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September 5, 2014
ABSTRACT
This study looks at how the Bolivian government has strategically portrayed the TIPNIS controversy\(^1\) and its impact to the political and social voice of indigenous communities. It also looks at how this conflict has articulated a shift in the MAS’s\(^2\) socio-economic priorities and how this shift points to deeper implications to Bolivia’s democratic quality and government accountability. This study aims to provide a comprehensive, although not exhaustive, account and analysis of the conflict that integrates literature from several academic disciplines, media sources, interviews, and lived experiences. This project also looks at the conflict under framing theory as articulated by Desrosiers (2011). By using this framework, this paper demonstrates how the Bolivian government has devalued the political and social autonomy of indigenous communities in the TIPNIS by creating, falsifying, or exaggerating information through official reports or media to legitimize their aims. This study finds that, the use of adversarial, aptness, and ascendency frames (in addition to cultivating the conditions to synthesize frames) have devalued the indigenous resident’s base of autonomy, undermined the unity of the communities and their representative organs by creating fissures along individual opinion, and undercut the legitimacy of the recent indigenous marches by making the marchers enemies with an seemingly unorganized opinion over the road project.

INTRODUCTION
The election of Evo Morales of the MAS in 2005 marks an enormous shift in Bolivia: the election of an indigenous candidate from a non-traditional party platform opened up new political and social spaces for Bolivia’s marginalized indigenous and campesino sectors. The realization of a constituent assembly that gathered indigenous and social movement leaders and the remodeling of the Bolivian constitution pronounce the MAS’ commitment to institutional and social change (Varat 2008, p. 1). However, although Morales’ MAS promotes several nation-building policies and institutes progressive legislation, in practice and as described by Zaveleta during a recent interview, these initiatives remain declarations but often do not materialize (Personal Communication, June 16, 2014). Reaching the end of its second term (2009-2014) and vying for a third in the coming October 2014 elections, growing evidence demonstrates visible contradictions and increasingly regressive effects from the MAS nation building initiatives. The conflict concerning the illegal construction of a highway across the TIPNIS, intended to link the economic centers of Bolivia’s Beni and Cochabamba municipalities, provides a relevant example of this dynamic. This project analyses the MAS framing strategies throughout its state building project in the TIPNIS and its effect on the resident indigenous communities. Furthermore, this report fleshes out the presence of patronage/clientelistic networks and the growing centralization of political influence around the MAS in the light of the TIPNIS.

\(^1\) Indigenous Territory and National Park Isiboro Secure (Territorio Indígena Y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure or TIPNIS)
\(^2\) Movement to Socialism Party (Movimiento al Socialismo or MAS)
Although one of ongoing environmental and social conflicts in Bolivia the TIPNIS conflict parses out how the state’s understanding of development, and the subsequent imposition of this understanding, runs ideologically and historically contrary to that of the TIPNIS resident’s. Considering that the Morales government has obfuscated the voices of the indigenous protesters through the cooptation of indigenous leaders/communities or through military repression, this literature review also hopes to honor the voices of the marginalized TIPNIS residents harmed by the government’s policies. This paper brings into question the legitimacy of the MAS democratizing, state-building initiatives by examining how the government has framed industrialization as development and progress contrary to the beliefs of the TIPNIS residents; devalued the voices of the indigenous protesters from the TIPNIS through adversarial frames while restricting/discouraging opposition through police/military force; and divided the indigenous stance towards the project within the park and among indigenous organizations through ascendancy frames and clientelistic networks. That is to say, I analyze how the national government subverts oppositional voices, namely the indigenous residents of the TIPNIS, using framing strategies and informal negotiations to secure their interests.

I parse out my study in several sections. In the first section, I explain my theoretical frameworks, namely framing theory and my focus on contemporary corruption, and methodology. The second section contextualizes the gradual mobilization of Bolivia’s marginalized sectors, and the MAS’s ascendance and subsequent policies. This backdrop illustrates the politicization of indigenous-campesino identity by demonstrating how this mobilization and shifts in social and political paradigms have, as described by Fabricant and Gustafson (2011), remapped how politics and claims to identity take place. By this I mean the introduction of new political actors and arenas (in the case of the TIPNIS, the indigenous territory has become a political arena); the emergence of territorially, ethnically, or class based coalitions; and the re-articulation of the reach and function of the state. The third section problematizes the government’s state building efforts in the context of the TIPNIS. It also examines the history and importance of the TIPNIS to the resident indigenous population and to the state. This snapshot of the interests behind the territory also contextualizes the conflict in light of the lived experience narratives form the indigenous community members while also articulating the role of the MAS in the conflict. Finally, the fourth examines the impacts of the governments framing strategies, either implied by specific actions or explicitly visible, during their state building project in the TIPNIS-namely the impact’s to the indigenous resident’s political and social power; the persisting marginalization and of indigenous peoples not affiliated to the national government; and the debilitation of indigenous organizations/representation and the integrity of the unity among indigenous communities and families within the territory. My conclusion offers insights to the long-term implications to democracy and accountability resulting from the government’s frames as demonstrated by the TIPNIS conflict.
SECTION 1: A WORD ON METHODOLOGY AND MY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

i) Methodology
This paper is based on field research and qualitative interviews conducted in Bolivia in 2013 under IRB approval, particularly with indigenous leader organizations (Subcentral TIPNIS, Subcentral Secure) and community members of the TIPNIS; Environmental and Social Science professors from Bolivia; and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives (Juarez, 2013). This field research is further supplemented by academic studies, news and media reports, and interviews gathered during an eight-week period in 2014. Considering that most of the information presented originally appears in Spanish, quotes or citations with a * indicate the passages that I have personally translated.

ii) Theoretical Framework
Before delving into the project analysis, a brief word on theory and methodology is necessary. My project is interpretive in nature, namely I look at the conflict through a series of analytical lenses to illustrate the conflict, namely framing theory. According to Van Cott (2000), drawing from D. McAdam, J.D. McCarthy, and M. N. Zald (1996), framing refers to “the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and for themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (p. 2). Van Cott sees the practice of framing as purposefully creating a collective identity using ideas that relate to others and propel a cause or action; framers try to establish new understandings and structures of society. However, Van Cott’s definition restricts framing as an action and does not acknowledge that framers can also be individuals, such as political/party leaders, or even other countries or foreign institutions that impose international norms through frames. For example, institutions such as the World Bank can establish the privatization of industries and resources as a global good by framing it as the most efficient and productive structure for a growing economy. Since all countries would like a robust economy, this frame resonates with them, or relates to their goals, and establishes a consensus towards that norm. In this case, the World Bank, or other groups for that matter, wanted to lead other countries to “adopt the same view” or value of economic privatization (Desrosiers, 2011, p. 10). Eventually, this consensus becomes a norm or an “orthodox” practice.

Desrosiers (2011) provides a closer look at framing theory, and advances the frames that I use in this project, in her article “Reframing Frame Analysis: Key Contributions to Conflict Studies.” Although she focuses on framing theory’s theory use as tool for understanding ethnic mobilization and conflicts, I draw upon a general definition of frame theory. This is not to devalue the ethnic dimensions of the conflict but to advance a deeper understanding of the sociopolitical frameworks at work in the TIPNIS. According to Desrosiers (2011), drawing from Benford and Snow (2000) and McAdam (1996), framing theory explains how actors strategically represent an issue in a manner that they know will mobilize support, while also being aware of the social and political limits on their capacity to create frames from the existing system (p. 3).
The strength of the frame, however, comes from its ability to align itself with the public's preexisting values and expectations with the framers', while ensuring that the framers' goals resonate with those of the people (Desrosiers, 2011, p. 5). Put simply, the framer must convince the public that his/her goals are theirs while demonstrating that they also support the public's beliefs and values. For example, during the various protests to the absence of prior consultation before the beginning of the road project in 2011, the “government represented the critical social organization as traitors to the 'change process' (proceso de cambio) and as tools of oppositional forces” (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2013, p. 209). In this case, the government purposefully interpreted the protests from the indigenous communities as a hindrance to the development of the state; they were painted as adversaries to the economic development of Bolivia. References and definitions of particular frames, however, are integrated throughout the analysis.

SECTION 2: REIMAGINING OF THE BOLIVIAN STATE—A LITERATURE REVIEW ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF EVO MORALE’S MAS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE TIPNIS

i) The rise of a new regime: a brief history of Bolivia’s transition

After the 1850s, Bolivia’s political system follows a trend of oligarchic regimes influenced by business elites, who primarily focused on natural resource extraction (Morales 1992). However, this trend culminates in widespread disillusionment towards Bolivia’s traditional political parties and system of politics from the indigenous minorities and a wide segment of the population (Gingerich, 2010, p. 55). In this case traditional refers to the incumbent political parties—namely the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario or MNR), the Revolutionary Movement of the Left (Movimiento del la Izquierda Revolucionaria or MIR) and the Nationalist Democratic Action Party (Acción Democrática Nacionalista or ADN)—whose leadership often consists of light-skinned, middle or high-class elite enshrining free market economic policies (Gingerich, 2010, p. 56-58; A. Selee, Personal Communication, July 17, 2014; Fabricant and Gustafson, 2011, p. 1). The presence of clientelistic networks, explained by Auyero (2000) as “the particularized exchange of votes and support for goods, favors, and services” (p. 19), and corruption also characterizes the period and contributes to growing discontent. Several factors lead to the disenchantment towards and demise of the traditional system of governing in Bolivia. For example the bureaucratic inefficiencies caused by the selective nature of the spoils system (Gingerich, 2011, p. 57). Furthermore, the spoils system inherent in consensus democracy make sure that the systems accountability slowly degrades, as corruption cases and illicit activities go unpunished (Gingerich, 2011, p. 56-58). The increasingly visible deficiencies of the old system, coupled with frustration generated from violent protests in 2000 and 2003, results in a growing support for “alternative” models of governance, which eventually propels the MAS to power.

These dates refer to the Cochabamba “water war” of 2000 and the protests against the privatization of petroleum and natural, or “gas wars,” that resulted in the ousting of president
ii) A new paradigm: the positive changes under the MAS

Largely seen as a shift to democracy by international organizations (Freedom House 2013a), the recent literature evaluating the MAS agrees that the MAS party and the election of the ethnically Aymara Morales to presidency represents an institutional shift in Bolivia social and political paradigms. Fabricant and Gustafson (2011) elaborate the symbolic and political impacts of Morales’s indigenous identity and the MAS in their volume *Remapping Bolivia: Resource, Territory and Indigeneity in a Plurinational State*. According to the authors, the MAS’s base of support and policies focusing on “a nationalist turn towards state sovereignty and natural resource control aimed at state led wealth distribution” (Fabricant and Gustafson, 2011, p. 2) distinguishes the group from the incumbent parties. Madrid (2008) adds to the MAS’s distinction from the traditional parties. He explains that the MAS’s networking with indigenous organizations and its efforts to facilitate the voting process for indigenous communities garners widespread support (p. 3). The MAS enables politically excluded social sectors and consequently opens up several new political spaces for direct participation.

Pablo Arce (2011) elaborates this growing access of political spaces to indigenous and campesino groups. Evaluating the MAS’s first term, Arce (2011) states that the MAS’s most valuable success is the “change in their [campesino and indigenous peoples] real possibility and potential to access power, not only by the route of governmental participation in instances of decision making, if not also through the leadership of base organization” (p. 9).* Also, according to Crabtree (2013), the constituent assembly convened in the MAS’s first term also results in the remodeling of the Bolivian constitution, which formally lays out the rights of indigenous communities and other communities, ratified in 2009. Thus, the literature acknowledges the successes and considerable social and political advances of the MAS under Morales. Although they are not without opposition, namely from traditional cattle rancher and landholding elites, these reforms have generated positive impacts in the perceptions of the Bolivian population. As the Latin American Public Opinion Project of Vanderbilt University indicates (Madrid, 2008, p. 3-4) and the 2013 Latinobarometro illustrates, satisfaction with democracy experiences a

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4 It is important to note that this is a simplification of the events that propels the MAS to prominence.

5 In order to not essencialize the rise of the MAS party as Bolivia’s monumental moment when indigenous communities become politically active, it is important to note that the mobilization of these marginalized social sectors gradually takes place. Movements such as the Revolution of 1952 under the MNR, the indigenous and peasant movement in 1994, and the natural resource protests in 2000 and 2003 all contributed to the growing political mobilization of Bolivia’s minority groups and led to progressive reform.

6 Although the Latinobarometro’s data draws from opinion polls based on individual experiences, which can be biased, bought, or manipulated, it reflects the political climate felt by bolivians. As Selee (2012) indicates, the Latinobarometro “highlights how direct experience in paying bribes is not the same as general perceptions about the level of corruption as measured by
marked increase, namely between 2005-2009, and again after 2011 (Lagos 2013).* However, this chart also offers an interesting counter argument as to the waning support networks under Morales. Although the TIPNIS conflict comes into scrutiny around 2011, the chart illustrates an increase in satisfaction with democracy. This begs the question: ‘why does satisfaction increase when there is growing evidence as to the undemocratic procedures taken on by the state in the TIPNIS?’ This continued support may also be the result of government frames that have legitimized the project in the eyes of the public by depicting the opposition as enemies, as will be explained in the final sections. Finally, R. Puentes acknowledges that Morales’s economic policies have staved high inflation and maintained the currency stable since its first term in 2006. The MAS won the 2009 national elections and several municipal elections with a substantial majority vote (Madrid, 2014, p. 34), and Morales plans to run for a third term in the coming October elections (Zavaleta, Personal communication, June 16, 2014).

**Figure a) Satisfaction with Democracy:** Total percentage in Bolivia from 1996-2013.

### iii) A rise or regression: a survey of the literature evaluating the impacts of the MAS

#### a) Politicizing identity

Although Bolivia has undergone significant positive change, the politicization of indigenous identity results as a significant and, as seen through the TIPNIS conflict, hazardous impact from the CPI [corruption perception index and other polls” (p. 8). As a result, the fact that the Latinobarometro measures a wider population than businessmen and engages with lived experiences gives greater validity and reliability to the data.
the MAS’s political rhetoric and mobilization of indigenous communities. While fleshing out the changes in political spaces in Bolivia, Fabricant and Gustafson (2011) note, Morales’s indigenous identity “has generated its own ‘social earthquake’ in Bolivia, creating…an irreversible turn toward the reconfiguration of Bolivian society and public life” (20). Adding to Fabricant and Gustafson, Arce (2011) indicates that Morales represented the dissolving “rupture of a species of apartheid which, though never formalized”* excluded indigenous and peasant communities from spaces of power and influence (p. 9). Madrid (2014) also indicates that the array of social movement groups that allies itself with the MAS “gave the indigenous groups parties an organizational base and a variety of human and material source in the cities and other areas where the indigenous movement was weak” (p. 34).

As I mention above, the MAS under Morales opens up formal spaces of political participation to the indigenous-campesino groups where there had been none. In addition, a large portion of the literature notes how the MAS also gives Andean philosophies and values a place in articulating the developmental ambitions of the state, namely the integration of Suma Qamaña (Aymara for living well or Buen vivir) and the protection of Pacha mama (or mother earth) in the country’s constitution (Schilling Vacaflor, 2011, p. 10; Solo de Zaldívar, 2013, p. 72; R. Puentes, Personal Communication, June 4, 2014). However, this also leaves national and political discourse open to greater divisions along ethnic lines. As Fabricant and Gustafson (2011) point out, that the “Amazonian and Chaco lowlands” have begun to take a “central role in the political and cultural dynamics of Andean Centered Bolivian…statecraft” (p. 8). Namely, The conflict in the TIPNIS also encompasses, but does not solely pertain to, tensions in the perceptions of development; Although the indigenous residents of the TIPNIS consider development as seeking ways to better navigate their environment while preserving the ecology (M. Fabricano, Personal Communication, November 15, 2014), the state widens the appeal of industrialized development based on natural resource extraction by framing it as a component to “living well.” However, this further clouds the values and characteristics of indigenous identity, both in the lowlands and the highlands and, as demonstrated through the TIPNIS conflict, colors and complicates contemporary social and political issues.

b) The MAS’ self representation vs. its actual practices
Morales and the MAS’s “anti-apartheid rhetoric” (Mayorga, 2008, p. 5) and self-representation as a tool through which the indigenous-campesino sectors of society can levy for their rights and interests (Rice 2012, p. 72-73) provides the party with a degree of legitimacy among the marginal sectors. This self-image, however, also leaves several informal doors of access open, motivating indirect forms of stimulating changes through the state. This can take the form of either direct protests to the state instead of through formal institutions, such as the indigenous marches from the TIPNIS to La Paz. This can also become the use of pre-established connections between the state and indigenous, peasant, and coca grower organizations that make up the MAS to levy for the respective organizations interests. To understand the potential informal channels of influence that surround the party, a brief word on the actual political nature of the MAS is in
order. Although Rice (2012), Madrid (2008) and Bilbao (2014), a representative from the Bolivian Consulate, classify the party as ethnic/indigenous (p. 73; p. 3-4; Personal Communication, July 18), this does not take into account the other social and class groups that constitute the MAS. The literature convenes in indicating that the MAS, or the Assembly of the Sovereignty of the Pueblos (Asamblea de la Soberanía de los Pueblos or ASP) in its initial phases during 1995, originates as an association between coca growers and indigenous-campesino segments (Van Cott 2008, p. 51; Arce 2011, p. 6-7; R. Puente, Personal Communication, June 4, 2014). Morales eventually adopts the MAS party label in 2002, without any conditions from the owner, due to problems that emerge when registering Morales organization at the time, the Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the People (Instrumento Politico para la Soberania de los pueblos, or IPSP) (Van Cott, 2008, p. 52; R. Puentes, Personal Communication, June 4, 2014). “It is very important,” reminds P. Zavaleta, to recall that, although Morales adopts Movement to Socialism as their party label, they had not socialist/communist leanings, contrary to claims of communism on the rise by the United States and other countries (Personal Communication, June 16, 2014). However, R. Puente, and Mayorga (2008), agrees that the MAS has become a political party. That is, the MAS has come to focus more on national issues than the localized problems of the groups it claims to represent. However, has the MAS’s relationship with social movement organizations given these groups a space in political deliberations, or have these ties allowed some organizations to contribute but excluded others?

There is an extensive range of literature discussing the shortcomings of the MAS’s attempt to represent social movement, campesino and indigenous organizations at the national level. After Morales and the MAS wins the 2005 national elections, the party then had to satisfy its promises of access to the several “social movement and civil society organizations” that help expand the MAS’s regional influence (Van Cott, 2008, p. 55). This becomes especially true for the coca grower and campesino blocs from which Morales begins his activist career (Van Cott, 2008, p. 202-203), and who remains the president of a coca growers union (Schilling-Vacaflor (2011), elaborating on the aforementioned, indicates that, “the inclusion of hitherto underrepresented sectors of society has also produced new exclusions, as not all of these sectors have been represented equally” (p. 11). On the same token, several authors and participants have agreed that the government has recently taken on authoritarian overtones and demonstrate a consolidation of power among Morales’ political and social constituents (Madrid, 2008, p. 4; Mayorga, 2008, p. 6; Schilling-Vacaflor, 2011, p. 11; Van cott, 2008, p. 177; Gingerich, 2010; P. Zaveleta, Personal communication, June 17, 2014; R. Puente, Personal communication, June 4, 2014). Van cott’s (2000) illustrates Shilling-Vacaflor’s (2011) point through her case study concerning the effects of indigenous governance on democracy at the local level after the 1995 municipal elections. According to Van Cott’s (2008) study of the Bolivia’s Chapare region, nestled in the Cochabamba department, “Coca federation leaders…prioritized group solidarity, unity and power at the expense of equality and pluralism” (p. 196).
Schilling-Vacaflor (2011) expands on this by demonstrating how this political bias translates into the national arena. During the 2005 constituent assembly, MAS breaks an agreement with indigenous organizations to 16 reserved seats in the Constituent Assembly, by passing a law calling for elections (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2011, p. 8). As explained by Schilling-Vacaflor, the MAS’ goal “was to concentrate the votes for its own party” making it “impossible for indigenous-campesino groups to nominate candidates for the assembly without allying with a political party (particularly the MAS). In his article, Gingerich (2010) notes, “a market in avales (formal certificates of participation in the MAS’s 2005 electoral campaign) emerged” as a result of the growing importance of demonstrating affiliation with the party in order to obtain a bureaucratic post (p. 84). The growing concentration of power around the executive, what Gillingham (2012) would describe as a “hyper-presidentialist model” (p. 55), has also undermined democracy. Although Gillingham (2012)’s model refers to Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institutional or PRI) that monopolized Mexico’s political arena for 71 years, Bolivia’s MAS has begun to adopt similar characteristics. By crowding out unaffiliated groups and potential opposition blocs, as in Schilling-Vacaflor and Gingerich’s examples, the MAS undermines political pluralism by removing fair political spaces. As a result, can the MAS truly be considered a step towards democracy?

c) Towards democracy?
“In some ways its become more democratic, in other ways its become more autocratic,” says A. Selee (2014) as we discuss the MAS’s general effects on Bolivia (Personal Communication, July 17, 2014). Selee argues that the MAS gives channels of access to communities who do not feel like full participants in the political process (Personal Communication, July 17, 2014). However, “in the short term,” he continues, “you may be mobilizing new voices. Overtime, power has its own dynamic” (Personal Communication, July 17, 2014). Indeed, although Morales’ MAS realizes dramatic change in some areas, it has also, and in some cases unintentionally, demonstrated several clientelistic and autocratic practices. For example, and as will be discussed at length in the forthcoming sections, although the MAS attempts to replicate a social movement through the national government, its affiliations with its root organizations are not compatible with the role of the executive. In this case, there is a disconnect between informal institutions at the local level, namely the MAS as a representative of the indigenous-campesino movement, and the MAS as the governing party in Bolivia.

Following the Example of North (1990), “informal” refers to the ways in which individuals negotiate with each other without the aid, or without going through, the state (p. 3-4). For example, negotiating with community representative for something instead of going through a state apparatus. In contrast, formal refers to the written procedures of the state that regulate and constrain the interactions between people and the people to the state (North, 1990, p. 3-4). That is, for example, if we want to get a driver’s license, a person would need to go to an organization, such as the department of motor vehicles, and follow a written procedure that guides the person through a series of steps. Nonetheless, as Selee (2014) explains, “Informal
institutions aren’t bad, its just they’re bad in more complex societies where there are multiple interests at play” (Personal communication, July 17th). In short, the shift in the MAS administration’s political and social priorities may also be a result of the retention of informal networks and institutions and the pressures emerging from those institutions, instead of a deliberate decision in part by Morales to centralize political power. However, how has the aforementioned evidence concerning the turn of the administration materialized in the TIPNIS?


Before trying to unravel the in conflict in the TIPNIS, it is necessary to understand: What is the TIPNIS? Why does it hold such value to the resident communities? Even more importantly, in a context where indigenous ideologies have become increasingly political as indicated above, is asking: what is indigenous? What is campesino (peasant)

i) Lo indigena (the indigenous): Defining indigeneity in the TIPNIS
As I allude to in the first section, indigenous identity has become a nebulous concept as a result of the states use of indigenous concepts on state building efforts that may not correlate with other indigenous philosophies. Most notably, there exist distinctions between their indigeneity in the highlands vs. “our” indigeneity. The Bolivian president, as the technician from the Subcentral Secure7 of the TIPNIS Josue Antazana indicates, “Is not indigenous because, we the indigenous, don’t characterize ourselves in that manner” (J. Antazana, Personal Communication, November 13, 2013). Antazana remark shows the friction between the indigenous residents of the TIPNIS and the state as to who holds a claim to what they believe to be true indigenous identity. The Bolivian Constitution provides another relevant example of this dynamic. Chapter 1, article 3 of the 2009 Bolivian constitution describes the Bolivian nation as composed of “the totality of Bolivians, the original indigenous campesino nations and pueblos, and the intercultural and afrobolivian communities” (The Political Constitution of the State). However, As Marcial Fabricano, the protagonist of the first indigenous march I 1990, describes, the constitution conflated the values of the campesino class, which tends to be more capitalistic and predatory towards nature, with the indigenous, which leans to the conservation of nature (Personal communication, November 15, 2013). E. Nozo adds that the constitution bundles up indigenous identity with something incompatible (Paraphrase, Personal Communication, November 13, 2013).

7 One of the organizations that represents the indigenous residents of the TIPNIS; More specifically, the organization formed in 2003 due to growing discontent among mojeño youth towards the directors of the Central of Indigenous Pueblos of the Beni (Central de Pueblos indigenas del Beni, or CPIB) due to their profiteering by selling lumber form the TIPNIS (Albo, 2012, February 19: 10).
Bolivia’s political economy and changing perceptions towards indigenous identity have also contributed to the growing complexity of what is “indigenous.” Some peasant (campesino) communities also have indigenous roots. This is possible by having originated from a highland indigenous community or having been an indigenous community that has assimilated to campesino ideology. Schilling-Vacaflor (2013) substantiates this claim when explaining the emergence of several campesino groups, particularly after 1960, including the colonizer group (Colonizados) (p. 6). According to Schilling-Vacaflor (2013), the colonizer group is a migratory population of highland indigenous groups and displaced workers who go to the tropical lowlands (Cochabamba, the Chaco region, etc.) after the major economic changes in the 1980s (p. 6). Roberta Rice (2012, p. 71) and Kevin Healy (2001, p. 44-45) substantiate Schilling Vacaflor’s claims by adding that the economic neoliberal turn of the 1970s and the 1980’s severely downsized mines and the highland workforce, forcing many to migrate eastward. Other groups, such as the kataristas, and their feminine counterpart the Bartolinas, and the Single Syndical Confederation of Workers of the Field of Bolivia (Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores del Campos de Bolivia, or CSUTCB) also appear after the 1960s demanding an end to economic and cultural discrimination for being campesinos and indigenous (R. Puente, Personal Communication, June 4; Schilling-Vacaflor, 2011, p. 6).

Although “more than two thirds of the Bolivian Population identifies as mestizo [racially and ethnically mixed],” the MAS campaigns and the growing mobilization of indigenous communities have made the general population politically conscious of ethnicity in Bolivia (Madrid, 2014, p. 33). As a result of the above, I do not hope to provide a solid understanding of indigenous identity in Bolivia or give a widely applicable definition of the identities from both sides. Instead, I hope to provide how the residents of the TIPNIS see their indigeneity and how their perception of identity interacts with the state policies. This definition encompasses perceptions of development and attitudes towards nature. A director from the Subcentral TIPNIS, V. Guoyugo explains that the residents of the TIPNIS clear the amount of land necessary for their subsistence (Personal Communication, November 22, 2013). Marcial Fabricano develops this idea further when indicating that the indigenous person has a relation between nature, man and spirituality, while the peasant has relationship of man, nature and economists” (Personal Communication, November 15, 2013). As a result, drawing from these and other interviews with indigenous leaders from Bolivia’s Subcentral TIPNIS, TIPNIS community members, and recent literature, indigenous identity in the TIPNIS, refers to a community that enshrines the use and preservation of the lands of their origin. They do this by using/respecting ancestral/ pre-colonials methods of political organization (V. Guoyugo, 2013, November 22, 2014, Personal Communication; L. Umarai, November 22, 2013, Personal Communication; A. Nazakayuga, November 22, 2013, Personal communication; Puente, June 4, 2013).

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8 The principal representative organization that oversees the indigenous communities of the TIPNIS (Albo, 2012, February 19, p. 10)
J. Antazana adds to this definition by noting “we are indigenous because we...do not parcel out land, but instead it is community land, collective land”* (Personal Communication, November 13, 2013). Namely, instead of having privatized land, as in the peasant bloc, the communities in the TIPNIS are held under a collective land title.

**ii) El Territorio y la Dignidad (of Territory and Dignity)**
But what exactly is the TIPNIS? Originally established in 1965 (Healy, 2001, p. 36), the National Park Isiboro Secure adopted its second function as an indigenous territory through the first March for Territory and Dignity by the lowland indigenous groups in 1990 (SERNAP, 2013; Paz, 2012, p. 9). The indigenous Territory and National Park Isiboro Secure is a protected area in Bolivia’s Amazonian lowlands, located between the departments of the Beni and Cochabamba (SERNAP 2013; See figure 2).

**Figure 2: National Park and Indigenous territory Isiboro Secure;** Adapted from the Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas-Bolivia; Accessed July 5, 2014. 

Despite the decline in the number of communities in the TIPNIS, the park houses the Yuracare, Mojeño and Chimane nations. In a previous IRB approved study where I outline the several sides of the TIPNIS conflict, the directors of the Subcentral TIPNIS further develop the value they attribute to the park. Laira Umarai Mueyba, secretary of Health and Education in the Subcentral TIPNIS and TIPNIS resident, shares “that the struggle for the TIPNIS is an ancestral one”*
According to Umarai, drawing from my previous project, “‘there have been movements that in all of these parts, they have been taking land from our own grandfathers. Well, they [the indigenous communities] organized themselves, went to go look for that place where we are now, were we live…they have fought for it’” (Juarez 2013, p. 7-8). Carlos Crespo, Director of the Major University of San Simon’s Environment and Sustainable development program in Cochabamba, Bolivia, deepens Umarai’s contribution by describing the TIPNIS as a “zone of refuge” (Juarez, 2013, p. 8). According to Crespo, cited in Juarez (2013) “‘the indigenous communities have gradually concentrated in the TIPNIS in the end…They all have come to this part of the region, lets say, retreating in the face of that expansion’”* of the cattle industry and rubber harvesting previously in place (p. 8). That is to say, that the region has historically been an indigenous territory that gradually expanded as a result of colonizing pressures and the exploitation of natural resources.

However, considering the above, what is a territory? Better yet, what does it mean to be an indigenous territory? There exists a firm consensus between the residents and directors of the Subcentral TIPNIS as to the significance of territory. In Juarez (2013), Laira Umarai explains that TIPNIS territory is a product of the ancestral struggles of their grandfathers, who first established and protected the region (p. 8). Furthermore, “a majority of the the residents/directors of the Subcentrals indicate that protecting the TIPNIS encompassed protecting a home/territory for the future generation”* (Juarez, 2013, p. 8). As indicated by Raquel Moyenoza, Economics secretary of the Subcentral TIPNIS during our interview in the fall, “‘What will be leave out children for inheritance if we do not fight as we have until today’”* (Juarez, 2013, p. 9). By the same token, the territory enables the residents of the TIPNIS to maintain a lifestyle enshrining the preservation of nature. As a resident of Trinidadcito, a village in the TIPNIS, explains, quoted in the fall project, “‘we have everything there. We have fishing and hunting, flower and fauna” (Juarez, 2013, p. 9). In addition to the narrative from the resident, all of the participants from the previous project agree that the territory provides, and the resident take, what is necessary. In addition to preserving their traditional lifestyle, the territory also serves as a base of autonomy, in addition to the indigenous march. Carlos Crespo takes this idea further when discussing that “‘autonomy is the dominion of your interactions, not simply the capacity that one has to decide over what to do for the place where you are’”* (Juarez, 2013, p. 9). The indigenous marches, such as the recent 8th and 9th marches, act as a way of protesting and deliberating “‘what to do in the place that you are’” (Juarez, 2013, p. 9) and represents a common expression of autonomy for the indigenous communities of the TIPNIS. However, the TIPNIS itself also has a role in the expression of autonomy, or the capacity to independently make decisions. This is due to the fact that the territory enables the residents to maintain a collective identity and goal. As a result, this legitimizes their social claims as an indigenous community and concretes their political aims by grounding their opposition in one place instead of having a scattered opposition throughout the country. As a result, and as I describe in my past project, the TIPNIS becomes “‘a past and a hope for the future and…is a base of indigenous autonomy’” (Juarez, 2013, p. 10).
iii) Emerging conflicts and brewing tensions: a brief explanation of the conflict concerning the TIPNIS

a) A previous consultation?

The violation to the right of prior consultation and granted to indigenous communities and the government’s reaction illustrates one of the various factors that foment the conflict in the TIPNIS. D. Pizarro (2014), when describing the World Bank’s Indigenous peoples plan, indicates that in order to carry out national projects that impact residents of the particular area several safeguards must be satisfied (Personal communication, June 10, 2014). In terms of the San Buenaventura –Ixiamas National Road project funded by the World Bank, these safeguards include mitigating the pressures on the land and the potential displacement of the resident population (D. Pizarro, Personal Communication, June 10, 2014). Shilling-Vacaflor’s (2013) description of the consultation guidelines set forth in the “ILO convention 169 on the Rights of indigenous Peoples and Tribal Populations” and “the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP)” (p. 203) agrees with Pizarro. Schilling Vacaflor indicates that, according to the ILO 169, indigenous peoples have the right to prior consultation before the government takes any action (p. 205). Puente (2014, June 13) further explains that the Bolivian government establishes the ILO 169 in 1991, as a result of the first indigenous march from the TIPNIS, and subscribes to UNDRIP 2007. Indeed, the Bolivian constitution also enshrines the above, indicating that indigenous communities have the right to “be consulted, through the appropriate procedures, and in particular their institutions, every time that legislative or administrative means are foreseen to be susceptible to affect them [indigenous residents]”* (Chapter 8, Law 15, Political Constitution of the State).

However, in 2011, the Bolivian government began constructing the Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Mojos highway project, intended to connect the Beni and Cochabamba departments via the TIPNIS (See Figure 3) (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2013, p. 202; Arce, 2012, p. 11; McNeish, 2013, p. 224). Figure 3 depicts the progress of the road (in red) and the planned construction of a second track through the territory. However, the government’s failure to consult the residents of the TIPNIS before beginning the road project, and the its organization of a post consultation provides the main impetus for the 2011 indigenous march and undermines the legitimacy of Bolivia’s formal institutions. The 2011 indigenous march to la Paz against a controversial highway project represents the eighth of a series of protests from the lowland indigenous groups of Bolivia’s TIPNIS. Under pressure from lowland indigenous groups and organizations, President Morales cancels the road project in the same year (BBC News, 2011) and established Law 180, or the short law (ley corta), which labels the TIPNIS as an intangible zone (McNeish,

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10 Although the National Government labeled the consultation process a “previous consultation” (la Consulta Previa) (Bustellos and Mealla, 2012), this report calls the process a “post consultation.” This is because the road project was already underway before a consultation was carried out.
Although this law intends to prohibit any economic or infrastructural activity in the reserve, as E. Nozo and M. Fabricano explain, the law also restricted the economic activities of the indigenous residents (Personal Communication, November 13, 2013; Personal Communication, November 15, 2013). That is, indigenous communities could not take from the natural resources from their land, such as timber, nor continue their local businesses in “ecotourism” and “sustainable nut and cacao harvesting” (Bjork-James, 2013). The call for a post consultation process results from a counter-march organized by Conisur, the organization encompassing the indigenous communities and colonizers from the south of the TIPNIS, in favor of the road project\(^\text{11}\) (COHA 2011).

**Figure 3:** “The second track of the San Ignacios de Moxos-Villa Tunari Road and the connection that would link the indigenous communities and the colonizers in the south of the TIPNIS.”* Adapted from the Center of Documentation and Information in Bolivia (*Centro de Documentación y Información en Bolivia*, or CEDIB) archives; Image originally published in Petropress N 27, 2011.

There is extensive literature documenting the deficiencies of the indigenous post consultation. According to a report from the Supreme electoral tribunal (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral*, or TSE), published through state owned, *Cambio* newspaper, out of the 69 communities of the TIPNIS, 58

\(^{11}\) The role of Conisur throughout the conflict will be discussed at length in the following section.
participated and 11 refused to participate (2013, January 8, p. 5). Of those 58, 57 were against
the intangibility clause and 55 communities supported the construction of the highway (Cambio
2013, January 8, p. 5). In order to bolster the consultation’s legitimacy, the President of the
Ministry of Public Works Vladimir Sanchez, as Bustellos and Mealla (2012, August, 12) discuss,
asserts that observers from the United Nations (UN) are overseeing the consolation process and
that the participants were briefed of the ecologically friendly plans for the road. However,
Bustellos and Mealla (2012, August, 12) inform that although the Minister went as far as
mentioning the names of UN representatives who were supposedly observing the consultation
process, the UN informed otherwise. According to the press release published by the UN, “ ‘UN
officials monitor human rights in the TIPNIS…and are not qualified as observers of the
consultation.’” Laruta (2012) expands on the government’s abdication of formal policies during
the post consultation process, claiming that it was not all-inclusive nor did it abide by the laws
set out in the constitution. He argues that the post consultation, carried out from July to
December 2012, fails to include the traditional authorities and representatives of the TIPNIS,
which include directors from the Subcentral TIPNIS and Secure, and village heads (Laruta, 2012,
p. 4). Puente (2014, June 14) elaborates the above, indicating, “the governmental proposal
asserts that only the organizations legally recognized by the state be consulted (and also only the
communities directly affected by the extractive objective of the consultation).”* Further, instead
of using the department responsible for carrying out a consultation process in a protected area—
namely the Ministries of Water, the environment and Public Works—the government uses the
electoral organ that oversees national elections and decisions (Laruta, 2012, p. 4). Schilling-
Vacaflor (2013) also adds that “during the consultation procedure negotiations with individual
community members were held and local authorities were corrupted” (p. 209). Namely, and as
demonstrated by the above, the MAS administration bypasses the formal institutions of the state
in order to generate quick results and decisions. As Schilling-Vacaflor (2013) describes it, the
MAS and affiliate corporations “exercised pressure to get a fast ‘social license” instead of
establishing real deliberations” (p. 209). Although this expedited consultation process is later
found to be false through investigations carried out by a several organizations—namely, the
commission representing the Catholic Church, the Permanent Assembly of Human Rights in
Bolivia, and the Inter-American Federation of Human Rights—the MAS’s informal practices
highlights the growing degradation of the legitimacy of the state.

b) The Conisur march and its implications on the stability of the indigenous
opposition.
The TIPNIS conflict also encompasses tensions in the claims to indigenous identity as
demonstrated by the Conisur march in favor of the road project. In January 2012, The residents
from the seventh polygon, a region to the south of the TIPNIS that houses colonizers from the
highlands and some indigenous communities once part of the TIPNIS, March to la Paz to
demonstrate support for the road (Villavicencio, 2012, p. 2). The heading for the article from
Cambio newspaper reads, “La Paz receives with solidarity the march of the indigenous residents
of the TIPNIS” (Villavicencio, 2012, p. 2). However, keeping in mind that Cambio is a state
owned newspaper company, it is important to note that the residents represented by the Indigenous council of the south (Consejo Indígena del Sur, or Conisur) do not necessarily belong to the TIPNIS. Equally important is that fact that not all of the residents are ethnically indigenous. Drawing from Albo (2012, February 12), Conisur is originally founded in 1997 after its communities had participated in the second indigenous march of 1996 (p. 10). However, in 2009, this Subcentral, and its indigenous communities, are split off from the TIPNIS due to an executive title signed by Evo Morales that granted the cocalero sector with 168,845 hectares from the park, along with the original indigenous communities inhabiting the area (Albo, 2012: 10). According to Albo (2012) and Puente (2014, June 4), the residents in this seventh estate/territory, or el polígono siete, are gradually coopted or influenced by the highland colonizers, mainly having coca growing, Aymara backgrounds (See figure 4).

**Figure 4:** The communities of the TIPNIS and the seventh estate (shown in white); Image adapted from Bustellos and Mealla (2012, August 14).

However, and as McNeish (2013) demands from further studies (p. 232), it is also necessary to look at the complex interactions between the country’s political economy and history to get a fuller picture of contemporary conflicts. Indeed, and Section 3i mentions, the present condition of colonization in the TIPNIS, particularly the seventh estate, also comes from economic restructurings of the 1980s and the consequential migrations from the highland to the lowlands.
As a result, the conflict emerges, not from the group’s identification as indigenous, but their claim to represent the TIPNIS and its respective indigenous communities. As demonstrated by Cambio’s article heading, Conisur portrays itself as representing the wider opinion of the TIPNIS as a whole. As a result, the counter march compromises the legitimacy and strength of the previous indigenous marches organized by the TIPNIS by depicting the “indigenous” opposition as unorganized, and undecided as to the road project.

c) The Many Forks of One Road

Although I present an overview as to the events and factors that foment the conflict in the TIPNIS, this explanation is geared towards explaining the conflict from the perspective of the indigenous residents. However, this does not mean that the conflict solely revolves around conflicts of interests between the state and the people. The conflict also encompasses historical issues such as the undefined departmental line between Cochabamba and the Beni region, as demonstrated by figure two. As I indicate in my previous project, this line also promotes interests between the department towards the park and, consequently, creates an interest between each department to choose a side (Juarez, 2013, p. 10-12). Furthermore, Jiménez P. (2011) summarizes the concerns of many in her article, “The Villa Tunari-San Ignacio de Moxos Road: Who does it Benefit?”* Jiménez P. claims that the road may become: a conduit for illegal drugs from within the park, an access point to the ocean for brazils soybean industry, an invitation to coca growers who may expand their coca production, and a general invitation for the expansion of natural resource extraction (2011, p. 16-22). Although these conflicts are also relevant to Bolivia and have stimulated substantial academic interest, it goes beyond the scope of this paper and will not be fully discussed.

SECTION 4: FRAMING A CLEAR PICTURE: AN ANALYSIS ON THE FRAMING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TIPNIS CONFLICT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

In his text, Scott (1998) explains the process of generating norms by narrowing the definition of a word or value according to the values and focus of the actor. Scott’s formulation of norm creation falls in line with, Desrosiers articulation of framing theory. Scott’s concept also applies to Morales’s MAS administration and the several state building projects that have required “a narrowing of vision” (Scott, 1998, p. 11) in order to amass a wide consensus. Desrosiers adds to this analysis by identifying the methods by which actors motivate a consensus or action within a
group. The TIPNIS conflict provides, and the lived experiences of the residents, provides several distinct examples as to the frames the Morales administration uses and its impacts to the indigenous communities.

i) Industrialization as development

As I have mentioned near the end of Section 2 iii a, the MAS promotes several state goals based on Andean philosophies, such as the widely recognized goal for ‘living well.’ However, the MAS has legitimized the pursuit of economic growth through natural resource extraction under the idea of ‘living well’ and pursuing the process of change, contrary to its original environmentalist rhetoric enshrining the rights of mother earth. Indeed, the vice-president, explains R. Punete during a recent interview, indicates that “those who criticize extractivism want that we not benefit ourselves with neither of the natural resources that we have in Bolivia.”* Jiménez (2013) validates Puente’s claim through another narrative from the vice president. As a result, Linera masks opponents of the government’s economic policies as enemies of the state and, particular, enemies of the Bolivian people. According to Garcia Linera, quoted in Jiménez (2013), “‘its alright that we have parks (…). But that does not mean that we need to stay living as we did 400 or 300 years ago to leave this wealth for another to take at some other time’”* (p. 5). Arce (2011) substantiates Puente and Jiménez’s claims, indicating that the president’s plan upon coming into his second term “explicitly indicates a route for conventional development for Bolivia”* (p. 14). Conventional, as described by Arce, refers to orthodox economic development though free-market practices and privatization. As a result, Linera portrays the preservation of the protected areas as adhering to a primitive style of life, and stresses the urgency of acquiring the resources before another does. In a similar fashion, as Schilling-Vacaflor (2013) describes, the government negatively portrays protest activities organized in 2010, such as the Alternative climate summit in Cochabamba convened in April and the realization of the seventh indigenous march two months later (p. 209). According to Schilling-Vacaflor (2013), “the government represented the critical social organizations as traitors to the ‘change process’ (proceso de cambio) and as tools of oppositional forces like national elites of the US organizations like the CIA or USAID” (p. 209).

The examples above, drawn from Garcia Linera and the government, as some of the many relevant examples of framing strategies described be Desrosiers, namely, adversarial and aptness frames. In her text, Desrosiers (2011) describes adversarial framing, drawing from Gamson (1995), as “working to make the ‘other’ into an opponent” by representing “an actors stance, policies, actions, but also character and identity in negative terms” (p. 12). That is, an adversarial frame makes others the enemy. Aptness frames work in a similar fashion but includes rhetoric of civic engagement. According to Desrosiers (2011), aptness frames “play on peoples perceptions of active engagement” by insisting that through their participating and through the use of specific comparative advantages, the population as a whole can succeed (p. 15). However, she also notes that “underlying this type of rhetoric is the compelling notion that whoever abstains from taking part is directly undermining the efforts of the group and is therefore…choosing the other camp”
Namely, if an individual does not participate the nation as a whole cannot succeed and the one who refuses to participate does not want the nation to succeed. By definition and as Desrosiers (2011) explains, these frames serve a diagnostic purpose, meaning that they work to create a consensus around a particular idea. As a result, when considering the above, Linera clearly frames opening natural reserves, including the TIPNIS, for the purposes of natural resource extraction as a national goal. However, anyone opposed to this goal also opposes the growth of the general Bolivian population. Similar to Linera Aptness frame, Morales, in response to the upwell of protests in 2010, adversarially frames the protest groups, indicating that they have become the enemy.

Although these frames have been used to legitimize the resurgence of natural resource extraction, they have also had the effect of further marginalizing indigenous groups in the TIPNIS and devaluing their autonomy. As mentioned in Section 2 iii a, the MAS has created what seems to be a fully participatory democracy wherein indigenous values are given a place in articulating the nations goals of the country. Ideologically, this also communicates to marginalized communities that their participation is also significant to achieving the goal of ‘living well’ and realizing the process of change. However, as evidenced through the above examples, the government has conflated the ideal of ‘living well’ with pursuing heavy industrialization at the expense of communities living within or around protected areas, including the TIPNIS. As a result, in addition to undermining the efforts of the TIPNIS communities, it also undercuts their philosophies concerning nature and their base of autonomy. As mentioned in Section 3ii, the TIPNIS as a territory also functions as a base of autonomy for the indigenous residents of the park. As a result, by framing territory as capital for the use of the nation, the government also communicates that the autonomy and ideology of the residents of the TIPNIS are irrelevant to the economic progress of the nation.

**ii) Undermining the unity of the residents of the TIPNIS**

In addition to the devaluation of the indigenous communities’ territory, the state has also divided the indigenous groups of the park and their respective leadership through, what Desrosiers would describe, ascendency frames. These representations entail “making a proposed alternative shine” (Desrosiers, 2011, p. 14), or demonstrating the benefits of one groups over another. Aptness frames also share similarities with an ascendency frame in that it plays on people’s perception of unity (as explained in Section 4i). However, this frame also highlights an ‘alternative’ by promoting: ‘this way of proceeding is better for the nation than the others as it necessitates everyone’s participation’ but follows with, ‘those opposed to it are thus enemies of the nation.’ In the case of the TIPNIS, albeit underlying recent actions by the state, the state has promoted the benefits of its presence in the territory and the integration into the wider Bolivia state over the residents traditional standing. M. Fabricano, a protagonist in organizing the 1990 March for Dignity and Territory, and a number of my participants describe the indigenous communities as feeling bought by the government. Indeed, in May 2012, president Evo Morales, accompanied by other members of government, personally visits Santísima Trinidad, a Mojeñan indigenous
community located in the seventh estate (Cambio, 2012, May 30, p. 4). During this visit to the community, the state representatives present the residents with motors, electric generators and funds for new schools (Cambio, 2012, May 30, p. 4). President of Conisur, Gumercio Pradel, in a commentary made in the cambio article, affirms “that this equipment and resources are not provided by the government in order to buy the indigenous people of the TIPNIS,”* but represents the government’s response to the real needs of the people (Cambio, 2012, May 30, p. 4).

However, taking a look at the context in which the distribution of gifts takes place demonstrates the government’s political and social incentives. This distribution happens in the backdrop of the controversial post-consultation process, wherein it becomes apparent that the state seeks to gain approval/generate a consensus for the road project. It is also important to mention, as Albó (2012) makes clear, that Santisima Trinidad remains part of the Subcentral TIPNIS and has not assimilated into the seventh estates representative branch, Conisur, although being located in the general area (p. 10). As a result, it becomes politically strategic to persuade the residents of the community that makes up part of the opposition bloc, namely the residents of the TIPNIS and its corresponding organizations, the Subcentrals. Several scholars have documented this dynamic, that is the government’s efforts to divide the opposition. As schilling Vacaflor (2012) recounts, in section 3iiia, the state coopts community members and “local authorities” during the supposedly “previous” consultation process (p. 209). J. Antazana shares his experiences when commenting that “there are brothers12 that lent themselves to this [to accepting the gifts in exchange for a yes to the road project] because in reality the brothers, in seeing a kilo of sugar, in seeing a kilo of butter, then they…well, they needed to sign, no?”(Personal Communication, November 13, 2013). According to Antazana, the government plays on the real needs of the community by framing itself as a ‘provider;’ by showing: ‘integrating to the state model is better as you will also be under the sponsorship of the state instead of struggling to subsist.’ Antezana also brings up a species of coercion: as he indicates, the members of the community did not have much choice than to agree with the states terms due to the real needs to the community.

However, this gift giving and cooptation of several community members and leaders has had lasting impacts. Antazana, before recounting his view on the state led gift distribution, tells that the road project “has brought serious difficulties; divisions within our communities, divisions with our families…between mother and son”* (Personal Communication, November 13, 2014). A participant from Trinidadcito, who requests to remain anonymous, agrees with Antazana. According to the resident, “the people are divided due to the goods that the Morales government distributed”* (Personal communication, November 20, 2013). Puente also brings attention to the divisions among the organizations that represent the TIPNIS. CIDOB (The Confederation of Indigenous Pueblos or La Confederación de Pueblos indígenas), as Puente explains, is divided into two: one part “is run by directors loyal to the government, and the other is the most authentic, although it is also not all authentic and that is another disgrace”* (Personal

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12 In this context, “brothers” refers to other members of the community.
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Communication, June 4, 2014). Taking into consideration the cooptation of representatives that Schilling-Vacaflor and Puente point to, and noting the growing fragmentation of opinions towards the road project and integration into the state provoked by Morales, the communities in the TIPNIS are now severely divided. This has also had repercussions towards the legitimacy of the marches and the potential future for the territory. As Fabricano confesses, when posing the question if he believes the indigenous marches remain effective, “No…it has remained in uncertainty on our part”* (Personal communication, November 15, 2013). As a result, the state sponsored gift distribution and subsequent cooptation of the community demonstrates the impacts of the Morales administrations ascendency frames.

iii) Synthesizing frames

Although rhetoric has been the main form of imposing specific frames during the conflict, the state has also used public resources in order to make frames that can give an adversarial light to the TIPNIS protesters. This becomes especially clear in the case of what most of the literature and participants call “la repression de La Chaparina” (the repression of the Chaparina) (McNeish, 2013; Antazana, Personal communication, November 13, 2014; Anonymous, Personal Communication, November 20, 2013). The ‘Chaparina,’ as McNeish (2013) explains, refers to “the police raid [in September 2011] on indigenous protesters just outside Yucumo” that intended to disband “an indigenous protest” (p. 222). The conflict shakes the people’s confidence towards the government (McNeish, 2013, p. 222) and results in investigations as to who ordered the raid, and investigations that is ongoing. However, the state justifies its attack on the marchers, as the resident of Trinidadcito describes when recalling his personal experiences in the eighth indigenous march, by framing them as enemies (Personal communication, November 20, 2014). As he recalls, as the marchers proceed through the Chaparina, they are confronted by a blockade by “los verdes” (the greens due to their green police uniforms). The police force sends a government representative to negotiate with the marchers to disband the protest. However, and as Puente notes, the state reports that, at that point, the protesters kidnap the representative in order to cross the blockade (R. Puente, Personal communication, June 4, 2014). Puente goes further by disclosing the recent reports in Bolivia identify the community members who allegedly kidnap the government representative are policewomen dressed up as indigenous protesters. Whether this is true or not due to several interpretations and finger pointing in the part of the government and the opposition bloc, Puente provides an important discussion point. Synthesizing adversarial frames has become another tool of the state under Morales to justify its administrations activities, namely disbanding/ fragmenting the opposition. In this sense, framing becomes more than rhetoric, but can also be generated by the actors in a conflict.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, my focus has been demonstrating the impacts of the governments framing strategies on the residents of the TIPNIS. However, this study does not mean to devalue the major successes that the current government has achieved under the MAS, if not to highlight a relevant contemporary issue emerging from new social and political contexts in Bolivia. In terms of the conflict in the TIPNIS, the president’s policies and actions have framed the indigenous
communities and their protests in a manner that has had far reaching impacts to their social and political power. The use of adversarial, aptness, and ascendancy frames (in addition to cultivating the conditions to synthesize frames) have devalued the indigenous resident’s base of autonomy, undermined the unity of the communities and their representative organs by creating fissures along individual opinion, and undercut the legitimacy of the recent indigenous marches by making the marchers enemies with an seemingly unorganized opinion over the road project. As a result of the above, the present developments in Bolivia raise questions for further study such as: Considering the alleged, recent left turn of several countries in Latin America, such as Venezuela, how have these governments deepened or weakened the democratic functions of the state? Drawing from evidence of Bolivia, are these governments devolving into their pre-democratic ancestors, and if so, what factors have allowed for this regression? More generally, how have these recent developments brought “democracy” as the ideal form of governance into question, and how can we rearticulate democracy in the present international political economy?
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