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Re-Producing Territory: Between Resource Nationalism and Indigenous Self-Determination in Bolivia

ABSTRACT

In 2005, indigenous leader Evo Morales was elected president on a dual promise of nationalising extractive industries to direct resource wealth to the country's poor and enacting long-held indigenous demands for a plurinational state. Each project has relied on two contrasting and contested understandings and practices of territorial sovereignty, however. On the one hand, resource nationalism has rested on the state's ability to re-seat and extend national sovereignty over non-renewable natural resources and concomitantly national territory. On the other hand, plurinationalism entails the departure from a liberal multicultural framing of the nation-state toward a model that recognises the territorial self-determination and political autonomy of indigenous nations, including over decisions of extractive development. Resource nationalism has quickly shown its centralising tendencies, as economic concerns have been put before a more radical reorganisation of the modern, colonial model of territorial sovereignty. From an analysis of the territorial geographies articulated by the lowland indigenous movement in the TIPNIS (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré*; Isiboro Sécuré Indigenous Territory and National Park) conflict over a road project – and the potential for hydrocarbon exploitation this could enable – this paper demonstrates that indigenous protestors constantly sought to de- and re-territorialise political space in their efforts for the decolonisation of the nation-state. This engagement not only highlights some of the tensions between resource nationalism and indigenous self-determination, but also illustrates how territorial visions are fashioned within the changing political conditions of Latin America's era of the extractive imperative.

Key words: Territory, Social Movements, Indigenous Rights, Resource Extraction, Latin America, Bolivia

1. Introduction

Theorised as a ‘territorial turn’ (Offen, 2003), Latin America witnessed a region-wide trend toward state recognition of communal property and land rights for Afro-descendent and indigenous peoples during the 1980s and 1990s. Despite policies decentralising territorial control, analyses demonstrated that governments largely used this agrarian reform to strengthen and extend neoliberal governance, however (Bryan, 2012; Hale, 2011; Offen, 2003; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). In Bolivia, the MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*; Movement Towards Socialism) administration led by indigenous president Evo Morales offered to turn this reform into a means of fulfilling indigenous demands for a restructuring of territorial sovereignty through a new plurinational state. Gustafson describes plurinationalism as “a state that merges constitutive sovereignty rooted in the national people (*pueblo*) and indigenous plurality and self-determination” (2009a: 987). At its core, plurinationalism entails the departure from a liberal multicultural framing of the nation-state towards a model that extends rights to multiple nations within one state.

Alongside this plurinational project, the MAS has actively sought to recover state sovereignty within the country’s territorial boundaries through resource nationalism and a development model based on ‘progressive neo-extractivism’ (Gudynas, 2012). The MAS has nationalised the country’s hydrocarbon industries with the aim of breaking free from patterns of foreign exploitation and accruing revenues to benefit the Bolivian populace (Pellegrini, 2016). The geography of Bolivia’s reserves – particularly of natural gas – habitually maps onto communal indigenous territories, however (Perreault, 2013). A number of scholars have argued that the extraction of non-renewable resources, alongside major infrastructural projects, has consequently come at the expense of indigenous rights (Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011; Gustafson, 2011; Hindery, 2013;

Humphreys Bebbington and Bebbington, 2012; Perreault, 2012). Over time, the MAS's pursuit of an extractivist economic model has shown a tendency towards authoritarianism over decisions regarding 'national' territory (Postero, 2017). Consequently, the decolonisation of the nation-state through plurinationalism has not been fully realised. This has resulted in a rise in socio-environmental conflicts, which have often been framed through spatialising claims as a "deeply questioned set of norms tied to *de jure* national sovereignty [has] confronted multiple *de facto* claims for the reconfiguration of the state's territorial order" (Gustafson, 2011: 222).

Within this paper, I examine the case study of an on-going conflict that arose in 2011 when the government announced plans to build a road that would facilitate hydrocarbon exploitation through a national park and legally recognised indigenous territory located in the Amazon Basin, known as the TIPNIS (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré*; Isiboro Sécuré Indigenous Territory and National Park). The TIPNIS conflict has been the most protracted territorial dispute during the three administration periods of the MAS and highlights some of the tensions between resource nationalism and indigenous self-determination in Bolivia (see Fabricant and Postero, 2015; Laing, 2019; McNeish, 2013). Specifically, I determine that during the conflict government officials have shown a growing disregard for the territorial autonomy of indigenous communities – and consequently the plurinational project – in the interest of extending control over natural resources and concomitantly national territory. I contend that progressive neo-extractivism has shown its centralising tendencies and acted instead to reify a modern, colonial version of territorial sovereignty. As such, government discourse and practices have sought to de-legitimise alternative visions of territory, governance and development.

In turn, the lowland indigenous movement spearheaded by CIDOB (Indigenous Confederation of the Bolivian East, Chaco and Amazon; Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonía de Bolivia) has sought to reframe 'spatial imaginaries' (see Welford, 2004) of territory in their efforts for self-determination over the lands they inhabit. Territory operates as the 'articulating demand' – the demand through which other claims (i.e. to sovereignty, autonomy, development,

and democracy) are fulfilled. The TIPNIS conflict illustrates how indigenous territorial visions are fashioned by changing conditions, namely international and national legal frameworks, pre- and post-colonial experiences of territorial ties and the dispossession of land and resources, particularly through extractive-led development.

This paper begins by exploring literatures on relational territoriality and suggests that the territorial spatialities of indigenous movements are often interwoven with wider dynamics of changing geo-political landscapes. I then consider the advancements, challenges and contradictions within the Bolivian government's attempts to re-seat territorial sovereignty through a development model based on progressive neo-extractivism. Following this, I introduce the TIPNIS conflict and take a chronological journey to detail how specific spaces of political contention were generative of emerging territorial imaginaries. The conclusion points to the need for a re-conceptualisation of the links between territory, indigeneity and extractivism. It illustrates that indigenous movements and governments articulate their own territorial discourses and practices. These are not created in a vacuum, but are constantly re-produced within the spaces of changing state-indigenous relations.

The empirical material for this paper draws on ethnographic research conducted between September 2011 and June 2012 to analyse the labour of contentious politics by the indigenous movement in defence of the TIPNIS. Specifically, the fieldwork consisted of participant observation, alongside interviews and document analysis.ⁱ This involved participation in activist meetings, as well as two indigenous protest marches to La Paz (including a six week stint on the second of these). This was supplemented with 55 semi-structured interviews with indigenous representatives of CIDOB, TIPNIS community leaders, indigenous rights activists and workers of relevant non-governmental organisations. Document analysis of campaign literature, declarations from the marches and newspaper articles also provided insight into the discourses of protest. This ethnographic data offers a unique perspective from which to examine and document the claims and demands of the indigenous marchers, as well as showing how these have been shaped as extractivism has intensified during the conflict.

2. Territory, indigeneity, extractivism

Territory – usually taken to refer to the political jurisdiction and occupation of space – is a central theme for political geography. Mainstream theories define territory as a bounded area of space where nation-states exercise political sovereignty (see Paasi, 2003). Yet, geographical analyses have critiqued dominant theory premised on this Westphalian model of demarcated sovereign nation-states (see Agnew, 2005; Anderson, 1996). Agnew (1994) coined the ‘territorial trap’ to highlight the mistaken assumption that the spatialities of sovereign power can be securely mapped onto state territory. Geographers have begun instead to rethink territory as a relational, on-going and contested process (Agnew and Oslender, 2013; Bryan, 2012; Elden, 2013; Painter, 2010). Terms such as ‘territory-effect’ (Painter, 2010), ‘overlapping territorialities’ (Agnew and Oslender, 2013) and ‘alter-territorialities’ (Courtheyn, 2018) have been offered to better encapsulate an understanding of territory as a product of networked relations, as well as to appreciate that different sources of territorial authority can exist within the nation-state.

Geographers, particularly from Latin America, have further sought to interrogate the idea of the modern, colonial idea of territory (see Halvorsen, 2018). These attempts to develop a more expansive, inclusive and open definition of territory look to the ways in which grassroots social movements challenge state territorial logics, generating their own respective counter-hegemonic territorialities (Agnew and Oslender, 2013; Haesbaert, 2004, 2013; Fernandes, 2005; Porto Gonçalves, 2001). The Brazilian geographer Rogério Haesbaert offers the term ‘multi-territoriality’ in recognition that territory “is not just a ‘state question’” as “struggles/social practices themselves continually remake the concept of territory” (2013: 148). By adopting Brazilian geographer Carlos Walter Porto Gonçalves’s (2001) triad of territory-territorialisation-territorialities, we can understand territory as a continual and contested process whereby a number of territorial projects can exist in the same physical location. Contentious politics is used to confront hegemonic forms of

territorial power and control and open space for a plurality of alternative understandings of how to organise territory. This results in a constant process of de- and re-territorialisation (Haesbaert, 2004).

For many social movements, territory is the articulating demand for a range of interrelated claims. Bernardo Fernandes offers the term ‘socio-territorial movements’ (2005: 24) to describe how the collective identity of a movement is intertwined with the construction of territorial imaginaries. For indigenous communities, territory is often understood as the materialisation of their unique relationship to a social and natural space interwoven with symbolic content. As such, territory evokes and sustains indigenous ontologies that recognise the interconnectedness of humans with ‘other-than-human beings’ (de la Cadena, 2015), act as ‘living entities with memories’ (Ulloa, 2012) and even provide the ‘definition of life itself’ (Escobar, 2008). Fundamentally then, indigenous movements offer an alternative vision of territory as a “place of difference, of natural/socio-cultural alterity” (Porto Gonçalves, 2001: 93). For these communities the distinction between land and territory is paramount. Agrarian reforms toward land redistribution often recognise land as a means of production under conventional property and ownership rights of a demarcated space. Although indigenous communities recognise the importance of land for maintaining subsistence livelihoods, territory is also of critical importance as a space for the exercise of autonomy and for the reproduction of a collective subject (Escobar, 2008; Reyes and Kaufman, 2011). Indigenous territorialities therefore serve to challenge the modern, colonial system by asserting an alternative territoriality based on counter forms of power, identity and control (Offen, 2003). Re-territorialisation efforts become part of the cartographies of indigenous power, intimately bound up with struggles over identity and culture (Mamani Ramírez, 2011).

Indeed, Latin American indigenous movements have been at the forefront of actively challenging and reshaping the centralised territorial logic of the Westphalian state model (Becker, 2011; Gustafson, 2009a; Jameson, 2011). In many cases, indigenous organisations have successfully utilised the language of ‘rights’ to overturn assimilationist development policies and

push for greater recognition and access to state power (Agnew and Oslender, 2013; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005). Both the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 of 1989 and the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 recognise the centrality of territory for the social reproduction of indigenous peoples, as well as the right to self-determination and autonomy in affairs internal to their communities. Indigenous movements therefore played a significant role in the ‘territorial turn’ (Offen, 2003) towards state recognition of collective property rights and self-governance.

Despite significant advancements, there has only been a partial vindication of indigenous territorial claims, however. Territorial autonomy has been secured through a reliance on state mechanisms of legal constitutional rights and mapping indigenous land titles, a contradictory process of seeking autonomy from both *within* and *from* the state (Porto Gonçalves, 2016). Charles Hale (2004) developed the concept of the ‘*indio permitido*’ (authorised Indian) to describe how the reforms of neoliberal multiculturalism during the 1980s and 90s granted rights within clearly defined limits that determined what can and cannot be claimed, as well as making assertions over what it is to be legitimately and authentically indigenous. Securing territorial rights through indigenous counter-mapping – the use of a colonial tool for an anti-colonial struggle – has also served to re-inscribe modern, colonial forms of territorial control and property rights (Anthias, 2017; Bryan and Wood, 2015; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). These boundary-making activities can act to paradoxically strengthen state control over indigenous lands as they necessarily produce an abstraction of indigenous peoples’ lived spatialities (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012; Sletto, 2009).

Post-neoliberal reforms since the turn of the century have also fallen short of indigenous claims to politico-territorial autonomy (Anthias, 2017; Garcés, 2011; Tockman and Cameron, 2014). From the late 1990s, indigenous movements played a significant role in the revolutionary wave of the now waning ‘pink tide’ that brought leftist governments to power (Bull, 2013). In some countries, this shift also instigated recognition of long-held indigenous calls for plurinationalism, legal pluralism, territorial autonomy and collective rights, particularly through new constitutional texts in

Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009). There has been a significant disjuncture between discourse and practice, however (Kröger and Lalander, 2016). Undoubtedly, one of the central barriers to a deeper decolonisation of the nation-state is ‘progressive neo-extractivism’ (Gudynas, 2012), a development model that gains popular support by nationalising extractive industries and redistributing state revenues. This has created an ‘extractive imperative’, where extractivism begins to “enjoy teleological primacy” (Arsel, Hogenboom and Pellegrini, 2016: 881) since it generates the primary source of funds for social policy expenditures. Extractive-led development overrides other concerns, including the territorial sovereignties of indigenous communities, in the interest of the nation as a whole (Pellegrini and Ribera-Arismendi, 2012; Pellegrini, 2016). Resource nationalism consequently legitimises the expansion of extraction frontiers, shuts down alternative frames of reference and shapes the nature of contentious politics (Hope, 2016; Pellegrini, 2016). A growing body of literature examines the role of neo-extractivism for re-working the dynamics between nation, territoriality and citizenship (Lu et al, 2016; Sawyer, 2004; Valdivia, 2008). This recognises the inherent relationship between resource-making and state-making activities (see Bridge, 2014), particularly in Latin America where hydrocarbon and mineral resources have come to figure centrally in the imaginative geographies of the nation (Pellegrini, 2018; Perreault and Valdivia, 2010). However, as Penelope Anthias explains, “the implications for indigenous territorial projects remains underexplored” (2018: 136). Within this paper, I contribute to understandings of the relationship between territory, indigeneity and extractivism through an analysis of how the processes of re-seating territorial sovereignty in Bolivia, particularly through resource nationalism, has impacted on indigenous peoples’ territorial imaginaries and politics of re-territorialisation.

3. Re-seating territorial sovereignty in Bolivia

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 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. (President Morales' inaugural speech in La Paz, 22 January 2006)

In 2005, Morales became the first indigenous president of Bolivia under the MAS. This social-movement-turned-multisectoral political party, had its roots in the Unity Pact; a national alliance among the country's five principal peasant and indigenous grassroots movements, including CIDOB and the highland indigenous organisation CONAMAQ (National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qollasuyu; Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyo). Despite fragmentary objectives, the Pact had a united vision to re-found the country through a Constituent Assembly process (2006-2007). The 2009 constitution renamed the Republic the 'Plurinational State of Bolivia' fulfilling long-held demands by indigenous movements, of which CIDOB had been at the forefront of political campaigning. The text declares 'decolonisation' to be the function of the new plurinational state (Art. 9, Gobierno de Bolivia, 2009) and expressly grants indigenous autonomy and self-determination through the designation of spaces known as TIOCS (Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino; Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Territories), formerly TCOs (Tierras Comunitarias de Origen; First Nations or 'Original' Communal Lands). Indigenous peoples inhabiting these demarcated lands are granted the authority to apply norms administered through their own representational structures and to define their own development. In respect to resource use and control, the text also permits the right to exploit renewable natural resources, to benefit from the exploitation of non-renewable resources and to prior and informed consultation in circumstances where development projects could impact indigenous communities (Art. 403, Gobierno de Bolivia, 2009). Autonomous territorialisation was later reaffirmed through the 2010 Framework Law for Autonomies and Decentralisation, which established regulations for incorporating territorial entities called Indigenous First People's Peasant Autonomies (Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesinas; AIOCs) into the state architecture. This territorial shift is part of a wider decolonial trajectory aimed at overturning the historic marginalisation and political exclusion of Bolivia's indigenous populations (Howard, 2010).

Plurinationalism has been concurrent with the project to re-seat national sovereignty over resources located within the country's boundaries, alongside attempts to reclaim government decision-making powers from foreign interests and national elites. Most notably, substantial gains were made by nationalising the hydrocarbons industry in 2006 under Decree 28701, which stated that nationalisation would "reclaim our natural riches as a fundamental base to recuperate our sovereignty" (cited in Haarstad 2009: 178). Due to an increase in taxation rents, the government saw a dramatic rise in funds from US \$287 million in 2004 to US \$1.572 billion in 2007 (cited in Kaup, 2010). These revenues have been used to enact a number of social welfare programmes that redistribute incomes to the poorer sectors of the population (Kohl and Farthing, 2012). In addition, the MAS expelled transnational actors considered a threat to the country's self-determination and national sovereignty, including the US Ambassador and officials of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (Farthing and Kohl, 2014; Kohl and Bresnahan, 2010).

The foundations for these developments were laid during the insurrectionary cycle of 2000-2005 when protests in the 'Water and Gas Wars' managed to overthrow two presidents and oust a transnational corporation in an upsurge of popular resistance to neoliberal hegemony (Crabtree, 2005; Dangl, 2007; Kohl and Farthing, 2006). Nationalisation fulfilled popular demands for resource sovereignty and overturned the neoliberal policies implemented as part of the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s-90s (Spronk and Webber, 2007; Postero, 2010). Further, anti-US sentiment was fostered due to the US-financed 'War on Drugs' and the 'Zero Coca' eradication policy in Bolivia (Crabtree, 2005; Dangl, 2007; Kohl, 2006). Ultimately, the violent repression of local resistance in the main coca growing area of the Chapare – which overlaps the TIPNIS – resulted in the militarisation of *cocaleros* (coca growing peasants), who became a formidable political force under their leader Evo Morales (Postero, 2010). The strength of anti-colonial and anti-imperial political identities has also been informed by a five-hundred-year history of disenfranchisement of the majority peasant and indigenous populations (see Klein, 1992).

Nonetheless, the MAS administration's pursuit of progressive neo-extractivism sits uneasily alongside the plurinational project. The government's brand of resource nationalism has extended the extraction frontier into so-called 'non-traditional' areas, many of which map directly onto indigenous territories (Pellegrini and Ribera-Arismendi, 2012; also see Perreault, 2013). A number of studies have shown that there is a substantial gap between *de jure* and *de facto* indigenous rights leading to territorial conflicts (Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011; Gustafson, 2011; Kohl and Farthing, 2012). In many cases, conflicts arise because of failures by the government to abide by the free, prior and informed consent procedures with indigenous communities as outlined in the constitution and under Supreme Decree No. 29033 (Haarstad and Campero, 2011; Radhuber, 2012). There is also a deep tension between the government's revolutionary social movement roots and the reformist project of liberal state-building by the MAS (Regalsky, 2010; Webber, 2011). As Nancy Postero (2017) has detailed, there has been a distinct shift in the political practice and discourse of the government over time leading to falling expectations of radical change. At the start, "indigenous activists held more power in the MAS alliance and were able to push forward policies intended to decolonize the state and institute indigenous rights", but this soon "gave way to a development agenda focused on resource exploitation and centralized state power" (Postero, 2017: 33). Resource nationalism seemingly supersedes alternative understandings of territoriality, governance and development postulated by many indigenous peoples. As Bridge remarks, "[r]esource making activities are fundamentally matters of territorialization – the expression of social power in a geographical form" (2011: 825). Indeed, changes to the territorial order in Bolivia have sparked the construction and articulation of new territorial claims, conflicts and struggle. This is exemplified by the TIPNIS conflict.

4. The TIPNIS conflict

On 15th August 2011, approximately 800 indigenous peoples departed from Trinidad in the

Amazonian region on a protest march named ‘for the Defence of the TIPNIS, for Life, for Dignity and for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’. The marchers were resisting the government’s plans to build a road through the Isiboro Sécre Indigenous Territory and National Park. The TIPNIS is a triangular piece of land covering 1.2 million hectares – about the size of Jamaica – which lies across the departmental boundaries of Cochabamba and Beni. The area was declared a national park in 1965 and was legally recognised as an indigenous territory home to the Mojeño, Yuracaré and Chimane peoples in 1990. This was as a result of the March for Territory and Dignity, which became an important point of reference in Bolivia and for indigenous movements in the Amazon Basin (see Canessa, 2006; Postero, 2007; Yashar, 2005). This march was instigated by CIDOB, which was founded in 1982 to unite diverse 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. As Canessa notes, despite a longer history of political organisation in highland communities, it was the lowlands “that produced the most dramatic and powerful example of indigenous mobilisation in the 1990s” (2006: 246). CIDOB arose in a global climate of ‘indigenism’ that sought to recognise indigenous rights under international frameworks (Brysk, 2000). In addition, CIDOB shaped and was shaped by neoliberal multicultural reforms during the 1990s that recognised the multi-ethnic nature of Latin American societies (Van Cott, 2000; Sieder, 2002). From the outset, demands have revolved around the concept of territory, which “became an icon of indigenous-state relations” (Postero, 2007: 49). Since 1990, a number of additional marches have been organised to push for greater territorial rights and have included demands for the reconstitution of the state through plurinationalism, the participation of indigenous peoples at all levels of government, the recognition of indigenous autonomy, the legal recognition of decision-making powers over natural resources located within indigenous territories and the acceleration of the titling process for TCOs (CIDOB, 2012).

The decision to undertake a march for the defence of the TIPNIS (the eighth indigenous march of its kind) following the route of the 1990 march was not taken lightly, however. Although TIPNIS

community leaders declared a state of emergency in May 2010, CIDOB representatives were initially reluctant to take part in organised resistance to a state-sanctioned project. As an important faction in the Unity Pact that had brought Morales to power, loyalty lay with the MAS administration. Nonetheless, CIDOB leaders had become increasingly frustrated with the government over the preferential treatment of some sectors over others (Laing, 2012). Rosa Chao, the then President of Cochabamba's regional branch of CIDOB, explained,

The Unity Pact was created when they were going to construct the political constitution of the state because there was a need. They all had the same vision – to have a new constitution where all sectors are participating that make this country Bolivian. But, the pact has not functioned because the five confederations have different visions. Two [CIDOB and CONAMAQ] are the same, but three want to be very different and they serve their own interests and not the interests of these two organisations 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. (personal interview, 20th January 2012)

The government had significantly departed from some of the platforms central to the indigenous movement, for instance by preventing demands for veto power over the extraction of non-renewable resources within indigenous territories, making the free and prior consultation process non-binding and designing heavily restrictive administrative requirements for gaining indigenous autonomy status (see Garcés, 2011; Tockman and Cameron, 2014, Tockman, 2016). This political turnabout is not surprising given that as leader of the *cocalero* movement Morales had been schooled in union politics, rather than indigenous rights (Gustafson, 2009b). In an interview in 2011, Morales even declared, “I never considered myself to be the first indigenous president, but the first trade-unionist president” (Página Siete, 2011). The announcement of the TIPNIS road was seen as another rescinded promise to protect indigenous rights, particularly as the government failed

to abide by the procedures for free, prior and informed consent. On 29th June 2011, President Morales made his feelings clear stating, “whether they want it or not, we are going to build this road” (Los Tiempos, 2011). Further, even though government discourse established the need to construct the road to integrate the eastern and western flanks of Bolivia, the fact that it would cut through the heart of the national park hinted at other motivations (see McNeish, 2013). Notably, the road would facilitate the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the TIPNIS (Figure 1), of which 17.7 per cent of the territory was given under concession in 2008 during the Morales administration (CEDLA, 2012). For these reasons, the decision was eventually taken to organise the TIPNIS march and in late 2011 – when the conflict was at its peak – CIDOB abandoned the Unity Pact altogether.

Figure 1. Map of the Hydrocarbon Concessions in the TIPNIS

Source: Created for this article based on public data from CEDIB (2015).

If there were ever any doubts over the MAS’s loyalties, these were revealed on 25th September

2011, when the government gave orders for a police raid on the TIPNIS march in an event known as ‘La Chaparina’. The government’s use of violent force “sparked both a national political crisis and debate about the validity of the government’s credentials as a progressive government that supports indigenous rights” (McNeish, 2013: 221). Moreover, the government was striking at one of the most important struggles of reference in Bolivia for indigenous politics during the MAS administration. Undeterred, after just five days the marchers regrouped and continued their journey arriving in La Paz on 24th October to streets lined with tens of thousands of supporters. Public pressure subsequently forced the government to announce Law No. 180 that halted the construction of the road. This victory did not last long, however, as a pro-road counter-march was conducted by peasant sectors affiliated with the government and Law No. 222 was promulgated in February 2012 that re-opened the possibility of the road subject to a consultation with inhabitants of the TIPNIS. In response, CIDOB convoked a second march that took place between 27 April and 27 June. This march was named ‘for the 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. A consultation was carried out in the latter half of 2012 and the government declared that consent had been gained from the TIPNIS communities. Since then, the state has actively sought to weaken social resistance to hydrocarbon projects by demobilising political movements whose proposals challenge extractive development. For instance, in 2012 MAS supporters within CIDOB decried their elected officials forcing the organisation to split with the legitimate authorities calling themselves the ‘*CIDOB orgánica*’ (organic CIDOB). The conflict has since entered into a more dormant phase, but was put back on the agenda after the promulgation of a new law in August 2017. In what follows, I will explore how changing dynamics between the state, peasant sectors and the indigenous movement shaped emerging forms of territoriality during the height of the conflict.

4.1 The TIPNIS marches: consolidating an ethno-territorial movement

The TIPNIS marches – hereafter referred to as the Eighth and Ninth Marches – served as a vehicle for the re-production of collective identity ties between the geographically separated ethnic nations of the lowlands, as well as for legitimising claims for territorial self-determination and political autonomy. Participants came together through the spatial mingling of bodies through practices such as eating, sleeping, washing, cooking, praying, meeting and walking. Further, identification under a single indigenous label presented a visibly united front in opposition to the road project to Bolivian society (Figure 2). Significantly, the marches also consolidated solidarities between CIDOB and CONAMAQ. Founded in 1997, the highland indigenous organisation was established to gain land titles for traditional *ayllu* communities based on collective kinship and territorial affiliations (Kohl and Farthing, 2011). 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). Not only did CONAMAQ participate in the marches from a position of solidarity, but also to protect indigenous communities in the highlands that had been experiencing similar resource conflicts. Resistance to the road project was therefore secondary to the wider aim of protecting all indigenous territories threatened by resource nationalism. Indeed, a few months after CIDOB, the highland indigenous organisation also decided to abandon the Unity Pact.

Figure 2. Banners of Indigenous Organisations on the Ninth March

Source: Author's photograph.

Like previous marches, the concept of 'territory' acted as the articulating framework for the collective demands of the lowland and highland indigenous movements. The following interview quotes demonstrate territorial imaginaries of participants on the Eighth and Ninth Marches:

A titled territory [is] where no one will bother us, where they live in harmony with nature, where they have self-determination within that territory, their own authorities, their own government. (Tomás Candia, Secretary of 'Juventudes' [Youths] of CIDOB, 2nd June 2012)

[Territory] is where, in the first place, you can decide the form of life that you want. (Adolfo Chávez, President of CIDOB, 27th May 2012)

It's self-determination, it's space, it's the cosmos itself. (TIPNIS inhabitant and advisor to CIDOB, 19th March 2012)

Historically, indigenous peoples have belonged to them [territories]. It is where we live in common and from where we live, we eat, we do everything. The defence is important for that reason – because the issue of constructing roads and of the access of other people, it is ethnocide. For us, it is death. (Rafael Quispe, former President of CONAMAQ, 29th April 2012)

Territorial rights were considered an integral component of ensuring political sovereignty over the lands in which indigenous peoples inhabit, as well as being integral for the wellbeing of indigenous populations, by protecting livelihood patterns and forms of social, cultural and spiritual reproduction. Undoubtedly, Westphalian definitions of territory are insufficient to capture these understandings since they speak to broader decolonial struggles for indigenous self-determination and the preservation of alternative ways of life and being (Escobar, 2008; Porto Gonçalves, 2001). By enacting an ‘alter-territoriality’ (Courtheyn, 2018), the marchers were legitimising the cultural and political right to difference.

These territorial imaginaries are not formed in a vacuum, however, as plurinationalism has provided new opportunities for ethno-territorial movements to flex their political muscles. Indigenous marchers consistently referenced the 2009 constitution, often carrying a pocket version from which to cite from in meetings and when making speeches. A participant on the Eighth March explained,

The state has never respected the organisational requests and the autonomous structures within indigenous communities, in TCOs. In the political constitution it clearly established that indigenous autonomies are autonomous and can make their own decisions. So, that is why we went [on the Eighth March] too. Because if they [the government] enter the TIPNIS, all TCOs are in danger. (personal interview, 20th January 2012)

Unlike previous marches, many of the TIPNIS demands were not about making new claims on the state but rather acted to re-assert the political rights already granted under the constitution. The lowland indigenous movement re-affirmed their stipulations for self-determination as evidenced in the sixteen demands of the Eighth March, which included the right to consultation and participation in all hydrocarbon and development projects affecting indigenous peoples. Ultimately, organised resistance was successful at temporarily halting the construction of the road under Law No. 180 that established the TIPNIS as '*intangible*' (untouchable), thereby setting a precedent for the protection of other indigenous territories across Bolivia at a time when the extractive imperative was increasingly driving government policy and discourse.

4.2 Pro-highway counter-march: downgrading territory

On 20th December 2011, a pro-highway counter-march was instigated by the Indigenous Council of the South (Consejo Indígena del Sur; CONISUR), a key base of support for the MAS administration. The day after the counter-march arrived into La Paz, Vice President García Linera announced that the Plurinational Legislative Assembly would sit down with CONISUR and draft a new law. On 1st February, Law No. 222 was promulgated that re-opened the possibility of the road subject to a consultation with TIPNIS inhabitants. Significantly, this organisation principally represents communities located in Polygon 7, an area that is part of the national park but outside of the TCO title (Figure 1). This legal titling was made concrete through a process of land cleansing in 1997, which at the same time established a '*linea roja*' (red line) separating the TCO from a colonised area predominantly inhabited by peasant farmers of highland Aymara and Quechua origin. For most of these migratory peasants, livelihoods have relied on the cultivation of coca resulting in a rapid growth of this sector in the 1980s, as well as the conversion of the Chapare into the biggest coca producing area of Bolivia (Healy, 1991). The 2012 census revealed that over

13,000 agricultural settlers occupied Polygon 7, compared with just over 3,000 indigenous peoples inhabiting the TIPNIS TCO (Fundación Tierra, 2017).

To be sure, the conflict has served to pit highland ‘*colonos*’ (colonists or settlers) and lowland indigenous peoples against one another (Fabricant and Postero, 2015). Fractures between indigenous and peasant sectors have become increasingly evident during the MAS administration as agrarian reforms have acted to “generate unintended consequences in terms of conflict” (Fontana, 2014: 297). As Farthing and Kohl explain, many of these tensions exist due to different relationships to land and territory, since “[h]ighland migrants to the lowlands, now called *interculturales*, often aspire to individual ownership, whereas lowland indigenous groups usually seek communally controlled territories” (2014: 114). Coca growers cultivate individual plots of land and have had to expand their areas of production due to the depletion of soil nutrients (Grisaffi, 2010). As a result, coca cultivation has resulted in large-scale deforestation and the illegal occupation of the southern part of the TIPNIS. CONISUR representatives – and those on the pro-road march – legitimised this accumulation by arguing that indigenous communities have unequal access to large tracts of land by comparison.

This feeds into rhetoric by MAS leaders that has sought to downgrade the concept of ‘territory’ to ‘land’. In a book written by Vice President García Linera, he noted that whilst lowland indigenous peoples represent just three per cent of the indigenous population they have acquired titles to more than 11 million hectares of land. The granting of TCO titles was therefore 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” (2011: 50). 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 resource nationalism, particularly by equating their own brand of developmentalism with patriotism and anti-imperialism. Perreault and Valdivia state that in “countries with economically productive hydrocarbon and mineral sectors, *la Patria* [fatherland] 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 imaginary was evidenced on 24th September 2011 – one day before the violent intervention on the Eighth March – when Marcos Farfán, then Deputy Minister of the Government, gave a speech to the police in which he declared, “what we need to do is consolidate our sovereignty as a nation. To be sovereign, we must be productive, rich as a nation, and to be rich we need to produce and industrialise our country” (Fundación Solón, 2017). Clearly, minority indigenous rights to territory were seen as secondary to majority rights to share in resource rents. These discourses consequently worked to negate the wider cultural and political connotations of indigenous territories under a liberal conception of land as a means of production, with implications for the accumulation of land for individual and state ownership.

4.3 The Cumbre: distinguishing territory from land

In a counter-move, the indigenous movement sought to distinguish ‘territory’ from ‘land’. The struggles in defence of the TIPNIS moulded a politics of indigeneity in which the authenticity of peasant groups as sharing an indigenous lineage was called into question. For instance, a three-day meeting in December 2011 held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra named the *Cumbre* (Summit)ⁱⁱ was organised by CIDOB to discuss the forthcoming strategies of the lowland indigenous movement. This acted as a counter sphere to a national summit organised by the government between 12th and 14th December entitled the First Plurinational Meeting to Deepen Change, which both CIDOB and CONAMAQ refused to participate in. The counter-summit was organised around a number of working tables, such as: geopolitics; justice; ecology and the environment; the economy; and platforms of the Eighth March. I sat in on the table ‘*tierra, territorio y patria*’ (land, territory and fatherland) for two days. This provided a 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 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.

This fashioning of essentialist ethnic identities served to negate the authenticity of indigenous peoples who live outside of collective territories, including coca growing communities, peasant farmers and urban indigenous populations:

Having land is not the same as having territory. Anyone can have land. We can acquire land in a city, in a town, but not a territory because a territory encompasses more. For us, it is our *casa grande* (big house) where we have meat, we have fish, we have rice, bananas and we use it for subsistence. That is the food of our family, and it is the *vivir bien* (living well) that the government preaches. Living with nature, conserving nature. So for us the territory is very important. [...] The government does not know the lowland indigenous peoples well and thinks that territory is the same as land, because the Andes have always had their farms, their plots and have been individual owners, acquiring an individual title. (Rosa Chao, regional leader of CIDOB, 20th January 2012)

The peasants have always been landowners. They have never demanded, never thought to demand, a collective territory. (Community leader of the TIPNIS, 28th April 2012)

To some indigenous leaders, self-identified indigeneity is therefore deemed insufficient since authenticity is premised on a person’s belonging within a communal indigenous territory. This feeds into long-standing claims by indigenous rights movements in Latin America that have critiqued agrarian movements’ emphasis on land as a means of production, which has historically acted to preclude entitlements by indigenous movements in less agrarian settings such as the Amazon Basin (see Bryan and Wood, 2015; Escobar, 2008; Reyes and Kaufman, 2011). The current emphasis by the state on territory as land has not only served to deepen tensions between the

indigenous-peasant alliance of the Unity Pact, but it has also served to re-instate discourses of political and cultural alterity by the indigenous movement. Some indigenous representatives even claimed that peasant sectors had ‘lost’ their indigeneity,

I think that the communities in the polygon are losing [their indigeneity], because they have now got another vision, another culture, of colonisation, to be a proprietary owner. It is not the same as being collective. (Emilio Noza, President of the Sécure Sub-central, 9th May 2012).

It is not only the face that can define who is an indigenous person. It is the world-vision. The indigenous see a future based on *buen vivir* (good living), respect of *madre tierra* (mother earth). Evo Morales has an indigenous face, [but] a capitalist mentality. Capitalism is based on individualism, the indigenous are based on community. The *cocalero* has an individualistic understanding, so you cannot tell me that they are indigenous. They are individualistic, they seek material wealth. (Rafael Quispe, 29th April 2012).

Indigenous territoriality 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, indigenous movement leaders made reference to the concept of the *estructura orgánica* (organic structure), a shared structure of governance that acts as a mechanism hindering the concentration of power by dispersing power through the social body. In an interview with a TIPNIS community leader, he likened centralised forms of decision-making to a ‘body without limbs’ (personal interview, 3rd May 2012). 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, a regional leader of CIDOB, had his position withdrawn when he signed agreements with the government without the knowledge of the bases. 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. Equally, the prohibition of

individual property or individual decisions over resource exploitation is said to act as a social mechanism that preserves local ecosystems and biodiversity. A TIPNIS inhabitant explained,

We are the perfect environmentalists in the sense that we keep the mountain as virgin. If we do a comparison between the colonised area and the TCO, then we can see clearly that the colonised area has nothing. There are just *chacos* [a clear and flat place in the vicinity of villages for the cultivation of rice, coffee, tobacco and sugar cane]. The settlers even fight over a tree, while we do not. We still have wealth, in the forests, in nature. (personal interview, 20th January 2011)

Although the idea of the ‘ecologically noble savage’ has been widely contested within academic literature (Diamond, 1986; Krech, 1999), the lowland indigenous movement legitimised political demands through this strategic essentialism (see Laing, 2015). Nonetheless, these essentialisms conform to understandings of authentic indigeneity by the government as written into the constitution. As Bolivian subaltern theorist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui explains, state-sanctioned indigenous territories act to create stereotypes that “combines the idea of a continual territorial occupation, invariably rural, with a range of ethnic and cultural traits” that act to categorise and determine the behaviours of indigenous peoples and create “scenarios for an almost theatrical display of alterity” (2012: 99). These discourses of authentic indigeneity are also politically divisive since they deny the historical experiences of peasant sectors that have been subject to accumulation through dispossession, in many cases losing their ties to ancestral territories.

4.4 From the loma santa to the casa grande: bounding territory

The protest marches formed part of a longer history of territorial struggle for indigenous communities of the TIPNIS. Specifically, the place-based millenarian movement ‘*en busca de la loma santa*’ (in search of the holy hill) was re-articulated in a pan-indigenous movement for the

recognition of indigenous territory in lowland Bolivia (see Laing, 2019). The millenarian movements in search of the '*loma santa*' were a series of migrations by the Mojeño peoples starting in 1887 from ex-Jesuit settlements in the Beni into the surrounding forests, including the TIPNIS. The migrations sought a religious space – the holy hill – free from the strictures of postcolonial governmentality. Movements sought a place of retreat away from the '*carayana*' populations; a lowland indigenous term for white people or outsiders (Lehm Ardaya, 1999; Riester and Fischerman, 1976). These migrations in search of the *loma santa* continued until the 1990s as a result of the increasing colonisation of lands, namely due to logging, cattle ranching and settler expansion (Yashar, 2005). Oral testimonies and collective memories of these movements informed the political repertoires and cultural terrains of resistance in the TIPNIS conflict, since many of the indigenous protestors were descendants of a second generation of later 1950s-1980s migrations (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Banner of the Eighth March 'For Life, for Indigenous Rights and for the Environment (the Holy Hill)'

Source: Reproduced with permission of Dario Kenner.

Some of the interviewees on the Ninth March explained that this concept – instilled with religious and symbolic meaning – had been relegated during the course of the conflict in favour of another more inclusive concept, the '*casa grande*' (big house). The *casa grande* is conceived of as a space where indigenous people live under one roof, as an extended family without individual ownership of resources:

The *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 united, the communities. (TIPNIS community leader, 14th May 2012).

The notion of the *casa grande* also denotes territorial self-determination:

The government cannot enter my *casa grande* without knocking at the door. The government wants to enter [our territories] by using their machetes, their pillories, their hoes to open another door on a different side. (Fidel Condori, Mallku of CONAMAQ, 7th May 2012).

We call it a '*casa*' because a *casa* is locked and has a key. Territory is the same, because it's enclosed. (Wilma Mendoza, leader of a regional branch of CIDOB, 11th May 2012).

If the government should access our territories, it should pass through the door. If not, they are like a thief (Community leader of the TIPNIS; 14th May 2012).

This discourse of the '*casa grande*' was constructed through the TIPNIS conflict. As such, a TIPNIS community leader on the Ninth March explained that,

Our ancestors, for example, called it [the TIPNIS] a '*loma santa*', a land where no one inhabited it yet, where there was so many animals, wilderness, fish. But now, with the passing of last year, it is called a territory, a collective territory. (personal interview, 28th April 2012)

Shifting to a political discourse based on territory has been integral for uniting lowland indigenous peoples and seeking legal protection by conforming to the national and international mechanisms of indigenous rights. It must be acknowledged, however, that whilst territory and the *casa grande* signifies the legal recognition of communal land as limited and bounded areas of national space, the millenarian movements sought an unlimited space and a utopian promised land outside of external jurisdiction (Canedo Vásquez, 2011) Jeremías Ballivián Torrico, a participant in the Eighth March, stated,

Before, there were no limits. So, why was a limit made? Because in some ways we need a territory where we can live. Because the people colonised [the TIPNIS] somehow and other businesses have been entering and the forests have been increasingly disintegrating and becoming smaller (personal interview, 20 January 2011)

Boundaries work to perpetuate forms of ownership, control and exclusion that may be incompatible with indigenous value systems, however (Sletto, 2009). The process of collective indigenous land titling has the advantage of securing rights and security for indigenous peoples, but may paradoxically act to extend the state's arm of governance in areas that have historically had little state interaction and intervention (Bryan, 2011; Erazo, 2013; Hale, 2011; Yashar, 2005). Anthias and Radcliffe 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" (2015: 262). The contemporary use and value of the memories and narratives of indigenous resistance in the search for the *loma santa* were appropriated, adopted and reinvented through the language of

indigenous rights. Bounding territory could inadvertently close down potential for greater territorial sovereignty, however. It is for this reason that Reyes and Kaufman (2011) suggest that the Zapatista movement chose not to seek recognition under the territorial turn, instead choosing an autonomous territorialisation as a way to fully de-link from the modern, neoliberal world system. Indeed, a ‘territorial fix’ (Finley-Brook, 2016) was perpetuated by acts of territorial enclosure practiced by the government during the TIPNIS conflict.

4.5 ‘Post’ consultation: acts of territorial enclosure

On 29th July 2012, fifteen government brigades of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal entered the TIPNIS in order to carry out a prior consultation process (dubbed the ‘post’ consultation) that was promulgated through Law No. 222 signed with CONISUR. On 7th December, the government announced that the consultation was a victory after the final report suggested that 80 per cent of the communities consulted wanted to advance proposals for the road (TSE, 2012). Alongside this process of consultation, the government enacted a publicity campaign, including television advertisements and radio jingles, which served to legitimate the process as democratic and in the best interests of the indigenous peoples.

Yet, the post-consultation ignored the organisational structures of indigenous communities, thereby not adhering to the procedures for free, prior and informed consultation recognised under the constitution. In particular, the consultation included eighteen communities of CONISUR who inhabit an area outside of the collective indigenous title and a further 11 communities of the 69 boycotted the consultations (TSE, 2012). Even though the final report stated that the consultation was inter-cultural and thus respected 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 (FIDH-APDHB, 2013). Bolivia’s human rights ombudsman Rolando Villena therefore criticised the consultation process as ‘authoritarian’ and ‘colonial’ (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 Law No. 180 to be restored. However, many communities objected to the language of the original law, which would make TIPNIS an ‘untouchable’ zone with possible implications for livelihood strategies. Communities were left in a catch-22 situation – either agree to the road or face a law that would hinder economic development potential.

In bypassing procedures for free, informed and prior consent, the government negated the territorial sovereignty of indigenous peoples (Figure 4). This acted to maintain a territorial fix in which indigenous communities are bound within a spatially discontinuous area with limited means of participating in state decision-making processes. The MAS’s version of plurinationalism therefore restricts the self-determination of indigenous peoples and allows the subtle re-establishment of state sovereignty in collective indigenous territories. However, indigenous peoples fundamentally seek a “transformation of the concept of sovereignty”, rather than “simply the devolution of territory” (Regalsky, 2009: 76). As former President of CONAMAQ Rafael Quispe explained, the significance of prior consultation is more than just a legislative framework, since it “is a mechanism for other rights, such as self-determination, autonomy, [and] self-governance” (personal interview, 29 April 2012).

Figure 4. ‘Prior and Binding Consultation’: Rafael Quispe and other indigenous activists protest outside of the National Congress upon hearing the government’s announcement of Law No. 222

Source: Author's photograph

5. Conclusion

This article examines the ways in which the spatial imaginary of 'territory' was re-inscribed, re-worked and re-signified during the TIPNIS conflict. Through ethnographic engagement with the lowland indigenous movement, I have highlighted some of the tensions between resource nationalism and indigenous self-determination. For the MAS administration, decolonisation entails the re-seating of national sovereignty over natural resources located within the country's boundaries after a 500-year long history of foreign plunder. The era of the extractive imperative has meant that the state's arm of governance has extended into new frontiers including indigenous territories, however. This development model has been legitimised through discourses that interweave the

imaginative geographies of the nation with its hydrocarbon resources. Concomitantly, the government has publically de-legitimised alternative indigenous visions of territory, governance and development. In particular, the state and affiliated sectors sought to downgrade the concept of ‘territory’ to ‘land’, inscribing indigenous claims to territory as unpatriotic and against the best interests of the Bolivian people. The details of the (post-)consultation process for the TIPNIS road project demonstrate how the state sought to restrict the extent of territorial self-determination thereby operating a legal regime that encloses indigenous peoples within ethno-territorial enclaves. This research supports analyses by scholars in Bolivia (see Bautista, 2010; Regalsky, 2009; Tapia, 2012) who suggest that the plurinational project has not necessarily re-worked meanings of territorial sovereignty within the modern, colonial state. Rather, the promises of decolonisation cannot be fully realised since the central state has retained overarching power over decisions affecting national territory (see Postero, 2017). Evo Morales’s unconstitutional bid for re-election into a fourth term in the 2019 general elections is testament to the increasing authoritarian nature of the MAS administration.

In turn, indigenous movements sought to de- and re-territorialise political space in their efforts for autonomy and self-determination over the governance of land and resources located in ancestral territories. The lowland indigenous movement utilised the political opportunities made available through the national and international framework of indigenous rights and through changes at the constitutional level. By engaging in a shifting politics of indigeneity, the indigenous movement also sought to de-legitimise competing claims to land by peasant movements. Specifically, indigenous representatives have pushed for an understanding that collectively owned territory is fundamental to the identity, culture and history of being authentically indigenous. Territory acts as the articulating demand for long-held calls for a deeper decolonisation of the state through indigenous autonomy, territorial protection, a fully constituted plurinational state and the right to make decisions about issues affecting indigenous communities including natural resource management. Nonetheless, by ascribing to the legal regimes of the territorial turn, there is a limit to what can and cannot be

claimed upon the state. Plurinationalism thereby re-embeds a ‘territorial fix’ (Finley-Brook, 2016), since indigenous self-determination is sought through a contradictory process of seeking autonomy from both *within* and *from* the state (Porto Gonçalves, 2016).

Ultimately, this article points to the need for further empirical engagement that addresses the relationship between territory, indigeneity and extractivism. Following geographical work that has delineated the relational and contested construction of territory, the TIPNIS case demonstrates how territorial discourses and praxis are constantly re-produced within the spaces of changing state-indigenous relations. Specifically, the extractive imperative has created changes to the territorial order in Bolivia with consequences for indigenous peoples’ politics of re-territorialisation.

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ⁱ The research was conducted in Spanish – the *lingua franca* of lowland indigenous communities – and all translations from non-English texts or interviews are my own. In this article, I use the real names of well-known representatives, but omit other names to protect anonymity.

ⁱⁱ Officially the ‘Grand Meeting of Indigenous Originary Peasants’.