Performing Indigeneity in Bolivia: The Struggle Over the TIPNIS

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INTRODUCTION: VIGIL FOR A ‘FAILED’ EVENT

In 2012, the elected leaders of Bolivia’s lowland indigenous organisation, CIDOB (Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia—Confederation of Bolivian Indigenous Peoples) staged a public vigil in the main plaza of the lowland capital of Santa Cruz, Bolivia. It was 9 August, the Day of Indigenous Peoples. The organisers had erected a big tent with photos of the recent marches CIDOB had organised to protest the government’s proposed plan to build a highway through an indigenous territory and national park known as TIPNIS (Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park). Isiboro Sécure has been an important area for indigenous organising since 1990, when, responding to the demands of the first Indigenous March for Territory and Dignity, the president issued an

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executive decree giving shared title to three groups of indigenous residents: the Tsimane, Yuracarés, and Trinitario-Mojeños. Then, in 2009, the area was given the designation of TCO (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*), a collective title under the agrarian reform law. The TIPNIS is now a 3869 square mile preserve, home to 63 communities, organised into two *subcentrales*. President Barrientos originally declared the TIPNIS a national park in 1965.

The photos showed the 1200-kilometre journey that the lowlands community members and their highland allies had made the previous year to bring an end to the highway project, which had not been the subject of a prior consultation as required by the new 2009 constitution. The TIPNIS project proved to be a lightning rod for national and international debates about extractivist development, pitting indigenous and environmental organisations against the government and transnational oil companies. While struggles between indigenous peoples and extractivist projects are common across Latin America, the TIPNIS controversy drew international attention because Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president and the leader of Bolivia's 'cultural, democratic revolution', pushed for the highway despite the opposition of some indigenous communities. CIDOB's 2011 march led to a temporary victory, but, in 2012, a follow-up march had fizzled out, without any agreement being reached with the government. The march's leaders returned empty handed to the lowlands, only to find the government had organised a takeover of their organisation's headquarters by a sector of indigenous people who allied themselves with the government. As we explain below, the TIPNIS debate sparked conflicts in an already divided indigenous movement between those opposed to the government's plan and, especially, its failure to consult those most impacted, and those who felt the highway would link their isolated communities to markets and educational opportunities. The state used a 'divide and conquer' strategy to fill CIDOB with its supporters. Locked out of their headquarters, Adolfo Chávez, CIDOB's elected president, and other officials from his organisation waited in the plaza, trying to arouse public support. On that August day, we sat on the park benches with friends from nearby Guaraní communities, who cried as they described the shocking takeover of CIDOB the week before. Chávez explained that the TIPNIS case represented a 'most notorious abuse of our rights'. 'Even though the laws establish with clarity that the government should respect the [TIPNIS] territory and national park, we are feeling the contempt this

government—like no other government before—has for us, the indigenous people of the eastern lowlands, the Chaco, and the Amazon’ (pers. comm. 9 August 2012).

In this moment of crisis, Adolfo and his staff did what they had often done in the past: frame their cause by performing representations of ‘good’ indigeneity, linking their defence of territory to images of nature. That morning, a few faithful CIDOB staff had assembled in the tent, using images that had proven so helpful in capturing national and international attention for the 2011 march. Glossy posters showed mothers carrying their children strapped to their backs in colourful fabrics. Long lines of peaceful marchers wearing T-shirts and flip-flops trudged up steep roads from the tropics into the freezing cold of the Andes Mountains carrying banners of the colourful *patujú* flower (*Heliconia rostrata*), a symbol of the tropical forest. To make their struggle for territory relatable to the urban mestizos whose support they were trying to gain, the organisers chose images of clearly recognisable indigenous people, motherhood, and ‘nature’. Gesturing to large green plants she had placed around the tent, one CIDOB staffer said, ‘this is to represent the nature we are fighting for’. Posters decrying government repression of the 2011 march accompanied T-shirts for sale bearing the slogan: ‘For the dignity of all the Indigenous Peoples’.

In this chapter, we describe how the TIPNIS controversy was fought, in large part, through performances, with different groups—the government, lowland elite, feminist groups, and lowland indigenous organisations (at both the local community level and the national organisation level)—using images and symbols of indigeneity to support their demands. Indigeneity is a fundamental site of politics where disagreements about the nature of the state, national sovereignty, its political subjects, and its relationship to land get played out with high consequences. As we show, the TIPNIS conflict illuminated a deep divide in Bolivia about the value of nature. Indigenous actors, along with others, challenged capitalist notions of the land and its resources, calling on indigenous cosmovisions and repertoires to argue for the protection of indigenous territory. Some of our fellow contributors to this volume might theorise this contestation through the lens of a ‘politics of nature’ or draw on Viveiros de Castro’s notion of ‘controlled equivocation’ (Viveiros de Castro 1998). While this can be a very productive exercise, our focus here is a different form of politics of nature. We examine, instead, the ways indigeneity stands in for a notion of nature in political struggles. We show how various actors perform ‘the virtuous’ or ‘good’ Indian in order to stake claims and defend

their notions of nature. As the TIPNIS case shows, especially when combined with representations of gender, indigeneity provides useful cultural and ethical material on which to base political and economic contestations because its tropes are well known and malleable.

This chapter makes two main interventions into the questions of both indigeneity and performance. First, we suggest that indigeneity here serves as what Povinelli (2011), following Foucault, would call an ‘ethical substance’, a central site of moral reflection and conduct in a certain era or ‘social world’ (Povinelli 2011: 10). In each world, the ‘ethical work’ of the self is to be in proper relation to the ethical substance identified as central (ibid.: 15). For Bolivia, we argue, indigeneity acts as such an ethical substance, a prime site of social ordering and anxiety. Povinelli uses the term to refer to both the material substance, that is, the people and bodies defined as indigenous, as well as the concept and representations of indigeneity, all of which serve as a site of ‘embodied potentiality’, possibilities that become ‘eventualised’ (or not) in particular moments and arrangements of forces (ibid.: 16). Who counts as legitimately indigenous and what ethical work such evaluations entail has been the centre of Bolivian politics since the colonial era. It is especially so in the era of Morales, whose government claims to have enacted an emancipatory indigenous state benefitting Bolivia’s poor and indigenous population, thus ‘eventualising’ the potentialities inherent in indigeneity. That is why the TIPNIS controversy became such a watershed moment for the Morales government: the government’s ethical and political commitments to bettering the lives of all indigenous peoples came into question. We suggest that an analysis of the varied TIPNIS performances provides a critical lens onto the ways performance acts to shape social worlds, as actors articulate specific figurations of ethical substance.

Second, we inquire into the politics of performance, arguing that these debates over indigeneity are played out in particular organisations of power, with differentially distributed capacities and vulnerabilities. We describe how both the Bolivian state and CIDOB performed the good Indian. Yet, we show that the state uses its position of relative power to define what good means in this context. The Morales administration pits an imagined, pre-modern, passive (female) lowland indigenous figure against a modern, politically agentive (male) highland Aymara figure. In contrast, despite all its efforts to embody the good Indian, in 2012, CIDOB did not have sufficient political power to garner public support or force the state to accede to their demands. Meanwhile, other actors were

able to use their performed versions of the good Indian to push their ethical political agendas, such as state development or gender equality. We argue that the interplay between gender and performances of indigeneity is a key site of politics in this case. How does performance help us theorise indigeneity as an ethical substance, at once semiotic and material, that distinct actors can claim access to and use for their own benefit? How can we evaluate performance as a political tool?

PERFORMANCES, POLITICS, AND ETHICAL SUBSTANCE

Anthropology has taken up performance as a way to theorise the presentation of self (see Turner 1988). For example, Dwight Conquergood (1991) showed how individual performances give marginalised subjects (whether Latino youth gang members or Hmong immigrants in Wisconsin) the ability to invert power structures and rewrite dominant narratives. Similarly, Sarah Warren (2009) shows how urban Mapuche women in Argentina construct their indigenous identity through gendered performances involving 'authentic' clothing, jewellery, and language, risking reinforcing gender stereotypes for the possibility of enhanced ethnic visibility. But Sergio Huarcaya (2015) points to the distinction between Judith Butler's now famous 1988 concept of 'performativity', the construction of the subject by the reiteration of norms, and 'performance', 'bounded acts done by a subject who consciously performs'. He argues, and we agree, that indigeneity is 'both performed and performative' (ibid.: 809ff). That is, as we show below, who and what constitutes 'indigenous' is constructed both through governmentality, that is, through norms emanating from both market logics and state discourses, as well as through individual and collective agentic performances.

We add to these anthropological approaches to performance by drawing from Elizabeth Povinelli's rich theorisation of what she calls 'ethical substance' (Povinelli 2011: 14ff). Povinelli does not use this term in relation to performance; instead, she uses it to analyse a form of liberal governmentality in which particular arrangements of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance make distributions of life and death, endurance, and exhaustion seem practical and sensible. We find particularly useful her focus on the ways that societies come to define certain objects as central sites of moral and ethical concern. What, she asks, is the material on which such ethical work is carried out in particular places and times? In settler colonial societies, indigenous peoples are understood and governed

through discursive and linguistic strategies that place them in the genealogical past, as opposed to the modern agentive present and future inhabited by settlers. This ‘governance of the prior’ is enacted through forms of representation and language and lived and embodied under differently structured material conditions (ibid.). It is a site of discursive framing and governance, but it is also very much material, as the bodies, lives, and deaths of native peoples are the substance through which the ethical debates are carried out.

We consider indigeneity a key ethical substance, a central site by which life and death have been organised in colonial and postcolonial societies. Scholars have described the discursive and material means by which indigenous peoples have been constructed as objects, labour, and nonhumans (cf. Hall 1996). Indigenous territories have been occupied, their bodies tortured and massacred. Over the last decades, however, as indigenous peoples have organised and proposed alternatives to coloniality, capitalism, and liberalism, they have made visible the liberating ‘potentialities’ immanent in the ethical substance of indigeneity (Povinelli 2011: 12–14). A central part of the Morales revolution has been to bring indigenous peoples and their values, ethics, and practices to the centre of the nation and to use these ideals to reconstruct laws, practices of governance, and a constitution. This theoretical framing seems more relevant in the Bolivian context than, for instance, a Bourdieusian perspective that might see indigeneity as a form of symbolic capital. Rather, the Morales revolution has been an ethical project, used to draw attention to the founding violence of the Bolivian state and the continuing legacies of it. In essence, this aimed to challenge the ordering of society, enacted through the governance of the prior. Through laws, policies, and performance, Morales has linked his political and economic agenda of resource extractivism, what he calls ‘economic liberation’, to a particular form of indigeneity. As Andrew Canessa rightly puts it:

[i]n Morales’s Bolivia, political legitimacy rests on being indigenous (although this is, of course, contested). On many occasions Morales has positioned the indigenous as being the best place from which to defend and protect the nation’s resources and to push for social justice on a very wide front. Indigeneity provides his government with the legitimacy to rule and a platform from which to protect the nation against cultural and economic globalization (even as he embraces many of its key aspects); in short, indigeneity is the foundation of a new nationalism. (2014: 17–18)

But, as Canessa points out, indigeneity is not a neutral or static notion; it is rather a constructed category that is under constant renovation and contestation. It is also relational. On the one hand, as Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn (2007) point out, 'indigenous cultural practices, institutions, and politics *become such* in articulation with what is not considered indigenous within the particular social formation in which they exist' (2007: 4). On the other hand, as Stuart Hall (1996) has shown, indigeneity has always been composed of opposing images: the noble savage versus the dangerous cannibal, the educable peasant farmer versus the radical revolutionary.

Charles Hale (2002, 2004) has argued that these dualities took a specific form in the neoliberal era. He showed how shifts in state ideology towards multiculturalism paired with aggressive neoliberal policies led to a new form of governance that reconstituted racial hierarchies in new forms (2004:16). The core of neoliberalism's 'cultural project', he argued, was 'the creation of subjects who govern themselves in accordance with the logic of capitalism' (ibid.: 17). As a result, using a term first formulated by Bolivian scholar Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Hale argues that this form of governance 'proactively creates and rewards' the *Indio permitido* (the authorised Indian) whose demands for rights do not challenge the state or global capital, while it condemns the 'undeserving, dysfunctional Other', the *Indio prohibido* (the prohibited Indian) to 'racialized spaces of poverty and social exclusion' (ibid.: 19).

Hale's analysis clarified what scholars across Latin America were observing, giving us a vocabulary to describe the subject positions 'responsibilised' multicultural indigenous actors appeared to be inhabiting. It is important to recognise the specificity of the historical moment that Hale carefully traced: the *indio permitido* was a subject position produced during the neoliberal period in Latin America. Hale relied on a Foucaultian framework to explain the effects of a particular form of neoliberal governmentality. He described how non-state actors like nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and international aid agencies encouraged or discouraged different kinds of conduct. One of the hallmarks of neoliberal governmentality is that it works through the 'techniques of the self', rewarding subjects who enact the appropriate behaviour themselves. Thus, Hale noted, in the neoliberal era, visibly repressive tactics were rare. Instead, neoliberal governmentality served 'the more reasonable proposition of nudging "radical" demands back inside the line dividing the authorized from the prohibited' (ibid.: 19).

Our analysis of the performances during the TIPNIS case shows two important shifts in thinking about how the image of *indio permitido* has been articulated during the Morales era. First, while there have been numerous debates about whether the Morales regime is ‘post-neoliberal’ or rather an extension of neoliberalism (see Postero and Goodale 2013), we see here that the *indio permitido* continues to have purchase in a period where the state uses what Foucault would call its ‘sovereign power’ (Foucault 1991): direct state violence, legal sanctions, and economic co-optation. That is, notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Indians continue to circulate in the narratives we recount here, but they are not only those emanating from a neoliberal logic, as Hale described. Instead, the Bolivian state uses these notions as a part of the tools of sovereignty to reinforce indigenous groups who cleave to the state line and support capitalist accumulation and extractive industries and to punish those who fail to acculturate to the workings of the market.

Second, rather than only being a site of self-government or a means to access government technologies of care, we show that indigeneity is also a fundamental site of politics where actors use performance to overtly contest what form of development is appropriate for local communities and who gets to decide. Thus, being a good Indian or bad Indian in the Morales era results in more than encouragement or abandonment; it is more than a cultural project. It is also a political project about development, extractivism, and sovereignty fought at the site of ethical substance. This has material implications: as we show below, being a bad Indian (in this case, resisting a particular form of development) can result in jail, organisational takeovers, violent physical repression, or the dispossession of territory. Thus, the agentive performances of indigeneity we document in this chapter are political acts of disagreement. Facing this mode of government, indigenous people, their allies, and the state all carry out politics through spectacle, protest, and performance.

Why are spectacle and cultural performance so important? Scholars have noted how ritual, drama, and carnival can offer a critique of the existing social system by presenting alternative forms of living and social ordering (Guss 2000; Mendoza 2000). Obviously, this is most clear in the spectacles of the state; it is through spectacle that national political communities are imagined, created, and communicated to subject-citizens (Anderson 1983; Joseph and Nugent 1994; Corrigan and Sayer 1985). But spectacles can also be tools for political protest, serving as a means for marginalised groups to thrust themselves into the public sphere ‘through

dramas of citizenship' (Holston and Appadurai 1999). There is a long history of social movements in Bolivia using the repertoire of embodied performance as a vehicle for structural change. These include hunger strikes against the dictatorship, highland Andean women blocking major roadways with their bodies, and the Landless Movements squatting on rural hacienda lands to protest inequities in land distribution. In the TIPNIS case, we describe here, multiple actors use such repertoires to debate not only the appropriate form of national development but also the fundamental political questions of who decides.

PERFORMANCES AND STATE-MAKING IN BOLIVIA

Morales and his MAS (Movimiento Al Socialismo or Movement Towards Socialism) party came to power in 2005 by challenging the neoliberal policies of previous regimes and promising to redistribute the patrimony of the country to its poor and indigenous populations. This anti-neoliberal agenda was paired with a promise to 'decolonise' the Bolivian state, to overcome the structures and practices of racism against its majority indigenous population. Thus, Morales and the MAS were charged with bringing into being a new revolutionary state and institutionalising a 'process of change'.

As Farthing and Kohl (2013) note, the robust rural oral history traditions in Bolivia facilitate cross-generational transmission of past injustices, transforming storytelling into sites of political action. Morales has been particularly adept at using this repertoire, mobilising performances of indigeneity to play upon emotions of the disenfranchised masses—for whom indigeneity has become a sign indexing their oppression as well as a platform for claiming rights (see Canessa 2014). James Jasper (1998: 409) has urged social movement scholars to take emotions seriously, arguing that emotions and affective reactions are integral to building social movements. He suggests, in fact, that people are often recruited into movements after suffering what he calls 'moral shocks', leading them to channel their anger into righteous indignation and political activity. This brings our attention back to the question of ethical substance: we suggest that political performances draw upon emotional responses precisely because they impact deeply held ethical positions.

The Morales administration has tapped this deep well in many of its performances. For instance, Morales began his administration with a memorable inauguration ritual at the archaeological complex at Tiwanaku,

where he was blessed and cleansed by Aymara spiritual leaders. There, invoking the Andean notion of *pachakuti*, or reversal of the world order, he declared the beginning of a new millennium of justice for indigenous peoples of the continent (Postero 2007). For every critical legislative reform, Morales rallies support through spectacular events mobilising indigenous history and tales of oppression and injustice. For instance, when Morales passed the New Agrarian Reform law in 2006, he organised social movement activists in the city of Peñas, the site of the brutal death of eighteenth-century anti-colonial Aymara revolutionary Tupac Katari. Addressing thousands of peasant farmers, he declared: ‘I stand before you today ... at the site where Julian Tupac Katari was *descuartizado* [quartered].... We are here to liberate our country, and Katari is the principal reference point for the indigenous struggles in Bolivia and a constant reminder of the obligation to decolonise Bolivia’ (see La República 2006). Through these performance events, Morales embodies the spirit of Katari as the leader of a movement liberating the country from a colonialist and racist history. Here, we see the hegemonic redemption story of the new state, which promises to put the evil of colonialism in the past and lead the way to a future of justice (see Meister 2011). Gathering up past and contemporary struggles over land and territory, Morales makes his national project of decolonisation seem universal, incontestable, and deeply ethical.

A second important narrative that Morales embodies has to do with what Kohl and Farthing (2012) call ‘resource nationalism’. In contrast to the long history of natural resource extraction—first by the Spanish conquistadors, then by white-mestizo elite, and finally by transnational corporations—the MAS state promises to construct a new form of justice based on redistribution of resource wealth to the indigenous and poor. This position has enormous emotional weight with Bolivia’s poor, especially as it is combined with a strong system of public redistribution through *bonos*, or cash transfers (Postero 2013). During the MAS administration, the economy greatly improved (CEPAL 2012). As his definitive 2014 electoral victory showed, this has been an extremely effective tool of state formation; despite widespread criticism of Morales, peasants, labourers, and working classes rallied behind him.

As was clear from earlier examples, Morales initially argued that indigenous values could be mobilised to create radical changes like land reform, management of natural resources, and protection of Mother Earth. In recent speeches, however, Morales has argued that the country’s goal is ‘economic liberation’ (Morsolin 2015). Elsewhere, we have argued that

‘economic liberation’ has become a powerful new consensus in plurinational Bolivia, building on and replacing previous revolutionary discourses of indigeneity, decolonisation, and even global climate change (Postero and Fabricant *in press*; Postero 2017). In the MAS state’s new vision, one version of indigeneity is now rearticulated as part of global capitalism under a new rubric of national sovereignty. Morales uses an ethical stance here as well, arguing that profits from extractivism will benefit indigenous communities as well as support national sovereignty.

THE TIPNIS PROJECT

It was within this context of development, extractivism, and economic liberation that TIPNIS exploded. In 2010, Morales announced a plan to build a highway linking the tropics of Cochabamba to the Brazilian border. The highway was to be funded by the Brazilian national development bank, opening new possibilities for trade with Brazil. The Morales government claimed that the highway would bring prosperity and trade to lowland peoples and help the state achieve control of the national territory. But the proposed highway would run through the Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park, both a forest preserve and TCO (communally held indigenous lands). Many residents feared that the road would bring ever-greater ecological destruction to a region already deeply affected by cattle ranching and illegal forestry. They were particularly concerned that it would open up their lands to further colonisation by Andean coca growers, who already inhabited one section of the park. Other local indigenous communities were pleased with the possibilities that the paved road might bring by linking them to bigger cities and markets and bringing increased access to education and healthcare systems. Here, we see national narratives of autonomy and sovereignty localised to indigenous communities. In his analysis of the TIPNIS case, John McNeish (2013) explained these opposing views by pointing to differing relationships with resource extraction: some indigenous communities are linked to the market in deeper and more positive ways than others, making them more likely to want more reliable access to markets for their goods and labour. However, it is clear that people’s position in the labour and agricultural markets did not map perfectly onto their positions on the road. There were many other factors, including their own assessments of whether they and their families would be directly benefitted, the histories of clientelism in the community, the seasonal labour opportunities available, leaders’

experiences in and loyalties to national indigenous organisations, NGO influences, marriages and friendships, and so forth (see McNeish and Arteaga Böhrt 2013). Building on McNeish, Anna Laing (2015) argued that the contrasting ideas about territory, rights, and nature that emerged on the marches reflected competing demands for resource sovereignty. Who should benefit from the resources of the territory, and, more importantly, who should decide? How to balance between protecting ‘nature’ and benefitting from ‘development’? As a result of these difficult tensions, Cecilie Hirsch (2012) argues, leaders were forced to make difficult pragmatic decisions to bring resources to their communities, despite their overarching concerns for the sustainability of the forest.

Even among those who opposed the highway, few were opposed to development, in general, or even the construction of a highway. Marilín Karayuri, a Guaraní journalist who worked as part of the communications committee of the march, told us that the marchers were mostly concerned that they had not been consulted about the placement of the road or the potential damages to the environment. When the project was announced in 2011, instead of carrying out the constitutionally mandated right to be consulted about development projects that might impact them, President Morales notoriously declared ‘Like it or not, we will construct this highway’ (*La Jornada* 2011). Thus, says Karayuri, the TIPNIS struggle represented a much larger concern than the highway. ‘If they could enter in this territory that was titled by the government, and a national park, they could enter into any indigenous territory. So TIPNIS signified the gateway to all indigenous territories’ (pers. comm. 11 July 2016). This was critical because many lowland indigenous communities saw this government as once again sacrificing them and their territories for ‘national’ development, the benefits of which they would not reap. This was the crux of the issue, as lowland communities saw the state’s actions as undermining the state’s ethical responsibility to protect indigenous lands and territories, not open up more veins to world market extractivism. To register their opposition, especially to the lack of consultation, the CIDOB and the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ) mounted two nonviolent marches.

The first, in 2011, captured international attention when the national police intervened in the small town of Chaparina, teargasing and firing rubber bullets at the protestors, including women and children. This changed the public debate substantially, and when the march finally arrived

in La Paz, the centre of Morales' political support, it received a warm and massive welcome. Morales was forced to declare the park *intangible*, or untouchable, and to carry out an ex post facto 'prior' consultation. Some communities were satisfied with the results of the march and the government's 'concessions'. But others were not, and some even suggested that the declaration of intangible was actually a form of spiteful punishment by the Morales state, a kind of bad-faith invocation of ideals of environmental protection and sovereignty, to show that the TIPNIS activists were so extreme as to oppose all development. Here, we see how the state continuously marked the marchers as *indios prohibidos*. Then, amid dissent within regional and national indigenous groups, in 2012, CIDOB mounted a second march to protest the last-minute consultation process, arguing that MAS had co-opted many indigenous leaders and set up parallel organisations to support the government. Again, this was an ethical challenge to the state, arguing that it had violated the ethics of participatory democracy and collective indigenous decision-making. The 2012 march received much less public attention than the previous year, in part, because the lowland organisations were split on whether marching again was a good idea. When they did reach La Paz, they were unable to negotiate with the government and returned home empty handed to the lowlands. As we showed in the opening scene, they were left to perform their virtuous indigeneity to residents passing through the central plaza in Santa Cruz, hoping for support from the mestizo elite. In part, this appeal set up a familiar narrative of victim and protector, where the mestizo elite, known as *cambas*, could play a role of 'defender' against Aymara colonisers writ large. It appealed to the elite desires for territorial control of the lowlands, a space that they imagined as having been invaded in recent years by Aymara and Quechua migrants. Claiming historic rights to this territory and to native peoples of their region allowed the lowland elite to make a call for regional autonomy, which they portrayed as a matter of justice. Despite these appeals, however, the government subsequently claimed the consultation with the TIPNIS communities showed substantial approval of the highway, and, after a temporary postponement, announced in 2014 that the highway project was still in the works and likely to resume shortly (Achtenberg 2014). In 2017, the conflict returned to public attention, as Morales announced plans to lift the moratorium and begin construction (EjuTV 2017).

PUBLIC DISCOURSES AND PERFORMANCES DURING THE TIPNIS CONTROVERSY

So, how did the Morales government use indigeneity and performance during the TIPNIS crisis? First, it is important to note that, like all states, the MAS-led state is not a homogenous entity with one single vision or set of tactics. As we carried out fieldwork in 2012, 2014, and 2016, we conducted participant observation in the city of Santa Cruz and spent time inside spaces of indigenous organising. We interviewed local and regional indigenous leaders, as well as public officials in cities, department, and national offices. We both focus on Santa Cruz, but we also spent time in La Paz, the capital, as well as smaller cities like Charagua, in the southeastern zone. We found an enormous range of opinions within the state apparatus about the TIPNIS case. We heard dissent even from MAS militants working in state ministries, especially those indigenous intellectuals who had been delegates to the Constituent Assembly and had worked closely with lowland indigenous organisations there. One indigenous leader literally backed out of the room when we asked her about it. The Minister of Defense, Cecilia Chacón, renounced her position after the Chaparina violence, and the National Ombudsperson issued a harsh critique of it (Defensor del Pueblo 2011). Yet Morales and his closest advisers put forth a united front defending the road. In a controversial 2013 book, Vice-President Álvaro García Linera argued that the highway would protect lowland peoples from rapacious patrimonial-hacienda elite and foreign corporations that currently control the region. To break up their power, he said, the MAS state should regain territorial control over the region in order to provide for the greater good. This then became a strategy of defending this resource-rich region from foreigners and NGOs. ‘In the Amazon, then, it is not the indigenous peoples who have taken control of the territorial power, as occurred years ago in the highlands and valleys.... But it is the despotic landowner order that predominates the region and has controlled indigenous organisation’ (García Linera 2013: 8; see Beaulieu and Postero 2013).

In this quote, we can see echoes of Hale’s *indio permitido*, as García Linera invoked a discourse labelling one set of indigenous peoples as good Indians and others as bad Indians. On the one hand, Morales frequently refers to the highland Aymara or Quechua people when describing the country’s modern development agenda. The new Aymara middle and upper-middle class emerging in La Paz as a result of their transnational

trade with China are especially lauded. This is not an anti-capitalist discourse but rather a discourse from within the global capitalist framework. As Emily Achtenberg states, 'it has been clear that the MAS has [transitioned] from a government of social movements to a big tent hegemonic power consolidated around a pro-growth, extractivist, neodevelopmentalist agenda cast in national-popular terms' (Achtenberg 2016: 374). High-profile megaprojects that evoke national pride, like the spectacular aerial cable car between La Paz and El Alto and the Tupac Katari satellite that brings internet to schoolchildren, all represent new and dominant symbols of a modern progressive nation. These shining new initiatives stand in stark contrast to the ways the TIPNIS protestors were represented as living in the past and resisting progress. The lowland indigenous figure is frozen in a pre-modern state while the Aymara becomes sign and symbol of modernity and progress within a capitalist system of extractivism and development. National peasant union leader Roberto Coraite suggested that the TIPNIS protesters should choose between the road, which would bring them trade and development, or else 'stay in clandestinity, as indigents, remaining as savages' (La Prensa 2011).

The good-bad narrative is further cemented through representations of gender. For instance, speaking to his highland supporters in the coca-growing area in 2011, Morales famously urged them to seduce the women of the TIPNIS to gain support for the highway (Mendoza 2011). Here, we see the trope of the passive lowland indigenous woman waiting to be penetrated by the active masculine outsiders. Again, this contrasts with images the government puts forward of the militant Aymara and Quechua women insurgents, such as eighteenth-century anti-colonial leaders Bartolina Sisa and Juana Apaza, as well as the more contemporary images of Aymara women blocking roads during critical moments of anti-neoliberal protests (see also the chapter by Li and Paredes Peñafiel, this volume). The image of Andean masculine power echoes in the many artistic posters that circulated online and papered the country's walls during the controversy, showing the highway as a phallic symbol, slicing open, and raping the forest (See Beaulieu 2014b). One popular image shows Morales wielding a phallic-shaped chainsaw cutting down a tree. The overarching message of these images is clear: the road is a violent and gendered form of penetration. Such gendered discourses of control through rape, violence, and conquest of lands harken back to the colonial forms of patriarchal oppression that scholars have so ably described (see Stephenson 1999; Weismantel 2001; Canessa 2005). While many of these images

came from critics of the road, they reinforced the gendered representations that put lowland indigenous peoples in a subordinate role ultimately pacified and controlled by the phallic Andean state, which will lead the nation into modernity and progress. In this view, national sovereignty is tied to Andean control and subsequently the submission of lowland indigenous lands, territories, and bodies.

LOWLAND NARRATIVES: THE FIGURE OF THE SUFFERING INDIGENOUS

During the struggles over TIPNIS, the MAS government was in a privileged position to articulate its stance through many public performances. Yet, the TIPNIS activists were able to present their own narratives as a result of the massive media attention the case received. They were able to use symbols and spectacular protest as productive forms of resistance to the Morales state, legitimising the ethical position of the lowlands peoples. We now turn to their efforts, demonstrating how they used many of the same symbolic elements to construct very different representations. Again, we want to emphasise the multiplicity of actors and perspectives that abounded in lowland communities. Yet, examining the semiotics of performance, we see that this multiplicity was reduced to produce a figure of a noble group of good Indians bravely resisting the state and defending the environment.

In 2011, the leaders of the TIPNIS march uploaded a video on YouTube called 'Message from TIPNIS to the World'. In it, Justa Cabrera, a Guaraní woman from Santa Cruz, and the president of CNAMIB (Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia), the women's organisation within CIDOB, described the struggle this way:

TIPNIS is our home and our life. We the indigenous people live, hunt, and fish, our life is based on the contact with nature. And so we demand that our government respect our cosmovision and our life.... TIPNIS is the lung of the forest that serves the Bolivian people, and Latin Americans and the world. (Cabrera and Poiché 2011)

These declarations, echoed over and over by TIPNIS spokespeople, obviously fit into the wider discourses used by activists and the media to represent indigenous people as ontologically different, as holding a special and authentic understanding of the universe, a 'cosmovision'. It is tempting

to see Doña Justa's words this way, but it is also important to see the political context in which these clichéd phrases were uttered. This was a media-driven video that was immediately put up on YouTube to attract attention and sympathy for the march. This is not to say that the declarations are not true or that Doña Justa does not believe them. Instead, as Michael Cepek has argued, it is critical to recognise such statements not as evidence of fundamental alterity but as provisional distillations of complex and multiple epistemological positions (Cepek 2016: 633).

Throughout the march, declarations like Doña Justa's were augmented by an array of symbols and images. When the organisers were planning the 2011 march, the communication committee strove to find symbols to give it a coherent image. These symbols become part of what Dell Hymes (1981: 79) called a 'communicative repertoire' that helped to give meaning to the social interactions between the marchers and an audience that include both the Morales state and civil society. The obvious choice for TIPNIS protestors was the *patujú* flower, one of two national flowers of Bolivia (along with the Andean *kantuta*). Although both the central and the state governments had used the *patujú* flower in their performances (see Vice-President García Linera's (2014) book, where an image of the highland flag, the *wiphala*, is superimposed on each petal of the *patajú* flower), the CIDOB organisers decided it would be the best symbol, along with the arrow, a well-known sign of lowland indigeneity. Marilyn Karayuri says they chose the *patujú* flower because it is red, green, and yellow, the colours of the Bolivian flag, but more importantly, because it grows in all the indigenous territories. It was an important symbol of indigeneity and the territory they were trying to conserve.

The territory has always been our home and that is what we have to defend. And so, this is what we discussed in the preparation for the march, the theme of the conservation of life, not just of our lives but also of nature's life. Ultimately, we are one, nature and the indigenous people, along with other human beings. Because the protection of the environment has always been in our hands. (pers. comm. July 2016)

As Laing (2015) and Kaijser (2014) have also shown, the association between indigenous peoples and nature reinforces the trope of the virtuous eco-Indian and works to link indigenous interests with the larger concerns for the environment and the global climate. As the battle over TIPNIS raged, images of beautiful and vulnerable nature abounded in the

massive poster production online and on the walls across the country. These were not the creations of CIDOB or the marchers but of the many allies, including students, artists, and environmentalist organisations. One iconic image was a poster that read: 'Is this really progress? Let's save TIPNIS.' The image shows the lush Amazon forest, with verdant trees and a brilliant blue sky, cut through by a highway. A huge leopard lies dead in the foreground, run over by an Sports Utility Vehicle. Here, nature, as represented by the tragic leopard, also stands in for the indigenous people of TIPNIS. The body of the lowland Indian and Nature itself are semiotically linked, tugging on the heartstrings of the audience. These posters and online images received a lot of attention, but indigenous organisers felt somewhat ambivalent about them. Marilín Karayuri explains:

Yes, there was a lot of support (apoyo) and lots of images disseminated by people trying to support TIPNIS. But we the indigenous peoples don't need to see these cartoons, or see this on TV, because we live it.... It is not the same, but it is good to try to transmit what we in the world of the indigenous people live, and why we want to conserve nature.... But we have always made clear: [These supporters] can speak, but not in our name! They are not authorized.... And many people have taken advantage of our situation to benefit their own struggles, to make themselves seen. (pers. comm. July 2016)

Karayuri has reason for her concerns. We have described how, as regional mestizo elites in Santa Cruz, the *cambas*, struggled against the Morales government, they adopted the lowland TIPNIS peoples as part of their struggle, calling attention to the wounded Indian-wounded Earth narrative. They characterised the violence committed against protestors as human rights violations, part of their broader campaign to destabilise the political power of the Morales regime (Fabricant and Postero 2013). By claiming the lowland Indian as their own, they could promote a regional narrative of autonomy. This became essential for protecting lands and natural resources in the lowland region of the country, where modernity or progress was not about an Aymara vision of capitalism but rather a lowland and mestizo vision tied to ideals of whiteness, a clean and 'rational' spatial order of the city of Santa Cruz (Gustafson 2006), and capitalist accumulation. In 2012, we witnessed a regional Cabildo, or mass public meeting, in the lowland capital of Santa Cruz, where elites used the TIPNIS struggle to push for regional autonomy. The TIPNIS representative, José Antezana, spoke to the cheering crowd.

We have come as citizens to demand respect for democracy.... It is the right and obligation of all of us Bolivians to defend this national park so that they do not destroy it with the highway the government wants to construct.... But we are going to defend this territory. I assure you, brothers: the highway is not going to pass through TIPNIS even if THE GOVERNMENT INSISTS. This territory belongs to us, it is our right, we have legal title!

Here, we see the ‘wounded TIPNIS’ spokesperson as personifying the violations of human rights and the abuses of democracy. This worked powerfully for regional elites because it allowed them to link their cause to the human rights victims and the ethical substance of indigeneity. The elites see the region of Santa Cruz as a territorial body wounded by Morales’ politics and by Aymara and Quechua invaders migrating to their region; that wound is echoed by the bodies of the many hunger strikers who protested against the state in 2008 pushing for departmental autonomy. However, it is not just the Right that makes these connections. In the 2014 political campaign, the Verdes (Green) party invited Fernando Vargas, the lowland indigenous leader of the 2011 march, to be its presidential candidate. Its campaign posters of endangered frogs made similar connections between environment, indigeneity, and human rights, challenging the MAS as authoritarian spoilers of the environment. This did not prove any more successful for the Verdes than it did for the Santa Cruz Civic Committee. The Verdes only won 3 per cent of the vote.

The last element of the TIPNIS narrative we point to is gender. If Morales used patriarchal and gendered discourses to push through the TIPNIS project, the protestors also used images of women to reinforce their performances of the good Indian. Lowland indigenous women were often strategically placed at the very beginning of the protest march. In part, their presence had such an impact because women appeared as both mothers and culture bearers marching to protect their children’s human right to culture (Beaulieu 2014a; Engle 2010). But the marches increasingly featured women as leaders as well. In 2011, Justa Cabrera, the Guaraní leader of Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia (CENAMIB)—the women’s organisation within CIDOB—whom we cited above, struggled to bring the voices of indigenous women into the public view. Having lowland indigenous women leaders was important, she said, because they ‘represented a culture that should be valued by society, not as before when they were triply discriminated against for being a woman, indigenous, and poor’ (Terrazas 2012). In 2012, TIPNIS march president Bertha Bejarano was increasingly

thrust into the spotlight. A 47-year-old Moxeño activist, she was joined on the march by six of her ten children (See Achtenberg 2012). Some saw Bertha as a criminal, as, in 2007, she was detained for smuggling cocaine. Drug trafficking, is, of course, a serious issue in Bolivia, where coca growing is legal but highly regulated. In 2006, the Morales government began a ‘*Coca sí, Cocaína no*’ (Coca yes, Cocaine no) campaign, vowing to fight cocaine production, while continuing to support traditional production through a policy of strict ‘social control’ (Farthing and Kohl 2012). The MAS officials thus used Bejarano’s conviction as a reason not to negotiate with her. The televised images of these women standing up to police and making demands to the MAS state telegraphed the strength of lowland indigenous women, as well as of the movement, in general, countering the dominant phallic practices of the state. Their images drew attention to the oppression they had survived. Yet, scholars make clear that these struggles are far from over in local communities, where women experience being silenced and discriminated against particularly in the political arena (see McNeish and Arteaga Böhrh 2013). Thus, TIPNIS performances showed only one side of indigenous women’s struggles, pushing their efforts for gender equality aside to represent them primarily as warriors for the environment and their cultures, again reproducing dominant and one-dimensional narratives of gender and of indigeneity. We echo the critique that gender inequality in the community may have been obscured through these performances, but we also argue that the compelling images of indigenous women did work to decentre the masculine narrative of the government and create sympathy for the march (see Achtenberg 2012). Women’s suffering during the march, which made for compelling media images, performed important semiotic and ethical work: it tied the unmarked everyday struggles of rural indigenous life—what Povinelli (2011) would call ‘quasi-events’ or endurance—to the monumental sacrificial ‘event’ of the march. As a result of these performances, members of the Bolivian public who normally would not take responsibility for the precarious situations these indigenous mothers live in as their lands are invaded by forest companies, mines and wells, or colonisers, suddenly found themselves forced to take an ethical position on the TIPNIS ‘crisis’.

MUJERES CREANDO: PERFORMATIVE ACTS OF SOLIDARITY

One important way this effect was amplified was through the work of La Paz-based anarcho-feminist collective Mujeres Creando, made up primarily of middle-class mestiza intellectuals who participate in a range of feminist

and anti-poverty work, including graffiti commentary, performance, street theatre, and direct action (see <http://www.mujerescreando.org>). Their acts of solidarity with the TIPNIS marchers reinforced the eventfulness of the marches through street performances, spectacles, graffiti, and online discussions. Scholars have written about the ways in which Mujeres Creando used embodied performance in public spaces of La Paz to disrupt everyday forms of patriarchy (see Galindo 2012; Monasterios 2006). Thus, the audience for the performances we describe here was clearly the urban public of La Paz.

Once again, the indigenous leaders of the TIPNIS march were a little wary about other people making unauthorised representations of them. Some were uncomfortable with the gender politics of the group, who they saw as radical and extremist—something that had little resonance in low-land indigenous communities. Marilín Karayuri reported that the male leaders even jokingly told the indigenous women organisers not to get too close to these feminists, who might tempt them to rebel against the men, or worse, become lesbians. But in the end, they agreed that if they didn't interfere with the TIPNIS demands, or speak in their name, their support would be welcome (pers. comm. July 2016).

During the 2011 march, Mujeres Creando sprayed city walls with bright red paint representing the blood of TIPNIS and painted graffiti on city walls, with slogans such as 'Police, what kind of change is this? You teargassed women and children.' Then, they created a massive street mural, welcoming the TIPNIS protestors when they arrived in La Paz in September of 2012. At the top, they spray-painted 'Soy TIPNIS' (I am TIPNIS) below which they created three life-sized masks. The first mask is a tiger/cheetah with an open mouth. The text from their website reads, 'With animal skin, with animal force, with animal ferocity, I am Struggle.' The second is a green human face with a frog creeping across the nose and a *patajü* flower on its hat. This mask reads, 'With the green of plants, lungs to enable us to breathe, scream, sing and live. I am Hope.' The last mask is a blue face with birds and flowers on its forehead and a huge red tongue sticking out of a pink mouth. This mask reads, 'With the blue of water, the principle element of life, to stick out the tongue thirsty for justice, for laughter, for liberty. I am Liberty.' The accompanying text for the masks explains that 'this is not an anthropological or folkloric imitation of the use the inhabitants of the TIPNIS make of masks. We have allowed ourselves to make other, different masks, imagined from the ideas and sentiments that they are contributing on each of the days of their

march. Imagination connects us!’ Mujeres Creando hoped these images would inspire both the TIPNIS protesters and the residents of La Paz. Here again, Jasper’s analysis of emotions become relevant. How and in what ways do these forms of protest and performance build ‘emotive connectivity’ across race, class, gender, and identity? We suggest that they were using these emotional tactics to build upon the ‘moral shock’ the TIPNIS controversy produced, drawing attention to the broader public’s perceptions that the Morales administration’s treatment of the TIPNIS protesters was unethical and authoritarian. This provided a space for larger national debates about the ethical substance of indigeneity.

Mujeres Creando used masks again the next year in the performance they called the ‘March of the Bertas’. During the 2012 march, the government had vilified the march’s leader, Berta Bejarano, bringing up her past criminal charge. Mujeres Creando took up her cause, with graffiti like ‘Berta, being a [drug] mule doesn’t annul you; We are one with you.’ They also protested the consultation, with graffiti that became famous in its own right: ‘Evo, your consultation insults all the people.’ On 5 July 2012, when the march finally arrived in La Paz, Mujeres Creando led a march of indigenous women protesters, including Berta and her fellow lowland leader, Nazareth Flores, and urban residents who joined them on the way into Plaza Murillo, the plaza that houses the Parliament. These protestors carried signs that read ‘For the Dignity of Women’ and ‘We are all Berta’. The participants held up life-sized photos of Berta Bejarano’s face, forming masks that they wore over their own faces and on their hats. As police intercepted the march with large shields blocking roads, women pasted these photos on the shields. Eventually, the police denied them entry to the plaza, teargassed them, and sprayed freezing cold water at them. This was a particularly violent tactic, given the difficulty these women from the tropics had in the frigid winter of La Paz. It also made clear that the state would go beyond the representational dimension to use state violence to gain control. Nevertheless, Mujeres Creando leader Maria Galindo concludes that the march was successful as it brought highland and lowland women together in protest, in contrast to Morales and his ministers who sought to divide and conquer. She defended their march against government accusations that they had acted as infiltrators by arguing that they had used Berta’s face with her permission, and that she had participated in the march with *gusto* (pleasure). Most importantly, Galindo said, the march returned Berta to her rightful place as leader of the march, after the mainstream media had gone along with government accusations, sidelining her in favour of male leaders (Galindo 2012).

We describe these creative performances because they show once again how the TIPNIS case became a site for very different political actors, each pushing their own interests. We have great respect for *Mujeres Creando* and see their performances as compelling attempts to provide an inspiring and creative vision of the environment, the fields of force facing indigenous peoples, and gender relations while posing a harsh critique of the MAS state. Yet, as they themselves admit, these are urban imaginaries produced by women with very different trajectories and interests from the indigenous women on the march. It is possible to see their acts of solidarity, in which they claimed, ‘we are all Berta’, as in fact producing the same sorts of dualisms that the state and the right-wing elite do: good Indians, who perform appropriately feminist gender relations, like Berta and the women leaders, and bad Indians, like the president, who don’t. In what ways might this claim ignore the specific gendered inequalities that exist in rural indigenous communities like TIPNIS? Of course, this returns us to the age-old question that has bedevilled feminism: which women can speak for all women? Who is the ‘we’ in ‘we are all Berta’? Here, we see contestations over the ethical substance of indigeneity being battled on the (fictional) faces and bodies of indigenous women, the material, and the discursive blending in performance. Representations of an indigenous woman (Berta), mistreated by the government, are worn on the faces and bodies of women who themselves suffer the impacts of government mistreatment. Both are material, and both form the basis of discursive contestation.

Each of these actors—the MAS, the right-wing *Cruceños*, and feminists—claims that the good indigenous people of TIPNIS belong to their virtuous half of a duality. The MAS state says they are part of the progressive modern plurinational state development project; the Right says they are part of the collective victims of the authoritarian state; and *Mujeres Creando* says they are part of the radical feminist project protesting the masculinist MAS state. While TIPNIS protesters might share some part of these different agendas, it is doubtful their positions can be distilled down this simply. As scholars have shown, indigenous women often articulate complex positions in which demands for women’s rights emerge from—and not in opposition to—collective demands for indigenous rights (see Speed et al. 2006). But indigenous people are not dupes in this representational battle. As we have shown, the TIPNIS activists created their own dualisms, claiming they were part of the human rights project as well as the environmental project to save Mother Earth. In their discourse, in essence, they are saying ‘we’ are Mother Earth. Thus, each of these groups

performs a ‘we’ that incites their audiences—be they the Bolivian public or the state itself—to ethical acts: supporting the government and the road, fighting the ‘evil’ state by embracing regional identity, struggling against patriarchy, or saving the planet and the forest by defending TIPNIS. Perhaps these very dualisms are necessary for movements to rally support and gain international traction.

EXERCISING STATE POWER

Describing these acts as performances may give readers a false impression of innocent or playful theatrical dramas in the public sphere. We want to make clear that these acts were anything but playful. Instead, they were tools in a serious political contestation between the powerful state, regional interests, NGOs, and relatively weaker lowland communities over the fate of their lands and the environment. Thus, the playing field for the representational battles was not a level one, and the state used all its tools to win, mounting a multipronged campaign to silence and undermine the TIPNIS protests and continue the national development project. We have already discussed the repression directed at the marchers in Chaparina in the 2011 march, when police violently assaulted the marchers, beating them and dispersing them into the forest. It was a watershed moment for Bolivia. This was the eighth indigenous march since 1990, all of which had been peaceful. Never before had the state used violence against the marchers, even when the state was run by neoliberal white/mestizos. Marilín Karayuri expresses a commonly held lowland response to the Chaparina. Years later, she says, she is still deeply hurt (*dolida*). ‘How is it possible that a president who makes himself known as indigenous, or at least acts in the name of indigenous people, did this? How can he call himself indigenous while he is repressing indigenous people?... It has left many people permanently marked.... It is like you are in shock’ (pers. comm. 11 July 2016). Here, we come face to face with the ethical substance of indigeneity as a site of both moral reflection and governance. Morales claims to orient the new plurinational state around this revaluation of indigenous bodies and lives, but Karayuri calls the morals of this administration into question, lamenting his conduct, and making clear the effects of this failure on real people’s lives.

Then, in 2012, the government again used violent force to support the CIDOB takeover that forced Adolfo and his followers to the vigil in the plaza. Our Guaraní friends who witnessed it remain traumatised to this

day. Roberta and her husband, a leader in the organisation, lived in a small house on the headquarters' property. She had just given birth to twins and was recovering from her Caesarean section when the newly elected leaders forced their way in, assisted by police firing teargas. When she and other members tried to oppose them, they were beaten, their hair was pulled, and they were knocked to the ground. Roberta, sobbing at the betrayal, fled with only her babies clinging to her (pers. comm. August 2012). As Adolfo pointed out that day in the plaza, it was incredibly painful to lose the CIDOB headquarters, the 'house that had born witness to so many laws, so many triumphs for the indigenous movement' over the 30 years of its existence (pers. comm. August 2012). The new CIDOB president, Melva Hurtado, gave a press conference shortly thereafter, promising to work with the government towards 'development' for the region (*La Jornada* 2012). Over the following year, the state used its other means to silence its opponents. In 2013, as McNeish and Arteaga Bohrt (2013) and Beaulieu (2014a) show, the MAS charged the old TIPNIS leaders, including Adolfo Chávez, with serious crimes and caused them to take refuge in an NGO until the Supreme Court overturned their cases. Morales called the protesters 'enemies' of Bolivia, accused them of being supported by US Agency for International Development (USAID), and thus being manipulated by the US government (Achtenberg 2011a, b). His government banned many foreign NGOs, including IBIS-Dinamarka, the Danish group that had provided infrastructural support to CIDOB for many years. On the other hand, the government 'invested' in embattled TIPNIS communities, paying indigenous leaders and buying outboard motors for community boats. The 'counter campaign' was covered by the media, while the old CIDOB was unable to get the attention they had had during the marches. 'Our hands were tied', says Marilín Karayuri. 'Facing their economic power, what could we do? We had no resources, no vehicles, no projects. We were completely blocked' (pers. comm. July 2016).

CONCLUSION

This was the context in which we found Adolfo Chávez, CIDOB's president, sitting in the plaza in 2012. Despite all the sacrificial marches, press conferences, and performances of the virtuous eco-Indians, and, despite support from environmentalists, feminists, lowland elite, international media, and even public opinion in La Paz, the TIPNIS marches had failed to meet their objectives. It is tempting to conclude that Adolfo and

CIDOB failed because they were unable to embody the *indio permitido*, since they challenged extractivist development that is at the base of the government's 'economic liberation' agenda. That may be true, but we argue something different: their performances of the good Indian and the coercive and violent responses to it by the state made visible how indigeneity continues to be the ethical substance through which Bolivian society contests its past and creates its future. Thus, performance is a central site through which social worlds are articulated. TIPNIS made clear that the Bolivian state is willing to sacrifice lowland peoples to a model of development based on natural resource extraction, and that the majority of Bolivians—for now—will support the state. Yet, the performances we describe here presented indigeneity in a variety of ways, manifesting this ethical substance in ways that made visible the continuing tensions in Bolivian society, and also making clear the potentialities within these alternatives. State performances showed clearly what the *indio permitido* meant in this context: agreeing with extractivism. But this image of indigeneity was troubled by the other performances we describe. While some had critiqued the government's enactments of Andean cultural practices as being cynical and folkloric (Portugal 2015), the performances by the TIPNIS protesters and their allies, both environmentalist and feminist, articulated a clear picture of the state as an unethical betrayer of indigenous interests. By enacting their status as victims, the TIPNIS protestors made legible the fact that the state was committed to development at all costs, even if it meant undermining the rights to consultation and self-determination established in the new constitution. Their suffering made Morales look hypocritical and, particularly demonstrated that this new revolutionary indigenous state was, at its heart, not that different from all other states: willing to use its sovereign power to enforce control. Like Gandhi's hunger strikes, the performances of failed marchers acted as a mirror onto the social world Morales and his development agenda had created. It asked: what kind of state is this? What kind of ethics does it reflect? What kinds of suffering does it accept?

Our analysis of the TIPNIS protests also draws attention to the ways performances can redefine the categories under debate, acting as a site of politics. If, as Andrew Canessa (2014) has pointed out, indigeneity provided Evo Morales with the legitimacy to rule (*ibid.*: 17–18), then the failure to protect lowland indigenous communities and lands from rapacious development delegitimised and undermined his administration. But the protests also pointed out that indigeneity is not a neutral or static category; rather, it is multiple and under constant revision. In this case, the

protests illustrated the malleability of indigeneity by highlighting the multiple constructed versions of indigeneity that offset and undermined the dominant narratives. As Marilín Karayuri, the Guaraní journalist indicated, not everyone on the march opposed development or even the construction of the highway. Some indigenous protestors were fierce advocates for the construction of the road. What protestors opposed was how the government used selected state authorised notions of indigeneity to push through its vision of national development. In contrast, the protestors' performances illuminated the fact that indigenous communities in the lowlands had been shut out of the decision-making process, which they framed as a violation of the ethical obligations of the indigenous state as well as fundamental to participatory democracy. So, in this case, lowland peoples used other images of indigeneity to stand up to the Aymara state, providing compelling images of noble and wounded Indians for the many sectors of Bolivia who were also opposing Morales.

Lastly, we see the ways in which the feminist group, *Mujeres Creando*, used lowland indigenous peoples as a means to 'out' the Morales government for its highly unethical but also hypermasculinist form of governance. If lowland indigenous protestors highlighted the multiple ways of being indigenous, then *Mujeres Creando* also pointed towards the multiple feminisms. Gender has permeated the discourses and enactments of colonisation and is inseparable from the coloniality of power. Yet, this gendered form of power is also asserted by a state led by an indigenous leader. By describing the gendered implications of the performances of both the state and its feminist critics, we draw attention to the complicated and fluid relation between ethnicity and gender, where gender can be a site of sovereignty, oppression, and resistance.

Performance made visible several things not previously legible, including the ongoing ethnic and gendered fragmentations and stratifications, the cracks and the breaks within the system. Through their performances, protestors contested state control over images and discourses of indigeneity/gender, battling over the ethical substance of indigeneity. If the state used monolithic visions of Aymara progress through development, notions of the lowland Indians resisting development flipped the 'passive Indian' into an active category undermining the power and authority of this hypermasculinist state. So, here, performance has the capacity to rewrite, to invert, to reverse age-old colonial representations of Indian versus white, of female versus male, and of development/progress versus backwardness, calling into being new social worlds.

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