The elusive promise of territory
an ethnographic case study of indigenous land titling in the Bolivian Chaco
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Publication date:
2014

Document version
Early version, also known as pre-print

Citation for published version (APA):
The Elusive Promise of Territory

An Ethnographic Case Study of Indigenous Land Titling in the Bolivian Chaco

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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31st January 2014
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### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APG</td>
<td>Asamblea del Pueblo Guarani, Guarani People’s Assembly (the national Guarani organisation of Bolivia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APG IG</td>
<td>Asamblea del Pueblo Guarani Itika Guasu, Guarani People’s Assembly of Itika Guasu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASOGAPO</td>
<td>Asociación de Ganaderos de la Provincia O’Connor, Association of Cattle Ranchers of O’Connor Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAINCO</td>
<td>Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz, Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism of Santa Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCG(T)T</td>
<td>Consejo de Capitanes Guaraníes (y Tapietes) de Tarija – Council of Guarani (and Tapiete) Captains of Tarija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERDET</td>
<td>Centro de Estudios Regionales de Tarija, Centre of Regional Studies of Tarija, a regional NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDOB</td>
<td>Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia, Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPTI</td>
<td>Centro de Planificación Territorial Indígena, Centre of Indigenous Territorial Planning, a project of CIDOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORDECRUZ</td>
<td>Corporación Regional de Desarrollo de Santa Cruz, Regional Development Corporation of Santa Cruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAPG</td>
<td>Equipo de Apoyo al Pueblo Guarani, Aid Team for the Guarani People, a local NGO based in Entre Ríos, Tarija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EINE</td>
<td>Estudio Integral de Necesidades Espaciales, Integral Study of Spatial Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEGATAR</td>
<td>Federación de Ganaderos de Tarija, Cattle Ranching Federation of Tarija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FES</td>
<td>Función Económica Social, Economic Social Function, the measure of productive land use under the INRA Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INRA</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria, National Institute of Agrarian Reform. The state agency responsible for land titling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACPIO</td>
<td>Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos, Pueblos Indígenas y Originarios, Ministry of Peasant, Indigenous and Originary Peoples’ Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>Movimiento Al Socialismo, Movement To Socialism, the political party headed by Evo Morales and currently in government in Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROSOL</td>
<td>Departmental agricultural direct cash transfer programme financed by departmental gas rents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN-TCO</td>
<td>Saneamiento de TCO, the legal process for titling TCOs (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAN</td>
<td>Tribunal Agrario Nacional, National Agrarian Tribunal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAIO</td>
<td>Viceministerio de Asuntos Indígenas y Originarios, Ministry of Indigenous and Originary Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YPFB</td>
<td>Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales de Bolivianos, Bolivian State Oil Fields. The Bolivian state oil company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

Word origins are indicated by S. (Spanish) or G. (Guaraní)

arakuaa  G. Guarani knowledge of time, space, the world (ara: time, sky, day; -kuaa, to know (translation from Gustafson, 2009: 301)
banda  S. Strip, band, bank. Used by Tarairí community members to refer to the strip of land on the opposite bank of the Pilcomayo River.
campesino  S. Peasant farmer
chaco  S. (Bolivia). See potrero
challa  S. (Bolivia). Ceremony of reciprocity with Pachamama (Mother Earth)
chicha  S. (Andes) Fermented maize drink
compadre  S. Co-parent, relationship between parents and godparents of a child
chagas  S. Tropical parasitic disease prevalent in the Bolivian countryside, transmitted by vinchuca insects that live in adobe houses
Chiriguano  S (Bolivia, colonial period). Name used to refer to the Guarani
Chiriguania  S (Bolivia). Territory inhabited by the Chiriguano (see above)
criollo  S. American-born person of Spanish heritage
empatronamiento  S. System of debt bondage or forced labour, in which indigenous people worked as virtual slaves for mestizo hacienda owners (patrones). Referred to elsewhere as enganche or habilito.
guirapembi  G. Cot, bed, woven from leather strips.
hacienda  S. Ranch or faro
Itikeño  S. A person from Itika Guasu
iya  G. Owner; spirit owner of a natural resource
iyambae  G. Without owner, free
i  G. Water
iwi  G. Land-territory
kaguiye  G. Fermented maize drink (chicha in Spanish)
karai  G. Non-Guarani person
kuña mburuvicha  G. Female community leader
kuñati  G. White (Guaraní) woman, the name given to me in Tarairí
mburuvicha  G. Leader of community or group of communities
mburuvicha guasu  G. “Big” mburuvicha, used to refer to President of TCO
mestizo  S. Of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage
mezquinar  S. To be mean or stingy, to hoard
mita  S. (Latin America). Torced labour performed by Indian men under Spanish colonialism, adapted from Inca mit’a system of mandatory public service
ñande  G. Us/our/ours
ñande reko  G. Our way of being
originario  S. Native, used in the highlands as an alternative to “indígena”
potrero  S. Field, fenced plot of cultivated land
tentami  G. Extended family group living around a single patio (oka)
tipoy  S. Clothing traditionally worn by Guarani women (G. mandu)
pochi  G. Bad-tempered, angry
patrón  S. Slave-master property owner.
-reta  G. Suffix indicating plural
tierras baldías  S. Idle lands (state classification)
Preface

In the summer of 2008, I resigned from my development job in the UK and bought a flight to Bolivia. This marked the beginning of a long journey that has culminated in the writing of this thesis. The focus of my research, indigenous land rights, marked the convergence of two core sets of interests that emerged over a previous decade of study and experience: postcolonial legacies of racialised exclusion and their contestation, particularly by Andean indigenous movements; and the evolution and contradictions of the “neoliberal” development agenda. The first was informed by undergraduate classes in postcolonial history and development at Cardiff University, and developed through subsequent experiences in Ecuador and Bangladesh; the second is rooted in student activism, engagement with critical development literature, and work experience in the development sector, including two years at the Institute of Development Studies, UK. While hugely informative, my time at IDS gave rise to the critical questions that propelled me back to South America and, ultimately, back to academia. These questions relate broadly to the limits of development knowledge and intervention to address colonial legacies of racialised inequality, or to resolve social and environmental tensions emerging from processes of market-led development. Once in Bolivia, this top-down perspective was balanced by an interest in the capacity of colonised populations to shape national and global development trajectories – and the obstacles and dilemmas they face in doing so. These questions are at the heart of this thesis.

In embarking on my first research journey in Bolivia (November 2008-June 2009), I was encouraged and guided by numerous UK-based academics who gave me their time and expertise. Among them was Tony Bebbington, who not only provided an inspirational reading list but also introduced me to my field site: the Chaco region of Tarija Department, in the South-east corner of Bolivia. My encounter with Tony and Tarija reflects a third strand of my emergent research interests: extractive industry development, whose brutal materiality and territorializing imperatives seemed to throw into relief my broader questions about postcolonial development. In deciding to work in Bolivia, I was also influenced by media and academic debates about the radical possibilities of – or, alternatively, the strategic threats posed by – the country’s new
“indigenous” government. In particular, I wondered about the prospects of the “process of change” for lowland indigenous populations historically at country’s political and geographical margins – particularly those whose territories overlay strategic natural resources.

I arrived in Tarija in the aftermath of a wave of civic strikes by lowland regional elites, which had brought the eastern lowlands to a standstill and produced violent clashes with indigenous and peasant sectors. When I visited NGOs and indigenous offices along the interrupted bus route from Santa Cruz to Tarija, I sensed fear and uncertainty. Entrenched ethnic power inequalities had been unsettled but not yet unseated by the new regime. Meanwhile, indigenous organisations seemed torn between a desire to seize historic opportunities and a historically-grounded caution about the dangers these might entail. These dynamics continued to evolve throughout subsequent fieldwork and the writing of this thesis.

During my first ten months in Tarija, my intentions of making myself useful to a local NGO (Centro de Estudios Regionales de Tarija, Centre of Regional Studies of Tarija- CERDET) while developing my research interests quickly evolved into full-blown fieldwork. APG assemblies I attended demonstrated the intense frustration felt by Guaraní communities regarding the *tema tierra* (land issue) and affirmed my commitment to make this the subject of my research. In early 2009, I elaborated a PhD research proposal on indigenous land titling in Itika Guasu alongside a more modest proposal for “systematising” information on the same topic for CERDET. By the time I left Tarija in June 2009 to begin a PhD at Cambridge, I had become subsumed in this more ambitious research agenda. I returned to Tarija in January 2011, better prepared and better resourced, for fourteen months of PhD fieldwork.

Over the course of this research (2008-12), Bolivians have lived through a period of intense social and political change under the government of Evo Morales. While these changes have been refracted in particular ways in Itika Guasu, this remains, above all, the story of one territory. Remaining committed to this story in a climate of heightened academic interest about the national “process of change” has been testing, and the question of how far this thesis is, or should be, about the MAS government has plagued me throughout the research and writing process. While this thesis does provide some
reflections – and, I hope, novel insights – into the dynamics of “post-neoliberal”
development in Bolivia, I have largely let the experiences of Itika Guasu and its
inhabitants speak for themselves. In fact, I would argue that it is by resisting the urge to
put the state and its discourses at the centre of analysis that we can best understand the
possibilities and challenges of the current political moment – challenges that are bound
up with the contentious project of decolonising territory.
Acknowledgements

My first acknowledgement is to Sarah Radcliffe, who has been an incredible source of guidance, encouragement and inspiration throughout the development of this research. Without Sarah to listen to my stories from the Chaco – which she did with considerable patience – I would have struggled to know how to begin to make sense of them. Sarah’s unwavering commitment to a postcolonial and geographical perspective has been an important theoretical influence on this thesis – and on me as a researcher. This research was made possible by a 1+3 Studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), UK, awarded to me by the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. Life in Cambridge has been made bearable thanks to the friendship and support of student colleagues in Geography and beyond, who are too numerous to name here. Special thanks to Phil Stickler and David Watson in the Department’s Cartographic Unit for their help elaborating the maps for this thesis.

Over the course of two years of fieldwork in Bolivia, I have been assisted and guided by numerous individuals and institutions, whose openness, generosity, and commitment to inter-cultural dialogue was a precondition for any critical insights I have gained. In Tarija, two local NGOs, CERDET and Comunidad de Estudios JAINA, provided friendship, office space, logistical support, feedback on early presentations, access to documentation and library resources, and sustained productive dialogue on research issues. Guaraní leaders at the APG IG and the CCGT showed incredible generosity, courage, patience, and reflective capabilities in their engagements with me and my difficult research questions. While personal friendships in Tarija are too numerous to list, I am especially grateful to Aldo Villena, Hernán Ruíz, Silvia Flores, Erick Araoz, Guido Cortez, Pilar Lazarraga, Ricardo Gareca, Denise Humphreys Bebbington, Tom Broadhurst, and Judith Van den Bosch for their intellectual and personal support. Beyond Tarija, members of numerous NGOs (Oxfam, CEJIS, CEDLA, CEADES, CIPCA, Fundación TIERRA) and organisations (APG, CIDOB, INRA) took time out of their busy work agendas to share their knowledge with me. I am also deeply grateful to non-Guarani local residents of Itika Guasu for sharing their experiences and perspectives with such openness and generosity.
I could not have carried out my research in Tarairí without the hospitality of my host family, who shared their home, food, warmth, and humour under often difficult circumstances. Tarairí’s other community members were incredibly gracious, patient, and caring in their interactions with me. Their willingness to share their knowledge, aspirations, and struggles profoundly shaped my understanding of both territory and indigenous politics. My arrival in Tarairí was facilitated by Bret Gustafson, whose moral and practical support at a challenging moment made a huge difference. Bret’s deep ethnographic knowledge of Itika Guasu, and longstanding politically-committed engagement with the Guarani, has been a constant source of inspiration.

This research would never have begun at all without initial encouragement from a number of UK academics, who I met with in 2008; in particular, Tony Bebbington, who provided generous guidance at a critical moment; David Preston, who shared his extensive knowledge of Tarija; and Fiona Wilson, who listened to my initial thoughts and told me about TCOs. As ever, I am indebted to Sandip Harazeesingh, who has remained a great mentor, friend and colleague throughout. During a recent 4-month visit to University of California San Diego, Nancy Postero provided incredible support, hospitality, inspiration, and opportunities for academic engagement. Heartfelt thanks to the “Bolivia Reading Group”: Amy Kennemore, Paula Saravia, Jorge Montesinos, Devin Beaulieu, and Andrea Marston, who gave incisive and encouraging comments on two thesis chapters. Amy Kennemore’s friendship and enthusiasm got me through the final months of writing.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to my wonderful family and friends for their continuing love and support, and for tolerating my long disappearances and diminishing availability as this project developed. Above all, I am thankful to my parents, Louise and Taf Anthias, for always encouraging me in my adventures – including long before they had any clear direction – and for enduring with me all the dramas, dilemmas, and uncertainties that this research journey has involved.
This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.
Introduction: Decolonising territory? A critical ethnographic approach to indigenous land titling

Since the 1980s, indigenous peoples across the Americas and beyond have mobilised around demands for collective rights to their ancestral territories. In doing so, they have drawn support from an array of local, national and international development actors, activists and even academics. The result has been a variety of state-led legal processes for recognising and titling indigenous territories. To date, there has been surprisingly little research on the achievements, dynamics or implications of these indigenous land titling processes. This thesis aims to contribute towards filling this gap. Through an in-depth ethnographic case study of one Guaraní territory in Bolivia’s resource-rich Chaco region, I ask: To what extent do land rights contribute towards indigenous struggles for decolonisation?

The Bolivian Chaco provides a uniquely rich research site in which to explore this question. A country with a majority indigenous population, Bolivia first recognised indigenous land rights in 1996 through the creation of Communal Lands of Origin (TCOs). Following the election of self-proclaimed indigenous president Evo Morales in 2005, TCOs have acquired a new context within a broader national “process of change” that promises to set Bolivia on a path towards decolonising development. Yet, continuing state commitment to extractive industry development and unfulfilled indigenous demands for autonomy have highlighted tensions between state and indigenous visions of decolonisation. These tensions are particularly evident in the Chaco region, the site of the country’s most important natural gas reserves, many of which are located beneath recognised indigenous TCOs. As such, this thesis not only draws broader lessons about the ambivalences of collective land titling for indigenous peoples, but also uses indigenous land titling to shed light on the possibilities and tensions of Bolivia’s current experiment in state-led decolonisation – an experiment being hotly debated across a range of academic disciplines.

While decolonisation is most commonly defined as the moment at which a colony gains formal independence, here I use the term to refer to the processes through which
colonised populations and others (including the Bolivian state) seek to address (post)colonial\textsuperscript{2} legacies of racialised dispossession, exclusion and inequality. In doing so, I start from the premise that "colonial knowledges have outlasted formal colonialism and live on in the present, constitute the present as such, and have ongoing political effects" (Wainwright, 2008: 14; see also Gregory, 2004). While recent Latin American academic scholarship has tended to echo earlier postcolonial writing in focusing on the decolonisation of knowledge,\textsuperscript{3} a focus on the decolonisation of territory brings to light the ways in which these epistemological conflicts are implicated in, and co-constituted with, material struggles over natural resource control (Quijano, 2000).

By evaluating indigenous land titling through the lens of decolonisation, this thesis seeks to question the assumption that cartographic recognition and the creation of legislative frameworks represent "success" for indigenous claimants of territory. Following Wainwright and Bryan, I argue that the power of indigenous mapping and titling cannot be taken for granted but "must be weighed against the political struggles they derive from and are intended to advance" (2009: 169). Understanding what indigenous peoples really gain from land titling requires in-depth ethnographic engagement in and beyond the territories subject to these processes. This thesis aims to provide such an account, in a way that contributes to debates on indigenous land rights in other contexts, as well as to ongoing discussions in and around Bolivia over the meaning of, and routes to, decolonisation.

Because this thesis deals with a place-based indigenous decolonising struggle, a global development policy instrument (indigenous land titling), and a region-wide context of intensifying extractive industry development, I draw theoretically from three literatures: postcolonialism, critical development geography and political ecology. Together, these literatures provide critical insights into the promise and ambivalences of indigenous land rights as an instrument for decolonisation. In the discussion that follows,

\textsuperscript{2}Following Sawyer (2004), I use (post)colonial to denote the existence of colonial knowledges and structures in a period after formal Independence, echoing a broader questioning of the term “postcolonial” (Loomba, 2005:13)

\textsuperscript{3}See Loomba, 2005 for a comprehensive review of the postcolonial (Subaltern Studies) canon. On Latin American postcolonial scholarship, see Mignolo 2005 and 2007; Quijano, 2007; Coronil, 1997. Recent Bolivianist scholarship has also focused on practices of decolonisation, and the state’s role in promoting it (Mamani, 2011; Tapia, 2007; Rivera, 2010a and 2010b; Viceministerio Del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia (ed.), 2011).
I map out some of these insights and the questions they generate for this research. I also identify the ways in which this study contributes towards current debates within these literatures and builds new bridges between them. My discussion is organised around four key themes: the production and contestation of postcolonial territory; the power and pitfalls of indigenous counter-mapping; indigenous land rights and neoliberalism; and the political ecology of indigenous land rights. In exploring these themes, I seek to demonstrate that indigenous land titling constitutes a highly ambivalent instrument for decolonisation from the outset. However, understanding this ambivalence requires more than theoretical reflection; it requires in-depth ethnographic exploration of how indigenous land rights intersect in practice with colonial power relations, multi-scalar governance regimes, and broader structures of political economy. This is the task of the remainder of this thesis.

The production and contestation of postcolonial territory

Indigenous peoples’ struggles for land rights in Latin America cannot be understood without reference to their colonisation, dispossession and subjugation by European (and later, mestizo) peoples during the colonial and republican periods. Furthermore, the ethnic social relations, identities, spatial imaginaries and institutions that frame indigenous land titling – a process widely applied in Latin America since the 1990s – must be understood as part of this colonial legacy. The literature on postcolonialism therefore provides a crucial point of departure for this research, which will draw on many of its insights for guidance.

A key lesson of the postcolonial literature is that the functioning of colonial power relies on the production of particular kinds of knowledge (cultural, geographical and historical), which in turn produce particular (racialised) subjectivities and spaces. Interrogating and deconstructing these knowledges has been a central concern of postcolonial writers, who have drawn on discourse analysis as a crucial point of questioning of Western knowledge’s categories and assumptions (Loomba: 2005: 44). Of particular relevance for this thesis is the role of geographical knowledge in the reproduction of coloniality. A key reference point here is Said’s Orientalism (1978), which describes how the production of Europe’s “Other” relied on a series of
spatialisations or geographical markers, such as grids, surveys, and territories, which worked to demarcate a familiar space that is “ours” from one that is “theirs” (1978:94). By revealing the arbitrary nature of these boundaries, and their role in the construction of racialised identities, Said sought to destabilise the spatial and racial order upon which Oriental knowledge is produced.

A similar approach has been used to call into question the geographical knowledges that have produced the spatial and racial order of postcolonial Latin America. For example, Mignolo (2005) explores how “Latin America” as a geographical concept functioned to naturalise cultural Europeanisation and to erase the identities of Indians and Afro-South Americans. Wainwright’s (2008) discussion of colonial power in modern-day Belize focuses on how the state produces its space, in ways that both marginalise indigenous territorially and obscure the nation-state’s colonial origins. Such accounts demonstrate how postcolonial geographical imaginaries and “the conventions of cartography…systematically erase the ways that national maps rest upon the material fact of colonial conquest as well as on colonial claims to ‘universality’” (Radcliffe, 2011: 141-2; see also Sparke, 2005).

The above accounts draw on work by Marxist-influenced critical geographers on “the production of territory”, which has called into question the naturalized notion of territory as a pre-given, critically examining how territory is produced and reconfigured by political-economic forces and other socio-spatial relations (Lefebvre, 1991; Agnew, 1994; Brenner and Elden, 2009; Painter, 2010; Sparke, 2005). As Sparke notes, this perspective enables us to read any geography:

[N]ot just for what it includes, but also for what it overwrites and covers up in the moment of representing spatially the always already unfinished historical-geographical processes and power relations of its spatial production” (ibid.: xiv).

This echoes the work of critical cartographers, who have sought to “break the assumed link between reality and representation which has dominated cartographic thinking” in order to “search for the social forces that have structured cartography and to locate the presence of power — and its effects — in all map knowledge” (Harley 1989: 8; see also ibid.. 2001; Pickles, 2004; Crampton and Krygier, 2006). As Wainwright argues, in the
context of postcolonialism’s relative neglect of geography, this critical geography perspective can provide the basis for a “postcolonial reading of territory”, which:

[S]hould begin with the presupposition that territory is not simply the space that is occupied by a nation nor is it the area demarcated by, or contained within, state boundaries....Territory is an effect of territorialization, where territorialization can be defined as the production of the space of the nation-state (Wainwright, 2008: 21, emphasis in original)

In this thesis, I employ a similar approach to locate the Guaraní struggle for territory in Itika Guasu in the context of a specific regional history of colonisation and dispossession that was intimately bound up with the territorialisation of the Bolivian nation-state (Chapter 1). In addition to drawing on secondary sources, I use ethnographic and archival research to explore how Guaraní people understand their territorial struggle in relation to this history. Following Sparke (2005: xviii), I argue that this can be seen as an attempt to “reterritorialise” the postcolonial nation-state.

It is worth reflecting on what is involved in such a reterritorialisation. This is not simply about contesting official state geography and putting indigenous land claims “on the map”. Rather, it is about calling into question what Wainwright calls the nation-state-territory complex (2008: 17). My reading of this project differs from Wainwright’s in foregrounding population as a central part of this complex. As postcolonial scholarship has illustrated, geographical knowledge is only one dimension of the ambivalent relationship between subaltern populations and the nation-state. Other dimensions include the erasures of elite nationalist historiography (Guha, 1999; Chakrabarty, 2000) and those inherent in the construction of an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). These insights are highly relevant for Latin America, where, following independence, societies continued to function according to “a complex internal racial hierarchy, where one’s experience of colonial exploitation depended on one’s position within that hierarchy” (Klor de Alva, in Loomba, 2005: 13; Canessa 2007: 148). By “co-opting indigenous oppressed non-Spanish-speaking peoples into this idea of an ‘imagined community’”,

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4 As Wainwright notes (2008: 17), postcolonial literature has been more preoccupied with historical than geographical knowledge, Said’s work being a notable exception.
Spanish-speaking creole communities crafted a nationalism born out of dispossession and privilege (Loomba, 2005: 156).

In this context, the rise of indigenous movements across Latin America since the 1990s has generated wide academic interest. While not necessarily written from a postcolonial perspective, these accounts draw on postcolonial work that locates liberal citizenship rights within a modernist project that is inherently racist, making the resurgence of racialised politics in postcolonial contexts a key element of aperture. In this thesis, I consider indigenous territorial claims as part of this broader “post-liberal challenge” (Yashar, 2005). By presenting themselves as collective subjects of rights, rooted in ancestral claims, indigenous peoples call into question the liberal project of citizenship, exposing its colonial foundations and racialised exclusions; as such, the struggle for territory is also a struggle over the nation (Radcliffe and Westwood, 1999). This informs my analysis of the meaning, dynamics and achievements of the Itika Guasu land struggle, which I consider in the context of the Guaraníes’ shifting relationship with the Bolivian nation-state.

If this highlights the decolonizing aspirations of indigenous territorial claims, then it also raises critical questions for this research. A central paradox explored in this thesis is that indigenous claims for territory, although a radical challenge to postcolonial geography and liberal citizenship, must necessarily be directed at the state, which retains the power to award or withhold land rights. Given that state law – and property rights in particular – has been instrumental to indigenous peoples’ (post)colonial dispossession and exclusion from citizenship (Larson, 2004; Razack, 2002), state land titling represents an ambivalent instrument for decolonisation from the outset.

In Bolivia, this picture is further complicated by the fact that, since 2005, the country has been under a government that portrays itself as at the forefront on an indigenous project of “re-founding citizenship” (Postero, 2010 and forthcoming). Does this represent an opening for indigenous efforts to “remap” the nation, or should we heed lessons from postcolonial scholarship and “not place great hope in resistance articulated in nationalist terms” (Quijano, 2007)? Indigenous land titling presents a unique

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5 Alvarez et al., 1998; Yashar, 2005; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1999; Andolina et al., 2005; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Sieder, 2002; Canessa, 2007.
opportunity to explore this question. In doing so, this thesis speaks to longstanding debates in postcolonial scholarship regarding the relationship between subaltern populations and the postcolonial nation, as well as contemporary literature on the Bolivian “process of change”.

Another critical question raised by postcolonial scholarship is whether subaltern subjects, histories or territorial imaginaries can be adequately represented within the dominant discourses of postcolonial society – an issue highlighted by Spivak in her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988). While Spivak expresses scepticism in this regard, Bhabha is more optimistic, arguing that official narrations of nation are disrupted by “supplementary performances”, which transform homogeneity into heterogeneity, so that “the very act of narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects (1994: 145; see also Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996: Chapter 2; Sparke, 2005). These debates are highly relevant for thinking about indigenous land claims, which seek to challenge postcolonial geography, but do so by deploying the knowledges and representational practices underpinning its production.

An important issue here relates to the power effects and constraints of abstract space (Massey, 2005) as an underpinning of postcolonial geography; indeed, it is a failure to take account of these power effects that Sparke sees as a key limitation of Bhabha’s argument (2009: 50). These issues of power and representation resurface throughout this thesis. At the same time, I seek to overcome a tendency in postcolonial writing to focus exclusively on discourse by considering the discursive dilemmas posed by indigenous land claims alongside, and in relation to, their social, political and material effects. For example, Chapter 3 shows how the notion of abstract space privileged private non-indigenous (“third party”) property claims within the TCO, reproducing a racial-spatial order predicated on colonial dispossession. Chapter 4 then demonstrates how, at a micro-level, the spatial practices of the Bolivian agrarian reform agency INRA undermined Guarani notions of community space and flexible boundaries, in ways that exacerbated inter-communal resource conflict.

The critical insights elaborated above are given empirical substance in the existing literature on indigenous counter-mapping. I now turn to this literature to explore some of the more concrete dilemmas and pitfalls involved in mapping indigenous
territory. I also highlight the limitations of these accounts, and how – through a focus on indigenous land titling – this thesis seeks to move beyond them.

The power and pitfalls of indigenous counter-mapping

The 1990s saw a wave of indigenous mapping projects in Latin America and beyond, which involved NGOs, environmentalists, human rights activists and, in some cases, academics. These “counter-mapping” efforts involved indigenous leaders and community members in the production of maps of their territories, which aimed to work “against dominant power structures, to further seemingly progressive goals” (Hodgson and Schroeder, 2002). Celebratory accounts of these efforts – often written by academics and activists who participated in them – endorse the idea that “while map-making has been a tool of the powerful, today it is becoming a tool of empowerment for indigenous peoples” (Herlihy and Knapp, 2003: 303). In addition to presenting a discursive challenge to the exclusions of postcolonial geography (Radcliffè, 2011; Sparke, 2005), counter-mapping has been shown to provide a locus for local processes of decolonising knowledge – including the retelling of history and the revalorisation of indigenous identity (Offen, 2006; Stocks, 2003; Gordon et al, 2003).

This suggests that the effects of indigenous land claims cannot be measured solely in terms of their cartographic, legal or material (redistributive) outcomes; rather, mapping indigenous territory must be seen as part of a broader social process, which has lasting consequences for the people involved. Taking on board these insights, Chapter 1 explores how the emergence of a Guaraní territorial claim in Itika Guasu provided a locus for a broader process of Guaraní ethnic resurgence, which had lasting social and political consequences. I try not to lose sight of the broader achievements and horizons of this decolonising struggle as I chart the frustrations and limitations of the official titling process. For example, I argue that, although TCO land titling in Itika Guasu failed to

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7 Other names include “power mapping”, “social mapping”, “remapping”, “ethnocartography”, “community-based mapping”, “participatory mapping” (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009; Herlihy and Knapp, 2003).
meet Guarani aspirations in cartographic, legal or material terms, the Guarani have continued to pursue their vision of “recovering territory” through creative strategies that exceed the terms and spaces of the official titling process.

A second important insight of the counter-mapping literature is that it highlights that indigenous land claims are framed not only by historical processes of colonial dispossession, but also in relation to the contemporary territorial incursions and encounters through which racialised inequalities are continually reproduced. Indeed, some of the earliest accounts of counter-mapping emphasised their importance in making indigenous territory visible to the state and private actors in the context of new development projects, echoing Nietschmann’s famous dictum “map or you will be mapped” (1995). This takes us beyond the “decolonisation of knowledge” to locate indigenous land claims in the context of competing contemporary projects for “producing territory” (Brenner and Elden, 2009), which are both material and discursive; both contemporary and shaped by historically sedimented “regimes of rule” (Moore, 2005).

At the same time, critical accounts of counter-mapping have extended and fleshed out many of the doubts raised above. For example, several authors have shown how placing indigenous territory within the abstract state space of Cartesian cartography can function to co-opt plural traditions and histories, and displaces the possibility of “alternative territorialities” (Sparke, 2005; Radcliffe, 2011; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009; Coombes et al., 2011), although precisely how this occurs remain under-explored. These accounts also bring to the fore the fact that state cartography is predicated on the erasure and dispossession of indigenous populations (Sparke, 2005; Radcliffe, 2011). By assuming its conventions, indigenous peoples paradoxically collude in a performance of state sovereignty in the same breath that they assert their claims through a language of pre-colonial (ancestral) rights (Bhandar, 2011).

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8 For example, Brody’s Maps and Dreams (1981 [1988]), showed how Indian land use maps and traditional dream maps were used to contest “white man's dreams” of building a gas pipeline through their Alaskan territory. Similarly, Peluso (1995) described how maps by forest users in Kalimantan, Indonesia, were used to contest state maps of forest areas that undermined their resource claims.

9 “Alternative territorialities” refers to ways of seeing and inhabiting landscapes that are profoundly different to those of dominant non-indigenous populations or Western observers; that is, it implies recognition not only of indigenous cultural difference but of indigenous life-worlds (Blaser, 2010; Escobar, 2008).
Another issue relates to the power relations surrounding the production of indigenous maps, and the way in which these can reflect and reinforce inequalities within indigenous groups, as well as between indigenous peoples and outsiders. As Wainwright and Bryan note, “not everyone can be equally involved in the work of map-making”, and resulting maps and titles may be incomprehensible to ordinary community members (2009: 161). Women, minorities and other vulnerable or disenfranchised groups are particularly likely to be marginalised by these processes (Hodgson and Schroeder, 2002: 161). Non-indigenous activists, lawyers, NGOs and academics often play a central role in “translating” indigenous land claims into the languages of law and cartography – a fact that not only disempowers indigenous claimants, but also mediates indigenous participation in these processes (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). I explore these issues in Chapter 2, which examines the concessions, translations, exclusions and power relations involved in the mapping of Itika Guasu.

These issues of power and representation echo broader debates in postcolonialism (discussed above), and point to the “ontological conflicts” that arise from encounters and articulations between indigenous and “modern” knowledges (Blaser, 2010: 2-5). Bhandar’s critical account of counter-mapping explicitly draws on postcolonial theory to highlight the limitations of property for advancing subaltern struggles in colonial settler contexts, arguing that property rights confine indigenous peoples to “a restricted economy of owning, knowing and being” (2011: 229). This highlights the disjunctures between indigenous understandings of territory and the territorial production resulting from indigenous peoples’ engagements with state cartography and law. To put it another way, it is not just a question of whether indigenous peoples achieve “territory”, but of what kind of territory they achieve, and how far it meets their aspirations or agendas. This is an issue that resurfaces throughout this thesis. For example, Chapter 3 examines how Guaraní community members reflect on the legal results of TCO titling in relation to their aspirations for “recovering territory”. Chapter 4 expands this discussion to highlight the difficulties posed for communities by the fixing of territorial boundaries, and how such

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10 While celebratory accounts of counter-mapping often fail to acknowledge these issues, a critical reading of these accounts reveals the considerable power and influence wielded by activist interlocutors and the selective nature of their engagements with indigenous communities and leaders (for example, Herlihy and Knapp, 2003; Stocks, 2003 and 2005).
boundaries are contested and resisted. In exploring these lived geographies, I draw on accounts of the differences between “territory” and “property” (Bryan, 2012; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009; Blomley, 2010) – in particular, Blomley’s description of how the territorialisation of liberal property entails “conscious ‘cuts’ in the processual networks through which social spaces are produced” (2010: 203).

This thesis also seeks to address a major limitation of most accounts of counter-mapping; namely, their failure to look beyond the mapping process to consider the legal, political and material outcomes of such indigenous or activist efforts. Few, if any, indigenous peoples participate in mapping without holding some aspirations for legal and material control of their territories. As I illustrate, Guaraní aspirations for “recovering territory” foreground material control rather than recognition. In this regard, a key objective of this thesis is to ask: to what extent does cartographic recognition translate into legal rights, and how far do legal rights imply material land control? It does so by following an analysis of early mapping efforts in Itika Guasu (Chapter 2) with a detailed analysis of the legal titling process that followed (Chapter 3), and the material outcomes and lived realities that this gave rise to (Chapters 4). In doing so, I follow Wainwright and Bryan’s insistence that “the power of indigenous mapping for legal cases must be weighed against the political struggles they derive from and are intended to advance” (2009: 169).

The failure of some accounts of counter-mapping to enquire into legal or material outcomes is made more ambivalent still when non-indigenous protagonists of mapping celebrate their own role in “empowering” indigenous participants and then go on to share the ethno-cartographic data produced with extra-territorial actors (state or private) whose territorial agendas are in conflict with those of indigenous claimants. These extra-territorial actors have even included the United States military.

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11 My distinction between discursive and material processes is a heuristic one; as this thesis illustrates, territorial imaginaries and struggles over recognition are co-constituted with conflicts over resource access and control.

12 In one indigenous mapping project, participants Chapin and Threlkeld accused the project’s Principal Investigator, U.S. academic Peter Herlihy of taking “credits for and ownership of the completed maps” (2001:83). Herlihy’s own account (2003) reveals that data was shared with the Panamanian National Geographic Institute – he claims, to facilitate “a collective indigenous-state understanding” (2003: 326).

13 In 2009, the U.S. Army’s Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) funded the American Geographical Society’s Bowman Expedition, designed to improve understanding of foreign lands and peoples.
important question; namely: How does mapping contribute towards making indigenous territory “legible” to (Scott, 1998), and reinforce the power of, extra-territorial actors (states, global development institutions or private companies)? This is explored in Chapter 2, where I examine the governmental agendas underpinning state mapping efforts in Itika Guasu.

In examining the complex legal process for TCO titling, this thesis also looks beyond the ambivalences of cartography and property to examine how legal norms were adapted, negotiated and reworked in the course of their implementation. In particular, I draw attention to how titling was shaped by the racialised power structures within which indigenous peoples, state officials and other stakeholders are embedded. Here, I echo Moore in arguing that “micro-politics matter, that the outcomes of cultural struggles remains crucially dependent on the diverse ways land comes to be inhabited, labored on, idiomatically expressed, and suffered for in specific moments and milieus” (2005: 2, emphasis in original). Exploring these micro-politics requires in-depth ethnographic engagement with the actors, processes, institutions, and landscapes involved in these struggles. In providing such an account, I combine lessons from postcolonialism regarding the coloniality of power and the state (discussed above) with insights from legal ethnography, which has shown how legal norms and discourses of rights become reworked in their engagement with local power structures, values and institutions (Merry, 2006; Eckert et al, 2012). Bringing these perspectives together, I argue that, in the context of TCO titling in Itika Guasu, this process of translation or vernacularisation (Merry, 2006) provided a key space for the reproduction of coloniality.

Conversely, and echoing counter-mapping accounts discussed above, questions arise regarding indigenous peoples’ ability to negotiate the legal terms and institutional spaces of the law, and regarding the power relations that structure such encounters. Sparke’s description of the struggle of the Gitxsan and Wet’suwé’en (Canadian First Nation peoples) for legal recognition of their territories provides a compelling illustration; indigenous leaders “had to negotiate the abstracting effect of the court itself:

among U.S. policymakers. The first of these expeditions, the *México Indígena* project, mapped indigenous lands in Mexico as part of an effort to build a nation-wide GIS database of property rights. Expedition leader Peter Herlihy and AGS president Jerome Dobson were accused of not informing communities of the military’s role in the project (Bryan, 2010; also Wainwright, 2013).
its rules, its norms of behaviour, and its general distance from everyday life among the two First Nations” (2005: 15). Despite their attempts to disrupt these cultural norms – for example, through the singing of ancestral songs as evidence of land claims – these “resistant courtroom performances were simply policed and cordoned off with bold disrespect” (ibid.: 27). This reminds us of how the racist attitudes of state representatives – illustrative of the coloniality of the state (Quijano, 2005) – present further obstacles to indigenous efforts to gain recognition within the law. These issues are explored both in Chapter 3, which highlights the racialised power inequalities underpinning indigenous-state interactions over land titling, and in Chapter 4, which reflects on local community members’ disempowerment by legal institutions, procedures and knowledges.

So far, my discussion has focused on the radical promise and ambivalences of indigenous attempts to contest postcolonial geography through the media of state cartography and law. I now move on to consider the relationship between indigenous land rights and neoliberal governmentality.

**Indigenous land rights and neoliberalism**

**Neoliberal multiculturalism and its legacies**

Now used extensively in critical geography and related literatures, “neoliberalism”, refers to “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005, cited in Postero 2010: 60). Put into practice throughout much of the postcolonial world from the mid-1980s in the form of structural adjustment programmes and conditional loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, neoliberalism was initially assumed by many of its critics to be fundamentally at odds with indigenous demands for cultural rights. In his seminal paper “Does multiculturalism menace?”, Charles Hale challenged this assumption, arguing that “proponents of the neoliberal doctrine pro-actively endorse a substantive, if limited,
version of indigenous cultural rights, as a means to resolve their own problems and advance their own political agendas” (2002: 487). By endorsing a set of minimal cultural rights and rejecting others, Hale argued, “neoliberal multiculturalism” creates “a dichotomy between recognised and recalcitrant indigenous subjects, which confronts the indigenous rights movement as a 'menace' even greater than the assimilationist policies of the previous era” (ibid.: 485).

Other accounts have demonstrated the salience of Hale’s arguments in the Bolivian context. Postero’s (2007) account of the 1994 Popular Participation Law (LPP) reveals the limited and regulated nature of the political spaces this reform opened for indigenous peoples. Like Hale, she draws attention to the “subject-making” processes at work in this new citizenship regime, which inculcated concepts of individuality and self-regulation intended to reduce the likelihood of direct challenges to neoliberal policies. Similarly, Gustafson’s (2009) account of the roll-out of state-sponsored Intercultural Bilingual Education under the 1994 Education Law highlights the constraints official endorsement placed on IBE as an autonomous indigenous project. Gustafson shows how state-sponsored IBE “tended to absorb and mute the more assertive language of popular and indigenous struggle” (157) and subjected Guaraní schoolchildren to neoliberal subject-making processes (198). As Chapter 1 details, the creation of TCOs under the 1996 INRA Law represents the third component of neoliberal multicultural reform in Bolivia. Although TCOs have been at the top of indigenous movement agendas since the 1990s, to date there has been no in-depth ethnographic study of TCO titling. As such, this thesis makes an important contribution to these debates.

TCOs provide a particularly valuable opportunity to reconsider the above critiques because, at the outset, they appear to challenge depictions of neoliberal multiculturalism as offering “recognition and not redistribution”, promising a material reallocation of land to indigenous peoples dispossessed by centuries of colonisation and postcolonial development. Nevertheless, as subsequent chapters detail, in practice TCOs served primarily to recognise indigenous territories, while regularising the existing racial-spatial order, and channelling indigenous claims for “recovering territory” into state-sanctioned forms of political engagement. As such, this thesis reveals how even indigenous demands that exceed and unsettle the boundaries of neoliberal cultural rights
can become diluted and contained in the course of gaining official recognition. Yet, I argue that this was less the result of a totalising “neoliberal” project than the outcome of the messy and contingent processes through which indigenous land rights were implemented, in a context marked by colonial power inequalities and conflicting visions of rights.

In situating this research within these debates, it is worth noting that Hale’s original (2002) depiction of neoliberal multiculturalism has been subject to important critiques and qualifications, including from Bolivianist scholarship. Like accounts of development governmentality more generally, Hale’s account risks portraying policy interventions as emanating from a monolithic power, obscuring the agency of indigenous peoples and other social actors in shaping development and state policy agendas. In contrast, Gustafson shows how IBE emerged amidst “contingent articulations”, through which state elites, regional social movements and transnational actors seek to “articulate and connect across difference by strategically translating points of common interest and silencing points of contention” (2009: 24; see also Tsing, 2000). My account of the emergence of TCOs (Chapter 1) echoes Gustafson’s in emphasising contingency and indigenous agency in shaping global and national policy agendas.

Accounts of Bolivian multiculturalism have also challenged Hale’s assertion that cultural rights contain more radical indigenous demands, by revealing how indigenous peoples utilised the double-edged spaces of neoliberal multiculturalism to advance their own more radical agendas. For example, anthropologist Nancy Postero has revealed how the inclusions and exclusions of the “neoliberal” Law of Popular Participation “enabled citizens, particularly indigenous citizens, to act against the continuing limitations of state-sponsored multiculturalism and the costs of neoliberal economic policy” (2007: 220) – including through participation in the wave of social protests that led up the overthrow of the neoliberal government of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, and the 2005 election of Evo Morales (see also Hart, 2010; Hale, 2011).15 This emphasis on indigenous and other marginalised groups’ agency in shaping governance outcomes resonates with a broader shift in critical development geography away from simplistic critiques of neoliberalism.

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15 As Sian Lazar’s (2008) detailed ethnography of everyday Aymara politics in El Alto reveals, the 2003 protests also drew on forms of local political organisation, such as Juntas Vecinales (Neighbourhood Associations), that predate the neoliberal period.
and towards more nuanced accounts of its variegated practices, the agency of society and
nature in shaping these, and the progressive projects this gives rise to (Peck et al., 2010;
Ferguson 2010; Lewis, 2009, Hale, 2011; Hart, 2010). Taking on board these accounts,
this thesis explores how, in spite of the limitations of TCO titling, the Guarani have
sought to use TCOs to advance far-reaching agendas for territory and autonomy. I
explore this in relation to Guarani engagements with elite-dominated regional
institutions, everyday struggles against racialised exclusion, and conflicts with extra-
territorial actors over extractive industry governance.

Of course, it could appear that neoliberal multiculturalism is no longer a relevant
framework in Bolivia, having been superseded by a new “post-multicultural” model of
cultural politics under the Morales government (Postero, 2007). This thesis rejects this
notion and highlights the continuing relevance of debates on multiculturalism for
understanding the current political conjuncture. The consolidation of TCOs remains at the
centre of indigenous agendas under the Morales government; indeed, as the preferred
territorial basis for indigenous autonomy (Garcés, 2011; Albó and Romero, 2010), TCO
titling has acquired an added urgency. As such, “the political and cultural formations of
the past…have contributed to create current social tensions” (Postero 2007:18). By
historicising my account of TCO titling in Itika Guasu and tracing its evolution from the
multicultural 1990s to the present, I seek to unsettle simplistic periodisations of
“neoliberal” and “post-neoliberal” governance, revealing how current struggles to
“remap” Bolivia (Gustafson and Fabricant, 2011) takes place on a terrain shaped by an
earlier period of contentious politics.

Neoliberal schemes to divide citizenship and nature

In addition to engaging with discussions of neoliberal multiculturalism and its legacies,
this thesis also extends this theoretical framing by placing indigenous land rights in the
context of evolving forms of neoliberal territorial governance. This moves beyond
debates on multicultural citizenship and the politics of recognition to consider how
cultural rights are spatialised in the context of broader neoliberal technologies of spatial
ordering (Anthias and Radcliffe, 2013). Here, I build on the work of anthropologist Tania
Li (2007a), who uses Polanyi’s notion of countermovements\textsuperscript{16} to interrogate the strategies through which colonial administrations, states and development planners have sought to mitigate the potentially destructive effects of markets on certain groups of people, from the colonial period to the present in postcolonial contexts.\textsuperscript{17} She highlights three key elite and governmental strategies for dealing with these tendencies:

[Rulers either] 1) extend and deepen a market in land, backed by a “transparent” system for registering private property, in the name of productivity, efficiency and market discipline; 2) seek to restrict the market by a combination of regulation and educational campaigns designed to convince the feckless and foolish that they should work harder, avoid debt, and hold onto their land; or 3) designate certain people, and certain places, as unfit to become market subjects (Ibid: 5-6).

It is within the third category “designating certain people, and certain places, as unfit to become market subjects,” that Li locates global development discourse on “indigenous peoples” and the granting of collective indigenous land rights (see also Hall et al., 2011). Crucially, her account suggests that land rights do not merely pacify indigenous peoples in the context of marketisation (Hale, 2002), but also seek to mediate relationships between these populations, territories and markets.

Taking on board Li’s arguments, Chapter 1 uses global and national policy discourse analysis to locate TCOs in the context of multiple (social and governmental) countermovements under neoliberalism. However, whereas Li’s account focuses on governmental efforts to mitigate the dispossession caused by agrarian micro-capitalism, my analysis highlights two additional dimensions of neoliberal territorial governance within which indigenous land rights are implicated: neoliberal environmental governance or “schemes to divide nature” (Anthias and Radcliffe, 2013); and extractive industry governance (Bryan, 2012; Hale, 2002 and 2006). In doing so, I show how TCOs were envisaged by policy makers as a means of mitigating the detrimental effects of

\textsuperscript{16} Polanyi argued that “to allow the market mechanism to be the sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment would result in the demolition of society” (1957 [1944]: 76). Before this destruction happened, however, society would recognise the risk of destruction, and devise protective measures to re-embed the reproduction of human life in social relations. These measures, and the social forces that bring them into being, comprise what he called a double movement or countermovement.

\textsuperscript{17} These relate both to the dispossession resulting from enclosures enacted by extraterritorial actors and to that which occurs through the “relentless micro-capitalism” that emerges among peasants as some accumulate land and capital, while others slide into debt and are forced to sell up (Li, 2007a: 5).
marketisation on indigenous peoples and natures. As subsequent chapters reveal, however, such governmental aspirations unravelled in the face of other territorializing projects to which TCOs were subject – including non-indigenous land claims (Chapter 3) and extractive industry development (Chapter 5). As such, this thesis highlights the limits of neoliberal technologies of spatial ordering, and the creative ways in which indigenous peoples have responded to these limits in pursuit of their own territorial projects. In doing so, it goes beyond Li’s account of “governmentality’s limits” (Li, 2007b: 18) to interrogate how indigenous struggles for decolonisation both expose and exploit these limits, in ways that bring political economy sharply into focus as an unacknowledged underpinning of postcolonial struggles for recognition.

In summary, by placing global support for indigenous land rights in the context of contradictory neoliberal projects to both promote marketisation and manage its destructive effects on society and nature, this thesis points to an important and under-explored dimension of the ambivalence inherent in indigenous land rights. While accounts cited above touch on dimensions of this, this thesis brings these arguments together in a common theoretical framework, and, crucially, provides an ethnographic account of the territorialised outcomes these processes gave rise to. For example, Chapter 5 builds on reflections about the relationship between extractive industry governance and indigenous land rights in policy (discussed below) to examine how processes of indigenous land titling and hydrocarbons development articulate in practice, producing new indigenous territorial visions and strategies. In order to better understand these dynamics, this thesis draws on insights from a final literature: political ecology.

The political ecology of indigenous land rights

Neoliberal capitalism and territorial restructuring

Political ecology explicitly addresses the relations between the social and the natural, arguing that social and environmental conditions are deeply and inextricably linked (Peet and Watts, 2004; Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Adams and Hutton, 2007). This has important implications for how we approach society and the environment as objects of
study. First, it implies social relations cannot be understood in isolation from the environmental conditions under which they take place; in other words, nature must be part of any social analysis. Conversely, environmental problems cannot be understood without reference to their broader social context. As a social form of access and control over land and resources, property rights are of particular interest to political ecology scholars. According to Peet and Watts, in order to go beyond a “fuzzy theory” of political economy, it is necessary to examine “the means by which property rights are defined, negotiated and contested within the political arenas of the household, the workplace and the state” (2004: 12). Tsing illustrates this, revealing how an analysis of the politics of resource access can contribute towards providing a territorialised account of globalisation:

Prosperity shapes haves and have-nots within local conditions for the enforcement of property rights. These local conditions shape market economies, where universals cannot transcend politically managed questions of access (2005:22).

Indeed, a key focus of recent political ecology work has been on how processes of capital accumulation shape the rules and institutions that govern access to and control of natural resources, often to the detriment of poor resource-dependent communities (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Peluso, 1992; Tsing, 2005; Sawyer, 2004; Holt-Gimenez, 2007).

This research draws on these accounts to examine how TCO land titling is shaped by broader structures of political economy and social power, and specifically, by competing claims for access and control of natural resources – something that has important implications for thinking about the relationship between indigenous land titling and decolonisation. While there are various dimensions to this question, a key focus of this research concerns the relationship between TCO land titling and hydrocarbons development. As the site of Bolivia’s largest gas field, Campo Margarita-Huacaya, TCO Itika Guasu provides a unique case through which to explore these dynamics. In doing so, I draw particularly on political ecology accounts of how extractive industries shape resource-accessing rights within specific territories.
In his case study of Cajamarca, Peru, Bury reveals how mining expansion in the Andean region has made transnational corporations into “new and important forces affecting land tenure patterns” (2005: 230). He describes how a new Mining Cadastre Law gave mining firms exclusive control of land resources for operations, while a complementary land law allowed collective groups to parcel and sell land to the mining company. This accelerated a transformation from communally-managed and informally-negotiated property to private ownership, resulting in an increase in land prices, a decline in non-mining activities, the destruction of traditional farming practices, and conflicts between and within communities. Bebbington has also provided numerous examples of how extractive industry shapes resource use and access within particular territories. He argues that:

> Through the control that the enterprise necessarily exercises over the natural resources it requires in order to operate – mostly land and water – the [extractives] industry changes the distribution of access to and social control of these resources in ways that by definition push certain groups (those losing this access) down the distribution (2009:7)

These accounts reveal how extraction produces and exacerbates inequalities by privileging the resource-accessing claims of more powerful groups. This thesis builds on these insights by asking how far this applies to land titling in resource-rich indigenous TCO territories in Bolivia, and through what legal or informal processes this could occur. Specifically, I ask, are indigenous groups among those “[pushed] down the distribution” by more powerful actors? While the above accounts focus on how new inequalities are produced by extractive industry development, this thesis places these dynamics firmly in the context of the entrenched racial inequalities of postcolonial territory. It does so by contextualising hydrocarbons conflicts in Itika Guasu in relation to a broader struggle over territory, and by examining the specific ways in which extraction mapped onto, and reinforced, a racialised geography of property rights (Chapter 5).

Despite their relevance, accounts of neoliberal territorial restructuring can become somewhat reductionist, reproducing an Avataresque scenario in which the powerful interests of capital inevitably come to prevail over the claims of traditional resource users. In fact, we cannot assume that the interests of transnational capital and state always
stand in opposition to those of local populations. Bebbington et al. (2009) make this point forcefully, calling attention to the indirect ways in which extractive industries reshape power dynamics at a variety of scales, creating new conflicts and inequalities within, as well as between, territories.18 These inequalities fall out around different axes of social and geographical difference: within communities, among ethnic groups, between localized populations and extractive industry companies, between regions and the central state, between national states and transnational enterprises, and also among different states within Latin America (Bebbington et. al, 2009).

On the one hand, this points to the capacity of powerful actors to exert influence on other actors to pursue their goals, becoming a sort of puppeteer in a regional political economy (Bury, 2004). Yet, it is important to recognise the agency of affected populations and other local actors, who do not necessarily oppose extraction, but may seek rather to influence how extraction happens and who benefits from it (McNeish, 2012). Chapter 5 takes on board these insights to examine how the Guaraní land struggle in Itika Guasu has become implicated in broader distributional conflicts, in ways that have not only further politicised land titling but have also redefined the meaning of this territorial struggle.

Beyond critiques of neoliberalism

Much of the literature discussed above implicates neoliberalism in its analysis, describing how transnational capital restructures territories with the collusion of neoliberal states, which make policies and laws that guarantee it rights to access land and natural resources. While this framing is relevant for the Itika Guasu hydrocarbon conflict, this thesis also seeks to move beyond these debates by exploring how a shift to resource nationalism under the “post-neoliberal” government of Morales has altered the dynamics of this conflict. Morales’s MAS government has combined a nationalist turn towards increased state involvement in extraction and the redistribution of resource rents, with

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18 Inequalities within territories include those related to resource access, job opportunities, development programmes funded by extractive companies, social and environmental impacts, while inequalities between territories relate to the uneven geographies of royalties, and inequities between distant territories.
support for indigenous claims to self-determination and autonomy, articulated through a discourse of plurinationalism and decolonisation (Fabricant and Gustafson, 2011). How have these dual trajectories affected the outcomes of indigenous struggles for land rights in resource-rich territories?

In exploring this, this thesis contributes towards answering Bebbington’s question: “How far does the ideological position of a government affect how relationships between extraction, environment, land, and territorial rights are handled?” (2009b: 15). This question arises from Bebbington’s observation of striking similarities in state discourse on indigenous rights and extractive industry in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru – countries with contrasting governments.19 However, answering it requires looking beyond political discourse to examine the shifting dynamics of conflicts around land and resources in specific territories. Chapter 5 provides such an account and, in doing so, sheds light on the broader implications of Latin American “post-neoliberal” governments for indigenous populations.

Since this research began, conflicts between state extractivism and indigenous rights under the Morales government have gained increasing attention, both from academics and from Bolivian social movements (Gustafson and Fabricant, 2011; Almaraz et al., 2012; Escobar, 2010; Gudynas, 2010; Bebbington, 2009; Humphreys Bebbington 2011; Haarstad ed. 2012; Garcés, 2011; Postero, 2013a). These accounts point to the watering down of indigenous and peasant demands in the 2009 Constitution and accompanying laws (Garcés, 2011; Cameron, 2013), the weak implementation of indigenous rights in the context of extractive industry development (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2013; Hindery, 2013; Gudynas, 2010; Humphreys Bebbington 2011), and resultant social tensions between the government and its social movement bases (McNeish, 2013; Anthias, 2012a; Postero, 2013a). These tensions have been interpreted by some authors as reflective of the divergence between the MAS government’s developmentalist and capitalist vision, and more radical social movement visions centred on the concept of “Vivir Bien” (Living Well) (Escobar, 2010; Postero, 2010). In Escobar’s view, they are symptomatic of broader processes of political transformation in Latin America, which he

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19 This article was written while Peru remained under a traditionally neoliberal government, prior to Ollanta Humala’s 2011 election.
argues combine two potentially complementary but also competing and contradictory projects: “alternative modernizations”, based on an anti-neoliberal development model, and “decolonial projects”, based on communal, indigenous, hybrid, pluriversal and intercultural practices, oriented towards the construction of a “post-liberal” societies (also Yashar, 2005). Other scholars have sought to understand these conflicts in less ideological terms, using institutional analysis to highlight the policy constraints and “path-dependent” dynamics of the Morales government (Kaup, 2010), which “remains subject to the internal and external constraints of global capitalism” (Fernandes, 2010, cited in Gustafson and Fabricant, 2011: 7).

This thesis makes an important contribution to this emerging literature. By charting the course of conflict over indigenous land rights and hydrocarbons governance in Itika Guasu from the mid-1990s to the present, I illustrate the continuities between “neoliberal” and contemporary resource governance in Bolivia, calling into question the analytical value of the MAS government’s self-description as a “post-neoliberal” government (also Goodale and Postero, 2013). At the same time, I draw attention to how a new discourse of “plurinationalism”, alongside an economic model of resource nationalism, has shifted the terms of extractive industry conflicts in Bolivia – not necessarily to indigenous peoples’ advantage. While echoing Escobar in highlighting fundamental tensions in the MAS development model, my account challenges his essentialist depiction of indigenous peoples as anti-capitalist, traditional and against modernising forms of development. As Chapter 5 shows, the Guaraníes’ quest for territorial control amidst extractives development complicates the construction of simple dichotomies between statist/modernising and indigenous/de-colonial agendas. Specifically, I argue that indigenous peoples are implicated in, and seek to position themselves within, emergent struggles over “hydrocarbon citizenship” (Valdivia, 2008; Perreault and Valdivia, 2010).

At the same time, however, my focus on TCO titling enables these new dynamics to be placed in the context of a longer de-colonial struggle for territorial recognition and control, which neoliberal cultural rights failed to resolve. In doing so, this thesis reveals

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20 This term adapts Valdivia’s notion of “petro-citizenship”, which describes the “politicoeconomic configurations through which [social groups] articulate petroleum and citizenship…as a way to shape the terms of petroleum governance” (2008: 457).
how new “regimes of rule” articulate with sedimented formations, giving rise to “entangled landscapes” that preclude simple periodisation (Moore, 2005; Postero, 2007). The theoretical framework outlined above helps trace these entanglements, which are relevant not only to indigenous land titling, but to a range of contemporary development processes. Combining this inter-disciplinary approach with ethnographic methods, I argue, sheds light on how technocratic governance interventions unravel in the face of a reality that exceeds the expectations and analytical categories of their architects (Li, 2007b), giving rise to new formations of identity, territory, and rights.

A note on the title

The title of this thesis, “The elusive promise of territory” is inspired by Karen Engle’s insightful history of the indigenous rights movement, The Elusive Promise of Indigenous Development (2010). She argues that, by aiming “to protect the group, rather than to transform the underlying power structures that work to marginalize it…[cultural rights] might be short-sighted and even counterproductive”. Legal or political victories won on the basis of cultural rights “do not necessarily lead to the major transformations their advocates desire” (278) and fail to meet indigenous peoples’ claims to economic and political autonomy (6). This thesis demonstrates the salience of her arguments by demonstrating the limits of a multicultural vision of indigenous territory predicated on the creation of bounded spaces of ethnic cultural difference. However, while Engle’s critique centres on indigenous peoples’ inability to conform to essentialised imaginaries of them underpinning cultural rights, this thesis foregrounds how idealised imaginaries of indigenous territory unravel in the “entangled landscapes” of postcolonial territory (Moore, 2005), where the territorial projects of local settler populations and transnational capitalist actors compete with – and often prevail over – those of indigenous peoples. Yet, rather than depicting indigenous peoples as at the mercy of unravelling global designs for them, I show how the Guarani of Itika Guasu have responded to “the elusive promise of territory” by pursuing alternative territorial strategies beyond the official land titling process. As such, I suggest that, even if cultural rights are potentially double-
edged, then indigenous peoples continuously contest these limits, making the outcomes of cultural rights claims far from pre-determined (also Lewis, 2009; Postero, 2009).

Based on the critical insights outlined above, the remainder of this thesis is structured around five central research questions, which loosely correspond to the five chapters of this thesis. These are outlined below, followed by a discussion of the research methodology through which I pursued them.

**Research questions**

**Central research question:**

*To what extent does collective land titling contribute towards indigenous agendas of decolonisation?* (All Chapters)

**Sub-questions:**

1. *What do indigenous peoples, the state, and global development institutions hope to achieve through titling indigenous lands, and what ambivalences do these multiple framings give rise to?* (Chapter 1: The Making of TCOs).
   a. *What is at stake for lowland indigenous peoples in the struggle for territorial rights?*
   b. *How are TCOs situated in relation to historical processes of nation-building and citizenship in Bolivia?*
   c. *How are indigenous land rights framed in global neoliberal governance agendas?*

2. *What cartographic imaginaries and power relations are at play in the mapping of indigenous territories?* (Chapter 2: Mapping Territory; Chapter 4: Lived Realities)

3. *How does collective indigenous land titling articulate with, challenge, or reproduce racialised power inequalities in postcolonial contexts?* (Chapter 3: Titling Territory)

4. *To what extent does land titling transform the lived realities of land rights for indigenous community members or meet their aspirations for territory?* (Chapter 5: Lived Realities)

5. *To what extent does collective land titling enable indigenous peoples to exercise territorial control in relation to transnational processes of territorial restructuring?* (Chapter 5: Contesting Resource Sovereignty)
   a. *How did extractive industry intersect with indigenous land titling under neoliberalism?*
b. How has the emergence of “post-neoliberal” states in Latin America shaped the progress of indigenous territorial claims in resource-rich territories?

c. How does extractive industry development shift the meaning and content of indigenous territorial struggles?

Towards a multi-sited ethnographic research strategy

Going beyond the official knowledges and legal-technical procedures of indigenous land titling to evaluate its political, social and material effects requires in-depth, in context and sustained engagement with actors, institutions and natures involved and implicated in the process. For this reason, this research is ethnographic, combining participant observation with flexible use of other methods (O’Reilly, 2011). The use of ethnographic methods distinguishes this study from the vast majority of existing studies of indigenous land titling. The latter, often situated within global development policy literature, tend to rely on a combination of legal-cartographic data, elite interviews, and institutional and policy analysis to identify statistical progress, procedural shortcomings and technocratic innovations to overcome these (Coombes et al., 2009). In contrast, a multi-sited ethnographic research strategy enables land titling to be approached not as a bounded object of study, but as a window into a complex of social forces, geographies, and sovereignties. This enables moving beyond technocratic framings of land titling to comprehend indigenous land titling as a social process in which territory, citizenship, and development are all at stake.

This study combines elements of both single-sited and multi-sited approaches to ethnography (Marcus, 1995; Falzon, 2012). On the one hand, I trace how ideas and practices of indigenous land rights are transformed as they travel across different sites and scales – from global to national policy, through regional institutions, in social

21 A more detailed and schematic account of methods used in both pilot and PhD fieldwork is provided in Appendix 1.
22 While Bolivian literature on TCO titling has provided more critical perspectives, this has rarely involved ethnographic methods.
23 Whereas traditionally ethnography tended to be focused on a single-site location – embedded in a world system, historical political economies of colonialism, market regimes, state formation and so on – recent decades have seen the emergence of “multi-sited ethnography”, which blurs boundaries between the “local” and the “global” by following “connections, associations, and putative relationships” (Marcus, 1995: 97).
encounters between local claimants, from indigenous leadership circles to local communities – and the power relations involved in these translations. This required me to move across multiple field sites and scales; primarily:

- Tarija city, the regional capital and location of the NGO Centro de Estudios Regionales de Tarija (Centre for Regional Studies of Tarija, CERDET), the Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Agrarian Reform Institute, INRA)’s regional offices, the Concejo de Capitanes Guaraníes de Tarija (Council of Guaraní Captains of Tarija, CCGT); and the departmental government;
- Entre Ríos, the nearest provincial town to Itika Guasu, the seat of the Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní Itika Guasu (Guaraní People’s Assembly of Itika Guasu, APG IG) leadership; the NGO Equipo de Apoyo al Pueblo Guaraní (Aid Team for the Guaraní People, EAPG), the provincial and municipal government, and local cattle ranching organisations;
- Guaraní communities, including the community of Tarairí,24 where I conducted six months of participant observation.

In addition, I travelled to indigenous assemblies in other nearby territories in Tarija and Santa Cruz departments, and conducted interviews in various other Bolivian cities (see Appendix 1). On the other hand, this research resembles single-sited ethnography in that it focuses on one site, TCO Itika Guasu, to explore what kind of territories these multi-scalar processes conjoin to produce. Furthermore, I conducted six months of participant observation in one Guaraní community (discussed below) in order to explore these dynamics in greater depth. This ethnographic work served to highlight the extent to which “the local” and “the global” are mutually constituted (Massey, 2005; Tsing, 2004). As such, I found that locality studies – if interested in the production of territory – can call into question spatial and scalar boundaries, challenging the dichotomy between these two ethnographic approaches.

In traversing geographical scales, I found myself travelling in two directions. Initially, my research strategy was influenced by ethnographies of development that

24 All community and participant names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.
combined development policy and discourse analysis with institutional and community-level ethnography (Li, 2007b; Ferguson, 1990; Gustafson, 2009). In particular, I was interested in:

[B]ringing together…analysis of governmental interventions (their genealogy, their diagnoses and prescriptions, their constitutive exclusions) and analysis of what happens when those interventions become entangled with the processes they would regulate and improve (Li 2007b: 28).

However, my ethnographic engagements quickly led me to view indigenous land rights less as a top-down governmental intervention and more as a grassroots indigenous project – or, rather, as a product of “contingent articulations” (Tsing, 2005:77; Gustafson, 2009). As such, I found myself not only tracking the implementation of a global policy intervention, but also tracing its origins and meaning in local processes of indigenous activism and a situated history of racialised dispossession.

This informed my methods in important ways. First, it called for engagement in Guarani politics beyond the arena of the official titling process. Initially, I focused on participant observation of Guarani assemblies and in-depth interviews with APG leadership to understand TCO titling in the context of a broader Guarani decolonising struggle. In doing so, I was guided by the work of anthropologists who have used engagement in everyday indigenous politics to interrogate broader struggles over governance and citizenship (Sawyer, 2004; Postero, 2007). Yet, I soon realised that Guarani political discourse and practice also required contextualising – both historically and in relation to lived realities of community life. This prompted me to incorporate community-level ethnography into my research methodology, alongside oral history and archival research. I will now describe in more detail how my PhD research methodology took shape in the context of an initial period of iterative research design and experimentation in 2008-9.

The importance of pilot research

I began researching the TCO titling process in Itika Guasu in 2008 as a volunteer in the local NGO CERDET, a position assumed with the objective of developing contextual
knowledge, contacts, and trust to enable me to design and implement a more ambitious project for PhD research. I now identify this as a period of institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005). Before long, I had begun to engage in Guarani politics independently of CERDET, to spend part of my time in the offices of the CCGT. In addition to engaging in the daily activities of both institutions, I attended seven multi-day APG assemblies; collected primary and secondary documentation from CERDET, the CCGT and INRA; and recorded 35 in-depth interviews with actors involved in the titling process in Itika Guasu. Further details of these research methods are provided in Appendix 1.

Methods employed during PhD fieldwork (Jan 2011- Feb 2012) were, in part, an extension and refinement of those used in 2008-9. I conducted five additional interviews with APG IG leadership, INRA and local NGO employees. Over the course of several visits to INRA’s regional office, I gathered up-to-date documentation and digital data on TCO titling, and discussed progress and dynamics with INRA technicians. Following significant developments in hydrocarbons negotiations since 2009, I collected additional documentation from APG IG and CCGT contacts. I attended two additional APG assemblies: one on a nascent Guarani TCO claim in a nearby Guarani territory, where I gave an invited presentation (23 April, 2011); and another on natural resource conflicts in indigenous territories in Tarija (21-22 July, 2011). I participated in various NGO and public events in Tarija to capture the dynamics of a shifting political context and continued to make frequent visits to the CCGT and CERDET.

My PhD research methodology also introduced three important new dimensions. First, whereas initial fieldwork had focused on the TCO titling process (from 1997 onwards), interviews had revealed the importance of understanding earlier processes of indigenous organisation and counter-mapping in Itika Guasu. In light of this, I searched the archives of CERDET and INRA Tarija for documentation on this period and conducted additional interviews, relying on snowballing to track down key informants. Second, the pilot study had highlighted the existence of conflicting discourses of rights and their capacity to influence the titling process. Building on these insights, I conducted nine additional interviews and one focus group with cattle ranchers and small farmers who claim or own land in TCO Itika Guasu. In March 2011, I attended two public meetings on land titling with this group, organised by the local cattle ranching
organisation ASOGAPO. Informal discussions were recorded with participants prior to and following these meetings.

The third key aspect of my PhD research strategy was community-level participant observation, oriented towards understanding the lived realities of land and territory in Itika Guasu. I lived with a host family in Tarairi between August 2011 and Feb 2012. Owing to male labour migration and community expectations, I initially found myself largely with women, who I accompanied for a range of domestic and communal tasks. My participation in these tasks was compromised in late August, when I broke my ankle playing football in the community. I spent the recovery period (3-4 months) building my relationship with the 13 households, improving my language skills, and volunteering in the school. Informal conversations enabled me to gather information on specific issues – land and resource use, perceptions of TCO titling, ethnic land relations, livelihoods strategies and so forth – which were recorded in daily fieldnotes. During Jan-Feb 2012, I recorded eight in-depth interviews with men from Tarairi and two nearby communities; conducted focus groups and participatory mapping activities with women and men (separately); conducted a household survey; instigated a walk with twelve participants to identify the legal boundaries of titled land (armed with a GPS device); and accompanied community members to different parts of the territory for livelihoods activities (Appendix 1).

Finally, in December 2011 and Feb 2012, I recorded eleven in-depth semi-structured interviews in Camiri, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz, in order to capture different national perspectives on the shifting dynamics of indigenous-state relations under the MAS government, and indigenous TCO claims. Informants included NGO employees, the former Minister of Land, and national indigenous representatives (in the APG, CIDOB and the Plurinational Assembly). During this trip, I participated in an expert focus-group on indigenous territorial struggles organised by Oxfam Bolivia (Santa Cruz), and a public event on the TIPNIS conflict (Cochabamba), both of which were recorded and transcribed.

The way in which the above methods evolved to form a multi-sited research methodology corresponds to Kim Fortun’s notion of “open-systems ethnography”, in
which “observation proceeds iteratively, driven by extrapolative readings of what observations thus far mean and imply” (2012: 74). As Fortun notes:

These kinds of project differ in important ways from traditional anthropological projects while preserving in depth engagements with real world situations as a defining methodology. They are often based on complex research designs, involving ethnography at multiple sites, engagement with multiple scholarly literatures and disciplines, and fluency in many languages, technical as well as natural. At their best, these projects result in dense and complicated accounts of how the contemporary world works, which have relevance both to scholarly debates and to practical efforts to respond to social problems (Ibid).

Maintaining the openness and flexibility to generate new research questions and conduct ethnography in unanticipated sites was of fundamental importance to this research, allowing me to explore multiple processes and practices through which territory is produced and struggled over. As Cook et al. (in Falzon, 2012) note, however, multi-sited research does not grant the researcher access to a “holistic, global view” that transcends the particular (47). The limitations of this research methodology for understanding the complexity of the processes and research context under investigation – including in relation to my positionality as a researcher – are discussed in Appendix 1, alongside further details of these methods.

Chapter outline

The five substantive chapters of this thesis shift between times, scales, places and actors to highlight different dimensions of the dynamics and outcomes of TCO titling in Itika Guasu. Chapter 1, “The Making of TCOs”, places the TCO land titling process in Itika Guasu in two inter-related contexts: first, a specific regional history of racialised dispossession, subjugation and eventual ethnic resurgence; and second, policy convergence around indigenous land rights within the global neoliberal development agenda, under the rubric of “ethnodevelopment”. I describe each of these contexts in turn, but also draw attention to the articulations that emerged between these scales and processes, allowing us to conceptualise the Guaraní land struggle in Itika Guasu as a historically-situated and place-based struggle, but one that is deeply implicated in, and
shaped by, national and transnational processes. The chapter then traces the national articulations that led to the integration of indigenous territorial demands into the 1996 INRA Law. It examines the contending actors and visions involved in national negotiations over this law, the key characteristics of the TCO titling process, and the initial responses it provoked from indigenous organisations and activists.

In Chapter 2, “Mapping Territory”, I shift scale back to Itika Guasu to examine the processes of mapping and justifying a territorial claim that unfolded in parallel with these national negotiations. Informed by accounts of indigenous counter-mapping, and drawing on archival and interview data, I highlight both the radical content of mapping efforts in Itika Guasu and the erasures, concessions and power dynamics involved in making territory legible to the state. In doing so, this chapter introduces issues of power, representation and translation that resurface in subsequent chapters.

Having critically examined the contingent articulations and power-laden processes that brought TCOs into legal and cartographic existence, Chapter 3, “Titling Territory”, provides a detailed account of the TCO titling process in Itika Guasu – that is, the field-based and office-based practices through which the land reform agency INRA sought to identify, demarcate, legally evaluate, and title private and indigenous land claims to TCO land. Combining insights from postcolonial theory and legal anthropology, I describe how legal norms and discourses of rights were reworked in their engagement with local power structures, values and institutions. Specifically, I draw on interviews, documentation and ethnographic engagement with the actors involved to document how local landowner resistance and ethnic power inequalities within the regional context conjoined with inherent limitations in the titling process to prevent a substantive redistribution of rights in Itika Guasu. In addition to examining the specific practices through which this occurred, I explore how local opposition to the TCO was informed by competing discourses of rights, rooted in the history of colonial settlement, nation-building and agrarian reform described in Chapter 1. Chapter 3 concludes with a brief analysis of the legal-cartographic results that these dynamics produced and discusses Guaraní responses to these ambivalent titling outcomes.

While important for looking beyond the “power of maps”, an analysis of legal titling results does not tell us what these outcomes meant for ordinary Guaraní women
and men in communities of Itika Guasu. I address this in Chapter 4, “Lived Realities of Land and Territory”, which is based on six months of participant observation in the Guarani community of Tarairí. The Chapter begins with a brief description of the community’s location, spatial organisation, and historical experience and memory of dispossession. I then provide an overview of the current status of legal and actual land ownership in and around the community, the problems this creates for community members, the discourses and strategies used to contest this exclusionary geography, and how community members evaluate the achievements of the land struggle. The second part of the chapter explores one inter-communal resource conflict to demonstrate how the fixing of boundaries in the context of TCO land titling has, paradoxically, undermined Guarani practices of natural resource use and inter-communal cooperation (practices that were already hybrid and contested). As I also highlight, changing environmental conditions and inter-ethnic relations present their own dilemmas regarding the staking and policing of territorial boundaries. The final section asks how, and how much, community members know about the TCO titling process and its legal results. This provides the basis for a broader reflection on the politics of knowledge of TCO titling, the ontological conflicts it gives rise to, and the competing spatialities within which Guarani lives are embedded.

The final chapter, Chapter 5: “Contesting Resource Sovereignty”, shifts focus to examine how TCO titling in Itika Guasu intersected with, and was shaped by, another territorialising process: that of hydrocarbons development in the TCO. I begin by briefly outlining the broader neoliberal policy context for this discussion. I then examine in detail how hydrocarbons development in the TCO shaped—and ultimately jeopardized—indigenous land rights, by mapping onto and validating a racialized geography of rights (through land use agreements with private claimants of TCO land) at the very moment that this faced transformation. I then explore why this occurred, revealing how land rights became intimately connected with a series of other Guarani claims in the context of extraction. The second part of the chapter traces the evolution of this resource conflict under the Morales government, where the issues of indigenous land rights and hydrocarbons governance became increasingly intertwined. The chapter concludes by examining a recent settlement between the APG IG and Repsol to illustrate how
hydrocarbons development has shaped the meaning, context and strategies of the Guarani territorial struggle.

The Conclusion summarises the main empirical and theoretical contributions of this research, and reflects on their broader implications for discussions in critical development geography, as well as for academic and social movement debates on decolonisation and the Bolivian “process of change”.
Chapter 1: The making of TCOs: Contingent articulations, uncertain compromises

This chapter traces the historical origins of lowland indigenous land claims in Bolivia and their eventual passage into state policy as TCOs (Communal Lands of Origin) under the 1996 INRA Law. It is argued that the Guaraní land struggle in the territory of Itika Guasu must be understood as emerging from three interrelated contexts: first, a specific regional history of state territorialisation and indigenous dispossession; second, the rise of ethnodevelopment within the global development agenda; and third, the construction of a national indigenous movement around demands for “territory”. The chapter describes each of these contexts in turn, drawing attention in each case to the articulations that emerged between these scales and processes. In doing so, it allows us conceptualise the Guaraní land struggle in Itika Guasu as a historically-situated and place-based struggle, but one that is deeply implicated in, and shaped by, national and transnational processes and agendas.

The chapter then goes on to trace how indigenous territorial demands became integrated into state policy under the INRA Law. It examines the dynamics involved in negotiations over this law, its key characteristics, and the responses and critiques it provoked from indigenous organisations and their allies. The chapter concludes by detailing the contingent and ambivalent process through which the indigenous movement succeeded in securing state recognition of the first TCO demands. This chapter draws on primary and secondary sources, alongside in-depth interviews with individuals involved in the construction of TCO demands at a local, regional and national level (see Appendix 1). This makes this account an original one, which brings together undocumented processes of indigenous organising and identity formation with existing discussions of national indigenous mobilisation and neoliberal policy formation.

In tracing how TCOs moved from indigenous demand to national legal category to cartographically recognised territories, I highlight the obstacles, diverse agendas, negotiations and concessions involved in this struggle to establish indigenous territories, as well as the creative strategies deployed by the indigenous movement. This sets the
scene for the remaining chapters of this thesis, which chart the halting progress and
ambivalent outcomes of the TCO mapping and titling process.

**Seating sovereignty at the Chaco frontier: 1892-1992**

A postcolonial reading of territory should begin with the presupposition that territory is not simply
the space that is occupied by a nation; nor the area demarcated by, or contained within, state
boundaries. This is not to deny the existence of territory. Territory clearly exists. Its concrete
effects are everywhere. Rather, it is to ask after its production (Wainwright, 2008: 20).

Until the late nineteenth century, the Bolivian Chaco - or *Chiriguania*\(^\text{25}\) - remained an
uncolonised frontier of the newly-independent Bolivian republic.\(^\text{26}\) Having seen centuries
of intermittent warfare over the previous three centuries, the Chaco lands continued to be
a site of shifting interethnic and intra-ethnic alliances, making state control of them
impossible (Pifarré, 1999; Langer, 2009; Saignes, 2007; Echazú, 1992). Early Jesuit
efforts to missionise the *Chiriguanos* had largely failed and, although the Franciscans had
more success (Langer, 2009), the Guaraní had largely regained their independence by the
mid-nineteenth century, following the chaos of the Independence Wars. Indeed, accounts
suggest that the Guaraní thrived during this period (ibid.: 15). One military general who
led a military expedition to the lands that are now TCO Itika Guasu in 1839, complained:

> The undertaking of forever driving off the Chiriguanos to the other part of the Pilcomayo [river],
> although contemplated, is more difficult than at first meets the eye. The savage hoards that have to
> be dislodged are numerous, and somehow they have advanced in the art of making war (own
> translation, cited in VAIO and MACPIO, 2000: 24)

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\(^\text{25}\) This colonial name for the Chaco lands is taken from the term *Chiriguano*, given to the Guarani by the
Inca and adopted by the Spanish.

\(^\text{26}\) Bolivia gained formal independence in 1825.
Figure 1: Colonial map showing the colonisation of the Chaco region of Tarija Department following the Kuruyuki Massacre of 1892

This map, produced by the Franciscan Church of Tarija in 1911, shows the gradual penetration of Guaraní territory by missions and karai settlements. The area of O'Connor Province (within which Itika Guasu is located – see the Chimeo mission at 64°24.5') is shown as narrowly within the “territorio civilizado” (“civilised territory”), shaded in blue, whereas the eastern Chaco – home to Guaraní and other indigenous groups – remains within “territorio inexplorado” (“unexplored territory”), shaded in orange. (Source: Mapa chaqueño del Padre Hermán Cattunar, 1911, in Calzavarini, 2005-6: Parte III. inset showing location in Bolivia added by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge).
By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Guaraní had suffered a series of decisive military defeats, paving the way for a century of dispossession and racial subjugation. The most decisive of these was the 1892 Battle of Kuruyuki, an event widely cited as marking an effective end of Guaraní anti-colonial resistance (Albó, 1990: 21; Gustafson 2009: 33-38). The battle took place after a young Guaraní prophet named Apiaguaiki Tūpa gathered Guaraní followers from throughout the region in Kuruyuki, near to the Santa Rosa mission, provoking suspicion and fear among the karai27 (Martarelli, cited in ibid.: 35-6). Although the Guaraní claimed they had merely gathered to perform religious rites, the rape and murder of a Guaraní woman by a karai official provoked them to launch an attack on the Santa Rosa mission. Republican forces pushed them back to Kuruyuki then launched a counterattack, killing 8,000 Guaraní men and boys. In the weeks that followed, the remaining Guaraní fighters were hunted down in their villages, and women and children were captured for distribution among “Christian” settlers. Tūpa, who had managed to escape to the hills, was eventually captured and subjected to gruesome treatment: he was impaled (sodomised) on a long pike, killed, displayed for 24 hours in the plaza of Monteagudo, then drawn, quartered and burned (ibid.: 37-38). As Gustafson concludes in his graphic description of these events, “the scorched-earth spectacle and terror of ethnic cleansing was now coupled with a performance that sought to conjure the unquestioned sovereignty of the karai state” (ibid.: 38). The details of this massacre – the karai fear of a “multitude of savages”, the indiscriminate killing, hunting down and enslavement of Guaraní women, men and children, and the brutal and emasculating tortures enacted on their leader’s body – illustrate how the creation of the Chaco as a karai, Christian and Bolivian territory was materially and symbolically predicated on the violent subjugation of its indigenous inhabitants.

Although symbolically important, the Kuruyuki massacre was just one milestone in a gradual process of domination of the Guaraní by an expanding (post)colonial state intent on seating sovereignty in its unconsolidated frontier regions. Settlement of the Chaco was initially driven by an expanding cattle ranching economy during the late eighteenth century, when the closure of the Pacific trading route during the Pacific War

27 Guaraní: non-Guaraní person or people
enabled cattle ranchers in Tarija to supply the booming mining economy of Potosí with a range of products (Echazú, 1992: 184). The commercial boom in beef production drew ranchers from other parts of Bolivia, who claimed large areas of indigenous territory, forcing the Guaraní to move to more marginal lands.

The Bolivian state played an active role in promoting this frontier settlement, through the granting of land and property rights to non-indigenous settlers. From 1884, the state sold off vast tracts of Chaco lands at rock bottom prices to any non-indigenous person who promised to settle there (Langer, 2009: 48; Echazú, 1992). In fact, the lands of Itika Guasu were legally appropriated even earlier, awarded by Simón Bolívar to the Irish-born Independence hero Frances Burdett O’Connor (after whom the Province is named) as a reward for military sacrifice. As such, the appropriation of Itika Guasu as non-indigenous property was bound up with the birth of the Bolivian nation-state. The state’s distribution of indigenous lands (by sale or award) rested on the colonial myth of these lands as *tierras baldias* (empty lands), awaiting “discovery” and “civilisation” by people of European descent – a myth that in turn rested on colonial discourses of indigenous peoples as savage, unproductive and unsettled (Razack, 2002; Postero, 2007: 44). As such, property was co-constituted with racialised subjectivities (Bhandar, 2011), demonstrating how “place becomes race through the law” (Razack, 2002).

If property law legitimised colonisation of the Chaco, then this process was also underpinned by violence. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Bolivian state funded the construction of forts and military outposts in lands near to large haciendas, and supplied arms for their defence (Echazú, 1992). The first *karai* villages in Itika Guasu, such as Tarupayo and Palos Blancos, were established during this period, providing important networks of communications, trade and services for haciendas (Pifarré, 1999). With a shrinking land base on which to sustain themselves, the Guaraní migrated to Argentina, sought refuge in missions, or resigned themselves to working as labourers on mestizo-owned haciendas, under a system of debt bondage (Albó, 1990). This system, termed *empatronamiento*, gave a *patrón* almost total control over the lives of indigenous *peones*, who were paid either not at all or a pittance (Chapters 2 and 4, this

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28 The designation of Chaco lands as “tierras baldías”, subject to unrestricted settlement, occurred under President Arce (1888-1892), replacing a prior regime whereby the state only awarded lands to those who had contributed military service (Echazú, 1992).
thesis). Women and children were also recruited as domestic labour, and expected to bring food to male labourers. As the Guaraní authors of one document describe:

We worked day and night, without eating, enduring cold, rain, heat, to be able to survive in these lands. Like that our sons began to speak Spanish, our daughters no longer wore the tipoy²⁹. Some were obliged to even give up the music of the arête³⁰. We always went around humble and silent because all the karai only ever said was “those chaguancos, those Ava, those cumpa³¹, are too lazy to work”, without realising that, due to our labours, they had trucks and knew money, becoming richer and richer. And we, who lived for years working, become poorer and poorer and we have to die without leaving anything for our children. (APG IG and CERDET, 2005: 53-54)

In fact, empatronamiento came relatively late to communities of Itika Guasu, owing to their location within the O’Connor estate, which prevented further karai settlement of the area until the 1930s (VAIO and MACPIO, 2000: 30-31). Guaraní men were, however, required to contribute annual (unpaid) agricultural labour, work in nearby salt and limestone quarries, and open up roads (ibid.: 30; Gustafson 2009: 101). From the 1930s, these mita-like obligations³² gradually came to be replaced by relations of empatronamiento, as a new wave of settlers arrived in the territory. This was triggered by two national events: the Chaco War and the 1952 agrarian revolution – both of which marked watershed moments in the state’s seating of sovereignty in the Chaco.

The Chaco War with Paraguay (1932-35), which began as a border skirmish, is today framed in Bolivia as a patriotic defence of the country’s oil and gas fields, a narrative that remains central to constructions of nation in Bolivia (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010; Chapter 3).³³ The war saw the construction of roads into the Chaco, brought thousands of highlanders to the region to fight, and caused massive Guarani

²⁹ A rectangular coloured piece of cloth worn traditionally by Guarani women (Guarani: manda; tipoy is the Spanish translation).
³⁰ Traditional Guaraní party where the fermented maize drink kaguiye (chicha in Bolivian Spanish) is shared by the host community, accompanied by music and dancing.
³¹ Derogatory colonial terms used to refer to lowland Indians. Chaguancos refers to an animal but was used for Chaco indigenous peoples; ava means “man” in Guarani but was used by the Spanish to mean “savage”; cumpa usually means compadre (the godparent of one’s child, see pg. 110), but also refers to folk traditions in Argentina and Paraguay.
³² Mit’a was a form of tribute to the Inca government in the form of labor, which was modified and intensified by the Spanish colonial government (primarily to extract indigenous labour for the mining economy), under which it became known as mita.
³³ Non-Bolivian scholars have argued that the war had its roots in social and political turmoil in Bolivia (Klein, 1992).
displacement.\textsuperscript{34} Furthermore, following the war’s conclusion, the Bolivian state encouraged ex-combatants – largely poor highland farmers – to occupy the Chaco’s gas-rich lands, which were seen as vulnerable to future foreign incursions due to their dispersed and still predominantly indigenous population. Settlement was aided by intensifying hydrocarbons development in the Chaco,\textsuperscript{35} which saw the opening up of roads into formerly inaccessible areas, integrating them into emerging networks of communications, trade and commerce. It is this period that Guarani community members in Itika Guasu most identify with the loss of traditionally-used communal lands to karai settlers (Chapters 2 and 4). The fact that Guarani dispossession was bound up with strategic national interests in hydrocarbons provides an important precedent to recent struggles over land and gas (Chapter 5).

Emerging from the social and political turmoil of the Chaco War (Klein, 1992) came the 1952 agrarian revolution and 1953 agrarian reform. Despite marking the incorporation of highland indigenous peoples into citizenship (discussed below), the reform’s main effect in the Chaco was to grant formal property rights to karai settlers, which produced more aggressive land appropriations and the spread of empatronamiento practices. As one Guarani leader from Itika Guasu described:

\begin{quote}
The Agrarian reform appeared, when the patrones intensified their pressure, took ownership of the land, and said that they were the owners and we poor; to sentence us, to kill us if we didn’t work for them - or if not, they wanted to remove us from the place we had lived for many years from hunting, fishing and agriculture (APG IG and CERDET, 2005: 53, own translation).
\end{quote}

Notwithstanding its revolutionary origins in highland indigenous land occupations, the 1953 agrarian reform was ultimately designed and funded by the United States government, which envisioned the modernisation of agriculture in the fertile Bolivian

\textsuperscript{34} The Chaco saw its Guarani population decrease by an estimated 15,000 people, owing to deaths of Guarani combatants and migration to Argentina and Paraguay (Pifarré 1989, cited in Postero 2007: 44).

\textsuperscript{35} Hydrocarbons development in the Chaco began in 1921, when the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey acquired from the government all concessions for oil exploration in Bolivia, including two and-a-half million hectares of concessions in the country’s eastern Amazonian and Chaco lowlands (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010: 694-695). Development intensified after the Chaco War, following the creation of the state-owned oil company YPFB (1936) and nationalisation of hydrocarbons reserves (1937), which led to a period of intense exploration, exploitation and construction of hydrocarbons infrastructure in the Chaco (Octavio, 2008).
lowlands as the basis for an import substitution-based model of economic development (Kay and Urioste, 2007; Soruco et al., 2008). Furthermore, it was hoped that this model would keep Bolivia – the site of important strategic resources – on a capitalist development path, following the social upheaval of the preceding decade, and in a context of US fears of the global spread of Communism (Murphey, 2009).

Beyond these geopolitical dimensions, the 1953 agrarian reform marked a watershed moment in indigenous-state relations in Bolivia. Based on an assimilationist paradigm of development, the reform sought to “include” some indigenous peoples (those in the highlands) in the Bolivian nation-state, by converting them into productive small farmers and awarding them individual property rights. As indicated above, however, this narrow gateway to citizenship was not opened to the Guaraní who, along with most other lowland indigenous peoples, continued to be viewed as “savages”, unsuitable candidates for either citizenship or development (Kay and Urioste, 2007). Instead, the 1953 agrarian reform exacerbated the Guaraníes’ loss of territory and autonomy, by consolidating the property claims of karai settlers. Guaraní dispossession thus continued to unfold through a familiar triad of racialised identities, exclusionary property law, and state and settler resource interests – now articulated with the making of the Great American Century (Harvey, 2003).

The above account illustrates how the Guaraníes’ dispossession of their ancestral lands in Itika Guasu went hand in hand with the production of national territory and the consolidation of a racialised project of citizenship. As the Bolivian state strove to define its geographical and racial boundaries, the Guaraní consistently found themselves placed at its margins, as an internal Other against whom the advance of sovereignty and

36 This was to be achieved through the breaking up of highland haciendas to “free up” highland indigenous labour, the granting of small parcels of land to these indigenous “peasants”, and an official programme to promote lowland colonisation.

37 US aid to Bolivia during the first agrarian reform (1953-1961) superseded that provided to any other country in the world (Soruco et al., 2008), and was contingent upon Bolivia’s granting concessions to US oil firms. Such conditions were met by the 1956 Hydrocarbons Law, which was effectively written by lawyers from the US-based firm Davenport and Schuster, and strongly favoured foreign investment (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010: 695).

38 According to Murphey, “By nurturing Bolivian nationalism, while simultaneously pushing it towards more agreeable policy stances, the Eisenhower administration wanted to show nationalists across Latin America and beyond that there were benefits in co-operating with the USA. Appreciating the importance of the power of Third-World nationalism in the post-war era, Eisenhower sought to ensure that these emerging nations remained firmly in the Western camp economically and diplomatically” (2009: 252).
civilisation could be measured (Said, 1979; Pratt, 1992). This is illustrative of how “the practices and institutions of republican liberalism produced an informal system of apartheid based on a wholesale exclusion of Indians from the political sphere” (Postero, 2007: 34, citing Larson, 2004). Postcolonial scholars have explained these exclusions by arguing that nation-building is predicated upon the creation of a homogenous ethnic community, the construction of which requires a constant redrawing of geographical and racial boundaries to define who should and should not be included (Said, 1979; Anderson, 1991). In Bolivia, as in other postcolonial contexts, this entailed processes of indigenous inclusion and blanqueamiento (whitening) – as illustrated in the 1952 reform – alongside the exclusion of groups whose cultural and historical difference is seen to make them impossible to “whiten” or civilise (Postero, 2007). It is in this latter category that the Guaraní found themselves, a fate shared with many other South American lowland indigenous peoples (see Sawyer, 2004; Valdivia, 2005).

This has important implications for thinking about recent indigenous claims for land rights, suggesting these claims must be understood as part of a broader indigenous project of “remaking the nation” (Radcliffe and Westwood, 1996). If this illustrates the radical content of indigenous land claims, however, then it also points to a key source of their ambivalence. For, it is only by demanding rights from the state that the Guaraní can hope to address this legacy of violent dispossession enacted by the state. That these claims should be pursued through the institution of property – a key mechanism of indigenous peoples’ historical dispossession – adds to this ambivalence. As Sparke notes, property rests on the production of abstract state space, a production predicated on the symbolic erasure of indigenous territory (2005; also Wainwright, 2008). By demanding territory (as property) from the state, indigenous peoples implicitly accept the state’s sovereignty over their ancestral lands. These ambivalences resurface throughout the remainder of this thesis. The above account also provides an important historical grounding for understanding the identities, ethnic power relations and discourses discussed in subsequent chapters. By drawing out these historical continuities, I will highlight the persistence of colonial knowledges and power relations as one of the key challenges involved in decolonising territory, and an important factor affecting the outcomes of indigenous land titling.
A final salient point from the above account relates to the role that natural resources played in the colonisation of the Chaco. As I have described, the Guaraníes’ exclusion from citizenship occurred alongside the gradual integration of their lands and resources into regional settler, national and transnational economies. This territorialisation, as I have shown, was bound up with a series of resource booms – from the Potosí-based mining economy, to a hydrocarbons boom in the 1930s, to the lowland agro-industrial boom dreamt into being by the US architects of the 1952 agrarian reform, who were themselves interested in Bolivia’s tin reserves. This echoes processes of state development that took place throughout Latin America during the twentieth century, particularly in formerly unexploited frontier regions (Galeano, 1971; Valdivia, 2005). This political economy of internal colonialism (Quijano, 2000) provides important context for contemporary conflicts over natural resource extraction in indigenous territories. As Chapter 5 reveals, the Guaraníes’ attempt to contest historic processes of state territorialisation by demanding land rights unfolded amidst another resource boom – natural gas development – which brought new alliances between transnational capital, the state and local landowners, producing new territorialising processes that unfolded alongside TCO land titling.

The struggle for land-territory in Itika Guasu: 1987-1996

Having sketched out the broader history of colonisation and Guarani dispossession in the Bolivian Chaco, I now describe how one grouping of Guarani communities mobilised to redress their marginalised situation through the construction of a collective claim for a territory, which they named “Itika Guasu”. The territory of Itika Guasu (recognised as a TCO in 1997) is located in a transitional geological and ecological zone, between the inter-Andean valleys to the West and the flat, semi-arid Chaco plain to the east (Figure 2). The TCO constitutes an area of 216,000 hectares comprised of 36 Guarani communities, whose total Guarani population is estimated at 3,435 people (APG Itika Guasu, 2005).
Figure 2: Location of TCO Itika Guasu in Bolivia\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{39} Elaborated by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge.
The territory also contains numerous private landholdings, 136 of which are titled (Chumacero et. al, 2010). While there is no reliable data on the population of non-indigenous inhabitants of Itika Guasu and local estimates vary widely, the presence of this population – a legacy of the history described above – has been a defining factor for the emergence and progress of the Guaraníes’ territorial claim, as I will describe. While I explain in detail below the complex system for evaluating and distributing land rights in TCOs, it is worth noting at the outset that TCO Itika Guasu is both a recognised indigenous territory (emergent from processes described below) and a particular “cut” into a heterogeneous landscape containing other kinds of actors, territorial imaginaries and property claims.

By the 1980s, following roughly a century of state-backed colonisation, most Guaraní of Itika Guasu who had not emigrated from the region were either trapped in relations of empatronamiento on mestizo-owned haciendas or were eking out a livelihood on marginal land. It was from this position that these communities began to organise in 1987, following contact with Guarani leaders from neighbouring Santa Cruz department, who had organised several years earlier to form the Asamblea del Pueblo Guarani (Guaraní People’s Assembly) (interview B23). Over subsequent years, a series of assemblies were held in Itika Guasu, culminating in the establishment of the APG Itika Guasu (APG IG) in April, 1989 (CERDET, 2008; APG IG and CERDET, 2005; Gustafson, 2009).

Early Guaraní organisation in Itika Guasu involved a range of local and national non-governmental, civic, sindicalist and religious institutions, reflecting a region-wide trend of indigenous involvement in transnationally-articulated networks of development actors during the 1980s and 1990s (Andolina et. al, 2009 and 2005; Brysk, 2000; Yashar, 2005). As these authors note, the proliferation of NGOs during this period went hand in hand with the “hollowing out of the state” under neoliberalism, which saw the transfer of

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40 These included the EAPG, an NGO founded by a local Director, his nephew, a young Swiss volunteer couple and a Catholic nun to work exclusively with Guarani communities of Itika Guasu; the regional NGO CERDET; the Permanent Human Rights Assembly of Tarija (APDHT), the Institute of Peasant Research and Training (IICCA); the United Nations-funded Indigenous Institute; the American Sisters of the Presentation, a group of Catholic nuns based in Entre Ríos; Comunidades en Marcha, a militant campesino organisation; the rural development NGOs IICCA and ACLO; and the national peasant federation CSUTCB (Castro, 2004; IICCA, undated; IICCA, 1992; APDHT, 1990; CERDET, undated-2; interview B23).
former state functions to an “empowered” civil society. As I elaborate below, NGOs were viewed as particularly important actors in delivering “neoliberalism’s cultural project” (Hale 2002). In addition to the presence of NGOs and national APG leaders, early assemblies in Itika Guasu were attended by representatives of the lowland indigenous umbrella organisation CIDOB, founded in 1982 (APDHT, 1990). As such, Guarani resurgence in Itika Guasu formed part of broader processes of indigenous and development activism.

Engaging 36 dispersed communities over an area of around 3,000 square kilometres in this organising process also required work. Following the first assemblies of 1987-89, held in what later became “Zone 1” of the TCO, APG leaders and their NGO allies went from community to community, usually by foot, informing people of the process underway. In accordance with an established APG organisational structure, a communal leader (mburuvicha) was elected in each community, as well one representative for each of the following areas: production, infrastructure, health, education and land-territory (a model known as PISET, initially developed by the NGO CIPCA). If this might make Guarani “resurgence” in Itika Guasu appear a somewhat top-down process, then it is also clear from descriptions of those involved that the process acquired its own organic momentum. As CERDET’s former Director Mario described:

It was incredible. A community would organise and afterwards it spread like wildfire, the news started to spread. And every week it was a matter of going to a new community and electing a new Mburuvicha communal and they came out very [quickly] – 36 communities in 2 or 3 years, organised, the Executive Committee of the APG, the 3 zones – that is, it was incredible (interview A27).

The struggle for land and freedom

Despite this dynamism, the Guarani faced major challenges. First and foremost, in order to become and remain iyambae – that is, independent of their former patrones –

42 APG IG and CERDET, 2005; interviews with APG IG leaders, 2009, especially B23.
43 Guarani: without owner, constructed from the prefix iya (owner) and the suffix mbae (without)
Guarani communities had to first re-establish independent subsistence livelihoods. The immediate challenge they faced in doing so was a lack of land. It was in this context that land rights were quickly identified as a central objective of the newly-formed APG IG. At an assembly in 1989 Ñaurenda, participants agreed to research the legal situation of land rights in the area and take steps towards constructing a territorial demand (CERDET, 1989), a commitment that was reaffirmed at subsequent assemblies. This represented the beginning of the APG IG’s pursuit of a “legal-cartographic strategy” (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009) and gave rise to the first attempts at mapping territory, detailed in Chapter 2.

Nevertheless, more immediate steps had to be taken to meet communities’ subsistence needs. It was in this context that the Guarani embarked on a wave of land occupations, establishing communal plots in privately-claimed properties, and forming work groups to farm them. They did so with support from the NGOs CERDET and EAPG, who provided coca, tools, barbed wire and food (interview B23). As EAPG’s Director explained, these communal plots acted as important symbols of Guarani independence and organisational capacity:

What was the main point of departure, or the main activity of the organisation? Have a potrero, a sown field, a common plot. They decided: “Where shall we do it?” They found a place and decided “We’ll do it here”. So the owners, the patrones, said “No, you can’t do it, and what’s more, you won’t be able to grow maize there”. “We want to do it here”. So they did a communal work – big, with many people….The other communities saw this beginning and that was like a symbol that an organisation exists, that in one community we have to have a potrero, a common plot. And in this way they started to do it in different communities (ibid.).

Communal plots were also a way of staking out and justifying Guarani land claims, in anticipation of a formal land titling process.45 As Mario explained:

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44 This involved the breaking, usually by negotiation, of unofficial labour contracts between Guarani workers and hacienda owners, including the annulment of debts purportedly accumulated by the former to the latter.

45 In this regard, Guarani strategies of claiming territory echo those of highland peasant during the 1940s’ agrarian revolution (Zavaleta, 1986), as well as those used more recently by the Movimiento Sin Tierra (Landless Peasants Movement, MST) in Bolivia (Fabricant, 2012) and Brazil (Wolford, 2003).
Even if there was also a legal struggle, on the other hand they were in the process of taking lands. Because when I arrived in Itika in ’89 there wasn’t a person, a community that had land. By ’95-’96 almost everyone had land. And that wasn’t the fruit of legal work; it was occupation of lands…we went occupying lands, occupying – the idea was to occupy the largest quantity [possible] so that when the declaration of the territory came, we would already have possession, we would be able to demonstrate that we are already in possession of the land (interview A27).

Two things are worth noting here. First, Bolivian land reform has historically been a process oriented towards the regularisation of land rights, making possession an important basis for property claims. Second, since the 1953 agrarian reform property claims have been evaluated based on the notion of the social function of property, enshrined in the popular mantra “land is for those who work it”. In this context, Guaraní land occupations, although outside of any legal process, were strategically framed within the established logics of Bolivian agrarian reform. The fact that racial stereotypes of the Guaraní as lazy and unproductive had been instrumental to their historic exclusion from property rights gave these organised work parties an added significance. More broadly, this shows how the “legal-cartographic strategy” was accompanied, and preceded, by material acts of claiming territory, which took place at multiple sites across the territory-in-the-making of Itika Guasu.

If this constituted something of a micro-agrarian revolution, then it did not go unchallenged. Both the organising efforts of the APG IG and the land occupations provoked strong, and sometimes violent, resistance from local landowners, particularly those who had previously relied on unwaged Guaraní labour (interviews A27, A26, B23). As the Guaraní movement spread, landowners threatened Guaraní leaders and NGO staff, who were assumed to be responsible for “stirring up” the docile Guaraní (ibid.: interviews B31 and A24). In 1990, the APDHT investigated various threats directed at Guaraní leaders by local landowners (APDHT, 1990). In the context of these threats and altercations, the Guaraní confronted a local state that was sympathetic to, and in some cases implicated in, landowner resistance.\footnote{In 1989, a local official, himself a local landowner, appeared at an APG IG assembly to reproach Guaraní participants for attending without his permission (CERDET, undated-3).} Documentation also reveals that various Guaraní men were held by the police, or in jail, during this period, either for their
organising activities or following confrontations with landowners (ibid.; APDHT, 1990; interviews A27 and A26).

Aware that physical force and the law were not on their side, the Guaraní and their allies sought to overcome this resistance through informal negotiation and moral argument. According to Tomás, a former intern at Fundación ACLO involved in Itika Guasu during this period, his colleagues, EAPG staff and APG IG leaders entered the properties of numerous *patrones* to persuade them to sign informal agreements stating that they would not oppose Guaraní organisation (interview B22). An EAPG employee similarly described how he countered hostile landowners by reminding them of the Guaraníes’ ancestral ownership of the newly-occupied land (interview A26). Interview accounts suggest that peasant organisations also played an important role in supporting Guaraní land occupations during this crucial period (interview A27).

Despite the land occupations and work groups, Guaraní communities continued to face major challenges in sustaining independent livelihoods. The years 1995-96 saw an acute food crisis, which threatened to undermine the entire process, motivating people to return to work on haciendas, which had previously guaranteed them food (ibid.). It was in response to this that CERDET began to orientate their assistance towards agricultural production, under the slogan “How to make freedom sustainable”, the answer to which was “Sow maize, sow maize, sow maize!” (ibid.).

**Territorial counter-narratives**

So far, I have focused on the practices and articulations involved in early Guaraní organisation in Itika Guasu. However, this was also – and perhaps above all – an epistemological process. Alongside political organisation, the breaking of labour relations and the occupation of land for collective farming, Guaraní communities were engaged in a process of retelling history, reaffirming identity, and imagining the possibility of “recovering territory” (Offen, 2003; Gordon et. al, 2003). As APG IG leaders and NGOs went from community to community spreading news of the organising process underway, they spoke of the construction of a territorial claim, through which the Guaraní would once again be owners of their territory. A booklet entitled “Solidarity with the Guaraní
People” (CERDET, undated-1), used to educate communities about the land struggle during this period, is illustrative. It opens with a picture of a small crowd of Guaraní men, women and children in traditional costume, who declare (depicted in speech bubbles): “500 years of resistance”\textsuperscript{47}, “We will recover again…”, “....territory” “...and power” (Figure 3). On the next page, a Guaraní man declares: “The Guaranies should recover our history because…Knowing our history helps us to understand our current problems” and “We Guaraní men and women have a past that we should feel proud of”. The remainder of the booklet offers an alternative narrative of Guaraní history, which charts their arrival in the region in search of the “Land without Evil”, their long anti-colonial resistance and eventual domination and subjugation by “the Spanish” who “wanted their lands to raise cattle”. Another page depicts Guaraní ancestral territory in Tarija, shown to cover entire Chaco region, under which is written “Our fathers had their own territory....we, the sons, should reconquer it!” (Figure 3).

As this booklet suggests, the project of imagining and justifying a territorial claim in Itika Guasu was grounded in a retelling of history, in ways that sought to visibilise and contest the violence and dispossession that the Guaraní had suffered at the hands of the republican state and karai settlers. These territorial counter-narratives helped create “new levels of cultural consciousness” (Stocks, 2003: 352) in Itika Guasu, in a context in which the Guaraní were seeking to regain self-esteem and cultural identity eroded by a regime of empatronamiento. As one APG IG leader told me in 2009:

I believe the Guaraní people is still in the process, a process of revalorising our identity, of saying that we are secure in being indigenous, of recognising ourselves…we’re in a process of revalorisation, of reconstructing who we are (interview B17).

\textsuperscript{47} This refers to the Quintencennial of Columbus’s landing, thereby linking Guaraní resurgence to a national and continental process of indigenous organising.
Figure 3: Excerpts from CERDET booklet “Solidaridad con el Pueblo Guaraní” (CERDET, undated-1)
The APG IG and CERDET also produced historical and territorial counter-narratives directed at a broader regional audience. In one 1993 article, in a section entitled “Indigenous people, myths and regional identity”, three CERDET employees write,

> According to the official history of our region, the Guaraníes are beings who existed a long time ago and only live in the yellowed pages of the chronicles written by Franciscan missions and conquistadores...On the contrary, the true history, which is made through struggle and doesn’t aspire to be crowned with official reports, is different. According to this, the Guaraníes are a people who, from remote times until the present, inhabit an extensive territory (CERDET, 1993, my translation).

They go on to describe the Guarani as: “the most fitting metaphor of what our country is: victims of a neo-colonial system which has always insisted on denying them [their rights]”. In doing so, they locate the Guarani land struggle in Itika Guasu within a broader national indigenous project of refounding citizenship in Bolivia. As Gustafson describes, retellings of the 1892 Kuruyuki Massacre – whose centenary coincided with the 1992 “500 years of resistance” campaign – provided a similar function, “[linking] the Guarani to a wider national history – colonial violence suffered by Andean and other lowland peoples” (2009: 40).

If the above examples point to the influence of NGOs and APG IG leadership in shaping and articulating the meaning of the land struggle, then these discourses were locally interpreted and understood. Interviews with older community members in Itika Guasu demonstrate how oral memories of a pre-colonial past associated with material abundance and freedom of movement, combined with personal experiences of dispossession and enslavement, give meaning to the aspiration for “recovering territory”. The following example, from an interview with Fausto, a Tarairí community member now in his sixties, is illustrative:

> Before, ñande. They didn’t know any Spanish, they didn’t know any Spanish; like that they lived peacefully. They looked after their land, up to what is now the crossroads, it was all Guaraní land and the banda too; everything – from Itikirenda to Ivoca, everything, up to Puerto Margarita. It

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48 Ours/us (Guaraní)
49 the opposite shore of the Pilcomayo river from the community of Tarairí
was all land of the Guaraní, of our grandfathers, you know. That is, there weren’t any Spanish people. There wasn’t…like now they’re already there, aren’t they? They’re already mixed. Before, it was pure Guaraní, it was our territory. We made our potrero (agricultural plot), they went to that blue hill [he points], that’s where it was, they went there to make their potrero…before one would walk, it would be to that hill there; Tarupayo was a big potrero and our grandfathers would walk, before they didn’t consume sugar or anything; it was pure maize, black beans, pumpkin, our food was all like that. They would go with the porongo, it’s called; our grandfathers carried chicha – kaguiye⁵⁰ they say, don’t they? (interview A1).

In this account, a sense of grievance for the material loss of territory is combined with nostalgia for a way of life transformed through colonisation and subsequent acculturation. Guarani mobility – the ability to move freely within the territory – is central to Fausto’s perception of what has been lost. In the discussion that followed, he went on to describe in detail his ancestors’ cultural practices and the strategies through which the karai established their dominant position, aided by the 1952 agrarian reform: “There was the agrarian reform and the law appeared – only for the karai; it wasn’t for the indigenous…never again could we rescue the land, we couldn’t rescue the land”. It is this historical memory of territorial loss that gives meaning to the TCO for this man, who described how, in the early days of the land struggle “people had the hope of being able to rescue [rescatar] everything, in order to live peacefully”.

Further examples are provided in Box 1 and Chapter 4. As these examples show, although a product of articulations with development actors, the land struggle in Itika Guasu was both historically grounded and locally understood, in relation to personal and collective experiences of historical processes described above. As such, it formed part of a broader Guarani process of decolonising knowledge (Gustafson, 2009).

⁵⁰ Chicha (S.), kaguiye (G.): a fermented maize drink central to the Guarani diet
Box 1: Guaraní discourses of “recovering territory” in Itika Guasu

To recover our territory is...that is, the old great grandfathers lived from that, the grandfathers, the great-great-grandfathers lived from that – from the forest, from land, from hunting, and looking for honey, and making their products. In contrast, when it’s private property, you can’t even go to look for some little animal to eat. When one already has his own land, one is happy [tranquilo] then, no? You go to walk, you go to hunt, you can already plan. But when there isn’t any [land], it’s difficult to enter a property, the owner gets angry (interview B14).

We were the owners of the land and we are owners as the Guaraní People, and more than 50 years ago our grandfathers fought so that they could leave territory for our children, and really the Spanish came, they appeared 50 years ago and they occupied a lot of land, our territory, and since then they’ve taken advantage of our territory and for that motive we, as the Guaraní People, by necessity have to organise ourselves, so that we can defend our land, our territory….We have many, we have the family and…they’re suffering for not having land to work, that’s why we as leaders are fighting for our territory; the family really needs land. …Our vision is really to recover our territory, our vision is to improve our work, also to improve our health, improve our freedom. Freedom is where we can walk, where we can go, where we can go in our territory, because from there we bring things from which we can live, the forest is really rich, there are many wild animals that we know that we can bring to our family…so that is our future and our future is to improve and save our situation, save ourselves also from slavery…to have our own territory, our own so we can have freedom of where to walk, have our children free and put them in school, put them where they can study…they can become professionals, so that’s what we hope for our children (interview B13).

When they talk of the TCO, it means land for everyone, where we can live, where we can work, where we can go to make our potrero or something. That’s what it was [for]. That is, our hope, when we speak of the TCO, our hope is that…that is, to live better, to live better, without anyone being able to tell us; “Hey, that’s my land, you have to work for free” – all that (interview A6).

[The land struggle is] for the reclaiming, the recovery of our territory because…centuries ago the Spanish and all the rest entered our ancestral territory of our ancestors. Why is it important, why have the indigenous peoples demanded it? Because it’s their only form of sustenance, their territory, to be able to construct their own development, their own form of life, their events in their own self-determination, of their forms and structures, which were on the point of being wiped out in their totality, due to the denial of the existence of the indigenous peoples in these territories…Our territory is legitimately ours, it can never be given up, we’re never going to give it up (interview B2).

First it’s necessary to see the situation in which we lived, first empatronados, in a system of slavery, without rights to land, only gripped by the hand of the patrón. It’s from there that our ancestors decided to organise themselves, first to consolidate or recover their territory, then to recover their freedom, and finally, to recover their cultural identity – they are the three different situations [objectives]…from there the struggle began (interview B3).
As noted, the land struggle was also oriented towards a radical transformation of ethnic power relations within the territory, a struggle that linked territory to recovery of individual and collective autonomy, associated with being iyambae (without an owner). As one APG IG leader explained:

Why did the indigenous peoples make the territorial claim? Because it’s the only way to maintain ourselves, our land, to be able to construct our own development, our own form of life, the achievement of our self-determination, our forms and structures, which were on the point of being destroyed in their totality (interview B2).

That such a place-based project should take shape amidst articulations with development actors operating at multiple scales is illustrative of Andolina et al.’s observation that “local” places are multi-scalar by way of their co-production by regional, national and international actors” (2009: 82). I now shift scale to the arena of global development policy to examine how these local processes are situated vis-à-vis evolving forms of global development governmentality.

Neoliberal countermovements and the territorial fix

In a recent unpublished paper (2007a), anthropologist Tania Li summarises the strategies that ruling regimes have employed to regulate relations between people and land from the colonial period to the present in postcolonial contexts. Her approach draws on that of Karl Polanyi, who famously observed that “to allow the market mechanism to be the sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment would result in the demolition of society” (1957 (1944):76). Before this destruction happened, Polanyi argued that society would recognise the risk of destruction and devise protective measures to re-embed the reproduction of human life in social relations. These measures, and the social forces that bring them into being, comprise what he called a double movement or countermovement. While the concept of countermovement has often been used to refer to social movements resisting neoliberal processes of “accumulation by

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51 A revised version of this paper was published in 2010 (see references), but without the same emphasis on countermovements.
dispossession” (Harvey, 2003; Perreault, 2009), as Li notes, Polanyi’s conception of the term includes elements of the ruling class, or those in government, who recognise the need to take protective measures to curb the destructive effects of the market on populations (also Hart, 2010). In this section, I interpret global convergence around the legitimacy of indigenous land rights in relation to three inter-related countermovements, namely the indigenous rights movement, social responses to neoliberalism, and the environmental countermovement. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate how indigenous peoples took advantage of openings within an evolving neoliberal development agenda, becoming key protagonists in reshaping national and global models of citizenship and development (Andolina et al., 2009: 76; Postero 2007; Anthias and Radcliffe, 2013). At the same time, I draw attention to the ambivalences and contradictions inherent in the neoliberal framing of territory, identifying tensions that will resurface in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The global indigenous rights movement emerged during the 1970s to challenge the dominant “assimilationist” approach to indigenous development. Exposing the violence enacted on indigenous peoples throughout the world in the name of “development”, it opened “a crack in the so-far solid confidence that progress justified almost everything” (Blaser, Feit and McRae, cited in Engle, 2010: 191). Indigenous rights advocates called for alternative models of development that would allow indigenous peoples to develop in culturally-appropriate ways, according to their own priorities. These brought about a paradigmatic shift towards what became known as “ethnodevelopment” or “development-with-identity” (Andolina et al., 2009). This shift was reflected, and greatly advanced, by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, passed in 1989 and ratified by Bolivia (following national indigenous mobilisation) in 1991. Explicitly rejecting the assimilationist philosophy of its predecessor, Convention 169 called for respect for the cultural integrity of indigenous peoples, their co-participation in national society and development decision-making, and recognition of their territorial rights. During the 1990s, these calls were echoed by leading global development institutions (ibid.). This occurred against a backdrop of

52 In 1993, the United Nations Indigenous Special Working Group issued its draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Two years later, the UN declared 1995-2004 the International Decade of Indigenous
indigenous activism throughout the Americas, which gained momentum and international attention around the 1992 Quintencennial of Columbus’s landing. In voicing their demands – first and foremost for territorial rights – indigenous peoples made reference to ILO Convention 169 and (as in Itika Guasu) drew support from emergent transnational networks of development actors (ibid.; Yashar, 2005; Engle, 2010). As such, they took advantage of new openings under neoliberalism to voice demands oriented at addressing longer histories of exclusionary and assimilationist forms of development.

Yet, global support for indigenous land rights also had a more ambivalent context, occurring against a backdrop of growing transnational capitalist incursions into indigenous territories. Some of the earliest and most influential global policy statements on indigenous land rights appeared in the context of attempts to mitigate the effects of large-scale capitalist projects on indigenous populations. In 1982, the World Bank issued its operational policy statement, OMS 2.34, outlining procedures for protecting the rights of so-called “tribal people” in Bank-financed development projects. The directive stated that:

> Unless special measures are adopted, tribal people are more likely to be harmed than helped by development projects that are intended for beneficiaries other than themselves. Therefore, whenever tribal peoples may be affected, the design of projects should include measures or components necessary to safeguard their interests, and, whenever feasible, to enhance their wellbeing (cited in Davis et al., 1998: 4).

Among these safeguards, it recommended that the design of tribal components of Bank-funded projects or parallel programmes should contain “the recognition, demarcation and protection of tribal areas containing those resources required to sustain the tribal people’s traditional means of livelihood” (ibid.: 5-6). Operational Directive 4.20 of 1991 strengthened this commitment to indigenous land rights, recommending that:

> Where Bank-financed projects potentially affect the lands and natural resources of indigenous peoples, measures should be taken to ensure that the land and territorial security of affected

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populations and their customary rights of use and access to natural resources are not adversely affected (ibid.: 7-8).

Recommended measures include “regularization of customary rights and/or compensation arrangements…to avoid, minimize or mitigate such impacts”. OD4.20 also stipulates that all Bank-funded projects that affect indigenous peoples must contain a special Indigenous Peoples’ Development Plan, which must include a land tenure component that establishes indigenous titles to ancestral lands and resources – a stipulation that itself required the creation of national legal frameworks to grant such titles. Finally, the directive indicates the Bank’s intention to provide funding and technical assistance to Borrower Countries in the process of indigenous land regularisation.

These safeguards appeared at a time when the World Bank was promoting the privatisation of hydrocarbons and mining industries in numerous developing countries, as well as providing loans for extractive industry projects (Griffiths, 2000). In the context of such projects, indigenous land rights have various functions. First, the clarification of property rights in areas with large numbers of indigenous people who have been excluded from previous agrarian reforms provides essential juridical security for investment capital (also Bryan, 2012). Second, clarifying the boundaries of indigenous claims is seen to enhance the governability of territories earmarked for extraction, “[reducing] the risk that tribal people will suffer from the project’s consequences or disrupt its implementation” (OD2.34, cited in Davis, 1993: 5). It would also enable private companies to “clarify their roles and responsibilities where indigenous communities are affected by their activities” (Davis et al., 1998: 9-10). The fact that indigenous land rights were embraced by multilateral agencies at a time when their territories and resources (titled or not) were becoming increasingly integrated into transnational capitalist circuits makes them highly ambivalent (Bryan, 2012; Hale, 2002, 2006). Hale describes World Bank funding for indigenous land titling as “a Faustian bargain: recognition of multicultural rights in return for endorsement, implicit or otherwise, of the broader political project of neoliberalism” (2006: 110).
Although I would question whether indigenous peoples endorsed neoliberalism in claiming territorial rights, Hale’s comment hints at what was at stake here; not only the governability of extraction, but the legitimacy of the neoliberal development model. The Bank’s growing commitment to indigenous land rights occurred against a backdrop of critique from activists, social movements, indigenous organisations, and academics, who pointed to the damaging impacts of its policy prescriptions, both on indigenous peoples and on society more broadly. In doing so, they contributed towards bringing about a broader shift towards a more socially-oriented, participatory and pre-emptive development agenda. Along with “participation” and “empowerment”, “social capital” was one of the buzzwords of this new approach. The concept was taken up in discussions of ethnodevelopment, in ways that emphasised how “traditional values and structures includ[ing] collective control and sustainable development of natural resources [could] play an important role in providing economic security” for indigenous peoples (Hall and Patrinos, 2012: 7; also Andolina et al., 2009: Chapter 2).

The reference to natural resource governance points to another key framing for discussions of indigenous land rights in global development policy during this period. From its inception, support for indigenous land rights was linked to indigenous peoples’ perceived role in biodiversity conservation (Stevens, 1997; Conklin and Graham, 1995). The third countermovement relevant to this account, then, is the global environmental movement, which emerged during the 1970s (Bakker, 2010). Rather than bringing about a shift away from environmentally-destructive forms of development, this produced a proliferation of conservation areas to preserve the most fragile or valuable environments from destruction (Harris and Hazen, 2006). However, conservation areas – which, like their colonial predecessors, were predicated on the assumption that saving nature meant excluding people – soon produced their own countermovement. From the 1980s, academics and activists documented the detrimental effects of exclusionary conservation.

53 This development agenda has been variously termed as “roll-out neoliberalism” (Peck and Tickell, 2002), the “post-Washington consensus” (various), “social neoliberalism” (Andolina et al., 2009), “pre-emptive” development (Sooderberg, 2004) and “soft neoliberalism” (Hindery, 2013). Rather than assessing the relative merits of these terms, my interest here is in locating the shifts they identify within a Polanyian analysis of contemporary global capitalist governance (Hart, 2010; Li, 2007), and bringing indigenous land rights into this framework.

54 Social capital is used to refer to the positive role played by social networks and cooperation in development (Andolina et al, 2009: Chapter 2).
on local populations, claiming they denied indigenous peoples’ rights, evicted them from their homelands and provoked long-term social conflict (Colchester, 2004; Adams and Hutton, 2007; Negi and Nautiyal, 2003). Furthermore, it was argued that this approach backfired from a conservation perspective, reducing peoples’ long-term stewardship of land (World Wildlife Fund, cited in Colchester, 2004: 147).

These critiques produced a paradigmatic shift in conservation, towards an approach that sees development needs of local populations as compatible with, and complementary to, the achievement of conservation goals (Marquette, 1996; Rights and Resources Initiative, 2012). In this context, the 1980s and 1990s saw an explosion of policy and academic discourse on the links between indigenous peoples and biodiversity. Some of this interest came from the environmental movement, reflecting early engagements between conservationists and indigenous movements (Conklin and Graham, 1995; Davis and Wali, 1993; Engle, 2010).

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission’s report *Our Common Future* connected indigenous peoples with the Earth’s sustainability because of their unique environmental knowledge. This argument was reiterated at the UN’s 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, which – coinciding with the 1992 Quincentennial of Columbus’s landing – recognised indigenous peoples as a “Major Group” that should participate in sustainable development (Colchester, 2004: 148). The 1992 Global Biodiversity Strategy, emerging from the Summit, included in its ten principles for biodiversity conservation the notion that:

> Cultural diversity is closely linked to biodiversity. Humanity’s collective knowledge of biodiversity and its use and management rests in cultural diversity; conversely, conserving biodiversity often helps strengthen cultural integrity and values (World Resources Institute et al., 1992: 21).

Similarly, a 1993 World Bank report noted:

> Increasing awareness on the part of the Bank and other development agencies that environmentally sustainable development will not come about unless indigenous and other

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55 The imaginary of indigenous peoples as “guardians of nature” has a long history, reflecting the continuing resurfacing of anxieties about modernity in Western societies (Wade, 2004).
traditional peoples are brought into the effort to solve the world’s urgent environmental problem. (Davis, 1993: 14)

Reflecting this, a new Social Policy and Resettlement Division within the Bank’s Environmental Department was tasked with developing new guidelines for increasing indigenous peoples’ participation in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation (Marquette, 1996).

This new discourse hinged on the idea that indigenous environmental knowledge and traditional resource management practices could be harnessed towards the achievement of conservation goals that would benefit not only indigenous peoples but all of humanity. The links between culture and conservation were elaborated in an extensive literature on “ethnoecology”, an approach which aimed “to recognize the value of the belief-knowledge practice complex of indigenous peoples in relation to the conservation of biodiversity” (Toledo, 2002: 7). These links were further explored through a variety of mapping projects, which highlighted the “striking spatial overlap” between indigenous peoples and biodiversity (Marquette, 1996). In the context of this new discourse, land rights were justified as a prerequisite for realising indigenous peoples’ potential as natural resource managers. Secure collective land rights, it was argued, would “encourage indigenous communities to protect their lands, especially against outside encroachments” (Davis and Wali, 1993: 11); conversely, without such rights, “indigenous groups [would] face pressure to degrade the land left to them in order to survive” (ibid.: 8). Conservation organisations supported these moves, with the added incentive that land rights were often a prerequisite in market-based conservation and development schemes.

In the above account, I have argued that global support for indigenous land rights in the 1990s was a product both of governmental efforts to manage social tensions resulting from (and anticipated in) ongoing processes of capital accumulation, and of indigenous peoples’ ability to exploit the resulting political openings to articulate historically-grounded demands for territorial rights. Without losing sight of indigenous peoples’ agency in these processes, framing indigenous land rights in the context of global neoliberal governmentality raises critical doubts about their decolonising potential. Some of these doubts relate to the claim that “neoliberal multiculturalism” offered recognition without redistribution (Hale 2002, 2005, 2006; Postero, 2007; Gustafson,
2009, see Introduction). Yet, the above account also goes beyond existing discussions of cultural rights, by placing indigenous land rights in the context of emergent forms of neoliberal territorial governance, which were bound up with the environmental countermovement. As I have highlighted, indigenous territories were envisaged as bounded spaces of ethnic difference and “traditional” (non-market) livelihoods within a broader landscape earmarked for marketisation.

Yet, how successful were TCOs as a means of “spatialising race” (Moore, 2005)? In subsequent chapters, I reveal how these expectations for indigenous territories and communities unravelled in the face of the social and material realities of postcolonial territory (Chapters 3 and 4), and the reterritorializing effects of extractive industry development (Chapter 5). As such, I consider the effects of TCO titling in Itika Guasu in relation to two key contexts: the Guaraníes’ quest for “recovering territory”; and the imaginaries of global development policy makers who endorsed recognition of indigenous territorial rights.

**National articulations: the making of TCOs**

First, I examine how the two processes described above – grassroots indigenous resurgence, and global policy convergence around indigenous land rights – came together in Bolivia to produce a new national process for mapping, designating, and awarding title to collective indigenous territories, as Communal Lands of Origin (TCOs). Indigenous peoples were the key protagonists in bringing this about. Parallel to the local and global processes described above, a national indigenous movement was gaining momentum in Bolivia, with “territory” emerging as a central demand. In 1987, just as the Guaraní of Itika Guasu were beginning to organise, the lowland indigenous umbrella organisation COICA (which became CIDOB) elaborated a first draft of a proposed Indigenous Law. Drawing on ILO Convention 169, the document called for recognition of the legal personality56 of indigenous peoples and protection of their collective rights, including recognition of their forms of government, social organisation, and customary legal systems; the right to preserve and develop their culture and ethnic identity; the right to

56 This is a juridical term, which refers to the capability of having legal rights and duties within a certain legal system.
hold land collectively; and the right to political participation (Van de Cott, 2000: 136). It further outlined indigenous peoples’ right to “cultural, political and administrative autonomy within their territorial jurisdiction” (ibid.). While the proposed law was an important unifying programmatic document for the nascent lowland indigenous movement (Paredes and Canedo, 2008: 35), translating it into state law was no simple matter. When the draft proposal was formally presented to Bolivian National Congress in 1992, it was quickly dismissed.

Alongside this legal advocacy, the 1990s saw a series of national mobilisations by lowland indigenous peoples. The first was the 40-day “March for Territory and Dignity” of June 1990. Catalysed by logging concessions in Amazon indigenous territories and led by the Mojeño people of Beni Department (Lehm Ardaya, 1999; Paredes and Canedo, 2008), the march demanded recognition of indigenous territorial claims, as well as respect for their traditional uses and customs, and for intercultural bilingual education. Five leaders from Itika Guasu participated in the march (APDHT, 1990: 2), alongside representatives from other Guarani territories and from the national APG leadership. Following the march, the President Paz Zamora met with indigenous leaders and signed Presidential Decrees recognising nine indigenous territorial claims – although without any legal instrument for titling this land to indigenous claimants. Beyond this achievement, the 1990 march visibilised indigenous territorial demands to a broader national audience; “Territorio became an icon of indigenous-state relations” (Postero, 2007:49). In 1992, CIDOB organised a second national indigenous march to coincide with the 500 Years of Resistance Campaign, celebrated throughout the hemisphere to mark five centuries of indigenous resistance to Spanish colonial rule. This led to the issuing of eight more Presidential Decrees recognising indigenous territorial claims (Deere and Leon, 2002: 65). This coincided with a national Guarani mobilisation to mark the centenary of the Battle of Kuruyuki, which saw more than 7,000 Guarani delegates march through the ancient battlefield (Gustafson 2009: 38). A further national march followed in 1996 (discussed below).

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57 Although Presidential Decrees in theory have the force of law, they have an exceptional status as an expression of the President’s final judgment in a particular case. As such, these Decrees did not provide any legal guarantee that other indigenous territorial claims would be recognised by the Bolivian state, nor did they establish the general principle of indigenous peoples’ territorial rights under Bolivian Law.
National indigenous activism was articulated and co-produced with the local and global processes described above; it amplified local demands for territory, drew on transnational ethnodevelopment discourses and networks, and formed part of broader social countermovements under neoliberalism. As part of this broader complex of social forces, the indigenous movement reshaped the terrain of Bolivian cultural politics, and accelerated the implementation of multicultural state reforms, which were simultaneously being pushed on the Bolivian government by international development donors under the rubric of “social neoliberalism” (Andolina et al., 2009). In 1991, in the wake of CIDOB’s first national march, the government of Paz Zamora ratified ILO Convention 169. This provided a crucial reference point for indigenous territorial demands, which the Convention directs governments to recognise under state law (articles 7 and 13-19). Two years later, the Bolivian Constitution was reformed to recognise the “pluricultural and multiethnic” character of the Bolivian state (Article 1) and the territorial and cultural rights of indigenous peoples (Article 171). In 1994, a new Education Law incorporated intercultural bilingual education into state policy (Gustafson, 2009). The same year, the Law of Popular Participation opened new spaces for indigenous participation in municipal governance (Postero, 2007).

Translating indigenous demands for “territory” into state law proved more contentious. Indeed, when President Gonzalo (“Goni”) Sanchez de Lozada took office in 1993, he rejected the Presidential Decrees signed by his predecessor, declaring them “unconstitutional” (Paredes and Canedo, 2008: 35). Yet, despite the continuing recalcitrance of national elites, neoliberal state restructuring had already opened a new political space for debating indigenous territorial demands. In 1992, under pressure from the World Bank to reform its defunct and inefficient agrarian institutions in line with market-led reform, Paz Zamora’s government opened a four-year national debate (1992-96) about the content of a new agrarian reform law (the INRA Law), a process that was overseen and financed by the World Bank through its National Project for Land Administration (World Bank, 2001).58

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58 Although this project officially commenced in 1995, project documents affirm that “since 1992, the Bank has maintained an intense policy dialogue on land tenure and administration with the [Bolivian] Government” (World Bank, 2001: 3).
Secondary accounts of this national debate point to the conflicting visions of agrarian development and rights that existed within global development institutions, within the Bolivian state, and within national society during this period. In the case of global development institutions, some Bolivian observers suggest that they were only interested in promoting a market-led model of agrarian development (Urioste and Pacheco, 1999; interview A35). Yet, as noted above, by the 1990s elements within the World Bank were explicitly promoting indigenous land titling within the framework of ethnodevelopment. World Bank project documents make clear that this influenced the creation of a legislative framework for recognising and titling indigenous land claims under the INRA Law. In fact, the Bank describes its interventions in Bolivia in the mid-1990s as designed both “to respond to the demands of campesino and indigenous movements” (2001: 2) and to promote market-led development, given that “pressure continues for [land titling, including TCO titling] to be completed in the fertile areas of eastern Bolivia as a way of promoting economic growth” (Ibid: 3). The document also advocates indigenous land rights on environmental grounds, arguing that “the titling of TCOs in eastern Bolivia is putting limits on the expansion of un-managed, illegal extraction of forest resources” (5). Indeed, additional Bank funding for TCO titling was targeted to strengthen these environmental benefits, by giving an “improved treatment” to “i) protection of cultural property; and ii) demarcation of protected areas adjacent to or within an area of titling” (Ibid.: 5). The Danish development agency DANIDA, which emerged as the major funder of legal and cartographic procedures for titling TCOs, advocated indigenous land rights on similar grounds:

The autonomous management of territory [by indigenous peoples] should facilitate a greater identification and more sustainable management of their own resources. In terms of the protection of the environment, the titling of TCOs permits indigenous peoples and communities to police [vigilar] and denounce social, cultural or environmental impacts that the exploitation of resources in their environment could give rise to (DANIDA, 2005: 23–24, my translation).

Like the World Bank, DANIDA highlighted the compatibility between indigenous land rights and market-led development, citing the importance of a more transparent and efficient system of property rights for transnational companies investing in oil and gas.
exploitation in Bolivia (ibid.: 15). As such, while international donors played a key role in supporting indigenous land rights at this crucial moment, this support was distinctly double-edged. As I discuss below, these capitalist agendas placed particular limitations on the attributes of TCOs.

As noted, national state actors tended to be less supportive of indigenous land claims, viewing them as a threat to state sovereignty and to the integrity of the nation. Tomás (the former ACLO intern), who worked in the newly-created INRA during this period, claimed that President Sanchez de Lozada and members of his government were particularly hostile to the Guaraníes’ collective territorial claim:

[Critics within the government argued]: “All this Chaco is Guaraní; you could see the dismemberment of the country as such” and that gave rise to a lot of fear…don’t forget that the INRA Law came out under a neoliberal government, and there was a lot of fear. It fell to us, a group of around thirty young employees, to fight for it. We met with the President [Sanchez de Lozada] and he always said… [he puts on a strong gringo accent]: “Isn’t there a danger that the country will divide? Because the Guaraníes are still going to be down there [in Argentina and Paraguay] and what will happen?” Because they already had information that there are hydrocarbons here [in Tarija] so it was like, the Guaraníes [could] ask for a territory, and then they [could] end up with the hydrocarbons and they make another country…there are maybe 96 countries in the world smaller than what the Guaraníes [claimed]. Under this internal political concept, of maintaining national sovereignty, they said: “They’re asking us for a lot” (interview A35).

This passage powerfully portrays how national interests in the Chaco’s hydrocarbons wealth, combined with colonial discourses that placed the Guaraní on the fringes of the Bolivian nation-state, combined to construct their territorial claim as a threat to the nation’s integrity. Instead of inscribing state sovereignty over indigenous lands, this US-educated President seemed to fear that titling Guaraní territory would have the effect of 

unmaking

the Bolivian nation. Above all, this quotation implies an underlying fear that indigenous demands for “territory” included more far-reaching aspirations for indigenous autonomy – a fear that was in fact well-founded.

At the same time, the above quotation illustrates that state actors were far from homogenous in their stance on indigenous land rights; Tomás refers to “thirty young
employees” actively pushing for their recognition. As he went on to explain, this was a product of the involvement (including through financial support) of international development actors like DANIDA, which hired new staff, giving rise to ideological conflicts within the state:

In INRA there were technical teams with a very…neoliberal vision, very….of creating a land market in Bolivia. And there were those of us who were frowned upon within the process, who were the counterweight to that, those of us who had a vision that the indigenous peoples should have TCOs. They called us bad names….at one point we were a majority….because Denmark gave money to us. Of course, [it was] for the indigenous peoples, wasn’t it? It was much more interesting to finance the indigenous populations, wasn’t it? So there were more of us. Later, [the government] started to introduce other teams with other criteria.

This further illustrates how the different actors, scales and processes described in this chapter were deeply entangled in practice. As such, the construction of a framework for recognising indigenous land claims rested on contingent articulations rather than a pre-established model of neoliberal multiculturalism. Nevertheless, Tomás’s account verifies the existence of a neoliberal governmental vision of indigenous territories as a protective measure against the destructive effects of the marketisation (unleashed by other aspects of the INRA Law); as he put it:

We invented a law, a regulation, and in that regulation you can see the legal terms of the system, of the neoliberals, who were in favour of opening a land market, and also, a lot of fuss: “Listen, we have to see how the indigenous people will access that, respecting for them one class of property….so that the system doesn’t end up buying it from them”. So they designed what ended up being the Communal Lands of Origin, with the characteristics of being irreversible, unseizable, etc.

While echoing both Hale’s (2002) and Li’s (2007b) arguments about the relationship between indigenous land rights and neoliberalism, this statement suggests that, as a “territorial fix” (Bryan, 2010), indigenous territories were less a neoliberal conspiracy than a product of negotiation and compromise between actors pursuing distinct development visions. As noted, indigenous peoples were prominent actors in these processes.
A range of Bolivian social actors also weighed into the national 1992-6 debate in defence of their own interests and visions of agrarian development. Urioste (1999) summarises the actors involved as: lowland indigenous peoples; indigenous-peasants of the (highland) altiplano and valleys; small coloniser peasant owners; small, medium and large entrepreneurs; and latifundio owners of idle land (see Appendix 2 for full descriptions). He claims that highland peasants demanded a range of tenure options (communal and household) and the redistribution of unproductive large estates in the east, rejecting a market-based model of agrarian development – a position shared by small peasant colonists. On the other hand, representatives of organizations of large landowners endorsed the neoliberal vision of a “free land market”, arguing for private property, legal security, access to credit and productive investment. They fiercely rejected the state’s right to expropriate and redistribute unproductive large estates. All these agrarian actors expressed their demands through social mobilisation and civic activism, as well as through participation in the formal debate (Canedo, 2007; Viceministerio de Tierras, 2008; Deere and Leon, 2002).

Fearing that the state would cede to pressure from powerful landowner organisations, the indigenous movement also stepped up its efforts, staging a third national march – the “March for Territory, Land, Political Participation and Development” – in August 1996, as the INRA Law was being debated in Congress. More than two thousand lowland indigenous people participated, as well as representatives of several peasant organisations, united in opposition to a market-based model of land reform. The marchers demanded the titling of indigenous territories already recognised by Presidential Decree and the rapid promulgation of the INRA Law, which they demanded should include procedures for the titling of new indigenous territories, a guarantee of indigenous claimants’ exclusive rights over natural resources, and mechanisms of social control over land distribution (CERDET, 2004b: 20-21). Following the march, CIDOB presented the government with thirty-three territorial claims (Almaraz, 2002). These were cartographically represented and discursively justified in documents produced during early indigenous counter-mapping efforts (Chapter 2) – or, in some cases, put together in haste prior to the march (interview A36). These included nineteen claims from the Guarani, which had a combined area of 10,385,945 hectares,
representing 81.3% of the Bolivian Chaco (Guzman et al., 2008). Among these was the territorial claim of the Itika Guasu.

I have described in some detail the social context of the INRA Law’s elaboration, because this had significant implications for the nature of the territories that indigenous peoples would be granted. As other accounts have noted, owing to the confluence of pressures and influences described above, the INRA Law combined multiple and contradictory logics. It has been described as a “transitory and ambivalent resolution” (Almaraz, 2003), the result of an “unstable equilibrium” between conflicting sectoral interests (Urioste and Pacheco, 1999), and “an unusual combination of neoliberal and social justice measures” (Deere and Leon, quoted in Gustafson 2002: 17). While echoing these observations, my account emphasises in particular the ambivalences and contradictions these uncertain compromises created for indigenous claimants.

Guzmán et al. provide a useful summary of the INRA Law’s three main currents (2008: 12). First, responding to the demands of Andean peasant organisations, it reaffirms central principals of the 1953 agrarian reform: the social function of property; the state’s obligation to support smallholdings (including those of new settlers), and the state’s right to expropriate lands not being used productively for redistribution to landless groups. The second current they identify is a neoliberal element, orientated at promoting the commodification of land and the consolidation of private property, as the basis for a market-driven model of agrarian development. 59 Finally, and most important for this account, the INRA Law recognised indigenous claims for land rights through the creation of TCOs (Communal Lands of Origin) as a new category of agrarian property. Drawing on ILO Convention 169, and reflecting broader logics of ethnodevelopment, TCOs are classified as:

The geographical spaces that constitute the habitat of indigenous and originary peoples and communities, to which they have traditionally had access and where they maintain and develop their own forms of economic, social and cultural organisation in a way that guarantees their survival and development. They are inalienable, indivisible, irreversible and collective, composed

59 This was reflected in the creation of an Agrarian Superintendence, charged with the task of fixing land prices, and the payment of taxes as a precondition for demonstration of productive land use.
of communities or groups of communities, exempt from seizure and imprescriptible (Article 41.5).

The indigenous movement celebrated the creation of TCOs as the first time in history that the Bolivian state had recognised indigenous territories (Paredes and Canedo, 2008: 36). Yet, critics were quick to point out the numerous ways in which TCOs fell short of indigenous peoples’ demands for territory. First, and most important, was the question of private property claims within TCOs. Responding to pressure from landowner organisations, the INRA Law stipulates that all private property claims within TCOs will be recognised and titled, provided they fulfil an Economic Social Function – that is, provided land is used productively. This applies not only to third parties already in possession of a land title, but also those who did not previously have land rights, provided they have possessed the land they are claiming for more than two years. As such, the INRA Law puts indigenous claimants in a position of inferior right compared to private claimants (Almaraz, 2003). In theory, indigenous peoples are to be compensated for these territorial losses through the allocation of state land, adjacent to the TCO or, where this is unavailable, through forced sale of private properties (“expropriation”); however, this has not happened in practice (Paredes and Canedo, 2008: 36-7).

Beyond its implications for the results of land titling, this prioritisation of private land claims violated the principle, established in ILO Convention 169, of indigenous peoples’ pre-existing rights to their territories. As two authors from CIDOB put it:

By not recognising the pre-existing indigenous rights to areas subject to SAN-TCO, the indigenous claimants remain, in the titling of their own territories, in a position of inferior rights to any legal possessor. In this way, the commitment of the Bolivian state to recognise the right of indigenous peoples to their TCOs, incorporated in the Constitution, in [the state’s] subscription to and ratification of ILO Convention 169, and in the adoption of the INRA Law itself, loses all effectiveness (ibid.: 21, my translation; see also Almaraz, 2003).

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60 Under the INRA Law, medium and large properties must fulfil an Economic Social Function (FES), small properties and peasant plots automatically fulfil a Social Function. Properties that do not fulfil the FES are to be reverted to the state and awarded to indigenous TCO claimants. The parameters for defining the FES were subject to continuing debate following the promulgation of the INRA Law.

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In seeking to balance indigenous territorial demands with private property claims, critics accused the state of mistaking indigenous peoples’ demand for territory as a *political right*, to be respected by other peoples, as a demand for property a *civil right*, shared with other Bolivian citizens (García Hierro, 2004: 280).

A related issue of contention was the creation of official Spatial Needs Identification Studies (EINEs, discussed further in Chapter 2). Because EINEs initially enabled the state to redefine the area of TCO claims, they soon came to be seen by indigenous organisations as an “instrument of amputation” (Almaraz, 2003: 33). Furthermore, the area recommended by EINEs was in practice often influenced by the existence of economic interests of private companies or the state in areas of claimed TCO land (ibid.).

Tomás, who worked in INRA at the time, described EINEs as “a legal barbarity” invented to reduce the size of indigenous territories (interview A35). Similarly, CIDOB complained that EINEs undermined the basic purpose of TCOs – recognising indigenous land rights – because they reduced territories based on the logic that “it’s the state who determines the quantity of land that indigenous peoples should be awarded” (CIBOB-CPTI, 2000: 42). EINEs were “a trap for indigenous peoples” because they undermined the ancestral nature of indigenous rights, failed to incorporate indigenous critiques of their methodology of calculation (viewed as out of sync with indigenous understandings of territory), wasted scarce funding for TCO land titling and represented yet another study of indigenous peoples which delayed recognition of their land rights (ibid.: 43). In fact, indigenous peoples were so angered by, and distrustful of, these studies that, in 1998, CIDOB led a mobilisation calling for their annulment. Although the completion of EINEs went ahead (funding for this having already been allocated) their legal power to define territorial boundaries was withdrawn from the legal norm (interview A36), an illustration of indigenous peoples’ agency in the face of these neoliberal efforts to limit and condition their territorial rights.

Yet, this was not always possible. A third key way in which TCOs fell short of indigenous demands for territory was in the fact that they excluded indigenous rights to the subsoil – an explicit demand of the indigenous movement, expressed in the 1991

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61 Indigenous peoples appear to have anticipated this; according to CIDOB, the territories demanded during the 1996 march, which summed 23 million hectares, were elaborated on the basis that they would be greatly reduced (Paredes and Canedo, 2008: 37).
proposed Indigenous Law. Under the INRA Law, the subsoil remains patrimony of the Bolivian state, as stipulated in the Bolivian Constitution, giving the state rights to exploit mineral and hydrocarbons resources within TCOs. The state’s unwillingness to cede sovereignty over strategic subsoil resources is a clear reflection of the state’s fears of indigenous resource sovereignty and autonomy claims. More broadly, this illustrates how the INRA Law – despite giving a discursive nod to indigenous peoples’ project for decolonising territory – was consistent with, and instrumental to, a historical process of state territorialisation, predicated on the incorporation of frontier territories and their natural resources into national development. The severing of the subsoil from indigenous territories also reflects a profoundly neoliberal view of nature as “a unique object that can be atomized into bits to be owned” (Mansfield, 2007: 401) – in this case, land by indigenous peoples and subsoil resources by the state and, by proxy, transnational companies. As Chapter 5 describes, the result was that many newly-recognised TCOs simultaneously became sites of hydrocarbons development, the complex land-based infrastructure of which belied such a neat parcelling off of land from subsoil rights.

Together these critiques gave rise to the accusation that TCOs offered indigenous peoples “land and not territory” (Hierro and Surrallés, 2004; Paredes and Canedo, 2008): 36 – a phrase that is still repeated today by indigenous leaders in Tarija. As CERDET elaborated the distinction:

A fundamental fact for understanding indigenous demands is that territory is much more than land, it’s a space of economic reproduction but also a space for symbolic appropriation, which has a lot of meaning for indigenous cultures and entails the integrated nature of resources. For that reason, when communities speak of territories, they don’t speak of the awarding of land but of spaces containing lands, trees, rivers, lakes, that is, the ensemble of resources that corresponds to their strategies of survival (2004: 24, my translation).

This integral nature of territory was articulated in CIDOB’s 1991 Proposed Indigenous Law. As one activist described, in it, “indigenous territory is a totality...all the rights that are ascribed to territory fit into a single cup”, whereas the INRA Law “gives you

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rights over the land and nothing else” (interview A34). A female indigenous leader conveyed the distinction even more powerfully, arguing:

> We’re not asking the government for lands, we’re asking that they give us papers – titles – recognising our rights to our territory, where our ancestors lived, where we currently live, and where our children will live (cited in CIDOB-CPTI, 2000: 12).

These limitations and critiques to illustrate that TCOs were an ambivalent instrument for decolonising territory from the outset. That is, even before the titling process began, the legal elaboration of TCOs had placed important limits on indigenous territorial claims, modifying the logics and visions of territory articulated by the indigenous movement. As I have argued, these limits were a product of the confluence of interests, influences and power relations involved in the national debate from which the INRA Law emerged: pressure by landowner organisations ensured a protection of private property; state fears of a gas-rich “Guarani nation” closed down discussion of subsoil ownership; the severing of land from forest, sky and subsoil was engineered through internationally-funded reform processes guided by a neoliberal vision of commodified nature.

Activists and NGO staff I interviewed tended to be pragmatic about these limitations, arguing that the INRA Law represented “the limit of possibility” of a particular political moment. As Mario, CERDET’s former Director, put it:

> [SAN-TCO] has many, many limitations, but it’s what is possible. If I learned anything in all this process, it’s that you have to play with what’s possible. Don’t you? So, it’s what’s possible and you have to carry on advancing (interview A27).

Similarly, Tomás emphasised the urgency of advancing within these limits of possibility, in a context in which indigenous peoples had faced new territorial incursions: “the strategy was: grab what they could now and from that point, afterwards, fight, but that they would already have something” (interview A35). This illustrates indigenous peoples’ and other social actors’ capacity to exercise agency within the limits of a neoliberal governance agenda (Postero, 2007; Ferguson, 2010). As subsequent chapters
detail, however, not all indigenous peoples shared this perspective; rather, many claimed they were unaware at the time of the implications these political-legal compromises would have for their territorial claims.

This thesis is not, however, just about how inherent legal limitations of SAN-TCO played out in practice – a “chronicle of a death foretold” for indigenous territorial claims – but also about how social and political context continued to play a central role in defining territorial outcomes, beyond (and sometimes against) what legal norms stipulated. Indeed, legal norms were themselves subject to continuing contestation and modification (discussed in subsequent chapters). As a prelude to this discussion, and to further illustrate the ambivalence of TCOs’ creation within a neoliberal reform agenda, I conclude this chapter by describing the contingent and ambivalent articulations that secured the legal recognition of Bolivia’s first TCOs.

Towards recognition of the first TCO claims

Despite the concessions noted above, the promulgation of the INRA Law did not bring an immediate recognition of indigenous territorial claims. In 1997, just a year after the law was passed, the future of TCOs was suddenly thrown into doubt by the election of a new President: the 71-year old right-wing former dictator Hugo Banzer Suárez. As Tomás explained:

[Banzer] came with clear intentions…of overturning the whole process that they’d started with the issue of the demands of the Communal Lands of Origin. For them, the concept was very clear: the Communal Lands of Origin shouldn’t be titled, they should be reverted… [we should] do a re-evaluation of how much land the communities really need, and if a community is productive, award [land], but they weren’t going to give land to a load of lazy people who don’t do anything. …as many of Banzer’s ministers in the ’70s said: “We should put the highland Indians in overalls and boots so they look cleaner”. There wasn’t any respect for cosmovision, culture – nothing; it was a concept of production, work and “Why do they need land?” (interview A35)

This quotation reveals the precariousness of indigenous gains in a context of chronic political instability and institutionalised racism. It also demonstrates how, despite the
state’s adoption of neoliberal values and multicultural discourse, also present were “sedimented discourses” from a previous “regime of rule” (Moore, 2005) – an assimilationist paradigm of citizenship, which framed agrarian reform as a tool for transforming savage Indians into civilised and productive peasants worthy of inclusion in the national community. Such views were at odds with the ethnodevelopment vision promoted by the World Bank and DANIDA. In this context, Tomás described, indigenous organisations were faced with “a kind of emergency”, in which the formal recognition of the first TCO seemed a matter of utmost urgency:

It was a moment of risk - truly, of risk. And we decided to get a title. And many….technicians or whatever, we met up in Santa Cruz and we chose [the territorial claim] of the Tapietes…because it was the first process completed. So the government knew that the Tapietes were on the point of being titled – a tiny territory [65,132 square miles], they were reconciled with the cattle ranchers, there was no trouble, there was nothing – it had to be titled (interview A35).

Despite the strategic selection – notably by non-indigenous technical advisors – of a well-advanced and relatively non-contentious TCO demand, these efforts were soon thwarted when the government invented a new process of “quality control” wherein the Geographical Military Institute was required to verify all of the measurements created by civil topographers. Faced with this laborious and irregular monitoring process – a precursor to EINEs – Tomás described how he and his colleagues opted to change tack, focusing instead on a TCO claimed by the Ayoreo people of Santa Cruz Department. The reason for their choice, he explained, was that this territory was already the site of a hydrocarbons project financed in part by the World Bank:

[The government] had made it clear that they wanted to stop the process, so just by chance they were constructing a gas pipeline from Bolivia to Brazil. And in the Bolivia-Brazil gas pipeline, they put together a compensation plan for indigenous peoples, because the gas pipeline was going to give $7 million in compensation money and the idea of not giving it to the indigenous peoples… they didn’t do it because it would have brought conflict….From this money came a plan. This plan has a Land Programme, which was the strongest part. And the Bolivian

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63 See Hindery, 2013 for details of this project, which involved irregular dealings between oil giants Shell and Enron, and President Sanchez de Lozada, who took office in 1993 (see Hindery, 2013).
government was obliged in the agreement of the gas pipeline to advance with the land titling process within a year.

With this in mind, Tomás and his colleagues at the Indigenous Institute worked with the Ayoreo organisation to rapidly elaborate a TCO claim:

Six months later we presented [4 TCO demands] of the Ayoreos to the [Presidential] Palace. Banzer refused to sign them and the Ayoreos marched to La Paz and carried out marches and blockades in Santa Cruz …but in addition to this, the oil company demanded that the World Bank get involved, because it was a [World Bank] loan, and [the WB] said [to Banzer]: “You’re obliged [to sign the title]”, so Banzer says: “What should I do?” He signed two, two of the four Ayoreo titles, and the other two we kept in reserve. And that’s his strategy; he says: “We’ll sign two and then later we’ll annul them”, because he hadn’t signed four.

However, under continuing indigenous pressure, recognition of other TCO claims was quick to follow:

After signing those, the first TCO titles in Bolivia, that was what opened the way – with the most…let’s say complicated government…the other two [Ayoreo titles] were demanded under pressure from the Ayoreos themselves – the indigenous peoples rose up once again, they demanded [the government] sign the other two [titles], and due to those two, another 74 titles for the Chiquitanos. At that point [the government] forgot about that Tapiete quality control process and titled the Tapietes 5 new titles…and they started to abandon the ideology of denying land to the indigenous peoples, because someone said [to Banzer]: “It’s strategic for your image before the World Bank and the international community”…And look at that, the Dictator is the one who ends up awarding the first TCO titles.

This previously undocumented account of how the first TCO titles in Bolivia came to be recognised demonstrates a number of important points. First, as noted above, following the elaboration of legal norms, the progress of territorial claims continued to be shaped by the power dynamics of the broader political context. The legal recognition and policy elaboration of TCOs was clearly no guarantee of implementation in practice. Second, transnational capitalist agendas for natural resource extraction in TCOs were not just a backdrop to global discussions on indigenous land rights; they were also an on-the-ground reality that shaped the law’s implementation. Furthermore, rather than being
duped into occupying double-edged neoliberal spaces (Hale, 2002), this account suggests that indigenous peoples and their advisers *knowingly* exploited transnational capitalist agendas in order to overcome resistance from a hostile elite-led government. This provides an illustration of Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) “boomerang” model, used to describe how indigenous movements bring international pressure to bear on domestic elites (also Brysk, 2000). Yet, rather than being “reloaded” in a transnational arena (Andolina et al., 2009), this boomerang was “loaded” from the outset. Whereas Hale worried that indigenous peoples accepting World Bank funding for land titling provided “implicit endorsement” for a neoliberal extractivist model (2006: 110), the reality was that extraction was *already underway* – with or without indigenous peoples’ endorsement, and with or without their territorial rights. This reinforces the fact that indigenous territorial struggles did not take place in conditions of indigenous peoples’ choosing.

A further insight from this story is that transnational companies and international financial institutions were ahead of the Bolivian state in recognising indigenous land rights and were important actors in territorial governance by the 1990s. Indeed, in parallel to indigenous-NGO counter-mapping efforts, the demarcation of indigenous lands was occurring in the context of numerous infrastructure projects funded by international donors – particularly the World Bank, for whom indigenous land rights were among the “safeguards” theoretically required, although not always applied, for all projects it financed (Griffiths, 2000). Above all, this chapter has illustrated that TCOs were created – largely thanks to indigenous peoples’ own mobilising efforts – in a context of neoliberal territorial restructuring and continuing national elite hostility to indigenous territorial claims. Not only did this ambivalent context come to bear on the legal attributes of TCOs, but it continued to constitute the political terrain for their implementation. I now turn to examine how this postcolonial and neoliberal context came to bear on the cartographic processes involved in the construction of TCO claims.

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64 For example, the World Bank’s five-year (1990-95) “Eastern Lowlands Project” in Bolivia, designed to promote soya production, cattle ranching and road-building, contained a special “indigenous component”, including plans for demarcating and securing indigenous territories (Griffiths, 2000).
Chapter 2: Mapping territory: the limits of postcolonial geography

In the previous chapter, I described the articulations and negotiations involved in the policy and legal creation of TCOs, and the concessions this process implied for indigenous claimants of “territory”. Before exploring the dynamics and results of TCO titling (Chapters 3-5), this chapter examines another arena within which territory was being negotiated, conditioned and produced. Focusing on local counter-mapping efforts in Itika Guasu during the early 1990s, I argue that even before indigenous territorial claims were subject to a state-led titling process, the ways in which they were delimited, justified and represented were conditioned by the logics and languages of postcolonial geography, as well as by the power relations involved in NGO activism.

I did not initially envisage writing a chapter on the mapping of territory. Indeed, when I began my research in TCO Itika Guasu, I took the existence of the territory for granted. As my research progressed, however, I began to realise that “TCO Itika Guasu” is not a natural, pre-given geographical category, but rather a particular territorial production, emerging from specific “historical-geographical processes and power relations” (Sparke, 2005: xiv; see also Lefebvre, 1991; Brenner and Elden, 2009). Although this process is often obscured in NGO and APG accounts of the land struggle, an enquiry into the cartographic and discursive processes through which indigenous territories in Bolivia were produced raises important critical questions regarding the ambivalent role of indigenous land titling in decolonisation. For example, what power relations, erasures, or concessions were involved in mapping indigenous territories?

In pursuing this question, this Chapter provides an original account of what was, in my view, a historically momentous and empirically under-researched process of reconfiguring identities and territories across the Bolivian lowlands – a process replicated in numerous Latin American contexts during the 1990s. Although the counter-mapping literature has provided important insights into these processes (although notably not in Bolivia), my research goes beyond existing accounts – which tend to focus on the methodologies and social effects of mapping65 – by highlighting the conditions placed on,

and exclusions involved in, the production of indigenous territories. Furthermore, by situting the discursive-cartographic production of TCOs within a larger story of asymmetrical engagements between indigenous decolonising projects and national and transnational governance agendas, I show how struggles over “cultural rights” were from the outset deeply intertwined with political conflicts over resource control, citizenship, and development.

Owing to scarce documentation, fading memories and limited Guaraní participation in the mapping process, this chapter relies heavily on the accounts of activists and NGO staff, alongside documentation recovered from CERDET’s archives. While I do not seek to privilege these perspectives, the fact that the most detailed accounts came from these actors is indicative of the power relations surrounding these maps’ production. Guaraní narratives of this period (discussed in Chapters 1 and 4) tend to focus on the broader process of social mobilisation and knowledge production of which these mapping efforts formed part – itself an important perspective on these processes, which I discuss below.

The chapter is structured as follows. I begin by describing early efforts at imagining and mapping ancestral territory in Itika Guasu, and the exclusions and modifications that took place as the APG IG and its allies adjusted their territorial claim to the logics of the state. I then describe the emergence of a new methodology for establishing and justifying territorial limits: indigenous spatial needs, which became subject to an intense discursive and political struggle between the indigenous movement and the state. A supplementary section (Appendix 3) provides a detailed analysis of the official Spatial Needs Identification Study for Itika Guasu, raising questions about the governmental implications of mapping territory, and the contradictory development visions invested in TCOs.

Mapping ancestral territory

The APG IG and NGOs began their first efforts at mapping territory in the early 1990s, after the issue of constructing a territorial demand was discussed in a series of meetings. As in other indigenous territories during this period (interview A34), initial mapping
efforts in Itika Guasu were oriented towards the reconstruction of “ancestral territory”.

As Mario, former Director of CERDET, remembers:

The most important criterion was historical, that is, where did their territory extend to?...because at that time – and this was to change later – the future of the communities was the past…there was a mythic dream of freedom, of abundance, where they emerge as owners of their lands, so you say: what we want isn’t to go forwards, we want to recover what we had….What did we have? We had all this territory (interview A27).

According to Celia, an activist who worked with CIDOB on numerous indigenous territorial demands during the 1990s, the focus on ancestral territory was informed by the language of ILO Convention 169, which defined indigenous territory in terms of indigenous peoples’ “traditional habitat”, giving rise to the question:

How do you identify this traditional habitat? How do you identify it? Place names were a central element. I remember that I fought hard for this issue, that to approach a historical dimension of what is territory, traditional habitat, place names helped enormously…Their history is tremendously translated in place names. When you speak of historical territory, the people say: “Over there, for example, that place, of course we don’t live there anymore but that’s what it’s called, in my language. The grandparents were there” (interview A34).

As Albó points out (1990: 33, 43), the Guaraníes’ historical migration patterns mean that the quest to identify a timeless ancestral territory is an act of imagination and political claim. This did not, however, prevent activists and indigenous organisations from mapping indigenous territories. A well as using Guarani place names, they relied heavily on colonial and missionary archives for evidence of historic land occupation:

The archives of the Franciscans, Jesuits, the governors…officials of the colonial empire also left their registers and that was also a documentation we started to use to formulate the territorial demand…so many demands started to have, let’s say, a package of documents, of archives, which said, which proved, what was the historical territory (interview A34).
In Itika Guasu, such colonial accounts and historical studies (Saînès, 2007; Pifarré, 1986) were used as evidence of ancestral occupation (VAIO and MACPIO, 2000), alongside the oral histories of community members (interview A27).

The resulting map of ancestral territory covered an area that far exceeded that currently occupied by Guaraní communities, incorporating cities and villages, and traversing provincial and departmental boundaries. As Mario described it:

The first map they made was huge. It included cities…everything. And that was on the basis of the old people, what they remembered. One said: “I, for example, before the hacienda came, I used to go to hunt up to that place”. Well, that’s part of the territory. “I used to go to fish up to that place”. “I remember that with my father I travelled…” – so there is an element of historical memory, you see? (interview A27).

Although I was unable to locate the map referred to above, other APG IG and NGO materials produced in this period depict Guaraní ancestral territory as covering the entire Chaco region (see Figure 3, p.62; Figure 4, below). Such maps had a dual function. First, as part of a critical-strategic engagement with the state’s representation of territory, they provided a precursor to more limited territorial claims; they were:

A discourse that we’re going to spread…in such a way that the state understands that our habitat was much bigger, but that, for the sake of this dialogue, we’re reducing it – so that the state understands the fact that we’re accepting its logic (interview A34).

At the same time, by visibilising the Guaraníes’ pre-colonial occupation of territory, these maps contributed to a broader “social process anchoring identity to place” (Offen, 2006: 382), contributing to the territorial counter-narratives discussed in Chapter 1.
Figure 4: Poster produced by the APG, CERDET and other NGOs showing indigenous ancestral territories in the Chaco (my photo, CERDET offices 2011)
Even these early maps of indigenous territory had their dark side. Like all spatial productions (Crampton and Krygier, 2006; Sparke, 2005), the production of territory in Itika Guasu was a power-infused process, which involved the silencing of alternative territorial imaginaries. As Mario admitted, when he began working with the Guaraní:

They didn’t talk about their territory, they talked about their land. But when they entered into this [mapping] process, they started to change. This ancestral notion of land started to change. First because of the influence of the theoreticians, let’s say, of “indigeneity”, who said: “what you need is a territory, and territory is this, that and the other”. The concept which they now have of territory isn’t an indigenous concept; it’s a very well-meaning interpretation of the técnicos. So there is a change, you see? There is a change in the idea of territory (interview A27).

This was echoed by Tomás, a former employee of IICCA, who described how, prior to the construction of a territorial demand in Itika Guasu (comprised of 36 communities) “there wasn’t even contact between some communities….Itika Guasu as such, as a whole territory, never existed” (interview A35). These statements are substantiated by my ethnographic engagements in Itika Guasu, where the TCO, as a bounded space, did not feature prominently in ordinary community members’ imaginative geographies. As such, indigenous territory was a discursive construction, and one that non-indigenous interlocutors played a key role in producing.

This raises critical questions about how Guaraní territorial imaginaries may have been silenced or modified by the construction of a territorial claim, an issue I take up in Chapter 4. Here, the important point to note is that imagining and representing territory as a singular, bounded, mappable space constituted the first step in a gradual process of limiting the Guaraníes’ territorial claim. As I now turn to explore, the modification of this ancestral vision of territory was not just a product of state intervention; it was a precondition for the state’s recognition of indigenous land claims.

**Fixing boundaries**

If maps of indigenous ancestral territory had a political-strategic function in negotiations with the state (Chapter 1), then they were not something the state could easily process. As Celia explained:
With the place names and the identification of historical territory, there was this debate with the state itself, with state functionaries; they said: “Yes, that’s the historic territory, but they don’t live there anymore; there are already third parties [non-indigenous land claimants] there. And we, as the state, can’t deny the presence of third parties”. So, that’s the logic of the state (interview A34).

The presence of non-indigenous settlers in these areas was only one issue; these territories also traversed, and threatened, the internal spatial order of the state, represented by municipal, provincial and departmental boundaries. In this context, NGOs and APG IG leaders began to make pragmatic decisions about what to include in, and what to exclude from, the Itika Guasu territorial claim. As Mario described:

There was a judgement that, well, they themselves realised it was a lot; that we can’t, that no one will believe [it]…So, after that – of saying “well…this is what we wanted, this is what we were; now, what is possible?”.

For example, Entre Ríos – Why are we going to go and fight with the residents of Entre Ríos? They took out Entre Ríos. Another judgement is [to take out] the main roads (interview A27).

As this quotation implies, such decisions responded not only to the national political context, but also to what would be politically viable in the regional context, where the Guaraní remained a politically and geographically marginalised minority. In this regard, the Guaraní speculated that “the karai are never going to accept a government of ours, and all it’s going to do it limit our possibility of government” (interview A34).

Concessions were also made to the administrative boundaries of the state. By excluding communities east of Palos Blancos, the APG IG and their allies confined the Itika Guasu territorial claim within the administrative limits of O’Connor Province (interview A35). As noted in Chapter 1, these provincial limits were based on the boundaries of the hacienda of Irish-born Independence hero Francis Burdett O’Connor; as such, the Guaraní mapped their claim onto a colonial geography. Similarly, the administrative limit of Tarija Department was used as the TCO’s northern boundary, despite the fact that lands to the north are occupied by Guaraní communities. The territory of Itika Guasu was also shaped by the uneven geographies of NGO intervention. As former IICCA employee Tomás admitted:
Why aren’t the communities the other side of Palos Blancos part of Itika Guasu? Because I decided, as an organization, to [exclude them]… – because the resources were only enough to last up to here…so they are also results of situations of access, opportunities of access, that’s the issue. Because I always asked myself, I always looked at the whole process – even after 20 years, I always asked myself: Why didn’t we go into these communities? Sincerely, why did we strengthen here, strengthen there and other zones were left out? (interview A35).

This further illustrates the propensity for extra-territorial actors – rather than indigenous territorial imaginaries – to shape the production of territory. The shrinking boundaries that accompanied these adjustments are illustrated by comparing a 1992 map of Itika Guasu produced by CERDET to final TCO limits established in 1997 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Comparison of 1992 Itika Guasu territorial claim and final TCO limits (elaborated by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge – details of original sources are provided below)
A photocopy of the former was found attached to an undated document placed in the CERDET’s archives in 1998, which refers to Itika Guasu as “a Guaraní region of 284,194 hectares” – larger than the 216,000 hectares legally recognised by INRA in 1997 (CERDET, undated-2). One secondary source points to the existence of a previous claim for 530,900 hectares (Gúzman et al, 2007). Another CERDET publication states that the first territorial demand presented to the state by the APG IG was just over 300,000 hectares (CERDET, 2004b: 79). Whatever the missing stages of this mapping story, the 1992 map represents one stage in a gradual process of delimitation and reduction of the APG IG’s territorial claim, based on the geographical limits of the state, karai geography and the interventions of outsiders. In other words, it depicts a territory under construction. This is demonstrated by the document to which it was attached, which states that NGOs and Guaraní leaders were, at the time of writing (between 1994 and 199666), engaged in an effort to “update the territorial demand, based on the following points” (CERDET, undated-2):

- Redefine the delimitation made in 1992 and compliment it with other studies completed subsequently
- The Constitutional reform [of 1994] …recognises in a special manner the right of indigenous peoples to their communal lands of origin, guaranteeing the sustainable use and exploitation of their natural resources, serves as a basis for territorial demands, so that “communal lands of origin” should be understood as an equivalent to “territory”
- Regarding the route for the presentation of the territorial demand, a concrete option has still not been defined; however, there is a greater inclination to consider that a direct demand to the President of the Republic is the most feasible.

As this reveals, both the area of the territorial demand and the mode of presentation to the state were matters still being worked out between 1992 and 1996, as indigenous peoples awaited the results of the ongoing national debate about the future of agrarian law. As this account suggests, however, ordinary women and men in Itika Guasu were largely excluded from these pragmatic adjustments – as were those who ended up outside of the territorial demand.

66 The reference to Constitutional reform dates the document to during or after 1994; it is clearly written prior to the promulgation of the INRA Law in 1996.
Towards a logic of indigenous spatial needs

As the APG IG and their allies – along with other lowland indigenous organisations – adjusted the boundaries of their territorial claims, the question re-emerged about how these territorial boundaries could be justified and “made legible” to the state, consistent with its own spatial production (Scott, 1998; Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). Historical archives and indigenous place names were clearly of limited use in rationalising territories that, by the mid-1990s, represented only a fraction of these ancestral areas. It was in this context that the logic “indigenous spatial needs” came to the fore as a means of establishing and justifying territorial limits (interview A36). As noted in Chapter 1, and as I elaborate below, this logic ultimately became associated with the state’s efforts to reduce indigenous territories, through the creation of official Spatial Needs Studies. Yet, interviews and secondary literature also suggest that this framing was initially put forward by indigenous organisations (particularly CIDOB) and their technical advisors. According to Celia, who worked both for CIDOB and for the state during the 1990s, the concept of indigenous spatial needs represented an attempt to justify indigenous territorial claims to the Bolivian state and society in a context of strong political opposition, including from landowner organisations. As she explained:

Why spatial needs? Precisely to find the boundaries…Don’t forget that the discussion wasn’t only with state functionaries. I remember that, for example, in CORDECRUZ 67 we debated this issue a lot with the people from CAINCO 68, with the cattle ranchers, the Civic Committee…that was the context we were working in (interview A34)

It is worth noting here that the notion of “spatial needs” resonates with an established logic of Bolivian agrarian reform, that of the social function of property. 69 By embracing spatial needs analysis, indigenous organisations sought to use an existing discourse of rights to justify their still-unrecognised territorial claims. This is supported by one CIDOB publication, which explains that indigenous spatial needs were put forward in an

67 Regional Development Corporation of Santa Cruz
68 Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services, and Tourism of Santa Cruz (Department).
69 At the heart of the 1953 agrarian reform, this expresses the automatic right of a person to legally own land they occupy and use productively, in the absence of competing claimants.
attempt to prevent an ambivalent state from rejecting indigenous territorial claims or redefining them to cover an even smaller area (CIDOB-CPTI, 2000).

The logic of “indigenous spatial needs” also provided indigenous organisations and their allies with a means of rationalising territorial boundaries that emerged from a rapid, improvised and highly politicised process of map-making. Although NGOs and APG leaders in Itika Guasu began mapping a territorial claim during the early 1990s, many lowland groups were less prepared by the time of the INRA Law’s promulgation. As Mary, a North American ecologist who worked in CIDOB during the 1990s, described, as the legal creation of TCOs became an imminent possibility, indigenous organisations – and, above all, their technical advisors – scrambled to put together territorial demands:

She went on to describe how this improvised and office-based process of mapping territories was accompanied by pressure from the state to provide a convincing rationale for these rapidly-constructed territorial demands. The state even sought to interrogate indigenous leaders independently of their technical advisers, asking them:

“Why do you need a million hectares, why do you need this?” So all of that argument drew the government to come to: “Well OK, you’re going to have to establish how much you need”, which is an absurd concept! Absolutely absurd, because, one, we don’t even know what they use, and what do you mean? It has nothing to do with how much you need, it’s really your right.

Although this quotation would seem to suggest that the idea of indigenous spatial needs came from the state, it also prevailed during our interview that, several years prior to such discussions, Mary had completed a doctoral dissertation on the question of how much
land an indigenous group required to sustain themselves – a study that was subsequently used by CIDOB to counter state efforts to reduce indigenous territories, according to a methodology of spatial needs analysis (discussed below). As such, the logic of indigenous spatial needs was neither merely a state instrument to reduce indigenous territorial demands, nor an indigenous-activist strategy to justify them. Rather, in a context in which “ancestral territory” was losing its political value, indigenous spatial needs emerged as a new discursive terrain of struggle, providing a crucial link in a “chain of equivalence” (Blaser, 2010: 216) between established notions of productive land use, indigenous territorial claims, and global discourses of “ethnodevelopment”. Although the displacement of a discourse of ancestral rights proved to be a risky move – as will become clear – indigenous leaders and their allies clearly believed they could mobilise this discourse toward their own ends, portraying large collective territories as a material basis for the traditional, sustainable livelihoods that global development actors had envisaged for them.

In this broader context, Guaraní leaders and NGOs working on the Itika Guasu territorial claim gradually began to shift away from the contentious idea of ancestral territory towards a more mundane claim for land as a basis for livelihood. Mario described this shift in the following terms:

There was a communal notion of ancestral territory which is what came out at first. But then the [Guaraní] realized that, well, it wasn’t viable…So, well, first of all they had to change; we can’t aspire to our ancestral territory anymore; instead we have to try for a quantity of land that’s viable in legal terms, but that at the same time is enough to be able to live (interview A27).

However, rather than presenting this as a strategic reframing, a way to claim more land, this quotation suggests the shift was more of a pragmatic concession; that is, an abandonment of politically unviable aspirations of “recovering territory” in favour of claims for a minimal area of land for indigenous survival. While Mario uses the collective pronoun “we”, my ethnographic engagements in Itika Guasu led me to question whether all Guaraní people made this imaginative leap – that is, of adjusting expectations of recovering ancestral territory lost to settlers to a demand for land rights as a basis for life and livelihood. I explore these lingering hopes of “recovering territory” in
Chapter 4. Once again, the task of adjusting to the “logics of the state” was one that fell largely to APG IG leadership, technical advisors and NGO staff.

In spite of this, spatial needs analysis did involve its own participatory methodologies; as Celia explained:

I would arrive at a community: How do we make our boundaries? Well, in this community, talking maps – that’s how we started to work. “You, Sir, where do you make your chacos?” “Here, here, here”. “Well we have to mark up all of that”. “Now, you Sir, where do you go to fish?” “To the river, in my lagoon, along the road”…so we started to establish a new, very contemporary, version [of territorial demands]…you could later identify all that [information] on a cartographic chart…we went from community to community…the work of the [formal territorial] demands started like that – that’s how we did it when they were about to approve the INRA Law…in the heat of the march [of 1996] they elaborated 18 demands; with the leadership we did them all…[in each case] we ended up commanding an area with boundaries (interview A34).

This quotation provides further illustration of the blurred boundary between official (state-led) and activist processes. As Celia makes clear, indigenous-NGO countermapping was responsive to, and instrumental in, policy negotiations simultaneously unfolding at a national level. This reinforces the point that indigenous territories were neither reflections of a pre-colonial geography nor an invention of state officials; rather, they were a contingent product of articulation, between indigenous decolonising aspirations, global multicultural imaginaries, and the limits of postcolonial geography.

Like earlier maps of ancestral territory, these new maps of indigenous spatial practices produced their own exclusions. The power exercised by non-indigenous NGO staff and activists is only one issue here. Given that few activists or NGO employees speak Guarani, they tended to rely on the accounts of those who spoke Spanish – usually male leaders – to provide information about territorial limits. According to the leader of the nearby TCO Tapiete – one of the first TCOs recognised – the mapping of territorial limits relied primarily on his personal knowledge and that of his elderly relatives (interview A37). My community-level engagements suggest that women were largely
excluded from this process, as were many ordinary community members. Indeed, when I accompanied a group of twelve community members to nearby boundaries of TCO land in early 2012, few people had any idea where these boundaries lay (fieldnotes, 22/1/12). One man, who I accompanied en route to agricultural work on a karai property, told me that the TCO is “something of the APG IG” and of no importance to ordinary community members (fieldnotes 16/1/12). This illustrates Wainwright and Bryan’s observation that “not everyone can be equally involved in the work of map-making” (161; also Hodgson and Schroeder, 2002). Given the different ways in which Guaraní people use and value territory (based on age, gender, location and livelihood strategies), we can speculate that alternative limits might have emerged had informants or methodologies been different.

**From justification to amputation: Spatial Needs Identification Studies**

In the above section, I described how, in the period leading up to the INRA Law’s promulgation (1992-96), indigenous leaders and technical advisors began to deploy a discourse of indigenous spatial needs to justify the limits of pragmatically constructed territorial claims that had no clear historical grounding. A departure from a language of ancestral rights, I suggested that this can be seen as a strategic engagement with state and popular discourses of rights, which property ownership is linked to productive land use. Rather than reproducing hegemonic and fundamentally racist ideas of what constitutes productive land use, these activists sought to redefine productive land use in ways that recognised and validated indigenous traditional subsistence livelihoods. They did so in ways that resonated with multicultural notions of “ethnodevelopment” that underpinned international support for indigenous land rights. In this section, I describe how this shift from ancestral rights to productive land use arguments ultimately backfired. Through the creation and manipulation of official Spatial Needs Identification Studies (EINEs), I describe how the Bolivian state coopted the discourse of indigenous spatial needs and utilised it to reduce the spatial extent of indigenous territories. However, indigenous

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70 INRA documentation from 1997 suggests that this was also the case in the early stages of the official titling process, which lists Guaraní participants of three initial zonal workshops (corresponding to the TCO’s 3 zones), oriented towards the production of maps of land use. All are male communal leaders, although the list excludes an additional four “grassroots” (de base) participants for each community.
peoples did not respond lightly to this attempt to diminish their newly-recognised and hard-won territorial claims; rather, they returned once again to the streets in a national mobilisation that succeeded in robbing these studies of their power to define territorial boundaries.

As noted, the creation of EINEs under the 1996 INRA Law, as a method for determining TCO limits, occurred in a context in which indigenous organisations were already using indigenous spatial needs analysis to justify the limits of territorial claims. Again reflecting the blurred boundary between state and non-state actors under neoliberalism, the state – using funds from DANIDA – initially contracted anthropologists to complete these official studies, many of whom were the same people already working on indigenous land claims as NGO or CIDOB employees. As Mary put it: “Basically [the state] handed it over to anthropologists, instead of the [indigenous] people themselves coming up with information.” This delegation reproduced racialised power inequalities whereby non-indigenous “experts”, rather than indigenous peoples themselves, were to ascertain land requirements and forms of development. Yet, this did at least mean that the task of determining indigenous territorial boundaries lay with actors who, for the most part, were sympathetic to indigenous land claims.

However, when anthropologists and other activists produced studies that justified large indigenous territories, the state intervened, rewriting EINEs according to its own vision and methodology:

[The anthropologists] went out and gathered all this information, and then [the EINEs] were taken and they were reworked [by the state] with this [alternative] model. So somebody else [from the government] went in afterward and put in all the economic stuff and made up the model….There was like two bursts: these first studies were done [by anthropologists] and then [the state] didn’t like ‘em, the government did not like them, and so they rewrote them and put this new model in, this economic model (ibid.).

As my discussion of the EINE for Itika Guasu (Appendix 3) elaborates, this “economic model” of indigenous spatial needs reproduced colonial discourses that framed indigenous traditional land use practices as illegitimate. Echoing assimilationist discourses of the 1950s, indigenous peoples’ enjoyment of citizenship rights was
predicated on their abandonment of traditional livelihoods in favour of peasant agriculture oriented towards the market. For example, the government model excluded indigenous hunting practices – which would have implied more expansive territories – on the basis that these were “backward” practices that would soon be phased out by indigenous peoples’ incorporation in “development”:

The government made the statement…where they said: “We really don’t have to consider wildlife in this, because in another 5 or 10 years [indigenous peoples] won’t have to hunt because of the pace of development”. So they were trying to limit indigenous territories by these studies, when the studies [as conducted by anthropologists] were actually expanding their territory. So that’s when [the state] came in and, when I showed them my models, that’s when they had to come in with a competing model and the model that they chose was done by an economist and it was based on economically maintaining them as a little bit above poverty level, but using their resources and their territory – selling them. So that model was kind of built in trying to…counteract the fact that we had a model – the indigenous people had a model showing how much they needed for land – not for money, just for subsistence. So the government came in with another model, but it was based on maintaining them just above poverty level and selling off everything they have (interview A36).

As this quotation implies, this vision of indigenous spatial needs was also a profoundly neoliberal one, oriented towards the commodification of land and resources within indigenous territories. Tellingly, Mary described how calculations of indigenous income from forest resources was taken directly from commercial data on timber values made by transnational companies operating nearby forestry concessions. More importantly, this economistic methodology of spatial needs was deployed by the state as a means of reducing indigenous territorial claims. In doing so, the state asserted its own power to define the size and status of indigenous territories, undermining indigenous claims to pre-existing rights over their ancestral lands. This illustrates how “the possibilities that mapping indigenous lands might reveal the fiction of state claims to sovereignty over a given territory is blunted by the explicit goal of formulating claims that can be recognised by the state” (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009: 164).

In response, in 1998 CIDOB organised a further national indigenous mobilisation, demanding the dissolution of EINEs, which it denounced as an “instrument of
amputation” (Almaraz, 2002: 33) and a “trap for indigenous peoples” (CIDOB-CPTI, 2000: 42). Mary claims to have played some role in increasing indigenous peoples’ awareness of “how [EINEs] were being manipulated against them” and helping them “have the force to do a march to make [the government] stop those stupid, stupid reports having the power to cut their territory size”. As a result of this march, the government finally conceded to indigenous pressure and agreed that EINEs would not have the power to determine the size of indigenous territories. This did not mean that EINEs were completely abandoned. Given that funds from DANIDA had already been allocated for their completion – providing employment and revenue for both state employees and consultants – the studies went ahead (interview A36). Furthermore, the neoliberal and colonial assumptions of EINEs remained firmly in place, despite their diminishing influence (Appendix 3).

Thus, although indigenous efforts to utilise hegemonic discourses to their own strategic ends could backfire – in this case, undermining claims to territory as an ancestral right – in the face of such unintended effects, indigenous peoples returned to social mobilisation in defence of their territorial claims. In doing so, they once again asserted agency within the precarious and double-edged process of postcolonial and neoliberal governance.

**Conclusion**

While limited documentation of, and participation in, early indigenous mapping processes – and the heterogeneity of these processes – make this a necessarily partial account, the above discussion nevertheless provides important insights into the complex and previously undocumented processes involved in the cartographic and discursive production of indigenous territories in Bolivia – processes that are occluded by state, NGO and indigenous movement discourses. Most important for this thesis, this account points to the limits of state cartography as a tool for decolonising territory. These limits relate to the power relations and politics of knowledge involved in making territory legible to the state (as “lines on a map”, Blomley, 2010), as well as to the cartographic and political negotiations involved in this process, which ultimately subordinated
indigenous territorial claims to the established limits of postcolonial geography. While initial mapping efforts had focused on reconstructing ancestral territory – an endeavour that resonated with ILO Convention 169 and APG territorial counter-narratives – by the time of the INRA Law’s promulgation, the Guaraní and their NGO allies had moved towards a more spatially and ideologically limited territorial claim, slotted into established state boundaries and framed through a discourse of indigenous spatial needs. This illustrates Wainwright and Bryan’s assertion that:

“When indigenous communities and their allies produce maps and lawsuits, they do so under conditions not of their choosing. These struggles unfold within an already-mapped world where one cannot elect to live outside of sovereignty, territory, or the law (2009: 31).”

It also resonates with postcolonial doubts regarding the possibility of subalterns achieving recognition within the dominant discourses of colonial society (Spivak, 1988; Bhandar, 2011). The process of making indigenous territorial claims legible to the state can be viewed as an act of “auto-ethnography”, in which “colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms” (Pratt, 1992: 7).

This does not mean that an “authentic” version of indigenous territory was replaced with a corrupted one; as I have noted, indigenous territory was from the outset a hybrid construct, informed by global imaginaries of “ethnodevelopment” and situated within a process of political negotiation with the state. Like indigenous identity, productions of territory can thus be seen as “a positioning, which… emerged through particular patterns of engagement and struggle” (Li 2000: 151). As Celia put it:

“There is always a political decision. A political evaluation – I think this also occurred in Itika Guasu. They put together the spatial needs studies, blah blah blah, the historical evidence. But there was a moment in which the different communities, with their leader or their various leaders, said: “Let’s see, that’s like that and now what do we want? Where is our political strategy?” and they wove it and said “This, gentlemen; that’s where we’re going” (interview A34).
This pragmatic perspective was shared by Mario, who provided the following reflection on the evolution of the Itika Guasu land claim:

Starting from the need to adapt what they wanted, which was impossible, they started to change a lot of things. So in the end we have a hybrid thing which maintained many things that the communities wanted but which, logically, was more limited in area, in quality, in a series of things – but anyway, in the end the communities have to understand…that they can’t live in isolation, they’re in a context and they learned very well to move forward in permanent negotiation with the system (interview A27).

From this perspective, pragmatic concessions were not so much a symbol of failure as a condition of success. These efforts can be considered as “counter-mapping” not in the sense of a liberating practice free from power relations, but in the sense that they probed at the limits of possibility, by meeting the state on its own discursive and political terrain. As Celia noted, the resulting encounter was not simply a one-way process, but rather:

A dialectical relationship of mutual influence, which modifies the understanding of each party, and they approach each other…and transform each other. That is, indigenous demands insert themselves into, if you like, the state matter, and they transform and ethnicize it…the state also intervenes in this sphere and objectifies and rationalises things that weren’t rationalised in the indigenous world…it makes it like a fact amenable to being known and planned. So it also modifies the understanding of territory of indigenous peoples themselves (Interview A34).

This reading echoes Radcliffe’s (2011) assertion (following Sparke, 2005) that indigenous map-making practices are situated within, and produce, what Bhabha (1994) describes as “third space”; that is, an arena within which subaltern subjects shift the languages, and knowledges of the state. By claiming TCOs, indigenous peoples did not overthrow the existing spatial-racial order, but they did open a new political space for renegotiating its boundaries in relation to their historic claims for territory. The national political negotiations described in Chapter 1 can be read in much the same way. As I trace the further concessions made and obstacles encountered during the titling process itself, I try not to lose sight of this perspective, emphasising the Guaraníes’ ability to exercise agency within a constrained social and political context.
At the same time, the above account raises questions about who was empowered to make these decisions, and how far ordinary community members identified with the cartographic representation of territory that emerged from it. If there is one thing that comes through from the above account, it is the protagonism of non-indigenous interlocutors in performing these acts of translation and political negotiation – processes that had significant implications for the form and content of indigenous territories. As I have noted, even the critical question of which communities were included in the Itika Guasu territorial claim seems to have been a contingent outcome of NGO geographies rather than a decision taken by community members. I expand on these reflections in Chapter 4. It is worth noting that these pragmatic negotiations over indigenous territorial limits also diverged from depictions of indigenous territory in global development discourse. Here, indigenous territories were imagined as clearly defined and bounded spaces of ethnic cultural difference, whose incorporation into state geography required a simple act of legal recognition. In fact, as I have revealed, they were spatial-ideological constructs, whose limits emerged from a process of negotiation and struggle. In creating TCOs, the Bolivian state was forced to grapple with these disjunctures, rationalising the outcomes of contingent processes, while reconciling them with the global imaginaries that had influenced their creation.

In the final section of this chapter, I explored how the state sought to rationalise, arbitrate and inscribe sovereignty over these contingent processes of (counter)mapping through Integrated Spatial Needs Studies (EINE). Drawing on the EINE for Itika Guasu (Appendix 3), I highlighted another ambivalence of TCOs: their capacity to make indigenous territories legible to state power – or, indeed, to the governmental designs of non-state actors. While flagging up this issue, my reading of the EINE for Itika Guasu highlights the limits, and fragmented nature, of state power and the lack of a coherent governmental design for indigenous territories. While in some ways reassuring, this did not imply an absence of development interventions in TCOs, nor did it empower indigenous peoples to forge their own strategies of territorial development. Rather, the EINE’s recommendations highlight the contradictory expectations indigenous peoples were subject to, and the pressing development challenges they faced following TCO recognition. The issue of what kind of development takes place in TCOs, and how far
indigenous peoples are able to define this, resurfaces later in this thesis. First, I turn to examine the obstacles, dynamics and outcomes of the TCO titling (SAN-TCO) process in Itika Guasu.
Chapter 3: Titling territory: landowner resistance and the coloniality of power

As described above, following an intense period of countermapping, indigenous mobilisation, and political negotiation, the 1996 INRA Law created the new legal process of SAN-TCO, designed to recognise and title indigenous territorial claims as TCOs. This chapter draws on legal, cartographic, ethnographic and interview data to provide a critical account of the SAN-TCO titling process in Itika Guasu from 1997 to the present. Owing to lack of space, it is not possible to cover all aspects and stages of this lengthy and complex legal process (for a timeline of major developments in TCO Itika Guasu, see Appendix 4; key stages of the SAN-TCO legal process are summarised in Table 1 below). Rather, my objective is to point to the underlying factors that determined its dynamics and results, focusing particularly on the local and regional context. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate the importance of legal ethnography for understanding the role, and the limitations, of state law in indigenous struggles for decolonisation.

The account that follows is partly about how the inherent limitations of SAN-TCO (discussed in Chapter 1) played out in practice. As Chapter 1 notes, waves of karai settlement in Itika Guasu over the last century from both the highlands and Tarija valley had created a landscape dotted with small and medium-sized property claims, many of which were used productively for cattle ranching and/or agriculture. Moreover, the INRA Law stipulated that productive private property claims within TCOs would be legally recognised. As such, this chapter is partly about how multicultural legal compromises forged in the arena of national politics – an arena far removed from life in Itika Guasu – came to be territorialised in a multi-ethnic territory. As noted above, Guaraní claimants

71 The chapter draws on over 70 in-depth interviews and with actors involved in the titling process, participant observation of 9 APG assemblies and 2 meetings organised by local cattle ranching organisations, analysis of documentation collected from INRA Tarija, the APG IG and local NGOs (see Appendix 1 for details).

72 National-level dynamics that affected the titling process (e.g. weak political will, growing political instability, weak institutional capacity, inadequate provision of funding) are referred to but explored in less detail.
did not necessarily understand the full implications of these legal compromises, which were in any case difficult to assess.  

Yet, the pre-determined nature of titling outcomes should not be exaggerated. As the remainder of this chapter details, the application of legal norms in Itika Guasu was not a neutral and merely technical process. Some third parties who should have been able to justify their claims failed to participate in the process, while others who did not use properties productively or even live in the region were often able to defend their claims through personal or political influence. Furthermore, private land legally earmarked for property reductions (that is, for reallocation to Guarani claimants) has rarely been reallocated in practice. As such, a key focus of this chapter is on how legal norms were adapted, negotiated and reworked in the course of their implementation. Specifically, it highlights how local landowner resistance, competing discourses of rights, and the coloniality of regional state power combined to influence the progress and results of land titling in Itika Guasu in ways that prevented a substantive redistribution of rights and frustrated Guarani aspirations for "recovering territory".

In doing so, this chapter helps to fill an important gap in existing accounts of indigenous land claims. As noted in the Introduction, literature on indigenous counter-mapping, although providing critical insights, has paid insufficient attention to the outcomes of these processes in terms of either rights or redistribution (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). On the other hand, global development policy accounts of indigenous land titling tend to attribute gaps between objectives and outcomes to weak institutional capacity, procedural shortcomings or "transactional costs", seen as remediable through technical solutions. As Coombes et al. argue (2011: 813-815), this "technocratic vision" fails to account for power relations embedded within political and institutional contexts and ignores ontological differences between indigenous and non-indigenous parties. Here, I echo Moore in arguing that, for cultural and resource struggles, "micro-politics matter" (2005: 2). Exploring these micro-politics requires in-depth engagement with the

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73 Given the lack of information on the number and legal status of private property claims in Itika Guasu prior to the TCO titling process, it was difficult to predict the outcome of legal provisions. As one APG IG leader admitted: “At the moment when we made the demand…we were also mistaken, because we thought that there was a lot of free land, state land….we thought that evidently there were landowners, cattle ranchers inside the demand, but that they didn’t have a title. Afterwards, we found that a large part of those landowners… had their titles…and they had their goods, their animals, and the issue is that [the law] respects their property rights – they don’t lose that at any time (interview B3)
actors, processes and institutions involved in TCO titling. While accounts of TCO titling by Bolivian NGOs have foregrounded these micro-politics and institutional power relations, they have tended to pay insufficient attention to the perspectives and discourses of rights of the different actors involved in the process – particularly those of non-indigenous claimants. As such, my account seeks to resituate TCO titling within broader postcolonial struggles over sovereignty and citizenship in the Bolivian lowlands.

In exploring these micro-politics and discourses of rights, I combine insights from postcolonial theory on the “coloniality of power” with those from legal anthropology, which has shown how legal norms and discourses become reworked in their engagement with local power structures, values and institutions (Merry, 2006). Merry has described this as a process of “vernacularisation” (ibid.; see also Eckert et al, 2012). A key dimension of this process, she argues, is “the people in the middle: those who translate the discourses and practices from the arena of international law and legal institutions to specific situations”. This is highly relevant to the process of TCO titling, which was grounded in global norms on indigenous rights, forged in the arena of national politics, then implemented in local contexts marginal to state power. The geographical remoteness of the Chaco exacerbates the tendency of governmental projects to metamorphosise as they are “scaled down”. As Gustafson reflects, describing the long arduous journey by dirt-road from La Paz to remote Guarani country, state policies “though imagined like plane flights…more closely resembled bus rides, fragmented by the topography, translated, broken down and reworked through local voices” (2009: 64). In the context of TCO titling in the Chaco region, I argue that “the middle” – occupied by local state officials who had personal and political ties to local landowning groups – provided a space for the reproduction of coloniality and the containment of indigenous territorial claims.

74 The “coloniality of power” refers to the epistemological, social and political legacies of colonialism – specifically, relating to the ways in which European colonial systems of racial classification and difference in Latin America prescribed value to Europeans while subjugating and indigenous populations and their forms of knowledge (Quijano, 2000, 2007).

75 Accounts of multicultural reform in Bolivia and other Latin American contexts have shown how global norms on indigenous rights often unravel in local contexts characterised by ethnic power inequalities (Postero 2007 on Bolivia; Speed 2005 on Mexico; Hale 2002 and 2006 on Guatemala).

76 Until the 1930s Chaco War, the only route connecting the Chaco region of Tarija to highland La Paz was a donkey track built by the Incas.
This chapter details the practices and discourses through which this occurred. I begin with some reflections on why many private claimants in Itika Guasu opposed the TCO titling process from the outset, despite its prioritisation of third party claims. I then describe the strategies non-indigenous land claimants used to influence the land titling process, before exploring in detail the racialised discourses of rights that underpinned this opposition. This is followed by a summary of the results of the TCO titling process in Itika Guasu to date and how Guaraní community members and leaders reflect on these outcomes.

**Local landowner opposition and the coloniality of power**

*The emergence of local opposition in Itika Guasu*

In reality, there was a strong opposition from the start, from when they elaborated the demand, since 1993. Because they felt threatened in their situation of *patrón*, as owner of the territory and of the people. The first reaction was that those of us who weren’t from the zone, the NGO, we were going to violate the intimacy of the property of the third party, so there were many threats. These threats didn’t end in the process of titling (interview B23).

In the above quotation, the Director of a local NGO frames local non-indigenous landowners’ opposition to the TCO titling process as a continuation of the violent response provoked by early Guaraní mobilisation, particularly from former *patrones* (described in Chapter 1). As this quotation implies, this response was not based on an informed evaluation of the titling process and how it would affect these landowners as individual claimants. Rather, their response occurred in an existing social context of indigenous resurgence and non-indigenous backlash, led by a landowning class who feared losing control of both land and indigenous labour. While small farmers had a more ambiguous positionality – generally possessing neither property rights nor socio-economic power – many of them feared eviction precisely because of this. As one farmer explained:

> When the cattle ranchers found out, when the *campesinos* found out – that is, those who live in the region – it was like a bucket of cold water. There was uncertainty about…that is, they also had
wrong information – some Guaraní compañeros said that once they started titling then everyone would have to leave. That it was theirs, the territory was theirs, and the people have to leave.
(interview A18)

Such fears were, in many cases, unfounded; under the INRA Law, claimants who had occupied land since 1994 and used it productively – or claimed only small plots – stood to have their claims recognised, regardless of their existing legal status. Some informants claim that fears of eviction were partly a result of fear-mongering by the patrones, who told their poorer neighbours “‘they’re going to take your land as well’ – that is, they scared them into being their allies” (interview A27). The power of such informal interpretations was in part a product of the failure of INRA’s 1999 public information campaign to reach many private claimants, particularly small farmers (see above Table 1 for a summary of the key stages of the SAN-TCO process). According to one third party claimant: “They held the meetings in one community for 10 or 15 communities, so there wasn’t much attendance of people; the majority of people didn’t understand much about this issue” (interview A18). Others claimed to have received limited, and sometimes inaccurate, information (interviews A24, B31 and B23; meeting of cattle ranchers, 18/3/11). This stood in stark contrast to the Guaraní, who received substantial training by CERDET and the EAPG prior to the start of INRA’s fieldwork.77 As one informant – who was in the unique position of being both a third party claimant and a CERDET employee – lamented:

On the side of the sector of the APG, yes, there was training, there was guidance and…they were on top of this information about the issue of the titling of the TCO – everything. But the campesino sector, the ganadero sector, they were orphans, let’s say, they didn’t have anyone to help them, anyone to guide them. The campesino federation didn’t understand this issue either…the cattle ranchers were the same, they didn’t understand, so…I think there was a lot of confusion, there was a lot of uncertainty (interview A18).

77 Prior to the beginning of the titling process, CERDET conducted a two-year capacity-building programme in coordination with the APG IG. This consisted of training on TCO titling for communal, zonal and regional leaders, as well as community training sessions, regular meetings and assemblies, the formation of monitoring teams and the establishment of a radio communications network (CERDET, 2004: 83-84).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of process</th>
<th>Entity in charge</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date in Itika Guasu</th>
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<td>Indigenous peoples formulate land claim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of TCO claim</td>
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<td>Indigenous peoples present TCO claim to Bolivian government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admission of TCO claim</td>
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<td>INRA admits and “immobilises” TCO claim to initiate SAN-TCO process</td>
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<td>Certification of indigenous identity</td>
<td>VAIPO</td>
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<td>Georeferencing</td>
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<td>The physical delimitation of the TCO boundaries is carried out</td>
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<td>The Bolivian government establishes how much land is required to satisfy indigenous spatial needs (legal power of EINEs annulled following indigenous protest)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publicity campaign</td>
<td>INRA’s departmental office</td>
<td>INRA disseminates information on SAN-TCO process through workshops and local media, and calls on private claimants to present their property claims.</td>
<td>1998-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>INRA’s departmental office (or private land titling companies)</td>
<td>Cadastral measurement, drawing up of plans, collection of legal documentation and on-site observations relating to Economic Social Function and Social Function of properties. Informal agreements to resolve land conflicts in TCO.</td>
<td>2000-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical legal evaluation</td>
<td>INRA’s departmental office (or private land titling companies)</td>
<td>INRA evaluates legal documentation collected and completed during fieldwork to ascertain legal status of properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determination of titling price</td>
<td>Agrarian Superintendence</td>
<td>The price of land titling for properties within the TCO is determined</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of results</td>
<td>INRA’s departmental office (and in some cases private land titling companies)</td>
<td>INRA makes public results of SAN-TCO, corrects errors, and notifies private claimants of the price of titling.</td>
<td>From 2001; most from 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titling Resolutions</td>
<td>National Director of INRA</td>
<td>INRA issues Titling Resolutions</td>
<td>From 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal appeals before National Agrarian Tribunal (TAN)</td>
<td>TAN</td>
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<tr>
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<td>National Director of INRA, President</td>
<td>Property titles signed, inscribed in Real Rights and awarded to land claimants</td>
<td>From 2003 - incomplete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based loosely on Pacheco, 2009: 331, Table 12.1, with modifications based on CERDET, 2004a: 25-7 and INRA, 2004. This table presents a simplified version of the steps outlined under the 1996 INRA Law.
This imbalance in information fuelled the perception that TCO titling was an instrument of the indigenous movement and NGOs, rather than an inclusive process for land regularisation. Without an effective information campaign by NGOs or the state, the work of “vernacularisation” was left largely to landowners themselves – particularly, to the elite leaders of cattle ranching organisations. This is not to suggest that no efforts were made by NGOs and INRA to publicise the titling process; part of the problem was that third parties were fundamentally opposed to indigenous land rights from the outset. As one NGO employee explained: “We had many threats, in the office in Entre Rios we received threats. It wasn’t easy. We tried to make everyone understand the process, although some had understood well – they just didn’t want to respect it” (interview B18). Similarly, INRA’s effort to communicate with landowners met with a defensive, and sometimes violent, response. As the former Director of INRA Tarija (2000-2004) explained:

> It was very difficult for people to understand you. Because we had to verify a property, measure a property, count cows, verify the work and tell you whether or not the whole property will remain yours. It was very difficult to make them understand this issue. We had to have a lot of explanatory meetings to avoid: one, that they don’t let you enter and attack personnel; and two, that they don’t let the other parties [i.e. INRA staff and APG IG representatives] enter (interview B28).

These examples suggest that non-indigenous TCO residents’ responses to TCO land titling were based largely on instinctive fears about what it would entail to live in a legally-recognised indigenous territory. Distant from the national debates of 1992-6, karai residents of Itika Guasu based their understanding of the TCO on what they had witnessed – a resurgent indigenous population with internationally-funded NGO allies claiming ancestral rights to the territory in which they lived. As I will now go on to describe, this perception marked the dynamics of TCO titling in important ways, enabling elite landowners to enlist broad-based support to oppose and obstruct the titling process. As such, local interpretations of the meaning of the TCO resulted in concrete practices that shaped its production.
In the account that follows, I describe how private claimants in Itika Guasu drew on clientelistic social networks, corrupt practices, collective mobilisation, and articulations with regional and national state power to defend their claims and avoid property reductions by INRA. In doing so, they mobilised entrenched ethnic power structures that were a legacy of the regional history of frontier settlement and state territorialisation described in Chapter 1. As such, I argue that TCO titling – a process to which Guarani claimants had pinned far-reaching hopes of “recovering territory” – unravelled in the face of the colonially of local state power. These racialised micro-politics compounded the already ambivalent implications of a legal process that, from the outset, prioritised private over indigenous property claims.

“Corrupt” practices and clientelistic networks

Interviews and documentation suggest that, despite the concerted monitoring efforts of the APG and the NGO CERDET, corrupt practices by private claimants were widespread during the course of INRA’s fieldwork. This fieldwork, which took place in March-December 2000, involved the identification of properties, the measurement of plots, and the collection of data relating to properties’ productive land use (the social economic function – FES, or social function – FS). These activities were carried out by INRA Tarija, with participation of private property claimants and at least one trained APG IG representative (“land promoter”). Despite APG IG participation, these legal-technical processes were influenced by a series of corrupt practices, included the lending of cattle (to demonstrate productive land use, discussed below), the presentation of false immunisation certificates or property titles, and attempts to bribe or sweeten INRA officials with money or feasts (CERDET, 2000, 2004 and 2010; interviews A24, B23 and A33). As one cattle rancher explained:

There’s a team responsible for land surveying. They come with all their equipment. They go to the forest, create points. There are people who buy this team, do you understand me?...I didn’t buy

79 INRA brigades were accompanied by an APG representative for all property measurements. CERDET and the APG also insisted on the marking of cattle to combat the practice of cattle lending (CERDET, 2004, interview B18)
them, I didn’t throw them a party…I didn’t give them daughters, so I’m not going to be alright. But the others…they bought them directly and they gave them [money], so…the information that those responsible [INRA] produced is not trustworthy (interview A24).

Some Guaraní leaders also claimed they were offered money by landowners during fieldwork to sign documents that increased the number of cattle registered in a property (interview B14), reflecting how racialised power inequalities could undermine Guaraní monitoring efforts. According to CERDET, “the falsified information that third parties…presented delayed the fieldwork of the [INRA] brigades in charge of this activity”, compounding delays caused by “permanent conflicts waged by third parties…to prevent [INRA] conducting fieldwork” (2000: 5).

Corrupt practices during fieldwork were partly enabled by the ambiguity of the process through which INRA evaluated property claims. While the methodology for assessing the “Economic Social Function” of property (which applies only to medium and large private properties) varies from region to region, in Itika Guasu this generally came down to the counting of cattle, based on the controversial equation that five cattle “justify” one hectare of land. This methodology is challenged both by local cattle ranchers, who argue that this area is insufficient for ranching in the arid lands of the Chaco, and by the Guaraní, who complain that “the INRA Law awards more land to a cow than to a Guaraní person”. More importantly, given the semi-extensive nature of ranching in Itika Guasu, the task of rounding up all of a claimant’s cattle on a given day proved challenging, with INRA officials often running out of time, energy or patience before the task could be completed (interviews A17, B15, A27). Subsequent claims that not all cattle had been counted were often impossible to verify, as was the ownership of cattle presented (interview A17, INRA documentation). Despite the APG IG and CERDET’s insistence on the introduction of cattle marking (interview B18), they were unable to prevent the borrowing, hiring or sale of cattle between neighbouring mestizo ranchers for the purpose of justifying property claims (ibid.; interview A24; CERDET 2004).

Corruption during the TCO titling process was not neutral in either class or ethnic terms. It was private landowners rather than the Guaraní who could afford to bribe, indulge or sweet-talk INRA officials – many of whom were themselves from mestizo
landowning families and sympathetic to the interests of private claimants (see below). Similarly, wealthier landowners – who were less likely to reside in or work land themselves – were particularly adept at ensuring their claims were recognised through irregular means, something that added to the sense of injustice of those who had lost out during the process. As one third party informant complained, “it hasn’t been very fair; the most unfair thing is that people who work and live there don’t have rights or title”, while elite urban-based landowners (several of whom she listed) had “rented [cattle] to justify their land” (interview A24).

The influence of racialised power structures on titling outcomes was even more apparent in the post-fieldwork, office-based stages of the titling process,\(^\text{80}\) when some “third party” claimants used personal or family connections with INRA officials to influence the outcome of the evaluation of their property rights. According to one CERDET employee:

> The INRA technicians had connections with the cattle ranchers. What’s more, we came to know also that they received money from the cattle ranchers. And as part of that favour, they made some files disappear. And afterwards, they resigned from INRA, they left and, of course, the file had disappeared...so the new technician found neither the file nor the information and they say, “It isn’t here, we have to do it again” (interview B18).

These accusations are supported by the findings of a second internal quality control conducted by INRA Tarija in 2008, which reported the loss of various documents and files by INRA technicians, among other irregularities (CERDET, 2008: 6). By this point, the NGO CERDET had begun making its own copies of all official documents, and so was able to provide INRA with replacements for some of the missing documents (interview B18). Guarani informants also identified corruption, nepotism and favouritism of third party claims as a key obstacle to the consolidation of their land rights. As NGO studies of other SAN-TCO processes show, the presence of such “irregularities” was commonplace in lowland regions marked by entrenched racialised inequality and institutional corruption (Nuñez et al, 2007; Paredes and Canedo, 2008; Almaraz, 2003).

\(\text{80}\) Termed the “Legal Technical Evaluation”, this office work consists of INRA officials (in Tarija and La Paz) analyzing data collected during fieldwork to determine the legal status of property claims, including their justification of the FES and the identification of any resulting property reductions.
Box 2: Guaraní perceptions of corruption and favouritism within INRA

Of course, [the cattle ranchers] went to fight this law, that’s why it’s still paralysed - that’s what they say… the cattle rancher himself is the Director of INRA – before, that is [mentions 2 previous directors who were cattle ranchers].

PA: Are they allies of the cattle ranchers? They are cattle ranchers – they’re their cousin, or their nephew. That’s why it’s kept on being obstructed (interview B7).

[INRA] say they understand, but they always make mistakes in the figures, they change everything, them and the ganaderos as well… they listen more to them than to us….there are cattle rancher functionaries also in INRA, and they do negotiations (interview B4).

It’s not easy because there is a rather strong interest in land…interests, for example, to continue occupying land… even the institutions are trying – the people from INRA, who are the sons of the patrón. That’s what they are, and they still don’t know the truth about the indigenous peoples (interview B17).

The biggest problem for us is trusting in them [INRA], that they’re really going to do the work, but it’s not like that. Because here there are many cattle ranchers and like that everything is obstructed, as they have money… they have money and more influence (interview B11).

Silently, that’s how they do it – a paper over there, it corresponds to him who has money… they put down money and INRA has to do it, grabbing money like that, we’ve seen the little face of [the former Director of INRA], he’s lied a lot to the People and that’s how it is – bribe and continue (interview B12).

One goes and does an on-site verification in which you have to count the animals that a landowner has, you have to see the improvements he has made, the issue of infrastructure, fill out a file… later, when they take the information away, it turns out that they’re changing information… I think they should only respect that report and not invent other subsequent reports (interview B3).

INRA Tarija is more in favour of the campesinos…. they’ve managed them directly… so in favour of us, nothing, that’s what has happened, isn’t it? Everything has gone in their favour (interview B14).

As some Guarani informants noted (Box 2), the potential for corruption was increased by the fact that INRA officials were sometimes members of families that claimed land in Itika Guasu. Indeed, individuals from landowning families sometimes sought employment in INRA’s regional office with the intention of influencing their family’s property claim (as noted in the above quotation by a CERDET employee). An informal discussion with Lino (not his real name), who I met by chance outside his small
legal office in Entre Ríos, shed further light on this. Lino, who is from a landowning family of Itika Guasu, described how he had gained employment in INRA Tarija when his “intimate compadre”81 also from a local ranching family, took over as the agency’s Director (interview B32). While at INRA, Lino worked on the evaluation of the FES of private properties – something he had a personal interest in, given that his father and several other of his family members claimed properties within the TCO.82 While not directly implicating himself, he admitted that “there are ganadero people who…put money in INRA itself…we too, as we’re the state, we look the other way, we don’t get involved much, but if they ask for help we sometimes intervene”.

In Tarija, the role of social and family networks in allocating privilege and rights is both routine and historically grounded (Lizárraga and Vacaflores, 2007). These practices and institutions were racialised, reflecting a history of colonial frontier settlement and nation-building that left state institutions dominated by elite karai landowning families, and indigenous peoples (until recently) excluded from citizenship. These ethnic power structures are also spatialised; reflecting the historic importance of land ownership (and indigenous labour exploitation) as a route to social and spatial mobility, Itika Guasu’s most powerful landowning families reside in Tarija city, where educational and professional opportunities for subsequent generations guarantee continuing access to positions and influence in regional institutions, thus perpetuating a historical correlation between race, land ownership, spatial mobility and political power. In the context of TCO titling, these entrenched ethnic power structures created micro-level opportunities for the obstruction or reorientation of legal processes, in ways that favoured the interests of non-indigenous land claimants.

81 Compadre refers to either the godparent of the speaker’s child or the parent of the speaker’s godchild. The relationship of compadrazgo – a kinship-like bond between the parents and godparents of a child – is a powerful one in Bolivia (see Lazar, 2008: 104-6). As Lazar notes, as well as cementing friendships between social equals, it can serve to create bonds of mutual obligation between people of different socio-economic status. In Itika Guasu, such bonds exist between some Guarani community members and local mestizo landowners, giving institutionalised form to clientelistic relations predicated on racialised inequality. As Lino’s experience shows, compadrazgo relationships are also instrumental in perpetuating non-indigenous landowning elites’ privileged access to regional state power.

82 This was not Lino’s only involvement in the titling process; he was also contracted as a lawyer by the cattle ranchers’ federation ASOGAPO, whose Director was also his compadre, during the controversial roundtable negotiations of 2003 (discussion below).
Collective mobilisation and articulations with regional power

In addition to the covert strategies noted above, collective mobilisation by local landowners played a significant role in shaping the TCO titling process in Itika Guasu. This erupted with full force during 2003, when INRA began notifying third parties of the status of their property rights (CERDET, 2008: 5 and 2004: 88). These results – the product of INRA’s legal evaluation of 2001-3 – revealed that, irregularities notwithstanding, numerous properties in the TCO had failed to demonstrate fulfilment of the Economic Social Function and had been earmarked for “reductions”, totalling over 40,000 Has – land to be awarded to the Guaraní. Two local cattle ranching organisations, ASOGAPO (The Cattle Ranchers’ Association of O’Connor Province) and FEGATAR (Cantonal Subsidiary of Cattle Ranchers of Entre Rios, Tarija), played a central role in instigating this mobilisation, calling numerous public meetings for private claimants to discuss the titling process and voice complaints. Such meetings generally resulted in the presentation of collective letters and resolutions to INRA’s regional and national offices and to other state authorities. In addition to property reductions, key complaints related to the mismeasurement or non-measurement of properties, and the high regularisation fee, demonstrating how procedural inefficiencies further eroded the legitimacy of the titling process.

Cattle ranching organisations drew on racialised and class-based networks of regional power to amplify their demands. For example, a letter sent to the Land Ministry in December 2007, which accompanied 41 individual complaints about the titling process in Itika Guasu, was authored by the Provincial Deputy, whose family was among those affected by the process – thereby giving these private complaints the added legitimacy of support from a democratically-elected official. This was nothing new; before the titling process had even began, another Provincial Governor – from the powerful O’Connor D’Arlach family, descendent of Independence hero Frances Burdett O’Connor – wrote

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83 Collection of 41 individual complaints addressed to Land Ministry, 12/2007; ASOGAPO Resolution, 6/2007; ASOGAPO Resolution, 8/2007; ASOGAPO resolution from meeting 18/3/11.
84 This fee, in some cases up to 30,000 US dollars (interview B15), was partly a product of the inefficiency of INRA, who “repeated many of the fieldwork processes, they spent a lot of money on paying technicians who were there scratching their arses, they delayed, they went again, they returned to do the same – then calculated the expenses that INRA incurred and divided them between the quantity of hectares titled” (interview A35).
to the then Prefect of Tarija requesting that he withhold the granting of the APG Itika Guasu’s legal personality (a precondition for a TCO claim).\footnote{This letter is referred to in another letter, dated 22/1/1998, found in INRA Tarija’s archives.} The current Provincial Governor, a former President of ASOGAPO and son of an infamous \textit{patrón} of Itika Guasu, continues to lobby for third party interests at a regional level (ASOGAPO meeting, 18 March, 2011).

These landowner articulations with regional authorities have enabled the cattle ranching sector to block the allocation of financial resources available for titling the TCO. Fiscal problems began in 2007, after a former Director of INRA Tarija – himself from a local cattle ranching family – diverted funds provided for TCO titling by the Danish government to individual titling processes in other parts of Tarija, something he openly admitted to in an interview (interview B23). Since this time, APG IG efforts to secure funding from the Departmental government – which has consistently been unable to spend its annual share of hydrocarbons rents, and hence has ample funds available – have consistently failed, owing to the presence of cattle ranchers within municipal and departmental authorities (CERDET, 2008: 7; see Appendix 4: years 2007-8).

Cattle ranchers from Itika Guasu also joined landowner groups from other lowland regions to obstruct TCO titling at a national level. In 2004, members of ASOGAPO participated in a national mobilisation led by the more powerful cattle ranchers of Santa Cruz Department, which demanded a five-fold increase in the \textit{carga animal} – the amount of land that could be justified per head of cattle, on which the Economic Social Function of properties is calculated (interview A35). Although the protest did not succeed in changing the legal norm, it was effective in delaying the progress of TCO titling processes nationally (interview B15), partly because ranchers from Santa Cruz who organised the protest “had a strong presence in the [central government] ministries, in the state institutions” (interview A35).

Third party claimants also sought to defend their land claims and avoid property reversions by presenting legal complaints before the National Agrarian Tribunal (TAN), an institution created under the INRA Law to resolve land disputes, which was widely
seen by NGOs and Guaraní leaders as partial to landowner interests. As one CERDET employee explained: “We’ve always feared that the TAN isn’t going to respond to the indigenous people, that it’s more on the side of the cattle ranchers…That’s certain; it’s been proven by events” (interview B18). One Guaraní leader argued that the TAN was yet another bureaucratic obstacle created by the state to block the consolidation of indigenous land rights:

The Bolivian state wants to…keep bureaucratising. What does the Bolivian state do? It creates various administrative stages, various obstacles. For that reason the National [Agrarian] Tribunal appeared. But who is the National Tribunal open to? (interview B17)

In fact, the APG IG did engage with the TAN in defence of their territorial claims (interviews B18 and A24). However, even where the TAN has upheld recommended property reductions, these have rarely been implemented in practice, owing to bureaucratic inertia, fiscal shortages and the continuing lobbying efforts of cattle ranching organisations within the regional context. Most significantly, this flood of legal challenges severely delayed titling progress. As one CERDET document on the titling process describes: “They lost time, resources, hopes and documents…these years [2004-5] can be considered LOST years” (CERDET, 2008: 3, capitals in original). It was the Guaraníes’ inability to break this deadlock that convinced them to agree to participate in a series of controversial roundtable negotiations in 2003 to resolve conflicts with third parties informally (discussed below).

It is important to note here that, at the time of INRA’s fieldwork (2000), the Guaraní of Itika Guasu had no representation, or allies, within municipal, provincial or departmental government. As such, they did not have their own networks of political

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86 This was echoed by a 2004 report by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues, which recommended that: “In so far as the National Agrarian Tribunal (TAN) is not replaced, it must address in an efficient and timely manner the cases under its jurisdiction, within the deadlines set by law. Additionally, it is recommended that TAN contribute towards genuine agrarian justice, ensuring the rights of access to land, including the right of indigenous peoples to their territories (34).

87 Fieldwork in Tarairí, and revision of INRA files on surrounding properties; CERDET internal report following strategy meeting for SAN-TCO, 15/8/08, which proposes “lobbying INRA Tarija to provide exact information about State Lands resulting from Reductions of Third Parties (geographical location, names, denomination of plot, status of areas)” (4).
influence through which to counter third party efforts to block the TCO titling process.

As the APG IG’s President lamented:

We are organised, the three indigenous peoples\(^{88}\), well-organised, maybe we’re strong, but the issue is that we don’t always have political representation, at least not in the arena where they make decisions. In contrast, the cattle ranchers *have been* represented – they’ve had senators, they’ve had deputies, they’ve been in the Prefecture all the time, so that is… I think they obstructed us. Whereas we, at no time have we had that arena where someone is going to defend us or take a position where they make important decisions (interview B2).

As such, the Guarani of Itika Guasu found themselves disadvantaged in the context of historically-grounded articulations between landowner interests and regional power, which profoundly shaped the dynamics of TCO titling in Itika Guasu. While the Guarani have recently taken important steps towards addressing their historical exclusion from regional institutions in Tarija (CERDET, 2004a)\(^{89}\), they continue to face marginalisation and discrimination. As the first Guarani to assume a position within a minor office of the departmental government in 2008 described his experience to me:

It was like making a new settlement in a community, so far out in the countryside…you don’t have a house, you don’t have food to eat, you have to start to work, building your house. It was like that… No one remembered the indigenous peoples – Guaranes, Tapietes….that is, in other words, we had to build a house (Interview B1).

Regional and national state authorities’ disregard for Guarani demands was illustrated in various APG assemblies on TCO titling I attended, at which the APG IG had requested the attendance of responsible authorities – usually either INRA Tarija or the Land Ministry.\(^{90}\) In many cases, officials did not appear at all, citing transportation problems or prior engagements. When they did come, their brief contribution often consisted of an incomprehensible delivery of statistics from an official report and excuses about the lack

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\(^{88}\) He refers here to Tarija’s three indigenous peoples, the Guarani, Weenhayek and Tapiete.

\(^{89}\) These steps include the election of candidates for positions in municipal and departmental government. Most significantly, a Guarani leader from Itika Guasu has risen to the position of President of Tarija’s Departmental Assembly – although sadly, he has become distanced from the APG IG leadership and communities in the process.

\(^{90}\) See Appendices 2 and 3 for a list of APG assemblies I attended.
of funds available to continue the titling process. APG demands for photocopies of official documentation were routinely ignored; in one case, at a 2008 APG IG land assembly in the community of Mokomokal, the Director INRA Tarija claimed to have insufficient funds for photocopying (recording from assembly, 28/11/08). In the discussion that followed, community members expressed frustration with the INRA’s lack of progress, transparency or concern for their demands, as the following quotations illustrate\textsuperscript{91}:

\begin{quote}
INRA always say the same – they speak of suppositions and not results. We are a people who have demanded [land rights] from the Bolivian State. The government has never carried out projects for the Guaraní people - the ministers aren’t interested in the indigenous peoples ….What is the obstacle? Why do [third parties] receive land and not us?
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
INRA always sends a different person – like that we’re never going to achieve [our land rights]. If we’re going to fight for land, we have to fight all together.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Why does the government play with us? There’s a lack of political will…What work does the Director [of INRA] do for his salary? As a people, we demand respect!
\end{quote}

These sentiments, echoed by other participants, brought about a noticeable change in the demeanour of INRA’s Director during the course of this meeting, who suggested INRA and the APG IG work together to finance and manage the titling process. However, community members were unconvinced, speculating afterwards that they would never get anywhere with INRA Tarija, but needed to “go further up” to lobby central government institutions not implicated in local power dynamics.

As the above account illustrates, private land claimants in Itika Guasu (often with collusion of state officials) used a variety of practices to block the progress of TCO titling and defend their own land claims within it. These practices show how TCO titling – a process the Guaraní hoped would transform the existing racial order – was instead shaped by these racialised power relations, which emerged from a history of frontier settlement and state territorialisation in the Chaco. While other accounts of TCO titling in Bolivia have highlighted some of these dynamics (for example, corruption and clientelism), my

\textsuperscript{91}These are taken from sections of the assembly that I audio-digitally recorded; they are not in order.
account has gone beyond them in locating these dynamics squarely in the context of the
defence of a postcolonial spatial and racial order. In order to interrogate this further, I
now turn to an exploration of the discourses of rights that accompanied and underpinned
this local opposition.

Colonial knowledges and discourses of rights

As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy. In the national
mythologies of such societies, it is believed that white people came first and that it is they who principally
developed the land... European settlers thus become the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the
fruits of citizenship. A quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is, therefore, the disavowal of
conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour... at each stage, the story
installs Europeans as entitled to the land, a claim that is codified in law. (Razack, 2002: 1-2)

As noted in the introduction, the functioning of colonial power relies on the production of
particular kinds of knowledge (cultural, geographical and historical), which in turn
produce particular (racialised) subjectivities and spaces. In previous chapters, I describe
how the Guaraní of Itika Guasu sought to challenge these colonial knowledges, through
retelling history and remapping territory in ways that made visible the violent processes
of indigenous dispossession that underpinned the state’s production of its territory.
However, this process of decolonising knowledge did not engage karai residents of Itika
Guasu, who saw only its material effects—endless Guarani meetings, the breaking of
bonds of empatronamiento, land occupations and, finally, the arrival of INRA, signalling
the state’s apparent recognition of Guarani demands.

In this section, I seek to understand local non-indigenous opposition to TCO
titling with reference to the discourses around race, place, identity and citizenship that
defined karai society on this (post)colonial frontier. I argue that these discourses played a
central role in how legal norms were contested, translated and (mis)applied in Itika Guasu
— something I explore using Sally Merry’s concept of vernacularisation. By putting a
spotlight on the discourses and claims of non-indigenous actors, and subjecting these to a
postcolonial discourse analysis, this account makes an original contribution to literature
on indigenous land titling in general, which has tended to focus either on procedural
issues (the development policy literature) or on indigenous knowledge practices (the
countermapping literature), largely neglecting the knowledges and discourses of non-indigenous actors. More broadly, my discussion expands existing discussions of mestizo elite power in the Bolivian lowlands (Valdivia, 2010; Soruco, in Gustafson and Fabricant, 2011; Fabricant and Postero, forthcoming), which have been heavily focused on large landowners and business elites, and on Santa Cruz department. By showing how racialised discourses and sovereignty claims are shared by and interpellate even more humble private non-indigenous land claimants, this account sheds important light on the continuing challenges of decolonisation in Bolivia, even following the waning of elite-led regionalist political movements (Postero, forthcoming). Finally, I seek to bring the under-researched subject of indigenous land titling into broader postcolonial discussions about race, identity and citizenship. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate how a focus on property can help reverse postcolonialism’s heuristic severing of discourse from materiality, revealing how particular (racialised) identities, spatial imaginaries and discourses of rights are territorialised, in ways that reproduce postcolonial exclusions.

In the account that follows, I highlight four inter-related discourses that resurfaced in the context of interviews, informal discussions and cattle ranchers’ meetings I attended: productive land use and economic citizenship; liberal discourses of equal rights; nation-building and native status; and outsider intervention versus local sovereignty.

Productive land use and economic citizenship

One way in which third parties defended their land claims was by arguing that land should be awarded to those who used it productively. This did not, in their view, include the Guaraní; as one farmer complained:

They only say “it’s my territory”; they don’t sow, they…don’t have a hacienda, so I believe that the land should be for people who….you should give priority to the person who’s going to….fulfil the social function. So that’s my proposal to INRA Nacional (interview A20).
This discourse draws heavily on the liberal idea of the “social function of property”,\(^92\) enshrined in Bolivian agrarian reform law since the 1953 agrarian reform. As noted above, this idea resurfaces both in the legal provisions of the INRA Law – as the Economic Social Function (applicable to medium and large properties) and Social Function (applicable to smallholdings and indigenous land rights) – and in EINEs, which sought to assess “indigenous spatial needs” in similar terms. As such, this quotation reveals how entrenched discourses of agrarian rights in Bolivia were deployed by private claimants to counter new multicultural discourses of indigenous rights. Yet, this discourse also has deeper roots. As in other settler societies, regional identities in Tarija are constructed around the idea that settlers legitimately earned their rights to land through a combination of hard work and enterprise (Razack, 2002, see above quotation). This in turn rests on the notion of indigenous lands as empty or unused – *tierras baldias* – awaiting conversion into civilised and productive spaces by *criollo* or *mestizo* farmers (Sundberg, 2008; Wainwright, 2008). As such, although the “social function of property” has historically lent moral weight to the claims of dispossessed rural populations in Bolivia (as in the 1952 Revolution), it can also serve as a vehicle for racialised colonial ideas about what constitutes productive land use, in ways that delegitimise indigenous land claims.

Underpinning this discourse is a colonial stereotype of the Guaraní as unproductive, and therefore undeserving of property rights. Reflecting on the implementation of the TCO titling process in Itika, one local government official told me:

> This law, it seems that it doesn’t have influence, because a cattle-rancher comes and says “I have so many cows, so I’m going to take it [the land] away from him” ; they say, “you don’t have cows…you don’t have agriculture”. It’s because the same indigenous person five years ago did nothing; “lazy” is the word. They have the idea that they stay sitting on their arses and everyone gives them everything. Life’s not like that – no, one has to work.

*PA: So if they were producing they would earn more respect?*

\(^\text{92}\) The idea of property’s social function has its origins in John Locke’s theory of property as a “natural right” (1690), based on the idea that when one mixes one’s labour with nature, one gains a relationship with that part of nature with which the labour is mixed.
From the government and from the cattle ranchers, the whites. The cattle ranchers say that they’re not using the land – that’s the problem (interview B29).

This quotation is revealing in several respects. First, it shows how the notion of productive land use as a basis for rights underpins everyday forms of indigenous dispossession in TCO Itika Guasu. Second, it reveals how references to the social function of property are linked to racist depictions of the Guaraní as lazy, rent-seeking, and requiring tutelage and discipline by *karai* landowners. Third, in slipping from description to personal judgement, this quotation reveals how such discourses are shared by officials within regional authorities. It is perhaps worth noting that, while this official did not have a direct involvement in TCO titling, he was Director of a rural development programme, which the Guaraní accuse of helping third parties to justify their land claims (and restricting their land access) through the provision of barbed wire to claimants whose land rights had not been recognised by INRA.

The depiction of the Guaraní as uncivilised and unproductive is reinforced by the widespread (inaccurate) popular perception, expressed to me in numerous interviews and informal discussions, that the Guaraní did not farm prior to their contact with non-indigenous settlers. Private claimants further elaborated this racial stereotype with reference to NGO development interventions, arguing that, despite receiving disproportionate help with their productive activities, the Guaraní have still proven incapable of development (interviews A19 and A22). While most informants, when pushed, acknowledged that Guaraní communities do practice subsistence farming, the superiority of *karai* land claims is frequently linked to their greater integration in local and regional markets. As one local rancher complained:

> Sometimes it hurts…that they take away your land, and you being the person…who produces, who provides meat here in the town, so [the titling process] wasn’t good, no. I also expected the Guarani to produce because they’re also human beings and they can produce. They also have hands, they can produce and sell – they could farm, but no…they don’t even sell a couple of cows, until now they don’t sell. I don’t know…to have land for free and not make them raise other… we say in local dialect that “you neither eat nor let eat” (interview A18).
The implication here is that the Guarani, have not *earned* the land they claim through commercial production; rather, it is “for free”. In contrast, *karai* claimants’ ability to sell their produce – and the status of meat as a preferred foodstuff for the urban middle class – serves to bolster private claims to land rights.

Market integration in turn serves to link *karai* land occupation to discourses of regional development. As one wealthy cattle ranching leader proudly pointed out:

> The productive agro-pastoral sector here in the province is the main driver of development. We’re not an industrial province, even less so an industrial department, so everything is sustained by agriculture, cattle ranching (interview A19).

Once again, this frames third party claimants of Itika as not only defending private interests but also serving the interests of broader Tarijeño society – providing meat to urban centres and fuelling the regional economy. The implication is that indigenous land rights could potentially undermine the reciprocal networks of production and exchange on which society depends. Of course, this depiction of a “neutral” market (Gibson-Graham, 2006) obscures the racialised inequalities that robbed indigenous peoples of their land base and rendered them an exploited labour reserve for, rather than equal participants in, agricultural markets. In doing so, discourses of economic citizenship use indigenous peoples’ disadvantaged status within a (post)colonial economy to undermine their present claims for land rights. In other words, they defend a colonial regime of citizenship (Quijano, 2000; Klor de Alva, 1995; Taylor, 2013).

As noted above, these links between race, nation and economy are sustained by a particular spatial order. Elite landowning families tend to reside and work in Tarija city and view rural landholdings in Itika Guasu as a source of secondary income – a spatial configuration that guarantees access to political power alongside economic security. Even poorer *karai* claimants tend to have economic links with urban centres, many of them working as *transportistas* (commercial drivers). As one city-dwelling landowner (a medical doctor) told me in an interview in his large family home in one of central Tarija’s elite neighbourhoods:
Non-indigenous residents of TCO Itika Guasu have other sources of income – many who are there [in Itika Guasu] are old, or part of their family is also in the city, or outside. For example, in Tarupayo, there are some who have gone to Spain, they send money from Spain, others live here in Tarija, they send money from here to their family. When the buses arrive….it’s with that that they maintain themselves, because their children who live here [in Tarija city] send money so the peasant there can maintain themselves (interview A19).

In contrast, although Guaraní men (and some women) do travel to urban centres for wage labour, the inability of most communities to produce agricultural surplus in a context of land scarcity, combined with poor transportation links and limited monetary resources for travel, limits their ability to participate in these regional circuits of production and exchange. In this context, market integration symbolises a spatial relationship that links karai landowners to the nation via urban centres – centres of state power and economic growth – a relationship from which the Guaraní have been historically excluded.

In the context of demands addressed to national government, these discourses were adapted to stress the importance of cattle ranching to the nation’s “food security”. As one former employee of INRA’s national office described, referring to national landowner mobilisations of 2004 (mentioned above):

The cattle ranchers organised through their Cattle Ranching Federation and they started to work on the issue of how they would defend [their claims] and what their position was before the government… [they said] “We’re producers and we’re connected to the food security of this country. So they’re not going to give all the land to the indigenous peoples while we’re giving food to eat to the whole country” (interview A35).

Despite its origins in international policy discourse, food security – when couched in nationalist terms – serves to legitimise state sovereignty over territory, by highlighting the need for rational state management of the nation’s land and resources. Appealing to the Bolivian state’s longstanding support for large-scale commercial agriculture (a modernising vision of development reproduced under neoliberalism), alongside colonial discourses of indigenous peoples as chronically underdeveloped and unproductive, the

93 The notion of “food security” comes from international policy discourse, and reflects a neoliberal vision of large-scale, market-based agricultural production. This model is contested by peasant social movements, who call for a prioritisation of “food sovereignty”.

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above discourse frames TCOs as a threat to the development and wellbeing of the entire nation. As noted above, these lobbying efforts – which combined moral argument with political mobilisation – succeeded in paralysing TCO titling processes across the Bolivian lowlands.

What made these discourses so powerful in the context of TCO titling in Itika Guasu was that they were shared by many of those responsible for implementing the titling process. For example, the former Departmental Director of INRA, who held the post in the crucial years of 1999-2004, openly admitted that he did not agree with the idea of indigenous land rights:

> You have the rule that work is the fundamental source of retaining the right [to property]; if you don’t work the land, they can expropriate it. For one sector [non-indigenous claimants]. But for another sector [indigenous peoples] you have a large quantity of land and you don’t do anything, so it’s not right, is it? I think that all the sectors without distinction should be required to use the land…all should fulfil the social economic function…you can’t justify that a people have so much unproductive land…it doesn’t serve any purpose, they’re going to be a threat to society (interview B28).

This quotation echoes those of private claimants in obscuring the colonial foundations of the current ethnic spatial order and locating indigenous peoples on the margins of national belonging. It is noteworthy that many of the events described above – such as the diversion of funds for TCO titling and the disappearances of INRA files – appeared under the watch of this individual. As such, knowledge and discourse are not separate from, but intrinsic to, the processes and dynamics described in the first part of this chapter.

Liberal discourses of equal rights

The above quotation also illustrates another key discourse underpinning third party opposition to the TCO: a liberal discourse of equal rights is used to challenge the fact that the Guaraní enjoy “special” rights under the SAN-TCO process and, specifically, are not

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94 This period saw the completion of INRA’s fieldwork and the subsequent Legal Technical Evaluations of property claims.
required to demonstrate productive land use. The following conversation, recorded at a public cattle ranchers’ meeting in Entre Ríos Town Hall on 18th March, 2011, is illustrative:

H1: The problem is that the law demands that the land possessor fulfils the FES – Economic Social Function. And it doesn’t demand that of the originarios (natives)95…that is, they justify [their land claim] by being originarios. So that’s a disadvantage, because it says that if we don’t fulfil [the FES]…then we’re going to face a reduction. Imagine a plague, you have 100 heads [of cattle], a plague comes, the plague kills 50 and when they come to do a census after two years you’re not going to have the 100, so they’re going to reduce [your property].

PA: So the law doesn’t seem fair to you in the sense that there is one treatment for the Guaraníes and another treatment for the cattle ranchers?

H1: Of course.

H2: They [the cattle ranching organisations] already demanded that – that if something is demanded of the cattle ranching producer who’s there…that the same be demanded also of the [Guaraní] community – that they make use of the land, because they have it without using it.

The two men went on to reiterate this argument with reference to a specific piece of TCO land the Guaraní had fenced:

H1: They’ve fenced a big area now…they can work, they can sow maize, they can sow pasture, and in the end…no one does anything. Over there they’ve closed it for no reason [de ganas]. If someone goes to work over there – [like] the clearing I do to sow pasture – they’re there looking at what this person is doing.

H2: Just standing there [parados].

95 The use of the term originario (native) rather than indigena (indigenous) here, and in subsequent examples, is significant. Originario is a term preferred by many indigenous people in the Bolivian highlands, based on the pejorative colonial connotations of indígena. In contrast, the wide use of indígena in the lowlands emerges from the transnationally-articulated process of ethnic resurgence of the 1990s, wherein indigeneity became the basis for special cultural rights, as well as for international support. The usage of originario here can thus be viewed as a discursive challenge to the identity politics underpinning the TCO claim – particularly given that some private claimants (“third parties”) in Itika Guasu hail from highland originario backgrounds.
H1: They don’t progress, so you can’t…a problem is…

H2: That is, they demand the FES from us – obligatorily [sí o sí] – and not from them. And it’s a big disadvantage – we’re all Bolivians, aren’t we, so we should get treatment that is…[equal]

Here, abstract concepts of equality and justice are interwoven with racialised depictions of the Guaraní as idle and uncivilised. By demanding equal treatment before the law on the basis that “we’re all Bolivians”, this discourse obscures the state’s historically unequal treatment of indigenous and settler populations, and the history of violent dispossession this gave rise to.

Some third party claimants went further, claiming they had suffered a form of (reverse) ethnic discrimination. In March 2011, I spent an afternoon with Beatriz Vaca, the then President of ASOGAPO, in her veterinary practice in Entre Ríos. Between serving customers – many of whom had travelled from communities in Itika Guasu for animal vaccines, farming accessories or advice – she related to me the long struggle of her father to overturn INRA’s decision to reduce his property. Originally a cowhand of the wealthy landowning Mendez family, by the mid-1990s her father, Roberto, had managed to amass his own herd, establish himself as an independent rancher, and negotiate occupation of a sizable piece of the Mendez’s land – a property coveted by the Guaraní (interview A19; informal discussions in Tarairí). During the titling process, however, Roberto Vaca failed to demonstrate fulfilment of the FES and received notification from INRA that his property would face reduction, something that he challenged before the TAN. In the following passage, Beatriz describes her experience accompanying her father to Sucre to present the unsuccessful legal challenge:

[It’s] discrimination because, like I told you before, when I went to make the legal challenge …the judge said to me: “Understand, Madam”, she said, “that we’re doing a favour by giving you a piece of the TCO. You know very well that the indigenous sector are the natives and they are owners of the land”. And this, for me, is a total discrimination…so, in a rage, I tell you I grabbed her arm like this [she grabs my bicep and squeezes it till it hurts] [and said]: “Would you happen to know that I was also born there, that I am just as native [originario] as the indigenous people? Or do you need me to put on a tipoy (traditional Guaraní garment) and paint my face so that you recognise me?” – I said that to her, with the irony of the anger that I felt at that moment, because I
felt so bad – after having worked…my father born, having worked, my grandfather too, as an old man in an indigenous territory – that they tell me now that there’s no land leftover for them. And when we, the cattle ranchers of the zone of Itika Guasu, are the ones who most contribute to the market…for me, that’s discrimination - total discrimination, because it can’t be that because we’re not indigenous they want to remove us from the indigenous territory, can it? We don’t deserve any blame for not being indigenous – I tell you, we’re just as native as they are and there [in Itika] they respect us (interview A24).

In this passage, Beatriz appropriates and adapts two of the key concepts underpinning indigenous land claims. First, the Guaraní claim for preferential rights as a redress for historic discrimination is subverted to claim that it is non-Guaraní people who now face ethnic discrimination. Second, indigenous claims for territory on a basis of ancestral occupation are countered by rival claims to *originario* status – a status earned, in her eyes, by the embodied labour of two generations of her family in Itika Guasu.

**Nation-building and native status**

This counter-discourse of ancestral rights is echoed in other third party accounts. For example, in an interview conducted in 2009, the then President of ASOGAPO, the son of a powerful *patrón* of Itika Guasu, provided the following reflections on the term *originario*:

Now looking a bit further back at what we are, that is to say, as non-Guaraníes…I think it’s difficult to understand when they speak of *originarios*; at least I very much disagree with the interpretation that this word implies. *Originario*...evidently history tells us that the ancestors lived on the banks of the Pilcomayo river, the Guaraní ethnic groups, but I find myself in a dilemma – for example, the majority of the [*mestizo*] families who live inside the TCO Itika Guasu have always lived in this zone – *always* (interview B31).

For this informant, a third generation immigrant to the area, the birth of one’s parents in the territory was sufficient to claim native status. This claim was reinforced by the conditions under which his grandfather arrived in Itika Guasu. As he continued:
And on the other hand, there is another factor that must be taken into account: for example, my grandfather was an ex-combatant in the Chaco War, he fought in the Chaco War. He went to war when he was 17 years old…he returned missing an eye, with a bullet in the lung, which thirty years ago cost him his life. I, as a grandson, I believe that I also consider myself originario, don’t you think? That is, beyond the estate and when we [acquired it], I believe that in the end we’re originarios, we’re originarios, we were born there, even the grandparents were there. So I think we have to begin to understand this issue there. We are just as much owners of this territory…the Guaranies, they deserve all the respect, valuation, and we do as well. When we understand that, I believe that we’re going to come to understand each other more. So, in relation to the issue of our identity, our identity is being from the place, we’re from the place we’re also originarios of the place.

As others have noted (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010), the Chaco War of 1932-35 with Paraguay retains a central role in the construction of a national “imagined community” in Bolivia, based on its popular depiction as a heroic struggle in defence of the nation’s hydrocarbon wealth. Recently, the Morales government has used the War – fought largely by poor indigenous highlanders – to reassert national sovereignty over the Chaco’s hydrocarbons wealth in opposition to both neoliberal resource governance arrangements and regionalist autonomy claims. Yet, the Chaco War is equally important for local sovereignty claims. As noted in Chapter 1, after the war ended many ex-combatants, rather than returning to impoverished rural communities in the altiplano, opted to try their luck as cattle men in the sparsely populated lands of the Chaco. For the numerous descendents of these war veterans who currently claim land in Itika Guasu, their ancestors’ sacrifice in the war effort provides an added basis for their land claims. The imaginary of land as a prize for sacrifice in battle has a long genealogy in Bolivia, where since the time of the Independence Wars, ex-combatants have been awarded frontier lands (and indigenous labourers) as a reward for military service (Chapter 1). As such, references to the Chaco war by current land claimants reproduce entrenched discourses linking property rights to participation in nation-building – a process underpinned by indigenous dispossession.

For example, the 2006 decree “nationalising” Bolivia’s hydrocarbons reserves was named the “Heroes of the Chaco” Decree and announced at the site of a war memorial in Camiri.
The Chaco War also provides an important reference point for families who settled in the region earlier on. Simón Mendez, the owner of two sizeable properties in the TCO – part of a much larger family hacienda – emphasised the sacrifices that his and other earlier settler families had made during the war. Not only did they “send all their sons, all their family to war”, but he claimed that they had been forced to hand over all their animals and other goods to the war effort, and were “left impoverished” as a result:

Many of the cattle ranchers lost everything. They lost everything because in the war all goods were common property. That is, no one could say “this is my cow”, or “this is my horse”, because they declared goods common property in service of the war…My family, they say that they had cattle, a good quantity of cattle, but after [the war] they were left with some ten or twenty heads of cattle…because they had used all of them in the war (interview A19).

In contrast, he claimed that the Guaraní had not participated in the war at all:

The Tarijeños [and] those from La Paz went to war, but the Guaranies declared themselves impartial. They declared themselves impartial, also they didn’t go to war – no Guarani person went to war…they were declared impartial, that we’re not in any war with Paraguay, because Paraguay also had Guaranies, so…they didn’t participate in the war, people only came from the north of La Paz, from Potosí, from Tarija.

Here, Mendez reproduces a war-time discourse that the Guaraní could not be trusted as allies owing to their spatial mobility and transnational kinship ties (in Paraguay). In the context of TCO titling, private claimants’ patriotic histories are frequently juxtaposed with Guaranies’ purported indifference to (or betrayal of) this nation-building effort. As one Guaraní leader complained, speaking at an APG assembly in Karapari, the site of a new TCO claim, karai opponents “say that Guaranies didn’t fight in the Chaco War” when the reality was that “they were made invisible for belonging to the patrones” (transcription of recording 1, 1/12/08). In fact, the Guarani suffered huge losses and massive displacement during the Chaco War, where they served as foot soldiers, guides and messengers for both Bolivian and Paraguayan forces (Pifarré, 1999). According to the Guarani authors of one publication, they also suffered military raids of their animals:
During the Chaco War many [Guaraní] men were taken to Villamontes and enrolled in the forces of the Bolivian army, or to work on the construction of the Tarija-Villamontes road…According to what the old people of the region say, during the war, the army entered the communities to take not only men, but also the few cattle that the indigenous families had left (APG IG and CERDET, 2005: 6).

As well as making their own claims to native status, some third party informants also suggested that some Guarani resident of Itika Guasu were not themselves native to the area. This is implicit in Cruz’s reference (cited above) to “Guaraní ethnic groups” who lived “on the banks of the Pilcomayo river” – a statement suggestive of the Guaraníes’ historic mobility and decentralised forms of organisation. This subtly questions the Guaraníes’ current claim to a fixed and bounded territory, illustrating a (post)colonial conflation between property and settlement (Wainwright 2008, see Chapter 5). References are also made to the fact that some current residents of Itika Guasu migrated during the last half-century from the neighbouring department of Chuquisaca, where they faced a more widespread and extreme regime of empatronamiento. One informant weighed the claims of Chaco War veterans against these Guarani “newcomers”, finding the former more deserving of land:

The leaders – that is, the old Guarani leaders who fought for the TCO demand, all that – they’re not, they weren’t native to here, from Itika. They’re people who came from Chuquisaca. So…they’re people who came from another department and, well…because they married women from here, they’ve stayed in the place. So perhaps there are people, let’s say, ex-combatants of the Chaco War, who were born in the place, and they feel they have much more right than people who’ve come, than the Guarani who have come from the Chuquisaca side…So they complain, they say: “Why don’t we have the same rights as them, as the Guarani, the Guarani who weren’t from there? – that is, who came after…precisely for motives of the slavery that there was on the Chuquisaca side – there it was more pronounced, according to what they say…they say that there the empatronamiento was worse (Interview B29).

Ironically, in seeking refuge from colonial exploitation and spatially limiting their territorial claim, the Guarani find themselves accused of being strangers in their own lands.
**Outsider intervention versus local sovereignty**

By questioning the origins of APG leaders, the above quotation also suggests that the TCO claim itself was the product of intervention by “outsiders”, rather than an organic process of indigenous organising. This denial of local Guarani agency in claiming territory is also elaborated through references to the role of NGOs in ethnic mobilisation and the construction of a territorial claim (described in Chapters 1-2). The following passage from an interview is illustrative:

I want to tell you something in relation to the conflict - and I can back this up in any debate. These are *created* conflicts, Penelope.

**PA:** Before the [titling] process, was the relation [between Guarani and non-Guarani] good?

Before the process, the relation was fine, before the TCO the relation….there have always been – not only in the Guarani zone but in all the country – there were problems between workers and *patrones*, there’s always been that. That’s a reality, we’re not going to deny it. [There was] a certain kind of imposition by some landowners, that’s true…but what I want to get at is that there are *interests* and who manages those interests? It’s the same people who have obtained a lot of resources – millions and millions of resources from international cooperation to improve the life of those people [the Guarani]. And how have they improved the life of the Guarani after more than twenty years in the zone?

**PA:** Are you talking about the *instituciones de apoyo*?

About some NGOs, some *instituciones de apoyo*, specifically in O’Connor Province. That is like an open secret, which one can’t complain about, because Tarija lacks documentary evidence of many things…but it’s popular knowledge: many families who are beneficiaries have got rich on the money that came for them [the Guarani] – that’s not fair. So what suits them? It suits them to have us divided…For me, those [organisations] are to blame for the bad [i.e. unfair] titling, because it was with their resources that they paid for the land titling (interview B31).

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97 APG leaders from Chuquisaca, who had already organised following contact with leaders in Camiri and NGO and Church campaigns to end slavery, played a leading role in early ethnic mobilisation in Itika Guasu (CERDET, 2008).
In this passage, a measured acknowledgement of the master-slave relations that predominated in Itika Guasu prior to ethnic mobilisation (forced by my question) is quickly masked over with the depiction of inter-ethnic conflict as a product of the self-serving activities of NGOs. Rather than being agents of their own history, the Guaraní appear as passive victims of manipulation by outside interests. Private claimants, on the other hand, are framed not as self-interested actors but as the defenders of local sovereignty and social order in the face of these foreign interventions. The effect is to displace the Guaraníes’ territorial claim from the realm of citizenship, relocating it outside of the territory and the nation. This denial of Guaraní political agency and citizenship claims is even clearer in the account of Beatriz, who speculated:

I think they [the NGOs] have trained [the Guaraní] like that, with the idea that the land belongs to the indigenous sector. And this is something I’ve felt and I’ve heard and I’ve seen various times – that no, the indigenous person has rights, the indigenous people are originarios, that they have rights and the terceros don’t, and some people have transmitted that in the minds of the indigenous people, but the thing is…it made us [feel] a bit like this: that they wanted to do us harm…but they didn’t succeed because at the end of the day we live in the same terrain and we have to live as a community, always united (interview A24).

Once again, the implication is that NGOs – with their talk of indigenous land rights – unsettled otherwise stable and harmonious inter-ethnic relations within the territory. A similar argument was presented in a newspaper article published in right-wing elite-owned Tarijeño newspaper El País on 1st July 2006. Entitled “Two NGOs promote conflict over land”, it depicts CERDET and the EAPG as “money-grabbing”, unaccountable, and a threat to the social order of the province (Appendix 5). As another informant put it:

CERDET is the wolf of the cattle ranchers, just like the Equipo de Apoyo, like INRA – it’s the wolf of the cattle ranchers….[they think] it’s the fault of the NGOs that now the Guaraníes are…a strengthened organisation and everything (interview A18).
Underlying this depiction (where the Guarani are implicitly analogous to lambs or calves) is a claim to sovereignty, which implies not only rights to land but also ownership of Guarani bodies.

Relational histories, selective sovereignties

The above account demonstrates how third parties in Itika Guasu justify their land claims by drawing on a repertoire of overlapping discourses, rooted in histories of colonial settlement, nation-building and agrarian reform. These discourses do not operate in isolation: as I have shown, arguments about property’s productive function are interwoven with liberal discourses of citizenship; competing claims to native status are intimately bound up with past experiences of nation-building; critiques of NGO intervention mask racialised claims to sovereignty over indigenous lands and bodies. Together, these discourses reveal how “localized land rights became articulated through relational histories of nation” (Moore 2005: 4). Whereas the Guarani sought to contest and transform the state’s production of its territory – a project founded on racialised dispossession and exclusion – third party claimants saw themselves as defenders of an idea of citizenship grounded in this (post)colonial history. Thus, indigenous and state attempts to transform land relations through a new multicultural discourse of rights were thwarted by “previous sedimentations” which “remained consequential” in localised “landscapes of rule” (ibid.: 3). Above all, this is illustrative of the existence in the Chaco frontier of “selective sovereignties”, which “compete with state assertions of absolute authority” (ibid.: 3).

Underpinning all of these discourses are two central elements: first, particular constructions of racial difference, where Guarani are framed as lazy, unproductive, unpatriotic, mobile, passive, uncivilised and undeveloped and karai as hardworking, productive, patriotic, settled (first), active, civilised, agents of development; second, a particular construction of nation – one which celebrates the role of mestizo settlers in the history of nation-building and disavows the violence, exclusions and disposessions inflicted on indigenous peoples. As one former employee of the NGO Indigenous Institute put it:
Who gave them lands there? …it’s the state that gave them that right… A fact: there was legal slavery in Bolivia until 1952.\(^98\) And you had the right to exploit the indigenous slaves (pongos) according to the law, and no slave could leave your property without punishment. If you didn’t punish him, national justice would punish him. Why? Because the Indian didn’t have the right to citizenship (interview A35).

Whereas Guaraní claims to citizenship are fundamentally revisionist – based on making visible this historical violence and exclusion – karai claims rest on a defence the racialised citizenship project from which they historically gained rights to indigenous land and labour. Rather than acknowledging that Guaraní speak from within the nation, as historically wronged and misrecognised citizens, their claims are situated outside of the nation, as a product of self-serving interventions by foreign-funded NGOs. Furthermore, the Guaraníes’ claim for territory is framed as a threat to the nation - its economic productivity, liberal justice system, geographical borders and origin myths of frontier conquest. Guaraníes’ true relationship with the nation, this discourse implies, is through their bonds to their patrones, whose discipline and tutelage is required to transform them into civilised and productive subjects.

These discourses are crucial to understanding how elite-led cattle ranching organisations were able to enlist broad-based support among a socio-economically heterogeneous local non-indigenous population, and in a context where not all claimants lost out from the TCO titling process. As I have shown, discourses underpinned concrete actions to block or distort the application of legal norms, adding moral argument to political connections and clout. I conclude this chapter by turning my attention to a final aspect of TCO titling in Itika Guasu, which powerfully illustrates how this defence of local sovereignty was enacted and brought to bear on the application of legal norms: the threat of violence and the recourse to informal negotiation.

\(^98\) Until the first agrarian reform (1952), Bolivian indigenous peoples were excluded from citizenship rights, while white and mestizo property owners enjoyed the legal right to subject indigenous populations within their lands to forced labour (Larson, 2004). The 1953 Agrarian Reform law abolished forced labour and established a program of expropriation and distribution of the rural property of the traditional landlords to the Indian peasants.
The threat of violence and the recourse to informal agreements

The INRA Law authorises and promotes the use of informal negotiations between Guarani claimants and private “third party” landowners in TCOs during the fieldwork stage of the titling process, particularly regarding the identification of boundaries of indigenous communal spaces and private properties. Official documentation suggests that such agreements occurred in 26 of 27 Guarani communities initially measured within the TCO area (INRA, undated: 5). As such, the law itself made provisions for some flexible negotiation regarding its application. In Itika Guasu, however, the use of informal negotiations went far beyond the agreement of locally-recognised property boundaries. Rather, informal negotiations – conducted at the margins of the law, and in spaces conditioned by racialised inequality – emerged as a key mechanism through which private landowners (with INRA’s collusion) neutralised the redistributive possibilities of the TCO titling process.

In 2003, following a wave of third party mobilisation (discussed above), INRA instigated 34 “roundtable negotiations” in order to try and diffuse high levels of tension in the zone and prevent further legal complaints before the National Agrarian Tribunal (TAN). As one CERDET report describes the context for these agreements:

The cattle ranchers gained strength and made claims but now in an organised manner, and for that reason INRA was obliged to instigate CONCILIATION acts between communities and cattle ranchers with the objective of avoiding greater social conflicts (CERDET, 2008: 5, capitals in original).

Another internal CERDET document reports that 44 such informal agreements were made between cattle ranchers and Guarani communities, in order “to make the process viable and avoid legal challenges to [the legal results of titling]” (2010). These roundtable negotiations succeeded in this immediate goal, reducing the number of legal challenges by third parties before the TAN from 100 to 7 (interview B18). However, this achievement came at a cost; in most cases, “the APG IG ceded spaces in favour of third parties” (CERDET, 2008: 5). This is supported by INRA documentation, photocopies of which I obtained from CERDET’s office. These documents show that, in 21 of 34
properties subject to roundtable negotiations, indigenous representatives agreed to an increase in the number of cattle recorded by INRA officials during fieldwork, thereby enabling the private claimant to justify land that would otherwise have been reverted to the TCO (Conciliation Acts, 2003; INRA, 2008b). Interviews with Guarani leaders involved in these negotiations shed additional light on how such agreements were reached. One Guarani informant described how, typically, Guarani leaders agreed to halve the area of a planned property reduction:

[Third parties] accepted the reductions, but negotiating. If they had a reduction of 50%, well, there they entered into the mesas de concertación, there we arrived: “Look, we don’t want that, what can we do? That reduces a lot; [so we agreed] half and half. They had 50 [percent] for each party – 50 for the TCO and 50 for them...that isn’t in the Law, but that’s what we call informal agreement (interview B4).

As CERDET notes, such agreements constituted “a flexible application of the [legal] norm and adjusted fieldwork documents, that is, they modified the FES files and these constitute UNTOUCHABLE documents...violat[ing] the rights of the communities”, although “at the time it was a measure that [INRA] considered the most appropriate for avoiding bigger confrontations and conflicts in the zone” (2008: 5, capitals in original, for emphasis). In light of this legal deviation, and even though INRA Tarija had instigated and overseen these agreements, in June 2008 the agency pronounced them illegal and demanded the revision of all affected property files, which it subsequently referred to the Agrarian National Tribunal (CERDET, 2008). Thus, while the APG IG had participated in this irregular and unfavourable negotiation process (under pressure from both CERDET and INRA) in a desperate bid to advance with the legal consolidation of their TCO claim, these agreements ended up bringing further delays to the titling process, as well as compromising the Guaranies’ land rights. For all the Guaranies’ pragmatism, the promise of territory remained elusive.

99 The most recent list of properties of INRA (2008b) claims that roundtable negotiations took place for 34 of the 133 private properties in the TCO. In 21 of these, the agreement reached concerned an increase in the number of cattle in the Legal Technical Evaluation (ETJ) report. In documentation the Conciliation Acts themselves, 15 of 24 acts obtained concerned an increase in the number of cattle for the fulfilment of the FES. This is stipulated through statements such as: “The quantity of x cattle was agreed between both parties” and affirmation that INRA had modified the ETJ reports accordingly.
In light of these events, it is unsurprising that some Guarani leaders in Itika Guasu reflected critically on these informal agreements. As one leader lamented: “Everything was an error…we ceded a lot”. He complained that “[INRA] pressured us a lot to sign the agreements…because they had to finish the titling as soon as possible” (interview B3). This once again points to the state’s collusion in the watering down of Guarani territorial rights – in this case reflecting INRA’s target-driven culture and primary concern with “making territory legible” (as opposed to decolonising territory). Another Guarani leader criticised the roundtable agreements as:

[P]art of the strategy of…this state to block [titling progress], it has been the clearest strategy of delay, delay, delay, intensify, pacify and not reach a conclusion….we had a clear idea that the agreements were to accelerate the process when in the end they told us that making agreements had no legal value…These were clear strategies for not arriving at the central objective that we, the indigenous peoples, had: concluding the titling (interview B2).

Despite these critical reflections, however, most Guarani leaders and NGO staff I interviewed continued to argue that the informal agreements were necessary at the time. This was partly because, as noted above, they saw no alternative means of overcoming the legal paralysis resulting from third parties’ complaints before the National Agrarian Tribunal. As one NGO employee put it:

What would have happened if we hadn’t arrived at agreements? All the third parties would have challenged the titling process, they would have blocked the possibility of the process advancing…we would have waited much longer with this process (interview B18).

Yet, interviews also point to another underlying factor. As Celestino, a Guarani leader who accompanied INRA in fieldwork activities, described:

The Law is the theoretical part, you see? In practice, it’s another thing, isn’t it? It’s not applied; if the Law had to be applied, it would start to generate many conflicts. Following the law, there is an internal negotiation. One can negotiate the Law internally more than the Law…. You can’t generate conflicts there. We have to look after the integrity of the communities, where they live, the Guarani people, the peasant farmers…We can’t start a fire. If we allow a fire to start, how are you going to put it out? (interview B1).
As this quotation reveals, the recourse to informal negotiations responded not only to the cattle ranchers’ ability to obstruct the titling progress, but also to their willingness to defend their property claims with violence. Through his metaphorical reference to “starting a fire” (by refusing to cede ground to third parties), this leader expresses his fear that inter-ethnic conflict resulting from confrontations over land rights in the TCO could quickly spread. For Guaraní communities who (unlike many private claimants) have literally nowhere else to go, the implications could be severe. Reading between the lines of this quotation, we could also reflect that the “integrity of communities” involves (asymmetrical) inter-ethnic relations of labour, property access, exchange of goods, and co-parentage – relations whose breakdown could exacerbate vulnerable Guaraní households’ existing difficulties in accessing land or livelihoods (Chapter 4).

If this leader’s view of the law as a flexible instrument might appear divergent from a statist vision, then this was not necessarily the case in Tarija. INRA employees I interviewed – whether ideologically opposed or sympathetic to indigenous land rights – also seemed to take for granted the impossibility of applying “the dead letter of the law” in the face of local landowner opposition. As one former INRA employee and indigenous rights activist explained:

Of course, beyond what you can apply as the dead letter [of the law], I think that everything is done according to...to how you see it socially, because even if the law is rather complex...if you have this experience on the ground, you realise that you’re fucking up people’s lives. So you realise that the law was elaborated not by people who have lived the reality of the zone, but rather by bureaucrats, who had a different vision...Obviously, if you applied the law inflexibly it would generate more conflicts (interview B15).

The former Director of INRA Tarija (2008-9), a long-time Guaraní ally, took a similar view:

Regarding the flexible application [flexibilización], well, it’s obvious, isn’t it? One thing is what is written in law, another thing is what one does on the ground, in practice, let’s say, isn’t it. So you have to apply the law flexibly [flexibilizar] (interview A29).

These examples convey a pragmatic acceptance of the impossibility of implementing indigenous land rights in practice as outlined in national and international law.
Underlying this, as these quotations make explicit, is the *de facto* sovereignty of *karai* landowners within the territory and their willingness to use violence to discipline those who challenge that power – including state officials. This threat of violence was not just a reality experienced by INRA officials, APG IG leaders and NGO staff; it also constitutes a central element of third parties’ discourse, used repeatedly to pressure regional and national authorities into responding to their demands. The former President of the cattle ranchers’ federation ASOGAPO reiterated this discourse in an interview, declaring:

> I feel that this issue is a time bomb... Because you can’t come and say to a non-Guarani producer of the zone... “You know what, Sir? It turns out you’re in this TCO, you don’t belong here, it’s a legally indigenous territory of the Guaranies, so you have to pick up your little house, your things and go”. You can’t do it. I think many people are going to prefer to stay there until the bitter end [*las últimas consecuencias*]; if they have to die there, they will do it...We’ve already seen, there have been deaths over this issue. So it’s the responsibility of the leaders, of the authorities, not to politicise this issue (interview B31).

This discourse has been repeatedly reproduced in cattle ranchers’ engagement with state authorities and the media. In an article published in 2007 by the elite-owned regional newspaper *El País*, the same informant is quoted predicting “a kind of war for land” if third party complaints are not addressed (see Appendix 5) and warns that “we’re on the brink of a new Pananti”, referring to a bloody land conflict that took place in a neighbouring province in 2008. These warnings were reiterated in third party correspondence with state authorities, as the following examples illustrate:

> The *campesinos* have taken the decision that they will defend their properties with their own lives...If in the future there should be a loss of human life due to this conflict it will be the responsibility of the relevant authorities who are denying the right of the *campesinos* to be listened to (letter from Provincial Deputy of O’Connor Province to Land Ministry, 28 March 2008, accompanying 41 individual complaints from Cattle Ranchers of Itika Guasu).

> We don’t want to spill blood among *campesinos* and Guaranies, that’s why we want them to attend to our demands as soon as possible (complaint to INRA, 15 Nov 2007).

> The affected parties resolve to make everyone respect their lands and their ownership of these until the last consequences and they will not be responsible for events that could occur in the zone of Itika Guasu (act from meeting of cattle ranchers, 22 December 2007).
that’s why relations are tense, with a possible emergence of a new Pananti, like that which happened in the Chaco… (letter by third party resident of Itika Guasu to President Evo Morales, 28th December, 2007).

Despite these vivid references to blood being spilt and lives lost, the authors absolve themselves of responsibility for potential violence instigated by them or their allies, on the basis that violence is an inevitable and justifiable outcome of the violation of private property – seen here not as a legal right granted by the state, but as an expression of the inviolability of settler sovereignty over “territories of conquest” (Soruco, 2011). This sheds important light on the nature and limits of state power in postcolonial frontier regions, where many indigenous people live (Das and Poole, 2004). Contravening Weber’s (1919) characterisation of the modern nation-state, as one where “the state is considered the sole source of the ‘right’ to use violence”, private claimants in Itika Guasu “reserved the right” to use violence against the state to defend their own sovereignty claims. Once again, this must be seen as rooted in a history in which state sovereignty in the Chaco has been predicated on, and functioned through, settler control of indigenous territory and bodies (Chapter 1). It was this hitherto unshaken alliance between state and settler sovereignty claims that the TCO titling process called into question. In this context, private claimants imagined themselves as the defenders of a racialised regime of citizenship.

As I have shown, the existence of “selective sovereignties [that] compete with state assertions of absolute authority” (Moore, 2005) ibid.: 3) had profound consequences for the implementation of state law in defence of indigenous land rights. Beyond adapting, or vernacularising, global and national norms to fit local meanings (Merry, 2006), private claimants raised the more fundamental question of who has the right to allocate land. While the rights of settlers were presented as preceding and transcending state law, the Guaraníes’ rights – although framed by the Guaraní as prior to those of the state or settlers – are eclipsed altogether. By denying the Guaraní “the right to have rights”, this discourse returns them to their colonial status as “non-persons with respect to justice” (Fraser, 2005).
It is worth reflecting on what made the Guaraní TCO claim so unsettling. Describing Guaraní Tüpaist messianic movements during the colonial period, Gustafson argues that what made these so subversive was the fact that they involved “mimicking or appropriating symbols of colonial authority” (2009: 34; see also Bhabha, 1994: 85-92). Such performances were “invariably met with excesses of colonial violence that pursued order through terror” (ibid.). A century later, the Guaraní “again questioned the racial and political order…now in a language of NGO development projects, state interculturalism and indigenous rights (ibid.: 38). Their appropriation of state cartography and law – the epistemological basis of settler land claims – towards these ends unsettled the very foundations of karai identity in at the Chaco frontier.

In this context, informal negotiations constituted a space at the margins of the law, within which legal norms could be renegotiated taking into account these competing (state and private) sovereignties. For the Guarani, whose legal-cartographic strategy relied on a scaling down of nationally and internationally recognised indigenous rights, this opened the way for undermining their own historically-grounded sovereignty claims. Crucially, informal negotiations resituated debates over indigenous land rights in a local context marked by racialised asymmetries of power, and between parties who were embedded in intimate relationships of dependency, patronage and resource competition. The endorsement of informal negotiations by local NGOs (as well as INRA Tarija) reinforced the idea that indigenous rights were subject to negotiation. Their critics – including some APG IG leaders – pointed out that NGOs were themselves embedded in regional ethnic power relations through personal and institutional ties to political and landowner interests, as well as facing pressure to report “success” to international donors (Ferguson, 1990).

In summary, the titling process – even more so than the national policy and local mapping processes that preceded it – was marked by contingent articulations between differently situated actors pursuing competing sovereignty claims within a field of power marked by racialised inequalities. I now turn to the results of the land titling process to illustrate the legal outcomes this gave rise to.
The results of TCO titling in Itika Guasu

Figure 6: The legal results of TCO titling in Itika Guasu

LEGEND
- Titled to the Guarani
- In process of being titled to the Guarani
- Titled to third parties
- Claimed by third parties
- State land

100 Elaborated by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, adapted from Map 1, in Fundación TIERRA, 2011: 308.
In January 1997, the Bolivian government of Sanchez de Lozada formally recognised the Itika Guasu TCO claim. In July, INRA officially “immobilised” (declared land sales illegal within) an area of 216,002 hectares (later remeasured as 235,949 hectares), marking the beginning of the legal process of TCO titling (SAN-TCO) – a process that involved identifying, measuring and evaluating all private property claims within the TCO area. As noted, this represented a reduction of the APG IG’s original territorial claim, and also fell short of the 293,584 hectares subsequently recommended by the EINE as necessary to meet the Guaraníes’ “spatial needs”. As such, even if the entire area of the TCO had been titled to the APG IG, this would have fallen short of the state’s own analysis of the area required by the Guaraní to sustain their livelihoods. In fact, the area titled to the Guaraní is much smaller. By 2012, fifteen years after the TCO’s immobilisation, the APG IG had been awarded legal title to 90,539.9 hectares, or 38.4% of the total TCO area. This is comprised of a first title of 64,758 hectares, awarded in 2002, and a second award of 27,007 hectares, made in January 2008 (see Appendix 4). Although the second award appears in recent INRA data, APG IG leaders and communities claimed they have never received the legal documents for this second award. Furthermore, almost half of the latest award is comprised of land already occupied by Guaraní communities, rather than state lands or property reversions. As Figure 6 illustrates, the titled TCO area is discontinuous, interspersed with properties titled to third parties or which have not completed the titling process, which together make up 42 percent of the TCO’s total area. A total of 25,452 hectares has been titled to third party claimants, distributed across 136 properties. Most of these are private properties owned by cattle ranchers; a few are peasant communities who have claimed land collectively. 75,000 hectares (198 properties) are claimed by third parties but have not concluded the titling process. Finally, 28,000 hectares are identified as state land, due to be awarded to the Guaraní.

A TCO refers to a contiguous hybrid area of private owners and indigenous communal land – that is, the boundaries of the indigenous territorial claim as recognised by the state. Owing to the recognition of private property claims within this area, the actual legal title awarded to indigenous claimants – in this case, awarded to the APG IG – is likely to be significantly less and non-contiguous. The fact that this indigenous-titled land is sometimes also referred to as “TCO land” is a matter of potential confusion. The disjuncture between the TCO as an imaginary and the fragments of land actually titled to indigenous claimants is emblematic of the “elusive promise of territory”, and multiculturalism’s offer of recognition without redistribution.

101
The gains of TCO titling for the Guarani of Itika Guasu are even more limited when we consider that the land awarded to them consists largely of former state lands that communities already occupied. This is partly a result of the way in which the APG IG secured their first title. In 2002, aware of the strength of opposition they faced, the APG IG – encouraged by CERDET and INRA – took a decision to opt for “partial titling”. As noted above (see also Table 1), the normal procedure for SAN-TCO is to complete the Legal Technical Evaluation phase – consisting of the evaluation of all third party claims, state lands and community lands, and the staking out of boundary lines (replanteo) – before proceeding to the awarding of individual and communal titles. In contrast, opting for a “partial titling” meant undertaking an accelerated process of titling for communal areas which were free from conflict with individual claimants. The result was that the Guarani were awarded some of the land Guarani communities already controlled sooner than they might have otherwise been (through the 2002 and 2008 TCO awards), but the more contentious task of recovering land occupied by third parties who failed to fulfil the FES was put on hold.

Guarani and NGO informants have mixed views on this decision; although it did give rise to a first title in 2002 – enabling the APG, as well as NGOs and INRA, to show “progress” (to communities, donors and national authorities respectively) – this amounted to “paper progress” in that it brought no real change in lived rights or land occupation. As the National President of the APG explained to me in 2009, many Guarani TCO claims have followed a similar legal pathway:

Legally, [in Itika Guasu] we have 68,000 hectares. So that’s been happening…at a national level, all [TCOs] are in this process: there’s a title, but they haven’t finished, they haven’t arrived at the reallocation of the [private] property reductions….In reality, I believe that the land that’s been titled…was our own land. The state hasn’t awarded land to the indigenous peoples (interview B6).

As an instrument for “recovering territory”, TCO titling has therefore made limited gains. As one APG IG leader summarised these results:

Our hope was that they would title the whole [TCO] demand that the APG [IG] had made. The demand is 216,000 hectares, and that wasn’t sufficient for the people; they needed 293,000
hectares, that’s what the study, EINE, said….Our hope was that everything would already be titled [by now]. But the government hasn’t done that (interview A11).

Just as the process of mapping indigenous territorial demands ended up squeezing them into spaces between urban centres and state boundaries, TCO titling slotted indigenous land rights into an established geography of (post)colonial settlement. As this chapter has highlighted, this was both a product of legal norms (shaped by pressure from landowner organisations), and of the law’s flexible and incomplete application in a context of entrenched colonial discourses and power relations. In so far as it regularised Guarani rights to land they already occupied but fell short of a significant redistribution of rights or land, TCO titling can be seen as consistent with Hale’s depiction of neoliberal multiculturalism as offering “recognition but not redistribution” (2002, see Introduction). In this case, however, it was less neoliberal agendas than colonial power relations that placed limits on indigenous territorial rights.

One consequence of this is that, reflecting the environmental geography of colonial settlement, the areas titled to the Guarani tend to be the least productive lands in the TCO, consisting largely of slopes in the foothills of the TCO’s three mountain ranges, or arid lands along the banks of rivers (Fundación TIERRA, 2011). This tendency to award indigenous claimants “leftover” lands was exacerbated by the micro-level implementation of SAN-TCO in Itika Guasu, where third parties facing property reductions have, in most cases, been able to choose which part of their property will be reallocated. Thus, as one female Guarani community member complained:

We don’t have flat land….the only part that belongs to us is peaks, asphalted land, all that…the private properties have land for growing, the large ones are 20 Has, 40 Has – in contrast we don’t have [flat, productive land], so that is what we also want to have, you see: land, but like that, flat (interview B10).

Another APG IG informant complained that the Guarani had been awarded “pure mountain” and concluded that TCO titling had proved to be a “double-edged sword” [una arma de doble filo] (fieldnotes 23/6/11). Echoing another common complaint, he also lamented that Itika Guasu was being titled “in little pieces” instead of as a single continuous territory. He emphasised that this ran contrary to the Guarani’s territorial
vision and land use practices; using a common household metaphor, he complained that TCO titling “shuts you in a room”, when the Guarani “live in a single house, a single patio”. Although he used the Spanish patio, the reference here is to the Guarani oka, a shared communal space (Chapter 4), which, in this context, symbolises ethnic cultural difference in land use, implying that TCO titling has failed to recognise or accommodate Guarani usos y costumbres (customs). That is, it has failed to deliver on its promise of “territory”, offering only “land”. It is worth noting that APG IG leaders also frequently complained that INRA had been issuing titles “by community”. While discussions with INRA and documentary analysis suggest that, in legal terms, all titles issued form part of the collective TCO award, this perception further illustrates frustration at the fragmentary effects of TCO titling, and the way in which this is linked to longstanding anxiety (and experience) regarding state and elite efforts to “divide” their territory. At a community level too, people frequently complain of the fragmentary effects of land titling, ongoing land scarcity and conflicts with karai neighbours over resource access (Chapter 4).

Frustration at these ambivalent outcomes is compounded by memories of the celebratory atmosphere at the time of the INRA Law’s passing and the TCO’s recognition. As one APG IG leader remembered:

In 1996, when INRA awarded the paper for the title [recognising the TCO], I have photos of then, [we thought] the APG will have a title, but no, only 2 communities in zone 1, all those here still don’t have anything. We were happy, what great happiness, there was a party…but it hasn’t been like that (interview B7).

Perhaps the most common complaint of all expressed by APG IG leaders and community members was that TCO titling benefited third parties more than it benefited them. It was partly in the context of this perception that, in 2009, the APG IG wrote to the government demanding an indefinite suspension of SAN-TCO in their territory (other reasons for this decision, relating to hydrocarbon conflict in the TCO, are discussed in Chapter 5). As one APG leader explained in 2011:

It’s only recognised land for the cattle ranchers, above all, it’s giving more to them, but not to the claimants like us. That’s why, well, the land issue is paralysed – well, we’re seeing what to do, how to work, it’s going to be a very long process (interview A11).
As this quotation implies, TCO titling in Itika Guasu is currently paralysed, with no clear prospect on the horizon for progressing with the legal consolidation of Guaraní land rights. It is worth noting here that it is not only the existing results of TCO titling that have favoured third party claimants, but, perhaps most of all, its lack of conclusion. Due to a failure to implement property reductions, many private claimants continue to occupy, work and fence land despite their claims having been assessed as illegitimate by INRA (Chapter 4). It is also important to reiterate that, had SAN-TCO advanced through all its legal stages, the state would have been obliged to compensate indigenous claimants with any lands “deducted” from the TCO as private property, either by adding adjacent state lands to the TCO, or, if no such lands were available, through the state’s purchase (through forced sale) of third party properties. In Itika Guasu, these final redistributive procedures – in addition to the reallocation of property reductions – have remained an elusive promise.

The reasons for the results described above were a subject of endless debate in assemblies in Itika Guasu in 2008-12, as well as in the context of interviews and informal discussions. While APG leaders in Entre Ríos expounded on a range of factors – from the national political context, to landowners’ political manoeuvres, to hydrocarbons interests (Chapter 5) – for many ordinary Guaraní, the process and its dynamics seemed opaque. What was clear was that the state had failed in its promise and obligation to recognise their territorial rights; as one elderly communal leader told me:

The government isn’t fulfilling, it hasn’t given us the territory that it had to give us, I don’t know what exactly [is the problem], but there is no solution for us as the Guaraní People. And we have many, we have the family that are suffering for not having land to work, that’s why we, as leaders, are fighting for our territory….I don’t know why and we continue the fight and we continue waiting….We’re waiting for results from government to government, I don’t know, it isn’t a decision where I can say “Well, we should [get land]” (interview B14).

This sense of powerlessness, of simply “waiting for results”, stands in stark contrast to the sense of agency and empowerment that many Guaraní experienced during the early years of the land struggle (Chapter 1). That is not to suggest that all Guaraní express the
same view about the titling process, which has had highly uneven effects for different communities. While some remain hemmed in by private properties, others have improved their land access considerably. As Chapter 4 demonstrates, such inequalities have in some cases created conflict between neighbouring communities, undermining the vision of a single shared territory.

In highlighting these disappointments, I do not wish to suggest that the TCO has had no positive effects whatsoever. As many informants acknowledged, as part of a broader process of visibilising Guarani land claims and challenging ethnic power inequalities within the regional context, the process has had a profound importance (interviews B1 and B21). TCO titling has also provided a central agglutinating force for the Guarani movement, both in Itika Guasu and nationally (interviews B1, B16 and B13; Albó 2012). As noted above, some communities within Itika Guasu have improved their land access and livelihoods possibilities substantially as a result of the titling process (A8). Furthermore, as Chapter 5 details, the APG IG have used TCO status to make far-reaching claims for resource justice and redistribution in the context of a protracted conflict over hydrocarbon development. However, in terms of historically-grounded material aspirations for “recovering territory”, understood as a collectively owned and internally contiguous space, the “legal-cartographic strategy” (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009) of TCO titling has failed to deliver. I now shift scale to the community level to explore what implications these legal results have for ordinary Guarani women and men in Itika Guasu.
Chapter 4: Lived realities of land and territory: notes from one riverside community

This chapter explores the lived realities of land and territory in Itika Guasu, drawing on six months of participant observation in the community of Tarairí. In doing so, it addresses an important gap in existing literature on indigenous land titling, which has tended to focus on procedural obstacles and legal-cartographic outcomes, leaving unaddressed the meaning and implications of land titling for ordinary indigenous community members. To date, there has been no in-depth ethnographic exploration of how TCO titling has shaped the everyday realities of indigenous communities in Bolivia. While there have been ethnographic accounts of indigenous countermapping – often written by activist anthropologists involved in such processes – these accounts have not revealed their lasting social or material effects for communities who participated in them. Yet, such an analysis is imperative if we are to measure counter-mapping’s potential against “the political struggles it derives from and is intended to advance” (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009: 169). As argued in Chapter 1, it is at a local level that these struggles acquire meaning, in relation to lived experiences of racialised dispossession and continuing problems of land inequality. As such, an exploration of the lived realities of land and territory is essential for understanding the role of collective land titling in indigenous struggles for decolonisation.

In particular, this chapter uses examples of how Guaraní community members inhabit and imagine their landscape to interrogate the fundamental differences between “property” and “territory” (Blomley, 2010; Bryan, 2012). In doing so, I provide ethnographic substance to the Guaraní and activist critiques, noted above, that TCO titling offered “land and not territory”, highlighting the ontological, as well as representational, dimensions of this distinction, and the ways in which it plays out in

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1 Owing to the uneven effects of land titling, in addition to other differences, no community can be taken as representative of the entire TCO. However, Tarairí (not the real name) was an appealing field site for several reasons. First, Tarairí is in a similar situation to many TCO communities, being located in communal (TCO) land, but surrounded by private properties. This made it a good case study for exploring the importance of legal limits and how they are negotiated. Other appealing factors included Tarairí’s proximity to other communities with distinct land situations and the suggestion of an inter-communal land conflict.
everyday practices of, and conflicts over, land and resource use. This enquiry also involves a further interrogation of the politics of knowledge surrounding TCO mapping and titling, building on that provided in earlier chapters. For example, if the demarcation of TCO boundaries was a contingent and power-laden process, then what alternative geographical imaginaries or notions of rights did this obscure? How accessible or relevant are cartographic and legal results of titling for ordinary community members? Exploring these questions takes us beyond the legal and material disappointments of TCO titling in Itika Guasu towards a deeper reflection on the inherent limitations of state-led land titling, with its grounding in discourses of inclusion and recognition, for redressing colonial legacies of racialised dispossession and subjugation.

The chapter is structured as follows. The first section describes the spatial location and organisation of Tarairí, the history of land use and dispossession, and the legal results of the TCO titling process in and around the community. I then draw on ethnographic engagement to discuss the everyday problems women and men face regarding access to land and natural resources in Tarairí, and how they evaluate the achievements of TCO titling in this context. The next section uses a case study of inter-communal resource conflict to probe the disjuncture between Guaraní communities’ informal entitlements and land use practices, and the discourses and practices of the TCO titling process. At the heart of this discussion is an exploration of the differences between “territory” and “property” (Blomley, 2010). Continuing this enquiry into lived versus legal-cartographic knowledges, the final section asks how, and how much, community members know about the TCO titling process and its legal results. This provides the basis for a broader reflection on the politics of knowledge of TCO titling, the ontological conflicts it gives rise to, and the competing spatialities within which Guaraní lives are embedded.
Lived realities of land and livelihoods in Tarairí

Lived spaces, fluid boundaries

Located on a flat, dry plateau overlooking the Pilcomayo River to the North East, and the Salao River to the South, Tarairí is one of a string of riverside communities, which, despite being surrounded by water, inhabit some of the most arid lands of the TCO. To the West, the land drops down to several hectares of cleared communal land used for household plots, followed by miles of dense Chaco forest, cut through by a dirt road. This road, made passable to vehicles following a recent municipal project, now enables regular access to the community by NGOs, the municipal government and karai traders, who come to buy fish or sell provisions. It also connects Tarairí to a bus route an hour and a half’s walk away, where a bus to Entre Ríos (a three and a half hour journey) passes once a day. Community members frequently make this journey to buy household provisions, attend APG meetings, or get to jobs on karai haciendas, in Entre Ríos, or further afield.

Tarairí currently has 96 members, distributed between thirteen households, making it an average-sized Guarani community in Itika Guasu. Some members of all households (generally women) are members of four generations of one family, reflecting the uxorilocal structure of traditional Guarani communities (Gustafson 2011: 110; Albó, 1990). As such, Tarairí constitutes a traditional tentamí, the basic unit of social organisation for the Guarani, where a group of family members live close together and share a single oka (patio) (ibid.: 88). Houses were spaced a good 5-10 metres apart around the periphery of this central communal space, which first became known to me as la cancha (the football pitch) and was quickly the cause of a broken ankle. People told me they had insisted on maintaining this distance between homes in the context of an NGO-Church housing project in the 1990s – something that was especially important given that almost all households kept some chickens, goats or sheep. A legacy of this project, houses shared roughly the same design – wooden beams, plastered adobe walls,

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103 This figure includes one mixed (Guaraní-karai) household on the edge of the community, but excludes a karai household further away, which does not participate in community organisation.
104 Based on APG figures, the average community size is 95.4 inhabitants (APG: 2005).
ceramic roof tiles, and a front porch supported by four large pillars. In most cases, part of the previous palm-roofed adobe structure had been maintained for use as a kitchen.

Although indistinguishable from the dirt ground beyond it, the area in front of each house was very much part of people’s homes, regularly swept and, for those households that enjoyed the shade of a tree, where families spent most of their time at home, eating, receiving visitors, drinking mate, doing handicrafts, weaving fishing nets, doing school homework or sleeping in the heat of the afternoon. Oka-pe was also where families slept at night, on guirapembireta, wooden bed frames cross-woven with strips of leather. Inside rooms were essentially used only for storage. The fluid boundaries between private and communal space became evident to me as I observed the frequency of peoples’ visits to other households, as well as the wide berth they gave those homes not being visited in their walks around the community – an early indication of the integrated nature of household and collective property. Aside from houses, the community also has a health post and (Spanish language) primary school, completing the circle of buildings around the central oka/cancha.

Tarairí’s uxorilocal family structure, the absence of karai households, older women’s continuing use of the mandu (tipoy) and fact that Guaraní was still preferred over Spanish were some of the factors that conjoined to designate it, at least in the minds of local NGO and state employees, as one of Itika’s more “traditional” Guaraní communities. This, combined with the community’s relatively enthusiastic embrace of NGO development projects, also led one CERDET employee to award Tarairí the dubious title of “a model community” (fieldnotes, 1/09/11). Perhaps reflecting this perception, during the period of my stay, Tarairí was the site of agricultural development projects by both CERDET and the EAPG, as well as a municipal “ecotourism project” and a week-long visit by some evangelists, who elected the community as the site for a church. Reflecting a less romantic reality, there were also visits by anti-chagas fumigators and an international food aid programme. This is indicative of the multiple and multi-scalar relations through which community life in Tarairí is reproduced, “traditional” characteristics notwithstanding.

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105 Other households would retreat to the shade of their porches during the day.
106 This had produced a series of brick buildings (“eco-lodges”) overlooking the river and transformed a dirt path down to the river into concrete steps, as well employing a number of the community’s men.
Having provided some brief context regarding Tarairí’s spatial location and organisation, I now turn to the land situation. I begin with a brief description of land relations prior to the TCO’s creation, as recounted in interviews and informal conversations, as context for the discussion that follows on the impacts of the titling process.

**Entangled landscapes of postcolonial dispossession**

Historically, Guarani land tenancy has been characterised by individual household plots, managed under a system that mixes shifting and continuous cultivation. In the days before karai settlement (before the 1930s), I was told, people from Tarairí would walk a long way from the community to find the best land for cultivating maize, sometimes leaving for a week at a time and constructing a makeshift house so they could “look after the maize” (interview A1; discussion with A3, fieldnotes, 16/1/12). Like other communities, following the 1930s Chaco War and 1952 agrarian reform, community members in Tarairí saw their land base gradually eroded by karai settlement. People were able to describe in detail how specific areas of land used by their grandparents had been lost to settlers – a process that usually involved a combination of coercion and engaño (trickery) (interviews A6 and A1, see Box 3). Increasingly, subsistence farming required negotiation with landowners (own fieldnotes; Fundación Tierra, 2011; Gustafson, 2011: 101).

The spread of empatronamiento (Chapter 1) further undermined Guaranies’ ability to practice subsistence farming. This was most dramatic in the case of “captive communities” – that is, those located within the hacienda of the patrón for whom community members worked unpaid. Tarairí’s situation was slightly different; although the community did come to be located inside a private property (discussed below), the community’s men, sometimes accompanied by women and children, worked for patrones in the more fertile lands around Timboy (to the West) and Tarupayo (to the South),

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107 According to Gustafson, some Guarani were able to maintain subsistence lands in return for seasonal collective labour in salt and limestone outcroppings (2009: 101).
Box 3: Guaraní narratives of communal land loss in Tarairí

In the following examples from interviews, community members from Tarairí and a neighbouring community describe how land occupied by their ancestors gradually came to be claimed as private property during a wave of karai settlement in the mid-twentieth century, leading to entrenched racial inequality and exploitative labour relations.

Of course our grandfathers had their cattle, they had their land, they had their little animals, but there was a trader who came to sell clothes, brought clothes, cloth, even hats, and people went to buy…they exchanged cattle…they bought more, [sold] another cow…like that he came to have various cows…he made a fence, made his house - seeing as the karai know how to read, know how to study, and we didn’t know anything, didn’t know how to read, even to sign [papers], nothing. They told us: “I’m going to be your friend, I’ll help you” – they did it like that until they had a house, they started little by little…our grandfathers told us this. PA: And they ended up taking ownership of a lot of land? They took ownership of the land – there in the banda, Itikirenda (interview A1).

[The karai] arrived here and said: “now this is my land”, but without a title, without anything. For example, my grandmother told me that here in Tetapiau…one [karai] arrived who came from the [Chaco] war and he stayed to live here. He married a guarani woman from here and he went to make his house up there…before long he had a lot of cattle, everything. And like that he made himself into a landowner… he began taking ownership little by little…in the end they said that he had a title (interview A6).

Pablo Vaca this guy was called, he took ownership of everything, so then they, our grandfathers, worked as employees but he didn’t pay them. He ordered them, said what they had to do, so they suffered more than us. So they suffered and then our captains met, the mburuvicha guasu, those who are highest, they saw that, that we always suffered, so they said “Enough! Enough working, enough…” We started, then, to work on our own (interview A8).

At that time, there was none of this hoarding land [tierra mezquina] - nothing! …All the land had only one owner…Then the karai appeared, they hoarded and then [the Guaraní] worked for the patrón.

PA: Did you work for the patrón? Yes, when I was young, I worked for the patrón. In Timboy….he would say “Come here!” “OK”. “Help me for a day”. OK, we helped him, even though he didn’t pay us anything – he paid 2.50 Bolivianos [22p in GBP, based on the 2013 echange rate].

PA: 2.50 per day? Per day we earned, per day – 2.50…We sowed like 30, 60 hectares, and with that he bought a lorry; we remained poor….We sowed, he sold, and only then would we see the money, but it wasn’t enough….he had a lorry and he sold [maize] in Tarija for a high price. That’s why, in time, the karai got rich, got ikokatu [Guaraní: rich], he already had money, already had a lorry, had a tractor – already had everything. We stayed just like that [así no más, i.e. poor] (interview A2).
earning either no wage or a pittance (interview A2; discussion with A1, fieldnotes, 10/11/11). Accounts differ as to the agency the Guaraní exercised in these labour arrangements; some informants suggested they were entered into voluntarily and not everyone in Tarairí worked for the *patrones* (discussion with A3, fieldnotes 16/1/12), while others claim that work was “obligatory” and *patrones* exercised “total control” over their workers (fieldnotes 10/11/11; interview A1). Whatever the case, *empatronamiento* represented a further loss of autonomy and territorial control for the community, denying them the labour time required to produce territory according to their own cultural practices and priorities. However, even during this period, households in Tarairí continued to practice some subsistence farming – something achieved through a combination of stealth and informal negotiation with a neighbouring *karai* landowner. According to one of the community’s oldest women, it was women who took charge of cultivating maize during the days of *empatronamiento*.

As this illustrates, the impacts of TCO titling overlie a complex and hybrid reality of land relations, an “entangled landscape” (Moore, 2005) in which traditional Guaraní tenure arrangements exist in awkward articulation with a racialised regime of property rights. If this illustrates Guaraní resilience in the face of racialised dispossession then the situation was hardly ideal. Not only were many community members forced, whether by coercion or circumstance, to work long hours for no wage far from their homes, but their community was itself property of a *karai* landowner. In this context, it is easy to see why the idea of “recovering territory” resonated with community members in Tarairí. As one man put it:

> When they talk of the TCO, it means land for everyone, where we can live, where we can work, where we can go to make our *potrero* or something. That’s what it was [for]. That is, our hope, when we speak of the TCO, our hope is that…that is, to live better, to live better, without anyone being able to tell us; “Hey, that’s my land, you have to work for free” – all that (interview A6).

Examples of community-level aspirations for “recovering territory” provided in Chapter 1 are largely based on interviews conducted in Tarairí. As these examples highlight, at a community level, the land struggle continues to be understood in relation to local memories of racialised dispossession, everyday realities of land inequality, and material
aspirations for land control. I now turn to describe the legal results of TCO titling in Tarairí, before examining what these results have meant in practice.

The legal results of TCO land titling in and around Tarairí

Tarairí was recognised and measured as a Guaraní communal area during INRA’s fieldwork of 2000, and appears on subsequent TCO maps and documentation. However, as Chapter 3 makes clear, this did not lead to an automatic awarding of this land to the APG IG. In fact, due to its location within a private property, Tarairí was excluded from the first TCO land award of 2002 – an award which only included “undisputed” TCO land, based on the “partial titling” strategy. The property in question had been titled to a wealthy urban-based landowning family, the Mendez family, following the 1952 agrarian reform. It was only when this property failed to prove fulfilment of the FES that the portion of it containing the community of Tarairí was earmarked by INRA for a property reduction – that is, land to be awarded to the TCO. INRA documentation (2008) and my informal discussions with community members in Tarairí (August, 2011) suggest that this reduction was initially disputed by the Mendez family, but that an informal agreement was made between the family and the community regarding the size of the reduction. This land was titled to the APG IG on 25 January 2008 as part of the second and most recent TCO award, of 27,007 hectares.

The collectively-titled area, which contains all the thirteen households of Tarairí, in addition to the community of Yukiporo, leaves Tarairí surrounded on three sides by three private properties, two of which take the natural boundaries of the Pilcomayo and Salao rivers (Figure 7). Only one of these properties, Palmas Reales, has been awarded title under the TCO titling process. However, all three continue to be occupied by private claimants, even where claimants have failed to demonstrate productive land use. This is the case of “El Porvenir”, a property on the opposite shore of the Pilcomayo River (la banda), which is much coveted by people in Tarairí, but remains occupied by Roberto

108 Although it is the APG IG, and not individual communities, who are awarded title for TCO land, INRA measured Guaraní communal areas – with participation of APG IG representatives and adjacent or overlapping private claimants – as part of its initial work of mapping out all land claims within the TCO area.
Vaca (mentioned in Chapter 3), a *karai* claimant and former cowhand of the Mendez family, who comes into frequent conflict with the community (discussed below).

Figure 7: Current status of property rights in and around Tarairí ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Elaborated by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge
As such, TCO titling has not resulted in a substantial restructuring of rights in this part of the TCO. Owing to the recognition of private property claims, and a failure to implement property reductions in cases where these were not legally justified, community members of Tarairí only enjoy legal rights (as TCO members) to a small area containing their houses, school, health post, communal plot, and several household plots of 1-2 hectares each, located nearby.\textsuperscript{110} While they are \textit{legally} entitled to use any other part of TCO land, as I discuss below, geographical obstacles and inter-communal resource competition place restrictions on their ability to do so in practice.

In fact, Guarani women and men in Tarairí did not base their evaluation of the gains of TCO titling on a legal-cartographic analysis of the official results described above. Most people were unaware of the legal status of property rights or the location of legal boundaries (discussed below). What was clear to them, however, was that in almost every direction they walked they encountered karai landowners, many of whom who had erected barbed wire fences around their properties – a practice exacerbated by TCO land titling, where fences are counted as evidence of productive land use. This places severe restrictions on people’s freedom of movement and ability to access land and other natural resources required for their livelihoods, as I will now describe.

\textit{Problems of land and resource access}

It was early January and despite scarce rainfall and uncertain climatic prospects following a series of recent droughts, most households in Tarairí were busy sowing their \textit{potreros} (plots) with maize, squash, black beans, yucca and watermelon. Alfredo, the father of my host family, left for his potrero straight after lunch, at around 11am, and I waited behind with his fifteen-year-old daughter Mabel, who was bringing the seed. While most agricultural work – clearing land, ploughing, fencing etc – is done by men and boys\textsuperscript{111}, as in many Andean indigenous societies, it is women who sprinkle seed. Mabel and I watched as her mother prepared three varieties of maize, as well as squash, picking some

\textsuperscript{110} As discussed below, 4 of 13 households have no plot at all, while some households’ plots are located further from the community and within private properties.

\textsuperscript{111} The exception to this is the community’s only all-female household, whose women maintain their own household plot.
of it off corn cobs, scooping some out of food sacks or makeshift containers. She sifted through it in a palm-weaved bowl, searching for weevils and throwing these to the chickens, then placed a measured quantity of each variety into a small plastic pot, which she gave to Mabel. I followed Mabel over the hill behind the house and down a steep dirt path to a circular potrero – several hectares of stick-fenced land, some of which was being farmed by other relatives for their households.

Alfredo was already hard at work, swinging a hoe from above his head in deft movements to complete a row of shallow trenches in the dry earth. Mabel filled a small rectangular cloth bag with seed, slung across her shoulder and then walked slowly along the rows, sprinkling the seed imprecisely into the trenches, a single squash seed for every four or five seeds of maize. I soon found a role for myself, kicking the mounds of loose earth to cover the seed. After an hour or so, we stopped to rest under the shade of a large tree. As we chewed coca, I took the opportunity to broach the subject of the land situation in the community. While it was not the first time we had discussed this - Alfredo frequently told me that land was the community’s number one problem – now, sitting contemplating his half-sown potrero, he conveyed to me more emphatically than ever before his frustration. The community was growing, and there simply wasn’t enough land to go round for the children, he complained. His anxiety was perhaps exacerbated by the fact that his partner was at the time pregnant with twins, adding to his three existing children.

Contemplating the prospect of growing land scarcity and food insecurity, he articulated a specific aspiration I had not heard before: that all of the land on this side of the Salao River – that is, the entire property of Rancho Grande – be confiscated from Mendez and awarded to the community. (His use of “the community” and not “the TCO” here is significant, reflecting the persistence of informal notions of community usufruct rights, the collective nature of TCO titling notwithstanding – a point I return to below). He justified the claim by noting that Mendez doesn’t even work the land himself, but employs people from the community to do so. Alfredo’s complaints not only expressed the frustration community members feel regarding the limited land available for farming,

112 These people include Alfredo’s brother-in-law, who Mendez employs casually as an agricultural labourer.
but also called into question the legitimacy of karai landowner’s control over the surrounding landscape. Although based on historically-grounded demands for “recovering territory”, this questioning is framed within the terms of the TCO titling process, through which the APG IG (as the collective TCO claimant) is entitled to all unproductive privately-claimed land.

This concrete demand for a reallocation of private property in the surrounding area was echoed by other community members. The most common target of such discussions was El Porvenir (discussed above) – less owing to the property’s unjustified legal status, of which not everyone was aware, than due to the fact that the community had until recently enjoyed unrestricted access to this land (discussion with Fausto, fieldnotes, 11/11/11). Indeed, many households are in a more precarious situation than Alfredo’s. In the household survey (see Appendix 1), nine of the community’s thirteen households complained they have insufficient land to meet their livelihoods needs. Four households claimed to possess no land at all, with three of these reporting that they actively desired land but none was available (see Box 4 for a description of informal tenancy and usufruct rights in Tarairi). A further four households farm plots of land located within Mendez’s property, negotiated through informal agreement.113 While views about the acceptability of this latter situation were mixed – some people reported that there was no problem because Mendez “no mezquina” (isn’t mean/ doesn’t hoard [his land]), while others complained about having to ask permission – such arrangements provided little security for the Guaraní. This was illustrated on at least one occasion, when the property changed hands and the community was denied access altogether.

The restrictions on subsistence (let alone commercial) production caused by the lack of land available for farming are compounded by the poor quality of this land – a result of the continuing monopolisation of the most fertile areas by karai landowners, combined with worsening drought conditions in the Chaco, exacerbated by extensive cattle ranching and logging by karai settlers over the last half century. During the period of my fieldwork, my host household and many others were purchasing maize from karai

113 A number of informants did not know whether the plots they farmed were located in Mendez’s land or in TCO land due to their lack of knowledge about legal boundaries, something I explore below.
Box 4: Informal land tenancy and usufruct rights in Tarairí

Reflecting traditional land use practices, household plots remain an important form of informal land tenancy in Tarairí, although, owing to the lack of available land, not all households have their own plot. For those who do, plots tend to be located a short walk from houses, although others were half an hour away. Most discussions pointed to a patriarchal system of land inheritance; five of ten households said they had acquired the land from a male relative (household survey). Others emphasised that daughters and sisters had equal rights to land, although it is normally men who do farming; for example, although Alfredo had inherited a plot from his father, he stressed that it also belonged to his sister, who received an equal share of the harvest. Alfredo’s mother, an elderly widow, also had her own plot, which was being worked on her behalf by a male grandchild who formed part of her household. Another informant claimed that, although men normally inherit land, allocation “depends on need” and if a woman – for example, a single mother – requires land to feed her family, she will be awarded land by the community (fieldnotes, 6/11/11).

As this suggests, informal notions of individual family usufruct and inheritance exist alongside a notion of communal land ownership, where allocation is decided by the community and/or by the mburuvicha communal. Accounts differed as to the importance of the mburuvicha’s role in land allocation. One household reported that they had been “given permission” to farm by the mburuvicha, (also referred to as permission “by the APG”); another household said they had requested a plot from the mburuvicha but been told none was available (household survey). However, Alfredo – who often challenged the mburuvicha’s authority – insisted that everyone can make their potrero where they want, provided they consult the community. In some other communities, the mburuvicha’s role in land allocation has been subject to abuses of power (fieldnotes 20/8/11; also Albó 1990; Postero 2007). Thus, with some caveats, the allocation of community land in Tarairí followed the general principle that:

[Community members] have the right to use any unoccupied part of the territory to establish their house, their crops, and the grazing area of their animals….when someone has established a determined place for their crops, this usufruct is respected…this right to establish oneself and farm is maintained for those community members who have gone to live and work in other places…this right also extends to arrivals from other communities, provided they fulfil communal obligations in the new place and have received the approval of the authority and assembly (Albó 1990: 84-5).

As Albó notes, this makes the conception of land tenancy of guaraní communities “completely different from that of the patrones that surround them” (Ibid: 65). It also challenges simplistic notions of indigenous territories as “collective”, revealing the existence of mixed forms of informal land tenure within the TCO (Fundación Tierra 2011: 312). In fact, a simple dichotomy between individual and communal tenure breaks down in a context in which land use is subject to flexible negotiation between community members, who are also members of the same extended family. The fact that households continue to engage in the reciprocal exchange of food, produce and labour further blurs these boundaries. I was told that, in the past, labour on household potreros was organised through a communal rota, and that the community used to eat from an olla común (communal pot) (fieldnotes 5/11/11). This is no longer common practice, possibly reflecting the community’s growing size.

Early Guarani organisation and NGO intervention during the 1990s added a further layer of complexity to these land relations by introducing communal plots. Although initially farmed collectively by men, as a means of establishing autonomy from patrones (Chapter 1), Tarairí’s communal plot is now farmed exclusively by a “women’s work group”, which receives support from both CERDET and the EAPG, who provide seed, advice and irrigation infrastructure. This shift in the gendered division of agricultural labour reportedly came about because NGOs were unable to persuade men to adopt communal production, in the context of traditional household production and growing male labour migration. Produce from Tarairí’s communal plot is shared among women who participate in agricultural work, complementing produce from family plots and occasionally providing a small amount of income (significant in some other TCO communities).
producers, having used up supplies from the previous year’s harvest. In this context, labour migration is increasingly the only viable livelihoods option. As one sixteen-year old put it:

When it rains a lot, we don’t leave, we can make our potrero; now that it doesn’t rain much we sometimes sow and it dries up, so there’s no point being here - that’s why we leave to work (interview A3).

During my stay, eleven of the community’s thirteen households had at least one member engaged in wage labour outside the community and contributing to household income (household survey, Appendix 1; fieldnotes, 2011-12). These jobs included agricultural labour, cattle ranching, construction, driving, and domestic work; were temporary, seasonal or semi-permanent; and took place in a range of locations, from neighbouring private properties, to Tarija’s urban centres, to farms outside of Buenos Aires. In early 2012, the first community member began work in the rapidly expanding nearby Margarita-Huacaya gas field.

Given that it is women who undertake the labour of cooking and caring for children, and who remain in the community while men migrate for work, it is they who most feel the everyday effects of land scarcity and resultant food insecurity. During my stay, the community renewed a food aid project from the World Food Programme, targeting pregnant women and children under five. Despite these present-day difficulties, most women’s primary concern regarding the land situation related to their children’s future. When asked about the land situation in the context of a focus group (21/1/12), women’s responses included “jeta sambiareta, mbaeti iwɨ” (there are lots of children, there is no land) am “mbaeti espacio sambiarairetare” (there is no space for the children).

Community members also complained frequently about the problems they faced accessing other natural resources. Perhaps the biggest challenge is faced by women, who rely on the collection of palm and twigs for making their handicrafts, the sale of which provides an important supplement to meagre household incomes (household survey,
January 2012). In order to collect palm, women frequently have to enter private property, risking confrontation with karai landowners, a situation compounded by a boundary dispute with a neighbouring Guarani community (discussed below). Men also complained of problems accessing forest products, including timber and other materials used for house construction, some of which can only be found inside private property. Supplies of firewood – the only source of fuel – within communal land are also diminishing, requiring increasingly long trips for collection.

**The elusive promise of recovering territory**

The above discussion has looked “beyond the map” to the realities of everyday life to highlight the limitations of TCO titling as an instrument for decolonisation. In Tarairí, the INRA Law’s prioritisation of private property claims, combined with the incomplete and flexible application of legal norms, has served to reinscribe and legitimate the existing (post)colonial spatial order – an order produced through colonial violence. This is illustrative of Hirsh et al’s observation that “title can give legal status to land that was grabbed in the past through dubious and sometimes violent means” (2012: 39). Despite the cartographic representation of the TCO as a continuous collectively-owned territory, in practice indigenous land rights have been squeezed into the spaces left between privately-claimed areas. In areas like the Chaco, with long histories of non-indigenous settlement, such free spaces are few and far between. As Tarairí’s situation illustrates, land recovered was sometimes little more than the areas already occupied by households; as such, communities gained “recognition but not redistribution” (Hale, 2002). This situation is compounded by the fact that, in a context of racialised power inequalities, the TCO titling process’s only real mechanism for land redistribution – property reductions – has rarely been implemented in practice. This is relevant to the private properties of both Rancho Grande and El Porvenir, both of which have pending reductions that have not been implemented in practice (INRA, 2008a). This perhaps illustrates how “the very

114 11 of 13 households listed handicrafts as one of the four main sources of household income: for 1 household it was the primary income source; for 4 the secondary source; for 4 the third most important source; for 2 the fourth most important source (Appendix 1).
abstractness of postcolonial state maps denies the representation of colonial dispossession and the possibility of Other territorialities and social configurations” (Radcliffe, 2011:141; see also Sparke, 2005).

As I have illustrated, this situation has undermined indigenous peoples’ ability to practice the “traditional” livelihoods imagined for them by global and national policy makers – livelihoods predicated on spatial mobility and access to land and resources from a wide geographical area. In fact, my conversations with community members suggest that, by fixing boundaries and encouraging the fencing of land, the titling process exacerbated the community’s problems accessing land and resources. During the TCO titling process, the fencing of land constitutes one of the criteria for assessing properties’ productive use (FES), providing a visual indication of claims, land use and investment. Many third party claimants in Itika Guasu acquired the barbed wire to fence their land from a departmental agricultural programmes – something some Guaraní viewed as an elite conspiracy to fragment their TCO claim.

The idea that TCO titling had exacerbated the fencing of private land was articulated to me by Fuasto, the community’s mburuvicha, one day as we sat chewing coca by a toilet block he was building for the municipal eco-tourism project. Gazing across the Pilcomayo river at the coveted privately claimed land of la banda (the opposite shore of the Pilcomayo River), he complained that, whereas “before it was free, you could go anywhere”, TCO titling had encouraged the karai to fence land. As noted above, the Guaraní have historically relied on precarious negotiations with landowners and covert access to private land to survive the onslaught of formal dispossession. Although this scenario was far from ideal, to materialise boundaries without significant land redistribution arguably leaves communities more squeezed than ever before.

Resonating with APG IG leaders’ complaints of being “shut in a room” by the fragmentary effects of TCO titling (Chapter 3), this starkly illustrates the differences between “territory” and property” (Blomley, 2010; Bryan, 2009). Whereas indigenous geographies are based on fluid boundaries and networked relationships across space (Castree, 2004), the territorialisation of property required “conscious ‘cuts’ in the processual networks through which social spaces are produced” (Blomley 2010: 203). Blomley illustrates this “zero-sum categorical logic” through the notion of “trespass”, in
which “mere physical presence, even absent any damage to a resource, constitutes an
offence” (ibid.: 208). If community members in Tarairi are routinely faced with this logic
then they also contest it. By accusing karai neighbours of “being mean/ hoarding”
(mezquínando), community members articulate an alternative “agrarian moral economy”
(Wolford, 2005), in which the failure to enter into flexible negotiations over land and
resource use constitutes a hostile act that undermines “normal” neighbourly relations. For
many community members, this access claim is also based on the fact that it was their
ancestors’ historic willingness to “share” their territory with settlers that facilitated the
establishment of private estates.

As I have noted, however, not all karai neighbours “hoard”, and Tarairi
community members remain dependent on informal negotiations over land and resource
access with the Mendez family. From a positive perspective, these agreements bear
testament to the Guaraníes’ historical agency in shaping land relations even in a
constraining context of postcolonial dispossession; indeed, when asked what they would
do if Mendez denied them access to his land, one person told me that the community
would “kick him out” (household survey, January 2012). However, this statement clearly
underplays the power relations involved in such negotiations. Above all, the fact that
communities like Tarairí continue to have to ask permission from a karai landowner to
farm or collect natural resources provides a stark illustration of the failure of TCO land
titling to significantly transform ethnic land relations in the TCO. This is not to suggest
that nothing has changed since the days of empatronamiento; as community members
acknowledge, the TCO – as part of a broader Guaraní decolonizing struggle – has forced
karai landowners to recognise them as subjects of rights. However, the failure to match
recognition with redistribution places continuing limits on communities’ options for
territorial development and governance. One result, as noted, is that they are forced to
negotiate land access, purchase produce and seek employment from karai landowners,
who are in some cases their former patrones.

From the perspective of some community members in Tarairí, this situation is
interpreted as a failure of TCO titling and the broader project of “recovering territory”.
As Fausto concluded:
Of course, if I think about it...of course [I want] to recover [territory]. But...as they say, it’s going to be a bit difficult to recover. It’s already like that: a piece here, a piece there. Everything already...Because before it was...there weren’t any karai...Where there’s the bridge of the Salao River, beyond that there’s a potrero, from here our grandfathers went to sow there. Up to Salao Grande, inside there’s an enclosure. I myself also went to sow there...I made my house over there, to store the maize. Not anymore; now there’s a landowner there.

PA: And do you remember what hopes people had when they presented the TCO demand in 1996?

People had the hope of being able to rescue [rescatar] everything, in order to live peacefully [vivir tranquilo], but...it’s still like this – with nothing (interview A1).

In this passage, the continuing presence of landowners and the fragmented nature of the TCO present seemingly insurmountable obstacles to the recovery of territory, seen as the basis for “living peacefully”. Another community member, Pedro, described a world prior to karai settlement, when “they lived wherever they wanted”, emphasising “that’s what we want to return to now with the TCO”, but concluded: “I don’t know if we can succeed” (interview A6; full quotation provided in Chapter 1).

Like Fausto, he evaluated TCO titling based not on an analysis of legal results, but on the contrast between the world described to him by his ancestors (“territory”) and present realities of land access in Tarairí, marked by the continuing presence of property:

In reality, what my grandmother told me [is that] years ago everything was freedom, there was freedom: where to live, where to make your house, everything. But now...For example, why can’t the people of Tarairí make their potrero there in the banda? Because it’s private property. Because I know that if they make it there [the landowner is] going to say: “Hey, who gave you permission?” You see? (interview A6).

In a passage that resonates strikingly with Blomley’s description of the making of liberal property, he went on:

Before, there wasn’t this....keeping land separate – everything was...for everyone, everyone did everything, we had land and nothing had an owner. Now it’s already...the karai are here and they have land, separate, it’s already fenced...that’s how it is now. Before it wasn’t like that – everyone went to their chaco to make a little potrero...Anywhere you went you could put up a fence, make
your house. Look, I would go to make my house in Timboy, from there I went to Tomatirenda and make my house. From there I returned to Timboy, then I returned here. So there wasn’t this…hoarding of land [tierra mezquina] – nothing. Now they don’t let you; before I could go to Salao, make my house, now they’re not going to let me make my house over there.

Fixing boundaries: inter-communal resource conflict

In fact, Tarairí community members do not only complain about neighbouring landowners fencing land. An equally frequent complaint was directed at a neighbouring Guaraní community, Yukiporo, which in 2010 fenced an area of forested TCO land between the two communities. This fence runs parallel to the road, extending from the Pilcomayo River to the boundary of this fragment of TCO land, where it cuts into the forest, tracing the boundary line southwards. Women in Tarairí have been most directly affected by the new fence, as the area of forest inside it is one of the main places they collect palm and twigs for handicrafts. As noted above, almost all women engage in this time-consuming work, which requires frequent (weekly or fortnightly) trips to collect raw materials. Even the oldest women embark on these trips, moving nimbly through dense forest, using specially selected sticks in a scissor action to break off palm leaves high above them, then trekking home along the road with neatly bound bundles of palm tied to their backs. Over recent years, a combination of drought and plagues has made palm increasingly scarce and the area fenced by Yukiporo is one of the few remaining places within walking distance where they can find it, the other being within the Mendez property.

In practice, the barbed wire presents no material obstacle to accessing the palm, given that there is a wooden gate at the beginning of the dirt road to Yukiporo. The women’s main complaint is that they feel that their right to do so has been called into question. As one woman, from an all-female household that relies primarily on handicrafts for income, complained: “We have to take it clandestinely” [ocultita]. Beyond the inconvenience it caused them, women and men in Tarairí objected to what the fence represented: Yukiporo’s claim to exclusive rights to an area of territory to which they had traditionally had access. They routinely criticised their neighbours for “hoarding” (mezquinar) palm, something they asserted went against Guaraní customs.
I discussed the issue with Pedro one November afternoon, after he had just returned from a health visit in Yukiporo (fieldnotes, 2/11/11). While seeing to a patient there, he had overheard a quarrel between a local woman and some women from Itikirenda (a community the other side of Pilcomayo river), who had crossed the river to collect palm from the forest. He described how the local woman had chastised the visitors for helping themselves to the palm without consultation, arguing that it belonged to Yukiporo and that there was scarcely enough to meet their own needs. Pedro lamented that, after such as long battle with the karai for land rights, the Guarani now seemed to be “fighting amongst brothers”, all due to Yukiporo’s “hoarding” of resources. It was all the more insulting, he complained, when they did nothing to prevent the karai landowners from grazing cattle on communal land. His complaints were echoed by other community members; as Fausto complained: “The Guarani himself is fencing. There is Yukiporo, they’re already hoarding land, palm…the women go for palm, and they hoard it” (transcribed informal conversation, 12/09/11).

There is nothing new about resource conflict between neighbouring Guarani communities (Albó 1990), and accounts suggest a long history of resource competition between Tarairí and Yukiporo. However, some people in Tarairí blamed the TCO titling process for exacerbating these tensions by fixing informal boundaries between communities that had once been fluid and negotiated. As Pedro explained:

INRA came here and said: “This part, this belongs to the community; this belongs to the community of Tarairí”, and this is what Guarani people went for [Es a esto que va la tetarareta\(^{115}\)]. And they don’t want, they don’t want another brother to go to build his house, to go to do his work, and that’s what they think. But, however, the organisation isn’t like that.

PA: So maybe the titling process…had the effect of dividing the communities? Is it because of titling (saneamiento) that they think like that?

Because of titling. But I think that INRA said: “Well now, we’re going to title land, now: this, what is it called? Right, this for a karai, this for a karai, this is for the Guaranes”. But amongst the Guaranes you can’t be hoarding [mezquinando] like that (interview A6).

\(^{115}\) Guarani: people, used to mean “Guarani people”
Here, Pedro refers to the process through which INRA went about its fieldwork, measuring the boundaries of Guaraní communities, as well as those of private properties. He suggests that, in measuring communities as bounded entities – something that was in part a side effect of recognising private claims – INRA created a notion of fixed boundaries where none had formerly existed. Paradoxically then, in its preliminary attempts to make the geography of Itika Guasu “legible” to the state (Scott, 1998), a precursor to any possible reallocation of land, INRA appears – at least in Pedro’s view – to have reinforced the fragmentary effects of karai settlement, segmenting territory into discontinuous areas and leaving communities isolated in what Albó calls “regions of refuge” (1990: 48). Once again, this illustrates how postcolonial geography came to intrude on the very process that sought to contest it. Again, this was enabled by the state’s translation of territory as property, the latter premised on “the production of bounded, coherent spaces, through which the individuated subjects and objects of property can be rendered legible” (Blomley, 2010: 203).

This is not to suggest that communal boundaries were merely a creation of INRA. Numerous conversations highlighted the existence of Guaraní notions of community entitlements over particular areas of land. The following passage from an interview with Felix, the mburuvicha of Yukiporo, is illustrative. Having told me about conflicts with neighbouring karai landowners, I asked if there were also problems with neighbouring Guaraní communities:

Yes, yes, yes….yes. That happens, it happens a lot because…in my community that doesn’t happen, that’s why [because] we’ve built a fence so we can make them respect [boundaries].

PA: So for you (pl.) the resources that lie in Yukiporo belong to the community and the others shouldn’t come just like that [así no más], but they sometimes do?

Here in my community, no, first they have to…to take [resources] they have to…they have to…they have to enter with permission.

PA: So with the land issue, it isn’t that it all belongs to everyone, every community has their space and has to respect other communities - their space?
That’s it. That’s it, because of course they have to respect. That is, with the issue of Tarairí they’re not doing that (interview A7).

The existence of such informal “environmental entitlements” (Leach et al, 1999; Ostrom 1990) was supported by other accounts; for example, Alcides, the mburuvicha of the nearby community of Itikirenda, argued that, while any Guaraní person had the right to come and live in his community, resource usufruct rights were contingent on residency: “If they’ve been living [here] a month, a year, they have the right to take their product [natural resources from the surrounding area], but on the other hand, if they come directly from another place to take, it isn’t fair either” (interview A8). The existence of community entitlements, as well as their shifting and negotiated nature, were also illustrated by discussions in Tarairí, where men both affirmed the existence of a boundary with Yukiporo and called it into question, by referring to a past in which no clear boundary existed (Box 5: men’s focus group).

My argument, then, is not that communal boundaries were a fiction created by INRA, but rather that the fixing of these boundaries, in both cartographic and material terms (via a barbed wire fence) had important effects, preventing the renegotiation of temporary entitlements to land and resources in light of evolving social and environmental conditions. The importance of the latter was illustrated by Alcides:

Here we are the community of Itikirenda, and we have also the community Yumbia. And here we don’t have conflicts – that is, fighting over land – we also can’t fight over land because we’re the Guaraní people, we’re the same brothers, and we can’t be fighting. So to be able to get some products, or do some work, such as a road, to do our work, we have a meeting, the two communities meet, to be able to reach a clearer conclusion, to be able to see what work we can do, and also to help each other (A8).

In contrast, people in Tarairí saw Yukiporo’s fence as an infringement of their rights to renegotiate rules and boundaries, or to maintain their former permeability. As such, they accused their neighbours of mezquinando. Although Fausto admitted to having signed a written agreement permitting the fence’s erection, as Felix (from Yukiporo) noted: “the problem is [that] only now are we fencing it” (interview A7).
Ironically, although some community members implicated INRA in the fixing of boundaries, my affirmation of the TCO’s collective legal status was quickly seized on by both men and women in support of their claims to access the disputed palm reserves. That is, they argued that, as equal members of the TCO, they had *just as much right* to collect these resources as their neighbours. Following my presentation of the results of TCO titling in a concluding session of the men’s focus group, Pedro turned to the group and exclaimed: “In that case, look compañeros! If there is a title here, Tarairí together with Yukiporo, at no point can they hoard land from us. So why are they doing this fencing?” The group readily agreed, reflecting on how the TCO lent legitimacy to their claims. This scene was repeated the next day, when a young man who had not attended the meeting appeared at my house to learn about the status of property rights – it prevailed primarily
as ammunition in a conflict between his family and the community of Yukiporo relating to cattle grazing (Box 6). As this revealed, the resource conflict was not only about palm.

**Box 6: Discussion with Rómulo**

It was only towards the end of my stay in Tarairí that I learned that the conflict with Yukiporo was not just about palm. I had just finished informing households about a forthcoming focus group for women and returned home to find Rómulo, one of Alfredo’s many nephews, sitting in the kitchen – as usual, slightly drunk. Since being left lame by a road accident a few years previously, Rómulo worked mainly in the community as a fisherman and was therefore around more than most men of his generation. He had brought us fish, which Sandra was busy cooking, but it prevailed that the real reason for his visit was that he had missed the men’s focus group of the previous day and was hoping for a private “capacitación” on land titling. He also felt that he should have participated in the map-drawing exercise on the basis of his previous experience; he once rowed a brigade of officials downstream to Puerto Margarita as part of a map-making mission. I began apologising until I remembered that I had indeed invited Rómulo in person the day before the activity.

We sat on my bed in the porch and went over the materials and explanation I’d prepared for the previous day on the history and current status of land titling in the TCO. As had happened in the focus group, Rómulo took the uniformly coloured area of communally-titled TCO land (which included Tarairí and Yukiporo) as ammunition in their long-standing battle with their neighbours. It prevailed that Rómulo had a personal interest in the conflict, which was one source of his unanticipated interest in the status of land rights. As he went on to explain, his father Hermes, along with him and his brothers, have been engaged in their own familial conflict with Yukiporo over the grazing of cattle in the area between the two communities. Hermes, who owns a herd of cattle, acquired while working as Mendez’s cowhand, had grown accustomed to grazing his cattle in this area. Around a decade ago, the community (Yukiporo) informed him that he should take them to graze elsewhere. In Rómulo’s account, his father did transfer his cattle to a different area but they made their own way back to their old grazing ground. In order to secure continuing access to this land, Hermes came to an agreement with the Mburuvicha, paying him to “look after” his animals and ensure no harm came to them when he was not there.

However, this does not appear to have held sway with other men in the community, who took the return of Hermes and his cattle as an affront. The conflict came to a head in 2005 when two young men from Yukiporo beat Hermes up badly. The precise events that led up to this were uncertain from Rómulo’s account – perhaps because he was himself absent at the time, doing military service in Tarija. He rushed back to the community (in a taxi, with a pistol and without military authorisation) after hearing from a relative of Vaca that his father had been killed. He and one of his brothers went to Yukiporo and, when the mburuvicha refused to become involved in the conflict, they set about finding and punishing the assailants themselves.

In spite of this violent confrontation, Rómulo claimed that he continues to graze his father’s cattle in the disputed piece of land and does so with permission from Yukiporo – however, he stressed that this is a personal arrangement and not a privilege that everyone from Tarairí enjoys. How this access was negotiated and whether it involves payments in cash or kind was not revealed from this brief discussion.
This discourse evidently preceded my arrival, however; as Pedro described me in an earlier interview:

I say to them [Yukiporo]: Brothers, why do we have to fight over land? Why do we speak of the TCO? What is the organisation for? You see? In that case, there is no border. There is no border. If I want to build my house there in Yukiporo, I can go and build my house. If they want to come and live here, they can come and live here (interview A6).

As this illustrates, notions of “traditional” land use are not apolitical, but are often themselves mobilised in the context of competing claims to resources. For Tarairí, the TCO’s discursive erasure of informal community rights serves a particular purpose, providing ammunition in a longstanding land conflict with their neighbours. As such, the TCO itself was open to multiple interpretations; the fragmentary effects of INRA’s measurements and of titling outcomes, used by some to defend exclusive resource rights, could be countered with appeals to the collective imaginary underpinning the territory’s production. Yet, barbed wire fences could not be imagined away. Thus, my basic point stands: land titling contributed towards fixing boundaries that were historically permeable and negotiable. As I will now explore, land titling is not the only factor at play here, but articulates with a series of other incentives for fixing boundaries.

New (and old) incentives for fencing

Although Felix acknowledged that the fence was partly about protecting palm supplies, this was not the first thing he mentioned when I asked about the motives behind the new fence. He claimed that the main reason for erecting the fence was to enable Yukiporo to grow pasture for cattle they had collectively acquired (discussed below). He explained that it was necessary to fence the land to prevent the cattle of neighbouring landowners from entering and eating this pasture:

Our motive for fencing the land is…you know that the other side there are the terceros, they’re there with their cattle, that is, in their property, but they have cattle so we’ve fenced so that these
cattle don’t enter in our area...because we’re in the process of making our little cattle stronger, and all of the work we’re doing we have to...we have to maintain it (interview A7).

He went on to describe how cattle ranching was part of a necessary shift in livelihoods strategies brought about by drought and declining fish reserves\textsuperscript{116}, which, as in Tarairí, had had a doubly devastating effect. He emphasised that the plot of land they had fenced was no longer suitable for farming:

As the climate has already changed, it’s not like it was years ago, now it’s drier and crops hardly grow....the area we have fenced...it isn’t suitable for farming, we’re just fencing to grow pasture and it’s only suitable for cattle ranching, for cattle ranching and there’s nothing for anything else.

As this illustrates, deteriorating environmental conditions – compounded by restricted land access and population growth – necessitate new and more intensive forms of land use, presenting their own incentives for fencing.\textsuperscript{117} As noted above, this situation is exacerbated by the failure of TCO land titling to resolve problems of racialised land inequality (or to reserve environmental impacts of karai settlement). To put it another way, without “territory”, Guaraní communities are increasingly forced to appropriate “land” using similar strategies to their karai neighbours, but in smaller and less productive areas.

It is worth noting that fencing reflects a shift in local karai as well as Guaraní land use practices; whereas previously both groups allowed animals to roam freely in search of food, worsening drought conditions mean that pasture must now be grown to ensure their survival. That is, encouraged by environmental conditions (and local authorities’ and NGOs’ environmental concerns), Itika Guasu is seeing a gradual shift from extensive to semi-extensive forms of cattle ranching. As the previous quotation illustrates, however, this shift is a partial one; the fencing of pasture is itself necessary because private landowners’ animals still roam freely, often transgressing unfenced boundaries of TCO land. That they do so reflects historically-grounded notions of settlers’ entitlement to

\textsuperscript{116} A long-term decline in fish reserves in the Pilcomayo river has been linked to upstream water contamination from mining around Potosí. More recently, supplies were devastated by the construction of a dam in Paraguay, which diverted water for agro-industry, making the river impassable for fish.

\textsuperscript{117} It is worth noting that the palm conflict is also a product of resource competition exacerbated by land scarcity and drought.
occupy indigenous lands – entitlements on which the cattle ranching economy was built, and which are now enshrined in the minutiae of the INRA Law.\textsuperscript{118} Paradoxically, it is precisely because the \textit{karai} do \textit{not} contain their livelihood activities within fixed boundaries of private property that the Guaraní are compelled to fence areas of communal land. In that sense, non-human animal geographies (Philo and Wilbert 2000; Whatmore, 2002) present both incentives and disincentives for the fixing of human territorial boundaries. Despite dreams of a pre-colonial territory, Guaraní communities continue to inhabit an “entangled landscape” in which their geographies are conditioned by those of other human and non-human actors.

These territorial dilemmas also articulate with shifting geographies and agendas of state and NGO intervention. As Felix went on to explain, Yukiporo had obtained both the cattle and the barbed wire from PROSOL, an agricultural subsidy programme funded by departmental gas rents,\textsuperscript{119} which allows each community to spend an annual budget (calculated based on the number of households) on material resources for rural development – such as animals, barbed wire, machinery or irrigation infrastructure. The fact that PROSOL, like many state development programmes, privileges “community” as a basic unit of geographical and political organisation, illustrates how networked relations with a \textit{karai}-dominated world undermine the idea of the TCO as a collectively governed indigenous territory, and reinforce the importance of community as a scale of territorial governance and rights. Yukiporo was not alone in responding to this confluence of pressures and opportunities by seeking to fix and defend communal boundaries. For all their complaints about Yukiporo’s fence, people in Tarairí were engaged in acquiring and putting up barbed wire fences of their own, for similar reasons (Box 7).

\textsuperscript{118} Although the allocation of property rights spatially fixes settler land claims, the INRA Law takes into account the expansionist logic of the cattle ranching sector, projecting the growth of an existing herd as the basis for the calculation of the Economic Social Function.

\textsuperscript{119} Prosol emerged from campesino organisations’ demands – via sustained social mobilisation - for a share of departmental gas rents, which they complained were concentrated in Tarija’s elite-dominated urban centres. Following initial complaints of discrimination, indigenous communities have recently participated in the programme. This is illustrative of how the Guaraní are increasingly seeking to take advantage of and access their fair share of new state development programmes funded by hydrocarbons development in the TCO (Chapter 5).
Box 7: The distribution of barbed wire in Tarairi

The sight of rolls of barbed wire piled in front of the crumbling adobe pre-school centre had become so familiar to me that I’d only recently thought to enquire about it. It was, Fausto told me one day, the community’s annual assignment from Prosol. This marked the guaraníes’ recent appropriation of the departmental gas-rents funded direct cash transfer programme, which they had initially complained only benefited campesinos, sometimes counter to their interests. Having requested a water tank and motorised pump in 2008 and failed to claim at all in 2009 (when the programme saw widespread fiscal problems), the community’s request for 2010 was for barbed wire, which arrived, belatedly, in August 2011, only shortly before the community expected the arrival of some goats, which they had requested for 2011.

In early September 2011, a meeting was called to distribute the barbed wire among households. This distribution corresponded with the logic of the programme in that, although a community is expected to agree on a collective demand, funding is calculated based on a per household basis. Of course, the programme’s logic was of little interest to community members, who were more concerned with making their household plots secure from the encroachments of karai landowners’ and other households’ wandering animals.

Representatives from each household gradually appeared and gathered standing around the stacked barbed wire. Fausto opened the meeting, explaining in Guaraní that the barbed wire had arrived and should be put to good use and that the amount they would receive in future from Prosol had increased, owing to the recent campesino mobilisations. Jimena, one of Fausto’s daughters and oldest literate woman, took charge of distribution, calling out names from a list, after which the relevant household representative would lug a roll of barbed wire from the central stack and place it at their side.

I struggled at first to grasp the politics of how the wire was distributed, as it seemed to me that some people/households ended up with much more than others; however, it soon became clear that some people were collecting on behalf of absent neighbours/relatives. Following the first round of collection, almost half of the stack of barbed wire remained in the centre of the group. Following a brief discussion, Jimena went through the list once more and each household acquired an additional roll. At least a dozen rolls still remained and, with no other instruction, some people helped themselves to the leftover rolls, although most people by this stage seemed to have little interest in acquiring even more barbed wire. The scene gave every appearance that the amount of barbed wire available far superseded the community’s immediate needs. By the time I left the community three months later, few households appeared to have used any of their wire; most rolls remained stacked at the back of palm-thatched kitchens, gathering dust.

After the meeting, I visited Fausto at home to enquire about the community’s previous engagement with Prosol and choice of barbed wire this year. He told me that barbed wire was better than wooden fencing, which often blows down in the wind, and that they would use it to fence their household plots, to grow pasture for animals, squash, maize and black beans. In this sense, the barbed wire was merely an upgrade for traditional stick fencing, preferred for its greater reliability, lower labour requirement and the diminishing supply of suitable wood for fencing near the community. As Fausto explained, “there are no more sticks…they’ve already cut them all down”; the construction of wooden fences now required a longer journey to collect the necessary wood, as well as, in most cases, the requesting of permission from a karai landowner – usually Mendez. However, there were also new incentives for fencing. As Fausto explained, when it rained more, and the community had access to more land, there were sufficient wild plants and fruits for their animals to eat. Animals were allowed to roam freely and there was no need to sow pasture for them. However, the limited area of land accessible to the community, combined with decreasing rainfall, had made it increasingly necessary to grow pasture, which meant fencing larger areas of land.
As Box 7 illustrates, incentives to fence do not necessarily imply a fixing of boundaries at a community level; in Tarairí, people seemed more interested in securing household potreros. It is also worth noting that the provision of barbed wire in Tarairí appeared to far outweigh the requirement for it, suggesting there are limits to how much people want to fence. This example also highlights that fencing is nothing new for the Guaraní; for traditional livelihoods that combine animal husbandry and agriculture, stick fencing has long been an essential part of land management, as well as the staking of temporary land claims. Furthermore, as Box 8 illustrates, the advantages and disadvantages of fixing boundaries are highly context-dependent.

Nevertheless, these ethnographic examples provide further evidence that Guaraní communities in Itika Guasu are experiencing new pressures and opportunities for fencing, in the context of deteriorating environmental conditions, land scarcity, wandering karai-owned cattle, and new development programmes. While these conditions are not merely a product of TCO land titling, TCO titling has failed to transform, and contributed towards reinforcing, a particular territorial logic – a logic that is more consistent with a history of colonial settlement than it is with either global ethnodevelopment imaginaries of indigenous territory or Guaraní aspirations of “recovering territory”. In fact, in a context of continuing landowner presence, the TCO is at times imagined like a private property, as a space from which karai are excluded. As Pedro put it, in the context of the men’s focus group:

The TCO is…where, where…where a landowner…where a landowner can’t sell land, also where other landowners can’t come, because it’s inside the TCO... You see? That’s what the TCO means. If some karai want to come and live here, are we going to let them build their house here in the middle of the football pitch? [To other men] Are you going to let them? No. That’s the TCO. That’s the way I understand the TCO.

These examples illustrate that Guaraní people are frequently faced with what Hall et al. call “exclusion’s double edge” (2011: 8). They argue that, while global development discourse frames land rights in terms of inclusion, in the context of on-the-ground land struggles, the opposite to exclusion is not inclusion but access.
Box 8: The pros and cons of fencing

One morning, I accompanied three women – Fausto’s partner and two of his daughters – to let the community’s sheep out of their pen to drink water from the Salao River. These “hair sheep”, recently acquired by the community from a CERDET project, were being kept in a stick-fenced pen a half hour walk from the community and were looked after by the community’s women according to a household rota. This daily task soon became unnecessary; it prevailed that the sheep were not eating enough in their pen and they were moved to the community oka. Here they roamed freely, grazing on whatever they could find, dodging missiles hurled and long sticks swished at them by women and children when they strayed into people’s private oka space.

After returning that day, I sat with the mburuvicha in his house and he told me about some of the community’s land problems. He complained that a local landowner, Vaca, was always letting his cattle graze on the community’s land. Vaca had arrived in the area some twenty years previous as a cowhand of the Mendez family. After earning sufficient cattle to become an independent rancher, he had occupied a large property the other side of the Pilcomayo River, to which he did not possess a title. While Fausto implied that Mendez should put up fencing to restrict his cattle’s movements, rather than letting them stray into the community’s land, he also lamented that the community had lost access to land and resources the other side of the river precisely because Vaca had occupied and fenced this land.

Several days later, I had my first sighting of Mendez, the largest landowner in the area, who lives in central Tarija, where he is a practicing medical doctor. I was playing football with the women and children when he pulled up in a red pick-up truck – apparently looking for male labour. The next day, I accompanied Alfredo to Entre Ríos. As we walked the 1½ hour stretch of road to the bus route, Alfredo told me that he planned to return to the community as soon as possible because he wanted to talk to Mendez before he left the area. The issue was about the fencing of his land the other side of the Salao River, across the Pilcomayo River from Vaca’s property. Following my earlier discussion with Fausto, I initially assumed the community wanted the land to be fenced to prevent Mendez’s cattle from entering community land. However, it turned out the reverse was true: Alfredo planned to ask Mendez not to fence this land, as doing so would create problems of access for the community.

Based on informal agreements with Mendez, a number of the community’s household plots are actually within his land, as is the pen where the hair sheep were being kept. This is also an area where the community collect forest products such as palm and wood. As Fausto told me in a later conversation, the community’s loss of access to surrounding land had been gradual, and had been exacerbated in recent decades by the increasing fencing of land – including in the context of the TCO titling process, when cattle-ranchers set about visibilising and justifying their land claims in preparation for INRA’s fieldwork. APG IG leaders complained that private claimants (particularly untiited small farmers) have continued to fence land since this time, helped by municipal and departmental programs that provide barbed wire – which, as noted, many view as an elite conspiracy to fragment their TCO claim. The provision of fencing, however, was sometimes justified by NGOs and state officials on conservation grounds; they rightly argued that extensive ranching was contributing to deforestation and desertification of the Chaco, as grazing cattle prevented the regeneration of native forest.
Acknowledging this means recognising that one person’s access is predicated on another’s exclusion:

Exclusion creates both security and insecurity. From the moment land becomes scarce, the exclusive access to land that is productive for some comes into tension with the fact that others cannot access it (Ibid: 8).

It is precisely this dilemma that Guaraní communities confront. While references to “recovering territory” invoke a world of freedom of movement and unrestricted access — predicated on the availability of abundant land and resources — it is only by excluding the karai that such a world seems possible. However, in a context where the state recognises landowners’ property claims, the best the Guaraní can hope for is to exclude karai neighbours from the fragments of TCO land they have rights to. Yet, the enforcement of boundaries between communal and private property can also backfire, excluding the Guaraní from accessing resources located within karai properties. When we consider relations between Guaraní communities, “exclusion’s double edge” becomes more complex still. In a context of growing land and resource scarcity, one community’s quest to “recover territory” — by asserting its own entitlement to access areas of traditional use — can quickly become a source of exclusion for other communities, who are also feeling the spatial squeeze of karai land control, state-funded fencing, population growth and drought-induced changes in forest cover.

Thus, echoing Hall et al.’s critique of development discourse, TCO titling offered indigenous peoples discursive inclusion in the nation-state as bearers of collective rights, while leaving unresolved the on-the-ground material question of access, with its exclusionary implications. The result is that the 36 Guaraní communities of Itika Guasu find themselves sharing (in legal terms) unevenly distributed fragments of TCO land. Not only are the fruits of this inclusion elusive for many communities, but attempts to secure these fragments against further karai encroachments can have the result of excluding other Guaraní — which, of course, may be precisely the intention in a context where communities compete for scarce land and resources.

Having explored some of the disjunctures between Guaraní territorial practices and notions of rights, and those of the TCO titling process, I now follow up issues
highlighted in Chapter 2, asking: How, and how much, do community members know about the TCO and titling outcomes? Furthermore, to what extent does it reflect or recognise their imaginative geographies or knowledge of territory?

Lost in translation: TCO titling and Other territorial knowledges

The colonizers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions (Quijano, 2007: 169).

We have been repeatedly struck by the inability of many who participated in the process [of mapping indigenous territory] itself to read maps in the ways that judges, lawyers and geographers do (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009: 161).

Knowledge about TCO titling in Tarairi

If the subject of TCO titling sometimes provoked emotive descriptions of the aspiration for “recovering territory” (discussed above), then this was not always the case. During my early months in the Tarairi, I was puzzled as to why my attempts to broach the subject of land titling often seemed to lead nowhere. I first interpreted this as either a lack of interest (perhaps people had other, more immediate, priorities) or a general disillusionment with the process owing to the poor results (it had achieved nothing so what was the use dredging it up again?). As the above sections reveal, these perceptions were not entirely unfounded. However, a series of conversations finally alerted me to another reason why not everyone was keen to talk about the TCO or land titling: they didn’t feel they knew much – or in some cases anything - about it.

This possibility first dawned on me as the result of a casual event, several weeks into my fieldwork. I had had just returned to Tarairi with my lower leg in plaster after breaking my ankle playing football. In an attempt to dispel the initial shock and guilt that my injury had provoked, I had brought paints and was sitting in the crumbling adobe edifice of the former school (now used as a pre-school centre) while the children painted my plaster with colourful representations of community-life. As usual, I had with me a
notebook I used for my Guarani language study. Some teenagers, curious about the gathering, had picked this up and were marvelling over the columns of Guarani and Spanish words (being bilingual themselves and unused to seeing their native language written) when a large folded sheet of paper fell out. It was a map of the TCO, which I had photocopied from CERDET and highlighted in different colours. The map became subject to intense scrutiny by a young woman and man, who appeared to be able to identify some places and geographical features. I asked them if they had ever seen a similar map before, and they responded that they had not. In the conversation that followed, it became clear that they did not know what the TCO was, although they did appear to be vaguely aware that they lived in “Zone 2”. While this exchange was brief and far from conclusive, it did lead me to enquire more seriously into how much people knew about the TCO or land titling.

I soon discovered that it was not only these young people for whom “TCO” meant nothing. While this discovery unfolded over the course of numerous informal conversations, it was illustrated vividly in the context of focus groups I conducted during my final weeks in the community. As the discussion in Box 9 reveals, even among adult men – the group most likely to have access to knowledge about TCO titling – few felt qualified to talk about the TCO. About half of the men who participated in this activity claimed they did not know what the TCO was at all. None of them knew whether land where they lived and worked had been titled to the TCO. Nor did they have any idea what was currently happening with land titling process. The men blamed the APG IG for not providing adequate “training” or sharing information, and also explained that many communal leaders who had participated in the titling process had either died (as in the case of Tarairi’s former mburuvicha), or had been replaced in their positions.

Despite these explanations, the men clearly felt ashamed about their lack of knowledge about the official titling process. In a concluding remark, Pedro, who knew more than anyone else, lamented:

120 The zones are significant within the APG’s organizational structure, with the next level of leadership above community-level mburuvichas being the mburuvichas zonales.
Box 9: Men’s focus group: exploration of knowledge about TCO titling in Tarairí

TCO titling was the subject of a third and final session of the focus group, after men had drawn maps of the community and its surroundings, and of other important places (Appendix 1). I opened the discussion on TCO titling by asking the men what they knew about the TCO: what was it and what was it for? One of the men present was Pedro, with whom I had discussed the issue on several occasions. He answered the question: “TCO meant Tierra Comunitaria de Origen”. Other men in the group said that they did not know this; one of them said “something old”. Pedro was on the point of explaining more, when I stopped him and asked the younger men if they could elaborate. There was a long pause. I rephrased the question: Did they live inside of a territory? Fausto explained: “They don’t know – INRA should have come to explain to the communities”. Wondering if it is an issue of terminology, I tried again: have they heard of Itika Guasu? What is it? One of the men tentatively responded: “The Pilcomayo River” (the literal translation). Finally, I allowed Pedro to explain to the others how he understood the TCO. He told them that it means “el estado reconoce” (the state recognises) and that it is “where the territory of the guaraní people extends to”. He went on:

Where the limit to Tarairí is; that’s what the TCO means for us. So, the TCO, we now have the TCO, I don’t know where it extends to, but we have the TCO. We are inside the TCO…because there is a map, I believe kuñati has it, there is a map [showing] where the TCO extends to, where it extends to in towards the east, towards the north, towards the south, towards the west….and the zone Itika Guasu is also where we live. The TCO is very….that is, it’s recognised by the state; inside the TCO is where a landowner can’t sell the land. Also where other landowners can’t come there because it’s inside the TCO, inside the demanded land. You see? That’s what the TCO means….If some karai want to come and live here, are you going to let them build their house here in the middle of the football pitch? Are you going to let them? No. That’s the TCO. That’s how I understand what the TCO is.

Following the description, the men discussed the issue of the lack of knowledge about the TCO in the community. The younger men accepted Pedro’s chastisement for their lack of knowledge, for which they assumed some responsibility, for not attending APG meetings or paying attention to what was said:

Pedro: Because we need to know (porque nos falta). Now kuñati herself is asking you.
P2: True – and we don’t know anything.
Pedro: And now you can feel bad: how bad that we don’t know.
P2: Sometimes one goes to the meeting and…
P3: Doesn’t pay attention.
Pedro: They don’t pay attention.

Uncomfortable with this dynamic – that the young men should feel humiliated by their lack of knowledge – I moved on to a planned presentation about the history of the land struggle, the TCO titling process, and the current status of land rights, using a series of maps. Before presenting these maps, I checked what the men knew about the status of land rights and it was evident that no one in the group had any idea of this, or of whether the community of Tarairí was titled. As I indicated Tarairí on a Fundación TIERRA map (2011), where it appears titled to the TCO, Pablo exclaimed: “It’s titled! It’s titled!” This enthusiasm was quickly qualified by another participant, who remarked: “It’s like a little chick: tiny!” – for although Tarairí indeed appeared as TCO land, it was surrounded by a sea of private property, and significantly smaller than other nearby fragments of communal land (see Figure 7). The other men concluded that they should know more and require “training” (capacitación) about the land issue.
We too, as the interested party, we have to be up to speed, because it’s always useful. It’s always useful – people come here to ask and we have to know something to answer, you see? Even me, I know nothing! Look, Kuñati - it’s not long ago that she came and she already knows everything. And we, the interested party, we don’t know anything! Above all, young people… And she comes to ask and we don’t know how to respond.

As this quotation indicates, the men appeared more embarrassed by the fact that a (female) outsider should know more than they did about a “Guaraní” political matter than they were convinced of the practical use of this knowledge. Yet, this is precisely the point: with its legal complexities, technical procedures and digitalised maps, TCO titling not only appears distant from the realities of peoples’ lives, it also disempowers them, making them feel excluded from, and ignorant about, what was once a Guaraní struggle.

Although the focus discussion group provided crucial insights, it also illustrated that this methodology¹²¹ and line of questioning is likely to perpetuate the disempowering effects of the legal process, and unlikely to shed light on what people do know – that is, the broader meaning of the land struggle.

In fact, what is striking is that people who felt unable to talk about the legal land titling process often talked passionately about colonisation, Guaraní resurgence and the broader struggle for “recovering territory”. This was illustrated by a discussion with Katuire, one of Tarairí’s oldest men. In the course of an unstructured interview, Katuire talked at length about the past: the days of empatronamiento, the loss of territory to the karai, the early days of the APG, as well as the inconveniences of having to deal with “hoarding” landowners (interview A2). However, when I finally asked about the issue of TCO titling, the conversation suddenly dried up:

PA: Can you explain to me what hopes you had for the TCO, for land titling?

I hardly understand that; I don’t understand it.

PA: Do you know what the TCO is?

¹²¹ Most communities have at some point experienced focus-group type activities in the context of NGO “capacitaciones” (training) or development projects. As such, focus groups and PRA activities perpetuate a familiar dynamic of a powerful and knowledgeable outsider compering knowledge to ignorant and passive Guaraní recipients.
No.

PA: Or the Guaraní territory of Itika Guasu…the titling of the land?

I hardly understand it.

PA: When INRA came here to measure properties?

I knew, but there was Alfredo’s father [the previous mburuvicha, now deceased]. They did measurements over there, there’s a post…but I wasn’t here.

PA: So you never knew much about what it was?

No, I don’t know, I don’t know.

This passage, in the context of the discussion that preceded it, powerfully illustrates how the titling process has, quite literally, taken the land struggle out of ordinary Guaraní people’s hands.

If men felt unable to talk about the TCO, then this was even more the case with women. The TCO and titling process were certainly not topics that cropped up in everyday conversation (although problems accessing land and other natural resources did). When I eventually asked direct questions about the TCO in a women’s focus group (Appendix 1), almost all women, whose ages ranged from teens to sixties, claimed they knew nothing about it. Even framing a question about the TCO or land titling in Guaraní was difficult – not only for me with my limited language skills, but also for bilingual women who helped with translation. These seemed to be concepts far removed from daily life, with no obvious translation. Some older women vaguely remembered “INRA”, but no one had much to say about a fleeting visit of some state officials twelve years ago. As with the men, this is not to say that women knew nothing of the land struggle; older women had lived through and participated in the process of early Guaraní organisation and had vivid memories of these events. Benita, Alfredo’s older sister and the community’s kuña mburuvicha (female communal leader), remembered her father (the former mburuvicha, now deceased) going to meetings where they talked about land and
the TCO. However, when I asked about the TCO, she quickly went from admitting she knew “michiraimi” (a little bit) to declaring apologetically “mbeti aikua” (I don’t know). The TCO was not something she felt able to talk about.

Other women in the group claimed to know nothing at all about the TCO, with two exceptions. First, Jimena (Pedro’s partner, who had been present in some of our previous discussions) explained to the others that it means “ñande iwí” (our land). While probably the most apt translation, this did not serve to clarify matters for the other women – unsurprisingly, given the disjuncture between the political notion of a collective territory (TCO) and the material realities of Guaraní land control in Tarairí. Second, Rosalia, an older woman, reported that she had heard a prominent Guaraní leader talking about the TCO on the radio, arguing that the empresas (companies) were not respecting it. That a Guaraní woman should learn of the TCO through a Tarija-based radio station reporting on extractives conflicts provides a further illustration of how the TCO land struggle has become removed from community-life. Neither Jimena nor Rosalia could say whether they lived inside the TCO or where it was located.

This sense of disempowerment perhaps explains older people’s reluctance to narrate the land struggle to younger generations. Most young people said they didn’t know what the TCO was, nor had they been told about the history of the land struggle. While some older community members blamed a lack of interest among young people, who had not endured the same hardships as them (interview A1), younger people contradicted this, blaming their elders for not teaching them. As one 16-year-old, already engaged in wage labour outside the community, told me, somewhat ashamedly:

I don’t know about land, my grandparents didn’t tell me… I almost don’t know. But I want to know. The older people haven’t told me so that I also know....They haven’t told me anything. Here generally there isn’t much… that is, the older people don’t teach, or one goes to ask and they don’t like it that you ask… it’s stupid [una huevada]… The old people don’t tell the young people; that’s how it is (interview A3).

Other young people in Tarairí shared this sense that the land struggle was something they didn’t know about, but ought to. By the time I left the community, following the focus
groups, some young men were asking me for capacitación (training) on the TCO titling process (see Box 6, above).

Asymmetrical knowledges and ontological conflicts

Given the multiple exclusions involved in mapping and titling the TCO and the complexities of the legal process, it is not difficult to imagine why people in Guaraní communities might not feel empowered to know or speak about land titling. Even with my privileged access to information, literacy, language skills, mobility, and other resources, I often experienced bewilderment when trying to make sense of the mass of legal and cartographic data I collected. Many properties had highly complex and ambiguous legal histories, involving questionable fieldwork results, legally dubious post-hoc adjustments to these, quasi-official informal agreements to settle disputes, independent control processes resulting in annulment of such agreements, judicial challenges waged by landowners, and bureaucratic irregularities throughout (Chapter 3). The generation of Guaraní people who participated in the land struggle during the 1990s are largely illiterate and speak limited or no Spanish. Even if they had been able to read or interpret cartographic data, they do not have access to this documentation, which is spread between the departmental and national offices of INRA, and in APG offices in Entre Ríos and Tarija. When communities did demand information on titling results in the context of meetings with INRA, officials consistently failed to provide photocopies in sufficient number, and delivered a verbal barrage of technical data, which served to baffle and silence the audience rather than answering their legitimate questions about their land rights (fieldnotes from assemblies 2008-9, see Appendix 1). This illustrates Hirsh et al’s observation that “titling programmes… intended to clarify rights and eliminate ambiguities…can create a new level of confusion and opacity” (2011: 42-3). As well as disempowering people, this ambiguity has material effects, making it difficult for Guaraní communities to challenge the continuing possession of legally-unjustified land by neighbouring landowners.

Yet, this legal complexity and bureaucratic opacity is still only the tip of the iceberg when considering the politics of knowledge of TCO titling. The disempowerment
people experience when asked to talk about the TCO also points to deeper “ontological conflicts” (Blaser: 2010: 5-6) between Guaraní embodied knowledges of territory and struggle and the modern knowledges of state cartography and law, premised on a world of subjects and objects (ibid.: 229) located in Cartesian abstract space (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). I have already referred to the disjuncture between Guaraní notions of territory – imagined as a fluid, unbounded space that enabled free access to abundant resources and places known by ancestors – and INRA’s production of property, as bounded spaces of exclusive ownership (Blomley, 2010), which imprisoned as well as excluded communities. I have also noted how flexible and nested regimes of collective, communal and household rights could not be accommodated within, and were eclipsed by, the “zero-sum logic” of property rights (ibid.).

More fundamental still is the way in which Guaraní arakua and ŋande reko122 knowledge that reflected and produced an alternative Guaraní life-world, and which had been valorised by APG IG counter-narratives of land-territory – was subordinated and made invisibile by the legal, bureaucratic and cartographic knowledges of TCO land titling. Rather than recognising territory as a container of “worlds and knowledges otherwise” (Blaser, 2010), TCO titling removed territory from the realm of indigenous knowledge and community life, transforming it into something that was irrelevant and incomprehensible to Guaraní community members: lines on a state map. This is illustrative of Bhandar’s claims regarding the “failure of recognition in the colonial settler context”, where “recognition of indigenous rights remains confined to a restricted economy of property ownership and subjectivity embedded during colonial settlement” (2011: 228-9).

An example of the erasures this involves is provided by the subject of iyareta (Guaraní: iya – owner; reta – suffix to indicate plural), the non-human owners of particular natural resources with whom the Guaraní share their territory, and on whose will they depend. My limited forays into the geographies and characteristics of these spirit guardians of nature revealed yet another layer of Guaraní territoriality, where human-non-human relations unfold across particular spaces and respecting particular limits (Box 10 – the iiya).

122 Arakuaa: G. Guaraní knowledge of time, space, the world; ŋande reko: G. Our way of being.
Box 10: The iiya: navigating spiritual and legal sovereignties

Having made a number of failed attempts to enquire into guaraní spiritual beliefs and practices, an unexpected revelation came when I informed Alfredo that I was thinking of accompanying a group of men to the toma de agua (water source) on a maintenance mission. The community had had no drinking water for the past week after taps suddenly ran dry. After speculating that the municipal eco-tourism project had used all the water, people eventually began to suspect a leak in the now decades-old piping and remembered that it was years since the men had organised to conduct repairs. To me, this seemed like an ideal opportunity to spend time with the men collectively, which was usually impossible given that so many were away for wage labour, fishing or working on their separate potreros.

When I raised the idea, Alfredo immediately warned me against going, telling me that the “dueño del agua” (he used Spanish) wouldn’t recognise me and something bad could happen (he didn’t specify what). He went on to describe how he’d once taken a karai engineer there and he’d nearly died, although he didn’t provide details. And the APG already blamed him for my broken ankle, he complained, mentioning it regularly (I knew this to be an ongoing joke rather than a serious accusation); if anything happened to me at the toma, it is him who would be held accountable. By transgressing the territorial boundaries of those who owned the territory – the iya(reta) – Alfredo implied that I would be endangering not only myself but also him and, by implication, his family.

I asked if there was anything I could do to appease or greet the iiya and he answered that no, it wouldn’t work because I was from another country. Eventually, he conceded that I could still go on the expedition with the men; I would just have to go to a certain distance from the water source and wait. This implied that others would be able to advise me about where precisely this boundary lay. In fact, I suspected that Alfredo’s warnings were only partially about spiritual beliefs and partly an attempt to prevent me from strengthening my relationships with other men in the community, some of whom Alfredo had clear rivalries with. Nevertheless, I continued to wonder about the iiya and pursued the subject in subsequent conversations.

Following an interview, I told Pedro about Alfredo’s warning and he quickly dismissed it. He agreed that of course I couldn’t approach the toma and touch the water, “just like that” (así no más); I would have to chew coca, pour alcohol on my head – in other words, challar – and only then could I sit down to rest near the toma. Only when I’d been there a good while should I approach the water, he advised. But this was the same for everyone, he stressed; unlike Alfredo, he made no special distinction because I was from outside the territory and not Guarani. He told me that he’d also been warned about the iiya when he first went to the toma, because he hadn’t lived his whole life in the community, making him something of an outsider. Given the evident rivalry between the two men, it struck me that warnings about the iiya and who it would or wouldn’t recognise acted as a trope for articulating belonging, and, by proxy (in the case of my proposed trip), authority. That is, although Pedro had previously experienced the same warnings as me, the current issue at stake was who had the knowledge and authority to instruct or permit me regarding my own interaction with the iiya.

Several days later, I was at Fausto’s house looking for eggs, having returned from collecting palm. The women offered me a plate of beans, rice and maize bread (muïti). As I ate, I chatted to the mburuvicha and he asked me about my trip to the toma the previous day, when I’d accompanied the men to dig up water pipes. I told him I hadn’t made it to the toma.
Whereas the project of “recovering territory” included iyareta and promoted the freedom of movement necessary to retain relations with them, and access to their resources, the TCO titling process took no heed of their power, geographies or relations with the
Rather, it drew on notions of abstract space and passive nature, calculating the hectares per household required for Guarani economic survival – “spatial needs” that were in any case not fulfilled by the titling process. Furthermore, as Box 10 illustrates, the consolidation of private property in the TCO created problems for the Guarani’s access to natural resources. In establishing their own supply of drinking water, the Guarani were forced to negotiate with and appease a karai landowner, the legal owner of the water source, alongside a spiritual sovereign, the iiya. These non-human resource sovereignties and fluid geographies were eclipsed and disrupted by the “bright lines” (Blomley, 2010) of the titling process.

This “problem of translation on a terrain marked by asymmetries” (Blaser, 2010: 17; Chapter 3) substantiates critical doubts about the potential of indigenous “counter-mapping” as a means of decolonising knowledge. If decolonising knowledge entails “liberat[ing] the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity” (Quijano, 2010: 11), then the TCO did not achieve this; rather it subjected the Guarani to an epistemic regime of property and abstract space that de-legitimised their own understandings and lived experiences of land-territory, while re-inscribing the state’s power to both represent and allocate territory.

Imagined geographies and hybrid spatialities

While it is important to highlight these ontological conflicts and epistemological asymmetries, another explanation for the above findings is that the TCO is simply not a dominant spatial imaginary for Guarani people at a community level. This was illustrated in a focus group activity, where – having already produced a map of “Tarairi and its surroundings” – men and women (in separate groups) were asked to add to a second map, showing “other important places” (Appendix 1). The maps produced were strikingly different, revealing gendered geographies of work, travel and kinship relations (Massey

123 The exception to this is the EINE, which recommends the Guarani be given “unrestricted access” to the Pilcomayo river, based on the “very important link of cultural union between riverside families and the mythic possessors of these resources” (VAIPO and MACPIO, 2000: 147), although this has not been obtained.
Significantly, however, both maps challenged the primacy of the TCO as a spatial category. The women’s map illustrated that people from Tarairí have strong relations with some other TCO communities but none with others, while the men’s map illustrated how livelihoods are forged across multiple spaces that transcend TCO boundaries. As argued above, it is these networked relations that constitute Tarairí as a place (Massey, 2005).

Community members in Tarairí were also well aware of the dominance of other geographical imaginaries within the broader regional context. As Pedro noted: “I think, talking of the TCO, the people of Entre Ríos don’t know what it means….they don’t know what the TCO is” (interview A6). For this reason, men said that they were unlikely to refer to the TCO in describing their home to outsiders, referring instead to O’Connor Province, Entre Ríos or the Pilcomayo river (men’s focus group). The relative marginality of the TCO within dominant (karai) imagined geographies was demonstrated by my own experiences travelling within the province. On trips between Tarija and Entre Ríos, a dirt road which passes through several mountain ranges and sees frequent accidents, I would usually opt to take a shared taxi, which takes an hour less than the bus and is marginally safer. My fellow passengers were generally non-indigenous people from O’Connor Province, whose lives involved frequent trips to Tarija for business, schooling or family visits. During these journeys, my travelling companions would often enquire what I was doing in the region and where I was headed. I soon discovered that, if I mentioned the TCO, most people had no idea what I was talking about; they were much more likely to know Guarani communities by name. On several occasions, I was surprised to learn that someone was heading to a place inside the TCO, yet unaware of its existence. This is not to say that no one had heard of TCO Itika Guasu. However, the TCO was far from being a dominant spatial category, in a landscape overlaid with numerous other boundaries and geographical markers – municipalities, cantons, communities, urban settlements, haciendas, rivers, roads and gas fields, to name but a few.

124 Women added seven other Guaraní communities where they made frequent visits to see family; men depicted the rural haciendas and urban centres where they went for labour migration, which were largely in Tarija Department but stretched as far as Argentina. Both groups depicted Entre Ríos, in women’s case as the location of the nearest hospital.
Conclusion

Through an ethnographic exploration of the lived realities of land and territory in one Guarani community, this chapter has provided key insights into the limitations of TCO titling as an instrument for decolonisation. I began by describing Tarairi as an “entangled landscape” (Moore, 2005) of postcolonial dispossession, in which Guarani territorial imaginaries and land use practices exist in awkward articulation with a racialised regime of property rights. I explored how the TCO was imagined by some community members as a route towards overcoming this predicament. Resonating with wider APG movement discourses during the 1990s, they drew on collective oral historical archive of dispossession and empatronamiento to frame the TCO as a means of “recovering territory”, associated with a recuperation of spatial mobility, cultural integrity and material abundance. As the remainder of the chapter detailed, however, the results of TCO titling failed to live up to such expectations. In a striking illustration of the everyday realities of the legal results described in Chapter 3, community members in Tarairi remain hemmed in on all sides by private property, a reality that creates daily challenges for farming and other livelihoods activities. As we saw, some community members reflected on this reality to conclude that TCO titling has failed to fulfil its promise of “recovering territory”.

Yet, seen from the perspective of community life, TCO titling’s limitations as an instrument of decolonisation go beyond its failure to redistribute land or property rights. I also argued that the spatial logics and legal-cartographic knowledges of state land titling were fundamentally at odds with how community members viewed and interacted with their territory. Through an examination of an inter-communal conflict surrounding the erection of a barbed wire fence around scarce palm reserves, I showed how the production of abstract Cartesian space (which overlooked communities’ differentiated entitlements), combined with the boundary-fixing work of INRA’s cadastral practices, resulted in a fixing of previously permeable and negotiable boundaries. The effect, as we saw, was an exacerbation of inter-communal conflict, where imaginaries of the TCO as a collective space were pitted against INRA’s recognition of fixed communal boundaries. As my account highlighted, such conflicts must also be placed in the broader context of
growing resource scarcity in Itika Guasu – a product of worsening environmental conditions (resulting largely from semi-extensive cattle ranching), Guarani population growth, and, above all, TCO titling’s failure to reverse a situation of acute racialised land inequality.

It is in the context of these multiple pressures towards more intensive forms of land use that the Guarani are confronted with what Hall et al. term “exclusion’s double edge”. Paradoxically, while Guarani discourses of “recovering territory” envisaged a landscape of free movement, where you could go and make your potrero wherever you want, the spatial and resource squeeze communities like Tarairi continue to face present increasing incentives for the fixing and policing of boundaries, moral discourses against “hoarding” notwithstanding. Yet, incentives for excluding others must be continuously weighed against their potential to backfire, in a context in which the transgression of established boundaries (including those of private property) remains an important strategy for survival. These dilemmas, I have suggested, are emblematic of how TCO titling failed to modify, and served to reinforce, a postcolonial logic of land and property that makes alternative territorial imaginaries both invisible and unviable.

In the final section of the chapter, I explored these disjunctions between territory and property through a different lens: based on an enquiry in the politics of knowledge involved in TCO titling. Here, I described how – despite some nostalgic memories of the early days of the land struggle – many people in Tarairi felt entirely distant from, and disempowered by, TCO titling and its legal-cartographic knowledges. This is illustrative of how efforts at “translation on a terrain marked by asymmetries” (Blaser, 2010: 17), oriented towards postcolonial recognition, can work to reproduce coloniality, subjugating subaltern knowledge to that of dominant actors. Given that these Other knowledges – which included relations with non-human actors – were constitutive of “territory”, this provides another dimension of the differences between property and territory, and the ways in which TCO titling privileged the former while eclipsing the latter. Not only was the TCO removed from Guarani territorial imaginaries, but its power was limited, in a landscape overwritten with other, more powerful, imaginative geographies. As such, this chapter has highlighted the deeper ontological conflicts and representational dilemmas that emerge from indigenous land claims, as well demonstrating the everyday challenges
and frustrations that result from TCO titling’s failure to enact a substantive redistribution of land to indigenous claimants.
Chapter 5: Contesting resource sovereignty: indigenous land rights and hydrocarbon development

In previous chapters I examined how the entrenched territorial logics of the state and karai landowner power conjoined to shape TCO land titling in ways that frustrated Guarani aspirations for “recovering territory”. In this chapter, I shift focus to explore how TCO titling articulated with another, more recent, territorializing process – that of hydrocarbons development. As the site of Bolivia’s largest gas field, Campo Margarita-Huacaya, TCO Itika Guasu provides a particularly apt case through which to explore these dynamics, which are of much broader relevance, given the significant spatial and temporal overlap between TCO titling and hydrocarbon development in the Bolivian lowlands. By 2008, 20 of Bolivia’s 84 TCOs were subject to contracts for hydrocarbons exploration or exploitation (CEASES, 2008, see Figure 8). As noted in Chapter 1, these entangled geographies are illustrative of the contradictory territorializing processes of neoliberalism, where the marketisation of land and resources was accompanied by governmental efforts to manage its negative social and environmental impacts.

125 This figure includes 44 hydrocarbons contracts signed by the Bolivian State in April 2007.
Figure 8: Map of Bolivia showing overlap of hydrocarbon concessions and TCOs\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{126} Elaborated by Cartographic Unit, University of Cambridge, UK, based on CEDLA 2010. Previously published in Anthias and Radcliffe, 2013.
In 1996, the same year the INRA Law created TCOs, the government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada set forth its ‘energy triangle’ policy, consisting of a new Hydrocarbons Law, the capitalisation (privatisation) of the state hydrocarbons firm YPFB, and construction of a natural gas pipeline to Brazil. These investment-friendly policies fuelled a boom in hydrocarbons development, which rose by 35.6 percent in the period 1997-2001 (Hindery, 2004). This development was concentrated in the Chaco region of Tarija Department (Hindery, 2013; Humphreys Bebbington and Bebbington, 2010), where key gas reserves are located beneath indigenous territories – many of which were being simultaneously claimed as TCOs.

In examining the relationship between indigenous land titling and extraction, this chapter addresses a key research question: To what extent do land rights enable indigenous peoples to exercise control over their territories? As noted in earlier chapters, colonialism was experienced by the Guaraní, perhaps above all, as a loss of control over ancestral territory (and, consequently, over their own bodies). Regaining this territorial control – as opposed to simply legal recognition of land rights – was at the heart of the Guaraní land struggle, expressed through the trope of “recovering territory” and, at a national level, through claims to “territory and autonomy”. The extent to which TCO titling enabled indigenous peoples to achieve territorial control is, therefore, of central importance for evaluating the role of indigenous land rights in decolonisation. If earlier chapters touched on this question in relation to other local actors, this chapter asks it in relation to transnational processes of capitalist territorial restructuring. In doing so, I draw on political ecology analysis (discussed in the Introduction), which documents how transnational processes of capital accumulation shape the rules and institutions that govern access to and control of natural resources, often to the detriment of poor resource-dependent communities. Taking on board Bebbington’s (2009) claim that extractive industry actors can “push certain groups (those losing this access) down the distribution” this chapter asks: How far do land rights protect indigenous peoples’ resource-accessing rights in the context of extraction? Conversely, How does the presence of extractive industry actors shape the allocation of land rights in TCOs? These questions extend my

127 The 1996 Law of Capitalization sold 50% of the state industries that had provided 60% of all government revenues to multinational corporations (Kohl, 2006).
analysis of TCO titling as a process embedded in broader structures of political economy and social power.

By examining these questions in relation to events that took place during the neoliberal period (1985-2005) and during the Morales government (2005–present), this chapter offers insight into how Latin American “post-neoliberal” development models shift the relationship between extraction, environment, and territorial rights (Bebbington: 2009b:15). This question is especially pertinent in Bolivia given that the MAS government has offered discursive and constitutional support for indigenous territorial rights alongside a commitment to extractives-based development, now framed as the economic basis for national sovereignty and social transformation (Gustafson and Fabricant 2012). While the tensions arising from this development agenda have been subject to increasing debate (see Introduction), it is through ethnographic work in territories subject to these contradictory processes that their dynamics are best understood.

This chapter also seeks to move beyond accounts that focus on conflicts between indigenous territorial claims and extractive industry (Hindery, 2013) by examining how the Guaraní visions and strategies of territory in Itika Guasu have shifted in the context of a protracted conflict over hydrocarbon development. This includes an examination of how struggles over land rights are situated vis-à-vis multi-scalar redistributive conflicts arising from natural gas development, which form part of broader struggles over nation and citizenship in Morales’s Bolivia (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010). Building on work on oil development in other contexts (Watts, 2003; Coronil, 1997; Valdivia 2008), I suggest that TCOs provide a vehicle for indigenous peoples’ participation in a broader regime of “hydrocarbon citizenship”. Rather than being read in terms of either empowerment or cooption, such engagements provide further illustration of the contingent nature of indigenous territorial struggles, and of indigenous peoples’ efforts to exercise agency within the double-edged spaces of postcolonial and neoliberal governance.

By exploring these dynamics in the final substantive chapter of this thesis, I seek to counter the tendency of some political ecology accounts – echoing the resource economics and environmental security literatures – to read territorial conflicts exclusively through the lens of extractive industry development, resulting in a kind of resource
determinism. Read in the context of previous chapters, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that conflicts over extractive industry development in postcolonial contexts must be understood in relation to historically-grounded struggles over territory, sovereignty, and citizenship. Drawing on insights from previous chapters, I explore how neo-colonial geographies of extractive industry map onto and articulate with existing cultural and resource struggles, becoming yet another sedimented layer (Moore 2005) in the postcolonial production of territory.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. The first section details the articulations between hydrocarbon development and TCO land titling in Itika Guasu during the neoliberal period. This discussion begins in 1997, which saw the beginning of both TCO titling and hydrocarbon development in Itika Guasu, and extends until (and slightly beyond) 2006, which marked the beginning of Evo Morales’s presidency. Drawing on extensive interview and documentary analysis conducted in 2008-9 and 2011-12, I describe how the transnational oil company Repsol both ignored and obstructed Guaraní territorial rights in Itika Guasu, and how land rights became implicated in a protracted conflict over hydrocarbons governance. The second section traces the evolution of this resource conflict under the Morales government (2006-present), when indigenous land rights and hydrocarbons governance have remained deeply intertwined. The concluding section analyses Guaraní discourse surrounding a recent settlement between the APG IG and Repsol, in order to reflect on how the meaning and content of territory has been transformed by a decade of hydrocarbon development in the TCO.

128 For a critique of such tendencies and for a more nuanced perspective, which emphasises histories, geographies, and moral dimensions of resource governance, see Perreault and Valdivia, 2010; Le Billon, 2001.
129 Specific details of these methods are provided in Appendix 1.
Securing Rights for Capital: Repsol’s Arrival in TCO Itika Guasu

[Repsol] went to [negotiate] directly with them, with the third parties, and with whoever was the biggest [landowner] and already had [property rights] …[Repsol] located everything and directly they went to do it with them (interview B4).

Figure 9: Map showing overlap of TCO Itika Guasu and Margarita-Huacaya gas field

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130 Elaborated by Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, based on adaptation of Figure 7:1 in Anthias, 2012."
As noted, TCO Itika Guasu overlies the Margarita-Huacaya gas field (formerly the Margarita gas field, or Campo Margarita)\textsuperscript{131} which forms part of the Caipipendi Block and contains Bolivia’s most significant gas reserves (Figure 9). In 1997, following a number of initial mergers and sales, the Spanish company Repsol YPF came to operate the concession via its subsidiary Maxus, along with its partners British Gas and Pan American Energy (a subsidiary of BP). Repsol signed a mixed-risk contract with the Bolivian state for activities in Caipipendi Block (including Campo Margarita) on 14\textsuperscript{th} May 1997, nearly two months after TCO Itika Guasu was officially recognised (CEADES, 2008). Shortly afterwards, the company began its operations in the TCO, including the drilling of four gas wells and the construction of the processing plant, airstrip and access roads. As such, throughout the course of Repsol’s activities, Itika Guasu was in a legal state of “immobilisation” for TCO titling. Under this status, all property claims within the TCO are subject to legal revision and private land transactions are prohibited until the TCO titling process has been completed.

However, the TCO’s legal existence seemed to make little difference to Repsol, who did not consult, or even inform, the APG IG of its planned activities.\textsuperscript{132} As one leader put it:

They entered [the TCO] as if they were entering their house. It was as if you’re the owner of the house and they pass under your nose, in other words. They didn’t even present us with the environmental impact study (interview B1).

Instead, Repsol established its operations within private properties claimed by non-indigenous cattle ranchers, with whom the company signed land use agreements and negotiated compensation payments.\textsuperscript{133} Known as Contratos de Servidumbre (Service Contracts), such agreements must legally be negotiated with the legal proprietor of the

\textsuperscript{131} The gas field was originally named Margarita, but was renamed Margarita-Huacaya in 2011, when the government controversially ruled that reserves were joined to the neighbouring Campo Huacaya (Chuquisaca Department), with implications for gas rents distribution.

\textsuperscript{132} This was in spite of the fact that Bolivia had signed ILO Convention 169 in 1991, which guarantees indigenous peoples the right to prior and informed consultation, through their representative institutions, on development processes that affect them directly (articles 15.2 and 7.1).

\textsuperscript{133} APG et al., 2005; interviews B4, B16, B33, B9, B3.
required land. In this case, however, they were made with third-party claimants within the TCO, whose land rights had not yet been established. As noted in Chapter 3, private claimants in TCOs may be awarded titles by INRA or may have their claimed properties confiscated or reduced, depending on the assessment of their properties’ Economic Social Function – something that requires extensive fieldwork. In fact, not only had property rights not been evaluated when Repsol began its activities in 1997, but official documentation from INRA’s subsequent fieldwork (conducted in 2000) shows that several claimants with whom Repsol negotiated ultimately failed to prove productive use of their properties. At least three properties (those of wells X-3 and X-4, and of the processing plant) were earmarked for reductions (INRA, 2008b; INRA, 2010) – land which should have been awarded to the TCO. According to Guaraní community members, neither these two properties nor those of gas well X-2 and the airstrip are used productively, since their owners – all from one elite landowning family – live in Tarija city (interview B4). The justification of the FES is also ambiguous in the case of the property of gas well X-1, claimed by the brother of the landowner Simón Mendez, who appeared in Chapters 3 and 4.

Not only did Repsol’s land use agreements pre-empt the results of the TCO titling process, but there is also strong evidence that in at least one case the company’s presence influenced these results. In the case of an airstrip, accounts of APG IG leaders, technical advisors, and NGO staff suggest that infrastructure built by Repsol was used as evidence of productive land use, thereby legitimizing the individual claimant’s rights to an otherwise unproductive property. Having heard several reports about INRA’s role in these land use contracts, I asked the agency’s former (2000-2004) Director directly about them in an interview. He explained, somewhat nervously, that the agreements had been validated on the basis of titles awarded following the 1952 agrarian reform:

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135 Interviews B4, B3, AV, B15, B28, B9; see also APG et al., 2005.
The company looks for information, evaluates it, and the owner emerges. The owner says “this is mine” and proves it with plans, with documents and later with the process of saneamiento they went about ratifying this.

PA: So some already had titles?

Yes, in the zone there were already titles. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. In the zone there were already titles, in the zone there were already titles. The process of saneamiento is the revision of the agrarian reform of ’53…so there were already rights… INRA certifies who is the owner, and that that property is in the process of titling and isn’t going to be confiscated or is going to be consolidated. That helps them a lot (interview B28).

This demonstrates INRA’s collusion in the perversion of the legal process of TCO titling – as noted above, all property rights were subject to a fieldwork-based evaluation by INRA, whether or not claimants possessed property titles. Beyond this fact, the existence of these old titles is itself noteworthy. Documentation produced by INRA in 1997, at the start of the TCO titling process, reveals that a minority of third parties in Itika Guasu possessed formal land titles at this time (INRA, 1997). Those that did represent the region’s longest-standing and most powerful landowning families. In fact, almost all hydrocarbons infrastructure is located in what were formerly two of Itika Guasu’s largest haciendas (interview B4). As noted in Chapter 1, the awarding of titles to karai settlers after the first agrarian reform was instrumental to Guaraní dispossession, and predicated on indigenous peoples’ exclusion from citizenship. It is precisely this racialised geography of rights that the Guaraní sought to contest and transform through TCO titling. For them, INRA’s willingness to sacrifice their land rights to provide legal security for a Spanish oil company represents the latest link in a chain of historical collusions between the Bolivian state, capitalist interests and local elites in this region. As one Guaraní leader retold these events:

There was the TCO but inside there was a third party who said “this is my property: here is your property, here is mine.” What Repsol did is enter this property, measured but still without title, entered and said, “I want to work in your property. That is to say, renting a part of your land, I’m going to work here, I want to live here.” Repsol settles there, was a tenant . . . INRA legally certified this case. I told them clearly that they were concentrating on conserving the huge
interests; INRA knew, loads of people knew, but they preferred not to admit it, and to let [Repsol] settle, give them security of where to live. (Interview B1)

It is perhaps worth noting that, after leaving INRA in 2004, the Director quoted above (who is from a local cattle ranching family) went on to work as a legal advisor for Repsol, fuelling speculation about negotiations between Repsol and INRA during this period (interview B2).

Land rights and extractives governance

What [Repsol] said is: “If you’re not owners of the territory, while you’re not owners of the territory, you can’t question the work we’re doing.” It couldn’t be clearer (interview B18).

While Repsol’s land-use agreements were initially established without the knowledge of the Guaraní, these agreements became subject to extensive scrutiny and contestation in an ensuing conflict over indigenous rights and hydrocarbon development in TCO Itika Guasu. As extraction’s social and environmental impacts became apparent, the APG IG began to make sustained claims for the recognition of their rights. These claims were articulated with reference to the ILO Convention 169 (ratified by Bolivia in 1991), which requires governments and companies to consult with the peoples living on the land prior to permitting resource exploitation, and states that they should participate in the benefits of such activities and receive “fair compensation” for any damages they sustain as a result of these activities (Articles 6 and 15). In 2003, the APG IG complained about their lack of consultation and demanded land-use payments, compensation for social and environmental impacts, and measures to monitor and address these impacts. This was the beginning of a long and bitter dispute that was not resolved until late 2010 (see below).

While it was in communities that the social and environmental effects of extraction were being increasingly felt, it was the Entre Ríos-based APG IG leadership – supported by local NGOs and technical advisors – that emerged as the injured party and rights-bearing subject in this dispute. This had important implications, which will become evident later in this chapter.

136 APG et al., 2005; Perreault, 2008.
In the context of this conflict, the APG IG began to scrutinize the means by which Repsol had established itself in the TCO and identified the legally dubious land-use contracts as a means by which the company had sought to avoid recognizing their rights. The APG IG first raised the issue of the land-use contracts in a meeting with Repsol’s subcontractor, Maxus, in February 2003, in which they demanded land use payments. According to a former NGO employee who participated in this meeting:

[Maxus said:] “We’ve sorted it out; we’ve paid land use payments to the owners.” And there the answer was: “There are no owners precisely because all rights are under a process of revision. And the preferential right is with the [Guaraní] people, with the TCO. So if you’ve paid, you’ve paid wrong, you’ve paid before knowing who is the final owner, you’ve paid wrong.” And if in the end [INRA] determine that the owner is different from who [Repsol] paid, the company would have to pay again. Because to pay wrong is to pay double, isn’t it? (interview B4).

Maxus flatly rejected this claim in a letter to the APG IG (Maxus, 2003a). In late March, 2003, another meeting was held, this time between the APG IG, Maxus, and INRA, in which INRA officials were called upon by the APG IG “to explain the situation of the land titling process in Itika Guasu, through which companies should respect the preferential right of the APG\textsuperscript{137} and mitigate the environmental impact” (CERDET, 2003). In April, following a complaint by the APG IG to the Ministry of Hydrocarbons, Maxus agreed to fund a development plan proposed by the APG IG and to make payments based on the market value of land the company occupied. However, the agreement was framed as a goodwill gesture and explicitly rejected Guaraní rights to consultation or compensation (Maxus, 2003b).

These concessions failed to satisfy the APG IG leadership, who on May 28, 2003 organised a blockade of the Margarita Bridge, bringing extractive activity to a halt. Within days, the government had ordered a military division from Villamontes to break up the demonstration (Perreault, 2008). In the months that followed, the APG and Maxus reached a compromise over land-use payments and signed the final version of the first development plan, which remained a voluntary agreement. However, the APG IG’s battle with Maxus and Repsol for recognition of its rights persisted and the land-use agreements

\textsuperscript{137} This refers to the TCO’s immobilised status under the SAN-TCO process, which gives indigenous land rights priority status in the TCO area until other (private) rights have been legally established by INRA.
continued to resurface as a pretext for defending or contesting other APG IG claims. For example, in 2006, an APG IG environmental monitoring team sent to inspect the four gas wells concluded in a report: “This terrain is property of the TCO, for which reason they should have consulted [us], given that it is in a process of land titling and therefore immobilized” (APG IG, 2007). Repsol responded with a document in which it claimed:

> All the contracts made with proprietors of the zone, called third parties by the indigenous people, were made following verification of their property rights, certified by the same National Institute of Agrarian Reform [INRA], so that the air strip, the gas wells, the Margarita plant and other installations are found in properties that will be titled to the said third parties (Repsol, 2006).

This letter explicitly rejects the APG IG’s claim to consultation on the basis that the properties hosting its operations belonged to third parties and not to the Guarani. In the years that followed, Repsol continued to refuse to recognize either Guarani land rights or their right to consultation and compensation.

**Neo-colonial geographies of extraction**

As the above account reveals, TCO status did not guarantee that Guarani resource-accessing rights would be protected and prioritized vis-à-vis those of extractive industry. Rather, the TCO titling process was itself responsive to the resource-accessing claims of transnational capital, which required clearly established property rights to provide legal security for its operations. This security was provided with recourse to old hacienda land titles – titles that dated from a period when the Guarani were not recognized as citizens. This not only illustrates political ecologists’ observation that, under neoliberalism, the resource-accessing rights of transnational capital often trump those of resource-dependent communities; it also demonstrates how these processes are racialised in postcolonial territories produced by histories of colonial dispossession. This points to the challenges of “recovering territory” in the context where new capitalist processes of territorial restructuring map onto and legitimize exclusionary postcolonial geographies of rights, marginalizing indigenous redistributive claims.

It is worth reflecting on the competing territorial imaginaries that underpinned this conflict. Initially, part of the problem was that Repsol – reproducing a “resource
triumphalist” vision of resource-producing zones as devoid of people and conflict (Bridge, 2001) – simply failed to see the Guaraní and their territory. Instead, the company located its operations within the abstract space of the postcolonial nation-state. Yet, if the space-obliterating imaginaries of energy capital initially rendered the Guaraníes’ territory invisible, at the point of negotiating land use Repsol sought to re-spatialize its activities. It did so by focusing on securing the “worm-holes” that enabled it to access deep-time processes of natural production (Bridge, 2009). Whereas the APG IG insisted that the entire TCO was “their territory” (APG, 2007a), Repsol argued that it only required small plots of land for its installations, which were located within private properties. As such, Repsol sought to circumvent Guaraní claims to territory with reference to a non-indigenous settler geography of private property – the “already-mapped world” of the postcolonial nation-state (Wainwright and Bryan, 2009: 31).

The recurrent issue of the validity of the land use contracts illustrates the company’s partial success in imposing this imaginary. For example, despite their claims to rights over the entire TCO, in 2003 APG IG leaders participated in an on-site inspection of the four gas wells by INRA, to establish their precise location and the legal status of this land (INRA Nacional, 2003). This provides further illustration of the difference between “property” and “territory” (Blomley, 2010) and the ways in which TCO titling contributes to the production of the former, while fragmenting and obscuring the latter. As the APG IG complained of another oil company, Transredes, in a 2007 statement: “They don’t respect the APG IG’s integral vision of territory…they claim that they only affect a section of the territory, and that that section of the territory doesn’t have people”.

More broadly, this illustrates how capitalist processes collude in the production of abstract space (Lefebvre, 1991; Brenner and Elden, 2009), in ways that undermine indigenous efforts to “reterritorialise” the nation-state (Sparke, 2005; Wainwright, 2008). As the military’s removal of Guaraní protesters in 2003 starkly illustrates, “violence [is] intrinsic to abstraction, and to abstraction’s practical use” (Lefebvre, 1991: 289).

A more basic observation is that, by 2003, indigenous land rights in Itika Guasu had became intimately connected to a series of other claims regarding indigenous

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138 APG IG, 2007b.
participation in hydrocarbons governance. If this suggests that indigenous land rights can offer more than recognition (Hale, 2002), having implications for territorial control and redistribution, then this power had a double edge, provoking competing territorial actors to collude in the denial of the Guaraníes’ territorial rights. These observations provide important context for the discussion that follows, where I examine how these dynamics have shifted under the Morales government. As has been well documented (Kohl & Farthing, 2006; Perreault, 2006; Postero, 2010), the election of Evo Morales as Bolivia’s president in 2005 was, broadly speaking, the product of a social responses to neoliberalism and, in particular, of popular demands for a more just regime of hydrocarbons governance. The Margarita gas field played a particularly important role in this history (Hindery, 2013). At the same time, however, Morales’s election was the product of a broader set of indigenous and other social movement demands directed at addressing the country’s colonial legacy. These demands centred on the vision of a “plurinational” state, which promised new forms of participation and more substantive rights for indigenous peoples (Postero, 2013). How have these shifts—from multiculturalism to plurinationalism, and from private to state-led extraction—affected the way resource conflicts are managed? By describing how the intertwined struggles over land and gas in Itika Guasu continued to unfold under Morales’s MAS government (2006–2011), the next section highlights some of the changes, continuities, and contradictions that this political project has entailed. This discussion, like that above, draws on original data collected during fieldwork in 2008-9 and 2011-12.

Following the certification of significant gas reserves in Campo Margarita, Repsol YPF and its partners formed the Pacific LNG Consortium in 2001, to construct a pipeline to export liquid natural gas to California, USA, via Chile. This project, which foresaw minimal Bolivian state participation in profits, is widely recognized as a key catalyst for the “Gas War” of 2003, and the eventual overthrow of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada.
Extraction, TCO titling and indigenous rights under the MAS government 2006–2011

Resource conflicts in a “post-neoliberal” state

Part of the dispute described in the previous section occurred in 2006—that is, after Morales took office. As this suggests, the election of an indigenous president did not bring an immediate resolution to the APG IG’s unfulfilled demands. To the contrary, the early years of the Morales government saw an intensification of this conflict, as the APG IG leadership became increasingly impatient at the new state’s apparent reluctance to recognize their rights in their ongoing conflict with Repsol. As the APG IG’s President explained in an interview in 2009:

    To date, [the government] haven’t reached any conclusion about who is right, the APG or the company. They keep telling us: “No, we haven’t reached a conclusion.” We’ve already shown them all the documentation, but all the government has done is to remain silent. How can they say they guarantee indigenous rights when there are guilty parties who have committed violations and contamination, social and cultural impacts? (interview B2).

In fact, the APG IG was told by the government that their negotiation with Repsol was between “private parties” and that the state could not intervene:

    In negotiations [the government says]: “You are the people of Itika, you’re a private people, it’s a negotiation between the oil company and you.” The reply of the organization: “No, you’re the father of the nation; you have to comply with the law, not the oil company (interview B1).

Furthermore, the APG IG accused the Morales government of failing to respect their rights in the context of new hydrocarbons development in the TCO. In July 2010, they sent a letter to Morales, whom they addressed as “the President of the Plurinational State,” expressing their anger at the granting of 20 new environmental licenses to companies to operate in the TCO, without prior consultation (APG IG, 2010). As in their earlier correspondence with Repsol, the APG IG explicitly grounded their claim to consultation in their territorial rights, accusing the Morales government of “explicitly violat[ing] the property right that corresponds to us as a legally recognised TCO”. Similar
conflicts over extraction have arisen between the Morales government and other indigenous groups in Tarija.\textsuperscript{140}

These demands met with an intolerant response from the Morales government, which accused the APG IG of being “a threat to the country’s energy development”, and dismissed their claims to consultation and compensation as \textit{chantaje} (blackmail) (interviews B1 and B2; Erbol, 2011). As one APG IG leader put it: “We only want them to respect the law, and now that we complain, they say ‘The APG IG is against the development of Bolivia’” (interview B1). In a context where nationalized gas reserves are portrayed as the basis for national sovereignty and social development (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010), those who contest extraction are increasingly framed as a threat not only to the state, but also the Bolivian people. For a people who have throughout history been placed on the margins of the Bolivian nation-state – as violent savages, untrustworthy allies, unproductive farmers and unworthy citizens – such accusations are particularly hurtful. In this context, the APG IG have sought to defend their position by affirming that they do not outright oppose extraction in their territory. As the TCO’s president emphasized in a 2009 interview:

\begin{quote}
The problem isn’t that we want to obstruct the development of the country, we just want legal security to guarantee that whoever comes here from outside will work well… if a project guarantees, respects indigenous rights, the people are always going to say “go ahead, work”, because it’s the development for this country (interview B2).
\end{quote}

This has not, however, discouraged the APG IG from claiming rights in the context of extraction; for it is precisely in doing so that they experience and reaffirm their citizenship; as one APG IG leader put it: “If you don’t make them comply with the law, no one else will; you as a citizen have to say: ‘\textit{Compañeros}, I have a law’” (interview B1). As another Guaraní leader lamented, using an analogy of denied paternity, “What the government is doing is as if you had a son and you don’t want to defend him” (fieldnotes on informal discussion in Tarija city, 23/6/11).

\textsuperscript{140} In April 2010, Tarija’s three indigenous groups – the Guarani, Weenhayek and Tapiete - held their first mobilisation against the Morales government to denounce the lack of consultation or environmental impact study by the company Petroandina in Parque Aguarague, a protected area co-administered by the CCGTT, which provides water for the entire Chaco region. The APG IG did not participate in this march due to internal divisions among the Guarani.
Gas as an obstacle to TCO titling

With the new governmental administration we had the hope of a better tomorrow for our children, but until now we don’t feel a real change in our lives. Even worse, our communities are threatened by the growing advance of the oil and gas industry, the extension of the agricultural frontier, the formation of new elites that take advantage of the gas rents that come from our territories, without us until now having been able to achieve the titling of our lands and territories, and a direct benefit from the resources exploited (“To the Plurinational State and the Population of Tarija”, Third Departmental Assembly of the Tapiete, Weenhayek and Guarani Indigenous Peoples, 2011).

The Guaraníes’ and other Chaco indigenous peoples’ frustration with the MAS government’s apparent disregard for their rights in the context of extraction has been compounded by the continuing lack of progress on TCO titling. As noted in Chapter 3, TCO titling in Itika Guasu has remained practically paralyzed since 2006, a situation echoed in other TCOs in Tarija, despite significant advances at a national level (Fundación Tierra, 2011). Frustration is exacerbated by the fact that, under the 2009 Bolivian Constitution, “consolidated indigenous territories” (i.e., titled TCOs) provide the preferred, and in many cases the only viable, route to “indigenous autonomy” (article 293; see also Albó and Romero, 2009; Cameron, 2013). In other words, not having completed the SAN-TCO process now constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of indigenous autonomy – the MAS government’s key promise to indigenous organisations.

In recent years, these frustrations have been subject to extensive debate and analysis in Itika Guasu. In 2008–2009, numerous assemblies (usually lasting several days) were held to discuss the “land issue,” six of which I attended (Appendix 1). During these discussions, participants often arrived at the same question: “What is the obstacle?” As noted in the previous two chapters, obstacles to TCO titling over the previous decade have been numerous. By this point, however, one particular explanation had come to the fore. As one APG IG leader explained in 2009:

If we review the UN Declaration, the ILO, the new [i.e. 2009] Constitution of the current government, the Hydrocarbons Law 3058, it’s clear . . . before the government or someone

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141 It is worth noting that this progress was largely administrative, many TCOs having undergone fieldwork for SAN-TCO under previous administrations.
142 The Hydrocarbons Law 3058 was passed in May 2005 following a wave of popular mobilisations, which provoked a referendum on state ownership of hydrocarbons in June 2004, in which the Bolivian
wants to intervene or exploit those resources, they must go through a process of consultation, because it’s inside a TCO. And that is not foreseen in the new contracts. The reason why we don’t advance with the consolidation of the TCOs is that we are going to directly intervene; we’re going to demand that they comply with the norm and go through a consultation process. And if it’s going to affect us directly, we can say that we don’t agree and they’re not going to exploit (interview B3).

By 2009, and throughout 2011 fieldwork, the idea that gas interests represented the main obstacle to the conclusion of TCO titling enjoyed widespread currency in Itika Guasu (see Box 11). On the one hand, this perception can be seen as emerging from lessons learned over the previous decade: namely, that transnational companies can gain state collusion to influence the outcomes of land titling, thus weakening indigenous claims to participation in hydrocarbon governance. In that sense, it points to the APG IG leadership’s recognition of the continuity in state behaviour under Morales. At the same time, however, the above quotation reflects the Guaraníes’ understanding of the particular, indeed exacerbated, contradictions between indigenous rights and extraction under the Morales government. As this leader notes, the MAS government has strengthened indigenous rights in the context of extraction in important ways. In 2007, Morales passed decrees to implement the 2005 Hydrocarbons Law, which reaffirms indigenous peoples’ right to prior and informed consultation, participation in the benefits of extraction, environmental monitoring in TCOs, and compensation for direct, cumulative, and long-term social, cultural, and environmental impacts. The 2009 Constitution also recognizes indigenous peoples’ right to prior consultation and participation in the benefits of exploitation of non-renewable hydrocarbons resources that are found in their territories (articles 30.2, 352, and 403). In 2007, Bolivia signed up to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes indigenous peoples’ right to not only consultation but also consent in the context of development projects in their lands.

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143 This refers to 44 new (i.e. renegotiated) hydrocarbon contracts signed by the state oil company YPFB and transnational oil companies in late October 2006, following a 180 day deadline (issued by the 1st May 2006 Nationalisation Decree) in which companies had to bring their operations into compliance with the 2005 Hydrocarbons Law or else face takeover of their fields by the state oil company YPFB. Following administrative delays, the contracts came into effect on April 23, 2007.
Box 11: Guaraní discourse on hydrocarbon interests as an obstacle to TCO titling

What it could be is….it could be that the government gives this excuse for not titling TCO Itika Guasu because there is an interest of its friend in this part…Its friend is the oil company. That’s what our President, Evo Morales, says, isn’t it? Not it’s not our guest; now it’s our friend. So in negotiations, they say to the [Guaraní] friends: “You are people from Itika, a private people, it’s a negotiation between the oil company and you”. The reply of the organisation: ‘No, you’re the father of the nation; you have to fulfil the law, not the oil company. Like that, more or less. There’s a strong interest in Itika Guasu, an economic interest of the oil company and the national government. Because you know very well that the only source of income for the national government is oil companies. Selling, exploiting oil. If it doesn’t exploit that, the government, this government administration, could fall. So, what do I [the government] do? I think, how am I going to attend to a group of 4000 little people, knowing that these little Guaraníes are 216,000 Has [instead of] helping a giant, powerful entity that is the oil company? That’s it (interview B1).

They’ve made some calculations of which TCOs of different peoples to title, and which to leave pending. Because the governments have realised that in the territories of origin there are big reserves of natural resources of different compositions, and that the state will exploit, extract and commercialise them for the big transnational interests. So one of the obstacles that has arisen [to TCO titling] is that those resources exist and that that was the clear vision…And there were TCOs with a delay because of the big interest of the Bolivian state…that included almost the majority of the Bolivian Chaco (interview B2).

The moment that they signed those agreements for the new oil contracts, the government of Evo Morales hadn’t defined what would be the situation of those reserves inside TCOs. And if we read the UN Declaration, ILO [Convention 169]…it should go through a process of consultation. Because it’s inside a TCO. And that’s not foreseen in the new contracts, and I believe that’s why…we don’t continue with the consolidation of the TCOs – because we’re going to intervene directly, we’re going to demand that they comply with the norm and that it should go through a consultation process, and if it affects us directly we can say that we don’t agree and they’re not going to exploit. Before, the government and the transnationals were a bit distant…but now when they sign a contract, they’re partners, and so the moment we consolidate securely our lands, we’re going to demand that they comply with the norms…and that creates an internal conflict between the oil companies…and the national government, because we [the indigenous peoples] should come first (interview B3).

We know that here in the Chaco is the majority of the oil and it’s inside Guaraní territory. I believe that that’s the other…what obstructs so that they don’t title everything. Where there’s oil, it belongs to the state, doesn’t it. But they have to do a consultation with the Guaraní people…Supposedly it belongs to the government, but we are also owners of the territory, of the land…that’s the other issue that doesn’t suit [the government], I don’t know, but the oil companies are in a great hurry to enter (interview B5).

Well, I believe that among the [departmental government] there isn’t much will [to title TCOs], perhaps…because there is an interest, an economic interest inside the TCO…from the whole area of the TCO, of Itika, wealth, gas, is coming out, so for that reason we believe that that is also another way to say that they won’t title, that the titling process won’t move forward. So there’s an interest (interview B8).
...So everything is a result of interests, [that’s] why they’re not going to title [TCO Itika Guasu]. And where are they titling? They’re titling in…Macharetí, Alto Parapeti, Ingre – where there’s no oil the government’s titling; in Tarija they’re not awarding any title, they won’t do it the next month…so you have to realise why they can’t title. The opposition is the cattle ranchers…and INRA Nacional also is against our TCO and that’s why they’re dividing us, because a TCO can’t be divided….So now the situation of land titling is bad, so obviously the oil companies have fucked with it (interview B9).

The oil companies entered here, obstructing, putting barriers so that the titling process didn’t advance. They’ve delayed for some motive the titling process (interview B12).

It’s not the case that there are social conflicts; the issue is that now they’re constitutionalising the consultation process – that the [indigenous] people should have investment from foreign energy development, that’s the problem. If I was President, I’d do the same – if they give title, there’s going to be conflict to fulfil their commitments for energy development abroad. They export gas, oil, and without consulting us. If they stop the titling process they can forget their responsibilities and keep doing energy development in all the Guaraní territory, and for our bad luck the oil companies escape (transcribed recording, APG Departmental Assembly, Centro Fundacion ACLO, Tarija, 16-17 Mar, 2009).

For his part, the big captain of the APG IG refers to the fact that behind everything are the oil companies, who don’t permit the conclusion of titling, for that reason they took the decision that no type of operations in Guar[an]i territory will be permitted if they don’t first title it (extract from APG minutes, APG Departmental Assembly, 27/4/2009).

[Interviews with non-Guarani informants:]

It wouldn’t be the same if there wasn’t gas in the Chaco, Tarija….Probably it would be much easier. Probably it would be much easier to title the lands of the indigenous peoples…Now what happens is that the government [of Morales] is in a situation of very strong conflict. On the one hand, it has to establish legal security for the most important industry in the country, which generates 80% of resources for the state; on the other hand, it has to respond to the demands of social movements that are the fundamental support base of the government. So that’s a very difficult situation of conflict of interests to resolve. I believe that until now what the government’s doing is to delay, let time pass, give itself a margin of time (interview B16).

[Around 2000] the oil companies started to pressure [the government] not to title the demand [of Itika Guasu] because that implied more complications for them, because they’d have to fulfil the norms.

PA: Do you think that the oil companies understood TCO titling as a threat and said clearly to the government that it was best not to title them?

They told us that various times. What they said is: “If you’re not owners of this territory, while you’re not owners of this territory, you can’t question the work we’re doing”. It couldn’t have been clearer; what they were saying is that they weren’t going to permit the indigenous people to be owners of the territory, and that as long as that didn’t happen, they were going to be able to act freely in these areas where they were working (interview B18).
These changes have been accompanied by the implementation of a new hydrocarbons regime. On May 1, 2006, Morales passed his “Heroes of the Chaco” decree officially “nationalizing” Bolivia’s hydrocarbons reserves. Essentially, the new regime consists of higher taxes, the renegotiation of contracts with private companies, and the rebuilding of the state hydrocarbons company, YPFB. Under the new contracts, the remaining 50 percent of revenues, after the royalty (18 percent) and Indirect Hydrocarbons Tax (32 percent), is split evenly between YPFB and the private company, resulting in an overall government share of about 54 percent. Not only is Bolivia under Morales more dependent than ever on gas revenue, but the state is also committed to bearing the cost of any delay to planned extraction; under the new contracts, YPFB must cover the recoverable costs of private companies operating in Bolivia (Kaup, 2010).

In this context, the implementation of indigenous rights presents a conflict of interest for the Morales government (see also Hindery 2013). For example, a prior consultation process – which the Ministry of Hydrocarbons and Energy is responsible for implementing – requires the diffusion of detailed information on planned developments to affected communities and indigenous authorities, and a series of meetings, which require logistical support, such as transport of people from dispersed and often inaccessible areas. Furthermore, reaching agreement may require a lengthy process of negotiation. Given the tight time-frames of contracts with transnational oil companies and gas-receiving countries, this process could easily delay the granting of environmental licenses and ultimately jeopardize production and export targets – the cost of which would be borne by the Bolivian state. Not only does this illustrate the MAS government’s continuing imbrication in path-dependent relationships with transnational extractives capital144 (Kaup, 2010) – and broader trajectories of colonial resource extraction (Galeano, 1971) – but pressure for extraction increasingly comes from within Bolivia.

Since 2006, increased national revenue from gas has funded a range of social programs, including old-age pensions and benefits for students and expectant mothers. In this context, natural gas is now framed as the basis not only for national development, but

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144 According to Kaup, the “path-dependent” effects of the neoliberal years include the material constraints of gas extraction, transport, and use, which keep Bolivia supplying gas that fuels development in neighbouring countries (such as Argentina and Brazil) without altering its own historical trajectory as an exporter of primary materials.
also for the achievement of *vivir bien* (“living well”) for the Bolivian people (Postero, 2013b).

These dynamics are well understood by Guarani leaders in Itika Guasu. As one leader summarized the government’s position in a 2009 interview:

There is a strong interest in Itika Guasu; an interest of the oil company and the national government - selling, exporting oil. If it doesn’t export this, the government, this administration of the government, can fall. So, [the government thinks]: How am I going to attend to a group of 4000 little people, knowing that these little Guarani [occupy] 216,000 hectares instead of helping a gigantic power, the oil company, to generate my income and support the 8 million or 9 million Bolivians? (interview B1).

This leader recognises precisely what is at stake here: a new regime of citizenship in which the “common good” – as defined by the MAS government – has become inextricably wedded to the extraction of hydrocarbon resources located beneath Guarani TCOs. Long imagined as an obstacle to modernity and progress, the Guarani now find their project of “recovering territory” framed as a sacrifice necessary for the advance of state-led decolonisation and post-neoliberal development – or, in Povinelli’s terms (2011), for the “redemption” of the Bolivian people.

I now turn to examine how the APG IG have responded to this situation, by forging new territorial strategies built on an explicit recognition, and strategic exploitation, of the seemingly inescapable links between land rights and hydrocarbon development. While these strategies have ultimately exceeded the national arena, they must nevertheless be understood in the context of the unfulfilled promises of both multicultural and plurinational citizenship.

*Shifting strategies of land and gas*

As the above account illustrates, land titling and hydrocarbons development – already linked in specific territorialised ways – became further intertwined under the Morales government, when the APG IG became convinced that the state’s strategic interest in the TCO’s gas wealth was preventing the consolidation of their territorial rights. In light of this, it is perhaps not surprising that the APG IG began to link the land and gas issues in
their negotiations with the state. The first attempt came in the form of an ultimatum. In February 2009, the APG sent a letter to Evo Morales relating the decision that no type of operations in Guaraní territory would be allowed until titling of the TCO was completed. The letter was discussed in a departmental assembly held in April (APG IG, 2009a). Although the APG had not received a reply from Morales, it was asserted in the assembly that the letter had succeeded in delaying the granting of authorisation to two other oil companies for operations in the TCO. Based on this achievement, participants reflected on the success of such an approach; as one leader concluded (paraphrased): “it is necessary to reach decision-making political bodies, and finally realise that the hydrocarbons issue is intimately linked to the titling issue” (ibid.).

The above statement reflects an important shift in APG IG strategy towards seeking resolution of the land issue through direct political negotiations with central government, instead of merely awaiting the outcome of the legal titling process – what one participant in the departmental assembly described as “winning on the pitch as well as at the table” (ibid.). This was an attempt both to circumvent elite-dominated regional institutions that remained hostile to indigenous land rights and to capitalise on the evident links between the land rights and gas issues. Moreover, this was another attempt to assert territorial control in a context of continuing hydrocarbons development in the TCO. However, whatever ripples of unease it might have generated, this ultimatum did not succeed in achieving either an advance on TCO titling or a cessation of extractive activity.

A few months later, the two issues were once again brought together, but with a different result. In August 2009, the APG Itika Guasu wrote to the Vice Ministry of Land requesting the indefinite suspension of the TCO titling process (APG IG, 2009b). Ironically, this happened at a time when INRA Tarija had just secured funding to continue with the titling process, following years of fiscal problems. This was the achievement of the then Departmental Director, a long-time Guaraní ally and CCGT técnico, who had assumed the position in June 2009 following a series of predecessors.

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145 My account is based on APG minutes; as such, this should not be treated as direct quotation.
146 This includes INRA’s national office and the Vice Ministry of Land, as well as other MAS ministers and Morales himself.
147 This occurred after I had left Tarija in June 2009 and I only learned of it in 2011.
who were overtly hostile to indigenous land claims. That the APG IG leadership should themselves demand suspension of the titling process just as progress seemed imminent seemed puzzling. An long interview with the by then disilllusioned former Director in early 2011 shed little light on the matter, merely pointing to a breakdown in his personal relations with the APG IG leadership (interview A29). It was only after obtaining a copy of the APG IG’s letter to the Vice Ministry of Land that I gained further insight into what was really at stake in this decision.

The letter begins by criticising INRA’s failure to provide requested information on the status of the SAN-TCO process and expresses familiar complaints about the fragmentary effects of partial titling. The next passage, relating to third party claims and hydrocarbons governance, is worth quoting at length:

“[The APG demands] the annulment of all the assignments to irregular third parties\textsuperscript{148}, that is, those who have violated their resource rights and/or [expressed] opposition to the APG IG and, the priority in this annulment should be all the assignments that coincide with the oil and gas exploitation or transport pipelines that pass through the TCO, making clear that none of the companies that are found operating in the TCO has complied with the rights to prior consultation, nor with the procedures for calculation of damages, for which reason ALL are operating illegally and don’t have the corresponding environmental licences...All this demonstrates the total lack of defence of, and permanent violation of, our most elemental rights, including to property” (APG IG, 2009b: 1, added emphasis).

This passage reveals that the APG IG’s decision to annul the land titling process was driven by concern that the TCO titling process would consolidate third party claims within gas-rich areas of the TCO and, in doing so, weaken the APG IG’s claims in the context of hydrocarbons projects. This concern was elucidated by one CERDET employee, who claimed that the APG IG took the decision after being shown a map of the TCO produced by the Ministry of Land (interview A25). The map, which he showed me, shows that a number of large properties overlying the Margarita-Huacaya gas field were on the verge of being awarded land titles.

\textsuperscript{148} This refers to third parties who have not legally justified their properties by demonstrating productive land use [the FES], but could also refer to irregular dealings between some third parties and INRA in the context of Repsol’s land use agreements, described above.
The resurgence of this issue – who owns land earmarked for extractive activity – provides a further illustration of the continuities in resource conflicts under the Morales government. The APG IG’s decision can be read as an attempt to pre-empt a repeat of the experiences of 1997-2003, when Repsol made land use contracts with private claimants and used these to undermine Guarani claims for consultation. In fact, the 2009 letter makes explicit reference to these past events. Yet, this was not just an attempt to prevent history from repeating itself; as the letter reveals, the APG IG’s decision also marked an important shift in strategy, based on the possibilities of the new political context. Rather than simply waiting in vain for INRA to complete the legal titling process, APG IG leaders now believe that they can get faster and surer results by purchasing private properties within the TCO. This is made clear by the letter, which states that:

In the case of assignments to third parties that can’t be annulled for reasons of legal process, [the APG-IG] will make an offer to buy [these properties] that will be 1.75…[times] the price of expropriation (APG IG, 27/8/09).

The potential for success of this strategy remains unclear, as do the possible terms of negotiations over land purchases. While some leaders emphasise that sales by third parties would be voluntary, in 2011 there were also rumours circulating of Guarani aspirations for a “clean territory” free of third parties – a notion that was generating fear and uncertainty among the TCO’s non-indigenous residents (interviews B1 and A18; fieldnotes 23/4/11). Indeed, this is suggested by the 2009 letter, which proposes that “following a period of 3 years, all those who have not agreed to sell [their properties] will be expropriated and the properties integrated into the TCO”. Given that the APG IG has no legal or political authority to enforce such an ultimatum, this can be read either as an appeal to the MAS government to put its weight behind an indigenous-led land reform or as a brave assertion of territorial sovereignty in defiance of state law. This can also be seen as a further example of local actors’ efforts to “vernacularise” the law in ways that serve their own political ends (Merry, 2006; Chapter 3).

More fundamentally, the proposal conveys the APG IG’s frustration with the state’s continuing failure to enact a substantive redistribution of land rights in the TCO and their determination to take the land issue into their own hands to achieve this. This
represents an important departure from the history of the Itika Guasu land struggle, where an imperfect law (the INRA Law) has been tirelessly wielded by the APG IG as the only means of extracting rights from hostile regional elites and an ambivalent neoliberal state.

Of course, the crucial issue that arises is, how does the APG IG propose to pay for these properties? The answer to this question is also provided in the letter. The cost of purchasing land, it proposes, will be met by a loan to the APG IG from a national Fund for the Development of Indigenous, Originary, and Peasant Peoples, known as the Indigenous Fund.¹⁴⁹ The proposal for an Indigenous development fund originally came from the Guaraní during the 1990s, who argued that indigenous peoples suffering the social and environmental impacts of extraction should receive a fixed share of hydrocarbon rents as compensation. Their proposal was rejected but then taken up by other social movements during the national mobilisations of 2000-2005. When Morales took office in 2005, he immediately passed a Supreme Decree creating the Indigenous Fund. However, rather than being directed at indigenous peoples affected by extraction, the fund is now shared between a range of national social movements. Furthermore, its Board of Directors includes representatives of three government ministries. Thus, although the Fund’s coffers have quickly swelled, lowland indigenous peoples have been unable to spend these resources as they see fit. The Indigenous Fund is viewed by many APG IG leaders as emblematic of their betrayal by the MAS government, where the promise of a genuine redistribution of power has been replaced by managed spaces of inclusion.

Perhaps reflecting the ambivalence of using this state-managed fund for the purpose of wresting control of land allocation from the state, the letter proposes that financial aid from the Indigenous Fund would come in the form of a temporary loan, which, “will be underwritten by the nationalised oil companies present in the TCO, that is, Transredes and YPFB”. The repayment of this loan, the letter stipulates, “should be deducted from the payments that [the companies] should make to the APG IG for environmental licenses and compensation for damages, which will be negotiated directly with the APG IG”. This demonstrates how the APG IG have attempted to gain political

¹⁴⁹ This is unrelated to the United Nations Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Andolina et al. 2009: 45-6)
leverage in their negotiations with the state through direct negotiations with transnational hydrocarbon companies operating in the TCO. This provides a precursor to events that followed, described below. Thus, despite identifying hydrocarbons development as the single biggest obstacle to the consolidation of territorial rights, it is increasingly through negotiations over extraction that the APG IG have sought to advance the land struggle. It is important to note that their success in doing so has so far been limited; despite significant achievements in negotiations over extraction (discussed below), the “land issue” remains paralysed in the fragmented legal state described in Chapter 3.

Discussion

The above account points to striking continuities with the neoliberal era, despite the MAS government’s discourse of “post-neoliberal” development (see García Linera, 2007; Yates, 2013; Radcliffe, 2012). Crucially, indigenous rights – both to territory and to meaningful participation in hydrocarbons governance – continue to be subordinated to the territorial and temporal demands of extraction (see also Hindery, 2013). This subordination becomes ever more visible and contested in a political context that combines an official discourse of indigenous rights and decolonisation with increased state dependence on, and state involvement in, extraction – now framed as the basis for national sovereignty and a redistributive model of social development. This exposes key tensions between the “post-neoliberal” and “plurinational” aspects of the MAS development model, and raises doubts about the potential for decolonizing territory in the context of extractives-based development. These doubts are of wide significance given the current prevalence of left-wing resource nationalist governments in Latin American countries with large indigenous populations (ibid.; Bebbington, 2009; Escobar, 2010).

Yet, indigenous peoples are not passive victims of these processes. My discussion of the APG IG’s struggle for resource justice in a changing political context demonstrates indigenous peoples’ astute understanding of these tensions, and their efforts to navigate, and even exploit, them in ways that further their own territorial projects. Once again, we see how indigenous peoples seek to exercise agency in the limited and double-edged spaces of postcolonial and neoliberal governance. This agency should not, however, be
overstated. Ultimately, the APG IG’s 2009 decision to suspend the TCO titling process signals their loss of confidence in a process that was created to recognise their territorial rights, but had become infused by both colonial power relations and national resource interests. Not only had TCO status failed to guarantee indigenous territorial control in the context of hydrocarbon development, but APG IG leaders feared that, by regularizing “third party” private property claims, the titling process would further undermine their resource claims. In this context, the proposal of using compensation payments from oil companies to buy TCO land can be seen as a desperate last resort – one which recognises the primacy of the market – in a context in which other strategies for exercising territorial control had failed.

It was not only APG IG strategies, but also the meaning of territory, that shifted in the context of this conflict. In contrast to the notion of territory as a space inhabited by ancestors, or where communities currently live out their lives, the above account shows how territory increasingly came to signify the legal-political jurisdiction of the APG IG, as defined in relation to extra-territorial actors. This is encapsulated in statements such as: “This terrain is property of the TCO, for which reason they should have consulted” (APG IG, 2007). While initially this political vision of territory seemed a means of protecting or achieving something else – an autonomous Guaraní space protected from outside incursions – over time, this something else has become increasingly elusive. That is not to suggest that ordinary community members in Itika Guasu have ceased to imagine territory in other terms (see Chapter 4). However, Tarairí community members’ dreams of “recovering territory” now appear as mere remnants of a collective territorial project that has become profoundly reshaped. Conceived amidst a localized struggle against patron power, the TCO has now been resituated in multi-scalar conflicts over the governance of gas.

This shift has served to strengthen the role of the Entre Ríos-based APG IG leadership, who are framed by state actors, oil companies and NGOs as the TCO’s representatives and guardians. The disjunctures that now exist between the TCO as a legal-political entity and community members’ imaginaries of territory compound those already produced by the legal-cartographic knowledges of the state. In the final section of this chapter, I build on these observations to explore how territory has been reframed in
the context of a recent agreement between the APG IG and Repsol. This agreement marks the culmination of the shifting strategies described above, where the APG IG were increasingly coming to see hydrocarbon negotiations as an alternative arena within which to pursue their struggle for territory.

Reimagining territory in the age of gas: the Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation

In the above account, I focused on how land titling and hydrocarbon governance became mutually implicated in negotiations between the APG IG and the Morales government. However, this was not the only arena within which this resource conflict played out. In parallel to the negotiations with the state described above, the APG IG were engaged in a transnational legal battle with Repsol YPF’s international headquarters in Madrid, assisted by Equipo Niskor, an international human rights advocacy network with offices in Spain and Belgium. The events that led to the scaling up of the APG IG’s negotiations with Repsol are discussed in Appendix 6. As this discussion illustrates, by 2006, the APG IG’s struggle for territory has expanded well beyond the realm of national citizenship onto the broader terrain of actors and relations that constitute (and contest) the oil complex (Watts, 2009). The events described in the previous section occurred while these transnational negotiations were still underway and their outcome uncertain. This situation changed on 29th December 2010, when the APG IG and Repsol YPF (with its consortium partners) signed an “Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation”. Among the terms of this agreement was the payment of 14.8 million US dollars into a newly-established “Itika Guasu Investment Fund”, co-administered by Repsol and the APG IG and currently held in a Brazilian bank account.

There is insufficient evidence for an account of the negotiations that led up to this agreement – details of which remain secret, inaccessible to all but a small committee of APG IG leaders and non-Guaraní “advisors”. The full implications of the agreement also have yet to reveal themselves. My interest in this section is rather to reflect on how the

150 See http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/eng.html
meaning and content of territory has shifted in the wake of this agreement and the
negotiations leading up to it. I focus here on two dimensions of this framing: territorial
recognition and territorial autonomy.

Reframing recognition

On 23rd March 2011, community members and leaders from through Itika Guasu
gathered in Naurenda, the birthplace of the APG IG, to celebrate the organisation’s 22nd
anniversary. Celebrations began with an evening “cultural event”, where alternating
Guarani music groups accompanied classes of school children dancing the rueda (wheel)
interspersed with speeches wishing everyone a happy birthday and a happy future. The
atmosphere was surprisingly flat; most of the audience sat silently through the hours of
acts. When at midnight twenty-two fireworks were let off in celebration, the response
was muted. Speakers blasted the usual Spanglish version of Happy Birthday and the
audience were asked to stand and participate, but there was little response. One Guarani
friend contrasted the event nostalgically to the days of Machirope – a leader of the
Guarani land struggle in the 1990s, killed in a bus accident en route to La Paz – who had
been capable of rousing the audience with his oratory skills and charisma.

The next morning was spent in preparation for the official parade, official
speeches and almuerzo (lunch), which had mobilised all the community’s women.
Throughout the morning’s preparations, a rolling announcement prepared by “Radio
Niskor”151 blared from loudspeakers, informing people of the terms and achievements of
the recent “Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the APG IG and Repsol
YPF E&P Bolivia SA” (see transcription in Appendix 6.2). In fact, no one seemed to be
listening; those gathered on Naurenda’s oka/cancha (patio/football pitch) were more
preoccupied with last-minute preparations for the speeches and lunch, or with catching up
with friends from other communities, than they were with the details of an agreement
negotiated by an increasingly distant, secretive, and unaccountable leadership elite. After

151 Radio Niskor is an Equipo Niskor internet-based project dedicated to the dissemination of audio
documents on human rights, civil liberties and peace. See http://www.radionizkor.org/about.html.
peeling a few potatoes, I accompanied some CERDET técnicos to pick up slaughtered cows and chicha from a nearby community.

When I returned, the speeches had already begun. Representatives of the APG IG leadership, local NGOs, the army, and the municipal, departmental and provincial government spoke in turn, each giving their personal (and political) take on the APG IG’s 22nd anniversary. Also notable in this staged performance of multicultural/plurinational citizenship was the presence of a representative from Repsol, who sat alongside other speakers and was repeatedly welcomed, although he did not speak. When it came to the turn of the APG IG President to speak, he told the audience that 2011 was a “special year” for the Guaraní of Itika Guasu, who had “cause for celebration”. He went on:

On the 29th December, we signed an agreement with Repsol Bolivia SA which put an end to the difficult confrontation which we’ve maintained for many years. But we signed without renouncing any of our rights and gained full legal recognition of our property over the Communal Land of Origin and of the existence of the APG IG.

This speech – an abbreviated transcription of which is provided in Appendix 6.3 – could simply be read as an effort to pacify community members, many of whom had become sceptical of the APG IG’s opaque negotiations with oil companies – something the event’s tense atmosphere reflected. Nevertheless, statements such as that quoted above are significant in revealing that territorial recognition is viewed as a key achievement of the agreement with Repsol. This interpretation was reproduced by other APG IG leaders in informal conversations (conversation SM, fieldnotes 11/2/11; conversation RG, fieldnotes 11/4/11 and 27/12/11, interview A12). By “recognition”, these informants referred to the production of a written agreement signed by Repsol (overseen by the APG IG’s legal advisors from Equipo Niskor), in which the oil company stated that it recognised the APG IG’s ownership of TCO Itika Guasu, as well as its legal existence and rights under international law (Equipo Niskor, 2010: 3).

While this may seem reminiscent of precisely the multicultural forms of recognition (Hale, 2002) that the APG IG has struggled to move beyond, APG IG leaders nevertheless saw it as important. On the one hand, this recognition gains meaning in the context of Repsol’s historic refusal to acknowledge the Guaraníes’ territorial rights (discussed above). On the other hand, it gains importance in the context of the Bolivian
state’s continuing failure to fully recognise Guarani land rights in Itika Guasu (by completing the titling process).

In fact, the APG IG-Repso agreement is just one example of how agreements over extractive industry development in Itika Guasu have come to stand in for state-sanctioned land title as a symbol of territorial recognition. An agreement signed with the former departmental Prefect Mario Cossio in 2010 regarding the construction of a highway through the TCO, has been heralded by APG IG leaders as the first time in history that the departmental government had given “legal recognition that the APG IG is the owner of Itika Guasu” (discussion with RG, fieldnotes 11/4/11). Later the same year, a Constitutional Sentence (25th October, 2010) issued by the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal, relating to a conflict between the APG IG and the departmental road-building company, provided such a strong legal endorsement for the APG IG’s land rights that it is now heralded by the APG IG as worth more than a TCO land title (interview A11, discussion with RG, fieldnotes 23/6/11). As one leader told me, “we’re going to give it to every institution so that they know, so that they too can read it” (interview A11).

In this context, the APG IG’s agreement with Repsol YPF is just one example of how legal and para-legal agreements over extractive industry – negotiated in regional, national, and transnational arenas – have come to provide an alternative terrain for the discursive production and recognition of indigenous territory, beyond the TCO titling process. It is precisely in light of the Morales government’s continuing failure to grant the Guarani legal title to TCO Itika Guasu that such agreements acquire their meaning. As one APG IG leader put it:

“The ex-governor of Tarija, Mario Cossio, has already recognised everything, and the company [Repsol] as well has recognised the rights of the people, but the only one who doesn’t want to

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152 This dispute erupted when Tarija department’s road-building company SEDECA signed an agreement with an oil company, PETROSUR, for the lease of a workers’ camp in TCO Itika Guasu. The APG IG denounced the agreement, claiming they should have been consulted; SEDECA then won a departmental court case against the TCO’s President for jeopardizing their “rights of association”. In 2008, following an appeal by the APG IG, the case went to the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal. In fact, the Constitutional Sentence (25th October, 2010) resulting from this case not only sets an important precedent for future negotiations over extractive industry development in the TCO, by affirming the APG IG’s right to prior consultation on any development activities in “their territory”, but also, referencing numerous national and international norms, orders the Bolivian state (via INRA) to complete the titling of the TCO in favour of Guarani claimants (Equipo Nizkor, 2010).
recognise [our rights] is the government...Abroad, in other countries, the APG is recognised. But the only one who hasn’t recognised us is the government (ibid.).

The growing importance of hydrocarbon negotiations as a discursive and legal terrain for realizing historically-grounded claims for territorial recognition can be seen as illustrative of the emergence of “hydrocarbon citizenship” – that is, the increasing tendency of citizenship claims to be articulated and understood in relation to conflicts over hydrocarbon governance. While such claims for recognition exceed the arena of the nation-state, as the above quotation illustrates, they must nevertheless be understood in the context of the frustrated struggles for multicultural and plurinational citizenship described in previous chapters of this thesis.

**Actualising autonomy**

Perhaps more telling still is the way in which territorial autonomy has been reframed in the wake of the 2010 Friendship Agreement. As earlier chapters highlighted, from the early days of the land struggle, the TCO has been associated with a struggle for autonomy, or becoming iyambae (free, without an owner). Initially grounded in the struggle to break relations of dependency and exploitation with patrones, autonomy is also associated with moving freely through territory (curtailed by the presence of landowners), and recovering cultural practices that enabled ancestors to “live well” without reliance on outside goods and labour markets (for example, collecting honey rather than buying sugar). The Morales government has seen the emergence of new tropes for imagining indigenous autonomy, including the creation of autonomously-governed indigenous territories (based on TCOs) within a “plurinational state”.

Without necessarily abandoning the above tropes, in the wake of the 2010 Friendship Agreement, APG IG leaders have increasingly come to talk about the Itika Guasu Investment Fund as a route to, and a symbol of, indigenous autonomy. In his 2011 anniversary speech, the APG IG’s President referred to the Fund as “part of our long-term funding strategy, which will permit us to carry forward our own development. This

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153 I use the verb “actualise” here in both its English senses: “to make real or concrete” and “to represent or describe accurately”, as well as in the Spanglish sense (*actualizar*: “to bring up to date”).
guarantees our real autonomy and that of our children”. If this speech could be dismissed as political discourse designed to quell the scepticism of community members, then informal discussions with APG IG leaders suggest that it has a deeper resonance for those involved in the agreement’s negotiation and management.

For example, one day in late 2011, an Itikeño friend, Román, was telling me about the ongoing process for establishing formal indigenous (Guaraní) autonomy in one municipality (also García 2012; Albó and Romero 2009), which he dismissed as “not real autonomy” owing to the continuing presence of non-indigenous campesinos in local government. When I asked him “What is real autonomy?” he referred to the agreement with Repsol, emphasising that:

We negotiated on our own with the company; now we’re managing the money on our own; we made our development plan for the next 20 years on our own” (interview A14, my emphasis).

The fact that the money was from a transnational oil company, negotiated with the help of foreign lawyers, was unimportant – for Román “on our own” meant independently of karai-controlled regional institutions and the MAS government, both of which had sought to contain the Guaraní quest for territory and autonomy. Yet, “on our own” also had a deeper significance; it framed the agreement as another step in the Guaraníes’ struggle to break relations of dependency with their former patrones; as he went on:

Before you had to work for the patron, he would pay you in coca; if the women wanted to wash the clothes then first they had to grind maize; you had to work a whole month just to get some sugar for your mate, but now you are working on your own, you’re doing things yourself.

To emphasise the point further, he compared the Fund – the interest from which would fund APG IG projects – to “a donkey that you fatten and breed every year”, concluding: “that is autonomy”. Imagined in such terms, the Investment Fund had transformed gas – a non-renewable resource whose extraction requires little direct Guarani participation – into a sustainable source of subsistence to be owned, nurtured and exploited by the Guaraní. This discourse furthermore placed recent APG IG success in negotiating with extra-territorial actors over extraction on a continuum with early
struggles to gain independence from local *patrones*. However, whereas the latter struggle has been grounded in the quest for *material* control of territory – something to be achieved through state-sanctioned land rights – this new notion of autonomy rests less on land control than on the APG IG’s ability to capture gas rents. In this context, APG IG leaders increasingly talk about indigenous autonomy not as a distant dream – or, alternatively, as the reward for completing a lengthy state-led administrative process – but as something that has already been achieved. As another APG IG leader proclaimed in an interview:

> We’re already autonomous! Because not we’re not maintaining ourselves here with [help from] other local institutions, we’re not dependent on NGOs, on the [regional government] anymore – all those things (interview A11).

My first introduction to this new discourse came almost a year earlier, when, having recently returned to Bolivia for PhD fieldwork, I unexpectedly encountered another Guaraní friend in an elite café in central Tarija. Previously one of a small number of APG IG-funded university students studying Human Rights in the regional capital, Santiago informed me that he had now graduated and been recruited by the APG IG leadership. Following the update on his personal progress, I asked him about the state of affairs in Itika. Santiago’s face lit up as he told me that “finally the moment has come when we will being to realise all our dreams” (fieldnotes, 11/2/11). It took me a few seconds to realise he was talking about the recent agreement with Repsol, which I had already learned of from Tarija-based friends. His enthusiasm about what the agreement meant for his people seemed genuine – he referred to aspirations to expand health services, build new schools, and recruit a range of medical professionals to work in the TCO. Perhaps more striking was the sense of pride with which he spoke of the agreement. He claimed that the APG IG had learned from mistakes of the past and “done everything right this time”. The sum of money negotiated would make the state’s development programs seem like mere crumbs in comparison, he beamed. More importantly, the APG IG would be able to administer the money itself, according to its own development priorities and without state interference.
Like Román, Santiago expressed great pride that the APG IG had negotiated the agreement without the involvement or knowledge of the state; indeed, he gleefully imagined the surprise and anger of leading government officials when they learned that “un pueblo chiquito” (a little tiny people) had managed to strike such a beneficial deal with a transnational company behind their backs. In reflecting on the achievement that this represented, Santiago used an interesting analogy. He compared the Guaraní People to a baby that was learning to walk – at first stumbling around uncertainly but now gradually finding a surer footing. This notion of the Guaraní organisation growing up and achieving full personhood in the context of a hydrocarbon conflict provides a powerful illustration of hydrocarbon citizenship, wherein recognition and autonomy – once framed in relation to the state and local patrones – are now understood in relation to the governance of gas.

It is worth noting that the APG IG is not alone in seeking to gain access to a share of gas rents as a means to implement their visions for indigenous territorial governance. In December 2011, the CCGT proposed the creation of a Departmental Indigenous Fund consisting of 15% of Tarija’s gas rents to fund the implementation of Territorial Management Plans in TCOs (fieldnotes, 2/2/12). This proposal replicates at a departmental level – and seeks to provide an indigenous-controlled alternative to – the state-managed national Indigenous Fund (discussed above), which receives a fixed share of national Direct Hydrocarbon Tax – rents generated largely by gas operations in indigenous territories of Tarija. At a national level, too, the governance of hydrocarbons is coming to play an increasingly important, if little-acknowledged, role in indigenous visions of autonomy. For example, during an interview in Camiri in early 2012, the APG’s national Autonomies Officer told me about a proposal for the creation of a national Guaraní oil company to conduct extraction within Guaraní territories, which, he argued, could provide the “economic base” for an autonomous “Guaraní nation” (interview A15). He went on to describe this idea in detail with reference to the experience of Canadian First Nations with whom the APG had been in contact, suggesting that:

154 This proposal was not entirely new: on 18 March 2009, Guaraní leaders from Kaipipendi and Ipaguasu sent the then Minister of Hydrocarbons Oscar Coca a letter entitled “Demand for the creation of a unit of assistance for economic initiatives of indigenous peoples’ hydrocarbon companies” (APG, 2007)
At least in Itika, you could invest those I don’t know how many millions that you’ve received in damages, in compensation, in an oil company that you manage. Where you’re the owners, the shareholders, that when the oil company is going to drill in your territory, you provide them services instead of them contracting…the services of other companies.

However, criticising the APG IG’s isolationist stance, this leader emphasised that Guaraní involvement in extractive process should function to benefit the Guaraní at a national level:

The beneficiaries are going to be the Guaraní Nation – now there are critiques with respect to this – they say “So you’re going to be doing what the state should do”. But we can’t sit and wait for the state to do it, the central government. We’re not going to wait; we too want to do it – that is part of autonomy.

As this makes evident, the reframing of indigenous autonomy in relation to gas rents has the potential to create new tensions within indigenous movements, as well as between indigenous movements and the “plurinational” state.

These visions of gas-rents funded indigenous autonomy must be placed in a context in which indigenous peoples have, under the 2009 Constitution and Autonomies Law, seen their demands for formal indigenous autonomy “domesticated” (Garcés, 2011) into a form of “autonomy without resources” (Cameron, 2013), which remains unachievable in many territories. They must also be placed in a national context in which political actors at a variety of scales are increasingly framing gas rents control as a basis for their territorial projects and sovereignty claims (Gustafson and Fabricant, 2011). For example, both provincial and departmental autonomy movements in Tarija have mobilised historic “resource grievances” to claim local control of gas rents as the basis for elite-led (and profoundly racist and conservative) political projects (Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011). Such subnational projects replicate the MAS government’s own construction of citizenship and nation, wherein state control of Bolivia’s gas wealth is framed as the basis for popular sovereignty and decolonising development (Perreault and Valdivia, 2010). Complimenting the above accounts, this
chapter suggests that Bolivia’s indigenous peoples are also emerging as active participants in “hydrocarbon citizenship”.

Furthermore, the APG IG leadership’s framing of their agreement with Repsol as a route to territorially-based indigenous autonomy suggests that such engagements can produce new forms of “governable spaces” (Watts, 2009), which may be at odds with those of the state (Coronil, 1997). This provides an illustration of the power of natural resources – as commodities and vehicles for cultural meanings – to shape the contours of the economy, polity, society, and environment (Watts, 2009). Yet, as my account has shown, such outcomes are not predetermined in the ways suggested by the “resource curse” literature (Friedman, 2006; Collier, 2007; Ross, 2003). As Perreault and Valdivia argue, statistical models “fall short of fully explaining the dynamics and character of resource conflict, which imbricate not only the spatiality of resources and populations, but also the particular histories and geographies of resource governance” (2010: 690). As the accounts of leaders from Itika Guasu demonstrate, conflicts over hydrocarbon governance in indigenous territories acquire their meaning in the context of longer postcolonial struggles over identity, sovereignty, and citizenship, even as they respond to the opportunities and threats of a new national regime of resource politics. Specifically, this thesis reveals how emergent indigenous experiments in hydrocarbon citizenship must be understood in the context of multiculturalism’s “elusive promise of territory”, represented by the failed project of TCOs. This was made explicit by the National Guarani Autonomies Officer, who situated his proposal for a national Guarani oil company in the context of broader Guarani efforts to recover a political vision of indigenous territory, which had underpinned TCO demands but become diluted in the course of TCO titling process, with its narrow focus on agrarian rights:

I think it’s the result of constant reflection…about the fact that, even if we managed to title our land, it turns out that what we’ve titled is insufficient – even though the initial demand was for our ancestral territory…There once existed a territory of the Chiriguano, the Guarani Nation, you see. This territory was the reference point for our demand to the Bolivian State, the titling process and the process of consolidating Land-Territory. So now the change [in our vision of territory] is substantial in the sense that we’re transitioning from a way of thinking based on agrarian [rights and development], and now we’re thinking of Land-Territory on the level of political practice (ejercicio político). And it’s there that we talk about autonomy. Indigenous autonomy now imagined not just for [agrarian] production – territory just for production – but to practice what we
consider to be our vision, our own political project. So there is that substantial change…that is, we don’t just want the consolidation of territory in agrarian terms but for the exercise of power
(interview A15).

By drawing on these broader examples, my intention is not to idealise the shifting territorial visions of the APG IG leadership, but rather to situate these in relation to the legacies of multiculturalism and the emergent dynamics of “post-neoliberal” citizenship. In doing so, I seek to provide an alternative to essentialist visions of indigenous territory-making projects as unchanging and oriented towards the past. Instead, such projects must be understood as historically-grounded and contemporary; shaped by long historical memories of racialised dispossession and by the processes with which indigenous peoples currently find themselves entangled. Yet, attempting to grapple simultaneously with colonial legacies and shifting postcolonial realities produces dilemmas, disagreements, and divisions. In the final section of this chapter, I return to TCO Itika Guasu to reflect on some of the erasures and tensions that current APG IG framings of territory are giving rise to.

Territorial trade-offs

El Departamento Jurídico, no somos muchos pero somos Machos
(The Legal Department [of the APG IG]; there aren’t many of us but we’re macho)
- Skype tagline of APG IG leader, 2013-14

If APG IG leaders believe they have achieved autonomy through their agreement with Repsol, then it is important to ask: autonomy for whom? As noted above, negotiations leading up to the agreement have been accompanied by increasing distancing of the APG IG leadership and Guarani communities in Itika Guasu. A stark example of this was the APG IG’s request in 2009 – apparently granted by zonal assemblies – to assume special decision-making powers, which implied that leaders in Entre Ríos could take decisions without having to seek authorisation from their constituents through assemblies. This decision led to an effective end to communal, zonal, and regional assemblies in Itika Guasu – the primary form of Guarani political participation. Having attended seven multi-day assemblies in Itika Guasu in 2008-9, I was struck by the dramatic nature of this decline in popular participation. Guarani community members were particularly critical
of the fact that the APG IG leadership’s annual evaluation by communities – when communities have the chance to replace ineffective leaders – had also not taken place since 2009 (interviews A17 and A6).

This erosion of mechanisms of democratic accountability has generated a lack of trust in the APG IG leadership among communities. As Felix, the mburuvicha of Yukiporo, speculated: “It could be that they’re lying, is it really true that they’re doing their work? That’s what we want to know” (interview A7). Communication and coordination between different levels of the APG IG leadership has also deteriorated in the context of the centralisation of decision-making power with a small leadership elite. As Felix went on to explain:

There’s no coordination with the communal leaders, the zonal leaders…[the APG IG Directorate] continue negotiating with the companies, continue fighting with them. But we…they’re only there…they’re sitting there, and they don’t remember us (interview A7).

This lack of communication and accountability has fuelled rumours of corruption and fiscal mismanagement by the Entre Ríos-based leadership following the agreement with Repsol (ibid., interviews A17 and A26). Tensions have been exacerbated by introduction of salaries to APG IG leaders following the agreement. These tensions have also played out within communities, where some APG IG community-level representatives – including the father of my host family – have begun to receive occasional and unpredictable handouts (fieldnotes). The fact that the creation of such unregulated “salaries” followed the sudden dismissal of the APG IG’s widely-respected accountant in 2009 served to fuel speculation about fiscal mismanagement among communities, NGOs and other Guaraní capitanías. Shortly before I left, Celestino – a longstanding and well-respected Itikeño leader who now works in the CCGT and is a vocal critic of the current APG IG leadership – informed me that some communities in Itika Guasu were beginning to organize their own assemblies to discuss the “state of the organization” (interview A17).

In this context, it is easy to see why celebratory statements about the 2010 Friendship Agreement – such as those made at the 22nd Anniversary – have met with a muted response. While some community members were indeed hopeful about the
prospects for new projects funded by the Itika Guasu Investment Fund – and certainly wanted to ensure they got their fair share of any such projects – many remained sceptical about whether these funds would ever arrive to communities (interviews A6 and A7). As Pedro from Tarairí put it:

Money is tempting. If one sees money, the first thing one thinks is to keep it. But now, if the compañeros who are in the head, the leadership [of the APG IG] really think about the rest of their brothers who are suffering, [they could say] “they’re suffering so let’s do this”. But, on the other hand, if they think of themselves, they’re going to keep everything and the brothers [in the communities] will end up with nothing (interview A6).

Such doubts about whether APG IG projects will ever materialise are accompanied by communities’ frustration about having lost out from state and NGO development projects owing to the APG IG’s recent acrimonious relations with local government and former NGO allies. From communities’ perspective, the possible fruits of plurinational citizenship have been undermined by hydrocarbon conflict, while the material benefits of hydrocarbon citizenship still remain elusive. More broadly, the tensions described above point to the way in which efforts to “produce territory” through external negotiations over extraction may be accompanied by a “hollowing out” of territory as a space of collective indigenous governance (Sawyer, 2004).

A second set of critical questions relate to the extent to which the agreement with Repsol really illustrates or strengthens indigenous territorial control, as opposed to merely recognition. While territorial control has certainly been at the centre of APG IG, how far the organisation or communities are able to exercise this control in practice in a context of intensifying hydrocarbon development is an important question. The 2010 APG IG-Resposl agreement coincided with a new wave of hydrocarbon development in the Margarita-Huacaya gas field. In 2012, Repsol pledged to invest a staggering 3274 million US dollars in the gas field’s development over a five year period (Energy Press, 27 February, 2012). This development includes the expansion of the gas processing plant, the construction of a variety of new access roads and gas pipelines, and the drilling of several new gas wells. These activities were already underway by the time I left Itika Guasu in early 2012 and were producing significant social and environmental impacts (Anthias 2012b). In October 2011, I counted more than 30 hydrocarbons companies
working in the TCO, and was informed that the registered number of gas workers in the TCO totalled 1,500 (ibid.).\textsuperscript{155} Although the 2010 agreement makes provisions for APG IG participation in socio-environmental monitoring, one APG IG leader acknowledged in an interview that they currently lack the technical expertise to assess or control the environmental impacts of extraction (interview A13). As he explained:

You need a professional who works on environment…I could say with my words, or note down, that they haven’t done such and such, but…I don’t know the environmental issue well…What you see is outside…but I have to see inside, I have to \textit{know}. I have to know the subsoil professionally and also outside, and that’s difficult to do….We’re looking at how we can control the environment – it’s complicated, all the time the temperature is rising and we can’t produce.\textsuperscript{156}

Although there was talk in 2011 of contracting European specialists to conduct an environmental audit of the entire TCO, this had not yet begun by the time I left Tarija in early 2012.

Furthermore, in spite of their positive framings of the agreement with Repsol, APG IG leaders expressed their own deep-seated fears about the environmental and socio-cultural impact of hydrocarbons development, which were framed as interwoven rather than separate concerns:

What will happen if the oil runs out? What will happen if it doesn’t rain? What impact will the oil companies have, what damage will they do? What development are we going to lose? What development could we gain, now or later, or will it cause lasting damage? What difficulties will the organization come to have? Will it be empty land? Will there be places to sow? It’s very complicated thinking about all these things (Ibid).

Such environmental anxieties were reiterated by community members – not least through the widely-held theory that hydrocarbons development is the cause of the deteriorating drought conditions in the TCO (interviews A17 and A7) – a discourse shared by some karai landowners.

\textsuperscript{155} This consultancy was part of the Rural Territorial Dynamics Programme of the Chilean NGO RIMISP and was supervised by Geographer Tony Bebbington (published as Anthais, 2012b).

\textsuperscript{156} He refers here to the worsening drought conditions effecting the region.
The APG’s success in gaining territorial recognition and funds from Repsol also fails to assuage the daily challenges ordinary Guarani women, men and children face regarding access to land and resources (Chapter 4). Indeed, some critics of the current APG IG leadership claim their preoccupation with hydrocarbons conflicts had diverted their attention from the land issue. According to Celestino, who participated in INRA’s 2000 fieldwork, when it came to the TCO the APG IG had “thrown everything on the floor” (interview A17). The implication here was that, by paralysing the titling process, the APG IG leadership had abandoned a historic struggle for territory in favour of short-term material interests in capturing gas rents. As noted above, plans to purchase private properties in the TCO using hydrocarbon compensation money have so far failed to materialise. Neither do they seem a current priority for the APG IG leadership, which remains engaged in multiple conflicts over hydrocarbon development in the TCO with local and central government.157

As such, I am not suggesting that hydrocarbons development has produced a universal, collectively-shared shift in the meaning of the land struggle in Itika Guasu; rather, this chapter points to a growing disjuncture between the way territory is framed by the APG IG leadership (and other actors involved in the hydrocarbon conflict) and how it is understood by Guarani communities. To put it another way, having already noted the gap between the state’s legal-cartographic construction of the TCO and the imagined territory that Guarani community members aspired to recover, this chapter has unveiled yet another parallel arena within which territory came to be understood and struggled over: that of hydrocarbons conflict. While it was initially recognition and representation that were at stake here, it is redistributive claims have ultimately come to the fore, positioning indigenous territory within a multi-scalar struggle over gas rents distribution – a struggle that has come to define the territorial dynamics of “post-neoliberal” Bolivia.

If this positions the APG IG leadership within broader national struggles over “hydrocarbon citizenship”, then my account has also revealed the transnational dimensions of this conflict, and the way in which APG IG leaders have sought to utilise

157 While Repsol has continued to operate outside of the 2009 “mixed” contracts, a range of synergistic developments (Hindery, 2013) have involved state-owned companies and regional elites, who have come into conflict with the APG IG over prior consultation and compensation payments. Particularly heated in 2011-12 was a conflict over the expansion of the Gasoducto Margarita Tarija (Margarita-Tarija Gas Pipeline, GMT).
transnational negotiations as an alternative arena within which to make claims for recognition and redistribution – claims that, nevertheless, remain grounded in a historic struggle for citizenship. The success they have had in doing so – and the erasures that such successes entail – demonstrate how Guaraní community members and leaders in Itika Guasu remain caught between the possibilities of hydrocarbons citizenship (which include political and economic empowerment) and the still-elusive promises of multicultural citizenship (the recovery of territory as a space of cultural identity and self-defined development). The conflicts, trade-offs and potential synergies between these visions – and their articulation with the unfinished project of building a plurinational state – have still to be worked out, in Itika Guasu and indigenous territories throughout Bolivia.
Conclusion: Decolonising territory: theoretical openings, political projects and practical challenges

In this thesis, I have used an ethnographic case study to explore some of the radical possibilities and profound ambivalences of indigenous land titling as a tool for decolonisation – that is, for addressing postcolonial legacies of racialised dispossession, exclusion and inequality, in ways that promote self-determination for subaltern populations. While acknowledging the disruptive potential and far-reaching aspirations of indigenous land claims, I have followed Wainwright and Bryan in arguing for the need to look beyond the “power of maps” to critically assess the legal and material outcomes of such a “legal-cartographic strategy” and, beyond this, its implications for the everyday lives and struggles of indigenous community members (also Coombes et al., 2011). This thesis has sought to provide such an analysis, while also highlighting the need for further critical research on this under-explored topic.

In Chapter 1, I argued that Bolivia’s TCOs must be understood as emerging from two inter-related contexts: first, place-based processes of ethnic resurgence that emerged from situated histories of racialised dispossession – that is, indigenous responses to the production of postcolonial territory; and second, global development policy convergence around indigenous land rights, within a broader framework of “ethnodevelopment”. By placing the latter within the context of evolving practices of global neoliberal governmentality – which sought to produce particular kinds of territories, as well as subjects – I pointed to one key dimension of the ambivalence of indigenous land rights as a tool for decolonisation. Furthermore, by tracing how these local and global actors and knowledges struggled with other national social forces over the crafting of the INRA Law, I revealed the existence of a social and political context that exceeded the expectations of global development policy experts (Li, 2007b). This included the persistence of entrenched colonial discourses and fears of indigenous territorial claims within the Bolivian state, which placed clear limits on the form and content of TCOs. As such, even before their full implementation, TCOs had been conditioned by their inception on the power-laden terrain of postcolonial and neoliberal governance.
In chapter 2, I examined the production of indigenous TCO territories within another arena: that of cartography. Here I argued that, in parallel with the political compromises over the INRA Law, place-based processes of indigenous counter-mapping also involved a series of translations and concessions – both to the already-mapped world of postcolonial geography and to the moral discourses of Bolivian agrarian law. Specifically, I highlighted how the spatial boundaries of TCO claims were adjusted to accommodate state and settler geographies, and how an oppositional discourse of ancestral (pre-colonial) rights came to be eclipsed by a technical one of indigenous spatial needs. Following other critical accounts of counter-mapping, I drew attention to the power asymmetries involved in these cartographic productions – between indigenous and non-indigenous actors, between indigenous leadership and communities, and within indigenous communities. As such, this chapter furthered the argument of Chapter 1 regarding the inherently double-edged nature of TCOs, while also bringing to the fore issues of power, knowledge and representation, which urge us to consider not only whether territory has been achieved, but also what kind of territory, for whom and by whom? I pursued these questions further through my examination of the state’s Integral Spatial Needs Study (EINE) for Itika Guasu, which revealed how the process of gaining official recognition could also subject indigenous peoples to power-infused, if contradictory, governmental agendas.

Having explored the inherent ambivalences of TCOs, Chapter 3 provided an account of the dynamics of their implementation through the official SAN-TCO titling process. Here I drew on ethnographic, documentary and cartographic data to show how legal norms were adapted, negotiated and reworked in the course of their implementation. Specifically, I revealed how local landowner resistance, competing discourses of rights, and the coloniality of regional state power colluded with the limitations of the INRA Law to prevent a substantive redistribution of rights in TCO Itika Guasu. In doing so, my account revealed the importance of looking beyond processes of counter-mapping and policy formation to ask: What happens when the law is implemented in specific postcolonial contexts? How far are cartographic representations of contiguous indigenous territories matched by rights and redistribution on the ground? In addressing these questions, I echoed Moore’s (2005) emphasis on how micro-politics matter in struggles
over cultural and resource rights in postcolonial contexts. An examination of these micropolitics reveals that the colonial legacy – represented in institutionalised ethnic power inequalities, colonial discourses of rights, and settler sovereignty claims – continues to pose significant challenges to indigenous struggles for territory, even following victories won in the arena of global and national policy. Notwithstanding the multi-scalar articulations of indigenous rights activism, it is at a local level that the outcomes of indigenous struggles for decolonising territory are ultimately decided.

If local micro-politics shape legal titling outcomes, then understanding their implications for decolonisation required scaling down further, to the everyday realities of indigenous community life. Chapter 4 explored these lived realities of land and territory, revealing how disappointing legal outcomes gave rise to daily challenges for community members, who struggled to access land and resources required to sustain subsistence livelihoods. Drawing on interview and ethnographic data, I argued that community members in Itika Guasu evaluate the gains of TCO titling not against legal-cartographic results, but in relation to contemporary realities of land control. These realities, when read against oral memories of colonial dispossession and ethnic resurgence, lead some community members to conclude that TCO titling has failed as a strategy for “recovering territory”.

Furthermore, through an examination of one inter-communal resource conflict, I drew attention to the disjunctures that exist between Guaraní understandings of territory and the spatial logics of state land titling. Resonating with recent academic discussions of the differences between “territory” and “property” (Bryan, 2010; Coombes et al., 2011), this discussion looked beyond the legal results of TCO titling to reveal deeper epistemological issues: the difficulty of reconciling indigenous and legal-cartographic knowledges, the asymmetrical power relations that structure engagements between the two, and the tendency of the latter to reproduce and legitimise the established postcolonial racial-spatial order. In doing so, I demonstrated how ethnographic engagement (informed by political ecology analysis) can add empirical substance to more abstract critiques of property and cartography, demonstrating the discursive and practical limitations of both as tools for decolonising territory. I extended this foray into questions of knowledge and power by exploring community members’ own knowledge and
perceptions of TCO titling. My finding that many people felt unsure of and distant from TCO titling and its knowledges provides a stark illustration of how the translations involved in gaining territorial recognition may come at the cost of excluding and disempowering the protagonists and intended beneficiaries of territorial claims: indigenous communities.

Finally, Chapter 5 examined the interactions between TCO titling and hydrocarbons development in the mega-gas field Margarita-Huacaya. Through interview and documentary analysis, I illustrated how TCO titling not only failed to guarantee the Guaraní territorial control in the context of extraction, but became shaped by the resource-accessing claims of a transnational oil company, which – through legally dubious dealings with INRA – achieved legal security by consolidating private rights to gas-rich TCO land. This provided a stark illustration of how contemporary processes of neoliberal territorial restructuring map onto and reinscribe (post)colonial cartographies and land relations, echoing historical collusions between capital, state and settler property in the Chaco. Such neo-colonial territorialisations create further obstacles to indigenous struggles for decolonising territory (and for collective title). Most significantly, Chapter 5 revealed how, under the MAS government, Guaraní demands for territory have continued to be subordinated to the territorial and temporal demands of hydrocarbons development, giving rise to powerful Guaraní critiques of the MAS development model, which shed light on broader tensions between “post-neoliberal” and “plurinational” development in Latin America.

Yet, this was not merely a story of conflict between indigenous and capitalist territorial and resource sovereignty claims. Rather, recent APG IG discourse and strategy point to indigenous peoples’ complex and shifting relationship with extractive industry development in their territories. In the context of a stalled land titling process and a protracted conflict with an oil company, the APG IG leadership has come to see territory as something to be achieved in the context of hydrocarbon development, rather than in opposition to it. As I revealed, this has meant abandonment, for the time being, of the TCO titling process, and the reframing of the TCO as a territorial basis for political and economic empowerment (as opposed to simply a container for agrarian rights). This post-multicultural framing of territory, I have suggested, must be read in the context of multi-
scalar struggles over gas rents distribution in Morales’s Bolivia, as well as the frustrated hopes of state-sanctioned indigenous autonomy. As such, this Chapter provides indications of indigenous peoples’ active and growing participation in a broader regime of hydrocarbon citizenship. These observations have far-reaching implications for cultural and resource politics in Latin America – and academic discussions of post-neoliberal development – and warrant further investigation.

The tensions inherent in these shifting framings of territory are emblematic of the dilemmas facing indigenous peoples, as they seek to redress colonial legacies of dispossession in a context of new territorial incursions of neoliberal and “post-neoliberal” development. In the context of previous chapters, the fact that the Itika Guasu TCO claim has become subsumed in a multi-scalar resource conflict illustrates how the contradictory agendas of neoliberal multiculturalism play out in practice, pushing indigenous claimants towards new territorial strategies. In other words, multicultural framings of indigenous territory – as bounded spaces of ethnic difference – unravelled in the face of the deterritorialised processes of market rule, in ways that frustrated indigenous aspirations for territorial control, giving rise to new territorial strategies forged in response to, and in articulation with, these actually existing processes. If this echoes other critical accounts of development policy failure (Ferguson, 1994; Li, 2007b; Scott, 1998), then it also goes beyond these accounts in revealing how such failures provide the foundation for new subaltern projects, which produce new configurations of identity, territory, capital, and citizenship.

Together, the chapters of this thesis highlight the limitations and ambivalences of cartography and law as instruments for decolonizing territory, while also demonstrating how indigenous peoples have utilized, critiqued and looked beyond these instruments in their quest for “recovering territory”. I now turn to reflect further on how these findings contribute to broader debates in critical development geography. My discussion resolves around four themes: governmentality’s limits and not-quite-neoliberal natures; indigenous geographies and the rescaling of sovereignty; resource conflicts as cultural conflicts; and the Bolivian “process of change” and the challenge of decolonisation.
Governmentality’s limits and not-quite-neoliberal natures

While TCO titling did, in a sense, offer “recognition without redistribution” (Hale, 2002), this thesis complicates critical accounts of “neoliberal multiculturalism” – and of neoliberal governmentality more generally. While Chapter 1 illustrated that the governmental agendas surrounding global policy support for indigenous land rights were indeed double-edged, shaped by a broad commitment to market-led development, neoliberalism did not appear here as a unified or coherent project. Rather, TCOs emerged from contingent articulations between actors operating at a variety of scales in pursuit of conflicting visions of development – not all of which supported the primacy of the market. Among these actors were indigenous movements, who exploited new political openings under neoliberalism – ethnodevelopment discourse, NGO activism, and even World Bank Operational Directives – in pursuit of far-reaching and historically-grounded demands for territory and autonomy. While indigenous peoples certainly faced efforts to contain their territorial demands, these reflected the colonial attitudes of state officials and competing claims of landowner groups as much as they reflected global neoliberal agendas. Arguably, it was global policy makers’ failure to take account of these competing demands – emblematic of the entangled landscapes of postcolonial territory (Moore, 2005) – that made indigenous territory an elusive promise. This reading of TCOs is consistent with a recent shift in critical geography away from critiques of neoliberalism and towards more nuanced analyses of neoliberalism’s variegated practices (Peck et al., 2010), the agency of nature and society in shaping these (Bakker, 2010; Castree, 2008), and the progressive openings, as well as the closures, emerging from such interactions (Ferguson, 2010; Lewis, 2009). As such, TCOs reveal how research on oppositional movement spaces “can contribute to ongoing efforts to decolonize the geographical imaginaries of critical development studies” (Silvey and Rankin, 2010: 700), revealing “the always contested spatiality of development” (Ibid: 701).

Yet, my account goes beyond many of those cited above in highlighting the importance of a postcolonial perspective for understanding how globally-conceived governance interventions are adapted and reworked in context. As I have highlighted throughout, Bolivian indigenous peoples’ ambivalent engagements with neoliberal
governance are just the latest iteration of a postcolonial predicament, in which subalterns are forced to struggle within the knowledges and institutions of postcolonial society. While Bhabha’s notion of “third space” (1994) is useful for capturing the productive nature of such engagements, as he acknowledged, the resulting spaces are never free from the power relations surrounding their production. Thus, although TCO claims remapped the Bolivian lowlands, this new geography – which already diverged from indigenous visions of territory – did not have the power to override state boundaries, private property, or capitalist resource concessions. Nor did it empower indigenous community members or state officials to confront a settler population willing to defend their land with violence. As a technical fix for racialised dispossession, TCO titling also faced inhospitable natures, illegible animal geographies, institutionalised corruption, language barriers, and overlapping resource claims. Moore’s notion of “entangled landscapes” offers a powerful perspective on these processes, shedding light on how compromises forged in the arena of global policy or national politics unravel and transform as they encounter postcolonial realities that exceed the expectations of their architects. Thus, while Foucault’s notion of governmentality remains critical for understanding the knowledges and practices of those who would seek to orchestrate these complex forces, it is insufficient to capture the multiple and contingent processes through which development actually takes place, and through which territory is produced.

Indigenous geographies and the rescaling of sovereignty

Recent work in critical geography and related disciplines has decentred the state as a unit of analysis, focusing instead on the spatial dimensions of sovereignty (Mountz, 2013; Agnew, 1994; Brenner, 2004). While indigenous peoples remain “imprisoned in the local” in some academic and policy accounts, this thesis illustrates how a focus on indigenous geographies can in fact contribute towards a critical rethinking of sovereignty, including in relation to “post-neoliberal” states. On the one hand, my analysis of the emergence of TCOs resonates with Andolina et al’s (2009) observation that state multicultural policies in Latin America were predated by global-local partnerships acting

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158 This is a reference to the difficulties INRA faced in rounding up and counting cattle, and verifying their ownership, as a basis for assessing property’s economic and social function.
under a new paradigm of indigenous social capital. Yet, as Slater has argued, the rescaling of sovereignty under neoliberalism was not uncontested, but was accompanied by attempts by Andean states “to contain and pacify the geopolitical within their within their already constituted boundaries” (1998: 387). Such efforts have resurfaced with force under the Morales government, exemplified by its growing attacks on NGOs, as well as on indigenous leaders, who stand accused of colluding in a foreign conspiracy to seize control of Bolivia’s natural patrimony (Garcia Linera, 2013). Such statements demonstrate the fallacy of the assumption – shared by many critics on the Left and fuelled by MAS government discourse – that a resurgence of leftist nationalism in Latin America will resolve indigenous demands for territorial sovereignty (a point I elaborate below).

Yet, perhaps a more important lesson from this thesis is that – echoing Emel et al. (2011) – discursive reassertions of state or indigenous sovereignty do not necessarily imply a spatial containment of sovereignty in practice. As recent developments in TCO Itika Guasu demonstrate, efforts to “reclaim the local” (Escobar, 2000) may paradoxically contribute towards – and even seek to exploit – the dispersal of sovereignty across multiple scales. As such, rather than imagining indigenous movements and leftist governments as natural allies in a challenge to neoliberalism “from below”, further analysis should focus on how territorial and political projects coalesce around different scales, in ways that both challenge and articulate with processes of rescaling sovereignty associated with neoliberal globalisation. Following Watts (2009; also Coronil, 1997), this thesis has revealed how such negotiations (and Faustian bargains) over sovereignty can produce new forms of “governable spaces”, which may be at odds with those of the state. More broadly, these processes challenge us to move beyond essentialised depictions of indigenous peoples as “defenders of place” to recognise how “territory” provides a locus for efforts to exercise agency at multiple scales, and in the context of multi-scalar processes. This is not merely a case of “throwing boomerangs” of transnational activism to pressure recalcitrant states (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Andolina et al., 2009), but also involves adapting state law to fight transnational battles – at the same time as using victories won in these extra-local arenas to contest racialised inequalities within local
institutions and communities. Such pragmatic strategies blur conceptual boundaries between indigenous localisms and extra-local engagements (Castree, 2004).

Resource conflicts as cultural conflicts

This thesis has sought to illustrate the value of understanding contemporary resource conflicts through a theoretical framework that combines a political ecology perspective with insights from postcolonial theory. As Coombes et al. (2011) argue, while political ecology has helped overcome many myths about indigenous peoples – including “that their land management is regressive and unsustainable” (Ibid: 812) – it suffers from important limitations. Namely, political ecologists have tended to “assume that local socioecological actions and events are always derivative of extra-local economic and political structures” and thus “[fail] to regard culture seriously”. While not all political ecology accounts suffer from these failings, this thesis demonstrates the urgency of “bring[ing] together identity, culture and environment in cross-scale analysis” (ibid.: 813). To do so avoids the “local trap” of indigenous environmentalism (Brown and Purcell, 2005, cited in ibid.: 811; Watts, 2000; Castree, 2004), as well as the “resource determinism” of the environmental security and resource curse literatures (Watts, 2009: 27-8). Following Perreault and Valdivia (2010), this thesis highlights the importance of placing resource conflicts in the context of broader struggles over identity, sovereignty and citizenship in postcolonial contexts.

Yet, as Coombes et al. (2011) note, “taking culture seriously” in this context means looking beyond the discourses and strategies through which different groups make competing claims to nature. It means recognising that indigenous peoples and other resource claimants may inhabit fundamentally different life-worlds (Blaser, 2010; Escobar, 2008). As such, resource conflicts may be underpinned by deeper “ontological conflicts” (Blaser, 2010: 2-5). This thesis illustrated this by showing that, not only did local actors in Itika Guasu mobilise fundamentally different notions of territory and rights (Chapter 3), but the Guaraníes’ efforts to translate their territorial claim into state law had the effect of delegitimising and eclipsing community members’ notions of territory (Chapter 4). As such, “taking culture seriously” in resource conflicts not only provides a
deeper understanding of what is at stake in such conflicts, but also helps to explain the failure of technocratic approaches, which are themselves predicated on Western ontological categories and dualisms (such as nature/culture). In that sense, the recent “ontological turn” in Anthropology and related disciplines has important implications for how we study resource conflicts and other processes of political economic change. Ethnography must play an essential role in meeting this challenge.

I conclude this chapter by considering how the findings of this thesis contribute towards current debates on the Bolivian “process of change” and, more generally, on the possibilities and challenges of Latin American experiments in “post-neoliberal” and “plurinational” development.

The Bolivian “process of change” and the challenge of decolonisation

If TCO titling predated the election of Evo Morales, then this thesis has also explored how its dynamics evolved in the context of a shifting national development model under the MAS government. As such, this thesis offers important lessons regarding the possibilities and challenges of current “process of change”. The conflict between the MAS government’s discursive commitment to indigenous territorial rights and its economic commitment to hydrocarbon development can be seen as illustrative of broader tensions between what Escobar calls “de-colonial” and “modernizing” visions of development (2010). Yet, rather than thinking about this in terms of conflicting cultural projects, I find it more helpful to see this in terms of conflicting sovereignty claims. It is worth noting here a certain resemblance between President Sanchez de Lozada’s fears of a gas-rich Guaraní nation and Vice President García Linera’s accusation that APG IG were “against national development” for demanding rights to consultation on hydrocarbons development. In this sense, recent conflict over land and gas in Itika Guasu illustrates the persistence of longstanding tensions between indigenous and state sovereignty claims, particularly where strategic natural resources are at stake.

Yet there are, of course, important differences relating to the current MAS “post-neoliberal” development model. For one thing, the Bolivian state, in asserting its right to access hydrocarbon reserves, now claims to be acting on behalf of “the Bolivian people”
– in particular, historically marginalised and impoverished indigenous and campesino populations. Such claims acquire a certain legitimacy in a context in which Bolivians have given overwhelming electoral support for a government that frames extractive industry development as a basis for social redistribution. It is also important to keep in mind that this model is itself a response – following a wave of national social mobilisation – to a neoliberal resource regime that also undermined indigenous territorial sovereignty claims, but offered extremely limited possibilities for redistributing resource wealth. It was in this context that García Linera articulated his vision of a “post-neoliberal state”, in which “a return to socialization of the collective [resource] wealth” was to be accompanied by “the empowerment of the state…to provide a protective shield for the social movements, an international armour for the growth of the social struggles” (2007:1). Within this vision, decolonisation was to be achieved by wresting control of strategic resources from foreign capital and placing these in the hands of a state that was itself “controlled and permeated by the demands, activities, and insurgency of the social movements” (Ibid:1).

As this thesis reveals, this has created an ambivalent terrain for indigenous struggles for territorial sovereignty. In practice, the gains of new cultural rights and opportunities for political participation seem to be outweighed by the implications of increased state dependence on hydrocarbon resources located in indigenous territories. In territories of extraction like Itika Guasu, the state appears less as an “international armour for the growth of social struggles” than as a local guarantor of the resource-accessing claims of foreign (and state) capital. It is worth noting here what Emel et al. have argued regarding resource nationalism; that “rather than hindering the flow of capital, [national claims to resource sovereignty] become constitutive to the accumulation of resource wealth by states and capital alike” (2011: 70). They insist that we should not imagine national resource sovereignty as confined to national space and state institutions; rather “sovereignty must be understood in relational terms to take into account the global geography of non-state actors that shape access to and control over natural resources” (ibid.). This alignment of sovereignties is well understood by Guarani leaders in Itika Guasu; as one informant observed: “[The government’s] friend is the oil company. That’s
what our President Evo Morales says…now it’s not our guest; now it’s our friend” (interview B1).

Yet, if indigenous sovereignty claims seem pitted against those of the state and private capital, then this picture is complicated by the APG IG’s recent agreement with Repsol, which illustrates the possibility of articulations between transnational capital flows and indigenous resource sovereignty claims. This challenges Escobar’s construction of a simple dichotomy between statist/modernising and indigenous/decolonial forms of development (2010), revealing that conflicts over different visions of development (and decolonisation) play out not only within the Bolivian state, but also within indigenous territories and movements. In a sense, what APG leaders have sought to do in Itika Guasu resembles what the MAS government has sought to do at a national level; that is, capture resource wealth from extra-territorial actors and use this as a basis for alternative forms of development. In both cases, a discourse of empowerment and territorial sovereignty masks the power asymmetries and development constraints implicit in such a strategy. While it is too soon to tell the longer-term implications of the APG IG-Repsol agreement, one danger is that redistributive claims – part of a broader Guaraní challenge to racialised inequalities – will exacerbate inequalities within, as well as between territories (Bebbington, 2009) in ways that undermine collective indigenous struggles to address a shared colonial legacy.

As other chapters in this thesis reveal, extractive industry development is far from being the only remaining challenge to indigenous decolonising struggles in Bolivia. Another key issue is that, despite the decline of the elite-led autonomy movements, regional institutions in the Bolivian lowlands remain dominated by elite non-indigenous sectors hostile to indigenous territorial claims (Chapter 3). In this context, recent legal and constitutional victories for indigenous rights cannot be considered a fait accompli, as it is precisely in the course of their implementation that the decolonizing potential of such instruments is often undermined. The 2008 civic strikes in Tarija and other lowland departments demonstrated the force of regional elite opposition to key aspects of the MAS government’s decolonizing agenda. Although MAS had by 2011 gained a strong foothold within Tarija’s departmental government, this was largely the fruit of
accommodations with local elites, rather than a symbol of their diminishing power.\textsuperscript{159} As I have illustrated, this has not changed the dynamics of TCO titling in Itika Guasu. Nor has the election of three indigenous representatives within the departmental assembly brought any tangible benefits for Tarija’s indigenous communities and their struggles for land rights.\textsuperscript{160} This points to the ambivalence of the state as an instrument for decolonising territory – particularly in frontier regions marked by entrenched, institutionalized ethnic power inequalities.

At a deeper level, this thesis has reiterated postcolonial doubts about the extent to which indigenous demands can even be articulated through the knowledges, structures and institutions of the state. Chapter 2 showed that the process of gaining state recognition for indigenous territory – reliant on the twin pillars of postcolonial geography, namely cartography and property – was distinctly double-edged, and had the effect of disempowering indigenous community members and subordinating their knowledges of territory. Under the Morales government, decolonising the state has been a central concern of social movements, politicians and intellectuals, who have used the notion of \textit{interculturalidad} to reject the dominance of a single culture or way of thinking within it (Choque, 2011). Closely associated with this is the vision of a \textit{plurinational} state, made up of autonomously-governed indigenous nations (Tapia, 2007). Yet, institutionalising and implementing this vision has posed challenges. Indigenous groups seeking to achieve autonomous status under the 2009 Autonomies Law have encountered obstacles reminiscent of those of TCO titling – state-imposed conditionalities and constraints; non-indigenous knowledges and categories; highly complex procedures; concessions to established state territoriality, and so forth (Garcés, 2011; Cameron, 2013). As this reveals, the question of how to avoid indigenous demands \textit{to} the state

\textsuperscript{159} At least three current MAS representatives in Tarija’s Departmental Assembly are the same individuals, from local elite families, who previously held positions within the Prefecture (replaced by the assembly in 2010) as representatives of right-wing opposition parties (informal conversations with B15 and B16, fieldnotes January and February 2011). The MAS also made a strategic alliance in 2011 with the PAN, an elite-led party advocating provincial autonomy in the Chaco, an autonomy claim that stands in opposition to those of Chaco indigenous populations.

\textsuperscript{160} Indigenous representatives remain dependent on non-indigenous advisors to articulate their demands, and have been ineffective in doing so, in the face of ethnic discrimination and the clientelistic overtures of competing elite factions.
becoming subject to the logics of the state is far from being resolved. As one Bolivian feminist posed the problem:

I think the question [of decolonisation] is badly set out from the state, because [the question is] how can society undertake its processes of decolonisation and what can the state do to favour the processes of decolonisation that society unleashes? Who is the subject of the action, the state or society? Well, it’s society (interview with Raquel Gutierrez, cited by Chavez, 2011: 35).

When dealing with subaltern populations and local state institutions infused by colonial discourses and power inequalities, this challenge becomes more complex still. If this helps explain why autonomously governed TCOs remain the preferred option for most lowland indigenous peoples in Bolivia, then the legal-political construction and implementation of such autonomies is likely to remain a highly contested process. I have not touched on it here for the simple reason that, pending the completion of TCO titling, in Itika Guasu this uncertain road to autonomy remains barred – a predicament shared by many of Bolivia’s lowland indigenous groups. As I have argued, it is partly in this context that the APG IG leadership has sought to pursue another, even more ambivalent, pathway to “autonomy”, based on access to finance from transnational hydrocarbons negotiations. As such, the issues explored in this thesis – relating to the political economy of natural resources, the coloniality of power and the state, and issues of knowledge and representation – point to broader challenges of decolonisation, which are at the heart of the Bolivian “process of change”, confronted by local indigenous communities and organisations, as well as by those working at a national level to build a decolonised state and society.
Appendix 1: Additional details of research methods

This appendix provides additional detailed information on research methods that could not be included in the methodology section of the thesis.

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10. Positionality and research limitations
1. Interviews

i) Table of interviews conducted 2011-12 (PhD fieldwork)\textsuperscript{161}

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\textsuperscript{161} With the exception of interview A36, conducted in English, all interviews were conducted in Spanish. In some cases, Guaraní was also used.

\textsuperscript{162} Owing to the politically sensitive research context in 2011-12, most later interviews with APG IG leadership took the form of informal discussions recorded in fieldnotes.
## ii) Table of interviews conducted 2008-9 (pilot research)

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<td>Fieldnotes</td>
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All interviews were transcribed in Spanish during or following fieldwork. Initial coding in Spanish took place in 2009-10 (for 2008-9 interviews) and in 2012 (for 2011-12 interviews). Quotations were translated at the point of being inserted into the thesis manuscript. All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.

2. Assemblies, meetings and events

The following events were recorded audio-digitally and/or in fieldnotes.

i) 2011-12 (PhD fieldwork)
- NGO-led public debate: “Reconfigurando política en Tarija”. Provided insight into conflicting perspectives on political change at a regional level under the MAS government (largely seen since 2009), 19 Feb, 2011.
- Workshop organised by local NGOs on “La identidad campesina chaqueña”. With a range of participants (peasant organisations, indigenous people, NGOs, academics), this provided insight into the construction of non-indigenous regional identities and how these are shifting in the context of the MAS government and struggles over hydrocarbons governance. 2 March, 2011.
- 22nd Anniversary of the APG IG, Ñaurenda. This was an opportunity to capture the dynamics of APG IG leadership-community interaction and the discourses of the leadership in the wake of the compensation deal with REPSOL. 21-23 March, 2011.
- Regional assembly/workshop on natural resource conflicts in indigenous territories, organised by a European NGO and the CCGT. This provided insight into indigenous movement discourses and strategies of regionally and shifting indigenous-state relations beyond Itika Guasu. 21-22 July, 2011.
- CCGT assembly on TCO titling in Karapari, a Guaraní territory in the process of presenting a TCO demand. Provided an opportunity to capture the processes and dynamics involved in the construction of a TCO. On request of the CCGT, I presented research findings from Itika Guasu, focusing on obstacles and strategies for SAN-TCO. April 23, 2011.
- Meeting on SAN-TCO organised by the Association of Cattle Ranchers of O’Connor Province (ASOGAPO), Entre Ríos Town Hall, 18 March, 2011.
- Follow-up meeting on SAN-TCO organised by ASOGAPO, Entre Ríos Town Hall, 27 March, 2011.
- Expert focus-group organised by Oxfam Bolivia on the history and current situation of indigenous territorial struggles in Bolivia, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 10 February, 2012.
- Presentations and public debate event on TIPNIS conflict, organised by NGO CEADESC, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 14 February, 2012.

ii) 2008-9 (Pilot research)
- APG Departmental Assembly, 16-17 March, 2009, Centro Fundación ACLO, Tarija
- National APG Assembly, 14-15 April, 2009, Aguayrenda, Tarija
- APG IG Assembly on Land-Territory, 28 Nov, 2008, Itika Guasu (Mokomokal)
- APG Regional Assembly on Land-Territory, 1 Dec, 2008, Karapari, Tarija
3. Fieldnotes

Electronic fieldnotes were kept while based in Tarija city in January-August 2011. Daily hand-written fieldnotes were kept in a journal during community-level participant observation. In 2012, I created an electronic index for these handwritten fieldnotes. During 2008-9, handwritten notes of key conversations and events were kept in a series of journals, although not in a systematic fashion. Keeping more rigorous and better organised fieldnotes was a key innovation of PhD fieldwork, following training in Ethnographic Methods at Cambridge.

4. Household survey, Tarairí (January 2012)

   i) Questionnaire – original (Spanish/Guarani)

   Encuesta Familiar

   1. ¿Cuántas personas viven en esta casa?

      Hombres _________

      Mujeres _________

      Niños _________

   2. ¿Cuántas hectáreas tiene la familia? ________________

      ¿Donde están? _______________________

      Como llegaron a tener esta tierra? _______________________

      Es suficiente? _______________________

   3. ¿Cuántas animales tiene ustedes?
Kuchi _____ Ovecha______
Kapura _____ Mburika ________
Uru _____ Guaca ________

4. ¿Cuáles cultivos tienen ustedes? ¿Van a sembrar otros?
Avati                                Mandipirope                                Otro ____________
Cumanda                              Mani                                          Otro ____________
Guindaka                             Frutales

5. ¿Cuánto de la producción agrícola es para el consumo/la venta? (%)
Consumo _____
Venta _____

6. ¿Hay miembros de su familia trabajando afuera de la comunidad?
En caso de sí, ¿Dónde viven? ______________________
Qué meses del año trabajan afuera? ______________________
¿Contribuyen a sus ingresos familiares? Sí ____ No ____

7. Cuáles son las fuentes de ingreso más importantes para la familia (importancia 1-5)
Trabajo jornaleo _____
Agricultura ______
La Pesca ______
Ganadería ______
Artesanía ______
Otro ____________________ ______
Otro _____________________ _____
Cambian las actividades principales según la estación? ______________________

8. ¿Cuáles son sus gastos principales? (1-5)
- Comida _____
- Transporte _____
- Gastos escolares _____
- Herramientas _____
- Salud _____
- Animales (salud, etc.) ____
- Mejoramiento de casa______
- Otro __________________      _____

9. Cuáles son los principales recursos naturales que sacan del territorio? (e.g. palma, leña, madera)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Recurso</th>
<th>Dónde se encuentra?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

¿Hay algún problema en acceder a estos recursos? (escasez, falta de acceso, conflictos por acceso)

Preguntas abiertas:

1. Cuáles son los problemas principales que enfrenta su familia?

3. ¿Han cambiado sus prácticas agropecuarias durante los 10-20 años pasados? ¿En qué sentido?

4. ¿Han cambiado sus fuentes de ingreso durante los 10-20 años pasados? Explica.
5. ¿Has percibido cambios en el medio ambiente durante los 10-20 años pasados? ¿En qué sentido?

Cómo han afectado sus actividades productivas?

ii) Questionnaire – English translation

1. How many people live in this household?
   Men ________
   Women ________
   Children ________

2. How many hectares of land does the household have? ______________
   Where is this land located? _______________________
   How did you come to have this land? _______________________
   Is it sufficient for your needs? _______________________

3. How many animals does the household own?
   Pigs _____ Sheep______
   Goats _____ Donkeys ________
   Chickens _____ Cows_______
   Other ________
4. What crops do you currently have? Are you going to sow others?

Maize            Yucca                     Other ____________
Beans            Peanuts                    Other ____________
Squash           Fruit trees               Pumpkin

5. What percentage of agricultural production is for household consumption versus sale?

Consumption (%) ______
Sale (%) ______

6. Are there members of the family working outside of the community?

If yes, where? _________________
How many months of the year are they working away? _________________
Do they contribute to the household’s income? Yes ____ No ____

7. What are the most important sources of income for the household (importance 1-5)

Day labour _____  Agriculture _____  Fishing _____  Ranching _____  Handicrafts _____  Other ____________  _____  Other ____________  _____
Do these activities change depending on the season? _________________

8. What are the main expenses of the household (1-5)

- Provisions ______
- Transport ______
- School materials ______
- Tools ______
- Healthcare ______
- Animals (vaccines etc.) ______
- Home improvements ______
- Other ____________  _____

9. What are the main natural resources that you take from the territory (e.g. palm, firewood, timber) and where are they found?

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Is there any problem accessing these resources (scarcity, lack of access, conflicts over access)?

Open questions:

1. What are the main problems that the household faces?
3. Have you changed your livelihoods practices during the last 10-20 years? If so, how?
4. Have your sources of income changed during the last 10-20 years? If so, how?
5. Have you noticed any change in the natural environment during the last 10-20 years?
6. How has this change affected your productive activities?

iii) Household survey results

Presented with pseudonyms or names blanked out.

1. How many people live in the household?

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<th>Children</th>
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2. Household land ownership

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<th>Location</th>
<th>How acquired</th>
<th>Sufficient?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Behind house (TCO land)</td>
<td>Inherited from father</td>
<td>No: “falta”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{163}\) Respondents include men working away as members of household  
\(^{164}\) 7 children are living away for work or combination of work and study  
\(^{165}\) Refers to informal rules of land ownership in Tarairi, not legal property rights
3. How many animals does the household own?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Pigs</th>
<th>Goats</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Donkeys</th>
<th>Chicken</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Household agricultural production
(Q: What crops is the household currently growing, or about to sow?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Maize</th>
<th>Beans</th>
<th>Pumpkin</th>
<th>Yucca</th>
<th>Peanuts</th>
<th>Cantaloupe</th>
<th>Watermelon</th>
<th>Butternut Squash</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>In huerto, veg, papaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Tidiku (soro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How much of agricultural production is for consumption?
All households produce crops exclusively for consumption.

N.B. Asked some households what proportion of animals raised were for consumption vs sale. Different answers:
Hernán 90% cattle for sale
Ernesto 30% animals for sale
Lazaro uru 50% for sale; mburika 100% for sale
Yolanda: cattle for sale and consumption

6. Are there members of the household that work outside the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Members who work away</th>
<th>Where do they work?</th>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>How many months of yr?</th>
<th>Contribute to household income?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

264
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Currently none</th>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Occupation, Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Return?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Currenty none</td>
<td>Suarurito, Entre Ríos</td>
<td>Agricultural labour, construction</td>
<td>1 month: Nov-Dec</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entre Ríos</td>
<td>Agricultural labour, construction</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Argentina (Julio), Tarija (Diego), Palos Blancos (Veronica)</td>
<td>Agricultural labour, construction</td>
<td>“any month” (2 men away from Aug to Feb)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Argentina, Villa montes, Entre Rios</td>
<td>Agricultural labour, fishing (VM)</td>
<td>Argentina 2 months; VM for fishing season</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tarija, beyond Bermejo, Karapari</td>
<td>Construction (builder)</td>
<td>Most of year: 3 months away, 5 days home</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entre Rios</td>
<td>Construction (ayudante)</td>
<td>Half the year: alternates 1-2 months away, 1-2 months in community. In community for fishing season (Apr-Sept)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entre Rios, Tarija, Argentina, Villa montes, Yacuiba</td>
<td>Agricultural labour, construction</td>
<td>3-6 months/yes (for 1-3 months, twice per year).</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entre Rios (Osma), Argentina (Nilo), Tarija (Marcia)</td>
<td>Agriculture, construction (currently Osma and Nilo), domestic service (Marcia)</td>
<td>Nilo away all year, for last 3.5 yrs. Marcia all year, for last 3.5 yrs. Visit for Carneval. Osma months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural labour, construction</td>
<td>3 months per yr (not in fishing season)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction (ER); Chofer (K); domestic</td>
<td>All living away – return for visits of 15 days to 1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

166 But Armando used to work in Tarupayo and ER prior to receiving APG salary. Work for APG and salary could be counted as work outside community, but not counted here as labour migration.

167 NB JDD also works mornings for Mendez in neighbouring property (agricultural labour)
7. What are the most important sources of income for the household? (ranking 1-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Day labour</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Fishing</th>
<th>Animal husbandry</th>
<th>Handicrafts</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (previously)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 – APG salary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3: Renta Dignidad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1: public salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (varies)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1: cattle-ranching</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. What are the household’s main expenses? (Rank 1-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>School materials</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Animals (inc health)</th>
<th>Home improvements</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

168 Main food expenses mentioned are maize and sugar.
9. What are the main natural resources that you get from the territory?

*Similar for all households so generic table based on all questionnaires*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural resource</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>How often collected</th>
<th>Where is it found?</th>
<th>Problems of access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>cooking</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>30 min walk (towards cruce)</td>
<td>Diminishing supply – have to go further away to collect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Beams for house; fencing posts</td>
<td>40 mins-1hr walk; Mendez’s land</td>
<td>Diminishing supply – have to go further to collect. Must negotiate with landowners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm</td>
<td>Handicrafts, Roofing</td>
<td>Twice per month</td>
<td>1hr walk towards Choroketi, or in Mendez’s land</td>
<td>Nearby supply used up. Yukiporo has fenced land to prevent access. “Hay que sacar ocultitas”. Mendez allows access to his land, but must ask permission “or he gets angry” (others say not a problem). If it doesn’t rain there is no palm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palito</td>
<td>handicrafts</td>
<td>Twice per month</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe</td>
<td>Building house</td>
<td>In community</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>To make pots</td>
<td>Rio Salao</td>
<td>Some indication from Pablo that yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>To eat, when no sugar</td>
<td>Mendez’s land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toborochi thread</td>
<td>House building and handicrafts</td>
<td>In community</td>
<td>La banda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal plants: e.g. topecha, edindita, tusca</td>
<td>Fever, anti-inflammatory, muscle pain</td>
<td>La banda, Shore of Rio Salao</td>
<td>In the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild fruits (mistol, algorobe etc)</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>In the community and nearby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Open questions**

1. What are the main problems for the family?
2. Have your farming practices changed over the last 10-20 years? Explain.
3. Have your sources of household income changed over the last 10-20 years? Explain.
4. Have you perceived changes in the environment during the last 10-20 years? How have these affected your productive activities?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>practices</th>
<th>income</th>
<th>change on livelihoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of fish as source of income</td>
<td>Less income from fishing. Álvaro receives APG salary, so does not work outside the community in other jobs</td>
<td>Álvaro had to work outside due to lack of fish (pre-APG salary) Drought – don’t have enough maize for whole yr – have to buy maize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>It doesn’t rain, crops dry out, there is nothing to eat. Food insecurity. Little fish so no money.</td>
<td>No change (but claim JDD migrates due to poor production)</td>
<td>Rains less, drier. Less fish. [Attribute to hydrocarbons activity] Drought causes food insecurity. Fall in income from fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>It rained more</td>
<td>Production has fallen due to drought</td>
<td>It is drier Production has fallen due to drought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sometimes men fail to remit and household lacks money to buy maize. Lack of agricultural production due to drought. Less fish.</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>Previously enough income from fish to last whole year – now less fish, for this reason men left to work. Two deceased brothers were fishermen. Drought; less fish Men have migrated due to lack of fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No problems</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>It doesn’t rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sequia – production isn’t guaranteed – if it doesn’t rain, the crops dry up and there is nothing to feed animals. Lack of fish means no income to buy food (i.e. combination of 2 probs serious)</td>
<td>Before they had good harvests and saved seed. Previously, all men sowed, now more migrating. Did’t used to buy sugar, pasta, rice, lived on traditional crops. Didn’t sell fish.</td>
<td>Drought, water quality has worsened Men migrate because of drought and lack of fish. “cada vez salen más lejos”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Drought and lack of fish</td>
<td>More income from day labour</td>
<td>Drought, lack of fish, river low. Less forest cover; trees used for Men migrate due to drought, previously didn’t migrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Environmental Impact</td>
<td>Economic Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Doesn’t rain, there is no production and animals die.</td>
<td>Firewood not regenerating as before. More plagues.</td>
<td>Men migrate due to drought and lack of fish. Lack of wild fruits and meat to eat – even buy meat from outside community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Before they worked for patrón</td>
<td>Contamination of the river – before could drink water. Climate has changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Drought, lack of fish</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Land scarcity. “mezquinar los ganaderos” N fence land so that we can’t work there</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Drought – can’t produce. Land scarcity. Lack of fish</td>
<td>Before produced more, now earn more from working outside.</td>
<td>Less forest animals, including wild boar, which used to eat. Used to be wild fruits (mistol, itala, ulala, cardón)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Children have left to work due to lack of land and work in community</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Community focus groups, participatory mapping, film screening, and walk to find TCO legal limit

i) Focus groups and participatory mapping

Focus groups were conducted with men (20th January, 2012) and women (21st January, 2012) in Tarairí to explore: spatial imaginaries and practices; identities and ethnic discrimination; knowledge and perspectives of TCO titling; and the gendered dimensions of all of the above. Drawing on mapping techniques from Participatory Action Research (Cornwall, 2011; Chambers et al., 1989), Participants were asked to draw two maps, which provided useful data and a basis for subsequent discussion. The first, of the community and its surroundings, was used as a basis for a discussion of spatial practices, lived boundaries and inter-community conflict. In the women’s focus group, older and younger women drew separate maps, owing to numbers presents, and in order to provide insight into inter-generational difference in imaginative geographies (and knowledge of official cartographic representations). In the second map, participants drew other important places outside the community, which acted as a basis for discussion of migration patterns, kinship networks within the territory, ethnic discrimination in other places and how the community’s location is communicated to outsiders. Finally, a group discussion of TCO titling was used to elicit existing knowledge and perceptions of TCO titling and the land struggle from participants. I then gave a short presentation on the history and process of TCO titling, in which I showed maps depicting the current status of land titling in the TCO and around the community. This was followed by further discussion of the current land situation, the loss of historical memory of the land struggle and hopes/doubts regarding the future of TCO titling. Both focus groups were both recorded audio-digitally and in fieldnotes, which were combined to produce a detailed annotated transcripts. Excerpts and key information from annotated transcripts are provided in Boxes.
Women’s focus group (split into 2 age groups)

Men’s map of the community and its surroundings
ii) Film screening
Following the two focus groups, I organized the showing of a film on the Guaraní land struggle, based on experiences from the neighbouring department of Chuquisaca, which was open to all community members. After the film, I facilitated a discussion on the film’s content, during which participants shared experiences and memories of the land struggle.
iii) Walk to find TCO legal limits
The next day, I organised a walk with 12 female and male community members to find the TCO’s limits, using their knowledge and a GPS device.

Communal walk to find legal boundaries of TCO land

Following the walk, the men decided to add the TCO boundary line to the map produced in the men’s focus group.

Men’s focus group map with added line to show TCO legal boundary
6. Archival and documentary work: list of institutions visited

   a. Collected documentary and digitalised legal and cartographic data on historical progress and current status of TCO titling process in Itika Guasu (and some similar data on other TCOs in Tarija)
   b. Searched through archives for copies of original TCO claim and some early correspondence between local actors and INRA.
   c. Acquired copies of legal norms from INRA staff.

   a. CERDET library. Collected secondary literature (published and grey) on indigenous organisation and TCO claim in Itika Guasu, and on regional history.
   b. CERDET archives. Collected (photocopied) documentation of early processes of indigenous organisation and counter-mapping in Itika Guasu.
   c. CERDET office files. Collected (photocopied) a large body of documentation on both TCO titling process and on the APG IG-Repso conflict.
   d. CERDET digital files. CERDET staff guided me towards relevant digital files on both TCO titling and the APG-IG conflict, which were copied digitally.

iii) CERDET office in Entre Ríos. Multiple visits 2008-9 and 2011. With guidance from CERDET staff, I combed digital and paper files for information on Itika Guasu TCO claim and APG-Repso conflict. A large amount of valuable documentation was found here, including photocopies of correspondence between third party claimants and INRA.

iv) CCGT office, Tarija. Continuous engagement in 2009 and 2011. Under supervision of CCGT staff, went through a large collection of filed documents relating to TCO titling, hydrocarbon negotiations, and Guarani-state correspondence, both in Itika Guasu and at a regional level. Acquired digital copies of a large number of documents from CCGT staff.

v) APG IG, Entre Ríos. Relevant documents provided by APG IG leaders in 2011-12.

vi) NGOs outside of Tarija Department, where I gathered additional grey literature on indigenous land claims in Bolivia.
   a. CIDOB, Camiri (2009 and 2012)
   b. CIPCA, Santa Cruz and Cordillera offices (2009)
   c. CEJIS, Santa Cruz (2009)
   d. Fundación Tierra, Santa Cruz (2009)
   e. Fundación TIERRA, La Paz (2012)
   f. Oxfam, La Paz (2012)
g. CEDLA, La Paz (2011)

Owing to the vast body of paper and digital documentation collected during the course of this research project, it is not possible to list all documents here. Those cited in this thesis are listed in the bibliography.

7. Guaraní language training

Beginning in February 2011, I attended basic Guaraní language classes in Tarija. In June-July, I supplemented these with private tuition. This was followed by self-study while in the community. Most everyday interaction in Tarairí was in Guaraní; interviews with men in Tarairí were conducted in Spanish, with some Guaraní. All other ethnographic engagements, interviews and documentary work was in Spanish.

8. Feedback on preliminary research findings from 2008-9

In June 2009, I presented preliminary research findings to CERDET. On returning to Tarija in January 2011, I presented a report compiled from 2008-9 research to key actors at a regional level (CERDET, CCGT, APG IG), some of whom provided feedback. I presented my revised PhD research proposal and preliminary findings at the NGO JAINA in January 2011, which was followed by a lengthy discussion (recorded). Lessons from preliminary fieldwork were also shared at an APG assembly on TCO titling in Karaparí on 23 April, 2011 (listed above, see 2.ii).

9. Consultancy on environmental regulation of hydrocarbon development in TCO Itika Guasu

In October 2011, I completed a one-month consultancy (supervised by Geographer Tony Bebbington) exploring institutions for environmental regulation of hydrocarbons development in TCO Itika Guasu, as part of a Rural Territorial Dynamics (DTR) programme of the Chile-based NGO RIMISP. This included interviews with APG IG leaders, regional state, hydrocarbons companies, cattle ranchers and Guaraní communities most affected by hydrocarbons development. I also made visits to affected Guaraní communities, Palos Blancos (a transport hub for hydrocarbon companies), and the Margarita gas plant, where I was given an unofficial tour of the Margarita gas field by an off-duty Repsol employee. I also visited the offices of an environmental consultancy firm contracted by Repsol, whose staff provided me with digital maps and other data on new hydrocarbon development in the TCO. This work shed important light on how intensifying hydrocarbons development is reconfiguring territory, livelihoods and development visions within and beyond the TCO – insights which informed subsequent PhD fieldwork interviews. The report I wrote for this consultancy was published in Ecuador in an edited volume (Peralta and Hollenstein, 2012).
10. Positionality and limitations of research

The account that emerges from the methodological approach outlined in the Introduction of this thesis is not an objective or complete one, but rather a story that I have constructed based on my contingent and limited engagements with people, institutions, and documentary evidence relating to TCO titling in Itika Guasu. These engagements were mediated in significant ways by my positionality (as a white, privileged, non-Bolivian, female researcher), limits of perception, and by the broader field of knowledge and power within which they took place. In engaging with Guaraní people, particularly at a community level, I was keenly aware of the limits of my ability to understand the life-world inhabited by my informants. This relates, in part, to the problem of engagement across epistemological and ontological difference (Blaser, 2010). In his thought-provoking reflections on the pitfalls of such engagements, Mario Blaser highlights the irreconcilability of indigenous and modern knowledge practices (which include academic accounts), and the tendency of academic knowledge production to construct and perform a hierarchical relation between the two. That is, indigenous informants’ explanations of the world tend to be reduced to, and “explained” within the terms of, the researcher’s own epistemic practices and ontological assumptions (Ibid: xii-xiii). While I have sought to give more space to the words and actions of my Guaraní informants than previous accounts of indigenous land titling, these attempts remain mediated translations that take place on an asymmetrical terrain of knowledge and ethnographic engagement.

On a more practical level, my forays into the Guaraní life-world were conditioned by my limited Guarani language skills. Although proficient in everyday conversation by the end of my community-level fieldwork, I remained limited in the topics I could converse on and struggled to follow conversations involving large groups of people. Compounding my linguistic handicap, my experience of community life was conditioned by my physical limitations after I broke my ankle playing football with community members, forcing me to forgo participation in work activities and exploration of the surrounding area for several months. As noted above, my female gender also structured my experiences and research engagements, both within and beyond the community.

Within the broader regional context, my position as a particular kind of outsider – white, privileged, educated, foreign-funded, English-speaking – created both barriers and opportunities. While winning trust sometimes took time and patience, outsider status gave me the ability to move fluidly between different groups and institutions in a way that my informants could not. This was especially important given the politically-charged nature of the research topic and context. My position as a privileged Westerner also opened doors, creating the expectation (which I did my best to manage) that I might possess valuable technical knowledge, political and policy influence – or, alternatively, the analytical power to resolve deep-rooted social conflicts and development problems. Perhaps more than this, however, the willingness of many informants to engage at length in answering complex and sensitive research questions reflected their own stake in the issues discussed, and their belief that knowledge co-produced in such encounters could inform and validate their own intellectual and life projects, as well as my own.
Appendix 2: Actors involved in 1992-96 national debate over the INRA Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF OWNER</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>DEMANDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples of the Eastern lowlands and Amazon</td>
<td>Indigenous population reaches a total of 154,996 people comprised of 30 indigenous originary groups. Indigenous populations were systematically ignored by the designers of public policies and it is only during the last two decades that their demands find some response. They mobilized in public protests and marches that obtained wide popular support.</td>
<td>- Constitution of Communal Lands of Origin, with exclusive right to the use of all natural resources, and - Autonomy of political-administrative administration, under ILO Convention 169 (ratified as state law).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peasants of the highland altiplano and valleys</td>
<td>A mostly Quechua and Aymara population, composed of small, impoverished property owners, organized in unions and ayllus, settled in the Altiplano and Valleys of the country. This majority sector, the main protagonists of the 1953 Agrarian Reform, currently have a strong union and political influence through peasant and coca producers’ organizations.</td>
<td>- Greater access to resources in a combination of property forms of communal and family rights (both private). - Free access to new lands, especially in the expansion area of the agricultural frontier in the East. - Open rejection of land markets and reversion of unproductive estates of the East so that these will return to be property of the State and will be redistributed without costs to landless peasants or those with insufficient land access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small colonizer peasant owners</td>
<td>A population of Quechua-Aymara origin, settled in the new tropical areas. They are beneficiaries of the colonization component of the Agrarian Reform between the decades of 1960 and 1970, in general they generate profits and have a semi-entrepreneurial behavior.</td>
<td>- Private family ownership rights - Free access to new colonization lands from the State - Unrestricted freedom to purchase or sell their land. - Rejection of land market, to continue being beneficiaries of free endowments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, medium and large Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>This sector consists of producers devoted mainly to export crops, particularly sugar cane, cotton, and especially soybean, with intensive and mechanical technology, settled in the East of Bolivia.</td>
<td>- Free land market (full security of their ownership rights, defense from invasion of third parties: peasants, other entrepreneurs and land speculators). - Tax reduction on landed property - Elimination of the faculties stated by the Political Constitution of the State for the reversion and expropriation of land that does not fulfill its economic-social function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latifundio owners of Idle Land</td>
<td>Sector hidden in producer organizations and in regional-civic movements, with great power of political negotiation</td>
<td>- Immediate security of their ownerships right through an immediate legal disposition that will automatically &quot;guarantee&quot; their ownership titles granted by the Agrarian Reform. - Transition from the concept of full property rights to the concept of absolute property rights - Elimination of State prerogatives for the reversion and expropriation. - Rejection of any form of payment of a tax on landed property.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

169 From Urioste and Pacheco, 1999; edits made to original text to improve translation.
Appendix 3: Rationalising territory: reading the EINE for Itika Guasu

The Integrated Spatial Needs Study (EINE) for Itika Guasu (MACPIO, 2000) illustrates the contingent outcomes, contradictory logics and governmental aspirations emergent from the processes described in Chapter 2. Despite indigenous critiques of EINEs as “instruments of amputation”, the EINE for Itika Guasu does not recommend a reduction of the TCO area; rather it recommends that the Guaraní should be titled 293,000 hectares; that is, 77,000 hectares more than the 216,000 hectare area recognised by INRA in 1997 (MACPIO, 2000). This positive recommendation illustrates that, despite the political conflicts described, some EINEs remained largely in the hands of indigenous rights activists or pro-indigenous anthropologists, without significant central state intervention (interview A35). In fact, this recommendation had no legal effect, given that the power of EINEs to define TCO boundaries had by 2000 been overturned by indigenous mobilisation. Nevertheless, it has served as a discursive reference point for the APG IG in their ongoing struggle for the legal consolidation of their land rights within the TCO.

It is noteworthy that the EINE for Itika Guasu was not conducted until 2000 – that is, three years after the TCO had been legally recognised and “immobilised” for land titling. This was not unusual, and reflects a temporal disjuncture between the politically urgent task of recognising indigenous land claims, and the bureaucratically laborious process of elaborating regulations for their full legal consolidation – as well as the delays brought by indigenous opposition to EINEs. As Tomás explained:

Most of the time, the Spatial Needs Reports were done after [INRA’s] fieldwork, when you already had results regarding how much land was left [not titled to third parties], so if 24,000 [has]

---

170 This section was originally part of Chapter 3: Mapping Territory and has been placed in an appendix owing to limitations of space.
171 Tomás was one such individual, having worked at the peasant NGO Fundación ACLO and at the Indigenous Institute, before being hired as a consultant to conduct EINEs.
172 Cynically, we could speculate that the EINE’s lack of influence on territorial boundaries explains the state’s lack of interference in its results.
173 Immobilisation means that no land within the TCO area can be bought or sold prior to the completion of the TCO titling process – although this did not prevent land sales in practice.
174 Such was the tense atmosphere around EINEs that indigenous claimants in one case held government ministers and INRA technicians hostage until they changed recommendations that decreased their TCO area (interview A27).
was left, I would do a report for 24,000; if 100,000 was left, I would do a report for 100,000 – so I tell you, it wasn’t scientific (interview A35).

This implies that the TCO land area recommended by EINEs was often a mere justification of limits already established by INRA. As such, EINEs arguably served primarily to rationalise and inscribe sovereignty over the messy, contingent and highly politicised process of demarcating and justifying indigenous territory, rather than assessing indigenous land needs according to objective scientific criteria. This is also indicated by the rapid and improvised manner in which the EINE for Itika Guasu was produced:

Given that there was a limited time – there [in Itika, consultants hired by INRA] did it in one week…so what they did is, to speed up the process, they took general considerations and tried to invent a formula…these are [the Guaraní of Itika Guasu’s] resources, they need 100,000 hectares…It was a very fast, very fast process of negotiation (interview A35).

The reference to an “invented formula” and a “process of negotiation” again points to the primacy of political rather than scientific considerations in determining results. As a scientist herself, Mary (the North American ecologist) lamented the lack of scientific rigour that went into the elaboration of EINEs, describing them as “a lot of made-up numbers”, and a waste of valuable resources:

They had all this money from the Danish and they just hired all these young consultants to go out there and gather information and what most of them did was the literature – they were just packed full of information, very poorly cited mainly, because most of the citations were taken out [subsequently, by the state, in order to insert its own logics], which to me is a total crime.

In her view, the politicised context of EINEs’ elaboration undermined their potential utility as sources of historical, social, economic or ecological data.

In light of these observations, the EINE for Itika Guasu should not be read as an explanation for the TCO’s geographical limits, nor as a scientific indication of the Guaraníes’ land requirements, but rather as a window into the state’s efforts to rationalise indigenous territory. By rationalise, I mean to make indigenous territories – a contingent
outcome of a long political struggle with the state – appear to be a logical result of the state’s rational-scientific evaluation of its indigenous citizens’ territorial and development needs, in ways that framed the state as both sovereign owner and neutral, rational administrator of its territory. As Moore notes, the “lens of social function” plays an important role in postcolonial agrarian governmentality precisely because it makes spatial orders appear “controlled by natural, mechanical or organic laws” (2005: 77), thus obscuring the agency of those governing. The EINE for Itika Guasu can also be read as an effort to construct discursive “chains of equivalence” (Blaser, 2010) with global discourses of indigenous development, territorial governance and environmental management. These efforts shed important light on how TCOs were positioned vis-à-vis neoliberal governmentality.

The EINE for Itika Guasu (MACPIO, 2000) is 150 pages long, not including 7 appendices, and is organised in eight chapters. The first six provide information on the following aspects, respectively: the legal framework and methodology for the demand; the precolonial presence of the Guaraní in the zone and transformations in Guaraní spatial occupation that took place during the republican period; current spatial occupation and socio-demographic characteristics of the Guaraní of Itika Guasu; the basic needs of this population, relating to nutrition, health, education and other aspects; the biophysical aspects of the zone, the renewable natural resources within the territory and their productive potential and the environmental sustainability issues; and the productive system and livelihoods strategies of the Guaraní population and the infrastructure that supports this. The seventh chapter puts this data into a mathematical model to arrive at a figure (293,000 hectares) that purportedly expresses the “spatial needs of the Guaraní population of Itika Guasu”.

This calculation rests on a series of assumptions and prescriptions regarding the forms of territorial governance and development that would take place in the TCO. Following a Methodology Guide elaborated by the government agency MACPIO, the authors of the study divided the territory into three areas, categorised in the following terms:
**Socio-cultural area**, [later referred to as “historic-cultural area”] consists of spaces which the indigenous peoples traditionally occupy, in which the man-land-nature relation that indigenous people have with their environment is demonstrated, and in which they carry out reproductive activities (hunting, fishing, gathering), achieving an integral use of space. This is the area identified to strengthen the cultural identity of the claimant people.

**Economic-productive area**, spaces or areas where the action of man over nature allows the establishment of a productive process (agricultural, forestry, pastoral, and others). Areas that should provide the necessary natural resources, which, if exploited sustainably, guarantee social and economic growth of the claimants and their future generations.

**Conservation area**, which may or may not be circumscribed as a Protected Area…The Conservation Area has as an end securing the presence of resources provided by biological diversity (flora, fauna, ecosystems etc) necessary for the cultural and biological reproduction of the claimant indigenous people…As is logical, economic management of these areas of a commercial nature is not anticipated, although the exploitation of the natural resources under a system of sustainable management oriented at subsistence consumption is permitted (140).

Together, these three areas can be viewed as an effort to reconcile the multiple and competing logics underpinning TCOs’ legal creation, referred to in Chapter 1. The first, the socio-cultural (or historical-cultural) area reflects the discourses of ancestral (pre-colonial) rights and of “territory as culture” (Engle, 2010), enshrined in ILO Convention 169, as well as in the ways indigenous movement framings of land-territory. The second, the “economic-productive area” rests on a Western ontological separation of subject/object (culture/nature), a postcolonial state logic of productive land use (discussed above), and a neoliberal preoccupation with economic growth. The third, the “conservation area” reflects global concerns with biodiversity conservation and its assumed compatibility with indigenous “traditional” livelihoods. The attempt to reconcile these potentially contradictory visions of territory through the demarcation of different “zones” is emblematic of neoliberal zoning practices, wherein the social and environmental destruction wrought by marketisation is thought to be remediable through the designation of particular natures and populations as “outside of the market” – a logic of spatial governance within which TCOs were themselves embedded.
As well as demonstrating how global discourses of indigenous territory were vernacularised by state employees, the content described above raises an important question: In the process of gaining state recognition, did indigenous peoples unwittingly subject themselves and their territories to the governmental calculations and designs of the state and other governance actors? Certainly, EINEs created a “technical grid of intelligibility” (Scott, 1998: 76) and reflected a “will to improve” (Li, 2007a) on the part of the governmental agencies (MACPIO and VAIO) involved in their elaboration. As the above excerpt makes clear, EINEs went beyond their initial mandate of defining territorial limits, making a series of prescriptive recommendations for indigenous territorial governance, which reflected state and multilateral visions for environmental management, agricultural development and multicultural governance.

Yet, rather than producing a coherent model for indigenous development, what emerged was a series of contradictory expectations for indigenous peoples’ livelihoods and land use practices. On the one hand, this EINE reproduces global multicultural discourses of ethnodevelopment and indigenous social capital (see Andolina et al., 2009: Chapter 2), as illustrated in the following passage:

The indigenous and originary population of the country lives in conditions of poverty and, as a consequence, constitutes one the most vulnerable to the negative effects of the globalization of the economic system. In that sense, the model of calculation supposes that to overcome poverty, two factors are necessary: on the one hand, the sustainable use and exploitation of the natural resources of the TCO and, on the other, the ancestral knowledge of the claimant people regarding the management of those resources. The strategy of overcoming poverty depends on these two factors, as the most important and fundamental in the indigenous cosmovision. The overcoming of poverty will permit cultural, social and economic strengthening of the claimants, which is ultimately what the State looks for through its development policies (134, quoted from the official MACPIO EINE Methodology Guide).

This suggests that sustainable natural resource management and ancestral knowledge alone will lift indigenous people out of poverty. At the same time, the calculation of Guaraní spatial needs in Itika Guasu is based on a model from peasant agriculture, which identifies how much income each household will need “to cover their necessities of the food basket and other basic goods and services for the maintenance of their family”,
factoring in the need for “economic growth” (136). In fact, eighty-eight percent of the recommended area for the TCO is justified with reference to households’ required monetary income. As noted above, this reflects both Bolivian state and neoliberal discourses of productive land use and agrarian development.

The remainder of the territory is earmarked for the combined purposes of conservation and “socio-cultural” activities. Although the suggested overlap between these activities is justified with reference to their inherent compatibility, reflecting global discourse on indigenous peoples as “guardians of nature” (Wade, 2004), the conclusion contradicts this, stating that restrictions may need to be placed on indigenous communities’ activities in order to meet conservation objectives. The authors further suggest “promoting and training the beneficiary population in the integral management and sustainable use of natural resources, with the objective of guaranteeing the perpetuity of the productive processes” (148). Such recommendations are illustrative of what Karen Engle has referred to as the “invisible asterix” of cultural rights, where “in achieving land or development rights based on the protection of their traditional practices, indigenous peoples are often restricted in their ability to make autonomous decisions” (2010: 7). In fact, the conclusion is peppered with further recommendations about what kind of activities, projects and forms of natural resource use should take place in the TCO.

As such, the EINE of Itika Guasu demonstrates how indigenous engagement in processes designed to recognise their territorial rights can also work to reinforce the power of the state or NGOs (rather than indigenous peoples) to govern territory (Hodgson and Schroeder 2002, Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). Above all, it reveals the propensity for knowledge practices designed to identify and understand indigenous territory – in Scott’s terms, to render it “legible” (1998) – to become a form of governmentality in their

175 Based on three categories of land use identified above, the study goes on to identify indigenous spatial needs, relating to forestry, agriculture, pastoral farming and conservation. The first three figures are calculated on the basis of land required to generate a minimum family income, with an added percentage to guarantee “sustainable economic growth”. The study concludes that: “With the awarding of the TCO...the Guarani could arrive at a level of spending of 32,377.82 Bs/family, which would permit them to cover their necessities of the food basket and other basic goods and services for the maintenance of their family” (147).
176 For example, it notes that “The forests in the Guarani demand of Itika Guasu are in a period of natural regeneration and recuperation; for this reason, forestry activity should be restricted” and recommends the elaboration of community forest management plans towards this end (147).
177 For example, it suggests agro-forestry projects, sustainable cattle ranching, access to certified seed, and post-harvest storage facilities could help increase Guarani incomes.
own right. One result is the erasure of indigenous peoples’ own knowledge practices and aspirations regarding territorial development; as CIDOB complained:

Indigenous peoples during the last three years have been the most studied people over the same issue (Characterisation Studies, Preliminary Identification and Spatial Needs Studies) with results that distort their reality (CIDOB-CPTI, 2000: 43).

Yet, the contradictory and entangled logics of this EINE – and the contingent processes that surrounded its production – diverge from Scott’s depiction of “legibility” as a basis for “large-scale social engineering” (1989: 5). The state certainly does not appear here as a unitary, all-powerful entity acting under a coherent logic of rule; rather it was represented by largely foreign-funded staff, which included indigenous rights activists, who patched together knowledges and methodologies developed over a previous period of indigenous and NGO activism. As such, the EINE was more of an attempt to inscribe sovereign authority over highly contingent processes than a reflection of the state’s actual power to govern indigenous territories. If anything, it was non-state actors whose role in territorial governance is made apparent by these processes.

Reflecting Moore’s analysis of governmentality in postcolonial Kaerezi (Zimbabwe), indigenous territories in Bolivia were subject to “shifting alignments and contingent constellations of power” rather than “a single ruling rationality” or a “coherent regime of intelligibility” (2005: 7-8).

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178 This refers to other preliminary studies conducted by INRA during the initial stages of the SAN-TCO legal process.
179 This includes historical evidence, used to show that “the area currently demanded by the communities of Itika Guasu corresponds with the historic and traditionally occupied area” (VAIO and MACPIO, 2000: 145).
Appendix 4: Timeline of TCO titling process in Itika Guasu, 1996-2009

1996
12 Sep The APG IG presents a TCO demand for an area of 229,800 has.

1997
10 Jan The government accepts the TCO demand of IG.
27 Mar IG is officially declared an area of SAN-TCO.

13 Jul INRA immobilises the TCO area, redefined as 216,002.7571 Has. The start of the legal titling process is delayed due to a lack of funds.

1998
7 Dec INRA declares the start of the titling process and advises landholders, tenants and beneficiaries to confirm their identity and legal personality by presenting themselves and their documentation to INRA.

1999
Dec INRA conducts the publicity campaign for the SAN-TCO process.

2000
14 Mar -31 Dec INRA conducts the fieldwork phase of the process, which aims to obtain technical-legal data for the properties within the TCO, and to verify the social economic function (FES) and social function (FS) of these properties. Following an initial meeting on March 14th in the Guarani community Puerto Margarita (zone 3), with the participation of representatives of all interested parties, INRA commences the delimitation and elaboration of polygonal plans, the identification of properties, the measurement of plots, the catastral measurement, the elaboration of plans and legal documents. Fieldwork unfolds in a context of high tension. During its course, 26 of the 27 identified Guarani communities make informal agreements with third parties regarding the boundaries of communal spaces and private properties.

7 Dec The Ministry of Peasant, Indigenous and Originary Peoples’ Affairs (MAIPO) releases the Spatial Needs Identification Study (EINE), which recommends awarding 293,584 has to the APG IG.

2001
Jan INRA closes the fieldwork stage having identified 121 properties of third parties (cattle ranchers and arable farmers), 3 peasant communities and 10 Guarani communal areas. 68,385 Has are identified as unclaimed land and Guarani communal areas. The phase of legal-technical evaluation begins.

INRA begins presenting results. The cattle ranchers express their dissatisfaction but do not formalise their appeals.

2002
After evaluating the national context, the APG asks INRA for a “partial titling” of the TCO.
June INRA awards the APG IG an area of 68.385 Has (the true area is later redefined as 64.758 Has). There are complaints from third parties but no formal legal challenge.

2003

March Presentation of results. Third parties begin to make claims in an organised manner.

March-May INRA initiates “roundtable agreements” between Guaraní communities and non-Guaraní cattle ranchers, which result in 33 “Conciliation Acts”.

November President Carlos Mesa signs the legal title for the first territorial award to the APG, for an area of 64.758 Has.

2004-5

INRA conducts an internal quality control, during which the agency loses legal files.

December INRA notifies some third parties with Final Resolutions for their properties and the process becomes paralysed by conflict. The cattle ranchers demand an audit of the titling process and present complaints before the National Agrarian Tribunal, claiming irregularities in the titling process.

2006

The process remains paralysed and conflicts increase between third parties and Guaraní residents of the TCO. The APG IG demands progress on the elaboration of Final Resolutions.

2007

April INRA Tarija announces that it does not have sufficient funds to continue the process.

April-June The APG-IG holds meetings with INRA Tarija, the National Director of INRA and other government ministries to agree on a timetable for progress.

September The APG secures funding through the Departmental Indigenous Unit UDAIPO for the notifications. INRA National Office enters the TCO to notify third parties with 6 Final Resolutions. The APG learns that there are more than 30 still to be elaborated, and 46 to be implemented.

October The APG presents the Prefecture of Tarija with a project to secure funding for the continuation of the SAN-TCO process in IG, Villamontes and Yacuiba. The project is rejected by the Municipal Council.

2008

January The APG IG visits INRA Tarija and secures an agreement regarding progress of the legal process. INRA notifies the APG IG with a resolution for a second TCO title of 27.007 has.

April The APG IG learns that funds from the Direct Hydrocarbons Tax (IDH) will be used to continue the processes of SAN-TCO in Tarija. The Prefecture will provide 3 million Bolivianos to continue the process.
Jul INRA Tarija claims it has funding for only some notifications. After revising files, the agency decides to challenge 17 before the National Agrarian Tribunal (TAN) due to the irregularity of the informal agreements, which led to modification of “untouchable” INRA documents on the social economic function (FES) of properties.

Aug The Prefecture decides to paralyse the payments which were going to finance the continuation of the SAN-TCO process, owing to pressure from the cattle ranching sector.

Sept INRA presents the APG IG with the plans and Final Resolutions for the second award, lacking only the legal title (inscription in real rights)

Oct The APG pressures the National office of INRA to create a Special Auditing Unit to revise the legality of all the files in the process SAN-TCO in IG

2009

Mar The APG IG pass a vote agreeing to give the government until the end of the month to present proposals for the continuation of the process, reserving the right to “take other action”. A demand for a meeting is sent to the President. INRA presents the APG with a timetable for continuing the process.

May The APG IG sends a letter to the Land Ministry requesting the indefinite suspension of the SAN-TCO titling process and the “annulment of all the assignments to irregular third parties, that is, those who have violated their resource rights” (discussed in Chapter 5).
In Tacuarandi, O’Connor
Two NGOs promote conflict over land

Community members from Tacuarandi* hold responsible a few NGOs, like CERDET and the Equipo de Apoyo al Pueblo Guaraní, for bringing to this zone a confrontation between campesinos and indigenous people over land, through a bad titling process implemented by INRA in 2000.

“Through the intervention of a few NGOs they’ve created discrimination, these money-grabbing Machiavellians employ the principle of “divide and rule”, denounced the representative of some campesinos, Walter Ferrufino, not ruling out a kind of war for land. The complainant, indicating that the NGOs do whatever they want without any oversight, has acquired substantial documentation which he intends to send to the embassies of the countries that finance this type of organisation.

CAPABLE OF ANYTHING
“They should find out what they are donating money to and what they do with this money”, he emphasised, warning that the campesinos are capable of anything in order to make people respect their land rights, which is a highly sensitive issue, concerning their whole life’s work.

INRA carried out a land titling process, establishing an Original Communal Land (TCO) for the indigenous people with an area of 216 thousand hectares, however: 80 per cent of this plot is occupied by campesino families.

LAND TITLING
As a consequence, the indigenous people, with the argument of the TCO and the support of the NGOs, tried to evict the campesinos from the land which, according to them, they have occupied since their ancestors, and [they claim] the land titling was very badly undertaken.

“We’re on the brink of a new Pananti”, Ferrufino again warned. In Pananti, Gran Chaco, there was a bloody confrontation between the Landless [MST] settlers and cattle ranchers over this issue, with the tragic toll of eight people dead at the beginning of this decade.

VIOLATING THEIR RIGHTS
The campesina Silvia Segovia said that the indigenous people are starting to violate their rights with the argument of being owners of the land and that the campesinos are tenants, they expect payment in calves, “no one gives [help] to us like the NGOs give to them”, she said.

“We lived here before the Chaco War, we feel like natives from here, a year ago the NGOs took away four families from Tacuarandi, where we live, that started the conflict, they’re committing violations”, complained the campesino Mario Torrez.

* A campesino community in Itika Guasu.

180 My translation, grammatical errors in original.
Appendix 6: Additional details of the APG IG-Repsol negotiations and Friendship Agreement

1. Notes on the scaling up of the APG IG-Repsol conflict

The scaling up of the Itika Guasu resource conflict initially occurred through transnational networks of NGO activism. During the early 2000s, both CERDET and CEADES were receiving funding for their work on hydrocarbons from Oxfam International, through its Extractive Industries Program. Oxfam Intermon – a member of Oxfam International – also became directly involved with the Itika Guasu conflict, as part of a region-wide campaign entitled “Repsol Mata” (Repsol Kills), which aimed to publicise Repsol YPF’s violations of indigenous rights in the context of hydrocarbon development in Latin America. It was as part of this campaign that several APG IG leaders, CERDET and CEADES staff travelled to Madrid in May 2006 to meet with representatives of Repsol YPF’s head office and the Spanish government (Radio Niskor, October 2007). During these meetings, the APG IG made public the results of a report documenting the social, environmental, and cultural harms that Repsol YPF has inflicted in TCO Itika Guasu (Intermon et al., 2005). However, negotiations between the APG IG and Repsol broke down and APG IG leaders decided to abandon the negotiating strategy promoted by CERDET and CEADES. Instead, during this trip, they made an agreement with Equipo Nizkor to work together on an international legal campaign directed at Repsol YPF’s head office. Since this time (May 2006), the APG IG leadership has maintained close contact with Equipo Niskor via email and Skype.

While some Guarani informants argued that the shift in strategy was because they realised that their NGO allies lacked negotiating experience and clout, discussions also point to another factor: the APG IG came to believe that Intermon – and by proxy CERDET and CEADES, who it financed – had come under indirect influence from Repsol, and could no longer be trusted as allies. The source of this theory – the veracity of which I was unable to verify – was a former CEADES employee, who claims that he was told that he could no longer criticise Repsol in Intermon’s name, because Intermon was receiving funding from the Spanish bank, CAIXA, which had shares in Repsol YPF (informal discussion, fieldnotes, 24/7/11). This individual soon left CEADES and emerged as an influential “technical advisor” working within the APG IG on its new “legal strategy”.

If the above events implicated NGO networks in the “oil complex” (Watts, 2009), then other observers have asked questions about the origins of Equipo Niskor’s own funding. These questionings came to a fore in December 2011, when a local newspaper El País published an article entitled “NGO Nizkor won’t give names of donors; APG IG leaders disappear” (El País, 16/12/11), which reported on a journalist’s failed enquiry into the nature of the interests behind Equipo Niskor (assumed to be suspect). This investigation must be placed in the context of departmental elites’ own interests in natural gas development in the TCO and frustration at the APG IG’s success in halting the construction of a gas pipeline in the TCO in 2011.

Whatever the truth of these various allegations, the above account demonstrates the APG IG’s imbrication of a complex web of extra-territorial actors, whose interests and relations are not always clear. It is also interesting to note the complaint of the
Ombudsman of Tarija in November 2011 (cited in the above article), that he had been unable to enter the offices of the APG IG, which, he observed, seemed to form part of “a kind of super-State, in which no one can enter”. This is indicative of the tense and secretive atmosphere surrounding the APG IG’s negotiations with Repsol, when leaders had received explicit instruction from Equipo Niskor advisors not to talk to any “outsiders” – a situation that I was also compelled to navigate.

2. Radio Niskor announcement played at APG IG 22nd Anniversary celebrations, Naurenda, 23rd March, 2011

The Assembly of the Guarani People of Itika Guasu (APG IG) announced that March 11th, 2011 marked the beginning of the financial activity of the "Itika Guasu Investment Fund", launched with an investment amount of 14.8 million dollars. The Itika Guasu Investment Fund was approved by the assembly of the APG IG for a period of 10 years renewable and its investment base is mainly sovereign and corporate debt of the highest credit rating. The fund will be administered by a "Council of Sages" appointed according to Guarani customs and uses, and its legal representative is the current President of the APG IG…The Banco de Brasil has accepted to undertake the management of the fund and it will provide its financial advice on a long term basis, having been chosen for having a solid Bank solvency and assets security. This fund results from the “Agreement of Friendship and Co-operation between the Assembly of the Guarani People of Itika Guasu and Repsol YPF E&P Bolivia SA”, approved by the General Assembly of our organization on December 1st, 2010 and signed before a Notary Public on December 29th, 2010. This agreement was reached on October 1st, 2010 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra between high representatives of Repsol Bolivia S.A. and British Gas (BP), on the one side, and APG IG legal representatives on the other, and it subsequently received the endorsement of E&P, representative of British Petroleum…The legal and financial advice for the implementation of the Agreement, as well as the financial negotiations and the establishment of the “Itika Guasu Investment Fund”, were led by…[the] President of Equipo Nizkor, and by members of this organization who are specialized in international commercial and financial law, as well as indigenous law…The APG IG considers that this agreement is the first of its kind signed in Latin America with a multinational oil corporation, therefore, we hope that it will have an impact on the practices in the oil industry, it being also a specific and concrete contribution to the demands of the Bolivian and Latin American indigenous communities.

3. Abbreviated transcription of anniversary speech by President of APG IG, Ñaurenda, March 23rd, 2011

Dear Friends:

We have gathered here in the Community of Ñaurenda to celebrate another year of the Assembly of the Guarani People of Itika Guasu (APG IG), another year of the People of Itika Guasu, another year of the existence of the Communal Land of Origin of Itika Guasu. But the significance of the past year is such that this year's anniversary is not like
any other; it is a very special year that we will forever remember and I think that we have reason to believe that it will also be remembered by our children and their children. In this past year, important measures were taken for achieving the legal recognition of our rights as indigenous communities, our rights to our land, and the recognition of our uses and customs.

Last December 29th, we signed an Agreement with Repsol Bolivia SA that put an end to the tough conflict that lasted several years. But we signed without giving up any of our rights and instead obtaining full legal recognition of our ownership of the Communal Land of Origin and of the existence of the APG IG…We have established, among others…the creation of the Itika Guasu Investment Fund, whose financial activity, as it has been announced, began last March 11th. This fund is the first of its kind in Bolivia and in Latin America and is part of our long-term financing strategy, which will allow us to progress in our own development. This guarantees our true autonomy and that of our children. These 14.8 million dollars will serve to develop first and foremost medical care for our children and women and will attend to our long-term needs.

…Our right to consultation has been recognised, not as an administrative measure, but rather in the form of a continuous supervision of the company's activities on our land and the companies' duty to respect our uses and customs and that, in the case of conflict, these uses and customs will be recognized and considered a legal priority for the purpose of reaching a resolution. We have also managed to incorporate into our Agreement with Repsol…international human rights law, international commercial law and international criminal law; the 169 International Labour Organisation Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention and the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights are also incorporated into our Agreement with Repsol. In other words, this does not consist recognition based on formality or rhetoric. These form an integral part of the Agreement, which implies recognition of all of the rights of indigenous peoples and our civil liberties. This is the first time that an oil company has signed such an agreement in Bolivia and in Latin America.

…Before finishing, I would like to say to you all that our wish is to defend all of our fellow companions and authorities, and to this end we will resort to all financial and legal means available to us. In this way, I appeal specifically for the defence of our uses and customs for the purpose of confronting those who attempt to usurp our lands, our forests and, most seriously, our authorities. As you will see, this new position presents us with many challenges, including, among others, the necessary training for the purpose of managing our own resources so that our children within a generation will have the means that we have never had and that will guarantee their education, their access to healthcare and adequate housing, and in addition, profitable projects that guarantee our development in the long-term. But we will not achieve this without everyone's effort and collaboration. Today, more than ever, we must remain united in order to be able to move forward. May these significant achievements be the beginning of a new era of which we can be very proud.
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