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A Political Analysis of the TIPNIS Conflicts

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A Political Analysis of the TIPNIS Conflicts

by

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“Si simón significa sí y nel significa no, ¿qué significa simonel?”
Roberto Bolaño, Los Detectives Salvajes

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Abstract

A Political Analysis of the TIPNIS Conflicts

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The conflicts happening around the *Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure* (TIPNIS) in Bolivia among the multiple and diverse stakeholders within it, cannot be reduced to a simple confrontation between conflicting interests regarding a highway.

A political analysis of the TIPNIS conflicts should be an analysis of how Modernity responds to different, opposed and complementary civilizational projects, stressing the relation between indigenous peoples, and the plurinational state in Bolivia; the present locus of the conflict. The plurinational state in Bolivia was formed with the express intention of dismantling the colonial and its civilizational order through the reformulation of the Bolivian State.

By contrasting, comparing, dissecting and analyzing how notions of citizenship, nationhood, and civilization are deployed in Modernity, in one geographical place, the TIPNIS in Bolivia, and through different historical eras, we can elucidate how those notions were and are enforced. The civilization/nation/citizen membership and non-membership, who fits and who doesn't fit those categories, and how the movement

between them is managed, throw light on how Modernity's project is carried away in everyday life, and under what costs.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	x
Chapter 1	1
1. Overlapping.....	1
2. Internal Colonialism as a Practical Framework	4
3. Race: a demobilizing idea.....	10
4. Internal Colonialism and Race in the Mirror	11
5. Getting Serious About Reparations	19
6. The Pluri-National bet.....	22
7. Who “we” are, and for what purposes?	23
8. The TIPNIS conflict or the Limits of Modernity	28
9. Dissections	29
a. Dissecting the Political.....	31
b. Dissecting the Epistemological	33
c. The Political and Epistemological Knot	34
Chapter 2.....	36
1. Creative Contradictions-Destructive Contradictions	36
2. The Social Movements Government, an approach from within	41
3. Social Movements Theory	43
4. McAdam-McCarthy, Charles Tilly and Tupac Katari	45
5. Mapping Structures.....	48
a. Revolution shall give you identity	48
b. 1964 to 1982: The other governments	50
c. Multiculturalism and Juridical Pluralism	52
d. Between cultural recognition and empowerment	59
e. Reappropriations	59
6. If Muhammad won’t come to the Mountain then the Mountain must go to Muhammad	61
7. Legitimate/Lawful/Rightful	63

8. Minimal Portraits	64
a. <i>Pueblo</i> Chimanes	65
b. <i>Pueblo</i> Moxeño	65
c. <i>Pueblo</i> Yuracaré.....	66
d. Settlers.....	67
e. Criollos.....	67
9. <i>Plurispacial</i> Communities Within.....	69
10. <i>Plurispacial</i> Communities Beyond	70
11. Moving communities	72
12. The Plurinational State and the Societal Movements	75
a. Internal Colonialism in Concrete: The Highway	76
b. Variegated Territory.....	78
c. Variegated Marches	81
d. Modernity on the limit: it's rather <i>you</i> or <i>me</i>	83
e. <i>Reasons</i> For Violence(s)	84
f. Laws 180 and 222: Regulated Violence's	88
13. Political Violence/Violent Politics.....	89
Bibliography	93

List of Tables

Table 1 Names Mentioned in Morales' address by type of "experience"	6
Table 2 TIPNIS Inhabitants according to different census	68
Table 3 Eastern Lowland Indigenous Peoples Marches	74

Chapter 1

1. OVERLAPPING

It is scheduled that on the 25th of April 2012, the IX indigenous march for “la defensa de la vida y dignidad, los territorios indígenas, los recursos naturales, la biodiversidad, el medio ambiente y las áreas protegidas, cumplimiento de la Constitución Política del Estado y el respeto a la democracia” will depart towards La Paz, Bolivia’s capital, in order to contest Law No. 222 promulgated on the 10th of February 2012. This Law abrogates Law No. 180, enacted the 24th of October 2011, as part of the aftermath of the *VIII Marcha Indígena por la Dignidad y el Territorio*, which declared TIPNIS an *intangibile*¹ Indigenous Territory and National Park:

“...se ratifica al Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore-TIPNIS como territorio indígena de los pueblos Chimán, Yuracaré y Mojeño-trinitario, de carácter indivisible, imprescriptible, inembargable, inalienable e irreversible y como area protegida de interés nacional.”²

Law 222 overturns Law No. 180 by decreeing a consultation process to define if:

“1. Definir si el Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore-TIPNIS debe ser zona intangible o no, para viabilizar el desarrollo de las actividades de los pueblos indígenas Mojeño-Trinitario, Chimane y Yuracaré, así como la construcción de la Carretera Villa-Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos.

2. Establecer las medidas de salvaguarda para la protección del Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore-TIPNIS, así como las destinadas a la prohibición y desalojo inmediato de asentamientos ilegales respetando la línea demarcatoria del TIPNIS.”³

¹ “Unable to be touched or grasped; not having physical presence.” New Oxford American Dictionary 2nd edition, 2005.

² «Ley No. 180», Art. 1.

³ «Ley No. 222», Art. 4.

The implementation of Law 222 by the Bolivian government implies that the IX march in defense of Law 180 and the consultation process initiated by the government will overlap:

“Haciendo números, se ve que, en caso de que efectivamente se inicie la IX marcha indígena, los tiempos se cruzan al menos en lo que podría presumirse como el final de la movilización y el inicio de la consulta: anunciaron la partida de los marchistas para el 25 de abril, mientras que se proyectó que la consulta comenzaría el 15 de mayo. Si recordamos que la marcha del Consejo Indígena del Sur (Conisur) —efectuada en condiciones considerablemente favorables— tardó 44 días en llegar a La Paz y que el tiempo entre la IX marcha y la consulta previa es de 38 jornadas, entonces el desfase temporal hace suponer que, hipotéticamente, cuando la consulta previa comience a “caminar”, parte de los habitantes de las tierras del Isiboro Sécure estarán muy lejos de ellas (lo que tampoco significa que no puedan llegar de manera posterior).”⁴

This overlap between the 2 events raises issues that go beyond the political strategies among interest groups. It is my intention to shine a light on the overlapping, contradictory, complimentary power relations among civilizational projects, in Bolivia today, in order to understand how Modernity is enforced, as an idea and an inescapable reality, since Modernity acts on concrete bodies, and is traceable, alive.

Therefore, a political analysis of the TIPNIS conflicts should be an analysis of how Modernity responds to non-Modern projects, stressing the relation between indigenous peoples, and the Plurinational State in Bolivia; the present locus of the conflict. However, the Plurinational State in Bolivia was formed with the express intention of dismantling the colonial order through the articulation of non-Modern projects (i.e. indigenous people nations and nationalities, recognition of Afro-descendant status as “indigenous”, etc.). Therefore, an analysis of the Plurinational State and its relation to Modernity, becomes imperative as well.

⁴ «Diagnóstico reservado para la consulta previa por el TIPNIS».

By contrasting, comparing, dissecting and analyzing how notions of citizenship, nationhood, and civilization are deployed in Modernity, in one geographical place (Bolivia) and through different historical eras, we can elucidate how those notions were enforced. The civilization/nation/citizen membership and non-membership, who fits and who doesn't fit those categories, and how the movement between them is managed, throw light on how Modernity's project is carried away in everyday life, and under what costs.

One of the salient features of the TIPNIS conflicts is that multiple interests are at stake, interests that are not locally or nation bound, but internationally. Brazil government, through a private company, OAS, has invested in the highway project that would connect Brazil and Chile, expanding commercial relations in the region. At the same time, the highway, which would cross the TIPNIS, is inscribed on the regional agenda of integrating South Americas' infrastructure. In the year 2000, the *Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana* (IRSA) was developed and ratified by twelve South American Countries, Bolivia among them, with the main objective of: "...avanzar en la modernización de la infraestructura regional y en la adopción de acciones específicas para promover su integración y desarrollo económico y social..."⁵ Local, national and global interests collide on the TIPNIS.

Therefore the TIPNIS conflict, as a different kind of conflict in which different types of tools by different stakeholders are deployed brings forth questions worth asking since they address the lives, and explains sometimes the deaths, of flesh and bone human beings. There are questions that arise from the direct confrontation, in Bolivia's current historical scenario: how does the Plurinational State, as opposed as the former

⁵ «IIRSA».

Colonial/Republican/Neoliberal Bolivian State deal with marginalized subjects? How do the multiple interests at stake shape the conflict? On the other hand, questions regarding Modernity, as the current global project at work, and how it works, should be addressed as well. How does Modernity enforce its project? Are anti-modern projects possible within Modernity?

2. INTERNAL COLONIALISM AS A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

In his inauguration speech as Bolivia's first indigenous president Evo Morales first words were:

“Para recordar a nuestros antepasados por su intermedio señor presidente del Congreso Nacional, pido un minuto de silencio para Manco Inca, Tupaj Katari, Tupac Amaru, Bartolina Sisa, Zárate Villca, Atihualqui Tumpa, Andrés Ibáñez, Ché Guevara, Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, Luis Espinal, a muchos de mis hermanos caídos, cocaleros de la zona del trópico de Cochabamba, por los hermanos caídos en la defensa de la dignidad del pueblo alteño, de los mineros, de miles, de millones de seres humanos que han caído en toda América y por ellos presidente pido un minuto de silencio. (As he finished these words, a pututu⁶ was heard in the National Congress.) ¡Gloria a los mártires por la liberación!”

A lot of lessons can be drawn from these first words and sounds. The Bolivian Congress sound space, what was commonly heard, was torn. The political disruption of the Institutional territory, through the enunciation of names and through the production of certain kinds of sounds, was Morales' first act as an Indigenous president. Luis Cárcamo-Huechante analyses the question of social sound spaces, and how these, as any other territory, are sites of contention. For Cárcamo-Huechante, *Wixage anai!*, an autonomous Mapuche radio station in Chile, brings forth the importance of being present and being visible, and in the case of the radio, audible. The presence of the Mapuche voices through

⁶ “Instrumento de viento, hecho de cuerno o asta del ganado vacuno, que empleamos (the Aymaras and Quechuas) para la Guerra y para los principales tumultos comunitarios como señal de emergencia, cuando nos encontramos en peligro.” (Quispe 1990: P. 22)

the radio waves helps create a new territory without a physical location. Listening to the radio, therefore, becomes a political act, an activist one, that creates a common territory for the Mapuches, rural and urban, bridging them in an autonomous zone.

“...la audiencia mapuche urbana que sigue el programa radial semanalmente debe ejercer un “compromiso” de escuchar, hecho que, en tanto expresión de voluntad comunitaria e individual, da cuenta de una acción política: el acto de escuchar el programa radial, aun siendo margen en el margen, ya pone de manifiesto una voluntad política de audición.”⁷

This political commitment, in the *Wixage anai!* experience (as well as in the Mapuche, and the experiences of all subaltern subjects?) comes from the price of defending indigenous autonomy from the elites. We don't have to go that far, in the case of *Wixage anai!*, autonomy meant sacrificing coverage in order to maintain freedom of creation and content: “Asimismo, habría que volver a señalar que este programa radial mapuche sale al aire a través de Radio Tierra, una emisora que, en su carácter alternativo, posee una cobertura limitada en el dial.”⁸ Different territories, in this case the sound space, same power inertia: the dispossession of the other(s) autonomic territories, annulling self-government possibilities.

Likewise the pututu that ripped the Bolivian congress sound space, the names that Evo Morales asked to be honored and remembered, and the Indigenous person that embodied it all, disrupted the longstanding Bolivian status quo.

It is important to map the names Morales called because they are at the matrix of the whole identity which was generated, actualized, transformed and used from the year 2000 to the approval of the new Bolivian Constitution in 2009, which brought with it the reformulation of Bolivia as a Pluri-national State in order to de-colonize Bolivia. This identity is a mixture of “memories” of past Bolivian exploitation experiences and stories.

⁷ Cárcamo-Huechante, «Voces mapuches en el aire», 8.

⁸ Ibid.

We find basically three periods of time, which evoke three different experiences, which mixed and fused early in the year 2000 into a novel one that, served to take the State through democratic elections in 2005.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui describes these three different experiences as cycles: Colonial, Liberal and Populist. Each of these experiences or cycles brought different exploitation relations into the “Bolivian” political reality. Broadly speaking, the Colonial cycle brought the ethnic cleavage, the Liberal cycle (1825 to 1952) brought the affirmation of the individual through the citizenry, and the Populist cycle in which the State assumes the role of a centralizing-homogenizing agent by introducing parameters such as development and underdevelopment in a National logic. In summary, the invention of the Bolivian Nation.

Table 1 Names Mentioned in Morales' address by type of "experience"

Colonial Experience	Liberal Experience	Populist Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Manco Inca •Tupaj Katari •Tupac Amaru •Bartolina Sisa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Zárate Villaca •Atihualqui Tumpa •Andrés Ibáñez 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ché Guevara •Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz •Luis Espinal •Coca leaf peasants •Pueblo Altoño (El Alto urban indigenous dwellers) • Miners

With all of these in mind, Evo’s address to the Congress is more than a political statement; it’s a political strategy, a kind of public policy in which imaginaries are re-ordered, hence re-evaluated and re-introduced to the everyday Bolivian symbols repertoire (Table 1).

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, the Aymara-European Bolivian sociologist, positions herself as a *chi'ixi*: "...considero a ésta la traducción más adecuada de *la mezcla abigarrada* que somos las y los llamados mestizos. La palabra *chi'ixi* tiene diversas connotaciones: es un color producto de la yuxtaposición, en pequeños puntos o manchas, de dos colores opuestos o contrastados...(emphasis mine) ”⁹ *Abigarrado* becomes a key concept used by Cusicanqui to describe a series of features that result from Bolivia's colonial, republican and neoliberal past: “La noción de *chi'ixi*,..., equivale a la de “sociedad abigarrada” de Zavaleta, y plantea la coexistencia en paralelo *de multiples diferencias culturales que no se funden, sino que antagonizan o se complementan*. Cada una se reproduce a sí misma desde la profundidad del pasado y se relaciona con las otras de forma contenciosa.”¹⁰ (Emphasis mine) Just as Cusicanqui does, Luis Tapia argues that:

“...Bolivia, en su acepción más amplia, no es una sociedad sino el nombre histórico de un país que contiene una diversidad de sociedades en situación de dominación más o menos colonial. Se podría decir que en una perspectiva más restringida es el nombre de la sociedad dominante, aunque se trate más bien de la historia *de esta conflictiva articulación de desigualdades y formas de superposición desarticulada*. Esto es lo que Zavaleta designaba como lo abigarrado. Bolivia es lo abigarrado, la existencia de una sociedad dominante, que a su vez es subalterna en lo mundial, que se superpone a las sociedades y culturas locales, que son articuladas parcialmente, de manera intermitente, en condiciones de desigualdad y explotación.”¹¹ (Emphasis mine)

We can draw from the concept of *abigarrado* two principal characteristics of Bolivia: 1) the coexistence of different civilizations amidst 2) contentious relations.

⁹ Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa*, 69.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹ Tapia Mealla, *Política Salvaje*, 36.

These two trends are implicit in what Pablo González Casanova defined as Internal Colonialism. In his book *Sociología de la Explotación*, the Mexican sociologist establishes the objectives of his work as the following:

“El libro está escrito sobre todo para los estudiantes de América Latina y de aquellos países que han adoptado el falso rigor empirista, tan estrechamente asociado a las ciencias sociales predominantes hoy en Estados Unidos. También esta escrito para quienes se quedan en los slogans y las palabras pomposas del marxismo ortodoxo y dogmático, renunciando a las grandes tradiciones que el propio marxismo tiene de investigación científica de alto nivel...”¹²

This colonial epistemic project, for the author, is embedded in the political, overarching project: “el juego de las distintas formas de explotación del hombre por el hombre, de las clases y el colonialismo.”¹³ Exploitation becomes central in his analysis, but its articulation in society varies along civilizations. While Lenin, through his analysis of Capital and Imperialism, described exploitation, and colonialism, as a social class conflict, revealing his colonizer/European/Eurocentric/male positionality, González Casanova observes that the contradiction, the contentious arena of colonialism, is not class, but the civilizational projects confronted since the “meeting of two worlds”.

“El colonialismo interno corresponde a una estructura de relaciones sociales de dominio y explotación entre grupos culturales heterogéneos, distintos. Si alguna diferencia específica tiene respecto de otras relaciones de dominio y explotación (ciudad –campo, clases sociales) es la heterogeneidad cultural que históricamente produce la conquista de unos pueblos por otros, y que permite hablar no sólo de diferencias culturales (que existen entre la población urbana y rural y en las clases sociales) sino de diferencias de civilización.”¹⁴

Hence, the “political” in the Colonial project is shaped in the contention among civilizations. Race, obviously, becomes a fundamental tool in this modern project:

¹² González Casanova, *Sociología De La Explotación*, 11.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 198.

“Es bien sabido que el racismo y la discriminación racial son el legado de la historia universal de la conquista de unos pueblos por otros...El racismo aparece en todas la colonias donde se encuentran dos culturas...El racismo y la segregación racial son esenciales a la explotación colonial, de unos pueblos por otros...El racismo y la discriminación corresponden a la psicología y la política típicamente coloniales.”¹⁵

But race, and racism, doesn't emerge as independent structures, on the contrary, they depend on the civilizational project underway, therefore its articulation in society varies. The contention among civilizations, therefore, will bring forth different articulations of race, class, gender, region, etc. in the diverse colonial setups, articulating a hierarchical ordered setup.

Rivera Cusicanqui, echoing González Casanova points that:

“...tanto la identidad india, como la identidad mestiza, y la misma identidad *q'ara*, eran identidades forjadas en el marco estructurante del hecho colonial. Quiero decir con ello que los elementos raciales que estas identidades pueden exhibir, *son secundarios frente al hecho de que son identidades definidas a través de su mutua oposición, en el plano cultural-civilizatorio*, en torno a la polaridad básica entre culturas nativas y cultura occidental, que desde 1532 hasta nuestros días continúa moldeando los modos de convivencia y las estructuras de habitus (Bourdieu 1976) vigentes en nuestra sociedad.”¹⁶ (Emphasis mine)

Internal Colonialism refers to the contention among civilizations, which spawns a: “...estructura jerárquica en la que se ubican los diversos estamentos de la sociedad a partir de la posición que ocupan en la apropiación de los medios de poder...”¹⁷

The analytical tool of Internal Colonialism becomes relevant since it brings forth the “original” contradiction through which the exploitation relations throughout society are structured and hierarchized in Latin America. Since an opposition among civilizations lies at the bottom of the contradiction, all the other contradictions introduced through the

¹⁵ Ibid., 195.

¹⁶ *Violencias Encubiertas En Bolivia*, 57.

¹⁷ Ibid.

different cycles of Bolivia's history, all the other exploitation experiences, get articulated around this very first opposition.

3. RACE: A DEMOBILIZING IDEA

On the other hand, Aníbal Quijano, describes the colonial project as one in which “Uno de los ejes fundamentales de ese patrón de poder es la clasificación social de la población mundial sobre la idea de raza, *una construcción mental* que expresa la experiencia básica de la dominación colonial...”¹⁸ (Emphasis mine) Race, hence, is what orders the colonial experience:

“La formación de relaciones sociales fundadas en dicha idea (raza), produjo en América identidades sociales históricamente nuevas... Y en la medida en que las relaciones sociales que estaban configurándose eran relaciones de dominación, tales identidades fueron asociadas a las jerarquías, lugares y roles sociales correspondientes, como constitutivas de ellas y en consecuencia, al patrón de dominación colonial que se imponía. En otros términos, raza e identidad racial fueron establecidas como instrumentos de clasificación social básica de la población.”¹⁹

Race becomes the idea through which new identities are created, i.e. indigenous, *yellow*, blacks; therefore racism structures and orders society based on phenotypical traits. Race, and racism, skin color, becomes the standard for organizing the colonies and their exploitation. There is no consideration, in Quijano's account, of the pre-existing Nations/Civilizations in the hemisphere, prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Colonization, therefore, just orders the bodies based on phenotype. “De ese modo, raza se convirtió en el primer criterio fundamental para la distribución de la población mundial en rangos, lugares y roles en la estructura de poder de la nueva sociedad. En otros

¹⁸ *La Colonialidad Del Saber*, 201.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

términos, en el modo básico de clasificación social universal de la población mundial.”²⁰ Race structures the subaltern experience, and from within, other sources of exploitation are incorporated, such as the racial organization of labor and racial organization of gender and sex relations. Therefore, racial control, and racial classification becomes, for the author, the contentious arena where “the political” is settled.

4. INTERNAL COLONIALISM AND RACE IN THE MIRROR

The political, practical, consequences of both accounts could be drawn from the political projects which Internal Colonialism and Race suggest. The analysis elaborated in 1978 by the *Movimiento Indio Tojil*²¹ draws on the concept of Internal Colonialism when it asserts that Guatemala is not a Nation, but a society. “En el seno de la sociedad guatemalteca coexiste una pluralidad de naciones entre quienes encontramos las naciones tradicionales... y una nación potencial surgida por y en el hecho colonial..(la nación ladina dominante).”²² Hence, “...se puede decir que de hecho, la “nación gutemalteca”, no existe ni existirá para nadie, ni para los indios, ni para los ladinos...”²³ Therefore, Colonialism and the project of Internal Colonialism, is structured in terms of the contention between nations (civilizations), being in the Guatemalan case, the different indigenous nations and the ladino-mestizo nation.

“...además de ser comunidades de historia, lengua y cultura, poseían gobierno propio...Cada nación disponía también de su territorio delimitado geográfica y lingüísticamente. A la llegada de los españoles, estas naciones fueron expropiadas de sus territorios respectivos, fueron desmanteladas de sus estructuras políticas administrativas, embestidas en cuanto a sus características culturales y destruidas

²⁰ Ibid., 203.

²¹ The “mythical” Tojil movement could be a: “...colectivo que va cambiando de nombre e imagen para sobrevivir en la clandestinidad de un entorno cada vez más represivo...” In “La (ausencia de) demanda autonómica en Guatemala” by Santiago Bastos.

²² Tojil, «Guatemala De La República Burguesa Centralista a La República Federal», 1.

²³ Ibid., 3.

en su vida económica. Es decir que dejaron de ser naciones autónomas para convertirse en naciones colonizadas y explotadas.”²⁴

If the contention is among nations/civilizations, therefore a whole new realm of political action is revealed.

By denying the nationhood of the civilizations in the “New World”, race becomes the tag in which all the others, i.e. non-Europeans, were bundled. Race is a consequence of the Colonial project, a key difference with Quijano for whom racism is the project:

“Porque la discriminación solo es la valorización de las diferencias reales o imaginarias de tipo social, cultural y biológico en provecho del ladino, mientras que la colonización es el fenómeno global de la explotación y opresión económica, política, cultural y military del pueblo indio en manos de la burguesía de la comunidad ladina. Además, cabe preguntarse, ¿cómo podrían resolver la cuestión de la discriminación racial antes de resolver el colonialismo interno?”²⁵

Therefore racism is not the project, colonialism is. Race by itself, in the Colonial enterprise, could lead to a struggle, which doesn’t overturn Internal Colonialism, the relations of exploitation among civilizations. By reducing colonialism to racism indigenous nationhood/civilization with their agency, culture, history, politics, economics, culture, memories, etc. are downplayed. “Las identidades nacionales son los únicos resultados naturales y permanentes de toda la evolución de la histórica de la humanidad, y los únicos divisores naturales de la especie humana en grupos de hombres. Porque si no fuera así, ya hubiera sido fácil integrar a los indios, como fácil debería de ser el de-indianizar a los ladinos.”²⁶ That’s why Tojil analysts conclude that the concept of race doesn’t work in Guatemala: “...el concepto de raza no funciona (ni en Guatemala ni en ninguna parte del mundo).”²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵ Ibid., 8.

²⁶ Ibid., 20.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

Since Tojil analysts and Quijano depart from different starting points (Nations/Civilizations v. Racism), the political projects diverge. Tojl proposes a Federal Republic in which all Nations (in the beginning for strategic reasons, all indigenous nations will coalesce in one Pan-Indigenous Identity, hence bringing forth an Indigenous Nation) Indigenous and Ladino are recognized, addressing the Pluri-National character of Guatemala:

“...la solución federalista es la única solución viable porque además de significar igualdad de derechos y poderes entre las comunidades India y ladina es la única que concuerda relativamente con los lineamientos del proyecto político indio contemporáneo, obliga a los ladinos a asumirse y comportarse como nación pueblo sin necesidad de indianizarse.”²⁸

The federalist solution seeks to harmonize the relations among Nations within Guatemala, without bringing forth a *Mestizo* Nation, or a *Chapin* Nation, or a *third* other Nation (the melting pot project). Pluri-Nationhood, if taken seriously, becomes the first step in order to decolonize societies (i.e. Guatemalan society), and liberate exploited nations.

On the other hand, and since racism is at the crux of Quijano’s argument, his political project comprises other traits. Quijano appeals to democracy, and democratization, as the vehicle of incorporation of the subalterns (of the other races). “En términos de la cuestión nacional, sólo a través de ese proceso de democratización de la sociedad puede ser posible y finalmente exitosa la construcción de un Estado-nación moderno, con todas sus implicancias, incluyendo ciudadanía y la representación política.”²⁹ Therefore, for the Peruvian sociologist, democracy, through its deliberative mechanisms, could make all persons equal, at least politically. This democracy, at the end, should be able to return to the people the: “...control sobre el trabajo/ recursos/

²⁸ Ibid., 18.

²⁹ *La Colonialidad Del Saber*, 241.

productos, sobre el sexo/ recursos/ productos, sobre la autoridad/ instituciones/ violencia, y sobre la intersubjetividad/ conocimiento/ comunicación...”³⁰

Walter Mignolo, takes on this definition of modernity (“La globalización en curso es, en primer término, la culminación de un proceso que comenzó con la constitución de América y la del capitalismo colonial/moderno y eurocentrado como un nuevo patrón de poder mundial.”³¹) to craft his Decolonial project: “Now, when Anibal (sic) Quijano introduced the concept of coloniality, and suggested disengaging and delinking from Western epistemology, he conceived that project as decolonization; *decoloniality became an epistemic and political project.*”³² (Emphasis mine)

What are the epistemic and political projects within the modernity/coloniality academic tradition? Since colonialism is founded on a mental construction, an idea, then what matters is changing, substituting, replacing and challenging that idea: “En consecuencia, es tiempo de aprender a liberarnos del espejo eurocéntrico donde nuestra imagen es siempre, necesariamente, distorsionada. Es tiempo, en fin, de dejar de ser lo que no somos.”³³ Ideas, since its ultimate bearers are individuals, should be discarded by each one of us. Each of us, under Quijano’s formula, should throw away the “made in Europe” mirror, making it appropriate to ask: who’s mirror should we buy, install, use, and believe next? This is when the modernity/coloniality theorist come handy, as Mignolo himself points out: “Decoloniality means decolonial options confronting and delinking from coloniality, or the colonial matrix of power...and it is an option claiming its legitimacy among existing academic projects, such as postcoloniality, ethnic studies,

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 201.

³² Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, XXV.

³³ *La Colonialidad Del Saber*, 242.

gender studies, the social sciences and the humanities...”³⁴ Therefore, Decolonial mirrors, made in Academia, become available to all of us, to de-link us from our Eurocentric image.

Hence, the Decolonial project, inaugurated by Quijano, and offered as an option by Mignolo renders invisible salient issues, by depoliticizing the subalterns’ agenda and by presenting the colonial experience as an epistemic problem (a mirror/idea). At the same time, positions academia as a necessary vanguard for us to decolonize ourselves.

Here it is important to address again the definition that González Casanova made of Internal Colonialism as a system structured among civilizations. These civilizations, with their own structures, never cease to be. If they did, America would too, as an ontological subject. Hence, the colonial experience has never been an option for the colonial subjects. The political is thus the epistemological; the colonized subjects suffered colonialism, not as an idea, but in the flesh. Whether the oppressed subjects rationalized their oppression, i.e. saw themselves in the mirror and saw the distorted reflection from it, or not, colonialism is enforced. Regardless of what Quijano, Mignolo or myself think about the “idea” through which colonized subjects have been oppressed, it is oppression, and colonial subjects can’t avoid experiencing it.

In Mignolo’s account of coloniality, the colonial matrix as an epistemic framework, helps us shine a light on how Knowledge, Race, Economy and Authority are intermingled and structured in the colonial experience.

“...(T)he colonial matrix is built and operates on a series of interconnected heterogenous historico-structural nodes, bounded by the “/” that divides and unites modernity/coloniality, imperial laws/colonial rules, center/peripheries, that are the consequences of global linear thinking in the foundation of the modern/colonial world.”³⁵

³⁴ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, XXVII.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

The “/”, i.e. the bound³⁶, is suspiciously forgotten in the rest of Mignolo’s argument. What is the “/” in his argument? My opinion is that the “/” device echoes Quijano’s “mirror”. By defining the colonial experience as an idea, they shift the place where coloniality (colonialism) is experienced. If “/” is the mirror, then the bodies, the flesh and bone colonial experience is silenced. Colonialism is not interconnected through “nodes” bounded by “/”; colonialism is interconnected through the bodies of flesh and bone human beings who are the subjects of colonial power. Some, not all, human beings’ bodies, lives, experiences, and hence their agency, are relegated by this account of modernity.

Modernity is structured around the bodies of the colonized subjects, it is in the flesh and bone of the subaltern subject that colonialism materializes. Before the idea of subjection, there was the direct and real confrontation of civilizations, in which the “/” - the “bound”- , the bodies, experienced in flesh the colonial project.

Therefore, for the theorists of modernity/coloniality, it’s easy to render invisible subjects such as Fausto Reinaga. Mignolo quotes Reinaga in order to structure his critique on the “traditional Marxist-left” tradition: “...Reinaga despised the Bolivian Left of his time, whose interests were closer to those of the ruling elite and less concerned with Indians. Indeed, the Bolivian Left did not see Indians. They saw peasants and workers.”³⁷ But, Mignolo doesn’t consider relevant to address Reinaga’s overall *hatred*. In the preface to the Manifest of the Indigenous Bolivian Party, Reinaga states that:

“Es un Manifiesto de una raza, de un pueblo, de una Nación; de una cultura oprimida y silenciada...En tanto Manifiesto del PIB, plantea la Revolución India contra la “civiliazación” occidental.

³⁶ “A territorial limit; a boundary”

³⁷ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, XXIX.

El Manifiesto Indio, no es un documento que trata de la formación y propósitos de un partido político por venir; el PIB *no es una “idea pura”; es un ser: ser social, vale decir, hecho vital.*”³⁸ (Emphasis Mine)

Reinaga assumes his struggle against Western civilization as an existent, factual and social reality in the making. Couldn't we argue that the Bolivian left, which Reinaga indeed bitterly critiqued, was also an outcome of the civilizational project?

Therefore, Reinaga's political agenda should be addressed as anti-civilizational one, with implications not only for the indigenous:

“Los Indios sí que sabemos, cómo vamos a gastar nuestra “gran fuerza”. Vamos a gastar en la lucha por la conquista del Poder. El poder para edificar una nueva sociedad, una nueva “naturaleza humana”, un Nuevo Hombre, mayor que el que ha hecho el Occidente...El indianismo es el instrumento ideológico y político de la Revolución del Tercer Mundo.”³⁹

When Mignolo sees colonialism structured in “nodes” bounded by “/” mirrors in the colonial reality, Reinaga sees Western civilization being enforced throughout the Americas through different strategies, that yield different outcomes:

“Al liberarse la Nación India, libera a Bolivia: la nación opresora. Por tanto la Revolución India tiene jurado propósito: abatir al cholaje cipayo blanco-mestizo y al imperialismo de las “fieras rubias” de EE.UU. y Europa.

En el proceso de la lucha a la discriminación racial del blanco, responderemos con nuestro odio racial de cuatro siglos; a la opresión clasista del capital, responderemos como clase explotada; y a la segregación cultural responderemos enarbolando muy en alto nuestra maravillosa cultura milenaria.”⁴⁰

Of course, Reinaga's account of whiteness has always been taken as literal, since, probably, metaphor, and in-between writing, is for the better, which most of the times are in the Academia. For example, Arturo Escobar, a distinguished member of Mignolo's

³⁸ Reinaga, *Manifiesto del Partido Indio de Bolivia*, 382.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 390–391.

Latin American modernity/coloniality research program, the “/” club, stated regarding “whiteness” that:

“Beyond this more empirical observation, however, lies the fact that imperial globality is also about the defense of white privilege world-wide. By white privilege here I mean, not so much phenotypically white, but a Eurocentric way of life that has historically privileged white people at the expense of non-European and coloured peoples world-wide-and particularly since the 1950s those around the world who abide by this outlook. As we will see, this dimension of imperial globality is better drawn out through the concept of global coloniality.”⁴¹

The “/” club naming and ordering the knowledge through the colonial matrix, hence ordering the political (in)action; the idea preceding the fact.

The political, the power relations among colonized and colonizers, is held in the opposition between civilizations and their contentious projects. Internal colonialism as opposed to the coloniality of power offers a framework in which oppression, exploitation, and the ordering of the bodies is structured around a civilizational model where White represents not only a physical bodily characteristic, but a project in which race, sex and gender, ethnicity, knowledge, spirituality, economy, politics, etc., is structured. Internal Colonialism, as well, accounts for the agency of the subaltern Nations, in the resistance to the Colonial project, since the “political” is not only an individual struggle, but a Nation/Civilization one. Violence, experienced in the flesh by humans, is structured in Modernity through the establishment of the Colonizer civilizational project. Redressing individuals, although necessary (as in the case of race reparations) is important, but doesn’t erase the source of that violence. Redressing colonialism means the liberation of the Others, hence, their possibility of existence as Others.

⁴¹ Escobar, «Beyond the Third World», 216.

5. GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT REPARATIONS

Reparation is a commonly used, and abused, term in the U.S. government- Native American Nations relations. Most of the time, reparations are understood as monetary compensations, being the Claims Settlement Act of 2010, in the United States, is an example of this: “This bill also provides funding for settlements reached in four separate water rights suits brought by Native American tribes, and it represents a significant step forward in addressing the water needs of Indian Country.”⁴² Through this act, the U.S. government seeks to redress two historically discriminated groups, Native Americans and African Americans. This redress stems from legal claims against the U.S. government, in which both groups sued the state for different reasons, in the case of Native Americans, through the mismanagement of Tribal funds, making Barack Obama conclude: “And now, after 14 years of litigation, it’s finally time to address the way that Native Americans were treated by their government. It’s finally time to make things right.”⁴³

Redress and reparation, have become the domesticated way in which governments address their “debts” with subaltern subjects; hence, a closer look to these concepts becomes critical. What is the logic behind redress and reparation? Redress means, when used as a verb, to remedy or set right, while reparation is “the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged.”⁴⁴ Both terms are related in that they both imply the will of the offender, the wrongdoer, to do well. Hence, the offender, through a conscious and voluntarily act, sets right his offense with the offended. Redress and reparation, in the case not of personal

⁴² «Statement by the President on House Passage of the Claims Settlement Act of 2010 | The White House».

⁴³ «Obama Signs Bill Setting Aside Another \$1.15 Billion to Pay Discrimination Compensation to Tens of Thousands of Black Farmers | CNSNews.com».

⁴⁴ *New Oxford American Dictionary 2nd edition.*

relations, but of State-to-State or State-individual relations develop in a different relation. In the former, redress through reparation can be accomplished since both Nations survive the action to repair (tax exemptions, for example, could only be given in a certain territory, to an established and visible society, i.e. with political organization and bureaucrats). But, in the latter case, how does reparation occur when the individual is no longer a part, sometimes as a direct effect of the violent act to redress, of a Nation, a State, a group, a community, etc.?

For Andrea Smith reparations must call into question, if taken seriously, the capitalist and colonial status quo. “If we think about reparations less in terms of financial compensation for social oppression and more about a moment to transform the neo-colonial economic relations between the U.S. and people of colour, Indigenous peoples and Third World countries, we see how critical this movement could be to all of us.”⁴⁵ Therefore, on the limit, redress and reparation have to contest the sources of violence(s) in the colonial experiences.

Modernity brings violence to those flesh and blood subjects that don’t fit its project; thus there cannot be a one-size-fits-all colonial experience:

“In my activist work, I have often heard the sentiment expressed in Indian country: we don not have time to address sexual/domestic violence in our communities because we have to work on “survival issues first”. However, Indian women suffer death rates twice as high as any other women in this country because of domestic violence.”⁴⁶

Hence, decolonization has to address those different experiences as well, for example sexism and male domination, since they are essential components of the Colonial project that modernity puts forth, not just its collateral effects.

⁴⁵ *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, 103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

“It has been through sexual violence and through the imposition of European gender relationships on Native communities that Europeans were able to colonize Native peoples in the first place. If we maintain these patriarchal gender systems, we will be unable to decolonize and fully assert our sovereignty.”⁴⁷

Therefore, decolonization, in the U.S. experience, becomes a twofold force: 1) decolonization calls for the recognition of the Indigenous Nations, its territory and autonomy and, 2) decolonization as the critical revision of the meaning, representation, and implementation the of Nation: “Before Native peoples fight for the future of their nations, they must ask themselves, who is included in the nation?”⁴⁸

Decolonization for Smith, at the limit, becomes the vehicle through which modernity, and its violence against the subaltern subjects is questioned and contested. If, reparation and decolonization are taken seriously, addressing the multiple forms of exploitation that the Western civilizational project enacted such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc., must be contested.

“Thus by making anti-colonial struggle central to feminist politics, Native women make central to their organizing the question of what is the appropriate form of governance for the world in general. Does self-determination for Indigenous peoples equal aspirations for a nation state, or are there other forms of governance we can create that are not based on domination and control?”⁴⁹

Decolonization becomes an acting framework with a twofold purpose, what on Smith’s account feminist groups such as Sista II Sista’s strategy is: “taking power” and “making power”.

“On the one hand it is necessary to engage in oppositional politics to corporate and state power (taking power). However, if we only engage in politics of taking power, we will have a tendency to replicate the hierarchical structures in our movements. Consequently, it is also important to make power by creating those

⁴⁷ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 97.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 105.

structures within our organizations, movements and communities that model the world we are trying to create.”⁵⁰

Deborah A. Thomas proposes reparations as a framework for thinking in order to focus on the structure of the colonial societies, in modernity, rather than their cultures as source of inequalities among people. This re-thinking, at the limit, would re-think categories such as citizenship and sovereignty, therefore of who fits and who doesn't a particular project:

“...we might be moved to apprehend *citizenship as a set of performances* and practices directed at various state and non-state institutions or extraterritorial or extralegal networks –networks that are global, national, regional, and local- over time. This reorientation would require that we tease out the various ways in which the regulatory, disciplinary, biopolitical, and distributional practice of governments throughout the Americas (and beyond) have often been suffused with and enacted by extra-state, non-state, or quasi-legal entities.”⁵¹ (Emphasis mine)

“Reparations” as a framework for thinking, as opposed to Mignolo’s coloniality matrix, is structured around flesh and bone colonial experiences.

6. THE PLURI-NATIONAL BET

In the Preamble of Bolivia’s 2009 approved constitution, it is stated that:

“El pueblo boliviano, *de composición plural*, desde la profundidad de la historia,... construimos un nuevo Estado. Un Estado basado en el respeto e igualdad entre todos, con principios de soberanía, dignidad, complementariedad, solidaridad, armonía y equidad en la distribución y redistribución del producto social, donde predomine la búsqueda del vivir bien; *con respeto a la pluralidad económica, social, jurídica, política y cultural de los habitantes de esta tierra*;... *Dejamos en el pasado el Estado colonial, republicano y neoliberal*. Asumimos el reto histórico de construir colectivamente el Estado Unitario Social de Derecho Plurinacional Comunitario, que integra y articula los propósitos de avanzar hacia una Bolivia democrática, productiva, portadora e inspiradora de la paz,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 106.

⁵¹ Thomas, *Exceptional Violence*, 6.

comprometida con el desarrollo integral y con *la libre determinación de los pueblos...*(Emphasis mine)⁵²

We can read in Bolivia's constitution statement of purpose two principal goals: 1) dismantling the Colonial-Republican-Neoliberal State, the form in which was articulated the contentious relationship between the different civilizations within the Bolivian State, and 2) the construction of a new State, the Plurinational State, in which the contentious nature of the *abigarrada* society is sorted out through the self-determination of the nations (*pueblos*). Hence, we can observe two creative forces being unleashed: one, which I define as the dissolvent agenda, i.e. disentangling the opposition of civilizations, destroying the structures and mechanisms that support the domination of one among others. On the other hand, by constructing a new State, the Plurinational State, a new hegemony is put forth, and a new solidifying (as opposed to dissolvent) agenda is incarnated in the construction of the new State. Therefore dissecting who *we* are, and for *what* purposes is necessary to analyze the *political*, the power relations within civilizations.

7. WHO “WE” ARE, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES?

Discipline, for Foucault, comes from the combination of three types of relationships: power as an action that is exerted over things and gives the ability to modify, use, consume and destroy them (finalized activities), power as a mean to bring forth relations between individuals, or between groups (power relations), and finally power as systems of communication (production and distribution of meaning). These three types of power should not be considered as three separate domains nor as a system with fixed equilibriums in which the three forms of power are equally exercised. Hence,

⁵² «Bolivia: Constitution, 2009», Preamble.

the question about power shifts from its nature, to its form. How is power deployed in a given society?

This epistemological turn is relevant for two main reasons: a) the reinstatement of history, hence, of the material, factual, conditions in which the power relations are being held in a given society, i.e. dissolving Truth and Truisms, and; b) the individual agency of the subjects amidst power relations, i.e. power as a verb, as the outcome of “free” relations among contenders as opposed to power as a subjugation relation where one imposes the other, erasing all the individual traits of the subjugated.

Hence, this epistemological shift tries to bring forth “...the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.”⁵³ ; i.e. how does the objectification of the subject entail different power relations, hence power as the result of subjects not as a thing in itself. “How,” not in the sense of “How does it manifest itself?” but “By what means is exercised?” and “What happens when individuals exert (as they say) power over others?”⁵⁴

For Foucault modernity is characterized in that the power relations within are structured around certain technique through which the individual is made subject, “...subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to.”⁵⁵ The twofold agenda of modernity is: to define and to order.

It is amidst this new modern “technique” in which struggles in modernity are held: domination (ethnic, social and religious), exploitation (economic alienation) and subjection (forms of subjectivity and submission) This last trait being a salient trend since

⁵³ Dreyfus, *Michel Foucault, beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, 208.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 212.

the emergence of the pastoral power: “We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political “double bind,” which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures.”⁵⁶

“The conclusion would be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state, and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state (the objectification-reification of the individual in a particular state). We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.”⁵⁷ (Parenthesis is mine)

This (re)conceptualization of power, as a relation and not a thing in itself brings forth the question: “...What are we? In a very precise moment of history. Kant’s question appears as an analysis of both us and our present.”⁵⁸

Gramsci’s principal concern is: “How to reconstruct the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group ...?”⁵⁹ For the Italian author, the State is a combination of dictatorship and hegemony: “...State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules...”⁶⁰ From this definition of State, we can elucidate Gramsci’s epistemological take, and hence, its practical consequences.

Gramsci shares with Foucault the need to place the analysis of the social question in an historical, time and place, perspective, without obliterating the “will and initiative of men”. Hence, both authors would agree on conceptualizing power, as a relational act, without a “nature” of itself. Hence, what separates both thinkers?

⁵⁶ Ibid., 216.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Gramsci, *Prison notebooks*, 228.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 244.

It is my opinion that the chasm between these 2 philosophers could be elucidate through the concept of ideology presented by Gramsci. Ideology serves to “cement and unify” the ideological unity of the entire social bloc, and “...since all action is political...”⁶¹, ideology becomes the site for contestation for Gramsci, as opposed to Foucault where individual freedom is the goal. While Foucault is trying to untie the individual in order to breakthrough from its former condition, the dissolvent impulse, Gramsci proposes the creation of an encompassing “mechanism”, ideology, in order to subvert the ongoing domination, exploitation and subjection, the solidifying impulse.

Hence, the *Foucaultian* “we” becomes a political dissolving category, one that looks to bring forth a type of knowledge, where how knowledge is administered in society in order to dominate, exploit, and subject the individual is unveiled. Foucault wants to understand what “we” is, and who is represented by it. On the other hand, the *Gramscian* “we” becomes a political solidifying category, in which domination, exploitation and subjection are reversed through the (organic, in the case of the revolutionaries that Gramsci is trying to support) creation of “ideology”, that cements the social (in this case the “revolutionary”) bloc, that would bring forth a certain type of State, through which individuals will subvert the domination, exploitation and subjection relations.

Gramsci and Foucault illustrate what has become the left contemporary debate: to create or to dissolve, the state or not the state.

Álvaro García Linera’s -Bolivia’s current vice-president- in the context of the political process in Bolivia represents a *Gramscian* standpoint, or as we called it, the solidifying impulse: “Es posible cambiar el mundo transformando al

⁶¹ Ibid., 326.

Estado...marginarnos de la lucha de la transformación del estado es renunciar a la lucha social y tener una actitud contemplativa a las relaciones de dominación...a la impotencia política”⁶²; whereas the EZLN seems to embrace on Foucault’s position, and the need to dissolve “what we are”:

“Mmh... el Poder... la evidencia incuestionable, el sueño húmedo de los intelectuales de arriba, la razón de ser de los partidos políticos... Siempre que prevalece una u otra forma de fascismo, la verdad y la justicia toman la forma de la Resistencia.

Pero es que además puede decirse que la izquierda es constitutivamente resistencia. Sin duda la izquierda se precipitó en nuestro siglo en un insalvable error histórico, pero ese error consistió a todas luces en creer que la izquierda podía tomar el poder. La izquierda en el poder es una contradicción, bastante nos lo ha mostrado la historia de este siglo (...).

Hoy está claro, me parece, que la izquierda no es el otro de la derecha, situadas ambas en una relación opuesta pero simétrica respecto del poder: la izquierda es ante todo el otro del poder, el otro ámbito y el otro sentido de la vida social, *lo que queda sepultado y olvidado en el poder constituido, la vuelta de lo reprimido, la voz de la vida en común ahogada por la vida comunitaria, la voz de los desposeídos antes que la de los pobres (y la de los pobres sólo porque son mayoritariamente, pero no exclusivamente, los desposeídos) – la izquierda es la Voz de los Muertos.*”⁶³ (Emphasis mine)

How does the Plurinational Bolivian State deals with who *we* are? Who is *we* in modern Bolivia? Who *we* are and for *what* reasons seems to be at the heart of the disputes among different civilizational projects.

⁶² Álvaro García Linera *Venezuela Foro Filosofía Estado, Revolución y construcción de Hegemonía.*

⁶³ SCI Marcos, «Una Muerte...O Una Vida (Carta cuarta a Don Luis Villoro en el intercambio sobre Ética y Política)».

8. THE TIPNIS CONFLICT OR THE LIMITS OF MODERNITY

In an editorial regarding the TIPNIS conflict in Bolivia, Edmundo Paz Soldán states: “El Tipnis traerá cola.”⁶⁴ That same editorial, titled “Los Límites de Evo”, argues that:

“Las crisis de los últimos meses muestran que Evo ha encontrado *los límites de su poder*. Hubo un momento en que su inmenso capital político le permitió “refundar” el país aprobando una nueva Constitución, arrinconar los deseos de autonomía de departamentos económicamente poderosos como Santa Cruz y burlar las leyes a su antojo para dismantelar cualquier intento de oposición a su gobierno. *Y muestra que el estilo autoritario, centralista, bajo el viejo molde del caudillismo latinoamericano, puede gobernar pero no construir un Estado. Sin instituciones sólidas, el caudillo termina siendo víctima de las mismas fuerzas que lo encumbraron*. Evo recibió un Estado en crisis; su carisma, su capacidad de convocatoria, maquillaron esa crisis, pero no la trascendieron. *Su discurso etnopolulista de izquierda, además, trazó una serie de coordenadas de las que no puede desviarse*; se sabe que, tarde o temprano, el gobierno debe dejar de subvencionar la gasolina y aumentar el precio, pero esa medida es vista más como de un gobierno neoliberal -las cosas deben costar lo que dice el mercado que cuesten- y no como de uno que se debe al pueblo; se sabe también que quizás se necesiten más carreteras para vincular internamente al país, pero éstas no pueden hacerse sin la venia de las comunidades indígenas a las que se les ha prometido autogobierno. *Así, el modelo desarrollista de Evo naufraga en medio de sus contradicciones internas.*”⁶⁵ (Emphasis is mine)

The effectiveness of this quote emanates from the “neutral” way in which the critique of Evo Morales and the re-foundation of Bolivia as a Plurinational State is framed. Throughout this quote, we can elucidate what is at stake when decolonization projects are launched. The violence of this critique, hence its effectiveness, arises from the superiority that one civilization/nation/citizenship is assumed to “naturally” possess against and upon others.

⁶⁴ País, «Los límites de Evo».

⁶⁵ Ibid.

It becomes imperative, in this case, to dissect this quote in order to unveil the mechanisms on which it bases its critique, rationality, irrationality and violence. It becomes imperative, not because it's necessary to make it clear for the participants of the events. It's not relevant because I, from an academic standpoint, have a better access to what is True, to what really is happening, or to what really should be done. As a matter of fact, this analysis doesn't make any recommendations, nor formulates any theoretical framework nor poses neither a new True nor a unique solution. The modest goal of this research would be in any case, to reveal the political projects that are being put forth in Bolivia, and how the TIPNIS conflicts has dramatically rendered visible the contentious relations within that country in particular, and amidst Modernity in general.

Hence, in order to counter-attack this civilizational enterprise that the editorial of *El País* embodies, we'll use the concepts of Internal Colonialism, *sociedad abigarrada*, and *chi'ixi*. This research, since it is a knowledge project as well, is also overtly political. Modernity is the battlefield; through its articulation of time and space, it becomes the first global project, hence the scenario for the contentious relations among civilizations that persist to the present.

9. DISSECTIONS

What is at stake in Bolivia's political project of decolonization through the formation of the Plurinational State? Luis Macas, a Kichwa politician from Ecuador, points to two principal struggles within modernity, for the subalterns or the colonized subjects. The first one:

“Por un lado, está la lucha para aplacar, por así decirlo, definitivamente, a los que hemos sido denominados como subalternos. Es una lucha tenaz que, al menos desde la hegemonía del Norte, piensan que debe ser resuelta con urgencia con

respecto a nosotros, los que no pensamos ni actuamos en conformidad con las coordenadas del pensamiento occidental y capitalista.”⁶⁶

The political reality beyond the rationalization or understanding of the oppression, but rather the oppression itself as a constant reality throughout time; the second struggle hence, the *creation* of the idea of that political reality; the epistemic struggle:

“...hace referencia a la disputa que existe en el terreno del conocimiento, en la formación de los saberes: ¿es posible el reconocimiento de otro pensamiento?; si existen otras racionalidades, ¿qué lugar asignar a la racionalidad dominante? Los saberes se contruyen social e históricamente. Nos pertenecen a todos porque todos hemos participado en su construcción. Pero hemos participado desde diferentes posiciones y con maneras de apreciar, valorar y comprender la realidad también diferentes.”⁶⁷

Macas is pointing out the salience of indigenous peoples in modernity. But since indigenous peoples have participated from an “other” civilization, their contribution is limited to that which the Hegemonic project decides as right for itself.

Reinaga pointed out that the *Revolución India*, was the *Revolución del Tercer Mundo*; the revolution of the Indigenous colonized subject, would necessarily imply the destruction of the grammar of Modernity in which individuals are ordered and subjugated to a historical contingent civilizational hegemonic norm. Macas, through the Plurinational State echoes this political position by asserting a State in which Ones and Others are visible:

“...hasta el momento...lo que aún subsiste es la vision del Estado colonial que ahora se expresa con otra formas pero con el mismo contenido básico: la invisibilización del Otro. Es un Estado homogéneo, un Estado vertical, un Estado uninacional, porque no ha incorporado la existencia siquiera de los pueblos que estamos juntos.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Pueblos indígenas, estado y democracia*, 36.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

In the El País editorial quoted before, we can see how political and epistemological control agendas are deployed.

a. Dissecting the Political

Let's focus first on the political critiques of the piece, where the author tries to eliminate the political agency of the subalterns by describing the political struggle as Evo Morales' sole project.

There are two principal critiques that I read from the El País editorial at a political level: the first argument refers to the *misuse* of some sort of "political capital" implying that Evo Morales wasted voter support throughout different elections, by not creating a strong (?), efficient (?) and effective (?) State. Hence, "el estilo autoritario, centralista, bajo el viejo molde del caudillismo latinoamericano, puede gobernar pero no construir un Estado. Sin instituciones sólidas, el caudillo termina siendo víctima de las mismas fuerzas que lo encumbraron." This account violently misrepresents the political struggles that ended in the election of Evo Morales as President. By doing it so bluntly, it poses the inability of the Western Global Modernity, to understand that other forms of articulating the political are possible. This violence is not particular to Bolivia, Latin American political leaders, especially those which throughout history have in one way or another, and under different realities changed or challenged the preceding status quo regarding *who* is and *who is not*. Hence populist-populism tag has been an excellent way for politicians and academia to devalue re-definitions of the social question: Castro, Arbenz, Chávez, Morales, Correa, Kirchner, Perón, Cárdenas, López Obrador, Zelaya, Lula, Lagos, Toledo, Humala, and a long etc. have always been described as "Populist" in Western Academia. This is not to say that all of those politicians were anti-colonial fighters, or that they were looking for the liberation of the subalterns, simply that all

these politicians by challenging the previous definition of whom was and whom wasn't part of the State they led, fitted immediately the populist category.

The second argument, described as Morales' ethno populist "straitjacket" which limits his governance: "Su discurso etnopopulista de izquierda, además, trazó una serie de coordenadas de las que no puede desviarse;..." Hence, Evo Morales, in order to win office, had to promise a series of ethno-populist promises which now are backfiring: "...el gobierno debe dejar de subvencionar la gasolina y aumentar el precio, pero esa medida es vista más como de un gobierno neoliberal -las cosas deben costar lo que dice el mercado que cuesten- y no como de uno que se debe al pueblo; se sabe también que quizás se necesiten más carreteras para vincular internamente al país, pero éstas no pueden hacerse sin la venia de las comunidades indígenas a las que se les ha prometido autogobierno." For the author the price of gas must be a perfect example of Adam Smith's invisible hand, in which the invisible forces of supply and demand settle the price (OPEC, for example, becomes invisibilized). On the other hand, the author points out how Evo "promised" self-government to the indigenous communities, so now the State, cannot turn back, since that promise will mean an electoral defeat. The author does not point out that the TIPNIS was lawfully established as an National Park in 1965 during the military government in Bolivia, and its status changed to Indigenous territory in 1992 under the presidency of Jaime Paz Zamora during his second term as president, amidst the neoliberal wave which brought, among other things, multiculturalism. The Supreme Decree No. 22610, addresses the recognition by the Bolivian State of the indigenous peoples and its territories:

"Se reconoce al Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure como territorio indígena de los pueblos Mojeño, Yuracaré y Chimán que ancestralmente lo habitan, constituyendo el espacio socioeconómico necesario para su desarrollo,

denominándose a partir de la fecha Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure.”⁶⁹

Therefore, construction of any type of infrastructure, such as highways in this indigenous territory is regulated:

“Toda construcción y obras de desarrollo, particularmente, de vías camineras y poliductos, que se realicen en el Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure, debe contar, previamente, con un pormenorizado estudio de impacto ambiental, debidamente aprobado por el Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos y Agropecuarios, con la participación de la organización indígena de la región. Las obras que estén en ejecución deberán ser paralizadas hasta contar con su respectivo estudio de impacto ambiental. *Asimismo, todo proyecto o estudio a realizarse deberá ser consultado y coordinado con la organización indígena de la región.*”⁷⁰ (Emphasis mine)

Hence, consultation as a political tool has been recognized by the State (which is not the same as saying that in that moment was when consultation appeared in the imaginary of the indigenous peoples) way before Evo Morales even dreamt of being president of Bolivia.

b. Dissecting the Epistemological

The author’s critique of the political, is intertwined with the epistemological, to eliminate the subalterns political agency, is to eliminate the subalterns’ knowledges: “Evo recibió un Estado en crisis; su carisma, su capacidad de convocatoria, maquillaron esa crisis, pero no la trascendieron.” Hence, expressions such as “al pueblo” and “comunidades indígenas” throughout the analysis are filled with passivity and without agency; the indigenous, and the people as passive receptors of the projects from above. By reducing indigenous peoples mobilizations as electoral mobilizations, the author reduces the scope, of at least some, of the indigenous movements within Bolivia.

⁶⁹ Bolivia, «Decreto Supremo 22610», Art. 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Art. 6.

c. The Political and Epistemological Knot

The author concludes that: “Así, el modelo desarrollista de Evo naufraga en medio de sus contradicciones internas.” This finishing touch by the author reveals how the re-civilization conquest is put forward. What the author is implying in his analysis, is (a) that the State that Evo Morales now leads as president, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, has failed. Development, for the author, cannot pay attention to ethnicity, nor race, nor culture, nor difference; development is, or is not. Gasoline and highways are its expression, not political dissent. Hence, (b) the other, the subalterns, the Indigenous, the pueblo, the multitudes, are not legitimate knowledge actors, since their experiences have nothing to do with neutral concepts and knowledge such as “Development”.

Yet the TIPNIS conflict, in my opinion, does point out to the internal contradictions and the limits not of Evo Morale’s regime, but of the Western Global Modernity Project when others knowledges, politics, economies, cultures, legal systems, etc., challenge the primacy of its supposed superior location in the civilizational project. The TIPNIS conflict and its contradictions from within, point out different conundrums that the Plurinational State in Bolivia faces nowadays.

The Plurinational State, and its decolonization agenda, cannot be analyzed by the same token as its predecessor, i.e. the Liberal State. The social movements that participate in the TIPNIS protests against Evo Morales’ government are not the same social movements that organized against a Colonial/Republican/Neoliberal State in the 1980’s and 90’s to achieve recognition of their nationality and territoriality.

Modernity, as a civilization project, in which people are ordered and organized hierarchically, at the discretion of the elites along multiple, overlapping and multilayered power technologies, has always been contested from different trenches.

Which is the last of the trenches available for the colonized, marginalized and exploited? If we answered that question with Life, then, we would have to think how Modernity, at the limit, enforces its project: with violence. Those killed by Modernity share a privileged epistemic standpoint.

Finally and as the El País Op-Ed points, the TIPNIS conflict, indeed, traerá cola. The struggle to name what the TIPNIS is (the question regarding who we are) and for whom, amidst Modernity will bring forth different struggles which could well show how Modernity in the limit is enforced.

Chapter 2

1. CREATIVE CONTRADICTIONS-DESTRUCTIVE CONTRADICTIONS

During the VI International Forum of philosophy, held in Venezuela on 2011⁷¹, Álvaro García Linera pondered the four, unprecedented, “internal creative contradictions” that the revolutionary process in Bolivia to Socialism has created. These can be summarized as follows:

1. State as monopoly vs. Society as democratization: The State, as legitimate and democratic representative of the will of the majority, has the monopoly of power. But, since the Bolivian Revolution created a Social Movements government, which is inspired by the democratization of the decision making, inherent to Social Movements logic, a contradiction emerges: monopoly vs. democracy.
2. Hegemony conundrum: The vanguard *class* of the Revolution, in the case of Bolivia, the Indigenous peoples, has to reach other classes in society (i.e. middle classes); in order to keep the Revolution going, it has to appeal *all*. In order to achieve this, the “core” of the Revolution (indigenous peoples), must yield to other interests. Therefore a contradiction emerges in the Government decision-making process: the tension of governing for the vanguard of the movement, your supporters, or governing for all.
3. Universal vs. Individual: This contradiction emerges when sectors from within the Revolution, that is sectors which rallied around the same universal goals (in Bolivia’s case, he gives examples such as: the election of Morales, the Constituent Assembly, the nationalization of the oil industry) begin to formulate “corporative” demands, that is, they start demanding specific, individual, requests (his examples

⁷¹ Álvaro García Linera *Venezuela Foro Filosofía Estado, Revolución y construcción de Hegemonía.*

are the eastern lowland indigenous peoples of Bolivia, and the *Central Obrera Boliviana*, COB). They, the non-universal revolutionaries, by claiming particulars, act in detriment of *all*.

4. Development and/or Nature: A greater wealth is needed to raise the living standards of *all*. In order to achieve it, we have to affect nature, cause “even breathing we affect it.” *Some* opposes these actions and would rather preserve Nature.

There are multiple layers in the Vice-Presidents’ “creative contradictions” that are important to distinguish, in order to realize what is at stake; it is important to highlight that the Vice-President, in addition to other faculties, coordinates the relations among the Executive, Legislative and autonomous governments and participates in the sessions held by the cabinet members, in order to assist the President in the “management of the overall government policy”.

As noted above, this speech was given in Venezuela, on the 28 of November 2011, barely a month after Law No. 180 was enacted, as the VIII March for the “Defensa del Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré TIPNIS, por los Territorios, la Vida, Dignidad y los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas” arrived La Paz demanding the State stop the construction of the highway that would pass through the TIPNIS. This march was mainly organized by the *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB), articulated entirely by indigenous peoples of the Bolivian eastern lowlands.

Most of the time during his speech, to illustrate the “creative contradictions” of the process, García Linera only uses abstract assumptions. He repeatedly uses the figure of the dam and the highway, “You want to build a highway, that would bring development, but some *compañeros* are against it.” Only in the case of the third

contradiction, universal vs. particular, García Linera gives two specific examples: the eastern lowland indigenous peoples and the COB, the biggest workers union in Bolivia. He frames the contradiction as follows: the *compañeros*, our *compas* (“with whom we have marched...”), the indigenous peoples of the eastern lowlands (who are *just* 200,000 or 250,000) oppose the distribution, by the State, of recently recovered lands to landowners, to Andean highland indigenous peoples, mainly Aymara and Quechua (which are the majority of the “indigenous movement” with 6 million people). Therefore, a minority group, on a big territory, denies a majority group with little territory their “universal” rights to land ownership.

García Linera was joined in the panel discussion, entitled “State, Revolution and the Construction of Hegemony”, by philosopher Enrique Dussel, and Venezuela’s Vice-President Elías Jaua. The Bolivian politician throughout his speech constantly contrasted his current position as an active member of the government to his former position outside of it (academia-guerrilla warfare), stating that these contradictions only became visible through the actually governing of the state, not through theory. He, Álvaro García Linera, between the philosopher, Dussel, and the politician, Jaua, discussing in *Gramscian* terms the liberation of the subalterns through State-Revolution-Hegemony parameters, represents, embodies, the *Gramscian* project (or, at least, one of its more common interpretations), that of the organic vanguard, which generates the organic bloc that puts forth a new *organic* hegemony.

The plurinational hegemony, and its contestation from within, is what brings forth García Linera’s “creative contradictions”. How come *this* government (the plurinational) fueled by an *organic* universal which was achieved, primarily, by the work of indigenous peoples (since they are the “nucleus of the movement” which is expressed in the new

constitution), making that universal fair (since it was achieved by an organic Constituent Assembly) be contested by those who made it (the universal)?

What is the organic vanguard left to do? García Linera finishes by pointing out that there was no solution to these contradictions, and “luchar, luchar y luchar” is the only way out; the fight for hegemony (“Hegemonía al final, es el arte de la “conquista, seducción y consolidación”).

Let me offer a (minimal) summary of García Linera’s speech: the year 2011 was a rough year for the Morales’ administration, but since they are inside problems, *nuestros compas*, there is no need to panic, Revolution will prevail.

Who, I think, would be *panicking*, under the light of recent events? Who is his audience? The Hegemony he is thinking of, embodied in multiple ways through the Forum, is composed of different actors, among others: Nation-States. Bolivia, for example, is an active member of UNASUR, which in recent years, following the momentum and support from “left” governments in Latin America, has set in motion (multimillion) regional projects, such as the *Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana (IIRSA)*.⁷²

The room, as well, is full of “revolutionaries”, which García Linera tries to ease. The Revolution is possible. *That* long process, all *that* struggle, all *that* falling down and standing up again, all *that* blood, sweat and tears, was not in vain, there is an end, and it spells Socialism.

Finally, his message goes to the *compas* -the organic bloc, *we*- a wakeup call to the Vanguard, to fit in again, to rally around the flag; to stop seeking “individual”,

⁷² It is worth noting that two members, Colombia and Chile, are not “left” governments, although the latter joined UNASUR while governed by leftwing *Concertación*.

“corporatist”, “selfish”, and anti-universal, claims, in a nutshell: to obey, since organic-*we* knows better.

As a good *Gramscian*, García Linera reinforces Hegemony as Hegemony-institutions, Hegemony-ideas and Hegemony-correlations of power.

But, what if, García Linera’s idea about the participation of (different) indigenous peoples was not right? What if, as Subcentral TIPNIS leader Fernando Vargas Mosúa declared, the indigenous support for Evo Morales was a mistake?

When asked, during the III National Commission of the CIDOB which resolved to start the IX march “*Por la Defensa de la Vida y Dignidad, los Territorios Indígenas, los Recursos Naturales, la Biodiversidad, el Medio Ambiente y las Áreas Protegidas, Cumplimiento de la CPE (Constitución Política del Estado) y el Respeto de la Democracia*” towards La Paz on the 25th of April, if he felt indigenous peoples had been used by the Morales Government, Vargas Mosúa answered:

“...más bien los indígenas nos sentimos *engañados*, creyendo que Morales iba a ser un presidente indígena que respetaría los *derechos territoriales* y del pueblo boliviano y más bien adoptó un comportamiento contradictorio... Lo más triste del Gobierno que el mandatario *sabe y conoce cómo son las estructuras de los pueblos indígenas, porque él viene de una organización social, pero las rompe y su relación es directamente Gobierno – Comunidad, es la típica representatividad de las empresas petroleras.*”⁷³ (Emphasis Mine)

His argument, if not carefully read, may leave the impression that the disappointment stems from Morales not being an indigenous president, some sort of false indigenous. Rather, he explains, *their* disappointment is based on how the Government has *broken*, and therefore neglected, the different indigenous social structures through which the various indigenous peoples of the eastern Bolivian lowlands are organized.

⁷³ «Líder del Tipnis: ‘Respaldo indígena a Evo fue una equivocación’ | eju.tv».

Both accounts, García Linera's and Vargas Mosúa's lay out the contentious space in which struggles to give meaning to the political are shaped and held.

2. THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS GOVERNMENT, AN APPROACH FROM WITHIN

In 2010, Álvaro García Linera presented on the construction of the Bolivian plurinational state, in the University of Buenos Aires. In his account, from the approval by referendum of the new Political Constitution, Bolivia has embarked in a political shift that:

“...reivindica, propugna y comienza a construir lo que hemos denominado un Estado Plurinacional, una economía social comunitaria y un proceso de descentralización del poder bajo la forma de las autonomías departamentales, indígenas y regionales. Un Estado complejo.”

García Linera compares two concepts; the first coined by Marx and René Zabaleta Mercado (a Bolivian philosopher) the “apparent” state and the second by Gramsci, the “integral” state. The first kind of state comprises the political and territorial institutions, which only represents some of the “actors” of the social structure. This state is viewed as the property of someone or some elite, a patrimonial state, which leaves at the margins without representation or mediation to the vast majority of citizens.

On the other hand, Gramsci's Integral State is based in an equilibrium between the Institutional Political Body of the State and the Civil Society, this in order for the State to start loosing against society its monopolist functions, and becoming a mere public administrator and manager (cause the power structures will reside in Society itself). In other words, García's Linera depiction of the state is an instrumentalist one, and the Plurinational State concepts looks for a redistribution of power relations within Bolivia.

To achieve the Integral State through the Plurinational State, Garcia Linera delineated three lines of action:

1. The project that the government assumes of transformation, of nationalization, of economic empowerment, of economic diversification, of the development of the economy of the Communities'; a strategic development project created and formed by the social movements;
2. The incorporation into the Constitution of Community Democracy (*voto comunitario*); which describes the possibility of other forms of grounding political representation and mediation;
3. Changing the mechanisms for the selection of the State staff shifting the "nature" of the bureaucracy⁷⁴. This point accounts for a shift into what should be the profile of public servants, as well as the requirements and constraints to participate in the State and its governance.

The "social movements" generated this general course, Evo Morales' political agenda, therefore, it is an organic one. Since the social movements are in the center of the political and power relations and conflicts, it is important to map these social movements, understand their nature as well as the political cleavage or cleavages against which they are reacting. These "social movements" start to become the centers, the space, in which citizenship, in the Plurinational State, is defined; the "social movements" as the legitimate interlocutor with the state.

⁷⁴ For a contextualized account of this point please refer to the following website: <http://www.infolatam.com/2011/05/08/bolivia-partido-de-morales-aprueba-las-reglas-para-elegir-magistrados/> This example shows how changing parameters in the selection of personnel can lead to a struggle for the decolonization of the State.

3. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY

Social movement theory since its first theorists, authors as LeBon and Freud, came about around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century struggling with one principal question: Why do people get out and start acting in regards to a collective good? Freud said that the libido (love) of each individual is what makes us go into the street, while authors such as LeBon emphasized the shared grievances of people. Both authors, with different semantics talked about the same: shared characteristics, shared grievances, shared necessities that would bring the people out, mobilizing them and taking action into their own hands.

This first wave of collective action theories was rapidly challenged under the argument that if grievances are what mobilizes people, and them have been present in all the political systems, then why there are not always revolutions, rebellions, riots, etc., going on? This paradigm gave rise to two different schools also with different answers. On the one hand the Resource Mobilization theories, with authors such as McCarthy and Zald, who emphasized organization and resources (and the access to them by the “organizers”) hence, an individualistic (individual agency) approach. What matters in order to mobilize is the quantity of resources in society for the “social movements entrepreneurs” to use, regardless of everything else.

On the other side were the structuralist-Marxist or functionalist approaches, authors such as Tilly and Skocpol, who emphasized “political opportunities”. By focusing more on the system and the structures within, they formulated a macro-theory of social movements in which individuals are not the principal actors, and individual choice is relegated to the background. This model is present in many areas of the social sciences: economy, political science, anthropology, sociology, business, etc. In all those cases, this problem has been studied as the relation between two or more actors, the owner of a

factory and its workers for example. But, what happens when the actor is the crowd? The *dynamic* part of Social Movements, identifying and understanding the “adversary”, has become a sort of a butterfly hunt where theories seem to make sense to a given “catch” butterfly (self-selection bias).

The 1980’s and 1990’s in Latin America among other regions, and the myriad of social movements that emerged from within, made theorists around the world rethink the collective action paradigm. As Escobar and Alvarez described, although people in the region were suffering one of the harshest economic crisis of recent times and amidst serious efforts by the political and economical elites to diminish the state responsibilities through its reduction, imposed by the Washington consensus, numerous forms of resistance arose. This contradicted the functionalist approach: these democracies now had “institutional” channels for political-social discontent. Political parties should be representing their citizens and, channeling the political discontent. Roberts’ review points out: “The tendency for popular mobilization to wane following transitions to democratic rule, the difficulty of constructing horizontal linkages between grassroots organizations to enhance their political leverage, and the strained relationships frequently existing between popular organizations and the formal representative institutions of democratic regimes”. What is the role of the Social Movements in democratic Latin America? On the other side, if crisis was hitting people, how could they even manage to try to get to the street and protest when they have to find enough to eat? The Resource Mobilization theorists couldn’t explain much either.

The New Social Movements theorists appeal to changes in the political practice: “...the new theories see contemporary social movements as bringing about a fundamental transformation in the nature of political practice and theorizing

itself...a multiplicity of social actors establish their presence and spheres of autonomy in a fragmented social and political space”⁷⁵.

These new social movements embody: 1) a widening of the “socio-political citizenship” and 2) a transformation or appropriation by the actors of the cultural field through their search for a collective identity. (Escobar and Alvarez) They refer then to social movements in terms of “collective identities” in order to address both structure and individual agency and their constant, historic and fluid interactions.

4. MCADAM-MCCARTHY, CHARLES TILLY AND TUPAC KATARI

García Linera defines a social movement as:

“...un tipo de acción colectiva, que intencionalmente busca modificar los sistemas sociales establecidos o defender algún interés material, para lo cual se organizan y cooperan con el propósito de desplegar acciones públicas en función de esas metas o reivindicaciones.”

He also describes the three minimal characteristics which social movements must have, being the first one “ Una estructura de movilización o sistema de toma de decisiones, de deliberación, de participación, de tareas, procedimientos, jerarquías y mandos que le permiten llevar adelante sus acciones públicas...”⁷⁶ This first characteristic is based in McAdam, McCarty and Zald “Social Movements” theory that stresses the rational and organizational aspects of collective action and the mobilization of resources. The second characteristic pointed by García Linera is “Unos repertorios de movilización, o métodos de lucha, mediante los cuales despliega públicamente su escenografía de acción colectiva para hacerse oír, lograr adherentes y lograr sus metas.” This second characteristic is based on Charles’ Tilly “political opportunities” theory framework, hence in his structuralist approach to social movements.

⁷⁵ *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America*, 3.

⁷⁶ *Sociología De Los Movimientos Sociales En Bolivia*.

The third characteristic is: “Una identidad colectiva y registros culturales que le permitan diferenciarse colectivamente, articular experiencias pre-existentes, cohesionar a sus miembros, legitimar sus acciones, identificar sus oponentes y definir sus demandas”. This third and final minimal characteristic of social movements is not backed up by any theorist in García Linera’s exposition, which points out the strain common in social movements theory about what to do with identities, culture, emotions and feelings.

It is not but until recently that these aspects had been incorporated into social movements theory. In Deborah’s Gould “Moving Politics. Emotions and ACT UP’s Fight against AIDS” we find the recognition of the affective dimension of the processes and practices that make up the political. The introduction of affect, on the one side, addresses why people organize despite the material perils and grievances, and on the other how social movements become sites where social meaning is generated and disseminated. For Gould the “movement” part in “social movements” addresses the realm of affect; bodily intensities emotions, feelings and passions. As this characteristic is inherent to all human beings, the affective dimension is part of the practices and processes that make up “the political”. This different ontology, this different conception of social reality, “recognizes emotion as a ubiquitous feature of human life that is present in, influences and brings meaning to every aspect of social life, including the realm of the political action and inaction.”

Gould differentiates then between affect and emotion: the first one is a bodily, sensory, inarticulate, non-conscious experience (full of potential), while the latter is the actualization or concretization of that emotion into the flow of living. Hence, the separation between affect and emotion 1) preserves a space for human motivation that is non-conscious, non-cognitive, non-linguistic, non-coherent, non-rational and un-predetermined (deriving in the realization or not of a political action) and, 2) explains

why contradictory feelings operate more at the level of affection than at a level of nameable emotions.

The concept of affect then presupposes sociality, as affect is shaped and actualized by social phenomena. For Gould, as affection is mediated by society, through emotions, an “emotional habitus” is established in which a “social grouping’s collective and only partly conscious emotional dispositions, that is, members embodied, axiomatic inclinations toward certain feelings and ways of emoting.” Hence, the *habitus* gives the individual and collective practices a structure, and also permits a dialectical relationship between structure and practice: “they (society and individuals) make, unmake and remake one another.” (Gould; 2009), recognizing the contingency natural to power relations.

Finally it’s worth noting about Gould’s theory that by differentiating affect from emotion, the first “has the potential to escape social control, and that quality creates greater space for counter hegemonic possibilities and for social transformations...” (Gould; 2009); i.e., domination is never complete, agency prevails, a least until death.

When thinking about social movements, Bolivian philosopher Luis Tapia acknowledges that in countries such as Bolivia:

“...no todas las fuerzas se mueven en la misma dirección...algunos procesos no son solamente movimientos sociales, o sea, movilización y acción política de ciertas fuerzas o de una parte de la sociedad con la finalidad de reformar algunas de sus estructuras, sino que también en algunos casos son movimiento *de sociedades en proceso de conflicto más o menos colonial en el seno de un país estructuralmente heterogéneo*”⁷⁷ (Emphasis mine)

Hence, Tapia describes the complexity of Latin American societies in which colonial power relations still exist and operate. Social movements emerge in Tapia’s account when state formations and its mediation of conflict with civil society don’t face nor resolve the conflict regarding the social and political order, bringing forth the

⁷⁷ Tapia Mealla, *Política Salvaje*.

dynamic political forms of social movements. But in colonial contexts such as the Bolivian

“...que tienen un carácter más denso que el de un movimiento social. En muchos casos se trata de la movilización de un conjunto significativo de las estructuras políticas y sociales de otras sociedades...subalternizadas por la colonización...” (Emphasis mine)⁷⁸

5. MAPPING STRUCTURES

Evo Morales election in 2005 should not be reduced to an electoral event. What the concept of “social movements government” is pointing at is a shift in the way that power was exercised in Bolivia and a shift as well of the places/spaces where the political is contested.

By mapping the political struggles, identities, and social/societal/civilizational structures that emerged, shifted and were reformulated during the period from 1952 to the present, it becomes possible to observe the practical implications of this concept, as well as the resulting identity emanating from it.

a. Revolution shall give you identity

In 1952, the MNR through its Nationalistic revolution inserted the Indigenous Populations into the State, as well as it introduced the centrality of class in a new nationalistic context, as the basis for social change.

MNR revolution was in part successful because of its incorporation of the indigenous population (rural) and the miners (urban) that were in clear antagonism with the landowners (*terratenientes*) and mine owners. Through reforms such as the incorporation of all “Bolivians” to the State through universal suffrage, land reform, nationalization of mining, and school curricula reform, the new “Revolutionary” State

⁷⁸ Ibid.

championed and alliance between all “classes”, the emergence of a new citizen. “La ideología emenerrista (from the MNR) persigue el objetivo nunca cumplido de homogeneización de la población boliviana.”⁷⁹. This homogenization meant for the indigenous, rural, populations their incorporation to the State through social class, peasantry. On the other side the urban indigenous and *mestizo* were incorporated as labor, as working classes.

These social classes and groups were integrated to the MNR, as part of the corporative elements of the State. Through this corporate attempt, the revolutionary process contributes to the consolidation of the peasant movement through the creation of Peasant Unions represented through the National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia (CNTCB for its initials in Spanish). Even though the name resemblances the language of Marxist-unionized imaginary, this Peasant Unions “...se limitan raramente a actuar como un instrumento de lucha y negociación, y se convierten en instancias de gestión de la vida social.” (Do Alto, 2007; P. 26) The Peasant Unions despite its name:

“...poco tiene que ver con el sindicato obrero, ya que designa un tipo de asociación tradicional de familias unificadas por obligaciones y derechos en torno a la posesión familiar-comunal de tierras y responsabilidades políticas locales.”⁸⁰

On the other hand, Labor Unions were corporatized to the State through the Bolivian Workers Union (COB).

“Entre los años 1952 y 1960, si bien la política fue unipolar en la medida en que un solo partido ocupaba el escenario dominante y regulador de las representaciones y acciones políticas de la sociedad, el MNR, éste era un partido mayoritariamente compuesto por sindicatos agrarios y obreros que de manera corporative eran el sustento electoral del partido y de sus distintas tendencias

⁷⁹ *Bolivia*, 25.

⁸⁰ *Sociología De Los Movimientos Sociales En Bolivia*, 11.

internas. De ahí que se puede hablar en esta época de una unipolaridad partidista-sindical de izquierda reformista.”⁸¹

What García Linera is explaining is how power relations shifted during the MNR revolution, and as power relations shift the places where the power is exercised tend to shift also: peasantry and labor became the new channels for incorporation to the Nation.

b. 1964 to 1982: The other governments

Amidst an internal crisis between the conservative and radical (miners union) wings of the MNR, and as the discontent arises among conservative sectors in Bolivia, from the Land Reform, the revolutionary era of the MNR concludes with the return of the Armed Forces. In the face of these events, both the leftist labor unions and the peasant movement adopt different attitudes.

Labor unions were highly persecuted and repressed and became the opposite pole of the State. “...el campo político se escindió en dos polos; por una parte, el ejército, que hacía el papel de articulador de fracciones empresariales, en tanto que la COB desempeñaba el centro unificador de lo nacional-popular de raigambre obrera y urbana.”⁸² For García Linera these were the times where the elites were in association with the army and society exercised citizenry rights through unions and national organizations as the COB: “Dictadura military y ciudadanía sindical eran los polos ordenadores del campo político...”⁸³

Indigenous peasantry, on the other hand, formulated with the Armed Forces in 1964 a “Peasant-Military Pact” (PMC). This consolidated the idea of a false ideology peasantry, sell-out to the state, which implied the subordination, on different accounts, of

⁸¹ Ibid., 12.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 11.

the indigenous to the eyes of both the economical-military elites and the labor union citizenry.

As Hervé Do Alto states, this PMC meant for the indigenous peasantry two important things: firstly, the respect for the achievements of the revolution, specifically the distribution of land, achievement of citizenry, and education reform. These attainments represented for the first time ever, since the Spaniard conquest, the recognition of the Indigenous as Bolivians, even if it was under the peasantry identity. Also, these represented a tangible change in social mobility for the indigenous populations.

Secondly, within the indigenous movement, the recognition of their communal way of organization through the Ayllu (interpreted by the non-indigenous elites as unions) helped actualize a political, social and economical tool, which also brought the memory of other cultural repertoires of contention (even though it was used by the elites for the continuation of the exploitation of the indigenous lands). As it was mentioned before, the Peasant Unions was the legitimization of another cultural practice, the Ayllu. Felipe Quispe defines Ayllu as the fundamental political, ideological, economical, social and religious base of the Aymara and Qhiswa (Quechua), formed by the union of the community families.

When García Linera expresses that the only realms of the political run through the two opposite poles conformed by economical-military elites and unionized citizenry, fails to recognize that multiple-cleavages cross Bolivian power relations. The peasantry identity served the Indigenous as a tool for the actualization of their social, political and economical formations through the Ayllu. By being more than a peasant union, and something different from that pre-Spaniard Ayllu, this social structure permitted the elaboration of what Linda Tuhiwai Smith defines as the 25 indigenous projects, such as

revitalization of cultural practices, the redefinition of representation, the reframing of the Indigenous relation with the land, etc.⁸⁴ In this regard, I consider flawed García's Linera definition of this period as characterized by an attenuated political polarity with corporatist political subjects and non-partisan politics.

This redefinition of the Indigenous is evident with the rise of new elites in the interior of the CNCTB, which start by opposing the PMC and started elaborating a new indigenous discourse. This new radicalized leadership, known as “Kataristas”, represents a new Indigenous identity that was only possible to attain through the social mobility channels obtained and maintained through the Revolution and the Military Dictatorship. This new leadership that had access, even if it was precarious, to the state, to land, and to education as well as to the urban centers, redefined the Indigenous Issues.

“...el katarismo plantea desde su surgimiento la articulación de la revaloración de lo “indio” con la cuestión de clase. Asimismo, los kataristas consideran que existe una doble opresión del campesino: a nivel social y cultural como indio y a nivel económico por la explotación de su fuerza de trabajo.”⁸⁵

c. Multiculturalism and Juridical Pluralism

“Reconocer que Bolivia es multicultural y plurilingue es reconocer tardíamente algo que siempre ha existido en los hechos.”⁸⁶

For Luis Tapia, liberal multiculturalism presents itself:

“...bajo una apariencia cosmopolita, pero en realidad es la forma contemporánea y encubierta del racismo, esto es, asumir como un hecho la existencia y la práctica de una cultura y un tipo de sociedad superior a las demás: el supuesto de que las puede contener cuando en realidad solo las traduce y, de ese modo, las traslada imaginaria y falazmente a su seno.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

⁸⁵ *Bolivia*, 30.

⁸⁶ Tapia Mealla, *Política Salvaje*, 36.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 37–38.

In 1994, multiculturalism is introduced in Bolivia's constitutional framework. The first article of the 1967 constitution that read: "Bolivia, libre, independiente y soberana, constituida en República *unitaria*, adopta para su gobierno la forma democrática representativa."⁸⁸, changed to:

"Bolivia, libre, independiente y soberana, *multiétnica y pluricultural*, consituida en República unitaria, adopta para su gobierno la forma democrática representativa, fundada en la unión y la solidaridad de todos los bolivianos."⁸⁹
(Emphasis mine)

In the same key, article 171 changed to:

"Se reconocen, se respetan y protegen en el marco de la ley, los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales de los pueblos indígenas que habitan en el territorio nacional, especialmente los relativos a sus tierras comunitarias de origen, garantizando el uso y aprovechamiento sostenible de los recursos naturales, a su identidad, valores, lenguas, costumbres e instituciones.

El Estado reconoce la personalidad jurídica de las comunidades indígenas y campesinas y de las asociaciones y sindicatos campesinos.

Las autoridades naturales de las comunidades indígenas y campesinas podrán ejercer funciones de administración y aplicación de normas propias como solución alternativa de conflictos, en conformidad a sus costumbres y procedimientos, siempre que no sean contrarias a esta Constitución y las leyes. La ley compatibilizará estas funciones con las atribuciones de los Poderes del Estado."⁹⁰

The president that enacted the constitutional amendments which introduce the multicultural reforms to Bolivia was Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada who ran with an indigenous vice-president, the first ever indigenous to access the State in modern Bolivia, Victor Hugo Cárdenas.

⁸⁸ «Constitución Política de 1967, con reformas de 1994, texto concordado de 1995 y reformas de 2002, 2004 y 2005». Art. 1

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid. Art. 171

In a 2002 interview, Cárdenas stated that: “Creo que nuestra presencia en el gobierno demuestra que en Bolivia es posible la construcción de una democracia multiétnica, a pesar del carácter inicial y provisional de los avances realizados...”⁹¹ He defines multi-ethnic democracy as:

“...la combinación creativa de las virtudes de la democracia indígena con la democracia liberal, porque no consideramos que la democracia sea sinónimo de liberalismo...En un país como Bolivia esas dos democracias tienen que sumar sus virtudes, y esto significa, por ejemplo, que hasta la propia democracia indígena tiene que sacrificar varias cosas internamente que no son democráticas. A eso llamamos democracia multiétnica.”⁹²

He continues to elaborate on what he considers to be the appropriate ways for indigenous movements to act in the multicultural/multiethnic state:

“Entonces, y a propósito del movimiento indígena, nosotros hemos sido protagonistas de esa manera de entender el liderazgo aymara en la lucha democrática. Pero hay otra clase de liderazgo aymara que está más en la pelea por separarse de los marcos de la izquierda marxista tradicional. Se trata de un liderazgo que tiene una enorme desconfianza en la lucha democrática, es una mezcla de indianismo reinaguista y cheguevarismo, algo que yo llamo fundamentalismo étnico. Obviamente que para esta clase de liderazgo, la alianza con Goni (Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada) no puede representar otra cosa que no sea una claudicación, una adscripción al neoliberalismo.”⁹³

The former ex-vice president is asked “¿Estás planteando la existencia de un comportamiento político distinto de ese liderazgo aymara más moderno y democrático e *integrado* a la democracia liberal frente a aquél otro liderazgo, digamos más tradicional?” (emphasis mine) to which he answers: “Sí...”⁹⁴

Rivera Cusicanqui describes the multicultural agenda as mandated-regulated by the elites:

⁹¹ United Nations Development Programme, *Política Y Sociedad En El Espejo*, 45.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 45–46.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

“Las elites bolivianas han adoptado un multiculturalismo oficial, plagado de citas de Kymlicka, y anclado en la noción de los indígenas como minorías... El corolario fue un multiculturalismo ornamental y simbólico, con fórmulas como el “etno-turismo” y el “eco-turismo”, que ponían en juego la teatralización de la condición “originaria”, anclada en el pasado e incapaz de conducir su propio destino.”⁹⁵

What is the Neoliberal multicultural Project? What do the Neoliberal multiculturalism assumptions reveal, and what do they conceal? What are the limits of Neoliberal Multiculturalism?

Charles R. Hale proposes that multiculturalism in Latin America has minimally entailed the “recognition of cultural difference, in the sense of the now ubiquitous official affirmations that, “we are a multi-ethnic, pluri-lingual society”.”⁹⁶ In this sense, it’s different from classical liberalism, for which individuals are the essence, since multicultural theorists acknowledge the possibility of a multicultural citizenship:

“...(W)hich is predicated on the idea that group rights and the central tenets of political liberalism can be compatible with one another. Will Kymlicka, for example, introduces a key distinction between 'external protections' and 'internal restrictions': the former offers a means to ensure equality for and prevent discrimination of the culturally oppressed within the liberal tradition, while the latter contravenes the fundamental liberal principle of individual freedom. Kymlicka and others also have worked out similar proposed solutions to related problems, involving political representation, educational policies, language rights, etc.”⁹⁷

The limits of Neoliberal multiculturalism may be drawn, hence from:

“Who, for example, makes the fine distinctions that determine when an initiative is needed for 'external protection' of an oppressed group's cultural rights, and when that initiative has 'gone too far' into the realm of 'internal restrictions'? The answer, implicitly at least, is 'the state'. And yet, this notion of the state as impartial arbiter of the conflict between individual and group rights is deeply

⁹⁵ Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa*, 58.

⁹⁶ Hale, «Does Multiculturalism Menace?», 492.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 492.

suspect, since in nearly every important question of cultural rights the state is also a key protagonist in that conflict.”⁹⁸

Juliet Hooker, through the analysis of the Black populations in Latin America, draws the limits of Neoliberal multiculturalism, and its representation of subjects through cultural parameters:

“While the goal of multicultural reforms may have been the promotion of democratic legitimacy by remedying social exclusion, the criteria used to determine the appropriate subjects of collective rights have not been racial discrimination or socio-economic and political marginalization. I argue that the main criterion used to determine the recipients of collective rights in Latin America has been the possession of a distinct cultural group identity.”⁹⁹

The openness of Neoliberal multiculturalism to cultural rights, through the multicultural citizenship, cancels on the other hand the recognition of rights through other parameters such as race and class:

“Multicultural citizenship reforms in Latin America privilege certain kinds of subjects and certain modes of framing grievances that have potentially negative consequences. The need to assert an ethnic or culturally distinct group identity in order to successfully claim collective rights means that not only the majority of Afro-Latinos, but some indigenous groups as well, are unable to gain such rights. The problem is that as a result Afro-Latinos who are unable to assert an 'ethnic' identity lack a solid claim to collective rights even though they may also suffer from political exclusion and racial discrimination.”¹⁰⁰

Therefore, the ultimate goal of Neoliberal multiculturalism is to organize societies within the state, in a hierarchical way:

“La reforma del estado ha reconocido esta diversidad cultural en la modificación del artículo primero de la Constitución... pero en ninguno de estos casos reconoce ni instituye la igualdad entre las culturas y los pueblos porque no reconoce que son *sociedades, es decir, totalidades*, y no solo lenguas y creencias diferentes. Se puede reconocer la diversidad cultural sin reconocer su igualdad.”¹⁰¹ (Emphasis mine)

⁹⁸ Ibid., 493.

⁹⁹ Hooker, «Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion», 291.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 306.

¹⁰¹ Tapia Mealla, *Política Salvaje*, 36.

If, as if Luis Tapia argues that multiculturalism and plurilinguism is the recognition of something that has always existed in Bolivia, Legal Pluralism is too:

“For the Sánchez de Lozada government, the indigenous customary law issue was part of a larger effort to accommodate Bolivia’s formal legal system to the reality of a country where justice is administered mainly in informal, oral, local settings and to create a more humane system, closer to the people, that promotes reconciliation and human rights.”¹⁰²

Donna Lee Van Cott defines legal pluralism as “...the simultaneous existence of distinct normative systems within one single territory, a condition usually associated with colonial rule.”¹⁰³ Legal pluralism, then is just the regulation of other juridical systems, and their incorporation into the national juridical framework, which regulates and enforces Multicultural Citizenship. As noted before, the amendment to article 171 recognized that:

“Las autoridades naturales de las comunidades indígenas y campesinas podrán ejercer funciones de administración y aplicación de normas propias como solución alternativa de conflictos, en conformidad a sus costumbres y procedimientos, siempre que no sean contrarias a esta Constitución y las leyes. La ley compatibilizará estas funciones con las atribuciones de los Poderes del Estado.” (Emphasis mine)

Indigenous communities, consequently, had the “authorization” of the State to exercise their own legal system; but, in the other side, the State does not grant any provision in order to this to happen. Principally, there is no discussion, nor inclusion, of property rights or land redistribution among the “comunidades indígenas”, legal pluralism, and multiculturalism, as a depoliticized tool of the Neoliberal State: “It is possible to interpret the limits of indigenous jurisdiction as either “fundamental rights” or

¹⁰² Van Cott, «A political analysis of legal pluralism in Bolivia and Colombia», 209.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 209.

as the constitution and other laws.”¹⁰⁴ How does the plural and multiple works among not equals?

In the International arena, as Karen Engle proposes: “cultural rights have provided the dominant framework for indigenous rights advocacy since at least the 1990s.”¹⁰⁵ This strategy, for the author, has put forth some of the “the dark sides of virtue”:

“As the right to culture has developed over the years, I contend that it has largely displaced or deferred the very issues that initially motivated much of the advocacy: issues of economic dependency, structural discrimination, and lack of indigenous autonomy. This displacement occurs even when the right to culture is used specifically with the aim of promoting development that is thought to accord with indigenous culture. In fact, *I suggest that increased cultural rights sometimes lead to decreased opportunities for autonomy and development.*”¹⁰⁶ (Emphasis mine)

For the author, hence, there have been 2 strategies, two different paths that indigenous peoples have forged in the international arena: one regarding cultural rights, the other self-determination rights:

“The right to self-determination, for example, comes in a strong form that asserts the right of secession or independence as a nation-state, a weaker form that claims significant legal and political autonomy within existing states, and a still weaker form that is often articulated as human right. Similarly, the right to culture sometimes implicates strong collective rights for land and territory, while at other times it is used to support individual indigenous people against indigenous groups that are attempting to limit their rights.”¹⁰⁷

In this sense, there are 2 legal tools which the international indigenous movements have crafted in recent times regarding self-determination: the 1989 International Labor Organization Convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples from 2007; for example article 3 of the UN Declaration

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 228.

¹⁰⁵ Engle, *The Elusive Promise of Indigenous Development*, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

states that: “Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of the right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”¹⁰⁸

d. Between cultural recognition and empowerment

Charles R. Hale proposes the strategy under Neoliberal multiculturalism for indigenous people in the following terms:

“...I argue that cultural rights movements have little choice but to occupy the spaces opened by neoliberal multiculturalism, and that they often have much to gain by doing so; but when they do, that we should assume they will be articulated with the dominant bloc, unless this decision forms part of a well-developed strategy oriented *toward resistance from within, and ultimately, toward a well-conceived political alternative.*”¹⁰⁹ (Emphasis mine)

Hence, it is important to look at the “spaces opened by neoliberal multiculturalism” in Bolivia; how these spaces were occupied by Indigenous Peoples, and how by occupying them, new alternatives of political-economical-juridical and social systems are brought forward.

e. Reappropriations

“Puede darse una inadecuación entre imágenes territoriales y territorio; en esta inadecuación está la clave del proceso constitutivo de la conciencia territorial. Lo que importa en la territorialidad es la vivencia social del territorio.”¹¹⁰

The Taller de Historia Oral Andina (THOA) in Bolivia is an example of how indigenous peoples movements occupy the spaces opened by neoliberal-multiculturalism. Marcia Stephenson describes this Bolivian NGO as a *counterpublic* sphere in which

“...(P)arallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁹ Hale, «Does Multiculturalism Menace?», 522.

¹¹⁰ Prada Alcoreza, *Territorialidad*, 16.

oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs...What distinguishes the indigenous counterpublic sphere from other contestatory publics, however, is the importance of territorial demands and the struggle to achieve autonomy and self-determination.”¹¹¹

For the author, autonomy and self-determination in Bolivia, become important, salient, topics from the mobilizations that took place in 1990 when eastern lowland indigenous peoples marched to La Paz demanding “Territory and Dignity”. This mobilization “encapsulated the complex historical dimensions of the indigenous movement by calling for the right of indigenous peoples to be treated with dignity and respected for their historical, cultural, and political specificities.”¹¹² THOA endeavors where, principally, the following: The “...(E)laboration and expression of Andean cultural identities by collecting and circulating historical, political, and testimonial documents disseminated mainly in bilingual (Aymara, Spanish) publications, videos, and radio programs or *radionovelas*”¹¹³; secondly, they helped to:

“...(O)rganize and promote the movement to reconstitute the Andean community structure known as the ayllu. It is the fundamental social organization loosely based on kinship groups and communally held territory that encompasses lands located in a variety of ecosystems...The geopolitical movement to reconstitute the ayllu calls for recognizing colonial territorial boundaries between communities and reestablishing traditional Andean forms of governance.”¹¹⁴

Finally, “On the international front, THOA’s work is increasingly grounded in the wider transitional indigenous movement, a growing Indian rights network that recognizes “both the current limits of purely domestic attempts at democratization and the potential for grass-roots leverage through “acting globally”.”¹¹⁵

The hypothesis from which THOA started was that:

¹¹¹ Stephenson, «Forging an Indigenous Counterpublic Sphere», 100–101.

¹¹² Stephenson, «Forging an Indigenous Counterpublic Sphere». 102

¹¹³ Ibid. 103

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 104

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 104

“...(D)espite the ongoing history of colonialism and repression, an autonomous indigenous historical memory and subjectivity persisted through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This native historical memory was fundamental to indigenous resistance to intensifying efforts by the radicalized working class to assimilate Indians as *campesinos* and by the MNR to transform Indians into acculturated *mestizos*...The oral histories collected confirmed both the existence and the magnitude of indigenous organization.”¹¹⁶

Through this reappropriation, THOA stressed the importance of identity and land, “...members insisted on the significance of identity and land as interlocking elements vital to the dialogics of an oppositional Andean cultural politics. In this context, the ayllu or traditional Andean community acquired critical symbolic value because it encompassed three basic characteristics: “población, gobierno y territorio”.”¹¹⁷ Territory and Identity, hence, become the axes that ordered and structured THOA political struggles.

6. IF MUHAMMAD WON’T COME TO THE MOUNTAIN THEN THE MOUNTAIN MUST GO TO MUHAMMAD

The first indigenous march “*Por el Territorio y la Dignidad*” that headed from Trinidad to La Paz began with 300 indigenous marchers of the Bolivian oriental low lands. This milestone march, which is known for bringing forth and articulating *the indigenous* as a political force in Bolivia’s recent history, was not initiated by the Quechua or Aymara Nations, but by the indigenous peoples that García Linera portrayed in Venezuela’s Forum as a minority among the indigenous movement: the selfish, individualistic, corporative indigenous opposed to the organic Plurinational Hegemony project.

The march, in its process towards La Paz, and through the discourse of territory and territoriality, opened a contentious space in which all indigenous peoples could fit.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 105-106

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 107

Therefore, the *Indígena* identity, is re-shaped and re-appropriated by the indigenous, on the move, in the perilous hike towards Bolivias' 12,000 ft. elevated capital.

“En este sentido, en la marcha desemboca un largo proceso de formación organizativa, discursiva e identitaria de los pueblos indígenas de tierras bajas, a la vez que se convierten en un hito fundamental en la reelaboración de las redes de asociación práctica, en el imaginario colectivo y en la autoidentificación de los pueblos indígenas.”¹¹⁸

This march, organized by the CIDOB, was grounded in the particular realities of the eastern lowland indigenous peoples, and channeled in accordance with these. “Territory and Dignity” served as an overarching umbrella for indigenous movements in Bolivia, but as Ernesto Noe accounts:

“En el año 1990, los pueblos indígenas marchamos para conseguir nuestros territorios indígenas, ya que en cuatro puntos muy importantes del departamento del Beni los terratenientes tomaron nuestras tierras, por lo que pedimos al Gobierno que nos reconozca nuestros territorios usurpados.

El Gobierno no hizo nada por nosotros, por lo que decidimos marchar a La Paz. El territorio indígena era una cosa muy extraña para el Gobierno de ese entonces, del Presidente Jaime Paz Zamora. Tuvimos que convencerlo que tener territorios indígenas no contradecía la Constitución Política del Estado, sino que estaba enmarcado dentro de la misma. Debatimos, y al final de cuentas el Presidente entendió nuestra realidad y nos dotó de territorios indígenas.”¹¹⁹

Territory was a strange, unfamiliar discourse for all audiences in Bolivia, not just the government. But, for the eastern lowland indigenous, land and territoriality have been at the marrow of their contentious relations with the diverse state “experiences” throughout the colonial and civilizational project.

Among the *pueblos* that conform CIDOB and which mobilized in 1990, were the Chimanes, Moxeño and Yuracaré, habitants of the then called “*Parque Nacional del Isiboro y Sécuré*”; a new legal figure which, under the military regime in 1965,

¹¹⁸ *Sociología De Los Movimientos Sociales En Bolivia*, 218.

¹¹⁹ «Boletín Bolivia Plurinacional: “VIII Marcha Indígena” | Cejis», 3.

prohibited the settlement of new colonizers within the borders of the Park. The National Park was already a territorial experience, in which the indigenous peoples of the region contested with the state, regarding land and territoriality. The *Pacto Militar Campesino*, the agreement by which the indigenous peoples were *incorporated* into the state framed the relations of indigenous peoples and the modern Bolivian state. Land, and land tenure, therefore becomes a site/space of/for citizenship to indigenous peoples, for example the Chimanes, Moxeño, and Yuracaré, that with a blow of a law, became in 1965 the legitimate/lawful/rightful settlers of Park for the state.

7. LEGITIMATE/LAWFUL/RIGHTFUL

The National Park Isiboro y Sécore (now TIPNIS) was established in the territories in which the *pueblo* Moxeño (principally at the northeast), the *pueblo* Yuracaré (to the southeast) and *pueblo* Chimanes (northeast) lived. This single law puts forth a new contentious arena in which land and territory become the loci of indigenous and state relations through which citizenship is contested; the (re)creation of the space and its logic, comprised between:

“Por el Norte, parte del hito tridepartamental de La Paz, Beni y Cochabamba, abra de Marimonos y a seguir por el curso de los ríos Natusama y Sécore hasta la confluencia de éste con el Isiboro.

Por el Sud, por el curso de los ríos Yusama e Isiboro hasta la confluencia de éste con el río Chipiriri.

Por el Este, de las Juntas del río Chipiriri por la cuenca del río Isiboro hasta su unión con el río Sécore junto al Puerto Gral. Esteban Arze.

Por el Oeste, mediante las aguas divisorias de las Cordilleras del Sejeruma y Mosetenes.”¹²⁰

Who are the peoples in this contentious space?

¹²⁰ «Decreto Ley 07401,1965. Bolivia», Art. 1.

8. MINIMAL PORTRAITS

The location where the TIPNIS is now found, was inhabited since before the conquest, as some archeological remnants show, by indigenous populations organized in complex systems that included canals and farming techniques:

“Los abundantes restos arqueológicos (extensos sistemas de canales y lomas artificiales con cerámica) reconocibles hasta hoy en toda la llanura y en las lomas de los ríos dan una idea de la prosperidad de las culturas... prosperidad que dio lugar a los mitos del Paítiti (una versión meridional de El Dorado).”¹²¹

Therefore, current indigenous groups at TIPNIS, such as Moxeños, Chimanes and Yuracaré, are believed to be direct descendants from those pre-conquest indigenous civilizations. Even though there are signs of expeditions from outsiders to the region, both from the Inca Nation and the Spaniards, it is not until the second half of the XVII century that the space was colonized by outsiders:

“Los intentos de reducir las diferentes etnias de los llamados indios de Moxos no fueron exitosas hasta la segunda mitad del siglo XVII cuando los jesuitas comenzaron a contruir sus misiones, en total 26, en toda la llanura de Mojos...”¹²²

The introduction of religious missions, transformed the relations that indigenous peoples had to space, therefore, to politics, economy, culture, society, and life:

“Los jesuitas instituyeron una forma de organización sociopolítica que permitía un mayor control de la población indígena, los llamados “cabildos”. Sus funciones básicas apuntaban a la organización de la mano de obra indígena en el sistema productivo misional y a la estructuración del ritual católico... Aún hoy en día en las comunidades del TIPNIS con fuerte presencia de población mojeña, el cabildo y sus autoridades, se encargan de organizar el trabajo communal y las festividades religiosas y en ellas el cabildo constituye la máxima instancia de decisión a nivel comunal.”¹²³

The mission system introduced new dynamics, while concentrating indigenous peoples through the missions; it also provoked, on the other hand, dispersion among

¹²¹ SERNAP, «Plan de Manejo-TIPNIS», 21.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

others that fled from them. Therefore, indigenous populations fled from the more accessible zones of the region, to inaccessible inland zones of it: the same space becomes re-discovered, therefore re-defined.

In 1767, the Jesuits were expelled and as new regional economic interests emerge, such as the rubber economy in the north of what is now the states of Beni and Pando, indigenous groups abandon the spaces where missions were established, since the missions economic system was on decay.

a. *Pueblo Chimanés*

The Chimanés: “...(H)an desarrollado una estrategia de supervivencia cultural caracterizada por el rechazo al proceso de concentración y reducción en misiones y por retirarse a zonas cada vez más inaccesibles...”¹²⁴

This among other characteristics, made this group a society structured around extended kinship with an extended and flexible occupation of the space, which is related to the lack of centralized and located overarching political structures:

“...(D)e manera que no han creado jefaturas o cacicazgos y en virtud a lo cual el jefe de familia es también el jefe político o Konsasiki. Cabe destacar que en éste sistema se suma el Chamán o Kukuítzi, quien representa autoridad por la relación que tiene con lo sobrenatural y su función está centrada en velar por la identidad cultural del grupo.”¹²⁵

b. *Pueblo Moxeño*

The Moxeños, are descendants from the Arawak, and it's the outcome of a process of: “...etnogénesis en las reducciones misionales jesuitas de Moxos...”¹²⁶ This group, since its relation to the Jesuit missions, incorporated into their imaginaries

¹²⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹²⁵ Defensoría del Pueblo, «informe Defensorial Respecto a la Violación de Los Derechos Humanos en la Marcha Indígena», 6.

¹²⁶ SERNAP, «Plan de Manejo-TIPNIS», 27.

religious, and western elements: “Los moxeños trinitarios del TIPNIS son herederos de una rica tradición misional que tiene expresión en sus patrones arquitectónicos..., en el culto religioso moxeño y sus manifestaciones asociadas...y en toda la tradición artesanal de los oficios misionales.”¹²⁷ This relation is made manifest by the *Loma Santa* myth:

“Una mañana de invierno...Pedro Cuevo se levantó de su hamaca, acomodó sus exiguas pertenencias, llamó a su esposa, hijos y a una treintena de vecinos y les dijo que había tenido una vision que le indicaba cómo llegar a la Loma Santa. Sin pensarlo dos veces el grupo emprendió el camino por el bosque tras los pasos de su líder. Luego de varios días el buscador se detuvo en un sitio cercano al río Isiboro y les dijo as sus compañeros: “Aquí podemos criar a nuestros hijos”. Bautizaron el lugar como Santísima Trinidad y decidieron quedarse.”¹²⁸

This *pueblo*, compared to the Chimanes and Yuracaré, possess a distinguishable productive and social capital: *Cabildos* are still part of their organization to the present day and are structured in communities; other productive crafts, such as ranching and manufacturing are present as well, remnants of the Jesuit economy structure.

c. *Pueblo Yuracaré*

As the Chimanes, the Yuracaré rejected the Jesuit Mission system, by organizing through

“...(L)azos de parentesco consanguineo y de alianza, constituyéndose la familia nuclear en la base de una red de relaciones, que empieza agrupando de dos a cinco familias hasta llegar a un número que asegure la autosuficiencia para la producción y subsistencia del grupo.”¹²⁹

Residency, therefore is:

“...(T)anto patrilocal como matrilocal y neolocal, cada familia nuclear es celosa de su independencia, aunque compartan una misma localidad o asentamiento. En lo

¹²⁷ Ibid., 28.

¹²⁸ Fundación Tierra, «Estudio de caso No. 2. TIPNIS, la coca y una carretera acechan a la Loma Santa: territorio indígena en Cochabamba y Beni.», 265.

¹²⁹ Defensoría del Pueblo, «informe Defensorial Respecto a la Violación de Los Derechos Humanos en la Marcha Indígena», 7.

que hace a su organización socio-político, no reconoce jefe único para todo el pueblo, con autoridad centralizada.”¹³⁰

d. Settlers

In colonial period and as Cochabamba developed as an urban hub, the first settlements were established at the south part of the TIPNIS, a region full of potentialities because of its extension, natural resources and low population. But it's not until 1905 that colonization was State bounded, organized and ordered by public policies, which “... (T)uvo su expresión en los procesos de ocupación del Chapare por población de horizonte cultural andino (Aymara and Quechua indigenous peoples) y que se manifiesta con mucha fuerza a partir de la década de los 60 (sic) del siglo pasado.”¹³¹ These settlements are characterized by the introduction of the planting and production of the coca leaf, characteristic of the Andean ecosystem:

“En el caso de la zona Sur del TIPNIS, la construcción de un tramo del camino en los años 70 (sic) hasta el asentamiento yuracaré de Moletto dentro del entonces Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore, facilitó el aumento de la colonización. Esta se acelera a partir de 1978, sobretodo en el periodo de auge de la producción masiva de coca (1980 a 1987) –que convirtió a la región del Chapare en la de mayor producción de coca en Bolivia- y con la crisis de la gran minería y la relocalización asociada a los mineros. El espacio ocupado por la población colona dentro del área protegida (delimitado por una “línea roja”) abarca unos 92.000 ha del territorio (alrededor del 7%).”¹³²

e. Criollos

Although a minority group, organized throughout 25 cattle ranches in the TIPNIS, these *criollo* populations, principally from Beni State, occupy more than 32,000 hectares, with extensions that go from “...(E)ntre menos de 100(hectares) hasta más de 5 mil

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ SERNAP, «Plan de Manejo-TIPNIS», 28.

¹³² Ibid.

hectáreas.”¹³³ This group is observed since the 1970’s, and in their ranches, they employ the indigenous workforce.

Table 2 TIPNIS Inhabitants according to different census ¹³⁴

Year/Source	Indigenous Population		Settler Population		Total Population
	Inhabitants	Communities	Inhabitants	Unions	
1990- INCOFOR	5154	53	13159		18313
1992- CIDDEBENI	3802	60	-	-	
1993-INE Indigenous Census	4563	56			
1992-INE National Census			7905	40	
1994-Hoffman			9758	48	
1997-PDM Villa Tunari			10653	42	
2001-INE National Census; TIPNIS by Municipality:					
San Ignacio de Moxos	2127	23			2127
Loreto	637	7			637
Villa Tunari	1227	14	6354	47	7581
Total	3991	44	6354	47	10345

All of these civilizations, intermingled, in a fixed space, through different historical eras, through different power technologies (state, family, missions, community, religion, land and territory) couldn’t be a better example of the *abigarrado* concept, of Bolivia as that...*conflictiva articulación de desigualdades y formas de superposición desarticulada*. Within the TIPNIS borders, through its *abigarrada* composition, and

¹³³ Ibid., 30.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 32.

amidst power relations from different civilizations, Modernity through the articulation of technologies is deployed and enforced.

9. *PLURISPATIAL COMMUNITIES WITHIN*

The indigenous *pueblos* within the TIPNIS are organized in communities, a term used in multiple ways throughout different spaces between the three *pueblos*:

“El concepto de “comunidad”, al tiempo que cada vez tiene mayor peso en la percepción local, engloba muy diferentes modalidades de identidad y una amplia tipología de formas de ocupación del espacio, desde puestos familiares con no más de diez personas, a poblaciones en torno a una posta y escuela con hasta 250 habitantes pasando por asentamientos de familias extensas. Los más grandes (entre 200 y 250 habitantes) son Santísima Trinidad, Buen Pastor, San Antonio de Ismose, Natividad, Gundonovia y San Pablo.”¹³⁵

Relations among Moxeños, Yuracaré and Chimanes, reflect as well, their social systems in which mobility and migration throughout the space are fundamental. These three groups through the occupation of different spaces in the region, in migration cycles, have fostered relations among them, establishing family as well as political ties.

“Como consecuencia de esta amplia movilidad especial, en la mayoría de los casos la convivencia de los tres pueblos se manifiesta en la ocupación de los mismos asentamientos. Históricamente las relaciones interétnicas entre los tres pueblos han estado mediadas ideológicamente, y en gran medida lo siguen estando por una suerte de “jerarquización” cultural –moxeños, yuracaré, tsimanes, en este orden– que han adquirido algunos rasgos de discriminación, especialmente a nivel de la organización política, pero que en los procesos reales de ocupación del espacio se han resuelto desde formas de convivencia y en un creciente porcentaje de matrimonios interétnicos. De este modo, el TIPNIS aparece como un espacio donde es posible discernir con claridad tres culturas indígenas diferentes pero al mismo tiempo se manifiesta en su globalidad como un espacio multicultural.”¹³⁶

Therefore the political for the indigenous peoples within the TIPNIS is structured throughout different, and not continuous, temporal and geographical paradigms. The

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 38.

journey through discontinuous geographies -plains, foothills and highlands- in the TIPNIS, and the incorporation and (re)appropriation of myths, such as the *Loma Santa* (“...Es la Loma Santa donde queremos vivir. Este territorio no nos lo han regalado por cariño. Fue una búsqueda de muchos años de nuestros abuelos. Ellos han recorrido todo el Beni buscando un lugar adecuado para vivir en paz y armonía con la naturaleza y con Dios.”¹³⁷), which is given different meanings in different historic eras, breaking the linearity of time, are at the core of the *political*. Citizenship is given on the move, through the circulation of geographies and time, in confrontation among civilizations.

10. PLURISPATIAL COMMUNITIES BEYOND

On 1982, the recently founded *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB) served as a turning point for the *pueblos* within the TIPNIS. Even though the Barrientos decree recognized the territory as a National Park prohibiting the establishment of new settlers, these never ceased to happen:

“En esos años el parque sufrió impactos negativos considerables ocasionados por los primeros procesos de colonización, la deforestación y la caza y pesca ilegales. A causa de este deterioro, en 1980 el área protegida fue eliminada de la lista oficial de parques nacionales y reservas equivalentes de las Naciones Unidas. Los indígenas también habían contribuido a eso, pues explotaban los recursos naturales y los vendían a intermediarios a precios ínfimos.”¹³⁸

Through CIDOB, the TIPNIS *pueblos* reshaped and reframed their land and territory claims. In 1979, the first contacts among indigenous peoples from the Bolivian eastern lowlands started to happen, but it was not until 1982 and after creating multiple organizations that CIDOB emerged. During these times, an intense and systematic labor of: “...(C)rear lazos y unificar criterios entre las ya existentes formas de autogobierno

¹³⁷ Fundación Tierra, «Estudio de caso No. 2. TIPNIS, la coca y una carretera acechan a la Loma Santa: territorio indígena en Cochabamba y Beni.», 265.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 268.

local y regional de los indígenas de tierras bajas...”¹³⁹ happened. The challenge was creating a central organization, throughout discontinuous territories, among different indigenous *pueblos*, with different social structures.

CIDOB’s structure is grounded in the communities that conform it; these communities, as reviewed in the case of Moxeño, Yuracaré and Chimanes, are structured in different forms, throughout different geographies. Therefore, the central organization of CIDOB is rooted in a flexible concept, that of community. “Las comunidades son consieradas por la CIDOB como “la base orgánica y fuerza política de la Confederación. Ellas tienen sus propias formas de representación de acuerdo a sus costrumbres y noramas consuetudinarias.”¹⁴⁰

This first level of organization, communities, becomes articulated through *centrales, subcentrales and capitanías* which “...(U)nifican por identidad cultural y lingüística a comunidades que en algunos casos tienen discontinuidad territorial.”¹⁴¹ The *centrales, subcentrales and capitanías* are organized as well through *Asambleas* or *Central de Pueblos*. At this level, we can observe how ethnicity and territory is overcome, in order to place a common eastern lowland indigenous peoples identity, therefore the construction of a new indigenous space. CIDOB orchestrates the eight *Asambleas* and *Central de Pueblos*.

CIDOB, therefore, is not a state, nor a centralized hub of representation; rather, this multi-regional and multi-ethnic space becomes active, and relevant, only as needed by the communities. “La fuerza de todo lo que es el movmiento indígena como tal viene desde abajo, desde sus bases, que son bases reales. Acá no es el caudillo o el líder

¹³⁹ *Sociología De Los Movimientos Sociales En Bolivia*, 218.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

sindical el que impone las reglas.”¹⁴² Therefore the communities are the ones that support CIDOB’s web when needed, meaning that the material needs for enforcing CIDOB have to come from the communities as well. As reviewed above, communities are shaped in different way, and could be conformed by just a couple of families, therefore, CIDOB becomes a space in which the communities are embodied through individuals, overcoming as well the lack of volume (eastern lowland indigenous peoples at Bolivia are a minority).

11. MOVING COMMUNITIES

“Cuando se va a convocar a una marcha, como aquí a la CIDOB, ella hace entrega de una convocatoria, y es mediante eso que respalda el capitán y saca fotocopias y a cada capitán se le entrega para que ellos con ese documento informen a su base y expliquen sobre qué es la movilización, para qué. Entonces ya mediante eso se convoca a una reunión (sic) para ya designar a los representantes.”¹⁴³

Since communities are the ones responsible for activating CIDOB when necessary, CIDOB is put forth by the communities’ particular grievances. But through the intermediate levels of articulation, these grievances are shared and re-defined, making of the *Asambleas* and *Central de Pueblos*:

“...(U)n escenario de cohesión social, de construcción de marcos interpretativos y legitimadores de la propia acción colectiva. De ahí que no sea una exageración afirmar...la asamblea funciona regularmente como un espacio de formación de opinión pública y, al momento de la movilización, como un centro de cohesión militante entre todos los involucrados, directa o indirectamente, en la movilización.”¹⁴⁴

Therefore, grievances in the communities are reinterpreted, and reframed in ways in which them could be articulated in an overarching argument for the eastern lowland indigenous *pueblos*.

¹⁴² Ibid., 228.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 237.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

This becomes evident through the main way that CIDOB has engaged with the State: marching. Marching, which implies the “...(S)acrificio del cuerpo como lenguaje de una exclusión y un sacrificio por el reconocimiento...”¹⁴⁵ was first deployed in 1990 and, as its name implies, it focused on Land and Dignity.

Land and Dignity, weren't empty categories, but rather they both encompassed pragmatic and symbolic meaning, so much so that the march ended with a Presidential Decree by Jaime Paz Zamora, that stated:

“Se reconoce al Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure como territorio indígena de los pueblos Mojeño, Yuracaré y Chimán que ancestralmente lo habitan, constituyendo el espacio socioeconómico necesario para su desarrollo, denominándose a partir de la fecha Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure.”¹⁴⁶

But this local redress for the Moxeño, Yuracaré and Chimanes, was only possible through the contestation that CIDOB posed, through its march, to the overall indigenous question in Bolivia; by addressing territory, the Bolivian Nation-State had to address the indigenous. In 1994, through the reform of the Bolivian constitution, multiculturalism is established:

“...Se reconocen, se respetan y protegen en el marco de la ley, los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales de los pueblos indígenas que habitan en el territorio nacional, especialmente los relativos a sus tierras comunitarias de origen...”¹⁴⁷

Territory, therefore, is tied to the definitions and redefinitions of citizenship, and how to achieve it among different citizen –civilization– projects.

Therefore, the nine marches organized so far by CIDOB, address local salient issues, that redefined by the multiple, becomes salient for *all* (Table 2).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 234.

¹⁴⁶ Bolivia, «Decreto Supremo 22610», Art. 1.

¹⁴⁷ Bolivia: Constitución Política de 1976 con reformas de 1994 y texto concordado de 1995 Art. 171.

Table 3 Eastern Lowland Indigenous Peoples Marches ¹⁴⁸

March	Date	Principal Attainment	Date
I. Indigenous March for “Land and Dignity”	1990	Presidential Decree 22610	1990
II. Indigenous and Peasant March for “Land, Territoriality, Political Rights and Development.”	1996	INRA Law	1997
III. Indigenous March for “Land and Territoriality and Natural Resources”.	2000	“Convention of Montero”: Annulment and abrogation of former Presidential Decrees as well as the enactment of new ones.	2000
IV. Indigenous March for “Popular Sovereignty, Territory and Natural Resources.	2002	Call for a Constituent Assembly.	2006
V. Indigenous March “Eastern Bloc: María Esther Chiquero Picaneré.”	2004	Creation of the Indigenous Section in the Hydrocarbons Law.	2004
VI. Indigenous March for “Territory, Community Redirecting for Land Reform Macabeo Choque y Bezabe Flores”	2006	This march was in order to introduce their demands in the Constituent Assembly.	2009 Bolivian Constitution.

¹⁴⁸ Made through different sources.

Table 3 (continued)

VII. Indigenous March for “Territory, Autonomy, and the Defense of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples.” ¹⁴⁹	2010	“Framework” Law for Autonomies and Decentralization “Andrés Ibáñez”.	2010
VIII. Indigenous March for the “Defense of the Indigenous Territory National Park Isiboro Secure TIPNIS, for the Territories, Life, Dignity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples.”	2011	Law No. 180	2011
IX. Indigenous March in “Defense of Life and Dignity, Indigenous Territories, Natural Resources, Biodiversity, the Environment and Protected Areas, the fulfillment of the Constitution and the respect to Democracy.”	2012		

12. THE PLURINATIONAL STATE AND THE SOCIETAL MOVEMENTS

If we agree with Luis Tapia’s statement that in Bolivia, social and societal movements (movements of civilizations) take place, how do the former differ from the latter? What is at stake at each kind of movement? How does Modernity cope with each of them? We can glimpse, I argue, through the stories and histories of the VIII Indigenous March “*Por la Defensa del Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure TIPNIS, Por los Territorios, la Vida, Dignidad y los Derechos de los Pueblos*

¹⁴⁹ This march is the one referred by García Linera in the above mention Forum in Venezuela.

Indígenas” how Modernity, in the limit, is enforced. I argue that, while the seven previous marches contested the state and Modernity, it was not until the VIII march that the indigenous reached, by opposing a highway, Modernity’s limit, bringing forth the mechanisms by which Modernity enforces itself, i.e. repression, criminalization, minimization. Violence as an essential feature of Modernity.

a. Internal Colonialism in Concrete: The Highway

The main character of Mario Vargas Llosa’s *Death in the Andes*, a mestizo, coastal (as opposed to Andean) Peruvian police corporal, supervising the construction of a highway in the Andes ponders:

“¿Avanzaba esa carretera? A Lituma le hacía el efecto de que, más bien, retrocedía. En los meses que llevaba aquí había habido tres paralizaciones y, en todas, *el proceso se repitió como un disco rayado*. La obra se iba a suspender este fin de semana o este fin de mes, el gobierno ya había dado a la constructora el ultimatum. El sindicato se reunía y los peones ocupaban las instalaciones, se apoderaban de la maquinaria y pedían garnatías. *Había un tiempo elástico en el que no ocurría nada*. Los ingenieros desaparecían y el campamento quedaba en manos de los capataces y del contador, quienes fraternizaban con los huelguistas y compartían la olla común, que se preparaba al atardecer, en el campo baldío medianero entre los barracones. Nunca había habido violencia y el cabo y su adjunto jamás tuvieron que intervenir. Las paralizaciones terminaban misteriosamente, sin que se definiera la suerte de la carretera. La compañía, o el representante del Ministerio enviado a zanjar el diferendo se comprometía a no despedir a nadie y a pagar a los trabajadores los días de huelga. La obra se reanudaba en cámara lenta. *Pero a Lituma le parecía que, en lugar de retomarla donde había quedado, los peones desandaban lo recorrido*. O porque había habido derrumbes en los cerros que dinamitaban, o porque con las lluvias los aniegos habían destruido la huella y deshecho el afirmado, o por lo que fuera, el cabo tenía la impresión de que seguían excavando, dinamitando, aplanando o echando capas de gravilla y de alquitrán en el mismo sector que trabajaban cuando él llegó a Naccos.”¹⁵⁰ (Emphasis Mine)

Vargas Llosa, through his main character, questions the indigenous incapacity of linearity through the highway as a metaphor. The highway serves him as a metaphor that

¹⁵⁰ Llosa, *Lituma en los Andes (Esenciales)*, 77–78.

connects time, the uncivilized past, opposed to the civilized future, and space, the disruption of the *Andean indigenous isolation*. Therefore, as the highway fails to be, the indigenous remains stagnant in time and space.

Different projects regarding a highway connecting the states of Cochabamba and Beni through the TIPNIS have been considered through different periods of time. Despite being pointed out as a priority by different governments, it's not until 2003 that Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (Goni), through the Presidential Decree No. 26996 declared the completion of the "...(R)ed Fundamental de Carreteras el Tramo comprendido entre las localidades de Villa Tunari y San Ignacio de Moxos, localidades pertenecientes a los Departamentos de Cochabamba y Beni respectivamente."¹⁵¹

This decree is enforced through Evo Morales' Law 3477, from 2006, in which it is declared "(D)e prioridad nacional y departamental la elaboración del Estudio a Diseño Final y construcción del tramo Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos, correspondiente a la carretera Cochabamba-Beni, de la Red Vial Fundamental."¹⁵² Consequently, since a *national priority*, Evo Morales signed in 2008 with former Brazil President da Silva and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, in Riberalta Bolivia, two agreements for the construction of the so called "North Corridor" that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by linking Brazil and Peru through Bolivia, framed on the regional development agenda carried out by IIRSA. But Brazil's credit only is involved with the highway project through the TIPNIS:

"Por su parte, el crédito de Brasil se ejecutará en dos fases de acuerdo con el protocolo suscrito por los presidentes de Bolivia, Evo Morales y de Brasil, Luis Inácio Lula Da Silva. En el documento se detalla que el primer tramo está compuesto por Rurrenabaque - Santa Rosa con una extensión de 95,7 kilómetros; Santa Rosa - Australia con 169,4 kilómetros y Australia - El Choro con 168

¹⁵¹ «Decreto Supremo N° 26996», Art. 2.

¹⁵² «Ley No. 3477», Art. 1.

kilómetros. La construcción de estos tres sectores demandará una inversión de 199 millones de dólares, bajo un financiamiento en términos preferenciales por parte del Banco Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social (BNDES). El segundo tramo está compuesto por la ruta El Choro - Riberalta con 74,9 kilómetros y una inversión de 31 millones de dólares de carácter concesional por parte del Programa de Financiamiento a las Exportaciones (Proex), administrado por el Banco de Brasil.”¹⁵³

This protocol is legalized in 2010 with Law 005 in which “(A)pruébase el Protocolo de Financiamiento suscrito entre el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia y la República Federativa del Brasil el 22 de agosto de 2009, por la suma de hasta \$us.332.000.000., destinados al proyecto Carretero Villa Tunari- San Ignacio de Moxos.”¹⁵⁴

Therefore, this 190 miles pavement highway which was budgeted on \$436 million dollars, of which \$332 millions would be covered by the Brazilian credit, was scheduled to be constructed in three sections, being the second, from Isunta to Montegrande de la Fe (which would go through the colonized zone of the TIPNIS and its “core zone”, that is, the less colonized section of the space) the contested one by the TIPNIS indigenous peoples, settlers, NGO’s, governments, media, politicians, Nation-States, etc. The TIPNIS becomes a multiple contested space, by a multiple array of actors, embodying different citizen-citizenship projects, in open contention.

b. Variegated Territory

Adolfo Moye, ex Subcentral TIPNIS leader stated in 2010, before the open conflict phase between them, through the CIDOB, and the Plurinational State regarding stage two of the highway project, that:

“El terriotrio (with the construction of the highway) se deteriorará, la fuente de alimento para las comunidades se perderá. Por ejemplo, los tsimanes, a los que no

¹⁵³ «Presidentes firman acuerdo para impulsar el “Corredor Norte”».

¹⁵⁴ «Bolivia: Ley 005», Art. 1.

les gusta convivir con otras personas ajenas a su cultura, prefieren mudarse cuando empiezan a ser invadidos, tengo la información de que en los últimos meses han estado llegando muchos tsimanes a San Borja (...) Con la carretera se invadiría el espacio de vida y no veo otro espacio donde puedan encontrar asilo las comunidades de tsimanes, yuracarés y (mojeños) trinitarios. Yo veo que no les va a quedar de otra alternativa que emigrar a las capitales para que se conviertan en indigentes. Para mí eso es genocidio porque la carretera ocasionará la desaparición de esos pueblos. Eso es lo más preocupante para nosotros; lo consideramos un atropello de nuestros derechos”.¹⁵⁵ (Parenthesis is mine)

As this quote points out, different actors through the TIPNIS space are defining and redefining territoriality:

“Hay comunidades que están apoyando la construcción de la carretera porque no entienden los impactos que ésta ocasionará. *Ellos ya han pasado el proceso de fragmentación territorial* y por eso estamos viendo la necesidad de bajar información a las comunidades mediante folletos y cartillas.”¹⁵⁶ (Emphasis mine)

Since 2010, political divisions among the TIPNIS indigenous associations have become more salient as the space becomes more complex as well. Territoriality, and its meaning, has shifted not only for indigenous peoples inhabiting the TIPNIS, but for *all* within and abroad. Reformulations of how cultural practices, identity and territory are related, i.e. territoriality, are redeveloped as well, as new technologies emerge and different natural and human resources become salient; for example with the current increase in lithium use.

A reshuffling of the political alliances regarding these new re-definitions of the space and territoriality occurs as well. Three are now the indigenous organizations within the TIPNIS. On the one hand, the Subcentral TIPNIS, founded in 1988, it's the oldest organization, and the one that has worked hand in hand with CIDOB since the early 90's.

¹⁵⁵ Fundación Tierra, «Estudio de caso No. 2. TIPNIS, la coca y una carretera acechan a la Loma Santa: territorio indígena en Cochabamba y Beni.», 281.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Both, at the northern (Beni bound) and southern ends (Cochabamba bound) of the territory new political associations that dispute the “representation” of the communities within TIPNIS, and therefore its resources, have emerged. At the north, the Subcentral Secure emerged through conflicts with Subcentral TIPNIS regarding wood and its use. On the southern end, CONISUR emerged, an organization that:

“...(G)enera desconfianza entre los indígenas, incluso de las comunidades sureñas. Ello se debe a que la Gobernación de Cochabamba apoyó la creación de esta organización, supuestamente, para consolidar el territorio departamental hasta la ribera del río Ichoa...”¹⁵⁷

Likewise, colonizers, since coca growers, are organized in seven stations and 52 unions (these settlements, since illegal, are not part of the Indigenous land regime, therefore, its parceled, making possible to trade it or sell it, contrary to the rest of the territory), allied to the *Federación del Trópico de Cochabamba*, the *cocaleros*' union from which Evo Morales is still leader.

It is worth noting at this moment that the current strategy of Evo Morales regarding the highway is articulated through CONISUR and the *Federación*, as multiple sources point out:

“El exprefecto de Cochabamba y exviceministro de Régimen Interior, Rafael Puente, aseveró este jueves que el Consejo Indígena del Sur (Conisur), que exige la anulación de la Ley de Protección del TIPNIS (Territorio Indígena Parque nacional Isiboro Sécore) y la construcción de la carretera Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos por el corazón del Isiboro Sécore, es parte conformante de las Seis Federaciones de Cocaleros del Trópico de Cochabamba, del cual el Primer Mandatario, Evo Morales, es su máximo dirigente.”¹⁵⁸

Or,

“El presidente del Estado, Evo Morales, acogió como su ahijado al bebé de una marchista del Consejo Indígena del Sur (Conisur). La ceremonia católica se llevó

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 272.

¹⁵⁸ «Exprefecto dice que CONISUR está afiliada a Federación cocalera de Evo | eju.tv».

a cabo en el coliseo Julio Borelli, donde los caminantes se hospedan en La Paz, donde llegaron para demandar la construcción de la carretera Villa Tunari – San Ignacio de Moxos.”¹⁵⁹

All of these elements, and others that go beyond this research, are immerse at the VIII Indigenous March in which land and territoriality, again, plays a crucial role as a space where citizenship is defined and redefined.

c. Variegated Marches

On the 15th of August 2011, exactly 21 years after the first Indigenous March for the “*Dignidad y el Territorio*”, the VIII Indigenous March “*Por la Defensa del Territorio Indígena, Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure TIPNIS, por los Territorios, la Vida, Dignidad y los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonía Boliviana*”, departed Beni’s State Capital Trinidad, demanding in first place, the immediate cessation of any highway activities - from research and design to its construction- and the annulment of all the regulations regarding the highway. Also, the march brought forth different issues that went from land and territoriality to health, education, and public policies concerning the state’s environmental agency; through particular grievances from the communities, overarching grievances for the eastern lowland indigenous peoples are articulated.

Through the annulment of all the norms regarding the highway project, CIDOB sought to insert the indigenous peoples in the re-definition of territoriality and space, not to exclude them, or the space, from the debate. There was never in CIDOB’s demands the cancelation of the possibility regarding “development” and infrastructure projects as such, intangibility was not one of the march demands, on the contrary, the highway in itself, was not for everybody, the problem but who benefitted from it:

¹⁵⁹ «Evo Morales apadrinó al bebé de una marchista del Conisur».

“Es cierto que a nosotros no nos molestaría una carretera, pero siempre y cuando pase por las comunidades. Por donde tratan de hacerla no estamos de acuerdo; ellos nomás se van beneficiar: los cocaleros, los madereros (...). La carretera tampoco va a pasar por aquí; tal vez (vaya) a Santísima Trinidad, pero las otras comunidades quedarán alejadas.”¹⁶⁰

Contention and conflict emerged rather from issues such as: where the highway was supposed to go through and which economic activities it would benefit the better; the way that the government overlooked the Constitution as well as multiple International Treaties signed by Bolivia (in fact, U.N. Convention on Indigenous Peoples Rights and OIT’s 169 Convention are incorporated into Bolivia’s Constitution):

“Los Estados celebrarán consultas y cooperarán de buena fe con los pueblos indígenas interesados por medio de *sus instituciones representativas* antes de adoptar y aplicar medidas legislativas y administrativas que los afecten, para obtener su consentimiento libre, previo e informado.”¹⁶¹ (Emphasis is mine)

As in the seven previous marches, this one also looked for an agreement with the government, through the plurinational state, in order to solve their demands.

“Nosotros como indígenas somos capaces también de analizar los problemas del país, y no queremos crearle problemas al gobierno; más bien nosotros estamos ayudando al gobierno, al señor Presidente, para solucionar los problemas.”¹⁶²

The indigenous peoples of the eastern lowlands, aware of their position regarding the Bolivian social landscape, a minority within the indigenous, living in discontinuous and hard to reach geographies, have always sought the recognition of the state(s), by recognizing it as well:

Queremos enfocarle y ayudarle al gobierno de que poniéndole en conocimiento todo lo que tiene como deber, como gobierno, de solucionar; nosotros tenemos que ponerle en su conocimiento, esto para nosotros no es ponerle una dificultad,

¹⁶⁰ Fundación Tierra, «Estudio de caso No. 2. TIPNIS, la coca y una carretera acechan a la Loma Santa: territorio indígena en Cochabamba y Beni.», 280–281.

¹⁶¹ «Declaración de las Naciones Unidas Sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas», Art. 19.

¹⁶² *Sociología De Los Movimientos Sociales En Bolivia*, 247.

no es ponerle una traba, sino asegurarle también que su gobierno pueda ser histórico.”¹⁶³

This dynamic is rooted in the concrete experiences of the eastern indigenous populations, an experience in which oppression and exploitation used to come from regional sources (missions, farms and ranches, political caciques, etc.), rather than the National State per se. Therefore, relating with the National State, through mutual recognition, in order to oppose regional oppressions, fitted with their political objectives. If CIDOB was acknowledged, that implied that the communities that make CIDOB active were acknowledged as well, brining forth a relation between nations/citizens. In the same key, when the State stops making its “job”, the indigenous peoples, through their communities, via the individual bodies, are set in motion in order to show themselves, as they embody their Nations-Civilizations-Citizenships.

d. Modernity on the limit: it’s rather *you* or *me*

“(C)állese porque ahorínga los voy a matar, ustedes estaban a punto de matarnos a punto de flecharnos!” “Si no los matamos nosotros ustedes nos van a matar”. “¡Por culpa de indios!””¹⁶⁴

That quote is part of the testimony given by Miriam Yubánore, Vice-president of *Pueblos Étnicos Mojeños del Beni* Central, who on the 25 of September 2011 was repressed among other marchers part of the VIII indigenous march, by the police and military forces of the plurinational Bolivian state. The argument, as depicted on the last quote, can be summarized as: if it’s either you or us, it better be us. What does *us* against *you* represents?

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ «Boletín Bolivia Plurinacional: “VIII Marcha Indígena” | Cejis», 11.

The VIII indigenous march, unlike the previous ones, was repressed on its way to La Paz. The state's repertoire of violence(s) against the indigenous marchers was, and still continues to be, deployed, in order to enforce a citizenship project.

As quoted before, the leader of the Subcentral TIPNIS stated that the reason for the breakup with the plurinational state, came when it broke the structures of the communities: “Lo más triste del Gobierno que el mandatario *sabe y conoce cómo son las estructuras de los pueblos indígenas, porque él viene de una organización social, pero las rompe y su relación es directamente Gobierno – Comunidad, es la típica representatividad de las empresas petroleras.*”¹⁶⁵

Justa Cabrera, spokeswoman of the VIII march stated regarding the repression:

“En la represión de 25 de septiembre hubo abuso físico y psicológico a las mujeres, hombres y niños. Algunos niños fueron separados de sus madres que todavía seguían amamantando. *El Gobierno ha violado las estructuras organizativas de nuestras organizaciones* así como la Constitución Política del Estado y la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas. De acuerdo a este instrumento internacional, el Estado debe hacer una consulta previa a las comunidades indígenas respetando su institucionalidad, sin embargo este Gobierno no quiso reconocerla, violando de esta manera los derechos de los pueblos indígenas.”¹⁶⁶ (Emphasis is mine)

The indigenous leader, in her editorial, points out at the different levels in which the violence by the state works: repressed bodies, repressed communities.

e. Reasons For Violence(s)

In its report about the events of the 26 of September the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, a public and autonomous institution recognized by the state, collects the multiple accounts regarding the repression to the marchers. The violence(s) accounts of the VIII indigenous march go as early as the 19 of August 2011, just 5 days into the march in which it is

¹⁶⁵ «Líder del Tipnis: ‘Respaldo indígena a Evo fue una equivocación’ | eju.tv».

¹⁶⁶ «Boletín Bolivia Plurinacional: “VIII Marcha Indígena” | Cejis», 2.

reported how a group of *cívicos* (municipal authorities) from the San Ignacio de Moxos municipality which supported the construction of the highway, blocked the marchers path to La Paz:

“Como parte de esta campaña intimidatoria, el pasado viernes alrededor de 150 personas armadas con palos bloquearon la VIII Marcha Indígena en la localidad de San Ignacio de Moxos, y rompieron el parabrisas de la camioneta de la Subcentral indígena del TIPNIS.”¹⁶⁷

At the same time, the Government stated their intentions of dialogue with the marchers by sending a commission conformed by different cabinet members; the rhetoric of dialogue, by the government, was coupled with delegitimizing the movement and the agency of its leaders in the media. Evo Morales, as well as other ministers, pointed that the VIII march was organized and funded through USAID, for example:

“Al mostrar un listado de llamadas telefónicas como supuesta prueba de la vinculación de algunos dirigentes de la VIII marcha con funcionarios de la Embajada de Estados Unidos, el Primer Mandatario “indígena” confesó que su gobierno espía a sus propios “hermanos” originarios, insinuando que son un peligro para la “seguridad” del Estado.”¹⁶⁸

The dialogue commission failed after the indigenous leadership

“...(O)bjeto las seis alternativas que presentó el Ejecutivo para construir el tramo II de la vía Villa-Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos, así como la propuesta de ir a una consulta pública...El dirigente de la CIDOB (expresó) “no van a partir el TIPNIS” .¹⁶⁹

Therefore, the march continued on its way to La Paz, amidst the opposition of the state and multiple groups benefitted from the highway, such as the settlers at the TIPNIS

“El dirigente de la Federación de productores de la hoja de coca de CARANAVI, Juan Cachaca, amenazó con otro bloqueo en la region paceña, si no se consolida

¹⁶⁷ «Avanza la VIII Marcha Indígena y Evo criminaliza la protesta».

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Defensoría del Pueblo, «informe Defensorial Respecto a la Violación de Los Derechos Humanos en la Marcha Indígena», 20.

el diálogo entre el Gobierno y los indígenas (which would end up resuming the construction of the hightway)”.¹⁷⁰(Parenthesis is mine)

The countermarch organized by municipal authorities and supporters of Morales at Yucumo intended to block the way of the eastern lowland indigenous peoples to La Paz, becoming the preamble of the repression of the latter by the government. As the march got closer to Yucumo, the Police blocked the access of the marchers, arguing for the “bigger good” –life- as opposed to other human rights, such as the right to move freely. As the police explained to the eastern indigenous protesters:

“Nuestro objetivo es contener. Evitar, por ejemplo, que continúe la marcha para evitar, vuelvo a recalcar, que exista un enfrentamiento”, dijo el coronel Carlos Flores, vocero de los policías en el bloqueo... “Los marchistas tienen el derecho al libre tránsito. Pero vayámonos a un principio: *el bien supremo*, el derecho mayor, que es justamente la vida. Nosotros debemos anteponer, ante este derecho de libre locomoción, el derecho a la vida. Lo que no queremos es que exista un enfrentamiento y existan daños a la integridad física, en el entendido de que están marchando niñas niños, mujeres embarazadas y ancianos”, dijo el coronel. Vamos a contener esta marcha -hasta el último momento- sin el uso de ningún tipo de agentes químicos y equipo policial... Nuestro rol es de contención absolutamente, es de prevención. No estamos viniendo a reprimir a la marcha, sino solamente a contener ¿Sí? Lo que nosotros queremos en este momento es evitar que los señores marchistas avancen, porque no sabemos cuál es la reacción de este sector (de los bloqueadores)”, recalcó.”¹⁷¹

On September 24th, and under the tensions between the indigenous march and the pro-government countermarch, the event that serves the state as an excuse for repressing the indigenous marchers occurs. As a new dialogue committee led by Bolivia’s chancellor David Choquehuanca failed, the marchers decided to continue to La Paz. Since, the police had blocked the highway, appealing to the integrity of the protesters, the indigenous march, “las mujeres, molestas, se llevaron a Choquehuanca para romper el cerco policial y avanzar hacia Yucumo.”¹⁷² The marchers first front, composed by

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷¹ «Policía Nacional: “Nuestro objetivo es evitar que continúe la marcha” | Cejis».

¹⁷² «Fueron liberados el Canciller Choquehuanca y el viceministro Navarro».

women, in order to break the blockade, took the Chancellor by the arm and marched with him, giving no option to the police, but to let them continue on their way.

The Chancellor stated that:

“Nosotros buscamos el diálogo y hemos venido a facilitar esto. No han aceptado y ha sucedido esto cuando algunos dirigentes se molestaron y de pronto me rodearon las mujeres, han habido amagos y me han forzado a caminar. Yo he caminado obligado y casi, casi hubo enfrentamientos”, dijo el canciller en contacto exclusivo con la televisión.

Déjenme hablar con los policías para que nos dejen pasar, pero los ánimos estaban exaltados. Los dirigentes no sabían qué hacer y después han empujado”, relató el Canciller.

Yo voy a seguir intentando que podamos superar esta situación. Vamos a seguir haciendo gestiones. Hay preocupación por parte de las organizaciones.¹⁷³”

As the report by the ombudsman states, the repression of the 25th of September was planned just after the events regarding the Chancellor happened. Different state institutions, from the Police, Army and the Executive branch, started to coordinate the events to happen on the 25th.

At 5:30 a.m. on the 25th of September, the Police stroked against the protesters. As protesters were repressed, including children, women and elder people, the Police as well, started targeting the march “leadership” in order to put them on jail, on the charge of abduction of Chancellor Choquehuanca, with the caveat that no warrant was never turned in by any judge. This didn’t came until February 2012, when 26 leaders were called to declare on the Chancellor’s “abduction”.

The leadership, abducted by the Police, was about to be shipped in Army and Police planes to La Paz, but the protesters took the airstrips en masse, and the Police with no other choice but to massacre the marchers or leaving them free.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

“Si, ellos gritaban y nos trataban que nosotros éramos unos indios de mierda y que no respetábamos al Gobierno. -¡Así tienes que respetar mierda, indio de mierda, a este Gobierno!- así me ha gritado, vamos a terminar con ustedes sabandijas de la tierra, así nos dijo... Un policía me dijo: -¡Este cabrón de mierda, este hijo de puta es el que instruyó a su gente y ahora he todavía decís parador y como parador le vamos a dar ahora su patada, así me dijo directamente!... Nos decían-¡Estos perros indígenas, los vamos a matar!-, de esa manera se expresaban, -¡Maten a estos mierdas!-, los agarraban, los llevaban arrastrando, no había caso de defendernos, queríamos nosotros defender a nuestros compañeros, nos regaban de balines y de gases lacrmógenos...”¹⁷⁴

f. Laws 180 and 222: Regulated Violence’s

After these acts of violence, which only brought rearrangements at the interior of Morales’ government and that still doesn’t cast any criminal liability to any of the individuals involved in them, the indigenous march gained new national and international visibility and momentum. The march that started with 700 marchers the 15th of August on Trinidad by the 19th of October, as they entered La Paz, mobilized over a million protesters. Just 5 days later, on October 24, the government promulgated Law 180.

As the seven previous marches, this one also ended up with a Law regarding the TIPNIS; unlike the previous marches, this law didn’t represent a victory for the lowland indigenous peoples, especially for the TIPNIS inhabitants, since it declared the TIPNIS intangible. Therefore, with Law 180 the highway project was washed ashore, since nothing could be done in the space, but the agency of the indigenous within the TIPNIS and their use of the space, as well, became regulated by the state:

“Artículo 3: Se dispone que la carretera Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos, como cualquier otra, no atravesará el Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure-TIPNIS.

¹⁷⁴ Defensoría del Pueblo, «informe Defensorial Respecto a la Violación de Los Derechos Humanos en la Marcha Indígena», 29.

Artículo 4: Dado el carácter intangible del TIPNIS se deberán adoptar las medidas legales correspondientes que permitan revertir, anular o dejar sin efecto los actos que contravengan a esta naturaleza jurídica.”¹⁷⁵

Opposition to the intangibility of the TIPNIS was immediate and came from all fronts, since it held back any kind of activity on it, therefore the government, rooting against this unpopular law and through the support of the social movements close to it, such as the coca leaf unions and the indigenous organizations dissenters of CIDOB within the TIPNIS, as CARANAVI, resolved to appeal to democracy, through a public and individual public consultation regarding:

“1. Definir si el Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécore-TIPNIS debe ser zona intangible o no, para viabilizar el desarrollo de las actividades de los pueblos indígenas Mojeño-Trinitario, Chimane y Yurucaré, así como la construcción de la Carretera Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos.

2. Establecer las medidas de salvaguarda para la protección del TIPNIS así como las destinadas a la prohibición y desalojo inmediato de asentamientos ilegales respetando la línea demarcatoria del TIPNIS.”¹⁷⁶

Environmentalism and democracy are used as tools by Modernity to enforce its project.

As Law 222 was enacted, the communities within CIDOB decided to activate it, and put forth the XIX indigenous march “Por la Defensa de la Vida y la Dignidad, los Territorios Indígenas, los Recursos Naturales, La Biodiversidad, el Medioambiente y las Áreas Protegidas, cumplimiento a la Constitución Política del Estado y el Respeto a la Democracia”.

13. POLITICAL VIOLENCE/VIOLENT POLITICS

The diverse accounts of the TIPNIS conflict evidence the different kinds of conflicts as well, within its space. If we read without any context both Law 222 and

¹⁷⁵ «Ley No. 180».

¹⁷⁶ «Ley No. 222», Art. 4.

CIDOB demands regarding the TIPNIS, it seems to be two of the same: both address international rights, such as the UN charter of indigenous rights, both appeal to the conservation of the natural resources within it, both appeal to the development of the population within it, both appeal to democracy, etc. How come the plurinational state, led by an indigenous president, and the CIDOB, an indigenous organization, could be so pitted in their positions?

Through this partial, subjective and incomplete account of the TIPNIS conflicts, I've tried to point out at the contradictions within the projects both of the Bolivian plurinational State and the eastern lowland indigenous peoples, organized mainly through CIDOB. Many facts, not only from this account but also from any historical account, are probably missing and therefore, no such thing as the Truth of the TIPNIS conflicts is offered.

However, there is a fact that cannot be denied: the repression through the use of violence(s) on the bodies of the marchers' part of the VIII indigenous march.

This sole fact, the abused bodies, evidence how Modernity is enforced, in this case in the Bolivian plurinational state context. While the previous marches didn't question Modernity, and its civilization and citizenship projects, the State (aka the legitimate monopolist of violence) accommodates. But, as soon as the *other(s)*, whoever they might be, questions Modernity foundations (i.e. who decides what development is and who enforces it) the State represses.

Therefore, *Subcomandante* Marcos' statement about how the Left should be the "voice of the death" gains substance.

In *Adiós Muchachos*, former Nicaraguan vice president Sergio Ramírez, reveals how death and deads became the parameter for the Sandinistas:

“El culto a los muertos no fue una orden que nadie dio nunca desde la jerarquía revolucionaria, sino la consecuencia de una convicción íntima alimentada con el ejemplo ...Nunca dejaba la muerte de ser el camino de la purificación absoluta, la expiación de toda mancha, sobre todo porque representaba el sacrificio deliberado, querido, buscado, chivo expiatorio y cordero degollado, y es por eso mismo que la revolución la puso en la cumbre de sus fastos, la conmemoración de la muerte como festividad propiciatoria. Y los muertos, tranfigurados por el sacrificio, pasaron a integrar el santoral; cada santo, cada mártir celebrado en la fecha de su muerte, de su caída. Y en los actos en la plaza, alguna vez empezó a aparecer una silla vacía, la de respaldo más alto en el sitio de honor, que era la silla de Carlos Fonseca, el jefe ausente de la revolución pero siempre presente...La obligación de los vivos era ajustar su conducta a la de los muertos... Había que recordarlo siempre...”¹⁷⁷

Through the death and through the violated, oppressed and silenced bodies, we could glimpse and understand how Modernity and its civilizational projects, in the flesh, are enforced.

On the other hand, through this research, another salient issue becomes evident. Is Modernity as a global civilizational project one in which the *other(s)* are actually possible? The plurinational state in Bolivia, as multiculturalism before, recognized the multiplicity in nationalities within the Bolivian space, something that existed regardless of its recognition by this or any state.

Modernity, through the state, enforces its projects in the limits, through violence. Therefore violence is essential to Modernity and its enforcement. The contention among civilizations is enforced, on the limits through the different repertoires of violence available: from physical death:

“Photographs apparently showing United States soldiers posing with body parts of dead insurgents drew strong condemnation on Wednesday from American officials... (I)n one photograph, two soldiers posed holding a dead man’s hand with the middle finger raised...The revelation of the photographs followed video uncovered in January of four American Marines urinating on dead Taliban fighters and appeared likely to complicate an already tense atmosphere for

¹⁷⁷ Ramírez, *Adiós muchachos*, 45–46.

American forces in Afghanistan. There is a military investigation under way into the burning of Korans at Bagram Air Force base in February, which touched off deadly riots. The military is also investigating the killing last month of Afghan villagers, including women and children, by a rogue American soldier in Kandahar Province, also in the south.”¹⁷⁸

To social death:

“La marcha de dirigentes políticos es un derecho, no tenemos por qué opinar bien o mal, pero...lo que ya no está en juego es el TIPNIS, lo que está en juego no es la carretera, lo que está en juego en la marcha es un proyecto político y tienen derecho a ser un proyecto político los dirigentes y los activistas, tienen derecho a decir que hay un proyecto de derecha que está en marcha y tienen todo su derecho de hacer su proyecto político de derecha”, aseguró el Jefe de Estado.

“Pero no es lo correcto que digan que la marcha es por el parque, porque ya no hay empresa para construir la carretera, ya no hay motivo para la marcha, la marcha ya no es en función de la carretera o el parque, pero que lo digan con valentía, somos de derecha y queremos un partido de derecha, que digan que sus verdaderos intereses con el pretexto del parque y como se está dando hasta ahora es para un proyecto político de derecha...”¹⁷⁹

Finally, if violence is at the marrow of Modernity, then: does violence is the only way to effectively contest Modernity? Does violence becomes a legitimate tool for all civilizations on contention? If violence is an inescapable and unavoidable feature of the *political*, can *other(s) political* projects avoid it, or manage and administer it differently?

Meanwhile, and regardless of this analysis, the battle for the *political* amidst civilizations in Modernity, embodied in the conflicts happening around the TIPNIS, will continue to happen. How violent will this battle be, remains to be seen, although the toll as of today remains uneven; as well as in the last 500 years.

¹⁷⁸ Bowley y Rubin, «U.S. Condemns Photos of Soldiers Posing With Body Parts».

¹⁷⁹ «García advierte que la IX marcha será para formar partido político de derecha - Vicepresidencia del Estado».

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