BOLIVIAN STUDIES JOURNAL
REVISTA DE ESTUDIOS BOLIVIANOS

Beyond Innocence: Indigeneity and Violent Deployments of Political Unreason in Bolivia

Mareike Winchell
London School of Economics

Abstract

This paper focuses on what critics have charged were false and duplicitous appeals to Indigeneity on the part of elected officials in twenty-first century Bolivia, a narrative confirmed by President Evo Morales's continued support for neo-extractivist nationalism. Although such critiques gained sway among far-right critics of Morales in the months preceding his 2019 ousting, scholarly efforts to account for his removal also often approach Indigeneity either as a resilient anti-extractivist plurality or as a manipulated instrument emptied of content. Building from fieldwork and historiographical studies, this article shifts away from such charges of falsity or innocence to instead examine the relational workings of Indigeneity in a setting long defined by Quechua and Aymara skepticism toward programs of government-based uplift and historical redemption. Beyond providing a framework for authorizing and "knowing" Indigeneity, I examine how introduced notions of racialized difference have been key to popular Quechua and Aymara efforts to contest political, religious, and labor incursions. Among rural supporters in the decade preceding Morales's ousting, shared appeals to Indigenous belonging and historical rootedness allowed new channels of claim-making. Rather than being neutralized, politicized invocations of shared Indigeneity contributed to a relational terrain by which supporters demanded elected officials' responsiveness given what they perceived as the failures of institutional decolonization and the tragedies of state abandonment.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Keywords
Indigeneity, Movement to Socialism (MAS), decolonization, Morales's extractivist agenda, Postcolonial Studies, Andes, race, collective memory, Ethics and Body Politics

Resumen

Este artículo se centra en lo que los críticos han identificado como apelaciones falsas y engañosas al indigenismo por parte de los funcionarios electos en la Bolivia del siglo XXI, una narrativa confirmada por el continuo apoyo del presidente Evo Morales al nacionalismo neoextractivista. Aunque estas críticas ganaron terreno entre la crítica de extrema derecha en los meses previos a la destitución de Morales en 2019, los esfuerzos académicos para explicar su destitución también suelen abordar el indigenismo como una pluralidad antiextractivista resistente o como un instrumento manipulado vaciado de contenido. Partiendo del trabajo de campo y de estudios historiográficos, este artículo se aleja de tales acusaciones de falsedad o inocencia para examinar, en cambio, el funcionamiento relacional del indigenismo en un entorno definido desde hace mucho tiempo por el escepticismo quechua y aymara hacia programas gubernamentales de redención histórica. Más allá de proporcionar un marco para autorizar y "conocer" la indigeneidad, examino cómo las nociones introducidas de diferencia racializada han sido clave en los esfuerzos populares quechuas y aymaras para oponerse a incursiones políticas, religiosas y laborales. Entre los simpatizantes rurales en la década anterior al derrocamiento de Morales, alegatos a la pertenencia indígena y al arraigo histórico permitieron canales de reivindicación. En lugar de ser neutralizadas, las invocaciones politizadas de la indigeneidad compartida contribuyeron a crear un terreno relacional en el que los partidarios exigían de los funcionarios electos receptividad ante lo que percibían como los fracasos de la descolonización institucional y las tragedias del abandono del Estado.

Palabras clave
Indigeneidad, Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), descolonización, agenda extractivista de Morales, Estudios Postcoloniales, Andes, raza, memoria colectiva, Ética y Politicas del cuerpo

Independencia, a municipal center town in the Ayopaya province of Bolivia, was abuzz with excitement in anticipation of President Evo Morales's visit, scheduled for Monday, May 23, 2011. A day earlier, Santiago, a Quechua man in his late eighties, walked by the dry goods store owned by his son and paused, announcing: "Evo is coming. On Monday, they say." By Monday, this news echoed across town in the form of a live broadcast stream. From 9 a.m. onward, an emcee in the central sports stadium covered Morales's visit. At 11 a.m., he informed viewers that the torch ceremony would "*wait until our national president, Evo Morales, is here later this afternoon*." His voice rose and then slowed for dramatic effect, reaching a crescendo with the key phrase, *national president, Evo Morales*. I could easily hear him from the two-room cabin I was renting, located in an enclosed pasture of a local agronomical organization. When its director, Rinaldo, and his nephew passed by to check on a pregnant cow later that morning, I asked when Evo would arrive. "One p.m.," Rinaldo replied, pointing to the village of Bella Vista to the north. "By helicopter to that peak, and then in a car from there." The word was out. The town was ready.

Soon after, I made my way down to the stadium by foot, avoiding the dogs that tended to gather near the footpath to the school. Directly around the stadium, Quechua and Aymara farmers crowded into the field, playing pan flutes, chewing coca, and drinking chicha. Students from various schools lined up in jerseys of blue and maroon. Outside the fence, an elderly pair sat in the shade of a tall oak tree on cement steps that had been newly unearthed and swept clean the day before. Over the next half hour, the crowd continued to swell. In the field ahead of us, union groups carried large signs printed with the names of their village peasant unions alongside expressions of affirmation like "present" or "with you Evo." Musicians in woven ponchos and carrying flutes collected in circles of five or six men, playing sporadically.

From where I sat on the steps, the field looked like a festive sea of brown, gray, and black felt hats, with the flute-play producing a lively cacophony of melodies. The regional peasant union had met the day before. Most members had stayed overnight with relatives or crowded into the school gymnasium in order to attend. *Jillacatas* (village leaders) were identifiable by their long wooden staffs decorated with multicolored tassels. They lined up along a chalk stripe in the grass that marked Morales's route from his vehicle to the podium. Women stood on the outskirts; babies slung in colorful *lliklla*s on their backs. Attendees squinted from below their hats, the bright sun not preventing them from surveying the entrance to the field. Many people carried *wiphalas*, flags

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

with a precolonial design that became synonymous, under Morales, with national struggles for Indigenous justice, whereas others displayed Bolivia's tricolor flag of red, yellow, and green. Some residents, such as the local shopkeeper Doña Josefina, did not attend the event nor hang a *wiphala* flag. In a space otherwise overflowing with effusive support for Evo, this absence drew my attention.

Building from seventeen months of fieldwork and over one hundred interviews and oral histories carried out since 2008, in this article I examine the relational workings of Indigeneity in a political milieu long defined by rural Quechua and Aymara skepticism toward national projects of government-based uplift and historical redemption. During ethnographic fieldwork in Ayopaya (situated in the Cochabamba region), the town of Independencia was home to two highly anticipated visits from President Morales. Ethnographic accounts of these visits combined with a discussion of the historical crafting of Indigeneity through state politics since the colonial era highlight what I call the *relational* workings of Indigeneity (Pratt, Tuhiwai Smith). Alongside acting as a framework for authorizing and "knowing" Indigeneity, I argue that introduced definitions of racialized difference can also be made to act as key modalities for Indigenous Quechua and Aymara groups to contest violent political, religious, and labor incursions.[1] Keeping such relationality in mind, I call for a move beyond laments of compromised Indigeneity to instead ask what scholarly concerns with falsity and duplicity *do*. This question is especially urgent at a time when Bolivia's conservative far right has deployed post-structuralist ideas of performed ethnicity to undermine popular Indigenous movements.

On November 11, 2019, Morales resigned after Bolivia's armed forces "invited" him to do so, even after he had agreed to hold new elections in response to (later debunked) accusations of electoral fraud. Although Morales's ousting was unprecedented, given what many people saw as his relative indefatigability, both the political violence and vicious language of *criollo* racial superiority were not (Farthing and Becker xviii).[2] Evo Morales's ousting and Áñez's swift entrée structurally replicated features of an earlier

[1] As Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, "Imperialism and colonialism (especially the 1493 Papal Bull) are the specific formations through which the West came to 'see,' to 'name,' and to 'know' Indigenous communities" (63).

[2] By the end of Áñez's interim presidency, thirty-five people were confirmed dead and four hundred injured by street clashes among pro-Morales protesters, armed anti-Morales opposition leaders, and youth (often on motorcycle), as well as by police violence and disappearances and shootings by military personnel.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

moment of socialist labor organizing guided by promises of Indigenous-peasant uplift. In 1946, too, the rapid unraveling of a socialist regime following the execution of President Villarroel elicited a surge in anti-Indigenous, reactionary violence against its supporters.[3] State gains for marginalized Indigenous Bolivians dissolved rapidly following Villarroel's death, and its leaders and supporters faced violent repression. During my fieldwork, Ayopayans drew upon this history to anticipate likely repression following Morales's future ousting. Keeping these parallels between Morales to Villarroel in mind, supporters calibrated their position toward the MAS state given a likely future undoing (Winchell 2020). Memories of state violence such as these complicate narratives of Morales's downfall as stemming from either growing extractivist policies or his government's illicit instrumentalization of identity.

Scholarly accounts of Morales's ousting often cite his government's growing developmentalist commitments—evident in laws supporting hydrocarbon and gas extraction—as an explanation for waning public support (Diebold 38-39, Webber, Wolff). They thereby highlight how nationalist neo-extractivist agendas in Bolivia have been coupled with mediatized performances of Indigeneity (Postero 2007, Fabricant, Fabricant and Postero 2014, 2019). This yoking of extractive agendas and appeals to anti-colonial Indigenous justice have faced severe challenges. In 2009, growing public disenchantment with the MAS government's approval of a highway through the protected *Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure* (TIPNIS) [Indigenous Territory and Isiboro Secure National Park]; generated widespread opposition and protests, especially from lowland Indigenous organizations. In this context, Anders Burman (2020) argues, Indigeneity was so thoroughly absorbed into governance that it became a "black hole" that subsumes everything it touches (182). As Indigeneity came to be "everywhere," and decolonization became a "new leitmotif" of Bolivian state politics, Indigeneity seemed to have been converted into a tool of political legitimacy that imploded upon itself: Indigeneity assumed its own "gravitational field," collapsing its possibilities "as an emancipatory device" (Burman 2020, 180-182).

[3] In Bolivia, the 1940s was a crucial period for rural peasant workers, most of them Indigenous Quechua and Aymara farmers (Winchell 2022). They established the first peasant unions and, in 1945, organized Bolivia's first Indigenous Congress. These efforts culminated in a 1947 mass revolt that responded to Quechua and Aymara outrage about unpaid and underpaid labor, sexual abuse, and hacienda "master" demands for free labor "services" and sexual favors.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Echoing Burman's concerns, leftist scholars have long pointed out the MAS party's failure to diverge completely from neoliberal modes of governance and resource extraction. This failure is evident in the state's continued reliance on foreign capital investments to fund the largest sector of the national economy, resource mining (Fabricant and Gustafson, Perreault, Hindery, Bebbington and Bury). Environmental issues here assumed special importance in scholarly and public debates about Morales's fidelity to the Indigenous cause, with extractivism cast as antithetical to Indigenous life projects (Ødegaard and Rivera Andía). As Nicole Fabricant and Nancy Postero show, in Bolivia "Indigeneity stands in for a notion of nature in political struggles" (2019, 247). Against that position, MAS party supporters have raised questions about means and ends and about the degree to which extractivism is sanctioned as a method for toppling enduring US economic hegemony in the region (Fabricant and Gustafson 42).

The deployment of Indigeneity as a foil for MAS governance has occurred not only on the part of Indigenous critics of the state but also by conservative groups opposed to Evo Morales and his anti-colonial, neo-extractivist agenda. Far-right anti-Indigenous challenges to Morales used the TIPNIS conflict, along with the MAS party's support for resource extraction, as evidence of that earlier commitments to Indigeneity had been fake, only mere efforts to achieve political legitimacy. This framework of a false or instrumentalized Indigeneity depends on an oppositional ideal of Indigenous peoples as privileged stewards or protectors of a sacred Nature. In this way, scholars and state critics alike share a central problematic: how to square the MAS state's renewed support for mining, deforestation, and infrastructural development through protected territories with its appeals to further an Indigenous environmental cause?

Concerns that Morales's government was misusing an appeal to virtuous Indigeneity gained strength in the months leading up to the president's ousting in 2019 (Burman 2022). For critics, the widespread wildfires throughout the Chaco and Amazonian regions confirmed a narrative of Morales's false and merely instrumental appeal to an Indigenous-inflected environmental cause: what critics of the MAS party have dismissed as *Pachamamismo*. In analyzing these events, critics on both the left and right have frequently evoked the figure of a more truthful Indigeneity rooted in ecological stewardship. As Fabricant and Postero note, "Indigeneity provides useful cultural and ethical material on which to base political and economic contestations because its tropes are well-known and malleable" (2019, 248). Given Indigeneity's seeming capture by governmental structures, could it continue to act as a

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

counterhegemonic form? A pessimistic response to this question is implicit in the critique offered by Portugal Mollinedo and Macusaya Cruz, who note that MAS politics devolved into an "unending series of ritual acts and ceremonies directed at tourists, as if this were what Indigenous [people] had been fighting for, as if this were the content of their struggle" (23).

Yet in their efforts to recover a more radical, counterhegemonic variant of Indigeneity, scholars at times risk falling back upon an understanding of Indigeneity either as resilient anti-extractivist plurality or, where that extraction goes unchallenged or supported, as something that has been evacuated of content or meaning. Instead, in what follows I draw upon ethnography to reassess the sources of growing discomfort with the MAS party state in Ayopaya during the years leading up to Morales's 2019 ousting. I argue that such discomforts stemmed centrally from disappointments with what appeared as elusive structural change, *rather than* from Indigeneity's strategic deployment by members of the MAS party government.

As evident from my discussion of how Morales was compared to Villarroel in Ayopaya, critiques of Bolivia's MAS party government in these years should be located within a longer history of twentieth-century revolutionary nationalism defined by state promises to deliver peasant justice to the descendants of forced Quechua hacienda laborers. In Ayopaya, MAS's agrarian reform was commonly described as the belated fulfillment of state promises of peasant land rights made in the 1940s. Such perceived parallels with previous revolutionary nationalist parties like the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) [Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] led residents to formally support Morales's MAS party while also expressing bitter disillusionment with its ongoing reform program. Attending to this historical coupling of commitment and critique among Quechua Ayopayans complicates familiar explanations of waning public support for Morales as an outcome of the MAS party's escalating turn to extractivism, which some scholars have cast as evidence of his party's increasingly superficial fidelity to an Indigenous cause.

In what follows, I turn away from the problem of the un/truthfulness of state appeals to Indigeneity to instead ask what such assessments of falsity variously elide, omit, or achieve—and for whom. Though Morales's policy program remained eminently developmentalist, both far-right critiques of Morales's duplicitous extractivism and scholarly worries about the production of a hollowed-out Indigeneity imply that there is another, more truthful Indigenous interest that must be recovered. In viewing extractivist policies as

absolutely counter to Indigenous justice, however, such accounts can unwittingly participate in the policing of identity that also underlay anti-Indigenous critiques of Morales during the period of civil unrest in November 2019. In foregrounding issues of self-benefit and political instrumentality, scholars may miss the generative ways that, for those on the edges of formal state policies of decolonization, appeals to shared Indigenous belonging and history—even where performative and partly immersed in institutional power relations—lent support to grounded efforts to challenge an increasingly unresponsive state.

Innocence, Deservingness, and Political Critique

Miriam Ticktin argues that presumptions of "innocence" are defining features of liberal humanitarian logics of the deserving subject of protection, one whose moral status also places her on the outskirts of reasoned humanity. To be worthy of protection, a group or subject must be deemed "innocent" or ignorant of political desire. This preoccupation with innocence responds to a "search for a space of purity, a space outside corruption and contamination, a space emptied of the power that can ground both tolerance and action" (Ticktin 578). How to define such moral purity has been a central problem of twentieth-century Bolivian politics. As Sylvia Rivera Cusicanqui argues, in the 1990s Bolivian political elites and scholars alike relied upon a liberal, multicultural discourses that privileged a romantic, even sanitized, vision of "original people" that could be re/appropriated into politics through mechanisms of rights-based recognition. The notion of origin underlying such recognition "refers us to a past imagined as quiet, static, and archaic, which allows us to see the strategic recuperation of Indigenous demands and the neutralization of the decolonizing impulse" (Rivera Cusicanqui 98-99).

In dialogue with Ticktin's call for attention to the disavowals of political reason concealed by the notion of deserving victimhood and Rivera Cusicanqui's critique of a neutralizing language of "origin," we might consider how scholarly narratives of Morales's ousting as an outcome of Indigeneity's instrumentalization smuggle in tropes of innocence and manipulability. Such tropes have long been key to colonial (and anthropological) projects of redemption premised upon protecting and "saving" a dwindling Indigeneity from corrosion (Simpson). As Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes, "Questions of who is a 'real Indigenous' person, what counts as a 'real Indigenous leader,' which person displays 'real cultural values,' and the criteria used to assess the

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

characteristics of authenticity" serve to "fragment and marginalize those who speak for, or in support of, Indigenous issues" (76). The idea of the authentic "is used by the West as one of the criteria to determine who really is Indigenous, who is worth saving, who is still innocent and free from Western contamination" (77). It is founded upon the "belief that Indigenous cultures cannot change, cannot recreate themselves and still claim to be Indigenous" (77).[4]

Expectations of deservingness premised upon such innocence and purity—externality from the political—overlook how Indigeneity as a mode of legible difference and a terrain of political struggle is intrinsically *relational*: it is a category that emerges through colonial violence and anti-colonial struggle (Tuhiwai Smith) and, hence, that is far from neutral. Appreciating these relational qualities of Indigeneity complicates arguments about Morales's downfall that blame his government for falsely appropriating Indigeneity and for using it as a smokescreen for neo-extractive nationalism. Instead, it allows new questions to emerge about the ways supporters mobilized and inhabited Indigeneity in purposeful excess of apolitical purity yet with a historical specificity not emptied of meaning. Attending to these discursive and embodied dimensions of Indigeneity allows us to push beyond the heuristic trappings of salvage anthropology and its moral accomplice: the childlike and innocent Indigene. Such preoccupations with fake or instrumentalized Indigeneity in post-coup Bolivia highlight how colonial frameworks of reason and unreason, both genuine and counterfeit, are appended to racialized depictions of humanity and to what the West has characterized as its own imperfect, simulated doubles.

Shifting away from such a paradigm is especially important given how pessimistic accounts of ethnicity found resonance in public (and far-right) outcry about Morales in the months before his ousting. Critiques of the illegitimate politicization of Indigeneity overlook its messy political career, including the juridical crafting of *indio* status as a colonial tribute category. They thereby risk reviving romantic figurations of cultural or ontological

[4] As this article was nearing publication, concerns over false appropriations of Indigeneity or "pretendians" were gripping the United States and Canada. That topic is difficult, and is not the focus of this essay. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in Bolivia, accusations of falsity have generally taken aim less at white appropriations of Indigeneity and rather concern what forms of shared life—particularly those seen as more immersed in modernity and in modern peasant and nationalist politics—still qualify as "Indigenous" (Rivera Cusicanqui).

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

integrity that cannot allow for critique. Ayopayans have since at least 2010 harbored deeply skeptical views of the MAS party. They have not taken issue principally with Indigeneity's manipulation but rather with the elusiveness of state promises of Indigenous uplift, with Morales's promises of change understood as corrections to the government's failed accountability to mid-twentieth-century peasant movements. Despite Ayopayans' broad disaffections with nationalist projects of historical redemption under MAS, the ways that Morales and other political leaders appealed to shared experiences of vulnerability related to the region's violent labor past were deeply resonant. Not only this, but such appeals to shared belonging and historical rootedness could also be converted into tools of critique and claim-making. Rather than being evacuated of their edge, such politicalized appeals to shared Indigeneity also sustained a relational terrain from which Ayopayans made demands on elected officials and the MAS party state.

Waiting for Evo

On the dusty path that led from my cabin to town, people lined the street, expectantly watching the soccer field below. In the town square, Florencia stood outside her and her husband's mechanic shop, dressed festively in a purple shawl and sweater. She turned to me, saying, "Evo is coming. By car. Maybe he has already arrived because his security personnel headed down the road over there. Maybe people are going to greet him over there. He should be staying for a bit, because whenever he comes by car, he stays for a while. At least an afternoon or evening." I responded that I heard that he was coming by helicopter and landing nearby. "Ah…," she replied, "then they have gone to pick him up." Outside her store, street venders were selling *salchipapas*— French fries and sausage covered in ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and *llajwa* salsa— to the gathering crowd.

Shortly after 1 p.m., a low buzz filled our ears. The announcer offered an update: "Our president is arriving." All heads turned left, where a red helicopter slowly came into view. People around me pointed up at it, nudging one another and their children, exclaiming, "Look! It's Evo!" The helicopter circled twice, and the crowd, with necks taut, strained to catch a glimpse before it dipped out of sight and landed on a nearby peak. To our right, the high school marching band warmed up, with squeaks and toots of horns and trumpets offering a taste of things to come. Last-minute preparations were made. I saw a young man dash to the town hall to make additional copies of the sheet

music. The announcer's next update came: "Evo is on his way to the stadium." In the field, people moved toward the far end of the stadium, where they hoped to catch a glimpse of his arrival. State security personnel had been in town all morning, circling in a black SUV and another white SUV. Around me, seats emptied out as people joined the crowd standing at the corner of the field and looking down past the Rio Khuri Barranca, where the dirt road wound down to the town square. Quickly, new onlookers arrived and filled the recently emptied seats.

As the helicopter appeared, a black Mitsubishi SUV pulled into the entrance of the soccer field. Two men got out and ran alongside the vehicle. First, a security guard, and then President Evo Morales stepped out. All eyes were on the president. A wreath of flowers was placed around his neck, and the band broke into loud song. The conductor directed the band with both hands, his head turned away from his students, straining to see. Morales walked gallantly along the chalk pathway (Fig. 1), a security guard running in front of him to ensure the crowd kept a safe distance. Schoolchildren stood along the fence, their fingers gripping the metal fencing. As Morales passed, the audience applauded, except for the assembled community leaders, who stand tall, their staffs resting on the ground. One man lifted his arm in greeting. Morales has arrived.

Quickly, Morales made his way past the clapping crowd, the community leaders, and the band in discordant song to be received at a podium with additional flower wreaths. After taking a seat onstage beside five other officials and the mayor, speeches began. The crowd was distracted; there was a low chatter, and the flute music started up again. Beside me, Hidalgo, a Quechua professional in his late thirties, struck up a conversation. He explained, "Evo lost a lot of support with the *gasolinazo* [protests from cuts to gas subsidies]. Before, this whole soccer field would have been full." For a presidential event, turnout was low, the outcome, Hidalgo pointed out, of many peasant unions' absence. Before Morales rose to speak, the officials performed what Hidalgo described as a "typical Andean" inauguration ritual: a man danced with the *wiphala* in front of the stage, slowly waving it back and forth. Men in the crowd removed their hats and held them to their chests as they watched. Morales was presented *chirimoyas* in a straw basket from a young woman in a *pollera* skirt. Finally, he spoke.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Figure 1: President Evo Morales arrives in Ayopaya, May 23, 2011
Photo Credit: Mareike Winchell

When Morales's voice boomed over the loudspeakers, the crowd grew silent for the first time. After welcoming everyone, he continued: "I want to take advantage of this opportunity to speak of our history. Before the foundation of our country, our grandparents, fighters for independence, united to direct their communities. Thus, before the Spanish took advantage of the state form to create a new republic, our Aymara and Quechua brothers assembled themselves to found and direct this country. They were fighters in the War of Independence. They struggled for the independence of this country. We, as children of the fighters for independence, are here to form a new society."[5] Turning to lighter topics, Morales recalled how, in 2007, he was in a *misa* (church service) in Santa Cruz. He had been taught by his mother to close his eyes during prayer, but when the media took photos of him in this way, they said, "Our president was asleep during the religious service!" Hidalgo laughed loudly. However, he was one of the few. If INE statistics about the region are

[5] Translations are my own.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

accurate, only about half the people in attendance spoke Spanish. "It's strange," I commented to Hidalgo, "the way Morales always speaks Spanish." He responded with a well-worn joke: "Yes, our president does not speak Quechua, does not speak Aymara, and *almost* does not speak Spanish!"

Morales went on to describe his childhood in this province, how he passed through these mountains herding llamas. It is a familiar story, a story repeated often in Independencia and the topic of a documentary film produced by the municipal government in 2008 (Winchell 2022). Morales recounted, "When I was thirteen, we passed through this *cancha* herding llamas. I have walked through this *cancha* since I was a child, through Sailapata, Arani, through the corn pastures, all the way to Oruro, to [the department of] Santa Cruz." His narrative mapped the landscape, the *pan de trigo* [wheat bread] he ate, the mountain footpaths he walked. It also located him in a familiar topography of corn fields and mountains peaks. These fertile valleys were intimately known to most of the crowd, many of whom were from communities spread out with no public transport, who walked by foot to pasture animals and purchase and sell produce at the weekly market. Morales explained that his story shows how, "when one has a dream, even to be president, one can realize it." He ended with a call for "a new friendship, a new unity" at the national level.

After his speech, the school band performed a goodbye song with a high-pitched melody typical of regional *huaynos.* The main refrain repeated as community leaders and flute troupes danced: "De esta circunscripción ha venido el Evo" [From these parts, Evo came forth]. The mayor thanked the president, and then turned to the crowd, shouting: "Long live Independencia! Long live the communities of these parts! Long live Evo!"

This 2011 presidential event in Independencia offers a glimpse into the mixture of pleasure and uncertainty shaping public views of the MAS party government in Morales's second term despite waning enthusiasm for his party's policies. This was a moment when many Ayopayans were seemingly cooling on Morales. By then, it had been five years since his election. Where was the promised change? This waning enthusiasm was apparent not only in attendance numbers at presidential events or in the familiar jokes and mockery increasingly accompanying public receptions of Morales in Ayopaya. It was also palpable in residents' willingness to take on positions as explicit supporters of the MAS party—a status on display through the public display of *wiphalas.*

Several months later, on August 6 (Bolivian Independence Day), I stopped by Doña Josefina's home, where she sold yarn and candy outside the entrance. Resting her arm on my leg, she asked how I had been. We chatted, and I

commented that there were so many *wiphalas* hanging in town today. She responded sleepily, "Yes, I was supposed to have one. I do not have one though. I should have. But then . . . I did not go buy it." She did not seem particularly upset not to have hung the flag, a coveted symbol of cross-national Indigenous solidarity, outside her home. We sat eating soup, which she had prepared because her cousins had planned to come to town from Cochabamba to take part in the festivities, but then they had not. Our conversation did not return to the question of the missing *wiphala.*

"The State Has Never Been on the Side of the Peasant"

Rural ambivalence toward Morales and his MAS party state in Ayopaya during his second term responded to a sense of disappointment with his failure to comply with long-overdue promises of peasant justice and Indigenous land rights. As I noted earlier, Ayopayans frequently compared Morales to mid-twentieth-century socialist figureheads such as President Villarroel (Winchell 2020). Moreover, interlocuters answered my questions about Morales by bringing up earlier socialist state programs of peasant uplift from the 1930s onward. They recounted Villarroel's visits to the countryside, emphasizing that he walked barefoot, or they complained that land titles now must be purchased for a fee, but in the 1940s they were free.

In our conversations, Ayopayans insisted that Morales's program was not historically unprecedented. They recalled the founding of several workers' parties at this time, most importantly the MNR in 1942. In 1945, under Villarroel, the MNR organized the first National Indigenous Congress. The Congress's aim was to discuss rural issues and peasants' well-being. However, the MNR government was overthrown on July 21, 1946, and Villarroel was assassinated. Elderly villagers still remembered their involvement with militias at this time. Others, such as the wives and children of *hacendados*, described how they fled to the nearby cities of Cochabamba, Oruro, and Potosí. Afterward, when forced labor returned, peasant militias attacked haciendas and forced owners to flee at gunpoint. According to one Quechua leader, after the civil-military junta of 1946 (and Villarroel's assassination), Indigenous leaders in the region were violently persecuted. Here, projects of Indigenous justice were yoked to close political ties with state leaders. For instance, in one case, the *mestizo* owner of an agrarian estate in Yayani reimposed unpaid domestic labor requirements that had been abolished under Villarroel. This was accompanied by the explanation to his workers that "[y]our President has

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

died. . . . Everything has changed" (Gotkowitz 239). In the absence of workers' ties to state leaders, owners flagrantly violated labor laws. When a laborer went to the mestizo landlord with documents that confirmed the peasants' legitimate ownership of the land, he simply confiscated them.

Similarly, in 2010 there was a sense in Independencia that state benefits required maintaining ties to Morales. Yet that Morales's presidency also evoked memories of earlier state repression also made supporters cautious about retaliation if the MAS party were to be removed from power. Worries about aligning too firmly with the MAS party (Winchell 2022) were further sharpened given what many Ayopayans deemed Morales's failure to uphold initial promises of Indigenous uplift. As one farmer noted, after comparing Morales's state programs to those of the 1952 Socialist Revolution, "[T]he state has never been on the side of the peasant." As years elapsed after Morales's election in 2015, many Ayopayans worried that he had lost sight of earlier promises to topple racial hierarchies, especially through land redistribution (Postero 2017). However, these criticisms did not target MAS's appropriations of Indigeneity so much as the neutralization of his political agenda. As one erstwhile supporter explained, Morales "has enjoyed life in the big house." In this view, it was not that new extractivist redistributive agendas and Indigenous justice were necessarily opposed, but rather that the privileges of Morales's leadership position had corroded his politics.

Similar doubts about the possibilities of radical anti-colonial political change from within the state were expressed in graffiti art that I photographed in 2013. It read, "200 años de libertad para quién?" [200 years of liberty, for whom?] The artist seemed to challenge the benefits of "liberation" through formal state independence in 1825 (Fig. 2). Beside this was printed "10 years," referring to the years since Bolivia's "Black October," when then-President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (or "Goni") violently suppressed mass protests opposed to resource privatization. Morales subsequently declared October 17, the day of Sánchez de Lozada's resignation, a "Day of National Dignity" that marked the end of Bolivia's neoliberal capitalist era and the beginning of a new revolutionary cycle. Like other politicians who had promised to bring justice to Bolivia's countryside, however, many Bolivians increasingly saw Morales as corrupted by the comforts of power. This led him to abandon policies of structural reform and, with them, more radical projects of upending racialized hiérarchies through state socialism. Doubts did not emerge from accusations of inauthenticity so much as from perceptions that little had changed. As one

Quechua leader responded in Quechua when I asked about MAS's program of change, "Manan kanchu" [There is none].

Figure 2: "200 años de libertad ¿para quien?"
Graffiti photographed in 2013 (Cochabamba, Bolivia)
Photo Credit: Mareike Winchell

In Ayopaya, disappointments such as these did not lead to explicit abandonment of Morales. On the contrary, he retained widespread support, arguably for the ways his own biographical narrative and his experience of a rags-to-riches transformation resonated with the province's majority Indigenous, Quechua population. Like Morales, members of many Quechua and Aymara farming communities in Ayopaya have migrated to coca regions of the lowland yungas to sell gasoline and coca paste, access urban education, and work in construction or government jobs. Because there was a sense of *knowing* Morales—both personally but also as a sort of archetype of Indigenous mobility—perceptions of the state's abandonment of the region

were especially heartbreaking. Theirs was a deep familiarity with the elusiveness of revolutionary promises of structural change.

The next section offers a compressed genealogy of Indigeneity to unsettle arguments that its newfound instrumentalization has generated a lack of integrity or content. If, a quarter of a century ago, Orin Starn (1991; see also Bessire and Bond) challenged fellow anthropologists for "missing the revolution" by remaining overly fixated on essentialist tropes of unchanging Indigeneity, we have arguably come almost full circle now: it has become nearly impossible for many scholars to imagine a liberatory politics of Indigeneity in the face of ethnicity's seeming capture by states and nationalist projects. In making this move, we risk missing Indigeneity's multiple vernacular lives and, how, in the ordinary ways that elaborations of Quechua belonging and history are navigated and taken up—for instance, in Ayopaya—this category has hardly been emptied of political force. An exclusive emphasis on Indigeneity's workings as an instrument of statist design overlooks its fundamental instability as a space of relation that hovers between grounded and lived experiences of vulnerability and struggle, on the one hand, and political and legal grammars of inclusion and recognition, on the other.

On the Juridical Production of Difference

Accounts of MAS's false appropriation or instrumentalization of Indigeneity raise the question of whether Indigeneity has ever operated in a nonpoliticized or "pure" form. In the Andes, Indigeneity has been used to define and (racially and juridically) "know" *indio* bodies, as well as to adjudicate claims based on legal sameness and difference. It has also operated as a unifying resource for modern nationalism and a militant, even revolutionary, call to lay waste to a corrosive coloniality. Why then expect its innocence? In this section, I examine the historical and legal shaping of the terms of Indigeneity, including how new claims and new political collectivities have emerged out of the remaking of racialized languages of difference since the initial implementation of the dual republic legal system in colonial Peru and what is now Bolivia.

Against expectations of innocence, I propose renewed scholarly attention to the relational workings of Indigeneity. Following Marisol de la Cadena, relationality involves forms of difference that are not outside of, but rather are internal to, the parts. As she explains, "Borders between Indigenous things and nation-state things are complex; they historically exist as relations among the

fields they separate, and therefore also enact a connection from which both—things Indigenous and non-Indigenous—emerge, even as they maintain differences vis-à-vis each other" (33). Drawing upon this approach, I ask how the slippages of Indigeneity make it especially powerful for Ayopayans' critiques of failed decolonial transformation.

Since the 1970s, postcolonial studies scholars have explored Latin American Indigeneity as the product of a dominant way of representing colonial difference since the Spanish conquest. Renato Rosaldo describes formations of "imperialist nostalgia" in which colonizers yearn for what they have destroyed. According to Hayden White, such sentiments depend upon a reified notion of wildness in the colonial imaginary, one that is apiece with broader European fetishizations of the "noble savage."[6] Along these lines, Sabine McCormack investigated how early colonial and late medieval conceptions of monstrosity and nature conditioned missionary efforts, including affective predicaments about the "opening" of the heart to new forms of divine love. Indigeneity here operated as part of a Western process of self-knowledge through an encounter with difference. This did not only create a notion of the civilized West but also companion ideas of its childlike, wondrous other: what Mayanthi Fernando calls the "Animist Indigene." By defining and delimiting religious, racial, and cultural difference against this other, colonial languages of racial superiority and inferiority consolidated European identity (Quijano 542, Mignolo 2000, 49). That is, they buttressed Western "positional superiority" (Said 208).

But this relational quality of Indigeneity was not just a matter of imposed colonial, Western designs. It was also a space of maneuver and compromise (Tuhiwai Smith 63), apparent in the early colonial chronicles of Dominican priest Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566), the *mestizo* Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), and Indigenous noble Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (1535–1616). Lodged in spaces between Spain and so-called New World, these writers demonstrate how notions of precolonial culture and Christian morality intersected both to legitimate and unsettle the colonial and missionary efforts as moral projects.[7] Although Indigeneity reflects a colonial construction, the

[6] These navigations of monstrous difference and unlikely shared humanity are also defining of the discipline of anthropology and its relation as an imagined "protector" of unadulterated Indigeneity (Simpson, Starn 1991).

[7] Even at this early date, Las Casas's appeals incorporated a notion of the "right of justice," and he saw his obligations as a Christian as counter to the voracious appetites and wickedness of Spanish colonial lords.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

giving of a face and name to the other (Tuhiwai Smith 2), it is also a site of revelation and of continued anti-colonial struggle. As Tuhiwai Smith notes, "[T]o resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve 'what we were and remake ourselves'" (4). If "Indigenous peoples" is an imposed terminology, it also acts as an "umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized contexts and experiences" (7; see also Byrd, Lowe). Hence, as Lisa Lowe reminds us, "What we might identify as residual (the idea of Indigenous peoples as consigned to the past) within the histories of settler or colonial capitalism does not disappear. To the contrary, it persists and endures, even if less legible within the obfuscations of a new dominant" (Lowe 20). Following Tuhiwai Smith (4), we could go a step further to ask how, rather than persisting only as passive residue, imposed taxonomies of difference have also intersected with emic or internal languages of collectivity in ways that produce new platforms of shared anti-colonial struggle.

This is apparent in the new self-perceptions and legalities produced through the colonial intersection of late medieval and early modern notions of barbarity and wildness, Castilian legal and historical patterns of adjudicating religious and social difference, and existent models of Spanish colonial legality in both Europe and the colonies. As Ravi Mumford describes, for instance, Inca authority was evoked by both Indigenous and Spanish litigants as the basis for the legal authority of their land claims (33). Tradition was not available only to Spanish and Portuguese litigants but also infused colonial debates about rightful political power and territorial possession. In the coproduction by colonial and Indigenous litigants of a notion of Indigeneity rooted in Inca tradition, we see Indigeneity not as outside the political but as its very ligaments: a site of mediation that sanctioned brutal racial violence *but also* afforded new trajectories of claim-making. Recognizing this allows us to move away from a one-sided account of states' top-down appropriation and deployment of Indigeneity, such as in Morales's so-called ethno-nationalism. Relationality instead points to the interplay of meanings and claims that preclude Indigeneity's capture either as a pure category of experience or as a usurped instrument of political repression.

Repurposing Status: Indigeneity as Claim

The relational workings of Indigeneity in juridical codes, legal negotiations of land dispossession, and widespread anti-colonial rebellions have haunted nation-making projects in the late colonial and republican-era Andes. In Bolivia,

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberalizing reforms were defined by interpretive struggles over the rightful place of the Indian in an emerging nation. Central to these reforms was a policy of *reducción* [reduction] that transformed traditionally dispersed community settlements into towns made up of individually owned properties (Larson 215). Late colonial reforms aimed at incorporating Indigenous collectivities into the nation as liberal citizens elicited mass Indigenous uprisings against land dispossession and the loss of forms of political autonomy that the colonial system had afforded. Juridical claims and armed uprisings alike evoked the earlier collective legal status of the highland *ayllu* community, which colonial law had formally recognized. Governments responded both with the strategic inclusion and systematized isolation of highland communities, apparent in how Spanish lords supported *kurakas* [local leaders] to secure their incorporation into an emerging republican design.

Nineteenth-century liberalizing projects recentered an abject, albeit reformable, Indigeneity. For instance, the half-century leading up to the 1952 National Revolution in Bolivia was defined by highland Indigenous struggles for internal decolonization and democracy (Gotkowitz). Members of these movements took up liberal languages of social justice and citizenship and recombined them with tactics of popular anti-colonial struggle (such as evocations of the millenarian figure of Tupac Katari) to demand greater political rights and structural inclusion.[8] In this way, Indigeneity as formal legal status came to be inhabited and mobilized in ways that exceeded and thereby *also remade* legal formulations of difference (Bhandar). This highlights how Indigeneity is produced on both sides, both by racialized subjects and racializing states—what de la Caden calls its relational qualities. Slippage here operates as more than the production of impurity: it is a condition of politics for those whose claims are not legible through or affirmed by frameworks of undifferentiated citizenship.

Such slippages have frequently been interpreted as evidence of modern hybridity or as complex processes of multicultural inclusion.[9] Néstor García Canclini has defined hybridity as the product of the aesthetic and representational intersection of existent "traditional" and introduced

[8] See Thomson, Winchell (2020).

[9] The literature examining multiculturalism and hybridity is vast. For Bolivia, see in particular Rivera Cusicanqui, Postero (2007, 2017).

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

"modern" forms (156).[10] According to his argument, such socialities reflect the failure of the state to properly adjudicate social differences through the realization of equality through multiculturalism. Hence liberal politics, for García Canclini, hold the possibility to "renovate" traditional forms (or what he terms "primordial sociality") so that they "avoid tendencies toward segregation" (xxxi). That is, the author celebrates hybridization insofar that it allows for the nation's translation—or "renovation"—of preexisting institutions of difference-based collectivity. Yet his argument implies that alterity can be "renovated" without loss, thereby downplaying the effects of incorporating traditional forms into the state through multicultural inclusion or liberal paradigms of rights-based recognition. However, following Wendy Brown, we might also consider how such a liberal "renovation" of tradition within democratic systems elicits (and indeed requires) the translation, and hence neutralization, of difference.[11] For García Canclini, where the forms of inherited collectivity spill over the bounds of tolerable difference in multiculturalism, they must be eradicated. Read together with García Canclini, Brown's account helps us to understand the violence involved in the domestication of such excessive difference. Hybridity hence emerges as a method of forced inclusion and sublimated loss.

Recast in this light, celebrating hybridity as an analytic diminishes the violent strangulation of difference-based collectivities in state multiculturalism. However, it also overlooks how such ostensibly "primordial" forms have been crafted through long histories of Indigenous struggle against, and negotiation with, the state. As Roberto Choque Canqui and Esteban Ticona Alejo insist, early twenty-first-century Bolivia is not historically unique in the MAS party's politicizing of Indigeneity. Similarly, Orin Starn (1991) examined Peru's *rondas campesinas* as "a system of justice . . . forged of the mixed codes and forced compromises" (24) or what Mary Louise Pratt calls "contact zones." These scholars point to the mutual constitution of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ontologies through histories of colonial violence, juridical negotiation, and multicultural definitions of legitimate ethnicity. Because

[10] To do so, García Canclini extends Adorno's critique of the workings of the "culture industry" to an understanding of the entailments of state-based languages of national tradition, where "culture" itself circulates much like a commodity and serves to "legitimize the present" (156).

[11] Brown focuses on how this translational maneuver (the transformation of what García Canclini calls "primordial sociality" into categories of difference that liberal governments can adjudicate and recognize) occurs through a language of "tolerance."

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Indigeneity acts as a contact zone, however, it also carries unique affordances in popular efforts to challenge and make demands on governments and elected leaders.

If Morales's biographical appeals to Indigeneity as an experience of rural marginality was part of what contributed to his popularity in Ayopaya, it also meant, for Quechua supporters, that he could not shake their expectations of his accountability to them. More precisely, his own rural background and material abjection made it difficult for his party to escape expectations that he would fulfill promises of peasant justice related to earlier twentieth-century labor movements. This suggests that the politicization of Indigeneity has not wholly evacuated it of meaning or critical force. Morales's 2011 Ayopaya speech evoked forms of spatial belonging—a childhood of itinerant labor familiar to the crowd that day. Recalling Javier Sanjinés's analysis of Katarista aesthetics, here Indigeneity arises not only as an "object of abstract institutions" but also as "a concrete intersubjective structure, reproduced through embodied action" (161).

Morales's 2011 visit to Ayopaya points to the kinds of political collectivity generated and sustained through shared familiarity with the trappings of racialized marginality and rural abjection. In this way, Indigeneity assumes a special charge as a relational category for weighing and judging the validity of anti-colonial struggles, both within and beyond the state. In fact, Quechua Ayopayans also maneuvered their shared Indigeneity with Morales as a source of claim-making. For instance, a series of local media productions included a documentary film titled *Q'arwa Awatiris* (2008), Aymara for "llama herders." The film combines photographs, video interviews with villagers, and historical reenactments to trace Morales's early life shepherding llamas in the region.[12] The film suggests significant interest in Morales, not only as a sympathetic leader but also as someone who was felt to "belong" to the town. Its cover portrays Morales as a rural shepherd boy familiar with the challenges of llama herding and, in his adulthood, as someone integrated into provincial customs of sponsorship and aid. On the back cover, he is shown dancing, adorned with a wreath of flowers. More than only affirming his presidency, however, the film also served as a modality for Ayopayans to speak directly to the president. As one interviewee noted, "I would like for him to visit us, to remember the places where he walked, and perhaps to help us in some way" (Alma Producciones 00:07:35).

[12] The film is available for viewing on YouTube. See Alma Producciones-Bolivia.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Like the interviewee's direct appeal to Morales in the film, Morales's visit can be understood not only as a means for the government to shore up of support through an instrumental appeal to Indigeneity but also for residents to make claims on him considering what they perceived as the unique obligations his rural attachments and biography entailed. Shared Indigeneity here acted as a language of connection or relationality for navigating state-subject ties, one that could not be monopolized entirely by the state or by Morales's Ayopayan constituency. This bilateral quality of identitarian categories complicates narratives of Indigeneity's capture by the MAS party state.

Conclusion: Indigeneity, Innocence, and Political Un/Reason

> To appropriate . . . .
> to set apart for or assign to a particular recipient, purpose, or use to take and make use of without authority or right.
>
> Merriam-Webster

Critiques of Morales's usurpation of Indigeneity implicitly rely upon the idea of its obverse: a natural, even a priori, Indigenous belonging defined by separation from the state. Appropriation thus implies a logic of earlier detachment: it is the illicit taking possession of [*ad*] an alien thing for one's own [*proprius*]. But for something to be wrongly taken, it must first have been distinct. In this article, I have sought to complicate the premise of such separation, a perspective that is often marshalled to cast MAS supporters as unreasoned and somehow blind to the manipulations of the Indigenous nationalist project. Instead, I have pointed to the ways that, in the Andes and Bolivia specifically, Indigeneity has acted as a border-crossing category or zone of relation whose bilateral qualities have imbued it with key importance for public attempts to evaluate and make claims on anti-imperial leaders and governments. By shifting away from the problem of authenticity (and its shadowy other, appropriation), scholars are also better situated to appreciate the generative workings of Indigenous projects of self-fashioning. In Ayopaya, such projects might be understood not so much as claims to purified authenticity that, in their encounter with formal politics or rights-based appeals that lost their force, but rather as efforts to foster historical collectivities that can refuse or stand up to the neutralizations of rights-based inclusion (Cordova Oviedo, Rivera Cusicanqui).

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Attention to these vernacular critical engagements with statist evocations of Indigeneity is especially urgent in the aftermath of Luis Arce's election to the presidency in October 2020. In the context of post-coup Bolivia, notions of constructed identity have proven deeply convenient for far-right efforts to debunk the moral authority of Indigenous movements. Although it is true that, following the heightened visibility of Indigeneity in national politics since 2005, identifications with that category have declined sharply in Bolivia (Moreno Morales, Canessa), events like Morales's visit to Ayopaya in 2011 or Ayopayans' comparisons of MAS and MNR programs suggest that Indigeneity retains an important critical edge even where partly entwined with revivalist state programs. In fact, during my fieldwork, Quechua Ayopayans frequently self-identified using the older term *"indio"* instead of "Indigenous" (Winchell 2022). They thereby evoked a more militant discourse of Indianista/Katarista politics, pushing back against facile and domesticated languages of Indigenous inclusion to instead highlight raw connotations of racial subjection, corporeality, and shared affect and anger.[13] Refusals such as these shape projects of Indigenous self-representation and empowerment that do not rely on presumptions of purified authenticity for their value. This insight complicates the idea that an instrumentalized Indigeneity is a vacuous Indigeneity, even in occasions (like political rallies) that clearly also entail performative dimensions.

In a region known for its dramatic place in nationwide political upheavals, including Bolivian Independence in 1825, the Ayopaya Rebellion of 1947 (Dandler and Torrico), and anti-hacienda militias in the 1950s, the 2019 coup was an event of national tragedy but not shock. Both the rapid crumbling of revolutionary political orders, as well as the risks that Aymara and Quechua people might be caught in the crosshairs, were deeply familiar. In this context, deliberation with state institutions and reform programs was appealing, even when insufficient.[14] As widespread condemnations of Morales's presidency seized the nation, the critiques took on a certain belatedness for Ayopayans, who had already been highlighting the shortcomings of MAS decolonial programs for some years. Indigeneity's central place in national struggles

[13] As in Javier Sanjínes's discussion of Katarista aesthetics, this indicates how appeals to the visceral Indian body can supply a radical refusal of assimilative abstractions of liberal inclusion and rights—what scholars have referred to as the Bolivian discourse of the "permitted Indian" (Rivera Cusicanqui, Zamorano Villareal).

[14] For instance, in meetings of the *Central Única de Trabajadores Campesinos Originarios de Ayopaya* (CSUTCOA) [Unified Central of Campesino Workers of Ayopaya], participants expressed concerns about being converted into political fodder. One speaker encouraged his fellow unionists to "remember the passive march."

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

over racial emancipation and anti-colonial political modernity had long precluded expectations of its "innocence" or externality from the political (Ticktin). I have suggested that non-Indigenous scholars, too, often participate in suchentrenched structure when they leave uninterrogated the privileges undergirding their willingness to proclaim themselves judges (and protectors) of a more sincere, less compromised Indigeneity.[15] What had been and remained at issue for MAS supporters with whom I spoke was not the compromised travel of Indigeneity but rather Ayopayans' enduring disappointment that even a political leader whom they imagined as their own had not held true to his promises to topple entrenched racial hierarchies.

If Indigeneity arises as an external-facing term originating in colonial systems of juridical classification and in colonized peoples' resistance to the violent events of racialized labor subjection, civilizational extermination, and land dispossession, we would be mistaken to treat it only as an imposition. Rather, following López Caballero (128) and Tuhiwai Smith, Indigeneity also acts as a terrain of struggle by which to collectivize forms of historical experience and vulnerability that might otherwise be rendered only as negations—as that which has been erased or denied as the "darker side of modernity" (Mignolo 2011) or as a "black hole" of pure negativity (Burman 2020, cf. Sexton). Alongside the relational workings of Indigeneity, Morales's visit to Ayopaya also reveals how shared appeals to histories of vulnerability and struggle support Indigenous efforts to hold political leaders and governments accountable.[16] Though fixity can be dangerous, this collectivizing of experience—what Quechua and Aymara unionists in Ayopaya call "unity"—affirms relations of entanglement that confront racialized injustice not only as the violence of forced inclusion but also of state abandonment.

[15] Audra Simpson has examined the romanticizing of purity in Boasian salvage anthropology. She demonstrates how anthropologists have achieved moral authority through salvage projects aimed at archiving the ruins of formerly intact Indigenous traditions, understood to have been irretrievably corroded by their encounter with Western modernity.

[16] Following Sergio Miguel Huarcaya, this is to attend also to the lived ways that Indigeneity is constructed as a social reality.

Vol. 30 • 2024 • doi: 10.5195/bsj.2024.319 • ISSN 1074-2247 (print) • ISSN 2156-5163 (online)

Works Cited

ALMA PRODUCCIONES-BOLIVIA. 2008. "Qarwa Awatiris (llameros)." YouTube. Uploaded by Alma Producciones-Bolivia. February 26, 2020. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxyOtOsEkUc]. Downloaded May 16, 2025.

BEBBINGTON, Anthony and Jeffrey Bury, eds. 2014. *Subterranean Struggles: New Dynamics of Mining, Oil, and Gas in Latin America*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

BESSIRE, Lucas and David Bond. 2014. "Ontological Anthropology and the Deferral of Critique." *American Ethnologist* 41(3): 440-456. [https://www.bennington.edu/sites/default/files/sources/docs/Bond_David-Bessire_Lucas-Ontological_Anthropology_and_the_Deferral_of_Critique_2014_AE.pdf] Downloaded May 16, 2025.

BHANDAR, Brenna. 2018. *Colonia Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership*. Durham: Duke University Press.

BROWN, Wendy. 2008. *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

BURMAN, Anders. 2020. "Black Hole Indigeneity: the explosion and implosion of radical difference as resistance and power in Andean Bolivia." *Journal of Political Power* 13(2): 179-200.

---. 2022. "A taste for ecology: class, coloniality, and the rise of a Bolivian urban environmental movement." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 17(2): 193-218.

BYRD, Jodi A. 2011. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

CANESSA, Andrew. 2014. *Intimate Indigeneities: Race, Sex, and History in the Small Spaces of Andean Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

CHOQUE CANQUI, Roberto. 2011. "Capítulo I. La historia aimara." Esteban Ticona Alejo, ed. *Bolivia en el Inicio del Pachakuti. La larga lucha anticolonial de los pueblos aimara y quechua*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal. 6-34.

CORDOVA OVIEDO, Ximena. 2021. "Indigeneity and national celebrations in Latin America: Performative practices and identity politics." G.N Devy and Geoffrey V. Davis, eds. *Performance and Knowledge*. London: Routledge India. 9-33.

DANDLER, Jorge and Juan Torrico, A. 1987. "From the National Indigenous Congress to the Ayopaya Rebellion: Bolivia, 1945-1947." Steve J. Stern, ed. *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press. 334-378.

DE LA CADENA, Marisol. 2015. *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds.* Durham: Duke University Press.

DIEBOLD, Gillian. 2021. "Evaluating Evo Morales: The Conflicts and Convergences of Populism, Resource Nationalism, and Ethno-

Environmentalism in Bolivia." B.A. Dissertarion. University of Pennsylvania.

FABRICANT, Nicole. 2009. "Performative politics: The Camba countermovement in eastern Bolivia." *American Ethnologist* 36(4): 768-783.

FABRICANT, Nicole and Bret Gustafson. 2014. "Moving Beyond the Extractivism Debate: Imagining New Social Economies." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 47(4): 40-45.

FABRICANT, Nicole and Nancy Postero. 2019. "Performing Indigeneity in Bolivia: the struggle over the TIPNIS." Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard and Juan Javier Rivera Andía, eds. *Indigenous Life Projects and Extractivism. Ethnographies from South America*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. 245-276. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-93435-8_10] downloaded May 16, 2024.

---. 2014. "Performing the 'wounded Indian': a new platform of democracy and human rights in Bolivia's autonomy movement." *Identities* 21(4): 395-411.

FARTHING, Linda and Thomas Becker. 2021. *Coup: A Story of Violence and Resistance in Bolivia.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

FERNANDO, Mayanthi L. 2017. "Secularism and the Animist Indigene." *The Immanent Frame. Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*. [https://tif.ssrc.org/2017/07/27/secularism-and-the-animist-indigene/] downloaded May 16, 2024.

GARCÍA CANCLINI, Néstor. 1995. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

GOTKOWITZ, Laura. 2007. *A Revolution for Our Rights: Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880-1952*. Durham: Duke University Press.

GUSTAFSON, Bret. 2009. *New Languages of the State: Indigenous Resurgence ad the Politics of Knowledge in Bolivia*. Durham: Duke University Press.

HINDERY, Derrick. 2014. *From Enron to Evo: Pipeline Politics, Global Environmentalism, and Indigenous Rights in Bolivia*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

HUARCAYA, Serio Miguel. 2018. "Plurinationality, Indigeneity, neoliberalism, and social movements." Linda J. Seligmann and Kathleen S. Fine-Dare, eds. *The Andean World*. London: Routledge. 571-586.

INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadística). 2001. *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2001.* Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia. [https://anda.ine.gob.bo/index.php/catalog/10] downloaded May 16, 2024.

KAUANUI, J. Kehaulani. 2017. "Sacrality, secularity, and contested Indigeneity." *The Immanent Frame.Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere.* [https://tif.ssrc.org/2017/06/23/sacrality-secularity-and-contested-Indigeneity/] downloaded May 16, 2024.

LARSON, Brooke. 2004. *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes 1810-1910.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LÓPEZ CABALLERO, Paula. 2021. "Inhabiting Identities: On the Elusive Quality of Indigenous Identity in Mexico." *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 26(1): 124-146.

LOWE, Lisa. 2015. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham: Duke University Press.

McCORMACK, Sabine. 1985. "'The Heart Has Its Reasons': Predicaments of Missionary Christianity in Early Colonial Peru." *Hipanic American Historical Review* (67): 443-466.

MERRIAM-WEBSTER. 2023. "Appropriate" [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appropriate#dictionary-entry-2] downloaded May 16, 2024.

MIGNOLO, Walter. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.

---. 2000. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

MORENO MORALES, Daniel E. 2019. "The mysterious case of the disappearing Indians: changes in self-identification as Indigenous in the latest inter-census period in Bolivia." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 14(2): 151-170.

MUMFORD, Jeremy R. 2008. "Litigation as Ethnography in Sixteenth-Century Peru: Polo de Ondegardo and the Mitimaes." *Hispanic American History Review* 88(1): 5-40.

NASH, June. 1992 [1979]. *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us. Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivia Tin Mines*. New York: Columbia University Press.

ØDEGAARD, Cecilie Vindal and Juan Javier Rivera Andía. 2019. *Indigenous Life Projects and Extractivism: Ethnographies from South America*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

PERREAULT, Tom. 2015. "Performing participation: Mining, power, and the limits of consultation in Bolivia." *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 20(3): 433-451.

PORTUGAL MOLLINEDO, Pedro, and Carlos Macusaya Cruz. 2016. *El Indianismo Katarista. Una mirada crítica.* La Paz, Bolivia: Fundación Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

POSTERO, Nancy. 2007. *Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

---. 2017. *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

PRATT, Mary Louise. 2007. "Afterward: Indigeneity today." Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn, eds. *Indigenous Experience Today.* New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation. 397-404.

QUIJANO, Anibal. 2000. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1(3): 533-580.

RIVERA CUSICANQUI, Silvia. 2012. "Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 111(1): 95-109.

ROSALDO, Renato. 1989. "Imperialist Nostalgia." *Representations* 26: 107-122.

SAID, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

SANJINÉS, Javier. 2004. *Mestizaje Upside Down: Aesthetic Politics in Modern Bolivia.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

SEXTON, Jared. 2017. "On Black Negativity, Or the Affirmation of Nothingness."[https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/on-black-negativity-or-the-affirmation-of-nothing] downloaded May 16, 2024.

SIMPSON, Audra. 2018. "Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, the Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession." *Indigenous Visions. Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas.* Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner, eds. New Haven: Yale University Press. 166-181.

STARN, Orin. 1999. *Nightwatch. The Politics of Protest in the Andes*. Durham: Duke University Press.

---. 1991. "Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru." *Cultural Anthropology* 6(1): 63-91.

THOMSON, Sinclair. 2002. *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

TICKTIN, Miriam. 2017. "A world without innocence." *American Ethnologist* 44(4): 577-590.

TICONA ALEJO, Esteban. 2011. "El thaki entre los aimara y los quechua o la democracia en los gobiernos comunales." Esteban Ticona Alejo, ed. *Bolivia en el inicio del pachakuti. La larga lucha anticolonial de los pueblos aimara y quechua*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal. 35-58.

TUHIWAI SMITH, Linda. 2012 [1999]. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.* New York: Zed Books.

WEBBER, Jeffrey. 2017. "Evo Morales, transformismo, and the consolidation of agrarian capitalism in Bolivia." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 17(2): 330-347.

WINCHELL, Mareike. 2022. *After Servitude: Elusive Property and the Ethics of Kinship in Bolivia.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

---. 2020. "Liberty Time in Question: Historical Duration and Indigenous Refusal in Post-Revolutionary Bolivia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 62(3): 551-587.

WHITE, Hayden. 1986. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

WOLFF, Jonas. 2020. "The turbulent end of an era in Bolivia: Contested elections, the ouster of Evo Morales, and the beginning of a transition towards an uncertain future." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 40(2): 163-186.

ZAMORANO VILLARREAL, Gabriela. 2020. “Indigeneity, Race, and the Media from the Perspective of the 2019 Political Crisis in Bolivia.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 29(1): 151-174.