

ACTIVISM OR EXTRACTIVISM:
INDIGENOUS LAND STRUGGLES IN EASTERN BOLIVIA

by

EVAN SHENKIN

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Student: Evan Shenkin

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Sociology by:

Professor Richard York	Chairperson & Advisor
Professor Matthew Norton	Core Member
Senior Instructor Galen Martin	Core Member
Professor Derrick Hindery	Institutional Representative

and

Sara D. Hodges	Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Evan Shenkin

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This dissertation is a study of the tensions between the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) political party, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and indigenous social movement struggles for territorial autonomy. This study takes a multiscale approach by examining (1) the emergence of competing indigenous leadership organizations, (2) state repression of civil society groups, and (3) strategic indigenous-NGO alliances to preserve Native Community Lands (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*, TCOs). At the community level, the study examines new organizations of state-aligned indigenous groups that represent extractive interests and threaten social movement cohesion. At the national level, this paper analyzes the controversial road project in the Isiboro-Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS) and similar state efforts to erode legal protections for native lands in the interests of extractivism. Analyzing the academic and public debates over indigenous politics in the Amazon, this study explores the struggle between the state and lowland indigenous groups over popular hegemony and the ability to shape international perception over indigeneity, socialism, and resource exploitation. The findings support lowland indigenous social movement claims of state repression but

situate this criticism within a path dependent world system dominated by global capital.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Evan Shenkin

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Sociology, 2018, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Sociology, 2013, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, 2009, International Studies, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, 2007, Anthropology, University of Oregon

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Latin American Studies
Political Economy
Social Movements
Qualitative methods

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2010 - 2018

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Tinker Field Grant, Center for Latino/a & Latin American Studies
Travel Awards and Grants, University of Oregon Sociology Department
Thomas Thurber Awards

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After decades of struggle, indigenous peoples of the Bolivian lowlands began to receive official communal land titles to their ancestral territories. Based on earlier radical social movement organizing, these land reforms began to be officially recognized in the 1980s and 1990s under neoliberal regimes, purported to advance both conservation and social justice goals, and were expanded under Evo Morales's *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) government (Postero 2007). The success of these Native Community Lands (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*, TCOs) in addressing social and environmental needs has been mixed, with state and extractivist interests threatening the viability of these protected territories - most notably in the TIPNIS conflict (Webber 2012; McNeish 2013). This paper takes a case study approach to understanding the tensions between local autonomy and resource pressures. Interview data with indigenous leaders, NGO directors, and related stakeholders help to triangulated archival and peer reviewed literature to better understand the regional and international complexities of these political-economic land and resource struggles. I situate my analysis in lowland indigenous community responses to territorial threats in the Department of Santa Cruz, a frontier region of eastern Bolivia experiencing rapid deforestation and natural resource extraction (NASA 2016).

By documenting the conditions within rural indigenous territories (TCOs) I provide greater understanding of the dynamic conditions emerging in these communities related to the dialectical relationships between competing

community visions, resource extraction, and political economic pressures within the world system. My analysis documents and explains internal political cleavages in lowland indigenous communities – conditions indicative of larger trends that threaten indigenous-left coalitions across Bolivia that struggled for generations for territory and dignity.

This research highlights the complex tensions between indigenous lands vis-à-vis state and non-state actors and connects long-term human rights efforts to secure communally held territory, to environmental preservation – part of the well documented relationship between indigenous territorial autonomy and ecosystem preservation (Langton, Palmer, & Rhea 2014). I also explore current community efforts to shape development within indigenous territories – and historicize and contextualize these movements within a rich tradition of indigenous and leftist coalitions (Cusicanqui 2007).

Bolivia's rural indigenous population are among the poorest people in a country that is one of the poorest in Latin America (UNICEF). However, many native peoples have varying degrees of communally-held property rights to vast territories – placing them in a land rich, cash poor position, within a raw materials extraction-based periphery nation. Indigenous social movement struggles within Bolivia are unique in Latin America given that both president Morales, and the lowland movements under review, deploy similar discourses of indigeneity, land sovereignty, ecology, socialism - and criticisms of neo-colonialism and extractivism. Understanding the disparate histories and allegiances at various scales allows us to better explore the fault lines within

these divided native communities. These power struggles highlight critical questions concerning democratic processes of governance in Latin American and the degree to which countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela – often characterized as left or center left – are actually enacting policies in line with their rhetoric.

Critics often argue that self-proclaimed leftist countries in Latin America are simply continuing historically-entrenched neocolonial policies of resource use, economic austerity, and international trade similar to preceding neoliberal regimes (Prevost, Vanden, & Campos, 2012). Eduardo Gudynas, the Uruguayan political ecologist, claims that Bolivia, and other center-left Latin American states, are engaged in a new extractivism partnering with multinational corporations and gaining greater royalties without addressing the underlying class structures of maldistribution (2009). Proponents of the MAS strategy, including the social theorist and current Bolivian Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera, describe the economic model as, “Andean capitalism” or “Andean-Amazonian capitalism,” arguing that “communism must be built based on a society’s ability to self-organize...but currently, it is clear that that is not our immediate future” and argues that Bolivia must continue extraction for the next 50 - 100 years (2014:12).

To wade through these theoretical discussions, it is essential to better understand the living conditions and struggles of some of the most vulnerable communities. In Bolivia, these are the rural indigenous peoples of the eastern lowlands. We must first ask; to what degree has wealth been meaningfully

distributed to these communities? How have indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin, as front-line communities of extraction and economic deprivation, been impacted by state-sponsored policies? Are we to understand the contradictions of the current Morales administration as characteristic of political choice, core-periphery relationships, or political expediency over long term integrity? These are challenging questions if we are to better understand the degree to which the radical new (2009) Constitution of Bolivia is living up to its ecological, socialist precepts of substantive equity among peoples and the legal “rights of mother nature.”

Interviewing indigenous TCO residents concerning the degree to which their community are consulted, and impacted, by natural resource development and extraction is a powerful metric for understanding issues of environmental justice, and resource distribution. Although these indigenous communities may technically own the land, subsoil resources, including oil and gas, remain the property of the state. In many cases, when state redistribution does not occur, factions of indigenous communities may seek to deal directly with multinational corporations in a Faustian bargain for access to hydrocarbon rents (Anthias 2016).

Relations between the state and eastern indigenous communities have eroded in recent years by a host of governmental legislation and actions that seek to undermine local sovereignty. For example, the MAS mandated that TCOs must have a minimum of 5000 residents before claiming autonomous status, (Framework Law on Autonomies). Further, critics argue that, despite legislation

for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) the MAS did not participate in good faith efforts with the TIPNIS national park and TCO residents before initiating the massive road construction project. As a result, when nonviolent protests began, there was violent police repression (Delgado 2017). These conflict dynamics are prevalent in the hydrocarbon rich reserves of the Chaco region (Bebbington and Bebbington 2010), productive cattle and agricultural lands in the Departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, and Pando (FAO 2018), and the great tropical hardwood forests, particularly in the Chiquitania, where the largest tropical dry forest in South America still stands (UNESCO 2011).

Within a global context, if leftist Latin American governments are to remain in power, resisting the international movement to the right, more sustainable models for development that consider the needs of labor and the environment must be explored. Research on territorial empowerment of indigenous peoples in the Global South is crucial, given the connection between indigenous land sovereignty and ecosystem preservation (Stevens 2014; Doak, Bakker, Goldstein, Hale 2015). All of the current conflicts occur within the context of a rich and radical labor history.

Bolivia's labor history in the 1920s was punctuated by powerful miner and industrial unions advocating for better working conditions that encompassed collective claims for human rights and democracy throughout the nation and played a central role in long term opposition to authoritarian forms of governance (Postero 2010). These *sindicatos* (unions) were instrumental in the 1952 revolution and agrarian reforms of the following year that began the complex

process of land redistribution. Land reforms officially began in 1953 in the small town of Ucureña in the province of Cochabamba. The decree was signed by national revolutionary leader, Víctor Paz Estenssoro (Fontana 2014).

Social movement resistance to colonial racism grew after the 1952 revolution and gained momentum during the first wave of neoliberalism beginning in 1985 when the World Bank and IMF supported economic policies, specifically the New Economic Policy (NEP) and Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) that propelled the country into widespread social and ecological problems (Kohl 2002). This social crisis led to a second wave of “hybrid” neoliberalism punctuated by calls for rights and citizenship based on an identity that Nancy Postero terms postmulticultural citizenship (2007:2). The state granted certain minimum packages of cultural, environmental, and social rights, with key legislation including the 1993 Law of Popular Participation (Postero 2007). There has been more focus on the Morales government as representative of a post-neoliberal leftist project than the ways that the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) has continued the multiculturalism of the prior neoliberal period of the 1990s (Prashad and Ballve 2006).

The official recognition of Original Communal Lands (TCOs) passed into law in 1996 under the National Agrarian Reform Law (INRA), with the first – TCO Itika Guasu, a series of Guarani communities in the Chaco – recognized a year later in 1997 (Anthias 2016). TCOs were part of a larger effort among the World Bank and other international development institutions who began working with governments of the Global South to support efforts for indigenous-owned

land titles. In Bolivia, this top-down effort was part of the inception of the process of forming TCOs although indigenous communal lands were not simply a top-down ‘ethno-environmental fix’ (Anthias & Radcliffe 2013). These progressive changes occurred simultaneously with the creation of conservation and indigenous territories (TCOs) in Bolivia and in other Latin American countries (Zimmerer 2009).

The neoliberal epoch was also a time of great social movement coalitions, when leftist highland miners, who had been forced to relocate to the lowlands after the tin market crash of 1985, organized with peasant unions and eastern indigenous groups against austerity, privatization and a host of neoliberal policies. This successful coalitional organizing against imperialism, and for indigenous and worker rights, fostered what Jeffery Webber terms the revolutionary epoch from 2000 – 2005 where “mass mobilizations from below and state crisis from above opened up opportunities for fundamental, transformative structural change” (2011:2). These broad, yet unstable coalitions of indigenous and leftist social movements once organized against neoliberalism and made great advances during the 2000 Cochabamba Water War and the 2003 Gas War that left 70 protesters dead (Perreault 2012). However, these movements lost momentum after the election of Morales, particularly in the Media Luna (half moon) the four eastern lowland provinces of Tarija, Pando, Beni, and Santa Cruz, where relations between the state and lowland indigenous groups have become increasingly tense.

The MAS has thus far succeeded in maintaining a hegemonic framing of the nation that seeks to overcome internal contradictions under what Nancy Postero terms *indigenous nationalism* (2010:1). This hegemony has extended to extractive industries, particularly mining cooperatives working in tandem with the state to form *resource regimes* (Marston & Perreault 2017:1). Importantly, increasing discontent and opposition threaten the long-term legitimacy of the state, particularly in the east. Even early in the Morales Administration, in 2008, the autonomy movements of the eastern lowlands brought the country to a state of crisis over access and control of hydrocarbon rents (Bebbington and Bebbington 2010). As the international press hailed the election of Evo, the first indigenous president of Bolivia and the Americas, there was a great hope for improving human rights conditions, environmental stewardship and building democratic institutions across Latin America (Cusicanqui 2011). In subsequent years, Ecuador's Rafael Correa, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, Cuba's Castro, and a host of leftist presidents formed economic and social agreements to oppose the Monroe Doctrine of U.S. interventionism in the region and reshape neo-colonial relationships to extraction. Importantly, the success of unions, and their central role in resistance to state oppression, unions became the main legitimate form of gaining political rights and remain salient to Bolivian political life (Garcia, Leon, & Monje 2004). This is demonstrated by the career of Evo Morales who built his pro-labor, anti-imperialist reputation as the leader of the cocalero (coca growers) union before assuming the presidency (Farthing & Kohl 2010). Even today, Evo remains the head of the cocalero union,

a significant reminder of his remaining allegiances. Increasingly, the perceived dissonance between the government's rhetoric and actions have led lowland indigenous critics to describe the MAS as practicing a double discourse – deploying eco-socialist rhetoric with de facto extractivist policies. Several interviewees made statements referencing the famous line in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, that in Bolivia, “all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

Extractivism has accelerated over recent decades in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, with much of this extraction impacting indigenous lands and waterways (Bebbington and Bebbington 2010). These communities face great humanitarian threats from extraction in, or upstream/upwind of their territories. To understand how social and environmental extraction impacts, more qualitative research must be conducted at the ground level. There is clear need for greater in-depth knowledge gained from interviewing a representative cross section of people living in TCOs to better grasp how communities are functioning and the degree to which consultation is occurring prior to mining, logging, or oil exploration in these territories. How are resources distributed? What internal political tension or types of corruption exist? Are national and international legal protections for indigenous peoples being upheld? Although the Bolivian constitution as well as articles 6 and 7 of I.L.O. Convention 169 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states there should be consultation prior to decisions impacting communities, ambiguity exists regarding what this process of consultation should look like (Anaya 2005). If adequate compensation programs

are to be instituted for TCO communities, it is imperative to document the impacts of extraction, and outline deficits while working with representative local leadership.

The most recent high-profile example of conflicts surrounding Bolivian neo-extractivism lies in the controversial proposed Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos highway project that threatens to cut through the heart of the Isiboro-Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS). The road project would allow large scale land degradation, coca production, hydrocarbons extraction, and result in an estimated 64% of the park being destroyed by 2030 (PIEB 2011). If constructed, the highway threatens to not only delegitimize indigenous territorial claims, but also to erode the status of protected areas like national parks, setting a new precedent for the face of development in Bolivia vis-à-vis indigenous peoples and the environment (Achtenberg 2011).

In 2012, several months after the road project was halted amidst a national outcry opposing police brutality against protesters, the government passed a consultation law and surveyed TIPNIS communities – reporting that a majority (80%) were in favor of the road. However, independent observers, including human rights groups and the Catholic Church, conducted their own survey finding that the state bribed communities with items including outboard motors and failed to provide accurate information to residents about possible road impacts (Achtenberg 2012; APDHB 2012). When I visited the TIPNIS, I confirmed that the MAS demonstrated preferential treatment to communities in

support of the project and overlooked aid for communities critical of the road. However, the TIPNIS conflict is only the tip of the iceberg (Delgado 2017).

Lowland indigenous peoples continue to struggle for agency within an increasingly hostile national context. The government's attack on aid organizations is primarily focused on international NGOs, as outside groups are easier to target than their domestic counterparts. This trend is exemplified by the Morales administration's expulsion of USAID from Bolivia in 2013. The broad implications of the government's authoritarian approach to development that challenges state policies have left many indigenous communities in difficult economic, social, and political situations. I argue that the MAS has launched a strategic effort to intentionally undermine indigenous groups critical of state development goals by targeting their institutional capacity builders – NGOs. For example, the MAS government is having a chilling effect on autonomous civil society organizations that participate in indigenous and rural capacity building – particularly in the lowlands. With a recent crackdown on four well-respected organizations including Fundacion Milenio, Fundacion Tierra, CEDLA (the Study of Labor and Agrarian Development), and CEDIB (Bolivian Center for Documentation and Información), who was recently asked to leave their building with only a two-day notice (Achtenberg 2015). According to CEDIB Director, Marco Gandarillas, the move was political. Gandarillas goes on to say, “the government, is trying to hurt us” (Hill 2017). Additionally, the MAS may create bureaucratic hurdles for organizations, asking for many years of past records that

effectively divert scarce resources away from an NGO's mission to meet government demands.

Building on a resource mobilization approach outlined by Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, Mayer Zald and a host of social movement theorists, I contend that the state, recognizing lowland indigenous social movements depend on both societal and external support for success, is attacking networks of foreign and domestic NGOs that provide these groups crucial resources for organizing. There is clear need to better understand and document the ways in which processes of state repression take place against civil society in efforts to ensure the rights of vulnerable and marginalized peoples are protected. More research must be conducted on this state crackdown on NGOs and how the loss of resources effects indigenous lowland communities.

In addition to state repression, other factors also influence the loss of indigenous resource mobilization and institutional capacities. Interviews with development workers identify a general political movement to the right across Europe and the subsequent turn towards isolationism and a reduced focus on humanitarian projects – particularly within Scandinavian nations with long histories of support for indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Additionally, the development of parallel organizations that undermining the ability for communities to organize, work with aid groups, and form effective coalitions capable of mounting shared grievances against the state.

The phenomenon of parallel organizations, often termed *paralelismo*, has become increasingly common in the political terrain of TCOs, and within the

Bolivian body politic. The roots of the breakdown can be traced to profound changes within the Pact of Unity (Pacto de Unidad), the most important left-indigenous alliance in the Constitutional Assembly. Amidst the national debate over the controversial TIPNIS road project, the Unity Pact balkanized and realigned in 2011 after CIDOB (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia), the most important coalition of lowland indigenous groups and its highland counterpart CONAMAQ (Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu), formally left the Pact. After CIDOB's departure, the MAS focused on undermining lowland indigenous groups and encouraged government loyalists to form splinter factions aligned with the state (Webber 2015, Delgado 2017). One notable example of the government's crackdown is demonstrated by the state accusation that CIDOB was functioning as "dividers" (*fraccionalistas*) and colluding with Santa Cruz elite and leftist NGOs (Webber 2015).

The Bolivian anthropologist and social researcher Walter Arteaga argues that paralelismo occurs for a variety of reasons. Principally, the dependency relationship between the MAS and people at the community-level is based on the state meeting certain basic needs. When the government fails to provide these services, the tacit acceptance of legitimacy begins to erode forming divisions. At present, these political dynamics are occurring throughout the lowlands with rival political parties often becoming entrenched in power struggles, weakening community solidarity, and making requests to the state easily dismissed or bought off. Another condition under which paralelismo arises is when an organization deviates from the state platform. The government then creates a parallel group

that claims loyalty and subservience to the state. The overall situation damages the connection between leaders and their constituents and weakens overall efforts for improving community conditions by the ensuing power struggle between groups. The MAS party seeks loyalty and attempts to silence critics through various forms of punishment, harassment, or threats, with dissenting women particularly impacted (Arteaga 2015).

CHAPTER II

ACTIVISM OR EXTRACTIVISM: INDIGENOUS LAND STRUGGLES IN EASTERN BOLIVIA

Hopes were high when Evo Morales assumed office in January 2006 becoming the first indigenous president in the 500 years since European colonization of the Americas (Sivak 2010). This was a time of great hope for many lowland indigenous peoples in Bolivia - whose social movements struggled and suffered for Morales and the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) political party that many believed would grant full recognition of indigenous Bolivians as equals in the pluri-ethnic character of the nation. As Nancy Postero notes, the MAS party integrated opposition to neoliberalism with indigenous activism in dynamic ways that catalyzed the majority indigenous population of the country (2010). Yet even as the plurinational character of the state was becoming realized - a collective sense of institutional betrayal was building among many indigenous peoples of the east and their nongovernmental organizations (NGO) allies who played crucial roles in supporting Evo. Collective grievances centered around the MAS' continuation of extractive policies indicative of earlier neoliberal epochs.

The historical traditions of Bolivian social movements run deep. Indigenous-left coalitions of anarcho-syndicalists and Trotskyists, were born over a century ago in the tin mines and based in labor union struggles for equity and self-determination (Cusicanqui 2007). Although many of the traditional labor organizations changed with the closing of the tin mines in the mid 1980s that once constituted, "one of the most militant working classes in Latin America"

(Gill 2000:69). New organizing continues to occur in these dispossessed migrant communities, many of whom now live in the young slum city of El Alto - where three of the four major supply routes to the capital La Paz pass through (Harvey 2013). I discussed the history of Native Community Lands (Tierra Comunitaria de Origen, TCOs) where, after decades of struggle, indigenous peoples of the Bolivian lowlands began to receive official communal land titles to their ancestral territories. Based on earlier radical indigenous social movement organizing and with the support of NGOs, these land reforms began to be officially recognized in the 1980s and 1990s under neoliberal regimes, purported to advance both conservation and social justice goals, and were expanded under Evo Morales's government (Postero 2007). The success of TCOs in addressing social and environmental needs has been mixed, with state and extractivist interests currently threatening the viability of these protected territories across the eastern lowlands, most notably in the ongoing TIPNIS highway conflict.¹

This chapter takes a case study approach to identifying the regional complexities of larger political-economic patterns of land and resource struggles within indigenous territories and explores contemporary NGO-indigenous efforts to protect TCOs from multi-actor extractivist interests. I confine my analysis to the eastern lowlands of the Media Luna - composed of the four departments of Tarija, Santa Cruz, Beni, and Pando - and focus on TCO Guarayo in the

¹ The TIPNIS conflict centers around the government proposed Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos Highway project that would transect one of Bolivia's oldest national parks and indigenous TCO territories allowing hydrocarbons extraction, deforestation, and other impacts in the region. Lowland indigenous protests against the highway have met with police brutality, and other forms of covert state repression.

Department of Santa Cruz, a frontier region experiencing rapid deforestation and natural resource extraction. I document two emerging social phenomena I argue are essential to understanding the larger political economic conditions within TCOs and the nexus between competing community visions, resource use models and power struggles. I ask; why are indigenous social movements in the Bolivian lowlands continuing to struggle to realize their original visions for territorial autonomy and dignity under Morales? Within the new constitutions, citizenship rights were extended to all Bolivians. Yet 12 years later, the process of land titling has stalled. And despite significant social movement organizing, the government remains able to grant hydrocarbons, logging, and mining within TCOs. How have social and ecological conditions within lowland indigenous communities changed under the MAS government?

To answer these questions, I integrate in-depth interviews with many central figures in lowland indigenous social movements and NGO communities and contextualize this data with a theory driven case study approach to understanding power relations within indigenous territories. I analyze in particular two understudied variables central to the present crisis in native territories of the eastern lowlands. These variables are (1) emergent internal political cleavages, (parallel organizations) in indigenous leadership and (2) the MAS government's repression of NGO-indigenous coalitions through overt threats and covert tactics. I confine my analysis to focus on parallel leadership organizations and the government's strategic attack on NGOs as related social phenomena and describe both through my case study in the TCO Guarayo. All of

this is indicative of larger patterns across Latin America's Pink Tide countries and exemplifies the erosion of government and civil society.

Leftist governments in the region are rapidly shifting towards politically expedient extractivist regimes that degrade both democratic processes and long term ecological imperatives while centralizing state authority and silencing political opposition. Research is needed to document social and environmental impacts from states that despite progressive rhetoric, facilitate resource extractivism and challenge indigenous community land sovereignty in ways indicative of earlier neoliberal epochs. The recent emergence of bifurcated indigenous leadership via parallel indigenous organizations, termed *paralelismo*, is a central problem on both the community and national levels. Within the last 10 years, this emergency of a rival political group claiming legitimacy and authority threatens to undermine any possibility for indigenous governance to form strong coalitions to fight extractive threats. Moreover, this political infighting weakens democratic institutions, aid networks, community resilience, as well as denied opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. As a result, indigenous territories are in a state of political, as well as economic crisis from these internal political divisions.

These divisions within indigenous leadership, in conjunction with the state crackdown on NGOs, are intricately tied to one another. Based on interviews, the new parallel groups are connected to the MAS government. In the long term, if lowland indigenous social movements in Bolivia remain compromised by external and internal threats, there will likely be negative human

rights and environmental outcomes given the well documented relationship between indigenous territorial autonomy and ecosystem preservation (Langton, Palmer, & Rhea 2014, Stevens 2014). In the Guarayo TCO case study, I analyze the ways that local democratically-elected indigenous leadership groups contend with regional elites, colonists, parallel indigenous organizations, and an increasingly hostile government to maintain NGO-coalitions for land sovereignty.

1. Coalitions and the Crisis of Indigenous Territorial Autonomy

Indigenous leaders and directors of allied NGOs packed an aging hotel meeting room a week after May Day celebrations had died down in the plazas of Santa Cruz de La Sierra, the capital city of Bolivia's eastern Media Luna provinces. Indigenous leaders from the Monte Verde TCO in the Chiquitano dry forest, the seasonally flooded Guarayo territory immediately to the west, Guaraní from the southern cattle and oil country and the Moxeño Trinitario of San Lorenzo in the TIPNIS - where at the time of writing, the controversial highway project moves forward despite protests. The subject of the meeting: how to protect indigenous territories against accelerating extractivism and challenges to de facto TCO sovereignty. The meeting brought together many of the main actors who remain part of decades-old indigenous-NGO coalitions who fought to create and maintain indigenous territories. One of the meeting organizers, a member of Fundacion Tierra, began the meeting by asking, "what is happening in the lowland TCOs? What is the future of the TCOs?" Participants from across the east described local situations with similar dynamics: unsustainable resource

exploitation often against the will and without compensation to TCO inhabitants facilitated by state approval of rules contradictory to indigenous peoples and supportive of outside interests using the territories as sites of extraction.

Questions about the tenuous future of TCOs have become central in the age of Morales as forms of extraction that once plagued indigenous territories have only grown worse since the MAS came to power. The presenter went on to clarify that if we argue that TCOs are failing, we must also compare them to other non-indigenous rural communities and determine the similarities and differences between the two. In fact, many places outside TCOs face similar obstacles to TCO lands. A peer reviewed study assessing 40-year land cover change in the Chiquitania compared private lands versus indigenous community lands (both indigenous forest reserves (TCOs) and forest concessions) and indicated that, “private landholders converted more than 125,500 hectares compared to only 4,800 hectares by indigenous communities” (Killeen, et. al. 1:2007). Resource pressures in indigenous territories are often similar to other lands, with the difference that TCOs, although lacking adequate governance, are generally better protected.

Indigenous-NGO coalitions once successfully fought landed elites to destabilize past regimes that allowed Morales to slip into power while gaining millions of hectares of autonomous territories for native peoples. Yet these indigenous social movements - linked to domestic and international civil society organizations - now struggle to exist in the current hostile political landscape. Famous NGO directors from some of the country’s most well-respected

organizations sat alongside indigenous leaders who once occupied positions of authority in the government and signed into law millions of hectares of indigenous TCO territories. Yet times have changed and these leaders now attended the meeting to collaborate on protecting their life's work: supporting indigenous people's human rights through territorial sovereignty, a politically salient - practically difficult task.

Development worker's careers have been dedicated to carefully building land and cultural rights for indigenous Bolivians. Although this work is rapidly eroding under the Morales administration and Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera whose public statements often publicly accuse NGOs of promoting "transnational imperial policy" (Achtenberg 2015). The state's chilling effect looms in the minds of many development workers as a constant threat, particularly with the expulsion of Danish NGO Ibis in 2013, and Linera's public statements against four prominent Bolivian NGOs for "meddling in political affairs." According to Unitas Director Susana ErosteGUI, the message from the MAS is, "don't get involved in politics and definitely don't criticize the politics of the government"(Sterling 2015). Moira Birss, writing in a 2017 NACLA report comments that state intimidation of civil society groups that stand in the way of development have become common throughout Latin America and describes how states are often reluctant to employ violence because of the possibility of public outcry. Instead, the strategy is to criminalize activists in an effort to, "hinder their work because of the time, energy, and financial resources they must dedicate to legal defense" (Birss 2017). As well as attacking NGOs funding sources of

indigenous social movements, the state plays a supporting role in parallel group formation discussed later.

About two months after the historic NGO-indigenous meeting, the MAS government once again began construction on the country's most controversial highway project - a road through the TIPNIS, a piece of land the size of Jamaica whose doubly protected status as both National Park since 1965 and indigenous TCO since 1990, left many within the national and international community shocked (Costas Monje and Ortiz 2010). Six years earlier, in 2011, the government ended attempts to complete the highway after widespread protests and violent confrontations between police and thousands of protesters across Bolivia demanded that laws protecting the TIPNIS be honored. If completed, the proposed 190-mile-long Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos highway would transect the heart of the National Park and TCO and effectively cut the area in two. Access would then open the site to oil exploration, mining, logging, and coca production among other environmental and social impacts. According to the Bolivian Institute for Strategic Research, the road would leave 64% of the park deforested within 15 years (Collyns 2017). Politically, the issue continues to divide the country and remains a national litmus test between indigenous territorial sovereignty or state sponsored extractivism.

I argue that these two events, (1) the historic meeting of indigenous leadership of the eastern lowlands and their NGO allies in Santa Cruz and (2) the government's decision to commence the TIPNIS road project, share a common theme: The recognition among both the government and civil society

organizations that indigenous territories are in a state of crisis. The TIPNIS is representative of the MAS party's de facto policy of discounting domestic and international laws governing environment and indigenous people's rights - while prioritizing an agenda that resembles a capitalist development model. Although I focus on Bolivia, the political-economic patterns of extractivism are indicative of larger trends in center left Latin American countries. For example, with analogous cases of the Ecuadorian government's decision to drill for hydrocarbons in the protected Yasuni National Park and indigenous territory in October 2016 amidst protests closely resembling the TIPNIS model of state extractivism under the banner of developmentalism (Vidal 2016).

1.1 Theoretical Foundations

Political scientist Jeffrey Webber characterizes the arc of Evo's presidency as moving from a revolutionary rebellious period to an epoch of reformism, continuing the momentum of earlier neoliberal policies (2011). Webber's recent theoretical work draws on scholarship by Adam Morton to frame the MAS government's approach to development in terms of Antonio Gramsci's notion of *passive revolution* where capitalist social relations, "are either instituted and/or expanded, resulting in both 'revolutionary' rupture and a 'restitution' of social relations" (2017:267). Gramsci's passive revolution is broken down into three phases where (1) figures from the opposition are individually integrated into the state's "political class" characterized by opposition to popular participation in the workings of the government, (2) where

larger groups of non-state actors become absorbed by the conservative party in power, followed by (3) large scale support from intellectuals (Webber 2017).

I argue that while Webber's framing of Gramsci's second passive revolutionary phase is characteristic of the growth of parallel indigenous organizations aligning with modernist state interests, the third phase of the passive revolution - that of state capture of the intellectual classes is unlikely to occur with mounting opposition from a broad leftist intellectual base I outline later in this work. I build on Webber's passive revolution analysis but argue that his Gramscian model of the MAS party could be further strengthened by including DiMaggio and Powell's notion of *institutional isomorphism* to explain the transformation of the MAS party from an eco-socialist movement into what Vice President Linera now terms as "Andean-Amazonian capitalism" (Polet 2013:4).

In their now classic 1983 article: *The Iron Cage Revisited*. DiMaggio and Powell outline a classical Weberian dilemma readily applicable to the newly-elected MAS party that gained power in 2006 - only to experience significant external and internal pressures to mimic existing structures of governance. The authors break down *institutional isomorphism* into three categories with (1) *coercive isomorphism*, being the inclusion of pressures from other entities the MAS depends upon, including organizations who abide by established bureaucratic or cultural processes. (2) *Mimetic processes*: unknown factors that encourage conservative mimicry of prior models and (3) *normative pressures*: the likely inclusion of outside bureaucrats from other sectors that carry normative

processes of efficiency, reification of systems of education, and hegemonic processes of socialization inherent in the structural conditions of bureaucracy - encouraging homogenous approaches to problem solving (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). While this transformation takes place over time, the authors suggest that:

Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations enter the field. But in the long run, organizational actors, making rational decisions construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years (1983:148).

This explanation suggests that the MAS government's first term in office was closer to the party's original social movement goals, with subsequent years serving only to cinch the knots around the organization tighter - and reduce emancipatory movement possibilities in the *longue durée*. The extractivist resource nationalism of the MAS, albeit theoretically distributive and successful in some respects, remains based on a Faustian bargain with transnational and domestic energy corporations functioning within the banal scope of global capitalism. The government's administration of modest redistributive infrastructure projects throughout the country requires revenue generated by these partially nationalized industries to fuel the bureaucratic apparatus. Since state functions are dependent upon extractivism, a deepening political-economic contradiction forms between counter-neoliberal rhetoric and the continuation of neoliberal practices on the ground. Nowhere is this contradiction more stark than indigenous territories where state priorities require these legally protected spaces become extractive national sacrifice zones.

Although the government's original goal was to shift the economy away from a mainly export based peripheral relationship to one of communitarian

production, at present, “the economy is more dependent on primary exports than before” (Andreucci and Radhuber, 2017:1). A 2014 *Economist* article applauded Evo’s ability to maintain, “high prices and strong demand for Bolivia’s exports of gas, minerals and soybeans ... and help the economy to maintain an average growth rate of 5%” since 2016 (The Economist 10/11/2014). Importantly, although government investment in public infrastructure including roads has increased, “social spending (has increased) only modestly in absolute terms, and actually declined as an absolute percentage of GDP under Morales” (Webber 2015:326). A prominent Bolivian economist and public intellectual recently criticized the MAS’ economic strategy saying, “this is the apex of consumerism. Call this model however you want. But please, do not call it socialism, or anti-capitalism, have some respect for Marx, please!” (Schipani 2014). A collectively written letter to the government from former public officials, activists and intellectuals claims that:

Today, the large majority of our people basically find themselves in the same situation of poverty, precariousness, and anguish in which they have always been. It would seem that those who have improved are those that had always been well: the bankers, transnational oil and mining companies, the smugglers, and the narco traffickers” (Colectivo Manifiesto 2011:3).

This sentiment was resoundingly communicated by a number of indigenous leaders who considered the government’s resource policies a central threat to community integrity. In the words of one delegate, “extractivism is not the agenda of the people, it’s the agenda of the government.” Many established locally elected indigenous leaders claim rival parallel organizations collaborate

with the MAS to undermine TCO autonomy. While these allegations are uniformly denied by the parallel groups, there are documented examples of former MAS party leaders transitioning into roles in parallel leadership organizations and undermining local organizational structures (Los Tiempos 7/13/2013). On the community level, the crisis of leadership generates political entropy, damaging local relationships and reducing local cohesion for shared community needs. A local indigenous leader described the conditions in a small Guarani community of 290 people about two hours outside the city of Santa Cruz, explaining that:

The water has gone too deep for our wells - it has been this way for 8 years. We get drinking water delivered by train from Santa Cruz once a month. Everyone in the village has Chagas (disease). We need a veterinarian because our animals have plagues. The children don't speak Guarani, only the older people. Almost no one has a job here. The young people are all in the city and they send money back home and come back once a year if they can." (Author's interview 5/11/17).

While many of these complex challenges were present prior to parallel group formation, the internal crisis of indigenous leadership has exacerbated conditions as the split represents a struggle within communities. Those who pursue more modernist, pro-MAS developmental goals generally side with new parallel leadership organizations while those supportive of more traditional practices and maintain ongoing relationships with NGOs, remain with traditional democratically elected leadership. In the following case study of the Guarayo people, I document the ways in which parallel leadership and state repression make have social and environmental co-effects. TCO Guarayo represents regional trends. Logging, mining, and other forms of resource use in TCOs

threaten community and ecosystem integrity in well documented ways. However, the emerging leadership crisis of parallel groups is a new and striking disruption that threatens long term indigenous community integrity by creating a rift in familial allegiances and informal bonds - once to crucial for the process of forming shared goals and grievances that made TCOs possible. These disruptions impact relations with NGOs, business opportunities and stifle the many possibilities that come with tacit community cohesion. Compounded with the Gurayo people's vulnerable population, and language - the rift represents a crisis for the group's long term cultural survival. I examine these complex challenges in the context of the group's unique history, famous musical traditions, and significant opportunities for independent development.

1.2 TCO Guarayo Case Study

The Guarayo people are of Guarani origin. Their oral tradition tells of a great migration from present day Paraguay before the colonization of the Americas between the 11th - 15th century in search of better lands for agriculture (FAO 2011). There are an estimated 15,000 ethnic Guarayos living in 16 communities, half of which have a majority Guarayo presence. The Guarayo TCO originally consisted of 2,205,537 hectares and is composed mostly of low rolling hills, mountains, and alluvial plains transected by the Negro, Blanco, San Julián, San Pablo, and Zapocó rivers that flow from the south to the north. The summer rainy season is November - April and winter dry season extends from May – October (UN Food and Agriculture Organization). Much of the territory is

low lying seasonally flooded lands that restrict logging during the summer months and require travel by boat to access the more remote communities. Unlike in the Chiquitania where Jesuit missionaries were the main source of colonial dominance, the Guarayo were exposed to Franciscan monks whose rich musical traditions remain to the present with an internationally renowned Baroque music festival occurring each year in the town of Urubicha and strong musical legacies remaining throughout other Guarayo communities.

Parallel organizations became increasingly common in TCO Guarayo, and other indigenous territories, and throughout the Bolivian body politic over the last decade. The term *parallel organization* or *parallelismo*, within the Latin American context, is meant to refer only to parallel organizations that occupy redundant or conflicting roles at the local level. In recent years, conflicts between parallel leadership organizations in TCO Guarayo have exacerbated social, political, and resource tensions and threaten to unravel the already fragile indigenous governance structures of the territory. As one development worker explained, “when you mention COPNAG (the main Guarayo indigenous leadership body) “you have to clarify which COPNAG you are talking about.” According to researchers Anne Larson, Peter Cronkleton and Juan Pulhin, COPNAG (*Central de Organizaciones de los Pueblos Nativos Guarayos*) formed in the 1990s as a regional indigenous leadership organization within TCO Guarayo to advocate for all the local Guarayos and assist in the TCO land titling process via pressuring the state to acknowledge claims for greater territory and function as an intermediary between the indigenous communities and the

government. Although the organization originally asked for 2.2 million hectares of TCO lands, the amount was later reduced to 1.3 million hectares after a state-sponsored needs assessment. Still, this remains a large territory for a young organization to administer with little resources and long distances between small villages.

There are regionally unique reasons for why parallel leadership groups are forming across the country - with little academic literature on the phenomenon as a whole and particularly within the Latin American context. The political leadership bifurcation in TCO Guarayo occurred approximately ten years ago in 2007 between *organic* and *parallel* organizations. Theorists including Rousseau and Hudon argue that parallelism can benefit marginalized groups via the formation of parallel groups within Bolivian indigenous women's movements that became instrumental in granting women entree into national politics (2017). Patrice McSherry discusses parallelism within the context of military and covert operations within Latin America and argues that at the state level parallel groups are, "an instrument to accomplish secretly what could not be accomplished legally or politically" (2005:21).

McSherry notes that although parallel organizations such as paramilitary death squads are a useful means for authoritarian governments to consolidate power through the use of terror - these groups pose a risk to the state because of their high level of independence, "by involving themselves in crime, drug trafficking, and other illicit operations to become self-financing, parallel groups can avoid accountability to their original masters" (2005:22). Indeed, within TCO

Guarayo, there are documented cases of the parallel organization participating in illegal land sales to colonists and other activities (El Deber 9/4/2017). Established Guarayo leaders expressed concern over the parallel group's illegal land sales, mining concessions to Chinese firms, and alleged involvement in drug trafficking - placing communities at risk of increased violence and environmental contamination. The parallel organizations also compete for increasingly scarce resources from NGOs threatened by state crackdowns. Why did rival leadership factions form? How has this crisis of local leadership impacted indigenous territoriality? One Guarayo leader describes the politics in his community:

People that were once loyal to the original causes are now divided because of corruption, drugs, and illegal land sales. The development organizations that fund projects in the TCOs create competition over resources. People start thinking individualistically about themselves. The NGOs are trying to help but it creates conflicts in the TCO communities. Even some of the older generation of leaders have become individualistic, selling out resources for personal gain. The majority of leaders are shifting from rural to urban living and there is a growing disconnect between the land and people because the leaders have to work with the government. Also, many leaders have to take second jobs to earn a living in addition to doing their political jobs.

This description outlines a common occurrence where indigenous leaders go unpaid for service to their community. Many are teachers, farmers or laborers who perform their leadership role as a community service position - often at great sacrifice to their own lives and those of their families. Ideological and economic pressures contribute to parallelism. Many leaders rely on NGOs to fund their *viáticos*, basic expenses associated with travel, including daily stipends for the cost of participation in indigenous meetings. These payments are essential for

leaders to organize because they often cannot afford even the bus ride to a meeting (Postero 177:2007).

Municipal governments receive money from state coffers for administration, however according to COPNAG leadership, no part of these federal funds is redistributed to their group. Importantly, before the creation of COPNAG, resource use was handled on the community level. Leaders are elected through general assembly of all indigenous communities in the province - although the TCO spans three municipalities where only one has an indigenous majority. The state's laws, under the *usos y costumbres* (traditional uses and practices) statute gives ambiguous authority for TCOs to manage resource use. COPNAG was originally conceived to act on behalf of the Guarayos peoples and to administer forest management plans within the Guarayos TCO. However, land competition has increased particularly in the 1970s as outside interests, mainly cattle, timber, colonists, and agricultural sectors, began moving in for land and forest resources.

A splinter COPNAG formed when allegations of corruption surfaced over land deals. In the year 2001, there were 44 fraudulent land sales where both INRA and COPNAG members were implicated (Lopez 2004). The crisis of legitimacy incited calls for a new election and in 2007 a female president was elected. The leaders who originally participated in the scandal - via false land titles within the TCO - left their positions and formed the parallel COPNAG. These leaders are acknowledged as the legitimate leadership organization by the right-wing Department of Santa Cruz government, the civic committee (*Comite*

Cívico) that represents regional elite agriculture, cattle, and oil interests. These groups once waged major efforts to secede from Bolivia under Morales but have more recently pushed for greater departmental rights from the central government using a rhetoric of autonomy rather than succession - sometimes aligning their shared grievances with discontent indigenous peoples. These organizations continue legitimating the parallel COPNAG who serve their regional interests vis-a-vis the state and furthering access to land and resources via encouraging discord within a divided TCO Guarayo (Larson, Cronkleton, and Pulhin 2015).

The roots of the balkanization within indigenous leadership can be traced to profound changes within the Pact of Unity (*Pacto de Unidad*) - the most important left-indigenous alliance in the Constitutional Assembly. Amidst national debate over the controversial TIPNIS road project, the Unity Pact split apart and realigned in 2011 after *CIDOB* (*Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano*), the most important coalition of lowland indigenous groups and its highland counterpart *CONAMAQ* (*Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu*), formally left the Pact. After the departure of CIDOB and CONAMAQ, the MAS focused on undermining lowland indigenous groups and encouraged government loyalists to form splinter factions aligned with the state (Webber 2015, Delgado 2017).

1.3 Impacts of Divided Indigenous Leadership

There are various social, political and environmental impacts to the phenomenon of competing organizations that have divided communities and formed social rifts between families based on allegiances to competing leadership organizations. This crisis of political legitimacy erodes effective community advocacy for collective goods at higher levels of government due to infighting and a lack of consolidated support for issues of general concern. For example, on March 31, 2017 in TCO Guarayo, a street fight broke out between local leadership organizations over proposed changes to the Comprehensive Forest Reserve Law. The organic COPNAG, headed by democratically elected leader Daniel Yaquirena, organized a protest march to the municipal coliseum in the town of Ascensión de Guarayos where the meeting between local officials and the parallel COPNAG organization led by Eladio Uraeza was taking place. Daniel and allies claim the proposed changes to the forestry law would increase deforestation and environmental degradation in TCO Guarayo. When the two groups met one another, a confrontation and fight ensued and the parallel COPNAG retreated from the larger organic group (Désther 2017). When I interviewed Yaquirena about the situation he explained:

The parallel COPNAG is getting kickbacks from selling logs in the protected TCO areas and the Forestry Department allows the colonists into the TCO. We don't want them to enter because we are Guarayo and this is our territory. Why not kick out the soy and cattle ranchers? I was offered a bribe for 1000 dollars to keep quiet about the 5000 families that entered the TCO this year. I told them, I don't want the money. The government and the other parallel organization are complicit in all of this. In order to control TCO Guarayo, the government says here is the money to keep quiet.

Similarly, when I interviewed the president of a local indigenous women's cooperative in Ascención de Guarayos, the region's largest town, she explained that COPNAG and her own organization received no money from the government. While touring the organic COPNAG building the roof visibly leaked and there was evidence of water damage in several areas where tiles had failed. When asked about the parallel organizations and her relationship with the government, she replied:

The campesinos have not consulted us to create communities in the TCO. If they asked us in an assembly, this would be different. The TCO is more than 1.4 million hectares. We asked the government to stop the situation with the colonists. The TCO is big, but it is broken into 3 parts and 27,000 hectares have been cut last year. We have asked the municipality to stop the cutting but they have not done anything. There is one project named *Mayi* where they cut everything then sell the land and let colonists live on it. If we block the roads there are criminals that will build others. They have money and without the government's help we cannot do anything.

Additional interviews suggest the primary beneficiaries of the crisis of local leadership brought on by parallel organizations is the central government, multinational corporate interests, and Santa Cruz elites who are able to take their pick of organizations on the local level to find favorable arrangements for land and resource deals. While indigenous infighting markedly reduces resistance to extractive interests because communities are often too busy fighting amongst themselves to collectively work towards greater goods.

While legal logging operations take place in TCOs under a various of forestry management plans, quasi-legal or illegal deforestation, mining, drilling, and colonist coca production has increased as TCO sovereignty erodes and

becomes more accessible to coca production and distribution. Guarayo and Chiquitano peoples reported increases in drug trafficking since the formation of parallel organizations at the local level - with illegal drug trafficking and small aircraft landing strips cut deep in the forest. These reports are partially confirmed by a recent article by C. Pena and Lillo Vaca in the newspaper *El Deber* on July 14, 2017 where police found a cocaine laboratory capable of producing between 150 - 200 kilos of cocaine per week in the forest outside of Concepcion in TCO Monte Verde on the banks of the Rio Negro river on the Brazilian border. Police estimated that - due to the remoteness of the site - it would be over \$800,000 US dollars to construct the facility. The sophisticated surveillance at the lab allowed all the drug traffickers to leave the area before law enforcement arrived. In the Guarayo TCO, local sources explained that the drug trafficking is also increasing.

These examples are illustrative of the asymmetrical power relations between outside actors - whether they are public or private, legal or illegal, extractivists of various forms make use of the institutional power vacuum created by weak and vying local indigenous interests, along with the relative remoteness of TCOs. When and if law enforcement become involved in counter-narcotics operations, this may only legitimate the militarization of indigenous territories, simultaneously fostering state access, while delegitimizing indigenous sovereignty and eroding rural inhabitants' territorial management claims.

1.4 Indigenous Responses to Territorial Threats

Despite barriers, the organic COPNAG leadership continues to address certain forms of illegal logging in TCOs to the extent representatives are able. Legally, TCO lands are indivisible and cannot be sold, however, in practice, with parallel groups, corrupt lawyers produce fraudulent land titles for colonists and outside interests. An economically destitute highland indigenous population living in rural poverty also exacerbates inter-indigenous conflicts over TCO lands. One Guarayo leader responsible for overseeing forestry and lands explained that he interferes with approximately 10 cases of illegal land or logging sales per year. Often, indigenous families living in the TCO attempt to sell land to colonists, or trees to logging companies, to either (1) pay for a family member's medical expenses (2) to acquire a percentage of wood to build a structure, or (3) sell land to a colonist for profit. In cases where an illegal transaction takes place, an elected representative of the community directly confronts the individual or family that chose to sell land or resources. After the COPNAG representative explains the legal basis for TCO lands as indivisible and unsalable to outsiders - most families return the money to the logging company or colonist. While some of these illegal land deals are blocked, others are allowed or occur without the knowledge of local leaders. Based on interviews with loggers and indigenous community members, at the time of writing, the going rate paid to locals by a logging company for an old growth hardwood tree (other than mahogany which is currently illegal to cut) is approximately 80 Bolivians, or

\$11.60 dollars. One logger I interviewed admitted that this price was, “ridiculous, a joke.”

The sale of resources and land is understandable given the bleak economic picture for a majority of rural people living in TCO Guarayo. When I asked an indigenous Guarayo leader about his organization’s level of state funding, he passionately explained that, “I tell you that there are no organizations that help us - all are bought from the municipality,” and went on to explain the main problems that he encountered in both his elected role as a community leader. Explaining that while most of the older colonists who live in the TCO are respectful because they know Guarayo leaders, the new waves of colonists are often aggressive and violent towards indigenous people. In the absence of state support, locals sometime make pragmatic alliances with unlikely actors.

While visiting a rural community in TCO Guarayo, I happened to comment on a new motorcycle bridge across the large Rio Negro river that allowed transport between communities during the rainy season. One of my indigenous guides mentioned the bridge had been built with funds made possible by the right wing mayor of Santa Cruz Ruben Costas who financed the bridge’s construction. Costas is infamous for making racist remarks towards indigenous peoples, include calling Morales an “animal” or a “monkey” (Kozloff 2008). Costas belongs to a Santa Cruz elite that represented cattle and big agriculture - vertically integrated landowners with vested interests in the continued expropriation of indigenous TCO lands. Costas had met with the US Ambassador Philip Goldberg in Santa Cruz and fostered state’s concern that the US was

attempting to support the right-wing opposition movement (Kozloff 2008). When asked why Guarayo people would support Costas, an avowed racist, I was told:

Evo doesn't visit the small communities in the lowlands like ours, just the main towns in an area, like Ascención de Guarayos. He only knows the city, not the countryside - especially the highlands. At least Costas goes to the communities. He has drilled wells, built bridges, because of this, people respect him.

These pragmatic right-indigenous alliances work against the left-indigenous coalitions needed to form a strong alternative leftist party capable of challenging the MAS at the voting booth in the near term. As the lowland indigenous movements becomes increasingly alienated from the MAS, particularly over the TIPNIS conflict, a strategic realignment characterized by tacit agreements between right wing cruceños elites and some indigenous communities are increasing based on a shared desire for autonomy from the state. Even though indigenous and cruceño elites occupy opposite sides of the socioeconomic spectrum, both have adopted libertarian anti-government rhetoric critical of state interventionism when impactful of local livelihoods. Although seemingly unlikely for indigenous communities to side with those that a few generations ago held their grandparents in near slavery conditions on haciendas, these are the tactics of non-aligned place-based indigenous social movement repertoires, or what Derrick Hindery terms *dynamic pragmatism* - indigenous peoples employing a fluid decision making process that evaluates practical outcomes and makes instrumental decisions within a limited political terrain (2013). Despite the contradictions, Guarayo communities may choose to accommodate Costas, leverage international environmental organizations support

and resist state-sponsored extraction within a flexible landscape that changes over time.

1.5 State Repression of Lowland Indigenous-NGO Alliances

Indigenous efforts to realize autonomy and sovereignty often encounter varying degrees of opposition from governments, “who invoke their own sovereignty to justify treating native bodies, territories, and rights as sacrificial for the sake of modernity, development, and nationhood, often deploying the myth of liberal equality against native claims” (Gustafson 2009:990). In the Bolivian case, the MAS extols indigeneity and Andean-Amazonian-Capitalism as a means to achieving national independence from various forms of colonialism and underdevelopment. Vice President Linera asserts that achieving credible socialism in the near term is impossible because of weakness of the present Bolivian economy and society. Thus, to achieve lasting socialism, Linera argues that, ‘Bolivia must remain capitalist for the next fifty to a hundred years’ (Polet 2013). Thus, the MAS government’s decision to advance capitalist policies under the guise of long term socialist goals is termed *reconstituted neoliberalism* by political scientist Jeffrey Webber (2011:177). Although purportedly in the interests of all citizens, state policies have generated a protective autonomist response from many local groups with disparate interests and class positions.

Whereas far right movements in Santa Cruz, have autonomous, even secessionist, elements vis-a-vis the state, for the purposes of this piece, the sovereignty or autonomy movements of Bolivian indigenous peoples of the

lowlands is understood solely in terms of regaining ancestral territories and increasing self-determination (Hansen, Blom, & Stepputat. 2006). This self-determination, in the Guarayo case, is indicative of democratically elected *de facto* and *de jure* recognition of land and resource rights, and the administrative capacity to effectively manage these spaces. In broader terms, indigenous communities of the eastern lowlands and NGO allies, encounter increasing levels of resistance when the MAS contests regional notions of indigenous sovereignty under the similar banner of the greater indigenous national interest - often directly oppositional to local needs. These competing indigenous discourses will be discussed later in this chapter.

In a 2011 report, the NGO *Fundacion Tierra* concluded the status of the approximately 20 million hectares of TCO lands in the process of titling is, “paradoxical ... because a government that has titled large amounts of TCOs and hectares, in turn is restricting the exercise of rights that are recognized with this ownership, such as the right to consultation, self-government, to indigenous autonomy. So, the application to the rights ... of titles is the new challenge for indigenous peoples and the Bolivian state itself (PIEB 2011). This contradictory language from the state, on the one hand recognizing indigenous land rights and on the other exploiting resources without consultation - has inspired many lowland indigenous leaders to label the state’s rhetoric as a *doble discurso* (double discourse) to describe the dissonance between state rhetoric and action, and highlight the contradictions between the government’s anti-neoliberal

rhetoric and the continuation of neoliberal policies termed by Linera as, ‘Andean Amazonian capitalism.’

Referencing the state’s discourse of equality and democracy, lowland leaders sarcastically recite Orwell’s famous line from *Animal Farm*, “all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.” At present, the state holds the right to exploit subsoil resources within TCOs, creating tensions between government-sponsored extraction and indigenous autonomy - with both actors dependent on the same resource exploitation (Anthias). With local territorial autonomy claims requiring economic revenue streams sufficient to allow internal governance and organizing, not to mention basic health, education, transportation, some indigenous groups who oppose state-sponsored extraction are sometimes forced to sell non-renewable resources to fund organizing efforts. For example, Fernando Vargas, a community leader organizing against the TIPNIS road allegedly illegally sold wood from the reserve. However, Vargas claimed the sale was done under a legal forest management plan and MAS affiliates were attempting to discredit their political rivals (Mealla & Condori 2012).

Indigenous allied NGO workers reported similar grievances concerning a hostile state. On August 14, 2015, the MAS launched an attack against four prominent NGOs while TIPNIS road protests were ongoing. The publicly criticised NGOs were, (1) *Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia* (CEDIB), (2) *Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario* (CEDLA), (3) *Fundación Milenio* and (4) *Fundación Tierra* (Layme 2015). The

state's decision to crack down on these groups, who remain significant in the long-term capacity building of lowland indigenous peoples, comes under the guise of anti-foreign interventionism - with reference to allegations against USAID for covert operations under the guise of aid. This is a strategic narrative on the part of the state to delegitimize NGOs who support capacity-building among indigenous groups. In the midst of this crackdown, NGOs also suffer from limited funding sources. One long time Bolivian aid worker described the general decades-long trend to explain why indigenous allied NGOs are no longer able to offer the same level of resources they once did:

In the 1980s, the social democracies of Europe were pouring money into the indigenous civil society organizations in Bolivia during the neoliberal period. But for the last 5 - 10 years the money has been decreasing to Bolivian NGOs and indigenous groups as the European countries moved to the right (politically) and focus on domestic priorities like immigration and terrorism in their own countries. When the Bolivian government was neoliberal, the social democracies of Europe didn't agree and wanted to support indigenous peoples. But when Morales was elected, his words were much better and the Europeans did not have the same energy to help civil society.

During the 1980s and 90s, the confluence of media attention on the Amazon, popularity of democratic mass movements across Latin America, transnational alliances with northern allies and Amazonian peoples' effective framing of their, "struggles for land rights and self-determination in environmental terms that northern publics could comprehend" made an effective case for indigenous self-determination being tied to environmental outcomes (Pieck 2006:309). Yet, indigenous cultural capital has waned, partly due to skepticism of the idealized notion of the "ecologically noble savage" (Redford

1993) and the absence of the Amazon in mass media coverage over the last decade (Pieck 2006).

As a result of the contraction of these NGOs the general consensus from rural indigenous communities is that the situation - specifically relating to indigenous TCO lands - has become worse each year. Eroding conditions under Morales are also attributed to foreign and domestic agribusiness, mining, logging and colonist activities pushing Bolivia's agricultural frontier further into the forests. These vertically integrated, capital intensive, mechanized agribusiness models also reduce the need for labor (McKay & Colque 2015) while increasing economic growth and exportation-dependencies that exacerbate socio-environmental conflicts (Bebbington 2009). Despite criticism, the state legitimizes extractivism as a long term developmental policy that fulfills the greater good. In an interview, Vice President Linera summarizes the paradox of TCO sovereignty vis-a-vis state interests:

In the case of the minority indigenous peoples in the lowlands, the state has consolidated millions of hectares as historic territoriality of many peoples with a low population density. But combined with the right of a people to the land is the right of the state, of the state led by the Indigenous-popular and campesino movement, to superimpose the greater collective interest of all the peoples. And that is how we are going to go forward (Linera 2009).

Poverty reduction statistics support Linera's argument that the nation has improved in some respects - with World Bank data indicating that poverty rates declined from 66.4% in 2006 to 38.6% in 2015.² Critics, including the

² For a full report of World Bank poverty data on Bolivia see here: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/bolivia>

sociologist Luis Tapia argue that, "the excess of commodity exports has not been used to transform production, but rather to lubricate clientele networks to increase society's political control and facilitate the rise of a new bourgeoisie." Tapia was once a colleague of Linera in the struggle against neoliberalism during the Cochabamba Water War of 2000 and Gas Wars of 2003 and 2005. But like many former intellectuals who were part of early movements against neoliberalism, he has become a strong critic of the MAS.

On June 22, 2011, Tapia, and three dozen prominent Bolivian intellectuals and social movement organizers including; Raúl Prada, Raquel Gutiérrez, Rafael Quispe, Yajaira San Martín, Oscar Olivera, and Pablo Mamani - wrote an 8-page public statement to the MAS titled, *Manifiesto: For the Recovery of the Process of Change With and For the People*. The documents outline various grievances these public intellectuals have with the government and argues that the, "majority of our people basically find themselves in the same situation of poverty, precariousness, and anguish in which they have always been ... five years after the nationalization, the transnationals still control our hydrocarbon resources ... (with) more debt to be carried on the shoulders of the Bolivian people ... mother earth has been abused and damaged" (Almaraz, et. al. 2011).

In a hopeful sign that Bolivia retains some space for public debate, Linera responded to the manifesto with a 166-page response titled: "*NGOism, An Infantile Right-Wing Disorder,*" arguing that some NGOs have become, "the vehicle for introducing a type of colonial environmentalism that relegates the indigenous peoples to the role of caretakers of the Amazon jungle ... creating *de*

facto a new relationship of privatization and alienation of the national parks and Communitarian Lands (TCOs) over which the state itself has lost custody and control” (Linera 2011). He continues by claiming that, “the NGO, as an organization of another government and possessor of financial resources, defines the subject matter, the focus, the line of funding, etc. based on the priorities of this other government, constituting itself as a foreign power within the national territory.” (Linera 2012). In a separate 2011 article in the Bolivian newspaper *Pagina Siete*, the Vice President asserted that some NGOs, like USAID and IBIS, “lie and misrepresent information to make policy and defend interests of transnational corporations,” and went on to call these groups, “Green Trotskyists, who for money have changed their ideology.” Before they were “staunch defenders of industrialization” and now “beware that (you must) not touch a petal or tree.” (Layme 2015). This public interchange outlines some of the ideological tensions between the state and civil society groups and is characteristic of the rapid breakdown of trust between state and civil society in recent years. The government’s main source of fodder for legitimating harsh treatment of NGOs comes from the complex history of US interventionism disguised as development in Bolivia.

Well documented practices of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), include the agency’s support for right-wing groups in the country who mobilized to destabilize the MAS and promote neoliberalism (Burron 2012). USAID officially began operating its first development project in Bolivia in April 1964 (USAID 2000:10). In the earlier 2000s, the program

implemented “soft” tactics to foster economic stability during the first presidency of Sánchez de Lozada. However, USAID’s relationship changed as the country’s political terrain shifted towards a less-US aligned government with the election of Evo Morales when the agency shifted strategies towards “hard” tactics, including support for the right-wing departments of the western part of the country, where autonomist forces mobilized to destabilize the MAS after Morales won the presidential elections in December 2005” (Burrton 2011:1). Under the context of USAID participating in political meddling, the MAS officially expelled the agency from Bolivia in 2013 - part of an effort among several Pink Tide countries to sever connections with what many consider imperialist institutions. USAID denies the claims made by the Bolivian state (USAID 2016). The optics of the expulsion of USAID from the country amid charges of foreign interventionism remains a liability many indigenous-aligned NGOs must contend with as the state continues to provide the political justification for heavy handed tactics.

A recent example of this state persecution occurred when CEDIB was evicted from their office with only 2 days’ notice. Although the organization had been housed in the building for more than 20 years, the head of the publically run University Mayor de San Simon (UMSS) forced the NGO to leave under the pretext of installing a new Chinese institute in the building. The university head is politically aligned with the MAS according to Marco Gandarillas Director of CEDIB (Hill 2017). This eviction forced CEDIB to move tens of thousands of books and millions of documents under stressful conditions. An aid worker I

interviewed described how the government suddenly requested that his organization provide over ten years of tax and accounting records immediately in order to remain in compliance with state regulations. These stories of arbitrary hurdles are common for NGOs who support indigenous rights, while less politicized organizations do not receive this type of harassment. These records requests, the eviction of CEDIB, and a host of other challenges are part of a larger state strategy to harass and deplete resources from organizations that challenge government authority. By making NGOs use valuable staff time and resources to meet bureaucratic arbitrarily enforced benchmarks - their jobs become more difficult and when an organization fails to meet requests, licenses may be revoked, fines levied, or NGOs exiled from the country - in the case of international NGOs. The state is sending a message that all who work in civil society hear clearly: 'be careful or we will make your lives difficult.'

The government crackdown against these civil society organizations is significant because over fifty former or current members of the MAS government worked for the same NGOs now under attack and are aware of the efficacy of these groups in bringing about social change. For example, the Deputy Minister of Communication Claudia Espinoza, the Administrator of Planning Viviana Caro and Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rubén Gamarra were former employees of the NGO CEDLA - *Center for Studies on Labor and Agrarian Development*. The prior Minister of the Interior, Rafael Puente was part of CEDIB - *Documentation and Information Center of Bolivia* - and the current Deputy Minister of Planning, Diego Pacheco, worked at *Fundación Tierra*

(Espinoza 2015). The state's intimate knowledge of the power of these NGOs to provide resources for indigenous groups, expose human rights abuses and document environmental impacts of extraction have certainly influenced the state's relationship to these groups today after political realignments.

Similarly, TCO communities that do not show loyalty to the MAS are often starved of resources. Parallel leadership organizations aligned with the government are supported while the organic democratically elected leadership is strategically ignored by government administrators who receive remunerations from hydrocarbon rents and other resource concessions. One long time Guarayo leader explained the state's strategy:

Since Evo was elected, the central government no longer allows communities to be compensated directly because of the assumption that they can't be trusted. But instead, the government receives from extraction and gives money to the Indigenous Fund who then gives it to communities.

The Indigenous Fund remains a national scandal and oft-cited example of the failures of centralized administrative corruption and mismanagement - with some representatives who were found responsible for various scandals spending time in prison. There are several notable exceptions to the centralized nationalization of resources. When redistribution does not occur, indigenous organizations, parallel or organic, may seek to deal directly with multinational corporations in a Faustian bargain for access to hydrocarbon rents (Anthias 2016). Community sources mention that in the face of economic austerity, native peoples are often forced to illegally sell off trees, land or other resources adjacent to their homes to pay for an illness in the family or other major expense. One

seasoned development worker familiar with the internal dynamics of TCOs described the tension between competing visions of how resources may be used within TCOs - with the traditional indigenous family as one unit - and the community territory on the other:

Families can garden and build a house and keep everything for themselves. They can cut trees for 4 reasons: to build a house, a hospital, a school or ...the fourth reason, to get money for the TCO community fund. The community leaders can sign a deal with an outside company to cut trees. Then the money is supposed to go into the account and is collectively decided upon. However, some community leaders will sell trees and take part of the money directly into their pockets. Or, for example, the loggers will say to the leader, "do you want this Toyota Tacoma? Then let us cut this area." Then give the keys to the leader.

Peaceful indigenous marches are sometimes met with state brutality. In efforts to promote the TIPNIS highway, Morales strategically deployed a machismo discourse, encouraging outside non-ethnically affiliated men to seduce women living in the TIPNIS in order to patriarchally stop their resistance to the proposed project. To counter this threat, indigenous marchers strategically use gender as a form of dynamic pragmatism - recognizing that the military is less likely to commit acts of violence against women within the context of a public protest. Traditional gendered relations are deployed, for example, in a non-violent march against the highway that resulted in a confront with the state.

On September 24, 2011, a confrontation began between hundreds of protesters against riot police and colonists supportive of the highway. The Secretary of State arrived and spoke with the protesters. The situation was tense and the Secretary later reported to the media, "the women had surrounded me and there had already been problems. There had been some threats and they had

forced me, they made me walk.” Although violence was averted, the next day, the police surrounded the 600 marchers, used tear gas on everyone, then proceeded to handcuff, gag protester’s mouths with tape and beat many before loading them onto buses. Resident coordination of the United Nations in Bolivia Yoriko Yasukawa called on the MAS, “I remind the authorities, at all levels, that their first responsibility is to stop this violence and to respect the rights of the people, the dignity of the indigenous marchers” (Cauthen 2012).

Indigenous female leadership is increasingly integrated into a larger discussion of gendered power relations within indigenous communities. When extractivism occurs, the actual employment numbers are often limited to a few highly skilled positions often performed by men, making women more dependent on male wages and reducing the possibility for substantive gender equality (Fabricant & Gustafson 2015). The issue of transcending gender roles in indigenous communities is undergoing revision from a variety of factors. Indigenous women’s increasing levels of urbanization and education, in combination with NGO capacity building under the ideological and programmatic agendas for gender equality are also further empowering women (Postero 2007). As Postero notes in her important anthropological text *Now We Are Citizens*, on the Guarani of Bolivia, workers at the Santa Cruz-based NGO CEADES were pedagogically aligned with the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and approached indigenous capacity building by encouraging women to participate in public discussions, a task that creates cultural contradictions for the

Guarani culture where, “women are...expected to defer to their husbands and fathers” (Postero 179:2007).

According to Marqueza Seco, Presidenta of the Indigenous Women's sub-center of the TIPNIS, people connected to the MAS actively, “recruit more and more people to change their minds and support the construction of the road” (Carilla 2017:1). Seco mentioned: “we don’t need a road, the river is the road.” When I interviewed Seco, she expressed concern for the future of the TIPNIS, saying: “we need to keep laws that protect mother earth and not eliminate the law 180.” Law 180 passed in 2011 and declares that the TIPNIS remain an intangible zone and prevents the construction of roads that would transect the territory (Bustillos 2012). Seco admitted that, “we don’t have resources for the fight” and listed various basic necessities the movement needed to continue their resistance, including gas and oil for boats and transport within and between the territory and cities as well as materials for protest banners and more outreach to NGO allies. She also mentioned that besides fighting the government’s road building efforts, other incursions from drug and land traffickers was occurring.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I examined the impacts of the MAS crackdown on indigenous-NGO alliances and the related emerging threat of parallel organizations. I argue that both social phenomena are contributing to a territorial crisis in lowland TCOs that may eviscerate the substantive meaning of the term *Native Community Lands* and instead come to mean little more than a national

sacrifice zone of hyper-exploitation. NGOs remain central actors to the integrity of these territories by providing capacity building and carefully fostering the growth of nascent indigenous systems of TCO governance. Parallel leadership structures, often affiliated with the MAS, undermine community cohesion and political agency - as factors necessary for effective negotiation with extractive interests, development and general social welfare. The MAS crackdown on NGOs is facilitating the administrative power vacuum within native lands that is accelerating extractivism in TCOs. Just as urban slums have problems, so too do these TCO communities. Over time, these problems can, and have, been overcome with the right resources, technical skills, and networks of dedicated people from inside and outside the communities. Yet, this rare opportunity for indigenous self-determination within a communal land base is rapidly being eroded. This precious opening in the arc of history should be allowed to develop according to the unique needs and aspirations of the inhabitants. Although there is considerable animosity, much of the political infighting could be addressed through sincere dialogue between the MAS and lowland leaders. The very fact that right wing elites have made minor inroads into indigenous communities is a testament to the many opportunities that exist for the state to begin providing minor funds to organic leadership organizations - rather than supporting rival parallel groups.

Unfortunately, the TIPNIS road project exemplifies the breakdown in communication between state and indigenous lowland territories characterized by increased levels of authoritarian decision-making that frames sincere social

movements within TCOs as simply barriers to the country's development goals. Under these conditions, challenges to indigenous territorial autonomy are likely to increase and generate continued animosity. I have also described how the government's broken promises are not the result of a weak administrative state unable to grapple with complex bureaucracies, but rather the result of two factors, where (1) earlier patterns of governance and path dependencies propelled the MAS into a reliance on extractivism and (2) because of the pressure to continue extraction, the state was forced to strategically undermined local indigenous and NGO agencies in order to more easily access resources. Under this new paradigm, former allies are framed as new opponents and indigenous-NGO coalitions that brought the MAS to power are seen as direct threats to hegemony

This dynamic is now common in center left Latin American governments of the Pink Tide, despite a rhetoric of ecological socialism and multicultural indigeneity, the bureaucratic reality of an administrative state encountering the prescribed political-economic parameters of hundreds of years of extractivism prevails. The state's treatment of the remaining indigenous social movements of the eastern lowlands and their NGO allies, remains a litmus test for regional dynamics. In the near term, the ongoing TIPNIS struggle represents the most visible indicator of the relationship between state vis-a-vis civil society. The MAS's entrenchment in extractivism as a financial engine for overcoming underdevelopment is increasingly challenged, yet as of yet, no significant alliances have risen to challenge the political supremacy of Morales.

The Morales Administration increasingly represents a model of capitalist extractivism that I argue is indicative of the pressure towards institutional isomorphism. Accelerated rates of resource extraction at the national level and state crackdown at the local level indicates the advanced condition of institutional transformation the MAS has already undergone. As an NGO worker explained, “the superstructure of the government produces the same processes at all levels and reproduces the discourses of mercantilism and individualism.” State-affiliated parallelism also represents an ideological struggle between modernist individualistic values and more communal ways - with vastly different political-economic repercussions. An NGO director described how parallel groups are, “the vehicle of the government that represents the intercultural identity of the campesino that is fundamentally different than the indigenous identity. The NGOs are part of the indigenous movement and continue to give indigenous peoples institutional support, so the NGOs represent a threat to the government.” State antagonism threatens NGO-indigenous coalitions that have suffered in recent years. While legal TCO land titling processes remain stagnant while roadbuilding and hydrocarbons extraction increase. The Guarayo case is indicative of these larger dynamics where ideological divides between those who value accessing the land for subsistence clash with parallel organizations seeking to exploit the TCO for profit. The state’s crackdown on specific NGOs who assist lowland indigenous groups represents a concerted effort to cut the few remaining sources of funding and capacity building to local democratic governance. Thus,

increasing risk for both native land tenure and the nascent governance structures of indigenous inhabitants and the ecosystem survival of the Bolivian Amazon.

NGO-indigenous alliances remain a key element of both human rights and environmental protection in Bolivia and across Latin America. Although community relationships are undergoing radical transformations in livelihoods, relationships to the government, gender roles, and political fracturing - opportunities remain for domestic and international coalitions to advocate for better resource use alternatives. In the subsequent chapters of this work, I describe other key tensions and provide some preliminary exit strategies from the current extractivist trends.

CHAPTER III

INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY AND ANDEAN-AMAZONIAN CAPITALISM

Relations between the Bolivian MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*) government and indigenous-NGO alliances have eroded in recent years over profound disagreements over development policies on native community lands (TCOs, *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*). This political-economic schism pits lowland indigenous social movements and their NGO allies against a government dependent on royalties from extraction. Within this chapter, I historicize, contextualize, and analyze these emerging tensions between state-sponsored extractivism vis-a-vis NGO-indigenous alliances. I make several assertions about the nature of these conflicts and the contradictions between the Bolivian government's indigenous ecosocialist rhetoric and accelerated extractivism. Trends representative of larger dynamics throughout Latin America's center-Left 'Pink Tide' countries.

Using a theory-driven approach I ask: Why is the Morales government cracking down on NGO-indigenous coalitions and in what respects is these national phenomena indicative of regional dynamics? How has the MAS managed to build a popular hegemony and in what ways are indigenous social movements asserting their own counter-hegemonic narratives in defense of territory? I use fieldwork among lowland indigenous groups and affiliated NGOs currently targeted by the government to explore civil society efforts to contest state power. I approach the topic by exploring the historical roots of the MAS party's creation of a Left-indigenous popular hegemony through one of the

country's most important public intellectuals, Bolivian Vice President Álvaro García Linera.

I employ a social movement theoretical approach to trace the ways in which MAS party officials consciously deploy the political strategies of Antonio Gramsci, and other processes designed to undermine critics, and craft common sense. I claim that state efforts to crack down on NGOs is a strategy to undermine indigenous capacity building and degrade land sovereignty as a barrier to extraction. Recent land and resource disputes between the government and indigenous-NGO coalitions, most famously in the TIPNIS conflict, can be partly explained by applying the political elements of social movement scholars Douglas McAdam and Charles Tilly's Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) as well as concepts from Antonio Gramsci - whose analysis of the ways in which hegemonic state power functions remains useful for mapping the political terrain of the body politic.

Along with Ecuador, Bolivia remains a bellwether of emerging trends in Leftist Latin American countries where revolutionary social movements toppled authoritarian neoliberal governments in the 2000s and radically rewrote constitutions to give parity to women, indigenous peoples and the environment while intensifying non-renewable resource extraction (Farthing and Riofrancos 2017). Are these contradictions the result of cognitive dissonance, political corruption, or larger structural constraints? How could the government enshrine indigenous people's legal rights to communal lands while simultaneously accelerating the destruction of these territories under agro-industrial practices?

Interrogating these fundamental contradictions within Bolivia is crucial for better understanding the ways in which the world system of global capital stifles alternative livelihoods while theorizing possibilities for emancipatory life projects based on indigenous and eco-socialist worldviews during the twilight of the U.S. empire.

2. Historical Background

The term *extractivism* is defined within this paper under three parameters where (1) resources are extracted on a large scale or high intensity, (2) raw materials undergo very little processing and (3) materials are mostly for export (Gudynas 2013). Social movement coalitions are defined as distinct organizations who pool resources to seek shared objectives (Levi & Murphy 2006). The Andean cosmovision adopted by Bolivia's new 2009 constitution is perhaps most succinctly summarized in the *Vivir Bien* (living well) approach that legally recognizes indigenous worldviews (Fernández 2009). While the Mother Earth Law is often considered the most radical environmental law in the world (Hindery 2014). However, an amended version: the Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well (*La Ley Marco de la Madre Tierra y Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien*), passed in 2012, underwent significant revisions that fundamentally altered the original document. This second law was an attempt to synthesize two disparate development paradigms. On the one hand, maintaining progressive ecological visions from indigenous movement coalitions under the Pact of Unity while simultaneously promoting an

extractivist agenda of the MAS based on mining and hydrocarbons extraction as a compatible model with the notion of *Vivir Bien* (Hindery 2014:218).

This syncretism of worldviews and the contradictory assertion that extractivism is compatible with the principles of the new constitution has led some lowland indigenous leaders to describe the MAS' cognitive dissonance as a *double discourse*. This mismatch is particularly salient within the context of the national debate over the TIPNIS highway, the highest profile land conflict between civil society and the Bolivian state within recent years. The political economic reasons for the road are well documented. The government's proposed road through the TIPNIS (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure*) places the MAS party's cocalero union base against lowland indigenous-NGO coalitions who want to protect the zone against development. A Brazilian bank is the main financier of the road which passes through transnational hydrocarbon concessions (oil blocks) within the heart of the park. Besides undermining the legally protections of indigenous territories and national park status, the highway would further a massive neoliberal development initiative known as IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America), a 12-country highway project designed to integrate remote areas into the regional market (Hindery 2014).

According to former indigenous leader Fernando Vargas, the road's construction would appease Morales' cocalero political constituents, the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba, where approximately 35,000 coca growers of the Chapare region seek additional suitable lands that would be made

possible by road access. TIPNIS lands are well suited for growing coca and have a population of readily available poor colonists already colonizing the southern portion park known as Polygon 7 the proposed road would transect. The readily available TIPNIS land and labor is an excellent opportunity for significant expansion of coca production and profit from both legal and illegal sales - not to mention a precedent setting example of eroding other protected areas across the country.

Agricultural areas suitable for coca growing are in short supply due to the country's continuing legacy of maldistributed lands. The 1952 revolution and Agrarian Reform Law's redistribution initiatives failed to significantly shift land ownership to the poor majority and allowed many elites to retain their great estates. Landless peasant movement pressures to colonize, and redistribute arable lands increased after the Agrarian Reforms for a period of 30 years (Crabtree and Whitehead 2001). However, the incomplete promise of substantive land distribution was not obtained, and the hands of time were pushed back to an earlier era of distribution characteristic of the neoliberal epoch of cattle barons and destitute peasants. At the beginning of Morales' presidency, a 2005 World Bank Report found that, "almost 10 percent of the existing agricultural units (almost 60,000 units) control 90 percent of agricultural territory" (2005). The MAS did institute changes that are perhaps best described as titling and legalization programs rather than agrarian reform (Kay & Urioste 2007). These programs were less substantive than agrarian reforms in several ways where (1) occupied lands were simply regularized or legalized, and (2) mainly public lands

were distributed - rather than expropriated from large private landowners - making the land distribution data look more favorable (Sauer & Leite 2012). Additionally, consolidation of huge hectare plots by large landholders was occurring simultaneously. In all, “of the 28.2 million hectares of land officially distributed up to 2014, close to 15 million hectares (53%) were titled” as TCOs/TIOCs (Vergara-Camus & Kay 2017:418). The MAS also gave land to large and medium sized owners - (approximately 14% of total redistributed lands) and 56 titles to 5,000-hectare properties (Webber 2011). All of these redistribution efforts occurred within the context of a global market that had stripped thousands from their jobs in the mines and laid the stage for the massive revolts that brought Morales to power.

2.1 The Great Tin Crash

The great tin crash of 1985 forced many ex-miners off the Altiplano and into the lower elevation Chapare regions to grow coca - although others settled into the new slum city of El Alto that overlooks La Paz. These ex-miners established *cocalero* (coca grower) unions. Cocaleros and other displaced peasant colonists often view national parks as easier to access than large privately-owned estates in other parts of the country where the risk of direct conflict is greater (Webber 2012). In addition to colonist land pressures, transnational oil companies hold oil concessions within the park that have already been signed (Mendoza 2017). Given pressures from (1) regional cocaleros, (2) national infrastructure and (3) international extraction, there is significant strain from both

inside and outside the MAS to undermine protected TCO and national park statuses to appease these interests. The TIPNIS conflict is also unfortunately indicative of larger constitutional and ideological incongruities that places cocalero and extractivist interests in direct conflict with lowland indigenous-NGO alliances who view the MAS' actions as an attack against ecology and indigenous sovereignty. These groups of highland cocaleros and lowland indigenous once worked together under strong coalitions - making the fight all the more bitter.

Within the TIPNIS, the Mojeño-Trinitario, Yuracaré, and Tsimané peoples continue to hold legal claims to their TCO and largely oppose the project despite government pressures. Some TIPNIS locals critical of the road reported receiving threats, as well as government bribery and extortion. CPEM-B, (Central of Beni Ethnic Peoples), an indigenous coalitions that defends the area, released a public statement calling the government's efforts to weaken the status of the park as a "direct affront and disrespect to the Indigenous Peoples of the TIPNIS territory" and asserting, "the government has lost respect for indigenous territories exposing them to the interests of transnational capital and other social sectors, jeopardizing the social and cultural existence and continuity of indigenous peoples" (Servindi 2017). These strong statements, in conjunction with nonviolent protests and marches, are clear indications of the seriousness of lowland indigenous group's attitudes as government actions directly undermine both international standards and the 2009 constitutional mandate that indigenous peoples have the right to receive "free, prior, and informed consent" (Human

Rights Watch 2017). Those TIPNIS defenders interviewed indicated that although they faced many economic and political barriers, they expected to have further clashes with police and made the statements that they would defend their territories with their lives.

Although the state claims the TIPNIS road building efforts are a poverty alleviation measure to bring schools and health services to isolated communities, that most TIPNIS residents support the project, and that movements that oppose the project are malcontents sponsored by foreign interests (Smith 2018).

However, a brutal police crackdown on 1500 nonviolent protesters in 2011 forced Evo to publicly apologize after the high-profile event catalyzed public opinion in support of lowland indigenous rights to exercise freedom of speech against the highway (Achtenberg 9/30/2011). Another public relations blunder occurred when President Morales called for colonists to romantically pursue the TIPNIS women as a way to undermine resistance, encouraging his cocalero male base to, “go out and seduce the Yuracaré women” (Achtenberg, 12/8/2011) and told protesters, “sooner or later the road will be built” (Corz 2017). Despite, and perhaps because of the MAS’s brutal and crude tactics, organizing in the lowlands generated a national cry of solidarity that effectively halted road construction until August of 2017 when the government resumed the project amid ongoing public protests (Collins 2017).

The government, in seeking to undermine indigenous and NGOs has continued to slander leadership and make unsubstantiated allegations of their opponent’s illegal activities to derail movement activities (CIPCA 2006). NGO

sources claim the government produced false reports of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) consultations of TIPNIS residents within the park - asserting a majority of communities supported the road. However, when third party monitors assessed the government's TIPNIS survey, the review found the MAS used bribery and other forms of coercion to legitimate their argument that the legal standard for prior consent and consultation had been met (Fundacion Salon 2017). According to a recent article by Myles McCormick in *The Guardian*, "a joint assessment by the International Federation of Human Rights, the Bolivian Permanent Assembly of Human Rights and the Catholic Church in 2016 concluded that the consultation had been, "neither free nor informed and did not respect the principle of good faith" (McCormick 2017). The MAS attempts to undermine democratic processes within TCOs seriously damages credibility and further erodes public trust.

Linera calls NGOs reporting on the social and environmental impacts of the road "park rangers" with the larger critique that, "NGO environmental activism promotes neocolonialism and threatens Bolivian sovereignty" (Achtenberg 2015). According to Brazilian Professor Ana Carolina Delgado who researches the TIPNIS, the road represents neither, but instead signifies the intensification of mining, hydrocarbons, big-agriculture, and other forms of extractivism destined for foreign markets (Delgado 2017). New York Times journalist Jean Friedman-Rudovsky points to the geopolitical significance of the road that if completed, "would likely be a major transport route for moving Brazilian soybeans to Pacific ports for shipment to China. Brazil's oil giant,

Petrobras, also holds the hydrocarbon exploration rights inside TIPNIS near the planned highway” (Friedman-Rudovsky 2012). Based on increasing world demand for soy, principally as animal feed, agro-industrial interests remain a central driver of Amazonian deforestation. Bolivian agriculture remains one of the most important sectors of the economy and accounting for about 13% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and about 30% of the total labor force (World Bank 2017).

Agro-industrial interests in the country are largely multinational in character and represent the vertically integrated monopolies that now dominate the world food system. According to business analysts although, “the 2009 Bolivian Constitution established that domestic investment has priority over foreign investment” (Brauch 2014). Though under Bolivian law, land may not be owned by foreign direct investment interests, de facto control lies in multinational agribusiness. Eduardo Gudynas describes this changing power dynamic where, “transformation marked by management rather than ownership of land, with control over production processes, privatization of resources, outsourcing and commodification replacing traditional farming activities” (2008:512). Under this model, the Morales government allows Santa Cruz landed elites, as well as Russian, Japanese, and Mennonite immigrants from around the world to commodify and exploit Bolivian lands based on an economic model prioritizing agricultural giants including Cargill, ADM, and Dreyfus who hold monopolies over global agricultural markets. The result is de facto alienation of indigenous and peasant lands through deforestation, and myriad environmental

and social impacts concomitant with vertically integrated expansionist models. Further, power is eroded from Bolivian democratic processes in the context of global trade because:

Decisions on agriculture are not determined by national policies, but by global dynamics. The role of the nation-state is weakened, and farmers and traders are linked into a global network of primary agricultural products, foodstuffs and agro fuels (Gudynas 2008:513).

Soy agribusiness is the main driver of contemporary Amazonian deforestation (Graesser, Aide, Grau, and Ramankutty 2015). If the MAS seeks to emancipate the nation from neocolonialism and bolster national sovereignty - allowing rapid expansion of transnational corporate management is not the solution. Allowing local communities to enter markets with the government support would provide lasting benefits. I assert that the Morales Administration is targeting NGOs who call attention to these glaring extractivist contradictions in state development policy - as part of a larger government strategy to maintain control over popular hegemony. The dynamics between the state and NGO-indigenous coalitions is not unique to Bolivia and represents a pattern between actors in center-Left states in Latin America, particularly Ecuador where state sponsored oil drilling in the Yasuni National Park and displacement of the Huaorani and Shuar indigenous peoples is comparable to the TIPNIS conflict (Estremadoiro 2013).

Left-labor coalitions brought leaders including Morales, Correa, and Chavez into power in the early 2000s. Both Ecuador and Bolivia, despite holding mutually exclusive mandates around sustainability and extraction have significant political-economic trajectories outside of the global neoliberal orthodoxy and as

such, remain important crucibles for alternative systems outside of global capitalism. Analysis and critique of the Bolivian state repression of civil society must be understood as the product of centuries of plunder within a self-replicating world system that undermine alternative development models, particularly nascent democratic systems that balance indigenous peoples' rights and ecology. If meaningful democratic reforms are to be supported a rigorous examination of the material conditions of marginalized groups should be central. How these social movements organize, obtain resources, and build capacities, are key. Particularly because indigenous human rights have been among the most bitterly repressed by elite white supremacist interests in Latin America.

2.2 Literature Review

Social movement literature on resource mobilization theories and Gramscian political theory help clarify certain structural contradictions in Latin America in general and Bolivia in particular. After the brutal neoliberalization of the state in the mid 1980s under what Naomi Klein termed 'shock therapy' (Klein 2007). Powerful inter-left coalitions arose to challenge the status quo and bring about emancipatory opportunities for democratic change in an effort to, in the words of historian Murray Bookchin, "grab the hands of time ... and push history forward" (Morse 2011). This revolutionary period of left social movements was the most radical in modern Latin American history according to political scientist Jeffery Webber and succeeded in toppling the neoliberal governments of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in 2003 and Carlos Mesa in 2005 and providing a political

opening for Morales to become president in 2006 winning 54% of the popular vote (Webber 2017).

I do not attempt an exhaustive overview of what has evolved into large, complex, and distinct bodies of literature on Latin American social movements, political theory and development. Rather, I focus on analyzing the contemporary political-economy of the Bolivian government's crackdown on NGO-supported indigenous social movements by applying resource mobilization theory and certain elements of Antonio Gramsci's theories on nation building that help contextualize power dynamics in the region within the arc of history. As a political theorist, his original contributions to understanding how class and social power are exercised and contested remains essential for studying the contemporary political terrain of Latin America. Gramsci is particularly important in Latin American political theory as non-Italian translations of the *Prison Notebooks* were first published in Spanish in Buenos Aires in 1950 - earlier than English translations (Allen & Ouviaña 2017).

As a political strategist, one of the central elements Gramscian theory offers is a divergence from classical Marxian generalizations of class conditions and an emphasis on regional specificity of poor and minority identity formation in building social movements through popular hegemony (Allen & Ouviaña 2017). His focus on the development of political strategy remains crucial as a "roadmap to power" by molding 'common sense' for ambitious figures including Bolivian Vice President Linera, and those across the political spectrum (*The Economist* 2017). Gramsci also made important contributions to understanding how political

opportunity structures form in specific contexts and how these openings may be leveraged by social movements to gain power - and how intelligentsia may be able to maintain it. While Gramsci's insights into the nature of power are profound - his applicability to contemporary social movements is somewhat limited because the majority of his writings occurred over 80 years ago. I fill this lacuna by engaging other contemporary social movement theories to articulate contemporary understandings of the conditions under which new social movements succeed or fail. I do so by integrating resource mobilization theory into my analysis to assert that there is a specific political-economic basis for the MAS government's antagonistic relationship towards indigenous allied NGOs.

Resource mobilization (RM) theories arose during the 1970s as a means of analyzing social movements of the 1950s and 60s and as a rejection of two earlier social movement theories that either cast movement actors as deviant and anomic or a second pluralist theory that framed movement actors as having the reasonable ability to have their grievances addressed within the political process (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald 1988; Edwards & Gilham 2013). Resource mobilization theorists were instead interested in the ways in which marginalized social movement actors organized, not just around shared grievances, but based on mobilization strategies and opportunities in efforts to create change in the greater architecture of society (McAdam 1982; Tilly 1978; McCarthy & Zald 1977).

Resource mobilization scholars often focus on how marginalized social movement actors mobilize to seek redress for grievances and consider formal

organizations, such as NGOs, as important assets to collective action (McCarthy and Zald 1977). As Della Porta and Diani assert, it is not enough to explore conflicts between groups, we must understand the conditions under which grievances become transformed into mobilization. This shift into collective action is based on both *material* resources including money and services, and *non-material* resources like the bonds of friendship, authority or engagement (Della Porta and Diani 2006). RM scholarship places particular emphasis on material resources needed to sustain movements because, “no matter how many other resources a movement mobilizes, it will incur costs and someone has to pay the bills” (Edwards & Gilham 2013:4). This sentiment was repeated by a Guarayo indigenous leader who noted that, “if you don’t have money, you can’t have autonomy,” signifying the importance of financial provided by NGOs and other allies in social movement struggles.

That there is the need for resources to flow to these organizations in order to function is so obvious as to barely warrant mention. Further, that a hostile state should try to cut off the revenue streams to political opponents is equally straightforward. However, what is worth articulating is the ways in which these processes take place on the ground - between civil society groups and the government. Particularly when both sets of actors share a similar rhetoric of emancipatory politics and originate from radical leftist social movements. It is equally important to examine the ways in which the state employs legitimation strategies to silence dissent and control popular hegemony. As MAS officials commonly frame NGO-indigenous alliances as the product of foreign

interventionism and imperialism machinations. Further, how these organizations and movements choose to respond is worth exploring. Before delving into the details of these dynamics, it is important to briefly recount how the MAS was able to obtain consistently impressive electoral victories and build a popular hegemony to command the common-sense ideas of the diverse Bolivian population - a colonial locus for centuries of looting and staunch left-indigenous coalitions (Cusicanqui 1986). I provide a brief account of the intellectual trajectory of the current Vice President Álvaro García Linera who is considered by many to be the principle intellectual architect and Marxist theorist of the MAS party in its current form.

2.3 Building Cultural Hegemony

In October, 1967 the iconic revolutionary was executed by CIA affiliated Bolivian troops in a schoolhouse southwest of Santa Cruz, in the Guarani community of La Higuera - with help from Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie (Smith, 2007). Prior to Che's capture, and despite his fame as a hero of the Cuban revolution, his diary mentions the inability of his small force to convert even one of the unfriendly peasants (Tobar 2004). Che attempted to mobilize the peasantry by appealing to their collective sense of injustice towards oppression. Yet, despite Bolivia's deeply unequal hacienda system, one of the worse in the Americas, the indigenous peasants alerted the Bolivian military to Che's location resulting in his assassination.

Almost 40 years later, and conscious of Che's failures to engage the popular identities of indigenous-peasants, the future Vice President, Álvaro García Linera spent years seeking ways to mobilize subaltern peoples - relying explicitly on Gramsci's work. His self-proclaimed objective: to build an effective hegemonic framework capable of mobilizing the left-indigenous base of the country under a common roof. As one of the most important Marxist theorists in the country and an accomplished organic intellectual capable of articulating the mass consciousness of the crowd. Linera's prodigious writing on diverse subjects are well represented in academic scholarship - particularly his synthesis of indigenous and Marxist worldviews. A more thorough analysis can be explored in the works of the vice president himself (Linera 2014) and Feldman (2015), with additional insight on the growth of Linera's political views accessible through the works of Webber (2015) and Baker (2015).

This background on the vice president and the ideological formation of the MAS, is a necessary beginning for historicizing the birth of the party. Linera's place as both a public intellectual and politician grants researchers rare access examine his thought processes, and the ways in which obtaining power changes a person. Linera's continued scholarship, intellectual objectives, and responses to critics, are equally rare (Linera 2011). The arc of Linera's political career; from intellectual, radical activist, prisoner, television personality, to political figure, represents an example of what Gramsci termed the embodiment of *praxis* - an individual or group's ability to synthesize thought and action - in this case combining theory with nation building. By positioning himself as a self-

described “cultural intermediary” between Bolivia and the West (Romero 2006) and interpreter of Bolivian history (Baker 2015), Linera attempts to legitimate and reify the MAS hegemony for both peasant-Indigenous and mestizo-white communities.

According to historian Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Bolivia’s population retains psychic historical traumas, both ancient colonial and the more recent 1952 Revolution - where indigenous identities became sublimated to Marxian peasant class-based identities that linger in collective memory (Cusicanqui 1987). Linera uses these powerfully evocative collective memories of the emancipatory promise of reclaiming indigeneity as a symbolic currency for the contemporary MAS government to deploy as the self-proclaimed representative of revolutionary social movements. The most compelling examples of this are the use of symbolism in the strategic public spectacles of President Morales at various ceremonies. In his 2006 presidential inauguration Evo was blessed by an Andean priest after walking barefoot over coca leaves (Postero 2010). Postero goes on to state, “at his 2006 inauguration, Bolivia’s President Evo Morales claimed a lineage that included Andean indigenous insurrectional struggles, Simón Bolívar’s nationalism, and Che Guevara’s socialism” (2010:1). This pastiche array of dehistoricized martyrs are mediated through what Postero calls “indigenous nationalism” but could as easily be called hegemony. The MAS participates in a continuous conscious use of symbolism for strategic social movement objectives. To what degree this dominant discourse is sincere is a

challenging question, yet we can study the discourse of those in power and hold their actions up to a theoretical blueprint.

In the preface to *Plebeian Power*, Pablo Stefanoni, director of the Bolivian *Le Monde Diplomatique*, describes Linera's turn toward finding theoretical frameworks capable of galvanizing support for popular movements. Stefanoni writes, "in addition to Italian Antonio Negri, Garcia Linera took a 'sociological turn' toward social movement theories and incorporated the historical sociology of Charles Tilly and the most rationalist visions of resource mobilization" (Linera 2014:8). Thus, in order to study the competing rationalities of the MAS on the one hand, and lowland NGO-indigenous groups on the other, it is worth using the critical theory approach known as *immanent critique*. With roots in the dialectical methods of Marx and Hegel, immanent critique employs, and provisionally accepts, an idea yet holds it up to a mirror of grounded material actions to test what gaps or contradictions exist between ideology and action. This technique is particularly important for questioning the core assertions of those in power based on the logic of the espoused ideology in a logical manner (Antonio 1981).

Linera himself, a student of Gramsci and social movement theory, speaks of the tensions between purity and pragmatism as one moves from being a critic of the government to becoming part of it and discusses the role of hegemony in maintaining popular consent. He describes how, "Gramsci helps us to convert the decision of a few into a decision of many" (Linera 2015:7) and asserts that remaining pure and avoiding ethical compromises are impossible for those (like

himself) tasked with managing a government. However, Linera articulates that there remain emancipatory ways to transcend this contradiction asserting, “the Gramscian comprehensive state concept allows us to observe or leave this dilemma. If I put myself in the State I am a reformer, if I move away from the State, I am impotent and testimonial, which is a little (like) the dilemma between Marxists and anarchists, right?” (Linera 2015:8). In other words, we are asked to accept that a pragmatic, reformist posture where contradictions are inevitable is the best we can hope for in the inherently compromised position of those in power.

Linera’s use of Gramsci’s *comprehensive state* is similar to the notion of *integral state*, roughly signifying the unification of civil society and political society (Nelson 2012). His statements about the nature of power help to frame a key debate between *purity* and *pragmatism* and how we are to understand development policies in Bolivia and across Latin American countries with continuing legacies of colonialism. The pragmatic approach views the Morales Administration as acting within the confines of a world system of global capitalism with few alternatives. A macro-structural analysis that fits within DiMaggio and Powell’ iron cage of institutional isomorphism where the momentum of prior bureaucratic structures forces new regimes to comply with the internal logic of the existing system (1983). This assumes that state policy promotion of extraction is the most viable, or only, means of overcoming periphery status because alternatives no longer exist. This viewpoint also relies on structural explanations of the ways in which power is exercised - sublimating

the agency of individuals and groups to take control through mass movements that change policy. Arthur Mitzman's *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*, asserts Weber's pessimism was "only the truth of his epoch, his country, and his station, the truth of a bourgeois scholar in imperial Germany" (2017:1). Weber's fatalism was certainly not shared by factory workers, peasants, and anarchists who did not have the luxury of pessimism. These groups chose instead to coordinate efforts that successfully expelled multinational corporations from privatizing the water supply of Bolivia's third largest city in the 'Cochabamba Water War' of 2000 (Olivera 2004).

A converse argument proposed by Jeffery Webber in, *From Rebellion to Reform*, is that despite the optics of the MAS being viewed as a homogeneous representation of the Left by many outside the country, the party was never an internally coherent radical bloc. Instead, Webber argued that as radical popular energy dissipated and ruptures in elite networks closed, the composition of the MAS party shifted from indigenous activism to a political structure more representative of, and beholden to, urban Mestizo middle class interests. Further, the party's bifurcation of race from class issues effectively decoupled indigenous liberation goals from long term socialist objectives - representative of another dissonance within the party (Webber 2011). The cynical perspective taken by many indigenous-NGO coalitions is that the MAS party has simply perpetuated what Webber terms 'reconstituted neoliberalism' under a hegemonic progressive guise. I explore this question of what happened to the radical politics of the revolutionary period in greater detail in my final chapter.

2.4 Gramsci & the People Without History

Before entering government, and while a member of the radical *Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army*, Linera remained unsatisfied with his synthesis of classical and Marxian thought to explain the Indian question and began to dig deeper into Marx's historical documents on indigenous peoples - until he made a discovery from years of archival research on Marxian theory, that he believed would be an effective vehicle to foment popular movements in Latin America. He finally succeeded, after a decade long effort, to find a salient discourse of Marxist populism that would bind working class identities and diverse indigenous worldviews under a common roof (Linera 2014). The vice president describes his research process in his 2014 book, *Plebeian Power: Collective Action and Indigenous, Working Class and Popular Identities in Bolivia*:

This was when my obsession with finding everything Marx had said about the (ethnic) issue began, and I did this for ten years. We started searching through Marx's notebooks and texts on the 'non-historic peoples' from 1848 and through the works of Engels ... and then the ethnological manuscripts, and also the other, unpublished manuscripts in Amsterdam. We travelled there to look for a set of notebooks on Latin America; Marx had eight or 10 notebooks on Latin America. We became obsessed with finding a common thread on indigenous issues from a Marxist perspective, thinking that it was possible for Marxism to explain the significance of this issue, of the content and the potential of indigenous peoples' ethno-national demands (Linera 2014:3).

Once this powerful synthesis was unearthed, Linera was able to drive less salient labor struggles forward by combining Marx's unpublished writings on the relationship between indigeneity and class solidarity in Latin America. As a theoretical accomplishment alone, this would have been significant. But by

integrating these insights into applied Gramscian political strategy - melding theory with praxis, Linera was able to form a potent popular hegemony, successfully aligning socialist Second World with indigenous Fourth World, to form a potent syncretism of worldviews that has lasted until today. Journalist Pablo Stefanini described the vice president's intellectual journey as one where, "his interpretation of Marx, Lenin, Althusser, and Gramsci were useful in his challenge to the 'old Left' and for his search for a Marxism suited to the Andean reality" (Linera 2014:3). Importantly, this well construction indigenous popular hegemony cannot be attributed to Linera alone and was the product of collaborative efforts from other radical social movement leaders and organic intellectuals.

Prior to his rise to power Linera cofounded the intellectual collective *La Comuna*, named after traditional Andean communities and the Paris Commune (McNelly 2017). Along with prominent Bolivian intellectuals Raúl Prada, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, and Luis Tapia, members of La Comuna participated in the revolutionary period of 2000 - 2005 where left indigenous social movement coalitions destabilized two successive neoliberal regimes. Many of the vice president's collaborators have since broken ranks and become some of the most outspoken critics of the MAS (Hylton & Thomson 2007, Webber 2015), while others were later placed in leading roles within the government (McNelly 2017).

Within the early years after the MAS gained power, the construction of a left-indigenous syncretic hegemony took place within the deeply symbolic

crucible of cultural identity, classical labor struggle, and anti-imperialist sentiment. This pastiche image formed an effective cultural war of position against neoliberal and landed elite interests who were forced to cede ground. To foment this populist unity, Gramsci's writings were consciously employed by Linera and other cultural architects in the Bolivian intelligentsia.

The Vice President summarizes his role as an organic intellectual in building a popular hegemony by stating that, "there exists a social, political and moral leadership that allows for a sense of belonging and being represented within the State's administrative structure, [...] an alliance that unites the people around a common project" (Allen & Ouviaña 2017). This common project, the MAS' sustained ability to hold a popular hegemony, has reduced lowland social movement's abilities to effectively mobilize against state actions by undermining their shared grievances from international and domestic communities that largely believe the rhetoric of the MAS. However, according to Peter Baker, a "point of bifurcation," a rift in popular hegemony occurred in 2011 over the TIPNIS affair where police abused protesters (2015).

The state's decision to force the TIPNIS road was indicative of larger policy decisions, both overt and covert, to gain access to resources for extractivist interests. The crackdown has the impact of demoralizing and weakening the government's political opposition by taking land away from lowland indigenous opponents and providing this territory, in a de facto sense, to cocalero colonists. Describing the government's reaction to nonviolent protests, indigenous leader

and former vice-presidential candidate Marcial Fabricano recounts a 2017 demonstration:

We marched for days from Trinidad to Tarija to put pressure on the government to stop the development and exploitation in protected areas for defense of human rights and the environment. The government didn't say anything, they just went ahead and drilled in the national parks (author's recording).

The state's failure to acknowledge social movement claims that do not directly benefit those in power has increasingly become a hallmark of the government's relations with civil society. In recent months, a group of disabled Bolivian activists called on the MAS to provide a basic \$70 per month stipend for those with disabilities. When the activists neared the end of their long wheelchair march blocks from the main plaza, they were confronted with 400 police who used water cannons and pepper spray to stop protesters (*The Guardian* 5/5/2017). Although much of this piece is devoted to examinations of the state through a social movements lens, I do not want to underplay the importance of bravery within social movements. Douglas McAdam, the great historian of social movements, stresses that collective action is largely dependent upon the "courage, strategic skill, and knowledge of committed activists" (McAdam 2010). Theories that frame social movement outcomes based on the agency of individuals to lever themselves against the powerful currents of the mainstream society lend an element of hope that the great movement of the world system can be shifted by a small but committed group of people. The individual bravery of Ghandi, Mandela, or Martin Luther King, although part of a larger movement, was able to bend the arc of history toward justice. Although these features are

rare in activists, the left does have no monopoly on bravery, or integrity and this feature can be found across the political spectrum, irrespective of the morality.

2.5 Contradictions

An important tension within the MAS' hegemonic discourse is that the party's socialist rhetoric is not always congruous with indigenous cosmovisions - with the intermittent emergence of profound discontinuities in the constructed ideology of the state through intellectual architects like Linera. David Choquehuanca, the MAS Minister of Foreign Affairs and an Andean cosmovision expert, describes how socialism, "seeks to satisfy the needs of man and for capitalism the most important thing is money and surplus value" (Economía Solidaria 2010). This indigenous critique of the exploitation inherent in capitalism - is also a criticism of the anthropocentrism of Bolivian socialism. This is instructive in recognizing that although Bolivia's rich history of socialism remains part of the collective cultural identity of many traditions, there are distinct indigenous understandings of right livelihood that do not prioritize human nature over non-human nature and create symbolic tensions for indigenous communities. This bifurcation occurs at the state and local level in the syncretic traditions of indigeneity and peasant socialism. Two identities that, although amalgamated under the MAS, are not internally congruous.

The rich history of struggle against oppressive governments within the lowlands remains active within collective memory. Many community members over 30 vividly remember the formative experiences of participating in

nonviolent marches to the capital under neoliberal regimes. The MAS' contemporary violent repression of similar marches for indigenous lands, including for the protection of the TIPNIS, is a painful reminder for many lowland peoples that the struggle for full citizenship must continue (Baker 2015). Because of the short span of time that has lapsed, many of these social movements have retained their solidarity and institutional capacities via NGOs. Intergenerational movement do not easily fade - particularly when similar dynamics of extraction and contestation present themselves within recognizable patterns. Bienvenido Zacu, a Guarayo indigenous leader who held several key positions in the Morales government and played a prominent role in social movement activism leading to the new 2009 constitution discusses how today:

The government refuses to investigate the land thefts (within the TCO). The colonists are ignorant, they are not interested in the law. The law says that you cannot enter the TCO and use the resources. But, the government built a road along the Piraie river, near Santa Cruz that helped colonists access more territory. This is just like the situation with the TIPNIS road (author's interview).

However, he goes on to discuss the next generation of indigenous leaders who continue the struggle against the colonists and others entering TCO Guarayo. These are counter-hegemonic narratives that are taking place throughout the lowlands and facilitated by NGOs. They are discussions that the MAS seeks to undermine by severing funding and creating parallel organizations - discussed in the first chapter. This state antagonism has generated a growing backlash throughout lowland Guarayo communities who are now deeply cynical about the MAS' aims and largely reject the ecosocialist rhetoric of the

government. This rejection of dominant state narratives is often conducted symbolically through jokes and sarcasm as a way to express what lowland indigenous describe as the government's 'double discourse.' For example, when indigenous rights are discussed formally by the state, lowland indigenous people use Orwell's famous line from *Animal Farm* that, 'all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others' as a means of expressing their perceived dishonesty. The symbolism of *Animal Farm* is particularly salient given Orwell's references to supposedly leftist governments reproducing systems of domination under the hegemonic framework of equality.

As Gramsci states, "wars of position (are) fought by huge masses who are only able to endure the immense muscular, nervous, and psychic strain with the aid of great reserves of moral strength. Only a skillful political leadership, capable of taking into account the deepest aspirations and feelings of those human masses, can prevent disintegration and defeat" (Gramsci 2008:88). Lowland indigenous peoples' distrust of central authority is part of long standing battles against racial caste systems reified by landed elites. These left-indigenous coalitions first brought some redistribution of lands under the 1952 Agrarian Revolution and have since continued to build rural-urban alliances against consolidated power by recruiting those they view as potential allies, be they international NGOs or even to a limited extent right wing elites.

Indigenous peoples, particularly those living in Amazonian, became western icons synonymous with environmentalism through stereotypes including what Kent Redford's termed the ecological noble savage, that blended indigenous

land sovereignty with environmental preservation (Redford 1990). This ecological Indian stereotype also carried what Pierre Bourdieu termed *symbolic capital* that carried particular significance for an international audience. This imagery was successfully leveraged by NGOs and fundraisers to build the sector's large-scale conservation and human rights networks (Conklin and Graham 1995). Today, under the twilight of this symbolic imagery, both the MAS government and lowland peoples continue to employ a variety of these symbolic resources as mobilization strategies to control legitimacy and the dominant discourse.

In the material world, irrespective of ideology, Bolivia has become the fastest growing economy in Latin America in recent years (Barría 2017). Despite the seeming end to Evo's Bolivia after a national referendum in 2016, the country's highest court recently overruled the constitutional mandate on presidential term limits - effectively allowing Morales to run for a fourth term in 2019 and beyond (Blair 2017). The MAS party successfully argued that the first term of Evo's presidency did not count because it was under the old constitution. Further, referencing the American Convention on Human Rights, the party argued that not allowing a person to run for president violates their "essential rights." While critics of the government including Felipe Quispe, former leader of the Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army who was once a supported the MAS called the state's action, "capitalism with an Indian face" (The Economist. 12/1/2017).

Both the Bolivian government and non-state actors draw from indigenous social movement backgrounds with both groups continuing to strategically

deploy stereotypes of indigeneity, ecological knowledge, and environmental preservation in their discourses to media and funding sources. The MAS attempts to undermine NGOs as the principal funding sources of their political opponents in various manners where the three general structures of resources are (1) social networks, (2) organizations, and (3) infrastructures (Edwards & Gillham 2013). In my first chapter, I outlined the ways in which the MAS targets indigenous grassroots social networks and organizations by facilitating the creation of parallel or ‘astro-turf’ leadership organizations at multiple scales of governance. While I refrain from delving into these points in this chapter, it is important to mention that the state strategically neglects indigenous social movement organization (SMO) infrastructure: including roads, waterways, and other necessary goods.

While in the Chiquitania, former Mayor of Concepción Carlos Wasase mentioned that during his time in office, he dedicated funds toward road maintenance in TCO Monte Verde and throughout the community. Today, the roads are neglected and bridges in disrepair. According to numerous sources in the democratically elected NGO-indigenous alliances, the MAS-affiliated parallel organization in Monte Verde supports illegal logging and allowing drug traffickers to expand within the TCO. Fabricant and Postero argue that external market pressures for extractive and agricultural resources since colonial times remain the underlying drivers that pressure the Morales government into development projects such as the TIPNIS road and thus create tension with lowland actors (Fabricant and Postero 2015). Jeffery Webber challenges the

notion that the government has actually instituted substantive egalitarian reforms at any point in Morales' presidency - instead arguing the MAS has simply incorporated indigenous-peasant movements into the state apparatus (2017). The MAS has also appropriated the indigenous sustainable development paradigm of *vivir bien* (living well) from the lowland Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano CIDOB whose central role in creating the ideological architecture of the modern Bolivian plurinational state goes largely ignored (Beaulieu & Postero 2012).

2.6 Civil Society Responses to State Hegemony

Lowland indigenous social movements depend, to varying degrees, upon outside patronage for access to resources (Postero 2006). Over the last decade, this patronage of lowland indigenous organizing has been primarily from NGOs from Northern Europe and takes the form of assistance including *viaticos* (money for travel and living expenses), capacity building, event organizing, technical and legal assistance, research and publications on issues of general concern, platforms for institutional and cultural legitimation and the amplification of environmental and human rights grievances on the global stage (Postero 2006). Because there is a general absence of significant state support for indigenous civil society organizations at the local level, with high rates of unemployment in native communities, NGOs remain the backbone of institutional capacity building for many lowland native social movements, especially those critical of extractivism. According to indigenous leaders, lowland peoples are strategically ignored by the

state as a strategy to weaken criticism and punish dissent. Bienvenido Sacu, former Guarayo Congressman explains some of the constraints and the social and economic repercussions of state repression:

One problem is we don't have education for institutional capacity (building) specifically for healthcare. For example, my friend cut her foot, but there's no specialist in the TCO, so she had to travel to Santa Cruz and it took a day. So, they had to cut off her foot. The new constitution says that the land is ours; for political participation, for natural resources. The forestry reserve law says the territory is ours. But this is a contradictory discourse about defending the territory...in order to sell artisanal crafts you need a certification ... there are many rules. Why don't we have that ability to certify in the lowlands? It's only in the highlands where they certify and export. Since Evo was elected, the central government no longer allows communities to be compensated directly because of the assumption that they can't be trusted. But instead, the government received money from extractive industries and gave it to the Indigenous Fund who then gave it to communities (author's interview).

The now defunct Indigenous Fund (2005 - 2015) was designed to provide money for rural development projects, yet the fund's ten-year lifespan was mired in controversy. From inception, MAS affiliates were placed in leadership roles until the government was forced to dissolve the fund in 2015 amidst a corruption scandal that involved the embezzlement of approximately 7 million dollars destined for 49 uncompleted projects (CNN Espanol. 12/11/2015). The institutional structures of bureaucracy, complexity and corruption are one means the MAS uses to maintain indirect control over political rivals by enforcing a status quo of grinding poverty and economic dependency - by creating a colony, within a former colony. This government strategy effectively denies meaningful opportunities for indigenous TCO residents to pursue non-extractive livelihoods, instead giving power to transnational agribusiness giants including Cargill and

Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) to play managerial roles in the regional economies of the eastern lowlands. These vertically integrated corporate networks are the primary drivers of deforestation within the county and regionally (Burbach, 2008). When the MAS supports corporations over citizens, this facilitates the centralization of wealth in the right-wing Santa Cruz elite exacerbating maldistribution of lands. Deforestation and pollution effectively privatize remaining indigenous people's lands and resources by making them toxic to consume and depressing the regenerative ecosystem processes through agro-industrial effluent.

Further, similar problems of institutional capacity building are exacerbated by the government's punitive use of bureaucracy as a strategy to prevent lowland indigenous peoples from participation in meaningful paid labor and non-extractive production in rural areas. This generates high rates of unemployment within TCOs and precipitates seasonal migrations of native workers to seek contingent *precariat* labor elsewhere. Even former Congressman Sacu remains underemployed, limiting trips to visit extended family in TCO Guarayo due to a lack of funds. Prior to his political career he worked as a carpenter. After his government service he now plays music with the Guarayo band *Los Amigos* at birthday parties, quinceañeras and other events to earn enough to feed their families - writing songs about environmental protection and territorial autonomy. Lowland indigenous movements are built on the backs of some of the most marginalized people in the country - and the government is fully aware of these conditions.

Recognizing these severe limitations to their political opponents, the MAS employs an economic scorched earth policy wherein funding towards native organizations not aligned with state interests are systematically undermined. Besides these wars of attrition already mentioned, the attacks arrive in the form of affronts to the character of movements and disparaging comments against leaders of native-allied NGOs (Moreiras 2015). On the one hand Vice President Linera criticizes western NGOs who support lowland indigenous capacity building as complicit in imperialism (Linera 2011). While organizations critical of the government draw their numbers from the ranks of intellectual discontents, former MAS loyalists, and lowland indigenous groups, under the common claim that the state is perpetuating an extractivist agenda with little improvement in living standards and scant distribution of resources to communities in need (Almaraz 2011). The political terrain of Bolivia is particularly complex because of the power of ideology to obscure the actual material conditions on the ground - with diverse parties employing legitimization strategies that make use of performance and symbolism.

The radical project of transformative ecosocialist state formation continues to appeal to the international Left and Linera's reputation as the country's most important Marxist public intellectual theorist supports the framework. As Nancy Postero notes, the MAS has been able to consolidate political power through deploying a hegemonic discourse of indigenous nationalism that blends the indigenous insurrectionism of Tupac Katari, the nationalism of Simon Bolivar and the socialism of Che Guevara (2010). In a

recent piece, Postero further highlights the tensions between the MAS on the one hand promoting emancipatory politics by rewriting the constitution and performing symbolic acts of decoloniality to highlight racial injustice while at the same time promoting extractivism and enforcing state authority through police actions against civil society (Postero 2017).

Due to the symbolic and ideological nature of Bolivian politics it is crucial to examine how material conditions, deforestation rates, relative poverty statistics, and other metrics may demonstrate better indicators of the condition of the poor under Morales. A recent report by Gonzalo Colque, Director of the well-respected NGO *Fundacion Tierra*, states “in the last decade there has been a systematic expansion of agro-extractivism.” Colque called on the government to reform “development policies, especially in indigenous territories, to “adopt forms of use and exploitation of sustainable natural resources, instead of expanding the agribusiness model” (Fundacion Tierra 2017:1). According to a 2016 United Nations Human Development Report based on consistent time series data, from the time the MAS was elected in 2005 - 2015, life expectancy increased from 63.5 to 68.7 years, GNI per capita increased from \$4,549 to \$6,155, (2011 PPP dollars), and the country’s Human Development Index (HDI) value rose from 0.625 to 0.674 (UN 2016).

These development metrics are part of a geopolitical, ideological and capitalist project of power relations that systematically neglect non-commodified resources until they are integrated into the market. To the extent that Bolivia, and other Latin American countries, participate in mainstream development practices

begun after the World War II, they are simply reifying the notion of poverty in a hegemonic manner based on reductive economic metrics. Political anthropologist Arturo Escobar, in his 1995 seminal work: *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, describes how the World Bank and the Truman Doctrine constructed the notion of *poverty* in particular economic ways - and in so doing two thirds of the world population *became* poor. In a Foucauldian sense, the social construction of poverty as a legitimization discourse reified neo-colonial relationships to the global south under the banner of development.

In the 2012 reissue to his classic, Escobar considers the radical possibilities that Bolivia and Ecuador, as states with new constitutions that grant rights to nature, open genuine opportunities for noncapitalist practices to organically develop. He sees the crucible for these emancipatory possibilities originating in, “forms of *autonomía* that involve nonstate forms of power stemming from communal cultural, economic, and political practices” (Escobar 2012 xxix). It is these types of democratic indigenous postdevelopment practices that the MAS government, with a political base rooted in cocalero mercantilism and an economic reliance on extractivism, seeks to undermine. Escobar characterizes the current dynamic as follows:

In Ecuador and Bolivia in particular, postextractivism and postdevelopmentalism thus bring together the state, NGOs, social movements, and intellectuals into a crucial and intense debate. There is a sense of an impasse created by the tense coexistence of progressive yet economistic and developmentalist policies at the level of the State, on the one hand, and the ability of movements to problematize such policies from below - a sort of “promiscuous mixture” of capitalist hegemony and

movement counterpowers, of radical demands for change and the reconstitution of ruling (Escobar 2012 xxx).

It is this tension that makes the situation in Bolivia so important for studying alternatives to the modern social and ecological crises. An indigenous leader from the municipality of Gutierrez who participated in a march to block the TIPNIS road discussed his role vis-a-vis the government: “We are autonomous (but) the government is not interested in helping the process of autonomy. We don’t have economic resources to strengthen the autonomy process. The lowland indigenous must know that the government is a necessary part of this process, but the advancement is very slow.” As Jeffrey Webber points out, although a radical rhetoric of change continues to be deployed the MAS government never acted on these revolutionary reforms. He argues that:

Despite its impressive capacity to mobilize and its far-reaching anti-capitalist and indigenous-liberationist objectives, however, the left-indigenous bloc lacked a revolutionary party that might have provided the leadership, strategy and ideological coherence necessary to overthrow the existing capitalist state and rebuild a new sovereign power rooted in the self-governance of the overwhelmingly indigenous proletarian and peasant majority (2012:150).

The power of ideology and the Evo’s strategic use of symbolism to convey meaning both domestically and internationally. Choosing to be sworn in as president at a pre-Incan site near La Paz by an indigenous religious leader. His speech was an homage to Che Guevara, Simon Bolivar, the Incan leader Tupac Katari, and quoted the Mexican Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos (Postero 2010). When asked in an interview about how his perspective changed after assuming the role of Vice President, Linera replied:

Being in the government has mostly reaffirmed the things that I believed and argued long before I ever imagined that I would participate directly in the state. In particular, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the state's monopoly on symbolic power has had increasing resonance, helping me understand how the state functions (Farthing 2010:31).

This is instructive given the strategic use of symbolic power the MAS continues to wield. Indigeneity, nationalism, and anti-imperialist imagery are useful ideological tools for state institutions seeking to hegemonically legitimate extractivism. Under a postmodern *pastiche* imagery integrating elements of famous figures and reconfiguring their diverse and highly archetypal elements to support nation building.

Since the election of Evo in 2005, the international press on the political Left has shown massive support for the president, quoting his ecological socialist discourse and providing an effective shield against those discontents. Such is the power of identity politics, to decouple ideology from material conditions while worshiping discourses deployed by those in power. This is a phenomenon that continues to this day with Linera's assertion that 50 - 100 years of extractivism is a prerequisite to a socialist society of the future. Even today, as political fractures have grown in the country, and international and domestic press has been largely critical of the TIPNIS road, within academic circles, there continues to be debates between those supportive of the long-term vision of the MAS and the ecological and human rights compromises that must be made for a decolonial project. While some critics claim that Morales has largely sold out to capital interests and maintained control through invoking the ecological Indian stereotype as diversion to capture the imaginations of unreflexively progressive ideologies.

This dynamic of symbolic, dematerialized rhetorical struggles superseding the needs and material conditions of people. As Cornel West argues, moral action is based on “systematic social analysis of the circumstances under which tragic persons struggle” (Gilyard 21). In other words, in order to understand what is happening in a given situation, a carefully examination must be undertaken to study the material conditions and lived experiences of those people and groups resisting the general directions of society. Antonio Gramsci termed political party’s efforts to assert hegemonic legitimacy through *wars of position* wherein popular hegemony is maintained through a political party’s reification of a dominant ideological framework disseminated via media, education, or other socializing apparatus (Egan 2014). Once established, these hegemonic frames allow the party to carry out their real objectives outside of the veil of ideology. In the Bolivian case, the MAS deploys eco-socialist discourses to the international media, easing concern from foreign civil society groups who themselves are institutionally designed to fight overt human and environmental threats. Once popular hegemony is established the MAS is free to continue plans for extractive projects that violate international laws relating to indigenous people’s right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). If there is push back from marginalized groups, the state either ignores, cracks down, or claims NGO foreign interventionism using salient anti-imperialist rhetoric designed to inspire feelings of nationalism against the very real threats of US imperial hemispheric policies characteristic of the Monroe Doctrine.

2.7 Conclusion

Progressive laws have gone hand in hand with environmental extractivism in Bolivia, Ecuador, and across Latin America since before the MAS. However, the massive economic restructuring that occurred in Bolivia in the 1980s and elsewhere deeply privatized public services in what Naomi Klein considers as one of the most brutal ‘shocks’ of any country in the Southern Cone. According to Latin American economics Professor Ricardo Grinspun, Bolivia’s economy received the “orthodox approach” developed at the neoliberal Chicago School of economics to, “shift all the social cost onto the poor through shock therapy” (Klein 2007:149). Instead of the population going limp and accepting the bombardment of devastating cuts to social programs, as conservative economists had hoped for, the poorest people organized, toppled the neoliberal governments and brought Morales and the MAS to power. Yet despite the partial nationalization of extractive industries under the MAS, with noteworthy rebounds in civil society over the last 12 years, there are material infrastructure and social services that cannot be rebuilt overnight.

This is particularly true given the structural conditions of the world system and the ability of international financial institutions to punish nations that do not comply with neoliberal orthodoxy. These continuous defeats prompted the famous writer Eduardo Galeano to describe Latin American countries as “specialized in losing” (1997:1) Because of this, many Latin American politicians have taken a short-term approach toward their political goals, many only looking as far as the next election cycle. Yet, in Bolivia, the general public disapproval

towards Morales, without any viable alternative candidates, is a crisis for the left allowing rightist conservative factions to regroup, seek allies, and employ the salient rhetoric of autonomy and sovereignty as a right-wing populist Trojan horse for rebuilding landed aristocratic fortunes based on expropriation of public lands via agribusiness and other extractive models. Why are indigenous territories continuing to struggle under Morales? The idea of indigenous territories (TCOs) was developed under neoliberal regimes with the help of NGOs who believed that indigenous communities were the common denominator for native peoples. However, as long-time wildlife biologist and anthropologist, Wendy Townsend notes:

The idea of TCOs was an outside vision to make communities into territories that are communally managed. Indigenous peoples are really more concerned with their families as the main denominator, not the village.

Townsend describes rival parallel indigenous groups as result of existing ideological differences within the community. TCOs, as semi-autonomous spaces, do not necessarily function homogeneously and where fragile, emerging democratic institutions are perhaps more vulnerable to extractivist interests due to economic impoverishment. Further, the power of global capital to influence modern state building efforts in Pink Tide countries where colonial forms of extraction remain the dominant productive form irrespective of who is in power or what the discursive rhetoric employed. As such, TCOs with all their natural wealth, are a nexus where the MAS' popular hegemony meet the remaining legal protections put in place by NGO-indigenous coalitions. Both sides remain locked in a battle over the soul of the country. Productive opportunities for synthesis of

development policies remain. Just and sustainable communities depend on inclusive dialogue among groups. Linera's position is that short term ecological damage is necessary for long term socialist goals. While critics argue this is a Faustian bargain where human and ecological rights are to be sacrificed for the prospect of an ecosocialist future. This would be closer to Gramsci's reading of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, where the needs of the political party are apart from a material framework.

Is the framing of pragmatism versus purity an overly simplistic dichotomy? Can the country meet future energy needs by rapidly developing infrastructure through redistributed hydrocarbon rents? Where would the money for infrastructure development come from if royalties from extraction cease? Could regional alliances be capable of producing the kinds of goods, medicines, and technologies capable of allowing everyone to meet their basic needs and participate as full citizens in a modern world of their choosing? I explore these questions, and offer several preliminary conclusions, in my final chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PURITY OR PRAGMATISM? THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BOLIVIA IN THE WORLD SYSTEM

Given the structural constraints of the contemporary world system and the historical momentum of core-periphery relationships to production and extraction, I ask: why is the Bolivian government simultaneously accelerating extractivism while promoting constitutional reforms for indigenous territories and the rights of nature? I examine the 2006 – 2018 period under President Evo Morales and the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) political party. I use immanent critique to interrogate the degree to which the state's concrete actions coincide with, or diverge from, the party's political speech to highlight possible contradictions - while recognizing the government's actions take place within a larger geopolitical system dominated by global capital.

Why would the MAS accelerate extraction while simultaneously supporting certain rights for indigenous peoples and the environment? Geographer David Harvey poses a similar question when he asks if these contradictions and the reformist character of the MAS is due to, “a matter of political choice, expediency, or a necessity imposed by the configuration of class forces prevailing in Bolivia, backed by strong external imperialist pressures” (2013:143). Are the contradictions in state development policies a result of structural constraints within a global world system that denies meaningful alternatives or a fundamental betrayal of indigenous-Left social movement efforts for postcolonial alternative livelihoods? What concrete actions has the MAS

taken to meaningfully alleviate poverty, protect natural areas and restructure the economy for sustainable human development? Finally, what exit strategies exist for lowland indigenous peoples in their struggle for place-based self-determination? How can we reconcile policies and processes that both support and undermine lowland indigenous peoples made by the first indigenous president in the Americas in 500 years?

While we cannot make conclusive assertions about the internal reasons for the state's decisions to shift from revolution to reform, we can make empirical observations about the condition and distribution of land and the relative welfare of some of the most marginalized groups within the country - rural indigenous populations. I base my analysis on fieldwork conducted in the Bolivian lowlands, archival data and national level poverty metrics from governmental and nongovernmental sources on indicators including: mortality rates, literacy rates, life expectancy and other country level data to analyze the degree to which partial nationalization of hydrocarbon rents under the MAS has impacted rural indigenous peoples of the lowlands. Before beginning the analysis, I historicize and contextualize Bolivia's relationship to the world system.

3. Literature Review

Immanuel Wallerstein is generally viewed as having devised the most popular version of world systems theory as a meta-analysis for understanding social reality. Wallerstein traces the roots of the world system to the 16th century agricultural arena when global capitalism became the dominant economic system

(Wallerstein 2004). In the updated version, world systems analysis argues that a global division of labor exists based on the three categories of power relations termed *core-states*, *periphery*, and *semi-periphery* areas (Wallerstein 2011). Core-states are those with robust organs of governance, high degrees of economic complexity, and ‘cultural integrity’ while periphery-states occupy a weakened colonial, or neo-colonial position with relatively low levels of autonomy. Semi-periphery and periphery are termed *areas* rather than *states* to connote weakened mechanisms of state governance. Semi-periphery areas lie somewhere in between either category and may have occupied the prior role of core states or developed in such a way as to transcend aspects of their former peripheral area status (Wallerstein 1976). Similar in many respects to World Systems Theory, *Dependency theory* uses core-periphery relationship between countries but focuses on differential power relations between core and periphery as the main explanatory factory for global inequality.

Dependency theory was first developed by economist Hans Singer in his 1949 article, “Economic Progress in Underdeveloped Countries” and elaborated by Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch beginning in 1950 with his publication, “The economic development of Latin America and its principal problems” (Prebisch 1950). The synthesis of these economist’s works formed the *Prebisch-Singer hypothesis* (Bloch and Sapsford 2000). Decency theory identifies global inequality as a function of unequal exchange - where periphery nations export relatively lower priced *primary commodities* (including food, minerals, or oil) with more fixed prices associated with production. Whereas core nations control

the production of *manufactured goods* (including phones, cars, or computers) and generally command a higher price relative to primary commodities. According to the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis, over the *longue durée*, Bolivia and any country that continues exporting primary commodities will remain in a periphery status of unequal exchange leading to underdevelopment. Contemporary Bolivia fits well into this model. According to recent World Bank data, the country's five primary export commodities are: natural gas, zinc, gold, silver, and soy beans. While the country's greatest imports are manufactured goods including: processed petroleum, diesel vehicles, machines, mechanical appliances, metal bars and rods, and gas-powered trucks (World Bank 2015).

More recent tests of the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis support the thesis that primary commodity prices tend to devalue over time relative to manufactured goods, suggesting the model remains valid under modern global market conditions with recent studies from scholars including; Harvey, Kellard, Madsen, and Wohar, 2010; Singer 1998; Arezki, Hadri, Loungani, and Rao, 2014.

3.1 Post-Shock Bolivian Reconstruction

There was a great push for democratic reforms across Latin American nations in the 1980s as a direct response to the neoliberal shocks that drastically privatized state services and plundered the public sphere. Although the Bolivian people narrowly elected Victor Paz Estenssoro President in 1985 on a platform of nationalizing industries and moving the country away from two decades of dictatorship - Paz did not deliver on his promises. According to Naomi Klein in

her classic 2004 book, *The Shock Doctrine*, Paz inherited a national economy in ruins from corruption, kleptocracy and experiencing massive inflation. Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs was brought in as economic advisor to stabilize the economy. Although trained as a demand side Keynesian economist, Sachs instead decided to recommend one of the most extreme “shock therapy” approaches yet attempted in efforts to restructure the economy based on Milton Friedman’s Chicago School. The neoliberal turn meant that currency inflation would be addressed by a series of draconian budget cuts, price deregulations, and massive privatization measures to dismantle, “the entire state-centric model” - all in less than 100 days (Klein 2004:146). This secret economic bomb was detonated on the unsuspecting Bolivian population who were awaiting democratic reforms. The public reaction to this betrayal of democracy was not ‘shock and awe’ - but rather outrage and rebellion - with union leaders calling for a general strike and huge social movement mobilizations in the streets.

One state strategy Paz employed to scare the population into submission was to deploy the military who rounded up approximately one hundred labor leaders and flew them to a secret prison in the northeast. This kidnapping and economic blackmail was designed to pressure labor to end the strike - and the tactic was successful. Mass mobilizing stalled and the public succumbed to what Latin American economics professor Ricardo Grinspun called an, “orthodox approach to shift all the social cost onto the poor through shock therapy” (Klein 2004:146).

Within two years, the unemployment rate increased from 20% percent at the time of election to 30%. The state's tin mines were among the sectors of the economy hardest hit, with more than 75% of miners laid off and forced to move to city slums or to the intermountain slope of the Chapere region to grow coca. Evo Morales came from one of these miner-turned-cocalero communities who clearly remembered the betrayal of labor, Washington Consensus imposed shock treatments, US coca crackdowns, and neoliberal policies that destroyed the country's efforts for meaningful democracy and ushered in another wave of governance that maintained one of the worst levels of land and wealth inequality in Latin America. Unsurprisingly, in the year 2000, the Cochabamba 'Water War' where a subsidiary of San Francisco based Bechtel corporation was expelled from the country after attempting predatory rate increases in Bolivia's third largest city where two-thirds of residents, "earn less than the cost of their minimum required daily nutrition" (Davis 2017:25). With the election of Evo in 2005, hopes were high for correcting the failures of the 1952 Agrarian Reforms to substantively address both issues of maldistribution and the vicious legacy of white supremacy that had maintained class relations within a racialized hierarchy for centuries.

3.2 For the MAS or the Masses?

At present, the official poverty rates show significant improvement on the national level with extreme poverty rates falling from 38% to 18.8% between 2005 - 2013, and moderate poverty falling from 60% to 39% in the same

timeframe (Postero 2017). Recent World Health Organization (WHO) statistics from 2015 show the country's mortality rates for children under 5 and maternal mortality rates have more than halved from 1990 levels (WHO). A 2016 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report indicated that between 2005 - 2010, those in extreme poverty went from 38% to 25%, while moderate poverty declined from 60% to under half the population (49.6%) (UNDP 2016).

Immunization rates for 1-year old children in the same time period (1990 - 2015) more than doubled (40% - 85%) while national expenditures on health care have risen only slightly (WHO 2015). A study assessing child health in Bolivia from 2003 to 2008 similarly found immunization rates increased, while more complex public health problems, including infant mortality and malnutrition, remained at similar levels in the first years of Morales' presidency (Heaton, Crookston, Forste, and Knowlton, 2014).

Other country level metrics indicate improvements. The unemployment rate more than halved in the same time period - from 8.4% to 4% (Human Development Report 2016) and according to a piece in *The Guardian*, Bolivia leads all other Latin American countries in transferring a larger share of Gross National Product (GNP) to the poor through social welfare programs including the *Juancito Pinto* school voucher program and the *Renta Dignidad* retirement pension for those 60 years old or older (Navarro 2012). Although Morales claims that the *Juancito Pinto* program reduced school dropout rates from 6% - 2%, there are difficulties in assessing these efficacy claims because these programs lack longitudinal data as there was no prior baseline for comparison (McGuire

2013). The majority of the Bolivian population (68.5%) is urban with little change since 2005 (UNDP 2016). Recent World Bank estimates place the rural population at approximately 31% (2016). With few paved roads outside major cities and widening political junctures, there is great disparity between rural and urban populations in community access to healthcare, sanitation, education and other basic services. While clean water, basic sanitation and electricity have been provided by the state to many rural indigenous communities, NGOs continue to fulfill vital roles including; healthcare, capacity building, microfinance and small business support, and a host of other tasks. For many isolated communities, and within underserved cities and towns, the erosion of NGO funding under Morales has resulted in few meaningful changes in overall welfare. However, there is overall a dearth of reliable data on longitudinal health metrics in rural areas making definitive statements difficult.

3.3 Sincere Political Economic Approaches

Speaking about the region, Leandro Vergara and Camus Cristóbal Kay assert that although leftist Latin American countries, including Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, have not lived up to the promises of agrarian land reform and divestment from the business-as-usual neoliberal model - there have been a few differences. According to the authors, TCOs in Bolivia and communal lands in Ecuador, represent a possible break from the general centralization and privatization of lands because these territories are integrated into the constitutions of both countries. However, citing Bebbington and Bebbington, the authors assert

that in actual practice, indigenous land sovereignty, “is very limited and they have not impeded left-wing governments from encroaching on those territories when the extractive imperative requires it” (Vergara and Kay 2017). These findings are consistent with the author’s fieldwork where de facto processes of autonomy are often overlooked by both state and nonstate actors. Yet these criticisms of the state are vigorously contested by Morales’ supporters - principally Evo’s Vice President Álvaro Marcelo García Linera.

Beaulieu and Postero note that Linera’s trilogy of books, *The Creative Tensions of the Revolution* (2010), “*NGOism,*” *Infantile Illness of the Right* (2011), and *Geopolitics of the Amazon* (2012) all attempt to rebuke MAS critics as ultimately benefiting the power structures of right wing elites and the system of global capital. The authors summarize Linera’s *Geopolitics*, a work directed at undermining the central arguments of the entire lowland indigenous peoples represented by CIDOB (the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia) that critiques efforts to protect the TIPNIS by NGO-indigenous alliances. The vice president characterizes efforts to protect the TCO and park as a:

Hysterical dramatization ... (that) is actually a strategy of colonial domination that takes advantage of the internal contradiction at the heart of the revolutionary popular bloc that brought Morales to power (Beaulieu & Postero 2012:14).

Linera asserts that power in the Amazon is held by three principal groups broken into (1) regional landed elites, (2) transnational corporations from the global north and (3) NGOs. He concludes that lowland indigenous people’s efforts to protect the TIPNIS and maintain TCO sovereignty should be understood as a colonial neo-hacienda system where indigenous people’s

organizing against the MAS will have the long-term impact of taking away their own collective rights and serving the political economic interests of outsiders (Beaulieu & Postero 2012).

Linera's argument - synthesized by anthropologist Nancy Postero who works with lowland Guaraní - is that the state occupies the only legitimate position to protect indigenous lands. TCO residents are, according to Linera, controlled in a patriarchal fashion by various non-state actors, principally NGOs, that detract from government power and foster elite-driven capital accumulation by detracting from national protectionism. Linera's narrative neglects to recognize the agency of lowland indigenous peoples to make conscious and pragmatic decisions, not to mention their significant contribution to state building - and their role in asserting the guiding principle of sustainability under the term, "vivir bien" (living well) in the new 2009 constitution (Schavelzon 2012). Similarly, Linera's perspective fails to honor decades-long lowland social movement efforts for regional autonomy prior to the MAS. However, the struggle between the government vis-a-vis indigenous-NGO coalitions is, as described in the previous chapter, not simply a battle over real estate, but a war for popular hegemony and the creation of a common-sense narrative for the past and future of the nation.

Within a global context, Rosaleen Howard frames how, "the bid for hegemony of Morales and the MAS-affiliated bloc threatens to disrupt the language/knowledge/power paradigm that has hitherto helped define relations of power" (2010:15). Federico Fuentes in, "Bad Left Government" versus "Good

Left Social Movements”? A Critique of Jeffrey Webber’s Arguments Against the MAS as a Party of ‘Reconstituted Neoliberalism,’” argues that casting cocaleros and miners as essentially opposed to one another reifies inter-Left conflicts and undermines commonalities that would benefit all leftist groups via coalitions around larger structural goals of overcoming imperialism through international socialism (Ellner 2014). A similar argument could be made between MAS loyalists and lowland indigenous autonomist communities, where both could benefit from greater levels of collaboration. Fuentes’ anti-Manichean argument frames the challenges Bolivia faces as irreducible to issues of “imperialist meddling” but rather as historically situated processes of colonialism and imperialism, that entrenched the nation into a dependent raw materials exporter within the world economy (Ellner 2014:120). Under this sincere perspective, the MAS party is given leeway for their broken promises due to external market pressures.

Historical and contemporary economic boom to bust cycles have only centralized these path dependencies. Brent Kaup argues that after the 2008 financial crisis, financial institutions were bailed out by depleting public resources. Global Northern countries, including the US, UK, and Spain, imposed domestic austerity policies that resembled the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed on the Global South after the Post World War II period. Yet, despite massive increases in wealth inequality and the admonishment from mainstream economists, including Alan Greenspan, that there were problems with the ‘free market’ ideology, the economic fixes to the system remain largely

unchanged in their relationship to the promotion of capital accumulation and wealth inequality. Kaup, quoting Peck, Theodore, and Brenner, calls this continuation of neoliberalism a “zombie phase” animated by technocratic forms of muscle memory, deep instincts of self-preservation, and spasmodic bursts of social violence (2012:17).

This zombie neoliberalism, or put differently, the institutional isomorphic pressures described by DiMaggio and Powell, exert tremendous pressures on the MAS or any other democratically elected party in power. Combined with a deeply rutted political terrain of path dependencies force Morales and other Pink Tide leaders - not to mention Greece’s Syriza, Spain’s dynamic Podemos Party, or other more independent political forces - forced to confront a capitalist edifice that cannot easily be rebuilt under different architectural principles. How then can the great desires of the demos reconstruct the foundations of a public sphere systematically abandoned and looted for decades? These would be a great challenge for a wealthy nation such as the U.S. where the legacy of wealth inequality and white supremacy remain 150 years after black reconstruction. The slums of Philadelphia today continue to be some of the poorest in the U.S. over a century after Du Bois’ wrote his classic, *The Philadelphia Negro*. So, for a single vulnerable economy in one of the poorest countries in Latin America to accomplish this feat would be an almost Sisyphean task indeed. Even to have a functioning regional alliance such as ALBA - the *Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America* composed of 11 Latin American states - to function

under an entirely different set of rules outside the world system is a great challenge that cannot be expected in a short period of time.

After centuries of colonial exploitation under core-periphery relations as well as decades of privatization, erosion of the public sphere under militarism, dictatorships, dirty wars, plutocracy, neoliberalism, and structural adjustment, this is a monumental task. Yet the ghosts of Che, Simon, Fidel and many named and unnamed revolutionaries linger in the collective memory of Latin American social movements who maintain the struggle for substantive democracy as a verb - not a noun. And this light is perhaps brightest for those in the lowlands who have been systematically denied equity for 500 years. The main questions remain, will the heterodox lowland movements, with their diverse needs and aspirations, be able to form coalitions capable of bringing pressure to bear on those in power? Will NGOs, so central to indigenous capacity building, be capable of maintaining these coalitions under an entirely different political landscape in some ways more complex than before?

3.4 Cynical Analysis

The MAS is reformist at best and “reconstituted neoliberalism” at worst argues Marxist scholar Jeffery Webber. The actual standard of living has not been significantly altered under Evo and instead the revolutionary character of the party that peasant and indigenous social movements fought for is best characterized as reformist political opportunism that leaves in place hierarchical class relations where transnational corporations and regional elites are prioritized

over the welfare of the most vulnerable (Webber 2011). In the final chapter of his 2013 work, *Rebel Cities*, David Harvey sees Bolivia's social movement struggles in the radical 2000 - 2005 period as at the forefront of the global efforts to repulse neoliberal globalization. Harvey asks why Bolivia, and leftist governments across Latin America, "were controlled and reabsorbed into dominant capitalist practices" (119:2013). Why did Bolivian social movement efforts to radically reclaim democracy and public goods fundamentally fail to maintain their core goals - concerning nationalization of resources, as well as rights for people and the planet? Why is today's MAS party a milquetoast administration that recently succeeded in overriding presidential term limits in the new constitution and now stands with Nicaragua as the only states in the Americas with no limits on presidential re-election (Blair 2017).

Harvey's engages with Webber's critique of the MAS and concludes that the party moved towards reform based on world systems pressures, similar to my analysis in the second chapter of this work. Harvey reminds us that calls for autonomy in Latin America are often associated with leftist progressive movements. Arturo Escobar is similarly supportive of these movements as, at base, anti-capitalist. Yet within the Bolivian context, lowland elites continue to use similar platforms of autonomy against the state (2013). This partially explains the uneasy and often pragmatic alliances between lowland indigenous and Santa Cruz elites where calls for autonomy serve both group's interests even if the underlying relations - to both land use and political-economic power - are clearly oppositional in the long term. Harvey, despite admitting his ignorance of the

situational complexities, remains skeptical of the underlying reasons for autonomist efforts from the lowlands - whether they originate from indigenous communities or right-wing elites. So we need to be clear about examining power relations and the underlying reasons for group's efforts to gain autonomy at various scales.

Even within indigenous communities, the struggle for territorial autonomy is largely an ideological tension between place-based use-values and exchange-values. This dichotomy can partially explain some of the reasons for the emergence of parallel indigenous leadership organizations. With the more recent splinter parallel groups representing a more mercantile, exchange-value centered worldview emphasizing short term wealth accumulation via legitimating logging and other forms of extraction in TCOs - over the cultural survival and independent sustainable human development. Under the current paradigm, rural to urban pressures are likely to exacerbate this pressure to prioritize resource commodification.

3.5 Indigenous-NGO Alliances

NGOs play an historical and contemporary relationship within this world system. In the Post World War II era, the third sector fills the gaps left by neoliberal austerity and marketization. After the deconstructed administrative state no longer fulfills basic social services and instead exists to perform limited functions for serving capital interests - civil society begins to unravel. This presents a significant problem for the workings of the system primarily for the

great mass of the poor who have no real possibilities for obtaining a better life, but also for elites in a somewhat limited capacity. A neo-Dickensian world is of course desirable for the masters of mankind - as a disposable army of labor, wage suppressant and provider of various services inherent to desperate peoples. Yet philanthropy and the heterodox reasons for NGOs remains strong and fulfill significant roles of concern to elites and others in relatively privileged strata. Even early on, the collective need to address basic sanitation, promote immunizations, etc. was recognized as inherently important by elites in order to prevent disease outbreaks and other causes of general concern. NGOs can thus be used as ad hoc subcontractors rather than providing full time state employment by fulfilling development needs generally fulfilled by the state, these organizations can depoliticize citizens by encouraging the public to look to the third sector rather than the state for solutions. This implicitly encourages anti-statist stances in the public conscious that do support an eroded public sphere under neoliberalism. In so doing, NGOs may have a deleterious impact on the structures of democratic institutions - further legitimating the privatization of the public sphere. By imposing unelected - and therefore non-democratic management to address issues of public concern, groups can co-opt organic intellectuals and the relatively privileged classes into working for NGOs through the economic whip and lack of public alternatives. Additionally, nonprofits may reinforce economic dependencies, function at sub-national levels, and be subject to the external whims of outside global northern donors with limited local

knowledge and a host of other concerns relevant to considering the tensions between state, civil society, and global capital (Petras, 1997).

In essence, Linera's critiques of the nonprofit sector are structurally sound, yet strategically ignores the agency of lowland communities to reject state sponsored extractivism and argue for sovereignty and for the rule of law set forth in the new constitution. In August 2017, Morales accused, "some NGOs and foundations" of being "instruments of the empire to loot and intervene [in] countries" (Human Rights Watch 2018). The MAS is willing to promote propaganda that uses nationalism and fear of an external enemy to discredit democratic lowland indigenous grievances and allies. Yet, the state has been, as of yet, unable to present credible evidence to support claims of foreign interventionism.

3.6 Conclusion

Clear political economic constraints for an independent Bolivia remain part of a colonial path dependent world system far beyond the scale of the MAS political party at the national level. NGOs, primarily functioning at the meso or local levels, are ill equipped to recognize these macro-economic pressures. While each group of actors (the MAS party, NGOs, and indigenous communities) can each be viewed, in the words of Joseph Campbell, as the 'hero in their own story' it is important to examine the material conditions of the most marginalized as a bellwether of the condition of the society as a whole. There is certainly a greater

burden of responsibility placed on the state to provide for the most vulnerable, given the state's role to preserve the public trust.

Bolivia's forest dependent indigenous communities of the eastern lowlands, peoples whose labor has been devalued, made redundant from neoliberal restructuring of the 1980s, and whose land has become the last frontier of monopoly agrarian capital - lie at the front lines of this fight. The skeletal *de jure* protections for indigenous territories must be reinforced. Indigenous communities must be provided with transparent processes of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) within open legislative processes that allow deliberative dialogue. Despite constraints, the MAS, or any government beholden to principles of democratic accountability, must be assessed based on a transparent examination of the conditions of human rights and the contradictions between rhetoric and concrete practices. With greenlighting the TIPNIS road, threatening NGOs, and failing to prosecute state offenders for past human rights violations, are serious threats to the integrity of the nation (Human Rights Watch 2018).

What possible alternative livelihoods exist for the lowland indigenous communities in TCOs including the Guarayo, Chiquitano, Guarani, and others, in determining their unique destinies and moving beyond the confines of extractive paradigms from the colonial period to the present? What emerging opportunities exist for Bolivia as the U.S. Monroe Doctrine recedes as the tide of empire is eclipsed by Chinese, Russian, and other ascendant powers? Will the new global hegemon perpetuate the same global resource extraction under a recognizable core-periphery relationship - as the evidence of extractivism in Bolivia, Ecuador,

and Peru suggests? Or will there be a power vacuum as the U.S. falls from the world's stage and allowed greater independence for Latin American countries to determine their own destinies. Elite divisions in world powers, particularly under the Trump administration, are creating possibilities for the formation and shuffling of alliances across the political spectrum.

The conventional framing of the Morales administration vis-a-vis lowland indigenous peoples, is seen as a power struggle between the government and lowland TCO sovereignty. NGOs loyal to indigenous peoples argue for increased rights and autonomy through the completion of TCO titling and greater state resources directed to local communities. While MAS loyalists, the agricultural and livestock sectors seek reduced indigenous rights to TCOs under a more aggressive extractivist model with the most well discussed icon for this discussion the TIPNIS road project. While these are important questions, there is a third option. Do nothing. As in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the two main solutions presented are either to create a two-state solution or integrate Palestinians and Arab Israelis into the Jewish state and allow them to fight for equal rights. The third option, one that Noam Chomsky claims has been carried out since the 1980s, is to slowly continue building settlements and occupy desirable land and infrastructure until the issue of land has been resolved through complete occupation of desired territories. This, I claim is the underlying goal of the MAS in relation to the TCOs. Simply allow government-supported extractivism to continue to take land and resources until the question of land ownership will be answered through de facto extractivism. Under this model,

indigenous peoples would continue to exist - but only in regions deemed undesirable. Or allowed to waste away or enter the rural flows into the urban slums. This war of attrition against the lowland indigenous organic leadership and their NGO allies - is the MAS' clear agenda.

Just as Frantz Fanon described in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the peasants (in Bolivia's case the lowland indigenous rural and forest dependent peoples) are in the best position to evaluate their material conditions because they are the least affected by colonial hegemony - so rooted are they to the land. As such, these peoples are the vanguard of a decolonial struggle for emancipation through various forms of insurrection - whether violent or nonviolent depending on conditions. We can observe the strongest support for territorial autonomy within the lowlands because of this recognition, within the lived experiences of the indigenous communities, that life has remained hard and, in some ways, become worse through economic inflation and environmental degradation.

Irrespective of the relative merits of the theoretical debates, NGO-indigenous coalitions remain, on the whole, important actors in the efforts for land and resource protection. It is true that NGOs became strong and began occupying the role of state apparatus under neoliberal regimes, and thus represent a general phase-out of democratic social programs to outside funding sources - with their non-local priorities. Yet, the accelerated resource extraction - both actively promoted and tacitly allowed - under Morales cannot be overlooked as the symptom of a larger problem of democracy and maldistribution. The relationship between environmental organizations, academic institutions, and

other non-state actors constitute deep concerns for democratic management of protected lands and access for indigenous place-based peoples. In some cases, fortress style conservation practices have resulted in indigenous peoples losing lands and management rights to traditional territories - in exchange for paternalistic protection and development under principles that commodify land and resources particular to western sensibilities.

As the era of U.S. hegemony comes to a close, threats to indigenous territories are likely to shift in new ways. Particularly with the role of non-U.S. development interests seeking to work with Latin American governments eager for a portion of resource rents. The MAS strategy to overcome underdevelopment via accelerated extractivism has generated genuine contradictions for the ecosocialist project and within indigenous communities. These contradictions cannot be written off as short-term opportunism or the Machiavellian orchestration of nation-wrecking by foreign financed NGOs.

A study of the hegemonic power of U.S. imperialism cannot be discounted in our analysis of Bolivian politics. Specifically, the debt-trap that allowed core nations like the U.S. to siphon off surplus resources from the periphery (Foster and McChesney 2004). In discussing imperialism, the authors ask; “is the (Vietnam) war part of a more general and consistent scheme of United States external policies ... or is it an aberration of a particular group of men in power? (2004:162). In a general sense, this is a question of structure versus agency - whether the war is a result of the internal nature of the system to require raw materials and labor, or the result of a ‘few bad apples?’ A similar

question could be posed in wrestling with the contradictions of the Morales Administration. We could therefore ask; are the contradictory values of extractivism and ecosocialism within the MAS party a result of world system pressures or a result of a particular group of people in power?

In this chapter I argued that it is neither one nor the other but rather a synthesis of structural conditions of the world system that pressures revolutionaries to conform and condemns rebels to death or obscurity. When extraction and development take place, this should be done with the transparent consent of the demos, guided by principles that equitably distribute based on the greatest substantive needs.

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