento al Socialismo (Van Cott 2003). Key to the mobilisation of support for the *cocalero* movement was the promotion of the coca leaf as a sacred component of Aymara and Quechua cultural heritage (Albro 2010b; Crabtree 2005). Thus, the *cocalero* movement utilised the indigenous rights framework to gain support for their struggles (Canessa 2007a). The US war on drugs also shaped the ideologies and grievances of the *cocalero* movement (Crabtree 2005; Dangl 2007; García Linera et al 2004; Kohl 2006). Consequently, Dangl has stated that '[f]or many Bolivians, the coca leaf is a symbol of resistance against direct intervention from Washington' (2007: 35).

At the turn of the century, struggles by peasant, indigenous and *cocalero* movements in resistance to neoliberal hegemony and private interests escalated (Crabtree 2005; Dangl 2007; Kohl & Farthing 2006). Firstly, from late 1999 to early 2000 the 'Water War' in Cochabamba erupted when, in compliance with the IMF and World Bank's protocol for development loans, the state owned water company SEMAPA (Servicio Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado; Municipal Service of Drinking Water and Sewerage) became privatised (see Albro 2005b; Assies 2003; Crespo 2003; Laurie 2005; Olivera 2004; Perreault 2006; Shultz 2003). The water supply was sold to International Water, a subsidiary of Bechtel (a US company), which formed the company Aguas de Tunari. The privatisation was pushed through without public consultation and subsequently there was a dramatic water rate increase of up to 300 percent (Crabtree 2005). In addition, Water Law 2029 set up charges for communal water systems used in many rural and poor urban areas (Dangl 2007). These developments caused widespread public outrage, which led to the formation of the Coalition in Defence of Water and Life (Coordinadora para la Defensa del Agua y de la Vida) that mobilised a series of protests, marches and blockades in Cochabamba. Furthermore, the *cocalero* movement and the CSUTCB instigated marches and blockades in other regions of the country (Albro 2005b; Dangl 2007; García Linera et al 2004). On several occasions the police met the protestors with rubber bullets, tear gas and physical restraints. On 08 April 2000 a teenager, Victor Daza, was shot and killed by a sniper (Dangl 2007). On 11 April continued pressure by protestors led to the cancellation of the contract with Aguas de Tunari and the resignation of President Hugo Banzer. The struggles mobilised the language of indigenous rights to gain legitimacy and support amongst the wider Bolivian population, particularly through the concept of *usos y*

costumbres (Albro 2005b; Perreault 2008b). The Water War became a turning point and a rallying cry for national resource sovereignty free from the strictures of foreign capital and interference (Albro 2005a, 2005b; Spronk 2007; Spronk & Crespo 2008). Additionally, social movements recognised their power to intercede against foreign companies and force the resignation of government leaders (García Linera et al 2004).

During this period, indigeneity was emerging as a key concept in the language of national politics. Nearly two-thirds of the population identified as indigenous in the 2001 census (INE/UMPA 2003: 157). This figure demonstrates that indigenous identities were being adopted by urban and *mestizo* citizens. In the 2002 general elections, Evo Morales ran for presidency under the MAS and Felipe Quispe under the MIP (Pachakuti Indigenous Movement; Movimiento Indígena Pachakutik). The indigenous-movement-based political parties combined to capture 27 percent of the vote (Kohl 2006; Van Cott 2003). Fundamentally, both parties ‘proposed a change in the nature of Bolivia’s political economy with a return to state control over natural resources, a new national identity and a new role for the indigenous peoples in modern Bolivian society’ (Klein 2011: 263). The 2002 elections demonstrated a significant change in political party allegiance since a large faction of the population supported indigenous candidates. Yet, the MAS received significantly more votes than the MIP, with 20.9 and 6.1 percent, respectively. Unlike the ethno-nationalist ideologies of the MIP, the near electoral success of the MAS relied on its ability to create cross-sector alliances (Albro 2006b). Webber argues that later discourse by the party moved ‘away from its radical past in an effort to present a more moderate face to the urban middle class’ in order to win the 2005 general elections (2009: 250).

In February 2003 protests broke out in La Paz instigated by Bolivia’s police force, students and labour organisations in response to the government’s announcement of a flat income tax of 12.5 percent as a result of IMF pressure to reduce the state deficit (Dangl 2007; Kohl 2006). On 12 February a shootout between the police and the military ensued and the violence resulted in the loss of 30 lives (Dangl 2007). Social movement activity was again successful in forcing the hand of the government as the tax proposal was cancelled. The protests lost much of the legitimacy of the Sánchez de Lozada government and created the scene for the 2003 and 2005 ‘Gas Wars’ since the dispute heightened demands for national sovereignty of public assets in the face of neoliberal impositions (see Perreault 2006; Perreault & Valdivia 2010; Spronk & Webber 2007; Webber 2012b).

In September 2003, protests again erupted over the proposed plans by an international consortium of companies to export gas to the US through a Chilean pipeline (Kohl 2006). For many Bolivians this was an unfeasible plan due to widely felt grievances with Chile over the loss of access to the sea in the War of the Pacific (Perreault 2006).²⁶ At this time, Bolivia had the second-largest natural gas reserves in Latin America but the majority of Bolivians lived in poverty. Conversely, foreign petroleum corporations enjoyed some of the highest profit margins and lowest operating costs in the world due to the Ley de Hidrocarburos (Hydrocarbons Law) established in 1996 as part of neoliberal reform measures that dismantled the state energy firm YPFB (Hylton & Thomson 2004). Again, protests were organised through a coalition, the Coalition for the Recuperation and Defence of Gas and Hydrocarbons (Coordinadora por la Recuperación y Defensa del Gas y los Hidrocarburos) that united *cocaleros*, union representatives, highland indigenous organisations and military leaders (Kohl 2006). In October 2003, the rebellions reached their climax in El Alto when urban residents of Aymara descent brought the city of La Paz to a standstill and military retaliation resulted in the deaths of over 60 people (Crabtree 2005; Hylton & Thomson 2004; Webber 2011).²⁷ This protest was predominantly organised by the Federación de Juntas Vecinales (Federation of Neighbourhood Councils; FEJUVE) and the Central Obrera Regional (Regional Workers' Central) of El Alto (Spronk & Webber 2007). During this time the 'October Agenda' was announced which included demands to nationalise the country's hydrocarbon industries, the call for a revolutionary Constituent Assembly, indigenous emancipation from internal colonialism and the redistribution of economic resources and land (Kohl 2006; Webber 2012b). On 17 October President Sánchez de Lozada fled to Miami marking his resignation and the end to an era dominated by neoliberal policy in Bolivia (Hylton & Thomson 2004). The Vice-President, Carlos Mesa, assumed the position of President. Mesa responded to popular demands by organising a national referendum in 2004 that asked voters to decide the fate of the country's gas reserves. However, the referendum did not include the question of 'nationalisation' causing protests and riots that ultimately led to his resignation on 06 June 2005 (Dangl 2007, Webber 2011).

²⁶ However, it must be noted that discussions of who might suffer the social and environmental effects of natural resource extraction were occluded from the Gas Wars (Perreault 2008c). Perreault argues that this is 'embedded in broader, historically constituted regional antagonisms between Andean and Amazonian groups' (2008c: 255).

²⁷ El Alto is an 'indigenous city' that replaced La Paz as the second largest Bolivian city in 2005 (Klein 2011). Many of its inhabitants migrated to El Alto as a result of the loss of jobs during the first wave of neoliberal reforms. However, the relocation of miners and peasants to the city did not stop organised political action (see Arbona 2007, 2008; Lazar 2008).

Fundamental to the 2000-2005 insurrectionary period was an emerging left-indigenous movement that ‘represented a *combined liberation struggle* that clarified the overlapping of racial oppression and class exploitation’ (Webber 2011: 49; original emphasis). As such, Crabtree argues that a ‘signal characteristic of all these mobilisations was the heterogeneity of their social make-up’ (2005: 24). These popular coalitions have been described by current Vice-President García Linera as the ‘multitude’ (2004: 65) and by anthropologist Albro as the ‘plural popular’ (2005a: 450). Hylton and Thomson theorise that ‘the insurrectionary “multitude” opposing oligarchic elites and their foreign, imperialist allies was formed through the political unification of normally divided subaltern actors’ (2004: 17). These assessments echo René Zavaleta Mercado’s earlier theories of ‘national-popular’ forces in Bolivian history (1983, 1986; also see Tapia 2002). During the Gas Wars these different sectors were united around the collective action frame of nationalising the gas industry that ‘focused on the injustice of poverty in a resource-rich land, the foreign control of the gas-industry by multinational corporations, and the long history in Bolivia of colonial and neocolonial abuse related to the extraction of natural resource wealth’ (Webber 2012b: 186). Indeed, the 2001 census results highlighted that only 16 percent of the population was having their basic needs met (Chaplin 2010). Furthermore, the nationalisation of mines after the 1952 revolution had left an enduring legacy for later revolutionary cycles (Hylton & Thomson 2004).

Crabtree convincingly argues that ‘an important reason for the resurgence in street protests in Bolivia [was] a lack of faith of ordinary Bolivians in the institutions of formal democracy, particularly political parties’ (2005: 9). The weakened legitimacy of the dominant political party – the MNR – to represent the interests of the Bolivian public led to the formation of El Pacto de Unidad²⁸ (Unity Pact) established in September 2004 that united a number of indigenous and peasant organisations, namely CSUTCB, Bartolina Sisa, CIDOB, CONAMAQ and MST (Movimiento Sin Tierra; Landless Peasant Movement)²⁹. The Pact was conceived of as a political instrument to push through a Constituent Assembly capable of fulfilling popular demands for a plurinational state. The coalition of various social movements and trade unions lent its support to the MAS, which

²⁸ This is a shortened name for the Asamblea Nacional de Organizaciones Indígenas, Originarias, Campesinas y de Colonizadores de Bolivia (The National Assembly of Indigenous, Original, Peasant and Coloniser Organisations of Bolivia).

²⁹ The MST formed in 2000 to consolidate struggles in the lowlands against large-scale soy producers who had been expanding their lands and displacing small-scale farmers. Members of the MST, who are originally from the highlands, have utilised memories of the Andean *ayllu* organisational structure and transported them to new agricultural communities in the eastern lowlands (see Fabricant 2010).

was identified as the only political party capable of representing the popular classes (Regalsky 2009; Tapia 2010). The Pact continued the demands of the October Agenda to recuperate national sovereignty from multinational corporations (Garcés 2011; Regalsky 2009). Furthermore, the Constituent Assembly was imagined as a space to ‘refound’ the state through popular democracy. Therefore, the coalition sought to rework the assumptions of the Westphalian state based on a dialectic tension between the state and social movements through the dispersal of power to the social body (Dangl 2010; Postero 2005; Zibechi 2010b). Despite the electoral victory of the MAS, the sectors formed an uneasy alliance around the common demand for a Constituent Assembly and tensions permeated discussions over issues of autonomy, natural resources, political representation and types of state control (Garcés 2011). As will be discussed in this thesis, these tensions came to the fore during the TIPNIS conflict.

2.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been more descriptive than analytical and has served to outline the broad antecedents to contemporary left-indigenous politics within Bolivia. This has highlighted four interrelated and recurring themes central to the long memories of struggle: the appropriation of natural resources by national elites and foreign corporations; US intervention in economic policies and military violence; the failure of different government administrations to address indigenous concerns; and the divergent histories of labour unionism and indigenous anti-colonial resistance. It can be seen that the nature of political ideologies and discourses have changed over time depending on the political opportunities available and the restrictions imposed on social movement activity. Although labour movements dominated the political scene for the majority of Bolivia’s history as a Republic, the effects of the military dictatorships in the 1960s and 70s and the onset of neoliberalism in 1985 brought class politics to its knees. This occurred just as indigenous political and cultural movements were beginning to gain momentum aided by recognitions at the international level. Bolivian indigenous movements have reinvented spatial imaginaries of the nation-state and envisioned an alternative representation of the ‘plurinational state’. The insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 marked a turning point as it laid the developments for the MAS Party to come to power in 2006. Gustafson notes that the MAS:

bridges indigenous histories and territorialities – which exert a decentralizing pressure and a discourse of plurinationalism charged with a deeply felt sentiment of popular

nationalism, tied both to visions of a strong, developmentalist state and to active control over economic production, especially Bolivia's strategic natural resources (2009b: 254-255).

As such, the MAS has embraced the long memories of struggle discussed in this chapter and adopted an expansive anti-neoliberal and pro-indigenous framework that cross-cuts class and ethnic identity ties. The fact that an indigenous person now sits in the seat of presidential power fundamentally changes the political playing field and makes articulations of indigeneity a key component in struggles over decision-making powers and territorial sovereignty.

**A MULTIPLE RELATIONALITIES APPROACH TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT
STUDIES AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY**

This chapter will provide a critical review of social movement studies literature and postcolonial theory, all the time seeking to show a ‘gap’ where geographical approaches can advance existing research on left-indigenous movements in Latin America. The research process has shaped the theoretical framework I put forward in this chapter in important ways. Before setting out to Bolivia my main research question centred on the changing conceptualisations of ‘climate justice’ in the so-called post-neoliberal state. However, the experiences and conversations afforded to me by the research encounter made me think more critically about the research questions and the theories that structure my intellectual perspective, not least because this was my first time in Bolivia (or Latin America). The research period was a perpetual process in which I began to think and engage in questions of decolonialism, indigenous territoriality, alternative *cosmovisiones* and geopolitical relations of knowledge. In particular, discussion within the left-indigenous solidarity networks in defence of the TIPNIS revolved around collective visions of decolonising the nation-state through plurinationalism.

Firstly, this chapter analyses the body of work known as social movement theory and argues that more focus needs to be given to the spatialities of contentious politics. This would require an understanding of space as relational and a recognition that multiple spatial registers coexist. I also argue that the praxis of political action and solidarity are generative in shaping new and emerging agendas, knowledges and relations of power. Secondly, this chapter analyses contemporary research on social movements in Latin America. There is limited research on the geographies of indigenous movements in Bolivia and this shapes a significant contribution of the thesis. Thirdly, this chapter will examine postcolonial theory and subaltern studies. Whilst British geography has gone some way in engaging with the subaltern studies programme in South Asia, I argue that the political commitment of writing ‘histories from below’ should be extended to Latin America. Much of the social science literature reproduces colonial epistemologies of knowledge, particularly in regard to understandings of the nation-state, territoriality, democracy and development, that negate the everyday lived experiences and practices of indigenous peoples who live in the liminal spaces of postcoloniality. Fundamentally, I contend that both bodies of literature – social movements studies and postcolonial theory – need to

acknowledge the importance of marginalised, subordinated and displaced knowledges. By attending to the voices and practices of the subaltern, it becomes clear that left-indigenous struggles not only challenge neoliberalism but the colonial legacy of ethnic – and sometimes gendered – relations of power.³⁰ Lastly, I outline a ‘multiple relationalities’ approach able to manoeuvre through a series of pervasive ‘borders’ and spatial registers within dominant social science perspectives. These include: the state-civil society dichotomy; an elite/subaltern distinction (often understood in terms of *mestizo-criollo*/indigenous in Bolivia); and the assumption that solidarity or movement building implies the coming together or unity of different and distinct sectors. By operationalising a relational understanding of the socio-spatial it becomes clear that pervasive spatial registers are contested, reiterated and reworked through the practices and discourses of contentious politics.

3.1 Traditional Perspectives in Social Movement Studies

Social movement studies is a broadly defined field that transcends the disciplines of political science, sociology, political anthropology and human geography. James McCarthy’s definition of a social movement is ‘[t]he organized efforts of multiple individuals or organizations, acting outside of formal state or economic spheres, to pursue political goals’ (2009: 695).³¹ The indigenous rights movement in Latin America has involved various forms of collective action, including demonstrations, marches, hunger strikes and legal campaigning, for example (Brysk 2000). These disparate forms of place-based political action can be said to constitute one movement because mobilisations share the political objective of seeking rights for indigenous peoples, such as the protection of land and material resources (territories, renewable or non-renewable resources, medicinal plants, sacred sites), cultural practices (performances, arts and literature) and knowledges (cultural, environmental, medicinal, agricultural or linguistic) (Hodgson 2002: 1037).³²

³⁰ In a piece in *Antipode* (Laing 2012) I have similarly argued that left-leaning scholarly analyses of Latin American social movements should not get caught up in the zeitgeist of post-neoliberal theory at the expense of recognising the on-going colonial practices of the state. However, this is not to suggest that engaging with experiences of post-neoliberalism is not important and in many cases processes of postcolonialism are intimately related to the former.

³¹ CIDOB itself is more aptly identified as a ‘social movement organisation’ described by McCarthy and Zald as ‘a complex, or formal, organization, which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or countermovement and attempts to implement these goals’ (1977: 1218). CIDOB is just one element of the larger indigenous rights movement in Latin America and internationally.

³² With the rise of global justice movements and alter-globalisation movements at the turn of this century, scholars began to question the term ‘social movement’ as evocative of political organisation as movements were not homogenised entities with fixed locations, practices or actors. Instead, scholars offered terms such as ‘movement of movements’ (Mertes 2004) and ‘network of networks’ (Melucci 1996). Within the thesis I

Indigenous rights movements are also interlinked with a variety of connected networks based on human and environmental rights and/or anti-capitalist movements. In many cases, these indigenous movements are intertwined with development organisations (such as the World Bank and other NGOs), religious institutions, union organisations and political parties. There is a broad spectrum of perspectives within social movement studies that one could draw on to study Bolivian left-indigenous politics. Within this section, I will offer a review of social movement theory in order to outline my own socio-political commitment to understanding contentious politics through subaltern voices and practices. Within North America influential models include resource mobilisation, political process theory and the frame analysis approach whereas European perspectives have privileged identity-based approaches, such as new social movement theory (Chesters & Welsh 2011).

Structural Approaches to Understanding Social Movements

Resource mobilisation approaches have gained strength since the 1970s and stress the ability of a movement and its members to acquire and use resources such as money, power, knowledge and supporters to be effective at generating social change (Jenkins 1981; McCarthy & Zald 1973, 1977, 2001; Oberschall 1973; Tilly 1978). This approach emphasises the rationality of movement actors and suggests that success depends on their ability to institutionalise and structure actions by ‘employing mobilized resources to influence other groups’ (Tilly 1978: 78). However, the approach has been widely criticised, particularly in reference to explaining the effectiveness of movements in the global South where the ability to access resources is limited (della Porta et al 2006). Indeed, the decision to take part in peasant or indigenous struggles in Latin America is often because people have few other options available to them and it is therefore a strategy of last resort (Wolford 2004).

Political process theory (also known as political opportunity structure) advances the resource mobilisation approach but supplements the theory by stressing the importance of opportunities within changing political climates (Eisinger 1973; Costain 1992; McAdam 1982; Meyer 2004; Tarrow 2011; Tilly 1995). The political process theory is richer as it places an emphasis on the effects of changing features of political regimes and institutions, including ‘patterns of access, realignments within the polity, divisions within existing

retain the language of an indigenous ‘movement’ since the lowland ethnic peoples are represented by one political organisation, CIDOB. That said, I use the language of left-indigenous solidarity ‘networks’ in reference to the looser organisational structures of the different actors and campaigns involved in the overall struggle in defence of the TIPNIS.

elites, and lessons movements learn from one another in the spread of repertoires of action' (Eschle & Stammers 2004: 336). Consequently, the approach is more able to account for the rise and fall of social movement activity and so-called 'cycles of protest' (Tarrow 2011), such as the 2000-2005 insurrectionary periods in Bolivia. It is also useful for understanding the rise of indigenous movements and their ability to shape national politics given the climate of changing citizenship regimes in Latin America and international indigenous rights legislation (see Yashar 2005). Yet, Meyer (2004) has noted that there is a great diversity of conceptualisations amongst scholars of this theory. As such, authors Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly developed their *Dynamics of Contention* book in order to clarify the approach and move away from abstract interpretations of social reality towards the identification of particular 'social processes' and 'causal mechanisms' (2001: 12-13). Thus, the authors have sought to establish a more robust theory that allows social movement researchers to 'search out recurrent causal mechanisms and regularities in their concatenation' (2001: 13).

Despite these advances and elaborations, the presence of political opportunities and access to resources cannot fully explain why some people in the same politico-economic circumstances take part in collective action whilst others do not. Theorists have thus accused these approaches of structural determinism and rationalisation (see discussions in Goodale & Jasper 2004). As such, several scholars have appealed for the recognition of the cultural and ideological dynamics embedded in collective action. This emphasis on the socio-cultural can be seen in the frame analysis approach to social movement theory developed by Snow and Benford (Benford & Snow 2000; Snow & Benford 1988, 1992; Snow et al 1986) drawing on sociologist Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974). Indeed, by the 1990s many of the concepts within this approach figured prominently in empirical studies of social movements (see Babb 1996; Capek 1993; Diani 1996). The core tenet of the argument, drawing from social constructionism, argues that movements construct ideologies and meanings to build resonance and connections with other actors. A movement's effectiveness is therefore determined by its ability to 'align' collective action frames to others using:

interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment (Snow & Benford 1992: 137).

Frame alignment includes the following four processes: frame bridging (linking two distinct frames); frame amplification (strengthening ideologies already in place); frame extension (widening ideological frames to access and mobilise more actors); and frame transformation (shifting to a more culturally resonant frame) (Snow et al 1986). Arguably, the frame analysis approach is best applied alongside political process theory in order to look at both the ideological and politico-economic aspects of social movements. For instance, Tarrow argues that there are three kinds of resources needed, on top of political opportunities, for sustained collective action: forms of contention that can access support; collective action frames that justify action; and mobilising structures linking centre to base (2011: 90).

Like political opportunity structure, frame analysis has been criticised on a number of levels for its static interpretation of contentious politics, namely: for overlooking the importance of political ideologies (Oliver & Johnston 2000); for simplifying cultural complexity to recruitment strategies (Jasper 1997); for making tautological claims in which causal relationships are implied that do not explain how frames might be transformed to fit with specific social, cultural and historical situations (Swart 1995); and for its 'inattentiveness to discourse as a collective and contested process of meaning production' and 'its [weak] capacity to analyse the contentious process of meaning production' (Steinberg 1998: 846). Therefore, even when taken together these approaches provide an inadequate framework for understanding the tensioned processes of identity formation and meaning production within social movements, as well as disregarding the importance of everyday lived realities for contentious politics. These approaches are structured by an understanding that 'politics' is something 'out there' that can be grasped, predetermined and objectified.

Geographers Andy Davies and David Featherstone have criticised some of the research on transnational collective action, particularly by prominent social movement theorist Sidney Tarrow. Tarrow, and associated authors, offer the term 'diffusion' to show how movements spread from one place to another. This involves the process of 'brokerage' defined as the 'generalization or abstraction of a core causal idea from a particular reality into a general frame that can be applied to other realities' (Tarrow 2005: 122). Vertical diffusion involves a 'scale shift' that implies a 'change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions to a different focal point, involving a new range of actors, different objects, and broadened claims' (McAdam et al 2001: 331). Davies and

Featherstone argue that Tarrow's (2005) book *The New Transnational Activism* offers a limited conceptual framework that does not allow 'an engagement with the dynamic processual constitution of political activity' (2013: 241). Instead, Featherstone argues that 'geographies of solidarities need to be seen as generative, as actively shaping political identities, rather than merely bringing together different movements around "common interests"' (2003: 405). The authors argue for a more open and generative account 'in which forms of contentious politics constitute diverse, multiple and contested geographies of connection' (Davies & Featherstone 2013: 239). By understanding collective action as relational and dynamic it becomes clear that these spaces are productive for emerging forms of political identity and for shaping the social movement. The authors also critique dominant social movement theories for being goal orientated and therefore negating emerging forms of political agency generated within social movement activity. By employing more fluid accounts of social movement practices it can be observed that identities are not predetermined and become part of what is shaped by relations across space. In section 3.4 I outline how an approach centred on the practices of 'articulation' can be useful for negotiating overly deterministic interpretations of the processes of solidarity/movement building.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement (NSM) theory attempts to explain various 'new' movements that have appeared since the 1960s and draws on cultural theorists such as Alain Touraine, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Jürgen Habermas and Alberto Melucci (Castells 1983; Cohen 1985; Habermas 1981, 1984; Melucci 1980, 1985; Mouffe 1984; Offe 1985; Touraine 1981). Although NSM is not a defined theory, approaches are generally premised on the idea that shifts towards a post-industrial economy (or postmodern world) in Western nations has transformed the nature of collective action in significant ways. Most notably, historical changes have resulted in a move away from labour and resource struggles towards movements attached to social and cultural concerns. Evers claims that the 'newness' of these struggles is that the 'transformatory potential within social movements is not political, but socio-cultural' (1985: 49). Pichardo argues that NSMs 'question the wealth oriented materialistic goals of industrial societies. They also question the structures of representative democracies that limit citizen input and participation in governance' (1997: 414). The approach is derived from a reaction to the 'deficiencies' of Marxism that had otherwise dominated European-situated understandings of politics (Epstein 1990;

Laclau & Mouffe 1985). In the contemporary historical specificity, traditional forms of collective action defined by class have been surpassed and a host of other identity positions need addressing (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality). Accordingly, examples of NSMs include urban social struggles, environmental, feminist and peace movements and campaigns for human, indigenous and gay rights (Boggs 1986). Buechler identifies six broad themes of NSMs: civil society is the arena for collective action; autonomy and self-determination overrides the search for power; socio-cultural changes are more important than accessing material resources; collective identities and group interests are fragile and transient; grievances and ideologies are socially constructed; and temporary networks often predominate over centralised organisational forms (1995: 442).

NSM theory therefore transfers the main domain of contention from the realm of production to civil society emphasising social changes in lifestyles and cultural transformations. I will briefly explore the related work of Manuel Castells, Jürgen Habermas and Alberto Melucci to illustrate this dynamic. Castells (1983) contends that class relations can no longer singularly define urban conflict as new relationships between the spheres of production and consumption in relation to the state have developed. He criticises resource mobilisation theorists for ‘immediately incorporating it [social movements] into the political process aimed fundamentally at the state’ (1983: 295). Instead, Castells reflects that urban protest movements share an anti-institutional orientation that focuses on issues of collective consumption and the defence of cultural identity. Habermas (1984) has identified two spheres within society: the ‘system’ (defined by the economy and the state); and the ‘lifeworld’ (a communicative space of socio-cultural identities, values and processes). Under this comprehension, the ‘colonisation of the lifeworld’ has given rise to new struggles to defend it and seek quality of life and democratic participation. Melucci (1980, 1985, 1989, 1996) envisages culture as part of the sphere of social reproduction. The author expands the scope of ‘social movements’ beyond the formal political system to ‘new channels for the expression of political demands’ (1980: 203). Melucci usefully conceptualises the process of collective identity as an ‘interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their actions take place’ (1995: 44). This is a negotiated process between an individual and collective action forms where ‘[t]he empirical unity of a social movement should be considered as a result rather than a starting point’ (1995: 43).

Collective identity thus offers a more generous approach to the interpretations offered by frame analysis.

Nevertheless, the broad tenets of what can loosely be defined as NSM theory have not been without their fair share of criticism. Tarrow (1991) has questioned the idea of there being anything ‘new’ about the majority of contemporary social movements as they often develop from earlier political or trade union organisations. The theory has also been denounced for discounting the prevailing relevance of class, material resources and the state for contentious politics (Barker & Dale 1998; D’Anieri et al 1990; Pichardo 1997).³³ In addition, geographers have criticised the approach for negating the spatial processes of social movements. Byron Miller has argued, for instance, that Habermas ‘underestimates sociospatial differentiation and many of the attendant dilemmas it poses for building a consensual basis for emancipatory politics’ (2000: 32). Although Melucci and Castells do acknowledge the importance of spatiality to collective action for NSMs, Miller contends that there has been little empirical investigation into how movements engage at different geographical scales. That said, there is a substantial geographical literature that engages with the spatial processes of identity-based movements (see Marston 1988; Keith & Pile 1993; Massey 1995; Miller 2000; Staeheli 1994; Cresswell 1996; Pile 1997; Routledge 1997a). These studies have more fully engaged with ‘how common identities, experiences, understandings, and power relations are constructed in and through the spaces and places of interaction’ (Miller 2000: 34). For authors such as Massey, space is not merely a backdrop to social movement activity but, on the contrary, ‘the spatial is both open to, and a necessary element in, politics in the broadest sense of the word’ (1994: 4). Relational approaches to space and politico-cultural configurations have become prevalent within the discipline of geography and offer a more nuanced interpretation of social movement processes and identity formations. I will outline my own approach in section 3.4.

3.2 Social Movement Studies in Latin America

Although NSM theory was originally envisaged in response to changing politico-economic climates within Western post-industrial societies, the analytical framework has been extremely influential in the Latin American region. The prominent journal *Latin American Perspectives* published two special issues on social movements in 1994 edited by

³³ Though it must be noted that the concept of class is rarely abandoned altogether within NSM theory. Rather, the theory problematises its centrality in social science frameworks as ‘[c]lass relationships are only one very specific historical form of production relationship’ and that ‘since the phase of industrial capitalism, the social structure has become ever more flexible and subject to change’ (Melucci 1989: 187).

geographer David Slater (1994a, 1994b), a special issue on globalising resistance in 2007 edited by Richard Stahler-Sholk, Harry Vanden and Glen Kuecker³⁴ and a follow up piece in 2011 (Stahler-Sholk & Vanden 2011). These papers show a general trend away from traditional class-based frameworks of analysis towards a focus on the cultural within political movements (also see Alvarez et al 1998; Escobar & Alvarez 1992; Slater 1985). Stahler-Sholk et al note that '[t]hese new formulations of activism contest the region's political and economic systems and challenge traditional definitions of citizenship, democracy, and participation' (2008: 1). In this respect, NSMs seek to define relations of power within the formal (the state, political parties) and informal (civil society or everyday life) political arena. In Bolivia, for example, several authors have suggested that urban and rural indigenous peoples postulate alternative understandings of citizenship to the Western model that is practiced in the everyday spaces of peoples' lives (Albro 2006a; Lazar 2008; Yashar 2005; Zibechi 2010b). The 2007 special issue (Stahler-Sholk et al 2007) highlighted that many NSMs do not necessarily seek to seize state power but focus on social and ideological transformations of civil society, or what would most likely be referred to in Bolivia and other Latin American countries as '*el pueblo*' (the people). This follows the work of theorists Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar who have argued that social movements operate at the interface of culture and politics where '[c]ulture is political because meanings are constitutive of processes that, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power' (Alvarez et al 1998: 7). This programme of analysis predominates studies of Latin American social movements and can offer us a more relational approach to essentialist binary categories such as politics/culture, state/civil society, production/reproduction and class/ethnicity, for example.

Drawing from Hellman (1995), Stahler-Sholk and colleagues identify three distinctions of NSMs: a 'tendency to seek *autonomy* from conventional/hierarchical political institutions'; an 'attention to horizontal and participatory *process* in decision-making'; and the 'quest for *solidarity* derived from notions of social justice linked to shared subjective identities such as race/ethnicity or gender' (Stahler-Sholk et al 2008: 4; original emphasis; also see Evers 1985). Fundamental to this perspective is the belief that 'every power relation is penetrated by social life' (Evers 1985: 48). Many analyses of NSMs within Latin America have focused on the different types of democracy being explored through the organisational practices of contentious politics and the potential this has on

³⁴ This was developed in their book *Latin American Social Movements in the Twenty-first Century: Resistance, Power, and Democracy* (Stahler-Sholk et al 2008).

transforming formal state institutions (Hellman 1995). Struggles over democracy are envisaged as seeking a 'redefinition not only of the political system but also of economic, social, and cultural practices that might engender a democratic ordering for society as a whole' (Alvarez et al 1998: 2). As such, these 'movements deploy alternative conceptions of woman, nature, race, economy, democracy, or citizenship that unsettle dominant cultural meanings' (Alvarez et al 1998: 7). Moreover, Escobar has celebrated the role of NSMs in the global South for offering 'alternatives *to* development' (2012: xiii).

Indigenous movements fall under the banner of 'new' social movements since they are shaped by a collective struggle for identity recognition and representation within the national political, cultural, economic and social environment (Escobar & Alvarez 1992). Within Latin America, indigenous majority populations exist in Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala, as well as being large minorities in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile (Kearney & Varese 1995: 207). Until recently, the study of indigeneity was largely the domain of anthropologists and was dominated by a modernist perspective of the nation-state based on the project of assimilation (Kearney & Varese 1995). However, the rise of ethnic-identity inflected social movements challenged dominant imaginaries of citizenship, democracy and development and required another perspective. Many of these movements, not least the lowland indigenous movement in Bolivia, demand the right to self-determination over decisions relating to ancestral territories and the resources located within them, as a way to reclaim their autonomy from systems of domination. Although identities of indigeneity are not homogenous, a regional movement has emerged based on a collective experience of subordination in the colonial and postcolonial state (Kearney & Varese 1995: 208). That said, indigenous movements have also proliferated due to political opportunities at the international and national levels, namely through the legal framework of indigenous rights (Brysk 2000; Canessa, 2006; Taylor 1994) and transitions to democracy that have resulted in social movements searching for 'alternative forms of democracy and national identity' (Andolina 2003: 724). This has involved pressuring national governments as well as engaging in 'transnational networks as a means to overcome local limitations on their political possibilities' (Andolina et al 2009: 2; also see Brysk 2000; Stavenhagen 1998; Yashar 2005).

Academic attention to indigenous movements in Latin America has focused on the 1994 Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico (see Barmeyer 2009; Collier & Quaratiello 2005; Harvey 1998; Khasnabish 2010). Webber argues that '[a]pparently, more books were

published on the Latin American “Indian question” between 1994 and 1999 than during the rest of the twentieth century’ (2012b: 10). Renewed interest has been fostered since the rise of populist political parties with indigenous elements, most notably Bolivia’s MAS Party (Stahler-Sholk et al 2008). Yashar (2005) contends that indigenous movements pose a ‘postliberal challenge’ since they seek collective citizenship rights and question the legitimacy of the liberal representative model of democracy. Similarly, Van Cott (2005) has examined how ethnic politics have influenced formal political institutions and the state in Latin America. Spronk (2012) has argued that neoliberal policies led to more jobs in the informal economy, which consequently made workplace-situated political organisation more difficult. She therefore states that the ‘protagonists of the New Left have a distinctly “plebeian” character’ (2012: 83). This plebeian character can be witnessed in the growth of *coordinadoras* (coalitions or coordinating bodies) in the Latin American region, such as the Coalition for the Defence of Water and Life in the Water Wars and the Coalition for the Recuperation and Defence of Gas and Hydrocarbons in the Gas Wars (see Assies 2003; Lewis 2004; McNeish 2008; Olivera 2004). These effectively acted as temporary umbrella organisations creating solidarity networks and allegiances around a common objective or grievance (Hellman 1995). *Coordinadoras* began to have ‘an impact on social and political demand-making throughout the country’ as they were instituted as a working form of direct democracy in the context of weakened trade-union power (McNeish 2008: 39). As such, Assies calls *coordinadoras* a ‘new social movement’ that is suggestive of ‘a significant change in the dynamics of social protest’ (2003: 34).

Yet, Hellman aptly notes that ‘a more detailed look at specific cases will reveal that the new social movements are neither so new nor so isolated from class and partisan struggles as some have suggested’ (1995: 167). Webber (2012b) pertinently points out that the community-based organisations and *coordinadoras* formed during the Gas Wars of 2003 and 2005 were not entirely ‘new’ as they contained traces of older union structures despite the breakdown of formal labour politics due to neoliberal reforms. Indeed, class and ethnicity are often intertwined (see Albó 1987; Edelman 1999; Hellman 1995; Nash 1979/1993). A case in point is the Kataristas that fought not just for the recognition of indigenous peoples as fully-fledged citizens of the Bolivian nation, but also for changes to agricultural systems of production (Calderón et al 1992). Thus, Hellman argues that many ethnically inflected movements are ‘in fact, centered on the problem of access to, or control of, the means of production’ (1995: 190). This can also be seen in the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 when the sovereignty of natural resources (and

decision-making powers over the revenues created through their exploitation) was at the heart of national demands, alongside claims for a constituent assembly that would incorporate calls for political representation of indigenous nations.³⁵ This period also demonstrated that the language of indigeneity is an effective tool in anti-neoliberal struggles (Canessa 2007b; Sieder 2002; Van Cott 2002; Yashar 1998).

Even where NSMs transcend class politics through cultural demands they often rely on identities and collective memories firmly rooted in precolonial experiences and in this respect are not ‘new’ (Evers 1985; Nash 1989). It is also clear that indigenous movements do not necessarily seek autonomy from the state or from relations with capital as is often postulated in NSM theory (Postero 2007; Goodale 2009). Further, Hellman (1995) notes that the celebration of NSMs as deeply democratic or operating horizontal organisational structures is not necessarily mirrored in the internal dynamics of social movements. As such, though the *coordinadoras* have been identified as an emerging ‘multitude-form’ – ‘a “horizontal” network insofar as it is the result of the formation in practice of a social space of encounter among equals’ (García Linera 2004: 71-72), it seems somewhat paradoxical that the main analyses of these bodies have focused on interviews with just one man, the ‘leader’ Oscar Olivera (see Zibechi 2012b; Dangl 2007, 2010).

Lastly, Brass contends that postmodernism and NSM is ‘a form of analysis-lite that has led to the dumbing down of the development debate, or the substitution of celebration for investigation’ (2002: 3). Certainly, romantic assertions of indigenous peoples as ‘noble savages’ should be avoided. As such, a number of authors have problematised essentialist understandings of indigeneity in Latin America (see Conklin 1997; Jackson 1995; Ramos 1994). To define a subject position by class, ethnicity or gender is to deny the relational process, whether from colonialism or capitalism, that has produced identity as a situated location in a wider ‘power-geometry’ (Massey 1994: 149). Chapter II has illustrated the multiple trajectories of indigeneity during the history of Bolivia, which demonstrates that identities are transient, fluid and positional (Canessa 2006; de la Cadena 2000; Martínez Novo 2006; Radcliffe 1999; Radcliffe & Westwood 1996). Social anthropologist Andrew Canessa suggests that the language of indigeneity has shifted from a ‘language of resistance’ to a ‘language of governance’ (2012a: 5) during the MAS administration:

³⁵ This was also true of the TIPNIS conflict since indigenous territoriality was not only a struggle for political and cultural autonomy but also for land and resource sovereignty in the face of increasing colonisation (see chapter VI).

indigeneity may be a useful conceptual tool for understanding conflicts between indigenous peoples and nation-states where indigenous groups are powerless minorities; they are, I argue, woefully inadequate in understanding conflict between different groups of indigenous peoples within a nation-state, much less between indigenous people and an indigenous state' (2012a: 9)

Like other scholars that work with indigenous movements, I contend that the identification of traits that make some groups more authentically indigenous than others is not of paramount importance to critically engaged research (Jackson 1995; Paradies 2006; Warren & Jackson 2003). I follow Lucero in arguing that academics should focus on 'the practices and discourses that situate some subjects as more culturally authentic and more politically consequential than others' (2006: 33; also see Clifford 2013; Walsh 2002). The question of authenticity therefore becomes a secondary consideration to understanding how cultural forms are articulated and 'whether, and how, they convince and coerce insiders and outsiders, often in power-charged, unequal situations, to accept the autonomy of a "we"' (Clifford 2001: 479). In order to do this, I argue for an ethnographic engagement with the everyday labour of indigenous movements in order to understand how multiple-identity positions are configured, contested and reworked through socio-spatial practices. In addition, I suggest that subaltern studies might offer a way to refocus research away from the subjects of identity (indigenous people) toward the practices by which subjects are made (state-civil society relations of power).

Geographical Perspectives on Latin America Social Movements

Research by geographers on Latin American social movements has been 'centrally concerned with the production of and relations between place and identity, contestations over the use and control of space, the politics of scale, and the establishment of trans-local political, economic, and cultural networks' (Perreault 2008d: 1364). Geographers have engaged with the following topics of interest: (i) indigenous struggles for re-territorialising the nation-state and for cultural rights (Anthias & Radcliffe 2013; Radcliffe & Westwood 1996; Regalsky 2008; Valdivia 2005); (ii) the role of transnationalism, NGOs and international development programmes within indigenous movements (Andolina et al 2005, 2009; Bebbington 1996; Keck & Sikkink 1998; Laurie et al 2003; Offen 2003); (iii) left, anti-neoliberal and labour movements (Brown 1996; Haarstad 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Perreault 2006; Valdivia 2012); (iv) agrarian or peasant movements (Perreault 2005; 2008b; Wolford 2004; 2010); and (v) the role of women (and the relationship between

gender and ethnicity) in political organising (Laurie 2011; Radcliffe 2014a; Radcliffe et al 2004).

Furthermore, an emerging body of work centres on the complexities of resource governance given the shift towards state-led neo-extractivist projects in the region. Perspectives from political ecology are useful for comprehending interrelated issues such as: environmental governance and its effects on cultural processes; land and resource conflicts; social exclusion and changes to social relations of domination; development agendas and resistance; and economic inequalities and poverty. This field has analysed how environmental, social and political relations interact (see Bryant 1992; Peet & Watts 2004; Robbins 2004; Zimmerer & Bassett 2003). Political ecology orientated studies have focused on indigenous peoples and their struggles in relation to modern development and the effects that this has on local livelihood forms and cultural changes (Bryant 1998). In economically ‘developing’ countries, research has focused on the analysis of unequal power relations in resource conflicts and the colonial legacies that inform such relations (Bryant 1998; Bryant & Bailey 1997). Geographers have used this perspective to analyse socio-ecological conflicts in Latin America, particularly in relation to indigenous peoples and the environment (Bebbington & Bury 2013; Hindery 2013; Humphreys Bebbington 2013; Perreault & Valdivia 2010).

These studies have all variously contributed to understanding the socio-spatial dynamics of social movements in Latin America. Yet, there are few geographical studies that address the question of how we can conceive indigeneity when an ‘indigenous’ political party sits in a position of state power. I argue that engaging with subaltern studies is a fruitful undertaking to grasp the elusive concept of being ‘indigenous’. By bringing the geography of social movement studies literature into dialogue with Latin American subaltern studies, I intend to shed light on how and why ethnic identity positions are brought into being, contested and (re)articulated in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS.

3.3 Subaltern Epistemologies at the Borders of (Post)Colonial Difference

Within this section, I shift from a discussion of the meta-theoretical frameworks to what can be more broadly considered as a politico-epistemic commitment to understanding indigenous politics from the respective subject-positions of people in decolonial struggles. Postcolonial theory is a cross-disciplinary theoretical position underpinned by the recognition that many countries have undergone a significant period of European colonial

rule and that the legacies of inherited relations of power surrounding the nation-state, race, class, ethnicity and gender, remain pervasive. Indeed, the concept of indigeneity can only be understood in reference to the colonial encounter as it is used to describe the native inhabitants of places settled by European invaders. The fact that the term prevails despite independence from colonial rule is testament not only to the presence of *mestizo* cultures but also to the colonial hangovers that structure society, such as racial categorisation. Postcolonial theory sets out to understand, analyse and respond to social, political, cultural and economic legacies of colonialism and imperialism. To do so entails the task of ‘thinking at the limit’ (Hall 1996: 242) since there can be no clearly differentiated ‘inside/outside of the colonial system’ (1996: 247). It is pertinent to engage with the voices, experiences and knowledges of subordinated and marginalised indigenous peoples in order to understand emerging debates, paradigms and socio-political orders in postcolonial contexts. In this vein, subaltern studies perspectives offer a starting point to these analyses.

Subaltern Studies

In the 1980s, the Subaltern Studies Collective was founded by a group of South Asian scholars interested in postcolonial studies. The term ‘subaltern’ is borrowed from the work of the Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci (1971) first adopted the term in his *Prison Notebooks* to mean a position of inferior rank and later used it to refer to subordinate social groups or classes. The author contended that:

[s]ubaltern classes are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only “permanent” victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately. In reality, even when they appear triumphant, the subaltern groups are merely anxious to defend themselves (1971: 55).

Gramsci’s writings therefore revised and reworked many of the assumptions of conventional Marxist theory, particularly around notions of socialist revolution, in line with developments in history and changing societal relationships (Hall 1986). He argued that the bourgeoisie were able to establish ‘cultural hegemony’ by promulgating their own values as part of the taken for granted ‘common sense’ of other classes. Gramsci described hegemony as the:

“spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is

“historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production (1971: 12)

Gramsci contended that the elite rely on coercive power in times when this consent fails. These ideas were instrumental to the Collective as they disturb the distinction between dominance and subordination, and related ideas of autonomy, by suggesting that ‘the masses’ take part in the active reconstitution of the dominant order. Thus, what Gramsci (1971) called a ‘war of manoeuvre’, or the tactic of open conflict between classes, was considered to be less effective in Western capitalist states than a ‘war of position’, where forces seek to gain influence through cultural predominance in civil society. Therefore, power is achieved through hegemonic arrangements that ‘have to be actively constructed and positively maintained’ over time (Hall 1986: 15). Engaging in a long-term war of position through counter-hegemonic movements is an indispensable basis for achieving societal transformation and changes to political authority. I contend that Gramsci’s theoretical approach is useful for engaging with indigenous movements in four ways: through an understanding that the subaltern is a subject of societal transformation; that counter-hegemonic movements must seek alliances with other groups to transcend narrow corporate interests; that this requires a ‘war of position’; and for understanding political discourse and practice as contextual.

Gramsci’s writings have been advanced by scholars of South Asian subaltern studies who have criticised dominant historiographies of the Indian nation for privileging ‘colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism’ (Guha 1988: 37). Knowledge production is envisaged as a realm controlled by the dominant powers of colonialism ‘as a homogenizing force’ (Guha 1997: x). Fundamentally, even though the Collective utilised Marxist perspectives they were also heavily critical of accounts that relegated non-Western voices to the margins of intellectual knowledge production. Chaturvedi (2000) has stated that subaltern studies represented ‘a theoretically self-conscious break from the economic determinism of “orthodox” Marxist scholarship, and a promise to write histories from “below” where subaltern classes were the subjects in the making of their own history’ (2000: viii). The Collective therefore expanded and appropriated Gramsci’s term ‘subaltern’ – meaning the proletariat classes – to other subordinated groups, particularly related to caste, race and religion. Subaltern studies sought to recognise the role of marginalised peoples in societal transformations, what Guha has referred to as the ‘*politics of the people*’ (1988: 40; original emphasis). Spivak has taken this further to argue that

‘everything that has no access to cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference’ (interview with de Kock 1992: 45). These theorisations displaced the centrality of the nation-state as a taken for granted sovereign power and argued that the concept has rarely managed to gain fully-fledged legitimacy and consent in colonial or postcolonial contexts. In relation to colonial India under the rule of the British raj, Guha (1997) has argued that the situation was one of ‘dominance without hegemony’, which represented the ‘*historic failure of the nation to come to its own*’ (1988: 43; original emphasis).

The proponents of subaltern studies have also been critical of the social sciences for prioritising knowledge situated in the West resulting in the negation of non-Western cultures and systems of knowledge (Spivak 1987). As such, postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty (1992, 2000) has called for a project of ‘provincializing Europe’. Chakrabarty argues that ‘as intellectuals operating in academia, we are not neutral to these struggles and cannot pretend to situate ourselves outside of the knowledge procedures of our institutions’ (2000: 43). In Spivak’s (1988) controversial essay titled ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ she infamously answered in the negative as the subaltern can only be understood if they learn the language of hegemony. Spivak (interview with de Kock 1992: 45-46) has therefore argued that the working classes are not subaltern as they speak the language of capital.

These theorisations are critical in addressing the agency of marginalised actors in the production of knowledge. However, some scholars re-embed dichotomous distinctions, such as the elite/subaltern binary (see Mahmood 2001; Moore 1998). These accounts also re-embed the hegemonic imaginary that civil society is autonomous from political society, as can be seen in the inaugural statement of the Collective in *Subaltern Studies I* which states that the ‘subaltern’ ‘was an *autonomous* domain, for it neither originated in elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter’ (quoted in Guha 1997: x-xi). I suggest that the contemporary subaltern does not exist independently of Western imperial knowledges, relations to capital or hegemonic spatio-political imaginaries. For example, it is evident that indigenous movements simultaneously combine overt political resistance to nation-state ideologies with strategic accommodations to government policies in order ultimately to rework hegemonic understandings of the nation (see Alonso 1995; Garfield 2001; Hindery 2013; Warren 1998; Stephen 2002). Similarly, I argue that any state that seeks to embed the state/civil society dichotomy as the prevailing hegemony needs to make certain accommodations to other epistemologies in order to bring them under the banner of ‘common sense’. Chatterjee (1993: 13) reflects that in postcolonial India, for example, the

presence of communitarian forms of governance in the liberal state attests to the state's concession to subaltern demands. Further, Chatterjee's (2004) *The Politics of the Governed* signified a shift in the subaltern studies tradition as it suggests that political resistance is emergent out of, rather than operating outside of, the state. This echoes post-Marxist scholars Laclau and Mouffe who suggest that social movements cannot simply remove themselves from relations with the state or capital as no emergent movement can be 'absolutely radical and irrecoverable by the dominant order, and which constitutes an absolutely guaranteed point of departure for a total transformation' (1985: 169). In a more recent paper by Böhm et al (2010) the authors argue for the '[im]possibility' of autonomy. On the one hand, they argue, autonomy is impossible because any social movement is bound up in the strictures of social, economic, political and cultural contexts. On the other hand, '*within the impossibility of autonomy there are possibilities of autonomous practices that challenge the very hegemony they are part of*' (2010: 18; original emphasis).

As such, some of the original theorists of subaltern studies have critiqued their original contributions (see Chatterjee 2012; Chakrabarty 2011; Guha 2009). Chatterjee has argued that there are now 'two aspects of mass politics in contemporary Indian democracy – one that involves a contest over sovereignty with the Indian state and the other that makes claims on government authorities over services and benefits' (2012: 47). He states that the emergence of the latter is a result of the extensive reach of tools of governmentality into the everyday lives of marginal populations. This therefore disturbs the classic understanding of subaltern resistance as autonomous to elite politics and adapts the theory to accommodate aspects of contemporary democratic politics in India. In addition, Spivak has more recently critiqued the Subaltern Studies Collective and declared that subalternity is not a position of radical alterity but implies 'the idea of no access to the structures of citizenship, the structures of the state' (2014: 10). Therefore, the 'subaltern' is an abstract concept and would be more readily understood if conceived as a relational process constructed through the dynamics of cultural hegemony and access to political and economic power.

In the early 1990s some US and Latin American scholars began to reflect on the relevance of postcolonial theory for Latin American 'area studies', particularly the notion that colonialism was a period of history that has been overcome. The Latin American Subaltern Studies (LASS) Group was established in the early 1990s to analyse the relationship between cultural and postcolonial studies with a commitment to recognising the social agency of the poor (Rodríguez 2005). This group more forcefully argued that they were

‘criticizing the postcolonial liberal state and the nationalist independence and anticolonialist movements from the Left, we were criticizing leftist states and party organizations for their liberalism’ (Rodríguez 2001: 4). The group not only criticised the dominance of knowledge emanating from colonial powers, but the colonial legacy embedded within the dominant ideologies of neoliberal states as well as more progressive ideologies on the left. The group were important in analysing the transition to the neo- or post- in Latin America and ‘discussed the inadequacies of the liberal paradigms circulating in mimicry of civil society [...] we spoke of Western Reason and the philosophies of the Enlightenment’ (Rodríguez 2005: 49).

However, the group have since disbanded because of intellectual differences. Among the reasons for separation were disagreements over the reading of subalternity as either a postmodern programme derived from Eurocentric traditions of knowledge or as a decolonial programme derived from subaltern perspectives (Mignolo 2000). For Grosfuguel, LASS comprised of largely North American scholars of Latin America who ‘produced studies *about* the subaltern rather than studies *with* and *from* a subaltern perspective’ (2007: 212; original emphasis). Due to an overemphasis on theories emanating from the West, rather than from subalternised knowledges, Grosfuguel argues that the LASS group ‘betrayed their goal to produce subaltern studies’ (2007: 212). It must be noted, however, that there are several criticisms of such arguments since they are charged with an anti-Eurocentrism that fails to see the problem as anything more than a geographic location of knowledge production (see Dikeç 2010; Mufti 2005). Rather, I agree with Escobar who has argued that Euro-American theorists must address the fact that ‘it is impossible to think about transcending or overcoming modernity without approaching it from the perspective of the colonial difference’ (2007: 186). These comments lead me to analyse another closely related programme, the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality project.

Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243)

The 'Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality' (MCD) Collective started in 1988 to critically analyse dependency theory, liberation philosophies and subaltern studies (see Escobar 2003; Grupo de Estudios Sobre Colonialidad 2010). MCD is a multidisciplinary research network of critical thinkers situated in Latin America, including Aníbal Quijano (Peru), Edgardo Lander (Venezuela), Ramón Grosfuguel (Puerto Rico), Walter Mignolo (Argentina-USA), Catherine Walsh (Ecuador), Arturo Escobar (Colombia), Fernando Coronil (Venezuela), Javier Sanjinés (Bolivia) and Enrique Dussel (Argentina-Mexico). The Collective produced the book '*La colonialidad del saber: eurocentricismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*' (The Coloniality of Knowledge: Eurocentricism and Social Sciences. Latin American Perspectives) edited by Edgardo Lander in 2000. The project is aimed at recovering theoretical contributions to postcolonial theory from the predominance of Western-inflected knowledge, especially in critical dialogue with Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems theory. Fundamentally, scholars questioned notions of modernity as a linear history that defines colonialism as a historical period designated to the past, which Grosfuguel determines as 'the myth of the postcolonial world' (2006: 28). In such an understanding indigenous peoples are identified in a condition of savagery or primitivism – as pre-modern – and in need of civilising (Moraña et al 2008). Instead, it is argued that European colonialism (military occupation by an imperial foreign power) left the legacy of modern institutions such as the nation-state, capitalism and the logic of Eurocentric science, which combine to create what the group calls 'coloniality'. In this respect, Mignolo argues that 'modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin' (2000: 50).

The group have identified three types of coloniality: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being.³⁶ First, coloniality of power is premised on the notion that race is a type of social classification established within colonial societies to install a social division of labour that necessarily concentrates wealth in the hands of elite 'whites' or '*mestizos*' (Quijano 1991, 1993, 1998, 2000). Here, race is seen as a 'naturalization of colonial relations between Europeans and non-Europeans' (Quijano 2000: 535). Through

³⁶ Geographer David Slater's work on postcolonialism refers to coloniality as 'the imperialism of power and knowledge' (2004: viii). He similarly argues that '[t]he posited superiorities of Western 'progress', 'modernization', 'democracy', 'development' and 'civilization' are deployed to justify a project of enduring invasiveness' (2004: 223). However, he questions Quijano's use of coloniality as needing to be distinguished from imperialism 'in which the actual possession of colonies is no longer a necessary condition for maintaining imperial control' (2004: 176; also see Slater 2011).

structural systems of race Mignolo identifies a ‘body-politics of knowledge’ whereby certain bodies are deemed inferior and these ‘inferior bodies carried inferior intelligence’ (2009: 178). This idea resonates within the work of Aymara sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2003/1984) who argues that colonialism prevails within the so-called *postcolonial* state of Bolivia. Rivera Cusicanqui identifies two periods of colonial history that have occurred despite independence: the pre-revolutionary period that was marked by colonial serfdom and indigenous counter-rebellion; and the post-revolutionary period that recognised the voting rights of indigenous and peasant peoples but maintained a racial apparatus of domination and marginalisation.

Second, coloniality of knowledge is the conceptualisation that Eurocentric ways of knowing are privileged (Coronil 1996; Dussel 1998; Escobar 2007, 2010; Lander 1998, 2000, 2002; Mignolo 2000; 2001). This acts to silence other knowledges and further colonial subjugation. Several authors have reminded us that we speak and think from a particular location of power (Anzaldúa & Keating 2003; Dussel 1977; Mignolo 2000) that Donna Haraway calls ‘situated knowledges’ (1988: 575). The notion of ‘geo-politics of knowledge’ centres on the conceptualisation of the Western world as the centre of privilege for deciding whose knowledge counts (Dussel 1977; Escobar 2008; Mignolo 2011). Fundamentally, the intellectuals involved in the MCD project critique ‘the social sciences, along with analyses of popular resistance in its many forms’ for ‘the role intellectuals play in appropriating and resignifying hegemonic models of thought’ (Moraña et al 2008: 6). In particular, theories situated on the ‘right’ or ‘left’, it is argued, are misplaced to understand the processes of colonial epistemologies in Latin America. Escobar (2003) argues that the Eurocentricism of modernity exists in work on the left. He uses the example of the work of Hardt and Negri (2000) who contend that there is no exteriority to modernity. However, Escobar (2003) argues that modernity is not a complete process and can never be absolute. The MCD scholars also critique academic enquiry that is limited to dismantling capitalism, since ‘capitalism is the central system of the coloniality of power, but it is not the only one’ (Grupo de Estudios Sobre Colonialidad 2010; author’s translation). Grosfuguel (2002) argues that socialist strategies of taking power at the level of the nation-state are insufficient because global coloniality would continue to marginalise indigenous peoples as second-class citizens. Marisol de la Cadena (2010) has argued that international intellectual analyses of contemporary Latin American politics as a ‘turn to the left’ denies the part that indigenous peoples have played in these transformations. Through critical attention to indigenous agendas she states that it becomes

clear that '[t]heir demands tend to disturb political agendas and conceptual settlements, progressive and conservative alike' (2010: 335). In this respect, Grosfuguel also rejects much of the social movement literature based on identity politics, since recognition within a colonial system of knowledge is 'not equivalent to epistemological otherness' (2006: 30). Similarly, Tlostanova and Mignolo state that decolonial thinking 'from an Amerindian perspective, does not mean inclusion in the existing social system, governed by the colonial matrix of power, but instead unlearning what imperial/colonial designs have naturalized' (2012: 22). Quijano therefore reflects that the vision of socialist revolution as 'control of the state and as state control of labor/resources/product' is a 'Eurocentric mirage' (2000: 572). Instead, Quijano argues that a decolonial socialism requires a 'socialization of power' as a 'radical return of the control over labor/resources/product, over sex/resources/products, over authorities/institutions/violence, and over intersubjectivity/knowledge/communication to the daily life of the people' (2000: 573).

Third, it is argued that the coloniality of power and coloniality of knowledge have combined to engender a coloniality of being (Mignolo 2003). This notion responds to the 'ontological dimension of coloniality' and 'the "ontological excess" that occurs when particular beings impose on others' in different encounters (Escobar 2004: 218). As such, colonialism produced a hierarchical knowledge system that obscures the 'being' or full humanity of colonised indigenous peoples. For Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) coloniality of being has dehumanising consequences. Maldonado-Torres suggests that the prospect for a de-colonial turn would be marked by 'the definitive entry of enslaved and colonized subjectivities into the realm of thought at before unknown institutional levels' (2007: 262).

Thus, the group seek understandings of modernity from the position of colonial *difference*. Mignolo has extended the political project of feminist writers Gloria Anzaldúa and Ana Louise Keating in their edited collection *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions For Transformation* (2003) to distinguish a project of 'border thinking'. This is defined as the 'space where *local* histories inventing and implementing global designs meet *local* histories, the space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated or ignored' (2000: ix). Grosfuguel similarly argues for the importance of attending to 'subaltern epistemologies' (2006: 22). Such an engagement:

necessarily implies an analysis of marginalized imaginaries and alternative epistemologies, surviving and emerging subjectivities, and modes of representation which exist in colonial and neo-colonial societies under – and in spite of – specific conditions of production, perception, and dissemination of knowledge’ (Moraña et al 2008: 11)

Dussel (1996, 2001) puts forward the project of ‘trans-modernity’ that problematises the prevalence of some of the assumptions of modernity by attending to subaltern perspectives. This requires an acknowledgement of knowledge as necessarily *pluriversal* rather than *universal* (Grosfuguel 2006). As such, critical border thinking does not reject modernity but redefines ‘the emancipatory rhetoric of modernity from the cosmologies and epistemologies of the subaltern, located in the oppressed and exploited side of the colonial difference’ (Grosfuguel 2006: 26).

In this way, the Zapatista project is hailed as an exemplar of critical border thinking as it ‘remaps Marxism, Third Worldism and indigenism, without being any of them’ (Escobar 2004: 219; see Grosfuguel 2006). Mignolo (2011) also identifies decolonial agendas emanating from new indigenous movements in the Latin American region. Mignolo argues that people are now ‘engaging in epistemic disobedience and de-linking from the magic of the Western idea of modernity, ideals of humanity and promises of economic growth and financial prosperity’ (2009: 161). In this view, decolonialism comes from a collective experience of ‘the colonial wound’, linked with ongoing structural racism (2009: 161). I contend that indigenous struggles for plurinationalism offer the most striking illustration of an active decolonial project being carried out in the region. These movements refuse recognitions within the limited framework of multiculturalism based on individual citizenship and liberal democracy and instead pursue a reconstitution of the nation-state to incorporate indigenous citizens through their own collective organisational structures and systems of knowledge. Similarly, Catherine Walsh has argued that Afro and indigenous community-based struggles in Bolivia and Ecuador are not only based on identity or rights but are ‘about perspectives of knowledge that have to do with the model and logic of LIFE itself’ (2011: 51). Current Vice-President García Linera has thus argued that ‘evismo’ represents ‘*múltiples modernidades*’ (multiple modernities), since the MAS recognises more than one system of production (2006b: 28).

However, MCD perspectives give us few analytical tools for understanding contentious politics. In particular, few accounts have examined the intersection of subaltern

epistemologies at the point of ‘colonial difference’ alongside other epistemologies. For this thesis the alliance between an indigenous movement and urban solidarity networks reflects the reality of different epistemic locations sharing the same territorial space of a single nation-state. As such, the project of plurinationalism should be considered an example of ‘border thinking’. As Burman argues, ‘the decolonization of Bolivia would imply, if not its de-bolivianization, at least its re-signification’ (2009: 125). Furthermore, despite the fact that geographers have engaged with South Asian subaltern studies, thus far the discipline has offered a limited reading of the LASS or MCD projects in Latin America. One notable exception, however, is a recent paper by Sarah Radcliffe that calls for ‘analytical frameworks that bring processes of knowledge production firmly into our analysis from a postcolonial perspective, recognizing the diversity of knowledge productions taking place at multiple scales simultaneously’ (2014b: 99). Although Radcliffe distances herself from the MCD group, she argues for an engagement with subaltern and indigenous ‘political ontologies that challenge the way that we compartmentalise and understand knowledge and knowledgeable subjects’ (2014b: 99).

In the next section I offer the analytical tools for operationalising critical border thinking through what I call ‘a multiple relationalities’ approach. Geographers are well placed to interrogate the embodied and relational processes through which knowledges and subject-positions are constructed, reiterated and variously contested. This thesis is an empirically grounded contribution to the body of literature I have outlined above.

3.4 Operationalising a Multiple Relationalities Approach

Recognising that ‘subalternity is a relational concept’ (Rabasa 2010: 6) puts space at the forefront of analyses of subaltern resistance movements. In this section, I argue that recent developments in geography provide a useful analytical framework for understanding contentious politics situated in the spaces of postcolonial difference. Thinking space relationally insists on ‘an open-ended, mobile, networked, and actor-centred geographic becoming’ (Jones 2009: 487). As Miller contends, ‘[s]pace matters because it is relational. It is the medium through which all social relations are made or broken – and making and breaking relationships is at the core of all questions of collective action’ (2013: 286). The work of Doreen Massey has been instrumental to this spatial turn.³⁷ In her book *For Space*

³⁷ The discipline of geography has seen a number of spatial shifts: from regions in the 1930s to 1950s; space in the 1960s and 1970s; place in the 1980s; scale in the 1990s and 2000s; and lately networks (Nicholls et al 2013: 2).

she argues that space is the product of interrelations, a sphere of multiplicity and ‘coexisting *heterogeneity*’ and is always under construction, ‘never finished; never closed’ (2005: 9). Furthermore, space is both local and global as ‘each place is the focus of a distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations’ (2005: 156). Massey argues that these socio-spatial relations are embedded with a ‘cartography of power’ (2005: 85). Thus, space is at the heart of decolonial projects since a ‘socialization of power’ (Quijano 2000: 573) would necessarily require a re-visioning of hegemonic spatio-political imaginaries, such as the state/civil society and political/cultural dichotomies.

It is therefore surprising that greater attention has not been paid to the ways in which hegemonic spatial imaginaries are simultaneously reified, disturbed and reworked through the everyday practices of contentious politics. As such, Davies has stated that geographers ‘need to create a set of thick accounts of social movement practice that interrogate more clearly how individual actors and organisations are influenced by spatial concepts such as territory, scale and networks throughout their quotidian practices’ (2012: 273-274). In this respect, Wendy Wolford’s (2004; 2010) ethnographic research alongside the Movement of Rural Landless Workers in Brazil is a critical intervention to this literature. Wolford draws on the notion of ‘spatial imaginaries’ as ‘cognitive frameworks, both collective and individual, constituted through the lived experiences, perceptions, and conceptions of space itself’ (2004: 409) to illustrate how particular understandings of space influence the practices of social movement actors in long-lasting ways.

Assemblage Thinking and the Spatial Reconfiguration of Articulation Theory

A number of geographers have reminded us to study the world in context: as relational, situated, multiple and becoming. These advances have acted to (re)spatialise theorisations of contentious politics in fundamental ways. First, network approaches to social theory assert that social movements are the temporary result of heterogeneous networks made up of a diverse range of materials (Juris 2004; Featherstone et al 2007; Nicholls 2009; Routledge 2008; Routledge & Cumbers 2009).³⁸ This approach has been inspired by actor-network theory (ANT), which illuminates comprehensions of the socio-spatial in the following ways: by understanding realities as relational and therefore multiple (Law 2004; Mol 2002); by considering power as a ‘process and not a reservoir, a stock, or a capital that

³⁸ There has been some recent work that connects science and technology studies, of which ANT falls into, to postcolonial theory. In this approach political, economic and cultural difference is additionally being understood as ontological difference; a source of multiple realities (Law 2011a, 2011b; Law & Lin 2009).

will automatically provide an explanation' (Latour 2005: 64); and by acknowledging the agency of the material or 'nonhuman' as part and parcel of everyday relations and performances (Latour 1988, 2005; Law 1994; Law & Hassard 1999). Despite these attributes, the approach has been criticised for discounting pervasive social categories such as class, gender and ethnicity and for precluding the power relations at play within social movements (Davies 2012; Routledge 2008). This has caused Whittle and Spicer to argue that ANT 'tends towards an ontologically realist, epistemologically positivist and politically conservative account' (2008: 623). Davies also asks 'if everything is part of a networked set of relationships, how do long histories and associations of people mean that places become more than just nodes or bundles of relations?' (2012: 275).

Second, geographers have adopted a 'multiple spatialities' approach to attend to different frameworks such as territory, place, scale and network (Jessop et al 2008) as well as positionality and mobility (Leitner et al 2008). This approach was developed in order to engage with different socio-spatial concepts, rather than privileging any one understanding. That said, Davies contends that the multiple spatialities approach is also insufficient as it 'remains grounded in a problem of vocabulary' since the authors 'present the spaces of socio-spatial relations as discrete entities that are somehow distinct from one another' (2012: 276). In this sense, the authors re-inscribe the idea that different spaces carry underlying structures and fixed characteristics. Davies therefore suggests the concept of assemblage as useful for engaging with the spatialities of political organisation. It is to assemblage thinking that I now turn.

Third, and finally, 'assemblage' or 'rhizome' thinking has been used to understand the dynamism of social movement processes (Davies 2012; Featherstone 2011; Legg 2009; McFarlane 2009). This theory has been inspired by the collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987; Deleuze & Parnet 1987; Delanda 2006).³⁹ Assemblage thinking implies an understanding of societal wholes as 'constructed from heterogeneous parts' (DeLanda 2006: 3). Though the term 'assemblage' is differently understood, the concept is broadly deployed to 'emphasise emergence, multiplicity and indeterminacy, and connects to a wider redefinition of the socio-spatial in terms of the composition of diverse elements into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation' (Anderson & McFarlane 2011: 124). The term is derived from the French '*agencement*' to

³⁹ Work by post-essentialist scholars has also influenced the flat ontological approach proposed by Marston et al (2005; Jones et al 2007). In a controversial paper, Marston et al called for a 'human geography without scale' in order to bypass the implied verticality of this spatiality within social science analyses.

denote both an arrangement and an agency, thus designating the importance of both the process and the form. Central to *agencement* is the possibility of re-ordering and becoming, and thus an assemblage is something transitory rather than static (Davies 2012). In McFarlane's work analysing political action he uses the term 'translocal assemblages' to denote three interrelated processes: the constant labour of assembling; the uneven structure of movements as collectives that, at times, exceed the assemblage; and as an emergent construct rather than a fixed formation (2009: 562). Hence, this conceptualisation problematises dominant accounts that 'assume and assign an ontological coherence to the category of movement – a solid "thingness" that is rarely tenable on the ground' (Wolford 2010: 5).

Through assemblage thinking, spatial forms such as place, territories and cities are conceived as relational constructions that, although vital to the practice and understanding of politics, could be otherwise. Furthermore, assemblage theory destabilises binary oppositions by asserting that everything is constituted by a continuous multiplicity. Instead, every dualism is defined by the 'and', or the relation that crosses between and within the other. As Deleuze and Parnet suggest:

it is always possible to undo dualisms from the inside, by tracing the line of flight which passes between the two terms or the two sets, the narrow stream which belongs neither to the one nor to the other, but draws both into a non-parallel evolution, into a heterochronous becoming (1977, 33-34)

I argue therefore that assemblage thinking could provide a critical tool for 'border thinking', particularly surrounding binaries of elite/subaltern, domination/resistance, modernity/traditionalism, civilisation/savagery, culture/nature and state/civil society.

Following from the work of David Featherstone, I contend that assemblage thinking could usefully 'inform a processual, relational reworking of articulation as bearing on the negotiation of multiple political trajectories' (2011: 139). Within ANT perspectives the process of connection is usually referred to as 'translation' in which the relations are made up of 'individuals and collectives' (Callon & Law 1997: 171). Yet, the structure of 'nodes' and 'networks' impedes an understanding of the generative processes of these connections and associations as tensioned, contested and productive for shaping political identities (see Featherstone 2003). The process of tracing network associations within ANT or following the actors (see Latour 2005; Law 1991; Murdoch 1995; O'Neill & Whatmore 2000) is not

sufficient for understanding the geometries of power and labour involved in these connections. One of the useful ways to understand how political identities are constructed through political action is by analysing ‘practices of articulation’ (Featherstone 2011: 140; also see Braun & Disch 2002; Davies 2012; Noxolo 2014; Yeh 2012). Moore has called this ‘articulated assemblages’ (2005: 317).

To do this, I adopt the notion of ‘articulation’ outlined by the late cultural theorist Stuart Hall who described it as:

the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called ‘unity’ of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary ‘belongingness’. The ‘unity’ which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected (interview with Grossberg 1986: 53)

Though Hall is not the only advocate of ‘articulation’ (see Haraway 1991; Kuhn 1970), I focus on his development of the term as it most closely relates to identities of race and ethnicity and is therefore the most relevant for addressing changing conceptualisations of indigeneity in Bolivia. Hall draws on the work of Marxist theorists, namely Althusser, Gramsci and Marx himself. In particular, he develops Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and ideology as a process in which the hegemonic elite are able to articulate their interests to other social groups in order to attain broad consent. For Hall, Gramsci ‘conceives ideological change, not in terms of substitution or imposition but rather in terms of the articulation and disarticulation of ideas’ (1986: 23). Thus, culture, identity and politics are part of the broader structures of power and are arranged through ‘relations of dominance and subordination’ (1980: 325). Hall has used articulation to usefully address issues of race (1980) and ethnicity (1997). Hall recognises that race is intimately connected to identities of class and argues that in South Africa ‘race is the mechanism by which this stratification of class is accomplished’ (1980: 309). However, he disturbs the notion that class is a static and homogenous identity instead asking us to think about the complex forms and processes through which economic relations affect social and political identities of race. Hall therefore asks us to attend to the nature of these relations and articulations rather than on an ‘identity’ position since this is always a contingent and contested process of becoming.

For Hall (1997), people's identities are multiple and contradictory. In his writings on black identities in Britain, Hall proposes a counter-hegemonic project that is 'a politics of living identity through difference' (1997: 57). Rather than trying to organise a universal collective subject he argues that multiple social identities need to be addressed and recognised where 'any counter-politics of the local which attempts to organize people through their diversity of identifications has to be a struggle which is conducted positionally' (1997: 58). This is done through a Gramscian 'war of position' in which the collective subject is constructed *through* and *despite* of articulations of difference. The constitution of 'positions' is therefore a necessary process in restructuring relations of power and structural inequalities based on class, gender, ethnicity and race. Slack argues that articulation works on various levels:

Epistemologically, articulation is a way of thinking the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities. Politically, articulation is a way of foregrounding the structure and play of power that entail in relations of dominance and subordination. Strategically, articulation provides a mechanism for shaping intervention within a particular social formation, conjuncture or context (1996: 113)

The concept of articulation mirrors relational approaches to the socio-spatial within the discipline of geography since Slack contends that 'context is not something *out there, within which practices occur or which influence the development of practices*. Rather, *identities, practices, and effects generally, constitute the very context within which they are practices, identities or effects*' (1996: 126; original emphasis).

Ernesto Laclau (1977) also develops the theory of articulation in a Latin American context. The author contests class reductionism in the region and argues for a refiguring of articulation able to analyse socio-spatial singularities as complex, multiple and unable to be predetermined. Laclau contends that articulation is the tendency to fix 'subject positions' that results 'from the contingent and precarious links established by articulatory practices' (1985: 34). He therefore contends that society is not an inevitable and fully constituted entity but part of a myriad of articulatory practices that are presented as 'a chain of equivalences' (1985: 35). Drawing from Laclau's *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* Hall states that Laclau 'uses the notion of articulation to break with the necessitarian and reductionist logic which has dogged the classist Marxist theory of ideology' (interview with Grossberg 1986: 53). Similarly, Chantal Mouffe has argued that

hegemonic political orders are the result of a ‘temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices’ (2005: 18). Yet, the dominant order is always ‘susceptible of being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices, i.e. practices which will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony’ (2005: 18). De- and re-articulation are therefore part and parcel of antagonistic struggle.

Articulation approaches have usefully informed studies of indigeneity as well as social movement research within human geography. Firstly, within explorations of indigenous identities the concept of articulation has been linked with Spivak’s understanding of strategic essentialisms as ‘a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest’ (1996: 214). In this way, ethnic identities are sometimes positioned as essentialist, fixed and static in order to further a political agenda, such as the notion of indigenous peoples being in harmony with their environments in order to gain territorial rights over land and natural resources (see R.B. Lee 2006; E. Lee 2011; Clifford 2001). That said, articulation theory allows an understanding of the ways that identities are re-imagined within changing socio-spatial relations. Slack (1996) therefore argues that the concept does not fall into the pitfalls of reductionism instead placing strategic essentialisms at the heart of that which needs explaining. James Clifford has argued that the notion of ‘articulated sites of indigeneity’ rejects two assumptions made of indigenous movements: (i) that ‘indigeneity is essentially about primordial, transhistorical attachments’; and (ii) that indigenous movements are a result of ‘post-modern identity politics’ (2001: 472). He suggests that there is partial truth to both accounts but that ‘[t]o think of indigeneity as “articulated” is, above all, to recognize the *diversity* of cultures and histories that currently make claims under this banner’ (2001: 472). Therefore, he argues that chains of equivalence are not ‘inauthentic or “merely” political, invented, or opportunistic’ but are the result of ‘productive processes of consensus, exclusion, alliance, and antagonism that are inherent in the transformative life of all societies’ (2001: 473). In Adam Mandelman’s paper exploring how different indigeneities have been positioned in Hawaii, the author states that articulation theory has permitted ‘a reconciliation of essence/being and process/becoming in scholarship on indigeneity and allowed scholars to understand how indigenous communities might simultaneously embrace *both* modernity and tradition, autochthonous roots and cosmopolitan mobility’ (2014: 179). In this way, articulation theory is useful for disturbing fixed understandings of indigeneity instead bringing the performances, relations and discourses of subaltern agency to the forefront of research.

Secondly, ‘practices of articulation’ have been addressed within the geographies of social movement literatures (Braun & Disch 2002; Davies 2012; Featherstone 2011). Featherstone (2011) melds assemblage theory with articulation to show that ‘relationalities are not a given of political activity, but are reworked, constituted and brought into contestation through the ongoing conduct of politics’ (2011: 142). The author argues that this ‘becomes less about creating a “unity” between two actors or phenomenon as Hall suggests. It bears on connections and links made between diverse trajectories rather than the coming together of two particular elements’ (2012: 61). This approach allows a focus on the contested processes of articulation and the ways that these practices actively reconstitute political practices and identities. Similarly, in Davies’ work on examining the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946, he states that ‘[a]ssemblage’s emphasis on emergence shows not only how political identities are forged through ongoing processes of engagement and negotiation, but how each sailor was an assemblage of corporeal and experiential components’ (2013: 31). In other words, individuals are more than just an identity fixed by class, gender or ethnicity, for example, but are themselves transformed through their collective experiences. This approach allows us to focus on the way numerous actors - defined as both elite and subaltern - rework, reify and disturb dominant ideologies as part of a milieu of relations. These authors show that the practices of articulation are profoundly geographical.

I expand Hall’s understanding of articulation to address the agency of the material, rather than just the discursive, within relational configurations (see Davies 2012; Featherstone 2012; Haraway 1992; Hinchcliffe 2007; McFarlane 2009). Criticisms have been expressed in regards to Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) abandonment of materialist understandings of economic determination that Gillian Hart describes as a ‘falling back on a problematic discursive reductionism’ (2004: 98). Adam Mandelman acknowledges the importance of the ‘*materiality of heritage objects, artifacts, sites, and landscapes [...] in shaping discourses around indigenous identity*’ (2014: 172; original emphasis). Furthermore, there has also been some limited work within science and technology studies that engages with nonhuman agency in articulation theory. Within Ingunn Moser and John Law’s research on how disabled people are (re)articulated in relation to new media technologies, they argue ‘that “voices” do not exist in and of themselves. They do not reflect something that is pre-given. Rather they are constituted or “articulated” into being in material relations which include social, technological and corporeal relations’ (2001: 3).

3.5 Conclusion

Here, I briefly sketch out how the multiple relationalities approach outlined above advances a theoretical foundation for a spatial analysis of the TIPNIS conflict:

Re-thinking the binary between the state and civil society: The approach disturbs the state-civil society binary reified in social science perspectives, through the recognition that social movement and government actors mobilise a number of spatial registers. As illustrated in chapters I and II both the lowland indigenous movement and the MAS Party have challenged hegemonic political orders structured by the liberal citizenship regime and the dichotomisation of public/private spaces of politics, particularly through the idea of ‘a government of social movements’. By understanding politics as practice we can more readily engage with the ways that dominant spatial imaginaries are contested, reified and rearticulated through contentious politics. For example, I have shown that indigenous movements simultaneously combine overt political resistance to nation-state ideologies with strategic accommodations to government policies in order ultimately to reclaim political power. As Massey suggests, there are no ‘a priori politics of topographies’ (2005: 172). Engaging with subaltern voices and practices i.e. those marginalised from the spaces of formal state politics, helps us attend to alternative forms of democratic practice. In turn, this shows how political antagonism has the potential to transform the formal political sphere.

Re-conceptualising subaltern identities: As discussed, identifying under an indigenous label offers many opportunities for political manoeuvre due to recognition of indigenous rights at the international and national scales. However, indigeneity is a less useful analytical framework for understanding conflicts between the lowland indigenous movement and the MAS Party ‘indigenous state’, since us/them boundaries have shifted beyond an ethnic identification. Indeed, certain indigenous peoples now hold positions of power within the Bolivian government and in this sense can no longer be viewed as wholly subordinate. I therefore look to the work of ‘after-subaltern studies’ and MCD scholars that have argued that subalternity is a relational process structured by the coloniality embedded in modern institutions that works to marginalise certain groups from exercising their rights to political representation and participation. Subalternity is also profoundly spatial. Jazeel argues that ‘there is much to gain from treating subalternity not just as a reference to subordinate subjects and/or groups, but also as a more figurative reference to the geographies occluded by the hegemonic conceptualizations of space’ (2014: 88). This

brings us back to rethinking the binary between the state and civil society by attending to counter-hegemonic spatial imaginaries.

Re-constructing political identities in solidarity/movement building: Through a relational approach to politics I seek to problematise the assumption that movement building implies the coming together or unity of distinct social sectors. Rather, it is clear that the spaces of political action can be generative of emerging political identities and spatial imaginaries. By understanding social movements as shifting assemblages we can evaluate the labour of building solidarity over time. Furthermore, forming connections to other social actors relies on shaping collective grievances through a Gramscian style ‘war of position’ capable of de- and re-articulating political identity claims and manoeuvring through political opportunities available at the time. In addition, collective political action offers affective spaces of social encounter and learning that generates emerging socio-spatial relations.

Researching ‘articulated assemblages’: Acknowledging the relational construction of the socio-spatial through assemblage theory advances an analytical framework alert to the changing articulations of spatial forms. In order to analyse how spatial registers are contested, reiterated and reworked I call for a framework capable of tracing how ideologies, demands and subaltern identities are articulated within materially heterogeneous and spatially extensive political struggles. Researching contentious politics through this approach necessarily has implications for deciding on the methods adopted. In the next chapter I will elaborate a critical ethnographic approach to research practice that has ‘resources which can be more alive to the generative and multiple character of political activity’ (Featherstone 2010: 90).

**METHODOLOGY: POLITICS OF RESEARCH, CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY
AND MULTIPLE POSITIONALITIES**

There are thousands of books from which one can ‘learn’ about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ methods in order to create an objective representation of the socio-spatial. In this chapter, I offer a wider exploration of methodology to explore the philosophical underpinnings of chosen methods and the necessary implications of these methods for the types of knowledge produced. Methodology is a ‘way of thinking about and studying social phenomena’ whilst the individual methods chosen are a set of ‘[t]echniques and procedures for gathering and analyzing data’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 1). It is now widely acknowledged within social science literature that the research methods chosen cannot be detached from specific epistemological assumptions (Hoggart et al 2002). Graham has stated that ‘[p]hilosophy is to research as grammar is to language’ (1997: 8). In other words, our methods are ‘grounded in the bedrock of a specific view on the nature of ‘reality’ (ontology) and the basis on which knowledge claims are made (epistemology)’ (Hoggart et al 2002: 310). Therefore, a good methodology is defined by the extent to which the ways of knowing – the methods – are aligned with the ontological underpinnings of the study (Cragg 2009).

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I introduce a politically engaged method framed around the core aim of attending to the multiple voices, practices and imaginaries of subaltern epistemic positions. Second, I outline critical ethnography as the method best able to explore the lived, subjective experiences of marginalisation, the construction of collective grievances and the formation of resistances from below. This involved a nine-month period of multi-sited fieldwork in Bolivia, through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field journals. Third, I offer a critical reflection on the implications of power and positionality for fieldwork. I claim that the researcher can never be disengaged from ways of knowing, the practices of research and therefore that which is represented. Thus, we need to acknowledge and reflect on our own positionalities in order to critically engage and negotiate the geometries of power that are embedded within any research encounter. Fourth, and finally, I consider the politics of language interpretation and translation.

4.1 Politics of Researching and Representing Indigenous Peoples

The point of ‘decolonising methodologies’ as Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) puts it, is to place the spaces of colonial difference at the centre of thinking through processes of knowledge production. This thesis aims to place subaltern epistemic perspectives at the heart of understanding political action by the lowland indigenous movement during the TIPNIS conflict. Studying the research subject raises a number of fundamental issues, however. Most importantly, it raises the question of representation and asks us to examine whether we – as Western situated researchers – can hope to comprehend alternative world-visions and ways of knowing in the spaces of postcolonial difference. In Spivak’s (1988) controversial essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ she answers in the negative since there is no space beyond representation in which the subaltern is free to speak. That said, Spivak does not foreclose intellectual engagement with subaltern ‘others’ but reminds us of our responsibility to ‘attend to the ways that one’s theoretical work construed *as* text works to ideologically constitute the subaltern subject’ (Jazeel 2014: 94). As such, researchers need to hold the desire to gain knowledge in tension with the political and ethical implications of representing the researched. Routledge asserts that:

There is fluidity in any site of representation. There is no clear distinction between speaking for others and letting others speak for themselves. I thus cannot simply abdicate my role as a representative, nor can I cease to construct subalterns discursively, even as I refuse to speak, in some ways, on their behalf (2000a: 376)

Relatedly, Spivak asks the researcher to ‘question the authority of the investigating subject without paralysing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility’ (1987: 200). Jazeel contends that engaged research implies ‘trying harder to interpret, to listen, to translate some agency’ (2014: 95). For Jazeel and McFarlane this requires ‘a creative, uncertain, indirect conception of learning with people/places/cultures’ and of ‘finding new ways of representing through learning together without slipping into [...] distancing abstractions’ (2010: 122). As such, I sought to provide modest accounts of my own inter-subjective experiences in order to produce the interpretations offered in the thesis. The research text is thus a ‘partial perspective’ (Strathern 2004) from someone separated from the communities studied and yet implicated in the knowledge produced through research encounters. This acknowledges that there will be ‘absences and fallibilities whilst recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands’ (Rose 1997: 319). The recognition of vision limitations opens up the possibility for

understanding truths, knowledges and realities as multiple and works to decolonise forms of knowledge production (Christians 2000). Clifford therefore calls for a ‘partial ethnography’ that leads to ‘more subtle, concrete ways of writing and reading, to new conceptions of culture as interactive and historical’ (1986: 25). This echoes Escobar’s (2001) call for deep ethnographic narratives that keep the transient, the tensioned and the everyday within the broader and deeper sets of relations and structures at work in processes of modernity. Within the next sub-section I explore feminist and poststructuralist contributions to the project of decolonising methodologies.

Feminist and Poststructuralist Approaches

Feminist and post-structuralist approaches were utilised as one way of addressing the violence of traditional studies of indigenous peoples as ‘objects’ of research. Feminist geographers have been key to problematising the assumptions of objectified theories of the socio-spatial determined by the researcher’s ability to distance themselves from the researched (Haraway 1988; Rose 1997). These interventions have shown that this separation, coined the ‘masculine gaze’, ‘seeks to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power’ (Haraway 1991: 58). As such, a feminist conception of objectivity closes this distance to show that knowledge is ‘embedded, situated, specific and hence partial’ (Mohammad 2001: 103). To present ‘views from somewhere’ necessarily implies a commitment to transparency, reflexivity and positionality in the research process (Haraway 1988: 590; see England 1994; Katz 1994; Kobayashi 1994; Parr 1998; Rose 1997; McDowell 1992; Valentine 2002; Widdowfield 2000). Hanson argues that ‘the knowledge born of the research process is a joint, yet always unequal, creation of both the researcher and the research subjects’ (1997: 122). As Valentine contends, self-conscious critical reflexivity is therefore integral ‘in order to overcome false notions of neutrality’ (2002: 117).

In this vein, some feminist theorists have critiqued Marxist approaches for creating a distinction between theory and practice that implies a distancing of the ‘other’ through a lack of engagement in extensive empirical work that makes ‘an explicitly “Marxist” ethnography difficult’ (Thomas 1993: 31). Moreover, Staeheli and Kofman have questioned the normative epistemologies of political geography arguing that it ‘describes a “world without people” or at least a world of abstract, disembodied political subjects’ that constitutes a ‘masculinist practice’ (2004: 5). That said, Marxist geography is not a coherent body of work and there have been a number of important feminist contributions to

political geography that critically engage with some of the problems of objectified social science research (see Hart 2004; Katz 2001; Pain & Smith 2008; Pain et al 2010; Sharp 2007; Staeheli & Kofman 2004). In addition, there have been important Marxist or anti-imperialist contributions to Latin American anthropology, such as June Nash's (1979/1993) *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*, William Roseberry's (1983) *Coffee and Capitalism in the Venezuelan Andes* and Michael Taussig's (1980) *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism*, to name a few.

In addition to feminist perspectives, the loosely defined body of work known as poststructuralist theory informed the research. Like feminist approaches, proponents have questioned structural forms of research embedded in empiricist, positivist and representational philosophies (Doel 1999). Latour, a key advocate of ANT, has therefore asked '[w]ould you qualify as "scientific" a discipline that puts to one side the precise information offered by fieldwork and replaces it by instances of *other* things that are *invisible*?' (Latour 2005: 50; original emphasis). In other words, the type of explanation or theory put forward should not be determined by anything other than the empirical findings derived from the research encounter. Mol also disrupts the presumption that knowledge is an object out there to be studied, instead arguing that '*ontology* is not given in the order of things, but that, instead, *ontologies* are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices' (2002: 6; original emphasis). As such, the author contends that scholars should shift away from research that represents *one* structure, *one* essence, *one* truth or *one* reality towards accounts that attend to multiplicity and difference (Mol 2002). As such, post-essentialist approaches, such as ANT and non-representational theory, problematise the existence of prefixed categories or structures that do not present the flux, motion and mutability of the social (see Latour 2005; Thrift 2007). Practices and performances are placed at the core of analysis to study 'the way identities and spaces are made and remade' through particular enacted moments (Smith 2001: 36). Thus, space is considered a 'verb rather than a noun' (Doel 1999: 123). Fundamentally, this infers an acknowledgement that subaltern political cultures cannot be predetermined but exist as part of the milieu of uneven power relations (Featherstone 2012; see also Guha 1982). As such, I attempted to surrender assumptions about indigenous agency as traditional and archaic or inherently good, for example (see de la Cadena 2010: 360).

Significantly, both feminist and poststructuralist methodologies usefully define power as a product of relational processes. Hence, power is not held but 'maintained' as '[n]o thing,

no class, no gender, can ‘have power’ unless a set of relations is constituted and held in place’ (Law 1991: 18). Therefore, ‘[d]omination is never a capital that can be stored in a bank. It has to be deployed, black-box, repaired, maintained’ (Latour 1991: 118). This echoes geographical understandings of domination and resistance as entangled and as bearing the traces of the other (Sharp et al 2000). To understand how dominant modes of ordering such as neo-colonial forms of knowledge production or capitalism are constructed therefore requires a committed approach to addressing relations embedded in place.

Both approaches also recognise that researchers (re)produce dominant structures of knowledge and power (Gibson-Graham 2006; Raghuram & Madge 2006). Law asserts that academics ‘not only describe but also help to *produce* the reality that they understand’ (2004: 5; original emphasis). As such, processes of knowledge production are inherently political (Cook 1997; Law 2004). This begs the question of whose realities we wish to represent (Aitken & Valentine 2006; White & Bailey 2004). In other words, methodology is not only ‘concerned with what there *is*’ but ‘what there could be’ (Law 2004: 23). For many feminist researchers ‘situated knowledges’ can subvert dominant relationalities of power and traditional analyses of the geopolitical that are concentrated at the macro level (Haraway 1988; Hyndman 2007). Routledge has argued that this recognition ‘implies that researchers take sides, albeit in a critical way’ (2002: 487). With the aim of complete transparency, I must be clear that my own engagement was one that combined intellectual pursuits with embodied research aimed at advancing many of the demands of the lowland indigenous movement. During the fieldwork I positioned myself against the proposed road through the TIPNIS for the same reasons offered by CIDOB. That is, not because of any indelible objection to development *per se*, but because the MAS Party have reiterated colonial structures of power that have overridden the views, livelihoods and forms of organisation of lowland indigenous peoples in the name of national progress. Notwithstanding this political stance, I also developed a negative critique of certain manifestations of power embedded within spaces of left-indigenous contentious politics.

4.2 The Critical Ethnographic Method

I argue that a critical ethnographic methodology is best placed to attend to a spatial reconfiguration of articulation theory that focuses on the material and discursive processes of contentious politics. I chose to adopt qualitative techniques since they are more suitable to ‘see[ing] the social world as something that is dynamic and changing, always being constructed through the intersection of cultural, economic, social and political processes’

(Limb & Dwyer 2001: 6). Qualitative approaches are also best placed to understand subaltern epistemic positions as they ‘challenge the way that knowledges are made, from the top down’ by ‘adopting a strategy that aims to place non-dominant, neglected, knowledges at the heart of the research agenda’ (Smith 2001: 25; original emphasis). Here, the distancing effects of the ‘view from above’ are rejected in favour of methods able to describe the ‘situated’ in place-based contexts (Rose 1997; Smith 2001).⁴⁰

An ethnographic methodology was chosen as the most appropriate tool to fulfil the aims of the research and attend to subaltern agencies. Ethnography is defined as ‘the art and science of describing a group or culture’ (Fetterman 1998: 11). This involves overt or covert participation in people’s everyday lives in order to facilitate an understanding of the placed experiences, systems of knowledge and ways of life of a particular cultural group (Cook 1997; Hammersley & Atkinson 1994). Ethnographic research is committed to intensive empirical research that avoids causal explanations and is therefore an appropriate method for relational understandings of social movement dynamics. Indeed, one of the key contributions of more recent anthropological studies has been to broaden understandings of collective resistance beyond the realm of explicit political protest to encompass everyday acts of resistance (see Escobar 2008; Nash 2005; Warren & Jackson 2003). I therefore argue, alongside Escobar, that ‘[t]o understand contemporary social movements, one must look at the micro-level of everyday practices and their imbrication with larger processes of development, patriarchy, capital and the State’ (1992: 420).

Nonetheless, it is important to recognise the historical grounding of ethnographic approaches, particularly in the discipline of anthropology, that are associated with systems of colonial knowledge production (Galtung 1967; Gough 1968; Lewis 1973) and unequal power relationships (hooks 1990; Scheyvens et al 2003). Herbert states that ethnography has served as a ‘handmaiden to broader colonialist projects’ where ‘the “natives” are passive and powerless’ (2000: 562). Thus, Restrepo and Escobar argue that scholars need a ‘critical awareness of both the larger epistemic and political field in which anthropology emerged and continues to function, and of the micro-practices and relations of power within and across different anthropological locations and traditions’ (2005: 100). I contend that ‘good’ ethnography is therefore that which is open to exploring issues of positionality

⁴⁰ It must be noted, however, that qualitative methods are not entirely synonymous with any form of epistemological approach as can be seen by Vicky Lawson (1995) who has used ‘counting’ as a method for researching the gendered implications of structural adjustment programmes in Ecuador through what she describes as a post-structuralist feminist approach.

and relations of power through a reflexive process of critical self-awareness. Herbert (2000) has argued that this can be achieved by pursuing three related practices: forthrightness (the visibility of the political nature of the research to the participants); reflexivity (consideration of the researcher's positionality in relation to forms of knowledge production); and modesty (a commitment to representing accounts that can only ever be marginal and situated). This implies the adoption of a 'critical ethnography' to 'describe, analyze, and open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain' (Thomas 1993: 2-3).

There have been some fruitful explorations of the ethnographic method in studies of Bolivian politics that are worth noting here. Lazar's (2008) study of the lived experiences of indigenous populations in the city of El Alto disturbs notions of the individual liberal citizen through insights into the performance of dance and fiestas as moments in the formation and maintenance of collective citizenship practices. Fabricant (2010) has explored the landless peasant movement in the department of Santa Cruz through work that involved living with leaders and members, participating in meetings and marches and observing agricultural fairs and festivals. Through this account she provides a nuanced understanding of the tensions between the romance of the collective *ayllu* structure and the realities of increasing poverty, inequality and the resultant call for individualised solutions. Rather than understanding these tensions as failings, Fabricant advocates a shift 'toward understanding such friction as critical to movement building' (2010: 88). Postero's (2007b) book *Now We Are Citizens* sets out to explore the neoliberal implications of multiculturalism through the lived experiences of the Guaraní peoples of Santa Cruz. Postero contends that 'postmulticultural citizens' have emerged as a result of state-sponsored projects with implications for local communities. Finally, Goldstein (2004) has written a neighbourhood ethnography exploring the implications of meso-political changes in specific places. He explores the *barrio* (neighbourhood) of Villa Pagador in Cochabamba through the two practices of folkloric festivals and street lynchings. Goldstein concludes that these performances are aimed at asserting their status as national citizens and articulating their grievances of the state's legal order.

The latter two ethnographic accounts are particularly insightful as the authors discuss the implications of their research for the participants involved and for pervasive power relations. Postero (2007b) sought a participatory ethnography that developed research topics through discussions with Guaraní people and translated her work into Spanish in

order to get constant feedback and reflection. Goldstein (2004) astutely reflects on his own positionality in light of the Bolivian state's history of exerting control over citizens through scientific studies. He suggests that the community might have viewed him as a potential ally or threat depending on how he positioned himself. Goldstein therefore established himself as beneficial to the neighbourhood by teaching English classes and taking photos for the local archive, as well as trying to gain acceptance by bringing his family to live in the community. These accounts provide exemplars of using reflexive approaches in postcolonial settings. In section 4.3 I will discuss my own positionality in the TIPNIS conflict and the implications of this for the ethics of the research.

A 'Multi-Sited' Ethnography

The fieldwork was carried out through a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1986, 1995). This cross-cut binary distinctions of the 'local' and the 'global' by focusing on specific discourses, practices and events of place-based political action within the wider assemblage of left-indigenous struggles in defence of the TIPNIS (see McFarlane 2009). Davies discusses the problems of doing a multi-sited ethnography of spatially extensive social movements but suggests that 'it can be enough to *attempt* to "follow the network" – seeing how people, information and objects are negotiated, translated, accepted and disregarded' (2009: 24; original emphasis). Although I was not able to be physically present at all activities, events and meetings that acted as important spaces of political articulation, I attempted to engage in both an intensive exploration of particular practices and a geographically extensive investigation following the relations between different actors, movements and organisations within the conflict.

In some senses, fieldwork began from my desk in Glasgow. The decision to study resistance to the road project was taken after a thorough exploration of web-based resources, such as campaign websites, social media and blogs. I then began the process of negotiating access to research participants in Bolivia through email correspondence with relevant academics, organisations and NGO representatives. This was also aimed at finding out 'what research may be possible within the constraints of access, time, mobility and money available' (Crang & Cook 2007: 18). Initial tentative emails were sent out to activists that participated in *Mesa (Table) 18*, an unofficial working group outside of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Searches identified Pablo Regalsky, a political geographer and so-called 'MAS dissident' who works on issues of identity, class and the state, and Carlos Crespo, a sociologist and

activist who coordinates studies on environmental justice. Both academic-activists became key gatekeepers for gaining relevant information regarding Bolivian politics and emerging fields of contentious politics. Despite these important connections, however, one academic respondent informed me that email was not the most effective means of communicating with activists and organisations in Bolivia. Therefore, much of the labour of negotiating access was carried out in the ‘field’. Furthermore, I came to learn the fundamental value of face-to-face interaction for engendering trust and rapport and for negotiating access to the spaces of the TIPNIS conflict.

The valley city of Cochabamba was chosen as the preliminary location for exploring the TIPNIS conflict, as it was the site of the World People’s Conference in 2010 and the Water War of 1999-2000.⁴¹ Additionally, Cochabamba plays host to a number of organisations with a strong environmental and social justice focus (Appendix 1). On the 28 September 2011 I arrived into Cochabamba, just three days after the events of La Chaparina. The police repression had catapulted the plight of the indigenous peoples of the TIPNIS to the national stage and resultantly acted to facilitate support from many urban solidarity groups. Consequently, although I had originally intended to spend the first three months studying at a language school, these events made it pertinent to undergo fieldwork straight away.

Within the first few weeks I had established contacts with important NGOs based in the city, such as Somos Sur, CENDA (Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino; Andean Communication and Development Centre) and CEDIB (Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia; Centre of Bolivian Documents and Information) (Appendix 1).⁴² NGO representatives provided me with newspaper articles and documents relevant to the conflict. Two of these individuals were also kind enough to speak with me about the reasons why the resistance to the road project had become a national issue laying out the turbulent relationships between the lowland indigenous movement, urban solidarity networks, the *cocalero* movement, the conservative ‘right’ and the MAS. Having come to study climate justice movements, I found myself undergoing a quick learning curve that

⁴¹ For more practical reasons, Cochabamba was also chosen as it has a temperate climate and a lower altitude than La Paz (and is therefore a good place to acclimatise) and has a number of reputable language schools in which to base myself for the initial three months of the fieldwork.

⁴² During this initial period it was also necessary to convert my specific purpose one-month visa to a temporary residence visa. This required a HIV test, proof of a permanent address, bank statements, criminal record checks from Interpol and the Bolivian police, a letter from my supervisors in Glasgow and a letter from a sponsor within a Bolivian academic institution (Carlos Crespo). This was a lengthy and costly process. On 11 November 2011 I received a one-year residency and eventually received my national Carnet de Identidad (Identification Card) in March 2012.

quickly highlighted my own naivety of the complex histories of indigenous politics and the state within Bolivia. After six days in the country my field diary read:

What I am beginning to understand is that the issue is not a question of environmental justice but indigenous autonomy and representation within the nation-state. What does it mean to be a plurinational state then? Does it mean both state sovereignty and indigenous autonomy? But clearly the rights of the indigenous are the first to go when pitched against development agendas, something that seems to resonate with people's collective resentment of their colonial past (field journal entry, 04 October 2011)

I was then encouraged by Maria Lohman from the organisation Somos Sur to participate in the government's Gran Caravana (Grand Caravan) to the southern area of the TIPNIS between 07 and 09 October. This facilitated my apprehension of the discourses mobilised by the MAS in order to gain support for the road project. The Brigada Parlamentaria (Parliamentary Brigade) of assemblymen of Cochabamba invited members of the government, organisations and federations affiliated with the government, social movements and representatives of the media to join in the caravan in order to show the 'realities' of the TIPNIS. I introduced myself as a research student but was quickly bracketed with a group of journalists and as part of the '*prensa internacional*' (international press). Consequently, I was frequently pushed to the front to record interviews with people in the area of Polygon 7 that desire the road. Although the research did not weigh heavily on the narratives and practices of government officials throughout my time in Cochabamba (September 2011 – February 2012), I also observed a government rally in Plaza 14 de Septiembre on 15 October, a gathering of government supporters at a viaduct on the outskirts of the city on 10 December and the CONISUR counter-march through the city centre on 30 December.

After returning from the caravan, I visited CESU (Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios; Centre for Higher University Education) to speak to Carlos Crespo who generously offered to introduce me to activists of the Campaña En Defensa Del TIPNIS (Campaign in Defence of TIPNIS). Later that night I met Carlos at the activist hub outside of the San Francisco Church in central Cochabamba and stayed to participate in a protest march through the central *calles* (streets) that temporarily halted the evening's busy traffic. I became a regular face at the meetings and protests that took place roughly twice a week, sometimes meeting outside of the church and at other times meeting in an office on Calle Sucre. After a couple of weeks, some of the activists extended an invitation to me to go

with them to join the Eighth March in its final stages. We arrived into La Paz on the 18 October and made our way up to La Cumbre (the summit; a shelf that sits 4,700 metres above sea level) by bus. We then joined the marchers in the afternoon's walk to the final campsite before descending into the capital city the following day. By this point, the march had swelled to roughly 3,000 people, including workers, students, environmentalists and union representatives (Laing 2012). As part of the Eighth March I witnessed the spectacle of support from Bolivian citizens and – on a less positive note – the police barricades around Plaza Murillo where the indigenous marchers made camp. The police restricted the entry of water, food and warm clothing coming into conflict with several urban activists and concerned citizens. In the evening, I also attended a meeting of urban solidarity activists in the Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA).

Upon my return to Cochabamba I carried on attending the activities of the Campaña. I also participated in workshops, conferences and public debates about the TIPNIS conflict and related issues, such as resource governance, development models and the role of IIRSA and Brazil. Members of the Campaña invited me to accompany them to a national indigenous meeting held by CIDOB in Santa Cruz between 13 - 15 December. This event became an important space for the urban solidarity movements to come together and discuss the recently set up national campaign, the Coordinadora Nacional de Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos (National Coalition of Defence of Natural Resources and the Self-Determination of the People). As a result, I was introduced to activists from Santa Cruz and La Paz, many of whom became important contacts as well as interview participants. In January I also carried out several interviews with key activists and intellectuals in Cochabamba.

Whilst in Cochabamba I met with Tomas Huanca of the TAPS institute (Tsimane Amazonian Panel Study Development Community) who has worked with the TIPNIS communities since 1997. I wanted to assess the possibility of entering the TIPNIS and ask advice about how to negotiate permission from the relevant indigenous authorities. Tomas was pessimistic, however, and told me of another researcher's yearlong wait to gain clearance. This news was a set back since I had hoped that a journey to the northern part of the park would have helped me reflect on the everyday lives of the people and their cultural practices as well as being able to gain the sensory experience of the biologically diverse region.

In February, I relocated to La Paz. Here, I contacted people I had met in Santa Cruz who then facilitated my participation in street protests and activist meetings held in the UMSA. On 10 February 2012 I waited with activists and indigenous representatives from CONAMAQ and CIDOB in Plaza Murillo to hear the government's announcement of Ley 222 putting the road project back on the agenda. I then went to a meeting of the left-indigenous solidarity network to discuss the news and make plans for future political action. During this time I conducted interviews in La Paz with activists from different groups and movements and visited several NGO organisations to use their library facilities and organise meetings with representatives. I also carried out interviews with a journalist from the Fundación Tierra (Land Foundation) and an investigator for FOBOMADE (Foro Boliviano sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo; Bolivian Forum for Environment and Development).

On 11 March 2012 I travelled by plane to the Amazonian city of Trinidad, the capital of Beni, where CIDOB was having a meeting to decide whether they would convoke a further indigenous protest march in defence of the TIPNIS. My presence, as a non-member of CIDOB, was restricted at the initial phases of the meeting. The next day, I attended a press conference by CIDOB, which announced the likelihood of a ninth indigenous march on the condition that the indigenous communities of the TIPNIS were also in accordance with the decision. As such, a brigade was assembled to travel to the community of Gundonovia in the north of the TIPNIS for a meeting of all the *corregidores*. A select group of urban activists and NGO representatives were also invited as part of the growing left-indigenous alliance. I then travelled by night bus to Santa Cruz where I contacted people I knew through the campaign and they invited me to meetings of CDAPMA (Coordinadora de Defensa de la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos y Medio Ambiente; Coalition of Defence of the Environment and Self-Determination of the People) that were held in an outside eating area at the Universidad Autónoma Gabriel Rene Moreno (UAGRM). During this time I conducted interviews with urban activists from CDAPMA and Mujeres Autoconvocados (Self-Convended Women), a group of professional women that formed in response to the repression at La Chaparina. I also carried out interviews with representatives of CIDOB at their headquarters.

On 25 April 2012 I arrived in Trinidad by plane from La Paz to participate in the Ninth March.⁴³ Here I met with a couple of activists from the Cochabamba Campaña that invited me to go with them by motorcycle taxi to the headquarters of the Ninth March. Once there I made myself known to Adolfo Chávez, the President of CIDOB, who I had previously communicated with by telephone. The march was temporarily delayed due to blockades and on 27 April I set off with the other marchers participating for a total of six weeks during which I walked, camped, cooked and lived alongside the indigenous participants and urban activists.

Ultimately, ethnography can be identified ‘as a perspective rather than a means of data collection’ (Brewer 2000: 7). Therefore, I will now turn to the four overlapping methods that formed the grounding of the nine-month research period in Bolivia undertaken between September 2011 and June 2012.⁴⁴

i) Participant observation (or observant participation)

Participant observation is ‘a technique that involves living, working or spending periods of time in a particular “community” in order to understand people’s experiences in the context of their everyday lives’ (Valentine 2001: 44). Rather than doing participant observation in a traditional ‘community’, I used this method to carry out embodied research in the different spaces of contentious politics as outlined in the multi-sited ethnography. This included city plazas, vigils in La Paz and Santa Cruz, meetings on the central *calles*, offices, university classrooms, cafés, homes, movement headquarters, markets, film nights, discussion groups, workshops, forums, book launches and the Eighth and Ninth Marches, to name but a few.

⁴³ There is a noticeable gap in my research activities in April before the Ninth March as I decided to take some time off to explore Bolivia with my husband who came to visit me. I kept up to date with the planning of the Ninth March and movement activities through email with acquaintances.

⁴⁴ Additionally, I took 900 photographs (on my compact system camera, digital camera and a mobile phone) and several hours of video footage. Documentary photography or photojournalism has been critiqued as it is contended that the meaning of a photograph is constructed through the creator and the person viewing the image (Harper 1998; Pink 2007). Photographs therefore do not offer images of truth but serve as representations. In many ways, the photos and video footage I took have mostly served as personal reminders and are not therefore included as a research method here. However, where they are used within the thesis I provide a context within the written text and am critical about the photos I include for the sake of fulfilling the specific aims of the research. I do not include any of the video footage within the thesis but have frequently gone back to it as a source of critical inspiration for the empirical arguments presented here. Where photographs are used, I have the verbal permission of those pictured.

Burgess (1984) has identified four field roles in the spectrum of the participant observer: the complete observer; the participant as observer; the observer as participant; and the complete observer. These follow from the distinction of ‘insider’/ ‘outsider’ roles that ‘has long been of central importance to social anthropologists’ (Jackson 1983: 44). However, such dualist assumptions have since been disturbed by authors such as Herod who have argued that the roles of ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ may shape the processes of research but that ‘it makes little sense to assume that one version of this knowledge is necessarily “truer” in some absolute and “objective” sense’ (1999: 314). Rather, it is pertinent that scholars acknowledge their role in any research encounter and carry out research in a politically and ethically sensitive way. In this vein, I echo Thrift’s (2000) call for being *observant participants* rather than *participant observers* recognising the ways in which social scientists necessarily participate in research encounters.

Gatekeepers were important to my facilitation in key events and meetings in the TIPNIS conflict. Burgess has identified gatekeepers as ‘those individuals in the organisation that have the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations for the purpose of research’ (1984: 48). In reality, the process of negotiating access via gatekeepers within social movements is more dynamic, tangled and convoluted. On the one hand, the urban campaigns were organised as non-hierarchical networks of solidarity and political action that were open to participation to everyone sympathetic to the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. On the other hand, CIDOB operated a members-only organisational structure that limited my participation in decision-making meetings. In this respect, I always felt more of a ‘participant’ within the urban movements. That said, I made the decision to limit my contributions to discussions about movement goals and ideological strategies as it was not appropriate to air my opinions on what is a highly contentious political topic that revolves around fiercely proud understandings of *la Patria* (homeland or fatherland). Therefore, my role in the social movement assemblage had a contingent nature that was mediated within specific contexts. Valentine argues that it is important to consider the ways in which ‘marginal groups [...] may be wary of ‘outsiders’ asking sensitive questions and of the purpose of the research, and may challenge your motivations and ethics’ (2001: 47). Consequently, I always strived for complete transparency during my participation in the struggles. I will come back to issues of consent in section 4.3.

ii) *Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews*

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were the second tool for gathering information and are the most commonly employed method for conducting qualitative research (Crang 2003). Interviews were carried out as a way of ‘investigating complex behaviours, opinions and emotions and for collecting a diversity of experiences’ (Longhurst 2010: 113). The interviews were *semi-structured* as a set of research themes and important questions were identified beforehand but the design was loose enough to allow interviews to ‘unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important’ (Longhurst 2010: 103). Interview schedules were also catered to each participant based on knowledge gleaned from my own participation and experience, other interview participants, media interviews and social media websites. The interviews were *in-depth* as they provided a deep exploration of the topics identified in the research project through a focus on the participant’s own words (Crang & Cook 2007). Appendix 2 outlines an example of an interview schedule designed for indigenous participants on the Ninth March. Questions stemmed from the original research questions and the iterative nature of participant observation. In the example given, the schedule was constructed around central topics such as personal background, participation in the TIPNIS conflict, organisational structures within communities, CIDOB and the Ninth March, ideological beliefs of territory and related concepts, environmental beliefs, conceptions of the plurinational state, views of the MAS Party government, political ideologies, left-indigenous alliances and the Unity Pact. The schedule acted more as a guide than a rigid framework and constant reflexivity was required to cater the inter-subjective encounter to fit unanticipated topics that emerged and to drop other issues that were inconsequential to the person interviewed.

In total I conducted 55 interviews in Spanish (the lingua franca of the lowland indigenous movement) with: representatives and leaders from CIDOB, CONAMAQ, CNAMIB (Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia; National Federation of Indigenous Women in Bolivia), APG (Asamblea del Pueblos Guaraní; Assembly of the Guaraní Peoples), CPITCO (Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Trópico de Cochabamba; Coordinating Body of the Indigenous Peoples of the Tropic of Cochabamba), TIM I (Subcentral Territorio Indígena Multiétnico; Multiethnic Indigenous Territory Subcentral), OMIT (Organización de Mujeres Indígenas de Trinidad; Organisation of Indigenous Women of Trinidad); the two Presidents of the TIPNIS and various community leaders; urban activists from Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz; human and environmental rights

campaigners; specialists from NGOs; academic-activists; and representatives from affiliated organisations, such as the neighbourhood association FEJUVE and the departmental body of the COB based in Beni (Appendix 3).⁴⁵ A small number of participants were identified through snowball sampling that involved ‘contacting a member of the population to be studied and asking them whether they know anyone else with the required characteristics’ (Sturgis 2008: 180). More commonly, ‘purposeful sampling’ (Patton 1990) was used to identify participants based on their involvement in the conflict. I carried out a mixed sample that included representatives such as leaders from CIDOB and the TIPNIS as well as local indigenous *corregidores* and activists in order to get a cross-view of different perspectives, experiences and articulations within the TIPNIS conflict.⁴⁶ I had planned to conduct interviews that would take between one to two hours to complete. In reality, the average interview lasted an hour and durations ranged widely from the longest at two hours and 15 minutes with the shortest just 22 minutes. Regrettably, some interviews were cut short due to interruptions, particularly on the Ninth March.

The various interview *spaces* had important implications for the inter-subjective encounter in the following ways: for the spatial configuration of bodies (interviews on the Ninth March could be uncomfortable as it often involved makeshift seats on tree stumps, upturned buckets and the floor); identity perceptions (I looked – and smelled – much different on the Ninth March than in CIDOB’s offices in Santa Cruz for instance); visual and noise distractions (interviews on the Ninth March were frequently interrupted by meetings, press conferences, mealtimes, childcare responsibilities, the weather and so on); and mental, emotional and physical factors (marchers’ concentration deteriorated depending on conditions of hunger, thirst, illness and mental or physical tiredness). In order to make the participant feel as comfortable as possible the interviews were arranged according to the time and place preferred by the individual. Interviews with urban activists took place in cafés, bars, restaurants and homes. However, for representatives of CIDOB or NGOs the interviews took place in office spaces. Using offices to conduct interviews impacted on the resulting data as representatives answered questions in an official capacity according to their organisational role. At times, I felt that interview participants, particularly from CIDOB, were employing self-censored and ideologically convenient representations that didn’t reflect the tensioned processes I observed through the

⁴⁵ All interviews were recorded and the transcripts are available on request.

⁴⁶ It could be argued that *corregidores* are also representational figures with a certain privilege of status and power. In the TIPNIS, however, many of the communities are very small and it is likely that members will take on a leadership role at some point in their lives.

participant observation. In addition, leaders from the lowland and highland indigenous movement were trained in the art of articulating collective grievances and objectives within the nationally and internationally recognised framework of 'rights'. As a result, some interviews took the form of a series of strategic 'sound bites' removed from the broader contexts of indigenous politics. As such, Valentine argues that interviews 'only generate information about what the participants say they do rather than their actual practices' (2001: 44). In this respect, participant observation was an integral method used to triangulate and compare data from interviews.

Interview transcripts, documents and field journal extracts were analysed through a system of coding defined as 'the assigning of interpretative tags to text (or other material) based on categories or themes that are relevant to the research' (Cope 2010: 440). Initially I openly coded the texts using knowledge of the research context, academic literature and the research aims to identify particular themes, which I intuitively scribbled down next to the text. I then read across the texts to isolate recurring patterns and emerging subject matter (Crang 2005). I also tried to be receptive to any gaps or silences of themes that I might have expected to find. I chose not to use research software, such as NVivo, for analysis to keep the process fluid and organic rather than mechanical. Nonetheless, even with an intuitive open coding process I was not entirely comfortable with condensing the data to a set of defined themes as details and contradictions could be lost through this approach. As a compromise I have constantly gone back to the original texts to clarify material and gain new insights and sought to weave narratives together within the thesis, even where they counter each other, thus combining general conclusions with specific nuances. The research analysis was an iterative process characterised by repetition, circularity and reflexivity. I did not set out to categorise, define and essentialise research data and conclusions instead seeking a 'thick description' (Geertz 1973: 3) rich in the multiple narratives, conversations, dialogues and actions encountered during the fieldwork. The results from individual methods were 'triangulated' in order to maximise understandings and inspire confidence in the legitimacy of the results (Crang & Cook 2007; Valentine 2001).

To allow this process of coding, interviews were transcribed into a written format. Two Bolivians carried out the transcription⁴⁷ as my written proficiency in Spanish was

⁴⁷ I partially transcribed two interviews that had been conducted in English and Spanish. Both participants had been educated to university level in the USA and instinctively went between the two languages in conversations and interviews.

insufficient to the task. One of the people employed to transcribe had acted for me as an interpreter and the other had been recommended to me by another PhD researcher studying in Bolivia. I was therefore confident in their abilities and trusted them to fulfil the responsibility adhering to ethical procedures surrounding confidentiality. Discussing the process with both people and drawing up an instruction document outlining procedures for how to document pauses, interruptions, false starts and changes in intonation ensured inter-transcriber consistency. Furthermore, I checked a random selection of the transcripts alongside the interview recording to guarantee accurate and reliable depictions. However, as Bird (2005) notes, this act of transcription is ‘a key phase of data analysis, as an acknowledged and integral part of the data interpretation’ (2005: 247). Undoubtedly, missing this stage resulted in important interpretative processes being lost. I tempered this loss by keeping all of the transcripts in Spanish, reading them in their original language and going back to interview recordings when meanings were unclear. Resultantly, the sections that have been translated into English are only those included in the final thesis.⁴⁸

iii) Documentary Analysis

The third research method was documentary analysis of textual material produced within the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. Documents are used as a source of analysis in social science research for the following reasons: to show social practices and events of organisations and communities; to express particular representations and readings of social events; to signify the social functions, interpretations and effects of documents; and to highlight sensitive topics and place-based contexts (Hoggart et al 2002; May 2001). This primary material included public announcements from the indigenous marches and CIDOB, literature from the urban solidarity movements, posters and leaflets, open letters to the government and web-based media such as web sites, blogs, Facebook and Twitter. Documents such as these are particularly important for political struggles as they act ‘as a means for mediating and co-ordinating between the local and the general in social relations and activities’ (May 2001: 184). Here, an expanded definition of *documents* is being used for any form of text, material or visual representation that can be used in order to understand the indigenous struggles more fully (see Barnes & Duncan 1992). This included, but is not limited to: poetic devices such as songs; national, regional and organisational flags and symbols; videos and campaign footage; and photographs.

⁴⁸ All translations in the thesis are my own.

Following a post-structural interpretation of the socio-spatial these texts were not ‘read’ as speaking for themselves but as dynamic social products constructed within specific contexts. It was therefore pertinent to attend to the labour that produced the text. Alongside authors such as Mitchell (1995) I argue that reducing the social to language is to ignore the cultural processes involved. Rather, ‘everyday life is not immediately “present”, but is *re*-represented simultaneously through the everyday filters and pretensions of our gender, class and racial/ethnic identities’ (Aitken 2005: 248). Thus, important questions when ‘reading’ texts were: how, and in what contexts, were texts produced; who and what was involved in this process; whose voices were included and excluded; what tensions, contradictions and ambiguities were silenced; and what power geometries were embedded within these processes. To do this, the method of documentary analysis was carried out alongside participant observation and interviews. For example, quotes from announcements from the Ninth March are referred to within the thesis but are contextualised through details of when, where, how and why they were made.

Furthermore, newspaper articles were used to gain contextual information on discourses from government representatives, interview quotations with indigenous leaders, media propaganda and for gaging public opinion on the TIPNIS conflict. I approached CEDIB in Cochabamba having been made aware that they were collecting all of the newspaper articles from national media agencies directly related to the TIPNIS road project and the contentious politics surrounding it. This amounted to 2,646 articles accumulated between January and December 2011 (with a large peak in articles around ‘La Chaparina’).⁴⁹ The material was used for establishing a timeline of key events, for identifying key people and organisations involved in the conflict, for detecting key themes and issues and for the elaboration and refinement of interview questions. After December I continued to keep abreast of national news coverage through the independent collation of articles.

iv) Field Journals

Anderson states that ‘the field diary comes to capture the flavour and sense of being in a cultural place’ (2010: 174). For me, the field diary (or journal) was an integral component of the ethnographic fieldwork. The field diary served as a method in various ways: to document general observations, timings and factual information about meetings and protest

⁴⁹ This included newspapers in La Paz (Cambio, El Diario, La Prensa, La Razón, Página Siete), Cochabamba (Los Tiempos, Opinión), Santa Cruz (El Deber, La Estrella del Oriente), Oruro (La Patria) and Sucre (Correo del Sur).

events and to record my own movements along the way; as a reflexive space for thinking through issues that were emerging through interviews and participation; to isolate areas of confusion to be clarified in later interviews; to draw preliminary conclusions and patterns of thought; and to document my own embodied experiences of the research process.⁵⁰ Needless to say maintaining a field journal takes time and self-discipline. Over the course of the nine-month period of fieldwork this practice amounted to six jam-packed journals and several hundred pages of notes on my laptop and random scraps of paper. At times, and especially during my participation on the Ninth March, this process was particularly arduous and time consuming.

Here, I wish to contemplate on the writing of field journals as a way to approach and reflect on cultural difference. This process was useful for putting the 'I' into the research method and to critically reflect on my positionality. In Samantha Punch's discussion of field diary techniques in southern Bolivia she concludes that key issues emerge in journal extracts, such as 'practical difficulties, emotional and intellectual concerns, and feelings of cultural and academic guilt' (2012: 86). Yet, these embodied research experiences and emotional responses are rarely mentioned within methodological descriptions (Bondi 2005). Nevertheless, they are an important component of fieldwork, particularly in postcolonial contexts. To illustrate, reading my field diary shows glimpses into the stark cultural differences between my own background and the various research settings in Bolivia that manifested through eating practices (carbohydrate/meat heavy⁵¹), social etiquette (feeling obliged to stay at gatherings, to do otherwise is to be considered rude), drinking cultures (it is impolite not to accept an invitation to share a drink), sleeping patterns (in my experience less than eight hours) and Bolivian understandings of time and punctuality (relaxed). Moreover, research encounters were sometimes a source of disconcertment that I have found hard to shake despite leaving the 'field':

I didn't write in my journal yesterday as I was feeling particularly tired and woozy after a shot of goodness-knows-what alongside some pretty hardcore pills. Yesterday morning we were told that we were walking 20 km so when we arrived at a site to have *almuerzo* [lunch] I thought we were going to set up camp there. Finally, after asking several different people who all seemed confused I was told that we were going to push on, a distance of another 30 km so we could reach a more shaded campsite. Well, after

⁵⁰ To this end, the writing process was cathartic in much the same way as a normal diary.

⁵¹ I am normally a vegetarian but ate meat on the Ninth March as I felt it would have been impolite and unpractical to turn down the food offered. I am, however, a vegetarian for environmental reasons and not for any moral or religious convictions.

about 15 km I started to feel unwell and noticed a swollen ugly rash emerging on my legs, belly and collarbone. I didn't want to tell anyone, as I knew they would make a fuss and I didn't want to take away medical resources considering it isn't really *my* march. About 5 km later the rash had become much worse and Ida took me to one of the nurses. They responded by putting me in the mini ambulance accompanying the march even though I still stubbornly claimed I wanted to carry on walking. After arriving at the next camp I was taken to the nurse who is from La Paz. She treated me with a shot of something in my lower back and some pills but didn't try to hide her disdain, presumably because she thinks I have no right to be on the march, just another *gringa* taking advantage of the political situation in Bolivia to 'extract' information and further my own career (field journal extract, 11 May 2012).

I have been ill for days now and last night our tent [shared with a North American PhD student Katie] was completely drenched through as it rained all night. It was particularly unnerving when the water started to permeate my sleeping bag from the floor of the tent. I didn't get much sleep and now all of my clothes and some of my papers are saturated. To top it off, we couldn't march today as the road has become impassable. The campsite is behind a petrol station and this evening the lady owner came out to us to offer us a position under the corrugated iron roof of the station. However, I wish we hadn't moved our tent as we drew a large crowd of people who began to discuss the state of our sodden belongings, a spectator sport of watching the *gringas*. Finally, the leader of the march Bertha came over to ascertain the reason for the crowd. I tried to tell her that our things were only slightly damp to which she responded by picking up our things and exclaiming loudly that they were '*mojado*' [soaked]. This is a woman who has the responsibility of looking after her ten children, including a three-month-old baby, and being president of the march and she is concerned with my well-being! I couldn't help but feel guilty over being a nuisance to her (field journal extract, 04 June 2012).

These field diary extracts serve as a reminder of the difficulties of being a researcher 'out of place'. I was acutely aware of my fair skin, freckles and gingery hair that visibly distinguished me as non-indigenous and non-Bolivian.⁵² In a photo taken by the Bolivian photo-journalist Samy Schwartz that was posted on Facebook he describes me as a '*La*

⁵² There were other non-Bolivian researchers on the Ninth March. Of these, two were white females with blond hair and blue eyes (from Sweden and the US), one was a North American male who had Mexican indigenous ancestry and another was a female from Colombia. Understandably, the two white females gained the most attention from the media, which shows the importance of visual appearance for the activities of the researcher during fieldwork.

gringuita antropóloga’ (the foreign anthropologist) (Figure 1). Although the *‘ita’* diminutive form is a term of endearment, *‘gringo/a’* has negative connotations in Bolivia as a result of the nation’s colonial past and more recent anti-US sentiments. For example, during the Gas War of 2003 a popular slogan was *‘los Gringos nos quieren robar el gas’* (the gringos want to steal our gas) (quoted in Perreault 2006: 160). These undesirable associations were perceptible on the Ninth March at Puente Tijamuchi, 26 kms west of Trinidad, where I sat down with a group of urban activists to watch a family of pink river dolphins when the conversation turned to global imperial powers. One man put forth his opinion that England has been the most violent, oppressive and capitalist nation-state in history, which attracted a few awkward glances in my direction. Finally the man picked up on this and turned to me exclaiming *‘está bien, ella es de Escocia’* (it’s ok, she’s from Scotland) to which I had to tell him that I was in fact English.

Figure 1. *La gringuita antropóloga*



Source: Used with the kind permission of Samy Schwartz.

Law and Lin argue that we should actually engage in an ‘exercise in cultivating disconcertment’ (2010: 14) as a way of attending to difference. It was only through these kinds of unsettling bodily experiences and the discussion of these events in my field diary that I was able to reflect on my own discomfort and unease in engaging in what I sometimes saw as a ‘colonial’ exercise; swanning in to participate in issues that weren’t

my own and then retreating to the safety and comfort of my life in Glasgow. This feeling of guilt was furthered when I took the decision to leave the march just two weeks before it arrived in La Paz. I had become ill with flu-like symptoms and after managing to reach Caranavi on the 07 June 2012 I took the decision to recuperate there for a while at which time my symptoms worsened.⁵³ With a heavy heart I left Bolivia without seeing the march reach its conclusion. To conclude, it is important to attend to sources of disconcertment through field diaries for three reasons: (i) to make difference visible; (ii) to critically reflect on the power relations embedded within encounters of cultural difference; and (iii) to transform relations in a positive way. To this, I will now turn.

4.3 Multiple Positionalities and The Ethics of Research

As discussed, the notion of a ‘critical ethnography’ implies a commitment to politically engaged research and critical reflexivity on issues of power and positionality. It is important to consider the ways in which our individual positions and institutional backgrounds impact on the production of knowledge as ‘[o]ur research can never escape from the power relations shaping the situations in which we research’ (Smith 2010: 165). This can be in terms of the interconnected components of cultural, social, gender, racial, geographical location, class or education. These issues of power and positionality were especially important to consider in the postcolonial setting of Bolivia as Skelton has argued that ‘[j]ust because as an individual you were not part of colonial practices does not mean they are not part of our identities, the ways in which we see the world, or the ways in which the world sees us’ (2001: 94). Similarly, Routledge asserts that ‘[w]hen conducting research in developing settings, researchers cannot escape the power relations that exist between their own societies and those in which they conduct their work’ (2002: 486).

My own positionality as a young white educated (and relatively wealthy) Western female had various implications that were culturally specific to Bolivia. In particular, my female identity was important ‘within the cultural boundaries of a paternalistic social system’ that exists in the country (Fontana & Frey 2000: 658). However, gender is not a one-way power relationship. On the one hand, in a couple of interviews with male leaders I was acutely aware of my identity as a female as the interview questions were interrupted with questions about my marital status, whether I had a partner and whether my father (never my mother)

⁵³ After my return to the UK I felt lethargic for months after. I underwent several tests at the doctors and hospital to make sure I had not contracted a virus or parasite. The prognosis was that I had probably suffered from dengue fever in Bolivia from mosquito bites (there is no vaccine against dengue fever).

minded his daughter coming to Bolivia on her own. One of the representatives of CIDOB nicknamed me '*reina*' (queen) although I was never sure if this related to my identity as a female, my British/English nationality or whether it reflected a sense that I was somehow 'above' the other people on the Ninth March. On the other hand, I often felt that I was perceived as being sufficiently foreign enough to be accepted into certain activities that were usually the domain of men. This resonates with the findings of Sarah Howard in her fieldwork in Nicaragua where she reflects that her outsider status placed her 'somewhat outside of the normal gender division of activities' (1997: 26). For instance, during the Ninth March some of the male leaders of CIDOB invited me and another white female researcher to join them to drink 96 percent proof *alcohol potable* (drinking alcohol) one morning and on another occasion I was invited by some of the *corregidores* from the TIPNIS to drink beer with them. On both occasions female indigenous marchers were not included in these activities.

As part of the multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork I found myself 'wearing different hats'; that is enacting and negotiating multiple subject positions dependent on the context. As Marcus notes, the ethnographer is likely to undergo a 'constantly mobile, recalibrating practice of positioning' (1998: 97). These included the following identities: a geographer from the University of Glasgow studying Bolivian politics; an environmental activist and campaigner from the UK; a member of the Cochabamba Campaña; a *gringa*; and a marcher on the Ninth March. Some of these identities were chosen strategically and others were unconscious or labelled on me. In particular I chose not to align myself to an NGO as I was aware that some of the urban activists were critical of their role in the lowland indigenous movement. On the Ninth March I actually felt – unreasonably perhaps – frustrated with my identity amongst the *gringo* researchers as I had participated for the longest amount of time on the march and was well acquainted with the urban activists in the solidarity movements. In some ways, I had started to think of myself as a *marchista*. As such, binary distinctions of 'insider'/'outsider' are malleable in the research context.

Ethical, political and moral dilemmas were an important component in fieldwork practices. At one point on the Ninth March I surreptitiously positioned myself as a BBC reporter for my own safety and that of fellow marchers. On 05 May three acquaintances and myself left the community of Bermeo (where the march was stationed) by motorcycle taxi to the town of San Ignacio de Moxos (a distance of 37 km) in search of an Internet connection to contact family and friends. However, when we attempted to leave the town we were unable

to get a motorcycle/car taxi or a bus as people in the town were hostile to the march and those affiliated with it. As a last resort I used my outsider status as a white European to claim that I was from the BBC and that the others were working for me. I even claimed that I had never been to the march and knew little about the reasons behind it. We eventually managed to persuade some *mototaxistas* (motorcycle taxi drivers) to drive us to the march. This was an uneasy embodied moment of fieldwork where I used my white-skinned body and postcolonial stereotypes to negotiate a position of safety. Yet, as Hester Parr notes, the ‘researcher’s body is often used as a strategic tool in fieldwork’ (1998: 28). For example, Routledge (2002) subverted his positionality as a white Westerner to masquerade as a tour operator in order to gain access to information beneficial to groups resisting development in Goa, India. Routledge contends that we can subvert our power differentials and ‘make them work for us in political ways that attempt to effect social, environmental, and political change’ (2002: 485). In Katinka Weber’s (2010) PhD research on negotiated indigenous identities in Bolivia she argues that ‘research ethics depend on the social and cultural context that a researcher encounters. In other words, ‘ethical context’, presentation of the self, and what constitutes appropriate research methods, are all linked to the socio-cultural context of a researcher’s field sites’ (2010: 110).

My participation on the Ninth March was particularly sensitive as government representatives had been making accusations that the march was being controlled and financed by NGOs, environmentalists and opposition parties. In reference to my positionality, Bertha Vejarano, the President of the Ninth March, stated that ‘the cameras focus really fast on you, this is to discredit the march and say that they aren’t indigenous that are marching, that they are pure *gringos*’⁵⁴ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). Consequently, it was decided that my participation in the march was premised on refusing media interviews, not participating verbally in camp meetings and by remaining ‘discreet’. Therefore, when asked by the media agency Canal 7, affiliated to the government, for an interview I politely declined. Thus, the use of popular anti-imperial sentiments by government representatives shaped my participation in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. One way I mediated negative associations was to use my camera to take video footage and photographs when the march was passing through large towns. The technology acted to differentiate me from the rest of the marchers, marking me out as a journalist rather than a representative of a political party or NGO.

⁵⁴ ‘las cámaras realmente lo enfoca rápido a ustedes, eso para qué para desprestigiar a la marcha y decir que no son indígenas los que están marchando, que son puros gringos’.

Research practices complied with ethical standards in the social sciences that included informed consent. Consent forms and information sheets were written in Spanish and the translations were checked with a postgraduate language student at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón (UMSS) in Cochabamba (Appendix 4). These were printed with the University of Glasgow logo to reassure participants that the research complied with ethical standards. With the urban activists and leaders from indigenous organisations this act of written consent was straightforward and some participants commented on their appreciation that I was undergoing strict ethical procedures. However, it became immediately clear on the Ninth March that some of the inhabitants from the TIPNIS felt uncomfortable signing a written contract and in some cases had insufficient literacy to read the documents. In these cases, participants were verbally informed of the purpose of the research project and the content of the interview schedule. Hence, informed consent did ‘not necessarily imply or require written or signed form. It is the quality of the consent, and not the format that is relevant’ (American Anthropological Association 2012).⁵⁵ I did, however, endeavour to hand out the information sheet to all participants so that if they needed to contact me with questions or to withdraw from the research they had my Bolivian telephone number, UK telephone number, mailing address and email address. Ethical considerations were of upmost importance due to the sensitive nature of interviews that might entail questions about ethnicity, gender, social and political discrimination and the violence that occurred during La Chaparina. Individuals were made aware that they were not required to answer every question and that they could discontinue or break from the interview at any time. This only occurred on three occasions when urban activists asked me to turn off the recording device for fears that their subsequent statements might implicate them in some way. I have not included any of these quotes within the thesis.

I treated consent as a continual ‘process’ rather than a fixed ‘event’, such as the ascertainment of a signature. A wealth of literature has problematised the appropriateness of medical ethics auditing schemes for social scientists (see Cloke 2002; Dyer & Demeritt 2009; Halse & Honey 2005; Sieber et al 2002; Valentine 2005). Dyer and Demeritt contend that ‘the ethical frameworks applied by formal ethical review processes ignore those wider normative and political concerns at best, and at worst actively subvert ongoing efforts to infuse geographical practice with an ethical sensibility’ (2009: 48). Informed consent arises from medical research and its requirement is driven by the need to protect

⁵⁵ These procedures adhere to my ethics proposal to the University of Glasgow to carry out this research, which is available on request.

the medical establishment from legal charges, as much as to protect a patient from harm (Meisel & Kuczewski 1996). Moreover, formal consent is problematic in indigenous communities because the use of a signature and the idea of signing a document may have been used as a colonial instrument to ascertain land, resources and local knowledges (Davison et al 2008; Dutfield 2009). In addition, Linda Smith states that '[i]ndigenous groups argue that legal definitions of ethics are framed in ways which contain the Western sense of individual and of individualized property' (1999: 118). Individual written consent may not therefore be suitable in settings with communitarian visions of ownership.

Rather, consent required continual re-negotiation and dialogue. For example, verbal permission for my participation on the Ninth March was received from the President, Bertha Vejarano. In an interview she affirmed that 'there isn't a problem, we know that you are conscious [...] We, the indigenous peoples, we value that you are here because you want to collect these experiences in the spur of the moment that otherwise you could not have'⁵⁶ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). This understanding of myself as 'conscious' was as a result of my prior involvement and participation in the urban movements and the fact that I was already trusted by certain activists. Yet, these relations of trust needed to be engendered with other marchers. On another occasion in San Borja, I was asked (alongside two other research students) by Bertha to introduce myself to the marchers and give my reasons for participating. This request occurred because new people had recently arrived on the Ninth March and were unaware of who I was. I introduced myself to all of the marchers in a camp meeting and described the nature of my research to ensure their agreement with my presence on the march.

Furthermore, consent does not ensure wider moral and ethical validity. Therefore, throughout the research process I was committed to the ideas of forthrightness, reflexivity and modesty (Herbert 2000), discussed earlier. In particular, I took the decision to offer interview participants the choice of whether or not they wanted their real names to be used in published findings (Appendix 4). This strategy was adopted because the majority of activists and indigenous representatives interviewed made it clear that they wanted their voices heard, respected and acknowledged. I therefore felt uneasy telling participants that their personal identities would be made anonymous as it raised a dilemma about whose authority counts in the 'politics of naming' (Guenther 2009: 412). Indeed, following

⁵⁶ The original in Spanish reads, 'no hay ningún problema, sabemos que ustedes son conscientes [...] tenemos un valor los pueblos indígenas que están ustedes aquí porque quieren recoger de repente esas experiencias, que de repente en otro lado no la han podido tener'.

standard practices of confidentiality and anonymity within the social sciences could re-embed unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched, as well as continuing a history of paternalism towards indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Consequently, I chose to respect participants' decisions over naming.

I also endeavoured to learn from the inter-subjective spaces of fieldwork in the hope that I might in some modest way be able to 'occupy the subject position of the other' (Spivak 1990: 121). Authors Gibson-Graham have called this a process of 'partial identification' (1994: 218) where common ground is established despite embodying different subject positions. Partial identification was fostered through empathy by being a witness to the trials and triumphs of the individuals struggling for politico-territorial autonomy. When asking one interview participant who had been on the Eighth March during La Chaparina if there were any other issues she felt were important to discuss she answered 'No, I have really enjoyed your questions. You have made me laugh, remember and cry'.⁵⁷ These instances also acted to forge my own emotional ties to the participants in the TIPNIS conflict. Thus, withdrawing myself from the continuing struggles was much harder than I had envisaged.

I have tried to temper my own geographical separation from the continuing struggles in defence of the TIPNIS by maintaining contact with some of the participants involved. After emailing one activist from Cochabamba he suggested a photography exhibition in Scotland of photos I took on the Ninth March as a way to help inform people of the issues of resource extraction within Bolivia. My potential use as a 'witness' in Europe was also echoed by Juan José Sardina, a *cacique* (native chief) representing CONAMAQ, who told me that 'as we are living, you have lived, you have seen it all, you are a walking testimony that will arrive there in Europe'⁵⁸ (personal interview, 17 June 2012). As such, in June 2013 I organised and curated a photography exhibition and opening event at Wasps Studios in Glasgow entitled 'Resource Sovereignties: Place-ing Resource Conflicts around the Globe' to stimulate awareness and critical debate surrounding issues of natural resource governance and indigenous and environmental rights. I also invited Owen Logan (University of Aberdeen) to contribute his photo banners on the socio-economics of oil and gas in Northern Europe, West Africa, Latin America and the former Soviet Union. The exhibition is currently on display at the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences in

⁵⁷ 'No, me han gustado tus preguntas. Me has hecho reír, recorder y llorar'.

⁵⁸ 'como lo estamos viviendo, tu lo has vivido, lo has visto todo, eres un testimonio andante que esto va a llegar allá a Europa'.

Glasgow. In this way, the research does not incorporate all aspects of participatory approaches that ‘involves those conventionally “researched” in some or all stages of research, from problem definition through to dissemination and action’ (Pain 2004: 652; also see Breitbart 2010; Moser & McIlwaine 1999). Indigenous representatives were more concerned that I take my experiences back to Europe to help their political cause than to come back to Bolivia to disseminate findings, for example. The nature and scope of my ethical obligations and the complex ‘geographies of responsibility’ involved (Massey 2004) were therefore shaped by the participants themselves.

4.4 Politics of Language Interpretation and Translation

Issues of language needed to be considered including the practicalities of interpretation and the politics of translation. In its most limited sense, translation can be defined as ‘the replacement of text in a source language by text in a target language *equivalent* in meaning’ (Muller 2007: 207). This was a necessary consideration in Bolivia, where 37 national languages are legally recognised under the 2009 Constitution. CIDOB represents 34 lowland ethnicities with their own respective languages, systems of knowledge, rituals, codes and symbols. The existence of multiple languages within the lowland indigenous movement means that Spanish is used as the *lingua franca* for communicating between different ethnic peoples, for intra-communal meetings, for announcements and written documents designed for the media or the government and for interacting with the urban activists and affiliated social sectors. Hence, I decided to carry out the research in Spanish and focused my time on improving my language proficiency by completing a one-on-one three-month training course of four-hour lessons five days a week in Cochabamba. I also practised Spanish during my time in two home-stays with Bolivian families.

Originally I had intended to conduct interviews with an interpreter. I approached my language ‘buddy’ Juan Pablo (JP) from the language school Sustainable Bolivia, who was a student of languages at UMSS and a very good English language speaker. However, after five interviews I determined to undertake the subsequent interviews without an interpreter for a number of reasons: (i) I rarely conversed with JP during the interviews, which made his presence feel awkward and unnecessary; (ii) JP is from a middle-class family of conservative political beliefs and I felt he was socially inappropriate for inter-subjective encounters with activists who defined themselves as ‘Trotskyist’; and (iii) I had known the activists being interviewed for roughly three months so introducing an interpreter at this stage was incongruous and broke up the fluidity of conversational interviews. I decided

that the quality of the interview data and the comfort and ease of the participant was more imperative than the occasional clumsy turn of phrase in Spanish. Indeed, it is well established that interpreters take on a meaning-making role that can be challenging to mediate due to cultural and linguistic misunderstandings, the potential loss of subtleties of language, the modification of relations of trust and rapport and the positionality of the interpreter (Herod 1999; Smith 2010; Twyman et al 1999; Watson 2004).

It is also important to consider the ‘politics of translation’ involved in written texts. Muller has questioned the notion that we can represent a translation that is ‘equivalent’ in meaning to the original text. Instead, he argues that language translation is embedded in the ‘*institutionalization of a naturalized meaning hegemony*’ (2007: 206; original emphasis). In other words, translation is necessarily political as it cannot be divorced from epistemological frameworks that work to make some knowledges present and others absent. Furthermore, ‘[d]ifferent languages structure the world in different ways and translations constantly suffer from not being able to convey the richness of connotations’ (2007: 207). Indeed, several authors have argued that translation is a performative and cultural act (see Asad 1986; Bhabha 1994; Dingwaney & Maier 1995). Translation is therefore an active and contested process, rather than a straightforward mapping of meanings from one language to another. Homi Bhabha argues that ‘[t]ranslation is the performative nature of cultural communication’ (1994: 326). Therefore, linguistic translation necessarily implies the interchange of cultures since divergent world-visions are structured through language. Bhabha contends that the ‘process of translation is the opening up of another contentious political and cultural site at the heart of colonial representation’ (1994: 49). In postcolonial contexts such as Bolivia language may structure ways of knowing, interpreting and understanding reality in different ways from the West.

To provide one example, the concept of ‘climate justice’ had little resonance with urban activists unlike the Andean concept of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth/World) or the Aymara worldview of *suma qamaña* (living well). Furthermore, interview questions with the urban activists included discussions of whether they advocated a particular capitalist or socialist economic system. This is particularly important in many Latin American contexts where ideologies are polarised into these two camps. However, during the first interview carried out with one of the community leaders of the TIPNIS it became clear that these frameworks had no resonance for *some* of the individuals from the area. Encounters such as these made me more aware that I was deploying a set of intellectual ‘lenses’ and

discourses that were sometimes alien to the research participants. This is not simply a question of accurate translation but is also a question of interpretations between languages with their own embedded ‘ways of seeing’. For Muller conventional translation is therefore ‘depoliticising’ in that it works to reify the notion of a neutral language structure that makes the notion of ‘multiple realities’ absent. Instead, it may be better to represent accounts that ‘destabilize and denaturalize the hegemony of the translated text’ (2007: 209). For this reason, the original Spanish is included within the thesis alongside the English in order to make the processes of translation more transparent. In addition, the triangulation of methods and the use of participant observation have aided understandings of Spanish-language concepts that were unfamiliar to my previous frame of reference.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the research design has been outlined in accordance with the stated aims of the research. Through a ‘critical ethnography’ that seeks an active engagement with the everyday embodied experiences of the participants the research methods were delineated, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field journals. I have discussed the philosophical underpinnings of the research agenda and have argued that all research is political. Therefore, it is argued that as social science researchers we should acknowledge this and work in critical ways in order to address issues of power and positionality. By critically engaging with these issues it can be seen that ‘understanding *how* the meaning-making process unfolds [...] is as critical as apprehending *what* is substantively asked and conveyed’ (Holstein & Gubrium 1995: 4; original emphasis). This is because *how* we know inevitably determines *what* we know (Hanson 1997). This is of particular importance in research with/of indigenous peoples where ‘it is surely difficult to discuss *research methodology* [...] without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices’ (Smith 1999: 2; original emphasis). Here, I have argued that although certain issues can be resolved through active political engagement and intellectual reflexivity, it is also important to acknowledge that we can only ever hope to make partial connections and must write these indeterminacies into the research. In the subsequent three chapters, I will flesh out the theoretical arguments and empirical findings of the fieldwork by addressing the changing relations between the lowland indigenous movement and the state, the negotiation of identity politics and the formation of left-indigenous alliances during the TIPNIS conflict.

**RE-WORKING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND INDIGENOUS
MOVEMENTS**

The MAS Party has sought to rupture colonial legacies of a centralised state divorced from civil society, most notably by renaming Bolivia a ‘Plurinational State’ and by establishing mechanisms to act as a ‘government of social movements’ (Svampa & Stefanoni 2007: 161; author’s translation). Yet, the MAS administration has been criticised for fragmenting social movements and re-legitimising a Westphalian state model. In particular, the government has re-centralised decision-making in its pursuit of state-led resource nationalism. Consequently, questions about the extent to which the MAS has ‘refounded’ Bolivia have dominated much of the analysis surrounding the TIPNIS conflict. In this chapter, I problematise polemic arguments based on a left-right binary politics that dominate theoretical analyses of the MAS. Instead, the empirical findings presented here engage with the everyday lived politics of the TIPNIS conflict to demonstrate that there are multiple relationalities at play that disturb *and* rework dominant spatial imaginaries, such as the state/civil society and government/social movement dichotomies.

First, I discuss the extent to which the MAS can be conceived of as a ‘government of social movements’ and relate this to scholarly analyses of the Bolivian state. I conclude that many Marxist accounts shutdown alternative conceptualisations of the Westphalian state. In doing so, analyses also negate the power of contentious politics to change the spatiality of state-social movement dynamics. Second, I call for a perspective that considers the ‘entanglements of power’ embedded within any state-social movement nexus. Third, I describe the shifting relations of CIDOB to the MAS during the TIPNIS conflict, including the breakdown of the Unity Pact. Fourth, I contend that the MAS has used anti-imperialist discourses linked to national patriotism to discredit the Marches in Defence of the TIPNIS as factionalist and against the interest of Bolivia. Fifth, I evaluate the ways that the MAS has articulated development as a model linked to progress and modernity. In doing so, representatives of the government have used a politics of race and gender to push through their own development agendas occluding alternative and plural understandings. Sixth, I consider how both the state and the lowland indigenous movement have sought to appropriate and control public spaces in metropolitan areas as a strategy to gain wider support and representational power. Seventh, I examine how the MAS has used social movement tactics as a counter-strategy to demands during the TIPNIS conflict. In the final

section, I discuss the ways that CIDOB and CONAMAQ are forming their own links to competing political parties in an attempt to claim state power. I conclude that the MAS has made important strides in reclaiming national sovereignty, empowering indigenous peoples as active citizens of the Bolivian state and reducing poverty. However, I argue that the state-led neo-extractivist model has come at the expense of minority indigenous groups and environmental rights. To this extent, the MAS has acted as a government to some social movements but has centralised power when it comes to those that challenge the development agenda of the MAS. In this way, the *pueblos* (peoples) of the lowland ethnic nations retain their subaltern status as they are refused access to state machinery.

5.1 State-Civil Society Relations in Bolivia

The Westphalian model of the modern nation-state is a '*historical* phenomenon' (Hall 1984: 1; original emphasis). It was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the modern European state came into its own when government institutions became the acting agent for industrial capitalism. Early theories proposed by the German philosopher Hegel (1952) identified civil society as a natural social order distinguishable from the state. It is with these early political philosophies of the state that important auxiliary binary associations emerged, such as public/private, dominance/subordination, government/social movements and the presumption that the state and civil society are somewhat, if not wholly, autonomous from each other (see Ehrenberg 1999).⁵⁹ These imaginaries produce a 'taken-for-granted spatial and scalar image of the state that both sits above and contains its localities, regions, and communities' (Gupta & Ferguson 2002: 982). Scholars have referred to this idea as a 'spatialisation' or 'spatial practice' of the state (see Gupta & Ferguson 2002; Lefebvre 1991; Rubenstein 2001). This spatialisation is described as an 'image of vertical encompassment, one in which the state sits somehow "above" an "on the ground" entity called "society"' (Gupta & Ferguson 2002: 982). Due to these prevalent assumptions, Sharp et al suggest that in both liberal and Marxist accounts 'the centrality of the state and its ability to harness legitimacy, together with the notion that power is rooted in particular institutions, remain largely unquestioned assumptions' (2000: 4).

Yet, the dichotomous distinction between the 'state' and 'civil society' hides the intimate relationships between civil society actors and government institutions (see Foweraker 1995; McAdam et al 1996; Offe 1985; Tilly 2004). In particular, Latin American social

⁵⁹ It is without the scope of this thesis to discuss a more in-depth historical configuration of the state/civil society paradigm within Western political philosophy. For a geographical discussion see Painter 2011.

movements have played an integral role in party politics and have often maintained close ties to government administrations in order to access resources and social welfare programmes. However, the political culture of clientelism (client-patron exchange of goods and services for political support, particularly votes) has resulted in an imperfect functioning of democratic systems in many of the region's countries (Kaufman 1977; Lapegna & Auyero 2012; Van Cott 2000a). In reference to Bolivia, Van Cott has argued that '[t]he representation function had been monopolized by party-based systems of clientelism that were exceedingly corrupt, even by Latin American standards' (2000a: 26). As such, social movements have questioned the legitimacy of political parties to channel and represent the needs of Bolivian citizens (Tapia 2009). Consequently, democracies in the region were 'being challenged by movements rallying against the failure of states to universalise democratic practices and secure political autonomy' (Yashar 1999: 77). Indigenous movements, in particular, contested the assumptions and mechanisms of democratic and liberal institutions (Postero 2007b; Van Cott 1994; Yashar 1999, 2005). Postero argues that ethnic movements have fostered new kinds of citizenship practices and meanings. The author refers to this as 'postmulticultural citizenship':

First, new protagonists are drawing attention to the ways Indians and the poor have been excluded from political participation in Bolivia's multi-ethnic society. [...] Second, Bolivia's new activists are pushing beyond traditional notions of substantive rights to rethink what they consider their rights to be. Central to this is an understanding that the political arena must be redefined to include not only questions of access to power, but also contestations over cultural meanings embedded in the unequal and hierarchical organisation of social relations (2007b: 6-7).

The Bolivian nation-state has functioned through a system of 'dominance without hegemony' (Guha 1997) as it has never been able to assimilate the indigenous populations of civil society to a postcolonial state headed by *criollo-mestizo* elites. There has thus existed a pervasive structural split between the elite and subaltern domains of politics and the consequent failure of the Bolivian state to integrate the alternative ways of life and decision-making practices embedded within divergent ethnic nations and communities. The 1952 revolution sought to recognise indigenous populations as Bolivian citizens but, as discussed in chapter II, failed to fully address the prevailing relations of power and structural inequalities that served to keep indigenous peoples a subalternised sector of society. In addition, what prevailed was a nationalist 'ideology of *mestizaje* – the mixture of indigenous and nonindigenous – [which] was paired with the extension of individual

citizenship rights to newly designated campesinos who, it was imagined, would set aside their collective cultural investments in keeping with the expectations of modernity' (Albro 2010a: 74). Spivak has referred to this process of the normalisation of difference as the 'epistemic violence' (1999: 127) of colonialism. The mission to 'civilise others' is premised on the categorisation of self/other identities, which affects the legitimacy of people's claims to cultural difference. Although the 1990s multicultural reforms legally recognised the collective forms of political and cultural organisation of indigenous communities, this was in the limited framework of the 'authorised Indian' (Hale 2002, 2004). To some extent, the Water and Gas Wars of 2000-2005 can be understood as a push to fulfil the 'uncompleted revolution' of 1952 (Malloy 1970). During this insurrectionary period, various social movements came together to form the Unity Pact that amalgamated a number of indigenous and *campesino* organisations to restore the legitimacy of the state through a 'political instrument of the people'; the MAS-IPSP. Both CIDOB and CONAMAQ were influential in forming a decision-making logic of the Unity Pact '*de abajo hacia arriba*' (from the bottom up) according to the organic structure of indigenous nations based on communitarian decision-making practices (Mayorga 2007: 6).

The MAS: A Party of Social Movements?

With its roots in a number of indigenous and peasant movements, the MAS came to power with the aim of disrupting the assumptions of liberal democracy and the prevailing binary distinction of the 'state' and 'civil society', which accompanies the ideology of the modern nation-state. The party's official doctrine called for the liberation of the state from a colonial legacy that maintained a structural difference between political parties and movements, arguing instead for national sovereignty of the people (Kohl & Farthing 2006). Hence, the MAS 'was consciously formed as a *political instrument*, rather than a *political party*' to represent *las bases* (the bases) of Bolivian society (Webber 2011: 61; original emphasis). In homage to the Zapatistas, Morales has asserted his commitment to following the will of the people through the concept of '*mandar obedeciendo*' (lead by obeying) (Bautista 2011a; Stefanoni 2006). Gustafson describes this process as 'state and social-movement efforts to "seat" (*sentar*) sovereignty and "re-establish" (*refundar*) the state' (2010: 48). As such, Dangl argues that 'nowhere else have the boundaries between the party and social movements been so confused' (2010: 16). Gustafson has even coined the MAS administration a 'social-movement state' (Gustafson 2009b: 255). García Linera has claimed that 'Evo symbolises the break of an imaginary and horizon of possibilities

restricted to the subalternity of the indigenous' (cited in Stefanoni 2011a: 29; author's translation). For some, this is a decolonising move as it fundamentally questions the assumptions of modernity and liberal democracy (Howard 2010; Monasterios et al 2007).

In many ways, the MAS Party has acted upon these promises to rework the state from within by breaking down the boundaries between the government and social movements. The Morales administration formed the Vice-Ministry of Coordination with Social Movements and Civil Society as a way of bringing social movements into state decisions (Mayorga 2007). Moreover, the government consults with the most important movements and union organisations through the CONALCAM (Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio; National Coalition for Change) that was formed on 22 January 2007 (Mayorga 2009). The coalition was closely aligned with the Unity Pact and has since expanded to include various urban social organisations. Morales has given social movement leaders positions within the government to illustrate the break with the old regime of elite political power and install what Gramsci (1971) called 'organic intellectuals'. Amongst these leaders were: Andrés Soliz Rada as Minister of Hydrocarbons (a long-standing defender of natural resources); David Choquehuanca as Foreign Minister (a high-profile Aymara activist); Casimira Rodríguez as Minister of Justice (former leader of the Domestic Workers' Union); and Abel Mamani as Minister of Water (former leader of the El Alto neighbourhood association FEJUVE) (Do Alto 2008). Further, the Morales administration has disbanded the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (Ministerio de Asuntos Indígenas y Pueblos Originarios) in recognition of indigenous peoples as contemporary citizens, rather than an internal 'Other' (Lucero 2008).

This reworking of the state and its institutions is reflected in the 2009 Constitution that incorporates the values, beliefs and rights of indigenous peoples. The recovery of constituent power, as formulated by Antonio Negri (1999), was required for the expression of the sovereign power of the people. Section six of the Constitution 'participation and social control' grants organised civil society the right to participate in the design of public policies and to exercise social control over the public administrations at all levels of the state, as well as the state's responsibility to create spaces of participation and public monitoring (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009: Art 241). To carry out this process of participation the government created the National Mechanism of Participation and Social Control under the Ministry of Transparency (Zuazo 2010). These changes reveal a move towards a plebiscitarian democracy, one that incorporates the notion of 'popular sovereignty' as

recognised within the 2009 Constitution. Moreover, the Constitution recognises indigenous and popular forms of decision-making structures through three systems of government: (i) direct and participatory democracy through referendums, citizen legislative initiatives, assemblies and councils; (ii) representative democracy through the election of representatives through individual voting systems; and (iii) communal democracy through the election, designation or nomination of authorities and representatives in line with the norms and procedures of native indigenous nations and peoples (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009: Art XI). In this way, state structures have incorporated what Slater has called ‘demo-diversity’ described as democracy that ‘emerges from indigenous roots’ (2013: 75).

This process of decolonising state structures has been significantly aided by reclaiming national sovereignty over the country’s resources and decision-making powers from foreign interests and national elites. Most notably, this has been achieved through the nationalisation of several industries already mentioned. In addition, the MAS has expelled transnational agencies that are considered a threat to the country’s self-determination and national sovereignty. In September 2008 the government expelled US Ambassador Philip Goldberg when it was discovered that the USAID’s (United States Agency for International Development) Office of Transition Initiatives had financed opposition parties in the Media Luna departments to the tune of \$4.5 million (Farthing & Kohl 2014).⁶⁰ The US responded by expelling Bolivian Ambassador Gustavo Guzmán. Shortly afterward the Bolivian government also ousted officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration (Kohl & Bresnahan 2010). Moreover, Bolivia and the US have staged some public battle of wills over the mysterious case of Morales’ plane being forced to re-route to Vienna on 02 June 2013, amid rumours that US fugitive Edward Snowden was on board. Morales accused the US of meddling in the affairs of European state decisions and two days later announced that Bolivia would provide asylum for Snowden (BBC 2013). This anti-imperial rhetoric is what Postero calls ‘oppositionalism’ (2010a: 29). The forging of regional linkages has joined the tactical retreat from the US through intergovernmental unions such as UNASUR (Unión de Naciones Suramericanas; Union of South American Unions) and ALBA (Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América; Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) (Weyland et al 2010). Gustafson contends that ‘[s]overeignty in this post-neoliberal transition thus derived at least in part from the capacity to reinscribe, resignify, and reorder territorially specific social orders and dismantle – through public delegitimation – the private forms of sovereign violence historically rooted therein’ (2010:

⁶⁰ This relationship with the USA has now been restored.

49). However, overturning elite control of state machinery has not been an easy process given that the MAS came to power with only twelve out of twenty-seven seats in senate. The MAS would therefore find themselves continually coming up against traditional political and economic elites (Farthing & Kohl 2014).

The MAS administration therefore sits at a difficult juxtaposition of having to maintain the cultural hegemony and legitimacy of the state in order to maintain control in the face of opposing seats of power in the Media Luna, whilst trying to redefine the premises of the liberal state model from within. Farthing and Kohl identify five formidable challenges to the ‘process of change’ pursued by the MAS: navigating transnational actors and institutions; diffusing internal opposition from powerful political and economic elites; on-going allegiances to clientelist parties in civil society; balancing government posts between trained professionals and social movement leaders; and fulfilling the enormous expectations of indigenous and peasant supporters (2014: 34). They conclude that the MAS are faced with three options in relating to social movements: ‘work to co-opt them, incorporate them as partners, or keep them at a distance’ (2014: 58). The authors contend that the MAS attempted partnership in the beginning of its administration but eventually moved in the direction of co-optation, which they argue is ‘an inevitable tendency in the complex and highly contested terrain of building a political party’ (2014: 57-58).

Between Revolution and Reform: Analyses of the MAS Administration

Despite the achievements of the government, a number of scholars have suggested that the MAS has not gone far enough in breaking down the boundaries between the state and social movements. Much of the criticism from within Bolivia has come from the political ‘left’, who assert that the MAS has not revolutionised the economic and political playing field, most notably through accommodations to private capital and a willingness to bow down to pressures from the political right and transnational corporations (Almaraz et al 2012). Certain movement leaders, former officials of the Morales government and Marxist intellectuals have unequivocally withdrawn their support for the government shaping a group of so-called ‘*disidentes del MAS*’ (MAS dissidents), including Filemón Escóbar (former Senator), Román Loayza (founder of MAS and former President of the Constituent Assembly), Lino Villca (former Deputy), Alejandro Almaraz (former Vice-Minister of Lands), Raúl Prada (former Vice-Minister of Economy and Finance), Pablo Regalsky (advisor to the Constituent Assembly) and Alex Contreras (former spokesperson for the Presidential Palace), to name a few (Do Alto 2008). The collective also includes the Water

Wars leader Oscar Olivera who turned down the role of Labour Minister arguing that popular democracy could not be achieved through the jurisdiction of the current state model (Goudkamp 2006). The group published a manifesto in 2011 that called for the recovery of the MAS's 'process of change' '*para el pueblo y con el pueblo*' (for the people and with the people) (Almaraz et al 2011). In this document, the group criticises the MAS on a number of fronts: for bowing down to the power of transnational corporations in the nationalisation of the hydrocarbons industry; for violating direct and communitarian forms of democracy and local indigenous autonomy structures outlined in the Constitution; for making decisions in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly without the consultation or involvement of indigenous peoples; and for pursuing an extractivist economic model at the expense of the environment. In response to the manifesto, Vice-President García Linera wrote '*El 'oenegismo', enfermedad infantil del derechismo*' (The 'NGOism', infantile disorder of the right) in which he accused critics of the MAS of being '*resentidos*' (bitter) and '*clase media*' (middle-class) and of working on behalf of NGOs that are aligned to the neoliberal 'right' (2011a: 7-12). The group then published a book '*La MAScarada del poder*' (The MASquerade of Power) (Almaraz et al 2012). One of the most pervasive critiques in this analysis surrounds the problem of *rentismo* (the economic dependency of royalties from natural resource extraction) and the consequences of this in terms of institutional change and its wider effects on social (particularly indigenous) exclusion. The authors conclude that the MAS has confiscated the 'political instrument of the people' for their own means. Morales has been accused of being a *caudillo* (a charismatic leader of an authoritarian power) and for centralising decision-making powers, which is part of a political legacy across Latin America (Farthing & Kohl 2014; Tapia 2011). This is reflected in the Constitutional Tribunal's argument that Morales can run for a third term in the 2014 general elections despite the Constitution's two-term limit (Stefanoni 2011a).

Scholarly analyses of the MAS administration are generally divided into two camps: those that argue that the party is reformist and socially democratic; and those that argue that it is revolutionary and populist (see Raby 2014). This is a tendency in both mainstream liberal and Marxist analyses, although their definitions of 'good' and 'bad' left governments tend to be opposite to one another. The political scientist Jeffrey Webber (2011) has been highly critical of the 'process of change' arguing that the MAS project has been reformist rather than revolutionary, acting as part of the '*izquierda permitida*' (authorised left) (2013: 150). In true Marxist fashion he contends that taking state power is a necessary component of a revolutionary project in Bolivia. Webber argues, however, that 'the politics of indigenous

liberation within the MAS government have separated artificially from the project for revolutionary socialist transformation' (2011: 70). Rather, the MAS has consolidated a 'reconstituted neoliberalism' (2011: 9) that 'has taken the form of strategic co-optation and division of labor and peasant movements on the part of state managers' (2011: 10). Similarly, the Aymara leader Felipe Quispe states that the MAS is 'neoliberalism with an Indian face' (quoted in Farthing & Kohl 2014: 148). Webber (2011) reasons that the 'left-indigenous struggles' of the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 need to reconsolidate in order to provide a socio-political articulation of a left alternative to the MAS.

The journalist Ben Dangl (2007) was initially hopeful that the MAS had broken down the boundaries between social movements and the state. However, he has since suggested that the 'state and governing party is, by its nature, a hegemonic force that generally aims to subsume, weaken, or eliminate other movements and political forces that contest its power' (2010: 5). He argues that 'social movement momentum has been divided, demobilized, and repressed by the MAS government in an attempt to expand the party's own hegemony over the country' (2014: 310). This, he states, came to the fore during the TIPNIS conflict. For Dangl, (2007, 2010) tactical retreat from progressive governments is an important objective for social movements in order to preserve their autonomy. Dangl states that 'a truly emancipatory route could be found outside of the ballot box, and in the vibrant social movements, autonomy and forms of everyday resistance that characterized the period of upheaval from 2000 to 2005' (2014: 310).

Similarly, Uruguyan political theorist Raúl Zibechi takes John Holloway's (2002) idea of 'changing the world without taking power'. The scholar insists that '[t]he state and capitalism are inseparable' and that one of the central premises of capitalism is '[t]he separation of the economic and the political' (2010b: 131). He therefore warns social movements to be alerted 'to the dangers of seduction by the state when it is in the hands of people connected to the movements' (2010b: 7). The author argues that 'the most serious problem with the state policies [of Latin America] is that they tend to dissolve the self-organization of those from below. In this way they impede the consolidation of the autonomy of popular subjects built up in unfavourable circumstances over decades' (2014: xiv). Zibechi states that this situation leaves social movements with two choices: 'mortgaging their autonomy' or 'forging clear boundaries' (2012: 20).

However, I contend that these arguments inspired by Marxist theories of dialectic relations foreclose the multiple relations at play during the MAS administration. Webber, Dangl and

Zibechi draw on over-simplified binary distinctions of co-optation/autonomy that reflects the logic that movements can be defined singularly in contra-distinction with the state. Although both Zibechi and Dangel problematise this binary in their work, they ultimately fall back into a narrative that re-entrenches the distinction. For example, Zibechi discusses the ‘meeting point’ between movements and the state as something mobile and relational, part of a ‘collective construction and in movement’ (2012: 267). Yet, he reestablishes a static understanding of state-social movement dynamics by distinguishing the state as a centralised and homogenising force antithetical to ‘anti-systemic’ indigenous movements. He suggests that whilst elites organise vertically, the ‘mobilization of the poor is, on the contrary, horizontal’ (2010: 11) and that Aymara logic ‘does not exist in modern Western political logic’ (2010: 15). This clear-cut binary distinction of West/indigenous occludes an analysis of the ways that self-defined indigenous movements are similarly embroiled in vertical styles of organisation. These understandings are premised on theorisations of contentious politics that suggest that involvement with political parties and state institutions can work to weaken revolutionary political agendas as movements get embroiled in more formal political spaces (see Tarrow 2011).

The Peruvian sociologist, Aníbal Quijano (2006) suggests that post-Marxist accounts of Bolivia express a homogenising, reductionist and dualistic Eurocentric tendency that insist on the notion of a singularly defined nation-state. In Bolivia, however, there are alternative and multiple spatial understandings of this state-social movement nexus. We therefore need new approaches to the study of contemporary politics that disturb binary thinking and that more readily engage with political praxis as it actively reworks hegemonic imaginaries. For example, ethnographic engagement reveals that the socio-political praxis of subaltern actors is not only *against* and *beyond* conceptions of the state (Holloway 2002) but also from *within* them. In this way, indigenous movements do not necessarily break away from orthodox understandings of the state since different actors and organisations operate within multiple and simultaneous spatial registers.

Some Latin American scholars have positioned a more nuanced understanding of contemporary Bolivian politics. The political scientist Hervé Do Alto (2008) believes that the question of whether the MAS is a social movement or political party is flawed. Rather, he states that the classic literature draws on a false dichotomy between party action and contentious politics and that there are a number of ‘*pasarelas*’ (gateways) and continuities between the two scenarios of action. He argues that in this sense Bolivia is a political

laboratory for new interpretations of state institutionalisation. Relatedly, Rafael Bautista (2010, 2011a) claims that the very concept of plurinationalism provokes a philosophical debate about the nature of the state itself. The scholar contends that ‘to decolonise the state means dismantling the structural and conceptual content of its colonial constitution’ (2010: 10; author’s translation). Stefanoni (2011a, 2011b) argues that it is important to steer clear of being overly pessimistic or polemic in analyses of the MAS. He states that there is ‘*un doble movimiento*’ (a double movement) in which, on the one hand, there is ‘the penetration of the state by social organisations’ and, on the other, ‘a “nationalisation” – real or potential – of unions and other “social movements”’ (2011b; author’s translation). He also recognises that the performative nature of emancipatory discourse by the MAS is not just symbolic, as it has initiated a reversal process of the stigmatisation of indigenous peoples within Bolivia. In this way, the MAS has played an important part in reworking the mechanics of internal colonialism and the perception of indigenous peoples as second-class citizens. The danger, though, is that the MAS enacts a kind of positive discrimination towards the peasant and coca-growing sectors that creates ambiguities in this process.

For Luis Tapia (2009, 2010), assessing the extent of democratisation and decolonisation is the fundamental criteria to measure the depth of ongoing transformation. He argues that the MAS has not gone far enough to encourage participatory processes of decision-making and alter the structural mechanisms of the state. The author contends that an enacted plurinational state would imply a ‘nationalisation that respects indigenous territories’ (2012: 268; author’s translation). In this way, state-led neo-extractivism reconstructs the idea of a homogenous nation-state. Without adopting the communitarian forms of decision-making into the state legislature, the MAS ‘stopped being the general articulator at the organisational level of the forces of the indigenous, the peasants and the popular sectors’ (Tapia 2011: 41; author’s translation). In this way, the MAS has continued traits of the ‘relation between political parties and civil society that were moulded in neoliberal times’ (2011: 161) and ‘reproduc[ed] the political inequality that is contained in the principle of representation’ (2011: 164; author’s translation). Similarly, the former Vice-Minister of Economy and Finance Raúl Prada (2014) has suggested that there are three transitional conditions to the breakdown of the nation-state: the plurinational agenda; communitarian visions of democracy; and autonomous organisational structures.

These accounts highlight the difficulties involved in institutionalising the plurination and breaking down the state/social movement binary model. These authors show that polemical

assessments of the MAS often fail to understand the complexities of overturning the Westphalian state model, recovering national sovereignty and consolidating the support of a number of disparate indigenous and peasant movements. I assert that the MAS are enacting a slower process of reworking cultural hegemony and understandings of the state. Furthermore, this process is necessarily ridden with internal tensions, contradictions and difficulties. Raby argues that the strategy of the ‘new Latin American Left’:

is one of a true Gramscian “war of position,” a mobilization of the poor and dispossessed in a sustained and systematic drive to transform society and to occupy and transform the state in their own image, using elections and constitutional procedures but also developing new structures of popular power and social organization to impose their will on the previously dominant class bloc (2014: 46).

Re-seating popular sovereignty requires strategic articulations of nationalist ideologies in order to maintain the legitimacy of the majority population. However, this comes at the expense of the lowland indigenous movement’s claims to indigenous territoriality, as at the current conjuncture conceding power could destabilise efforts to reclaim the mechanisms of the state from elite and foreign interests. This is especially salient given the continued threats from separatist revolts in the Media Luna that have re-appropriated the concept of ‘autonomy’ granted in the 2009 Constitution to counter the ‘process of change’ and reclaim control over natural resources located within the region (see Eaton 2007; Gustafson 2006; Humphreys Bebbington & Bebbington 2010). It is therefore pertinent to analyse how these divergent scale-making projects get articulated and negotiated in the everyday politics of contemporary Bolivia.

5.2 Entanglements of Power

Evidently, there is a spatial dimensionality to the state-social movement nexus that is multivarious. In chapter III I have suggested that further empirical research is needed to understand the ways in which hegemonic spatial imaginaries operate and are reworked within place-based contentious politics. I proposed a multiple relationalities approach in order to comprehend the ‘entanglements of power’ between the state and civil society that consists of ‘countless processes of domination and resistance which are always implicated in, and mutually constitutive of, one another’ (Sharp et al 2000: 1). As such, domination and resistance cannot be clearly distinguished as practices of the state and the subaltern, since they form part of an intricate web in which hegemonic power relations are reworked

through ongoing political practices. It is therefore crucial to take notice of the everyday practices of subaltern politics in our understandings of state-social movement dynamics.

Changing articulations of political and socio-cultural identity form part of an ontological politics engaged in by a myriad of actors including, but not limited to, state institutions and the indigenous movement. Political identities are also formed in relation to factors, such as transnational capital, US imperialism, traditional elite power blocs, histories of clientelism and the legacy of a colonial state model. During the TIPNIS conflict, cultural representations have acted to change the ‘maps of grievance’ in Bolivia, a term used to imply that the ‘construction of grievances has both a distinctive spatiality and is constitutive of political identities’ (Featherstone 2003: 404). In this chapter, this term is used to argue that changing geographies of power effect the articulation and re-articulation of strategic – and temporally essentialised – political identities. In efforts to re-territorialise Bolivia in divergent ways, both the lowland indigenous movement and the state take part in a Gramscian ‘war of position’ in which the legitimacy of their claims is mediated by political opportunities and restraints and the ability to form emergent connections with other sectors of civil society. Gustafson therefore argues that seeing sovereignty as a process rather than by legal definition ‘calls for ethnographic attention to the territorially situated practices and mechanisms through which sovereign rule is (re)produced and contested on the ground’ (2010: 4). Here, I find the work of Robert Andolina particularly useful as a framing device. In his research on how indigenous movements effect regime consolidation in Ecuador, the author states that:

[w]hat nineteenth century France and twenty-first century Ecuador point to are the porous and moveable borders between civil and political society, and between society and state. Social movements may locate themselves precisely at these boundaries, engaging in legitimacy politics in order to create spaces that permit the entry and exit of political actors, ideas and practices across political spheres. [...] [I]nnovative combinations of ‘sovereigns’ and ‘shadows’ may enhance representation, participation and accountability in both kinds of institutions, generating consensus on institutional purpose and greater consent to rule within a democratic regime’ (2003: 750).

Rather than make polemic arguments about the failures of the MAS administration to carry out a full-scale revolution it is more useful, and reflects politics on the ground more fully, to analyse the ways in which the MAS and social movements interact in the on-going process to re-territorialise Bolivia as a plurinational state. Empirical analysis shows that the

paradox of the choice between co-optation and autonomy is a fallacy premised on a limited and deductive understanding of political praxis. A focus on the everyday lived politics of the TIPNIS conflict will show that there are multiple relationalities at play that disturb *and* rework the assumed state/civil society and government/social movement distinctions.

5.3 Shifting State-Indigenous Movement Relations: The Unity Pact

On 28 September 2011 I arrived into the gridlocked city of Cochabamba amidst a national strike by the union organisation COB. During the preceding days the scale of the TIPNIS conflict had significantly increased due to the events of 25 September, a day that will forever be marked in history as the day that an indigenous President gave the orders for police brutality against a non-violent indigenous protest march. At 5pm on Sunday 25 September, a group of approximately 500 federal police entered a campsite in Chaparina, just outside of Yucumo, on the route of the Eighth March. Using tear gas, rubber bullets and batons the police escorted marchers onto waiting buses and transported them to nearby towns. Others fled to the mountains resulting in the separation of children from parents. Roughly 100 people were injured and two women suffered miscarriages. As television footage of the police violence emerged, vigils quickly sprang up in the plazas of Bolivia's main cities as protests against the government intervention became widespread. The Interior Minister Sacha Llorenti was forced to resign over accusations he gave the police order and the Defence Minister Cecilia Chacón also resigned criticising the government for the police deployment. After just five days the marchers regrouped and continued their journey to the capital city of La Paz where they were greeted by tens of thousands of supporters. On the 24 October the government was forced to announce Ley No. 180 that halted the construction of the proposed road through the TIPNIS.

Fundamentally, the government had resorted to coercive force marking a crisis of hegemony in which the legitimacy of the MAS was severely undermined. Until this point, the administration had managed to strike a balance of governing in the interest of social movements whilst appeasing significant forces on the political and economic 'right'. Overall, the party had maintained the legitimacy of being a self-professed 'government of social movements'. However, it seemed that the scale-making project of indigenous territoriality was beginning to be seen as a threat to the model of state-led resource nationalism positioned in an effort to recover national patrimony from foreign interests and national elites. The use of violence also reflected the legacy of nation-state building in

postcolonial contexts and specifically in Latin America. As the media coverage spread, the TIPNIS conflict became a vessel for a number of popular grievances.

During the TIPNIS conflict the relations between the government and the lowland indigenous movement changed substantially. As part of the Unity Pact, a left-indigenous alliance representing key peasant, indigenous and union organisations, CIDOB was an important sector of support for the MAS. The Pact was established in September 2004 as a political instrument to push through the Constituent Assembly and bring Morales to power. The alliance was ‘to be a foundational political moment, one that was truly *constitutional*, in which social movements, indigenous and others, rather than conventional political parties, would literally “refound” the state’ (Garcés 2011: 47; original emphasis). In 2006 Pedro Nuni, a leader of CIDOB and a Mojeño representative from the TIPNIS, occupied an important position at the national level as a MAS congressman. Due to these state-indigenous alliances, representatives of CIDOB were reluctant to participate in protests against the road project despite the fact that more localised struggles in the department of Beni had already begun.

Yet, the Pact’s indigenous and *campesino* members have long held contrasting views on key issues, such as whether the country should rely on extractive industries or seek alternatives, how much land should be redistributed to collective indigenous territories, the meaning and limits of political autonomy and the social control of the state (Garcés 2011). In addition, the social movements involved exercise different forms of social and political organisation. Thus, Garcés suggests that the groups did not have a common dialogue but subsumed tensions under a collective objective of bringing the MAS to power and pushing through the Constituent Assembly. However, the TIPNIS conflict has served to pit highland *campesinos* and *cocaleros* against lowland indigenous groups inhabiting collective territories. In particular, in 2011 CIDOB was going through a turbulent time in which internal disputes broke out over whether the organisation agreed with the direction of the government’s plans, especially surrounding the proposed renegotiation of the agrarian reform law, Ley INRA, in favour of *campesino* sectors. The executive branch of the government had converted TCOs into TIOCs, which recognises the *campesino* sector as subjects of territorial rights, opening the possibility of titling individual land for the peasant and coca-growing sectors (Bolpress 2010). As such, discords have resurfaced and been exacerbated during the conflict.

Tensions therefore emerged amidst a growing concern that the party that they had struggled to bring to power had no intention of fulfilling its promises of being a ‘government of social movements’, let alone living up to political autonomy demands by the indigenous movement. Rather it was clear that the government were privileging some sectors, such as the coca growers, whilst marginalising others giving social movements the choice of devoting their unconditional loyalty or being sidelined from political decision-making powers (Canessa 2012). Furthermore, the decision to continue supporting the MAS Party regime was perhaps easier for the peasant and coca growing sectors because of a shared lineage defined by union organisational practice and prominent Marxist ideologies. Gustafson states that Morales ‘cut his teeth in the language of union politics rather than among indigenous rights movements’ (2009b: 254). Similarly, in personal communication with Morales’ ex-consultant Pablo Regalsky, he argued that Morales was more concerned with class politics centred on national liberation, rather than indigeneity (personal field-notes, 12 January 2012). In the offices of CPITCO, a regional body of CIDOB based in Cochabamba, President Rosa Chao described how Morales treated the lowland indigenous: ‘it is as if we are *entendados* [stepchildren or illegitimate children i.e. looked down upon]’⁶¹ (personal interview, 20 January 2012). The MAS are therefore continuing power relations that create a re-spatialised internal colonialism that positions the *campesino/cocalero* sectors as dominant and the lowland indigenous as subordinate (Laing 2012).

Eventually after several calls by regional leaders, CIDOB came together to participate in the first indigenous march in defence of the TIPNIS. Nevertheless, a fairly amicable relationship of dialogue endured between the indigenous movement and the government during the first stages of the march. For example, in the town of San Borja, the marchers warmly received ten government ministers in order to establish working tables of negotiation.⁶² However, discussions quickly broke down when it appeared that the representatives of the government had no intention of compromising over the construction of the road. Meanwhile, Evo Morales made his feelings clear pronouncing that ‘*no hay alternativa*’ (there is no alternative) (Los Tiempos 2011c).

Relations with the state have not been a one-way process of domination, however. The indigenous movement has at different times chosen to align with the state or maintain their autonomy depending on the political gains available at the time. In the first five years of

⁶¹ ‘como si fuéramos entendados’.

⁶² For a rundown of the main events during the Eighth March see Appendix 5.

the MAS administration the lowland indigenous movement strategically maneuvered through the spaces opened up by a progressive government and the constitutional process. During this period, CIDOB actively supported the political programme of the MAS maintaining strong relations of negotiation and dialogue over key issues. In 2011, CIDOB representatives increasingly questioned the extent to which the MAS were fulfilling its promises of re-founding Bolivia through the concept of the plurination. Resultantly, CIDOB decided to re-establish more traditional forms of rebellious practice, such as protest marches, in order to make demands of the state. The final break with the MAS came when CIDOB and CONAMAQ decided to abandon the Unity Pact in early 2011, which was not only a result of internal disappointment but also represented a tactical retreat at a time when the legitimacy of the MAS administration was being questioned by broader societal sectors. The government also appeared to have chosen to take a step back from their own relations with CIDOB announcing Ley No. 222 on the 10 February 2012 that diminished the original indigenous victory of Ley No. 180 by reopening the agenda of the proposed road. Conversely, CSUTCB, Bartolina Sisa and CSCIB have sustained support for the government and continue to gain the benefits afforded by this relationship.

Rosa Chao, the President of CPITCO, explained CIDOB's decision to leave the Pact:

The Unity Pact was created when they were going to construct the political constitution of the state because there was a need, right? [...] They all had the same vision. To have a new constitution where all sectors are participating that make this country Bolivian, but until now the pact has not functioned because the five confederations have different visions. Two are the same but three want to be very different and they are to their own interests and not to the interests of these two organisations [CIDOB and CONAMAQ] that were left out. [...] For us the Unity Pact does not exist because a Unity Pact is where all the confederations were united and had the same vision and the same interest. Now there isn't this anymore.⁶³ (personal interview, 20 January 2012)

In addition, interview participants gave the general impression that the MAS were using social movements in the alliance to push through their own agendas without dialogue and

⁶³ El Pacto de Unidad se creó cuando se iba a hacer la Constitución Política del Estado porque había una necesidad ¿no? [...] Tenían todos la misma visión. De hacer una nueva constitución donde estén participando todos los sectores que hacen este país boliviano, pero hasta ahora el pacto no ha funcionado porque tienen otra visión las cinco confederaciones. Dos son iguales pero tres quieren ser muy diferentes y ellos están a sus intereses propios y no a los intereses de éstas dos confederaciones que quedaron fuera. [...] Para nosotros no existe un pacto de unidad porque un pacto de unidad es donde todas las confederaciones estaban unidas y tenían una misma visión y un mismo interés. Ahora ya no hay eso.

consultation. Juan José Sardina, a *cacique* within CONAMAQ stated that ‘we were simply being used by the President for electoral spoils in many cases’⁶⁴ and that when they left the Unity Pact ‘we have obviously become enemies of the government’⁶⁵ (personal interview, 17 June 2012). In addition, Rafael Quispe, the former President of CONAMAQ, explained that ‘the objective was to deepen the plurinational state, as it was not being achieved [and] the other three organisations were submissive to the party, [so] we decided to leave’⁶⁶ (personal interview, 29 April 2012).

Bertha Vejarano showed her disappointment in the promises of the Unity Pact, stating that ‘when he [Evo Morales] was in the political campaign he said that “I will rule by obeying the people”, so who are we? Are we not the people?’⁶⁷. She concluded that ‘it seems that we, the indigenous, are second-class for him’⁶⁸ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). Moreover, Jeremías Ballivián Torrico, a participant in the Eighth March, stated that ‘Evo Morales only has the face of the indigenous but [he is] not in other ways, in the sense that he doesn’t respect our *cosmovisión* and our autonomy. He doesn’t respect how we live. [...] We feel very marginalised’⁶⁹ (personal interview, 20 January 2011). I met for an interview with the online activist Wara Ysabel from the Coalition of Defence of the Environment and Self-Determination of the People (CDAPMA) in Santa Cruz. We sat down over coffee in the central plaza and after initial discussions I was still trying to get to grips with the concept of indigeneity in Bolivia. Wara proceeded to take my notebook and draw a ranking class system that categorised the Bolivian populations into four groups that descended from: the Spanish and foreign elites; the middle class *mestizo* populations; the urban, *campesino* and *cocalero* indigenous; and finally the lowland indigenous peoples. He noted that the President has made great strides in representing the third sector – the coca-growers and peasant indigenous – but not the lowland indigenous who are still considered backward and in need of civilising (personal interview, 16 March 2012).

Interview participants expressed their wishes for the plurinational state to recognise the plural *cosmovisiones* present within the country. Bertha Vejarano therefore stated that the

⁶⁴ ‘simplemente estábamos siendo utilizados por el presidente como botín electoral en muchos casos’.

⁶⁵ ‘nos hemos convertidos obviamente en enemigos del gobierno’.

⁶⁶ ‘el objetivo era profundizar el estado plurinacional, como no se estaba logrando y las demás tres organizaciones eran sumisas al partido, decidimos abandonar’.

⁶⁷ ‘él, cuando estaba en campaña política, dijo “yo gobernaré obedeciendo al pueblo”, entonces nosotros que somos, ¿no somos ese pueblo?’.

⁶⁸ ‘entonces pareciera que nosotros, los indígenas, somos de segunda clase para él, ¿no?’

⁶⁹ ‘Evo Morales solamente tiene de indígena la cara pero otra cosa no, en el sentido de que no respeta la *cosmovisión* y la autonomía de nosotros. No respeta cómo queremos vivir. [...] Nos sentimos muy marginados’.

indigenous movement ‘would have liked, in Bolivia, to have had a president who governs for equals, right? For blacks, whites, for poor and rich’⁷⁰ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). As such, Celso Padilla stated that:

The Andean vision of the West and of those who represent Evo Morales is very different, in other words you can’t compare it to the vision of us, so for this we do not enter into an agreement, we cannot enter ourselves into an agreement with the government, because the government has another mentality, another way of thinking, another vision, another way of life, another structure of organisation [...] The plurinational state signifies that we have every right to be different but equal.⁷¹ (personal interview, 16 May 2012).

Thus, the lowland indigenous movement has maintained that there are plural and diverse understandings of place-based indigeneity that need to be recognised and represented within the plurination. Within the movement, a relational ontological politics is constructed and refigured that works as a mobilising vision for the indigenous peoples involved.

5.4 Re-articulating Indigeneity as Anti-Imperialism and National Patriotism

In this section, I will explore articulations of indigenous nationalism by the state and affiliated social sectors. The MAS Party has established an ‘indigenous nationalism’ premised on anti-imperialism. The strength of anti-imperial political identities has been informed by a five-hundred-year history of subordination and oppression of indigenous peoples by *mestizo-criollo* elites and the more recent impositions inflicted under the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. Historically, transnational corporations have plundered natural resources in Bolivia leaving a legacy of poverty and the marginalisation of indigenous peoples from the institutions of the state. Thus, anti-neoliberal movements in the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 aimed to recuperate sovereignty over natural resources within a populist vision of the nation-state. As such, the MAS Party project has concentrated on the necessity to repossess Bolivia’s natural resources for the benefit of

⁷⁰ ‘nos gustaría que en Bolivia hubiera un presidente que gobierne por igual ¿no? para negros , para blancos, para pobres y para ricos’.

⁷¹ ‘La visión andina del occidente y que quien representa Evo Morales es muy diferente, o sea no puede compararse a la visión de nosotros, entonces por eso es que no entramos en un acuerdo con el gobierno, porque el gobierno tiene otra mentalidad, otro pensamiento, otra visión, otro enfoque de vida, otra estructura de organización. [...] El estado plurinacional significa de que nosotros tenemos todo el derecho de ser diferentes pero iguales’.

indigenous and peasant peoples. State-led resource sovereignty, through the nationalisation of key industries, has served to produce a popular territorial imaginary. This is made evident in the 2009 Constitution, which states that:

[n]atural patrimony is of public interest and strategic character for the sustainable development of the country. The conservation and utilisation for the benefit of the population shall be the responsibility and exclusive authority of the state, and will not compromise the sovereignty over natural resources (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; Art. 346; author's translation).

Anti-imperialism has been intimately linked to a national identity of '*la Patria*'. Perreault and Valdivia state that in 'countries with economically productive hydrocarbon and mineral sectors, *la Patria* often conjures subterranean natural resources (oil, gas and minerals) as *patrimonio nacional* [national patrimony], the inheritance of the nation and its citizens' (2010: 691). This is imbued with the notion that hydrocarbon resources can promote national growth and prosperity (see Coronil 1997; Martz 1987). As such, oil and gas resources have come to figure centrally in the imaginative geographies of the nation.

However, the nationalist ideologies evoked work to homogenise indigenous identity under the cultural referent of 'a very occidental model of a nation and its homogenous people, the Aymara' (Canessa 2012c: 214-215). State articulations of a homogenous Aymara nationalism delegitimise alternative understandings of indigenous identity. These articulations are part of a wider 'cultural politics' (Alvarez et al 1998: 7) in which identity becomes highly politicised. Importantly, this involves '*call and response* interactions, where political communities contest and negotiate ideas that legitimate the political regime and political interests' (Andolina 2003: 725; original emphasis). One of the most enduring strategies in which to nullify support for the lowland indigenous movement has been through a discursive battle circulated through television, print and online media. In turn, CIDOB has counter-acted government discourses in order to authenticate their demands to wider sectors of Bolivian society. These strategies of resistance and domination have worked in tandem, playing off against one another and constantly working to rearticulate the 'maps of grievance'.

Representatives of the government have mobilised national identities of *la Patria* to delegitimise the Eighth and Ninth Marches in defence of the TIPNIS. A political discourse has been circulated that accuses the lowland indigenous peoples of putting their own

interests ahead of the nation. This has been achieved through statements that the protest marches were funded by NGOs and private enterprises from the US and/or Europe and through claims that the granting of TCO titles to lowland indigenous communities was a regrettable act of the government. The first strategy has a substantial history of being used by previous governments to discredit indigenous and peasant marches. This propaganda was, somewhat ironically, mobilised by President Sánchez de Lozada against the March for Life, Coca and National Sovereignty led by Evo Morales in 1994 from Villa Tunari to La Paz (Contreras Baspineiro 1994).

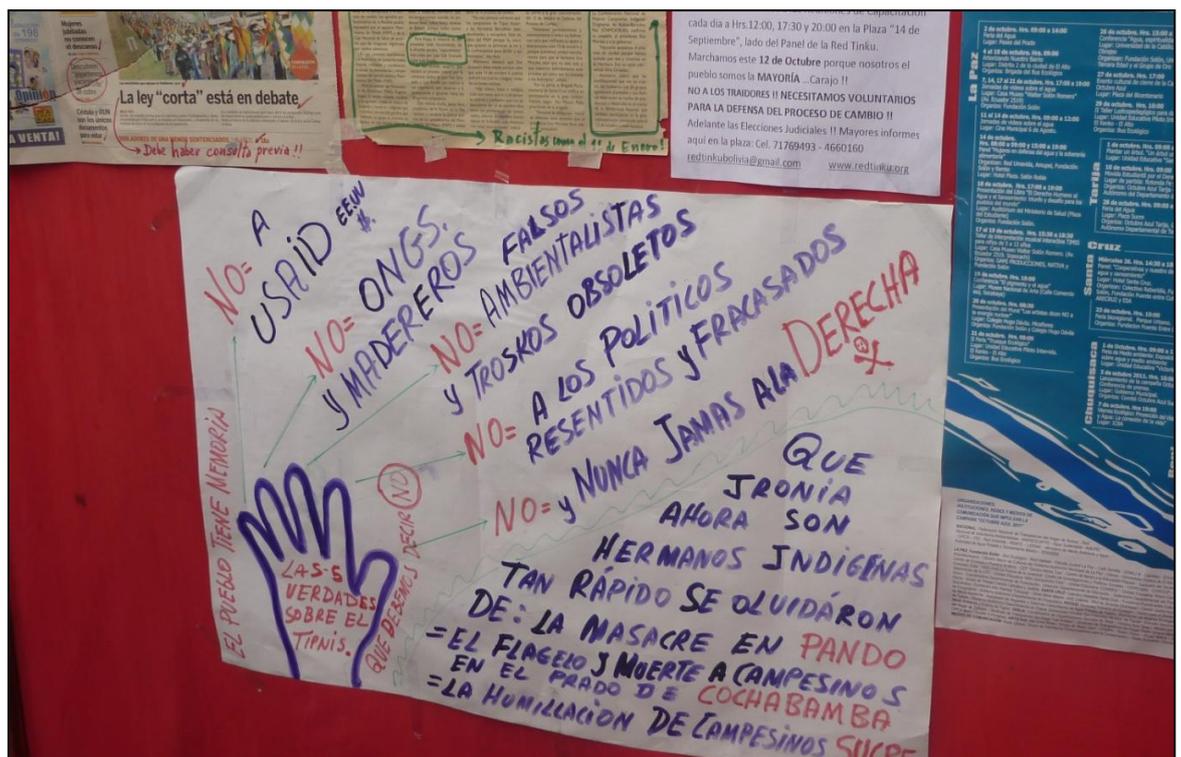
Towards the beginning of the Eighth March, President Evo Morales declared that USAID were passing out '*migajas*' (crumbs) to CIDOB and that 'indigenous leaders are cheating their bases and some leaders are being deceived by certain NGOs' (Cambio 2011; author's translation). Juan Ramón Quintana, Minister of the Presidency, stated to the press that USAID had been involved in investing \$100 million to '*un ejército de ONGs*' (an army of NGOs) in order to corrupt indigenous leaders within CIDOB and CONAMAQ (Bolpress 2011a). He described the expulsion of USAID as '*un acto patriótico*' (a patriotic act). In addition, García Linera stated that NGOs:

[...] have managed to create a clientelist relationship with the indigenous leadership [...] with little contact with the grassroots Amazonian indigenous, they function exclusively with external finance (of NGOs), that pays the salaries of the leaders, that in reality they operate strictly like NGOs that reproduce mechanisms of clientelist co-optation and ideological and political subordination toward funding agencies, for the most part European and North American, as is the case of USAID. (2012: 26; author's translation)

The notion that indigenous organisations have been in cahoots with agents of the US has been mobilised to destabilise urban support for the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. For instance, pro-government representatives have accused urban supporters of the various TIPNIS campaigns of succumbing to 'TIPNIS fashion' or 'tipnimanía' (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011). These discourses in the Bolivian media have used English language words to suggest that external interests guide activists in the urban solidarity networks. In addition, pro-government groups have argued that some factions of the middle classes have supported the lowland indigenous movement to destabilise the government of Evo Morales and restore neoliberalism. Figure 2 shows a poster at a pro-government rally on 12 October 2011 in Plaza 14 de Septiembre in Cochabamba. Here, social movements

such as the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba and Bartolina Sisa united in an official act of support for the government, its process of change, the construction of the road through the TIPNIS and the upcoming judicial elections. The poster is entitled ‘The Truths about the TIPNIS’ and includes the following statements: ‘No to USAID and the USA’; ‘No to NGOs and loggers’; ‘No to false environmentalists and obsolete Trotskyites’; ‘No to resentful and failed politicians’; and finally ‘No and never ever to the right’.

Figure 2. Poster at a Pro-Government Rally in Cochabamba



Source: Author’s photograph.

Moreover, accusations have circulated that CIDOB are affiliated to conservative political parties and economic forces in the wealthy region of the Media Luna. In García Linera’s (2012) book *Geopolítica de la Amazonía* (Geopolitics of the Amazon) the author promotes the idea that the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS have worked to weaken the ‘process of change’ by claiming sovereignty away from the state. He has also argued that by not supporting the MAS project, CIDOB has created the spaces of opportunity for conservative political parties to gain electoral support:

The tragic course of history so unfolds that the counter-revolution can come hand in hand with a faction of its own constructors who, without necessarily advocating it, may

as a consequence of the exacerbation of its corporatist, regional or sectoral particularism, and without taking into account the general configuration of overall social forces nationally and internationally, end up defending the interests of the conservative forces of the right and undermining their own revolutionary process. That is precisely what came to happen with the so-called ‘TIPNIS march’. (García Linera 2012: 14; author’s translation).

Furthermore, this rhetoric makes it difficult for academics and activists on the political ‘left’ to challenge the government as ‘[t]he prospects of the right taking power are much grimmer than continuing to engage, or be subsumed by the MAS’ (Dangl 2010: 23). In an interview with the academic-activist Pablo Regalsky he stated that ‘[t]he left cannot organise itself [...] There is no left left’ (personal interview, 09 June 2012).⁷² He concluded that there was no longer a united political position to take since the old enemy of capitalism had become something more complicated. In addition, these sectors do not want to give fodder to the regional autonomous movements in the Media Luna that seek greater control over the hydrocarbon reserves within the region.

The political discourses mobilised against the Eighth and Ninth Marches had consequential effects on the rhetoric and practices of CIDOB. For instance, internal tension emerged on the Ninth March when Minister of the Government Carlos Romero released a recording of a phone call in which a representative of the political party MSM (Movimiento Sin Miedo; Movement Without Fear) can be heard talking with indigenous leaders who were taking part in the Ninth March (El Día 2012a). Romero said that the communication reveals a fundamentally political strategy of the lowland indigenous movement and a coordination of economic financing for the protest marches. In response, the committee of the Ninth March made a public declaration to the Bolivian media on the 20 May 2012 in San Borja confirming their non-partisan motivations for the indigenous struggle. The declaration states that the Ninth March is funded by donations of the Bolivian public ‘in defence of the TIPNIS and in defence of their constitutional rights to enjoy a healthy environment’. The document continues by declaring that ‘if a certain person in the name of the Ninth March is soliciting economic resources from political parties, civic committees or other political groups, they should be the subject of allegation and criminal proceedings, since each leader has credential granted by the Ninth March’ (Comité de la Novena Marcha 2012a; author’s translation). Furthermore, on arrival of the Eighth March into La Paz the marchers could be

⁷² This interview was conducted in English and Spanish. This quote is from the original English.

heard chanting ‘*esto es voluntario, nadie nos obliga*’ (this is voluntary, nobody forces us) to distinguish their autonomy from NGOs and political parties (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011).

On a different note, García Linera has argued that the granting of TCO titles to communal indigenous territories has been a ‘regrettable act of sectarian factionalism and egoism in the face of the needs of the rest of the indigenous-peasant movement of the country’ (2011b: 50; author’s translation). García Linera states that whilst the indigenous of the lowlands only represent three percent of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia they have received more than 11 million hectares of land in recent years (2011b: 50). As such, these discourses serve to downgrade the concept of ‘territory’ to ‘land’ negating the importance of indigenous territories to the maintenance of plural and diverse world-visions. This also furthers the arguments of certain sectors affiliated to the government such as the CSUTCB, who propose that TCC (Tierras Comunitarias Campesinas; Peasant Communal Lands) titles should allow the buying and selling of lands that are currently held by indigenous community title (Los Tiempos 2010). These developments strengthen lingering colonial epistemologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have perceived the lowlands as a space for colonisation, negating the subjecthood of Amazonian peoples and their ways of life (Tapia 2012). Discourses work to re-appropriate the spaces of indigenous territories as spaces for individual or state ownership, with implications for further capitalist accumulation of land for the development of natural resources. Farthing and Kohl argue that there are ‘different visions of how land should be used’ and that:

[h]ighland migrants to the lowlands, now called *interculturales*, often aspire to individual ownership, whereas lowland indigenous groups usually seek communally controlled territories. This is further complicated by the economic dependence on escalating resource extraction that places minority rights to territory and livelihoods in conflict with the majority rights to share in resource rents. (2014: 114)

Consequently, representatives of CIDOB have sought to distinguish ‘territory’ from ‘land’ by articulating links between the lowland indigenous peoples and the environment, collective forms of decision-making and communitarian property and land ownership. This will be the focus of section 3 in chapter VI. To conclude, the MAS Party have actively sought to assimilate radical discourses of anti-imperialism and indigenous rights in such a way as to de-legitimise alternative understandings of decolonialism and to reify modern understandings of the nation-state. This has acted to negate more relational and place-

based understandings of indigeneity. Conversely, the lowland indigenous movement has sought to de-legitimise certain highland indigenous groups in order to shut down competing claims to land rights.

5.5 Developmentalism and a Politics of Race and Gender

Comprehending resource conflicts requires an approach that integrates politico-cultural understandings that entangle ‘meanings of development, citizenship and the nation itself’ (Perreault & Valdivia 2010: 697). As such, understandings of indigeneity have been entangled in debates over the meanings of modernity, development and governance in the TIPNIS conflict. Within this section, I will discuss the framework of ‘development’ as a lens for the MAS to continue a racial legacy in Bolivia. This follows a *rentista* imaginary in Latin America in which the ‘state appeared as a single agent endowed with the magical power to remake the nation’ through its intimate relation with the exploitation of natural resources (Coronil 1997: 4). Coronil continues by arguing that ‘these rents help establish patterns of internal specialization and external dependence which consolidate the role of third-world nations as what I call nature-exporting societies’ (1997: 7). In this way, the state becomes the agent of modernisation. The nationalisation of the hydrocarbons industry has resulted in the Bolivian state amassing financial reserves of \$14 billion, the highest ratio in the world of international reserves to the size of its economy. These developments have even resulted in praise from the World Bank for Morales’ ‘prudent’ macroeconomic policies (Neuman 2014).

Government discourses of development reify a normative epistemology of modernity based on the model of a mono-cultural nation-state. In reference to discursive resistances to mega-dams within the Narmada river valley in central India, Routledge argues that “non-modern”, traditional and indigenous systems of knowledge have been devalued, and portrayed as “unscientific” and “irrational” (2003b: 245). In the case of Bolivia, MAS representatives have suggested that inhabitants of the TIPNIS need economic development. This is made evident through a pamphlet *TIPNIS: Atrapados en el paraíso* (TIPNIS: Trapped in paradise) issued by the government’s Ministry of Communication. The document states that within the TIPNIS families go hungry, children don’t have shoes and that children leave school without passing their exams (Esprella 2012). It finishes by stating that ‘[o]f every one hundred children born in the TIPNIS, 60 die, in full view of journalists, the church and NGOs, to whom it seems [more] important to weaken the government that give an opportunity to those who inhabit the TIPNIS’ (Esprella 2012: 18;

author's translation). Official discourses of the government therefore position the road project as part of the necessary process of development in Bolivia. Pro-road factions and supporters of the MAS adopt this understanding. For example, Figure 3 shows graffiti after a pro-government rally in Cochabamba that reads 'the road is progress, it is integration'. More recently, announcements by Morales have called to eradicate poverty within the TIPNIS over the next three years (El Deber 2013b). However, this type of discourse strips the lowland indigenous communities of their right to self-determination in decisions over development projects as defined in the 2009 Constitution (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; Art. 304: II). As such, the state fails to understand questions of poverty and development as anything more than socio-economic needs. In doing so, representatives occlude the question of political claims for self-determination (see Eversole et al 2005).

Figure 3. Graffiti in Cochabamba



Source: Author's photograph.

The development trope is closely tied to a politics of race and gender. The discourses and practices of government representatives articulate derogatory understandings of the communities of the TIPNIS as backward, uneducated, poor and underdeveloped. This model reinforces development pursuits with the goal of 'civilising' indigenous peoples and continues assimilation strategies of past government administrations in Bolivia. Discourse has revolved around the idea that the Amazonian indigenous peoples need to be integrated

into modern Bolivia through the road project. On one occasion President Morales suggested to the *campesino* youth located in and around Polygon 7 to the south of the TIPNIS that, ‘*iría a enamorar a las compañeras y convencerlas de que no se opongan*’ (I would go to enamor the [Yuracaré] comrades and convince them not to be opposed) to the construction of the road (Página Siete 2011a). This assimilationist rhetoric is extended in the Ministry of Communication’s pamphlet *TIPNIS: Trapped in Paradise*. The document states that a new *campesino* population has been produced – the *Kollacarés* – as a result of the intermixing of the ‘Kollas’ (Andean Bolivians) with the Yuracaré people of the TIPNIS (Esprella 2012). The rhetoric echoes Andrew Canessa’s view that Aymara and Quechua settlers in the Chapare ‘treated them [the lowland indigenous] little differently to the way lowland indians have been treated historically. They spoke of them as “savages” who “didn’t know how to work” and their displacement or engagement as wage laborers for the colonists was seen as a civilizing mission’ (2012a: 20).

The discourse is also gendered as it portrays the lowland indigenous women as objects to be dominated by highland migrants. For Bertha Vejarano, the President of the Ninth March, the suggestion of racial and cultural integration by Evo Morales is one of cultural ethnocide in which ‘the essence of the indigenous movement will lose its own culture’⁷³ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). Tapia states that ‘[t]he idea of the lowlands as a space of colonisation corresponds to the lack of recognition of the existence of other peoples and their territories’ and that this is a form of ‘ethnocentrism’ and ‘structural racism’ of the MAS (2012: 271; author’s translation). Similarly, Bautista (2012) has claimed that the Bolivian state enacts a new form of internal colonialism in which congenital racism pervades and is rationalised through a discourse of ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’. Bautista states, in reference to the TIPNIS conflict, that the concept of development ‘is [made] possible only by the superior-inferior dichotomy that is, in turn, a sophisticated way to cover up the previous racist classification between civilised and barbaric [people]’ (2011b: n. pag.; author’s translation). Following Agamben’s (1998) notion of the exception of ‘bare life’, it is clear that the indigenous bodies of the TIPNIS are marked (or excluded) from the status of political subjecthood through the violence of ‘development’ agendas. I contend that this is a form of what Quijano calls a ‘coloniality of power’ where the production of race is a ‘basic factor in the problem of nation-states and nationality’ (2000: 229).⁷⁴

⁷³ ‘esa esencia del movimiento indígena va a ir perdiéndose su propia cultura’.

⁷⁴ Burman (2009) points out the concept of ‘internal colonialism’ had little resonance for indigenous peoples such as the Aymaras during the Republic era as many of them did not feel part of the nation-state and there

The lowland indigenous movement countered these discourses through articulations of alternative understandings of development and territory. As Routledge argues ‘[d]iscursive resistance, like its material counterpart, acts as a political disruption in the unanimity implied by state discourses regarding development’ (2003b: 260). Counter-discourses did not reject development *per se* but sought the acknowledgement of place-based understandings defined within indigenous territories. Many indigenous peoples and communities actively seek development (see Bebbington 1993). This can be observed in the platform of demands of the Ninth March that included calls for the construction and implementation of community development models according to the vision and self-determination of the indigenous, the recognition of community organisations as actors in the mineral and hydrocarbon sectors and the right for communities to benefit from the revenues created from extractive industries (see Table 2 in chapter VI). These demands are legitimised through the 2009 Constitution, which recognises the right to ‘*la economía plural*’ (the plural economy) including communitarian visions (Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; Art. 306). The movement demands financial and political autonomy from the state regarding decisions over economic development. The framing of indigenous grievances was also mediated through practices of resistance. For example, on the Eighth March a popular campaign slogan was ‘*TIPNIS si, carretera no*’ (TIPNIS yes, road no). Later, on the Ninth March this was reworked to ‘*Carretera si, pero no por el TIPNIS*’ (Road yes, but not through the TIPNIS). This re-articulated message was the product of encounters with government supporters who subverted the motto to mean that the indigenous were against roads, modernity, progress and development.

Further, the lowland indigenous movement counteracted discourses of progress through promoting evidence that suggests that modern development programmes can be detrimental to the lives of indigenous peoples. Bertha Vejarano stated in an interview that ‘[w]hen you have roads here, equally we don’t have basic services, we don’t have electricity, we don’t have water, we don’t have good attention to the subject of education, we don’t have good health’⁷⁵ (personal interview, 15 May 2012). This disturbance of the positive assumptions of development is important since the MAS administration has constructed a number of highways throughout Bolivia in order to integrate the country and

was therefore ‘nothing “internal”’ to the asymmetric power relations between Aymara peoples and *q’aras* [white people]’ (2009: 128). However, I argue that the term can be used more meaningfully in the recent period of Bolivian politics as the MAS ‘indigenous’ Party now subordinate other indigenous groups that are part of the new ‘Plurinational State of Bolivia’.

⁷⁵ ‘cuando tiene las carreteras acá igual no tenemos los servicios básicos, no tenemos luz no tenemos agua no tenemos buena atención el tema educativo, no tenemos buena salud’.

offer opportunities for economic development. Hence, making visible the poverty along certain highways within Bolivia often caused by the displacement of indigenous peoples, deforestation and water contamination has become an important way to counteract the popular imaginaries of ‘development’. For instance, some urban activists published photographs of destitute families and children living alongside the newly built roads on social media sites such as Facebook. Some representatives of the indigenous movement have also argued that development cannot be defined economically. For instance, Bertha Vejarano suggests that the indigenous peoples are:

[..] so poor, so humble. But they coexist with nature, they live on the meat of the mountain, of the fish in the rivers, of the collection of fruit, of wood, of natural medicine that you have inside the territories, so the territories are very rich, and they cannot tell us we [are] not.⁷⁶ (personal interview, 15 May 2012)

These imaginaries of alternative forms of development are echoed within the discourses of urban activists. Marielle Cauthin, an investigator and journalist of indigenous rights, argued that:

You don’t need to have a car, a house, anything, it is only having your clothing and preserving your language, your customs, your territory. This is a wealth that has no value and the government should encourage this type of vision of development.⁷⁷ (personal interview, 05 February)

Counter-discourses therefore become part of a strategy in furthering indigenous demands for territory, autonomy and self-determination when pitted against the extended arm of the state under the guise of development agendas. The Bolivian writer and philosopher Rafael Bautista has argued that ‘modernity’ is equal to ‘domination’ and that “‘modern wealth’, ‘development’ and ‘progress’, are only possible in terms of domination’ (2012: 177-178; author’s translation). To this extent, it is clear that the MAS is ruling under a state of hegemony that is questioned by some sectors of society, including many of the lowland indigenous peoples. Rather, the Morales administration is sustaining a structural split between an Aymara elite and an Amazonian subaltern that fails to integrate the plural

⁷⁶ ‘[...] ellos son tan pobres tan humildes pero conviven con la naturaleza, ellos viven de la carne del monte del pescado en los ríos de la recolección de la fruta de la madera de medicinas naturales que tiene adentro de los territorios, entonces los territorios son bien ricos, y no pueden decirnos que nosotros no’.

⁷⁷ ‘no necesita tener un auto, una casa, nada, es solamente teniendo su vestimenta y preservar su idioma, sus costumbres, su territorio eso ya es una riqueza que no tiene valor, y el gobierno debía fomentar, ese tipo de visión del desarrollo’.

epistemologies of Bolivian citizens into the consciousness of the central state. The lowland indigenous movement, who engage in a contest for hegemony surrounding development ideologies, fundamentally challenges this.

Government representatives have countered this by manipulating essentialist indigenous identities to refute claims to greater autonomy and self-determination. Ley No. 180 described the TIPNIS as an '*intangible*' (untouchable) zone, which would prohibit even inhabitants of the park from using its natural resources. As such, members of CIDOB viewed the law as a modest victory that on the one hand would cancel the road project but on the other would mean that community development initiatives already operational within the TIPNIS, such as cacao production and caiman hunting, would be suspended. Furthermore, García Linera has countered claims of the TIPNIS being an unspoilt territory or '*pulmón del mundo*' (lungs of the world) because of allegations of illegal timber sales by representatives of the park, such as President of the TIPNIS Sub-Central Fernando Vargas and ex-President of CIDOB Marcial Fabricano. García Linera thus argues that the TIPNIS is 'a lung pierced by the illegal extraction of wood and leather, a lung with cancer from nicotine' (García Linera 2012: 35; author's translation). The idealisation of lowland indigenous peoples as living in harmonious balance with nature can therefore limit the pursuit of wider political objectives. This is a contradictory strategy by the government considering that the Vice-President has also argued for the road by stating that it will actually only cross through 16.7 percent of virgin territory within the core 'untouchable' zone (García Linera 2012). Indeed, some of the land concessions granted to hydrocarbon enterprises by the current government fall within the Core Zone of the TIPNIS.

To conclude, it is clear that discursive articulations of development paradigms were part of the struggle of power within the TIPNIS conflict. This echoes Escobar's understandings of coloniality as part of two parallel processes: 'the systematic suppression of subordinated cultures and knowledges [...] by a dominant modernity' and 'the necessary emergence, in the very encounter, of particular knowledges shaped by this experience that have at least the potential to become sites of articulation of alternative projects and of enabling a pluriverse of sociocultural configurations' (2008: 12). Therefore, I agree with Blaser's (2010) conclusion in his ethnographic study of the Yshiro peoples of the Chaco that calls for an understanding of multiple worlds or realities through the 'pluriverse' that recognises alternative forms of modernity. In many ways, debates surrounding the governance of natural resources are fundamental to the TIPNIS conflict as they feed into questions over

whether indigenous peoples should have the jurisdiction to exploit and govern resources located on their lands, or whether notions of national sovereignty mean that natural resources should be held under the jurisdiction of the state.

5.6 The Appropriation and Control of 'Public' Spaces

Boundary-drawing exercises have been an important component of the reconfiguration of political identities during the TIPNIS conflict. The tactical manipulation and symbolic reappropriation of space and place is integral to many social movements (see Auyero 2003; Escobar 2001; Marston 2002; Moore 1997; Routledge 1997b). However, Sewell has argued that the social movement literature 'has treated space as an assumed and unproblematized background, not as a constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualized' (2001: 51-52). On the one hand, the state and affiliated sectors have sought the control and management of public spaces within metropolitan areas through spatial representations that discount the presence of lowland indigenous peoples. On the other hand, protestors on the Eighth and Ninth Marches have actively resisted these practices and attempted to liberate urban public spaces and identify themselves as equal citizens of Bolivia.

In the mid 1960s, Henri Lefebvre (1991) analysed the production of space in the city. He argued that the logic of the market had transformed urban spaces into places of concern for exchange value. The author called instead for 'the right to the city', centrality and the participation in decision-making processes for all Parisian working classes. Lefebvre therefore engages in issues of exclusion within cities and how this operates to essentially maintain the reproduction of capitalist logic. Indeed, certain metropolitan spaces have been contested during the Ninth March. Sewell argues that the physical assembling of large numbers of people into limited spaces can have the positive effects of gaining publicity, enhancing group solidarity through collective experiences and serving as a 'concentration of forces' in which the masses can exert pressure on repressive forces (2001: 58). For the lowland indigenous movement, the march also has the effect of creating visibility of an otherwise marginalised people. Stephenson argues that the previous indigenous marches have represented a new arena of public debate and contestation which 'underscores the historical agency of indigenous peoples and challenges prevailing dehumanizing practices that for over five hundred years had relegated them to the category of premodern Other' (2002: 102). Thus, the march challenged the spatial segregation of indigenous peoples into territories or the fringes of urban areas by permeating the historically colonial spaces of

Bolivia. Indigenous marches in the past have succeeded in making indigenous territory and participation a matter of shared concern for all Bolivians and thus an issue worthy of debate within dominant public spheres.

Historically, the indigenous majority of Bolivia has been excluded from urban centres. One important urban space for the Ninth March was the city of San Ignacio de Moxos, a hub of political support for the MAS and President Morales. The marchers had received word that the inhabitants of the city were prohibiting the Ninth March from passing through the central plaza causing Rafael Quispe to joke that the town should be renamed ‘San Ignacio de Quintana’ after Bolivia’s Minister of the Presidency Juan Ramón Quintana instead of ‘de Moxos’ (of the Mojeño peoples). A meeting was convoked to discuss whether the marchers should force their way through the town with one *corregidor* of the TIPNIS asking ‘¿no somos bolivianos tambien?’ (are we not Bolivians as well?) (personal field-notes, 07 May 2012). In the end the marchers decided to re-route around the outskirts of the town for fears of violent confrontations. Below is an extract from my field diary from that day:

I woke early to the noise of people packing up, alerting me to the fact that we were definitely marching today. We headed from El Algodonal towards San Ignacio de Moxos at around 8am. I was a little scared this morning after hearing that drunken locals had been circling our campsite on motorbikes through the night and threatening to hurt people. Even Ruben from Fundación Tierra had had his car graffitied with the word ‘*traidor*’ [traitor] outside of his hotel in the town. We approached with some trepidation and were met with around 1000 of the city’s inhabitants lined up along the roadside chanting and shouting derogatory racial abuse against the marchers, calling them ‘*monos*’ [monkeys] and yelling ‘*caminen como perros, como lo que son*’ [walk like dogs, as what you are]. (field journal extract, 08 May 2012)

It transpired that early that morning the police force had finally agreed to provide security for the marchers as they passed around the outskirts of San Ignacio de Moxos (Figure 4). This likening of the indigenous marchers to animals further reified racist representations of the marchers. The language acted to dehumanise the protestors continuing a long history of branding populations linked to a pre-colonial ancestry as non-human (see O’Rourke 2003). This echoes the concept of a ‘coloniality of being’ put forward by the MCD collective (see Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo 2003). In this instance, the language and practices of certain residents of San Ignacio de Moxos negated the marchers’ right to occupy these

public metropolitan spaces as Bolivian citizens. This antagonism was the cause of much concern for the marchers. The next day at a camp meeting in Puerto San Borja Bertha gave an emotionally charged speech in which she declared ‘[t]hey cannot deny our rights, as Bolivians, as citizens! We don’t even have the right to enter, to move freely through these streets on public roads’⁷⁸ (personal field-notes, 09 May 2012; author’s translation).

Figure 4. Police Escort Through San Ignacio de Moxos



Source: Author’s photograph.

The previous day, I had managed to hitch an hour’s motorbike ride to San Ignacio de Moxos in order to buy supplies. In the town I found various anti-march graffiti, including one that reads ‘*Bertha Vejarano. India Maleant[e]. El Pueblo No Perdona*’ (Bertha Vejarano. Indian Thug. The People Don’t Forgive) (Figure 5). The President of the Ninth March is originally from the town but is now considered a traitor of the indigenous-peasant alliance that brought Morales to power. The indigenous movement has reworked the colonial ordering of public spaces upheld through the regulation of access to certain racial bodies. In particular, the movement mobilised the well-established practice of the protest march as a way to occupy urban spaces and make their citizenship status visible. This

⁷⁸ ‘¡No pueden negar nuestros derechos, como bolivianos, como ciudadanos! No tenemos el derecho a ingresar, a transitar libremente, por esas calles en la vía pública’.

strategy of resistance therefore ‘represents the material and symbolic re-appropriation of an ‘alien’ space, thereby giving it new content’ (Zibechi 2012: 18). As such, the Eighth and Ninth marchers chose to walk through towns, including Trinidad, Caranavi and San Ignacio de Moxos, as well as occupy important urban centres in La Paz such as the religious centre Plaza San Francisco and the political centre home to the Presidential Palace; Plaza Murillo. Therefore, ‘struggles over public place are struggles over opposing ideologies, certainly, but they are also struggles over the *practice* of democracy, a practice that is as often determined in the streets, on the sidewalks, and in the parks as it is in the halls of the legislature or in the courtroom’ (Mitchell 2003: 152; original emphasis). Hence, the decision to occupy important public spaces was made to challenge the notion of the MAS as a party that represents the needs of all social movements. For example, one of the chants as we entered the centre of state power, Plaza Murillo, on the Eighth March was ‘¿si este no es el pueblo, el pueblo dónde está?’ (if this is not the people, where are the people?) (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011).

Figure 5. Graffiti in San Ignacio de Moxos



Source: Author’s photograph.

The ability of the marchers to physically manoeuvre their bodies through metropolitan spaces was fundamental as a mobile enactment of their citizenship status and to resist place-based associations of indigenous peoples. The marches were a way of utilising the

material flesh of the body to gain solidarity and empathy with metropolitan inhabitants. In her work with the Landless Peasants Movement in Bolivia, Nicole Fabricant states that protest marches are ‘about the use of the body – specifically, indigenous bodies moving visibly through national space’. This tool of political action requires ‘sacrifice and determination, pushing the body through a severe regime of pain in order to gain legislative rights to land, resources, and alternative ways of living’ (2012: 136). Thus, the protest marches are embodied performances in which the marchers use their bodies to achieve their demands. During my participation on the Ninth March, men designated the role of security frequently reprimanded me for walking out of line. They would call ‘¡columnas de dos!’ (lines of two!) to ensure that two people would walk side by side, each rank-and-file member walking roughly a foot behind the person in front (personal field-notes, 01 May 2012). When I asked the President of CIDOB, Adolfo Chávez, why this was he answered that it was ‘to avoid that there are accidents’ (*para evitar que haya accidentes*) and ‘to identify that there are no infiltrators’ (*para identificar que no haya infiltrados*) (personal interview, 27 May 2012). In conversations with other marchers and members of NGOs they also told me of the strategic importance of the two lines for the representation of the movement to the media and in metropolitan spaces as it would make the march seem more uniform and much longer. In addition, it was only in the urban centres that indigenous representatives wore the traditional dress of their respective communities or nations. For instance, at the start of the Ninth March in Trinidad representatives of CPEM-B wore the *vestido* (costume) of the Mojeño peoples: a long white tunic with a feathered headdress. These public displays of indigenous heritage proved to be a strategically effective tool for granting authenticity to the marchers and their cause. In her work studying Amazonian indigenous activism in Brazil, Beth Conklin (1997) argues that this use of imagery can also cause problems in pursuing wider indigenous goals for self-determination. I will discuss some of the dangers of ‘strategic essentialisms’ (see Spivak 1987: 281) in the next chapter.

In addition, a strategy of the indigenous movement has been to construct a political identity of pacifism that pits indigenous resistance against state power. Although this has been created as an identity that is part of the indigenous culture, it has been actively constructed through political action during the TIPNIS conflict. On the 10 February 2012, I waited apprehensively with indigenous representatives and urban activists in Plaza Murillo for the announcement of Ley No. 222. After the announcement was made a scuffle with the police ensued who forced the indigenous representatives out of the central plaza. When this died

down, one representative asked me if I was ok and stated '*es sólo un show Anna, no te preocupes*' (it's only a show Anna, don't worry) (personal field-notes, 10 February 2012). What had occurred was not only a very real display of antagonism towards the government's decision but also a strategy in which representatives of the movement consciously tried to rile the police in order to create a media spectacle in which the indigenous peoples would be seen to be subjugated by the dominant power of the state. This shows how externally the 'indigenous movement' of the CIDOB knowingly engage hegemonic spatial imaginaries of the state and civil society, utilising binaries of domination/resistance, in order to further support for their demands amongst the wider Bolivian society. In another example, when the Ninth March reached the outskirts of San Ignacio de Moxos a meeting was held in which the marchers agreed not to rise to the expected abuse or violence of certain inhabitants but instead to remain humble in the face of repression (personal field-notes, 08 May 2012). This was a useful strategy as it represented the state and affiliated social sector groups as the enemy and the indigenous movement as the dignified victim. As such, Rosario Ribera, a volunteer of the group *Mujeres Autoconvocadas*, stated that 'in this ocean an island emerges, which is a lesson of peace and of harmony despite the violence. For me, it was the greatest gift that I could have in my fifty-something years of life, it changed many things in my life'⁷⁹ (personal interview, 17 March 2012). The use of non-violence to negotiate through public spaces has formed part of a romantic and essentialist understanding of lowland indigenous peoples. This echoes what Doug McAdam refers to as 'strategic dramaturgy' (1996: 348) in his work with the US civil rights movement. The civil rights movement planned protest marches and civil disobedience in strategic locations that incited violent retaliation in order to capture the attention of the media and bystander publics and advance the moral position of their demands. For the TIPNIS protestors, this was especially effective since the events of La Chaparina. Non-violence can therefore be proactive, rather than passive, as it withdraws consent to state power by refusing to engage in military practices (see Routledge 1997b; Sharp 1973; Sharp & Paulson 2005).

The struggle over public space was perhaps most evident when the Eighth and Ninth Marches reached La Paz. On the Eighth March the marchers were barricaded into Plaza Murillo through a police cordon that prevented access to water, food, warm clothing and dialogue with urban supporters and campaigns (personal field-notes, 20 October 2011). On

⁷⁹ 'en ese océano surge una isla, que es una lección de paz y de armonía a pesar de la violencia. Para mí fue el regalo más grande que he podido tener en mis cincuenta y tantos años de vida, cambio muchas cosas en mi vida'.

the Ninth March the marchers set up in Plaza Murillo demanding that the government meet them. However, the police were ordered to use pepper spray, tear gas grenades and water jets against the marchers. This started after a protest by the feminist activist collective *Mujeres Creando* (Women Creating) when they had thrown fruit and vegetables at the police. The police retaliation resulted in several tents of the indigenous campers being destroyed and the need for medical treatment of eight children who suffered from respiratory problems (Los Tiempos 2012b). The government never agreed to meet the protestors and the indigenous peoples participating were forced to make the long journey home without meeting any of their demands. In this way, the government also used its ability to withdraw consent by refusing to negotiate with the protest march.

5.7 Mobilisation of Social Movement Strategies by the MAS

During the TIPNIS conflict the MAS administration mobilised a number of diverse social, cultural and performative mechanisms that replicate traditional political activity of social movements thus complicating the binary distinction between the ‘state’ and the ‘social movement’. In reference to progressive governments within Latin America, Zibechi has asked ‘[w]ho is better placed to implement complicated tactics that represent the real art of governance than governments that emerge from the movements?’ (2012: 270). Moreover, Gustafson’s analysis of Bolivia’s ‘social-movement state’ (2009b: 255) allows him to query traditional understandings of power relations. Gustafson argues that the MAS has attempted to ‘seat’ state sovereignty in the face of powerful local elites by adopting social movement tactics that have ‘repositioned the link between the state and violence as a political instrument’ (2010: 50). Instead of using force – for the most part – the MAS has reconfigured territoriality by replicating rebellious activities of insurgent movements, traditionally held as distinct from the more formal and systematic forms of politics practiced by the state. Scholarly analyses of the MAS therefore point to the development of an altered state-social movement relationship in which power is entangled in novel ways. In addition, the MAS are in a better position of knowing the terrain of social movement strategies and tactics thus enabling the state to co-opt their discourses and practices. The MAS Party government and affiliated social sectors instigated a number of practices in order to articulate representations of being a ‘government of social movements’ including: counter-marches, rallies and demonstrations, blockades, public meetings, statements to and in public media and the symbolic display of indigenous heritage.

First, a few days after arriving in Bolivia, I decided to participate in the government's '*Gran Caravana*' (Grand Caravan) to TIPNIS on 07 October 2011. The caravan was set up to counter the media attention circulating around the Eighth March as a result of La Chaparina on 25 September and to show the 'realities' of the TIPNIS to media agents. A document provided by the parliamentary brigade stated that '[t]he caravan has the goal of becoming acquainted with the local characteristics of the second stretch of the highway project' (Brigada de Asambleístas de Cochabamba 2011; author's translation). In particular, the caravan aimed to counter images and rhetoric of the TIPNIS as a 'virgin' territory and also show that the indigenous peoples inhabiting the area are actually in favour of the road. I arrived to participate and was placed in a vehicle with one of the leaders of Bartolina Sisa and some government officials. We left Cochabamba as one of approximately fifty vehicles adorned with Bolivian flags on the 120-mile route that would take us through a number of small communities within the TIPNIS. In the town of Isinuta in the coca growing region of the Chapare we were welcomed with a banner that read 'We support the finalisation of the road from the Tunari to San Ignacio de Moxos – Isinuta is with you Evo' (*Apoyamos a la conclusión del tramo de la Tunari – San Ignacio de Moxos – Evo Isinuta esta contigo*) (personal field-notes, 07 October 2011). After dinner we sat through a number of presentations by local leaders in support of the road. The following day we embarked on a trip into the TIPNIS to meet with communities who stated that they wanted the road in order to access markets for the sale of produce such as bananas, oranges, avocados, cassava and rice. The community of Nueva Aroma held a banner that read 'Yes, to the construction of the road Villa Tunari – San Ignacio de Moxos' (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Pro-Road Caravan to the TIPNIS



Source: Author's photograph.

Yet, the communities visited on the tour are all within the area of the TIPNIS known as Polygon 7, which is not part of the collective TCO title granted to the Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré and Chimane peoples. Polygon 7 is predominately populated by Andean *campesino* communities that have been migrating to the lowlands since the 1970s. As the ongoing President of the coca-growers union, the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba, Evo Morales has strong support in this region and this was mobilised in a media exercise to convince the Bolivian peoples of the demand for the road. As such, the caravan was instigated to counter the claims of the indigenous protestors on the Eighth March and also served to consolidate government support amongst already affiliated sectors. As the last day of the tour drew to a close for lunch I decided to hitch a ride back to Cochabamba with three diplomats. Instead of papayas and bananas lining the pavements, many of the houses were drying coca leaves in the midday sun giving a very different impression of the motivations behind demands for the road (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Coca Leaves in Polygon 7



Source: Author's photograph.

Second, on 12 October 2011, I heard the bang of firecrackers echoing around the streets of Cochabamba and decided to seek out the source. I came across a mass of unions and federations affiliated with the MAS descending on Cochabamba, including the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba and Bartolina Sisa. The throng concentrated in the central Plaza 14 de Septiembre around noon for a series of presentations by leaders and representatives of the MAS. The speakers rallied support for Evo Morales, the '*proceso de cambio*' and the upcoming judicial elections. Of the speakers, Zacarías Rojas (Federación de Campesinos de Chimoré; Federation of Peasants of Chimoré), Joel Flores (President of FEJUVE in Cochabamba) and Leonilda Zurita (a representative of Bartolina Sisa and the MAS) called for support for the Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos road. This was strategic timing with the Eighth March just 60 km outside of La Paz. On 10 December 2011, a similar concentration occurred at a viaduct on the outskirts of Cochabamba (Figure 8). It is unclear, however, whether the people participating on both these occasions are staunch supporters of the MAS since many of them work for or are affiliated to federations, syndicates and co-operatives that claim financial backing from the government. Indeed, not only did the MAS administration provide and pay for much of the transportation to these events but I also witnessed people checking their names off attendance lists. It was evident that the MAS were in a strong position to mobilise a

number of powerful social movement sectors to endorse the government's 'process of change' and discredit those in opposition to the TIPNIS road.

Figure 8. Pro-Government Concentration in Cochabamba



Source: Author's photograph.

Third, the union organisation CONISUR organised a counter-march to reject the announcement of Ley No. 180. The march, headed by inhabitants of the southernmost part of the TIPNIS (located outside of the TIOC), left from the town of Isinuta on 20 December 2011 arriving into La Paz on 30 January 2012. The pro-road march covered a distance of 400 km and sadly resulted in the death of a child, Hipólito Vargas. Because of CONISUR's connection with the coca growing federation and hence with the MAS, representatives of CIDOB and the TIPNIS attempted to discredit the marchers by calling them '*cocaleros*'. In turn, this rhetoric triggered the defence of the march by the President of CONISUR Gumercindo Pradel who declared that '[t]here are no *cocaleros* in the zone, what we have is our production. [...] I produce rice, banana, cassava and maize' (cited in Opinión 2012). CONISUR's connections to the government seemed clear, however, when the march reached La Paz and was supported by both Bartolina Sisa and CSCIB, both of which remain within the Unity Pact. Although the march resulted in the implementation of Ley No. 222 that would annul the previous law cancelling the road, the march received very little broader civil society support or media coverage. I witnessed the march as it

proceeded through the streets of Cochabamba to the indifference of the city's inhabitants (personal field-notes, 30 December 2011).

Fourth, between 12 and 14 December 2011 the government conducted a national summit in Cochabamba entitled the *Primer Encuentro Plurinacional para Profundizar el Cambio* (First Plurinational Meeting to Deepen Change), referred to as the *Cumbre Social* (Social Summit). The MAS invited indigenous and *campesino* organisations, neighbourhood federations, the business sector and governors of departments to discuss how the 'process of change' could move forwards. At the meeting, Morales stated that:

The profound changes in recent years reflect the conversion from a patriarchal, clientelist and exclusive colonial state to an inclusive state, that hosts cultural diversity in its structures of power, and revolves around sub-national entities based on the rupture of the monopoly of political drive at the central level, guaranteeing the control of economic surplus and the application of mechanisms of access to the better distribution of social wealth. (Los Tiempos 2011d; author's translation)

The meeting operated through several working tables covering a number of issues such as 'economic development', 'industrialisation and integration' and 'land'. The Social Summit furthered notions of the MAS Party as a 'government of social movements' not divorced from civil society groups. CIDOB and CONAMAQ, amongst other sectors and individuals critical of the government, did not participate in the meeting arguing for the need for a meeting away from political parties. Instead, CIDOB conducted a parallel summit in Santa Cruz, which I attended. This had alternative working tables, such as 'territory and land', 'platform of the Eighth March', and 'geopolitics and relations' (personal field-notes, 14 December 2011). CIDOB formally invited Evo Morales and government representatives to the counter-summit with the argument that it was the true social summit, not one designed and controlled by a still centralised government.

This section shows that the government has acted to instigate a number of social movement practices in order to articulate representations of being 'a government of social movements'. As such, the 'progressive governments' are often 'the most effective agent at disarming the anti-systemic nature of the social movements, operating deep within their territory' (Zibechi 2012: 290). In some ways, this has acted to solidify support within pro-Evo areas of Bolivia. These practices have also acted to subvert the allegiances with some social movement sectors remaining within the Unity Pact to the advantage of the

government. Nonetheless, these strategies have largely furthered romantic representations of the Bolivian government to international audiences rather than Bolivian society.

5.8 Rupturing the '*Estructura Orgánica*' of CIDOB

I suggest that the most dangerous affront to the lowland indigenous movement has been attempts to rupture the organisational structures of CIDOB by the government. In the early stages of the MAS administration resistance was managed through the assimilation of social movements into the state. According to Zibechi this acts to 'create a leadership body separate from the movement's base' (2012: 278). Later, after the Eighth March, the government shifted to a more subversive and effective 'divide and conquer' strategy in which representatives set out to break down the '*estructura orgánica*' (organic structure) of the indigenous communities by isolating and assimilating (or co-opting) some of the indigenous leaders.⁸⁰ As such, the President of CIDOB, Adolfo Chávez, explained that 'the government is becoming a hub of power to break the unity of the indigenous peoples, instead of reinforcing the unity of the people. What the government does is destroying its own organisation to invest in development'⁸¹ (personal interview, 27 May 2012). Juan José Sardina, a leader of CONAMAQ, stated that 'until now in our *estructuras orgánicas*, the indigenous peoples, haven't had much political interference [...] [now] the political parties put stones in the road'⁸² (personal interview, 17 June 2012). This remark indicates the fact that previous administrations have not worked so actively to breakdown the organic structures of the indigenous peoples.

Firstly, the strategy of co-optation led to the absence of eleven out of the thirteen regional leaders of CIDOB at the start of the Ninth March having been given incentives, such as development initiatives, not to attend (La Razón 2012a). The Morales' administration had signed pacts with the regional presidents not to participate on the march in return for health and education projects, as well as infrastructural projects, in their regions. This initially shocked me, having met and interviewed some of the regional leaders prior to the march. In particular, I had interviewed Rosa Chao, the leader of the CPITCO, who had been visibly distressed about their treatment from the government. On reflection, however, she

⁸⁰ The '*estructura orgánica*' is a horizontal form of decision-making that disperses power throughout the social body of CIDOB. I will discuss this in more depth in the next chapter.

⁸¹ 'el gobierno se está convirtiendo en el eje de poder romper la unidad de los pueblos indígenas, en vez de reforzar esa unidad de los pueblos. Lo que hace el gobierno es destruir su propia organización para invertir en el desarrollo'.

⁸² 'hasta hoy en nuestras estructuras orgánicas, los pueblos indígenas, no tienen mucha injerencia política. [...] los partidos políticos ponen piedras en el camino'.

was visibly worn down and the regional leaders were under considerable pressure to provide tangible projects for their communities. The pacts also show a prevailing modality based on a history of clientelistic state-indigenous relations since republican times, in which proffering support for the government is one of the few ways to access resources (see Rivera Cusicanqui 1990; Yashar 2000). However, the fact that regional leaders did not participate in the Ninth March shed serious doubt on the legitimacy of the march as seen by other civil society sectors. These developments also led to internal disputes amongst the bases of CIDOB who could not decide whether to follow the decision of their leaders or participate nonetheless. This was particularly evident amongst the Guaraní, with some communities deciding to march and others choosing to support the march from within their own communities. That said, the marchers that did participate asserted that the involvement of the bases was more important than that of the leaders. In fact, some interview participants argued that the absence of regional presidents of CIDOB meant that the march would be more democratic and less open to co-optation. The fact that the indigenous movement can endure without the regional leaders also shows the strength of the '*estructura orgánica*'. Rivera Cusicanqui, the Aymara scholar and activist, has argued that the 'MAS isn't co-opting the social movements, but rather the movement leaders' (cited in Dangl 2014: 317). Sarela Paz, a sociologist and anthropologist specialising in indigenous territories, stated that the organic structure was designed in the 1990s as a way of providing protection for territories of the indigenous peoples as it was a robust and permanent structure unlike the more sporadic uprisings during the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 (personal interview, 09 June 2012).

A second affront came when the Morales administration set up a parallel organisation of CIDOB in order to create a leadership body separate from the demands of the indigenous movement. The parallel CIDOB was set up on the 8-10 June, just before the Ninth March arrived into La Paz on 27 June 2012 (La Razón 2012b). Government representatives also set out to discredit the President of CIDOB, Adolfo Chávez. On one occasion, Chávez left the Ninth March to travel to Ecuador for a meeting with COICA (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica; Coordinating Body of the Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin).⁸³ In a public announcement by Amanda Dávila, the

⁸³ COICA formed in 1984 and now represents one hundred interethnic confederations of nine countries of the Amazonian region (Kearney & Varese 1995). COICA serves as a coordinating body for indigenous rights claims at the international level and played an active role in both the UN Working Group on Indigenous People's Rights and the discussions surrounding the ILO Convention 169. From the outset CIDOB has therefore demanded territorial rights at the level of the state as well as serving to change international legal norms regarding indigenous rights at the supra-national level.

Minister of Communication, she stated that Chávez had ‘*abandonado*’ (abandoned) the Ninth March and that the government were no longer sure who was leading the protest (Eju 2012). These discourses led to people on the Ninth March questioning the whereabouts of Chávez, causing the leader to account for his absence and play a more prominent role in the daily goings on of the march. Since these developments representatives of CIDOB have taken to calling the organisation ‘CIDOB Orgánica’. Furthermore, both the APG and the COICA issued public resolutions disclaiming the authority of the parallel CIDOB set up by the government (APG 2012; COICA 2012).⁸⁴

Thirdly, and finally, the government has chosen to ignore the organisational structures of the lowland indigenous movement by entering the TIPNIS in order to carry out the prior consultation process (dubbed the ‘post’ consultation) that was promulgated through Ley No. 222 signed with CONISUR. The consultation was carried out by the governmental institution of the TSE (Tribunal Supremo Electoral: Supreme Electoral Tribunal) that sent fifteen government brigades into the TIPNIS to meet with the communities. This was instigated on 29 July and finally ended on the 07 December 2012. The process aimed to ‘consult’ the 69 communities within the TIPNIS about whether the earlier Ley No. 180 should be restored and whether the communities are in agreement with the construction of the road. The final report from the TSE (2012) states that 80 percent of the communities consulted want to advance the proposals for the road. At an event in Trinidad on 07 December the government therefore announced that the consultation was a victory. Here, Vice-President García Linera further articulated notions of the need for modern development when suggesting that ‘there are people who want the inhabitants of the TIPNIS to continue to live like animals [...] it is time for them to develop like any other Bolivian’ and that ‘180 years of neglect for the Amazonian peoples end with Evo Morales’ (CIDOB 2012b; author’s translation). Alongside this process of consultation, the government enacted a publicity campaign, including television advertisements and radio jingles, which served to articulate the process as democratic and in the best interests of the indigenous peoples. In July 2012, Morales personally visited Oromomo in the TIPNIS to install a mobile telephone station and bring the community solar panels, radio equipment and school supplies (La Razón 2012c).

⁸⁴ A similar process occurred in December 2013 with the CONAMAQ. A faction of government supporters within CONAMAQ took control of their central offices in La Paz. A conflict ensued that resulted in a number of injuries (Erbol 2013).

However, the process of post-consultation ignored the organisational structures of the indigenous communities recognised under the 2009 Constitution. In particular, the consultation included eighteen communities of CONISUR who do not currently hold the collective indigenous title necessary for the mandatory process of prior consultation. A further 11 communities of the 69 boycotted the consultations (TSE 2012). The majority of these communities are in the northeast of the TIPNIS, where the fiercest resistance to the road has taken place amongst the Mojeño communities. A Verification Commission by representatives of the APDHB (Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Bolivia; Permanent Human Rights Assembly of Bolivia), the Catholic Church and the FIDH (Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos; International Federation of Human Rights) concluded that the consultation did not adhere to the organisational structures of the indigenous communities, sometimes meeting just part of the communities or conducting meetings outside of the communities altogether. Moreover, even though the TSE report stated that the consultation was inter-cultural respecting the cultural diversity and world-visions of the different communities, the process was not done by consensus – the usual form of decision-making within indigenous communities. Bolivia’s human rights ombudsman Rolando Villena criticised the consultation process as ‘*autoritaria*’ (authoritarian), ‘*colonialista*’ (colonial) and ‘*unilateral*’ (unilateral) (Página Siete 2012). Even where communities agreed to the proposal of the road, it is suggested that they may have been manipulated. For instance, the main question during the consultation was about whether the communities wanted Ley No. 180 to be restored. However, as discussed, the law would make the TIPNIS an ‘untouchable’ zone with possible implications for economic development within the communities. It was then suggested that if they didn’t agree to the TIPNIS being ‘untouchable’ they automatically agreed to the road.

5.9 Reworking the State from Within: Constructing a New Political Instrument

The struggle towards a lived plurinational future looks set to take a turn towards electoral politics. The indigenous movement of the lowlands and highlands, represented by the organisations CIDOB and CONAMAQ, are currently working to create a new political instrument. During my participation on the Ninth March and in interviews with representatives of the lowland indigenous movements, most leaders refused to discuss this issue with me in taped recordings. Juan José Sardinias, the *cacique* of the Chicas nation within CONAMAQ talked about this as a long-term process in order ‘to create a political

instrument, a tool to take the power'⁸⁵ (personal interview, 17 June 2012). This process aims to recover the 'political instrument of the people' from the MAS for the indigenous movements of the lowlands and highlands. More recently, it has been announced by CIDOB that Fernando Vargas, the President of TIPNIS Sub-Central, will stand as a candidate for presidency in the general elections due to take place in late 2014 (Erbol 2014). Vargas will represent the Movimiento de Integración por la Libertad Total e Irrestricta, Pacto Nacional de Igualdad Social (Mil-TIPNIS; Integration Movement for Total and Unrestricted Freedom, National Pact of Social Equality), a political party fashioned in February 2014 by the organic structure of CIDOB. Here, the acronym of the TIPNIS has been re-signified for the name of the new political party.

The creation of a new political instrument is a contentious issue both within CIDOB and for urban solidarity networks in the TIPNIS conflict. Yashar highlights the following potential issues when indigenous movements begin engaging in electoral politics: (i) experienced leaders get lost to state politics; (ii) the task of delivering demands becomes monumental; (iii) leaders won't necessarily be embraced by indigenous communities; and finally (iv) they may fall prey to partisan competition and political cleavages (2005: 302-305). The indigenous movement is entering electoral politics in order to struggle for and retain their territorial sovereignty, self-determination and autonomy. Yet, this seems somewhat contradictory to many and it remains unclear how CIDOB would be able to maintain the *estructura orgánica* whilst occupying state institutions born from colonialism.

There is growing concern within CIDOB that the fourth issue identified by Yashar – that of partisan competition and political cleavages – is already emerging. Indeed, one of the pervasive internal tensions of the lowland indigenous movement is the debate over whether CIDOB should align itself to political parties. On the one hand, one of the key principles of the organisation is 'to maintain partisan political and religious independence' inline with the organic structure (CIDOB 2005; author's translation). This also echoes the words of one of the 'founding fathers' of the indigenous movement, a Guaraní man known as the Sombra Grande (Great Shade), whose legacy is maintained in CIDOB through the motto to '[k]eep the unity of the organisation and the independence from political parties' (CIDOB 2008: 79; author's translation). On the other hand, representatives of CIDOB have aligned themselves to political parties on a number of occasions. For instance, ex-President of CIDOB Marcial Fabricano ran for Vice-President on the ticket of the Movimiento Bolivia

⁸⁵ 'crear un instrumento político, una herramienta para tomar el poder'.

Libre (MBL; Free Bolivia Movement) in the 1997 general elections, the country's fifth-largest political party, causing a crisis in the organisation (Assies & Salman 2005). Again, in the early 2000s, tensions were strained as some leaders of CIDOB chose to align themselves to the MIR and others to the MAS. Postero (2004) notes that these tensions proliferated in 2002 when indigenous leaders of CIDOB disagreed over strategies for the March for Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources to demand a Constituent Assembly. The marchers separated into two groups 'making a divided and confusing public representation' (Postero 2004: 206). Furthermore, in October 2002 the indigenous organisation of the Beni region – CPIB – separated into two groups because of irrevocable differences (Bazoberry Chali 2008). Internal conflicts emerged as representatives of the Mojeño peoples sought political participation at the national level through traditional political parties unlike other ethnic groups in the region. This split resulted in the formation of CPEM-B, which has since had a vital political influence in the Beni and nationally through its leaders' ability to link grievances to affiliated social sectors (Bazoberry Chali 2008; CIDOB 2008). In late 2004 a representative of the CPEM-B named Sixto Vejarano Congo was even elected Mayor of San Ignacio de Moxos, a first for indigenous peoples in the municipality.

During the TIPNIS conflict, some interview participants expressed unease over new linkages formed with political parties. A technical expert from CIDOB told me of his worry that the indigenous movement would fall prey to the problem of war-lordism, or the problem of progressive governments centralising decisions when they take power. Certainly, on the Ninth March, it was evident that many backdoor negotiations and decisions were taking place and that the technical experts from within CIDOB were being ignored for advice from NGOs, political parties and economic elites. A technical expert from CIDOB spoke to me about his concern over the involvement of the 'right' in the political decisions of the lowland indigenous movement:

During the Constituent Assembly, they [the right] have ordered the beating or the dismantling of the offices of CIDOB primarily as a symbol of indigenous peoples. And now we are allies with them, how [can we] agree, right? As if nothing had happened. So, I think we need an internal reflection, real and transparent, on the part of the main leaders of CIDOB. I am very concerned that, in terms of the lack of transparency and

honesty, we will be the losers once again, the indigenous peoples, for the irresponsibility of our leaders.⁸⁶

As CIDOB enters into electoral politics, a cycle of dependency is being created in which the organisation is relying on the financial support of external agents and/or partisan cleavages with conservative political parties. This is especially true since funds previously supplied by the MAS administration have been cut off after the breakdown of the Unity Pact. The decision to enter electoral politics has undoubtedly been strengthened by such shifts in allegiances, with the influence of external consultants and intellectuals from organisations such as the World Bank playing a major role. I argue that there is a danger that this close alliance with NGOs and some political parties could weaken the demands of the indigenous movement and its emancipatory potential. Criticisms are also present within the urban solidarity networks resisting the road. As such, some groups of anarchists and self-proclaimed Trotskyists have criticised the current initiative and stated the need for maintaining autonomy from the state. Whatever the reasons, ideological or political, for this criticism it could potentially breakdown the left-indigenous solidarity networks established during the TIPNIS conflict.

Secondly, it would appear that Yashar's third issue – that indigenous communities won't necessarily embrace candidates – is also evident. For instance, the indigenous leader Pedro Nuni was positioned as a candidate for the Governor of Beni in January 2013, with the full backing and support of CIDOB. However, Nuni lost the elections with less than 2.65 percent of the vote, a bleak electoral defeat that shows that even the communities represented by CIDOB did not vote for him (El Deber 2013c). Similarly, Marcial Fabricano's bid for vice presidency in 1997 under MBL failed disastrously (Yashar 2005). I suggest that this is part of the legacy of clientelism and the pervasive power to buy votes.

It therefore remains unclear how these processes will unfold and I have suggested certain dangers that CIDOB need to be careful to avoid. However, what becomes clear is an agenda in which the indigenous movement are not adverse to state politics or indeed anti-state. Rather they seek to enact change from within state institutions in order to gain rights to autonomy. I would therefore disagree with scholars such as Dangl (2007, 2010) and

⁸⁶ 'Durante la asamblea constituyente, ellos mismos han ordenado el apaleamiento o el desmantelamiento de las oficinas de la CIDOB principalmente como símbolo de los pueblos indígenas. Y ahora nos vemos aliados con ellos, como acuerdos ¿no? como si no hubiera pasado nada. Entonces, yo creo que falta una reflexión interna, real y transparente, de parte de los dirigentes principales de la CIDOB. Me preocupa mucho esto, en términos de la falta de transparencia y honestidad, que los perdedores nuevamente seamos nosotros los pueblos indígenas por la irresponsabilidad de nuestros dirigentes'.

Zibeche (2010b, 2012) who state that there is a choice between co-optation or autonomy. Instead, I would argue that the MAS Party government has opened up important changes within the state that could be furthered through other progressive governments. This would be a long and arduous process but if the indigenous movement can seek autonomy by making demands on the state, they could also reconstruct the Westphalian state model from within the transient institutions of government. That said, the indigenous movement might fall under the same traps of the MAS Party, such as the limits to transformatory potential imposed by the inheritance of colonial state bureaucracies.

5.10 Conclusion

The Ninth March will be much bigger, because they will participate; it will have the support of all of civil society. This time [on the Eighth March] the marchers came alone, now I'll bet that it will be all - all of the people of the countryside, the city, they will unite, and they will join and they will march.⁸⁷ (Huascar Bustillos Cayoja, activist in the CDAPMA, personal interview, 17 March 2012)

The above statement was made by an activist in Santa Cruz between the Eighth and Ninth indigenous marches in defence of the TIPNIS. He predicted that the Ninth March would be bigger as it would have built up momentum from the Eighth March when tens of thousands of people welcomed it into La Paz. However, the strategies of the MAS to undermine the lowland indigenous movement, as outlined in this chapter, led to less indigenous people participating in the march and less consolidated support from the Bolivian population. That said, this has not been a simple process of co-optation and domination by the state. Rather, the MAS has sought to rework the boundaries between the 'state' and 'social movements' and has broken several glass ceilings for the *campesino* and *cocalero* sectors. Despite these progressive advances, the process of change based on reseating national sovereignty feeds into a neo-extractivist development model that conflicts the scale-making claims of indigenous territoriality. Fundamentally, state recentralisation shuts down the emancipatory potential of the plurinational project and reifies relations of power that act to subalternise the lowland indigenous peoples as they have not gained access to the state machinery. I therefore argue that, in some respects, the concept of the 'Plurination' has acted as a smokescreen for the continued repression of lowland indigenous groups in

⁸⁷ 'La novena marcha va a ser mucho más grande, porque van a participar, va tener el apoyo de toda la sociedad civil. Esta vez los marchistas vinieron solos, ahora yo te apuesto que va a ser todos, toda la gente del campo, la ciudad, se van a unir, y van a ingresar y van a marchar'.

Bolivia (see Laing 2012). Yet, despite these criticisms a recent poll suggests that 45 percent of Bolivians intend to vote for the MAS in the 2014 general elections (Stefanoni 2014). This shows that cultural hegemony is an inherently spatial process since the MAS enjoys uneven and geographically divided support but is still likely to win a third term in electoral office.

NEGOTIATING IDENTITY POLITICS OF LOWLAND INDIGENEITY

In this chapter I evaluate the lowland indigenous struggles in defence of the TIPNIS in order to better understand the multiple and shifting articulations of indigeneity in contemporary Bolivia. During the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 indigenous groups, the urban poor, students, activist-academics and peasant unions formed coalitions that crosscut identities of class and ethnicity. The success of these movements in protesting against the neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s was inextricably linked to a growing identity politics and national discourse of indigeneity. With the inauguration of Bolivia's first indigenous president Evo Morales in 2006 indigeneity has become a key 'language of contention' (Roseberry 1996: 83). The MAS Party rose to power on the back of Bolivia's left-indigenous movements and Morales has continually asserted his political ideology as one of indigenous cultural and political liberation. Here, I explore how a politics of indigeneity has influenced and impacted on the types of identity claims and strategies adopted by the lowland indigenous movement. These discussions recognise the inherent tensions and conflicting understandings of indigeneity within the movement and the ways in which multiple actors, according to changing political climates, reconfigure indigenous identity claims.

First, I discuss the shifting dynamics of the lowland indigenous movement since the 1990s. Second, I turn to address the multiple meanings of ethnicity in an 'indigenous state'. Third, this leads into a discussion of the key 'strategic essentialisms' (see Spivak 1987: 281) mobilised by CIDOB to legitimise political claims. I examine how these essentialist discourses get imagined, reiterated and brought into contestation through political action. Fourth, I evaluate the ways in which place-based memories of struggle centred on religious and utopian visions of the '*loma santa*' (holy hill) have been re-framed around the more spatially extensive term the '*casa grande*' (big house). Fifth, I consider the 'geopoetics of resistance' (Routledge 2000a: 385) and the ways in which representational materials, such as songs and the Amazonian Patujú flower, have been mobilised to galvanise support from wider sectors of Bolivian society. Finally, I discuss the significance of the spatiality of the Eighth and Ninth Marches for building intercommunal ties and then address the question of who represents whom in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. I argue that the praxis of contentious politics is restricted within the hegemonic framework of legal rights and

through the mediation of NGOs and media agents. These problems of representation often act to dilute or challenge the emancipatory potential of indigenous world-visions.

6.1 Shifting Articulations of the Lowland Indigenous Movement

As discussed in chapter II, Bolivian indigenous movements made a number of significant advances in the 1990s due to a blended pattern of multicultural pro-indigenous reforms and neoliberal decentralisation. CIDOB arose in a global climate of ‘indigenism’ that sought to recognise indigenous rights under international frameworks such as the 1989 ILO Convention No. 169 and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Brysk 2000; Canessa 2006; Yashar 2005). Both recognise some form of self-rule, the right to retain customs, institutions and customary law and the rights of indigenous peoples to be consulted in decision-making regarding development proposals.

On the one hand, a number of authors have argued that the multicultural reforms in Latin America constituted an expanded neoliberal framework that did little to challenge liberal citizenship regimes or resource inequities (Goodale 2009; Gustafson 2002; Hale 2002, 2004; McNeish 2008; Povinelli 1998). Indeed, neoliberal reforms fell short of indigenous claims to politico-territorial autonomy in various ways: the LPP often served to increase the political power of local elites; Grassroots Territorial Organisations did not recognise traditional forms of authority and representation of indigenous peoples, such as the collective assembly; and lack of political will delayed the titling process of TCOs (see Postero 2004; Van Cott 2002). Van Cott contends that ‘Bolivian indigenous organisations were unable to link constitutional recognition of their authorities and territories to a meaningful level within the political and territorial administration’ (2002: 57).

On the other hand, scholars have suggested that criticisms of the multicultural reforms close down the agency of indigenous peoples who have shown that they can push beyond the limits of Hale’s (2000, 2004) ‘authorised Indian’. McNeish reminds us of the partial failures of the neoliberal project in Bolivia and uses the example of the Water and Gas Wars of 2000-2005 to demonstrate that certain indigenous groups have fostered ‘innovative strategies and structures in their efforts to circumvent its limits’ (2008: 51). Moreover, Postero has argued that ‘indigenous citizens in Bolivia have taken advantage of political openings that the LPP [Law of Popular Participation] offered, in many cases by assuming many of the rationalities of neoliberalism [...] to pose important challenges to the workings of global capitalism’ (2007b: 17). Thus, indigenous organisations have

shown an ability to utilise the frameworks and institutions created through neoliberal reforms whilst questioning the assumptions on which they are based. Hindery calls these histories of resistance and accommodation ‘dynamic pragmatism’ (2013: 82). Van Cott (2006) has reasoned that multicultural reforms did not strengthen neoliberalism in areas of strong social and political mobilisation such as Bolivia and indigenous rights can provide an effective vehicle for left-indigenous coalitions. For instance, Jeffrey Webber (2012b) argues that the Gas War of 2005 combined a politics of class struggle and indigenous liberation to reclaim national resources from transnational corporations.

Moreover, the failures of multiculturalism resulted in increasing demands by CIDOB for decision-making powers, through their own organisational bodies, in the central state. This would thereby rethink ‘the homogenizing and liberal precepts of contemporary citizenship regimes *and* the state’ (Yashar 2005: 285; original emphasis). Gustafson contends that this demand to re-found the institutions of the state thus ‘differs from conventional views of indigenous self-determination as (only) special legal regimes applied to ethno-territorial enclaves’ (2009a: 989). Rather, indigenous territorial demands have sought a degree of autonomy and self-determination over the governance of land and resources located in ancestral territories alongside greater participation within state institutions. This plurinational agenda was the main crux of the 2002 March for Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources led by CIDOB and peasant organisations that demanded the reworking of the mono-cultural state through a Constituent Assembly (Table 1 in chapter II). Albro contends that the resulting Constitution approved by referendum in 2009 represents a ‘historical transformation’ and a ‘landmark in the effort to decolonize the public administration in this country’ (2010a: 72).

CIDOB’s broader demands for self-determination over political, territorial and resource jurisdiction have only been partially recognised within the MAS administration, however. For instance, when it came to defining the organisational structure of the Constituent Assembly, the law established that representation would be through political parties ‘thus failing to acknowledge the demand of the indigenous organisations (many of them with limited regional presence) for representation as collective subjects’ (Regalsky 2010: 46). CIDOB and CONAMAQ were therefore restricted to channelling their demands through allegiances with the MAS. This situation was the motivation for the 2007 March for an Indigenous Assembly and the Constituent Assembly that departed from Santa Cruz to Sucre (where the Assembly was being held) in order to exert pressure to include the direct

representation of indigenous peoples through their collective organisations within the legislature. Furthermore, in 2010 the Plurinational Assembly debated the implementation of the new Constitution's notion of autonomy but ignored indigenous demands resulting in the March for Territory, Autonomy and the Defence of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Table 1). It is important to understand, therefore, that autonomy has been conceived of by indigenous organisations 'as at once cultural, territorial, and legal' and, under this understanding, has not been adequately recognised (Albro 2010a: 76).

Furthermore, competing resource sovereignties with distinctive spatialities have become a sticking point to the plurinational project. The Constitution recognises the autonomous and exclusive use of renewable natural resources by inhabitants of collective indigenous territories (Art 30: II). Conversely, the document also declares that 'natural resources are of strategic character and of public importance for the development of the country' (Art 348: II, Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; author's translation). The Constitution states that:

Hydrocarbons, in whatever state they are found or form in which they are presented, are the alienable and unlimited property of the Bolivian people. The State, on behalf of and in representation of the Bolivian people, is owner of the entire hydrocarbon production in the country and is the only one authorised to sell them. The totality of the income received by the sale of hydrocarbons shall be the property of the State (Art. 359: I; Gobierno de Bolivia 2009; author's translation)

Therefore, indigenous communities have been granted limited territorial sovereignty and autonomy over natural resources. Indeed, government representatives have strategically drawn on imaginative geographies of the nation and the history of appropriation of natural resources by foreign corporations to garner support for their state-led project of resource nationalism, negating competing claims by indigenous peoples. As such, many of the demands of the Eighth and Ninth Marches call for greater governance over resources located within indigenous territories (Table 2). It is therefore evident that contemporary protests against the TIPNIS road project form part of longer struggles for indigenous economic, social, political and cultural autonomy and the decolonisation of the nation-state through the plurinational agenda.

Table 2. Platform of the Demands of the Eighth and Ninth Marches

Eighth March (16 Demands)	Ninth March (9 Demands)
1 TIPNIS: Reject the construction of Section II of the highway between Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos.	TIPNIS: Compliance and enforcement of Ley No. 180 (with amendments) and the repeal of Ley No. 222.
2 Aguaragüe Park: Demand to stop all hydrocarbon activities in Aguaragüe Park.	Aguaragüe Park: Stop all hydrocarbon activities in Aguaragüe Park.
3 Land and Territory: Respect of indigenous territories in the new agrarian legislation.	Indigenous Rights: Recognition of indigenous peoples as subjects of rights.
4 Climate Change, Green Fund and REDD+: The right to compensation payment for the mitigation of greenhouse gases in indigenous territories.	Territory: The titling of communal lands (TCOs) in process in favour of the indigenous-originary nations, peoples and communities.
5 Policy Development and the Right to Consultation: The right to prior consultation as defined by law.	Environment: Completion of the rights of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, and respect for Mother Earth.
6 Productive Development: Decentralisation of the FDPPIOYCC ('Indigenous Fund') to the lowlands for their visions of development.	Law of Mother Earth: The official approval of the proposed Law of Mother Earth that was agreed in 2010.
7 Indigenous Autonomy: The provision of economic resources to develop indigenous land management in all titled indigenous territories.	Eighth March: The completion of the agreements made on the Eighth March.
8 Forestry Law: The participation of indigenous peoples in the Ley de Bosques (Forestry Law).	La Chaparina: Imprisonment of the people responsible for La Chaparina.
9 National Parks and Protected Areas: The elaboration of the Ley Especial de Áreas Protegidas (Special Law of Protected Areas).	Political Participation: Participation and control in the design, construction, implementation and monitoring of standards and policies of the state.
10 Education: Dispersal of economic resources for the construction of infrastructure and the Bolivian Indigenous University.	
11 Health: Incorporate indigenous peoples as beneficiaries of Universal Health Insurance.	
12 Census: Conduct a census as soon as possible for accurate data on indigenous territories.	
13 Housing: Implement housing plans for indigenous peoples in territories and indigenous migrants that live in cities.	
14 River Pilcomayo: Implement policies for the management, protection and conservation of River Pilcomayo to maintain the livelihoods of the Weenhayek, Tapiete and Guaraní peoples.	
15 Communication: Ensure the full right of access, use and management of the information and communication of indigenous peoples.	
16 APG: Completion of 2010 agreement with the APG.	

Source: Comité de la Octava Marcha (2011a); Comité de la Novena Marcha (2012b).

Yet, it is important to note that CIDOB's claims to indigenous autonomy have never demanded independence from Bolivia, unlike the Aymara Kataristas of the 1970s that imagined a separate indigenous nation from the Bolivian state (Albó 1987). Rather, CIDOB has strived for autonomy and self-determination within the borders of the existing nation-state similar to the Zapatistas who have positioned themselves as indigenous autonomous peoples *and* as Mexican citizens (Hiddleston 2009). This has been a general trend across Latin America where indigenous sovereignty has sought a degree of autonomy from the state but not complete isolation relying on governments for the security of welfare and the implementation of development programmes (Erazo 2013; Escobar 2008; Gustafson 2009b; Warren & Jackson 2003). Demands for self-determination have included: the recognition of respective indigenous institutional forms and decision-making powers; the exercise of legal responsibilities, land and resource rights; the establishment of semi-autonomous regions; and the presence of representative indigenous bodies within national governments (see Diaz Polanco 1997; McNeish & Eversole 2005). In this way, indigenous movements push at the limits of liberal concepts of the nation-state whilst maintaining national territorial boundaries. This echoes James Anaya (2004), the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in his verdict that indigenous claims to territory, self-determination and autonomy do not challenge the sovereignty of the nation-state but rather call for recognitions of different understandings of the 'nation' within one state. Therefore, indigenous politico-territorial autonomy is more than a demand for the recognition of an aspect of culture or identity, or the protection of ancestral lands, but the recognition of semi-autonomous spaces or territories.

6.2 Multiple Meanings of Ethnicity in an 'Indigenous State'

New meanings of indigeneity have been articulated with the rise of the MAS. The party has shown a marked ability to subsume heterogeneous identities under an 'indigenous nationalism' that crosscuts class and ethnicity (Stefanoni 2006: 37). Morales' public use of anticolonial heroes such as Túpac Katari has 'forged a shared historical and territorial narrative and promoted the construction of a collective identity, a partnering of sorts between movements and the state' (Fabricant 2012: 162). This more inclusive categorisation has resulted in indigenous issues taking centre stage in Bolivian politics (Albro 2005a; Canessa 2006; McNeish 2008). The MAS also monopolised on shifting understandings of indigeneity in Bolivia that resulted in 62 percent, including urban inhabitants, self-identifying as indigenous in the 2001 Census (INE/UMPA 2003). The

result showed that indigeneity was no longer coupled with an ability to speak an indigenous language as this accounted for just 49 percent of the population. Canessa has thus concluded that after ‘centuries of contemporary indigenous culture being represented as anachronistic, backward and retarding the progress of the nation, “the indigenous” is now increasingly seen as being iconically national’ (2006: 243).

Yet, Maybury-Lewis contends that ‘indigenous peoples are defined as much by their relations with the state as by any intrinsic characteristics that they may possess’ (2006: 27). The politics of indigeneity employed from the 1970s has been complicated by the fact that the MAS government also makes claims to an indigenous identity. Indeed, Morales only began to articulate claims to a highland ethnic identity in the period of ‘indigenous awakening’ in the early 2000s (Fabricant 2012). In an interview in 2011 Morales even stated that ‘I never considered myself to be the first indigenous president, but the first trade-unionist president’ (Página Siete 2011; author’s translation). Moreover, Canessa (2007b) notes that in the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity the majority of the highland groups participating refused to be identified as indigenous on the grounds that it is an identity based on colonial subjugation preferring the term ‘*originarios*’. Since Morales’ election the use of the indigenous label – with new meanings attached – has increased within the highlands (Albro 2005a; Canessa 2006, 2007b; McNeish 2008). Through the articulation of a more inclusive urban-based indigeneity as articulated through the MAS political project, ‘indigeneity’ and ‘indigenous issues’, previously marginal to the Bolivian political sphere, have become more mainstream (Albro 2005a; Canessa 2006, 2007b).

However, Canessa notes that ‘[i]f much of the politics of indigeneity is about difference and recognising the cultural and other rights of minority groups, Morales’ government is asserting a very different vision of indigeneity; a homogenous national culture for the majority’ (2012a: 15). This restricted framing of an ‘imagined political community’ (Anderson 1991: 6) of the nation acts to negate the world-visions of the historically more marginalised lowland indigenous peoples and reinforces a continual trend of the Andeanization of Bolivia (Albro 2010a; Canessa 2006; Gustafson & Fabricant 2011). Goodale therefore concludes that the MAS has not re-founded the nation-state model to include multiple world-views but ‘[r]ather, they simply demand an expansion of the categories of modern Bolivia, the universalization of the liberal subject, and a commitment to equality of rights’ (2009: 179). Where demands of the lowland indigenous movement are recognised it is within the limited framework of indigenous rights. This can be seen in

the Constitution that ‘renders some forms of indigenous identity more “legible” than others’ (Albro 2010a: 72). In particular, Albro notes that the ‘rights-bearing indigenous subject’ is ‘aligned with the state’s “direct and participatory” communitarian identity’ and is therefore separated from the liberal citizen subject (2010a: 72). The authenticity of indigenous peoples relies on their ability to ‘fit’ pre-established rights frameworks through associated characteristics, such as communitarian visions of property, land and resource ownership, collective forms of decision-making and assumptions that indigenous people have a unique relationship to nature and their local environments (see Stefanoni 2013). This polity restricts the political repertoires of ethnic movements to an adherence to state discourse and legislation for fears of being labelled inauthentic and losing the benefits of the rights-bearing indigenous label (Lucero 2006). In this way, the Morales administration has continued the multicultural assimilationist strategies imposed under neoliberal reforms.

Relational articulations of indigeneity are made evident in the 2012 Census, which shows a decrease by 21 percent in Bolivian citizens self-identifying as indigenous (INE 2013: 50). Tellingly, in 2001 there was an increasing call for a collective ethnic identity in struggles positioned against the neoliberal state. Conversely, in 2012 Bolivia was under the administration of an indigenous presidency and it was therefore not as politically useful to identify under an indigenous label. Galindo Soza (2013) argues that the MAS are using indigenous identity claims as an alibi for the justification of a centralised power that speaks on behalf of the country’s indigenous peoples whilst favouring certain highland identities. This political strategy, however, carries the risk of opening up explosive ethnic tensions between various groups that differently identify under the indigenous label.⁸⁸

Shifting articulations of indigeneity have worked to rupture previous alliances between various indigenous and peasant organisations. Stavenhagen observes that ethnic differences may ‘erupt into violence when a state wishes to impose its own vision and attempts to eliminate or minimize the differences amongst the population through authoritarian or arbitrary measures’ (2000: 11). Before the inauguration of Morales the lowland indigenous marches involved differential levels of coordination with highland sectors, such as CSUTCB, depending on the political climate at the time. There have, however, been a

⁸⁸ Also of note is the fact that the 2001 Census only included the ballot options of identification as Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní (the three largest indigenous groups) or other, whilst the 2012 census included all 36 indigenous identities identified in the Constitution and the category of Afro-Bolivian. In both cases, there was no option to self-identify as *mestizo*. However, many people would rather claim an indigenous identity than a European one. In the 2012 census, though, the fact that the categories were more specific may have led to people self-identifying as ‘*no pertenecen*’ (not belonging) to an indigenous group.

number of long lasting tensions between CIDOB and CSUTCB due to different organisational structures and objectives. In particular, CIDOB has demanded territory and shown a willingness to negotiate with the state whilst CSUTCB has demanded political and economic autonomy through antagonistic political repertoires (Canessa 2007b; Gustafson 2002; Lucero 2008). These tensions were heightened during the TIPNIS conflict as CSUTCB have been trying to push through an agrarian reform law that would see land redistributed to smaller producers on an individual ownership basis. In addition, the CSUTCB have argued that there needs to be a reconsideration of the communal TCO titles granted to indigenous peoples, given the amount of land and resources distributed in these units (Fundación Tierra 2012). At this juncture, it is imperative for the lowland indigenous movement to distinguish themselves from *campesino* movements in order to legitimate their claims to territory as the ‘true’ indigenous peoples of Bolivia. It is significant, therefore, that the Eighth and Ninth Marches in defence of the TIPNIS did not involve the participation of peasant organisations. The only other indigenous body on the marches was the highland organisation CONAMAQ who similarly adopt a collective action frame centred on politico-territorial autonomy (Gustafson 2002). Stefanoni (2013) notes, however, that these developments have led to dangerous anti-*campesino* propaganda amongst some activists and academics on the political ‘left’.

6.3 Cultural Politics of Indigeneity: Learning to be an Indian

International legislative frameworks define indigeneity as an identity category bound to ancestral claims to land, intimate relationships with nature, communitarian decision-making and communally owned property. The model of indigenous rights therefore sets the terms and limits by which indigenous peoples are recognised and can make identity claims (Sylvain 2002). These definitions have been criticised by academics and indigenous peoples alike for essentialising cultures, negating people’s agency and grouping different people and nations under a single indigenous label (see Lattas 1993; Smith 1999; Warren & Jackson 2003). Nonetheless, many social movements still utilise the indigenous rights-based framework developed in international forums and the new Constitution to legitimise demands to land and resource sovereignties, greater political participation in the state and territorial autonomy. Indigenous movements are mediated by the international and national climate of legal rights. However, rather than necessarily strengthening the political clout of ethnic movements these frameworks also open them up to challenges regarding their ‘authenticity’ and the legitimacy of their claims (Hames 2007). Warren and Jackson argue

that ‘essentialism can be coercively imposed by the state as well as deployed by indigenous groups as a form of resistance to demeaning political imaginaries and policies’ (2003: 8). Lowland indigenous identities are not formed in a political vacuum but counteract government projects of extractive development that jeopardise the livelihoods of indigenous peoples within communally owned territories. Thus, Canessa argues that ‘culture has never existed independent of political frameworks’ (2012b: 3). Comprehending resource conflicts requires an approach that integrates diverse politico-cultural understandings of development, citizenship and national identity (Perreault & Valdivia 2010). The performance of an identity narrative is intimately connected to changing political climates and other forms of identity construction, such as those mobilised by the state. As such, CIDOB has adopted the international language of indigenous rights as an effective discourse to make demands on the state and gain the support of other sectors. Furthermore, the MAS’s ‘rejection of *mestizaje* as national ideology’ (Canessa 2012a: 17) has opened up new opportunities for contentious political action. For instance, Dangl argues that the 2009 Constitution ‘creates important new political space for the grassroots to flex its muscles’ (2010: 37).

In this section, I examine how the strategic use of indigenous essentialism (see Spivak 1987: 281) authenticates and legitimises the demands of the lowland indigenous movement during the TIPNIS conflict. In this way, the movement engages in a Gramscian ‘war of position’ in which assertions of an ethnic identity are articulated in various ways aimed to bridge collective indigenous concerns to wider sectors of Bolivian society. I evaluate three identity claims: (i) notions of the ecologically noble savage; (ii) communal organisational structures; and (iii) the collective ownership of land and resources. I also consider the ways that these identity categories were renegotiated throughout the conflict.

*(i) Notions of the Ecologically Noble Savage*⁸⁹

In his 1991 article ‘The Ecologically Noble Savage’, Redford argued that scientists and advocates of indigenous rights during the 1980s revived notions of the idealised ‘noble savage’, this time with a distinctly ecological quality. McNeish (2013) argues that this association remains prevalent within intellectual assessments and media attention surrounding the TIPNIS conflict despite the fact that academic literature has disputed that

⁸⁹ This section on the ecologically noble savage is reworked from a paper in the *Bulletin of Latin American Research* entitled ‘Resource Sovereignties in Bolivia: Re-Conceptualising the Relationship between Indigenous Identities and the Environment during the TIPNIS Conflict’ (Laing 2014).

there is an intrinsic relationship between indigenous peoples and nature (see Diamond 1986; Colchester 1994; Krech 1999). McNeish (2013) asserts that these simplifications are dangerous as they ignore the fact that the indigenous peoples of the lowlands are involved in processes of resource extraction, globalisation and development. McNeish's cautionary reminder is imperative to critical assessments of indigenous eco-politics. Nevertheless, it is important to contextualise indigenous identity claims within the broader climate of contemporary state-indigenous relations. To do so, reveals a new dynamic in indigenous politics, namely that for the first time in Bolivian history the government is also embroiled in indigenous eco-politics in order to justify their own brand of resource nationalism. In the case study of the TIPNIS conflict these interactions take place through 'languages of contention' (Roseberry 1996: 83) that circulate around concepts such as *vivir bien*, *Pachamama*, the *casa grande*, *soberanía nacional* (national sovereignty) and *territorio indígena* (indigenous territory).

On the one hand, the Bolivian government has reified an essentialised Aymara identity based on concepts such as *vivir bien* and *Pachamama* in order to justify a state-led model of resource nationalism. On the other hand, the indigenous movement of the lowlands has fashioned demands for indigenous territoriality through notions of ecological sustainability. Both identities performed act to legitimise competing resource sovereignties by building connections with other sectors of the Bolivian population. Postero argues that the state's use of the language of *vivir bien* is 'not just a token rhetorical tool' as it 'has sufficient moral and cultural significance such that its insertion into the debate has changed the discursive and material field in which contestations over resources and distribution are occurring' (2013: 90). It is within this climate of the politics of identity that we must situate lowland indigenous narratives that advance the idea that indigenous communities live in conformity with nature.

Mesa 18, an unofficial working group outside of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, was instigated by the highland indigenous organisation CONAMAQ who came together with social movements and Bolivian intellectuals, to disclose the gap between the state's external rhetoric on capitalism and environmental rights and internal practices of extractivism (Building Bridges Collective 2010).⁹⁰ *Mesa 18* heightened public awareness of the politics surrounding climate change

⁹⁰ Similarly, in 2009 at the World Social Forum in Brazil the indigenous leader Blanca Chancoso called on the Forum to condemn Ecuador's President Rafael Correa for his pursuit of resource-extractive enterprises at the expense of rural indigenous communities (Becker 2003).

and the tensions within the government's development model. Indeed, whilst the People's Conference took place indigenous peoples were mobilising against the San Cristobal Mining Company for contaminating local water supplies and against oil operations in the indigenous territories of the Weenhayek, Tapiete and Guaraní in the Gran Chaco (Fabricant 2012). These developments reoriented the key language of contention of indigenous political organising towards an emphasis on the ecological. As such, members of CIDOB have linked narratives of indigenous territoriality with associated claims to environmental sustainability. Just one month after the People's Conference held by Morales, the *corregidores* of the TIPNIS declared a state of emergency in response to the government's proposal to build a road through their territory. In a public resolution dated 18 May 2010, the importance of the protection of *Madre Tierra* (Mother Earth), rather than the Andean concept of *Pachamama*, is repeatedly evoked. The document asserts the intimate connection of indigenous peoples to the environment:

[...] opening this road would present a threat to the lives of the peoples who inhabit the TIPNIS, due to the loss of natural resources and biodiversity upon which Mojeños, Yuracarés and Chimanes sustain their culture and life. (XXIX Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS 2010; author's translation)

Simultaneously, the resolution discredits the propaganda discourses of Morales's government:

[...] our President Evo Morales has constituted himself as the main defender of the rights of indigenous peoples and of the *Madre Tierra* [...] We resolve [...] to declare a state of emergency and immediate and permanent mobilisation in defence of our rights, territorial integrity and the rights of the *Madre Tierra*. (XXIX Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS 2010; author's translation)

Instead of utilising anti-neoliberal sentiment the language of *territorio indígena* gains its legitimacy through international legal frameworks, as well as state legislation surrounding indigenous and environmental rights. These indigenous identities are re-constructed in order to resist and undermine dominant knowledges that serve to maintain particular systems of power relations, particularly state control of decisions surrounding resource use and exploitation. Interviewees participating in the Ninth March advanced the following definitions of *territorio* and the *casa grande*:

[as] a titled *territorio* where no one will bother us, where they live in harmony with nature, where they have self-determination within that *territorio*, their own authorities, their own government.⁹¹ (Tomás Candia, Secretary of ‘Juventudes’ (Youths) of CIDOB, personal interview, 02 June 2012)

The *casa grande* is where you can live comfortably. It is where, in the first place, you can decide the form of life that you want. This is the *casa grande* that is offered to you by nature, it gives you traditional medicine, it gives you your daily food [...] There is [gestures around] the fish and the wild fruits. So, I think that the *casa grande* invites you to be more respectful of nature and there is a balance between man and nature that you have to respect.⁹² (Adolfo Chávez, President of CIDOB, personal interview, 27 May 2012)

These two statements suggest that indigenous territory holds both a socio-ecological significance (as a harmonious relationship with the immediate natural environment that the indigenous peoples inhabit) and a political significance (as self-determination and autonomy outside of state jurisdiction). This connection identifies the preservation of the environment as integral to the well being of indigenous populations, through their livelihood patterns and forms of social reproduction. In doing so, it acts to authenticate further claims to territorial sovereignty over natural resources.

Therefore, indigenous territorial sovereignty is positioned in contrast to the state’s implementation of exploitative development. As such, Adolfo Chávez, the President of CIDOB, stated that ‘disordered development brings poverty to our peoples [...] For us, it becomes the destruction of our *casa grande*’⁹³ (personal interview, 27 May 2012). These notions of the lowland indigenous peoples as ‘ecologically noble’ are given further credence through national frameworks and government documents, such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the TIPNIS, issued in 2011 by the Ministry of Environment and Water and SERNAP. This report frequently suggests there is an integral relationship between the indigenous peoples inhabiting the TIPNIS and the natural environment

⁹¹ ‘un territorio titulado donde nadie nos moleste, donde vivan con armonía con la naturaleza, tengan su auto determinación dentro de ese territorio, sus propias autoridades, su propio gobierno’.

⁹² ‘La casa grande es donde tu vives cómodamente. Donde en primer lugar tú decides tu forma de vida, como quieres vivir. Esa es la casa grande que te ofrece la naturaleza, que te da la medicina tradicional, que te da la alimentación [...] Está el pescado, esta la fruta silvestre. Entonces, yo creo que eso es la casa grande, que te invita a que seas más respetuoso con la naturaleza y hay un equilibrio entre el hombre y la naturaleza hay que respetarla’.

⁹³ ‘un desarrollo desordenado trae pobreza a nuestros pueblos [...] Para nosotros llega a ser como una destrucción de la casa grande’.

concluding that ‘road policies, tied to the political extension of hydrocarbon activities, presents cumulative negative effects on the environment which, as mentioned, is the fundamental condition for the survival of the adapted indigenous model’ (SERNAP–Rumbol 2011: 7; author’s translation).

Moreover, indigenous territorial sovereignty is positioned as important in relation to global climate change. For instance, during my participation in the Ninth March indigenous leaders frequently spoke of the TIPNIS as the ‘*pulmón del mundo*’ (lungs of the world) and the ‘*corazón de agua dulce*’ (heart of fresh water) in Bolivia and/or Latin America. Angel Yubanore, the Secretary of Justice and Social Participation for CIDOB, explained in his office in Santa Cruz that the struggle in defence of the TIPNIS was national and international as ‘the defence of the environment isn’t just for one sector, global warming isn’t going to be for one sector. The warming is worldwide, so then is the struggle’⁹⁴ (personal interview, 01 March 2012). Furthermore, this narrative is evident in early declarations, such as the resolution from a meeting of community leaders in the TIPNIS on 17-18 May 2010 that states the ‘destruction of our territory [from the road] is also an attack upon humanity as a whole because it will aggravate global warming’ (XXIX Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS 2010; author’s translation). International conventions and summits have been important spaces to counter the Bolivian government’s use of rhetorical tools, such as *Pachamama* and *vivir bien*. In late 2011, a delegation of indigenous leaders attended the UNFCCC in Durban, South Africa, where Chávez and one of the leaders of CONAMAQ, Rafael Quispe, stated that the Bolivian government is ‘*capitalista, extractivista y abusivo*’ (capitalist, extractivist and abusive) (Los Tiempos 2011e). In an interview with Rafael Quispe he stated that ‘public policies come from the United Nations and the indigenous people should impact in this space [...] In Durban I was co-president of the indigenous of the world, so I made my address at the highest level, in front of 194 countries’⁹⁵ (personal interview, 29 April 2012).

Fundamentally, the perception that lowland indigenous peoples live in balance with their environments acts as a bridging tool for the construction of allegiances and solidarity networks between those defending indigenous territoriality and urban environmental movements. A member of the Campaña in Cochabamba, Fernando Machicao, declared that

⁹⁴ ‘la defensa del medio ambiente no es solamente para un sector, el calentamiento global no solamente va a ser para un sector. El calentamiento es en el mundo entero, entonces es la lucha’.

⁹⁵ ‘las políticas públicas vienen desde naciones unidas y el pueblo indígena debe incidir en ese espacio [...] Yo en Durban he sido copresidente de los indígenas del mundo, entonces hice mi intervención en el segmento de alto nivel, en medio de los 194 países’.

‘for there to be indigenous [people] there must be jungle, there is no jungle without [the indigenous], it works both ways’⁹⁶ (personal interview, 19 January 2011). This echoes a view held by many of the activists that place-based territory is synonymous with an indigenous identity, and as such the destruction of their local environments would be tantamount to cultural ethnocide. The ecological identity also fosters solidarity of anti-neoliberal movements against transnational capital. A David-versus-Goliath tussle is envisioned that positions the indigenous peoples of the TIPNIS as noble saviours of the Amazon standing up to a tyrannical government. For example, at a street protest held by the Campaña, a student activist brandished a poster that displayed the TIPNIS inhabitants as the Na’vi species who are threatened by the mining activities of a colonising power in the 2009 film *Avatar* (Figure 9). The indigenous are portrayed as defending the snakes, birds and trees of the TIPNIS from a bulldozer being driven by Morales, most likely mocking his public praise of the film’s ‘profound show of resistance to capitalism and the struggle for the defence of nature’ (Huffington Post 2010). This notion of the marchers as ecologically-minded peoples was actively reproduced. For instance, the marchers were criticised on the Eighth March for the amount of litter they discarded at each camping ground. On the Ninth March the leaders were careful to announce a fifteen-minute cleaning-up slot before setting off from each site (personal field-notes, 28 May 2012).

Figure 9. ‘Evotar’: Poster on a Protest March in Defence of the TIPNIS in Cochabamba



Source: Author’s photograph.

⁹⁶ ‘para que haya indigenas tiene que haber selva, no hay selva sin, en los dos lados’.

In many cases, however, these standardised indigenous identities deny the full potential of political demands. Bolivian academics, media and activists often portray the indigenous as maintaining an alternative world-vision to capitalist models of development. For instance, the Bolivian sociologist Raúl Prada has stated that the indigenous marches in defence of the TIPNIS are a clear demonstration against ‘the compulsion of extractive development attached to the modernist illusion of wealth and consumption’ (Prada Alcoreza 2012: 160). Yet, as discussed in chapter V many indigenous peoples and communities actively seek development, which can be observed in the platform of demands of the Ninth March (Table 2). Nevertheless, internal tensions exist within CIDOB and the TIPNIS over issues of land and resource sovereignties. Conversations on the Ninth March revealed disagreements about the types of development people desire for TIPNIS. In particular, the marchers differed over whether hydrocarbons should be exploited or not and whether indigenous peoples in TCOs should be able to capture additional economic revenues from hydrocarbon exploitation in their territories (personal field-notes, 10 May 2012). These tensions were silenced in public discourses.

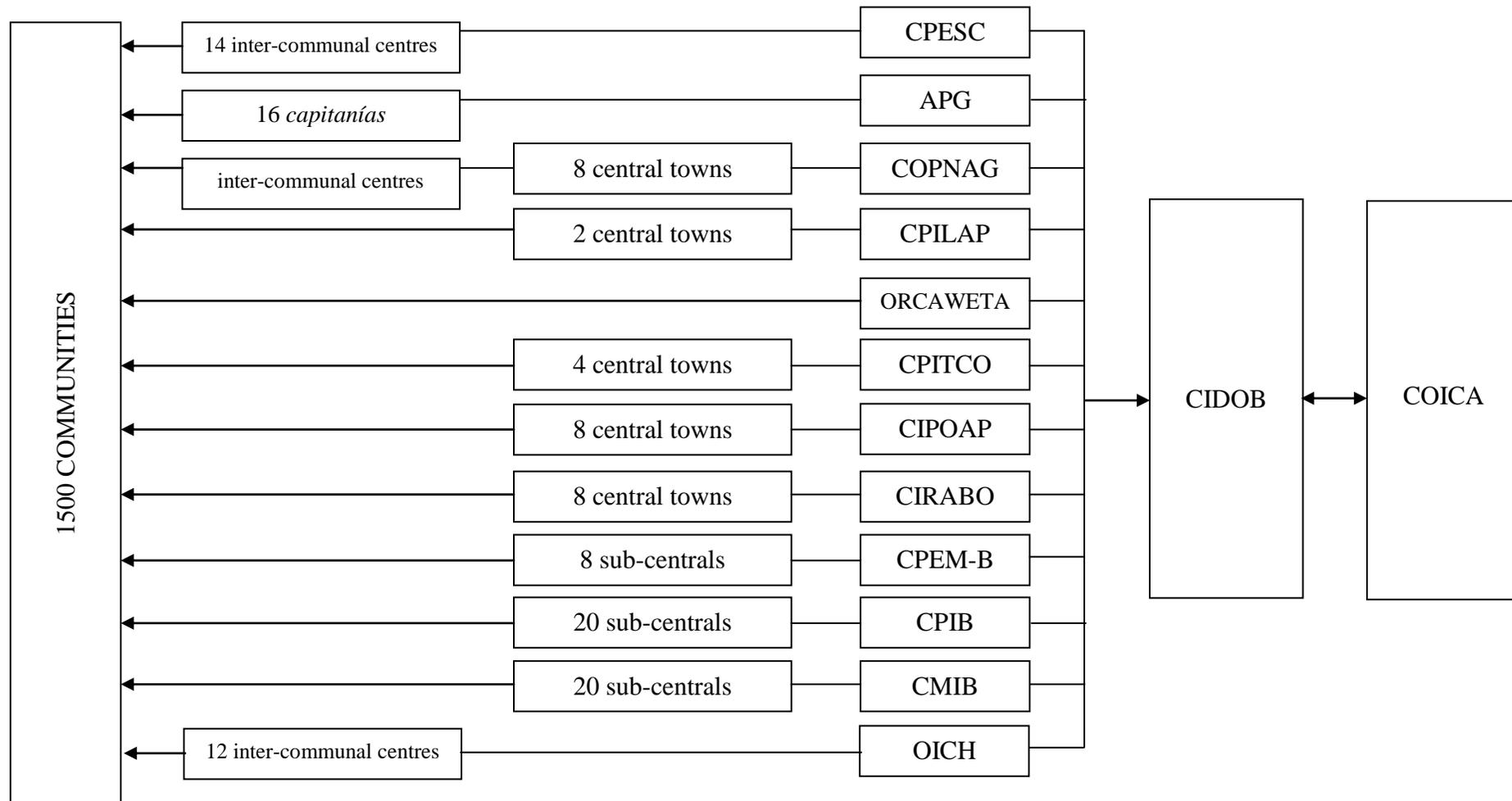
(ii) Communitarian Forms of Decision-Making: The ‘Estructura Orgánica’

CIDOB functions as a series of organisational bodies that serve to consolidate horizontal and consensus based decision-making. This shared structure of governance is defined under the concept of the *estructura orgánica* (organic structure) that acts as a mechanism hindering the concentration of power to any particular leader or community by dispersing power through the social body. In an interview with Carlos Cayuba Cueva, a *corregidor* from the TIPNIS, he likened centralised forms of decision-making to a body without limbs stating that ‘it is like me only seeing my hand, here [makes a slicing action on his wrist], it is going to hurt. But my limb is my body’⁹⁷ (personal interview, 03 May 2012). In addition, the anthropologist Sarela Paz stated that ‘it is not Adolfo Chávez who has taken this decision [to conduct the Ninth March], it is the result of a territorial meeting’ and ‘it is an organic movement because he responds to this organic decision, this is the decision made by the communities of the TIPNIS’⁹⁸ (personal interview, 09 June 2012).

⁹⁷ ‘es como si viendo mi mano no más, aquí, va a doler. Pero mi miembro es todo mi cuerpo’.

⁹⁸ ‘no es Adolfo Chávez quien ha tomado esa decisión, es fruto de un encuentro territorial’ y ‘es un movimiento orgánico porque él responde a esa decisión orgánica, esa es una decisión tomada por las comunidades del TIPNIS’.

Figure 10. The Organisational Structure of CIDOB



Source: Adapted from CIDOB (2008).

Within CIDOB the actions of leaders are a direct result of various levels of consultation that extend upwards from the bases: from the local indigenous communities; to the twelve regional bodies; to the level of the directory of CIDOB; and finally to the transnational body COICA (Figure 10). Within the TIPNIS, decisions are also based on the *estructura orgánica* system. Initially, *corregidores* are chosen through a community election at a public meeting (*cabildo comunales*) and then these leaders take decisions to the level of the territory. Every year a *cabildo* is held to evaluate the administration of the *corregidor* but they can also be dismissed by calling an ‘extraordinary meeting’ (*encuentro extraordinario*) to remove the leader if there are signs of mismanagement (see McNeish & Arteaga Böhr 2012). These decisions are then transferred to the regional affiliate of CIDOB for that locality, which for the TIPNIS is CPEM-B and CPIB. These decisions are then brought to the attention of CIDOB. In principle, this structure means that any leader that makes decisions without the consent of their bases will be discredited and their leadership position revoked. This happened on the Ninth March when Pedro Vare, regional head of CPIB, had his position withdrawn when he signed agreements with the government without the knowledge of the bases (El Día 2012b). This was done through a process of ‘*desconocerlo*’ (disown; i.e. not recognise them as president), which was announced in a public statement to the press (personal field-notes, 15 May 2012).

Internally, the organisational practices of CIDOB represent a form of prefigurative politics that go *beyond* the hegemonic dichotomous distinction of the ‘state’ and ‘civil society’. The organic structure is thus held in contradistinction to the structure of political parties, which are conceived of as centralised bodies separated from the level of the people (or bases). All of the official mandated ‘principles’ of the CIDOB could be described as prefigurative: the preservation of the unity and solidarity of indigenous peoples; independence from political parties, religion and external interference; horizontal democracy; and greater participation of women at all levels of decision-making (CIDOB 2005). The communitarian structure takes precedence over orthodox forms of decision-making, such as representative democracy. On the Ninth March this was evident in camp meetings where – given the restrictions of the meeting space – the marchers would sit in circles with the leaders sat amongst the crowd. This spatiality of meetings was consciously done to facilitate open discussion instead of privileging the voices of official representatives. In this respect, CIDOB are creating organisational structures that are relatively autonomous from state models of liberal democracy. This echoes Yashar’s (2005) argument that Latin American indigenous movements are posing ‘postliberal

challenges' that call for the recognition of differentiated forms of citizenship. Sian Lazar (2008) refers to these alternative indigenous forms of citizenship in El Alto as the 'collective self' as opposed to the liberal individualism of Western colonial societies. Autonomy from the state, in the sense of staying outside of the political party system, is also a key mechanism for maintaining internal cohesion.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that these collective forms of indigenous decision-making are historically contingent. Communitarian forms of governance are part of a spatial imaginary actively produced within the organisation of CIDOB. Started in 1982, the organisation has laboured to bring together previously disparate territories and now represents over 1500 communities within the lowland region of the Amazon Basin and the Chaco. Yashar (2005) states that APCOB advised the lowland body to operate horizontal decision-making mechanisms in order to distinguish it from highland peasant organisations. This suggests that the idea of the *estructura orgánica* was somewhat mandated by external agencies. McNeish and Arteaga Böhr (2013) point out that prior to the 1990s the positioning of leaders within the TIPNIS was largely dependent on their selection by the departmental government and national political parties. Thus, the organic structure has three important facets. First, it helps to foster internal unification needed in order to bring together different cultures and political histories. Second, the representation of a shared collective vision aids the forging of a relationship with the state. Finally, this form of decision-making differentiates CIDOB from other social movement sectors that might also be claiming an indigenous identity i.e. union organisations. That said, the Mojeño system of governance is widely admired for its ability to achieve tighter social cohesion and has been used to structure intra-community ties within CIDOB.

Yet, the failure of leaders to fulfil the obligations of the *estructura orgánica* caused internal conflicts on various occasions. It was evident on the Ninth March that there was a core set of CIDOB leaders that took part in backstage negotiating through closed meetings spatially separated from the other marchers. On several occasions, leaders left the campsites in one of the few vehicles available to the Ninth March to head for a nearby town to complete official business. To this extent, when camp meetings were conducted it sometimes felt like they were manipulated to confirm a particular decision that had already been decided. This echoes Erazo's study of an indigenous territory in Amazonian Ecuador where she found that leaders expected residents to 'act as good territorial citizens' (2013: xxiii). It is likely that the representatives of CIDOB and CONAMAQ felt like they could take decisions on behalf of their communities because of their higher levels of education in

and experience of indigenous rights legislation. Leaders of CIDOB can be understood as ‘rooted cosmopolitans’ defined as ‘people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts’ (Tarrow 2005: 29). One indigenous representative from the TIPNIS (who wished to remain anonymous) told me that leaders within CIDOB often relied more on the advice of external NGO ‘*técnicos*’ (experts) than their bases. This highlights a related problem of tokenism. There is a danger that the centralisation of leadership roles results in certain people becoming the main ‘voices’ of the lowland indigenous movement. Spivak (1990) argues that such tokens become representations of a homogenised Other (i.e. ‘the’ indigenous) that can act to silence different and more localised versions of identity. In one meeting on the Ninth March, Fernando Vargas, the President of the TIPNIS Sub-Central, was concerned with the media’s focus on certain leaders and discussed the need to facilitate their own networks of alternative media and communication in order to regain control over representations of the Ninth March (personal field-notes, 26 May 2012).

There was also a gendered aspect to decision-making processes that revealed a problematic relation of power. There were general murmurings of discontent when some of the male leaders did not attend camp meetings. On one particular occasion, when asked about the whereabouts of the President of CIDOB, Adolfo Chávez, a marcher responded stating that he ‘had gone fishing’ (personal field-notes, 05 May 2012). This became an on-going joke when he repeatedly failed to attend meetings. On one occasion, the Ninth March reached the small community of Marimonos, after a 25 km walk in 35-degree heat to find that the school we were staying in had run out of water. An internal emergency meeting was conducted between the male leaders and the decision was taken to move the campsite to the town of Palos Blancos in service trucks at dusk. The decision caused much confusion and upset as some female marchers had found a nearby river and started to cook, clean and wash their clothes. In a meeting the next day, it transpired that the male leaders who had conducted the meeting had not told the President of the Ninth March, Bertha Vejarano, of their decision and consequently different reasons had been given to the Bolivian media. It appeared that the male leaders had taken the decision so that they could watch football on television and go out drinking (personal field-notes, 01 June 2012).

That said, during the mobilisation of the Eighth and Ninth Marches there was a genuine move towards greater female political participation and representation re-working the internal power dynamics of the contemporary lowland indigenous movement. Most

notably, indigenous women have successfully campaigned for the creation of a female organisation that runs parallel to CIDOB. The organisation CNAMIB (Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia; National Federation of Indigenous Women in Bolivia) was created in 2007 and has offices located within the same complex as CIDOB in Santa Cruz. The Vice-President of CNAMIB, Wilma Mendoza Mino, described the importance of past indigenous marches for women's struggles for participation:

[The men said] “let the women go ahead” and “let them go cook”. But when the hour of truth arrives to produce a platform or, more than anything, to build consensus, where are the women taken into account? They were further back like sheep. [...] So, we concern ourselves mostly in making women visible. We women have rights and we must act, and we must make our voice and our needs, that we have within our communities, known. And more than anything within public space. Today, we are walking to this end so that the voice of women can be heard.⁹⁹ (personal interview, 11 May 2012)

CNAMIB was thus created to promote female leadership and political participation within the lowland indigenous movement and is the first institution of its kind in the region. In this way, the difficulties in past mobilisations have acted as a ‘creative friction’ (Tsing 2005) for progressive changes to the internal structures and dynamics of power within the movement. The formation was funded by NGOs such as the American Jewish World Service and the organisation Hivos. NGOs have sought to make the work of indigenous women visible as active participants in the fight for indigenous rights. For example, in 2009-2010 CNAMIB offered a training programme to educate women about their rights under the new Constitution and to foster a greater degree of political empowerment. Wilma Mendoza Mino went on to discuss how this has not been an easy process since ‘this struggle has been hard as well within our own territories so that the men accept’¹⁰⁰ (personal interview, 11 May 2012). As a result of on-going gender stereotypes CNAMIB and CIDOB have maintained a strained relationship since the organisation's creation in 2007. It is significant, however, that one of CIDOB's official principles is ‘to strengthen the presence of women at all levels of decisions’ (CIDOB 2005; author's translation).

⁹⁹ “Que vayan adelante las mujeres” y “que vayan cocinando”. Pero llegando la hora de la verdad para construir una plataforma, o construir mas que todo los consensos, ¿es en donde tomaban en cuenta a las mujeres? Que iban no mas atrás como ovejas [...] Entonces, nosotros nos preocupemos más que todo en la visibilización de las mujeres. Las mujeres tenemos derechos y debemos actuar, y debemos hacer conocer nuestra voz y nuestras necesidades, que tenemos dentro de los pueblos. Y mas que todo dentro de el espacio público. Hoy en día, estamos caminando a ese fin de que la voz de las mujeres sea escuchada.

¹⁰⁰ ‘esa lucha ha sido duro también dentro de nuestros territorios mismos para que los hombres acepten’.

Progressive changes to gender dynamics and relations of power have been critical to movement building during the TIPNIS conflict. It is noteworthy that the presidents of both the Eighth and Ninth Marches were women. Bertha Vejarano, the President of the Ninth March, showed her leadership qualities around camp and at meetings where she displayed a timely silence, the ability to take the opportune word and to act decisively. Whilst organising the protest march, Bertha also maintained her parenting duties as a mother of 10, six of whom were on the march. Bertha fed her seven-month-old son at her breast whilst facilitating camp meetings. Women often took on roles as mother, cleaner, cook or carer alongside leadership positions. Women were also important for improving morale in wet, hot, tired or hungry moments. For example, on the Eighth March Nazareth Flores, who became President of CPIB, had encouraged the marchers to sing together when they became fearful of the growing police presence before La Chaparina. Despite the miscarriage she suffered as a result of this repression, Nazareth decided to participate in the Ninth March and could be heard singing and joking around camp and on long legs of the march. On the Eighth March, without water and surrounded by a police blockade, it was also a group of indigenous women that decided to walk the Chancellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, David Choquehuanca, through the barricade in order to reach the next camp.¹⁰¹ This mirrors research by several scholars that suggests that indigenous women are often the key agents for preserving and reproducing communities and cultural forms of social identification (see de la Cadena 1991; Radcliffe 2008).

That said, a gendered division of labour was pervasive on the Ninth March, particularly in relation to domestic chores. Women took on much of the ‘invisible’ work, including: the preparation of daily meals; the caring of children; the camp set-up of tents, equipment and food preparation areas; the washing of the family’s clothing in the rivers; and the carrying of babies whilst marching. In addition, seven of the female marchers were pregnant and two ladies went into labour during my participation on the Ninth March. Dora Luz, a leader of OMIT (Organización de Mujeres Indígenas de Trinidad; Organisation of Indigenous Women of Trinidad), stated that:

The women, for the march, we are very important. Why? Because we work double. In part we walk, we have to arrive at the campsite, cook, look after our children and wash our clothes, so it’s why we work much more, double than that of the men. And if we

¹⁰¹ In a press conference, the government official Sacha Llorenti has denounced this event and stated that Choquehuanca was ‘*secuestrado*’ (kidnapped) (Opinión 2011a).

are leaders, in the first place, we have to be at the meetings. We feel this a lot but by no means, as leaders, will we be discouraged.¹⁰² (personal interview, 09 May 2012)

In this way, women formed the backbone of the protest marches against the road project but this work was not necessarily acknowledged in meetings or by the state. This can be seen on the Eighth March when the marchers arrived in La Paz and set up a vigil in Plaza Murillo outside the Palace of the Government. When the government finally met with some of the leaders to discuss their platform of demands, there were only two women to eighteen men in the delegation. The government's Minister of Communication, Iván Canelas, even called for the intervention of the Ombudsman to prevent children and pregnant women to continue on the TIPNIS march, which acted to stigmatise women for their active participation (El Día 2011). In personal conversations, however, all of the women I spoke to said that they wanted to participate and that they would not split up their families by staying within their respective territories.

Helen Álvarez, an activist in the feminist group Mujeres Creando, spent time documenting the Eighth March and told me of problems of gendered violence and subjugation of women in indigenous communities (personal interview, 10 February 2012). I became aware of this problem when the Ninth March was suspended in the community of Totaizal for five days due to rain. Here some of the men took the opportunity to drink alcohol. One morning I was told that one of the lowland indigenous men had come back to his tent and beaten his wife. A decision was made to ask them to leave the march (personal field-notes, 16 May 2012). Having heard the news second-hand from a friend, I pondered on why there was no public meeting to discuss the event or deliberate on a decision over the right course of action. It is likely that the leaders of the march wanted to keep the event non-public for fears that the story would be picked up by the media, which could damage the reputation of the lowland indigenous as pacifist peoples. However, the silencing of acts of violence against women highlights social attitudes tolerating gender inequality. As such, I argue that analyses need to be aware of the ways that overt or covert sexism might run parallel to an otherwise liberal programme of indigenous rights. Fabricant argues, for instance, that the highland *ayllu* structure present in territories organised under CONAMAQ 'provide a more democratic and legitimate structure for indigenous farming communities to assume some

¹⁰² 'Las mujeres para la marcha somos muy importantes ¿Por qué? Porque trabajamos al doble. En parte que caminamos, tenemos que llegar al campamento, cocinar, ver a nuestros niños y lavar nuestra ropa, así es que nosotras trabajamos mucho mas, el doble que los varones. Y si somos dirigentas, en primer lugar, tenemos que estar en las reuniones. Nos sentimos muy este, pero no por eso, como dirigentas, vamos a estar desanimadas'.

form of autonomy from the state’ but ‘they can also reproduce similar hierarchies of power, violence, and gendered inequality’ (2012: 93). In addition, McNeish and Arteaga Böhr (2012) note that even though women participate in decisions at the level of the territory or regional body of CIDOB, they still have limited participation in their own respective communities. Significantly, Radcliffe and Pequeño remark that ‘[i]ndigenous women are positioned at the intersection of male-female relations and hierarchical race relations’ (2010: 985) but that this is seldom taken into account in discussions of ethno-development policy and practice.

Thus, by exploring the contested dynamics of internal organisational structures it permits a questioning of who is privileged in shaping these connections. This allows an interrogation of who is marginalised within the lowland indigenous movement and how such geographies of power shape the articulation of different identity claims. In her work with the Landless Peasants Movement in Bolivia who conduct communitarian decision-making Fabricant reminds us that there ‘is no purity to such a political model. These reconfigured cultural models of governance are ridden with daily contradictions and tensions’ (2012: 102). Furthermore, Featherstone asserts that even if initial readings of movements ‘from below’ are appealing, analyses often ignore ‘the contested organising practices through which subaltern groups mobilise. This closes down a sense of the multiple and uneven spaces and relations through which solidarities are constituted’ (2012: 58).

(iii) Communal Property Ownership and Resource Governance

Lastly, the lowland indigenous movement has constructed an identity that links the concept of territory to communal land and property ownership. This is understood through the concept of the *casa grande* that is conceived of as a space where indigenous people live under one roof, as an extended family without individual ownership of resources. This association relies on the political legitimacy derived from the definition of territory as communal land with collective forms of property, governance and resource management. For instance, the annex to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reaffirms that ‘indigenous peoples possess collective rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development as peoples’ (UN 2007: 4). In addition, the 2009 Constitution recognises the right ‘to the collective titling of land and territories’ for indigenous and peasant populations (Art. 30: II; Gobierno de Bolivia 2009).

Collective territories prohibit individual ownership of lands and natural resources cannot be exploited without the consensus of communities. This acts as a mechanism preserving

local ecosystems and biodiversity. The following statement from a TIPNIS community leader on the Ninth March demonstrates this vision:

When the community needs something, we meet and then we know what we are going to do. If we sacrifice a tree, well, we do it together. That is our life, our way of working. We do not destroy it just like that [...] because we know that the day natural resources are finished, woe betide us and woe betide our children.¹⁰³ (Corregidor Francisco Semi of Carmen de Coquinal, personal interview, 14 May 2012)

This claim also derives its legitimacy from scholars that have argued that indigenous peoples are the best guardians of land for conservation (see Durning 1992; McIntosh 2004). In addition, these associations grant more power to indigenous communities who are able to represent their demands as part of a collective body. Fidel Condori Mita, the Mallku (Chieftain) of Land and Territory for CONAMAQ stated that ‘the government can not enter my *casa grande* without knocking on the door’¹⁰⁴ (personal interview, 07 May 2012). In this way, the legacy of communal property ownership legitimises claims to greater sovereignty over resources located within indigenous territories in the face of the exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations or the state.

This notion is held in contradistinction to individual models of property that are conceived of as related to a capitalistic model of economic development pursued by transnational corporations, domestic businesses and the *campesino* sector. Again, this was used to garner support for the TIPNIS marchers through their claims to an authentic indigenous identity. As such, Fernando Machicao, an activist from the Cochabamba Campaña, argued that ‘land is what the colonisers want, territory is what the indigenous want’¹⁰⁵ (personal interview, 19 January 2012). This conceptualisation of indigenous territory was moulded by the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. For instance, a three-day meeting in December 2011 held at the René Gabriel Moreno Autonomous University in Santa Cruz de la Sierra named the Cumbre (Summit) (officially the Gran Encuentro de Naciones Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia; Grand Meeting of Indigenous Originary Peasants) was organised by CIDOB and CNAMIB to discuss the forthcoming strategies of the lowland indigenous movement. The meeting was organised around a number of *mesas de trabajo* (working

¹⁰³ ‘Cuando la comunidad necesita algo, nos reunimos y luego sabemos que vamos a hacer. Si sacrificamos un árbol, bueno, lo hacemos en conjunto. Esa es nuestra vida, nuestra forma de trabajar. No lo destruimos así no más [...] porque sabemos de que el día que se terminen los recursos naturales, pobre de nosotros y pobre de nuestros hijos’.

¹⁰⁴ ‘el gobierno no puede entrar a mi casa grande sin tocar la puerta’.

¹⁰⁵ ‘tierra es lo que quieren los colonizadores, territorio lo quieren los indígenas’.

tables), such as: geopolitics; justice; politics; ecology and the environment; and the economy. I sat in on the table '*tierra, territorio y patria*' (land, territory and fatherland) for two days. This provided rare insight into the evolving concept of 'territory'. The first question on the agenda was to interpret the different meanings of 'land' and 'territory'. The facilitators of the session clearly pushed an agenda that created a binary distinction between 'territory' as collectively owned by indigenous peoples and 'land' as individual property owned by other sectors (personal field-notes, 14 December 2011). These associations served to maintain the legitimacy of lowland indigenous claims to territory.

In addition, this fashioning of essentialist ethnic identities linked to collective property also serves to negate the authenticity of indigenous peoples who live outside of collective territories, including coca growing communities, peasant farmers and urban indigenous populations. Some of my interview participants contended that sectors that operate an individual form of property ownership had 'lost' their indigeneity. In a public discourse with the news agency EFE, Fernando Vargas, the President of TIPNIS Sub-Central, stated that some of the indigenous peoples located in Polygon 7 'have become coca growers, consequently they have ceased to be indigenous' (ABC 2011). Self-identified indigeneity is therefore insufficient, as authenticity is premised on a person's belonging within a communal indigenous territory, with a way of life supposedly outside of the capitalist production system. These strategic essentialisms surrounding concepts of indigeneity, territory and environmental governance therefore simultaneously act to negate the political demands and symbolic capital of sectors that are demanding the road. Yet, this discourse of indigeneity is dangerous as it denies the collective historical experience of *campesino* and *cocalero* sectors that are also victims of agrarian land tenure based on land takeovers by Bolivian elites and transnational corporations.

It is important to be vigilant of the ways that this identification under a collective label is fraught with tension, particularly in reference to individual acts of commercialising natural resources within communally owned territories. For example, on 08 May 2009 under the indigenous justice and customary law defined under the Constitution, Marcial Fabricano, a Mojeño leader from the TIPNIS and former President of CIDOB, was punished for a series of crimes, most notably the illegal sale of timber to the value of US\$1 million in one transaction (see McNeish & Arteaga Böhrst 2012). In addition, in 2003 Fabricano created the Sécure Sub-Central (the second sub-central within the TIPNIS) in order to sell illegal timber. For these crimes, the communities of TIPNIS ordered that he should be publicly whipped and expelled from the TIPNIS area. As such, when Fabricano participated in the

Ninth March he was told not to accept media interviews because of this loss of legitimacy as a representative of the indigenous movement.

6.4 Re-articulations of Long Memories of Struggle: from the *Loma Santa* to the *Casa Grande*

There have been a number of scholarly analyses that touch on the TIPNIS conflict (Canessa 2012a; Fabricant & Postero 2013; Humphreys Bebbington & Bebbington 2012; Kuhn 2013; Laing 2012, 2014; López Flores 2014; Paz 2012; Perrier-Bruslé 2012; McNeish 2013; Mokrani & Uriona 2012; Webber 2012a; Zibechi 2011b). These authors have variously engaged with one or more of the following topics: shifting and multiple articulations of indigeneity; the concept of plurinationalism; the links between the environment and indigenous ideologies; Latin American post-neoliberalism; neo-extractivist economic models; and the relations between the ‘state’ and ‘civil society’. None of these accounts, however, discuss the longer history of indigenous marginalisation and struggle within the TIPNIS or how these have been drawn on and re-articulated within contemporary resistances to the road project. Instead, the majority of academic interest has circulated around the extent to which Bolivia can now be conceived as a post-neoliberal state, with particular reference to the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005. These discussions, though pertinent, have acted to render invisible the history of anti-colonial resistances in the region.¹⁰⁶ Kohl and Farthing argue, in relation to indigenous movements located in the Andes, that ‘long memories’ have served to instil ‘people with a sense of continuity, the inevitability of resistance, and the legitimacy of struggle’ (2011: 196). Furthermore, Wolford argues that ‘the critical study of resistance requires an analysis of the ways different historical-cultural frameworks shape the decision to mobilise in particular people and places’ (2004: 421). Thus, this section attempts to address this gap in the literature and specifically focuses on the ways that millenarian movements *en busca de la loma santa* (in search of the holy hill) have been re-articulated in pan-indigenous movements for the legal recognition of *territorio indígena* in lowland Bolivia.

Millenarian Movements in Search of the Loma Santa

It is a difficult task to discuss the history of millenarian movements in the TIPNIS region in full detail because these dynamics are not well documented in written texts, aside from

¹⁰⁶ I have made a similar argument in an *Antipode* paper entitled ‘Beyond the Zeitgeist of “Post-Neoliberal” Theory in Latin America: The Politics of Anti-Colonial Struggles in Bolivia’ (Laing 2012).

some anthropological studies. Rather, these place-based histories are revived within indigenous communities in a narrative form through oral testimonies.¹⁰⁷ Tellingly, during my participation with urban solidarity networks, I did not encounter tales of the *loma santa*. It was not until an interview in March 2012 that Plácido Semo Maza, a technical advisor for CIDOB who is originally from the community of Puerto San Lorenzo in the TIPNIS, referred to the importance of these ancestral movements (personal interview, 19 March 2012). In particular, he pointed me to the book *En Busca de la Loma Santa* (1976) by two German anthropologists that he referred to as ‘*bastante certero*’ (fairly accurate). In this book the authors describe the millenarian movement by the Mojeño peoples as a series of migrations (between 1887 and the 1990s) from ex-Jesuit settlements into the forests of the department of Beni¹⁰⁸ in search of the *loma santa*, conceived of as a religious space free from the strictures of colonial or neo-colonial domination.

The long-term subjugation of indigenous peoples by agents of European descent instigated these migrations. Movements sought a place of retreat, referred to as ‘the holy hill’, away from the ‘*carayanas*’, a lowland indigenous term for white people or outsiders (Fundación UNIR 2008; Lehm Ardaya 1999; Riester & Fischerman 1976). Three main rounds of exploitation by colonial agents had impacted on the indigenous peoples of the Llanos de Mojos (Plains of Moxos) where the TIPNIS is located. Firstly, between 1536 and 1617 the area enticed Spanish expeditions whose missions were to find ‘El Dorado’ and the ‘Gran Paititi’ (the lost city of gold) in search of natural resource wealth (Lehm Ardaya 1999). Whilst this exploration had little impact on indigenous ways of life, it was the first time that the Spanish Empire had shown an interest in the area as a source of economic prosperity. Secondly, the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries into the Beni between 1684 and 1767 had an immense impact on indigenous society and culture (Riester & Fischerman 1976). The Jesuits rounded up the local peoples that lived in communities adjacent to the main rivers into 16 ‘*reducciones*’ (reductions) across the Moxos (see Barnadas 1984; Block 1986; Chávez Suárez 1986). The reductions were a type of centralised settlement designed to help spread the Christian faith, civilise the indigenous peoples and consolidate tax collection. The Jesuits provided food, music, labour and entertainment and was, for the most part, successful in assimilating the local people into the Christian religion.¹⁰⁹ It was

¹⁰⁷ In this way, there has never been a process of ‘remembering’ (or documenting) of cultures and histories in the lowlands to the same extent as the highlands, which has been instigated by certain NGOs (see Stephenson 2002).

¹⁰⁸ The Beni is the second largest department in Bolivia covering 20 percent of the land. The population, however, is just 4.3 percent of the national population.

¹⁰⁹ However, this was more successful among the Mojeño ethnic communities and less so amongst the Yuracarés and Chimanés that also live within the TIPNIS (CPIB n.d. cited in Yashar 2005).

the Jesuits that laid the first territorial foundations of the colonial state in the region and it was the missionaries that acted as representatives of the central state in the remote ‘frontier’ regions of the Moxos and the Chaco (Soruco et al 2008). Furthermore, Healy states that prior to the Jesuit missions ‘[a]ncestor worship, devotion to forest spirits, and jaguar cults flourished in a society closed off from the world’ (2001: 363). The remnants of these settlements remain as cities in the department of Beni. These include Trinidad¹¹⁰ established as a Jesuit reduction in 1687, San Ignacio de Moxos (1689) and San Borja (1693). Thirdly, after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America in the mid-eighteenth century the reductions were taken over by secular officials who put many of the indigenous inhabitants to service in the rubber boom of the late nineteenth century. Sadly, the terrible working conditions resulted in a number of deaths and enlarged hostility towards the *carayana* traders (Riester & Fischerman 1976; Van Valen 2013).

It is in this context of socio-cultural change that in 1842 a series of migrations started to occur ‘in which people were pushed by liberal reforms, labour demands associated with the rubber boom, and floods, and pulled by the prospect of rich, higher lands which were distant from the authorities’ (Van Valen 2013: 107). In 1887, these scattered migrations became a unitary movement under the leadership of an Itonama¹¹¹ shaman named Andrés Guayocho¹¹². The leader guided migrations from Trinidad into the forests to the west of the Mamoré River in the united belief that a paradise on earth existed there that would grant the indigenous peoples freedom to live according to their respective world-visions (Lehm Ardaya 1999; Riester & Fischerman 1976; Van Valen 2013). Guayocho considered himself to be a messiah and saviour of the Mojeño peoples from *criollo-mestizo* populations (or *carayana*), whom he considered a damned race that were spreading evil into the land (Lehm Ardaya 1999; Van Valen 2013). Lehm Ardaya thus describes the *loma santa* as ‘a sacred space of abundance and free from the socio-cultural pressures that diverse actors of national society exerted on them’ (1999: 9; author’s translation). The shaman leader combined the Christian faith brought by the Jesuits with local ancestral customs and ‘articulated a millenarian ideology’ to give ‘supranatural sanction to the abandonment of Trinidad’ (Van Valen 2013: 140). In doing so, he articulated legends of a Christian ‘promised land’ alongside pre-colonial spiritual beliefs, such as the practice of channelling deceased people and the use of jaguar and caiman worship. For example, one of the parables he used described the *loma santa* as a place guarded by jaguars and

¹¹⁰ Officially La Santísima Trinidad (The Holy Trinity).

¹¹¹ Guayocho was not of Mojeño ethnicity but he had lived in the Moxos for 25 years (Van Valen 2013).

¹¹² The movement is also referred to as the ‘Guayocherà’.

caimans that would only allow entry to people of faith (i.e. Mojeños) (Van Valen 2013). In this migration Guayocho founded the community of San Lorenzo de Moxos, approximately 40 km north of the TIPNIS, where he proceeded to set up an alternative cabildo system (Spanish administrative body governed by a council).

These migrations, however, resulted in violent clashes in San Lorenzo between the Mojeños and an expedition sent by the Prefect of Trinidad (Van Valen 2013). Prisoners, including Guayocho, were captured and executed. The Prefect then turned his attention to the punishment and massacre of several Mojeño peoples within Trinidad itself. The national government, previously unaware of the turbulence in the region, renounced these actions and stepped in to act as a protectorate of the indigenous population. As a result, the movement was unable to be quashed and San Lorenzo was reoccupied. A Trinitario named Santos Noco became the *cacique* of the town and set out to form a community that was both autonomous *and* maintained contact with national society. For example, the leader advocated for Spanish language education, maintained strong connections to the Catholic Church, permitted trading with the *carayanas* and showed a sense of national pride through the display of the Bolivian flag and performances of the national anthem. Therefore, Van Valen argues that ‘Santos Nocos’ agency was based above all on participation in and engagement with the dominant society’ in order to maintain the relative autonomy of the Mojeño-Trinitarios (2013: 168). This desired relationship to the state and Bolivian society is echoed in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS.

The movement in search of the *loma santa* has been resurrected in later migrations lasting until the 1990s (Van Valen 2013). Many of these migrations settled in the adjoining forests next to River Sécure and River Isiboro, where the TIPNIS is located (Querejazu Lewis 2008). For example, communities such as San Lorenzo, Trinidadcito and Santa Rosario in the TIPNIS were all founded as part of these relocations. Later waves occurred due to the increasing colonisation of lands in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia due to several factors, including: the promulgation of the Ley de Tierras Baldías (Law of Barren Lands) in 1905 that opened the Oriente to foreign investment; the collapse of the rubber trade (around 1910-1920) that led to a rise in cattle ranching, which required larger tracts of land; the 1953 agrarian reform law (see chapter II); and the granting of ‘public’ lands to a government supported oligarchy during the military dictatorship period of the 1960s and 70s (see Healy 2001; Jones 1984; Lehm Ardaya 1999; Querejazu Lewis 2008). Yashar writes that between the 1960s and the 1980s ‘indigenous communities in the Beni confronted the ongoing threat of loggers, cattle ranchers, and *colonos* [colonisers] who

occupied tracts of land considered by Amazonian Indians as open space for working, hunting, and residing' (2005: 206). This instigated several further waves of migration into the forests of the Moxos region. For example, in the 1950s a Guarayo spiritualist named José Vaca led migrations that relocated communities much deeper into the forests away from the ex-mission towns (Querejazu Lewis 2008). Many died due to the lack of food and water, the spread of disease and the tropical environment (Riester & Fischerman 1976). In addition, one of the most important migrations occurred in 1984 directed by a twelve-year-old girl named Ana Teco (Lehm Ardaya 1999). The girl identified herself as a 'seer' and effectively re-situated more than 300 families to the Bosque de Chimanes¹¹³. Like Guayocho, she amalgamated Catholic traditions (the missions were accompanied by the image of the Virgen del Carmen, an invocation of the Virgin Mary) with ancestral beliefs (stories spoke of a snake with two or three heads that would only admit speakers of the Mojeño language to the *loma santa*) (Cortés Rodríguez 1987).

Oral testimonies and collective memories of the movements in search of the *loma santa* informed the political repertoires and cultural terrains of resistance during the TIPNIS conflict. Emilio Noza Yuco, the President of Sécure Sub-Central, described the movements in search of the *loma santa*:

Formerly, the Mojeño-Trinitario people lived in the city of Trinidad, a large cabildo of pure Trinitarios, for [this] they had lots of repression, humiliation. So they always had a religious vision that supposedly they knew biblically, that God had a place prepared for them, reserved, where they could believe that in this promised land, that is the *loma santa* as they call it, [...] from God to his chosen people [...] At this time they [the indigenous peoples] were completely enslaved by the Spanish, the Jesuits and by everything.¹¹⁴ (personal interview, 09 May 2012)

Stories of the *loma santa* were prevalent on the Ninth March as several of the marchers formed the second generation of the later 1950s-1980s migrations. Dora Luz, a leader from the Indigenous Council of Trinidad and a representative of OMIT, related the memory of

¹¹³ This region was legally designated an 'indigenous territory' alongside the TIPNIS after the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity.

¹¹⁴ 'Antiguamente la gente moxeña-trinitaria, vivía en la ciudad de Trinidad, un cabildo así grande puro trinitarios, por tener mucha represión, humillación. Entonces ellos siempre tuvieron un visión como se dice religioso que supuestamente que ellos conocieron bíblicamente, que Dios le tenía un lugar preparado para ellos, reservado, donde podían creer de que en ese tierra prometida que es la loma santa que ellos lo llaman [...] de parte de Dios a su propio pueblo escogido [...] En ese tiempo totalmente eran esclavizados por los españoles, los jesuitas y de todo.'

her father telling her about their resettlement to the community of Oromomo in the north of the TIPNIS (close to the proposed route of the road) when she was two years old:

I've heard him [her father] talk when I was 8 years old, I remember it well [...] I don't know how many families there were, but they went in search of the *loma santa*, they left by the river, for Oromomo. In Oromomo they found the *loma santa* already [...] They began to make their communities. My father was one of the founders of all those communities there. There I studied, there I grew up. I know the TIPNIS like the back of my hand.¹¹⁵ (personal interview, 09 May 2012)

In an interview with Plácido Semo Maza, who is from the Mojeño-Trinitario community Puerto San Lorenzo situated on the River Sécuré in the TIPNIS, he talked of the migrations in the 1950s in search of the *loma santa* and drew a map to show me the places the communities had settled:

The communities originated much more in the 1950s, more or less, due to the pressure. [...] [In Trinidad] they had no space for agriculture, so with the religious faith, with those that arrived, the Franciscans, to conquer the whole region of the Moxos, they had made a belief of a symbiosis between the Catholic religion and our beliefs, in respect for the trees, mostly the forests [...] My ancestors believed that looking again for the *loma santa*, they would find a place where everyone would have, would be at peace. So they began migrating from Trinidad towards those communities on the map that I have shown you, and where every family believed that the *loma santa* was there. They stayed to conform the community and others have followed.¹¹⁶ (personal interview, 19 March 2012)

The *loma santa* is conceived of as a holy space of freedom away from the pressures and influences of external agents in much the same way as the original millenarian movements. Importantly, marchers on the Eighth and Ninth Marches similarly practiced spiritual, ritual and festive components that amalgamated pre-Hispanic customs of the Mojeño peoples

¹¹⁵ 'Yo lo escuchaba charlar cuando yo ya tuve unos 8 años, yo bien me acuerdo [...] no sé cuantas familias eran, pero salieron en búsqueda de la loma santa, salieron por el río, por el Oromomo. En Oromomo ya lo pillaron la loma santa [...] Empezaron a hacer sus comunidades. Mi padre fue uno de los fundadores de todas esas comunidades allá. Yo allá estudié, yo allá me crié. Conozco el Tipnis como la palma de mi mano.'

¹¹⁶ Las comunidades nacen mucho más en los años 50 más o menos, producto de la presión. [...] No tenían espacio para la agricultura, entonces, ellos con la fe religiosa, con los que llegaron los franciscanos a conquistar toda la región de Moxos, han hecho una creencia de una simbiosis entre la religión católica y la creencia misma de nosotros, con respecto a los árboles, al bosque principalmente [...] Mis antepasados creyeron que buscando nuevamente la loma santa iban a encontrar un lugar donde todos iban a tener, iban a estar en paz. Entonces, empezaron a migrar desde Trinidad hacia esas comunidades en el mapa que le he mostrado y donde cada familia creía que ahí estaba la loma santa. Se quedaron a conformar la comunidad y los otros han seguido.'

and the religious aspects inherited from the Jesuit missionaries. This relationship between pre-colonial identities of the indigenous peoples and colonial properties of the ‘modern’ world is not deemed contradictory, however, and the integration of Christian symbols and concepts into millenarian movements is a common trait across the Amazonian region (Brown 1994). Brown argues that this element of indigenous movements does not signify acculturation as there are ‘robust efforts to wrestle control of Christianity from whites while reshaping it to meet the spiritual needs of Indian peoples’ (1994: 299).

There were several examples of Christian beliefs and customs on the Ninth March. This

Figure 11. Religious Mascots



Source: Author’s photograph.

was shown most visibly by the two mascots that led the marchers; the Virgin Mary and a wooden cross that reads ‘Mojeña Cross: Permanent Mission’ (Figure 11). Practices of Catholicism were also part of the routine activities of the Ninth March through frequent masses and a prayer being said at the beginning of each marching day. Even after a long day walking in the heat of the Amazonian sun the marchers made their point of arrival at each camp the local church were they would stand and listen to the sermon and blessing of a minister. This was no different when the Eighth and Ninth Marches arrived in La Paz where the marchers participated in a mass in the Basilica of

San Francisco.¹¹⁷ Indeed, these everyday rituals were important ways of motivating the sometimes weary and fearful marchers. The participants interviewed on the Ninth March gained courage from their faiths and often described themselves as the ‘*hijos de dios*’ (children of God). Emilio Noza Yuco, the President of the Securé Sub-Central, stated that ‘all the people who are here today, they believe that this is a test from God, that if they love their territory, they will have to defend it’¹¹⁸ (personal interview, 09 May 2012). In many ways, then, the internal dynamics and motivations of the marches in defence of the TIPNIS were inflected with a millenarian element that predates the more recent pan-

¹¹⁷ The original intention on the Eighth March was to conduct the religious ceremony in the Cathedral next to the Presidential Palace in Plaza Murillo but it was closed and after roughly 20 minutes the leaders of the march decided to head onwards to Plaza San Francisco where the Basilica is located.

¹¹⁸ ‘toda la gente que está hoy en día, ellos creen de que esto es una prueba de Dios, de que si ellos lo aman su territorio, lo van a tener que defender’.

indigenous movements for the legal recognition of indigenous territory. I therefore disagree with Lehm Ardaya (1999) who states that the millenarian movements had its roots in religious elements whilst the demands for the legal recognition of indigenous territory in the 1990 March were secular. Rather, the local histories of anti-colonial resistance that pre-date neoliberal hegemony in the 1980s and 1990s are also important to the contemporary movement. This echoes Zibechi's convincing argument that a 'temporal distinction is important, too, because it can reveal the agenda that lies *below and behind* the visible actions, the major struggles that would otherwise have no relationship' (2012: 259).

The Lowland Indigenous Movement and Demands for the Casa Grande

That said, these internal utopian visions of the *loma santa* were not vocalised as part of the key languages of contention of the lowland indigenous movement represented by CIDOB. On the Ninth March, the term *loma santa* was often used synonymously with notions of *territorio* or the *casa grande*. The two latter concepts, however, were much more frequently articulated within public resolutions of CIDOB and in statements to the Bolivian media. In an interview with Emilio Noza Yuco he indicated that this was a strategic decision made within the Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS (Extraordinary Meeting of Community Leaders of the TIPNIS), a gathering that brings together the leaders of each of the communities when a decision relating to the TIPNIS needs to be made:

Today it is no longer "the promised land", it's no longer the "*loma santa*". It is "*la casa grande*" where everyone believes that all the family are inside one house: father, son, grandson, grandfather. That is the family, this is what they say in the meetings of the *corregidores*.¹¹⁹¹²⁰ (personal interview, 09 May 2012)

The terminology of the *loma santa* has, in some senses, been silenced and the key language of contention is that of the *casa grande* conceived of as a communally owned enclosed space, somewhat equal in meaning to the definition of territory. It also suggests a form of property that can be inherited from generation to generation and a communal-individual space with component parts for different ethnic groups who are united through their

¹¹⁹ 'Hoy en día ya no es "la tierra prometida", ya no es la "loma santa" es "la casa grande" donde todos creemos de que toda la familia estamos dentro de una casa: padre, hijo, nieto, abuelo. Que es la familia, eso es lo que dicen en los encuentros de corregidores'.

¹²⁰ This quote is also of note as it highlights a gendered spatiality to the concept of the *casa grande*. Emilio discusses the family home as a place for the male members of the family without referencing females such as the mother, daughter, granddaughter and grandmother. Again, this reflects a discrepancy between progressive gains made at the organisational levels of CIDOB and the persistent exclusion women experience within their local communities.

indigenous identity as a family. Corregidor Francisco Semi of Carmen de Coquinal in the TIPNIS voiced his opinion that:

That *casa grande* is ours, it belongs to all of us. For comparison, [it is] a large building since we split the rooms, but the family lives in all [parts], we are all a family, that's why we call it "*la casa grande*" [...] where we live unitedly, the communities.¹²¹
(personal interview, 14 May 2012).

I suggest that this is to steer away from the religious elements of local indigenous histories. This change moved the protesters rhetoric towards concepts that denote a territorially bounded space that encapsulates the contemporary legal and jurisdictional demands of the collective indigenous movement. It is also likely that the religious sentiments embedded within experiences of ethnic identity would be perceived as ‘non-rational’ or ‘backward’ by other sectors of civil society, such as the urban solidarity networks. Historically, for instance, movements on the political left have been ambivalent towards what Gramsci called ‘folklore’ (Rabasa 2010). In this way, the concept of the *casa grande* serves to unite heterogeneous ethnic groups under a common ideology that can be more easily articulated to other indigenous cultural systems as well as to other sectors of Bolivian society. Notably, on the rare occasion where the *loma santa* is referred to in declarations it has been secularised and used as a substitute for territory or Mother Earth. For instance, in a resolution against the government’s proposal for the road dated 18 May 2010 it declares that ‘Mother Earth’ ‘for us is the *loma santa*’ (XXIX Encuentro Extraordinario de Corregidores del TIPNIS 2010; author’s translation).

Furthermore, the strategy of ‘resistance through migration’, as Van Valen describes the movements in search of the *loma santa* (2013: 108), is no longer viable in the contemporary context as timber companies, the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons and the continuing encroachment of *cocaleros* into ancestral lands means that the indigenous peoples have nowhere left to retreat to. The demand for the government land titling in the 1990s until present is, in this sense, a strategy of last resort to secure the self-determination and autonomy of lowland indigenous peoples. A Yuracaré and specialist in Yuracaré culture, Jeremías Ballivián Torrico, explained that the ways of life of the indigenous peoples of the lowlands have changed over time:

¹²¹ ‘Esa casa grande es nuestra, es de todos nosotros. A comparación de una construcción grande pues nos dividimos los cuartos pues, pero la familia vive todo, todos somos una familia, por eso es que decimos nosotros “la casa grande” [...] donde vivimos unidos las comunidades’.

Normally, before, there were no limits. The limit was made because in some ways we need a territory where we can live, why was a limit made? Because the people colonised somehow and other businesses have been entering and these forests have been increasingly falling apart and becoming smaller.¹²² (personal interview, 20 January 2011)

In addition, expressions of resistance are no longer directed solely at the *carayana* population but the *cocalero* peasant settlers of Andean indigenous descent and the ‘indigenous’ government of Morales that pursues the road project. Until recently, the Bolivian Amazon had no specific place in the imaginary of the nation-state with respect to political territory (Molina 1996). This change has significant implications for the shifting articulations of indigeneity in Bolivia. Fundamentally, however, both the movements in search of the *loma santa* and the contemporary indigenous movement represented by CIDOB share a common demand: that of politico-territorial autonomy. Indeed, the contemporary lowland indigenous movement faces many of the same challenges of the millenarian resistances, most notably: resource and land depletion; social conflicts with external forces; and the desire to reclaim cultural values and equilibrium with nature. The fundamental difference, though, lies in the fact that the movements in search of the *loma santa* pose a spatial separation from colonial agents whilst the indigenous movements led by CIDOB aim to negotiate political participation in the state (see Lehm Ardaya 1999).

Bolivian sociologist Gabriela Canedo Vásquez discusses in her book *La Loma Santa: una utopia cercada* (The Loma Santa: A Fenced Utopia) (2011) the difference between the *casa grande* and the *loma santa*. Canedo argues that territory is a limited and bounded space of collective property whereas the *loma santa* is an unlimited space and a utopian promised land. Canedo Vásquez contends that the process of ‘*territorialización*’ (territorialisation) is the glue that holds together the indigenous peoples of the lowlands (2011: 55). In addition, she argues that it is a form of legal protection and a form of assimilation into the structures of the nation-state. The author contends that in order to question the postcolonial framework of the state, indigenous peoples have to play by the rules of the game. Therefore, whilst the millenarian movements sought complete autonomy from national society the contemporary movement seeks recognition that the lowland

¹²² ‘Normalmente antes no había límites, no? El límite se hizo porque de alguna manera nosotros necesitamos un territorio donde nosotros podamos vivir, por qué se hizo un límite? Porque la gente coloniza de alguna manera y otras empresas han ido entrando y estas selvas se han ido cada vez desbaratando y haciendo cada vez más pequeñas’.

indigenous peoples are Bolivian citizens. This argument can be seen in CIDOB's contemporary slogan '*Bolivia nunca más sin los pueblos indígenas*' (Bolivia never again without the indigenous peoples) (CIDOB 2014). That said, the movement has managed to use territory as a counter-hegemonic instrument of power against centralised state sovereignty. Canedo Vásquez states that:

For indigenous groups in general, territory is the central element in their constitution as a group. Territory is the central place of their existence and material reproduction, where subsistence hunting, fishing, harvesting and cultivation take place. This allows the symbolic and cultural reproduction of identity, as it is in the everyday relationship with territory that they develop, reproduce and transmit culture. The defence of territory has led them, in addition, to position it [territory] as a political actor, because it is the backbone of the organisation and driving force of their political action. (2011: 24; author's translation)

Therefore, what was once an unlimited space free from the pressures of the *carayanas* is now a geographically defined space with a legal title that is defined within state legislation. Taken to the extreme, one could postulate that indigenous territory is another form of neoliberal multiculturalism where the rights of indigenous peoples are granted within the confines of a Western model of nation-state homogeneity. This consideration is made evident within the reforms made under the Morales administration. For instance, although the MAS Party has granted legal land titles to indigenous communities, the respective organisational structures of these indigenous territories have not been incorporated into the bureaucratic system of decision-making of the centralised government.

In her work with the indigenous territory of Rukullata in Ecuador, Juliet Erazo argues that this process of collective indigenous land titling has the advantage of securing rights and security for indigenous peoples although its 'apparent purpose is to allow native peoples the freedom to escape from the everyday workings of bureaucracy and the state' it 'paradoxically initiates new governmental structures within the territory and new dynamics of rule and discipline' (2013: 2). She contends that indigenous territory does not grant sovereignty and furthermore that 'sovereignty is more process than product' (2013: 2). Gustafson suggests that 'indigenous territorialities in practice did not pursue ethnoterritorial closure through monocultural geographically fixed territorial units. Rather they sought to flexibly rearticulate across space to counterbalance centers of power' (2009a: 998). Simpson highlights the 'forced cultural transformation of native culture through the bounding of people and bounding of space through the concept of indigenous

territory' (2000: 118). Anthias and Radcliffe therefore contend that the granting of TCO titles constitutes an 'ethno-environmental fix' that has 'inevitably de-politicized and de-historicized the realities of postcolonial territoriality' (2013: 6). Hence, the contemporary use and value of the memories and narratives of indigenous resistance in the search for the *loma santa* are appropriated, adopted and reinvented through the language of indigenous rights but this could close down greater potential for self-determination and political participation in the nation-state.

6.5 The Geopoetics of Resistance

In Paul Routledge's (1994; 2000a) research on social movements he asserts the importance of cultural expressions of resistance and collective memories. The author defines this political terrain the 'geopoetics of resistance' which 'refers to those cultural expressions that can be interpreted through the conceptual interweavings of material space, imagined space, and spatial practice' (2000: 385). These 'cultural articulations of dissent' (2000: 377) take many forms such as poems, songs, paintings and plays. In this section, I will focus on two examples from my participation in the TIPNIS conflict: the anthem of the Eighth and Ninth Marches; and the use of the Patujú flower as a symbol of the lowland indigenous peoples.

The *canCIÓN* (song) entitled *Coraje* (Courage) was the anthem of the Eighth and Ninth Marches in Defence of the TIPNIS. The activist, poet and songwriter Luis Rico adapted music by an Argentinian composer Víctor Heredia in homage to the indigenous protestors on the original March For Territory and Dignity in 1990. The well-known Bolivian musician uses verse as a cultural instrument in political struggles to recover democracy and engender social justice in Bolivia. On 14 August 1990, one day before the march reached La Paz, Rico travelled to a meeting of the marchers at La Cumbre to express his solidarity with their cause. Here, the leaders of the march asked Rico to compose a song that reflected the objectives of the indigenous peoples of the Beni. Rico obliged and sang the anthem in the doors of the Cathedral in Plaza Murillo to a crowd of thousands the next day (Opini3n 2011b). At this time, the song was not recorded as it was considered to have a dangerous political or partisan undercurrent.

Figure 12. Anthem of the Eighth and Ninth Marches ‘*Coraje*’ by Luis Rico

¡Coraje!

Vengo desde la selva, el bosque chimán,
Donde niño y serpiente tienen su hogar,
Vengo desde la tierra que ya no está,
Donde antes se vivía en libertad.

Vengo a decirles que allá siembran dolor
El que depreda, mata y corta la flor,
El que mancha los ríos, el talador.

Chorus:

¡Coraje, coraje!

La unión hace la fuerza
Y un corazón Americano,
Crece a la luz del sol.

Les traigo en las palabras el corazón,
Desde la amazonía Yuracaré,
Les traemos la esperanza, la fe y la razón,
Que cargan en sus espaldas hombre y mujer.
La furia y la codicia del carayana,
Está sembrando envidia y desolación,
Y eso es lo que me duele en el corazón.

Chorus

Unidos los Movima y los Sirionó,
Mojeños la esperanza, razón y fe,
En contra el carayana depredador,
Luchando en el Isiboro y el Sécure,
Por eso el territorio y la dignidad,
Nos venimos buscando al caminar,
De los hermanos la solidaridad.

Chorus

Courage!

I come from the jungle, the Chimane forest,
Where child and snake have their home.
I come from the land that is no longer there,
Where once one lived in freedom.

I come to tell you that pain is sown there,
He who destroys, kills, and decimates the flora,
He who defiles the rivers, the logger.

Chorus:

Courage! Courage!

Unity is strength,
And an American heart,
Grows to the light of the sun.

I bring to you the heart in words,
From the Yuracaré Amazon.
We bring you the hope, faith and reason,
Which men and women shoulder.
The fury and greed of the *carayana*,
Are sowing envy and desolation,
And that is what pains my heart.

Chorus

United the Movima and the Sirionó,
Mojeños, the hope, reason and faith,
Against the destroyer *carayana*.
Fighting in the Isiboro and the Sécure,
For territory and dignity.
We are searching while walking,
The solidarity of brothers.

Chorus

Source: Personal field-notes (author’s translation).

The song was resurrected for the Eighth and Ninth Marches and is now widely known across Bolivia. The song gained notoriety through performances in a number of public spaces as a tool to articulate the collective demands of the indigenous movement to wider sectors of Bolivian civil society. For example, Luis Rico and Nazareth Flores, one of the indigenous leaders of the movement, sang the anthem when the marchers entered Plaza San Francisco in La Paz on the Eighth March. Rico and Nazareth's moving rendition swept through the crowd and invigorated the marchers after their exhausting seven-hour descent into the capital city (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011). The soft dynamics and slow tempo of the verses juxtaposed the gradual crescendo of the chorus and the impassioned call for '*coraje*' when hundreds of paceños (residents of La Paz) sang along. Nazareth, a well-known figure from the Eighth March, had frequently captured media attention because of her emotional oral testimony of the events of La Chaparina when she was gassed, had her hands tied and was thrown onto a truck resulting in a miscarriage. The crowd was stirred when Nazareth changed the last line of the song '*de los hermanos la solidaridad*' (the solidarity of brothers) to '*de los hermanos paceños dignidad*' (the dignity of paceño brothers). In this moment the song developed what Michelle Bigenho has described in her work on Bolivian music as 'experiential authenticity'; or the shared experience of an embodied practice and sonorous performance that acts to create a common bond (2002: 17-18). The song was shared through social media websites such as Facebook marking a significant difference from the censorship encountered on the 1990 March. The song has thus played an integral role in gaining visibility for the demands of the lowland indigenous movement and in providing a cultural expression of urban solidarity. Displays of solidarity were evident during the final approach of the Eighth March into La Paz when a van full of urban activists from Caranavi arrived carrying speakers that blasted out the *Coraje* tune.

In creating a representation of the lowland indigenous peoples the performance also acts to reify certain voices and silence others in the interests of a collective group identity. Routledge contends that 'articulations of collective identity can themselves be abstractions that efface differences and inequalities within particular places and within the movements themselves' (2000a: 387). The song's lack of reference to millenarian or religious concepts, such as the *loma santa*, is noticeable by its absence. Instead, the song refers in various ways to the '*carayana*' identified as a destroyer, killer, defiler and greed hungry logger. The colonial agent is positioned as the common enemy to the lowland indigenous peoples serving to consolidate collective action around a shared sense of place-based

history based on the colonial wound (see Routledge 2000). In contradistinction, several ethnic communities that inhabit Amazonian Bolivia are imagined as bringing ‘hope, faith and reason’ in the search for ‘territory and dignity’. The song also makes it clear that the protest marches do not seek territorial autonomy as the chorus calls for ‘unity’ at an American scale and finishes by asking for the ‘solidarity of brothers’. The song rearticulates a local history of marginalisation by colonial forces as a national or supranational struggle for indigenous territory. This is also reflected in the choice of panpipe interludes in the song that speaks to a collective indigenous – albeit it Andean – cultural heritage.

For the indigenous movement, the Patujú flower symbolises a collective identity formation as well as re-articulating imaginaries of the Bolivian nation. The Patujú (also known as a false-bird-of-paradise) is recognised in the Constitution as one of the two symbolic flowers of the nation-state, alongside the Andean flower of the Incas, the Kantuta (Art 6: II; Gobierno de Bolivia 2009). Both flowers contain the red, yellow and green colours of the Republican flag of Bolivia. During the Eighth and Ninth Marches the marchers proudly waved white flags adorned with the Amazonian flower. When I arrived in Trinidad to join the Ninth March I was given, alongside the other marchers, this flag emblazoned with the words ‘*No por el TIPNIS*’ (Not through the TIPNIS) to express their resistance against the proposed road (personal field-notes, 27 April 2012). Representatives of CIDOB distributed the flags and they served the dual purpose of unifying different communities under a shared symbol *and* displaying a clear and visible image of their collective identity to wider sectors of Bolivian society. In the photograph below Adolfo Chávez, President of CIDOB, greets a barge crossing over the Mamoré River carrying inhabitants of the TIPNIS on the Ninth March. Here, the Patujú flag can be seen alongside the Republican national flag. Adjacent to the barge is a small boat carrying journalists, as this was also a prime photo opportunity for the construction of a representative image to the Bolivian media.

Figure 13. Flags of the Ninth March



Source: Author's photograph.

The use of the Patujú emblem also served as a symbol of the struggle of the lowland indigenous peoples to be recognised as citizens of the state. For example, when the Eighth March concluded its journey in La Paz the marchers expressed their gratitude to the paceño people by presenting the Mayor with a flag decorated with the Patujú flower (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011). The 2009 Constitution recognises the red, yellow and green tri-colour flag of the Republic and the criss-cross rainbow wiphala flag as official symbols of the state (Art 6: II; Gobierno de Bolivia 2009). The wiphala, however, represents the native people of the Andes and in the 1990s was increasingly seen as a symbol of indigeneity representing the many different *originarios* or nations present in the country (see Goodale 2006). As such, the march was symbolically directed against the MAS's understanding of the Bolivian nation through the wiphala as a 'catch-all' representative emblem for a homogenous indigenous national identity. CIDOB is developing a project for the state to recognise the eastern emblem as a comparable national symbol. That said, the marchers interspersed the Patujú flag with the Republican and wiphala flags to show that they were still part of the nation and not driven by separatist agendas. Displays of nationalism were also witnessed in the singing of the national anthem as a popular action upon arrival at a new campsite and this worked simultaneously alongside regional, as well as local, identities. Instead then, the lowland indigenous movement seeks the formation of the 'plurinational' that gives them a degree of autonomy whilst being incorporated into the

Bolivian nation. In reference to the Eighth March, the Bolivian political scientist Franklin Pareja has stated that:

Plurinationality is expressed not only in the recognition of nations but in the recognition and respect of their symbols and this shows that Bolivia is not only Andean-centric, because it must revalue the peoples of the *oriente* and their symbols. The wiphala has value for the *occidente* and equally the Patujú should be recognised as a symbol of the *oriente* (El Diario 2011; author's translation)

Therefore, state recognition of symbols of the lowland indigenous peoples was an integral part of CIDOB's objectives during the TIPNIS conflict in order to re-align the characteristics of the nation-state in the post-Constitution period.

6.6 Protest Marches as Subaltern Counterpublic Spheres

Within this section, I adopt Nancy Fraser's term 'subaltern counterpublic spheres' to discuss the critical importance of spatial practices within the lowland indigenous movement. Subaltern counterpublic spheres is a term used to describe 'parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs' (Fraser 1990: 67). The counterpublic sphere is a space where marginalised peoples, such as indigenous groups, can exercise their agency as thinking subjects and therefore circumnavigate some of the problems of representation through external mediators. In relation to his research in Bolivia, Stephenson argues that the 'counterpublic sphere can be a site for formulating and expressing alternate ways of knowing, thereby legitimizing the cultural and political right to difference' (2002: 101). Fraser's concept is critical to understanding counter-hegemonic spaces of resistance as important for identity formation. Yet, it lacks an understanding of the materiality of contentious politics and the ways that social movements involve tensioned processes that cross-cut ethnic, class, gender and age differences. The issue-specific campaign in defence of the TIPNIS united broader communities of interest that overlap and that combine at particular times and places as an assemblage; a temporary gathering of different elements together. These formations can be conceived of as 'translocal assemblages' described as composites of place-based movements that exchange ideas, knowledge, practices and resources across sites (McFarlane 2009: 562).

Here, I focus on how the spaces of the Eighth and Ninth Marches served to strengthen the internal dynamics of the lowland indigenous movement by consolidating organisational structures and collective identity ties.¹²³ The protest marches were important spaces for the convergence of geographically separated indigenous communities. Over the course of the 61 days on the Ninth March, participants came together through the spatial mingling of bodies through practices such as eating, sleeping, washing, cooking, praying, meeting and walking. Partaking in these collective bodily experiences stimulated the sharing of stories and place-based memories. These familial relations engendered relations of trust, reciprocity and solidarity. Moreover, the marches were a space of learning and political empowerment. Laida Nuñez, the Vice-President of TIPNIS Sub-Central, stated that the march ‘is a school for us because what is not taught in school, one learns it [...] In the Ninth March we are learning’¹²⁴ (personal interview, 16 May 2012). Meetings were also important as they provided an important counterpublic sphere in which to foster collective ideologies and identities. In particular, the marches served as a vehicle for the unification of CIDOB and CONAMAQ as meetings stimulated the open dialogue and negotiation of political strategies and objectives. Figure 14 shows representatives of CONAMAQ posing with the Patujú flower in a mark of solidarity with the lowland indigenous movement.

Figure 14. Representatives of CONAMAQ on the Ninth March



Source: Author's photograph.

¹²³ I will discuss the importance of space for left-indigenous solidarity networks in chapter VII.

¹²⁴ ‘es una escuela para nosotros porque lo que no enseñan en la escuela, lo aprende uno [...] En la novena marcha estamos aprendiendo’.

That said, divisions between indigenous groups were spatially maintained on the Ninth March. The marchers were split into sectors consisting of TIPNIS Sub-Central, Sécure Sub-Central, TIM I, CONAMAQ and COPNAG, for example. Separate areas for eating, camping and carrying out meetings were designated to each indigenous group. This division was also upheld whilst marching with each indigenous bloc distinguishable by the banners of their organisations. For example, Figure 15 shows the gathering of marchers on the Ninth March at a school playground in Entre Ríos near the city of Caranavi. There are several reasons for this separation: logistical reasons of organising cooking duties; to maintain convivial relations between participants; for representing different bodies to the media and in metropolitan areas; to ensure accountability; and to lessen the chances of infiltrators on the marches. This spatial separation, however, also served to hinder conversations and inter-subjective encounters.

Figure 15. Banners of Indigenous Organisations at Entre Ríos near Caranavi



Source: Author's photograph.

6.7 The Problems of Identifying under a Single Indigenous Label

Evidently, a number of strategic essentialisms have been constructed and reproduced in order to legitimise demands made under the umbrella of an authentic indigenous identity. In contemporary Bolivia collective territory has consequently become synonymous with lowland indigenous identities. This is reflected in the President of the TIPNIS Sub-Central

Fernando Vargas' mantra '*¡territorio o muerte, TIPNIS o muerte!*' (territory or death, TIPNIS or death!) (personal field-notes, 02 June 2012). Similarly in an interview with Adolfo Chávez he stated that 'an indigenous people without territory is headed for destruction, to the elimination of their cultural identity'¹²⁵ (personal interview, 27 May 2012). However, taking these claims for granted ignores the many ways that 'territory' has been adopted as a language and practice that is not necessarily aligned historically to all indigenous communities and nations. There is a danger, therefore, that mobilising essentialist indigenous identities forecloses the multiple forms of indigeneity practiced within place-based communities. Identification under a single indigenous label can obscure the internal differentiation, power geometries, negotiations and tensions that permeate any social movement.

Erazo observes that when people hear of 'indigenous territory' or 'indigenous sovereignty' 'they imagine that, compared to non-indigenous groups, indigenous peoples who live in their territories are more culturally homogenous, with shared values, and priorities, making political unity straight-forward or even natural' (2013: xix). Through her work with an indigenous territory in Amazonian Ecuador, Erazo illustrates that many differences between communities became apparent through the process of territorialisation, since this brings changes to communities that have previously had little formal governance structures or state control. This process was evident in my own participation on the Ninth March as inter-ethnic differences were observed, particularly in relation to organisational structures and strategies for achieving land rights and political autonomy. These differences between groups were grounded in the place-based histories of communities. For example, it is important to acknowledge that the movements in search of the *loma santa* were not only a product of the conflict between Mojeño peoples and white-*mestizo* communities but within Mojeño society as some criticised the search accusing people of abandoning crops and livestock and of risking people's lives (Lehm Ardaya 1999). Therefore, the Mojeño peoples that have been heavily involved in the TIPNIS conflict as part of CPEM-B are those with this long history of political organising against colonial agents. Conversely, the majority of the inhabitants of San Ignacio de Moxos (a Mojeño town) in Beni maintains staunch support for the MAS and displayed fervent opposition to the Ninth March. This division resulted in an announcement by CPEM-B representatives of the Mojeño communities, that 'publicly denounced' indigenous authorities affiliated to the MAS. The document remarks that individuals, such as the Mayor of San Ignacio de Moxos Basilio

¹²⁵ 'un pueblo indígena sin territorio va camino a la destrucción, a la eliminación de su propia identidad cultural'.

Nolvani, the President of the Municipal Council of San Ignacio de Moxos Ignacia Vilches, the Governor of the Province of Moxos Sixto Bejarano and Assemblywoman Teresa Limpias have been:

nursing their personal interests being subservient to the national government, and taking advantage of their positions they have entered different communities of the TIPNIS, misinforming and deceiving our community *hermanos* with false promises of productive projects and infrastructure; with the sole purpose of obtaining consent for the construction of the road and even worse mobilising community members of Oromomo and Santo Domingo to take part in a counter-march. They completely forget that they are primarily representatives of indigenous peoples rather than a political party, which should be the essential definition of their role. (CPEM-B 2011a; author's translation)

Moreover, there was a marked predominance of certain regional ethnic groups on the Ninth March. The main bodies were CPEM-B, APG, CPESC and the Chiquitano Indigenous Organisation OICH. The APG represent the third largest indigenous nationality in Bolivia and the President of the organisation Celso Padilla was one of the main leaders of the protest marches in defence of the TIPNIS. The presence of the APG was evident in the platform of demands of the Eighth March, of which three of the sixteen points directly relate to the Guaraní organisation (Table 2). This emphasis on regional struggles became a source of contention during the meeting in Puerto San Borja to decide the platform of demands for the Ninth March. Several regional leaders and participants of the Ninth March expressed the need to articulate cross-ethnic demands of the collective indigenous movement rather than specific place-based issues (personal field-notes, 10 May 2012). After heated discussions the demands were narrowed down to nine key points, with just one point relating to the APG in respect to the management of Aguaragüe National Park¹²⁶ (Table 2). Wilma Mendoza Mino, the Vice-President of CNAMIB, argued that this lack of uniformity on the Eighth March meant that the government could declare that the marchers did not have a platform of demands to negotiate. She explained that:

¹²⁶ Aguaragüe National Park is co-managed by APG and the state environmental agency SERNAP. However, in 1996 the Bolivian government named it a 'traditional hydrocarbons area' and since then there have been proposals for exploratory work by the Brazilian company Petrobras and Petroandina (a joint venture between YPF and Venezuela's PDVSA). Since these developments the APG have tried to establish their role in decision-making and policy-making in regard to hydrocarbon exploration. In 2011, APG organised a series of protest marches that successfully delayed new gas projects but negotiations are on-going (see Humphreys Bebbington 2013).

[...] the other [indigenous] peoples had wanted to continue modifying it, because last year the struggle had been much bigger, perhaps. With the participation of the 13 regional [bodies] to which we belong as indigenous peoples. So, each regional [body] had different regional problems as well. So, they wanted to insert very specific problems that are very small, that are easy to resolve. But we always say “no”. The platform of the struggle is a national demand that has to be a little broader.¹²⁷ (personal interview, 11 May 2012)

Thus, there was a conscious effort on the Ninth March to consolidate regional dissent into overarching demands of a bracketed lowland indigenous movement.

There were further differences and points of contention between the highland organisation CONAMAQ and CIDOB. In part, this can be understood through their respective histories of resistance and state relations. CONAMAQ was founded seventeen years after CIDOB and its principle objective is the reconstitution of the 16 pre-colonial *originario* nations of Andean Bolivia. Unlike CIDOB, this requires the re-territorialisation of indigenous communities and the recovery of pre-colonial structures as the highland and valley regions of Bolivia were greatly influenced by the process of unionisation that occurred after the 1952 revolution (Canedo Vásquez 2011; García Linera et al 2004). These different histories were observed in the use of the common language of ‘*hermanos*’ (brothers) within CIDOB and ‘*compañeros*’ (comrades) within CONAMAQ – a term associated with union structures – on the Ninth March (personal field-notes, 01 May 2012). The alliance between CONAMAQ and CIDOB is strategic for the highland organisation since the lowland communities are perceived to be more authentically indigenous than *campesino* organisations such as the CSUTCB. In particular, their alliance was of importance during the Constituent Assembly when both organisations demanded the direct representation of indigenous peoples in the legislative body, the rights to the management of natural resources in indigenous territories and indigenous autonomy. However, their different histories of political organisation emerged as a source of contention during the TIPNIS conflict. In a meeting held in La Paz after the announcement of Ley 222, that put the road project back on the agenda, conflicting opinions emerged over strategies for renewed forms of protest. Representatives of the highland organisation expressed their desires for a more radical approach to protest that included road blockades, traditionally associated with

¹²⁷ ‘[...] los otros pueblos han querido seguir modificando porque el año pasado ha sido una lucha tal vez mucho más masiva. Con la participación de las 13 regionales a la cual nosotros pertenecemos también como pueblos indígenas. Entonces, cada regional tiene pues diferentes problemas también. Entonces, quisieron meter problemas muy puntuales que son bien pequeños, que son fáciles de resolver. Pero nosotros siempre decimos “no”. La plataforma de la lucha, es una demanda nacional tiene que ser un poco más amplia’.

union organisations such as the COB. Conversely, leaders of CIDOB conveyed staunch opposition to this as the organisation has opted, in the past, for peaceful and non-disruptive forms of protest (personal field-notes, 10 February 2012). In an interview with the President of CIDOB, Adolfo Chávez, he stated that:

The choice of the march, is because it's peaceful, it's tranquil. [The march] does not obstruct anyone, neither the lorry drivers, the small traders nor Bolivian business. In comparison to other actions that have big blockades and where they don't respect the right to life or at least for when there are sick people in the roads and they have to go to emergency centres, to hospitals.¹²⁸ (personal interview, 27 May 2012).

There will be a number of internal dynamics, fields of conflict and points of contention in any 'indigenous movement'. Indeed, Gustafson cautions that researchers should 'stay clear of dualistic framings which find echoes in popular racial discourse' (2002: 293). Yet, the creation of common identities and grievances relating to the indigenous label was an overarching political weapon in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS and for the right to territory and natural resources.

The use of indigeneity as a common signifier has fostered mobilisation across different ethnic groups. This process has been aided by NGOs and *técnicos* (technical experts) that accompanied the Eighth and Ninth Marches. NGO representatives facilitated meetings, provided training, funded activities and constructed written announcements and texts. These mediatory actors therefore helped to re-articulate the grievances of the marchers under the banner of indigenous rights. This could be seen in the writing of open letters to the government during both the Eighth and Ninth Marches, made possible through the aid of technical experts from one of the principle legal organisations defending indigenous rights in Bolivia CEJIS (Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social; Centre of Legal Studies and Social Investigation). Therefore, in order to 'speak' and be heard, the indigenous peoples have to undergo a process of representation through the language of legal rights. They therefore remain 'subaltern' because their attempts at self-representation fall outside the 'the lines laid down by the official institutional structures of representation' (Spivak 1996: 306). Thus, Glenn (2011) contends that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is ironic since it seeks the recognition of alternative epistemologies through civic institutions that have homogenising and universalising tendencies.

¹²⁸ 'La elección de la marcha, es que es pacífica, es tranquila. [La marcha] no obstruye a nadie, ni al transportista, ni al comerciante minoritario, ni al empresariado boliviano. A comparación de otras acciones en que hay bloqueo grande y donde no se respeta el derecho a la vida o por lo menos cuando hay enfermos en las carreteras y tienen emergencia de ir a los centros, a los hospitales'.

However, as Fabricant notes in her work with the Landless Peasants Movement in Bolivia, movements ‘take NGO ideas and meld them with their own creative strategies to come up with solutions that will work for their communities’ (2012: 120). Moreover, Gustafson (2009b) offers a balanced interpretation of the ways that NGOs offer a language and model for politicising alternative worldviews. The indigenous movement consciously reifies certain strategic essentialisms whilst at other times actively resisting them. Indeed, indigenous knowledges do not exist outside of other knowledge forms (Walsh 2002). As Walsh argues ‘[t]he efficacy of the movement in fact derives from its ability to construct and use the correspondences among various contemporary knowledge positions [...] in order to exercise political tactics and strategies’ (2002: 71). A politics of refusal is unlikely to advance indigenous demands. As such, Hale suggests an analytical framework based on the Gramscian notion of articulation to ask:

will the subjugated knowledge and practices be articulated within the dominant, and neutralised? Or will they occupy the space opened from above while resisting its built in logic, connect with others, toward ‘transformative’ cultural-political alternatives that still cannot be fully imagined? (2002: 499).

Indeed, there is the danger that identifying under a single indigenous label risks losing the complexities and processes that permeate the heterogeneous inter-ethnic collectivity of the lowland indigenous movement. This acts to disembodify the identity claims from some of the more radical tangents of the movement. Mexican anthropologist Miguel Alberto Bartolomé argues that indigenous autonomy should contemplate ‘new modes of [inter-ethnic, inter-cultural] social articulation that are more egalitarian than existing [ones]’ and that a multi-ethnic state ‘should explore all possible paths in the search for novel forms of conviviality between culturally distinct groups’ (2005: 146 cited in Gustafson 2009a: 998). Escobar similarly calls for a decolonisation that ‘can be started in earnest from a deessentialized perspective’ (2008: 305). Indeed, the movement seeks the recognition of plurality without the homogenisation of indigenous cultures or ideologies or the ranking of difference that necessarily works to subordinate some cultures and let others dominate. This project of emancipatory societal transformation is an on-going challenge for the lowland indigenous movement.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the changing articulations of lowland indigeneity within the TIPNIS conflict. Cultural politics has been an important component of claims to politico-

territorial autonomy. These discussions show that identities are transient and that indigenous peoples are agents of their own political subjecthood. Yet, ethnic identities are not constructed outside of relations to capital or the state. Thus, indigenous knowledge 'is a hybrid, networked form of socio-political and cultural practice that articulates with other forms of knowledge production and practice' (Gustafson 2009b: 23-24). Furthermore, the spatio-political imaginaries articulated in the TIPNIS conflict (and in other natural resource conflicts in Bolivia) were structured through memories of struggle and territorial loss, which influenced contemporary political action (also see Bebbington et al 2013).

I contend that the representation of demands under a single indigenous label is likely to fall short of more radical agendas to recognise the plural epistemologies of heterogeneous ethnic nations in Bolivia. In addition, a politics of indigeneity can be criticised for actively de-politicising on-going relations of power. Rather, the project of plurinationalism relies on the active reproduction of difference where '[t]he *one* gives way to the *multiple*' (Zibeche 2010b: 30). Uncoupling essentialist identity markers from indigeneity would begin to disentangle the 'coloniality of power' (Quijano 1991, 1993, 1998, 2000). It would contest the re-embedding of race as a social classification that maintains neo-colonial relations of power and acknowledge the diversity of indigenous experiences (see Paradies 2006). Plurinationalism, if only understood as limited spaces of special minority claims, could not act to fully reconstitute the Westphalian state model. Haesbert contends that (re)territorialisation is not a 'simple formal recognition within the territorial sphere of the state' but implies a recognition of 'the heterogeneity of the experiences of social groups' (2013: 148). The MAS's process of change shows clear similarities with Hale's 'authorised Indian' and calls into question the extent to which the plurinational state has actually given credence to the plural demands of a diverse and disparate lowland indigenous movement that seeks self-determination.

LEFT-INDIGENOUS POLITICS: RECOVERING THE *PROCESO DE CAMBIO*

This chapter will explore the events, practices and moments that acted to consolidate a left-indigenous alliance united in a collective struggle in defence of the TIPNIS. This ‘translocal assemblage’ (McFarlane 2009) appears outwardly to cut across historically contentious lines of identity based on ethnicity, class and gender. The unison thus engenders a progressive climate for decolonising the nation-state under the banner of the plurination. This process of unification was, however, multi-faceted. Tensions permeated the relations between and within the lowland indigenous movement and urban networks of solidarity. In particular, certain groups from the political ‘left’ and ‘right’ used the TIPNIS conflict to further their own agendas that were not necessarily aligned to indigenous demands for politico-territorial autonomy. Therefore, pervasive power relations within the left-indigenous assemblage shaped the geographies of solidarity.

Contrasting spatial imaginaries of the nation-state and its connections to natural resources have rubbed up against one another within these left-indigenous spaces of dissent. These imaginaries have been articulated through competing *de facto* resource sovereignty claims, namely: the demand for politico-territorial autonomy positioned by the indigenous movement; the claim to popular sovereignty of the people postulated by urban movements on the political left; and regional movements for ‘autonomy’ in the Media Luna. These demands are variously juxtaposed with the project of resource nationalism pursued by the MAS. I maintain that the layering of spatial imaginaries influenced the practices of social movement actors during the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. Therefore, the solidarity networks that were formed during the conflict have created distinct ‘maps of grievance’ or spatially distinctive political claims (Featherstone 2003, 2008). Moreover, the spaces of contentious politics have been important for the jostling together of multiple subject positions and this has generated opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange and empathy. As such, I argue that the tensions, contradictions and difficulties of movement building do not necessarily imply failure. Rather, these differences can be an important component of attempting to create unity and conviviality amongst divergent sectors of Bolivian society. This chapter then, elaborates on social movement theorisation from within the intimate spaces of solidarity building to understand how and why political ideologies have shifted and adapted during the TIPNIS conflict.

To do this, first, I outline the theoretical contributions of this chapter through an approach that opens up politics as practice. Second, I describe the emergence of solidarity networks in defence of the TIPNIS centred in metropolitan spaces. I contend that urban movements can only be understood in the context of recent political changes and through the lens of long-lasting memories of struggle. Third, I discuss the various ‘convergence spaces’ that brought together place-based movements. Fourth, I evaluate the importance of virtual spaces of social media networking for mobilising political actors and consolidating support for the lowland indigenous movement. Fifth, I consider the importance of international solidarity in the TIPNIS conflict. I contend that transnational networks of support have not been fostered to a great extent and that this reflects some of the difficulties of articulating indigenous demands for decolonialism to advocates of environmental and human rights. Sixth, I argue that various ‘spaces of encounter’ have been significant for generating political identities and collective demands. I argue that through mutual and collective learning there are pathways for an enacted plurinational future. Therefore, differences are not intractable and left-indigenous alliances hope to recover the ‘*proceso de cambio*’ from the MAS and initiate their own project of societal transformation ‘*desde las bases*’ (from the bases).

7.1 Opening Up Politics as Practice

As discussed in chapter III, traditional social movement studies literature offers a limited conceptual framework that is goal oriented and negates the generative potential for emerging forms of political agency within social movement activity. In relation to her work with the MST in Brazil, Wolford contends that most analytical accounts ‘assume and assign an ontological coherence to the category of movement – a solid “thingness” that is rarely tenable on the ground’ (2010: 5). I have thus adopted assemblage thinking as an approach more capable of grasping the dynamic heterogeneity of social movement processes (see Davies 2012; Featherstone 2011; Legg 2009; McFarlane 2009). This method is useful for understanding the contingency of socio-spatial relations, which allows us to evaluate the continual labour required for building unity across social sectors. As such, assemblage thinking sees space relationally and goes beyond accounts that view social movements as naturally cohesive or fixed spatial forms. Rather, geographies of solidarity are generative of emerging spatio-political imaginaries (see Featherstone 2003, 2013). By placing myself amongst the daily geographies of political organisation, I hope to offer a rich empirical account of how solidarities were formed and shifted over time.

The construction of collective political identity ties relies on the ability to articulate place-based knowledges, experiences and ideological beliefs to others. This process is part of what Gramsci (1971) termed a ‘war of position’ in which the art of negotiation creates alliances that counteract hegemonic power and generate new, potentially emancipatory, political subjectivities. In this chapter, I advocate the use of articulation to understand this process of negotiation but go beyond discursive understandings advanced by Stuart Hall (1980, 1986, 1997) and Ernesto Laclau (1977). Rather, I consider the agency of embodied moments and encounters for relational configurations of unity. I therefore evaluate the ways that collective political action offers affective spaces with potential for generating emerging socio-spatial relations.

7.2 Urban Solidarity Networks

If you remember, when the TIPNIS march entered Plaza Murillo last year it was very nice because those of the TIPNIS entered in one bloc first. After, the city dwellers that had arrived on the TIPNIS march entered, then the homosexuals entered, then a group of Catholic Christians that had a huge banner that said, ‘Christ, the first revolutionary’. Behind the homosexuals! Do you realise?! [laughs] Then came students from the universities with a giant caterpillar and they moved the caterpillar and they entered singing and shouting ‘long live the environment’. And then young people disguised as toucans appeared. Afterwards, a group of female representatives entered of I don’t know what and then all of the citizens in general. In other words, in blocs. It was a movement that united all.¹²⁹ (Daniela Leytón, personal interview, 17 June 2012)

The narrative above provides an insight into the lived experience of Daniela, a human rights activist from La Paz, when she witnessed the final leg of the Eighth March as it entered the capital city of La Paz on 19 October 2011. By this point the march had swelled to more than 2,500 indigenous people and had been reinforced by urban inhabitants from across Bolivia (Fundación Tierra 2012). As part of the dense marching throng on the extraordinary day, I was unable to observe the full spectacle of the different blocs as we entered the two important public spaces of power and representation in La Paz; Plaza

¹²⁹ ‘Si tú te acuerdas, cuando entró la marcha del TIPNIS el año pasado a la Plaza Murillo, era muy simpático porque primero entran los del TIPNIS en un solo bloque. Después entran los ciudadanos que han venido a la marcha del TIPNIS, después entran los homosexuales, después entra un grupo de cristianos católicos que tenía un banner gigante que decía; ‘Cristo, el primer revolucionario’. Detrás de los homosexuales! ¿Te das cuenta? [jeje] Después entran los universitarios con un gusanito súper gigante y se movía el gusanito y entraron bailando y gritando, ‘que viva el medio ambiente’. Y aparecían chicos disfrazaditos de tucán. Después entraron un grupo de señoras representantes de no sé qué y después toda la ciudadanía en general, ¿no? O sea, por bloques. Fue un movimiento que unió a todos’.

Murillo and Plaza San Francisco. I meandered my way down from the shelf above the capital, known as La Cumbre, with urban activists from Cochabamba. We had joined the march the previous day to show solidarity with the protestors on the concluding leg of their journey. On this final day, I awoke to find a bustling crowd of people that had come to provide moral support, food, clothes and medical aid. Bolivian and foreign journalists, activists and academics had also arrived to document this significant milestone in Bolivian history. As we descended on the city my altitude sickness faded, in part from the descent, but also because of the remarkable sight of a 10 km human chain from the urban indigenous peripheries of La Paz, down towards the heart of the city and the presidential palace where tens of thousands¹³⁰ of people waited in anticipation of our arrival (Figure 16).

Figure 16. The Eighth March in La Paz



Source: Author's photograph.

People had taken time off work, school, university and other commitments on this weekday afternoon to demonstrate compassion for the indigenous marchers bearing flags that read '*Bienvenidos a La Paz*' (Welcome to La Paz) whilst joining the chants of the marchers: '*¡Ni soja, no coca, el TIPNIS no se toca!*' (Neither soya, nor coca, you can't touch the TIPNIS); '*¡TIPNIS si, carretera no!*' (TIPNIS yes, road no); '*¡El TIPNIS es*

¹³⁰ CIDOB claim this figure to be closer to one million but this seems unlikely given that the 2012 census puts the total population of Bolivia at just over 10 million people (CIDOB 2012a).

vida!' (The TIPNIS is life); and '*¡Todos somos TIPNIS!*' (We are all TIPNIS). Members of the neighbourhood association FEJUVE in El Alto received the marchers and chanted '*¡Fuerza, fuerza compañeros, que la lucha es dura pero venceremos!*' (Strength, strength comrades, because the struggle is hard but we shall overcome). The horizon was a sea of colour as the different flags jostled together in happy flight; the red, yellow and green of the national flag, the intermingling colours of diverse departmental flags, the multi-coloured criss-cross of the wiphala highland indigenous flag and the distinct white flag of the lowland indigenous peoples adorned with the Patujú flower. The streets were teeming with supporters from across Bolivia – workers, university students, families, representatives of unions and political sectors, neighbourhood councils, the urban indigenous – a broad spectrum of society bought together in a single act of unity. People cried, embraced, kissed and shook hands. One woman took off her shoes to give to a child marcher who was barefooted. The urban support for the indigenous peoples was overwhelming (personal field-notes, 19 October 2011). The written, photographic and video recordings of the event and peoples' shared recollections will likely become part of the memory of ethnic struggles that make up the Bolivian 'collective subconscious' (Albó 2008a: 21).

The emergence of solidarity networks in defence of the TIPNIS centred in metropolitan spaces can only be understood within the context of the 2000-2005 period of insurgent rebellion and the consequential election of Bolivia's first indigenous president, Evo Morales. As discussed in chapter II, this period of contentious politics generated the space necessary for the Constituent Assembly and the renaming of Bolivia as a plurinational state. Further still, the epoch nurtured – somewhat unrealistic – expectations of the MAS project that have not been wholly realised. These expectations included the protection of indigenous and environmental rights, reclaiming national sovereignty over natural resources and the promise that MAS would be a 'government of social movements'. The accumulation of discontent over the course of Morales's two administrative periods produced a climate of disillusionment that is key to understanding the antecedents of the TIPNIS conflict. During the 2010 *gasolinazo* social movements had begun to flex their muscles. On 26 December the government cut petrol and diesel subsidies and consequently transportation costs rose by as much as 73 percent (Farthing & Kohl 2014). By 2012, fuel subsidies were costing the government US\$1 billion, more than social stipends and pensions put together. As a result, massive protests and blockades paralysed the major cities. Significantly, resistance sprang from some of the traditional strongholds of MAS

support, such as neighbourhood associations, indigenous workers in La Paz and *cocaleros* in Cochabamba. Five days later, Morales rescinded the decree exclaiming his decision reflected his promise to '*mandar obedeciendo*' (lead by obeying) (Bolpress 2011b). Thus, the TIPNIS conflict arose at a time when factions of the population were looking for ways to solidify their grievances and the proposed road became the linchpin that united a number of cross-partisan sectors through commonly held dissatisfactions with the MAS. That said, left-indigenous allegiances have not simply 'emerged' but have been constructed over time through shifting political identifications. For instance, as I discuss within this chapter, early configurations of urban solidarity networks centred on ideologies of anti-neoliberalism, anti-imperialism and environmental rights and have since adapted to encompass demands for indigenous politico-territorial autonomy.

For the purposes of this chapter, I identify three – broadly defined – urban sectors involved in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. First, there was a group of activists, intellectuals and students that self-identified as on the political 'left'. In reality, this is not a homogenous sector but comprises of people who might identify as Marxists, Trotskyites, feminists, anarchists and – to some degree – environmentalists. Levitsky and Roberts note that historically in Latin America the '[l]eft was associated with a relatively well-defined alternative to capitalist models of development, one that emphasized public ownership of the means of production and central planning as opposed to market allocation of basic goods and services' (2011: 4). As such, this group has united around a common dissatisfaction with the government's nationalisation programme arguing that neoliberalism through transnational capital pervades as the structuring economic model of the state (Alvarez et al 2012). The road has been associated with an emerging Brazilian sub-imperialism and desires by transnational corporations to exploit hydrocarbon reserves in the TIPNIS, and this has given fodder to pre-existent critiques of the government. A further criticism is that state-led nationalism does not distribute decision-making powers to the Bolivian people, leaving demands for national sovereignty unfulfilled (see Cuba Rojas 2006; Quijano 2006; Haarstad 2009a; Webber 2011). Movements on the political 'left' demand '*soberanía popular del pueblo*' (popular sovereignty of the people). This vision postulates a reworking of the nation-state from liberal forms of representative democracy to collective forms of decision-making in a self-governing society (Máiz 2008). The principle of popular sovereignty requires that state authority be determined by the political consent of the people.

Second, individuals and groups on the ‘right’ have formed relationships with CIDOB during the conflict. This group consists of ring-wing political party-affiliated individuals and/or members of *comités cívicos*. Civic committees exist in most Bolivian cities and have acted historically as an elite instrument of maintaining economic and political power through rituals such as beauty pageants and commemorative events (Assies 2003; Gustafson 2006, 2011). Although the committees are officially non-partisan, members in Santa Cruz have been closely tied to the Movimiento Nación Camba de Liberación (Camba Nation Liberation Movement), a political group that promotes departmental autonomy. Gustafson states that ‘traditional civic committees like that of Santa Cruz maintain their essentially colonial expression of civil society as elite, light-skinned chambers of informal authority’ (2011: 232). The group has utilised the TIPNIS conflict as a Trojan horse for destabilising popular support for the MAS administration. It should be noted, however, that individuals are unlikely to self-identify as the political right. Rather, I adopt this terminology as it was frequently used by individuals that self-identified as Marxist. The presence of those perceived as being on the ‘right’ was a source of provocation in interviews with activists and in meetings of urban solidarity movements.

Third, non – explicitly – partisan citizens concerned with environmental, indigenous or human rights were a critical sector of urban solidarity. In particular, individuals and campaign groups have articulated demands for the government to carry out the legal processes of prior consultation with indigenous inhabitants of the TIPNIS and take heed of concerns raised in the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out by SERNAP in 2011. This sector has also rallied around demands for the legal investigation of human rights abuses against indigenous marchers during La Chaparina and the prosecution of those that gave the orders for the police brutality. Activists and campaigners have worked closely with national and international NGOs, such as Amnesty International and the Bolivian Catholic Church. The Bolivian Defensor del Pueblo (Ombudsman), Rolando Villena, has also played a significant role in representing the interests of the Bolivian people. In November 2011, Villena issued a report detailing the violence perpetrated at La Chaparina. The document concludes that the government ‘committed serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and even acts of torture’ (Defensoría del Pueblo Estado 2011: 105; author’s translation). The report presents a series of recommendations, that include: the prosecution of the people responsible; a transparent and objective investigation; an official list of the victims; and the assurance that the Bolivian police will ensure the exercise of freedom of transit to avoid

future instances of violation against non-violent protest marches. These suggestions have been used to apply pressure on the government.

Fundamentally, the networks of solidarity constructed during the TIPNIS conflict marked the first time in Bolivian history that the urban ‘left’ have formed long lasting connections with the lowland indigenous movement. Sarela Paz, an anthropologist and sociologist specialising in indigenous territorial rights, informed me that ‘the Eighth March is a milestone in Bolivia, because it is the first time that the indigenous movement of the lowlands, is tied up with the cities’¹³¹ (personal interview, 09 June 2012). Within the research I focused specifically on this ‘left-indigenous’ alliance, which broadly coupled the demands of CIDOB with urban solidarity movements located in the cities of Cochabamba, La Paz and Santa Cruz. It must be noted then, that my usage of the term ‘left-indigenous’ contrasts Jeffrey Webber’s (2012b) definition in his book *Red October*. Here, he explores a ‘left-indigenous struggle’ that existed during the Gas Wars of 2003 and 2005 when a coalition formed between COB, FEJUVE in El Alto, Marxist activists and *campesino* sectors. In this way, Webber is speaking of a different indigenous group – the *campesino* populations and urban indigenous – rather than the lowland indigenous peoples that inhabit collective territories. In fact, the involvement of the Amazonian indigenous peoples in the Water and Gas Wars was minimal.

Therefore, the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS have brought together a myriad of activist movements, indigenous organisations, NGOs, individual campaigners and intellectuals in a collective resistance to the government’s plans to build a road through the TIPNIS. Spatially, the movement is an assemblage of people, discourses and materials that have come together at various place-based sites during the TIPNIS conflict. Here, I focus on a number of distinct movements based within the main cities of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and La Paz.¹³² In terms of length of engagement, Cochabamba is the birthplace of the left-indigenous alliances that have developed. Pablo Rojas, who is trained as a linguist, is the longest serving urban activist involved in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. In 2009, he began informing the public about the construction of the road through the national park and in 2012 he published a book *El sueño del Presidente: la pesadilla de la Madre Tierra* (The Dream of the President: The Nightmare of Mother Earth) about the conflict.

¹³¹ ‘la octava marcha es un hito en Bolivia, porque es la primera vez que el movimiento indígena de tierras bajas, se liga con las ciudades’.

¹³² There were campaigns in other cities such as Sucre and Oruro. However, I focused my attention on the cities of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and La Paz as these were the central hubs in the urban struggles in defense of the TIPNIS. This also highlights some of the logistical issues of conducting multi-sited research that is both intensively rich and geographically extensive.

As awareness spread a group of students, activists and academics decided to set up a group named the Campaña en Defensa del TIPNIS. The members set up the website isiborosecure.com that provided information about the indigenous inhabitants of the TIPNIS, the biodiversity of the protected area and the proposed road. Indeed, this website was also my first encounter of the government project, and the resistance to it, whilst still in Glasgow.

The Campaña united a broad group of people who were largely concerned with the environmental implications of the road. Moreover, the collective included a number of self-identified Trotskyites united in their common dissatisfaction with what was perceived as a gap between the rhetoric and practice of the MAS. At this time, there was little awareness amongst the majority of the Bolivian people of the proposed plans to build a road through the TIPNIS. Many citizens were also unfamiliar with the national park and the history of lowland indigenous struggles for territorial sovereignty. In fact, the announcement of the Eighth March generated minimal media attention or public curiosity. Many of the activists or *ambientalistas* (environmentalists) had been sensitised to the issue of international climate change through the discourses of *Pachamama* and *vivir bien* by Evo Morales at events such as the 2010 World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Tiquipaya (CPMCC), just outside of the city. Hence, the emblem for the Campaña displays a clenched fist – a historical mark of solidarity – rising towards a tree (Figure 17).

Reynaldo Flores, head of communication for the Campaña, explained that the imagery was chosen to signify the union between humans and the environment with both sustaining the other in ‘complementariedad’ (complementarity) (personal email, 29 October 2012). The emblem includes the words ‘*Isiboro Sécure o muerte*’ (Isiboro Sécure or death), a play on words given Morales’ infamous declaration ‘Pachamama or death’ (cited in Webber 2011: 156) at the CPMCC. These words are also of note because Isiboro Sécure was the title of the area designated as a national park in



Source: Personal field-notes.

1965 and not the name that recognises the dual character of the indigenous territory and protected area recognised in 1990; the TIPNIS. The words chosen reflect the common environmental concerns of the Campaña alongside a sector that criticised the neoliberal tendencies of the government's development model. Significantly then, the movement did not have strong collective concerns for indigenous rights or self-determination. That said, the Campaña is also the least ideologically dogmatic of the larger movements.

La Chaparina occurred on 25 September 2011 changing the political playing field of the TIPNIS conflict considerably. McNeish argues that this event 'is now widely recognized as sparking the most significant crisis of public confidence in the current Bolivian government since its arrival to power in 2006' (2013: 222). I had arranged my flight with the expectations of studying a small-scale environmental conflict but arrived into the gridlocked city of Cochabamba just three days after La Chaparina amidst a national strike. Images and videos of the police violence were circulated via print and television media as well as on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. La Chaparina created visibility of the Eighth March and, to some extent, the demands of the indigenous marchers. In quick succession, *vigilias* (vigils) sprang up in the central plazas of the main cities of La Paz, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba to protest the human rights violations perpetrated by the government. The vigils were active sites of resistance and solidarity until the arrival of the Eighth March into La Paz.

The lowland city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the largest city in Bolivia, was home to one dominant organising body named CDAPMA, the Coalition of Defence of the Environment and Self-Determination of the People. The Coalition consisted of students and experienced activists, of which a handful self-identified as Trotskyites. As discussed in chapter III *coordinadoras* have become a new type of collective organisational structure since the Water and Gas Wars that places the emphasis on network-like structures rather than centralised forms. As such, there was no formal leadership within CDAPMA and the collective favoured a horizontal organisational structure based on collaborative, participatory and inclusive meeting spaces. In addition, there was a smaller and less politically active movement called the Mujeres Autoconvocados that were perceived by many in CDAPMA to be affiliated with the political 'right' because of ties with the Santa Cruz Comité Cívico. This group formed a close relationship with CNAMIB, the parallel female institution to CIDOB, through their ability to raise and collect money for the lowland indigenous movement and the Eighth and Ninth Marches.

Identifying the dominant movements in La Paz is a more complex task due to the city's fierce history of political mobilisation and the fractured nature of ideological positions. A number of campaigns and collectives have formed in defence of the TIPNIS whilst other movements have adopted the TIPNIS conflict as part of their broader and pre-existent political visions. That said, two main movements were identified: La Red de Activistas Independientes por el TIPNIS (The Network of Independent Activists for the TIPNIS) and the Coordinadora de la Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (Coalition of the University of San Andrés). These larger groups coexist alongside smaller movements and one-off activities by groups broadly defined as politically engaged vegetarians and vegans, feminist groups, human rights campaigners, anarchists and Marxists. These included a Trotskyist group named La Chispa (The Spark), an anarchist-feminist collective Mujeres Creando (Women Creating) and a human/environmental rights campaign group Kandire. The two main movements maintained long-term relationships with the lowland indigenous struggles whilst the latter groups have acted intermittently at times of peak interest, such as after La Chaparina and when the Eighth and Ninth Marches neared La Paz.

Moreover, the indigenous struggles were aided through the broader support and solidarity of Bolivian people. The deluge of people to the streets of La Paz on 19 October 2011 was effective in putting enough pressure on the government to announce the cancellation of the road under Ley 180. Although the majority of these individuals were not part of any sustained movement, the events of La Chaparina consolidated feelings of dissatisfaction with the state. This discontent was evident during the judicial elections that took place on 16 October, just three days before the Eighth March reached La Paz. The MAS promoted the election as a way for citizens to choose members of the country's four national courts and as 'the next step in the refounding of Bolivia' (Al Jazeera 2011). Bolivian citizens engaged in a collective political act of abstention (20.3 percent) and spoiling ballots (57.8 percent) in a country where voting is compulsory (Los Tiempos 2011b). Many people spoiled their vote by writing 'TIPNIS' over their ballot cards (Figure 18). This act was partially a result of a campaign to '*voto nulo*' (null vote) by the urban movements, which was made visible by the graffiti that could be observed in many of the cities. Activists of CDAPMA in Santa Cruz issued an announcement that declared that '[t]he last elections reflected the discontent of the people against the government for its incapacity to resolve basic problems: health, work, education, housing, etc.; for this discontent the people have joined the fight for the TIPNIS, that is the protection of life, the environment, dignity, self-determination of the peoples and natural resources' (CDAPMA 2011; author's translation).

Therefore, both the urban movements and individual citizens were mutually significant in changing the political playing field during the TIPNIS conflict.

Figure 18. Spoilt Vote in the Judicial Elections



Source: Courtesy of an urban activist.

Within these urban assemblages that brought together multiple and overlapping movements, organisations and campaigns there existed a small handful of committed activists that León Galindo, a consultant advisor for CIDOB, described to me as a ‘rag tag army’¹³³ (personal interview, 15 March 2012). It is with this core group that I argue there has emerged an enduring left-indigenous alliance that continues to exert pressure on the government despite the fact that the visibility and public interest of the TIPNIS conflict has substantially died down. Convergence spaces were an integral component to the development of these relationships of solidarity.

7.3 Convergence Spaces in the TIPNIS Conflict

Together, the left-indigenous networks of solidarity are conceived of as ‘convergence spaces’ that are identified as ‘a heterogeneous affinity of common ground between resistance formations wherein certain interests, goals, tactics and strategies converge’ (Routledge 2000b: 25; see also 2003a). The struggles in defence of the TIPNIS did not represent a closed entity – a singular ‘movement’ – but transpired through various place-

¹³³ This section of the interview was conducted in English.

based events that brought together divergent actors. In a paper by Cumbers, Routledge and Nativel the authors identify seven characteristics of convergence spaces: (i) they are place-based, but not necessarily, place-bound; (ii) they articulate collective visions for generating common ground for solidarity; (iii) they are relational; (iv) they facilitate spatially extensive political action; (v) 'grassrooting vectors' are essential; (vi) they can have different operational logics; and (vii) contested social relations and entangled power relations are pervasive (2008: 192-196). Within the TIPNIS conflict, convergence spaces operated through meetings, gatherings, vigils, street protests, rallies, the Eighth and Ninth Marches and the more virtual spaces of the Internet.

Vigils in the main city plazas were important spaces for the generation of collective grievances and the organisation of political action (Figure 19). In Cochabamba a vigil was set up outside of San Francisco Church. On 25 September 2011 the highland indigenous organisation CONAMAQ announced a hunger strike at the vigil in response to the government intervention on the Eighth March and in solidarity with the marchers. CONAMAQ made the following four demands: (i) immediate release of the detained, retrieval of any injured or missing people and the confirmation of any deaths; (ii) the suspension of the road project; (iii) the resignation or dismissal of government ministers, namely Carlos Romero (Minister of the Presidency), Walter Delgadillo (Minister of Public Works) and Sacha Llorenti (Interior Minister); and (iv) the resignation of the President and Vice-President should they not be able to rule with inclusion and in accordance with the Constitution (CONAMAQ 2011). On Tuesday 27 September the vigil became a hub of protest activity that included the addition of several Yuki indigenous families, the opening of a book of signatures, a street blockade on Calle 25 de Mayo, a street protest by students from UMSS and the collection of food, clothing and medicine from the public. Later that day, the news was announced that Sacha Llorenti had resigned and this was celebrated with vigour. Thus, the repression became the point at which a broad range of sub-aggregate movements united in solidarity with the indigenous marchers.

Figure 19. The Vigil in Plaza San Francisco, La Paz



Source: Author's photograph.

From the Cochabamba example, it can be seen that the vigils were convergence spaces where 'facilitation, solidarity, communication, coordination, and information sharing' were carried out (Routledge 2000b: 25).¹³⁴ The public spaces were used as places for people to eat, sleep and converse, as well as becoming active sites for resistance, protest, communication and discussion. A number of practices and events were central to the convergence spaces. Firstly, the vigils were vital for displaying solidarity with the indigenous marchers: through campaigns and rallies for the legal protection of human and indigenous rights; through the use of the publicly visible sites as hubs for the collection of economic resources and material supplies for the marchers; and for the collection of signatures condemning the government intervention. The vigils accumulated approximately 65,000 signatures across the main cities during the Eighth and Ninth March and 55,000 signatures in support of the indigenous marchers being nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize (Reynaldo Flores, personal email, 25 November 2012). Secondly, these spaces were integral for sharing information about the road project, such as the government's failure to address the recommendations of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the

¹³⁴ The vigils were just some of the 'sites of grievance' (Featherstone 2003) of the urban movements. For example, I attended a sit-in outside of the Brazilian Embassy in La Paz that was undertaken by a small group of activists (personal field-notes, 10 February 2012). This event protested the new 'Brazilian sub-imperialism' that connects Brazilian capital to megaprojects in Bolivia and sought to make these relations localisable and contestable by inviting media attention.

lack of a prior consultation process with inhabitants of the TIPNIS, the involvement of Brazilian capital, the potential exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves, the historic encroachment of *cocaleros* into the park, contextual information about the lowland indigenous struggles for territory and the cultural backgrounds of the three ethnic nations that inhabit the TIPNIS. Information was circulated through conferences, lectures, seminars, plays and music events and the displaying of posters and videos at the site of the vigils. The vigils were also an integral mediatory space that connected information about the progression of the Eighth March with urban centres. As such, the sites were an important point of contact for television, print and radio journalism. Thirdly, the vigils were important places for the coordination of collective grievances and political identities and the articulation of these demands and objectives through various protest events, rallies and announcements to the media. The vigils brought together multiple movements and political trajectories and were important for urban activists to communicate, converse and share living spaces with indigenous peoples from CONAMAQ, CIDOB and CNAMIB, and vice versa. These sustained encounters on the vigils (and on the Eighth and Ninth Marches) facilitated a process of embodied learning that generated emerging political identities. I discuss the significance of these ‘spaces of encounter’ in section 7.5 of this chapter.

Tensions also permeated the convergence spaces of the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. Many of these internal frictions revolved around ideological differences, since left – right cleavage exists in Bolivian politics and continues to play a significant part in social movement dynamics. For instance, the formation of the Santa Cruz vigil in Plaza 24 de Septiembre caused a number of conflicts. Members of CDAPMA decided to expel participants from the vigil who they perceived of as being aligned to the political and economic elite (some of which later formed the group *Mujeres Autoconvocados*). Consequently, the plaza was split into two with both groups occupying distinct spaces. Although ideological differences persisted in La Paz, the main issue was the general lack of communication and coordination between the different groups involved. On one evening, I arrived at UMSA for a meeting of *La Red de Activistas Independientes* to discover that in the same building the *Coordinadora* were also having a meeting (personal field-notes, 07 February 2012). It was eventually decided that some members of the group of *La Red de Activistas Independientes* would attend the other meeting to keep informed about the types of activities that were planned. In addition, both groups were somewhat closed off and reluctant to encourage new people to join their activities. As the meetings

were rarely publicly announced or advertised (unlike in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz) it was difficult for new actors to get involved, which acted to form a core group of active members who knew each other well. On one occasion in January 2012, I eventually found a meeting held by La Red de Activistas Independientes that I had been invited to in an abandoned basement in a room lit by candlelight.

These tensions were productive encounters and did not necessarily imply failure. Instead, negotiation, learning and discussion often re-worked ideological stances and political action. Huascar Bustillos, of the CDAPMA in Santa Cruz stated that ‘at the beginning there wasn’t a uniform approach, for example, “I am an environmentalist”, “you are of the right and this is of the left”. At the beginning it was “I don’t think this”, “I have to go this way”’. Huascar continued by stating that over time the ideological tensions were ‘evolving and the criteria was standardising, so that now one thinks along the same line’¹³⁵ (personal interview, 17 March 2012). When the Eighth March arrived in La Paz the main urban movements met to discuss future political organisation. Collectively, the participants decided to form the National Coalition ‘Coordinadora Nacional’ of Defence of Natural Resources and the Self-Determination of the People. The formation of the Coordinadora Nacional marked a fundamental shift from environmental concerns, which were often previously defined as apolitical, to an explicitly political campaign centred on reclaiming national sovereignty over natural resources and defending indigenous rights. Another meeting of the Coordinadora Nacional was held in Santa Cruz at the Gran Encuentro held by CIDOB. In an official announcement, the collective stated that ‘as a national organisation we salute the distinct social sectors that have become independent from the deceit and deception of the MAS government and of currents outside of the exploited masses of the country that begin to meet in different parts of the country for their own agenda’ (Coordinadora Nacional 2011a; author’s translation). The collective body not only provided a more permanent structure for the urban movements in defence of the TIPNIS and for political action around other related issues, but it simultaneously provided a singular body for better communication and coordination of the emerging left-indigenous movement. León Galindo explained that ‘this is a permanent structure, full of conflicts like everywhere but it is permanent, it won’t disappear’¹³⁶ (personal interview, 15 March 2012). The left-indigenous alliance was solidified when representatives of CIDOB and the

¹³⁵ ‘al comienzo no había una uniformidad de criterios, por ejemplo, yo soy ambientalista, tu eres de derecha y este es de izquierda, al comienzo era: “no yo pienso así” “yo tengo que ir por acá” [...] ‘evolucionando y los criterios se fueron uniformizando, con tal que ahora se piensa en una línea específica’.

¹³⁶ ‘ese es un estructura permanente, llena de conflictos como en todo lugar pero es permanente, eso no va a desaparecer’.

TIPNIS invited several *jóvenes* (young people)¹³⁷ to attend the 30th Extraordinary Meeting of Community Leaders of the TIPNIS held in Gundonovia on 19 March (personal field-notes, 12 March 2012). The union was finally consolidated when the Ninth March was opened to all participants (outside of political party affiliation). As such, several members of the Coordinadora Nacional took part in some or all of the Ninth March.

7.4 The Virtual Spaces of Social Media Networking

One factor that helps account for the emergence of the left-indigenous alliance is the rise of new technologies and social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and movement websites. The use of virtual spaces has changed the form of contentious politics in Bolivia as Internet resources have become available to the young middle classes, specifically students. For example, Gregory Beltran of the Coordinadora in La Paz stated that the use of the Internet:

is an interesting phenomenon that has occurred for the first time. I have been in social conflicts for the last 15 years and it's the first time that I see *jóvenes* joining, in a particular way, many are not in the streets for example, but they are on the Internet¹³⁸ (personal interview, 07 February 2012).

The World Development indicators for 2011 suggest Internet users represented 30 percent of the Bolivian population, a jump from just 10 percent in 2007 (World Bank 2012). The urban movements have used the Internet in the following ways: to establish networks of communication within and between movements; to provide information about the conflict and to articulate discourses and images that counteract government rhetoric; to stimulate local direct action and support; and as spaces for the cross-fertilisation of different ideas and viewpoints. The prevalence of online organising was also an important tool for the research as it allowed me to keep abreast of current developments in the conflict, locate and recruit interview participants and maintain contact with activists after returning to the UK.

Firstly, the Internet was a cheaper (in comparison to mobile phones) medium of communication within and between urban movements. In particular, the chat functions on Facebook, the use of Skype and communication by email were important for coordinating

¹³⁷ This is the term most often used by the indigenous movement to describe the urban campaigns in solidarity with the TIPNIS.

¹³⁸ 'es un fenómeno interesante, primera vez que se da. Yo he estado en los últimos 15 años en los conflictos sociales, y es la primera vez que veo a los jóvenes incorporarse, de una forma particular, muchos no están en las calles por ejemplo, pero están en Internet'.

activities. This use allowed direct action, protests, marches, public debates and events to be held concurrently in each respective city in order to create a national spectacle. Many of the movements have their own websites, blogs or Facebook pages and these were employed to make and sustain contact between activists and campaigns. Juan Baltazar, a member of the neighbourhood organisation FEJUVE in El Alto stated that in '[19]91, not many people had a colour television, there was no Internet, there was no mobile phones'¹³⁹ (personal interview, 28 April 2012). The use of social media and virtual spaces sits congruous to other rapidly increasing technologies such as mobile phones, which also made long distance communication easier than in the past.

Secondly, social media sites were used to counteract government propaganda and provide information about the TIPNIS conflict and the Eighth and Ninth Marches. In Bolivia, where the traditional media is owned and managed either by the economic powers of the so-called 'right' or is politically aligned or controlled by the government, the Internet became an important space for alternative media. In the words of Wara Ysabel, an activist from the CDAPMA in Santa Cruz, social media was '*nuestra propia red de noticias*' (our own news network) (personal interview, 16 March 2012). Activists used social media to counteract government rhetoric of 'progress' and 'modernity' by, for example, posting Facebook photographs taken of the poverty that lines some of Bolivia's main artery roads. Further, Wara Ysabel argued that the use of Twitter had been instrumental in placing pressure on certain representatives of the MAS after the police repression that occurred on the Eighth March. After La Chaparina photographs and videos of the abuse and violence were used to counter the government's rhetoric of denial and force those responsible for giving the police orders to be held to account for their actions.¹⁴⁰ Twitter played a key role in making known the human rights abuses to those with access to the Internet. In addition, the urban movements have used social media sites for distributing information and materials relating to the conflict such as photographs, audio files, videos, poems and satirical cartoons. Through social media they have also shared electronic copies of announcements from the Eighth and Ninth Marches, CIDOB, meetings in the TIPNIS and the various urban movements. Conversely, the MAS has likewise used social media to denounce the legitimacy of claims from the left-indigenous solidarity networks and to

¹³⁹ '91, muchas personas no tenían televisor a color, no había Internet, no había teléfonos celulares'.

¹⁴⁰ Though it must be noted that there are ethical and political risks of representing images of the abuse on the Eighth March. Peffer has argued that the pursuit of public sympathy through the circulation of photographic images risks 'further abjection, objectification, and instrumentalization of the image of the [indigenous] body' (2008: 55).

publish material of their own, such as the various e-books written by Vice President García Linera that can be accessed on his webpage.¹⁴¹

Thirdly, virtual spaces were important to connect the demands of the lowland indigenous movement with broader civil society. In particular, Facebook has been significant in generating visibility of the TIPNIS conflict and the demands of the Eighth and Ninth Marches. Several Facebook pages exist to support the lowland indigenous movement and range from a dozen members to thousands of people. For example, the most prominent Facebook group ‘Amigos Del TIPNIS’ (Friends of the TIPNIS) had amassed a total of 11,538 members as of 24 May 2014. In addition, in the last couple of years Bolivian newspapers have begun to use webpages to publish news articles online making it easier, for those with access to the Internet, to read the different newspapers that exist in their respective regions of the country. During the conflict, some of the representatives of CIDOB, CONAMAQ and TIPNIS have also adopted these technologies by setting up Facebook accounts in order to capitalise on the benefits of having a virtual presence. CIDOB and CONAMAQ also have websites that contain information about the organisations’ objectives and decision-making structures, updates on meetings and public announcements. Interestingly, many of the urban activists expressed the opinion that this use of social networking tools was informed by what they perceived of as the successful use of these technologies in the following protests: the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests in the Arab World known as the ‘Arab Spring’; the Occupy movements against transnational corporations and the global financial system around the globe; the ‘Chilean Winter’ when young people demanded educational reforms and protested high levels of inequality; and by the *indignados* (indignant ones) that demanded radical political changes in Spain (see Castells 2012; Guzman-Concha 2012; Juris 2012; Khondker 2011). This was reflected in a document issued by activists in La Paz that referred to all of these protests in turn as a ‘*crisis global del sistema*’ (global crisis of the system) (Red de Activistas Independientes por el TIPNIS 2011). In particular, the Chilean protests in August 2011 were still fresh in the minds of Bolivian students when La Chaparina happened the following month. Activists used social networking tools to mobilise support and encourage Bolivian citizens to attend public protests and other events, such as music gigs and photography expositions. There is some evidence to suggest these new technologies played a vital role in the outpouring of people onto the streets when

¹⁴¹ vicepresidencia.gob.bo

the Eighth March reached La Paz. They also served to encourage donations of money, food and supplies to be sent to the marchers.

Fourthly, the Internet was used as a virtual space for discussion and the cross-fertilisation of different ideas and viewpoints. Scholars have argued that the Internet facilitates decentralised communication flows, horizontal decision-making, freedom of expression and individual autonomy (Pickerill 2001, 2006). Certainly, the use of social media tools allowed activists and users of the Internet to express their opinions and upload various types of information. Thus, Facebook acted as an online platform for liberated debate and discussion surrounding key issues. Some interview participants spoke of the problems of disorganisation and the saturation of information online, however. For instance, Daniela Leytón, a human rights activist based in La Paz, stated that Internet users ‘don’t think and don’t write, they are limited to copy [and] paste’¹⁴² (personal interview, 17 June 2012). As such, it is likely that many of the members of the Facebook groups engaged in a superficial understanding of the complexities of the conflict, such as the debates over indigenous territoriality and state-led resource nationalism. Reynaldo Flores, of the Campaña in Cochabamba stated that:

[w]e’ve seen that a lot of people did not know the issue of the TIPNIS, did not know the topic of the environment and of the protected areas in our country, did not know of this new process in our country, in the new state, that of free determination or self-determination of the people¹⁴³ (personal interview, 26 January 2012).

Nonetheless, online debates between core members of the urban movements were instrumental in generating emerging ideologies and understandings of the conflict. This dialogue gave impetus to the decision to combine the movements located in the different cities into the Coordinadora Nacional and to establish a clear political line centred on the defence of natural resources and the self-determination of the Bolivian people.

Virtual spaces are exclusionary and inaccessible, however, both in terms of finance and in terms of technological aptitude and confidence to the majority of the Bolivian population. This echoes Jenny Pickerill’s (2001) work on environmental Internet activism in Britain in which she explains that participants had differential access due to financial resources, skill sets, time restraints, gender, ethnicity and language capabilities. The Internet remains

¹⁴² ‘no piensa y no escribe, se limitan a copy paste’.

¹⁴³ ‘Hemos visto que mucha gente no conocía el tema del TIPNIS, no conocía el tema del medio ambiente y de las áreas protegidas en nuestro país, no conocía de este nuevo proceso que hay en nuestro país, en el nuevo estado de la libre determinación o autodeterminación de los pueblos’.

relatively expensive for most Bolivians, including the middle-classes, and many do not have access in their homes. Daniela Leytón stated that ‘[w]e have the most expensive and slowest Internet in South America [laughs]. I think it’s heroic [laughs] to make a social movement from the social network with the price and the slow pace’¹⁴⁴ (personal interview, 17 June 2012). Thus, the activists able to use online resources could only do so because of the networks within which they were embedded. In particular, resources were available through local universities (as students or academics) and NGO offices (as campaigners for human, indigenous or environmental rights). The lack of Internet infrastructure in rural areas of Bolivia also made it difficult to upload information, such as announcements and audio recordings, from the Eighth and Ninth Marches to the various online platforms. Media representatives, urban activists and the people on the Committee of Communication for the marches laboured to access and use Internet facilities, which were often 30 km or more from the camping sites. Tomás Candia, a member of the Committee of Communication for the Ninth March, expressed the concern that ‘there are shortcomings’ (*hay falencia*) in the use of the Internet to inform civil society about the developments on the march. In particular, he spoke of the lack of financial resources and the need to create and distribute forms of alternative media able to more aptly express the objectives of the lowland indigenous movement to Bolivian society (personal interview, 02 June 2012). The spatiality of available infrastructure therefore structured internal movement dynamics.

Moreover, the majority of the urban activists I spoke to expressed the opinion that social media networks have limited significance in mobilising individuals to participate in protests and meetings and cannot replace the physicality of direct action on the streets and in the plazas. Fernando Machicao, of the Campaña in Cochabamba, argued that of the 10,000 people supporting the campaigns on Facebook none materialised into physical presence at meetings and mobilisations (personal interview, 19 January 2012). He therefore argued that it was more effective to mobilise support by talking to people face-to-face through occupations in the central plazas and to ‘*socializar*’ (socialise) information about the TIPNIS conflict with people directly. Therefore, public spaces were important places in which to build connections and solidarity with ordinary Bolivians who might otherwise have lacked access to information on the complex issues surrounding the TIPNIS conflict. Similarly, Daniela Leytón stated that ‘they do not carry out the revolution

¹⁴⁴ ‘Tenemos el internet más caro y lento de Sudamérica. Creo que es heroico hacer un movimiento social desde la red social con el precio y la lentitud’.

from Facebook, they carry it out in the street'¹⁴⁵ (personal interview, 17 June 2012). Therefore, the 'virtual' and the 'physical' cross-articulated with one another throughout the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS and have played a new, if not wholly significant, role in mobilising support for the lowland indigenous movement.

7.5 International Solidarity

There has been some solidarity with the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS across international borders. This has also been fostered through the networking tools of the Internet. For example, Avaaz.org campaigns have been used to accrue signatures against the road project. Avaaz.org – meaning 'voice' in several languages – is an online community that was set up in January 2007 that calls attention to new social and environmental issues. The website mobilises online and offline direct action and lobbies governments to encourage more democratic decision-making. There have been two important petitions 'Bolivia: Stop the Destruction of the Amazon' (495,103 signatures) and 'Stay Strong: Save the Amazon' (103, 103 signatures).¹⁴⁶ In an interview with Daniela Leytón, who has set up an online petition, she stated her amazement at the fact that her petition had accrued 470,000 signatures by the end of the Eighth March and had been translated into German, English, Arabic and Portuguese (personal interview, 17 June 2012). In addition, 20,000 signatures were sent to the Bolivian Embassy in Berlin, Germany, collected by the organisation Rainforest Rescue (Salva la Selva 2011). Further, over 60 environmental organisations signed an open letter to Evo Morales against the road project, including Amazon Watch based in the US, Spain's Ecologistas en Acción, the regional group of 350.org, Rainforest Information Centre based in Australia and Canadians for Action on Climate Change (Various Organisations 2011). The pan-Amazonian indigenous organisation COICA also issued various written declarations of their support (COICA 2012). There have also been a number of protests against the road project or the violence perpetrated in La Chaparina outside of Bolivia. For example, there was a small protest march in New York when Evo Morales visited in 2011 and another protest in Washington by Bolivians living in the US towards the end of 2011 against the repression of the indigenous marchers.

International solidarity has been fostered through Bolivian NGO networks. For example, the Bolivian environmental organisation FOBOMADE had an international call for entries

¹⁴⁵ 'no hacen la revolución desde el facebook, lo hacen en la calle'.

¹⁴⁶ Numbers correct as of 24 May 2014.

to a poster competition relating to the TIPNIS (Figure 20). This had the combined role of fostering international awareness of the TIPNIS conflict and producing posters that could be used for resistance in the metropolitan spaces of Bolivia.

Figure 20. Entries for the FOBOMADE Poster Competition, Cochabamba



Source: Author's photograph.

Another factor was the importance of personal communication with people living outside of Bolivia. León Galindo, a consultant within CIDOB, told me that the role of contacting academics and NGO workers engaged in Latin American regional studies or in campaigns for human rights or environmental justice played a significant part in garnering international solidarity (personal interview, 15 March 2012). This was especially important after the repression on the Eighth March when various human rights organisations and the UN began to offer their support. Amnesty International submitted an open letter to the Bolivian government in May 2012 that states that:

Amnesty International believes that the current dispute largely stems from the fact that the Bolivian authorities failed to carry out free, prior and informed consultation on the TIPNIS road project when they should have done, as stipulated by international standards and in treaties to which Bolivia is a party, as well as in its domestic legislation (Amnesty International 2012)

That said, international effort went little beyond these initial displays of solidarity. Although the conflict generated articles in the *BBC News*, *Aljazeera*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *New York Post*, news coverage was limited compared with many other regional conflicts. It was unclear from interview participants why this was the case and many expressed the attitude that international solidarity was secondary to other objectives. This reasoning is likely to be because of popular sentiments of *la Patria* that make Bolivians critical of European and US intervention. Daniela Leytón explained that in countries located in the West people would not understand the demands of the indigenous marchers in the same way as in the Latin American continent where ‘*ellos están pasando por lo mismo*’ (they are going through the same). She mentioned several protests in the region against projects such as the Belo Monte Dam in Brazil, the Conga mining project in Peru and the Canadian Mining Company Osisko in Argentina. She argued that in Europe the conflict was understood as the need to protect the Amazon and ‘it can be a reading of the environment and of species and biodiversity and the lungs of the world’¹⁴⁷ rather than of indigenous rights (personal interview, 17 June 2012). Certainly, the complexity of plurinationalism, state-led neo-extractivism and indigenous territoriality is not easily translated into a clear message to galvanise international solidarity. This is made more complicated by the fact that Evo Morales is considered to be a leader for environmental rights, indigenous rights and post-neoliberal ideologies for many climate justice and anti-capitalist movements. Federico Fuentes (2011) has even criticised the Avaaz.org campaign during the TIPNIS conflict for promoting ‘policies that represent a new form of “green imperialism” [...] the governments of rich nations now use environmental concerns to promote policies that deny underdeveloped nations the right to control and manage their own resources’ (2011: n.pag.). In this respect, international solidarity might have been conceived as detrimental to the Bolivian process of change.

Yet, at a different geographic scale, there were significant attempts to link the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS with other Latin American indigenous movements. Some of the indigenous leaders weaved between the space of the Ninth March and international conferences. For example, on 20 May 2012 Adolfo Chávez left the march to attend a meeting of COICA in Quito, Ecuador, to discuss the formation of a human rights campaign to bring justice for the events at La Chaparina. A delegation of leaders was also sent from the Ninth March to the meeting of OAS (Organisation of American States) in Cochabamba on 05 June 2012. Thus, indigenous leaders played roles as key imagineers or ‘grassrooting

¹⁴⁷ ‘puede ser una lectura de medio ambiente y de las especie y de biodiversidad y de los pulmones del mundo’.

vectors' that were able to establish mutual solidarities between place-based social movements (Routledge 2005).

7.6 The Enabling Potential of 'Spaces of Encounter'

This section evaluates the shifting nature of left-indigenous allegiances and the extent to which 'spaces of encounter' have been significant for the generation of emerging political ideologies and identities. I contend that although there were frictions between the connections formed, they were also productive as they enabled the cross-fertilisation of ideas, the co-presence of different world-visions and the establishment of mutual trust and respect. Tsing discusses how friction can generate movement, action and effect showing that '[c]ultures are continually co-produced in the interactions I call "friction": the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference' (2005: 4). Similarly, in relation to internationalism, Featherstone contends that solidarity is a 'transformative relation':

Solidarity has often been understood as being about likeness. This approach obscures the importance of solidarities in constructing relations between places, activists, diverse social groups. This can involve the cementation of existing identities and power relations. It can, however, as frequently be about the active creation of new ways of relating. It is through being attentive to such relations, that the dynamism and inventiveness of solidarities can emerge. (2012: 6)

Solidarities are thus productive, generative and creative. Rather than using the somewhat static concept of 'social movement', it may therefore be more productive to talk of the generative potential of 'societies in movement' (Zibeche 2010b, 2012). In this section, I evaluate the extent to which left-indigenous solidarity networks in the TIPNIS conflict have generated the potential for emergent utopian visions and activist imaginaries that would mark a step toward the possibility of 'living with diversity' (Amin 2002). I also ask whether these inter-subjective encounters, or what Catherine Walsh (2009) calls '*interculturalidad*' (interculturality), can transform social relations and develop the political imaginaries needed for an enacted plurinational state.

Spaces of Encounter

There has been some attention within the discipline of geography given to the spatialities of inter-ethnic encounters (see Amin 2002; Clayton 2008; Valentine 2008). However, less

attention has been given to how these ‘spaces of encounter’ might reveal the multiplicity and malleability of cultural difference in postcolonial countries, such as Bolivia. In the evaluation of social movement dynamics of the World Social Forum by Chesters and Welsh, they argue that:

there is a deep commitment to providing *spaces of encounter* that involve and invoke recognition, trust building and affectivity that have little obvious instrumental value in terms of immediate social change. Rather, there is a presumption that the iteration of such practices through the extension of similar spaces within the nested networks represented, and the linkages formed through the practice of encounter, are in and of themselves, a coherent model for achieving change. (2005: 203)

Massey describes this as the ‘thrown-togetherness of place’, which requires ‘that, in one way or another, we confront the challenge of the negotiation of multiplicity’ (2005: 141). She argues for a conception of ‘space *as* coeval becoming’ (2005: 189) and for a ‘relational politics of place’ (2005: 181). In reference to transnational insurgent politics, Juris and Khasnabish describe ‘momentary spaces of encounter’ as the interaction of ‘place-based meanings, flows, and sensibilities’ (2013: 5). This approach, they argue, highlights ‘the uneven, power-laden interactions [...] between groups within these spaces’ (2013: 5). Within this research, I engage with the spaces of encounter that occurred within the boundaries of the nation, which is of particular importance to culturally diverse countries such as Bolivia. Here, I describe ‘spaces of encounter’ as the place-based jostling together of inter-subjective relations that necessarily implies the negotiation of the boundaries of the ‘self’ and ‘Other’. This echoes Routledge’s understanding of activist participation in ‘convergence spaces’ as ‘embody[ing] their particular places of political, cultural, economic and ecological experience with common concerns, which lead to expanded spatiotemporal horizons of action’ (2003: 345).

Spaces of encounter included the city vigils, meetings and the indigenous marches. These spaces brought together unique assemblages of people, campaign materials, banners, flags and living spaces that combined to foster undetermined forms of action and learning. Significantly, inter-subjective encounters often took place within metropolitan centres. Merrifield discusses the importance of the city for ‘the politics of the encounter’, which is a site for producing political contention and occupying space as well as forming connections that go beyond imaginaries of the city as ‘entities with borders and clear demarcations between what’s inside and what’s outside’ (2013: xv). For many of the urban activists these encounters were the first time they had any sustained contact with

indigenous people from lowland territories, and occasionally vice versa. These spaces provided the opportunity for urban activists to understand the place-based histories of the lowland peoples, their ways of life and their long memories of anti-colonial struggle. This also provided a unique opportunity for the urban movements to procure written declarations against the road by TIPNIS communities dating back to 2007.

Place-based encounters were important for the process of *conocimiento* (knowledge or consciousness) of cultural difference. Many of the urban interviewees described how their understandings of the conflict had changed over time through engagements with indigenous peoples in vigils, meetings and on the indigenous marches. This process was evident in the shifting articulations of political agendas of the urban movements. Many activists had begun participating in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS because of environmental concerns or to protest human rights violations. However, after sustained encounters within the left-indigenous solidarity networks activists began to accommodate, or even actively support, an indigenous agenda. The following interview statements give some indication of this process:

I can't go into the TIPNIS but on the march I have the opportunity of being closer and to understand more things that we did not understand so well. Their organisation, to really [she places emphasis] see how the *compañeros* live with their *wawas* [babies, in Quechua], how they have marched, right?¹⁴⁸ (Helga Cauthin, activist in the Campaña, 26 January 2012)

The day they [indigenous participants in the Eighth March] were in Caranavi, they were one night and one day. From the afternoon I had the opportunity to speak with some of them and I was very surprised because they still have a characteristic, they live in primitive communism, where everything belongs to all, where there aren't keys, where there is no private property.¹⁴⁹ (Gregory Beltran, an activist from La Paz and a journalist for FOBOMADE, 07 February 2012)

Every day we know something new, we become acquainted to an indigenous *hermano* [brother] that has a vision a little different to the *occidente*. Another day we become acquainted to a *hermano* that has a thought a little different in the *oriente*. Every day

¹⁴⁸ 'No puedo entrar al Tipnis pero en la marcha tengo la oportunidad de estar más cerca y de comprender más cosas que no comprendíamos tan bien. Su organización, ver realmente, los compañeros como viven con sus wawas, como han marchado ¿no?'

¹⁴⁹ 'El día que estuvieron en Caranavi, estuvieron una noche y un día. Desde la tarde tuve la oportunidad de hablar con algunos de ellos y he quedado muy sorprendido porque ellos todavía tienen una característica, viven en un comunismo primitivo, donde todo es de todos, donde no hay llaves, donde no hay propiedad privada.'

you learn and clearly every day you can learn errors, and every day you can be better.¹⁵⁰ (Reynaldo Flores, activist in the Campaña, 26 January 2012)

These accounts show how the spatial environments of the left-indigenous networks were important for learning about the different ways of life of Amazonian ethnic nations. Therefore, a spatially distant process of accumulating knowledge and information cannot accommodate ‘learning across differences’. Rather, to form fuller understandings requires critically reflecting on the power relations in arrangements of ‘collective learning’ (McFarlane 2006, 2011; Jazeel & McFarlane 2007, 2010). For McFarlane (2006, 2011) this requires that outcomes of relationships are not predetermined and demands a strong commitment to take the knowledges and ways of life of others seriously, even if this means ‘unlearning’ (see Spivak 1993) your own assumed knowledge. Jazeel and McFarlane state that ‘[c]ollective learning asks us to think with, talk with, and immerse ourselves in these different ways of knowing’ (2010: 121). This echoes the idea of ‘wayfinding’ explored by McFarlane (2011) in *Learning the City*. McFarlane describes the process of learning as ‘a distributed assemblage of people, materials and space that is often neither formal nor simply individual’ (2011: 3). Thus, learning can generate the cultivation of new solidarities and ways of knowing.

Spaces of encounter have also fostered new friendships and relations of trust, mutual respect and reciprocity. As a result of these connections a group of core activists, who have engaged in more sustained encounters with the lowland indigenous movement, have offered substantial time, energy and money to the TIPNIS conflict. Some of the urban activists that I spoke to described how they had used their life’s savings to donate money to the Eighth and Ninth Marches and in order to travel to conferences and meetings around the country. Many activists seemed exhausted and disheartened that after all their efforts during the Eighth March the Ley 180 had been rescinded and the road project was back on the agenda. In one interview, an activist from La Paz wept as she described her experiences on the Eighth March during La Chaparina. Another activist from Cochabamba explained how he broke down in tears during a television interview due to fatigue and questioned how much more energy he could commit to the struggle. The same activist had given up his job to dedicate his time to the left-indigenous movement in defence of the TIPNIS and was struggling to get by on the generosity of friends. He had also sold his computer to pay

¹⁵⁰ ‘Todos los días conocemos algo nuevo, conocemos a un hermano indígena que tiene una visión un poquito diferente del occidente. Otro día conocemos a un hermano que tiene un pensamiento un poquito diferente en el oriente. Todos los días se aprende y claro todos los días se pueden conocer errores, y todos los días se puede ser mejor’.

for travel expenses. The commitment of these individuals was nurtured through shared experiences of repression and marginalisation carried out by the MAS and affiliated social sectors. Hynes and Sharpe (2009) argue that collective experiences of violence in mass demonstrations can increase the possibilities of affecting and being affected. Thus, the affective capacities of spaces of encounter also relied on the physical mingling of embodied experiences that went beyond linguistic political articulations (see Roelvink 2010).

As a consequence of the solidarity afforded by the urban movements, representatives from CIDOB began to open-up their decision-making spaces to these *mestizo* actors. As mentioned, the most fundamental milestone in the left-indigenous alliances was marked by the Encuentro de Corregidores (Meeting of Community Leaders) held in Gundonovia in the TIPNIS between 17-18 March 2012. This meeting was held to decide whether the Ninth March would take place and an invitation was extended to a select group of urban activists. This was also reflected in the decision by CIDOB to open the Ninth March to all Bolivian citizens. Over time, certain representatives of CIDOB and CONAMAQ began to view the urban support as necessary to their own objectives of politico-territorial autonomy. For example, some of the communities of the TIPNIS decided to send Plácido Semo Maza, who is from the community Puerto San Lorenzo, to Santa Cruz so that he could:

[...] create alliances and linkages with social networks in urban areas because the leaders of the organisation are devoted to develop defence strategies in the communities, in the area, within the territory. And relations have been left a little bit neglected, the urban support of the citizens in general, that do not live in territories and that are not indigenous as well. Therefore, it is good to make an alliance with them.¹⁵¹
(personal interview, 19 March 2012)

Furthermore, Tomás Candia, the Secretary of 'Juventudes' (Youths) of CIDOB stated that the importance of the vigils relied on their ability 'above all, to sensitise people to what, why we are marching, and it was very important. We believe we have taken a very important step because the people there knew what it was, what was the platform and what

¹⁵¹ 'realizar alianzas y articulaciones con redes sociales en el área urbana porque los líderes o dirigentes de la organización están avocados a desarrollar estrategias de defensa en la comunidades, en el área, dentro del territorio. Y se ha dejado descuidar un poco las relaciones, el apoyo urbano de la ciudadanía en general, que no viven en territorios y que no son indígenas además. Entonces, es bueno hacer alianza con ellos'.

was the mission' (personal interview, 02 June 2012).¹⁵² Despite views that saw interculturality as integral to the left-indigenous networks of solidarity, when asking indigenous participants on the Ninth March of the importance of urban movements they usually replied that it was to attain resources, such as water, food, medicine, clothing, tents and money. For Emilio Noza Yuco, the President of Sécure Subcentral, urban support provided logistical and financial support, which was integral to maintaining autonomous relations with political power on the 'right' (personal interview, 09 May 2012). Therefore, within the lowland indigenous movement there were contrasting views on the reasons for building left-indigenous alliances.

The left-indigenous networks were maintained and reproduced through the mobility of certain representatives of the indigenous movement who acted as mediators travelling back and forth between the Ninth March and the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz to engage in conferences, meetings and urban campaign activities. Adolfo Chávez spoke of the necessity of the urban movements so that '*hay mayor conciencia de todos los bolivianos*' (there is more awareness of all Bolivians). He continued that 'I think that the best information that the Bolivian *hermanos* make is [through] individual dialogue'¹⁵³ (personal interview, 27 May). Therefore, it was felt that face-to-face communication was the best medium for gaining the support and solidarity of the wider Bolivian population. There was the general sense in interviews with indigenous leaders that personal contact was needed to facilitate a collective learning experience able to generate new ways of knowing. Juan José Sardina, a representative of CONAMAQ, stated that understandings of plurinationalism could not come through academic analysis alone but instead requires a change in 'attitude':

it's difficult to understand, its difficult. I believe that neither the great scholars [or] analysts have begun to understand these 52¹⁵⁴ *cosmovisiones* of this country. Then, there is how to deal, how to begin to rethink what will be the future of indigenous peoples in this part of South America. [...] But so far, this theory needs to be deepened. Many don't understand, many are not aware. But also, it's a bit difficult to apply, the decolonisation that the government touts is a personal challenge for each person. It doesn't matter much that the people say "I am from an *ayllu*, I am *originario*,

¹⁵² 'más que todo, sensibilizarla a la gente de qué, por qué estamos marchando, y fue muy importante Creemos que hemos dado un paso muy importante porque ahí conoció la gente cuál era, cual era la plataforma y cuál era la misión'.

¹⁵³ 'yo creo que la mejor información que hacen los hermanos bolivianos es el diálogo individual'.

¹⁵⁴ He declares there to be 52 world-visions in Bolivia because he is including the 35 ethnic languages recognised in the lowlands, the 16 pre-colonial ethnic nations of the highlands and Spanish.

I consider myself indigenous'. But they do not show that in attitude Anna, this [decolonisation] has to be in attitude.¹⁵⁵ (personal interview, 17 June 2012).

In addition, the lowland indigenous movement are forming these alliances in order to recover the '*proceso de cambio*' from the MAS. In a public manifesto by CPEM-B the Mojeño peoples declared:

We call on all social movements of Beni and Bolivia, the COB, young people, urban organisations, academics, teachers, peasant organisations, intellectuals and others to build a national social agenda for the renewal of the *proceso de cambio* without any discrimination seeking the unity and the social peace of all Bolivian people. (CPEM-B 2011b; author's translation)

However, this process of unifying different movements and ideological factions was not without difficulties. Furthermore, these convergence spaces were penetrated by 'power geometries' (Massey 1992) that mediated the forms of political identities articulated. One pervasive tension within the left-indigenous allegiances formed was differences in ideological frameworks and objectives. Massey contends that '[t]he differential placing of local struggles within the complex power-geometry of spatial relations is a key element in the formation of their political identities and politics' (2005: 183). It is therefore important to think through the ways that identification under a single 'movement' might obscure internal differentiation, power geometries, negotiations and tensions that permeate any social or political movement (see Featherstone 2008; Juris 2008; Routledge 2003; Routledge et al 2007). As such, social movement studies provides an important resource for understanding who or what produces and expresses a collective group identity and how collective action is structured and sustained over time. For example, social movement scholars have illuminated the marginalisation of working class and women's voices in anti-globalisation spaces such as the World Social Forum (Conway 2004; Sen 2004); the entangled geographies of power within global justice networks (Cumbers et al 2008; Routledge & Cumbers 2009; also see Juris 2008); and the challenges of organising across race and class lines in feminist movements (Naples 1998). It is therefore integral in the

¹⁵⁵ 'es difícil comprender, es difícil. Ni los grandes estudiosos, analistas creo no han podido comprender estos 52 cosmovisiones que tiene este país. Entonces, hay como lidiar, como empezar a replantearnos lo que será el futuro de los pueblos indígenas en esta parte de Sudamérica [...] pero hasta hoy falta bastante profundizar bastante esta teoría. Muchos no conocen, muchos desconocen. Pero también es difícil un poco aplicar, la descolonización que pregona el gobierno es un desafío personal para cada persona. No importa mucho que la gente diga "yo soy del ayllu, yo soy originario, me considero indígena". Pero en actitud no demuestra eso Anna, eso tiene que ser en actitud'.

analysis of the left-indigenous alliances to evaluate how relations of power have permeated the labour of solidarity building and how this has impacted on the distinctive ‘maps of grievance’ (see Featherstone 2003, 2008, 2012).

The relations formed between indigenous and urban movements were structured through the left-right binary politics prevalent in Bolivia and Latin America, more broadly. In particular, a group of hard-lined Marxists, or Trotskyists, refused to see the TIPNIS conflict as anything other than a continuation of the Water and Gas Wars and the fight for a socialist state. This could be observed in the ideologies of a number of MAS dissidents, some academic-activists and Marxist groups, such as La Chispa in La Paz and URUS (Unión Revolucionaria Universitaria Socialista; Revolutionary Socialist University Union). A paternalistic attitude to relations with the Amazonian indigenous peoples hindered the recognition of these groups as active participants in the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS. For instance, Joaquín Terrazas from the CDAPMA in Santa Cruz told me that:

There is no fight for the self-determination and indigenous liberation outside of the fight for the transformation of the country, for the end of private property. There isn’t this, and our task as the national coalition is to bring that to the indigenous.¹⁵⁶
(personal interview, 19 March 2012)

The belief that the urban movements were responsible for educating the indigenous movement echoed colonial relations of power. Similarly, Mónica Quijva from La Chispa argued that their group’s principle task was to unite the indigenous movement with the worker movement located around the union sector, and stated that they needed to ‘[...] make them [the indigenous] aware that our principle fight is against capitalism’¹⁵⁷ (personal interview, 12 February). This is not to dispute the importance of post-neoliberal struggles in Bolivia or the significance of recovering national patrimony. However, some movements on the ‘left’ were blind-sighted by these objectives at the expense of the wider decolonial visions of the lowland movement. One activist in La Paz even went as far as to suggest that the reason the indigenous do not want socialism is because they do not have books. Such comments are reminiscent of assimilationist strategies to ‘civilise’ indigenous peoples after the 1952 revolution that hindered real moves towards the emancipation of ethnic minority citizens. At times, the urban movements sought to ‘represent’ the indigenous movement rather than embracing them as citizen-subjects and to shape the

¹⁵⁶ ‘No hay lucha por la autodeterminación y la liberación indígena al margen de la lucha por la transformación del país, por acabar con la propiedad privada. No hay eso y nuestra tarea como la coordinadora nacional es llevar eso a los indígenas’.

¹⁵⁷ ‘[...] concientizarlos que nuestra principal lucha es contra el capitalismo’.

terms of discussion. As such, geographies of solidarity can actually reify rather than challenge unequal power relations (see Featherstone 2012; Sundberg 2007).

Equally, certain movements conceived (by some of the movements on the 'left') as on the political and economic 'right' used the TIPNIS conflict as a Trojan horse to destabilise the MAS in an effort to bolster the support of other political parties. With greater sources of financing these groups became powerful allies of CIDOB. This could be observed at the Gran Encuentro held in Santa Cruz on 13-15 December 2011. The governor of the department of Santa Cruz, Rubén Costas, who has been a keen advocate in the regional movements for autonomy, attended the event. Juan Del Granado, the leader of the political party MSM, was also present. To many of the urban activists at the event, this was a contradiction to the lowland movement's articulations of the *estructura orgánica* (personal field-documents, 15 December 2011). On the last day of the meeting, I went with the urban activists from the recently founded Coordinadora Nacional to one of their houses for a party alongside the ex-President of TIPNIS Sub-Central Adolfo Moye. However, the next day it emerged that some of the representatives of CIDOB had gone to another event affiliated to the Santa Cruz Civic Committee. Members of the Coordinadora Nacional called a meeting to discuss this and issued a written announcement that warned CIDOB of the dangers of building connections with these factions:

[t]hese sectors and conservative or opportunistic individuals have in the recent past beaten and humiliated the indigenous and historically stripped them of their land, territory and dignity [and] intended to take possession of the struggle and we cannot deliver them on a silver platter this feat that has cost blood, sweat and tears. (Coordinadora Nacional 2011b; author's translation)

The announcement concludes by calling for 'the unity of the indigenous next to all of the oppressed sectors of Bolivia to build your own agenda to achieve true self-determination and liberation'. In another document the collective articulated concerns that they had seen members of the '*derecha racista*' (racist right) at the Gran Encuentro and that: '[t]heir participation jeopardises the achievements and gives the government argument to discredit the struggle of indigenous peoples as a whole, accusing them of having ties to the right, as it [the government] did from the beginning of the Eighth March' (Coordinadora Nacional 2011b; author's translation). For many, any links between CIDOB and the Civic Committee in Santa Cruz was unfathomable since it was this organisation that orchestrated a 'regional coup' in 2008 that led to the destruction of public institutions, NGO offices and

CIDOB headquarters during the Constituent Assembly process (see Postero 2010a). Similar arguments were expressed in a written declaration by the Trotskyist organisation LOR-CI (Liga Obrera Revolucionaria por la Cuarta Internacional; Revolutionary Workers League for the Fourth International) in reaction to the announcement that the Civic Committee of La Paz were going to organise two welcoming acts for the Eighth March: ‘we meet the indigenous march and we are present to fight for an independent politics from bourgeois party governments, NGOs and environmentalists [...] Only the unity with workers in the struggle against imperialism and their transnationals can guarantee the right to the self-determination of indigenous peoples’ (LOR-CI 2011; author’s translation). In addition, the Campaña in Cochabamba wrote a letter denouncing their connections to an individual who was claiming to be a member of the movement. The letter condemned any links between the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS and ‘*neoliberales, oportunistas y reciclados de derecha*’ (neoliberals, opportunists and those recycled from the right) (Campaña en Defensa del TIPNIS 2011). The individual was accused of being a functionary of transnational corporate interests and the World Bank.

Activists in the Coordinadora Nacional were also critical of the involvement of *ambientalistas* (environmentalists) without a wider ideological framework. For instance, one document stated that ‘[t]he defence of the environment can not be apolitical’ and that ‘the struggle in defence of the environment can not be conceived apart from the struggle to end capitalism’ (Coordinadora Nacional 2011c; author’s translation). This has caused tensions with the lowland indigenous movement because of the promotion of carbon offsetting schemes by CIDOB. For example, the fourth demand of the Eighth March was for the indigenous communities to be able to receive funds from the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) programme (Table 2 in chapter VI). REDD+ is a climate change mitigation programme established at the Copenhagen UNFCCC in 2009. It determines that developed countries, that produce most of the greenhouse gas emissions, pay developing countries to preserve their forests. However, it is a controversial policy because it would allow deforestation if emissions were compensated by planting industrial tree plantations elsewhere. Thus, some indigenous and climate justice movements view the programme as a market-based solution that effectively trades carbon credits rather than reducing overall emissions, privatises forests and cements inequalities between the global North and South (see Carbon Trade Watch 2014; Indigenous Environmental Network 2014; Reed 2011; Van Dam 2011). The involvement of NGOs in this promotion of the programme was evident when I arrived early for the II

Comisión Nacional (2nd National Commission) of CIDOB held in Trinidad. An additional meeting had been tacked onto the National Commission to discuss the benefits of the REDD+ programme to the indigenous participants (personal field-notes, 12 March 2012).

Conflicting Resource Sovereignties

Another sticking point between the urban movements and the lowland indigenous movement was the different interpretations of how non-renewable resources should be managed and controlled. In this sense, the demands for indigenous territoriality, self-determination and autonomy conflicted the demand for popular sovereignty of the people. This vision, which was an important demand during the October Agenda of the 2005 Gas War, postulates that the ownership and governance of natural resources should be in the hands of the people and therefore questions the exclusionary demands of indigenous territoriality as well as the centralised decision-making being pursued by the MAS Party administration. For example, the Water War leader Oscar Olivera has stated that recovering collective patrimony over natural resources would involve ‘countering both forms of privatization – the private property of the transnationals and the private property of the state’ and that the ‘true opposite of privatization is the social reappropriation of wealth by working-class society itself – self-organized in communal structures of management, in assemblies, in neighbourhood associations, in unions, and in the rank and file’ (2004: 156-7). Urban movements and activists in defence of the TIPNIS have promoted this form of resource sovereignty, which has become a bone of contention in solidarity networks with CIDOB. Tensions were evident in a meeting in Puerto San Borja to decide the platform of demands for the Ninth March. A heated discussion arose over discussion point four, ‘Tierra, Territorio y Madre Tierra’ (Land, Territory and Mother Earth). Conversation quickly turned to natural resource governance, with little reference to the protection of the environment or biodiversity. Indigenous representatives from CIDOB and the TIPNIS specified their desire for greater economic rights over their lands and resources, arguing that the government must be the one to guarantee these jurisdictional rights for the indigenous peoples. The agenda focused around the right to self-determination, namely the right to decide their own forms of development and the right to indigenous governance and consultation over development projects initiated by the state or international corporations. However, representatives from the highland indigenous organisation CONAMAQ were much more vocal about the need to sustain the harmonious balance between humans and Mother Earth, arguing that neither state-led nor foreign-led capital would be acceptable as long as development based on resource extraction

continued. These debates between the indigenous marchers provoked a response from one of the urban activists, a so-called ‘MAS dissident’, who argued that the indigenous cannot be the only ones to decide the future of natural resources, because national development is in the interest of all Bolivians. Rather, reiterating calls for popular sovereignty, he argued that the whole country has the right to communal development (personal field-notes, 10 May 2012). In personal conversations with urban activists, it became clear that certain people were concerned that allowing indigenous communities more autonomy over land and resources located in their territories would not necessarily block transnational corporations or governments from co-opting communities in order to access natural resources. Gustafson notes that ‘in neither Bolivia nor Ecuador is plurinationalism wholeheartedly embraced by the nationalist left’ (2009a: 1003). There are thus frictions between articulations of two ‘scale-making projects’ (Tsing 2005).

Indeed, indigenous territoriality does not incorporate the disenfranchised majority population in cities that continue to struggle for basic services, infrastructure and employment conditions and that rely on the state dispersal of wealth generated from natural resource extraction. In this respect, anti-extractivist discourses by authors such as Eduardo Gudynas and Bret Gustafson do ‘a disservice to the struggles of the majority’ (Fuentes 2014: n.pag). In an interview with the MAS dissident Pablo Regalsky he stated that ‘[a]s far as I understood, the people that I speak with, they support the environmental issues and they support the right to speech or the right to express but they don’t support the indigenous rights to territory, they are against it’¹⁵⁸ (personal interview, 09 June 2012). Many citizens do not understand or think it fair that three percent of the population should hold land titles for more than 16 million hectares of land, over 15 percent of Bolivia’s territory (García Linera 2011b). It is important to note though, as discussed in chapter VI, that indigenous groups have rarely made explicit demands for territorial enclosure, instead demanding political representation and participation in the state through their respective organisational structures. As Gustafson argues ‘[i]n both Ecuador and Bolivia, indigenous peoples concede (theoretically legitimate) claims to absolute resource control, yet seek in return a decolonized, redistributive sovereignty within which their relative position is one of equality, rather than marginality’ (2009a: 1000). Nevertheless, unless this non-exclusionary vision of territory is articulated to wider sectors of Bolivian society, it is unlikely that CIDOB will be able to solidify a longer-term movement capable of hegemonic change.

¹⁵⁸ Interview conducted partly in English.

Recovering the Proceso de Cambio

Despite the tensions discussed, the left-indigenous allegiances were part of a ‘process of politicization’ (Featherstone 2012: 7), which challenges the idea of Bolivia as an Andean state. In her work studying indigenous and non-indigenous environmental campaigns in Australia, Pickerill has spoken about the need to move ‘beyond a colonial paternal sense of responsibility, to a dynamic and engaged mutuality of concern’ (2009: 78). In this way, the solidarity networks refashioned the ‘*proceso de cambio*’ being pursued by the MAS in more equitable ways. The relations formed articulated an ethics of solidarity premised on mutual respect and the recognition of Amazonian ethnic peoples as citizens of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

I suggest that through solidarities formed in the TIPNIS conflict, certain individuals and sectors have begun to accommodate the discourses and world-visions of the lowland indigenous movement. This emerging paradigm has been influenced by the discourses of plurinationalism that has sought to ‘refound’ the state in recognition of the indigenous majority population. This requires a *sui generis* model of the nation-state that can accommodate the specific complexities in Bolivia. This is explained by Jeremías Ballivián Torrico, who participated on the Eighth March:

[...] for me, there are two worlds in one world. There is the indigenous world and the occidental world. The occidental world thinks in a different way and we think in a different way, but we do not blame this occidental world that has a different vision. But in some way, we have to look for a middle ground or create a *sui generis [sic]* here that we can understand and we can engage, so that they can understand us and we can understand them, right?¹⁵⁹ (personal interview, 20 January 2011)

This understanding was echoed by Helga Cauthin from the Campaña in Cochabamba who suggested that the indigenous peoples have a way of communitarian living that is more real than abstract theories, such as socialism (personal interview, 26 January 2011). Similarly, Huascar Bustillos, an activist from the CDAPMA in Santa Cruz suggested that:

The TIPNIS has set the pace for a new movement, neither of the left nor of the right, a way much our own, I consider myself of this way. I think that we, Bolivians, have to

¹⁵⁹ ‘[...] para mi hay dos mundos en el mundo. Hay el mundo indígena y el mundo occidental. El mundo occidental piensa de diferente forma y nosotros pensamos de diferente forma, pero nosotros no culpamos también a ese mundo occidental que tenga una visión diferente. Pero de alguna manera tenemos que buscar un lugar, un espacio medio o crear un *sui generis [sic]* ahí para podernos entender y podernos engranar, para que ellos nos entiendan a nosotros y nosotros entendamos a ellos, no?’

have our own way to think, in order to apply it to our problems, because we don't have to follow the right or the left. We have to think for ourselves. This is what we have to do!¹⁶⁰ (personal interview, 17 March 2012)

Marielle Cauthin, a researcher and journalist specialising in indigenous rights, stated that the acceptance of indigenous peoples as decision-making subjects of the nation-state marks a fundamental shift in Bolivia:

[...] the cities also have said to the march “we know that this moment is yours, we know what are your rights, that this march is yours and that you will resolve this conflict”, so we give them that space “what you decide is what is right”. And it is a process of political maturation in Bolivia very, very important. That we respect that this political moment is of the indigenous peoples, that you can't think of another way of developing the country, if it is not with the indigenous peoples.¹⁶¹ (personal interview, 05 February 2012)

Recovering the ‘process of change’ was conceived of as the need for a home-grown project of societal transformation that was not imposed by a central state or by foreign impositions, such as the structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and the World Bank. There is therefore a shift from the desire to represent the voices of the indigenous peoples to an understanding of them as subjects of Bolivia's future. Gustafson contends that ‘plurinationalism requires changes in the subjectivities of other Bolivians as well, through the recrafted discourse of intercultural society’ (2009a: 1009). Furthermore, Slater argues that democracy ‘can only be sustainable if it emerges from indigenous roots; what is required is a struggle for what may be termed “demo-diversity”’ (2013: 75). He continues that in Western democracy ‘the enabling potential of learning across cultural divides is negated’ (2013: 81). Therefore, for some interview participants the answer did not lie in Eurocentric models of capitalism or socialism but in the creation of a new project designed by the Bolivian people themselves. Juan José Sardina of CONAMAQ stated that:

you cannot think and revive an old failed system like socialism and much less apply the political fight of class to this country that is culturally diverse. Here there are

¹⁶⁰ ‘El TIPNIS ha dado la pauta de un nuevo movimiento, ni de izquierda ni de derecha, una manera mucho más propia, yo me considero de esa manera. Yo pienso que nosotros los bolivianos, tenemos que tener nuestra manera de pensar propia para poder aplicar a nuestra problemática, porque no tenemos que seguir la derecha o la izquierda. Tenemos que pensar como nosotros mismos ¿eso lo que tenemos que hacer!’.

¹⁶¹ ‘[...] las ciudades también han dicho a la marcha “sabemos que este momento es de ustedes, sabemos que son sus derechos, que esta marcha es de ustedes y que este conflicto ustedes lo van a resolver”, entonces como que les cedemos ese espacio “lo que ustedes decidan es lo que está bien”. Y es un proceso de maduración política en Bolivia muy, muy importante. Que respetamos, que este momento político es de los pueblo indígenas, que no puedes pensar otra vía de desarrollo con el país, si no es con los pueblos indígenas’.

nations submerged inside a Bolivian state that doesn't have a nation, right? Solely, the Spanish came and they said, "well, this is going to be called...", the liberator, supposed liberator said "It will bear my name, Bolívar".¹⁶² (personal interview, 17 June 2012)

7.7 Conclusion

It is evident that the left-indigenous solidarity networks formed during the TIPNIS conflict have been significant for gaining the wider support of Bolivian society and for making connections between indigenous territories and metropolitan spaces. Some of the movements are working at cross-purposes, however. Fundamentally, I contend that the contrasting scale-making projects of popular sovereignty of the people positioned by the urban left and politico-territorial autonomy articulated by the indigenous movement will shape relations of solidarity in future resource conflicts. Furthermore, I have shown that solidarity has been shaped by ongoing paternalistic attitudes towards indigenous peoples and that certain individuals have negated the subject-citizen status of these communities. This has hindered the decolonising potential of these alliances as pervasive colonialities of power mediate the agency of bodies marked by ethnicity. There is, therefore, no guarantee that geographies of solidarities will be transformatory in an emancipatory sense. The decolonisation of the state through the project of plurinationalism cannot occur until there is a wider shift in Bolivian society, what Spivak refers to as the need to 'occupy the subject position of the other' (1990: 121). As one activist, Daniela Leytón, argued, urban dwellers do not comprehend the concept of indigenous territory, indeed, '[t]his profound ignorance, I believe is the source of this conflict'¹⁶³ (personal interview, 17 June 2012).

That said, 'spaces of encounter' have been productive for processes of embodied and inter-subjective learning across cultural difference. As a result, there are a number of core activists, the 'rag tag army' that have established relationships of trust and mutual respect with the lowland movement and are committed to working with them, rather than speaking for them. These relations have been engendered through articulations that go beyond discursive representations. Rather, solidarity has relied on collective bodily experiences in convergence spaces, such as vigils, meetings and the Eighth and Ninth Marches. It is

¹⁶² 'no se puede pensar y hacer revivir un viejo sistema fracasado como el socialismo y mucho menos se aplicaría la lucha de la política de clases en este país, que es diverso culturalmente. Aquí hay naciones sumergidas dentro de un Estado boliviano que no tiene nación ¿no? Solamente los españoles vinieron y dijeron "bueno, esto se va a llamar...", el libertador, supuesto libertador dijo "va a llevar mi nombre Bolívar".'

¹⁶³ 'Este profundo desconocimiento, que creo que es la fuente de todo este conflicto'.

through these stronger left-indigenous alliances that a united political project for recovering the *proceso de cambio* from the MAS looks set to continue.

CONCLUSION: RE-TERRITORIALISING THE PLURINATIONAL STATE

This thesis contributes to the body of literature on state-indigenous relationships in Bolivia and Latin America more generally. Shifting relations between left-indigenous movements and the MAS Party were evaluated through the case study of a resource conflict that arose in 2011 when the Bolivian government announced controversial plans to build a road through an indigenous territory and national park, known as the TIPNIS. Through an ethnographic study with the lowland indigenous movement represented by the organisation CIDOB alongside urban solidarity networks broadly associated with the political ‘left’, I have located myself amongst the daily geographies of political organisation. Throughout the thesis, I have shown that the dynamics of contentious politics are complex, context-driven and transient. In each chapter, I have sought to reveal the realities of resistance, identity formation and solidarity building through the words, practices and performances of the participants. Therefore, a key empirical contribution of the thesis springs from a critical and embodied engagement with the grounded realities of re-territorialising Bolivia as a plurinational state. Hitherto, the example of the TIPNIS conflict has not been examined in such close detail. Empirically, the thesis also builds on scholarly research carried out in the Amazonian region of Bolivia. As highlighted in chapter II, most research conducted on Bolivia has focused on the agrarian, labour and ethnic movements of the Andean region. I have therefore sought to narrate a contemporary ‘history from below’ with subaltern actors in order to place lowland indigenous communities into the mainstream of national history.

8.1 Rethinking the Binary between the State and Civil Society

I have illustrated how antagonistic struggles and social movements in the sphere of ‘civil society’ have challenged formal democratic spaces. Most notably, collective political action in the 2000-2005 insurrectionary period called for reclaiming national sovereignty over natural resources and decision-making powers from domestic *mestizo-criollo* elites and transnational corporations. Furthermore, demands for the re-founding of Bolivia as a plurinational state, that were led by the lowland indigenous movement, called for the recognition of alternative forms of democratic practice through collective forms of decision-making operational within indigenous territorial spaces. These struggles paved the way for the electoral victory of the MAS Party that purportedly operates as ‘a government of social movements’, rupturing the colonial dichotomisation of a state

divorced from civil society. Indeed, the TIPNIS conflict has been a litmus test for the MAS administration and its ability to act as a ‘political instrument of the people’.

Fundamentally, I demonstrated that there has been a breakdown in the relationship between the MAS and the lowland indigenous movement during the TIPNIS conflict. Conflicting resource sovereignties and coupled territorial claims have been at the heart of this breakdown since the pursuit of state-led resource nationalism supersedes indigenous and environmental rights granted under the 2009 Constitution. Importantly, the MAS has made great strides in overturning the colonial racialisation of formal political spaces, most notably for the *campesino* and *cocalero* sectors. However, the party’s overall negation of lowland indigenous claims has served to fragment the ties that were created under the Unity Pact, which amalgamated a number of indigenous and peasant organisations. This shows that the party has an uneven and geographically divided support with some indigenous groups directly interpolated by the MAS and others resisting its dominance. Conceptualising hegemony as an inherently spatial process has been important to this thesis. In this way, I usefully complicate Guha’s (1997) framing of ‘dominance without hegemony’ as a simple binary distinction between the elite and the subaltern.

Following from this, I contend that the MAS needs to acknowledge and advance the alternative and divergent world-visions and ways of living of the lowland indigenous peoples within the institutional apparatus of the state in order to strengthen the legitimacy of the sovereign state (see Maybury-Lewis 2002). Indeed, it is not enough to reseat power from the Media Luna to the Andean highlands. Rather, decolonising the nation-state requires the construction of a spatial imaginary of the nation that fully embraces Amazonian peoples as citizens, with their own respective democratic practices, development visions and modes of knowledge production. Thus, I maintain that a neo-colonialist epistemology remains in the MAS that re-legitimises the Westphalian state model. Furthermore, the TIPNIS conflict has exacerbated tensions between highland *campesinos* that have emigrated to the valleys/lowlands and indigenous peoples in these areas. Again, these groups pose contrasting resource sovereignties with the former pushing for individual titles and the latter pressing for communal ownership of land and resources. This is problematic since it has undermined the counter-hegemonic bloc formed during the Water and Gas Wars leaving the *proceso de cambio* (process of change) open to manipulation by traditional domestic elites and transnational capital. Fundamentally, I argue that it is pertinent to analyse how these divergent scale-making projects get articulated and negotiated in the everyday politics of Latin America.

I have shown that the MAS administration has sought to discredit the left-indigenous struggles in defence of the TIPNIS through the following strategies: the use of anti-imperialist discourse linked to national patriotism to accuse the lowland indigenous movement of being factionalist; the articulation of a politics of race and gender to push through a modernist development agenda based on linear progress; the appropriation and control of public spaces, particularly metropolitan centres; the mobilisation of sectors affiliated to the MAS; the use of social movement tactics to delegitimise support for the TIPNIS cause; and attempts to rupture the collective decision-making structures of the lowland indigenous movement. I conclude that minority indigenous groups still undergo a process of subalternisation since they are denied access to the state machinery. The MAS and affiliated sectors have denied the collective democratic practices of the lowland indigenous peoples, which postulate a 'postliberal challenge' to the nation-state model (Yashar 2005). Government representatives therefore reify a geographical imaginary based on a vertical spatialisation that separates the dominant power of the 'state' and its unruly partner 'civil society' (see Gupta & Ferguson 2002; Lefebvre 1991; Rubenstein 2001).

In this thesis I have also shown that the indigenous movement has challenged these power relations. For instance, during the TIPNIS conflict CIDOB and CONAMAQ took the decision to leave the Unity Pact since it was no longer serving their interests of attaining greater politico-territorial autonomy. More recently, the indigenous movement has been building their own links to political parties outside of the MAS in an attempt to claim state power. CIDOB's strategies at accruing political power have therefore mirrored the strategy of the MAS when they oscillated between popular direct action and electoral politicking in the early 2000s (see Postero 2010a). In chapter VI, I explained that CIDOB operate a collective, horizontal and consensus based decision-making structure known as the *estructura orgánica* (organic structure). This mode of governance acts as a mechanism to hinder the concentration of power by dispersing it through the social body. The *estructura orgánica* therefore offers an alternative spatial imaginary to the pervasive state-civil society binary distinction. In this way, the lowland indigenous movement could advance attempts to decolonise the nation-state that have been initiated by the MAS.

Yet, I also demonstrated that the prefigurative politics of collective democracy is an ongoing process riddled with daily tensions, contradictions and difficulties in its implementation. During my participation on the Ninth March, unequal power relations were displayed in various ways: decision-making powers were centralised in the hands of a few leaders; the 'movement' was liable to homogenised representations shaped through

NGOs and the media; and gendered inequalities were persistent despite radical progress in this area. As such, leaders of CIDOB need to exercise caution in entering formal state politics. Indeed, taking part in electoral politics is a dangerous strategy since occupying state institutions born from colonialism could compromise the autonomous organisational practices of the lowland indigenous movement. It is likely, however, that the movement's bases will push for representatives to follow the organisation's official objectives.

Within these discussions, I have called for a perspective that considers the 'entanglements of power' (Sharp et al 2000) embedded within any state-social movement nexus. I contend that much of the scholarly analysis of the MAS Party government is hinged on a Marxist ideology, which negates alternative conceptualisations of the Westphalian state. In doing so, these analysts continue a colonial legacy and spatial hegemony that negates indigenous peoples as agents of political transformation (Laing 2012). By attending to the subaltern as an agent of political change, it becomes evident that left-indigenous struggles challenge hegemonic understandings of the nation-state, territoriality and democracy. A relational approach to space also recognises that multiple politico-spatial registers coexist and that state-social movement relations have changed over time. This is part of a continual Gramscian 'war of position' in which political and ethnic identities are articulated in order to galvanise national and international support for competing resource sovereignty claims.

8.2 Re-conceptualising Subaltern Identities

Like in other Latin American countries, the Bolivian government enacted a number of multicultural reforms in the 1990s that operated a dual strategy of extending citizenship rights, most notably to indigenous populations, and fostering a favourable climate for the expansion of neoliberalism. As discussed, the rights acknowledged under this regime were limited and did not greatly change the power structures of state-indigenous relations (Hale 2002, 2004). Rather, Povinelli has argued that the reforms under neoliberal multiculturalism 'were able to bind oppressed groups more tightly to the state and to looking to state law as the site from which a non-discriminatory politics could proceed' (1998: 598). Hence, the 'coloniality' of 'power', 'knowledge' and 'being' (see Quijano 1991, 2000; Dussel 1998; Escobar 2007; Lander 2000; Mignolo 2000, 2003) remained embedded within the pervasive 'geometries of power' (Massey 1993). These processes of subalternisation have acted historically to marginalise and undermine the authority of the indigenous voice and their respective ways of living and knowing the world.

The lowland indigenous movement has *both* challenged the liberal rights-based framework *and* utilised the opportunities afforded to political action through the cultural capital of the indigenous label. CIDOB was fashioned in early 1980s in order to represent the diverse ethnic nations of the Amazonian lowlands and the Chaco. The intra-communal ethnic ties constructed provided a tool for the articulation of minority claims and a collective political identity. At this time, the decision to unite under a homogenised indigenous label was heavily influenced by international legal guidelines and national policy-making. With the indigenous revival of the 1990s and early 2000s a number of social movement sectors laid new claims to an indigenous identity. During the insurrectionary period of 2000-2005 the notion of a collective ethnic identity was articulated as a way to resist neoliberal reforms on a number of levels. Insurgent citizenship therefore laid the way for an ‘indigenous state’ to come to power through the MAS Party, that cross-cut ethnic and class ties.

However, as I have shown, the MAS has articulated a nationalist popular imaginary of a homogenous citizenry based on the Aymara. As a result, lowland indigenous politicking has had to conform to a rights-based framework legislated through the 2009 Constitution. Thus, CIDOB has mobilised a number of ‘strategic essentialisms’ (see Spivak 1987: 281) to legitimise political claims to an authentic indigenous identity, relating to notions of the ecologically noble savage, communal organisational structures and the collective ownership of land and resources. In chapter VI I examined how these essentialist discourses get imagined, reiterated and brought into contestation through political action. I argue that the practices and discourses of contentious politics are restrained by the hegemonic framework of legal rights and through the mediation of NGOs and media agents. This process can have the adverse effect of predetermining identity categories and shutting down the potential to recognise the plural, multiple and shifting embodiments of people’s identities and knowledges. For instance, I have demonstrated how place-based memories of millenarian movements in search of the *loma santa* (holy hill), a space free from colonial imposition, have been re-articulated through the discourse of the *casa grande* (big house). The *casa grande* is synonymous with the notion of indigenous territory as a geographically defined and limited space with a legal collective land title. However, although the MAS has granted an unprecedented number of TCO titles, the respective organisational structures and alternative world-visions of lowland indigenous peoples have not been incorporated into the bureaucratic system of decision-making of the centralised government. This initiated a new period of governmental discipline in the Amazonian region, which has only recently brought into the national imaginary. Thus,

indigenous territory does not grant self-determination or substantially rebalance power dynamics in Bolivia. In this way, the MAS has reaffirmed neoliberal multiculturalism since indigenous citizen-subjects are recognised within ‘clearly defined limits’ (Hale 2002: 490). These shortcomings in the implementation of plurinational agendas by the MAS have shaped subsequent forms of political action during the TIPNIS conflict. Again, CIDOB has displayed a marked ability to manoeuvre through the political opportunities of the 2009 Constitution whilst consistently moving beyond current processes of subalternisation.

Hence, by developing the work of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality Collective situated in Latin America and subaltern studies, I argue for refocusing research on indigenous movements away from perspectives that view them as subjects of identity towards research capable of analysing how subjects are made (see Kuus 2007: 91). By understanding the subaltern as a relational construct structured by pervasive power relations and access to the machinery of the state (see Rabasa 2010; Spivak 2014), we can bypass static and essentialist interpretations of ethnic identity.

8.3 Re-constructing Political Identities in Solidarity/Movement Building

The struggles in defence of the TIPNIS were articulated through the collective agency of ‘territory’, demanding the recognition of indigenous rights, self-determination over natural resources and environmental protection. These claims resonated with the visions of environmental movements, claims to popular sovereignty of the people, as well as appealing to the international climate of indigenous rights. In chapter VII I argued that a new urban and indigenous alliance has emerged that unites certain sectors of society and engenders a progressive climate for decolonising the nation-state under the banner of the plurination. Indeed, Gramsci (1971) has noted that diverse groups and classes can come together under specific historical conditions. Yet, he also acknowledges that this solidarity is shaped through the dynamic geographies of uneven power relations. On the one hand, I have demonstrated that the unison appears outwardly to cut across historically contentious lines of identity based on ethnicity, class and gender. On the other hand, tensions permeate the relations between and within the lowland indigenous movement and urban networks of solidarity. In particular, relations were structured by a left-right binary politics that remains prevalent in Bolivia and Latin America, more broadly. In this way, certain urban movements used the TIPNIS conflict as a means to further a socialist agenda and in doing so negated the agency and world-visions of lowland indigenous peoples. Furthermore, these leftist groups pursued a competing resource sovereignty claim based on popular

sovereignty of the people, which postulates that resources should be in the hands of the Bolivian masses. This spatial imaginary therefore questions what is perceived as an exclusionary demand for indigenous territoriality.

That said, some urban activists maintained longer-term contact with the lowland indigenous movement that engendered stronger bonds of solidarity. I have argued that ‘convergence spaces’ (Routledge 2000b, 2003a) have brought together discursive and material actors in place-based moments during the TIPNIS conflict. These spaces have operated through meetings, gatherings, vigils in central plazas, street protests, rallies, the Eighth and Ninth Marches and the more virtual spaces of the Internet. Fundamentally, I contend that these have acted as ‘spaces of encounter’ in which multiple bodies, knowledges, experiences and memories have jostled together and generated opportunities for people to ‘occupy the subject position of the other’ (Spivak 1990: 121). Therefore, differences were not intractable and left-indigenous networks have worked together to recover the ‘*proceso de cambio*’ from the MAS and initiate their own societal transformation ‘*desde las bases*’ (from the bases).

In this respect, solidarity networks displayed real efforts to live interculturally. The project of *interculturalidad* aims to construct a new society on the basis of an equal dialogue between different epistemologies in order to disrupt the hegemonic political order based on the liberal and republican state (Mignolo 2005; Walsh 2009). *Interculturalidad* is therefore an ongoing process aimed at transforming power relations, especially the racialisation of political institutions. This change requires the labour of articulating indigenous demands to other sectors of Bolivian society in order to construct a counter-hegemonic movement capable of emancipatory transformation. I therefore agree with Postero and Zamosc that:

capturing a significant share of power will require a radical change in the imagination of the citizenry as a whole. In other words, the national community must come to see indigenous peoples and their representatives as natural bearers of the national interest. Such changes must happen on discursive and symbolic levels as well as institutional ones. This will require work at the complex and historically sedimented boundary between “the indigenous Other” and the nation, a boundary reinforced by language, custom, and power-laden practices. Whilst this boundary may never be dissolved, for the universalist/egalitarian model to function, indigenusness must be understood and felt as a natural and rightful aspect of the national character (2004b: 19)

This change to the hegemonic political order requires fostering a Gramscian ‘war of position’ in which grievances are re-articulated by social movements as they manoeuvre through changing political landscapes. Making space for indigenous peoples in the mind-sets of other national citizens will likely be a lengthy and uneven process, since decolonisation is clearly an emancipatory project rather than a revolutionary ‘moment’. This will entail going beyond the spatial imaginary of a left-right binary politics to consider how Latin American nations can create *sui generis* models of political representation. The indigenous movement will undoubtedly continue to tread a close line between resistance and compromise, what Hindery calls ‘dynamic pragmatism’ (2013: 5). The indigenous movement will legitimise their claims through a dual process of addressing demands at the state level and building solidarity with other sectors of Bolivian society. The question remains, however, of whether ‘the emergent cultural-political subjects in Latin America [can] reach an activated and stable condition of alterity capable of re-constituting socio-natural structures from within, along the lines of decoloniality, relationality and pluriversality?’ (Escobar 2008: 47-48). In this vein, I offer a cautionary note to CIDOB as current claims for politico-territorial autonomy are in danger of being perceived as not offering a meaningful and viable alternative for other societal sectors that currently benefit from the revenues created through a state-led model of neo-extractivism.

I have expanded on social movement studies literature to encompass the spatialities of political action and discourses. By doing so, we can conceive of the tensions and difficulties of bringing people and materials together under a common banner such as ‘the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS’. I offered an analytical framework that bridges assemblage thinking with attention to the spatial practices of articulation. By doing so, we can understand that multiple and contingent political identities are shaped through the diverse spatialities of political action. I advocate a rethinking of how we think about solidarity/movement building towards a more open, fluid and relational understanding that can appreciate that the spaces of political action can be generative of emerging identities and spatial imaginaries. By understanding social movements as shifting assemblages we can evaluate the labour of building solidarity over time.

8.4 (Re)territorialising Latin America

Latin American states are structured around hierarchical intersecting relations of class, race, and gender with “first class” citizenship reserved for white, male, urban and wealthier individuals and “second class citizenship” for indigenous peoples,

individuals of Afro-descent, women, and rural and poorer groups (Radcliffe & Pequeño 2010: 984).

The MAS Party project has undoubtedly made considerable strides towards decolonising the nation-state and recognising indigenous peoples as citizen-subjects of Bolivia, as well as reducing poverty. These changes have therefore overturned many of the assumptions of formal political spaces as exclusive to the *mestizo-criollo* elite class. These changes also reflect a ‘territorial turn’ across several countries in Latin America that have recognised communal indigenous property and land rights. Returning to the opening discussions of this thesis, I argue that the struggles in defence of the TIPNIS must be conceived of in relation to attempts to de- and re- territorialise Bolivia. This understanding conceptualises the project of the nation-state as an on-going and contingent process (Abrams 1988).

Conflicting resource sovereignties have been at the heart of the TIPNIS conflict. State-led neo-extractivism is held in tension with indigenous struggles for indigenous territoriality and calls for popular sovereignty of the people postulated by movements on the political left. These national and subnational territorialising projects are bound up to collective memories of colonialism and neoliberalism that shape the settings within which contemporary political action emerges. For the Mojeño peoples of the TIPNIS, contemporary claims are fashioned by long histories of territorial loss through the Jesuit reductions in the seventeenth century, the rubber boom in the mid-eighteenth century, cattle ranching in the mid-twentieth century, and more recent expansions of coca cultivation and hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation. Conversely, resource nationalism gains legitimacy through Bolivia’s territorial loss in a number of wars, particularly the Chaco War perceived as a conflict over oil, and a 500-year history of the appropriation of natural resources by Spain during the colonial period and by foreign corporations in the postcolonial period. This layering of spatial territorial imaginaries and place-based histories creates ‘friction’ (Tsing 2005) that generates movement, action and effect. Ultimately, this creates new territorial orders.

As Farthing and Kohl assert, it is simply not possible to break from ‘five hundred years of an extraction-based economy in under a decade’ (2014: 159; also see Kohl & Farthing 2012). In order to meet peoples’ basic needs and improve living standards, the MAS has recuperated the nation’s natural resources and brought about greater state control of the wealth created. At present, there are few other alternatives for developing the country’s economy. In this vein, we must be mindful of the ways that claims for greater politico-

territorial autonomy could pose a danger to recovering state sovereignty from both foreign and domestic seats of power. As discussed, separatist movements for regional autonomy in the powerful Media Luna have utilised the lowland indigenous movement as a Trojan horse for giving legitimacy to their attempts at regaining national power. For this reason, I stress the importance of maintaining a staunch position of autonomy to conservative movements perceived as being on the political 'right'. Furthermore, it is unlikely that wider sectors of the Bolivian citizenry are willing to concede greater resource sovereignty powers to the lowland indigenous peoples at the expense of the majority population.

Ultimately, thinking territorially has wider relevance beyond the thesis considering the dramatic increase in the exploration and exploitation of sub-soil hydrocarbon resources within the Latin American region since the 1990s (Bebbington & Bury 2013; Sawyer & Gomez 2012; Silver 2008). This has re-spatialising effects, not least because this exploration has expanded into new frontiers in the Amazonian regions of Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil (Bebbington & Bury 2013). The re-crafting of the nation-state through neo-extractivism is likely to cause further resource conflicts since these geographical areas are renowned for their unique biodiversity and significance for maintaining hydrological balance across the region. Many of these projects are facilitated through the IIRSA development plan that aims to expand transport (including roads), energy and telecommunications infrastructure in the region. Bebbington and Bury note that 'given the scale of investment in IIRSA, and the transformations in South American environments that it will catalyze, there is remarkably little work on it in the academic literature' (2013: 25). This change is also connected to another area of potential future research; Brazilian sub-imperialism. Brazil is one of the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) with a rapidly growing economy and extensive industrialisation. The country thus requires an impressive supply of minerals and hydrocarbons that are increasingly sought from neighbouring countries. It is worthy of note, for example, that 61 percent of Bolivia's gas is exported to Brazil (Miranda Pacheco 2009). Economic changes therefore alter regional geopolitics with knock on effects for territoriality.

This thesis advances current theorisations of resource conflicts in postcolonial contexts through opening up politics as practice. In particular, I have shown that (i) indigenous struggles are mediated by historical process of territorialisation as well as being agents of reterritorialisation, (ii) everyday spaces of encounter, discourses and events are integral for the reproduction of political identities, and (iii) that multiple and divergent spatio-political imaginaries are articulated through a Gramscian 'war of position' that continually re-crafts

the nation-state. Moreover, territoriality is intimately bound up with the contestation and antagonism surrounding natural resource governance, ownership and jurisdiction. As with all partially hegemonic projects, state-led resource extractivism will require constant maintenance and ideological articulation that will inevitably be challenged by counter-hegemonic movements articulating diverging imaginaries of national space. As such, natural resources will continue to be a major player in mediating the relations between civil society and the nation-state for many years to come.

8.5 Theoretical Contributions to Geography

This thesis offers a number of contributions to geographical debates by bringing together theoretical traditions of the geographies of social movements and postcolonial studies with an ethnographic study of a resource conflict in Bolivia. Geography has provided an insightful means to understand place-based political action during the TIPNIS conflict and the relational processes through which social conflict can effect (or prevent) social, cultural and political change, shaping public policy and methods of political representation. In this section, I will outline three explicitly geographical contributions of this thesis:

Geographies of Social Movements

Primarily, this thesis contributes to theoretical debates in social movement studies. To date, much of this work has been dominated by structural approaches that define movements singularly, as something ‘out there’ that can be grasped, predetermined and objectified. Advancing the view of certain social movement scholars, specifically geographers David Featherstone and Andy Davies (Davies & Featherstone 2013), I have used a conceptual approach that places the tensioned processes of identity formation and meaning production at the heart of the analytical narrative. Through a prolonged ethnographic study of urban ‘left’ political activity, alongside an exploration of indigenous resistance on the Eighth and Ninth Marches, I have demonstrated the dynamic, plural and contested nature of political mobilisation, the labour of solidarity building and the process of collective identity formation. Emphasising the competing spatio-political imaginaries articulated in the TIPNIS conflict – through diverse conceptualisations of territoriality, the nation-state, democracy and development – I have responded to Wendy Wolford’s call for scholars to pay more attention to the ‘spatial constitution of the social’ rather than just focusing on the ‘social construction of space’ (2004: 409).

Further, a key theoretical contribution of this thesis has been the drawing together of subaltern studies and the intellectual discussions of the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality Collective to make sense of social movement dynamics in Latin America. It has addressed the processes of subalternity in contemporary Bolivia and attempted to grasp an understanding of the voices, epistemologies and practices of subaltern indigenous subjects in the daily labour and activity of place-based political mobilisation. Moreover, the construction of collective identity ties has relied on what Gramsci (1971) termed a 'war of position' in which broader alliances are created through the effective articulation of knowledges and ideologies to others in specific geographical and historical contexts.

Resource Politics

A small but significant body of geographical scholarship has emerged that considers the politics of resource conflicts in Latin America (see Bebbington & Bury 2013; Haarstad 2012; Hindery 2013; Humphreys Bebbington 2013; Perreault & Valdivia 2010). In particular, scholars have begun to address the implications of post-neoliberal economic policies and development models based on neo-extractivism on the environment and indigenous ways of life. The sub-discipline of political ecology has been significant for understanding the impacts of resource struggles on national identities, environmental governance and indigenous livelihoods and cultures (Bebbington & Bury 2013; Hindery 2013). Here, I provide an additional case study to these regional contributions. I advance this literature further, however, through a renewed emphasis on local histories of oppression, dispossession and resistance and the importance of these for collective memories of struggle and contemporary political action. I argue that the significance of place-based colonial experiences on shaping spatio-political imaginaries should be a central concern for future research on resource politics in Latin America, as well as being relevant in other postcolonial settings. Indeed, by privileging political economy perspectives on Latin American post-neoliberalism and the resource curse, academics risk curtailing a more nuanced and complex analysis of local struggle. Through my analysis of the TIPNIS conflict I have shown that indigenous resistance was not only about livelihoods, land and material dispossession but was also a politico-cultural struggle for the recognition of collective forms of political representation within the institutions of the state. Furthermore, regional changes to political institutions, frontiers of extraction and development agendas also impact on the geography of resource struggles.

Articulations of 'Territory' and 'Place'

Finally, as the title of this thesis would suggest, a central contribution of this research is to long-standing debates over geographical concepts of territory and place. Territory is conceived of as a spatial unit of sovereign control and political authority, of which the most predominant form is the state. Following from this, a nation is generally understood as the collective identity shared by those occupying this territory (Agnew 2011). Yet, it is widely recognised that states and national identities are not always congruent to one another (see Agnew 1994). Within this thesis, I have built on these theorisations by demonstrating that activists within the movement in defence of the TIPNIS, as well as representatives of the state, have operationalised divergent and multiple ways of thinking about geographic space. Although the lowland indigenous movement has never sought to disrupt the macro-scale territorialisation of Bolivia's national boundaries, some indigenous actors and communities have questioned the deployment of certain territorial strategies by the government. In particular, CIDOB has contested the notion of indigenous territories, otherwise known as TCOs, as 'bounded spaces' in which ethnic communities are held at arms-length from political representation in the state. Indeed, the production of territory by the MAS reifies prevailing power relations and forms of exclusion centred on race and ethnicity and a state/social movement divide. Yet, I have shown that these territorial processes are also actively resisted through place-based contentious politics. Thus, place is an integral site for the articulation of competing and contrasting visions of territoriality. Here, it is useful to conceive place relationally as the flow of cultural, social and economic processes in particular locations. Following Massey, I reiterate that 'places may be thought of as open articulations of connections' (1999: 288). Reasserting place into understandings of state sovereignty and territorial authority is especially pertinent in the contemporary political climate of Bolivia as a plurinational state, as well as for examining the spatial imaginaries embedded in local resource politics.

In order to think about space and place relationally, I adopted an analytical framework that bridged assemblage thinking with attention to the spatial practices of articulation (Braun & Disch 2002; Davies 2012; Featherstone 2011). By itself, assemblage theory offers a contingent understanding of the socio-spatial but lacks analytical rigour. Thus, drawing from the work of Stuart Hall (1980, 1986, 1997) and Ernesto Laclau (1977), I use theories of articulation to trace how plural spatio-political imaginaries and subaltern identities are constructed, contested and reworked within materially heterogeneous and spatially extensive political struggles. A vital and important contribution of this research, then, is

the implementation of ‘articulated assemblages’ (Moore 2005: 317) to conceptualise social movement processes and examine overlapping, diverse and transient spatial epistemologies. Methodologically, a multi-sited ethnography of the daily geographies of a national resource conflict has offered a specific and unique insight into the geographies of social movements, resource politics and spatial understandings of territory and place.

Appendix 1. List of Organisations Contacted in Bolivia

Name of Organisation	Role of Organisation
CEJIS (Centro de Estudios Jurídicos y Investigación Social; The Centre for Legal Studies and Social Investigation)	A legal body that works to gain land titles for indigenous communities in the lowlands and now works towards indigenous social and political rights as defined by the 2009 Constitution.
CEDIB (Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia; Centre of Bolivian Documents and Information)	An independent human rights institution based in Cochabamba. CEDIB seeks to strengthen the political action of popular organisations to institute change in Bolivia.
CEDLA (Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario; Centre for Studies of Labour and Agrarian Development)	A centre based in La Paz for the study of labour issues to inform public debates and the actions of organisations.
CENDA (Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino; Andean Communication and Development Centre)	A private organisation in Cochabamba focusing on indigenous issues of natural resources, land management, ecology, biodiversity, education, food security and legal rights.
CESU (Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios; Centre for Higher University Education)	Part of the Universidad Mayor de San Simón (UMSS). Predominantly focused on issues such as the environment, energy, gender, development studies, habitat studies, economics, planning, politics and legal studies.
CIDOB	A national organisation for the indigenous peoples of lowland Bolivia that works for the collective ownership of land, the governance of natural resources and participation in the state.
CIPCA	A national NGO with regional offices that focuses on the political, economic and cultural development of indigenous peoples.
CONAMAQ	A national body representing the indigenous peoples of the highlands that fights for indigenous self-determination and collective rights. The body organises around issues of justice, gender rights, natural resources, the environment and human rights.
CPEM-B	A regional body of CIDOB that represents the Mojeño people of Beni.
FOBOMADE (Foro Boliviano sobre Medio Ambiente y	An umbrella organisation based in La Paz that focuses on issues of environmental management, food

Desarrollo; Bolivian Forum on Environment and Development)				sovereignty, land rights and biodiversity.
Fundación Tierra (Land Foundation)				An NGO that works on issues of agrarian reform and rural studies, especially in relation to indigenous, peasant and native peoples. The national office is based in La Paz.
Fundación UNIR (Unite Foundation)				An independent institution based in La Paz aimed at the investigation, analysis and constructive transformation of conflicts.
Fundación Xavier Albó (Xavier Albó Foundation)				A library based in La Paz, set up by CIPCA.
LIDEMA (Liga de Defensa del Medio Ambiente; Environmental Defense League)				An organisation based in La Paz that represents a national network of environmental institutions dedicated to promoting sustainable development and conservation and the promotion of awareness of environmental issues.
Mujeres Creando (Women Creating)				An anarchist-feminist collective based in La Paz that engages with anti-poverty campaigns, street theatre and direct action.
SERNAP				A branch of the government Ministry of the Environment and Water. In charge of policies and planning for Bolivia's protected areas.
Somos Sur (We are South)				An alternative information space about social change in Bolivia, based in Cochabamba.
TAPS Panel Study Community)	(Tsimane Amazonian Development)			An NGO that studies the effect of the road building project on the livelihoods and well-being of the inhabitants of the TIPNIS.

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule for Indigenous Peoples of the TIPNIS

Opening Questions and Statement

Statement about research project and aims

Statement about confidentiality and anonymity

Confirmation of informed consent (written or verbal)

Background

“Tell me about where you are from in the TIPNIS?”

- Can you describe the community? How many families/people? Where is it located? What is the scenery/environment like?
- What are the livelihood strategies, religious practices and rituals?
- Have these changed over time? If so, please explain?
- Describe your average daily routine?
- Do you identify as an indigenous person? If so, please explain what being indigenous means to you?

Participation in the TIPNIS conflict

“Tell me about why you are participating in the Ninth March?”

- What do you hope to achieve by participating in the Ninth March?
- Did you participate in the Eighth March?
- Tell me about the police intervention on the Eighth March? Did this change your opinion of the government?
- Have you participated in the previous seven indigenous marches? Can you explain the importance of these marches for the indigenous peoples of the TIPNIS?
- Tell me about the role of women during the Eighth and Ninth marches?
- Tell me about why the process of prior consultation is important to you?
- If the government had consulted the indigenous peoples of the TIPNIS before they had announced the decision to construct the road, do you think the inhabitants of the TIPNIS would have agreed to it?
- Should the road be built using a different route? If so, what would be the benefits of a road?
- Did you feel any pressure or responsibility from your community, CPEM-B or CIDOB to participate in the march?

Organisational Structures

“Tell me about how decisions are made in your community?”

- Is there an organisational structure that you always adhere to? If so, please explain.
- Are decisions taken communally and/or individually?
- How does your community communicate with CPEM-B and the CIDOB?
- Do you think CPEM-B/CIDOB do a good job at listening to and representing your views and demands?
- Do men and women have the same decision-making opportunities? Are men and women allowed to have the same positions of authority?

Territory, the *Loma Santa* and the *Casa Grande*

“Tell me about what ‘territory’ means to you?”

- What does the *Loma Santa* mean to you?
- Were you or your family part of the movements in search of the *Loma Santa*?
- How does the concept of territory relate to the concept of the *Loma Santa*?
- What does the *casa grande* mean to you?
- How does the concept of territory relate to the concept of the *casa grande*?
- Is the *loma santa* and the *casa grande* the same concept? If so/not, please explain.
- How does territory relate to issues of autonomy and self-governance?

Environmental beliefs

“Tell me about your environmental beliefs and your relationship with the environment?”

- Is the environment an important reason for objecting to the construction of the proposed road through the TIPNIS? If so, please explain.
- Do you relate to the concepts of *pachamama* or *madre tierra*?
- Evo Morales and Álvaro García Linera have argued that the TIPNIS is not ‘virgin’ territory. To what extent do you agree with this? Do you think that it is important?

The Plurinational and Indigenous Rights

“Tell me about your understanding of the Plurinational State of Bolivia?”

- When the new Constitution was announced in 2009 what did you think about the idea of the ‘plurinational’?
- How does the plurinational relate to issues of indigenous autonomy, territory and self-determination?
- To what extent do you think that the government represents all of the different ethnicities of Bolivia?
- What rights do you think are important to yourself/indigenous communities?
- Do you feel that you know enough about your rights?
- Do you consider yourself to be a Bolivian citizen?
- Do you identify more as a Mojeño-Trinitario/Yuracaré/Chimane and/or as a Bolivian?
-

The MAS Party Government

“Tell me what you think of the current government and President Evo Morales?”

- To what extent do you think that the government respects indigenous and environmental rights?
- When Evo Morales became president what did you think of him?
- Have your views of Evo Morales and the MAS Party government changed over time?
- The government has stated that they are anti-imperial and anti-colonial. To what extent do you agree with these statements?
- To what extent do you think that the government has the same vision of development as yourself and your community?

Political Ideologies

“Do you think that the marches in defence of the TIPNIS are political?”

- Do you have any ideological beliefs, for example do you consider yourself to be socialist or capitalist?
- Have any political organisations or parties been involved in the marches in defence of the TIPNIS?

Left-Indigenous Alliances

“Tell me about the role of urban solidarity movements in the TIPNIS conflict?”

- To what extent do you think that the urban campaigns in defence of the TIPNIS are important for goals of the CIDOB?
- Why do you think that so many people came out to support the marchers when they arrived in La Paz?
- Why has the Ninth March invited all Bolivians to participate?
- The campaign has been described as ‘*TIPNIS somos todos*’. To what extent do you think that the TIPNIS conflict is important to Bolivians who are not indigenous?
- Tell me about the role of the CONAMAQ in the TIPNIS conflict?
- Do you think that there are any tensions or differences of objectives between different groups involved in the TIPNIS conflict?
- What has been the role of the media in the TIPNIS conflict?
- Tell me about the role of international NGOs, rights organisations and justice movements in the TIPNIS conflict?

The Unity Pact

“Tell me about the relationship between the indigenous movement and the government?”

- Why do you think that the CIDOB left the Unity Pact with the government and other organisations?
- The MAS Party is designed as a ‘party of social movements’. To what extent do you think the government has fulfilled this role?
- What do you think is the role of the coca growers/CONISUR in the TIPNIS conflict?
- Do you think that the coca growers can identify as indigenous peoples?

Closing Statements/Questions

What do you think will happen now?

That’s all of my questions. Do you feel that I have left any important issues out or you would like to add anything further to the interview?

Appendix 3. List of Interviews (positions correct at time of interview)

Name	Who/Occupation	Location	Date
<i>Representatives of CIDOB</i>			
Adolfo Chávez Beyuma	President of CIDOB	Ninth March	27 May 2012
Angel Yubanore	Secretary of Justice and Social Participation for CIDOB	CIDOB, Santa Cruz	01 March 2012
Bertha Vejarano Congo	President of CPEM-B and President of the Ninth March	Ninth March	15 May 2012
Celso Padilla Mercado	President of APG and the Continental Council of the Guaraní Nation	Ninth March	16 May 2012
Ingrid Cortez	Technical advisor to CIDOB	CIDOB, Santa Cruz	20 March 2012
León Galindo	Consultant advisor to CIDOB	CIDOB, Santa Cruz	15 March 2012
Miriam Yubánure M.	Vice-President of CPEM-B	Ninth March	01 June 2012
Nazareth Flores Cabao	President of CPIB	Ninth March	26 May 2012
Plácido Semo Maza	Technical advisor to CIDOB, from Puerto San Lorenzo in TIPNIS	Café, Santa Cruz	19 March 2012
Rosa Chao Rico	President of CPITCO	CPITCO, Cochabamba	20 January 2012
Tomás Candia Yusupi	Secretary of 'Juventudes' (Youths) of CIDOB	Ninth March	02 June 2012
<i>Representatives of CNAMIB</i>			
Angela Noza Coyuba	Secretary of Health of CNAMIB, from Santísima Trinidad in TIPNIS	Ninth March	14 May 2012
Wilma Mendoza Mino	Vice-President of CNAMIB	Ninth March	11 May 2012
<i>Representatives of CONAMAQ</i>			
Fidel Condori Mita	Mallku (Chieftain) of Land and Territory, CONAMAQ	Ninth March	07 May 2012
Juan José Sardina	Cacique (Local Chieftain) of the Chichas nation in Potosí	Vigil, La Paz	17 June 2012
Rafael Quispe Flores	Tata (Father) and ex-President of CONAMAQ	Ninth March	29 April 2012

Representatives/Indigenous Peoples of the TIPNIS TCO and TIM I TCO

Benigno Noza	Corregidor of Galilea	Ninth March	28 April 2012
Carlos Cayuba Cueva	Corregidor of Concesión de Ichóa	Ninth March	03 May 2012
Emilio Noza Yuco	President of Sécure Sub-Central	Ninth March	09 May 2012
Fernando Vargas Mosua	President of the TIPNIS Sub-Central	Ninth March	28 May 2012
Francisco Semi	Corregidor of Carmen de Coquinal	Ninth March	14 May 2012
Hilario Noto	Corregidor of Villa Fátima	Ninth March	28 April 2012
Laida Nuñez Moy	Vice-President of the TIPNIS Sub-Central	Ninth March	16 May 2012
Marcial Fabricano	Ex-President of CIDOB, ex-President of TIPNIS Sub-Central	Ninth March	12 May 2012
Miguel Ángel Caumol	President of TIM I	Ninth March	11 May 2012
Severo Yuco S.	Corregidor of Santa Clara	Ninth March	08 May 2012
Simon Noza Guaji	Corregidor of Gundonovia	Vigil, La Paz	17 June 2012
Yeni Suárez P.	Vice-President of the Sub-Central of Women of the TIPNIS	Ninth March	27 May 2012

Members of Campaña en Defensa del TIPNIS, Cochabamba

Fernando Machicao	Activist and marcher on the Eighth and Ninth Marches	Office block, Cochabamba	19 January 2012
Helga Cauthin Ayala	Activist and marcher on the Eighth March	Café, Cochabamba	26 January 2012
Reynaldo Flores Díaz	Activist and marcher on the Eighth and Ninth Marches	Bar, Cochabamba	26 January 2012

Members of Campaigns and Organisations, Santa Cruz

Alejandra Crespo	Activist in CDAPMA	Café, Santa Cruz	19 March 2012
Anabel Fernández Ferrier	Activist in CDAPMA	Main Plaza, Santa Cruz	19 March 2012
Angelica Parrado (pseudonym)	Activist in the group Mujeres Autoconvocadas	Café, Santa Cruz	20 March 2012

Huascar Bustillos Cayoja	Activist in CDAPMA	Café, Santa Cruz	17 March 2012
Joaquín A. Terrazas	Activist in CDAPMA	Main Plaza, Santa Cruz	19 March 2012
Rosario Ribera	Activist in the group Mujeres Autoconvocadas	Café, Santa Cruz	17 March 2012
Wara Ysabel (pseudonym)	Online activist and member of CDAPMA	Café, Santa Cruz	16 March 2012
<i>Members of Campaigns and Organisations, La Paz</i>			
Gregory Rafael Beltran Valdivia	Activist in La Coordinadora de Jovenes Independientes	Restaurant, La Paz	07 February 2012
Daniela Leytón Michovich	Human rights activist and founder of Kandire	Café, La Paz	17 June 2012
Helen Álvarez Virreira	Member of Mujeres Creando	Mujeres Creando, La Paz	10 February 2012
Maya Neyrot	Activist in the Coordinadora de la UMSA	Café, La Paz	27 March 2012
Mónica Quijva	Activist in the Marxist group La Chispa	Market, La Paz	12 February 2012
Oscar Huara (pseudonym)	Independent activist and has taken part in the vigil in La Paz	His home, La Paz	06 March 2012
<i>Researchers/Academics/Journalists</i>			
Carlos Siles (pseudonym)	Journalist for Fundación Tierra	Fundación Tierra, La Paz	03 February 2012
Jeremías Ballivián Torrico	Yuracaré who also researches Yuracaré culture	His home, Cochabamba	20 January 2012
Marielle Cauthin	Investigator and journalist of indigenous rights	Restaurant, La Paz	05 February 2012
Marxa Nadia Chávez León	Sociologist and journalist	Café, La Paz	07 February 2012
Pablo Regalsky	Political Geographer and Investigator at CENDA	Café, Cochabamba	09 June 2012
Sarela Paz	Anthropologist and member of the team that completed the EAE	Her home, Cochabamba	09 June 2012
Silvia Molina Carpio	Investigator and writer for FOBOMADE	FOBOMADE, La Paz	13 February 2012
<i>Representatives from Other Affiliated Organisations</i>			
Dora Luz	Leader of Indigenous Council of Trinidad and leader of OMIT	Ninth March	09 May 2012

Henry Rojas	Vice-President of FEJUVE in Cochabamba	Ninth March	06 May 2012
Juan Luis Baltazar Torrico	Member of FEJUVE in El Alto	Ninth March	28 April 2012
Wilman Parada Cholima	Secretary of Culture and Sports for COD in Beni	Ninth March	04 May 2012

Appendix 4. Information Sheet and Consent Form



Información para la Investigación

Anna Laing

Me gustaría invitarle a participar en esta investigación llevada a cabo como parte de un programa de estudios de postgrado por Anna Laing de la Universidad de Glasgow en Escocia, Reino Unido. El estudio se centra en cuestiones de medio ambiente, derechos indígenas y modelos de desarrollo económico en Bolivia. En particular, las preguntas se referirán a sus experiencias individuales de estas cuestiones en relación con la construcción de la carretera Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos por parte del gobierno boliviano. Las preguntas que se llevarán a cabo recogerán su opinión sobre si el camino debe ser construido y su comprensión de los impactos de la carretera en los medios de vida de las personas, el medio ambiente y el futuro de Bolivia. El estudio se interesa por su relación con el gobierno de Bolivia y Evo Morales, si usted cree que la construcción de carreteras ha cambiado su opinión sobre el gobierno, si usted cree que los derechos de los pueblos indígenas y el medio ambiente están siendo escuchados y si usted está involucrado en alguna campaña política a favor o en contra del proyecto de construcción.

La participación en esta investigación es totalmente voluntaria y depende de usted si desea participar. Antes de tomar parte en la investigación, por favor no dude en hacer cualquier pregunta sobre la investigación o lo que se espera de usted. Si usted desea participar en esta investigación, no tiene que contestar todas las preguntas que se hacen y se puede detener la entrevista en cualquier momento. Si desea detener la entrevista, sus respuestas anteriores pueden ser destruidas y no se le pedirá más información.

Si usted da su consentimiento, la entrevista será grabada para que pueda ser escuchado en una etapa posterior como un recordatorio de lo que se discutió. Si usted tiene alguna inquietud sobre esto, por favor no dude en hacerlo conocer o hacer cualquier pregunta a Anna. Si no desea que la entrevista sea grabada, sea libre de decir que no y sus deseos serán respetados. Esta investigación es un estudio de la universidad y la información de la entrevista puede ser utilizada al escribir o hablar sobre la investigación y algunos de los resultados pueden ser publicados. Es su decisión si desea utilizar su nombre real o un pseudónimo en el estudio.

Usted puede decidir no tomar parte en la investigación después de la entrevista, pónganse en contacto con Anna y sus respuestas serán destruidas. Si desea saber más acerca de los resultados de la investigación o si desea hacer cualquier pregunta, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto con Anna en cualquier momento. Para ponerse en contacto puede utilizar la dirección de correo electrónico o número de teléfono móvil que aparecen en la parte inferior de este formulario.

Si a usted desea quejarse sobre cualquier parte de la investigación o comprobar que la investigación sigue los procedimientos éticos oficiales póngase en contacto con la Universidad de Glasgow a través del Comité de Ética Dr. Hester Parr a Hester.Parr @glasgow.ac.uk.

School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ, UK

Mobile number: +44 (0)7581 882 712 (UK); 6534 7004 (Bolivia)

Email address: a.laing.2@research.gla.ac.uk

I would like to invite you to take part in this research conducted as part of a postgraduate study programme by Anna Laing at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, the United Kingdom. The study is focused on issues of environmental, indigenous rights and economic models of development in Bolivia. In particular, questions will concern your individual experiences of these issues in relation to the Bolivian government's construction of the Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos road. Questions will be carried out that ask to hear your opinions on whether the road should be constructed and your understandings of the impacts of the road on the livelihoods of people, the environment and the future of Bolivia. The study is interested in your relationship with the Bolivian government and Evo Morales; whether you feel that the road construction has changed your opinion of the government, whether you feel that the rights of indigenous groups and the environment are being listened to and whether you are involved in any political campaigns for or against the construction project.

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and up to you whether you want to take part. Before taking part in the research please feel free to ask any questions about the research or what is expected of you. If you wish to take part in this research, you do not have to answer all of the questions that are asked and you can stop the interview at any time. If you wish to stop the interview your previous answers can be destroyed and you will not be asked for any more information.

If you give your consent the interview will be recorded so that it can be listened to at a later stage as a reminder of what was discussed. If you have any concerns about this please do not hesitate to let Anna know or ask any questions. If you do not wish to have the interview recorded you are free to state that and your wishes will be respected.

This research is for a university study and information from your interview may be used when writing or discussing the research and some of the findings may be published. It is your decision whether you wish to use your real name or a pseudonym in the study.

You can decide not to take part in the research after the interview by contacting Anna and your answers will be destroyed. If you would like to hear more about the findings of the research or want to ask any further questions please feel free to contact Anna at any time. To get in touch you can use the email address or mobile phone number provided on the bottom of this form.

If you would like to complain about any part of the research or check that the research follows the official ethical procedures please contact the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee through Dr Hester Parr at Hester.Parr@glasgow.ac.uk.

School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ, UK

Mobile number: +44 (0)7581 882 712 (UK); 6534 7004 (Bolivia)

Email address: a.laing.2@research.gla.ac.uk

Nombre del investigador: Anna Laing
Nombre de la institución: The University of Glasgow

Número de participante para este proyecto:

Por favor, lea las siguientes declaraciones y firme con sus iniciales en los cuadros si usted está de acuerdo de dar su consentimiento a la declaración.

Por favor, el cuadro inicial

1. Confirmando que he leído y comprendido la hoja de información para el proyecto anterior y he tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas.
2. Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria y que soy libre de retirarme en cualquier momento y sin necesidad de justificación. *(Por favor, llame al +44 (0) 7581882712 o correo electrónico a.laing.2 @ research.gla.ac.uk si desea retirar su consentimiento).*
3. Me gustaría / no me gustaría *(táchese según su proceder)*, para que mi nombre real sea incluido en cualquier material publicado.
4. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en el proyecto de investigación de arriba.

_____	_____	_____
Nombre del Participante	Fecha	Firma
_____	_____	_____
Nombre del Investigador	Fecha	Firma

Para ser firmado y fechado en presencia del participante. Este documento ahora se mantendrá en un lugar seguro y accesible sólo por el investigador.



Consent Form

Anna Laing

Name of Researcher: Anna Laing
Name of Funder: The University of Glasgow

Participant Number for this project:

Please read the statements below and sign your initials in the boxes if you agree to consent to the statement.

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. *(Please call +44 (0)7581882712 or email a.laing.2@research.gla.ac.uk if you wish to withdraw consent).*
- 3. I would/ would not *(delete as appropriate)* like to have my real name included in any published material.
- 4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant. This form will now be kept in a secure location and accessed only by the researcher.

School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ, UK
 Mobile number: +44 (0)7581 882 712 (UK); 6534 7004 (Bolivia)
 Email address: a.laing.2@research.gla.ac.uk

Appendix 5. A Brief Chronology of State-Indigenous Relations on the Eighth March

15 August: Trinidad	Approximately 700 people depart from Trinidad, the same starting point as the 1990 indigenous march.
19 August: San Ignacio de Moxos	The marchers are detained by a blockade. Evo Morales is in the TIPNIS, discussing the construction of the road with CONISUR.
22 August: Departing San Ignacio de Moxos	The day before a 12-year-old boy, Pedro Noye, dies falling off a truck of supplies. The march travels 120 km in a week, stopping at various indigenous communities. Meanwhile Quintana accuses the march of being funded by USAID and the EU, whilst Evo Morales welcomes Lula de Silva to Bolivia on the 29 August.
01 September: San Borja	The march is warmly welcomed in San Borja. Ten government ministers meet the marchers and authorities and working tables are organised. However, no agreement is reached. Meanwhile the police install themselves around Yucumo. On 03 September, a baby, Juan Uche, dies from an intestinal infection.
24 September: Chaparina	The march is met by Chancellor David Choquehuanca but is detained by a police line. On 24 September the marchers break the police line desperate to find water. A group of women take the Chancellor at the front of the march to guarantee their security.
25 September: San Lorenzo	At 4pm the police surround the camp and gas the marchers. They then load the marchers onto buses. Some go in buses to Rurrenabaque, some to San Borja and some hide in the mountains. Many children are separated from their parents.
30 September: Quiquibey	Five days after the march is reunited and leaves with 1000 marchers.
07 October: Caranavi	The marchers are welcomed like heroes. Support is being gained internationally and vigils are set-up in the main Bolivian cities.
15 October: Chuspipita	The march begins the 4000m ascent to the shelf above La Paz. Many people become ill. The judicial elections occur on 16 October, with many nullifying their vote in support of the TIPNIS.
19 October: La Paz	The march arrives in La Paz to tens of thousands of supporters. People celebrate in Plaza San Francisco. Some marchers set up a vigil outside the presidential palace so that their demands are met.
21 October: La Paz	Negotiations with the government begin. The police block entry to Plaza Murillo to the rest of the marchers and other people.
24 October: Victory!	The announcement of the Ley 180 is made that cancels the road.

Source: Adapted from CIDOB 2012: 6-7.

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