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Natural Gas, Indigenous Mobilization and the Bolivian State

Thomas Perreault

Identities, Conflict and Cohesion
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Acronyms

ADN	Acción Democrática Nacionalista *(Nationalist Democratic Action)*
APCOB	Ayuda para el Campesino Indígena del Oriente Boliviano *(Assistance for the Indigenous Peasant of the Bolivian East)*
APG	Asamblea de Pueblos Guaraní *(Guaraní Peoples' Assembly)*
BG	British Gas
BP	British Petroleum
CIDOB	Central de Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano *(Center for Indigenous Peoples and Communities of the Bolivian East)*
COB	Central Obrera Boliviana *(Bolivian Workers Central)*
CIPCA	Centro para la Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado *(Center for the Investigation and Promotion of the Peasantry)*
CONAIE	Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador *(Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador)*
CONAMAQ	Confederación Nacional de Ayllus y Markas de Qollosuyu *(National Confederation of Ayullus and Markas of Qollosuyu)*
CONFENIAE	Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazona Ecuatoriana *(Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon)*
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia *(Confederation of Peasant Labour Unions of Bolivia)*
Ecuarunari	Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui *(Confederation of the Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador)*
EIA	environmental impact assessment
FEDECOR	Federación Departamental Cochabambina de Regantes *(Cochabamba irrigators' federation)*
FEJUVE	Federación de Juntas Vecinales *(El Alto Federation of Neighbourhood Associations)*
FOBOMADE	Foro Boliviano Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo *(Bolivian Fund for Environment and Development)*
ha	hectares
IDH	Impuesto directo a los hidrocarburos *(direct hydrocarbon tax)*
IFI	international financial institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
INRA	Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria *(National Agrarian Reform Institute)*
LIL	Learning and Innovation Loan
LNG	liquefied natural gas
LPP	Law of Popular Participation
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo *(Movement to Socialism)*
Minagua	Ministry of Water
MIP	Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti *(Pachakuti Indigenous Movement)*
MIR	Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria *(Revolutionary Left Movement)*
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario *(National Revolutionary Movement)*
NFR	Nueva Fuerza Republicana *(New Republican Force)*
NGO	non-governmental organization
PODEMOS	Poder Democrático y Social *(Social and Democratic Power)*
TBOs	Organizaciones Territoriales de Base *(Territorial Base Organizations)*
TCF	trillion cubic feet
TCO	Tierras Comunitarias de Origen *(communal lands of origin)*
THOA	Taller de Historia Oral Andina *(Andean Oral History Workshop)*
UMA	Unidad del Medio Ambiente *(Environmental Unit)*
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos

Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

This study examines the relationship between natural gas extraction, state restructuring and political mobilization among indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Natural gas has emerged both as Bolivia's major source of export revenue and as a source of political tensions involving regional governments, the central state, transnational hydrocarbons firms and indigenous peoples. During the 1990s, the Bolivian government, under President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, passed a series of neoliberal measures designed to attract international investment to gas and oil development, and facilitate hydrocarbons exports. Opposition to the government's plan to export liquefied natural gas to the United States erupted into violent protest in October 2003, forcing Sánchez de Lozada out of office. Continued protests brought down the subsequent government and led eventually to the election in December 2005 of Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous *campesino* president. Protests over the management and distribution of benefits derived from natural gas extraction contributed directly to Morales' election, and the associated ascendancy of indigenous and campesino social movements as political actors *within* the state, in contrast to their previous oppositional position external to the state apparatus. In Bolivia, the interests of dominant indigenous groups have become "mainstreamed" in political discourse. But Bolivia's indigenous population is large and diverse, and divisions remain between the numerous and politically influential Quechua and Aymara peoples of the country's Andean west, and the numerous, smaller indigenous groups of the eastern lowlands.

As a case study, the paper focuses on the impacts of natural gas operations of the Spanish firm Repsol YPF on the Guaraní community of Cumandaroti, located on the Itika Guasu Tierra Comunitaria de Orígen (TCO/communal lands), in the southern department of Tarija. The Guaraní are Bolivia's third largest indigenous group, and the largest group in the eastern lowlands. In spite of their relatively strong political organization and close contacts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), other indigenous organizations and social movements, the Guaraní have borne the brunt of much of the oil and natural gas development in Bolivia. This is exemplified by the case of the Guaraní who live on the massive Margarita gas field in the eastern Tarija department. Residents of Guaraní community of Cumandaroti, located on the Itika Guasu TCO, are affected by fumes, noise and water pollution emanating from gas extraction activities, and their crops and livestock have also been harmed. In spite of international financial institution (IFI) policies that require oil and gas firms to consult with affected indigenous peoples (in accordance with International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 and Bolivian law 1257), Repsol YPF and its subcontractors did not adequately consult with Guaraní community members regarding plans to extract natural gas from their lands. Moreover, it is shown that neither the IFIs nor the Bolivian state exercised adequate oversight authority. This situation has led to several protests by Guaraní residents of the Itika Guasu TCO and the Guaraní Peoples' Assembly (APG), who have demanded that Repsol YPF pay restitution.

Bolivia is, in many ways, a unique case. As a majority indigenous country with a long history of indigenous political mobilization, strong social movements and weak government, its experiences are not easily transferred to other countries. If Bolivia holds lessons for indigenous movements elsewhere, it is more in the way indigeneity has been reconceptualized in the country than as an example to follow. The strength of Evo Morales' Movement to Socialism (MAS) party lies not in its "authentically" indigenous character, but rather in the very plurality of the way it represents and reworks what it means to be indigenous in Bolivia. Indigeneity, in this sense, serves to articulate ethnicity and class, rural and urban. This recognition points to the multiple ways of being indigenous. The Bolivian case demonstrates the possibility of forming transcendent, coalitional politics that cut across historical regional, ethnic and class-based divides. Such coalitions have played a crucial role in the ability of Bolivian social movements to limit the power of transnational firms to capture profits from gas exploitation, and may provide a powerful model for indigenous peoples elsewhere.

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Résumé

Cette étude porte sur les rapports entre l'extraction du gaz naturel, la restructuration de l'Etat et la mobilisation politique des populations autochtones de Bolivie. Le gaz naturel est devenu à la fois la principale source de recettes d'exportation pour la Bolivie et la cause de tensions politiques entre les administrations régionales, l'Etat central, les sociétés transnationales d'hydrocarbures et les populations autochtones. Pendant les années 1990, le gouvernement bolivien, sous la présidence de M. Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, a adopté une série de mesures néolibérales pour attirer les investissements internationaux vers l'exploitation du gaz et du pétrole et favoriser les exportations d'hydrocarbures. L'opposition au projet gouvernemental d'exportation de gaz naturel liquéfié vers les Etats-Unis s'est subitement transformée en octobre 2003 en manifestations violentes, qui ont contraint M. Sánchez de Lozada à renoncer à ses fonctions. La poursuite des manifestations a entraîné la chute du gouvernement suivant et a finalement abouti à l'élection en décembre 2005 d'Evo Morales, le premier président *campesino* et autochtone de Bolivie. La contestation de la gestion et de la distribution des bénéfices tirés de l'extraction du gaz naturel a contribué directement à l'élection d'Evo Morales, et à l'ascension combinée des mouvements sociaux autochtone et paysan comme acteurs politiques *dans* l'Etat, alors que jusqu'à présent leur statut d'opposition les maintenait hors de l'appareil de l'Etat. Les intérêts des communautés autochtones dominantes ont fait leur entrée dans le discours politique bolivien. Cependant, l'importante population autochtone de la Bolivie est loin d'être homogène et des divisions persistent entre les Quechuas et les Aymaras de la Bolivie andine de l'ouest, qui sont nombreux et exercent une véritable influence politique, et les communautés autochtones des plaines et des bas plateaux de l'est, qui sont multiples et plus petites.

L'extraction du gaz naturel par la société espagnole Repsol YPF et ses conséquences pour la population guaranie de Cumandaroti, situé sur les terres des populations d'origine (Tierra Comunitaria de Orígen—TCO) de Itika Guasu, dans le département méridional de Tarija, ont fait l'objet d'une étude de cas. Les Guaranis constituent la troisième communauté autochtone de Bolivie et l'ethnie la plus importante des plaines orientales. Malgré une organisation politique relativement forte et des contacts étroits avec des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), d'autres organisations autochtones et des mouvements sociaux, les Guaranis ont beaucoup souffert de l'exploitation du gaz naturel et du pétrole en Bolivie, comme l'illustre le cas de ceux qui vivent sur l'important gisement de gaz naturel de Margarita, dans le département oriental de Tarija. Les habitants guaranis de Cumandaroti, situé sur la TCO d'Itika Guasu, subissent les émanations, le bruit et la pollution de l'eau qui résultent de l'extraction du gaz et qui ont affecté jusqu'à leurs cultures et leur bétail. Malgré les politiques des institutions financières internationales (IFI) qui exigent que les sociétés gazières et pétrolières consultent les populations autochtones touchées (conformément à la Convention No. 169 de l'Organisation internationale du Travail et à la loi bolivienne 1257), Repsol YPF et ses sous-traitants n'ont pas suffisamment consulté les membres de la communauté guaranie lorsqu'il a été question d'extraire le gaz naturel de leurs terres. De plus, il est démontré que ni les IFI ni l'Etat bolivien n'ont exercé de contrôle adéquat. Cette situation a été à l'origine de plusieurs protestations des Guaranis qui résidaient sur la TCO d'Itika Guasu et de l'Assemblée des peuples guaranis (APG), qui ont exigé une réparation de la part de Repsol YPF.

Avec une majorité d'Amérindiens ayant une longue tradition de mobilisation politique, de puissants mouvements sociaux et un gouvernement faible, la Bolivie est, à bien des égards, un cas unique. Il est donc difficile pour d'autres pays de mettre à profit ses expériences. Si des mouvements autochtones d'autres pays peuvent en tirer des leçons, c'est moins comme d'un exemple à suivre que pour s'inspirer de la manière dont l'indigénéité a été repensée. La force du parti d'Evo Morales, le Mouvement vers le socialisme (MAS), tient moins à son caractère "authentiquement" autochtone qu'à sa façon de représenter et de retravailler l'indigénéité en

Bolivie, dans la pluralité. L'indigénéité, dans ce sens, sert à articuler l'ethnicité et la classe, dans les campagnes comme en ville. Cette reconnaissance indique qu'il existe de multiples manières d'être autochtones. Le cas bolivien démontre qu'il est possible de former des coalitions politiques qui transcendent les divisions historiques, régionales, entre ethnies et entre classes. C'est dans une large mesure grâce à de telles coalitions que les mouvements sociaux boliviens ont pu limiter l'accaparement des bénéfices gaziers par les sociétés transnationales et, à cet égard, elles constituent un puissant modèle pour les populations autochtones d'autres pays.

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Resumen

En este estudio se examina la relación entre la extracción de gas natural, la reestructuración del Estado y la movilización política de los pueblos indígenas de Bolivia. El gas natural se ha convertido en la principal fuente de ingresos de exportación para Bolivia y, al mismo tiempo, en una fuente de tensiones políticas que alcanzan a los gobiernos regionales, el gobierno central, las empresas transnacionales de hidrocarburos y los pueblos indígenas. Durante la década de los 90, el gobierno boliviano, bajo la presidencia de Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, aprobó una serie de medidas neoliberales dirigidas a atraer inversión internacional para la explotación de gas y petróleo y facilitar la exportación de hidrocarburos. La oposición al plan del gobierno de exportar gas natural licuado a Estados Unidos desembocó en violentas protestas en octubre de 2003, y culminó con la expulsión de Sánchez de Lozada del poder. Las protestas continuaron y también derrocaron al gobierno que sucedió a Sánchez de Lozada, hasta la elección, en diciembre de 2005, de Evo Morales, primer presidente indígena y campesino de Bolivia. Las protestas contra el manejo y la distribución de los beneficios provenientes de la extracción de gas natural contribuyeron directamente a la elección de Morales, así como al ascenso de los movimientos sociales de campesinos e indígenas como actores políticos *al interior* del Estado, en contraste con el papel anterior de oposición al exterior del aparato estatal. En Bolivia, los intereses de los grupos indígenas dominantes se han incorporado como elemento central del discurso político. No obstante, la población indígena de Bolivia es numerosa y diversa, y sigue habiendo divisiones entre los pueblos quechua y aymara del occidente andino, numerosos y políticamente influyentes, y los, grupos indígenas de los llanos orientales, numerosos, aunque más pequeños.

Este estudio de caso se centra en los efectos de las operaciones de gas natural de la empresa española Repsol YPF sobre la comunidad guaraní de Cumandaroti, ubicada en la Tierra Comunitaria de Origen (TCO) de Itika Guasu, en el Departamento de Tarija, al sur del país. Los guaraníes son el tercer grupo indígena más grande Bolivia, y el grupo más grande en las tierras bajas del oriente. A pesar de contar con una organización política relativamente fuerte y de mantener estrechos contactos con organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONG), otras organizaciones indígenas y movimientos sociales, es el pueblo guaraní quien ha soportado el mayor peso de la explotación petrolera y gasífera en Bolivia. Ejemplo de ello es el caso de los guaraníes que viven en el enorme campo gasífero de Margarita, en el Departamento de Tarija. Los residentes de la comunidad guaraní de Cumandaroti, ubicada en la TCO Itika Guasu, sufren los efectos del humo, el ruido y la contaminación del agua resultantes de las actividades de extracción de gas, y sus cosechas y ganado también se han visto afectados. A pesar de las políticas de las instituciones financieras internacionales (IFI) que requieren que las empresas petroleras y de gas consulten con los pueblos indígenas afectados (de conformidad con el Convenio No. 169 de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo y la ley 1257 de Bolivia), Repsol YPF y sus subcontratistas no consultaron adecuadamente con los miembros de la comunidad guaraní con respecto a sus planes para extraer gas natural de sus tierras. Más aun, se demuestra en este trabajo que ni las IFI ni el Estado boliviano ejercieron adecuadamente su autoridad de supervisión. Esta situación ha generado protestas de parte de los residentes guaraníes de la

TCO Itika Guasu y la Asamblea de Pueblos Guaraníes (APG), quienes han exigido que Repsol YPF pague restitución.

Bolivia es, en muchos sentidos, un caso único. País mayoritariamente indígena con una larga historia de movilización política indígena, fuertes movimientos sociales y gobiernos débiles, sus experiencias no se transfieren con facilidad a otros países. Si alguna lección puede extraerse de Bolivia para los movimientos indígenas de otros países, esta tendría que ver más con la forma en que se ha reformulado el concepto de indigeneidad en el país, y no tomar su caso como ejemplo a seguir. La fortaleza del partido Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) de Evo Morales reside no en su carácter "auténticamente" indígena, sino en la pluralidad misma de la forma en que representa y reformula lo que significa ser indígena en Bolivia. En este sentido, la indigeneidad sirve para articular la etnicidad con la clase, lo rural con lo urbano. Reconocer esta situación revela las múltiples formas de ser indígena. El caso boliviano demuestra que existe la posibilidad de formar coaliciones políticas que permitan trascender las históricas divisiones regionales, étnicas y de clase. Estas coaliciones han desempeñado un papel crucial en la capacidad de los movimientos sociales bolivianos para limitar el poder de las empresas transnacionales en obtener beneficios de la explotación de gas, y podría ser un poderoso modelo para los pueblos indígenas de otras regiones.

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Introduction: Natural Gas, Indigenous Mobilization and the Bolivian State

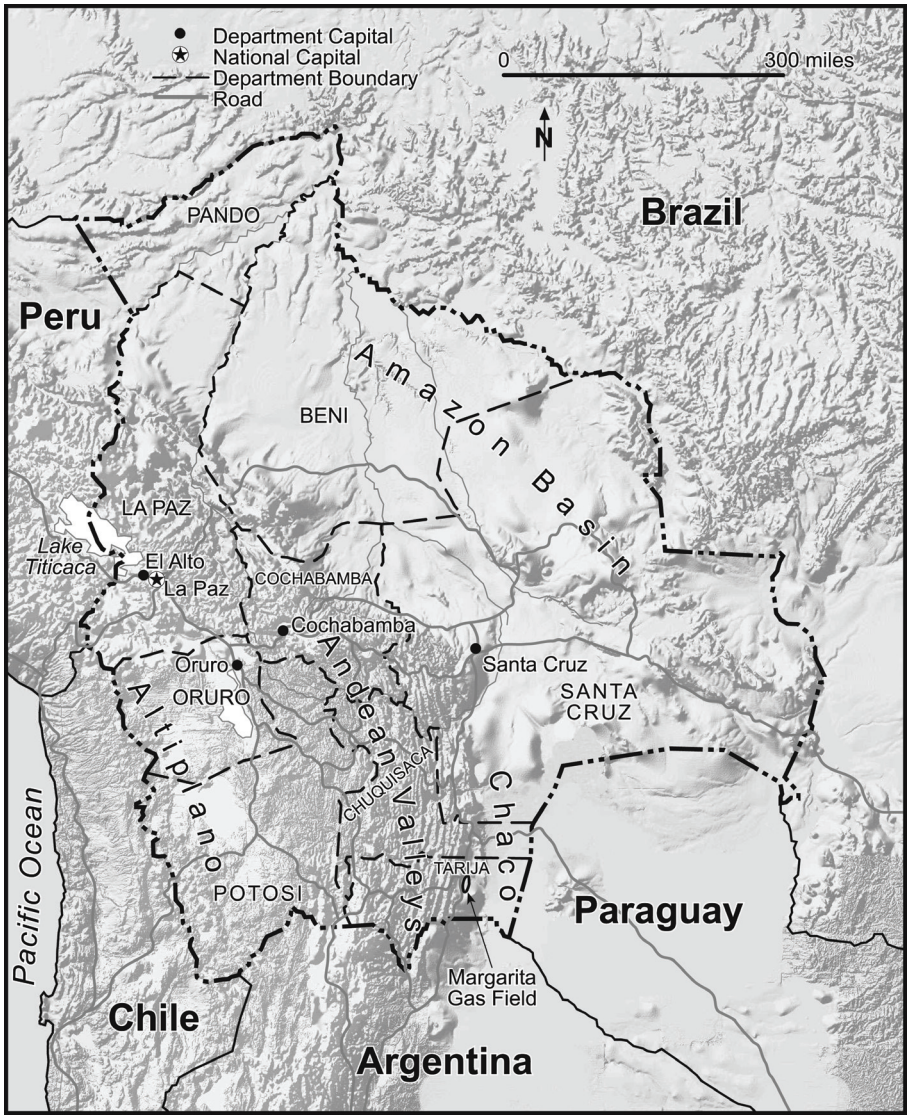
This paper examines the relationship between natural gas development, state restructuring and political mobilization among indigenous peoples in Bolivia. Oil and natural gas have long been important sources of income for the Bolivian state. Indeed, defence of oil fields in the country's eastern lowlands has retrospectively become the central justification for the disastrous Chaco War of the 1930s (Klein 1992), and was more recently invoked by Aymara protestors during the 2003 struggle over plans to export natural gas. Though long overshadowed politically and economically by the importance of oil, natural gas has recently emerged both as Bolivia's major source of export revenue and as a focal point of political conflict involving social movements, transnational hydrocarbons firms, regional governments and the central state. Hydrocarbon governance—that is, the decision-making authority, the relative accountability of government agencies and private actors, and the rents private firms pay to the Bolivian state for the oil and gas they extract—was restructured in the mid-1990s as one component of broader neoliberal reforms. Ongoing protest against these reforms erupted in October 2003 in the form of the "Gas War", which led to the deaths of over 70 protesters and the resignation of president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. A year and a half later, more protests forced the resignation of Sánchez de Lozada's successor, Carlos Mesa, and the establishment of a caretaker government. This process in turn set the stage for the election in December 2005 of Evo Morales, the ethnically Aymara leader of Bolivia's coca growers union, and the country's first indigenous *campesino* president.

During the past 10 years, transnational hydrocarbons firms have dramatically increased investments in Bolivia, in direct response to neoliberal legislation of the 1990s, which included a reformed hydrocarbons law passed in 1996. Economic liberalization of Bolivia's hydrocarbons sector was promoted and financed by the World Bank and strongly supported by the US government. Increased investment in exploration led to the discovery of new gas deposits, increasing Bolivia's proven reserves by over 30-fold between 1996 and 2002, and making Bolivia's reserves the second largest in South America, after Venezuela. This potential boon has come with a heavy cost, however. Activities associated with the exploration, extraction and transport of natural gas have had profoundly negative social and environmental impacts, particularly for indigenous peoples in the eastern Chaco lowlands of Santa Cruz and Tarija departments. The emergence of Evo Morales and his Movement to Socialism (MAS) party has ushered in a new era of indigenous politics in Bolivia, upending historical patterns of white elite rule. Questions remain, however, as to whether the interests of small and less-influential lowland indigenous groups will be adequately represented by the MAS government and its social movement allies.

It is argued here that protests over the management and distribution of benefits derived from natural gas extraction contributed directly to the election of Evo Morales, and the associated ascendancy of indigenous and campesino social movements as political actors *within* the state, in contrast to their previous oppositional position external to the state apparatus. It is important to note, however, that Bolivia's indigenous population is large and diverse, and should not be represented as ethnically or politically homogeneous. This paper attempts to take this diversity into account while examining the ways in which the interests of dominant indigenous groups have become "mainstreamed" in Bolivian political discourse. Following this introduction, the paper considers indigenous politics in Bolivia, and the involvement of various indigenous, campesino and worker social movements in protests over natural gas. It then examines the implications of neoliberal reform for resource governance, with a particular focus on neoliberal state restructuring in Bolivia. The paper then moves on to a discussion of natural gas development in Bolivia, and briefly outlines the history of transnational involvement in the country's hydrocarbons sector. This is followed by an examination of natural gas development and its impacts on, and responses by, Bolivia's indigenous peoples. This section begins by discussing the effects of natural gas extraction on Guaraní communities in Tarija department, and then considers responses to gas development in the country's Andean highlands. The paper

ends by examining events since the 2003 Gas War, and ongoing conflicts regarding natural gas management in Bolivia.

Figure 1: Map of Bolivia



Indigenous Identity Politics and the Bolivian State

What it means to be indigenous in Bolivia differs both qualitatively and quantitatively as compared with most other countries in Latin America or elsewhere. This is in part because the majority of Bolivia's population—roughly 57 per cent—is of indigenous ethnicity, with Quechua speakers comprising the largest single population group (some 2.9 million, or 33 per cent), followed by Aymara speakers (about 2 million, or 23 per cent), and Guaraní speakers (about 79,000, or 1 per cent), and numerous Amazonian ethnicities.[1] In all, some 39 different

[1] These figures are admittedly conservative and come from López Levy (2001). Some estimates place indigenous peoples' share of Bolivia's total population as high as 70 per cent. Using census data to determine the exact numbers of indigenous peoples is notoriously complicated and unreliable, as it necessarily involves the selection of subjective and mutable indicators of indigenous identity (for example, language, dress, place of residence), or relies on self-definitions and declarations of ethnicity. Such indicators are highly controversial, and do not take into account the historically constituted and highly contingent nature of social identities (Xavier Albó, personal communication, La Paz, 21 July 2005). As such, the figures given here should be considered rough estimates, rather than fixed and objective data.

indigenous languages are spoken in Bolivia (López Levy 2001). The remaining 43 per cent of the population consists of Spanish-speaking whites and mestizos. Thus, as is the case in Guatemala, "indigenous" in Bolivia does not equate with "minority".

Clear distinctions cannot be made between the ethnic and class identities of most indigenous peoples in Bolivia. The large majority of the country's indigenous peoples are Andean—either Quechua or Aymara speakers. In contrast with many Amazonian indigenous groups, Aymara and Quechua peoples have long histories of integration with market relations, and colonial and national society. Many Aymara and Quechua speakers are urban, or divide their time between urban centres and rural areas, maintaining homes, farms and in many cases, families in rural communities. The majority of people living in the cities of El Alto and Oruro are indigenous, and the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosí, Sucre and Santa Cruz all have sizable indigenous populations.[2] With roughly 800,000 people—at least 70 per cent of whom are ethnically Aymara—El Alto is nearly the size of La Paz, and is the country's third largest city.[3] Moreover, Bolivia's Quechua and Aymara peoples have never been ethnically homogeneous or politically unified. Diverse Aymara groups on the Altiplano were subject to Inca and later Spanish conquest, and long periods of colonial and republican domination, which together erased many of the pre-existing regional and political distinctions among them. Quechua speakers in the Altiplano areas of Oruro and Potosí, and the highland valleys of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Potosí are descendants of diverse populations that adopted the Inca language. Moreover, the prominence of Quechua and Aymara populations in mining (primarily in Potosí, Oruro and La Paz departments) and as smallholder agriculturalists (and former *pongo* labourers under the hacienda system) imbued these populations with identities rooted in socioeconomic class. Traditional indigenous organizational forms were eroded through centuries of colonialism, while regional- and occupation-based identities emerged as more salient than the generic term "indigenous". As a result, labels such as campesino (peasant) and occasionally *minero* (miner) are more commonly used among Quechua and Aymara speakers in the Altiplano and highland valleys than *indígena* (indigenous).[4]

This situation is complicated by the cultural and political meanings attached to particular labels. Historically, the term *indio* (Indian) has been considered derogatory, and was used by white and mestizo elites as a term of derision to refer to Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní and other indigenous peoples. With the 1953 Agrarian Reform (a result of the Social Revolution of 1952), the hacienda system was abolished, and in line with prevailing modernization development theories of the day, as well as the corporatist and populist politics of the ruling National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) party, indio hacienda labourers were officially re-christened campesinos.[5] Former hacienda lands were distributed to resident Quechua and Aymara communities, programmes of rural education were initiated, and universal suffrage was granted (by eliminating literacy requirements for voting rights, over 800,000 Aymara and Quechua campesinos were summarily given the vote, expanding the electorate to five times its pre-Revolution size). Thus, for many indigenous peoples in Andean Bolivia, the term indio has historically been equated with social, economic and political oppression, whereas the term campesino—a label of class-based, rather than ethnic, identity—is associated with social progress, including basic rights to land and citizenship (Grindle 2003).

Moreover, in Bolivia, the term indígena, which has come into use in the past few decades, is typically used to refer to Amerindian groups in the Amazonian and Chaco regions of the eastern lowlands (such as the Guaraní, discussed below), and not to Quechua or Aymara populations in the western Andean highlands. As a result, the term indígena is often associated with ethnic cohesion and territorial claims that have limited applicability to Andean groups.

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2 Gill 2000; Goldstein 2004; Postero 2007.
3 Albó 2006; Arbona 2007; Lazar 2006.
4 Xavier Albó, personal communication, La Paz, Bolivia, 21 July 2005.
5 On August 2, 1953, President Víctor Paz Estenssoro announced the Agrarian Reform in the Quechua town of Ucureña, near the city of Cochabamba, by declaring "From now on you will no longer be Indians ('*indios*') but rather peasants ('*campesinos*')" (quoted in Healy 2001:14). This shift in nomenclature was accompanied by official recognition of peasant unions (*sindicatos campesinos*), and an associated corporatist politics (see also Klein1992; Grindle 2003).

These differences are overlain by historically sedimented regional antagonisms between east and west that have complicated sporadic efforts at coordination between highland and lowland groups. As a result, indígena is only rarely used as a term of self-identification among Aymara and Quechua speakers in the Bolivian Andes, though it is slowly gaining acceptance (particularly among activists, intellectuals, journalists and politicians). More commonly used among the most traditional Aymara and Quechua communities is the term *originario*, a more recent discursive innovation that is the rough equivalent of Canada's First Nations, signifying the country's original inhabitants. This term was adopted in the 1990s as an Andean counterpart to the lowland-inflected indígena,[6] and is today most closely associated with the Aymara and Quechua ayllu movement,[7] an ethno-political project that claims roots in traditional socio-territorial organizational forms dating to pre-Columbian times. The ayllu, as a form of social and territorial organization once common in the central Andes of what is now Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, largely disappeared as Andean peoples were subjected to centuries of Spanish domination and associated population decline (up to 90 per cent in many places), social reorganization under the Crown's *reducción* system, and forced labour in mines and haciendas. Although the ayllu has remained in place in remote areas of southern Peru and Bolivia (Allen 1988), it is as much a product of interaction with colonial and post-colonial forms of domination, as it is an historical artifact of sociocultural organization (Weismantel 2006). In recent years, the ayllu has taken on explicitly political meaning, as it has served as a material and symbolic basis for ethnic resurgence among Quechua and Aymara peoples in northern Potosí, Cochabamba and the Altiplano of La Paz. Led by organizations such as National Confederation of Ayllus and Markas of Qollosuyu (CONAMAQ) and Andean Oral History Workshop (THOA), the ayllu movement has adopted an explicitly indigenist ideological stance to legitimate claims to territorially-based ethnic autonomy.[8]

The claims of the ayllu movement have limited reach, however. It must be acknowledged that Andean discourses of politicized indigenous identity do not necessarily have the same purchase in the eastern lowlands. Lowland indigenous groups are smaller, more ethnically diverse (with at least 35 distinct languages spoken), less urbanized and spatially dispersed across a vast region. Persistent and pervasive regional antagonisms transcend ethnicity, and complicate sporadic efforts of highland and lowland indigenous and campesino groups to unify politically. In contrast to the indigenous movement in Ecuador, where Andean and Amazonian indigenous confederations[9] together formed a national confederation, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) in the mid-1980s, in Bolivia there has never been a sustained attempt to unite highland and lowland organizations under a cohesive national umbrella. These regional divisions must be taken into account in any consideration of Bolivian indigeneity. In the lowland east, indigenous identity is more commonly associated with specific ethnic groups, and their claims to political and cultural recognition, resource rights and territory. To the extent that indigeneity is incorporated into politicized notions of regional identity among lowland urban elites, it is in the racist, Right-wing discourses of the Nación Camba and its allies, who employ images of lowland indigenous cleanliness, intelligence and industry in contradistinction to the growing numbers of Quechua and Aymara immigrants to the region, stigmatized in such discourses as dirty, stupid and lazy. Nación Camba intellectuals and activists hold up lowland indigenous groups such as the Guaraní, Chiquitano and Guarayu as "their Indians", who exemplify the "progressive character" (and, no doubt, the political "moderation") that they claim as their own.[10] Such discourses appeal to the goals of territorial rights and political self-determination of lowland indigenous groups. While discursive representations such as these employ a broadened sense of indigenous identity, which

[6] Xavier Albó, personal communication, La Paz, 21 July 2005.

[7] The ayllu is a uniquely Andean form of communal organization, which involves a social structure and an associated territorial base (which may or may not be spatially contiguous). The ayllu has thus functioned as a relatively autonomous basis for cultural reproduction among traditional Aymara and Quechua communities. In Bolivia, ayllus are most common in Northern Potosí, but are found in southern Potosí, Cochabamba, and La Paz as well. See Allen (1988), Healy (2001), Mendoza and Patzi (1997), Rivera Cusicanqui (2003), Yampara Huarachi (2001).

[8] Lucero 2006; Rivera Cusicanqui 2003, 2004; Weismantel 2006.

[9] The Confederation of Peoples of Kichua Nationality of Ecuador (Ecuarunari) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), respectively.

[10] Kathleen Lowry, personal communication, 24 September 2004; see also Gustafson (2006).

articulates particular interests and ideological positions (that of lowland indigenous political acceptance with white elite goals of regional autonomy), they also help solidify regional divides that complicate any attempt to forge broader coalitions between Andean and lowland groups. Though elements of this discourse appeal to lowland indigenous aspirations for territorial and cultural autonomy, they are, at root, part of an ideological project aimed at bolstering the political and economic power of the region's urban, white elites (Eaton 2007; Gustafson 2006, 2008).

By contrast, indigeneity resonates in the country's Andean west as part of a politicized discourse, which espouses (idealized) "Andean values" of reciprocity, communalism and collective action, and which is resolutely opposed to domination by foreign and national elites. In this sense, the concept of indigeneity serves to articulate ideologies of nationalism, class alliance and ethnic self-determination that have more purchase in the Andes than in the lowland east. Such reworked understandings of indigenous identity find particular resonance in the urban centres of El Alto, La Paz, Cochabamba and Oruro, where waves of rural migrants swelled the ranks of these cities' poor neighbourhoods during the past 25 years. Many of these Quechua and Aymara immigrants, who fled the devastating combined effects of drought and neoliberalism on the countryside in the 1980s, maintain close ties to rural communities and retain traditional Andean forms of social organization and collective action. In some cases, whole urban neighbourhoods are composed of immigrants from the same region, permitting a continuation (and even exaggeration) of traditional Andean practices (Goldstein 2004). For these residents, just one or two generations removed from rural communities and traditional lifestyles—and who, in many cases, retain close personal connections to the countryside—indigeneity is not something relegated to the marginal, the exotic and the territorially bound. Rather, indigeneity is, in this context, a fluid concept that transcends divides of rural/urban and ethnicity/class, and imbricates a sense of cultural heritage and Andean tradition with nationalist sentiments and class-based opposition to domination by foreign and domestic elites (Albro 2006a, 2006b).

Thus, identifying exactly who is indigenous, and what the term means in Bolivia, is far from straightforward. While indigenous is used to refer to Amerindian populations in the eastern lowlands (and, less frequently, particular groups in the western Valleys and Altiplano), it has also become a signal of political claims that are not ethnically confined. This is not to argue that indigenous no longer has meaning as an ethnic category or socially constituted subject position. Nor is it to adopt a form of radical constructivism in which individuals can select their ethnicity at will. Rather, it is to signal the fact that indigeneity in Bolivia is not *only* an ethnic marker, and that it intersects with, and is mutually constitutive of, socioeconomic class and geographic region, serving to articulate diverse subject positions and associated political claims. Indigenous identity, in other words, is not necessarily the best—and certainly not the *only*—lens through which to view contemporary social struggles in Bolivia (even those involving indigenous peoples). The apposite question, then, is not who is and who is not indigenous, but rather, how we understand a "thoroughly plural indigenous project" (Albro 2006a:421). As Albro (2006a:422) suggests, we may begin by trying to understand the "multiple ways of being 'indigenous'" in contemporary Bolivia. The plural nature of indigenous politics, and the complex intersections of ethnic, class and regional identities have helped shape the ideological bases and social geographies of protest through which hydrocarbons development has been contested in Bolivia. These processes are taken up below. First, the paper examines the neoliberal restructuring of the Bolivian state, particularly in regard to hydrocarbons governance and indigenous peoples' political participation.

Power and Development

Neoliberal state restructuring in Bolivia

Political and economic liberalization was undertaken in Bolivia following a long period of dirigiste economic policies and political populism, pursued by both civilian and military governments (Demmers et al. 2001; Yashar 2005). The 1952 Social Revolution swept to power the (then) populist MNR, which instituted agrarian reform, nationalized mining and other industries, and established a highly centralized, populist state (Rivas Antezana 2000). Thirty years later, amid growing economic problems and nearly continuous social conflict, it was the MNR that would again bring about revolutionary change, this time undoing many of its earlier policies. The newly elected MNR government implemented a set of radical economic reforms in 1985, drastically reducing state spending and instituting a series of austerity measures (Conaghan et al. 1990). Although these policies succeeded in controlling Bolivia's crippling hyper-inflation, they took a disastrous social toll. Over 20,000 miners were left unemployed and some 35,000 manufacturing jobs were lost, while the informal sector grew to account for 70 per cent of the working population by the end of the decade (Sanabria 2000).

A second round of neoliberal reforms was initiated in the mid-1990s, with the election of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada as president. Goni, as he is commonly known, instituted his *Plan de Todos* (Plan for Everyone), a sweeping reform package that affected nearly every facet of the state. At the heart of these reforms were administrative decentralization under the Law of Popular Participation, and economic privatization under the Law of Capitalization (Kohl 1999; Perreault 2005). Both laws were central to Goni's project of neoliberalizing the Bolivian state and have, moreover, facilitated indigenous and popular mobilization. While the Law of Capitalization—which privatized certain state industries and natural resources—provided a focal point for anti-neoliberal protests, the Law of Popular Participation—which decentralized administrative functions of the state—created numerous territorial bases for localized political mobilization by opposition parties and social movements, including indigenous peoples.

The 1994 Law of Popular Participation (LPP) created 314 new municipalities (by re-designating previously existing administrative units known as provincial sections), gave them authority over development planning, infrastructure construction and budget decisions, and assigned to them 20 per cent of the national budget.[11] Under the LPP, neighbourhood groups and indigenous and campesino organizations were granted legal status as representatives of their constituencies through the establishment of Territorial Base Organizations (TBOs). Representatives of the TBOs form oversight committees, which are responsible for ensuring that municipal budgetary decisions are sound, and are granted veto power over this process (Kohl 2002). In this regard, political decentralization has undeniably provided indigenous and rural peoples with new opportunities for sociocultural organizing and political participation (Albó 2002). This has led to an increased presence of campesino and indigenous peoples in formal politics since the late 1990s, almost certainly an (unintended) outcome of the LPP.[12]

Together with the LPP and the Law of Capitalization, in 1994 Goni's government implemented a Constitutional reform, which, among other things, recognized Bolivia as a multiethnic and pluricultural nation: the so-called pluri/multi reforms (Van Cott 2000; see also Zimmerer 2000). Official recognition of indigenous ethnic diversity—in the form of communal land titling, bilingual education programmes, and recognition of certain forms of traditional customary resource rights and uses or *usos y costumbres*—was an integral part of Goni's neoliberal reforms (Albro 2006b). This is exemplified by his choice for vice-president during his first term (1993–1997), Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, an Aymara intellectual and a leader of the indigenous Katarista movement. The selection of Cárdenas as vice-president seemed particularly astute following the

[11] Municipios are analogous to counties in the United States in that they involve a city or town and the surrounding rural area. Municipios are primarily small and rural in character. Of the 314 municipalities in Bolivia, 31 per cent have populations under 5,000, 73 per cent have populations under 15,000 and 94 per cent have populations under 50,000 (SNPP-DNFC 1997:11, quoted in Kohl 2002:461, footnote 17).

[12] Ricardo Calla, personal communication, La Paz, 20 December 2002.

1990 March for Territory and Dignity, in which numerous lowland indigenous groups marched from the Amazon lowlands to the Andean capital La Paz, a widely-supported action that led to the creation of seven indigenous territories in Bolivia's Amazon region.

Official efforts such as these to recognize Bolivia's ethnic diversity, and provide certain rights and limited autonomy to indigenous groups, are examples of what Nancy Postero (2007) has termed "state-sponsored multiculturalism". While seemingly progressive in their recognition of indigenous diversity, such tactics proved politically divisive, and did little to improve the material conditions of life for most of Bolivia's indigenous and campesino poor. As Postero (2007:14-15) notes, "Simply recognizing cultural pluralism or promoting tolerance of difference in a managed multiculturalism is insufficient if there is little lasting change for the dominated group". Similarly, Yashar (1999:80) argues that such pluri/multi reforms, linked as they were to policies of political and economic liberalism, established a "neoliberal citizenship regime":

> The expansion of political and civil rights has tended to coincide with the decline of social rights and the promotion of liberal or pluralist modes of interest intermediation. Organized social sectors (such as workers and peasants) have lost their state assurance of a basic standard of living and similarly have lost their main institutional means of accessing and occasionally influencing the state.

Thus, while neoliberalism has increased individual freedoms of expression and electoral participation, it has simultaneously reduced assurances of livelihood and welfare. Using the terminology of T.H. Marshall (1963; see also Yashar 1999), under such regimes, civil rights (freedom of organization and expression) and political rights (participation in the electoral process) have been extended, while social rights (to a minimum standard of living) have been systematically dismantled. As Hale (2002:493) puts it, indigenous peoples—who in Latin America generally occupy the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder—are confronted by the "paradox of simultaneous cultural affirmation and economic marginalization".

It is with this paradox in mind that Hale (2004) warns of the seductive promise of "neoliberal multiculturalism", in which official recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity is ideologically bound up with state neoliberal projects, bringing with it both promise and peril. In this view, indigenous identity, and the forms of politics that go with it, is officially valorized only insofar as it is functional to, and subsumed under, the broader neoliberal project. As Hale (2002:491) puts it,

> Powerful political and economic actors use neoliberal multiculturalism to affirm cultural difference, while retaining the prerogative to discern between cultural rights consistent with the ideal of liberal, democratic pluralism, and cultural rights inimical to that ideal. In so doing, they advance a universalistic ethic, which constitutes a defense of the neoliberal capitalist order itself. Those who might challenge the underlying inequities of neoliberal capitalism as part of their 'cultural rights' activism are designated 'radicals,' defined not as 'anti-capitalist' but as 'culturally intolerant, extremist'.

Drawing on his extensive ethnographic and historical work in Guatemala (like Bolivia, a majority indigenous state), Hale makes a persuasive argument. Bolivia, however, is not Guatemala. In Bolivia, indigenous and campesino peoples have benefited from many of Goni's reforms, while turning them against the dominant neoliberal political and economic order. As noted by Postero (2007:17), "indigenous citizens in Bolivia have taken advantage of political openings that the LPP offered, in many cases by assuming many of the rationalities of neoliberalism. In an interesting turn about, however … these indigenous citizens are using them to pose important challenges to the workings of global capitalism". For instance, municipalization under the LPP created decentralized electoral bases for the election of MAS officials in Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz, while reforms in national electoral laws allowed indigenous and campesino candidates from social movements and non-traditional political

parties to enter Congress for the first time in 2002. Moreover, neighbourhood federations in El Alto and La Paz, organized according to the LPP, led widespread street protests against neoliberal resource policies in 2003 and 2005. Bolivia, it would seem, has entered a "postmulticultural" moment, in which understandings of citizenship are being reworked, and indigenous and popular movements are successfully positioning their interests in the political mainstream in ways that are explicitly oppositional, rather than functional, to neoliberalism (Postero 2004, 2007). These political developments have figured importantly in popular protests over the governance of natural gas.

Hydrocarbons development in Bolivia: The state–IFI–multinational corporation nexus

In 1996, the government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada set forth its "energy triangle" policy, consisting of (i) a new hydrocarbons law; (ii) capitalization of the state hydrocarbons firm Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB); and (iii) construction of a natural gas pipeline to Brazil. Together, these measures were intended to increase state revenues by facilitating private (mostly foreign) investment in Bolivian hydrocarbons and opening up new markets in Brazil (Hindery 2003). The new hydrocarbons law sought to promote foreign investment by restructuring the tax code and implementing a new concession system with no spatial boundaries; facilitating the import, export and internal marketing of hydrocarbons; and allowing foreign parties to distribute, transport, refine and industrialize oil and gas (Hindery 2003:113). Liberalization of the hydrocarbons sector was encouraged by the United States government and the Inter-American Development Bank, and was explicitly promoted by the World Bank through specific sectoral loans, institution-building programmes (and associated loans), and direct lobbying of members of Bolivia's Congress to pass enabling legislation (Hindery 2004). According to the Bolivian government and World Bank representatives, the 1996 Hydrocarbons Law was expected to increase foreign investment, liberalize trade in hydrocarbons and related goods and services, create an independent regulatory agency to establish tariffs and negotiate contracts with private firms, and deregulate prices (World Bank 1994).

The World Bank was also involved in institution-building programmes that sought to facilitate the entrance of private capital into the Bolivian hydrocarbons sector in a way that appeared environmentally and socially acceptable to international observers. For this, the World Bank promoted the creation of an Environmental Unit (UMA) within the Vice-Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons, tasked with regulating hydrocarbons development activities, and mitigating environmental and social impacts stemming from the liberalization of the hydrocarbons sector. Creation of the UMA was funded through a Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL) of $4.8 million[13] (which covered 87 per cent of the LIL project's total estimated cost of $5.5 million). As Hindery (2004) notes, the UMA's ongoing operations were to be funded by fees from hydrocarbons concessions. That the agency responsible for environmental oversight was itself reliant on funds derived from environmentally destructive hydrocarbons development activities created an obvious conflict of interest, and prompted objections from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Amazon Watch and the Bolivian Fund for Environment and Development (FOBOMADE) (Hindery 2003). Ultimately, the World Bank itself conceded the failure of the LIL project to provide adequate oversight. In 2000, the Bank acknowledged that the rapid expansion of gas development resulting from capitalization had created social and environmental impacts that the UMA was incapable of containing (World Bank 2000).

International hydrocarbons firms responded enthusiastically to Goni's reforms.[14] In the period 1997–2001, foreign investment in hydrocarbons rose from $296 million to $401.3 million, an increase of 35.6 per cent (Hindery 2004). Before leaving office, Goni signed a presidential decree

[13] $ amounts refer to the US dollar.

[14] By the mid-1990s, numerous transnational oil and gas firms were operating in Bolivia, including Argentina's YPF (now Repsol YPF of Spain) and Pluspetrol; Brazil's Petrobras; Total, Fina and Elf Aquataine of France; Texaco, Shell, Mobil, Maxus and Enron of the United States; and British-owned BP Amoco (Wu and Pezeshki 1995).

reducing from 50 per cent to 18 per cent the royalties paid by private firms on newly discovered oil and gas reserves (royalties on existing reserves were to remain at 50 per cent—Hindery 2003). This had the effect of reducing the percentage of state earnings provided by hydrocarbons, from some 50 per cent in the early 1990s to roughly 25 per cent by 1999 (Kohl 2002; Orgáz García 2002). If Goni sought to improve the business climate for foreign firms, he succeeded: in 2003 the government revealed that the Bolivian operations of Spain's Repsol YPF and British-owned BP Amoco enjoyed the lowest operating costs for hydrocarbons exploration and production anywhere in the world (Hylton and Thomson 2004). Prospects for accumulation were greatly enhanced when, shortly after capitalization, the firms announced that Bolivian oil and gas reserves were substantially greater than anticipated. Indeed, whereas existing gas reserves at the time of capitalization were 1.5 trillion cubic feet (TCF), new reserves, discovered or declared following capitalization, totalled 50.7 TCF. Similarly, whereas oil reserves stood at 27.8 million barrels before capitalization, new reserves announced after capitalization totaled 901.3 million barrels (Hindery 2003: 117). As a result, some 97 per cent of Bolivia's oil and gas was contained in "new" reserves, subject to the lower (18 per cent) tariff rate.

Identity and Development

Natural gas extraction and the Guaraní people of eastern Bolivia

According to seismological studies, some 55.6 per cent of Bolivian territory has hydrocarbon potential, mostly in the eastern Amazonian and Chaco lowlands (but including a sizable portion of the Altiplano as well). Unsurprisingly, given that rural Bolivia is inhabited primarily, and in many areas exclusively, by indigenous peoples, there is considerable overlap between the regions of hydrocarbons development and indigenous lands. Current oil and gas development activities particularly affect the peoples of the Amazon, Chaco and Chiquitanía regions of the country's eastern lowlands. Just over 83 per cent of Bolivia's gas reserves lie under Guaraní land, in the dry thorn-scrub region known as the Chaco, in eastern Tarija and Santa Cruz departments.[15] These reserves are divided into four main gas fields: Margarita (with 13.42 TCF of natural gas), San Alberto (11.05 TCF), Itaú (9.27 TCF) and San Antonio (5.25 TCF) (Orduna 2004:3).

The Margarita gas field is located on the Itika Guasu Tierras Comunitarias de Orígen (TCO/communal lands of origin) of the Guaraní, and contains seven Guaraní communities.[16] The 216,000 hectares (ha) Itika Guasu TCO is one of 14 TCOs pertaining to the Guaraní people, in Santa Cruz, Tarija, and Chuquisaca departments. In all, 34 Ava Guaraní communities are located on the Itika Guasu TCO, which was established in 2004 under the auspices of the Guaraní Peoples' Assembly (APG) (Martínez 2000). On the Margarita gas field itself, the roughly 650 Guaraní (in about 170 households) are outnumbered more than two-to-one by the 1,600 non-Guaraní workers employed in various phases of gas production (Orduna 2004: 4).

As a category of land rights claims created by agrarian reform legislation in the 1990s (the Ley INRA—law of the National Agrarian Reform Institute), the TCO was designed to facilitate recognition of communal lands claims by indigenous peoples in the country's eastern lowlands (although some Andean communities have also taken advantage of the legislation; see, for example, Laurie et al. 2002). Article 41 of the INRA Law defines TCOs as:

[15] Some 85.7 per cent of Bolivia's gas reserves are found in Tarija, with Santa Cruz containing a further 10.6 per cent of reserves (Chávez and Stefanoni 2006).

[16] These include Zapaterambia, Itaparara and Puerto Margarita south of the Pilcomayo River, and Yuati, Ivoca, Cumandaroti and Villa Mercedes north of the Pilcomayo.

> those geographical spaces that constitute the habitat of indigenous and original (*originarias*) peoples and communities, and to which they traditionally have had access and where they maintain and develop their own forms of economic, social and cultural organization, the mode of which assures their survival and development. They are inalienable, indivisible, irreversible, collective and composed of communities or groups of communities (*mancomunidades*).

The establishment of TCOs under the Law of Popular Participation was intended in part to resolve outstanding land disputes involving indigenous peoples in the Amazon and Chaco lowlands, according to Bolivia's obligations under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO 169). As such, TCOs form an integral part of the state's pluri/multi reforms of the 1990s (Martínez 1999). In 1996, just two years before the discovery of the Margarita gas field, the 24 *Capitanías* (political authorities) of the Guaraní initiated a claim for 18 TCOs, covering 10,220,340 ha. In 2004, following eight years of consideration (and six years of gas production), the government awarded the Guaraní just 6.8 per cent of their request (697,957 ha). As a result, the remaining 93.4 per cent of the Guaraní's land claim has been effectively opened up for oil and gas development (Orduna 2004:3).

The Guaraní form the third largest indigenous group in Bolivia (after the Quechua and Aymara), and comprise several groups in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.[17] There are three groups of Guaraní in Bolivia; the Ava Guaraní, who live in the eastern Andean foothills of Santa Cruz and Tarija; the Izoceño Guaraní, who live in the Izozo region of central Santa Cruz department; and the Simba Guaraní, who live in small enclaves of Tarija and Chuquisaca departments. In rural areas, Guaraní are settled agriculturalists, who rely on smallholder subsistence or semi-subsistence-based farming (raising beans, squash, corn and a variety of other crops, as well as cattle, goats, pigs, chickens and sheep), hunting, fishing and the gathering of wild plants and fruits. Since the agrarian reform of 1953, numerous Guaraní have migrated to lowland cities, forming part of urban neighbourhoods or outlying villages. Today, there are several urban and peri-urban Guaraní communities in and around Santa Cruz (Postero 2007).

Guaraní social organization is marked by the capitanía system—supra-communal forms of organization comprised of a leader, or *capitán*, from each member community, and headed by a *Capitán Grande* (head captain, or *mburuvisa guasu* in the Guaraní language). Maximum authority is held by an *asamblea* (assembly, or *yemboati* in Guaraní), which functions as a deliberative, judicial body and has authority over the mburuvisa guasu. Assemblies exist for individual communities, as well as for the *capitanía* as a whole (Hirsch 1999). Since the 1980s, the Guaraní have been organized politically into modern indigenous organizations, similar to those found in the Andes as well as some other Latin American states such as Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico. The Center for Indigenous Peoples and Communities of the Bolivian East (CIDOB) was founded in Santa Cruz in 1982, with the assistance of the NGO Assistance for the Indigenous Peasant of the Bolivian East (APCOB).[18] CIDOB serves as an umbrella group for the various indigenous peoples of Bolivia's Amazon and Chaco regions, but emerged largely as a result of Izoceño Guaraní mobilizing. Today, the Guaraní are the largest lowland indigenous group, and remain the primary force within CIDOB. The APG was founded in 1987 with the support of CIDOB and the Catholic NGO, Center for the Investigation and Promotion of the Peasantry (CIPCA).[19] APG brings together Ava, Izozo and Simba Guaraní communities, with leadership composed of representatives from each of the three zones (Hirsch 2003). It should be noted that, with the exception of the Ava Guaraní, indigenous groups in the eastern lowlands have not organized

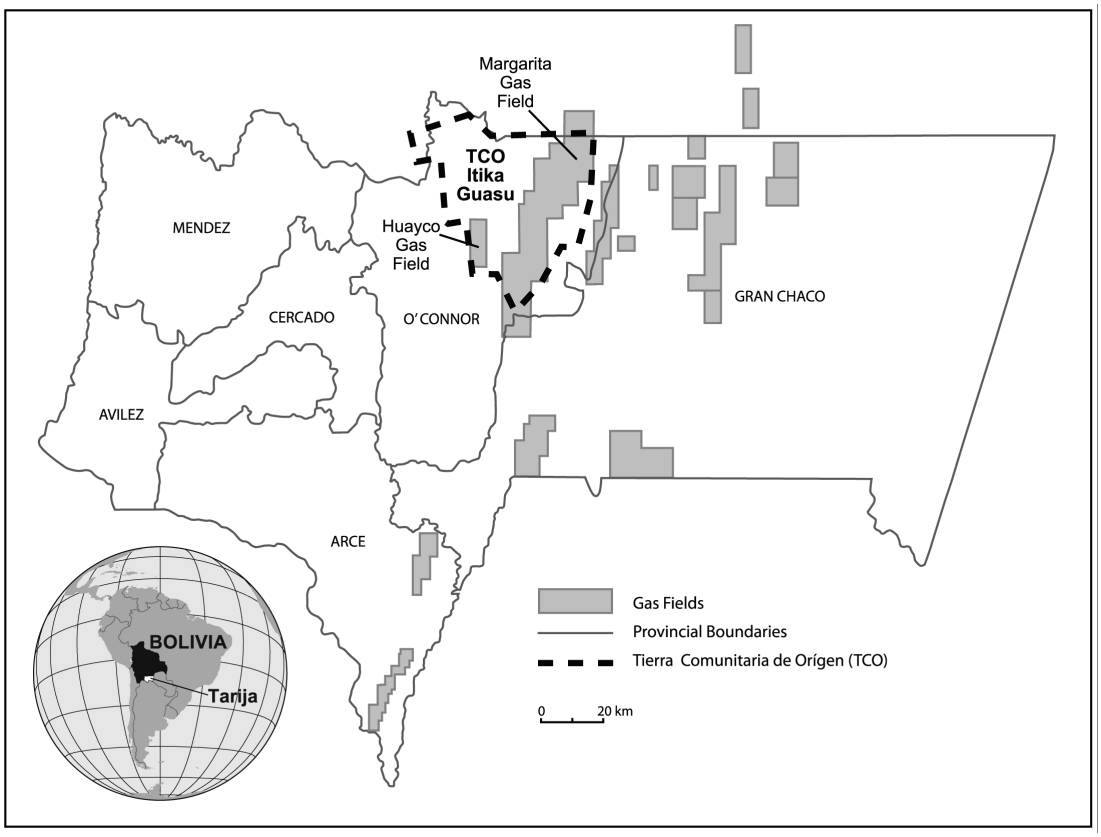
[17] Guaraní is a modern term of self-identification. In the anthropological and ethno-historical literature, Guaraní are sometimes also referred to as Tupi-Guaraní or Chiriguano (an antiquated term that the Guaraní consider derogatory). According to Hirsch (1999), contemporary Bolivian Guaraní are descendents of a cultural blending of Chané peoples and Guaraní who migrated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries into what is now Bolivia.

[18] APCOB was founded in 1980 by anthropologists working in the region.

[19] CIPCA was founded in the early 1970s by Jesuit priests including Xavier Albó, who holds a PhD in Anthropology from Cornell University, and is today one of Bolivia's leading scholars and public intellectuals on indigenous issues.

into peasant unions (*sindicatos campesinos*). Peasant unions, provided for by the 1953 agrarian reform and found in rural communities throughout the highlands, do not carry the same relevance for lowland indigenous peoples, few of whom were ever subjected to peonage under the hacienda system.[20] As a result, the label "campesino" does not carry the same meaning for lowland indigenous peoples as it does for Aymara communities in the northern Altiplano, or Quechua communities in Cochabamba, where the hacienda system was strongest, and where campesino identity was most fully embraced following agrarian reform.

Figure 2. Map of Tarija showing gas fields and TCO Itika Guasu



In spite of their relatively high level of social and political organization, and strong contact with NGOs, other indigenous organizations and social movements, the Guaraní have borne the brunt of much of the oil and natural gas development in Bolivia. This is exemplified by the case of the Guaraní who live on the Margarita gas field in eastern Tarija department. These communities are small and impoverished, and far removed from the headquarters of APG and CIDOB in Santa Cruz. As a result, they have few resources to draw on in countering the impacts of the transnational hydrocarbons firms operating on their lands.

The Margarita gas field and the Guaraní of Tarija department

The largest of Bolivia's gas fields is the Campo Margarita, on which there are four wells in operation (X-1 through X-4). Operations on the Margarita gas field are conducted by a consortium of transnational firms, including Repsol YPF (37.5 per cent share), BG Group (37.5 per cent share) and Pan American Energy (25 per cent share). Gas firms have sought to facilitate their relations with local Guaraní communities by providing basic services, including the construction of health posts and adobe houses, and the provision of such items as fencing, blankets and construction materials. According to Orduna (2004:5), Repsol YPF spent less than

[20] Lowland indigenous peoples were, however, subject to other forms of exploitative labour relations. Forms of debt peonage were common throughout the Amazon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and still exist in some areas.

$100,000 on goods and services for Guaraní communities, as compared to some $2.4 million it spent constructing a bridge over the Pilcomayo river, and its total investment of over $200 million in its Margarita operations. In other words, Maxus-Repsol YPF's payments for Guaraní "development" represent less than 0.05 per cent of their total expenditures in the Margarita field, a figure which is made all the more stark when considering the potential value of the gas it was producing. At 2004 prices ($1.50 per 1,000 cubic feet), the 13.42 TCF of natural gas in the Margarita had a total value of over $20 billion.

What's more, Repsol YPF's voluminous environmental impact assessment (EIA) for well X-3 contained only 10 lines regarding the Guaraní that would be most affected by extraction activities. In completing the EIA, Maxus argued that they were exempt from thorough consultation with the Guaraní communities, because the land where the well was to be drilled belonged not to the Guaraní, but to a third party. This in spite of the fact that well X-3 is located on the Itika Guasu TCO. Negotiating with a third party, as Repsol YPF appears to have done, is a legally dubious practice which circumvents the firms' requirements under the ILO 169, which was ratified by Bolivian law 1257 (passed in 1991) and mandates full consultation with indigenous peoples regarding extractive activities occurring on their lands. Bolivia's hydrocarbons law requires that firms conform to the directives of ILO 169, but delegates responsibility for this consultation to the firms themselves. As a consequence, monitoring and enforcement is inadequate to ensure that indigenous peoples are properly involved in this process. The firms' cavalier attitude toward the Guaraní was further reflected in the legal documents they submitted to the Vice Minister of the Environment, Carlos Valenzuela. Instead of using the correct names for the Chaco region (in which the Margarita gas field is located), the Guaraní themselves, and the Guaraní community of Cumandaroti, the documents indicated that the firms had distributed Christmas gifts in the Amazon region, referred to the local people as Tsiman, and called the community "San Borja". In preparing the report, Maxus had apparently used a template from an earlier report regarding its operations in the Tsiman community of San Borja, located in the Amazon Basin, hundreds of kilometres to the north (Orduna 2004:3). Such an error, while perhaps not surprising, is indicative of the dismissive, one-size-fits-all approach the firm has taken in its dealings with indigenous peoples.

Conditions surrounding well X-3 exemplify the problems Guaraní face. The well is within 500 metres of the small community of Cumandaroti (in spite of company assurances that the well would be over 700 metres away). Gas flares, heat and odour associated with drilling and extraction cause headaches and human illnesses, and adversely affect crops and animals. Waste drilling mud, chemicals and lubricants used during drilling have been dumped into a large open pit, along with chemical and hydrocarbon-contaminated water (Orduna 2004:2).[21] Such conditions present an obvious and immediate health hazard for local residents.

Environmental and social problems stemming from gas development motivated sporadic small-scale protests from the Guaraní. In May 2004 (seven months after the Gas War, discussed below), dozens of Guaraní staged a peaceful protest against Repso-YPF and Maxus operations in the Margarita gas field in Tarija department. Protestors called for recognition of their territorial rights and—in line with the "October agenda", a list of demands that came out of the 2003 Gas War—nationalization of the country's hydrocarbons industry. Protestors surrounded company installations at Margarita and blocked the transport of food supplies to company workers. Following five days of protest, the government agreed to establish a fund by which 2 per cent of gas rents paid to the state would be reserved for development projects in Guaraní communities.[22] Protests flared up again in August 2006, as community members, calling for more development funds for Guaraní communities, threatened to shut off the flow of gas to Brazil. This time, protests were focused on the Parapeti control station in Santa Cruz department, where the 300 members of the APG threatened to take control of the pipeline and shut it down. One of the issues was a $9 million fund that the pipeline operator Transierra had

[21] At 3,600 square metres, this is roughly the size of an American football field.
[22] www.gasandoil.com/GOC/news/ntl642248.htm, accessed on 4 October 2007.

agreed to invest in Guaraní communities over a period of 20 years as compensation for the pipeline crossing Guaraní lands. Transierra, which is jointly operated by the Brazilian firm Petrobras, the Spanish-Argentine firm Repsol YPF, and the French firm Total, had by then spent about $255,000. Guaraní representatives called for greater investment, and wanted the fund to be administered by the Guaraní themselves.[23]

In spite of sporadic protests by Guaraní residents of the Itika Guasu TCO, and an agreement with Repsol YPF, relations between the Guaraní and the firm continued to be tense. In November 2005, the APG released a statement denouncing Repsol YPF's activities on the Itika Guasu TCO, accusing them of violating Bolivian law under Evo Morales' presidential decree of 1 May 2005. Known principally for restructuring the royalties that oil and gas firms pay to the Bolivian state (deceptively touted by all sides as the "nationalization" of Bolivia's gas reserves), the so-called Heroes of the Chaco decree also reaffirmed the rights of indigenous peoples on whose lands oil and gas extraction occurs. Drawing on Morales' decree for legal and moral justification, the APG's statement lists a series of grievances and demands that Repsol YPF comply with Bolivian law and international agreements in regard to Guaraní rights. The statement is worth quoting here at length (see the appendix for the complete statement):

> The Assembly of Guaraní Peoples of Itika Guasu denounces…that the company Repsol YPF, in initiating new work within the TCO without previous consultation and notification, is violating the Law of Hydrocarbons 3058 of 17 May 2005, in the articles referring to the rights of indigenous peoples…We denounce that the Spanish company Repsol YPF has entered our territory of the Itika Guasu TCO to carry out prospecting, exploration and extraction operations, and has done so systematically violating our right to prior consultation and notification, established in the ILO's Convention 169, which is Law of the Republic [of Bolivia] since 1991, Law 1257…In March 2003, after much pressure on our part, Repsol YPF established a formal agreement with the Guaraní people of Itika Guasu, an agreement that the company has not complied with, because in spite of their promise to respect our TCO, the petroleum firm has continued damaging our territory, dividing our communities, violating their own commitments not only with the Guaraní people but also with the Bolivian state, as established in the environmental impact studies and national laws…Since 17 May 2005, in our country there is a new Hydrocarbons Law, Law 3058, which in its Titles VII and VIII clearly establishes how the activities of petroleum firms on indigenous territories should be carried out…In spite of this, on the Itika Guasu TCO Repsol YPF continues acting in a manner contrary to the law, and because of this, violating our rights.[24]

Clearly, then, the new hydrocarbons law, established by presidential decree in May 2005 (and detailed below), has provided both legal basis and political inspiration to the APG in their struggle against Repsol YPF. What is less clear, however, is the extent to which the Guaraní people of the Itika Guasu TCO will be able to halt Repsol's activities on their lands. The firm continues its operations and, given the financial reliance of the Bolivian state on hydrocarbon rents, it is unlikely to cease operating any time soon.

On 12 August 2007, leaders of APG-Itika Guasu signed an agreement with the Ministries of Hydrocarbons, and Rural Development, Agriculture and Environment which will allow Guaraní communities on the TCO to register complaints and make recommendations in the construction of a new gas pipeline. This agreement was the result of a process of Consulta y Participación (consultation and participation), mandated by Evo's Presidential Decree 29033.[25] Released on 16 February 2007, Presidential Decree 29033 establishes procedures for consultation with and participation of Amazonian and Andean indigenous peoples, as well as campesino communities, on whose communal lands or TCOs hydrocarbons development-related activities

[23] www.gasandoil.com/GOC/news/ntl63938.htm, accessed on 4 October 2007.
[24] www.redesma.org/boletin/bol_2005/bol_7_19/pueblo%20guarani.pdf, accessed on 14 February 2008.
[25] http://cedla.org/obie/articulo/articulo.php?articulo=1103, accessed on 14 February 2008.

are to occur. The decree requires that hydrocarbons development respect communities' territoriality and *usos y costumbres*. In essence, this decree codifies and puts into effect Bolivia's obligations under ILO 169, adopted by Bolivian law in 1991. It is too early, of course, to determine whether the agreement between APG-Itika Guasu and the government, or Presidential Decree 29033 on which this agreement was based, will significantly alter well-established patterns of environmental degradation and social marginalization. Surely, however, it is a hopeful sign of change.

In summary, it is apparent that Repsol and Maxus failed adequately to consult with affected indigenous communities, as required under ILO 169 and Bolivian law 1257. As evidenced by errors in the companies' environmental impact assessment, little consideration was given to the welfare of Guaraní communities, on whose lands the Margarita gas field is located. Such practices on the part of transnational hydrocarbons firms were facilitated both by international lending institutions and the Bolivian government. International lenders, led by the World Bank, helped finance natural gas extraction and the construction of pipelines. These agencies, together with the Bolivian government at the time, established a lax business climate in which private firms were largely responsible for policing themselves. Bolivian regulatory agencies and government ministries, charged with overseeing such projects, were closely tied to private firms, and as in the case of the Unidad del Medio Ambiente, were in some cases funded by hydrocarbons extraction activities. The preponderant influence of transnational firms and international financial institutions, together with what was widely seen as the venality and arrogance of the Bolivian state in promoting its neoliberal agenda, led to widespread protest, particularly in the country's Andean west.

National impacts of gas development: The Gas War, October 2003

In October 2003, the Guerra del Gas, or Gas War, rapidly encompassed most of the country's Andean cities, as citizens' groups rejected a government plan to export natural gas to the United States and Mexico via a Chilean port. Though discontent with neoliberalism had been brewing since its introduction in the mid 1980s, proximate causes of the Guerra del Gas can be traced to the formation of Pacific LNG. Pacific LNG—a consortium of the transnational energy firms Repsol YPF, British Gas and Pan-American Energy, established in Paris in 2002—was formed with the expectation of transporting natural gas from the Margarita gas field via a pipeline to a Pacific port. The gas was to be transformed into liquefied natural gas (LNG) at a plant on the Chilean coast (to be constructed by Pacific LNG), allowing it to be shipped to markets in Mexico and California (Miranda Pacheco 2002). This arrangement was approved by then president Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, in spite of widespread opposition from the armed forces, nationalist politicians and the majority of Bolivians. Bolivia lost its coast to Chile in the War of the Pacific in the 1870s, and its landlocked status has been a contentious issue between the two states, as well as a symbol of Bolivian nationalism, ever since (Klein 1992). Given that gas (like other strategically important natural resources before it) is widely thought of as national patrimony, plans to export it through Chile were simply unacceptable to most Bolivians.

Protests in opposition to the plan were met with a violent police and military response, which served only to strengthen popular outrage. The protests brought together diverse actors and organizations: the El Alto Federation of Neighborhood Associations (FEJUVE), Aymara campesinos from the Altiplano and Quechua campesinos from Cochabamba, Aymara and Quechua miners from Oruro and Potosí, factory workers, students, intellectuals and other activists sympathetic to the protestors' anti-neoliberal position. What began as calls for the government to export natural gas through a Peruvian rather than Chilean port quickly transformed into a widespread rejection of export plans altogether. Protestors, led by FEJUVE, called for the recovery and industrialization of the nation's gas reserves—that is, the strengthening of state control and the simultaneous weakening of private, foreign influence over natural gas, together with coordinated, state-led efforts to use the gas for the country's social development (del Granado and Zaratti 2003). These demands were discursively bundled with calls for the re-founding of the country (*refundar el país*)—a loosely defined set of demands

for greater democratization based on popular forms of social organization emphasizing an Andean-centered vision of indigenous cultural heritage.[26] Following four more days of violent protest and over 70 deaths, Goni resigned his office and fled to the United States.[27]

It is worth noting that the Gas War was dominated, both in terms of the discursive framing of the struggle and the protestors in the street, by Aymara communities in the Altiplano as well as urban social movements in La Paz, El Alto and Cochabamba. Thus, struggles over natural gas were defined and enacted by people and places distant from the actual centres of production, while the Guaraní communities directly affected by gas extraction were (and remain) largely excluded from the discussions and demands circulating in the Andes. These protests were therefore not concerned with the direct social or environmental effects of gas development, but rather involved more abstract matters of national imaginary citizenship, national development, and the distribution of benefits stemming from the country's massive gas reserves (Perreault 2006). Neither the government nor the social movements took seriously the possibility that the Guaraní themselves might have something to say about the extractive practices occurring on their lands.

Given their contrasting geographical and historical contexts, it is not surprising that gas development had distinctly different effects in the Andean highland and eastern lowlands. It is the indigenous peoples of the Amazon and Chaco regions who bear the direct social and environmental costs of hydrocarbon development. Their capacity to respond to, let alone stop, these impacts, is limited by the fact that these populations are small, ethnically and linguistically diverse, economically and politically marginalized, and spatially dispersed. This situation differs markedly from the Andean highlands, where large and well-organized (mostly) urban Aymara and Quechua populations (together with a loose coalition of urban workers, students, intellectuals and other activists) protested the privatization and export of natural gas in October 2003.

After the Gas War: Political realignment

Goni was succeeded by his vice president, Carlos Mesa who, despite initial popularity and political calm, was forced to step down in June 2005 amidst widespread protests in El Alto, La Paz and Cochabamba that paralyzed much of the country's Andean west.[28] Mesa's departure led to the selection of judge Eduardo Rodriguez to head a caretaker government, the central task of which was to provide for new elections in December of that year. The traditional political parties—the MNR, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN) and the New Republican Force (NFR)—which between them controlled most political offices in the country over the past several years, had by this time lost credibility with the majority of voters. In their place emerged a number of new parties and social movements, in most cases built around charismatic leaders and former militants from the disgraced mainstream parties who had jumped ship in an effort to salvage their political careers. The array of what in Bolivia is referred to simply as the social movements (*movimientos sociales*) includes indigenist organizations such as THOA and CONAMAQ, indigenous political parties such as MAS and the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP), the radical Confederation of Peasant Labour Unions of Bolivia (CSUTCB), the coca-growers union, the influential Cochabamba irrigators' federation (FEDECOR) and other, mestizo-led groups like the sindicalist Bolivian Workers Central (COB) and the Coordinator for the Defence of Water and Life (Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y la Vida), which led the 2000 Cochabamba Water War (García Linera 2005). Together, these social movements form occasional "plural popular"

[26] The term "*refundar el país*" has proven to be ideologically malleable, having been used both by the social movements and by Goni himself, with quite different political meanings. More recently, the term has been adopted by the Right-wing autonomy movement centred in Santa Cruz department, to promote its vision of an administratively restructured political system in which departmental governments would retain a greater share of resource rents, and would enjoy greater control over budgetary discretion and the exercise of police power (Eaton 2007; Gustafson 2008).

[27] Goni had two non-consecutive terms as president, from 1993 to 1997, and again from August 2002 to October 2003.

[28] These protests involved diverse groups mobilized around a variety of causes, including the privatization of water services in El Alto and La Paz, teachers' pension reform, calls for the nationalization of the country's natural gas, demands for constitutional reform, and defence of coca production.

coalitions that unite rural with urban, Aymara and Quechua with mestizo, worker with campesino (Albro 2006a).

The most prominent of the social movement parties was the MAS, headed by Evo Morales. The MAS first emerged as a regional political force in municipal elections in the late 1990s. From its electoral base in the tropical coca-growing region of the Chapare,[29] in Cochabamba Department, MAS's influence grew to include much of the Altiplano and highland valleys. MAS's electoral base consists largely of campesino and indigenous peoples, particularly Quechua-speaking campesinos in Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Potosí and Oruro. MAS's popularity has grown on the (mostly Aymara) Altiplano and among disaffected mestizo voters, the urban poor, intellectuals and the Bolivian Left more broadly, mostly in the Andean west but also in the lowland east. Indeed, these voters were key to Morales' victory in the 2005 election.

Morales, or Evo as he is popularly called, was elected with 54 per cent of the popular vote in the first round of the election—the largest vote total in Bolivian history, and twice as many votes as his closest rival, Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga. As the son of Aymara campesinos, and having grown up in the mining camps of Oruro, he is the country's first indigenous campesino president. As a young man he became an activist with the coca-growers union in the Chapare, and retains his position as head of the *cocaleros* while simultaneously serving as President of the Republic (Albro 2006c). Shortly after his election, Evo began implementing the "October Agenda", the set of social movement demands stemming from the Gas War in October 2003. The first of these tasks was to initiate a Constitutional Assembly to rewrite the constitution. The Assembly—which comprised elected representatives from every region of the country, many of them with traditional party affiliations—was inaugurated in August 2006. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Assembly has been slowed by conflicting interpretations of the rules of operation, most notably the size of the majority needed to adopt measures in the rewritten Constitution. Conflicts over this issue led to violent clashes between MAS supporters and opponents in Cochabamba in January 2007, which claimed four lives and caused over a hundred serious injuries. Following this conflict, MAS conceded its position to those calling for a two-thirds "super-majority", breaking the stalemate and allowing the Constituent Assembly to move forward (Spronk 2007). Though in session for longer than the planned one-year period, the Assembly failed to reach consensus. MAS's efforts to reform the Constitution were largely scuttled by intransigent opposition led by the Social and Democratic Power (PODEMOS) party, based in Santa Cruz. In December 2007, as the Assembly grew increasingly fractious and stalemated in Sucre (the historical capital, and site of rancorous, often violent clashes between Evo's supporters and opponents), MAS assembly members retreated to the Altiplano city of Oruro to finalize and pass their version of the Constitution. Amidst much fanfare, Evo presided over the passage of the new Constitution. But given the staunch opposition from PODEMOS and other parties of the right, as well as the dubious manner in which MAS ratified the Constitution—ensconced in a MAS stronghold and without participation of opposition party members—it is doubtful that it will be widely accepted as legitimate.

The second demand of the October Agenda addressed by Evo was the nationalization of the country's natural gas and petroleum, declared on Labour Day (1 May) 2006. Surrounded by soldiers and representatives from the national and international press, Evo announced Presidential Decree 28701 from the San Alberto natural gas field in Tarija, a banner behind him declaring "Nacionalizado: Propiedad de Bolivianos" (Nationalized: Property of Bolivians). As he read the decree, the military simultaneously occupied 56 natural gas installations throughout the country. As Webber (2006) notes, such military theatrics served both practical and symbolic purposes. On the one hand, the armed forces were needed to prevent records and documents

[29] The importance of coca growing and consumption in the Andes has been well-documented, and substantially predates Spanish arrival (Allen 1988). Since the 1980s, US-led anti-drug campaigns have pushed for the eradication of coca (the key ingredient in cocaine), an ongoing effort that has led to several violent confrontations and numerous deaths and injuries. In response, coca growers, the vast majority of whom are of Quechua or Aymara origin, have organized themselves into one of the most disciplined unions in the country. Given its longstanding importance to Andean cultures, together with its targeting for eradication by the US and Bolivian drug enforcement agencies, coca provides a potent symbol of both cultural heritage and anti-imperialist politics (Farthing and Ledebur 2004).

being removed from the offices of hydrocarbons firms. Thorough audits would have to be conducted to assess company activities and profits in order to renegotiate contracts. On the other hand, the presence of the military signalled armed forces support for Evo and the nationalization plan, sending a message to opposition activists in Santa Cruz and elsewhere that a coup was out of the question. Moreover, this show of military force in the oil and gas fields was a reminder of past nationalizations under military regimes: the 1936 nationalization of Standard Oil's operations in the wake of the Chaco War and associated creation of YPFB, and the 1969 nationalization of Gulf Oil. As with previous nationalizations of oil and gas, the Evo's declaration may be read as a repudiation of foreign domination and a signal that the government intends to use the nation's natural resources for the benefit of Bolivian people.

Article 1 of Decree 28701, named the Heroes of the Chaco decree, states that "The state reclaims the property, the possession and the total and absolute control of these resources". The name Heroes of the Chaco is a reference to the disastrous War of the Chaco (1932–1935), which Bolivia lost to Paraguay, and in which the majority of Bolivia's 57,000 casualties were Aymara and Quechua conscripts. Though the causes for the war had probably more to do with internal Bolivian politics and gross miscalculations by Bolivia's corrupt and inept political elite, it has retrospectively been framed as a gallant defence of the country's oil (and more recently, gas) fields. Thus, the label Heroes of the Chaco resonates both with Andean indigenous historical memory, which views the war in terms of Aymara and Quechua sacrifices for the nation, and with nationalist conceptions of sovereignty, rooted in national and cultural patrimony (Orgaz García 2000). Such indigenous and popular nationalisms emerge periodically in relation to natural gas and other resources. During the 2003 Gas War, for instance, one of the principal slogans used by the protestors (who chanted it during marches and spray-painted it on building walls) was "*Gas para los bolivianos*"—Gas for Bolivians. This protest also saw groups of Aymara women in El Alto burning crates of Chilean apples, a clear repudiation of Bolivia's historic rival.

Article 2 of the decree states that oil and gas firms operating in national territory are obligated to turn their hydrocarbons production over to the national firm YPFB. Moreover, as indicated in Article 4, operations in the largest gas deposits—with average production in 2005 of over 100 million cubic feet per day—will be subject to an 82 per cent taxation rate, with the remaining 18 per cent remaining with the firms. (This inverts the taxation rate introduced by Goni's 1996 Hydrocarbons Law, which established an 18 per cent taxation rate on profits earned by hydrocarbons firms.) Production on smaller gas and oil fields will be subject to 50 per cent taxation, the rate in place prior to the implementation of the 1996 Law. Notwithstanding the assertions of the international press and Evo himself, the Heroes of the Chaco decree constitutes less a full nationalization (as called for many on the Bolivian Left) than a forced renegotiation of the terms of hydrocarbons development (Spronk 2007). Evo had swept to office in the wake of the Gas War and its October Agenda for nationalizing hydrocarbons, reconstituting YPFB and industrializing the country's natural gas. In this context, Evo framed his move as nationalization in fulfilment of campaign pledges and in rejection of his predecessors' neoliberal policies.

In his analysis of current gas-related conflicts in Bolivia, Gustafson (forthcoming) compares the royalty structures of the neoliberal era established by Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (under the hydrocarbons law of 1996), the transition period under Carlos Mesa, and the nationalist era of Evo Morales (under the Heroes of the Chaco decree). Under all three royalty regimes, 11 per cent of tax revenues were to be divided among producing departments (according to their share of production), 1 per cent goes to Beni and Pando departments, and 6 per cent goes to the national treasury. During the transition period, a 32 per cent direct hydrocarbon tax (IDH) was levied, bringing the royalty rate to 50 per cent of production. While the state continues to receive 50 per cent of revenues from production on smaller gas fields, Evo's decree adds a variable payment of 18–40 per cent directly to a reconstituted YPFB for production from the so-called gas megafields (of which Margarita is the largest). Thus, under the new regime, the state receives up to 90 per cent of the revenues from gas produced by Repsol YPF and Petrobras, which together control production in the megafields. These royalties are assessed on the value

of companies' net production (total production minus the gas and/or oil used in extractive processes). The remaining 50 per cent is divided between recoverable costs (equivalent to firms' total operating costs, expenses and investments) and benefits and utilities, which are subject to the additional variable fees (Rodríguez Cáceres 2007). Thus, while the Heroes of the Chaco decree did not nationalize Bolivia's gas operations—despite the pronouncements of both the government and its detractors—it did establish a royalty structure that benefits the Bolivian state to a much greater degree than was the case under the two previous regimes. In a broader historical perspective, however, this royalty structure merely replicates the distribution of rents that existed prior to neoliberalization. As Rodríguez Cáceres (2007) notes, in practice the country has returned to the pre-Goni period, insofar as foreign firms are obligated to deliver the oil and gas they extract to a reconstituted YPFB, Bolivia's state hydrocarbons company.

Following Morales' 1 May 2006 declaration, hydrocarbons firms operating in Bolivia were given a period of 180 days to sign new contracts with the Bolivian government, or they would not be permitted to operate within Bolivia. Between them, Repsol-YPF and Petrobras control over 70 per cent of hydrocarbons production in Bolivia, making them by far the leading firms involved.[30] While clearly unhappy with the new royalty regime, these firms and politicians from their home countries appear so far to have reluctantly accepted these terms. Argentina, having limited gas reserves of its own, relies on Bolivian imports. Similarly, the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, on the Bolivian border, is heavily dependent on Bolivian gas, as is the mega-city of São Paulo (Gustafson forthcoming).

Evo and the new Bolivia: Lessons for change?

Prior to his formal inauguration in La Paz, Evo held a ceremony at the pre-Inca site of Tiwanaku, near Lake Titicaca on the Altiplano. Widely considered a sacred site among Aymara peoples, Tiwanaku was also the location, in the 1970s, where Aymara activists met to launch the Katarista movement, in defiance of the Bánzer dictatorship's ban on political activities such as this. Evo's ceremony thus resonated both with indigenous historical memory, and with more recent histories of political mobilization. Equally symbolic, but more substantive in nature, were Evo's cabinet appointments, 14 of which (of a total of 16) went to people of indigenous heritage. He also required civil servants to speak at least one of the three most common indigenous languages (Aymara, Quechua or Guaraní), and eliminated the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs whose focus on the "indigenous problem" has long been rejected as racist by indigenous activists and intellectuals.[31] The formerly autonomous Ministry was folded into the Ministry of Justice (Albro 2006a), whose newly appointed head is Casimira Rodríguez, a Quechua woman and labour leader from rural Cochabamba department. At the age of 13, Rodríguez was sent to work as a domestic servant in the city of Cochabamba, where she was forced to work long hours for no pay, an experience which, for young indigenous women from the Bolivian countryside, is as common as it is exploitative (Chávez 2006; Gordon 2006).

Perhaps Evo's most fundamental restructuring involved the creation of the Ministry of Water. Water had formerly been managed in piecemeal fashion through various state agencies, and according to sector-specific laws (for example, those regulating drinking water, agriculture, mining or hydroelectricity). With the creation of the Ministry of Water (Minagua), management of basic services (drinking water and sewerage) and irrigation are integrated into one government ministry (each with its own vice ministry), along with watershed management (the third vice ministry in Minagua). Evo's selection for Minister of Water was Abel Mamani, an Aymara activist and former leader of FEJUVE. Mamani was the central figure in the 2005 struggle against Aguas del Illimani, the French-owned firm that in 1999 was granted the concession for drinking water and sewerage services in El Alto and La Paz (Webber and Spronk 2005). The creation of Minagua was a direct response to more than five years of mobilization by irrigators, urban social movements and intellectuals for more clearly defined and socially

[30] The most important firms currently operating in Bolivia are Spain's Repsol-YPF, Brazil's Petrobras, France's Total, British Petroleum (BP) and British Gas (BG).

[31] Some indigenist activists joked that Evo's government should establish a ministry of white affairs (Ministerio de Asuntos Blancos), to attend to the needs of the country's minority population.

controlled water rights. Indeed, Evo's election, and the broader ascendancy of the Left/indigenous social movements of which the MAS is a part, may be traced to the 2000 Cochabamba Water War, which consolidated and set in motion many of the social movement alliances that would bring the MAS to power less than six years later.[32]

What then is the significance of this increased presence of indigenous peoples in Bolivia's new government? As recent experience in Bolivia and Ecuador has shown, one must not confuse indigenous political appointments with fully democratic representation for indigenous peoples, or assume that the presence of individuals of indigenous heritage in government will necessarily result in improvements in political rights or the material conditions of life for the indigenous masses.[33] It must be recognized that MAS and the broader movement of which it is a part cannot be understood in terms of indigenous identity alone. Since at least 2002, indigenous representation and leadership in public affairs appears to be broadly (though not universally) accepted by the Bolivian public (Dunkerley 2007). Indigenous leaders are seldom viewed as representing *only* indigenous interests, even by their detractors. In contrast to indigenous politics in many parts of Latin America and elsewhere, rooted in claims of autonomy for a unitary subject position, MAS represents a plural, popular movement in which indigeneity, though central, is but one constitutive element. Indigenous peoples are well represented in Evo's government, but so are campesinos, workers, the poor and other popular sectors.

One must take care, however, not to romanticize the achievements of Bolivia's social movements. The ascendancy of Evo and the MAS are best viewed critically, within the context of Bolivian history and contemporary global political economy. In addition to the openings created for indigenous peoples, Evo's election has widened splits between different social sectors, most notably between the lowland east and the highland west. In particular, existing tensions between the urban poles of La Paz and Santa Cruz have been exacerbated by calls from Santa Cruz's elites for departmental autonomy, and the equally vigorous rejection of the *autonomista* movement by Evo's social movement allies (Eaton 2007; Gustafson 2006, 2008, forthcoming). Such regional animosities have fuelled sporadic violence both in Santa Cruz and in the highland west, most recently in relation to the dysfunctional Constitutional Assembly (Spronk 2007). A growing regional autonomy movement centred in the city of Santa Cruz, but encompassing the entire *media luna* (half moon) of lowland departments (Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni and Pando) threatens to derail Evo's reforms (Schroeder 2007). As Gustafson (forthcoming) argues, however, these struggles, most commonly conceived of in regional terms (including by the conflict's Bolivians protagonists on both sides), cannot be so neatly spatialized or racialized. Rather than the clear divisions between lowland/highland, east/west, or white/indigenous portrayed by many journalists, scholars, activists and politicians both within and beyond Bolivia, struggles over gas rents and autonomy in Bolivia pit economic elites (centred in, but not restricted to, Santa Cruz) and their particular vision of departmental autonomy against a nationalist, redistributive regime led by MAS (based in, but not limited to, La Paz). These struggles—fuelled by gas rents and visions of territorial autonomy—entail shifting regional, class and ethnic alliances, and it is as yet far too early to predict their outcome. Whether Morales will be able to contain these divisions, or if his government will merely exacerbate conflict, is an open question. Moreover, there remains the standard litany of social and economic problems that any president of Bolivia must confront: extreme poverty, unemployment, external debt, corruption, and inadequate educational and health services, to name but a few. It has yet to be seen whether Evo's government will succeed where past governments have largely failed to foster sustained and equitable development.

[32] Albro 2005; Dunkerley 2007; Perreault 2006, forthcoming.

[33] In Ecuador, indigenous leaders Nina Pacari and Luís Macas briefly held cabinet-level positions in 2003 during the short-lived presidency of Lucio Gutierrez. In Bolivia, Aymara intellectual and Katarista leader Víctor Hugo Cárdenas served as vice president during the first term of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993–1997). None of these appointments can be said to have led directly to substantial improvements in the conditions of life for indigenous peoples, and indeed these presidencies are both remembered in largely negative terms in their respective countries.

What lessons may be learned from the Bolivian experience? Importantly, the limited generalizability of the Bolivian experience must be recognized. As a majority indigenous country, Bolivia is nearly unique in the world (in Latin America, only Guatemala shares this characteristic). It is highly doubtful, for instance, that a similarly broad-based indigenous political movement could emerge in Canada, Australia, India or Nigeria, where indigenous peoples, though well organized and politically active, comprise small, largely rural minorities. If Bolivia holds lessons for indigenous movements elsewhere, they take form less as an example to follow, than in the way indigeneity has been re-conceptualized. MAS's strength lies not in its "authentically" indigenous character, but rather in the very plurality of the way it represents and reworks what it means to be indigenous in Bolivia. For Evo and the MAS, indigeneity is not limited to the rural, territorially bound, ethnic Other, but rather serves an articulatory role, linking ethnicity and class, rural and urban (Albro 2006a, 2006b; Postero 2007). This recognition points to the multiple ways of being indigenous. If we accept that indigenous identity is socially constructed, we must also accept the possibility that understandings of indigeneity may be *re*constructed. This is not to say that indigenous peoples can escape history and geography. Rather, it is to argue that indigenous peoples, and the societies within which they live, need not be *limited* to particular histories or geographies, and that new forms of transcendent, coalitional politics are possible. Such coalitions have played a crucial role in the ability of Bolivian social movements to limit the power of transnational firms to capture profits from gas exploitation, and may provide a powerful model for indigenous peoples elsewhere.

Conclusion

If little else is clear about Bolivian politics, it is by now obvious that relations between the state and the country's indigenous peoples have changed in profound if uncertain ways. Evo Morales' election represents not only a break with the white/mestizo elite-dominated governments of the past, but also—and perhaps more significantly—a move away from the neoliberal policies that had dominated Bolivian society since the mid-1980s. The historically weak and highly centralized Bolivian government has long been influenced by international actors, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, bilateral aid agencies, and foreign governments (particularly that of the United States). Economic liberalization, beginning in the 1980s, and continuing in the 1990s with the Plan de Todos policies of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, opened the Bolivian economy to international trade and investment in key industries such as telecommunications, airlines, and hydrocarbons (Kohl 1999, 2002). These economic reforms—under the umbrella of the Capitalization Law—were accompanied by administrative decentralization according to the Law of Popular Participation, which created localized electoral districts (*municipios*) and increased opportunities for social oversight and participation. These moves were further supplemented by Constitutional reforms and associated laws granting limited recognition of indigenous peoples' resource and territorial claims, language rights and customary laws and practices—the so-called pluri/multi reforms.

Such state-led multiculturalism did little, however, to improve the material conditions of life for most indigenous peoples, and advances in electoral politics and bilingual education did not outweigh the negative impacts of continued resource exploitation by foreign firms. Transnational oil and gas firms stood to reap enormous profits from the liberalization of Bolivia's hydrocarbons sector. Sectoral reforms, promoted and financed by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the US government, paved the way for massive foreign investment in Bolivia (Hindery 2003, 2004). Although the Bolivian government received rents from oil and gas extraction, tax rates established by the 1996 Hydrocarbons law clearly favoured private interests (Hylton and Thomson 2004). Given Bolivia's long history of colonial and neocolonial exploitation, the conditions for oil and gas extraction established by capitalization were widely viewed as just the latest example of foreign profiteering at the expense of the country's natural/national patrimony (Perreault 2006). In spite of policies on the part of international financial institutions (IFIs) requiring hydrocarbons firms to consult with

affected indigenous peoples (in accordance with ILO 169 and Bolivian law 1257), companies did little to include Guaraní communities in planning how—let alone *whether*—gas would be extracted from their lands (Orduna 2004). Neither the IFIs nor the Bolivian state exercised adequate oversight authority (and indeed, neither had much interest in doing so). It is clear that the triad of state–private capital–IFIs gained much from the neoliberalization of hydrocarbons extraction on Bolivian territory, a practice for which the marginalization of indigenous populations was not just incidental but indeed functional and necessary.

Unsurprisingly, the neoliberalization of Bolivian resource governance, benefiting private (mostly foreign) capital, and under the aegis of the Bolivian state and IFIs, elicited a dramatic response on the part of indigenous peoples and other popular sectors. The 2003 Gas War involved coalitions of indigenous/campesino peoples, urban workers and intellectuals who together rejected the neoliberal model, and called for more inclusive, democratic rule. For these social movements the notion of indigeneity continues to play an important articulating function, linking together diverse political interests and subject positions. As noted by Albro (2006a: 433–434): "In a country where the majority shares an indigenous heritage, indigenous-based politics have lately gained national ground not through promoting ethno-nationalist separatism but by ceding the formerly exclusive category of 'Indian' to a pluralist and urban-based project of refounding the Bolivian State." In this sense, indigenous identity is no longer confined to the rural, the "traditional", and the internal Other. Rather, indigenous interests, constructed as plural, popular, communal and explicitly anti-neoliberal, have moved to the political mainstream in what Postero (2007) calls "postmulticultural Bolivia". The election of Evo Morales in December 2005, made possible by the support of this coalition of plural/popular social movements, signals a radical transformation of the relations between the Bolivian state and the country's indigenous majority.

This is not to argue, however, that indigenous identity in Bolivia is homogeneous, or that Bolivian indigenous peoples are themselves politically unified. Far from it. Regional antagonisms remain between the country's Andean west—dominated politically and demographically by Quechua and Aymara peoples—and the Amazonian and Chaco lowlands of the east—inhabited by numerous smaller, less influential indigenous groups. It is these groups that are most directly affected by oil and gas development, a fact that received little notice in the 2003 Gas War and its aftermath. Although most of these groups supported Morales and his MAS party in the 2005 elections, it remains to be seen whether their concerns will figure into the ongoing reform of the hydrocarbons sector, or proposed regional development plans. Persistent regional tensions between Andes and Amazon/Chaco transcend the boundaries of ethnicity and class, and present a significant challenge to Morales' political agenda (Gustafson 2006). It is clear that historically rooted regional identities and animosities, though in the process of being reconfigured, will not soon disappear, and are sure to complicate efforts to forge a new Bolivia.

Appendix: APG Statement Denouncing Repsol YPF's Activities on the Itika Guasu TCO[34]

Guaraní Peoples' Assembly (APG)
Organization of the Guaraní communities of Bolivia
APG Itika Guasu Region

The Assembly of Guaraní Peoples of Itika Guasu denounces to national and international opinion that the company Repsol YPF, in Bolivia, violates the rights that we have as indigenous peoples.

It denounces also that the company Repsol YPF, in initiating new work within the TCO without previous consultation and notification, is violating the Law of Hydrocarbons 3058 of 17 May 2005, in the articles referring to the rights of indigenous peoples.

We make it known that Repsol YPF, without respecting the Guaraní culture, has entered the territory of Itika Guasu, located in the Province of O'Connor, Department of Tarija, provoking a series of damages against our environment, destroying our forests, driving away the wildlife that is the source of our subsistence and violating our communal form of life, that is to say, Repsol YPF is killing our culture.

We denounce that the Spanish company Repsol YPF has entered our territory of the Itika Guasu TCO to carry out prospecting, exploration and extraction operations, and has done so systematically, violating our right to prior consultation and notification, established in the ILO's Convention 169, which is Law of the Republic [of Bolivia] since 1991, Law 1257.

Since 1997 Repsol YPF has violated our rights, instead of respecting our organizational structure. From the communal, zonal and regional authority, it promotes the division of our communities, using them for these authorities for its own community and social relations, and as its own director of Communication and External Relations.

For this, Repsol YPF uses deceitful propaganda that seeks to make people believe that the Guaraní people are in agreement with the behaviour of the company, when in reality in the TCO people demand that the company stop operating in this manner.

In March 2003, after much pressure on our part, Repsol YPF established a formal agreement with the Guaraní people of Itika Guasu, an agreement that the company has not complied with, because in spite of their promise to respect our TCO, the petroleum firm has continued damaging our territory, dividing our communities, violating their own commitments not only with the Guaraní people but also with the Bolivian state, as established in the environmental impact studies and national laws.

Today, in spite of the fact that indigenous monitors of the Itika Guasu TCO have written a dozen reports that request that the company protect the environment, modify its outrageous conduct toward our communities, stop violating national laws and international agreements, the damages to our territory continue and increase, with the company taking advantage of the permissive attitude of the Bolivian state which, knowing of our denunciations has not done anything to protect our indigenous rights that Repsol YPF is violating.

Since 17 May 2005, in our country there is a new Hydrocarbons Law, Law 3058, which in its Titles VII and VIII clearly establishes how the activities of petroleum firms on indigenous territories should be carried out.

[34] Taken from www.redesma.org/boletin/bol_2005/bol_7_19/pueblo%20guarani.pdf, accessed on 14 February 2008; translated from the Spanish by author.

In spite of this, on the Itika Guasu TCO Repsol YPF continues acting in a manner contrary to the law, and because of this, violating our rights.

For all this we make it known to national and international opinion that Repsol YPF is a petroleum company that carries out practices on the Itika Guasu territory that are contrary to those which they publicize in newspapers, radio and television.

It is not true that Repsol YPF has brought benefits to the Guaraní people, to the contrary, it is destroying our territory, blatantly violating national laws and international agreements.

For all this, we call for solidarity with the Guaraní people to demand that the company changes its behaviour in our TCO and withdraws from all communications media the deceitful propaganda that it publicizes, that says very little about its commitment to ethical and transparent behaviour established in its business mission and vision.

We demand that Repsol YPF complies with Bolivian laws and international agreements!

We demand that Repsol YPF no longer deceives its shareholders with false reports about the Guaraní people!

For the Assembly of Guaraní People of Itika Guasu
TCO Itika Guasu, 8 November 2005, Tarija, Bolivia

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