VIVIR BIEN AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

CAN INDIGENOUS TERMINOLOGIES DECOLONIZE THE STATE?

Eija Ranta

Vivir Bien as an Alternative to Neoliberal Globalization

Presenting an ethnographic account of the emergence and application of critical political alternatives in the Global South, this book analyzes the opportunities and challenges of decolonizing and transforming a modern, hierarchical and globally immersed nation-state on the basis of indigenous terminologies.

Alternative development paradigms that represent values including justice, pluralism, democracy, and a sustainable relationship to nature tend to emerge in response to – and often opposed to – the neoliberal globalization. Through a focus on the empirical case of the notion of *Vivir Bien* ('living well') as a critical cultural and ecological paradigm in Bolivia, Ranta demonstrates how indigeneity – indigenous peoples' discourses, cultural ideas, and worldviews – has become such a denominator in the construction of local political and policy alternatives. More widely, the author seeks to map conditions for, and the challenges of, radical political projects that aim to counteract neoliberal globalization and Western hegemony in defining development.

This book will appeal to critical academic scholars, development practitioners, and social activists aiming to come to grips with the complexity of processes of progressive social change in our contemporary global world.

Eija Ranta is University Lecturer in development studies at the University of Helsinki.

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Acronyms

ADN	Acción Democrática Nacionalista
AIDESEP	Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América
APCOB	Apoyo para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano
ASP	Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos
ATTAC	Association pour une Taxation des Transactions Financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens
CEBIAE	Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativa
CEDLA	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina Y el Caribe
CER	Certified Emission Reduction
CIDOB	Central Indígena de Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano
CIPCA	Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado
CNMCIOB–BS	Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa
COB	Central Obrero Boliviano
COMIBOL	Corporación Minera de Bolivia
CONAIE	Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador
CONALCAM	Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio
CONALDE	Consejo Nacional Democrático
CONAMAQ	Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu
CONISUR	Consejo Indígena del Sur
CPILAP	Central de Pueblos Indígenas de la La Paz
CPSC	Comité Pro Santa Cruz
CSCB	Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia
CSCIB	Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia
CSUTCB	Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish Development Assistance
DEA	US Drug Enforcement Administration

EBRP	Estrategia Boliviana de Reducción de la Pobreza
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FNMCB–BS	Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa
FSTMB	Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GB	Great Britain
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GNI	Gross National Income
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDH	Impuesto Directo a los Hidrocarburos
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
INRA	Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria
IPC	Integración Para el Cambio
IPSP	Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization
IU	Izquierda Unida
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo
MCD	Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality Group
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MIR	Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria
MITKA	Movimiento Indio Túpac Katari
MNR	Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario
MRTKL	Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari de Liberación
MSM	Movimiento Sin Miedo
MUJA	Movimiento Universitario Julián Apaza
NDP	National Development Plan
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Assistance
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTB	Organizaciones Territoriales de Base
PCML	Partido Comunista Marxista Leninista
PDVSA	Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.

PIB	Partido Indio de Bolivia
PODEMOS	Poder Democrático Social
POR	Partido Obrero Revolucionario
PPB–CN	Plan Progreso para Bolivia – Convergencia Nacional
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
TCO	Tierras Comunitarios de Origen
THOA	Taller de Historia Oral Andina
TIPNIS	Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Securé
UD	Unidad Democrática
UJC	Unión Juvenil Cruceñista
UMSA	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés
UN	United Nations
UNITAS	Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WCIP	World Council of Indigenous Peoples
WGIP	Working Group on Indigenous Peoples
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YPFB	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales

1   Introduction

Vivir Bien as a postneoliberal alternative in the global world

As my fieldwork began I was touched by a story that, I later realized, aptly crystallized some of the key elements of the Bolivian state transformation process: deeply rooted ethnic and economic inequalities, hierarchical power relations, hopes for indigenous liberation, and a dream of a new beginning. It was a story about a domestic worker who, for the first time, confronted her employer through a very simple but significant expression: when the employer addressed her, she raised her head and looked her employer straight in the eyes. It was such a simple gesture that for most outside observers it would have gone unnoticed, yet it meant a world of difference both for the domestic servant and the employer. For the domestic servant, coming from humble indigenous origins, it was an act of resistance that challenged ethnically and socially determined hierarchies and power relations that dominated her everyday life. Even without spoken words, it was clear that this look did not demonstrate humility but rather demanded respect. It symbolized the emergence of a new decolonized subject *par excellence*: a new woman who was at the point of internalizing the possibility of freedom. In this sense, it was the story of a new beginning: of a revolutionary moment in which a person who, due to her indigeneity, class, and gender, had lived her whole life subservient to someone else and had now stood up.

The story was told to me by Claudia,[1] a young consultant from one of Bolivia's many ministries, who was a close friend of the employer, someone who had ruthlessly criticized Claudia for working for the *indio* Evo Morales who had "made [indigenous peoples] think too much of themselves". Indigenous political uprising, she believed, was manifested in the election of peasant union leader and social movement activist Evo Morales as the first indigenous president of this impoverished, landlocked, and ethnically heterogeneous Latin American country and in the rise of his political party, Movement Toward Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, MAS), into political power in December 2005. In consequence, in her view, indigenous peoples had started to behave "as if they were equal", an issue which seriously confused her ideas of the established social order and which was illustrated by her domestic servant's rebellious behaviour. This incident was a testimony to new challenges faced by those working in a state bureaucracy. It highlighted how indigenous politics as a source of liberation – and the questioning of unequal, often ethnically defined, power relations – had started to play a major role

in state discourses. The story also resonated with the emergence of the politics of indigeneity as a source of contestations and critical challenge within state arenas, where it had become the responsibility of state actors – ministers, vice-ministers, public servants, and consultants, amongst others – to translate these discourses into practice through concrete actions such as policy making.

This book examines the contested emergence, meanings, and use of the notion of *Vivir Bien* (Spanish term for 'living well', *Suma Qamaña* in Aymara, *Sumak Kawsay* in Quechua[2]) – a conglomeration of critical ideas, worldviews, and knowledge deriving from a complex set of social movements, indigenous groups, activist networks, and scholars of indigeneity – in policy-making and state transformation processes in Andean Bolivia. It asks how the circulation of indigenous terminologies in the sphere of state bureaucracy transforms the nature of the state. While originating in social movement struggles and indigenous liberation battles, the term has been incorporated and used in state political discourses and policy making by Evo Morales's indigenous, peasant, and left-wing regime for more than a decade now.

Much literature on *Vivir Bien* – or *Buen Vivir* as is more commonly used outside the Bolivian context[3] – as a critical cultural and ecological paradigm has already been produced (Acosta 2013; Burman forthcoming; Farah and Vasapollo 2011; Gonzáles Casanova and Vázquez 2015; Gudynas 2011, 2013; Lalander 2016; Merino 2016; Radcliffe 2012; Ranta 2016, 2017a; Schavelzon 2015; Vega 2011; Villalba 2013; Walsh 2010), with linkages to other alternative ideas, such as degrowth (Escobar 2015; D'Alisa, Demaria and Kallis 2015; Thomson 2011). In terms of Bolivian state policy, many of the outcomes of the shift in public policy have been critically assessed from a political-economic perspective (Cunha and Gonçalves 2010; Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín 2012; Webber 2011, 2016), but with little focus on indigenous terminologies apart from important recent work by Postero on the indigenous state (2013, 2017). There are also recent anthropological works on various positionalities of indigenous movements vis-à-vis the process of decolonization of the state (Burman 2014, 2016; Canessa 2012, 2014). In comparison to these works, this book focuses more on the internal functioning of state bureaucracy, because equally missing have been those studies examining how policy transformation is experienced, shaped, and contested by those state actors who are responsible for its translation into practice. Furthermore, scholarship suggests that instead of enhancing the cultural and ecological goals of *Vivir Bien*, Bolivia's progressive government rather promotes state-led resource extractivism and centralization of state power (McNeish 2013; Ranta 2016, 2017a; Webber 2011). Consequently, there is an increasing concurrence amongst *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* scholars that its conceptual introduction into state policies has failed to produce meaningful political-economic transformations (Radcliffe 2015a, 861).

This book makes an intervention in *Vivir Bien* scholarship by focusing on a less studied, yet equally critical aspect: the complexities of indigenous terminologies in policy making, state bureaucracy, and governance. Instead of asking whether Bolivian policy works, it focuses on unveiling the circulation of the

notion of *Vivir Bien* – or its indigenous equivalents – amongst key indigenous and nonindigenous actors within the state bureaucracy, such as ministers, public servants, consultants, academic scholars, development experts, and activists. It ethnographically examines how policy transformation is lived, negotiated, and disputed in multiple ways. By exploring the category of *Vivir Bien*, the book analyzes developments in this alternative paradigm, focusing on contradictions and contestations between the principle as a supposedly postneoliberal, indigenous category and its bureaucratic application to state-formation processes and power dynamics involving social movements. Meanwhile, treatment of the subject matter differs from that in the general literature on indigenous movement struggles and political change in two ways: first, by offering an ethnographic methodological angle from which to examine the emergence, meanings, and use of the notion of *Vivir Bien* inside Evo Morales's state bureaucracy (explained in the following sections); and second, by combining theoretically global political economy with Foucauldian governmentality and Latin American decolonial thinking (see Chapter 2). The main aim is to describe and understand the intricate and complex processes through which *Vivir Bien* philosophy is being translated into concrete alternative practices within the postcolonial nation-state structure – thus possibly transforming it – in the context of global political economy and our intertwined capitalist world-system.

The book also contributes to scholarship on state formation, indigenous politics, and development in the Global South. Although global and local processes are crucial to indigenous experience, this study argues that the state has increasingly become an important reference point for indigenous peoples and social movements. Through the Bolivian case, it demonstrates how the state becomes the object of transformation through the application of indigenous policy and the provision of political alternatives while at the same time acting as the subject executing the changes. In recent decades, however, the legitimacy of the study of the state has been challenged both in world politics and theoretically (Steinmetz 1999). The first challenge relates to economic globalization and the intensified global flows of people, capital, commodities, technology, and ideas over and across the borders of nation-states (Sharma and Gupta 2006b; Trouillot 2003). While the state has clearly been stripped of its previously strong roles in regulating the economy and providing social welfare by neoliberal restructurings, the intensification of state-led extractive economies and the political rise of progressive governments have turned the tide in Latin America (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012), indicating that further analyses are needed (see, for example, Krupa and Nugent 2015). Important recent accounts on Andean postcolonial states provide inspiration for this study (Postero 2017; Radcliffe 2015b).

In respect of the theoretical challenge, a Foucauldian approach to examining power and authority redirects attention from the study of state structures and institutions to the wider functioning of power (Foucault 1980). Foucault's elaborations on power are used theoretically in this book to demonstrate, on the one hand, how hard it is to change neoliberal rationalities of modern state formation and, on the other, how neoliberal governmentality is being spread through assumedly

universalist development models to countries like Bolivia that, due to violent histories of coloniality and capitalist exploitation, have little room to manoeuvre vis-à-vis global actors, such as International Financial Institutions (IFIs), development agencies, and transnational corporations. *Vivir Bien* policy is approached here through the concepts of 'government' and 'neoliberal governmentality', elaborated in the context of the Global South by such scholars as Ferguson (1994), Ferguson and Gupta (2005), and Li (2007). I am most specifically inspired by Li's (2007) ethnographic work on the relationships between governmentality, development endeavours, and indigenous struggles. By utilizing a Foucauldian framework, it is argued that it is not solely the grand ideological battles or global asymmetries of power that impede the implementation of revolutionary political alternatives. In addition to these large-scale structural issues, more attention should be paid to the internal functioning of state governance and its micropractices of power in processes of change.

As a result of colonial histories, racial segregation, and transnational capitalism, Foucauldian approaches to state formation and power need to be complemented with other theoretical tools when examining formerly colonized contexts of the Global South. Latin American decolonial thinking as a regional provider of theoretical and political alternatives (Mignolo 2005; Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui 2008; Quijano 2000; Walsh, García Linera and Mignolo 2006), with salient figures such as Mignolo establishing a critical dialogue with Foucault on power and knowledge relations (Alcoff 2007), has suggested that global capitalism – and the concept of development attached to it – is deeply colonial in nature. Decolonial projects, such as promoting the notion of *Vivir Bien*, are perceived as vehicles for confronting and transforming coloniality, a line of argument that provides a theoretical foundation for combining global political economy with Foucauldian approaches to the state and Latin American decolonial thinking. However, the concept of coloniality of power, elaborated by Quijano and reworked by Mignolo, crystallizes how the "colonized were subjected not simply to a rapacious exploitation of all their resources but also to a hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge systems" (Alcoff 2007, 83). Therefore, while conceptualizing the history of development as essentially that of global capitalism actively 'underdeveloping' certain peoples and areas of the world, decolonial thinking complements analysis of exploitative economic bases with attention to such issues as indigeneity, ethnicity, and diverse knowledge orientations – that is, power relations in a wider perspective.

By applying the concept of decolonization to Foucauldian state-formation theorizing, this study develops the concept of 'decolonial government' to emphasize the role of indigenous activists and social movements as active producers of alternative forms of governance. It examines how radical decolonial political ideals of alternative forms of governance, or what are termed here 'governing pluralities' – that is, plural political formulations governing both the state and indigenous territorial arrangements – are being translated into bureaucratic state practices. Or is it rather that the state apparatus, unintentionally perhaps, is effectively taming the active agents of pluralism – social movements and indigenous groups – by converting them into 'disciplined masses'?

With these goals, this book maps conditions for, and the challenges of, radical political projects that aim to counteract neoliberal globalization and Western hegemony in defining development. By examining complexities and contested meanings of an alternative paradigm through lived experiences, it challenges understandings of development as rooted in global capitalism, while also demonstrating difficulties, contradictions, and exclusions that emerge in the process of transformation. Initiatives aiming at social transformation outside capitalism through local, participatory, ecological alternatives and radical collective practices have become more common in many parts of the world. Often termed 'nowtopia' (Carlsson 2008) by activists and scholars, in distinction to the distant, futurist implications of utopia, attempts to construct concrete alternative practices in the Global North include various forms of solidarity economy, cohousing, and alternative banks, to name a few (Demaria et al. 2013).

In many parts of the Global South, where mass-scale poverty and inequalities have always been the other side of the coin of global capital accumulation, critical political alternatives and perceptions of new kinds of development host the circulation of locally rooted cultural concepts including *Ubuntu* in Southern Africa, Buddhist concepts in Asia (for example, the sufficiency economy in Thailand and the happiness paradigm in Bhutan), and the notion of *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* emanating from Latin America, which is associated with constructing new politics from below. Although the use of endogenous development terminologies, such as *Ujamaa* in Tanzania, *Harambee* in Kenya, and Gandhian ideas in India, has, to some extent, been common amongst postcolonial governments in Africa and Asia, the new emergence of alternative culturalist concepts appears to be a more recent reaction to contemporary times in which our global economic system has proved its dysfunctions and debilities, and in which we are increasingly concerned about the environment, climate change, and ecological sustainability. Furthermore, we are experiencing a crisis of humanity: a situation in which our social relations, our bodies, and our minds are being commoditized at an increasing pace. Development, as we know it, has reached its limits economically, environmentally, and socially.

As a response to this, *Buen Vivir* offers a platform for "alternatives to development focused on the good life in a broad sense" (Gudynas 2011, 441), thus aiming for the displacement of the political economy of destructive capitalism. Capitalism, as Wallerstein (1990, 36–7) has defined it, is a polarizing system based on endless accumulation of capital, requiring the maximum appropriation of surplus value. It is fuelled by inherent contradictions, such as those between simultaneously increasing wealth and deepening poverty. Furthermore, while capitalism is based on the idea of, and belief in, universalism, it is concurrently shaped by divisive characteristics like racism and sexism. The 'culture' of capitalism, as Wallerstein (1990, 39) argues, is an attempt to come to terms with, and to justify, these contradictions and juxtapositions of our world-system, with culture becoming "the key ideological battleground . . . of the opposing interests within this historical system". *Buen Vivir*, for its part, is an alternative grounded in 'localism' and ethnic equality, thus representing another kind of 'culture': culture as

resistance. Gudynas (2011), one of the leading scholars on *Buen Vivir*, argues that by rejecting growth and capital, it represents a postneoliberal alternative, replacing the idea of development as linked to the universalism of global capitalism. *Buen Vivir* rather emphasizes ethics and a wider variety of values – cultural, spiritual, ecological, historical – than merely those produced by capital (Gudynas 2011, 445). As Harcourt (2014) has poignantly indicated, the urgent need to find more sustainable, harmonious, and just alternatives to neoliberal globalization is apparent in the contentious encounters between universalism and particularism, as well as reform and transformation.

Consequently, there is an urgent demand for the examination of critical political alternatives and perceptions of new kinds of development, which are emerging in the Global South in response to – and often opposed to – the global capitalist political economy. The examination of the notion of *Vivir Bien* in contemporary Bolivian state transformation processes aims to contribute to this end. I invite readers to take part in this journey.

Bolivia's indigenous alternative to universalist development models

During more than ten years as the head of the state, Evo Morales has portrayed himself at international forums as one of the loudest worldwide critics of global capitalism. Together with Venezuela and Ecuador, and of course Cuba, Bolivia has become one of the leading Latin American proponents of postneoliberal and anti-imperialist agendas. Within global indigenous and environmental movements, the rise of alternative political agendas, such as the notion of *Vivir Bien*, the rights of *Pachamama* (the Mother Earth), and climate change discourses, has encouraged high hopes for similar gains elsewhere. Until quite recently, however, Bolivia had been celebrated by IFIs and international development agencies as a model student of neoliberal restructurings of economy and state (Eyben 2004; Kohl and Farthing 2006; Morales 2012). Under the rubric of the Washington Consensus policies, it was one of the first countries in the world to adopt structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). Its experimentations with participatory decentralization processes and poverty reduction policies were also perceived as exemplary cases and were soon replicated in other countries of the Global South (Booth and Piron 2004; Montambeault 2008). Given the contradictions between the present and recent past, we are faced with putting contemporary attempts to formulate an endogenous development discourse at the centre of our scrutiny.

It has been argued that "the breakdown of the Washington Consensus began when the promises that these policies would lead to better social and economic indicators for the [Latin American] region's poor majority were not realized" (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012b, 4). According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), investments in the social sector declined and poverty increased all over Latin America during the period of the SAPs. Although poverty diminished during the early 1990s in

most countries, 39 per cent of the population in the region continued to live in poverty and 18 per cent in extreme poverty (Panizza 2009, 130–1). In one of the regions in the world with the greatest income disparity – where the richest tenth of the population receives between 40 and 47 per cent of total income and the poorest fifth some 2–4 per cent – inequalities expanded rather than diminished in most Latin American countries during the 1980s and the 1990s (de Ferranti et al. 2004, 2–3).

In Bolivia, the implementation of the SAPs led to the closure of mines, the opening of the country to foreign investments and transnational corporations, and the acceleration of the privatization of state enterprises and services with the consequent disappearance of tens of thousands of jobs; these were all factors contributing to growing income inequalities, unemployment, and social problems (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 61–2, 71). The growth of foreign investment did not create employment or provide economic well-being for a large sector of the population (Hylton and Thomson 2007, 100). The informal sector, including the production of coca leaf and cocaine, expanded rapidly as an alternative mode of income generation (Arce 2000, 44). With growing intrusion onto indigenous lands and territories, transnational oil industries, logging companies, cattle ranchers, and the expansion of mono-crop cultivation and agribusiness, especially soya, were increasingly threatening indigenous ways of life and financial subsistence (Crabtree 2005, 53–62; Yashar 2005, 195). By the turn of the new millennium, more than 63 per cent of the Bolivian population was considered poor (República de Bolivia 2001). Poverty was concentrated in rural areas and the High Plateau (*Altiplano*), areas that are mainly populated by indigenous peoples. A World Bank study estimated that 52 per cent of indigenous peoples lived in extreme poverty and showed that while, in general, poverty had been decreasing between 1997 and 2002, the poverty gap between nonindigenous and indigenous peoples had become even wider (Hall and Patrinos 2005).

While indigenous uprisings and rebellions have played a major role in contentious state-society relations throughout Bolivian history, it was not until the mid- and late 1990s that indigenous movements started to become major actors in Bolivian politics. Resistance to neoliberal restructurings and the increasing power of IFIs, development agencies, and transnational companies have been considered major explanatory factors in the rise of Latin American social movements, such as those based on indigeneity (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and Kuecker 2007; Vanden 2007). Brysk (2000, 145) has asserted that

> indigenous political mobilization increasingly seeks to contest commercialization and shield Indian communities from market forces. Symbolic protest, civil disobedience, guerrilla activity, and transnational pressure campaigns target both the state and outside actors such as the World Bank and multinational corporations.

This has to do with the realization that in Latin America, "unmediated market forces systematically reproduce ethnic inequality" (Ibid., 146). Indigenous farmers

find themselves in unfavourable positions vis-à-vis regional and bilateral trade agreements – the Mexican Zapatista rebellion being a prime response to this – and their ability to compete with transnational corporations in the markets is limited. Increasing transnational resource extraction and export agriculture tend to put pressure on indigenous lands, territories, and income generation, especially in the Amazonian lowlands (Brysk 2000). Consequently, Niezen (2003, 9), for example, has argued that the "indigenous peoples' movement [rose] out of the shared experiences of marginalized groups facing the negative impacts of resource extraction and economic modernization".

Combining an indigenous cause with increasing antiglobalization sentiments, the MAS evolved rapidly from a popular protest movement comprising social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions into the governing political instrument (Albó 2008; Van Cott 2008). The 2005 national elections made a difference in the relationships between those who have governed the country and those who have been governed. Evo Morales and the MAS gained approximately 54 per cent of the vote (Morales 2012, 590). Morales was elected the first indigenous president of the country, and the MAS won 84 seats in the Parliament: 12 of 27 in the Senate and 72 of 130 in the Lower Chamber (Ibid., 595). In the 2009 national elections, the political success of the MAS continued when they gained 64 per cent of the vote (Ibid., 593). Morales started the second term of his presidency and the MAS gained a two-thirds majority both in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. In the general elections in 2014, Morales was yet again the MAS's presidential candidate amidst dispersed and weak oppositional parties and coalitions. He gained 61 per cent of the vote, and the MAS won 25 of 36 seats in the Senate and 88 of 130 in the Lower Chamber. Thus, Morales has become one of the longest-standing presidents of politically turbulent Bolivia, with attempts being made to hang on to state power longer than the renewed constitution allows (see Chapter 6).

To make the Bolivian state work for indigenous peoples appears to be a justified – yet highly contested – process, given their majority in the country and their disadvantaged position in terms of economic, political, and social affairs. Recognized by the constitution (2009), Bolivia's 36 indigenous nationalities, including the Quechua (31 per cent); the Aymara (25.23 per cent); and minor groups such as the Guaraní, Chiquitano, Mojeño, and others (6.10 per cent) make up approximately 63 per cent of the total Bolivian population (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2004, 104; see Figure 1.1).[4] In the 2012 census, however, the number of those self-identifying as indigenous dropped to approximately 40 per cent (Postero 2017, 182). Although, for the sake of analytical clarity, the generic term 'indigenous people' is used in this study, it is acknowledged here that the concept itself is much contested and changing in the Bolivian context (Canessa 2014; Postero 2017; see Chapter 2). Differences and multiple definitions within and between distinct indigenous groups derive from their multiple histories and relations with the Bolivian nation-state and global processes.
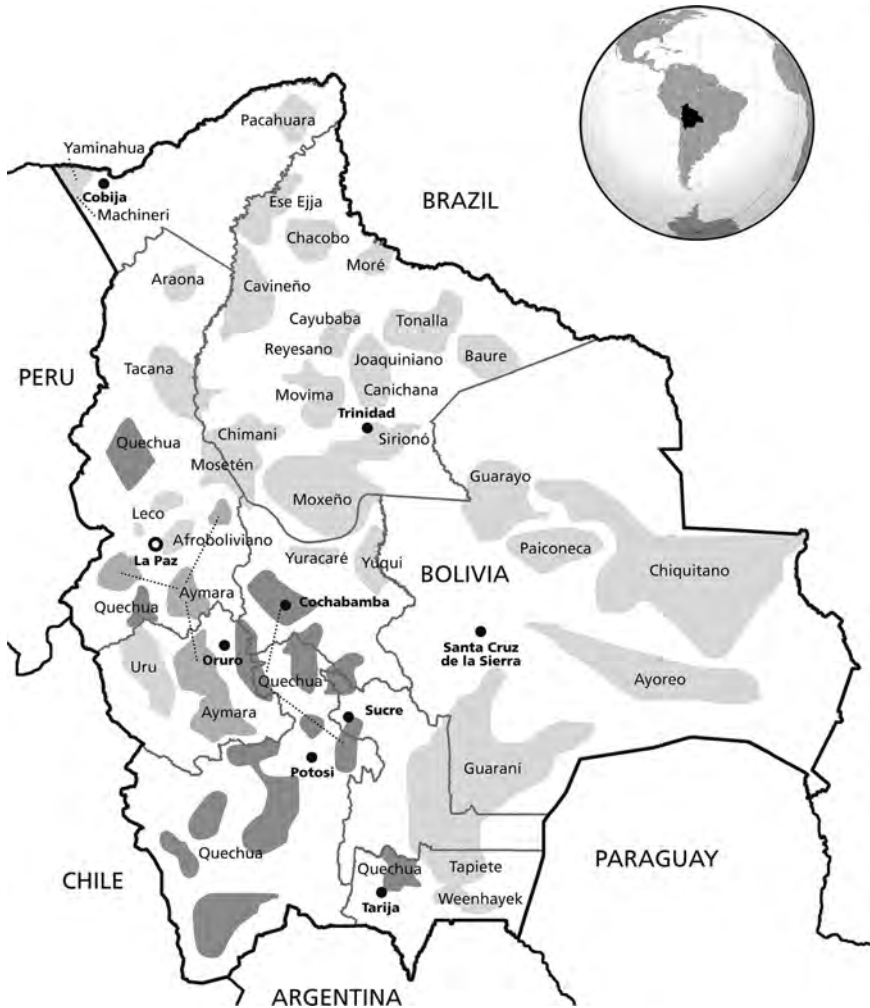
Figure 1.1 Map of major indigenous peoples in Bolivia

Source: Drafted by Miina Jutila on the basis of Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pueblos_originarios_de_Bolivia.png

Although indigenous policy reforms have been common since the 1990s in Bolivia and elsewhere, indigenous ideas have rarely become overarching policy principles for the state. The notion of *Vivir Bien* emerged as the backbone of Bolivian state policies with the launch of the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva, y Democrática para Vivir Bien*, NDP) in 2006. While it nearly disappeared in *Rumbo a una Bolivia Líder: 2010–2015 Programa de Gobierno* – the subsequent governmental

programme which gave priority to resource extraction, industrialization, and grand-scale state-led developmentalism (Movimiento al Socialismo MAS-IPSP 2010) – *Vivir Bien* has reemerged in the 2016–2020 policy guideline (*Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social en el Marco del Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien*). Stated to originate from indigenous, afro-Bolivian, and peasant ideas, worldviews, and knowledges, state policy defines *Vivir Bien* as "an alternative civilizational and cultural horizon to capitalism and modernity" (Ministerio de Planificación al Desarrollo 2015, 4). It draws on the assumed strengths of previously marginalized indigenous peoples – solidarity, collective well-being, sense of community, identity politics, and ecological knowledge and sustainability – as opposed to a "culture of individualism, mercantilism and capitalism that is based on the irrational exploita-tion of humanity and nature" (Ibid.). *Vivir Bien* is also present in the constitution where such conceptualizations as *ama qhilla, ama llulla, ama suwa* ('don't be lazy, don't be a liar, don't be a thief'), *Suma Qamaña* ('to live well'), *Ñandereko* ('har-monious way of life'), *Teko Kavi* ('good life'), *Ivi Maraei* ('land without evil'), and *Qhapaj Ñan* ('noble way or path') – often understood as the multiple indigenous origins of the Spanish umbrella term *Vivir Bien* – are defined as the ethical-moral principles for Bolivian society (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009).

The *Vivir Bien* policy framework has been coupled with the new perception of the state. State discourses emphasize the contested notion of decolonization of the state (*descolonización del estado*). The NDP states that the main goal of decolo-nization is to strengthen the incorporation of multiethnic and plurinational forms of governance and, subsequently, democratization (República de Bolivia 2007, 4–5). Similar claims are made in the 2016–2020 plan, which defines the process of decolonization as the elimination of racial and cultural discrimination and the strengthening of indigenous knowledge and ideas. Postero (2017, 12) defines the Bolivian process of decolonization as a form of 'transitional justice'; "an effort to move beyond racialized systems of servitude and structural inequalities to a new, more equitable society". The constitution defines Bolivia as a plurinational state (*Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia*), referencing long-term indigenous struggles to recover governance of colonized lands, territories, and natural resources. The plurinational state, therefore, refers to a decolonized and decentralized state that comprises a conglomeration of various nations (*naciones*), autonomous indigenous territories, municipalities, and regions (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 485). According to Vice-President García Linera (2007, 66), the aim of constructing the plurinational state is to "allow dominated and excluded ethnic groups to have their share of . . . structures of political power". As an antith-esis of liberal nation-state principles and universalist development models, this implies – in principle – a major transformation of the state, that is, its refounda-tion: a new beginning, rather than moderate reforms. However, in the course of discussion in this book it will be shown that these utopian political categories are negotiated and contested in the practice of the state, thus becoming something quite different from what has been claimed.

At the regional level, the rise of Bolivian social movements can be associated with the electoral success of various Left and Centre-Left parties starting with the

election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 1998 and followed by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil in 2002, as well as other left-wing candidates in Uruguay, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Chile (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012a). Webber and Carr (2013b, 5–6) situate Bolivia within the category of the radical Left in distinction to more moderate and reformist Centre-Left countries in the region, given a party and regime modality that aims at tackling capitalist productive relations through a human-centred development model and espouses communal ownership of economic and natural resources, democratization, and anti-imperialist policies. What further separates Bolivia from many other Latin American countries in which the political Left has been prevalent is the extent to which new political landscapes have been defined and shaped by indigenous terminologies. Together with a fellow Andean country, Ecuador, under the leadership of the left-wing president Correa (2007-2017) (Becker 2013; Walsh 2008, 2010), Bolivia has brought the *Vivir Bien* paradigm to the fore in the state transformation process, with alterations to the concept appearing in such countries as Nicaragua (*Vivir Bonito*) (Radcliffe 2015a, 861).

Following the notion of *Vivir Bien*

Methodologically, this book follows the circulation of the notion of *Vivir Bien* in the spheres of policy making and state bureaucracy in Evo Morales's Bolivia. As indigenous policy it is a discursive and conceptual construction that becomes visible in the documents, perceptions, and representations of the state, material which forms the basis of ethnographic analysis of the characteristics of its appearance in diverse social settings. At the same time, I track the notion of *Vivir Bien* in the everyday practices of public servants, consultants, and state bureaucracy more generally. While drawing on anthropological belief in the importance of fieldwork, deep understanding of people, and the personal involvement of the researcher, this study undertakes the task of ethnographic examination of a context traditionally studied by political scientists, political sociologists, and political economists: the state. Its starting point is the idea, represented by Trouillot (2003, 89), that "the state is a set of practices and processes and the effects they produce as much as a way to look at them [which is why] we need to track down these practices, processes, and effects". What ethnographic examination can bring to the study of states is the understanding that the state is not a given, fixed entity but a complex set of everyday practices, discourses, institutions, and structures constructed by a diversity of actors. Ethnographic study, as Sharma and Gupta (2006b, 8) have suggested, can rather

> bring together the ideological and material aspects of state construction, and understand how "the state" comes into being, how "it" is differentiated from other institutional forms, and what effects this construction has on the operation and diffusion of power throughout society.

The study is also influenced by another strand of research: ethnography of development aid. It is a branch that has developed during the last few decades within

the disciplines of social anthropology and development studies (see, for example, Ferguson 1994; Li 2007; Mosse 2005; Mosse and Lewis 2005) and, to a lesser extent, within political sciences (see, for example, Mitchell 2002). Ethnographies of aid investigate the workings of the development apparatus: its policies and practices, structures and institutions. By asking how discourses and practices of social change are produced and how they work, ethnographic studies of development policy and the state can demonstrate the internal discrepancies between policy and practice, unintended effects of policy efforts, multiple intentions and social logics between different kinds of actors, and the real-life functioning of things beyond official discourses.

This study is a response to the challenge of the changing circumstances of indigenous peoples in contemporary Bolivia: if representatives of social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions have shifted from rural communities to the presidential palace and ministerial cabinets, the methodological choices of those who study indigenous peoples have to respond to this situation. Although now in the corridors of power, many Bolivian politicians are more familiar with indigenous activism, peasant marches, and community traditions than with the affluence of the traditional Bolivian elite and the traditions of bureaucratic-institutional structures of the state. Therefore, I have adopted a double strategy: obeying Riles's (2001) methodological recommendation to render the familiar – such as state bureaucracy or development apparatus – exotic, and therefore, accessible ethnographically, while also observing indigenous ideas in an unfamiliar site for ethnographic inquiry, that is, the state. This dual strategy underlines articulations between indigenous politics and state formation as fluid, dynamic, and contested. In contemporary Bolivia, indigenous peoples no longer stick to a singular site, territory, or community, if they ever did.

While discussing local-global articulations, Tsing (2007) has noted that accounts of indigenous peoples often regard national political scenes as irrelevant for the analysis of indigeneity. Although it is true that nation-states have been increasingly losing their role as the sole vehicles of sovereign power with the increase of global and local actors, this does not mean that states have lost their importance altogether. It is, therefore, not acceptable for ethnographers to dismiss the role of the state as an irrelevant reference point for indigenous experience. This book is committed to Tsing's (2007) idea that nation-states do matter for indigenous causes. The importance of the state as the field of study is especially relevant in Bolivia, where indigenous discourses are being employed at the centres of state transformation and policy making.

Analysis in this book is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2008 and 2009 amongst Bolivian ministers, public servants, indigenous activists, and development experts concerning their perceptions and actions related to the notion of *Vivir Bien* as state policy. Thus, the ethnographic material has been gathered during Evo Morales's first term of presidency. The overall fieldwork data consisted of 54 individual interviews, 6 group interviews, policy documents, and 6 months of participant observation in the offices and corridors of state institutions (see Table 1.1). Approximately 20 of the interviewed persons were

Table 1.1 Interviews by the category of interviewees, including the number of individual and group interviews and gender-aggregated data

Category of interviewees	Number of individual interviews (m/f *) 2008–2009	Number of group interviews (number of persons m/f) 2008–2009	Number of individual interviews (m/f) 2016–2017	Number of interviews, total
Ministers, vice-ministers	9 (8/1)			9
Public servants, consultants	17 (14/3)	3 (5/1)	1 (1/0)	21
Representatives and functionaries of international development organizations	12 (8/4)	1 (2/0)		13
Social movements, indigenous organizations, trade unions, NGOs	7 (4/3)	2 (3/2)	1 (1/0)	10
Academic scholars	7 (7/0)		1 (1/0)	8
Political figures from the opposition	2 (1/1)			2
Total	54	6	3	**63**

*m = male, f = female

indigenous, while the majority of state employees and development experts were nonindigenous. More specifically, I participated in and observed development policy events, seminars, and meetings. Access was partly facilitated by my earlier work experience and contacts made in an indigenous nongovernmental organization (NGO) and United Nations (UN) office in 2001 and 2002, when I lived in Bolivia for a total of 13 months. Since the fieldwork period, I have maintained systematic communication with various informants through e-mails and social media. I have also conducted a few formal follow-up interviews in 2016 and 2017 through Skype. This communication has enabled me to keep track of recent developments in the field of my study. Furthermore, the material is complemented by critical engagement with recent policy documents and academic studies that connect with the subject.

In order to grasp what was going on in this highly complex and mobile field, various ethnographic techniques of investigation were used, the most crucial being a combination of policy analysis, participant observation, and interviewing. When the state is the field of research, documents represent key sources of data because they are "paradigmatic artifacts of modern knowledge practices" (Riles 2006, 2). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, 121) suggest that many of the social settings ethnographers study today are "self-documenting, in the sense that their members

are engaged in the production and circulation of various kinds of written material". State bureaucracies are major examples of this. Shore and Wright (1997, 8) consider policy documents as loci of political technologies that conceal the operations of power in "the objective, neutral, legal-rational idioms in which they are portrayed". Policy guidelines, policy papers, and programme documents illuminate governmental rationalities and forms of knowledge that attempt to unify the discourse of the state. The main documents examined here through policy analysis are the following:

- *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva, y Democrática para Vivir Bien 2006–2011*
- *Rumbo a una Bolivia Líder: 2010–2015 Programa de Gobierno*
- *Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social en el Marco del Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien 2016–2020*

In terms of participant observation, I had an opportunity to observe closely the functioning of state bureaucracy and to get well acquainted with some of the political and policy actors in a highly volatile political situation. Although I moved back and forth between ministries, development agencies, universities, social movements, and other actors, I was able to observe most closely the internal functioning of the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination, an entity responsible for elaborating and monitoring *Vivir Bien* policy making. I participated in, and observed, policy events where the notion of *Vivir Bien* was being operationalized into state practice. Most specifically, these related to the production of sectoral development plans. I was also able to participate in and observe many important political events organized both by social movements and by the governing regime, including the referendum over the constitution.

Although ethnographers have tended to give more prestige to spontaneous conversations and participation in everyday life in order to interfere as little as possible in the data (Wolcott 2005, 155), in the case of modern bureaucracies, presolicited visits and interviewing may in fact be a more practical way to conduct research than hanging around in the institutions. My tactic was to use reflexive, semistructured interviews as much as possible, meaning that many were closer to conversations than formal interviews. In addition to conversational interviewing, I had a chance to conduct life-history collection with a few key informants, and I also used projective techniques such as questions related to the future of the interviewed individuals and the institution/group they were representing. Interviews were also observational events. Presolicited meetings with various kinds of officials and experts gave me a chance to enter the premises of ministries and to observe bureaucrats in action, which otherwise would have been difficult to do. In general, the questions were directed at disclosing the perceptions of different actors of the notion of *Vivir Bien*; its introduction to policy making; and its content, practices, and challenges. A more general conversational framework for these questions was built around the ongoing Bolivian process of change and the role of indigenous peoples and social movements within it. In general, ministers,

academics, and experts were very analytic, explicit, and open about their views of policy and political processes.

Synopsis of the book

This book is divided into eight chapters. The introduction (Chapter 1) frames the study by providing information about research objectives, previous research, an introduction to the Bolivian case, and methodological orientations. In Chapter 2 I move into detailing the theoretical and conceptual views that guide this book, providing justification for choices made. It anchors scholarly discussions of indigenous politics and decolonization to notions of policy making, state formation, and power. Chapter 3 outlines the histories of indigenous politics and state formation in Bolivia as complex articulations between global, national, and local processes. Chapter 4 focuses on multiple definitions, interpretations, and understandings of *Vivir Bien* amongst social movements and indigenous activists, as well as in state policies, discourses, and actors.

The remaining three chapters describe and explain the notion of *Vivir Bien* as contested practice in Bolivian state transformation. In Chapter 5 I examine the translation of indigenous policy ideas into bureaucratic practice and technical expertise, focusing on the functionings of micropractices of power. Through ethnographic observation, description, and analysis of policy events, I argue that problems in rendering technical have hampered the translation of the notion of 'living well' into radically new governmental practice. Chapter 6 discusses institutional and structural characteristics of the Bolivian state and draws a picture of the state bureaucracy as a disciplinary power. It argues that the rupture that exists between decolonizing discourses and bureaucracy as a disciplinary power leads to a situation in which various forms of rule and power are enacted. Chapter 7 examines the emergence of state-led developmentalism and resource extraction as challenges to *Vivir Bien* ideals. I argue that what is at stake in Bolivian state transformation is intimately linked to struggles over ideas, resources, and various forms of governance. Chapter 8 discusses the findings and significance of the book.

Notes

1 A pseudonym.
2 Kichwa in Ecuador.
3 The concept of *Buen Vivir* is utilized by international academic scholars and activists – and in the context of Ecuador – as the general category for this paradigm, while *Vivir Bien* is mainly used in Bolivia. I utilize both terms throughout the book, the notion of *Vivir Bien* referencing the specific empirical case of Bolivia, while *Buen Vivir* alludes to the whole alternative philosophy or paradigm in the wider sense.
4 The Aymara and the Quechua groups reside predominantly in the Andean mountain regions – the first in the Andean High Plateau and the second in the valleys – and comprise various internally heterogeneous groups. The Guaraní and other minority groups reside in the Bolivian lowlands, which consist of the regions of Chaco, Santa Cruz, and the Amazon (Yashar 2005, 190–1; see Figure 1.1).

2   Towards decolonial
government

Although there is a growing literature on indigeneity in world politics and political theory (Beier 2009; Hobson 2012; Rÿser 2012; Sassen 2008; Shaw 2008; Van Cott 2008; Wilmer 1993; Yashar 2005), indigenous political alternatives and movement struggles still occupy marginal roles within these disciplinary orientations. Even though political scientists and social movement scholars on Latin America have been instrumental in highlighting the importance of indigenous movements as political forces amidst increasing resistance to neoliberal globalization (Dangl 2007, 2010; Eckstein 2001 [1989]; Petras and Veltmeyer 2005; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and Kuecker 2008), and as being associated with the rise of Left politics (Arditi 2008; Cameron and Silva 2009; Castañeda and Morales 2008; Madrid 2008; Weyland, Madrid and Hunter 2010; Webber and Carr 2013a), there are surprisingly few studies on what indigeneity, or indigenous terminologies, actually mean. There is also a paucity of research on how they translate into real-life political alternatives and the policy practices of states in countries such as Bolivia, where such notions as *Vivir Bien* have become key to understanding contemporary processes of change. It has been the task of anthropologists such as Postero (2017) to stress that the discourse of *Vivir Bien* has been enormously influential – although controversial – in politics, at least symbolically. Another anthropological author, Burman (2016), has highlighted the importance of understanding such concepts as decolonization as lived experiences rather than as mere political-ideological discourses amongst groups of indigenous peoples that have been marginalized from the realm of the state for decades. In comparison to the work of many political scientists and social movement scholars, analysis here adheres to these views by placing emphasis on the importance of indigenous terminologies in politics and policy, as well as on people's own experiences and voices in the state sphere.

Political scientists who traditionally study state formation and political regimes have not necessarily been exposed to indigenous studies, decolonizing methodologies, or anthropological research on indigeneity and, consequently, tend to frame indigenous politics through Western academic paradigms. In the field of world politics, Hobson (2012), for example, has claimed that whether taking mainstream or anti-imperialist stances, much international theory rests on Eurocentric explanatory models that portray Western civilization as an ideal referent in world politics.

Tickner (2015, 539), for her part, has argued that within the discipline of international relations, the historical evolvement of Western nation-states, modernity, and capitalist economy has been celebrated, which is why such issues as colonialism, indigenous self-determination, and gendered and racial injustices have been largely bypassed. Meanwhile, such notions as *Vivir Bien* are completely overlooked, because they do not fit into preexisting theoretical frameworks. It has been argued that "post-colonial approaches have been largely ignored in [international relations] given its state-centrism and positivism" (Smith and Owens 2005, 288). Postcolonialism is, first and foremost, a postpositivist stance; like postmodernism, it demands "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 1984, XXIV), including the grandeurs of such oppressive and violent colossuses as colonialism and modernity.

This study lauds interdisciplinarity. As an ethnographic endeavour, it differs from the work of fellow anthropologists in that rather than concentrating on local indigenous communities or impoverished urban neighbourhoods, it focuses on the circulation of indigenous terminologies in the corridors of power, in state institutions, and in the contested sphere of policy making. Here the historically constructed bureaucratic power relations and forms of rule, as well as the influence of various global processes such as neoliberal globalization and international development policy making, become key concerns in analysis. An interdisciplinary approach is needed to place movement struggles in their diverse and complex historical framings and to relate the empirical messiness of Bolivian politics to larger structural and institutional frameworks of state formation and global processes. Critical development studies offer a platform for interdisciplinary endeavours that draw from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, scholarly orientations, and normative standpoints. As an academic discipline, it is, and needs to be, a platform for the critical examination and understanding of social change and transformative alternatives in our global world.

In sum, this book makes a case for the utility of moving empirically at the intersections of local, national, and global, as well as people, institutions, and systems: in scholarly terms, at the intersections of world politics, critical development studies, and social anthropology; and, from a theoretical perspective, at the intersections of scholarship on decoloniality, Foucauldian governmentality, and global political economy, as will be explained in the following sections.

Policy making, state formation, and power

In political sciences, it has been typical to differentiate between policy making and state formation as theoretical objects of study. In general, "state-formation is understood as a mythic initial moment in which centralized, coercion-wielding, hegemonic organizations are created within a given territory. All activities that follow . . . are then described as policymaking rather than state-formation" (Steinmetz 1999, 9). Nevertheless, policy making and state formation should rather be considered as intertwined and constantly ongoing processes in which structural

features of the state are either transformed or maintained. According to Steinmetz (Ibid., 9), these structural features of the state include

> the entire set of rules and institutions that are involved in making and implementing policies: the arrangement of ministries or departments, the set of rules for the allocation of individual positions within these departments . . . , the nature and location of boundaries between state and society, and so forth.

There are various ways to examine policy, such as development policy, the most common of which – the instrumentalist and the critical views – are complete opposites (Mosse 2005, 2–6). The instrumentalist approach conceives of policy as "rational problem solving": it examines whether development works and what kinds of impacts and results it produces (Ibid., 2). The critical approach, often inspired by Foucault's governmentality and represented by authors such as Escobar (1995) and Ferguson (1994), concentrates on showing how policy conceals its true operations – the spread of transnational and state bureaucratic power and Western dominance – in the technical idiom in which policy is portrayed. The critical political-economic view, on the other hand, perceives development policy, and such related issues as the Washington Consensus on policy, as forms of imperialism: that is, "as a means of advancing the geopolitical and strategic interests of the governments and international organizations that provide this 'aid'" (Veltmeyer 2013, 54). There are also authors, such as Mosse (2005) and Li (2007), who have examined policy from a more empirical and contextual perspective, thereby emphasizing their complex and contested nature.

There has been an absence of methodological tools amongst anthropologists to assist in examining policy making, state formation, and modern political organizations due to a very strong preconception of what anthropology is supposed to study: it has been "driven by the appeal of the small, the simple, the elementary, the face-to-face" (Appadurai 1986, 357). Traditionally, it has been the academic slot of the political scientists, economists, and similar to study issues that represented modernity (the state, the development apparatus, and so forth), while rural populations, indigenous communities, and ethnic minorities were examined by anthropologists (Sharma and Gupta 2006b). This focus has, however, been blurred by the emergence of the so-called anthropology of the state or ethnography of the state (Das and Poole 2004; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Sharma and Gupta 2006a; Trouillot 2003). According to Sharma and Gupta (2006b), the comparative advantage of ethnographic study of state formation in the age of globalization lies in its empirical capacity to examine how global processes function concretely in specific national and local contexts. Additionally, it gives a voice and provides a forum for the personal testimonies of those various actors who in their everyday lives as public servants, technical experts, and development workers are part of the work of the state. Simultaneously, the strength of ethnographic research is that, alongside institutional and structural analysis of the state, it provides a detailed description of multiple and dynamic everyday practices through which the state appears as a set of processes and effects rather than as a neatly bounded entity separate from society (Trouillot 2003). However, it has been recently argued that anthropological

works on the state have focused primarily on cultural constructions, images, and discursive representations of the state, while downplaying actual practices (Thelen, Vetters and Benda-Beckmann 2014). Consequently, it has been suggested that a relational approach in bridging the two is needed (Ibid.).

Processes of globalization have challenged the legitimacy of the study of the state. As Hansen and Stepputat (2001, 10–11) have argued, equating the state, society, nation, and economy – once the core formulation of what stateness entails – has proved problematic because of global and local processes, including economic globalization, migrations, supranational policy making, ethnic mobilizations, and local struggles for autonomy. Many researchers have assumed that global market forces, as well as the increasing role of IFIs, development agencies, and transnational corporations, would wither away, or at least seriously challenge, the role of states (Sassen 1996). Indeed, the increasing role of IFIs in national decision making started to mitigate the naturalness of the sovereignty of nation-states worldwide (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 296). Key characteristics of this line of thinking include the idea of deterritorialization: "the disintegration of national borders, and the demise of the nation-state" (Hart 2002, 49). While the state has lost much of its regulatory capacity in the face of global market forces, ethnographic scrutiny of global processes has, however, shown that globalization is manifested, constructed, and negotiated at national and local levels in various complex and mobile ways (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Hart 2002). Furthermore, the rise of progressive governments and the increasing role of state-led extractive economies and development endeavours in Latin America have brought the question of the state back to prominence (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012). The postneoliberal turn in Latin America has raised new expectations of the state in terms of economic well-being and social welfare amongst a large gamut of transnational, national, and local actors (Krupa and Nugent 2015).

Traditionally, (neo-)Weberian or (neo-)Marxist understandings of the state have been dominant within political theories of state formation, although rational-choice theory has also become common (Steinmetz 1999). Weber perceived sovereign states as holding the monopoly over coercion in given territories. For him, modern Western states represented legal-bureaucratic rationalities, whose formal organizations produce universal outcomes based on technical knowledge, the separation of political and technical spheres, and the compartmentalization of responsibilities at distinct levels of bureaucracy (Weber 2006 [1968]). Indeed,

> for neostructuralists, acting on Weberian theoretical foundations, the capitalist state is essentially a benign set of institutions that can act on a more or less rational basis . . . and the repressive role of the state in reproducing [class] relations are obscured, replaced by an ostensibly non-ideological, rational set of institutions.
>
> (Webber 2011, 190)

Marx, on the contrary, noted in his early works that states produce and govern dominant ideological representations that reproduce capitalist relations (Steinmetz 1999, 13–14). The state, therefore, appears as an alienating, bourgeois instance, a

product and maintainer of unequal economic structures and productive relations based on class domination. Therefore, class relations were to be reversed through working-class revolutions which would provide total transformations of the state and society. Representing this view, Webber (2011, 191) recalls that "economic exploitation and state repression are built-in, constituent parts of the system of capitalism". Rational-choice theories' individualist and ruler-centred approach to state formation assumes that social actors "apply the standards of means-ends rationality, that they are self-interested, and that they are largely actuated by a desire for maximizing wealth" (Adams 1999, 100). There is a large body of classic anthropological critique of the idea of wealth-maximizing individuals, viewed through the notion of reciprocity (see, for example, Godelier 1999; Mauss 2009 [1950]; Sahlins 1972).

All of these approaches differ from Foucault's notions of the state in which "one moves beyond the image of power as essentially a system of sovereign commands or policies backed by force" (Mitchell 1999, 86). Foucault rejected the idea that unequal productive relations in capitalist economies would be the fundamental – or sole – sources of power relations (Jessop 2006, 40). On the contrary, Foucault (2000, 59) suggested that

> rather than looking for the single form, the central point from which all the forms of power would be derived by way of consequence or development, one must first let them stand forth in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, their reversibility.

Because, for Foucault, power operates in multiple ways, it helps us see that indigenous peoples are not immune to it. They are not solely passive victims of neoliberal imposition of external coercion; rather, they are active agents of change with their own internal contestations, power struggles, and various hierarchies. This understanding of power blurs the boundaries between state and society, thereby enabling an examination of the role played by social movements in state centres that is free of the determinist dichotomy of proletarian-run society versus perpetuation of a bourgeois ruling class in the guise of movement activists. While looking for movement activity in state centres, I found myself amidst movement activists, trade unionists, and indigenous scholars, all of whom were seeking to make sense of their new roles in a very complex situation in which the boundaries between the state and society had become blurred, yet remained infused with potentially explosive power relations. Contrary to claims of indigenous peoples' disinterest with regards to the state, this book demonstrates that the state, in fact, is an important reference point for indigenous experience in contemporary Bolivia. Foucauldian understanding of governmentality gives analytical tools for framing these new state-society relations.

Government as a field of power

Influenced by Li's (2007) ethnographic work on the relationships between improvement schemes and indigenous peoples as targets of development, my study looks at policy through the prism of 'government' as a field of power. The notion

of government is here understood as a calculated means of shaping the lives of individuals and groups of people in a desired way. Influenced by Foucault's concept of government, Rose (1996, 41–2) has described it as being constituted by "all those ways of reflecting and acting that have aimed to shape, guide, manage or regulate the conduct of persons . . . in the light of certain principles or goals". Paramount in the functionings of government is what Li (2007) calls the will to improve; the idea and aim of improving the conditions of the population "by educating desires and configuring habits, aspirations and beliefs" (Ibid., 5). The moral attributes often affiliated with development fit well with the idea that "government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth" (Foucault 1991, 100). However, development as a scheme of improvement is intimately tied to and constructed upon colonial differences and multiple forms of inequalities. As Radcliffe (2015b, 5) suggests, coloniality is an underlying factor in all development interventions, because "development represents simultaneously and inextricably a form of knowing and a presumption of embodied, epistemological, and categorical social difference, through which governmentality operates" (more on coloniality in the following sections). *Vivir Bien* as state policy is portrayed in this study as a decolonial improvement scheme. The important question is whether it succeeds in transforming the coloniality of the state and its development endeavours and in what ways.

I will unravel this question by examining the technicalization of *Vivir Bien* terminologies, for example, through the analysis of the elaboration of sectoral development plans. What Li (2007) calls the practice of government occurs through the translation of the will to improve into the technical exercises of concrete development programmes and projects. This requires two key elements: first, the identification of a problem or a negative state of affairs that needs to be corrected; and second, an affirmation of what Li (2007, 7) calls rendering technical, which "confirms expertise and constitutes the boundary between those who are positioned as trustees, with the capacity to diagnose deficiencies in others, and those who are subject to expert directions". Important in the practice of government is the role of technical experts as knowledge brokers and gatekeepers of truth claims. Their role has been fundamental in the institutionalization of forms that govern and control individuals and groups of people, because "political rule would not itself set out the norms of individual conduct, but would install and empower a variety of 'professionals', investing them with authority to act as experts in the devices of social rule" (Rose 1996, 40). What is crucial in the case of Bolivia is how indigeneity is translated into technical language and expertise and the experiences of indigenous and nonindigenous state functionaries in this process (on indigenous state bureaucrats in Chile, see Radcliffe and Webb 2015).

In the case of many contemporary aid-dependent countries, the practice of government operates through such transnational actors as banks, corporations, and development agencies, as well as local actors such as civil-society and community organizations. Consequently, especially since the increasing spread of global free-market principles and universal development models, the production of government and control in many countries of the Global South shifted from nation-states

to global and local development actors. One of the main characteristics of the neoliberal will to improve present in IFIs and international development agencies is their "increasing reliance on dispersed and marketized modes of governmentality" (Fraser 2003, 167). The phenomenon that Ferguson and Gupta (2005) call 'neoliberal governmentality' changed the nature of nation-states in the Global South from corporatist and centralized agents of productive forces to outsourced governments. Neoliberal governmentality functions through "all the processes by which the conduct of a population is governed: by institutions and agencies, including the state; by discourses, norms, and identities; and by self regulation, techniques for the disciplining and care of the self" (Ferguson and Gupta 2005, 114). Thus, neoliberalism starts to operate in both external economic, political, and social structures and in disciplining and self-regulating individual conduct. Consequently, governing is both internalized and present in external – economic, political, and institutional – structures (Cruikshank 1996; Kaisto and Pyykkönen 2010; Mitchell 1999). Rather than leaning on force, Hardt and Negri (2000, 23) define this as the emergence of the society of control. According to them, its main characteristic is that

> mechanisms of control become ever more "democratic", ever more immanent to the social field, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens. The behaviours of social integration and exclusion proper to rule are thus increasingly interiorized within the subjects themselves.

With this formulation, Hardt and Negri (2000, 25) refer to the idea that at the moment when power starts to overtake every aspect of human life (the condition to which Foucault [2000] referred with the term biopower or biopolitics), it "reveals a new context, a new milieu of maximum plurality". This line of thinking offers an optic for the study of the potentialities – or failures – of democratization that new forms of government suggested by *Vivir Bien* might open up. This internalization of decolonization, or becoming a decolonized subject, came up, for example, in the story of the domestic worker at the beginning of this book. Here, the question is whether indigenous terminologies as state policy can entail truly decolonizing characteristics or whether they will turn out to be yet another example of development solutions through which neoliberal rationalities continue to function, demonstrating their endurance. Observations concerning neoliberal governmentality are important because *Vivir Bien* is portrayed as an alternative paradigm to capitalism: it relies in endogenous rather than transnational models, as well as cultural/ecological rather than economic solutions to development.

Transformations are always deeply political: however, the technicalization of *Vivir Bien* requires and is apt to result in depoliticization. What is meant by depoliticization is that matters of great political importance are turned into seemingly technical issues through knowledge and expertise. In regards to poverty reduction, for example, Ferguson (1994, 256) has claimed that "by uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problem of

'development' is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized". He (Ibid., 256) has taken his criticism even further by suggesting that while an important – if not *the* most significant – aspect of development is its 'anti-politics' character, aid is, nevertheless, often "performing extremely sensitive political operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object". Although development is portrayed as a merely technical and non-political exercise, it is, in fact, a major player in the production and reproduction of power relations. It has many political and ideological effects most prevalently seen in the restructuring of forms of governing, as well as in the spread of the free-market principles of global capitalism. The question arises here: if assumingly postcapitalist, postneoliberal, and decolonial *Vivir Bien* policy is depoliticized by the state, what kinds of operations of power are channelled though it? This will be discussed in the course of this study.

Although represented as depoliticized, Li (2007) has shown that the business of doing good is part of a complex web of interests and relations through which people are managed, controlled, and targeted as objects of development in a way that delimits – but does not impede – their opportunities to question and confront existing power relations. As we well know, the most burning development issues are highly political because they touch upon questions related to the redistribution and control of resources and wealth (land, labour, capital), power relations of all sorts (ethnic, gendered, class), and inequalities at local, national, and global scales. A counterpart to the concept of the practice of government emerges here: the practice of politics. While the practice of government was earlier explained as a calculated mode of enhancing the well-being of populations through technical means, the practice of politics is defined by Li (2007, 12) as a critical challenge that "shapes, challenges, and provokes it". Therefore, while the aim of the practice of government is to rule through the taming of political contestations, there is always room for critical challenge. Bolivia presents a case in which social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions (those presumably chaotic, undisciplined, and contentious masses at the margins of the state whose lives the practice of government aims to enhance and govern) have entered the sphere of government through contestative politics. It is in this context that the double understanding of power and politics as forms of rule and as the transformative potential is most salient. The empirical chapters that follow contribute to examining articulations between them.

Articulations of rule

Li (2007) notes that in addition to contestative politics, government as a field of power is limited by force. From the point of view of understanding countries in the Global South, one of the main criticisms of the notion of governmentality can be directed at its application to Western societies, which are too easily portrayed as normative ideals of societal governance (Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips 2006, 250–1). In this view, governmentality would be the governing mode of advanced

liberal democracies, while more authoritarian forms of rule would be preserved for postcolonial Southern contexts. However, because of violent colonial histories, racial making of differences, and transnational capitalism, different forms of power tend to manifest themselves in awkward and contradictory articulations. Thus, Li (2007, 12) suggests, governmentality should be viewed from the perspective of enabling an analysis of complex articulations between government, sovereignty, and discipline as practices of rule. Foucault (1991, 102) himself stated that "we need to see things not in terms of replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government". This triad of different forms of rule proves helpful in the analysis of Bolivian *Vivir Bien* because it sheds light on the complicated relations between decolonizing policy and the coloniality of the state.

In regards to sovereignty, Mitchell (1999, 86) has claimed that it "conceives of state power in the form of a person . . . , whose decisions form a system of orders and prohibitions that direct and constrain social action". Furthermore, he continues (Ibid.) that

> power is thought of as an exterior constraint: its source is a sovereign authority above and outside society, and it operates by setting external limits to behavior, establishing negative prohibitions, and laying down channels of proper conduct.

In Foucault's sense, the purpose of sovereignty was to maintain and to feed the power of the ruler over his territory and population; the use of violence, coercion, and force did not require justification because the "sovereign's authority to issue commands, punish enemies, deduct taxes, and bestow gifts is absolute" (Li 2007, 12). In this understanding, the crucial difference between sovereignty and government is that while the authority of the sovereign is given, government needs constantly to seek authority through the improvement of the condition of the population (Ibid.).

In the Global South, articulations of rule have been intimately shaped by colonial encounters. Colonial sovereignty was based on conquest, the monopoly of violence, and the arbitrary use of power (Mbembe 2001). These were combined with extractive economies, ecological destruction, and racial othering of native populations. Soon, however, interest in developing more systematic ways of extracting economic profits led to more calculated interventions. Thus, colonial sovereignty as arbitrary use of force and the emergence of governmental improvement schemes occurred in parallel and through awkward articulations, although their principles were, in theory, mutually exclusive (Li 2007). In the case of Latin America, Vanden and Prevost (2012, 108) suggest that many of the ways in which contemporary social relations and political organizations are built rest on the histories of

> the traditional large estate, plantation, or mine run by European or mostly European owners who commended absolute or near absolute power over the masses of people of color toiling on their property. In this hierarchical,

authoritarian system, the peasants, laborers, servants, and even overseers were strongly subordinated to the *patrón*.

This reminder is still relevant because of the history of *caudillismo* (understood as a political system based on the leadership of a strong man), military dictatorships, and tendencies for the personalization and centralization of power to narrow economic and political elites (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003). In the classic book on Latin American bureaucratic states, Chalmers (1977) described them as politicized rather than institutionalized states. He has listed as the main characteristics of the politicized state (1) the strong penetration of the state into society, which means that individual political leaders have a great responsibility for the well-being of the population in question through patronage and benefits; (2) political battles that concentrate on the achievement of control and manipulation of the state because "being in power . . . gives the leader wide patronage and the authority to establish government programs to benefit existing supporters and attract new ones"; (3) the blurring of the state bureaucracy and political regime, which Chalmers calls 'bureaucratic politics', meaning that administrative and institutional hierarchies are manipulated for the purpose of political support through the building of networks and hierarchies; and (4) the concentration of power in specific individuals and political leaders that have been skilled in building such networks and patronage because "such 'personal power' is all there is, and it is necessary for survival" (Chalmers 1977, 30–3). It is crucial to take these considerations into account when examining the difficulties of translating *Vivir Bien* as a decolonizing policy into state bureaucratic practice.

These views resonate with the understanding of state-formation processes in other postcolonial contexts.[1] Starting with the well-known work on neopatrimonialism by Chabal and Daloz (1999), political patronage has been associated with the exercise of patrimonial power in Africa. As a contrast to modern, rational-legal bureaucracies, patrimonialism in Weber's sense refers to a type of state formation which is centred on the male ruler and his family. In Latin America, Vélez (2000) has called 'patrimonial politics' a form of political power that derives directly from the political leader. Stretching this to the context of modern state formation, neopatrimonialism refers to the running of the postcolonial state through patron-client networks, where the president or some other major political leader (patron) distributes state resources, such as land, state contracts, and development projects, to his allies (clients). According to Vanden and Prevost (2012, 122), the president is often understood as the personification of the state and national patron in Latin America and, consequently, "political leadership . . . has often tended to be authoritarian, with the political leader exercising a great deal of power and control". Although coercive in many ways, patron-client relationships are at the same time one of the sole sources of protection for the people, when states or other governing regimes, such as municipalities, are either absent or not institutionalized enough to provide basic services or to protect citizens' rights. This is important to keep in mind when examining the personalization of state power into the figure of Evo Morales in Chapter 6.

Race and ethnicity have played a major role in both colonial and postcolonial governance. Integral to this has been the production and maintenance of racial segregation and ethnic discrimination. According to Mamdani (1996), the colonial state created ethnically based, authoritarian governing mechanisms. Various strategies were adopted: the first was the discourse that the immaturity of colonized others was too great to allow them to be governed in a liberal manner, an issue which legitimized the continuation of brutal, violent, and arbitrary use of force against them (Li 2007, 14). Another was the introduction of class on top of racial divisions, in which the elites were deemed worthy of improvement, and the others not. The third was improving the conditions of natives through their own culturally defined indigenous traditions, such as territorial self-governance. This last strategy permitted colonial rulers to intervene in the lives of natives, but at the same time keep them racially and culturally distinct from themselves, and thus devoid of same rights, a necessary condition for the justification of colonial rule (Ibid., 14–15).

Discipline was reserved for such colonial groups as women, children, prisoners, and specific ethnicities that required special supervision and control (Li 2007, 14), taming them into servile objects. While governmentality represents the productive dimension of power which aims at improving people's well-being, discipline is about direct control, punishment, and a negative relationship of power (Ferguson and Gupta 2005, 115). Disciplinary institutions included prisons, state bureaucracies, and other institutions in which people are under the constant exercise of rule. In postcolonial states, instead of serving the causes of the population concerned, bureaucracies maintained their disciplinary character vis-à-vis racialized, class-based others, such as indigenous groups. This is a challenge to *Vivir Bien* as a decolonizing improvement scheme. In the case of Bolivia, there is a long history of perceiving indigenous populations as potentially dangerous and, consequently, as targets of bureaucratic control and coercion. They have been drawn into state mechanisms through patron-client networks, corporatist arrangements, and other forms of co-option (Lazar 2008; Casanovas Moore 1990; Morales 2012). At the same time, many indigenous peoples, especially in the lowlands, have been left outside the gates of the state (Postero 2007); for them, if the state has presence at all, it has represented an extension of bureaucratic rule rather than a provider of welfare. Consequently, Bolivian state bureaucracy has traditionally disciplined those groups of people that it now tries to liberate through the implementation of indigenous terminologies.

The question then becomes whether, and how, regimes that preach in the name of decolonization can create other, more democratic forms of power. Can they liberate themselves from the neoliberal hegemony of expert knowledge regimes and bring to the fore alternative local knowledges and epistemologies? Or will there be a continuation or even deepening of bureaucratic and authoritarian forms of power that are so deeply inscribed in the historical construction of Bolivian state-society relations? How will they attempt to change the external political-economic conditions and enhance the internalization of decolonial principles through *Vivir Bien* policy? In other words, how will different forms of rule articulate with one another?

Indigenous self-governance, lands, and territories

Because I am looking at state policy, bureaucracy, and governance through the prism of indigenous terminologies, it is important to recall here the relationships between indigenous peoples and the state. Amongst new social movement scholars, and within anthropological theorizing of indigenous resurgence, it has been a common argument that indigenous movements are not organized to seize state powers but rather to claim self-determination and sovereignty through autonomous arrangements. However, the last decade has witnessed the political rise of indigenous movements coupled with the election of left-wing governments in many parts of Latin America (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012a; Webber and Carr 2013a). This has demonstrated the increased interest of indigenous peoples in state capture, especially in the Andean contexts. Canessa (2014, 165), indeed, suggests that indigeneity always implies a relationship to state. As part of the overall analysis of the notion of *Vivir Bien*, my analysis examines the contested articulations between nation-state sovereignty and indigenous self-governing arrangements, that is, indigenous sovereignties. As will be shown in Chapter 4, various indigenous groups in Bolivia have utilized indigenous terminologies, such as *Suma Qamaña*, to promote, for example, Aymara nationalism. In the practice of the state, however, it appears that under the banner of *Vivir Bien* a number of contradicting tendencies ranging from the promotion of indigenous autonomies to the centralization of the nation-state appear, as will be demonstrated throughout this study.

The notion of self-determination has been an important part of international law since World War II, when it was first and foremost launched in connection with processes of decolonization. The right to self-determination on the part of 'peoples' is recognized in all of the most important UN declarations and, from the 1970s, the concept started to circulate amongst indigenous movements and other minority groups that used it to demand rights and recognition from their respective states. Wilmer (1993) has indeed claimed that in a world made up of nation-states, indigenous self-determination is the last unresolved issue of decolonization processes. Currently, Articles 3 and 4 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) declare that

> indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development . . . Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

It can be argued that one of the central political goals of indigenous movements worldwide – including those in Bolivia – has indisputably been related to indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and autonomy (Bowen 2000; Brown 2007; O'Malley 1996). However, the right to self-determination has become a major source of conflict between indigenous peoples and states (Erni and Jensen 2001, 4).

Indigenous political goals of sovereignty and self-determination, as well as notions of indigenous law, collective rights, and cultural difference, have proved difficult to handle for many nation-states because they stand against many modern norms, such as liberal democracy, constitutional uniformity, and the sovereignty of the nation-state (Niezen 2003, 16–17). The term autonomy, or self-government, represents the concrete manifestation of self-determination. Indigenous self-governance also refers to the *de facto* condition of many indigenous communities when they practise self-government through their own cultural principles and their own social, political, and economic systems (in Bolivia these are called *usos y costumbres*), whether or not these have been legally recognized by their respective states.

One of the key determinants of what defines indigeneity is the occupation by the group in question of lands and territories prior to colonization and conquest. Therefore, the political goal of achieving indigenous self-determination is closely linked to struggles over lands and territories and the natural resources contained therein (Bowen 2000; Brown 2007). This often conflicts with the interests of states and transnational corporations, as will be seen in the context of Bolivia in Chapter 7. Tsing (2007, 36), indeed, argues that "those communities that have placed high hopes in the international indigenous label do so because their land and resources are threatened by corporate and state expansion". Li (2010, 385) has remarked that in most international declarations and agreements, an important feature of indigeneity is "the permanent attachment of a group of people to a fixed area of land in a way that marks them as culturally distinct". Convention 169, for example, states that lands and territories have a special cultural and spiritual value for indigenous peoples. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), for its part, asserts that indigenous peoples everywhere in the world have a "distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories . . . and other resources". This cultural distinctiveness gives them certain claims and rights vis-à-vis others – for example, peasants and migrants – in a situation in which the global economy is increasingly threatening their territories and livelihoods. On the basis of their prior occupation of lands and territories, indigenous peoples are entitled to lands, territories, and natural resources in ways that other (ethnic) groups are not (Bowen 2000).

At the level of Latin American state policy, there emerged during the 1990s what Hale (2002, 2005) calls neoliberal multiculturalism (for Bolivia, see Postero 2007): a series of multicultural policies tied to neoliberal economic restructurings that recognized cultural differences in the name of indigeneity. In the Andes, ethnodevelopment or development-with-identity projects tied indigenous peoples to this newly emerged social neoliberalism (Andolina, Laurie and Radcliffe 2009, 10–11). In Bolivia, a wave of privatizations and reforms of the state administration were accompanied by a series of pro-indigenous reforms, including collective rights to lands and territories, especially for minority indigenous groups in the Amazon. In the name of cultural recognition and cultural difference, indigenous peoples were able to promote their long-term goals for the recognition of their *de facto* self-governance. Through multicultural reforms and international conventions,

indigenous identity had therefore become an important signifier in the allocation of resources such as lands and territories.

Although the goal of indigenous self-determination is based on the idea of confrontation between a liberal form of rule and colonized subjects, the promotion of self-governance is, surprisingly, compatible with neoliberal agendas aimed at reducing the role of the state in economic and social affairs. Instead of the state interventions so feared in orthodox neoliberal doctrine, indigenous NGOs, organizations, and communities are disciplined to govern and control themselves, thereby encouraging a situation whereby

> the state does not merely "recognize" community, civil society, indigenous culture and the like, but actively re-constitutes them in its own image, sheering them of radical excesses, inciting them to do the work of subject-formation that otherwise would fall to the state itself.
>
> (Hale 2002, 496)

Rose (1999) has framed this as "government through community". This demonstrates an unexpected relationship between indigenous peoples, neoliberal policies, and forms of governing, an issue to which many academics have drawn attention (Andolina, Laurie and Radcliffe 2009; Henley and Davidson 2008; Li 2007; O'Malley 1996; Ong 2005; Tsing 2007). Yet neoliberal multiculturalism was accompanied by an outright neglect of structural inequalities causing the marginalization of indigenous peoples in the first place. The politics of recognition of indigenous identity did not imply changes in the political-economic structures (Hale 2002; Postero 2007). These considerations are relevant when we start to examine the complicated relationships that have emerged during Morales's regime between the promotion of indigenous self-governance through indigenous terminologies and the state's redistributive politics.

Articulating indigeneity

There is a lot of hesitation amongst scholars to define indigeneity. However, Niezen (2003) suggests that the term entails three specific characteristics: first, it implies a shared global identity; second, it is normatively framed by international legislations; and, third, it is tied to the prior occupation of specific lands and territories. Distinct indigenous peoples, such as the Sami of Finland, the Maori of New Zealand, the Maya of Guatemala, and the Sirionó of Bolivia, all self-identify within the unifying global category of indigenous peoples. They have collective goals and strategies that they plan and negotiate in international forums and meetings, especially within the UN (Andolina, Laurie and Radcliffe 2009; Brysk 2000; Hodgson 2002; Niezen 2003; Tsing 2007). Important international networking developed after World War II, for example, between Mexican activists[2] and the US Red Power movement in the 1960s on the basis of the notion of pluriethnic autonomy, and between indigenous groups in Canada and New Zealand in the 1970s over questions of indigenous sovereignty (Tsing 2007, 40). International

networking within the UN and NGOs has provided indigenous peoples with arenas in which to deal with, and to promote, issues that have been neglected by their respective nation-states (Brysk 2000).

This global indigenous movement draws its strength from international legislation on indigenous rights, as the term indigeneity is not solely analytical or an expression of identity; it is also a legal category (Niezen 2003, 3). Global standardization of what indigeneity means is cemented in UN declarations such as Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1989) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Although the ILO's Convention 169 explicitly states that its aim is not to establish a fixed definition of indigenous peoples, it does, however, set parameters by which the qualifications of different groups of people are measured in order to define the scale of their indigeneity. The convention (Article 1) concerns

> peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions . . . Self-identification as indigenous . . . shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion.

The key qualifications attached to indigeneity, therefore, include descent from original peoples of colonized or otherwise occupied lands and territories who, nevertheless, still retain parts of their distinct culture, traditions, and forms of organizing themselves socially, politically, and economically. According to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (WGIP), any definition of indigenous peoples has to include four criteria: first, priority in time in respect to specific territory; second, cultural distinctiveness; third, self-identification; and, fourth, an experience of discrimination, dispossession, and marginalization (Kenrick and Lewis 2004, 5).

An important goal in the identity politics of social movements and indigenous organizations has been to pinpoint cultural difference and distinguish indigenous peoples from others. A commonly used strategy in this has been to emphasize that, to a certain extent, indigenous peoples worldwide share common traits in worldviews, cosmologies, knowledge, and practices that are distinct from others. All over the world, indigenous activists

> draw upon the arguments, idioms, and images supplied by the international indigenous rights movement, especially the claim that indigenous people derive ecologically sound livelihoods from their ancestral lands and possess forms of knowledge and wisdom which are unique and valuable.
>
> (Li 2000, 155)

By examining relationships between indigenous movements and environmentalist groups in Colombia, Ulloa (2005) has demonstrated how indigenous peoples have been increasingly turned into ecological natives – saviours of the global

environment that Western development has destroyed – through multiple local and transnational processes. To frame the phenomenon, she (Ibid., 6) uses the Foucault-inspired term eco-governmentality, referencing "all environmental policies, discourses, representations, knowledges and practices . . . that interact with the purpose of directing social actors . . . to think and behave in particular manners towards specific environmental ends". Indigenous peoples compose one group of social actors within this environmental assemblage. Their contradictory ecological identity construction has coincided with the internationalization of environmental laws and neoliberal multicultural policies that have assigned them rights to territories and resources "only under the legal conditions and economic practices of the environmental marketplace" (Ibid., 4).

This is partly in line with what Hodgson (2002) calls strategic essentialism, the use of particular cultural representations of indigeneity for political purposes. In Chapter 4, I demonstrate that the elaboration of such indigenous terminologies in Bolivia as *Suma Qamaña*, *Sumak Kawsay*, and *Ñandereko* can be perceived in this light. Initially elaborated by Spivak (1987), the term 'strategic essentialism' implies the idea that in order to get their voices heard, it may sometimes be beneficial for marginalized groups, such as women or indigenous groups, to frame their political demands as a simplified cultural discourse. These indigenous characteristics included, for example, the "natural" relation to land, a respect for nature, value for community traditions, egalitarian relations between community members, and a distinct form of indigenous knowledge. This making of difference has become an important political tool locally and nationally, and it enjoys the support of international legislations and conventions on indigenous rights.

Problematic here is that representations of cultural difference have often been translated into truths: they are taken to represent empirical realities of particular local cultures in specific locations, although this "fairly narrow, inflexible definition of [indigeneity] . . . may not reflect the present (or future) realities of . . . indigenous livelihoods and lifestyles" (Hodgson 2002, 1039). To an extent, this essentializing of indigenous peoples derives from nostalgia towards an inherently ecological and egalitarian human being that has been lost by modernity, argues Niezen (2003, 11), who continues that because of this romanticization, "indigenous leaders must struggle against a temptation to take both libels and outrageous flattery as the truth about themselves and their peoples". Instead, indigeneity should be understood as a historically constructed, mobile, and multiple term which articulates a set of positions and struggles. In this, I lean on Li (2000, 151), who argues that

> a group's self-identification as . . . indigenous is not natural or evident, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is, rather, a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle. The conjunctures at which (some) people come to identify themselves as indigenous, realigning the ways they connect to the nation, the government, and their own, unique tribal place, are the contingent products of agency and the cultural and political work of *articulation*.

In the Bolivian context, it has been demonstrated that indigeneity is a much-contested and changing concept (Canessa 2014; Postero 2017). During colonial times, three distinct identities were produced and solidified: *indio* (Indian), *q'ara* (white), and *cholo* (*mestizo*) (Rivera Cusicanqui 1993, 57–60; quoted in Postero 2017, 8). Today there are many variations in the self-identification of Bolivia's multiple indigenous groups, with significant differences between highland and lowland groups, as well as between urban and rural dwellers for historical reasons, such as state formation, and their relationships to global capitalism (more about the history of Bolivian indigenous peoples in Chapter 3).

The current constitution uses the term *indígenas-originarios-campesinos* as an overarching category (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009; see also Albó and Romero 2009, 4). Although acknowledging the danger of portraying fluid articulations as fixed categories, I attempt to explain these terminologies. The term 'indigenous' began to prevail in Bolivia during the 1980s (Postero 2017, 10). The notion of indigenous peoples (*indígenas*), which is the term used by international conventions on indigenous rights, refers, first and foremost, to those minority groups that reside in the Bolivian lowlands including Santa Cruz, Chaco, and the Amazon regions; indigenous peoples in these regions tend to self-identify themselves as *indígenas* (Postero 2007). The Aymara and the Quechua, who reside in, or have ties to, *ayllus*, self-governing territories of indigenous communities in the highlands, rather prefer to define themselves as natives, or *originarios*, a term coined by the colonial Spanish Crown to refer to such original male members of *ayllus* who had direct access to land rights (Klein 2003, 48). As a result of the 1952 nationalist revolution, many also tend to categorize themselves on the basis of their class position as peasants (*campesinos*) (Albó 2008; Postero 2007). In practice, of course, these categories are complexly intertwined and contingent. Not all necessarily self-identify with any of these categories but they may nevertheless use them from time to time tactically to make various kinds of claims, often related to lands and territories. This was particularly useful during neoliberal multiculturalism, as suggested earlier and discussed in more detail in the Bolivian context in Chapter 3. However, these concepts may also conflict with each other, as is manifested by current confrontations between indigenous groups and peasant unions discussed in Chapter 7.

During Morales's regime, questions over indigeneity have become ever-more acute, because the government has engaged in an unprecedented way in the "critical battle over the meaning of indigeneity" (Postero 2017, 10). While the rise of Morales and the MAS has been enormously important symbolically and politically, Postero (2017) has argued that indigeneity is being utilized at an increasing pace in merely performative ways. By performing indigeneity, state actors may legitimize a variety of issues that have nothing to do with indigenous liberation (Ibid.). This contradictory governmental engagement has led into "competing rights claims based on indigeneity" (Canessa 2014).

In fact, Canessa (2014) has questioned whether indigeneity is even a useful term for understanding conflicts in such contexts as Bolivia, where indigenous peoples make up the majority of the population and the state governs in the name

of indigeneity. There is a tension between the majority combination of urban indigenous populations, coca growers, and peasant migrants – who are engaged in capitalist market actions and thus interested in developing extractive industries – and minority indigenous groups particularly, but not exclusively, in the lowlands that suffer from their consequences (Ibid., 161). Consequently, Canessa (2014) suggests that indigeneity should be understood both as an inclusive national indigeneity for the majority that predominate within the process of refounding the state, and as a concept based on cultural difference utilized by minorities that need the protection of international legislations against their respective states. In this process, indigeneity also articulates with other dimensions of identity such as class and gender, thus being one irreducible dimension in the complexity of what Radcliffe (2015b) calls "postcolonial intersectionality".

Coloniality, racism, and the decolonial option

When indigenous concepts become state policy, new analytical tools are needed for their analysis. One way to conceptualize indigenous experience is through the concepts of coloniality and decolonization. Theoretical discussions of coloniality and decolonization of the state resonate with Latin American decolonial thinking (or the so-called Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality [MCD] Group) (Escobar 2010; Mignolo 2002, 2005; Mignolo and Escobar 2010; Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui 2008; Quijano 2000). The aim here is to provide theoretical openings for combining Latin American thinking on decoloniality with Foucauldian concepts of government and neoliberal governmentality. Furthermore, it is demonstrated here how these considerations are linked with views on global political economy.

Coloniality can be defined as "a term that encompasses the transhistoric expansion of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary time" (Moraña, Dussel and Jáuregui 2008, 2). These effects include "long-standing patterns of power that . . . define culture, labour, intersubjective relations and knowledge production" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 128). While Latin American thinking on decoloniality suggests that global capitalism is deeply colonial, it expands its critical inquiry from the examination of exploitative class relations to the problematization of power relations in a wider sense, including race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality. The main interest rests in unveiling the imperial and colonial nature of knowledge production and epistemologies and in assessing their effects in contemporary times. What Quijano (2000) has termed coloniality of power was a system that "organized the distribution of epistemic, moral, and aesthetic resources in a way that both reflects and reproduces empire" (Alcoff 2007, 83). The colonized were deemed naturally inferior, and "modernity and rationality as exclusively European products and experiences" (Quijano 2000, 542). This racial classification of the world population was first introduced in the conquest of the Americas and later spread through colonial expansion elsewhere. It continues, argues Mignolo (2009), one of the main figures of the MCD Group, in the imperialist nature of contemporary academic knowledge production that silences and devalues the voices of

racialized others. It also portrays certain peoples and areas of the world as bearers of knowledge and skills to improve the lives of others in need of guidance and tutelage (Ibid., 20). What Mignolo (2002) calls the geopolitics of knowledge was one attempt from the Global South to contest these exploitative epistemic stances through the elaboration of decolonial alternatives that would advance the cause of the colonized. *Vivir Bien*, and its indigenous equivalents in particular, can be perceived in this light.

The important core concept here is decolonization. In its more traditional sense, decolonization refers to the abolition of "the political control, physical occupation, and domination by one group of people over another people and their land for purposes of extraction and settlement to benefit the occupiers" (Crawford 2002, 131; quoted in Smith and Owens 2005, 288). However, despite early formal independence struggles and decolonization processes in Latin America (Slater 1998), "nothing much has changed in the world economic order since independence, in that patterns of economic power and unequal exchange remain more or less exactly as they were" (Manzo 2014, 332–3). This phenomenon has been explained through the concept of neocolonialism, used by, amongst others, Latin American dependency scholars like André Gunder Frank (1967). Many countries of the Global South continue to be inserted into the global capitalist economic system in ways that enhance their economic dependency and allow foreign nations and global actors to impose agendas that favour foreign economic, political, and military interests (Hoogvelt 1997; Young 2001).

The MCD Group perceives decolonial projects as vehicles for confronting and transforming coloniality. For Mignolo (2009), the decolonial option was an act of engaging in epistemic disobedience against the assumed universalism of Western knowledge production and its institutional groundings. According to Escobar (2010, 9), decolonization confronts two issues: first, transnational capitalism and neoliberal development thinking; and second, "discourses, practices, structures, [and] institutions . . . that have arisen over the last few hundred years out of . . . cultural and ontological commitments of European societies". Decolonial projects, Escobar (2010, 11) further suggests, aim at constructing a post-liberal society based on communal, indigenous, and hybrid sets of cultural, political, and economic practices. For instance, processes leading to the formulation of the notion of *Vivir Bien* as an alternative paradigm for state formation can be perceived in this light. Here, decolonial thinking makes linkages with critical postdevelopment scholarship (Escobar 1992, 1995; Latouche 1993; Pieterse 1998; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992). It was a scholarly school of thought that from the late 1980s onwards questioned the concept of development and sought alternatives to it. Development was generally perceived as the modernization, industrialization, technological progress, and capital accumulation inherent to worldwide capitalism. Alternatives to development were found in multiple and diverse local cultural traditions, worldviews, knowledge patterns, and epistemologies of the Global South: in social movements and indigenous, ethnic, and ecological activism at grassroots levels. Summarized best in Escobar's seminal book *Encountering Development* (1995), a need was perceived for the process of unmaking development because

it has been "linked to an economy of production and desire, but also of closure, difference, and violence" (Ibid., 214).

In the same way as Escobar was inspired by Foucault's linkages between development, knowledge, and power, Mignolo has been inspired by Foucault in his conceptual elaboration of the geopolitics of knowledge (Alcoff 2007). While Foucault's theories have been accused of Eurocentrism (a view I am inclined to support) (Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006, 250–1), the theoretical impetus of the repudiation of absolute truth claims is that it opens up the possibility for alternative local views. Foucault (1980, 85), in fact, called for the emancipation and reactivation of local knowledges as opposed to "hierarchical order of power associated with science . . . [and] the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse". However, there are also differences in thinking. While Foucault's elaborations on the pivotal role that biopolitical population control played in the emergence of the modern state focused primarily on Europe, Mignolo (2009) has demonstrated that biopolitical state technologies were also applied in colonial contexts. While intimately intertwined, what made European and colonial experiences of biopolitics different was the systematic making of racial distinctions, with colonial controlling techniques deeming black and indigenous bodies and minds inferior to those of Europeans (Ibid., 16). Consequently, as Mignolo (2009, 19–20) concludes, "racism . . . was the result of two conceptual inventions of imperial knowledge: that certain bodies were inferior to others, and that inferior bodies carried inferior intelligence". These assumptions continue to be implicit in contemporary development interventions that tend to affirm "colonial imaginaries of social relations" (Radcliffe 2015b, 8). Consequently, "development expectations owe their power and endurance as much to embedded cultural tropes as to attempts by modernization and then neoliberal governmentality to forge new types of development subjects" (Ibid.).

As a response, what Mignolo (2009, 16–17) labels the body-politics of knowledge – a bodily technology engaged in decolonizing the knowledge responsible for the very coloniality of racialized others – has emerged as a resistance and as an alternative political strategy. The question that arises here, an issue also mentioned by Postero (2017), is whether a state apparatus, such as that of Bolivia, can produce and reproduce truly decolonizing options if its origins and present-day configurations have been constructed on the basis of colonial violence, racism, and economic exploitation. I explore the possibilities and limits connected with this question through the concept of decolonial government which is developed throughout this study.

By now it has become clear that the mere cultural recognition of the colonized and racialized others taking place during neoliberal multiculturalism is no longer sufficient nor accepted in the Global South. Mignolo (2009, 3) explains that there have emerged two strategies to confront coloniality: the first being de-Westernization – a concept elaborated by Mahbubani (2001) – and the second being the decolonial option. The first is a reaction to neoliberal globalization and a capitalist economy whose rules have traditionally been set by Western actors, institutions, banks, and corporations. De-Westernization challenges this by bringing to

the fore, for example, economic actors and forms of cooperation stemming from the Global South, such as China and India as new economic superpowers, increasing South-South cooperation, and new regional and local development banks. These may not change the key structural components of global capitalism, but they do shift the emphasis of who has the say in defining the terms of global political-economic decision making. This is what connects de-Westernization and decolonial options: both reject Western hegemony in defining global political-economic rules and Western epistemic privilege in classifying peoples, assigning them rankings, and defining how the condition of others should be improved (Mignolo 2009, 3). Yet, while the former does not question modernization, growth-based economy, and modern institutions, decolonial options – whose main concern is the healing of the colonial wound effected by racism and (post)colonial violence – depart from this by claiming that "the regeneration of life shall prevail over primacy of the production and reproduction of goods at all costs" (Ibid.).

While comparing contemporary postneoliberal political transformations in Latin America, Escobar (2010, 11) makes similar distinctions between what he calls alternative modernizations and decolonial projects. The first – more prevalent at the level of states – promotes antineoliberal development models and strives towards a postcapitalist economy but does not provide many alternatives to 'Euro-modernity'. The starting point for the second – more common amongst social movements but not unknown in the state sphere – is to challenge Euro-modernity through communal and intercultural practices and so counteract neoliberalism and development (Ibid.). Examining articulations between the two, Escobar (2010, 12) discusses the potential benefits of moving in the direction of postcapitalism, post-liberalism, and poststatism in Latin America, that is, the "decentering of capitalism in the definition of the economy, of liberalism in the definition of society and the polity, and of state forms of power as the defining matrix of social organization". This may not mean their complete destruction, but the displacement of their "discursive and social centrality" (Ibid.). In Escobar's view, this transition also signals major challenges to the centrality of development in our thinking. Consequently, the approach presented here resembles Escobar's (1992) postdevelopment theorizing, taking into account the key distinction between alternative developments and alternatives to development. (For a discussion of these categories in the case of Ecuadorian *Buen Vivir*, see Villalba 2013.)

While social movements have been more closely linked to fostering decolonial projects, Escobar (2010), for example, suggests that when decolonization processes are transferred into the hands of the state, it is rather alternative modernization that occurs. Gudynas (2013) has discussed this phenomenon as "the domestication of *Buen Vivir*". Consequently, Radcliffe (2015a, 863) suggests that it is important to acknowledge an analytical difference between state-led *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* initiatives and more relational and hybrid alternatives – such as *Sumak Kawsay* or *Suma Qamaña* – deriving from such multiple actors as indigenous movements, ecological groups, and feminists, "whose relationship with the state might be tense, conflictive or outright hostile". In the case of Ecuadorian indigenous women, for example, as Radcliffe (2015b) argues, state-driven *Buen Vivir* can be perceived as "yet another colonial move to police and manage indigenous agendas" (Ibid., 274–5), while

Sumak Kawsay represents a distinctive ontology with which to counteract mainstream development and its colonial legacies. Although focusing on the internal functionings of state bureaucracy, the analysis of this book touches upon the articulations of the two by examining how radical decolonial political ideals of alternative forms of governance, or what I term governing pluralities, are being translated into bureaucratic state practices. Or is the state apparatus taming social movements and indigenous groups by converting them into disciplined masses, and under what conditions does this take place? Here the analysis comes closest to combining decolonial views and Foucauldian governmentality with a linkage to global political economy discussed in the following section.

Vivir Bien: towards more heterodox political economy?

Scholarly discussions of *Vivir Bien* can be located as operating at the complicated intersections of the multiple categorizations presented in the preceding sections. To start with the first one, the notion of *Vivir Bien* – and especially its indigenous variants, such as *Sumak Kawsay* and *Suma Qamaña*, from which the Spanish translation is perceived to originate – has often been portrayed as a decolonial option, decolonial project, or an alternative to development originating from Latin America, or from the Andes to be more precise. This cultural and ecological category has emerged as an alternative to long-term Western hegemony over defining what development is: as a resistance to, as Gudynas (2011, 445) states, "the reductionism of life to economic values and the subsequent commodification of almost everything". While Gudynas defines *Buen Vivir* as a very diverse, culturally specific, and contextualized platform for questioning the mainstream concept of development, he lists some of the core components of the term (for definitions in the Bolivian context, see Chapter 4). To begin with, he notes, it cherishes a wide variety of cultural, spiritual, ecological, and historical values outside those produced by capital. The centrality of nature as a subject is emphasized. Its concept of history is not linear, but multiple and cyclical. Instead of focusing solely on material aspects of development, it brings forth affections, feelings, and spirituality. Decolonization of Western-dominated knowledge production is considered a necessary condition for setting the stage for alternative epistemologies and ontologies (Ibid., 445–6). Consequently, Gudynas (2011, 446–7) suggests that this postcapitalist alternative to development differs not only from liberal multiculturalism (Gagnon, Guibernau and Rocher 2003; Kymlicka 1995) but also from socialist traditions (Ramírez 2010) originating in Eurocentric political thought.

   Vivir Bien is one of a wide variety of political-cultural initiatives aimed at social transformation emanating from diverse contexts of Global South. In South Africa, the well-known notion of *Ubuntu* – an abbreviation of the Xhosa proverb "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*," which translates as "a human being is a human being only through its relationship to other human beings" (Marx 2002, 52) – is said to entail such qualities as solidarity, hospitality, a sense of community, unity, and harmony. Perceived today as an ideal or an ontology of African philosophy, *Ubuntu* played a major role in the 1990s' post-Apartheid reconciliation process in which it was used to build up a sense of common postcolonial identity, memory, belonging, and

sovereignty (Fox 2011). In contemporary Rwanda, nearly 20 years after the geno-cide, the concept of *Agaciro* – a Kinyarwandan word for self-worth – is circulat-ing amongst state officials and development actors as a decolonial, locally rooted philosophical concept referencing the ideals of self-determination, dignity, and self-reliance (Rutazibwa 2014). While in principle emphasizing pluralism and heteroge-neity, the political use of these concepts in the service of cultural nationalism (Marx 2002) tends, however, to construct new antagonisms. For example, they juxtapose Western individualism and African communalism, thus portraying the West "as the source of everything negative" (Ibid., 60), leaving aside other structural issues, such as elite formation, authoritarianism, and distribution of wealth. The notion of *Vivir Bien* can also be seen to resonate with nonmaterialist, human-centred development views, such as Schumacher's (1973) so-called Buddhist economics.

The construction of *Vivir Bien* as an alternative paradigm for development is also part of the emanation of more heterodox political economies in the Global South (see Gibson-Graham 2006; Harcourt 2014). In Latin America, these attempts started with the rise of left-wing governments in such countries as Venezuela, Bra-zil, Argentina, Ecuador, and Bolivia as a response to neoliberal restructurings and nominal democratization (Panizza 2009). Termed Latin American neostructural-ism (Leiva 2008) or postneoliberalism (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012), this turn sig-nalled new, more varied articulations in relationships between states and markets. The main characteristic of postneoliberal rebuilding and reclaiming of the state has been, as Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012) argue, the introduction of social expenditure and welfare, as well as the revival of the developmentalist state, alongside growth agendas and expansion of the export economy of natural resources. The main contemporary challenges to postneoliberal alternatives in Latin America seem to crystallize in state co-option, state developmentalism, resource extraction, and the continuing dependency on the exports of natural resources (for example, hydrocar-bons that are detrimental to the environment and climate change) (Gudynas 2010; Petras et al. 2014; Veltmeyer and Petras 2014). Thus, it appears that countries propagating postdevelopment policies are caught in complicated articulations with the "real-politik of post-colonial states" (Radcliffe 2015a, 861), inscribed with deeply ingrained social and economic inequalities and little room to manoeuvre in the global political economy. Correspondingly, as Radcliffe (Ibid.) has suggested, there is an increasing unanimity amongst *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* scholars that its implementation into state policies fails to show substantial closure to the enduring quality of the development concept.

Here we come to the second set of topical conceptualizations on *Vivir Bien* presented earlier, namely those of de-Westernization, alternative modernizations, and alternative developments. Efforts to theorize the situation – addressed by a wide variety of scholars – can be found, for example, in Webber's (2011, 2016) work under the notion of reconstituted neoliberalism. Writing from the perspec-tive of historical materialism, Webber (2011) demonstrates that political-economic conditions in Bolivia have not transformed to the same extent as revolutionary discourses, implying that when social movements attain governing positions, they may legitimate, or even deepen, the interests of the ruling class. Using the

ethnographic lens, Postero (2017) sheds light on the complexity of the situation by focusing on diverse and changing positionalities and multiple contestations between diverse actors within the process of refounding the state. She claims that in today's Bolivia, citizenship and inclusion are defined more on the basis of class position than ethnicity. An emerging indigenous middle class has benefited from economic liberation, while other indigenous groups may not have. Consequently, Postero (2017, 5) argues that indigeneity has been transformed from being a site of emancipation to one of liberal nation-state building. In the process, indigeneity is co-opted by the state, whose performances of indigeneity legitimize the retaining – or regaining – of its power vis-à-vis indigenous activists, movements, and autonomy struggles (Ibid.).

While my book reaches similar conclusions in terms of state co-option, the continuation of neoliberalism, and increasing reliance on market capitalism, it approaches the situation from a different angle: rather than looking at the situation through the multiple lenses of indigenous actors, I focus first and foremost on the circulation of indigenous terminologies within state bureaucracy. Through depoliticization and a technical approach, as Radcliffe (2015a, 856) notes, even radical development alternatives are quick to transform and to blur with the mainstream, which is why analysis is needed to unveil how "exclusions, marginalization and impoverishment work themselves back in so effectively", even in the context of such alternatives as *Vivir Bien*. While Foucauldian analyses of governmental and disciplinary characteristics of development have focused predominantly on neoliberal interventions, I follow Radcliffe's (2015a, 865) observation that there is a need for detailed scrutiny of how Latin American postneoliberal development works in all its complexities, without expecting neoliberalism either to continue as business as usual or be completely transformed overnight.

Despite his criticism of historical materialism, it has been argued that "Foucault maintained a sort of 'uninterrupted dialogue' with Marx, [who] was in fact not unaware of the question of power and its disciplines" (Fontana and Bertani 2003, 277; quoted in Jessop 2006, 35). Jessop (2006, 42) has defined their relationship by saying that "while Marx seeks to explain the *why* of capital accumulation and state power, Foucault's analyses of disciplinarity and governmentality try to explain the *how* of economic exploitation and political domination". Foucault was concerned that the view of the state as the locus of class struggle was limited and, in fact, hindered the success of revolutionary processes, which is why he (1980, 60) cautioned that "nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed". While political-economic analysis provides tools for understanding and changing external dependencies and economic exploitation, it does not explain how social change (or power) becomes internalized, an issue which I find crucial if social change is supposed to be maintained over time. The Foucauldian approach of governmentality, on the contrary, focuses both on external structures and internalized forms of power (Mitchell 1999).

One way to bridge these two positions analytically may be through the application of Wallerstein's (1990) idea about the functionings of culture in the capitalist

world-system. For him (Ibid., 39), culture was, on the one hand, created to assert unchanging realities in a constantly changing world, while on the other, it justified inequalities caused by the capitalist system. Thus, culture was "the outcome of our collective historical attempts to come to terms with the contradictions, the ambiguities, the complexities of the socio-political realities of [the capitalist world-economic] system" (Ibid., 38). One of the foundational contradictions exists between universalist principles and particularist prejudices, for example, between universal human rights and the equality of citizens and structural racism and sexism. Universalism, in fact, was perceived as Westernization, which on its part equalled modernity (Wallerstein 1990, 42–7). While Marxism "privileged class relations over racial hierarchies and patriarchal and heterosexual normativity" (Mignolo 2009, 14), linkages can be found between Wallerstein's analysis of culture as serving ideological functions in the service of the capitalist world-system and decoloniality scholars who accentuate that the racial classification of populations combined with division of labour was immanent in the global capitalist coloniality of power (Quijano 2000, 536–7, 539). Both emphasize that race and class are intermingled.

Racialized knowledge making and power relations continue to be prevalent in present-day neoliberal politics and the political economy of globalization (Mignolo 2009, 18). Foucault's biopolitics demonstrated that neoliberalism extended market relations to the sphere of the individual, forcing them to become consumers in the name of improving the human condition and creating more wealth (Ibid., 20). Thus, as Escobar (2010, 41) claims, one of the greatest strengths of neoliberalism was "the entrenchment of individualism and consumption as cultural norms". Consequently, marketized cultural production of persons and communities within global capitalism (Escobar 2010) is what should be changed. Postneoliberal alternatives in Latin America have, in fact, been reactions against "excessive marketization at the end of the twentieth century and the elitist and technocratic democratization that accompanied market reforms" (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012, 3). Decolonial options – and the body-politics related to it – try to bypass this, as Mignolo (2009) suggests, by instead focusing on life itself. By examining contradictions, complexities, and contested meanings of *Vivir Bien* as a paradigm of life in Andean Bolivia, analysis in this book unravels articulations between indigeneity, state formation, and the global political economy of capitalism. While challenging understandings of development as rooted in global capitalism, using decolonial concepts, it highlights the difficulties, contradictions, and exclusions that emerge in the process of doing politics differently.

Notes

1 I have studied state formation in the context of Kenya. For more details, see Ranta (2017b).
2 Mexican indigenous thinking and movements have been influential in the spread of indigenous ideas all over Latin America.

3 Indigenous resistance struggles, coloniality of the state, and the capitalist world-system

A historical view

Bolivia is a nation of notable diversities and stark contradictions, including geographical conditions that range between the arid, rugged Andean highlands and the humid, luscious savannas and tropics of the Bolivian lowlands; a population consisting of an indigenous majority divided into more than 30 ethnic nationalities with major local and regional distinctions; and socioeconomic conditions built on inequalities, poverty, and ethnic disparities. It is not, therefore, an unlikely candidate for radical transformation. Since its independence from Spanish rule in 1825, Bolivia has been subjected to a dramatic number of coups, revolts, and revolutions (Dunkerley 1984). Despite political turbulence – or perhaps because of it – Bolivians have experienced various forms of calculated policy interventions aimed at transforming their lives. Attempts to rule from outside started with the Spanish colonial conquest and its brutalities and was followed by long periods of US interference in Bolivian affairs. Thereafter, a nationalist revolution and military dictatorships were characterized by 30 years of totalizing modernization schemes in which the nation-state acted as a regulatory agent of development; Bolivia then faced the era of economic globalization and the spread of universalist development ideas. Promoted by IFIs and other international development agencies, development policies, such as economic adjustments and poverty reduction schemes, transgressed national boundaries. Serving the purposes of global capital accumulation, development policy implemented in the Global South came to tie the governing and controlling of people into larger networks of power because "globalization – both in the sense of intensified processes of spatial interconnection associated with capitalist restructuring, and of the discourses through which knowledge is produced – is deeply infused with the exercise of power" (Hart 2002, 12).

Given the turbulent and intimately intertwined past and today, this chapter sheds light on the history of the intertwined relations between Bolivian state formation and indigenous politics by looking at the complex articulations of global, national, and local processes from colonial times to the present. The starting point here is that the history of the Bolivian nation-state can be described through three continuities: exploitative capitalist dependencies, coloniality of state institutions and practices, and contentious state-society relations. Together these historical factors have created and constantly reproduced marginalization of the country's diverse

indigenous populations. However, it is shown that indigenous peoples' claims for lands, territories, and natural resources, as well as the revival of indigenous self-governance, have a long and active historical trajectory through the medium of resistance struggles. Indigenous goals for gaining self-determination through territorial sovereignty and plural political formations – a central element in understanding the politics of *Vivir Bien* – have been at the centre of these struggles ever since the colonial conquest. It is argued that while the emergence of the notion of *Vivir Bien* into state politics reflects a long historical continuum of conflictive state-society relations and indigenous resistance, it also appears as a response to the specific historical situation of contemporary global capitalism.

Colonial governance and the making of racial differences

The Bolivian nation-state came into existence as a colonial construction. Comprising, amongst other areas, the present-day Bolivian highlands, it was preceded by *Qullasuyu*,[1] which was the southern corner of the four main *suyu* – sectors of the Inca state called *Tawantinsuyu* – literally "the state of four corners" (Pärssinen 1992, 250–6, 2015, 265–6).[2] Although contemporary Bolivian indigenous discourses often represent *Tawantinsuyu* as the ideal of indigenous civilization, historical evidence shows that to a large extent it was based on conquest and patterns of colonization. Canessa (2000, 118), for example, has written that "tens of thousands of people regularly moved hundreds of miles to pay tribute in mines or cities, or to colonise on behalf of the state". By the time of the arrival of the Incas, there were more than ten major Aymara nations (*naciones*) in the Andean highlands (Bouysse-Cassagne 1986). However, despite the conquest of the Aymara by the Inca state, and the territorial spread of Quechua groups, the Aymara retained command over their own languages and large parts of their social, economic, and political systems (Ibid.). The High Plateau was multicultural: in addition to the Aymara and the Quechua, Puquina and Uru speakers lived in the region (Korpisaari and Pärssinen 2011).

Many Aymara nations were spatially and politically divided into two complementary parts called *urqusuyu* and *umasuyu* that were further subdivided into regions connected to the main villages (*marka*). These *marka* regions, in turn, were normally divided into yet another dual social and territorial arrangement called *hanansaya* (upper half) and *hurinsaya* (lower half), or *alasaya* and *majasaya* in Aymara, and yet again into minor units called *ayllus* (Murra 1975, 193–223; Pärssinen 1992, 351–62; Platt, Bouysse-Cassagne and Harris 2006, 90–101). Each *ayllu* had territory in different ecological zones along the Andean mountain range that produced different crops and food staples (Murra 1978, 2002 [1956]). Furthermore, there existed an elaborate system of economic exchange and reciprocity between them (Ibid.). This ecologically and economically vibrant system was maintained through hegemonic power relations, gifts, kinship, and shared labour obligations called *mit'a* (D'Altroy 2002; Murra 2002 [1956]; Pärssinen 1992). Inside the *ayllus*, at least in a few cases, political authority was rotational amongst male-female pairs (See, for example,

Yampara 2001, 69). While in today's indigenous discourses, *ayllus* are often represented as synonymous with reciprocal, complementary, and harmonious community life, historical evidence shows that despite such factors as kinship ties, low social stratification, and common rights to land, class structures and governing hierarchies did exist during the eras of both the Aymara nations and the Inca state. Regional chiefs and *ayllu* leaders had access to private property, and they extracted the labour force outside *ayllu* structures (Klein 2003). Nevertheless, this kind of social organization is often portrayed as an early example of community-based participatory politics (Vanden and Prevost 2012, 183).

The Spanish conquest of the Inca state of *Tawantinsuyu* (ca. 1438–1533) led into expeditions to the Bolivian highlands already in December 1533 (Bedregal Villanueva 2015, 73). As with other colonies, Bolivia was built to benefit the Spanish conquistadors as a new market area via economic exploitation of natural resources, mainly minerals such as silver and, later, tin, as well as land and labour (Klein 2003). In this historical setting, characterized by "an excess of surplus transfers to the core of the world economy" (Webber and Carr 2013b, 10), lies the roots of the peripheral, and dependent, position that many Latin American countries still occupy in the global political economy. Rather than ensuring the well-being of local populations, the building of elite-led administrative bureaucracies and institutional structures that later came to represent the governing structures of the Bolivian state supported the Spanish imperial structure and the early birth of a capitalist economy. Nash (1993, 1) has described this by stating that "the Spaniards took enough silver from [Bolivia's] mines to build a transatlantic bridge to Madrid, but left nothing in the mining centers from which these riches came".

Vanden and Prevost (2012, 38–9) have written of Latin American colonial-state organization in the following way:

> Political power was highly concentrated in colonial governmental structures . . . The colonial elite that emerged amassed considerable wealth and power . . . The Viceroy was . . . the King's representative and could truly rule. Executive, military, and some legislative powers were combined in such a way as to establish the cultural model of the all-powerful executive that has permeated Latin American political . . . culture to the present day.

Economic elites used the colonial state both to the advantage of the Spanish Crown and for their own personal gain by intervening directly in political affairs to advance their own economic interests. Herein lie the origins of political and bureaucratic clientelism and patronage, common in Latin America even today, in which the elite in public office tied their personal economic interests and networks to that of the nation (Dezalay and Garth 2002, 23). A practice that originated in the Spanish *encomienda* system and later consolidated in large estates (*haciendas*) as a relationship between the *patrón* and his (indigenous) labourers, Vanden and Prevost (2012, 198) have defined the patron-client relationship as "the special ties of personal loyalty and commitment that connect a powerful person with those below him".

External conquest was in parallel with the construction of so-called internal colonialism. This term, launched in Latin America by Pablo Gonzáles Casanova (1965) and popular amongst Bolivian and Latin American social scientists, has been used by dependency scholars such as Frank (1967) to explain regional inequalities within countries that are seen to have resulted from the unevenness of capitalist development and state interventions. In the case of Bolivia, the term has often involved an ethnic dimension. It has been used to explain economic and social inequalities that arose in specific areas and territories as a result of ethnic and racial domination of one group by another (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 106–7). Although indigenous populations were in theory entitled to royal protection on the basis of their "inferiority", their relationships with colonial rule were, at heart, exploitative (Postero 2007, 28). Indigenous peoples in the Andean highlands were drawn into a system of forced labour at the mines and later at large estate *haciendas* that complemented the mining system (Ibid.). This was partly justified through a racial discourse of purity of blood, a *sistema de castas* that originated in Spanish cultural traditions and was for three centuries an institutionalized part of a colonial rule in Latin America that ranked whites with pure blood at the top, followed by mixed-race people in the middle, with indigenous peoples and blacks filling the lowest echelons (See, for example, Martinez-Alier 1989). Exploitation occurred at multiple levels, as Postero (2007, 29) has noted: "Exploitative economic practices were enabled by the juridical definitions and, in turn, reinforced the resulting discursive racial categories, naturalizing particular forms of domination."

In terms of governing indigenous populations, the Spaniards (following the model of Inca rule) at first opted for a system of indirect rule (*encomienda*) that maintained as much as possible of *ayllu* structures and governing mechanisms through the mediation of local indigenous leaders in order to control the abundant indigenous labour force and to spread the Catholic religion (Klein 2003, 33–4). This enabled *ayllus* to maintain a certain amount of territorial control and self-determination (Albó 2008, 23). Some decades later, to answer to the severe decline of the indigenous population, an increasing need for labour in silver mining, and the rise of a local Spanish elite, Viceroy Toledo (in office 1569–1581) initiated a massive process of *reducciones* within the established *encomienda* system. At the same time, he allowed commercial redistribution of fertile lands to large estates and regrouping of *ayllus* into *comunidades originarias*, that is, indigenous communities with larger permanent settlements and clearly assigned lands that were easier to govern and tax directly (Toledo 1975 [1570–1575]; Klein 2003, 35–6). This standardized spatial organization and new taxation system effectively forced the indigenous peoples of the highlands to integrate into the market economy (Klein 2003, 37). It also marked the start of a long series of land reforms that effectively destroyed *ayllu* territories.

Neither the Inca state nor Spanish colonial rule was able to colonize the vast Bolivian lowlands fully (Klein 2003, 20, 36). However, the Jesuit and Franciscan missions were eager to organize seminomadic hunters and gatherers of the lowlands into fixed communities. While these communities were relatively

self-governing and autonomous from the state, it was the Church that functioned as a para-state entity: it utilized indigenous labour, provided evangelization and religious schooling, and imposed new authority structures called *cabildos* – systems that still function in many lowland indigenous communities today and are considered indigenous forms of organization (Yashar 2005, 195, 205). Gustafson (2009, 45) describes the semiautonomous arrangements of lowland Guaraní peoples as subservient autonomy: local leaders entitled as captains served as labour contractors and intermediaries between indigenous communities, missionaries, and *hacienda* owners, thereby transforming the social structures of the Guaraní into hierarchical structures of indirect rule.

In addition to the *ayllus* and *cabildos*, a third group resembling today's peasantry emerged in Quechua-speaking valleys, especially in the area of Cochabamba. Given the dislocation of many *ayllus* into communities, social organization started to change and the number of *originarios* – a term used by the Crown to refer to original male community members who had community land rights as well as tax and *mit'a* obligations – to diminish. The number of indigenous peoples who had no access to lands and no tax and *mit'a* obligations increased, becoming an itinerant underprivileged group (called *forasteros*, or 'foreigners') who either sold their labour to large Spanish *haciendas* or performed free labour within communities in return for a piece of land (Klein 2003, 48–9). By the late colonial period, the majority of indigenous community organizations in Cochabamba had been replaced by landless labourers (*colonos*) on Spanish *haciendas* who gradually became an important class of small-scale farmers (Ibid., 61). With time, the peasantry began to be treated as tax- and rent-paying individuals with access to capitalist markets and individual landownership, while indigenous groups were treated as collectivities whose relation to the land was innate and culturally defined. Given today's distinctions in Bolivia between *originarios* of the highlands, *indígenas* of the lowlands, and peasants, it is important to note that these divisions derive from historical structures of the *longue durée*.

Struggles between liberal and communal practices

The influence of the French Revolution, the collapse of the imperial government in Madrid in 1808 under Napoleon's armies, and the independence of the United States and Haiti in the Western hemisphere spurred a wave of decolonization across Latin America (Klein 2003, 89–90). The early independence of many Latin American countries has meant that contemporary discourses of decolonization differ from those in Africa and Asia, where processes of decolonization and the construction of postcolonial states have been more recent phenomena (Slater 1998, 653). The nineteenth-century republican era was a period of political anarchy because of military and civil *caudillismo*, which effectively enhanced authoritarian political rule and an unstable political environment all over Latin America for the decades, if not the century, to come (Valtonen 2001, 522–6). *Caudillos*, the archetypical charismatic leaders not unknown in present-day Latin America, were strong, dictatorial rulers at local, regional, or national levels (Vanden and Prevost 2012, 184).

The fact that the president and the executive were assigned major political power in the constitution, along with the limited number within the population with political rights (wealthy men), led to continuous political battles and coups within the relatively narrow elite (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003, 13).

In terms of state formation, the liberal phase, which lasted from 1899 until the 1930s, represents a period of laissez-faire state organization during which "the feeble state was nothing more than the repressive apparatus of the oligarchy" (Casanovas Moore 1990, 33). While economic elites and tin barons withdrew from direct political decision making, lawyers and politicians did continue to act in the interests of the extremely narrow, trade-oriented, capitalist elite. By the end of the 1920s, 90 per cent of the tin mines, the main foreign export at the time, were owned by three Bolivian families (Valtonen 2001, 528). The relations between the elites and the rest of society continued to be based on internal colonialism in such ways that "internal colonial hierarchies reproduced colonial legacies of ethnic, economic and political domination and subordination" (Qayum 2002, 279).

Initially, new republican governments depended on the Indian head tax, which is why they regularly renewed the commitment to support indigenous communities' corporate landholdings and self-governing authority structures (Klein 2003, 105). Yet, as elsewhere in Latin America, liberal ideas started to take over from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, with increasing amounts of foreign capital pouring into the country. Control of lands and territories by local communities contravened liberal notions of individual rights and property and the capacity to buy and sell land (Albó 2008, 24). Consequently, the Disentailment Law (*Ley de Exvinculación*) was promulgated in 1874 to privatize collective lands and to commoditize them (Mendieta Parada 2008, 58–61). As a result, "ancient communities were fragmented as *haciendas* 'captured' the land and labour of entire communities" (Qayum 2002, 297). This marked the start of ongoing battles between liberal and communal ideas and forms of life in Bolivia that, according to Rivera Cusicanqui (1990), has marked much of the country's history. In response to the rapid liberalization of the economy, the creation of the mining export industry, and the massive expansion of the *hacienda* system, a wave of indigenous uprisings took place. Local and regional rebellions against the capture of lands, taxation, and the interference of the Spanish in the election of local leaders had broken out periodically during the colonial period, the most notable being the massive Túpac Amaru Rebellion (1780 – ca. 1782) claiming independence (Klein 2003, 73–8). With the aim of gaining indigenous self-governance, conflicts erupted periodically again from the late-nineteenth century until the nationalist revolution in 1952. They included a movement called *Apoderados Generales* which consisted of highland indigenous authorities who, from the 1880s, fought against the *Ley de Exvinculación* (Ticona Esteban 2003). Initially aligned with the Liberals against the Conservatives, there was also a massive indigenous uprising in 1899 under the leadership of indigenous leader Pablo Zárate Willka, who aimed to seize back the lands of indigenous communities (Condarco Morales 1983; Mendieta Parada 2008).

From the 1930s onwards, political and economic landscapes changed all over Latin America. First, the collapse of external trade as the result of the Wall Street

crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression in the US and Europe turned Latin American economies inwards, augmenting the role of the state and the strategy of import substitution industrialization (ISI). Second, the collapse of external trade weakened the role of trade-oriented economic elites, thereby opening political spaces for new actors (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003, 16). In Bolivia, the Chaco War (1932–1935) against Paraguay over vast south-western territories that were believed to contain large oil reserves united the middle class, workers, and indigenous peoples who, for the first time, had been intimately drawn into national affairs (Valtonen 2001, 529). After the war, former forced labourers refused to go back to the *haciendas*, formed the first peasant unions, and started to fight for the ownership of lands, especially in the Cochabamba areas (Albó 2008, 27). The earliest sign of the emergence of new kinds of politics was the nationalization of the US-owned Standard Oil Company in 1937 (Casanovas Moore 1990, 33). With the rapid growth of socialist ideas, indigenous political struggles started to mingle with left-wing political thinking. One of the first examples of combining indigenous and Marxist ideologies amongst Bolivian intellectuals was the work of Tristan Marof, a founder of the Trotskyite worker's party *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR), who had been greatly influenced by the thinking of Peruvian intellectual and activist José Carlos Mariátegui. He combined indigenous demands that lands be returned to indigenous communities by the *haciendas* with workers' demands that the mining sector be retrieved from the private sector and returned to the hands of the state. The first indigenous congress was held in 1945 with the specific aims of demanding land reform, rural education, and the elimination of forced labour (Klein 2003, 184–5).

The nationalist revolution and the uprising of *katarismo*

Inspired by the Mexican revolution, the development of a new nationalist ideology culminated in the 1952 Bolivian nationalist revolution. A massive process of nation-state building was kicked off: universal suffrage and education were initiated, the mining sector nationalized, and agrarian reform launched (Grindle 2003; Morales 2012). Relying on state-led growth and public investments, the Bolivian nation-state strived to be a strong and centralized agent of planning and control of strategic economic sectors, labour, and development initiatives: the *desarrollista* state (Morales 2003; Webber 2011, 67–8). This followed regional trends promoted by *cepalistas* and other dependency scholars throughout Latin America (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003, 16). Despite US resistance, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA; later on, ECLAC with the Caribbean added; CEPAL in Spanish) started to recommend an import-substituting economy as the Latin American regional economic policy from the 1950s. It was based on the so-called Prebisch-Singer thesis which argued that trade relations between industrialized and developing countries were becoming disadvantageous for the latter over time, due to their concentration on exports of primary commodities (Vanden and Prevost 2012, 160). The solution was to enhance national industrial processes, to lessen imports from abroad, and to increase the regulatory role of the state

in economic affairs. However, in comparison to other Latin American countries, Bolivia maintained a heavy reliance on the exploitation of natural resources, with only minor changes in industrialization and import tariffs (Morales 2003, 216).

Despite the nationalist revolution and the ISI policy, Bolivia's external dependency remained strong. The first US development programmes in Latin America had been piloted in Bolivia; during the 1950s, it became the largest recipient of US development aid in Latin America and the highest per-capita recipient in the world; by 1958, one-third of Bolivia's national budget was financed directly by US funds (Klein 2003, 218). The US crusade against communism led them to lavishly support the main agent of the nationalist revolution, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, MNR), a political party comprising members of the middle class, under the leadership of midrange military personnel. In turn, the US demanded support for the operations of US (oil) companies in the country and, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it also dictated new fiscal policy to Bolivia (Klein 2003, 219–21). The so-called Triangular Plan, which was supported by the US, West Germany, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), was elaborated to enhance the state mining sector, thus giving a boost to the emergence of new state economic elites (Casanovas Moore 1990, 37). The notable role of the US in Bolivian political and economic affairs was a clear demonstration of the continuation of neocolonial relations between Bolivia and other countries.

In terms of political and social impact, the most fundamental feature of the nationalist revolution was what the Bolivian historian René Zavaleta (2008 [1986]) has called the formation of the national-popular or the hegemony of the masses, an alliance, or cogoverning arrangement, between the emerging national bourgeoisie and the popular classes, including workers, miners, and peasants. This resulted in long-term histories of corporatist state building and political clientelism (Gray Molina 2003, 350). In the early 1950s, the MNR supported the creation of the Bolivian Workers' Union (*Central Obrero Boliviano*, COB) in which miners' unions that cogoverned the nationalized mines through the *Corporación Minera de Bolivia* (COMIBOL) played a major role (Klein 2003, 213–14). Following US foreign policy interests in Latin America (Webber and Carr 2013b, 13), the MNR had also supported the organization of indigenous communities into state-sponsored peasant unions in order to avoid radical communist mobilizations. In the name of unifying the nation, the state strived to assimilate indigenous peoples into the comprehensive national project via universal suffrage, education, and land reform, as well as by identifying them through their class position as peasants rather than as indigenous people (Albó 2008). This has resulted in the "continuing ambiguity between class and ethnicity" (Postero 2007, 11), visible in state politics and indigenous discourses even today.

The repressive military dictatorships (1964–1982)[3] that suppressed the COB and took over the state from the MNR, however, continued with, and intensified, corporatist arrangements with peasants under the so-called military-peasant pact (*pacto militar-campesino*) (Gray Molina 2003, 350; Klein 2003, 223). The state-led peasant unions lost their independence, serving as the cogoverning popular

wings of the military. Klein (2003) has argued that with the confiscation of *hacienda* lands by the state, the granting of these lands to indigenous peoples through their peasant unions (*sindicatos*) and communities, and the agreement that these lands could not be sold individually, indigenous peoples became a relatively conservative political force for decades, especially in the Andean highlands. Only the massacre of peasant strikers who had been protesting against decreasing wages, massive inflation, and the elimination of food price subsidies in 1974 put an end to the pact (Casanovas Moore 1990, 45; Gray Molina 2003, 350; Kohl and Farthing 2006, 52). In 1979 and 1980, the two main peasant unions active in Evo Morales's current regime were finally founded as organizations independent of state interference: the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB) and its women's branch, the *Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa"* (FNMCB-BS)[4] (Canessa 2000, 127; García Linera, Chávez León and Costas Monje 2008).

The political programme of the CSUTCB focused both on economic improvements in the lives of peasants and on the liberation of indigenous nations (Albó 2008, 39–40). The second political thesis of the CSUTCB, launched in 1983, introduced the concept of plurinationalism as a political discourse. As its main political goal, it stated,

> We want total liberation and construction of the plurinational society which maintains national unity but also combines and develops the diversity of Aymara, Quechua, Tupí-Guaraní, Ayoréode, and other nations. There cannot be a true liberation unless the plurinational diversity of our country and diverse forms of self-governance by our peoples are respected.
>
> (Quoted in Albó 2008, 40)

The emphasis on indigenous concerns amongst peasant unions reflected the rise of a new wave of indigenous movements. They had started to appear in the 1960s and 1970s especially amongst the highland Aymara which, particularly the communities in La Paz and Oruro, had been less influenced by state-led peasant unionism than indigenous peoples in the Quechua valleys where ex-*hacienda* lands had been redistributed to *sindicatos* (Yashar 2005, 166–7). Disappointed with the state modernization project and the imposition of peasant structures from above, mobilization around indigenous identity first appeared in La Paz amongst secondary and university students from Aymara communities. Inspired by Fausto Reinaga's (2001 [1970]) writings about the Indian revolution, these movements (*Movimiento 15 de Noviembre* and *Movimiento Universitario Julián Apaza*, MUJA) dealt with racial discrimination and marginalization that Aymara students and intellectuals experienced in their new urban environment and within the education system (Yashar 2005, 168). Although the nationalist revolution had produced its first indigenous intellectuals and academic scholars, paradoxically "these same changes produced an educated and vociferous class of activists with enough symbolic capital to challenge state ideology" (Canessa 2000, 129). These early indigenous movements came to be known as *indianistas* that promoted indigenous culturalism. Their main

message, which was also endorsed by political parties (such as the *Partido Indio de Bolivia*, PIB, and the *Movimiento Indio Tupak Katari*, MITKA, that, in 1979, succeeded in getting the first ever indigenous representative, Julio Tumiri, into Parliament), was that the oppression of indigenous peoples was basically a result of ethnic and racial discrimination rather than class relations (Yashar 2005, 168–9).

In 1973, a group of intellectuals announced the *Manifiesto de Tiwanaku*, which was the first document that publicly proposed the reconstruction of the Aymara nation (Canessa 2000, 124). The document criticized progress and development brought from abroad by the state elite, asserting that a "development concept imported from abroad . . . does not take our deepest values into consideration . . . No respect has been shown for our . . . own ideas about life" (Tumiri Apaza 1978, 21). Additionally, the document advocated for the independence of peasant movements from state control and aspired to have indigenous peoples' own political instruments in order to "elaborate our own socio-economic policies based on our cultural background" (Ibid., 28). According to Canessa (2000), the launch of the *Manifiesto de Tiwanaku* initiated a second phase of indigenous movements known as *kataristas*. This conglomeration of various "Aymara-oriented nationalist groups" derived its inspiration from Túpac Katari, one of the late-eighteenth-century Great Rebellion leaders (Ibid., 124–5). While they also drew their inspiration from ethnic and cultural concerns, they combined it with those of unequal class relations and the status of peasantry (Yashar 2005, 169–70). The role of indigenous university intellectuals was crucial here as well, but the main difference between *indianistas* and *kataristas* was that they began by creating their support infrastructure through grassroots peasant unions and rural indigenous communities (Ibid., 169, 171). Signs of indigeneity, such as indigenous community decision-making patterns, the indigenous flag *wiphala*, and the slogan *volveré y sere millones* associated with Túpac Katari were built upon and combined with peasant discourses (Albó 2008, 38). Albro (2005, 434) has called *kataristas* "an earlier incarnation of Bolivia's contemporary social movements".

The global flow of indigenous ideas

Kataristas were supported by many international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), such as Oxfam GB, Oxfam USA, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (NOVIB), and Bread for the World (Yashar 2005, 175). Specific organizations and cultural centres within the *katarista* movement participated actively in international forums, including the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), which was the first international indigenous peoples' organization to be granted NGO status by the Economic and Social Council of the UN in 1974 (for the work of Bolivian delegates, see Tumiri Apaza 1978, 52–5). The role of foreign anthropologists in the promotion of indigenous affairs has also been prominent. Some hints of the early alignment of anthropologists in the Bolivian Indian liberation can be found in a collection of *katarista* manifestos containing one of the statements made by anthropologists at the First Meeting of Anthropologists in the Andean Region, held in 1975. It states that anthropologists should

support indigenous political goals by providing studies of indigenous cultural values which would enhance indigenous struggles to obtain "their systems of self-government [and] the ownership of each Indian community and its territory" (Tumiri Apaza 1978, 4).

The case of indigenous movements in the Bolivian lowlands represents the clearest example of the influence and significance of global networks for indigenous political mobilization against their respective nation-states. Until the nationalist revolution, most indigenous groups in the lowlands had retained relatively strong autonomy and self-governance vis-à-vis the Bolivian state (Gustafson 2009; Postero 2007; Yashar 2005). With what Yashar (2005, 194) calls a corporatist citizenship regime, the situation changed because "the state sought to capture the Amazon – both to defuse land pressures in the Andes and to promote grand scale development". While the state had brought Andean indigenous peoples into corporatist arrangements through land reform and peasant unionism, indigenous peoples in the lowlands were still largely perceived as "primitives" and, consequently, as wards of the state (Ibid., 193–4). The 1953 land reform that distributed ex-*hacienda* lands to peasants in the highlands was never implemented amongst the lowland peoples (Crabtree 2005, 56).

The most serious threat to lowland indigenous geographic spaces, and the access of their inhabitants to natural resources such as water, animals, and forest products, was posed by the Colonization Law (1966). It massively increased both the migration of poor peasants (*colonos*) from the Andean highlands to the valleys and lowlands, such as the Yungas and the Chapare where land was more abundant, and the number of large-scale landowners, especially in Santa Cruz and Beni (Yashar 2005, 194–5). The colonization programmes that were implemented between 1958 and 1985 awarded between three and five million hectares of land north of Santa Cruz, in Chapare, and in Beni to migrants from the highlands (Childress 2006, 474). The *Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia* (CSCB),[5] one of the backbones of Morales's contemporary regime, was founded in 1971 as the union movement of *colonizadores*, peasants who had migrated in search of land and new forms of income generation, such as that provided by the production of coca leaf (Albó 2008, 57). The challenge that the process of colonization posed, and still poses, to local indigenous autonomy has been a source of continuous tension between the state, peasant migrants, and local indigenous groups for decades (a contemporary example of this is the case of the Isiboro Securé National Park and Indigenous Territory [*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Securé*, or TIPNIS], discussed in Chapter 7).

By opening the Amazonian lands to colonization, previously marginalized areas and livelihoods were more intimately drawn into global processes. One of these was the cocaine trade and another was large-scale capitalist development in the lowlands, which enjoyed lavish economic support from the US (Casanovas Moore 1990). During the 1970s, a massive amount of capital was transferred from military dictators to new regional elites engaged in agribusiness (Crabtree 2005, 49). A new lowland elite began to appear as "ex-*hacendados* from the highlands whose lands had been appropriated in the agrarian reform, mining families

with compensation money from the nationalization of the mines, and all kinds of wealthy speculators made lucrative investments in sugar and cotton cultivation" (Postero 2007, 47–8). However, it was the 1980s that saw the aggressive penetration of loggers, ranchers, transnational corporations engaged in agribusiness (mainly soya), and the oil and gas industries into indigenous lands. These developments posed threats to the livelihoods and cultures of indigenous peoples in the lowlands and led to their further displacement from ancient lands and territories (Yashar 2005, 195).

In response, the *Central Indígena de Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB)[6] was founded in 1982 to act as the confederation of indigenous peoples in the Amazon, Chaco, and Santa Cruz. When the CIDOB was founded, it was the first Bolivian indigenous organization to deploy identity politics primarily based on indigeneity rather than class. According to Postero (2017, 30), it sought indigenous recognition and collective landownership without radically challenging capitalism. The creation of CIDOB was supported by a group of anthropologists (led by German anthropologist Jürgen Riester) and sociologists working for *Apoyo para el Campesino-Indígena del Oriente Boliviano* (APCOB), an NGO that drew its inspiration from the *Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana* (AIDESEP), an Amazonian indigenous organization in Peru (Albó 2008, 41; Postero 2007, 49). Research activities on the part of the APCOB were directed at promoting indigenous peoples' political activism on the basis of their own sociocultural beliefs, customary law, authority structures, and ethnic identities (Yashar 2005, 201). Another NGO working in the region was *Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado* (CIPCA), which, despite its initial commitment to assisting indigenous causes through peasant unions, later started to support the organization of Guaraní peoples through indigenous authority structures. During the 1980s, the CIDOB was inspired by the Ecuadorian *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE), and it tried to initiate similar coordination and cooperation between indigenous peoples in the Bolivian Andes and the Amazon; until the massive 1990 March for Territory and Dignity (*Marcha por Territorio y Dignidad*), however, these attempts failed (Yashar 2005, 202).

The indigenous march from the Amazon to the capital La Paz was a result of indigenous peoples' struggles against the aggressive invasion by logging companies in the Bosque de Chimanes, by cattle ranchers in the Isiboro Securé and amongst the Sirionó indigenous group, and by colonizers in the Isiboro Securé (Yashar 2005, 210), the very same location of today's TIPNIS conflict. What unified the often internally conflictive lowland groups was the defence of their lands and territories in the face of transnational colonizers. Eventually, the CSUTCB joined the CIDOB on the march, marking the first time when all indigenous groups were united in their political cause and when lowland indigenous peoples took a place in national political imaginaries (Postero 2007, 49). The demands made by the CIDOB included first and foremost the recognition of, and rights to, indigenous territories and lands, but also to organizational autonomy, self-governance, and customary law (Yashar 2005, 203, 215). As a result, President Paz Zamora

granted seven indigenous territories to indigenous peoples in the lowlands (Postero 2007, 49).

Amongst the highland Aymara, a similar organization based on indigenous discourses and political demands on the basis of indigeneity was founded in 1997: the *Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu* (CONAMAQ). In comparison to the lowlands, the historical situation with regards to highland indigenous populations had differed due to the stronger impacts of agrarian reforms and peasant unionism. During the period of land reform (1953), feudal debt servitude was abolished and the collective properties of some indigenous communities were partly restored (Morales 2012, 579). However, major conflicts over lands emerged between those communities that maintained parts of *ayllu* traditions and those ex-*hacienda* lands that were redistributed to peasant unions (Albó 2008; Yampara 2001). During the late 1980s and especially the 1990s, when Bolivia experienced a sudden proliferation of indigenous affairs in state reforms and amongst NGOs, various local movements emerged in the Andes to revitalize demands for territorial self-governance and plural forms of local authority structures. One of the major promoters of this cultural turn was the research collective and NGO *Taller de Historia Oral Andina* (THOA) (Albó 2008; Stephenson 2002; Yashar 2005). It comprised many of those Aymara intellectuals who, as youngsters, had organized themselves in the *indianista* movements (Stephenson 2002, 105). For them, the main aim was the "reconstitution of the *ayllu* as political act of decolonization" (Ibid., 111). In addition to THOA, various Aymara, Quechua, and Uru communities had started to congregate in the 1990s in order to reestablish *ayllus* as "egalitarian and Pre-Columbian kin-based and collectively owned territorial space" (Fabricant 2013, 164). The principal goal of the CONAMAQ was to coordinate these efforts.

The THOA, as well as the CONAMAQ, was supported in its reinventing of indigenous traditions by development agencies and NGOs including Oxfam América, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Inter-American Foundation, and *Fondo Indígena* (Albó 2008, 55; Stephenson 2002, 110; Yashar 2005, 188). Indigenous culturalist tendencies had become attractive due to neoliberal restructurings and new global and state interest in indigenous discourses. Both CONAMAQ and CIDOB formed close relationships of cooperation and dialogue with national and regional governments, as well as foreign donor agencies. To give an example, in 1994, the CIDOB signed an agreement with the MNR-led Subsecretariat of Ethnic Affairs to work on policies and legislation (Postero 2007, 52). The CONAMAQ was also willing to cooperate with the government and, prior to the 2003 Gas War (discussed later in this chapter), for example, some of its leaders were identified as supporting the conservative, right-wing government of ex-military dictator Banzer (Albó 2008, 66).

Drawing on Charles Hale's notion of authorized Indians, Albó (2008, 56) situates identity-based indigenous organizations, supported by anthropologists, NGOs, and international aid agencies, within the category of *indios permitidos*, while peasant unions have historically represented out-of-control Indians (*indios alzados*) who were perceived as rebellious, radical, and violent. In this situation, peasant unions started increasingly to use indigenous terminologies in the promotion

of their political goals. Until the early 1990s, however, CSCB's discourse, for example, had been oriented towards modernization schemes and union activism with no traces of indigenous discourses (Albó 2008, 62).[7] These are important remarks considering Morales's background in peasant unionism and contemporary conflicts over extractive economies.

The neoliberal turn

From the mid-1980s, Bolivian political economy again changed drastically, shifting from decades of military dictatorships and repressive governments to representative democracy and party politics, accompanied by an opening of its markets to free trade and economic globalization. These were regional trends resulting from the 1982 debt crisis which effectively brought an end to both military dictatorships and state-led development planning in Latin America (Dezalay and Garth 2002; Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003, 27–30; Panizza 2009).[8] In global terms, Latin American regional economic trends coincided with the crisis of Keynesian economics in Europe and the US and the respective rise of the conservative governments of Thatcher and Reagan, which had a strong impact on their foreign policy (Vanden and Prevost 2012, 169). Furthermore, the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union helped generate the ethos that there were no alternative ideologies to free-market liberalism (Ibid.).

Bolivia served again as an experimental ground for international economic and development policies, being one of the first countries in the world to adopt SAPs (Grindle 2003). The SAPs were economic and financial reform packages that were required to be implemented by heavily indebted countries in order to qualify for loans from IFIs (Boås and McNeill 2003; Riddell 2007). In response to hyperinflation, a dramatic collapse of the world market price of tin, and a piling up of foreign debt that Bolivia was increasingly unable to manage, the newly elected MNR government came up with the framework for the New Economic Policy (NEP; also known as *Decreto* 21060) in 1985 (Klein 2003, 244–6; Kohl and Farthing 2006, 65–70). From the mid-1990s, the NEP policy, which had focused on macroeconomic stabilization, a decrease in inflation rates, and cutting down governmental expenditure, was further enhanced by an accelerating pace in privatizations of the largest state-owned companies, which were being sold to transnational corporations (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 107–8). The privatizations, inscribed in the new legislation (*Ley de Capitalización*) and forcefully demanded by the IFIs, the US, and other development donors, touched upon such important sectors as oil and natural gas (Bolivia's main export at the time), telecommunications, electricity, airlines, and railroads (Ibid., 108–9).[9] Bolivia shifted rapidly from being one of the most nationalized economies in the region to being one of the most liberalized (Crabtree 2005, 18).

Opening the national economy to transnational corporations and the introduction of universalist development models radically changed the nature of the Bolivian state. In the post-Cold War ideological environment, it was perceived that the "tension between left and right [was] replaced by a tension between the global

and the local, and between the market and civil society" (Boås and McNeill 2003, 156). Consequently, one of the fundamental features of neoliberal governmentality promoted through policy reforms was the diminishing role of the state in economic and social spheres vis-à-vis global and local actors. The aim was to create a minimally regulated economy open to foreign investment, and a minimal role for the state combined with the new conception of a proactive, multicultural citizenship (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 84). Although the Bolivian case resembled orthodox Washington Consensus principles in many ways, the wave of privatizations was complemented by multicultural reforms (discussed in more detail in the next section).

After Bolivia submitted to loan conditionalities, IFIs and international development agencies were eager to support both Bolivian privatization schemes and social programmes. During the years 1994–1998, the World Bank supported the privatization process to the tune of US $357 million in credits directed at institutional, economic, municipal, educational, and social reforms. European bilateral development agencies heavily supported such issues as decentralization and indigenous and gender affairs, while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) financed judicial and regulatory reforms (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 86–7). In 1999, Bolivia ranked twelfth in per-capita aid recipients in the world (Klein 2003, 250). Bolivia had become highly dependent on, and indebted to, multilateral and bilateral development actors (Mollinedo and Velasco 2006), which significantly increased their role in Bolivian economic and development policy making through loan and debt relief conditionalities. The influence of foreign development actors in dictating policy became so powerful in Bolivia, as in many other aid-dependent countries, that it has been argued that it was "virtually impossible . . . to choose any other path of national development" (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003, 28).

In 2001, Bolivia was also one of the first countries to undertake the steps outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), required by the World Bank and the IMF for debt relief within the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme (Booth and Piron 2004; Morrison and Singer 2007).[10] Craig and Porter (2006) locate the emergence of the so-called post-Washington Consensus in the financial crisis of the late 1990s, especially that of the Asian Tigers. In comparison to highly criticized SAPs, PRSPs emphasized civil-society participation and national ownership and made an explicit link between macroeconomic adjustment, debt relief, and poverty reduction (Ibid., 77–8). Nevertheless, they have been criticized for their macroeconomic and political conditionalities; for increasing the influence of IFIs over the internal issues of sovereign states; and, despite their rhetoric of participation and ownership, for ignoring specific political, economic, social, and cultural contexts (Gould 2005; Peet 2003; Steward and Wang 2003). The launching of the *Estrategia Boliviana de Reducción de la Pobreza* (EBRP) was preceded by a massive *Diálogo Nacional* consultation process with municipalities and NGOs within the institutional framework of decentralization and the Popular Participation Law (discussed in more detail in the following section) (Booth and Piron 2004, VIII). However, as PRSPs became conditionalities for

obtaining any concessional assistance all over the Global South (Morrison and Singer 2007, 722), the World Bank and the IMF clearly called the shots in their elaboration. Critical civil-society actors were marginalized from consultations.

Multicultural policy reforms in the 1990s

Amidst major neoliberal restructuring of the Bolivian economy and state, indigenous issues came to the fore in state reforms. The introduction of the global free-market economy coincided with the upsurge of identity concerns worldwide (Appadurai 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Trouillot 2003). The year 1993 was named the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, while the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples started in 1994. An important regional culmination point for indigenous peoples in Latin America was the celebration of 500 years of resistance to colonialism and conquest in 1992 which, in Bolivia, sparked initiatives encouraging international networking and national political participation (Healey 2009). During the same year, Guatemalan Maya activist Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012b, 5). In Bolivia, the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity, which unified the indigenous peoples of the lowlands and highlands for the first time, brought major national and global pressures for the Bolivian governing regimes (Postero 2007, 49). In response, Bolivia was one of the first countries in the world to adopt ILO Convention 169 on indigenous rights in 1991 (Ibid., 51).

Concerns for what Gray Molina (2003, 355) has termed pluri-multi politics and the construction of the pluri-multi nation started to circulate within mainstream politics. In the 1993 presidential campaign, the presidential candidate for the MNR, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, referred to Bolivia as the nation of nations, thereby responding to indigenous demands for plurinationalism (Albó 1994, 56; quoted in Canessa 2000, 128). When elected, he chose, as the first indigenous vice-president of the country, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, the leader and parliamentarian of the CSUTCB-influenced *katarista* political party *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari de Liberación* (MRTKL), which combined elements of indigenous culturalism and peasant unionism. Instigated by Vice-President Cárdenas, *katarista* ideas of a plurinational state were inserted into state affairs, although the *katarista* movement itself had already split into numerous small and insignificant movements and parties (Canessa 2000, 127). In 1994, the Bolivian constitution was rewritten and, for the first time, it stated Bolivia to be a multiethnic and pluricultural nation and included mention of indigenous rights to territories, natural resources, and their own values and identities (Postero 2007, 52).

A wave of privatizations and reforms of the state administration were accompanied by a series of pro-indigenous reforms. Also labelled neoliberal multiculturalism (Hale 2002) or state-sponsored multiculturalism (Postero 2007), the latter included the establishment of collective land titling as part of land reform (*Ley del Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria*, INRA, 1996), bilingual and intercultural education within education reform (*Ley de Reforma Educativa* 1994), and the enhancement of local level political participation through administrative

decentralization and the Popular Participation Law (*Ley de Participación Popular* 1994).[11] Albó (2008) has argued that the inclusion of indigenous components in neoliberal reforms was made in order to consolidate neoliberal state policies and SAPs by giving them a more humane image. Gustafson (2009) has endorsed Albó's argument by suggesting that pro-indigenous reforms were undertaken in order to avoid social unrest at a time of massive unemployment, rises in food prices, and cuts in social services.

Mid-1990s pro-indigenous state reforms have had a major impact on the contemporary state transformation process in many ways. The introduction of bilingual intercultural education has not only enhanced the elaboration of indigenous knowledge and epistemologies but also opened up forums within indigenous NGOs and communities for political mobilization on the basis of these alternative forms of thinking (Gustafson 2009). Meanwhile, land reform and the process of decentralization had two interrelated, yet contradictory, impacts. On the one hand, indigenous ideas of self-governance materialized to some extent through the entitlement to indigenous territories (*Tierras Comunitarios de Origen*, TCOs), especially in the lowlands and through increasing indigenous participation in the main organs of municipal politics known as *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base* (OTBs) (Albó 2008, 49–54). On the other hand, the increasing participation in local politics facilitated the inclusion of indigenous peoples in state affairs over time (Albro 2005; Van Cott 2008). This observation seems to coincide with the suggestion that "in some contexts [neoliberalism] open[s] up spaces for indigenous challenges to, and participation in, local and regional policy implementation" (Laurie, Andolina and Radcliffe 2005, 473).

Lowland indigenous peoples had high hopes for the 1996 land reform, which was highly criticized amongst the highland groups as a neoliberal privatization scheme. Through land titling, indigenous groups in the lowlands succeeded in obtaining recognition of their territories and collective ownership of lands through the TCOs, while peasant groups were less successful in this (Crabtree 2005, 56–7). Rather, they organized themselves through municipal OTBs, and major conflicts of interest emerged between TCOs and OTBs (Albó 2008, 54). The 1953 Agrarian Law had stated that peasants could occupy lands that were not in productive use and that they could make legal claims on them to land-reform authorities. With the support of IFIs, the 1996 INRA reform changed this by seeking private property rights, which made the land use of many small-scale peasants illegal. Indigenous groups, for their part, were able to claim lands and territories collectively in the name of indigeneity (Crabtree 2005, 56–7).

How then did neoliberal restructuring appear compatible with identity concerns and indigenous political goals? The first issue to be raised is what Paulson and Calla (2000) call the individualizing dimension of neoliberal state formation. According to them, "this dimension produces subjects who fit into social categories such as gender or ethnicity". While the corporatist developmental state had classified people in terms of their collective class position as workers or peasants, now fragmented identity formations, individual liberties, and responsibilities had become common parlance. According to Schwarzmantel (1998, 165), a so-called

politics of difference has emerged because "the power of 'class' as a collective subject . . . has been eroded". The powerful role of trade unions, which had been at the core of Bolivian corporatist politics for centuries, was disarmed with the privatization of state enterprises and the consequent unemployment of tens of thousands of workers from the mining sector, industries, schools, and state administration. The subsequent displacement of class, mentioned by Comaroff and Comaroff (2000) as a central feature of millennial capitalism, resulted in the loss of collective demands for redistribution of productive relations, lands, and wealth. Although the emphasis on the importance of identity politics is potentially beneficial for indigenous peoples, there is a danger of reducing indigenous issues to mere recognition rather than demanding redistribution between indigenous peoples and others. And this, indeed, is exactly what happened in Bolivia. While indigenous issues were ever-more present in policy discourses, promoted by neoliberal governments and international donor agencies alike, deteriorating economic conditions and poverty rates remained alarming.

Second, a key element in neoliberal restructurings was the withdrawal of the state from economic and social affairs. This neoliberal strategy of shifting state powers and duties to local levels through decentralization, a process that was undertaken in many countries of the Global South with the support of IFIs and development agencies, resembled Rose's (1999) idea of government through community. Through the process of decentralization, major state responsibilities and 20 per cent of the national budget were transferred to municipalities, where the tasks of the community were executed through mechanisms of participatory planning (Healy and Paulson 2000). This was the major issue in which neoliberal discourses of the withdrawal of the state coincided with indigenous political interests in indigenous self-determination. Indigenous peoples were happy to regain some form of self-governance, and international donors approved the shrinking of the state. The same has occurred elsewhere. In the case of New Zealand, Larner (2000, 18), for example, noted that "neo-liberals and some Maori found themselves in unexpected agreement on a key theme: namely, the dangers of continued dependency on the state".

Yet, while the Bolivian state outsourced its economic and social affairs to transnational and nongovernmental actors, it did not lose its cogency politically. The Bolivian state was "pro-market, but by no means anti-state" (Gustafson 2009, 161). Although the responsibility for the provision of social services was increasingly being shifted from the state to municipal governments, the Bolivian government did not lose its interest in governing and controlling its population and territory. Goldstein (2004) has suggested that the Law of Popular Participation functioned as a tool through which state governmentality and power was disseminated in a subtler way than through force to areas that had not previously been effectively governed by the state. In this way, the state entered even those potentially dangerous (indigenous) municipalities which were centres of resistance against the central power. The aim was to make conflictive indigenous masses more disciplined through self-governance and by rendering community technical via policy and legislation.

The evolvement of the MAS as a political instrument

While indigenous peoples have actively mobilized throughout Bolivia's history, their political uprising intensified from the mid-1990s through both party politics and movement activism. The first initiatives emerged amidst the regional celebrations of 500 years of resistance to Spanish conquest in 1992 when the Assembly of First Nations was inaugurated (Healey 2009, 95). An additional regional spark for indigenous mobilizations was enhanced by the launching of the idea of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in 1994, which effectively brought the case of Zapatista indigenous resistance in the Mexican Chiapas to the attention of the world (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012b, 3). Furthermore, the booming of Bolivian protest movements and street actions coincided with escalating antiglobalization movements all over the world, including the US and Europe. Together with the FTAA protests across Latin America, Bolivian movements were inspired by the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO), the establishment of the *Association pour une Taxation des Transactions financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens* (ATTAC) against free trade, the launch of international fair trade and debt relief campaigns, and the emergence of new civil-society forums such as the World Social Forum (WSF) (Mayorga and Córdova 2008, 17–18, 34).

Institutional reforms, such as the process of administrative decentralization, and constitutional reform in which the proportional representation system was complemented by a single-member district system, opened up forums for indigenous participation through regionally based political parties (Van Cott 2005, 70–1). The Assembly for the Sovereignty of Peoples (*Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, ASP) was founded in 1995 and ratified in 1996 at the congress of the CSUTCB as the political instrument for coca-growing peasants and some other segments of the indigenous and peasant movement (Webber 2011, 59–60). In 1997, the ASP gained approximately 4 per cent of national votes under the banner of the United Left (*Izquierda Unida*, IU). Because of internal power struggles within the ASP,[12] a group of Evo Morales's followers split off from the ASP, founding the Instrument for the Sovereignty of Peoples (*Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, IPSP) in 1999. When the national electoral court denied the IPSP the status of a political party, members adopted the legal registration of an old, nonfunctioning party, the *Movimiento al Socialismo*, in order to participate in the national elections as MAS-IPSP (Van Cott 2008, 53).

The birth of the MAS as a political instrument initially served the interests of coca-growing peasants. Combined with the ongoing cocaine boom in the US, the SAPs and the NEP policy further enhanced a process in which tens of thousands of unemployed Aymara and Quechua miners migrated to the Chapare region in search of a living (Sanabria 1993). Governmental zero coca policies and outright militarization of the area as the result of the United States' 'war on drugs', resulted in years of violent conflicts between the army, the police, and coca growers' unions (Crabtree 2005, 35–9). Approximately 200,000 people depended directly on coca-growing activities and suffered from income losses because of the eradication policies executed by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and because

of the largely unsuccessful alternative development activities funded by USAID (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 158). With the pressure from the US, the eradication of coca became a major conditionality for Washington Consensus loans and development aid (Ibid., 80). This came to be viewed as a major intrusion into Bolivia's internal affairs by local farmers, peasant unions, and social movements, generating resistance amongst them (Arce 2000, 46). Peasant unions successfully tied the defence of coca leaf to global indigenous discourses; it was argued that US coca eradication conditionalities were an assault against ancient indigenous cultural traditions and national cultural heritage. "If among themselves the Chapare coca growers often self-identify as '*campesinos*'," wrote Albro (2005, 439), "nationally and internationally [they] highlight their indigenous heritage." Furthermore, coca was tied to discourses of conserving natural resources as a national patrimony that was being threatened by the influence of foreign political and economic interests.

Simultaneously, the founding of the peasant-indigenous political party was a reaction to so-called pacted democracy. Since the return to representative democracy in the mid-1990s, three major political parties – the MNR, the right-wing *Acción Democrática Nacional* (ADN), and the Centre-Left *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) – collaborated in a political 'pact' in terms of sharing political power, political positions, and public-sector jobs, while trade unions were deprived of their previously important role in cogoverning arrangements (Grindle 2003, 337–8; Mayorga and Córdova 2008, 20–1).[13] Party coalitions were needed in order to implement highly unpopular SAPs and other neoliberal conditionalities. Salman (2007) has called this a process of democratic deconsolidation whereby liberal and conservative political parties in favour of Washington Consensus policies co-opted state power for themselves. Many felt that political parties were just puppets serving the interests of IFIs, international development agencies, and transnational corporations. With the founding of their own political instruments, indigenous peoples and peasants demonstrated a deep distrust in party politics and a need for new forms of political representation (Van Cott 2003).

Two major mass mobilizations paved the way for the further political rise of the MAS. The first was the Cochabamba Water War (2000), which originated in resistance to the privatization of the water and sanitary systems of Cochabamba, Bolivia's third-largest city and located in an important agricultural valley. Under pressure from the World Bank, the Water Law awarded exclusive water distribution rights to a transnational company leading to sharp rises in water tariffs and confiscation of community water systems supplying small-scale, irrigation-dependent farmers and neighbourhood organizations (Assies 2003; Kohl and Farthing 2006; Olivera 2004). The massive popular uprising that ensued comprised irrigation farmers, workers' unions, coca growers, students, and even the Catholic Church and the urban middle class. The Gas War (2003) shifted contentious movements to El Alto, an impoverished and speedily growing city – in fact, Bolivia's second-largest city – of rural Aymara migrants surrounding the capital La Paz on the Andean High Plateau. The MNR government under President Sánchez de Lozada complied with the plan of allowing a transnational consortium to ship Bolivian natural gas through Chilean harbours to the US in order to meet its energy

needs (Crabtree 2005, 98). The vast majority of Bolivians opposed this, particularly as, for historical reasons, there was a strong hostility towards Chile.[14] Both wars symbolized the culmination of fatigue and anger with the influence of foreign economic and political interests and the strong role of transnational corporations and IFIs in national affairs. As such, conflicts and contestations were "a response to the perceived violation of Bolivia's 'national sovereignty'" (Albro 2005, 446).

In fact, both 'wars' were also celebrated as victories for indigenous Bolivia. In their counterdiscourses, peasant unions and indigenous organizations sought inspiration and legal backup from ILO Convention 169 on indigenous rights. In the case of the Water War, "a rallying point for . . . [the] cross-sector and largely city-based movement was the defence of the use and distribution of water as a collective cultural heritage based on indigenous rights, or *usos y costumbres*" (Albro 2005, 435). It was argued that natural resources were the gifts of the indigenous *Pachamama*, Mother Earth, and thereby unsuitable for commercialization (Olivera 2004). The capitalist commodification of such vital natural resources as water was represented as a violation of indigenous collective rights and their cultural values of communitarianism (Assies 2003, 16–17). Although drawing on global indigenous discourses, indigenous cultural discourses were portrayed as a locally grounded alternative to global capitalism. Linking national concerns and indigenous identity brought transformation: "Indigenous advocacy now [took] the form of broader – and plural – civil society coalitions rather than pursuing a marginal, if more exclusively autonomous, identity politics of its own" (Albro 2005, 436). Indigeneity had thus appeared as an essential element in national political discourses.

In the 2004 municipal elections, the MAS made a political breakthrough by becoming the largest party, sweeping traditional political parties off the political map with each of them receiving less than 5 per cent of the votes (Van Cott 2008, 54). The MIR and the MNR, the main pillars of Bolivian politics for decades, almost disappeared from the political map overnight. This was preceded by the 2002 elections in which the MAS had already become the political opposition to be reckoned with. Evo Morales came a very close second in the presidential elections to mid-1990s neoliberal reformer Sánchez de Lozada (Albó 2008, 72). The MAS had expanded onto the national scene, taking advantage of the wide dissatisfaction with the traditional political parties and ever-growing conflicts and social protests (Van Cott 2008, 54). After 2005, a new political grouping, *Poder Democrático Social* (PODEMOS), became the main oppositional grouping to represent liberal and conservative sectors of the country, especially lowland business elites, receiving more than 20 per cent of the vote in the 2005 national elections (Van Cott 2008, 56). In the general elections of 2009, it was replaced by the Centre-Left coalition party *Plan Progreso para Bolivia – Convergencia Nacional* (PPB-CN), which received 26 per cent of the vote. The 2014 general elections again sparked the emergence of new oppositional groupings, with the coalition party *Unidad Democrática* (UD) gathering 24 per cent of the vote.

According to Albro (2005), the MAS used to be a mixture of political party and social movement. It utilized both streets and Parliament as political spaces, engaging with both direct protest actions and parliamentary negotiation tactics,

not to mention its current governing role at the executive level. At least in the early stages of Morales's regime, the organizational structure of the MAS more closely resembled that of social movements than traditional political parties. At the midlevel, it has been organized into ad hoc thematic cabinets or public participatory assemblies, and at the local level, it coincides with local peasant unions (Albro 2005, 441). Consequently, the almost-hegemonic presence of the MAS at the centres of state power has blurred the relations between the governing regime and social movements and between the state and society. Morales has been keen to remind people that the MAS is not a traditional political party, but the political instrument that represents social movements (Postero 2017, 31).

In 2004, the major indigenous organizations and peasant unions – the CSUTCB, FNMCB-BS, CSCB, CIDOB, and CONAMAQ – signed a mutual cooperation agreement, *Pacto de Unidad* (Unity Pact), with other important social groups. The aim of the Unity Pact was to bring indigenous and peasant demands into a unifying national discourse: marginalized social movements would be better equipped to promote their political agendas as a common front. Established on the basis of the so-called *Estado Mayor del Pueblo*,[15] a coalition of almost 20 social movements and trade unions founded in the heat of the 2003 conflicts (Albó 2008, 73; Albro 2006, 414), the Unity Pact aimed to provide a common agenda for the elaboration of the Constituent Assembly and the nationalization of natural resources, issues that social movements were now pushing forwards forcefully. While it succeeded in bringing together lowland and highland indigenous organizations, peasant and indigenous concerns, and social movements active in water and gas struggles, time has shown that unity has been "more an aspiration than a fact" (Postero 2017, 47). Yet, despite the dispersed ideological orientations and political goals that led to the eventual rupture of the Unity Pact in 2011 (more detailed discussion in Chapter 7), movements, organizations, and unions within the Unity Pact provided the most fundamental support during the presidential election of Evo Morales and the MAS in December 2005. In 2007, they also served as the basis for the establishment of the president-led *Coordinadora por el Cambio* (CONALCAM), the coordinating body between social movements, the executive, and the legislative branch, discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

In addition to the five indigenous organizations and peasant unions mentioned earlier, the movement base of the MAS has been diverse, or "eclectic", as Postero (2017, 31) puts it, comprising "campesinos, the landless movement, leftist lawyers, women's groups, some lowland indigenous leaders, and assorted Trotskyites". Dunkerley (2007, 134), for his part, has vividly described the MAS's early executive as an "entirely inexperienced cabinet comprised of indigenous activists (of all ages), sixty-something left-wingers from the 1970s, and forty-something radical intellectuals from the 1990s". Salman (2009, 102) has described the new political elite in terms of three categories: (1) intellectual and bohemian *blanco-mestizos* mostly comprising progressive university professors, NGO staff members, journalists, and the like; (2) members of a wealthy urban indigenous population of mostly Aymara and Quechua origins; and (3) social movement leaders that "prefer 'movements' over 'institutions', and 'struggle' over 'governance'". However, the most long-standing division, although blurred and complex, inside the MAS seems

to reside between indigenous activists promoting their own world visions – or what I call indigenous culturalists, meaning that they are promoting indigenous causes principally through discourses of cultural difference rather than, for example, class struggle – and left-wing politicians, scholars, and activists advancing state developmentalism and industrialization (Postero 2017, 34–9).

In the following chapter, I move into discussing how the notion of *Vivir Bien* has developed and how it has been defined and used in many diverse, and often contradictory, ways by this very heterogeneous group of actors involved in the process of change.

Notes

1 This term has various spellings. *Qullasuyu* is used, for example, by the main highland indigenous organization *Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu* (CONA-MAQ). The historian Herbert S. Klein (2003) uses the term *Kollasuyo. Collasuyu* is also a common spelling.

2 Another ancient civilization that is very important for contemporary indigenous discourses is Tiwanaku (ca. 300–1150). It comprised the western parts of Bolivia, as well as parts of contemporary Chile and Peru. For more on Tiwanaku, see Korpisaari and Pärssinen (2011). The ruins of the historical and ritual centre of Tiwanaku are located near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, approximately 70 kilometres from the capital La Paz. In addition to state institutions in the capital, Morales's regime holds major state celebrations collaterally at the location, including the inauguration of Morales's presidential terms (2006, 2010, 2015) and the wedding of Vice-President García Linera in 2012. State rituals are said to be held according to indigenous Aymara customs, honouring the *Pachamama*. However, some have deemed them as merely performing indigeneity (Postero 2017).

3 Over the course of military dictatorships, the US was outraged by the 1969 nationalization of US-owned Gulf Oil by General Ovando, while openhandedly subsidizing ideologically suitable dictators such as Hugo Banzer, who promoted direct US investments and was heavily supported by the Bolivian industrial sectors, especially in the lowlands. By financing 20–30 per cent of yearly budget deficits, the US helped like-minded dictators hold on to power (Casanovas Moore 1990, 39, 41).

4 In 2007, it was renamed the *Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa* (CNMCIOB-BS).

5 The CSCB changed its name to *Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales de Bolivia* (CSCIB) in 2010.

6 Currently known as the *Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia*.

7 For more on the use of indigenous identity for enhancing peasant claims in the Andes, see Yashar (2005). For a parallel process in Chiapas, Mexico, see Tsing (2007, 47).

8 Chile was an early exception with the alliance between the military regime of General Pinochet and neoliberal economists and technocrats called the Chicago Boys (for more on the case of Chile, see, for example, Dezalay and Garth 2002).

9 Despite foreign pressure, Paz Estenssoro's government (1985–1989) had resisted the privatization of the largest and most strategic state-owned companies. The Paz Zamora government (1989–1993), for its part, enhanced the privatization of smaller state-owned companies, nearly 30 of which were purchased by mainly Bolivian investors (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 107).

10 HIPC is a World Bank and IMF-led initiative, started in 1996, whose aim is to cancel the international debts of the poorest countries of the Global South. For more on the HIPC in Bolivia, see Mollinedo and Velasco (2006).

11 In general, these reforms were typical of neoliberal economic restructurings: the land reforms established legislative norms for private landownership (Albó 2008, 52), and the process of decentralization shifted decision making and service provision from the central state to municipalities (Postero 2007, 53).
12 Conflicts emerged between Alejo Véliz, Felipe Quispe, and Evo Morales because of ideological disagreements and personal *caudillismo* (Webber 2011, 60). Between 1998 and 2000, Felipe Quispe, the head of the CSUTCB, started to distance the CSUTCB from the electoral participation of the MAS-IPSP led by Evo Morales (García Linera, Chávez León and Costas Monje 2008, 121). In the end, Quispe founded his own party.
13 Launched in 1985, the political pact between the MNR and ADN was called *Pacto por la Democracia*. From 1989 until 1993, there was a *Pacto Patriótico* between the MIR and ADN, while after that, the MNR adopted *Pacto por el Cambio* with its allies (Grindle 2003, 337).
14 The War of the Pacific (1879–1884) with Chile led to the loss of the Bolivian maritime connection. It has been portrayed as the first Bolivian resource war against geopolitical interests and economic imperialism of foreign nations (Morales 2012, 572–3).
15 The list of social movements belonging to it can be found in the *Manifiesto del Estado Mayor del Pueblo Boliviano* (2003).

4 Contested meanings of *Vivir Bien*

This chapter focuses on the multiple definitions, interpretations, and understandings of *Vivir Bien* amongst indigenous activists, scholars, and social movements, as well as amidst state policies, discourses, and actors. *Vivir Bien* is portrayed as a conglomeration of politically, socially, and culturally constructed, performed, and articulated ways through which politics is negotiated in today's Bolivia by a multiplicity of actors. Consequently, the concept is highly prone to contestations over its meanings. What perhaps describes it the best is, indeed, its heterogeneity and diversity. Gudynas (2013, 196) has emphasized that *Vivir Bien* deriving from Bolivian *Suma Qamaña* is distinct from the *Buen Vivir* deriving from Ecuadorian *Sumak Kawsay*. In the case of Ecuador, as Radcliffe (2015a, 863) has noted, there is a discrepancy between state-policy elaborations of *Buen Vivir* by Correa's government, and multiple understandings of the indigenous Kichwa concept of *Sumak Kawsay* by a diverse and heterogeneous strand of critical social movements. Additionally, indigenous peoples in both Bolivia and Ecuador are a quite varied group with many worldviews, epistemological stances, and cultural expressions. Not all indigenous political and cultural goals revolve around *Vivir Bien*, nor do all Aymaras and Quechuas have an interest in exploring *Suma Qamaña* or *Sumak Kawsay* (Gudynas 2013, 196). In Bolivia, as is shown by recent ethnographic studies, the notion of *Vivir Bien* entails various meanings at the level of distinct communities, some of them resembling mainstream views of development, and others rather distant (Mamani et al. 2012).

However, as this chapter's analysis demonstrates, both indigenous actors and state actors (indigenous and nonindigenous) attempt to unify and solidify discourses of *Suma Qamaña* and *Vivir Bien* for their own purposes. Sometimes these purposes meet; at other times, they collide. However, a clear unifying theme is the portrayal of these terminologies as expressions of decolonizing efforts to counter Western development (Gudynas 2011, 443) because, as it is often suggested, "the very idea of development itself is a concept and word that does not exist in the cosmovisions, conceptual categories, and languages of indigenous communities" (Walsh 2010, 17). After this common starting point, its definitions, interpretations, and understandings turn into a political battle over meanings – and resources.

In terms of indigenous actors, I am particularly concerned with demonstrating how deeply rooted political demands – for example, claims for lands, territories,

and natural resources, as well as the revival of indigenous self-governance – are represented through strategic essentialism. This chapter argues that the prominent importance of constructing alternative indigenous terminologies is to enhance indigenous political struggles for self-determination through autonomies and indigenous territories, a phenomenon that I call governing pluralities. Discourses of cultural difference and cultural distinctiveness seem to offer a legitimization for the very political process of constructing a discursive and ideological vision of indigenous self-determination through territorial sovereignty and plural political formations. In the sphere of the state, I argue that despite diverse and often conflictive policy discourses emerging in the process of Bolivian state transformation, the notion of *Vivir Bien* is portrayed as a unifying local alternative to universalizing development discourses and neoliberal globalization. However, although state discourses emphasize plurinationalism, that is, a political vision of a state governed through a plurality of indigenous nations, *Vivir Bien* appears to amount to an empty signifier legitimizing a variety of contradictory causes.

Suma Qamaña as cultural difference

As already noted, in Bolivia, many of the discourses of *Vivir Bien* are perceived to derive from the Aymara concept of *Suma Qamaña*. Simon Yampara, an Aymara scholar and activist, who started to write about Aymara knowledge systems, cosmologies, and *naciones* in the early 1990s (Yampara 1993; Torrez and Yampara 1998), can be considered as one of the main protagonists in the elaboration of the term. He shared with me his understanding of *Suma Qamaña* in his office of indigenous affairs at El Alto City Council on a busy January afternoon in 2009:

> I started to think about [*Suma Qamaña*] in the mid-1980s [when] I attended processes consecrating marriage [in Aymara communities]. Marriage is a kind of a journey; it provides one a passport to *pacha*, which is an interminable [cosmological] time and space. The family of the bride and the family of the groom, as well as all their kin, give advice on how the couple can live well. They conclude the ceremony with a sort of a paradigm of life by saying "*Suma Qamaña*", that is, a suggestion to live well . . . You can hear this same saying in almost all [Aymara rituals]. This is where I caught the idea that *Suma Qamaña* is a paradigm of life present in everyday practices.

Yampara's discussion of the origins of the concept associated it with the everyday ritual practices of Aymara communities in the Andean highlands. It was the guiding principle, an ideal, for harmonious life involving the family, kin, and community. Therefore, it was portrayed as regulating the social organization of the community. Yet achieving full social identity (Harris 1982, 63) – that is, becoming *jaqi*, the status of an adult or a human being acquired on marriage between men and women in Aymara social structures (Estermann 2006, 65; Medina 2006b [1999], 269) – is not a purely social affair. Through successful fulfilment of community duties and responsibilities – often based on rotational reciprocal patterns

and practices – adulthood opens up a passage to *pacha*, the cosmological principle and organization of the universe, mentioned by Yampara in the aforementioned quotation.

But the notion of *Suma Qamaña* is not merely about social relations and cosmological principles. This became clear when Yampara continued to explain yet another aspect of the meaning of *Suma Qamaña*, while the busy halls of the city council – crowded with white-collar officials, salespersons of all sorts, and indigenous groups from the neighbouring countryside – buzzed around us:

> My origin is in the *ayllu*. Until the seventies, there was a constant conflict with an ex-*hacienda*, whose attempts at expansion affected the *ayllu* lands. One community leader told me: "We have to defend our lands, the lands of *ayllu*. The *ayllus* are not of contemporary making; for thousands of years we have been born of these lands; it is just recently that our lands have been stolen." *Ayllu* was [economically and ecologically] self-sufficient. *Ayllu* is a *jathacolca. Jatha* in Aymara is a seed.[1]*Colca* is storage, a nest, a stock of natural resources and wealth. We talk daily with the animals, we talk with the land, that is our relationship . . . At that moment I understood the meaning of lands and natural resources for the paradigm of life as *Suma Qamaña*.

Yampara's further description of the meaning of the concept brought up the fundamental importance of lands and territories for the achievement of *Suma Qamaña*. For the Aymara, "land is paramount; humans must serve the land both directly by cultivating it and through worship of the telluric spirits" (Harris 1982, 48). The state of *Suma Qamaña* signifies harmony and balance between all the characteristics that define the *ayllu*: cosmologies, rituals, social and political organization, economy and production, and territory. If one of the characteristics is missing, the *ayllu* suffers from imbalance; that is, poverty and *vivir mal* ('bad living') (Yampara 2001, 72). Politically, therefore, it was implied that the achievement of *Suma Qamaña* would not be possible without attaining indigenous territorial self-governance. Furthermore, references to lands and territories suggested an interdependent relationship between humans and the nonhuman ecological environment, thus underlining ecological sustainability as one of the core characteristics of *Suma Qamaña*.

From the 1960s until the 1980s and beyond, there was a strong current of cultural ecology within Andean anthropology that focused on the examination of vertical ecosystems (Mitchell 1994, 43). The so-called vertical archipelago, a term coined by Murra (2002 [1956]), referred to the tradition of Andean peoples who use various ecological zones across the Andean mountains, valleys, and lowlands for ecological and economic exchange; in a parallel manner, this system also determined the formulation of their social organizations and political institutions. As a result, contemporary characterizations of *ayllus* as vertical ecosystems, the harmonious adaptation of indigenous peoples to nature, and their supposedly ecologically sustainable lifestyles derive from this tradition. In Yampara's writings, indigenous *ayllus* and nations have, indeed, been portrayed as reciprocal, holistic,

harmonious, and community oriented. This "Andean matrix of civilization", there-fore, appeared as a contrast to the "Western matrix of civilization". Crucial here is Yampara's division of these civilizations into two knowledge systems: one based on *Suma Qamaña*, and the other on "development-progress" (*desarrollo-progreso*) (Yampara and Temple 2008, 176–8). He explained the differences between the two in the following way:

> When I returned to the countryside after university studies, I could not under-stand the *ayllu* with the tools I was given by the university. Class struggle, Marxism, socialism, capitalism, liberalism – they did not explain anything; people's lives [in Aymara communities] had different paths . . . The paradigm of life of our [indigenous] ancestral . . . matrix is *Suma Qamaña*, whereas the paradigm of life of the Western . . . matrix is development . . . People don't talk about development; they rather talk about *Suma Qamaña*; that is, well-being and harmony.

Yampara's turn towards ideas of cultural difference was, therefore, explained by the discrepancy that he felt between his university studies and everyday life in his *ayllu* of origin. Both Marxist class struggle and state modernization agen-das received fierce criticism from Yampara, who concluded in the interview that "capitalism and socialism . . . both derive from the same Western matrix". Reinaga (2001 [1970]) had, for example, proclaimed that in addition to "Yankee imperialism", Marxism-Leninism enhanced dependency relations through mental colonialism, thus proclaiming an antagonism between indigenous culturalists and left-wing activists. According to Yampara, the Western matrix of civilization sepa-rates individuals from communities and from nature; draws on private property, competition, and accumulation of capital; and creates unequal productive relations between the capitalist ruling classes and subservient working classes (Yampara and Temple 2008, 176–8).

Similar juxtaposing of opposites, even to the use of the same concepts, is repre-sented in the works of Javier Medina, a self-termed Washington Consensus tech-nocrat, who can be considered one of the early nonindigenous elaborators of such indigenous terminologies as *Suma Qamaña* and the Guaraní concept of *Ñandereko* in Bolivia. When I met Medina for an interview at his home, he told me that his long-term work experience with World Bank–financed social funds (*Fondo de Inversión Social*), the Law of Popular Participation, and the national dialogue of the PRSPs had made him realize that technical solutions to development do not work if indigenous worldviews and traditions are not taken into account. As a result, he had developed a massive body of texts related to encounters between the Western world and indigenous ideas (2006b [1999], 2000, 2001, 2002a), including books written for the German Organization for Technical Cooperation (GTZ – today known as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenar-beit [GIZ]) – on *Suma Qamaña* (2006a [2001]) and *Ñandereko* (2002b), reveal-ing the early involvement of foreign development agencies in the elaboration of alternative development terminologies through ethnodevelopment or multicultural

neoliberalism. In his book on *Ñandereko*, Medina defines the term in similar ways to the historian and anthropologist Bartomeu Melià (1988, 1989), who perceived it as the harmonious way of life whose main components entail reciprocity and a search for fertile, cultivable lands and territories (*tierra-sin-mal*). Just like *Suma Qamaña*, it emphasizes the importance of ecological sustainability, landowner-ship, and territorial sovereignty for the Guaraní. *Ñandereko* appeared for the first time in the Guaraní dictionary, *Tesoro de la Lengua Guarani*, composed by Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya in 1639 (Medina 2002b, 68). It is today portrayed in political discourses as the Guaraní representation of the notion of *Vivir Bien* and is inscribed, for example, in the Bolivian constitution.

Xavier Albó, whom I met early in 2009, is a Jesuit priest and public intellectual in Bolivia and an expert in linguistics and anthropology, who relates the notion of *Suma Qamaña* to the traditions of reciprocity in Aymara communities, which, in his opinion, involved numerous practices: community labour (*ayni*), exchange of gifts and services inherent in the yearly agricultural cycle, the organization of community celebrations and rituals, the organization of marriage festivities and becoming an adult (*jaqi*), and the elaborate rotational system of *cargos* (positions of authority and decision making). In linguistic terms, Albó explained that the meaning of the Aymara word *suma* is 'pleasant' and 'good', as well as 'excellent' and 'perfect', while *qamaña* refers to the verb 'to live', 'to reside', and 'to take care of each other'. Together they entail both social and ecological dimensions: that of living in harmony with family, kin, and community, and also with the physical surroundings of *ayllu* lands and territories. A person who fulfils his or her responsibilities and duties towards the *ayllu* is understood to be rich and living a good life, because he or she is surrounded by a web of social, economic, and spiritual relations and has the capacity to live with others (*convivir*) in mutual support. Therefore, *Suma Qamaña* connotes a condition of coexistence and interdependence between com-munity members, nature, and the world of beliefs (see also Albó 2011). When I met Albó, he had been especially busy, having been approached by David Choquehu-anca, the Minister for Foreign Affairs (more on him in the following sections), for the elaboration of indigenous terminologies for the constitution.

At our meeting, Albó noted that there is a tendency to idealize such indig-enous notions as *Suma Qamaña*. It is "a utopia attached to the past", Albó noted, also explaining the importance that the nurturing of positive – and sometimes romanticized – visions of the past have for indigenous peoples who have continu-ally been "pressured, colonized, and disregarded". To an extent, classifications and juxtapositions based on dualisms between Western and indigenous worldviews are *tout court* remnants of the structuralist past of anthropology. A structural-symbolic strand linked ecological questions to more explicit examination of Andean cos-mological and ritual orders and their social implications for indigenous communi-ties (Bastien 1978; Bouysse-Cassagne et al. 1987; Girault 1988; Isbell 1985; Platt 1982; Urton 1981). Many of these accounts portrayed an image of internally coherent Andean communities in which social organization, political-economic organization, cosmological order, and ecological adaptation created a harmonious totality – as if there were no internal power relations or conflicts. Importantly,

Lazar (2008, 9) has suggested that although collective cultural values and practices do exist in Andean forms of social organization, "it would be false to propose a model of the western imposition of liberal individualism on indigenous societies that are somehow naturally (or even predominantly) collectivist". Additionally, as often occurred in anthropological research, these communities were portrayed as if they were isolated from the nation-state, development efforts, and the wider economy; they were portrayed as functioning through their own logics, apart from external influences (Mitchell 1994). In his stark criticism, Starn (1991) argued that by depicting Andean communities as static and unchanging, anthropologists bypassed such pressing issues of modernity as poverty, inequalities, and a longing for political change. Although anthropologists today commonly agree on the role of their discipline in contributing to the "essentialized construction of Andean communities as relics of the Pre-Columbian past" (Lazar 2008, 9), its legacy on the ground is still strong.

Promoting indigenous self-determination

The notion of *Sumak Kawsay* is predominantly identified with the Kichwa of Ecuador. However, it was already circulating more broadly in Bolivia in 2001 when I volunteered for six months in a Bolivian NGO working on indigenous rights and intercultural education. Regionally linked with organizations in Ecuador and Peru, the leadership of the NGO was Quechua, although its networks reached indigenous communities all over Bolivia. Its staff used the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* as the overarching principle through which it promoted the revalorization of indigenous cultural traditions and worldviews as alternatives to Western development discourses. Such issues as community values, collective ownership, mutual support, a holistic conception of time, and a spiritual relationship with lands and territories were argued to be characteristics of indigenous cultures. The notion of *Sumak Kawsay*, through which indigenous peoples were supposed to regain their cultural identity and self-worth, tied these characteristics together. In the case of Ecuadorian Kichwa women, Radcliffe (2015b, 273–4) explains, *Sumak Kawsay* refers to

> a model of socially and environmentally sustainable life that upholds the earth's capacity to provide a balanced, equitable standard of living, and humanity's mutually dependent engagement with socionatures, whereby human social reproduction occurs in close symbiosis with living earth environments.

Because the sustainability of human lives is intimately intertwined with the survival of the ecological environment, *Sumak Kawsay* is closely associated with lands and territories (Ibid.). Consequently, environmental damage and the exploitation of natural resources are perceived as antithetical to *Sumak Kawsay* (see also Lalander 2016; on MAS's environmental and climate change discourses in Bolivia, see Kaijser 2014).

During a visit to Finland in 2016, the founder of the aforementioned NGO told me that for the past two decades, the main political goal driving their *Sumak*

Kawsay agenda had been the struggle for indigenous self-determination through autonomies. Inside self-governing units, indigenous peoples would deliberate and decide upon matters collectively according to their own culturally defined *usos y costumbres*: in the case of the Quechua, the principles of *Sumak Kawsay*. According to him, the need for political mobilization had already emerged during the 1992 celebrations of 500 years of resistance to colonialism, when indigenous movements in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru started to network with each other and with critical allies in Europe. Political goals were first promoted through intercultural education, which was a theme that was little by little co-opted by the Andean states during the multicultural reforms of the 1990s. Then, he told me, the idea that constitutional reforms and complete state transformations were needed in order to obtain indigenous self-determination began to emerge in Ecuador. "Kichwas in Ecuador established the discourse of the plurinational state," he said, adding that "from then on the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* was suggested as an alternative to the monocultural state and its vision of development." This discourse travelled to Bolivia, where it was the Aymara who theorized the concept the most, he concluded. While during the early 2000s the NGO had worked against the state to obtain indigenous autonomies, they were now working together with the MAS-led state in launching the first Guaraní autonomy in 2017 in Charagua, in the southern part of Bolivia.

After my 2008-2009 fieldwork had already ended, I received a message from the Vice-Minister of Planning and Coordination, Noel Aguirre, explaining that the Ministry of Development Planning was about to organize a seminar for academic scholars and social movements working on the topic of *Vivir Bien*. Indeed, a seminar titled *Vivir Bien: Una Alternativa Transformadora de Desarrollo* was held in November 2009. Both foreign and Bolivian anthropologists, indigenous activists, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions from Bolivia and the neighbouring Andean countries gathered together to share and to discuss their perceptions on the notion of living well and its governmental application. The following is based on the analysis of workshop materials that I received from the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination.

One of the indigenous organizations that participated in the seminar was the CONAMAQ. Instead of talking about *Vivir Bien*, the CONAMAQ discussed *Suma Qamaña*. Its message to policy makers was clear: the fundamental basis for achieving *Suma Qamaña* is the recovery of indigenous self-governance over lands and territorial units, *ayllus*. Through cultural representations of indigeneity, the control of lands and territories was portrayed as having much wider significance than mere economic interests or political gain. Living well, it was argued in their presentation, would be acquired through the knowledge of *pacha*, an Aymara and Quechua term that refers to land, earth, and universe. It has many culturally important derivatives, such as *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth, "in whom are incarnated both space and time" (Harris 1982, 52); *Pachakamaq*, the creator deity of the universe and the dyadic male counterpart of the *Pachamama* in ancient Inca mythologies (Medina 2006b [1999], 285); and *Pachakuti*, the new beginning, the emergence of a new cycle, and the refoundation of the universe in the cyclical cosmological order

(Bouysse-Cassagne et al. 1987). The knowledge of *pacha*, argued the CONAMAQ representatives, creates harmonious relations between men and women, as well as between social, spiritual, and ecological spheres of life.

The prerequisite for obtaining this knowledge, and hence *Suma Qamaña*, was that it would require the people to belong to the *ayllu*. Historically speaking, living in *ayllus* was, as we have seen earlier, based on reciprocal patterns of exchange in terms of social organization and economy (Murra 1978). It also tied generations into a continuum of ancestry through land rights and inheritance of houses, while at the same time sacred cosmological beliefs and relations between the dead and the living were inscribed in specific geographical spaces and territorial arrangements (Harris 1982). In many ways, the CONAMAQ's demand for the recovery of *ayllus* and indigenous nations (*nación originaria*) paralleled what de la Cadena and Starn (2007, 14) have observed of indigenous territorial claims worldwide: "The defense or recovery of territory has very often become more than just a matter of economic survival, but also connected to the dream of revitalization, homeland, and restored dignity."

The seminar presentation clearly showed that the CONAMAQ was promoting two parallel forms of governance through the notion of *Suma Qamaña*. It argued for the construction of plurinationalism through the complementarity of, first, a system of indigenous nations based on ancient indigenous territories and governing structures, and, second, the Bolivian nation-state system. The antagonistic idea of two Bolivias often used in order to emphasize sharp divisions between indigenous peoples and *q'aras* (whites) (Albro 2005, 434; Gray Molina 2003, 358; Reinaga 2001 [1970], 174), and with historical resemblance to the dual organization of legal and institutional systems during the colonial rule, was translated here into the more constructive idea of the plurinational state. While the state would, in fact, be transformed into a conglomeration of self-governing indigenous nations, there would be a complementarity between the two governing systems: indigenous nations and the state. According to the CONAMAQ, the promotion of the system of self-governing indigenous nations is justified because of the history of the Aymara and the Quechua as the first peoples in Bolivian territory, as well as on the basis of what is stated, and promised, in international conventions on indigenous rights.

In their presentation, the CSUTCB, the main peasant organization, joined the CONAMAQ in its demand for indigenous self-determination (*autodeterminación*). However, its discourses were less focused on indigenous cultural difference than on their historically unequal and marginalized class positions vis-à-vis the state and global actors. It was argued that the Bolivian state is built upon exploitative relations of internal colonialism, which has led to poverty, unemployment, and the social and cultural exclusion of indigenous peoples. The state, it was noted, has traditionally represented the interests of a narrow political and economic elite in the service of transnational economic and development actors. As a result, the CSUTCB argued strongly for the recovery of national sovereignty in relation to natural resources and the management of the state. In the proposal of the CSUTCB, the decision making of the new plurinational state should take

place through *cabildo*, an assembly or meeting of social movements, indigenous organizations, and local, territorially based social groupings. It should function on the basis of the complementarity of opposites (*ayni*, a form of reciprocity) with representatives appointed through both rotation and elections, and with a diarchic government comprising dual leadership by a man and a woman (*chacha-warmi*).

What these organizations and unions suggested was that there is no alternative future in which *Suma Qamaña* – supposedly the collective and harmonious well-being of indigenous communities in all their social, economic, and spiritual aspects – would prevail without increasing indigenous political agency and the decolonization of the state; this would take place by emphasizing indigenous territorial sovereignties and self-governance of plural political formations. Here the question of indigenous self-governance is portrayed as a new form of democratic participation through the appreciation of pluralism. This way, the audibility of the voices of social and indigenous movements is – ideally – more strongly enhanced in the form of governing pluralities. This is a radical demand for the traditionally centralized Bolivian nation-state, or any state, for that matter. In the following, I will move into discussing how the term *Vivir Bien* is defined and used at the level of state policies and discourses.

Vivir Bien in state development policies

The notion of *Vivir Bien* emerged as the backbone of Bolivian state policies with the launch of the NDP (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva, y Democrática para Vivir Bien*) in 2006 (Kohl and Farthing 2014; Postero 2013, 2017). The process through which *Vivir Bien* appeared as a new improvement scheme was narrated to me by Noel Aguirre, the Vice-Minister of Planning and Coordination, at the Ministry of Development Planning.[2] Together with Carlos Villegas, then the Minister of Development Planning, and other authorities, Aguirre was responsible for the elaboration of the NDP:

> For approximately 20 years, we have been undergoing a process of retrieval of our own cultures, our cosmologies, and our ways of perceiving life; that is, perceiving what is development. As a result of the emergence of all that is indigenous, or what we call *originario*, various thinkers, philosophers, and sociologists have appeared, including Aymara, Quechua, and Guaraní [scholars]. Amongst these [intellectuals], there it arises: *Vivir Bien*.

Here Aguirre identified that the origins of the notion of *Vivir Bien* as state policy lie in the upsurge of indigenous movement activity and political mobilization since the 1980s and the 1990s. The revitalization of indigenous cultures and identity concerns occurred at the same time as the co-opting of the notion of development by economic growth agendas and global free market rhetoric. This, according to Aguirre, motivated indigenous scholars and activists to elaborate on the meanings and conceptualizations of alternative forms of development. Aguirre mentioned that he talks of development in brackets because, for him, as we will later see in

more detail, the notion of *Vivir Bien* represents an alternative form of worldview and knowledge deriving from indigenous lived experiences; the notion of *Vivir Bien* emerged amongst academics and indigenous activists as an *alternative* to mainstream development.

But what were the origins of its inclusion with national policy making? Aguirre continued:

> During the second half of 2005, when the members of the current government were preparing for the [presidential] elections, they decided to discuss their major proposals as a political party. Various proposals emerged. It was suggested that we should concentrate on, for example, national sovereignty, eradication of poverty, or on inventing a new development model. Then one group, or fundamentally one person, raised his hand and said, "We cannot think of anything else but *Vivir Bien*." It was the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, David Choquehuanca. Choquehuanca presented his proposal according to which the governmental programme of the MAS should be based on the notion of *Vivir Bien*. It was accepted . . . Therefore, this was the occasion where the MAS explicitly incorporated [*Vivir Bien*] into official [discourses]; it had always been a theme of discussion, but now it was brought into national debate.

Choquehuanca, who, according to Aguirre, brought the notion of *Vivir Bien* into governmental discourses, has been one of the longest-serving indigenous culturalists within the governing regime, serving as the Foreign Minister from January 2006 until January 2017.[3] With a background in the NGO programme Nina (implemented by the *Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social*, UNITAS) for the recovery of indigenous worldviews and the training of indigenous leaders, Choquehuanca's suggestion to choose *Vivir Bien* as the MAS policy proposal drew from these experiences. According to Choquehuanca, the main characteristics of the notion of *Vivir Bien* include respect for nature, consensual decision-making processes, respect for cultural difference, complementarity and harmony as cultural principles, the promotion of indigenous identities, reciprocal patterns of work and labour, respect for women as symbols of *Pachamama*, the recovery of natural resources, and the exercise of indigenous sovereignty (La Razón 2010).

Although the MAS had functioned as a political instrument since the mid-1990s, its sudden rush into national politics was a surprise for everyone. Most of the ministers whom I interviewed told me that the months before and after the elections were chaotic as leading political figures tried to identify concrete policy proposals and persons who could be appointed as ministers, vice-ministers, and heads of units in the ministries. The MAS had grown enormously as a protest party, but besides its two major campaign promises – the nationalization of hydrocarbons and the convening of the Constituent Assembly – it lacked concrete policy proposals. Most political decision makers and policy makers came to state rule with little or no experience at all in state administration. Therefore, the same plurality

of ideas continued at the level of practical policy work at the Ministry of Planning, as Aguirre explained:

> When the MAS won [the elections], the first thing was to create the Ministry of Development Planning. Additionally, the president told us that we must make a development plan. Then, the first discussion we had amongst ourselves was "What kind of development should the development plan promote?" Again, the debate started: some said we should focus on sustainable development, others suggested human development, others economic development, and so on. But then we rethought what had been discussed previously and it became clear to us that the path had already been chosen; it was *Vivir Bien*.

The main development goal for the Ministry of Development Planning was defined as the enhancement of *Vivir Bien*. Aguirre's explanation of the evolution of *Vivir Bien* as a new form of government highlights various features of its origins. It becomes clear that the notion as a new policy idea was one of many options. It came to represent a compromise amongst various concepts and initiatives that different political actors brought to the table, a kind of empty signifier, to use the term utilized by Laclau (2005): a unifier amongst various – and very heterogeneous – political demands. Ultimately, as was reflected in Aguirre's description, various perspectives, visions, and ideas about appropriate improvement schemes were present and appear under the overarching discursive framework of living well. There were considerable interpretational ambiguities amongst political decision makers over the meanings and interpretations of policy. Yet the discourse of *Vivir Bien* as a development paradigm aims at unifying various views and political tendencies within the MAS governing regime. Let us then turn to examining this plurality in the content of the national development plans by looking at it, first of all, as a decolonial indigenous policy option and, second, as a challenge to neoliberal globalization. Third, I will analyze more recent policy documents.

Decolonizing indigenous policy?

The National Development Plan (NDP) (República de Bolivia 2007, 2) starts with the definition of the concept of development, which is stated to reside in the notion of *Vivir Bien*:[4]

> The notion of *Vivir Bien* expresses encounters between indigenous peoples and communities, and respects cultural diversity and identity. It means "to live well amongst ourselves"; it is about communitarian coexistence (*convivencia comunitaria*) . . . without asymmetries of power; "you cannot live well, if others do not". It is about belonging to a community and being protected by it, as well as about living in harmony with nature, "living in equilibrium with one's surroundings".

This excerpt underlines such characteristics as the egalitarian nature of indigenous communities and the interdependence of social, economic, and ecological aspects

within them. This latter idea is discussed through the concepts of cosmocentrism and holism. Cosmocentrism relates to the idea that in indigenous communities, spiritual, social, and material aspects of life are intertwined. Holism is defined in the NDP as a conglomeration of emotional, spiritual, social, cultural, political, and economic elements that together formulate a worldview that is opposed to linear Western models of growth and development. The idea of encounters expressed in the previous quotation refers to the ability of indigenous communities to contribute to the definition of development in more democratic, deliberative, and horizontal ways than usual in Western development practice, said to be conditioned from above and abroad: by Bolivian political and economic elites and transnational actors such as IFIs and international development agencies.

The NDP argues that development must be constituted upon the "plurinational logics of civilizatory coexistence" (República de Bolivia 2007, 2). An essential part of it is stated to be the complementarity of knowledge systems. According to the argumentation, the myth of linear progress inherent to Western developmental thought has divided the world into those who know and those who do not know, into modern and premodern cultures, and into those who are assumed to be developed and those who are perceived as developing. The problem is, as the plan states, that the unequal power relations that often follow ethnic and racial divides are produced, reproduced, and maintained through the administration of knowledge, a view shared by the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality scholars. To end the imposition of this colonial knowledge from above and abroad, the NDP states that it aims to establish mechanisms for the development and application of the knowledge of indigenous peoples, thus creating the rationale for the construction of the decolonial option. Consequently, indigeneity formulates the backbone of the NDP because, as Postero (2017, 96) has noted, "the document returns time and again to its assertion that the foundation of Bolivian society is its indigenous peoples, tying the well-being of all Bolivians and the nation as a whole to its indigenous peoples and social movements". However, the plan does not explicate in any concrete way what these indigenous knowledge systems and alternative epistemologies amongst each indigenous group and community entail, thus presenting sweeping and idealized generalizations about indigeneity. By collectively lumping all Bolivians under the banner of indigeneity, it fails to take a stance on real-life diversity amongst the population in terms of class, race, and ethnicity (Postero 2017, 96). Equally missing are considerations about postcolonial intersectionalities between indigeneity, gender, and sexuality.

Aguirre told me that, in his view, the essence of the notion of *Vivir Bien* is to highlight positive aspects of indigeneity, as well as to promote the active agency of indigenous peoples as subjects of change. This is important given that universalizing approaches to poverty reduction and economic growth tend to label indigenous peoples as poor and deficient, thereby constituting them as targets of development interventions. Prior to his involvement with the MAS, Aguirre, a well-known specialist in pedagogy, had been involved for years with NGOs such as *Centro Boliviano de Investigación y Acción Educativa* (CEBIAE), a research and education institute with ecumenical origins. He had been particularly active in its educational

network (*Foro Educativo Boliviano*), which promoted intercultural bilingual education for indigenous peoples. Drawing on these experiences, as well as his family background, he felt the need for the cherishing of indigeneity as a positive rather than pejorative denominator. Aguirre was born in a poor Andean mining community. Of Quechua origins, his father was a miner and his mother a peasant farmer. Yet Aguirre could conduct his studies in an unexpected discipline and environment: economics at the Catholic University of La Paz, the most prestigious private university in the country. Aguirre told me that this juxtaposition between his personal everyday experiences of poverty and the luxurious, upper-class educational environment with its "purely neoliberal" teachings of macroeconomics made him turn to the study of alternative, indigenous epistemologies. The second important aspect is that it promotes harmony with nature and balance with one's surroundings, including people, gods, and nature. In one of his seminar presentations, Aguirre emphasized that the indigenous notion of living well highlights the importance of indigenous communities and their mutually dependant coexistence, which comes up in the often-repeated governmental slogan, "*No se puede vivir bien si los demás viven mal*." The third is that unlike liberal modernization paradigms and Marxist ideas of social change through class struggle – both of which tend to focus mainly on material aspects of development – the notion of *Vivir Bien* also takes affections, spirituality, and identity into account (see also Gudynas 2011, 445–6). Indeed, as noted, many have argued that the notion of *Vivir Bien* is not an alternative discourse of development but rather an alternative to mainstream development altogether, something beyond it. This is reflected in the following quotation from an interview with Hugo Fernández, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs:

> It is not good to translate *Vivir Bien* as development. The concept of *Vivir Bien* is an Aymara concept. Although it is not static, neither is it linear as is the Western concept. Development is a linear concept that always moves from negative to positive. That is why we tend to talk about better life: "I want to live better." Contrary to that, *Vivir Bien* . . . is about reestablishing balance . . . Colonization destroyed the balance [of indigenous communities], which is to be recovered now. And this balance is *Vivir Bien*; you cannot be living well, if people around you are not living well. *Vivir Bien* is the new paradigm; it is a new way of seeing things.

Hugo Fernández, a Catholic Jesuit and long-term NGO activist, told me that he had adopted these views during his various years of experience in working with Aymara, Chiquitano, and Guaraní communities in fields such as rural development, intercultural bilingual education, and the capacity building of indigenous leaders. Prior to becoming part of the executive, he had been working as the director of the intercultural education programme Nina at the NGO UNITAS, where Choquehuanca had also gained his experience in the promotion of indigenous issues.

In all this, the formulation of policy based on indigenous ideas coincides with a similar process in Ecuador. Approved in 2008, the Ecuadorian constitution based on the Kichwa notion of *Sumak Kawsay* defines it as a collective well-being that

derives from indigenous cosmologies and philosophies (Walsh 2010). According to Gudynas (2011), who assisted Alberto Acosta (former Minister for Energy and Mining in Correa's government, President of the Constituent Assembly, and the leading nonindigenous author behind the *Buen Vivir* state agendas in Ecuador), the notion of *Sumak Kawsay* confronts the idea of development as linear transformation from one stage to another in constitutional and policy processes, extends the idea of human well-being from material resources to spirituality and happiness, and treats nature as a subject of rights. In the Ecuadorian NDP, *Buen Vivir* is defined as a "social, liberating alternative which proposes other priorities for social organization to the simple economic growth implicit in the development paradigm" (Ecuador SENPLADES 2013, 16). It refers to "an environmentally and socially sustainable development objective that is strengthened and guaranteed through rights-based citizenship in which the barriers to substantive citizenship caused by impoverishment are removed" (Radcliffe 2015b, 259).

However, not all indigenous culturalists within the Bolivian government agreed with the *Vivir Bien* or *Suma Qamaña* terminologies as state-policy concepts. Ex-Minister of Education and Aymara sociologist Félix Patzi has been termed one of the indigenous culturalists amongst the ministers of the state. Although a promoter of Aymara self-governance, Patzi did not seem to be enthusiastic about the notion of *Suma Qamaña* as an indigenous policy idea when I questioned him on these themes at the City Hall of La Paz, where he was employed in 2008–2009. In his opinion, policy ideas about *Suma Qamaña* are scattered, not well defined, and too idyllic and speculative. Patzi then continued to explain what the governing regime should do, in his opinion, to promote indigenous opportunity:[5]

> The community system (*sistema comunitario*) should enter politics and the economy; it is different than capitalism. In capitalism, one does not live well (*no se vive bien*) because one is alienated from work; there are those who accumulate more and others who do not . . . Because of elections and the competition between political parties, there is an alienation [from decision making] in representative democracy. In community democracy, the people will decide, decision making rotates. There are no parties; instead, parliamentarians, the president, and all the authorities are elected by rotation without the interference of political parties.

This resembled a return to the indigenous system of *ayllus*, where community leaders, appointed in rotation, decide on the political, economic, and judicial matters of the community. Indigenous sovereignty would, in his opinion, be best exercised through community traditions and territorial self-governance. Patzi's interpretation of the country's development priorities would bring this community system to the national level:

> This system of rotation used to be local, but now it will be more national. Obviously, it will not be easy, which is why we are having continuous conflicts

in Bolivia. Two [development] paradigms have emerged: the liberal, Western, European, and modern paradigm and another ancestral paradigm which becomes vivid in each conflictive historical moment. One difference between these two in respect to the economy is that modernity supports a capitalist, privatized economy, whereas the indigenous ancestral strand promotes a community economy where the worker himself owns his labour force; he is not working for the state or for any private company. All the products that he produces are his in their totality. This is already completely different to both state socialism and capitalism.

Known for his radical and polemical promotion of Aymara nationalisms, Patzi's short term as Minister of Education at the beginning of Morales's first presidency (2006–2007) produced fierce conflicts both with the Catholic Church over its role in the country's educational system and with teachers' unions who have traditionally played a major role in national politics through their union activism. As an indigenous culturalist, Patzi had infuriated important segments of both the Left and the Right with his radical visions of decolonization and accusations against everything "modern". Although Patzi was not sympathetic with the *Vivir Bien/Suma Qamaña* rhetoric, he shared its major goal: the promotion of indigenous nations.

Indeed, the cherishing of indigeneity within national development plans has major political implications relating to new forms of governance. The Bolivian NDP argues that a process of decolonization of state structures, institutions, and practices is needed in order to eradicate characteristics of its coloniality, such as liberal and neoliberal modernization, domination, ethnic exclusion, and racism. As an example, the NDP notes that the constitution of state executive powers has colonial roots, suggesting that alternatives must be found for such institutions (República de Bolivia 2007, 7–8). Social movements, indigenous peoples, and peasant unions are portrayed as the primary agents in restructuring political power. The plan states that the main goal of decolonization is to strengthen the incorporation of multiethnic and plurinational forms of governance and, subsequently, democratization (República de Bolivia 2007, 4–5). The NDP, for example, emphasizes that the aim of the governing regime is to enhance the participation, deliberation, and emancipation of indigenous peoples and plural social movements *both* as leaders of the structures of state governance *and* within their own nations (Ibid., 7–8). Here I advance the argument that the construction of the notion of *Vivir Bien* as an alternative state discourse contributes – ideally – to the creation of new forms of governing pluralities, that is, plural political formulations governing both the state and indigenous territorial arrangements. The democratization would – ideally again – occur at these two levels. The emphasis thus given to enhancing indigenous self-determination through plurinationalism is very interesting – and contradictory – when we start to examine its relationships with the project of strengthening national sovereignty discussed in the following chapter.

Counteracting 'neoliberal colonialism'

On the one hand, the NDP is, therefore, based on the decolonial critique of Western epistemologies and knowledge claims by indigenous ideas. On the other, it presents a strong political-economic critique of neoliberal globalization and introduces a new approach to state formation, as will be demonstrated here. According to the NDP, the role of the state needs to be enhanced in order to confront 'neoliberal colonialism' (see Postero 2013): a global capitalist economic system in which indigenous peoples appear meaningful solely as reserves of cheap labour power and as potential consumers of transnational goods. The surplus generated in this process solely benefits transnational companies, it is argued. Meanwhile, the role of the state is reduced to a minimum that, on the one hand, reduces its agency as the provider of economic opportunities and social protection and, on the other, increases its oligarchic, centralized, and corrupted nature.

With these critiques in mind, Aguirre told me that the main objective of the NDP resides in changing the pattern of an export economy based on a few natural resources (*patrón primario exportador*) in order to decolonize neoliberal forms of economic relations. Indeed, policy documents demonstrate an understanding that the "deep and longstanding levels of social inequality in the country are linked to its history of primary-export development, rooted principally in the extraction of natural resources" (Webber 2016, 1862). Consequently, the NDP strives towards a plural economy: one that combines a market economy with state regulation and enterprises and increases the role of local communities and cooperatives as economic actors. The role of the state as the guarantor of national sovereignty and as the key economic and social actor is emphasized. Echoing the state-led schemes of ISI politics in the Bolivian nationalist revolution era, the NDP concludes that the way out of inequality and poverty demands that the state takes a more active role in the use and control of major means of production through, for example, nationalization and industrialization of natural resources, which would also create additional surplus for the state. For these reasons, a new role for the state is proposed in the pages of the NDP: the state will constitute the provider of education, health, and social services in *Bolivia Digna*; it will operate as an active agent in regulating and controlling productive relations through, for example, nationalizations, in *Bolivia Productiva*; and it will recover national sovereignty vis-à-vis IFIs, transnational corporations, and other global actors in *Bolivia Soberana*.

During my interaction with Aguirre, it became clear that, in his view, the core of the notion of *Vivir Bien* was to restore national sovereignty in deciding on parameters of development. First of all, he claimed that the origins of development thinking are so intimately linked with Western civilization that their application in other kinds of empirical contexts tends to fail. Aguirre's second criticism was a direct critique of the role of IFIs, development agencies, and transnational companies in Bolivia. These global actors tend to possess the hegemonic power to define development priorities and to implement policy in the Global South, he said, and concluded that this weakens national sovereignty and curtails the possibility of implementing local priorities for social change. Aguirre's views were shared by

Claudia, a consultant and head of planning at one of Bolivia's many ministries, who viewed the notion of *Vivir Bien* as an alternative to universal development models, as she explained to me in an interview at her office:

> We don't need to import [development] recipes. Why should we import [development] models if we are capable of constructing them ourselves? It is not easy, because we start from zero. Maybe there will be many failures along the way, many weaknesses, but it is ours; it has the label "Made in Bolivia". We intend to give the economy a human face so that the free market system will not be the image of the economy, an unequal system in which only few get rich. Development models that have been imported have not functioned. I am totally against them! Institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank have created these models and they wanted to implement them in countries such as ours without taking into account the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of our country. So, clearly they have not worked, because recipes are not same for every country.

Here Claudia underlined both the need to change the economic system and to lessen the role of transnational actors in the making of development policy. The significance of the notion of *Vivir Bien* appeared here as the demonstration of local and national capacity to set contextualized priorities for the transformation of the country: "It has the label 'Made in Bolivia'."

One of the concrete manifestations of enhanced state sovereignty has been the launch of new foreign policy. Especially in the early stages of Morales's regime, discourses against the World Bank and the IMF were highly critical. While previous governments enjoyed close relations with the United States, diplomatic relations between Bolivia and the US were broken in late 2008 only to be tentatively reestablished in 2011. Instead, Bolivia has increased South-South cooperation. Venezuela has become Bolivia's main political and economic ally through the *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América* (ALBA),[6] which is an economic alliance that "involves the exchange of energy producing products for services, primarily in the field of health care and education" (Vanden and Prevost 2012, 299). It is an alternative to the US-led FTAA that has the potential to "counter the capitalist foundations of existing trade agreements rooted in exchange values and profit seeking, with values of regionwide cooperation and economic complementarities" (Webber and Carr 2013b, 11). Direct Venezuelan aid to Bolivia has included the launching of the strategic agreement between the Bolivian state-led oil company *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPFB) and the Venezuelan *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.* (PDVSA), mining initiatives, rural development projects, education and health projects, military and surveillance guidance, communications, and humanitarian aid in cases of emergency (Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 215). However, trade relations between Bolivia and Venezuela within the framework of ALBA have encountered some difficulties: for example, protectionism on the part of Venezuela, which has forced Bolivia to search for alternative

trade relations (Ibid., 205). Another strategic partner has been Cuba, which has undertaken social programmes such as literacy campaigns and medical support in the country (Postero 2013, 26; Webber 2011, 41). Furthermore, China's role as a trade partner has increased considerably; more than 400 deals on aid, trade, and loans have been signed between the countries (Postero 2017, 104).

In terms of strengthening the state, various state reforms have taken place since Morales's election, one of the most significant of which has been the nationalization of natural resources such as natural gas. In practice, this has meant that the contracts with private companies have been renegotiated, the amount of royalties increasing drastically; however, "no assets were expropriated and no companies expelled" (Farthing and Kohl 2014, 38). The income resulting from the "nationalization" and the launching of the direct tax on hydrocarbon resources (*impuesto directo a los hydrocarburos*, IDH) has been directed into social benefits and conditional cash-transfer programmes, the most important being the education allowance (*Juancito Pinto*), maternity allowance (*Bono Juana Azurduy*), and pensions (*Renta Dignidad*) (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007; Kaup 2010; Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín 2012; Webber 2011). In terms of concrete changes in the political economy achieved by this approach, the response of different commentators has been mixed. Some actors perceive the increasing role of the state in the regulation of market forces and in the provision of services as a major shift. In his speech at the meeting of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank and the IMF in 2009, Aguirre declared that

> within the framework of a development model headed up by the State and a pluralistic organization of the economy, Bolivia has made profound changes in recent years that, in sum, include the nationalization of the oil and gas sector, improved income distribution, and enhanced social protection policies, without disregarding the preservation of macroeconomic stability in a context of democratic process.
>
> (Aguirre 2009)

During Morales's first years as president, there was rapid economic growth mainly due to international demand and high prices for hydrocarbons and minerals, and a small increase in private consumption (Webber 2011, 193). Although the entire Latin American region enjoyed high growth rates, the average gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Bolivia was higher than elsewhere (Ibid., 171). According to the World Bank statistics, the gross national income (GNI) per capita (Atlas method, current US$) has risen from US $1,030 in 2005 to $3,000 in 2015 (World Bank 2017a). Foreign direct investments into Bolivia have risen sharply during Morales's regime, from US $278 million in 2006, to $503 million in 2015 (Webber 2016, 1863; World Bank 2017b). While Aguirre (2009, 2) has stated that economic growth in itself is not the only goal, and that the government puts a high priority on income redistribution, economic data offers evidence to the contrary. Between 2005 and 2007, income inequality has shown only a modest fall, as measured by the Gini Index, from 0.60 to 0.56 (Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín 2012, 550).

As a result, Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín have concluded that state policies have not had much impact on redistribution. Webber (2011, 201–2), for his part, has demonstrated that

> the poorest 10 percent of the Bolivian population received 0.3 percent of national income in 1999, and still received only 0.4 percent by 2007 . . . Meanwhile, the richest 10 percent of the population took home 43.9 percent of national income in 1999 and precisely the same percentage in 2007 . . . The poorest 20 percent of society took in a mere 1.3 percent of national income in 1999 and, in 2007, a still paltry 2 percent. The richest 20 percent of the population pocketed 61.2 percent of national income in 1999 and 60.9 in 2007.

The latest World Bank estimates show that the national income share received by the poorest 20 per cent of the population was 3.6 per cent in 2014 (World Bank 2017c). Public policies, and most specifically conditional cash transfers, however, have had a greater impact on poverty reduction (Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín 2012, 550). According to the most recent World Bank statistics, 59.6 per cent of the population was considered poor in 2005 in comparison to 38.6 per cent in 2015 (World Bank 2017d). On the other hand, considering the government's revolutionary discourses, social spending has been low (Webber 2011, 198–9). Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín (2012) have demonstrated that even at its peak in 2008, public spending on social services has been lower during the Morales regime than it was during the neoliberal era.

Recent policy formulations

Consequently, academic commentators have offered the criticism that ideas suggesting a postneoliberal era are merely discursive because the underlying political economy has not been radically changed. Despite the increasing role of the state, the process is far from radical change, as Webber (2011, 232) explains:

> The tendency of the political economy over the entire[ty of] . . . Morales's first term was toward a reconstituted neoliberalism, one that abandoned features of neoliberal orthodoxy, but retained its core faith in the capitalist market as the principal engine of growth and industrialization.

Some of the key features of what Webber (2011) calls reconstituted neoliberalism were the continuation of extractive capitalism, the continuing influence of transnational capital, and the export of primary natural resource commodities. Rather than decolonizing the economy, Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín (2012) have shown that the extractive model of the Bolivian economy has been further intensified during Morales's presidency (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7).

A shift from the indigenous and environmental discourses of *Vivir Bien* towards the intensification of extractive economies can be clearly observed from recent policy documents. The MAS launched its new governmental programme in 2010.

Titled *Rumbo a una Bolivia Líder: 2010–2015 Programa de Gobierno*, the document is a combination of MAS's governmental programme and development plan for the nation (Movimiento al Socialismo MAS-IPSP 2010). The first 50 pages of the document present the achievements of the government between 2006 and 2009. The rest of the document (approximately 100 pages) is titled "Four Pillars for United and Grand Bolivia for All (National Development Plan)". The first pillar, *Bolivia Democrática*, focuses on the consolidation of the new constitution and the plurinational state with autonomies. *Bolivia Productiva* describes the national economic model as a plural economy of private, state, and community economies. The focus of the *Bolivia Digna* is on the redistribution of wealth and equal opportunities for all – an issue that "we used to call *Vivir Bien*", states the program (Movimiento al Socialismo MAS-IPSP 2010, 54). *Bolivia Soberana* is about national identity and national sovereignty to decide national affairs. To a large extent, discourses of *Vivir Bien* have been replaced with references to state sovereignty.

While the 2006 NDP was constructed around *Vivir Bien*, the 2010 governmental programme is devoid of indigenous terminologies; it has a strong theme of modernization through state-led industrialization and other state initiatives such as infrastructure, transportation, agricultural production, and social services. A concrete manifestation of this shift has been the ongoing conflict that started in 2011 between state extractive and developmentalist interests versus indigenous rights and ecological values at the Isiboro Securé National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) (discussed in detail in Chapter 7). The main emphasis of the 2010 state policy rests on the so-called Great Industrial Leap (*Gran Salto Industrial*). Emphasizing the notion of *patria* (homeland), the governmental programme defines Bolivia as a free, united, strong, and industrialized homeland. While there is a strong emphasis on autonomies, an even stronger emphasis on national unity and sovereignty is evident. In many ways, the picture emerging from the document parallels James Scott's (1998) description of high-modern schemes to improve the human condition. Instead of radically democratizing forms of indigenous self-governance, the document brings us back to a nationalist, state-centred ideology with strong political leadership. Similar processes have taken place in Ecuador, where the state can be identified as having a central role in "the management, regulation, and operationalization of development and political economy" (Radcliffe 2015b, 260). Unlike neoliberal regimes, these new states in the making are characterized by strong developmentalism with redistribution and egalitarian politics towards citizens and nature at the centre (Ibid., 261). These shifts may be perceived as signalling the withering away of the significance of indigenous actors, to be replaced by the increasing role of traditional and radical advocates of left-wing politics within the Andean progressive regimes (discussed in detail in Chapter 7).

The notion of *Vivir Bien* has, however, reemerged in the 2016–2020 policy guideline (*Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social en el Marco del Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien*). It is defined as an indigenous, afro-Bolivian, and peasant alternative to capitalism and modernity (Ministerio de Planificación al Desarrollo 2015, 4), thus emphasizing both political-economic and decolonial

aspects of the concept. *Vivir Bien* is perceived as a conglomeration of knowledges (*saberes*) – knowledge about being and thriving, about learning and thinking, and about relating with one another, to name a few – constructed on the basis of harmonious relations between the individual, the community, the cosmos, God, the family, and Mother Nature (Ibid., 5). The meaning of the latter is emphasized by underlining the importance of harmony and balance between human beings, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Four sets of rights are then introduced: (1) the rights of Mother Nature; (2) civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights; (3) indigenous rights; and (4) the right to live without material, social, and spiritual poverty (Ibid.).

Major contradictions emerge here, not least between the fulfilment of economic rights and the rights of nature. The plan acknowledges the need to find a balance between environmental values and the cherishing of *Pachamama*, and the right to "integral development" by all Bolivians. Integral development appears as the new catchphrase, one that binds together the conflicting principles of *Vivir Bien*, plurinationalism, developmentalism, and extractive economies. Furthermore, the need for an integrated and unified state is emphasized, while at the same time plurinationalism and the leadership of diverse social movements is recognized, thus bringing to the fore conflicts between national and indigenous sovereignty. The balancing act of negotiating between contradicting goals is attempted through the model of "communitarian socialism for living well" (*Socialismo Comunitario para Vivir Bien*), one that, according to the plan, combines the expansion of well-being and an increase in public benefits with community values and environmental elements (Ibid., 5). The notion of socialism – Venezuela's twenty-first-century socialism being the prime example – has been more common in other progressive Latin American countries than in Bolivia, where it has been repudiated by many indigenous culturalists, as shown earlier. However, its incorporation into state policies demonstrates a shift in policy discourses, which I will examine in detail in Chapter 7.

Indigenous elements in the constitution

The 2009 constitution defines as major guiding principles and values of the state (or, as "ethical-moral principles of the plural society") the diverse aspects of *Vivir Bien*, such as *Suma Qamaña*, collected from Aymara, Quechua, and Guaraní belief systems. A list of values that the Bolivian state is committed to promote in order for its citizens to live well (*vivir bien*) include equality, solidarity, and redistribution of resources; reciprocity, complementarity, harmony, and equilibrium; and justice, transparency, and gender equity, amongst others. After the idea has been put forwards, however, *Vivir Bien* unexpectedly vanishes. Curiously enough, it is absent from the normative framing of the rights of indigenous peoples and nations, indigenous nations being a term that cuts across the whole constitution and comprises, according to Albó and Romero (2009), the most innovative aspect of the whole text. The notion of *Vivir Bien* appears briefly in the articles that discuss education. It is explicitly mentioned in reference to indigenous peoples' environmental

knowledge: "Education is oriented towards . . . the conservation and protection of the environment, biodiversity, and territory for *Vivir Bien*."

The fourth part, which discusses the economic system of the state, starts with the statement that "the Bolivian economic model is plural and oriented towards improving the quality of life and achieving *Vivir Bien*" (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009, 117). It is later stated that a "social and community economy will complement individual interests with collective living well (*vivir bien colectivo*)" (Ibid.). In terms of concrete political economy changes, therefore, the constitution brings to the fore the questioning of the global market economy as the sole economic option. In the name of pluralism, community and state-led economic models and practices are recognized. Here one may recall that the NDP criticized the equating of the notion of development solely with economic aspects, yet the correlation in the constitution of the notion of *Vivir Bien* with the restructuring of the Bolivian economy makes one wonder whether development continues to be equated with economic development despite the contrary arguments stressing the importance of spiritual, cultural, and social aspects of good life. This view is, indeed, strengthened in Article 313, which states that to eliminate poverty and economic exclusion in order to achieve *Vivir Bien*, the Bolivian economy has to be organized to produce and redistribute economic surplus in a just way, to reduce inequalities in access to productive resources, to reduce regional inequalities, to industrialize natural resources, and to promote active participation of the public sector and communities in the productive apparatus. Here *Vivir Bien* becomes a signifier for the changing – and more active – economic role of the state: the revival of state regulation, rather than an indigenous alternative to understanding development as a broader category than mere economic change.

The idea of a Constituent Assembly had emerged in activist agendas as early as the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity, during which lowland indigenous peoples demanded it be organized in order to enhance indigenous citizenship and participation (Albó 2008). It was later widely advocated during the Cochabamba Water War as facilitating the creation of new forms of people's power and democratic decision-making arenas (Olivera 2004, 133–9). Additionally, it was discussed in the 2002 presidential elections during which Morales rocketed into second place (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 87). During the 2003 Gas War conflicts, the coalition of social movements, indigenous organizations, and trade unions demanded the organization of the *Asamblea Constituyente Popular y de las Naciones Originarias* (Estado Mayor del Pueblo Boliviano 2003). The organization of a Constituent Assembly was one of the key political demands by social movements that signed the Unity Pact in support of Evo Morales in 2005.

Consequently, there were lots of expectations amongst popular sectors and social movements when the 255 elected members of the Constituent Assembly started their work in Sucre in August 2006. Movements and organizations aligned with the *Pacto de Unidad*, for example, convened actively during 2006 and 2007 and elaborated various proposals for the construction of the plurinational state, indigenous autonomies, and indigenous self-determination (Postero 2017, 53–5). For them, a Constituent Assembly represented a new way of doing politics from below; it was

perceived as an example of the use of collective indigenous decision-making patterns at the level of state affairs. Consequently, indigenous groups, communities, and social movements lobbied to send delegates to the assembly directly through their organizations. Superseding the powers of the governing regime or political parties, they conceptualized the assembly as an organ of direct democracy that would represent social movements and indigenous peoples without mediation and would channel people's will through their diverse *usos y costumbres*.

This liberating discourse of people's power was shared by many nonindigenous scholars and activists. A member of the Constituent Assembly for the MAS, and former Vice-Minister of Strategic Planning, Raúl Prada, for example, was part of the intellectual group *Grupo Comuna* that combined academic and political thought and practice in rethinking governance through social movements. Other researchers in the *Grupo Comuna* included Alvaro García Linera, Morales's vice-president since January 2006 (see Chapter 7), and Luis Tapia, Bolivia's most renowned political scientist. Prada explained to me that his expectation for the Constituent Assembly was that it would become a forum for deliberation and democratic participation for indigenous groups and social movements. His idea was that democratizing forums like people's assemblies, *cabildos*, and other local deliberative mechanisms, present in workers' unions, peasant unions, and *ayllus* at local levels, would be the future for decision making in the new plurinational Bolivia. As Prada suggested, his expectation was that through the practice of plurinational statehood, a radically democratizing assemblage of autonomous nations and plural governing bodies would replace the bureaucratic state and the system of political parties. Through plurinationalism, the nation-state that García Linera (2004) – today characterized by many as the main advocate of state developmentalism and extractivism – has described as an illusory collectivity and as the synthesis of the interests of dominant classes provides room for the practice of direct democracy in which multiple political formations and plural conglomerations of people decide for themselves. Following this, the intellectual ideas and ideological formations behind plurinationalism crystallized in the assumption that the state would be absorbed by a plurality of nations such as those structured around *ayllus* of the Aymara, as was explained to me by Prada:

> The idea of the plurinational state was that it would cease to be a state; it would be absorbed by [indigenous] nations . . . , social practices, decisions by society, by social assemblies. The idea of the plurinational state was that it would supersede the dialectic contradictions between state and society . . . The idea of the plurinational state was that if the state were plural, it would no longer be a state, because it would be opened up for a plurality of multitudes . . . It is not a unity, it is not homogeneous, and it is not a general will: it is, rather, various wills, multiple practices . . . The plurinational state was supposed to open gates, to deinstitutionalize . . . in such a way that politics would not be exercised through [state] bureaucracy and hierarchical arrangements but fundamentally through social dynamics and the exercise of direct actions and democratic practices.

Prada's anarchist explanation echoed the theorizing and ideological thought of post-Marxist and poststructuralist scholars who conceptualize indigenous movements as an example of new kinds of political activism based on multiple identity demands and plural political formations. The ideological construction of the Plurinational State of Bolivia is based on the idea that these pluralities have a legitimate right to govern through self-determination and autonomous arrangements. This view was also influenced by Gramsci's writings on regulated society, that is, "a state without a state" (Gramsci 2006 [1971]) of which the *Grupo Comuna* has written (see, for example, Tapia, García Linera and Prada 2004).

While the Constituent Assembly was perceived as the first litmus test for the power of self-governing assemblies, in practice it failed miserably. Instead of becoming a forum for deliberation and democratic participation, Prada recalled that political conflicts between the executive and the political opposition and internal fights within different sectors of the MAS hampered any attempts at creating alternative ways of doing politics. The Constituent Assembly rather became a battlefield for the two main political parties and smaller political parties and groupings. In fact, it has been claimed that the MAS opposed direct indigenous participation and rather insisted on representation based on political party membership, allowing "Morales to control a majority of MAS delegates and to pull indigenous representatives into the [Constituent Assembly] as their own MAS delegates" (Postero 2017, 48). With its massive representation in the national elections, the MAS succeeded in winning 54 per cent of seats in the Constituent Assembly (Van Cott 2008, 56). In comparison to what was intended by social movements, it was "a poor substitute, indeed more reminiscent of the proceedings of the existing liberal congress than a participatory and revolutionary rupture with the status quo" (Webber 2011, 232). Vaclav, one of radical left-wing youngsters, who during 2008–2009 worked as a consultant at the Ministry of Planning, commented to me in an interview in 2017 that the exclusion by the MAS of social movements from decision-making processes in the Constituent Assembly was, for him, one of the first signs of the construction of the "monopoly of the MAS" in state governance, a tendency that has later intensified (more on young consultants in Chapter 5 and on the centralization of the state in Chapter 6). Some even claim that MAS's goal was state capture all along (Postero 2017, 57–8).

As the work of the Constituent Assembly was truncated, the executive interfered with the process, thus compromising its autonomy. This was a major disappointment to many movement activists and indigenous representatives. In the end, the executive had intervened in the process that was supposed to be an example of new forms of people's democracy and an demonstration of governing pluralities. In 2008, negotiations over the constitution were shifted to Cochabamba, where the MAS and lowland oppositional leaders came up with a compromise that was later ratified by the Bolivian Parliament (Regalsky 2010, 37). Due to political compromise between the internally heterogeneous MAS and the lowland elites through the right-wing PODEMOS (also a political party with diverse strands of political thinking and action), ideas and concepts in the constitutional text represent various political discourses and ideologies (Postero 2013; Vega 2011). Questions of

land reform and indigenous self-governance, for example, were fiercely resisted by PODEMOS and oppositional activists. Furthermore, the opposition co-opted indigenous demands for territorial self-governance in order to push forwards their own ideas of regional autonomy (for more details, see Chapter 7). However, within the MAS itself, different tendencies emerged, some promoting decolonizing practices, others centralization, as indicated, for example, in the stronger role of the president and in allowing presidential reelection, unlike in previous constitutions (Tapia 2007). Furthermore, while the constitution defines Bolivia as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, indigenous autonomies are subjugated to the power of the central state instead of governing themselves through self-determination (Postero 2017, 58).

Notes

1 According to Aymara dictionaries, *jatha* refers not only to seeds but also to a social unit of people who have joint access to lands, natural resources, and community obligations, as in *ayllu* systems (Medina 2006b [1999], 269).
2 Noel Aguirre occupied the position of Vice-Minister of Planning and Coordination from January 2006 until February 2009, when he was appointed Minister of Development Planning. From January 2010, Aguirre has served as Vice-Minister of Alternative and Special Education at the Ministry of Education.
3 David Choquehuanca is currently the General Secretary of the ALBA.
4 The rest of the document is divided into four pillars of development: dignity, democracy, productivity, and sovereignty. Dignity (*Bolivia Digna*) includes such policy sectors as education, health, social policy, and water and sanitation. Additionally, a justice sector, public security, and national defence are discussed under the title of dignity. The second pillar, democracy (*Bolivia Democrática*), discusses how the plurinational state is constructed through decentralization of power and through the increased participation of social movements in decision-making processes. The third – productivity (*Bolivia Productiva*) – introduces issues related to the economy, production, and trade. It represents major strategic sectors of the economy (hydrocarbons, mining, and so forth) and discusses income generation and employment. The sovereignty pillar (*Bolivia Soberana*) is concerned with Bolivia's foreign relations, international development aid, and trade policy. At the end of the NDP, there are additional sections concerning macroeconomics and investments.
5 Also explained in Patzi's book *Sistema Comunal: Una Propuesta Alternativa al Sistema Liberal* (2007).
6 Its member states include Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and small Caribbean islands.

5   "Colonialism strikes back"

Vivir Bien as bureaucratic practice
and technical expertise

This chapter examines the complex and contested process of translating the *Vivir Bien* improvement scheme into concrete bureaucratic practices during Morales's first executive period (2006–2009). Through ethnographic examples of policy events, workshops, and meetings between indigenous activists, ministers, consultants, and public servants, it sheds light on the challenging task of transforming *Vivir Bien* as a form of government into a technical framework with corresponding plans, programmes, and projects. It will be shown that, to a large extent, Bolivian bureaucratic logic has differed from discursive and ideological framings of state transformation and, therefore, it is argued that more attention should be paid to examining the internal functioning of state governance. Consequently, the chapter describes and analyzes how multiple and nuanced micropractices of power work through everyday bureaucratic actions in the course of major state transformations.

   State-centred social theorizing has typically located power in the state or the economy. Foucault's take on the genealogy of modernity, however, as Fraser (1981, 272) has argued, questions this stance by suggesting that power "operates at the lowest extremities of the social body in everyday social practices". While this view expands our understanding of power from the loci of specific political ideologies, political figures, or class struggles to a much broader field, it simultaneously concretizes it through references to the multiplicity of what Foucault calls micropractices of power (Ibid.). In terms of state bureaucracy, power is created and reproduced through the various forms of everyday techniques, procedures, and routines of the state. The same phenomenon occurs in the working of the development apparatus. Multiple and complex micropractices of power operate through various techniques, such as standardized development planning mechanisms, monitoring tools, and evaluation formats through which the lives of target populations can be guided, directed, and controlled in the desired way. The practice of government, as defined by Li (2007), emerges through its translation into concrete bureaucratic programmes and projects. As a result, as Li (2007) and Ferguson (1994) have shown, development problems have often been identified according to available expert technical solutions. This has effectively excluded locally important political questions from the palette of aid interventions.

Yet during Morales's first regime in Bolivia, the exact opposite occurred. The introduction of the notion of *Vivir Bien* into state governance was an overtly political exercise. What was radically new was that the process of decolonization of the state not only aimed to open it to previously marginalized peoples through new conceptual thinking, indigenous epistemologies, and alternative knowledge orientations, but in doing so, it also challenged the expert technical regimes and the authority of public servants by condemning them as remnants of neoliberal colonialism. Yet if – from the point of view of state officials – the notion of *Vivir Bien* as a new form of government was to succeed, something that was radically political needed to be tamed into bureaucratic practice, a process requiring depoliticization. In the course of the events, the danger arose that discourses circulating in the name of indigeneity legitimize the reproduction of the neoliberal rationalities dominant in bureaucratic traditions and practices: the coloniality of the state constantly reproducing itself in the continuation of micropractices of power. As Radcliffe (2015a, 856) has noted, even radical policy alternatives can easily turn into something unexpectedly conservative. Indeed, it has been argued that the strength of neoliberalism lies in its capability to function as a "flexible mutating regime" (Peck, Theodore and Brenner 2010, 95).

The making of sectoral plans

On a chilly, misty, early November morning I joined a buzzing crowd of public servants on the doorsteps of the Ministry of Development Planning at the upper end of the Prado. I was about to catch a bus that would take planning directors and public servants from various ministries to the rugged and impoverished indigenous neighbourhood of Chasquipampa in the hills on the outskirts of the wealthy southern zone of the capital. During the last months of 2008, the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination organized a series of workshops in order to facilitate and coordinate the elaboration of individual development plans for each of the various sectors of the four pillars of the National Development Plan (NDP). The first two-day sectoral workshop, where we were heading, was called *Taller de Metodología para la Elaboración de Planes Sectoriales de Desarrollo*, and it concentrated on defining vision, focus areas (*ejes de desarrollo*), and strategic development objectives for the sectors. A similar two-day workshop in late November focused on budgeting and on the creation of indicators for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation.

The workshop location in Chasquipampa was a large two-storey conference centre, whose second-floor auditorium held approximately 100 public servants and sectoral stakeholders of various kinds (such as university professors for education, policemen and military personnel for security and defence respectively, and so forth). Most of the people appeared to be male, urban, and middle class, some in suits, some in more informal jeans and sneakers. There were also some females, especially amongst young sectoral consultants. It seemed, at least on the surface, that representatives of social movements, indigenous organizations, and
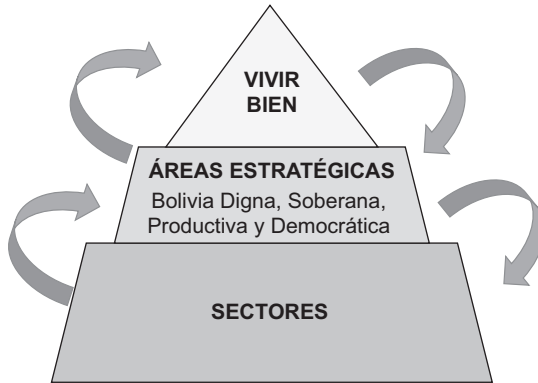
Figure 5.1 Articulation between different levels of development planning

peasant unions were absent, which was curious given that *Vivir Bien* discourses emphasized the value of indigenous knowledge and expertise.

Vice-Minister Aguirre opened the workshop with a presentation in which he stressed the importance of obtaining concrete results instead of producing more and more discourses. "In the beginning, we [of the executive] were able to say that we don't have experience in state administration," he said, and continued forcefully, "but now, now we have experience and we need to do something concrete." With this sentence Aguirre admitted that there had been problems and inefficiencies in concrete policy execution. But now they were about to make a difference. Therefore, each sector had to become aligned with one of the strategic pillars of the NDP and with the notion of *Vivir Bien*, while at the same time, work at the level of sectors and strategic pillars could have an effect on the formulation of the logics of *Vivir Bien* as Aguirre suggested (see Figure 5.1).

Aguirre suggested that each sector should use the workshop hours to analyze its own position on the notion of *Vivir Bien* as a new development paradigm. Then sectors could go on to discuss possible visions for their sectors defined by Aguirre as the following:

> A realistic and objectively calculable future situation for the state, society, target population, and the sector itself as a result of the actions of the sector that are conducted in the framework of its political and social mandate. It is based on agreements between different actors, institutions, and social organizations with shared values, principles, and ideals that promote and inspire commitment towards change.

Afterwards, the sectors were advised to define focus areas and strategic development objectives on the basis of which concrete programmes and projects would be designed. Sectoral focus areas were defined by Aguirre as "those fundamental

elements that summarize the most important components of the sectoral development vision". A strategic objective was defined as

> an expected change that the sector is supposed to achieve in favour of the population. It is based on focus areas, potentialities, and problems of the sector. An objective is supposed to be short, simple, and straightforward, and it should express the expected change unambiguously. It has to be clear, specific (especially in its qualitative aspects), concrete, measurable, and verifiable. It should be ambitious, yet realistic and achievable.

Ultimately, the development planning techniques that Aguirre presented resembled those that are universally applicable, such as programme or project cycles and logical frameworks approaches (LFAs) typical of development planning; there it has been argued that they are used to portray "the rationality (and manageability) of a scheme with logically related and technically specified activities, measurable outputs, an ordered sequence and the functional integration of different components and institutional actors" (Mosse 2005, 38). These were precisely the techniques that indigenous activists and movements have often criticized because, in their opinion, these kinds of models and technical framings of problems and solutions are based on Western ideas of linear progress and causal logics, which, in their opinion, are the opposite of indigenous ideas, knowledge, and worldviews (Gudynas 2011, 445; Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 226). In his development critique, Escobar (1991, 667) has, for example, noted that this kind of planning approach "gives the impression that policy is the result of discrete, voluntaristic acts, not the process of coming to terms with conflicting interests and worldviews, in the course of which choices are made and exclusions effected". Yet it appeared that the elaboration of sectoral plans within the framework of *Vivir Bien* relied on knowledge and logics typical of bureaucratic practice that are "explicit, codified, recognized as such and expressible . . . as rules [and] norms" (Mosse 2005, 83). Conflicting interests and worldviews were not discussed despite the overt political criticism of previous development planning.

Thus, a contradiction had been established between indigenous policy discourses and concrete bureaucratic practice, which was very apparent in the views of public servants sitting in the audience. Their commentaries strongly criticized the lack of clear planning, coordination, and guidance for public servants and institutions; they found it difficult to identify what they were supposed to do and in what direction and for what ends they were supposed to work. Many expressed the view that they needed more technical guidance and less politics. Most probably, they felt the insecurity of not having an identifiable problem that they could solve with their fixed palette of expertise. Escobar (1991, 667), for example, has noted that the assignment of expertise has usually been based on the identification of "people as a problem . . . in such a way that some development program has to be accepted as a legitimate solution". If neoliberal colonialism, as was suggested in Chapter 4, was now identified as the problem to be solved, the attention of expertise shifted from the poor and their inherent qualities to the "non-poor" and structural global

inequalities, that is, to issues of power that have usually been absent from development discourses (Escobar 1991; Ferguson 1994; Li 2007). Therefore, public servants felt that their institutional traditions and technical expertise had been disrupted without their being offered clear guidelines for new institutional restructuring and technical management.

In his response to the criticism, Aguirre underlined that the question was not about how to develop state institutions or how to define institutional strategies but how to respond to the political and social demands of social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions. He thereby reminded public servants that all technical work within the sectors had to respond to such political priorities as the notion of indigenous living well, decolonization, and resistance to neoliberal colonialism. After all, as he concluded, "the government does not want minor reforms but real transformations". Therefore, as political leader, he was balancing between politically set goals of radical revolutionary change, a new beginning, and existing bureaucratic practice that, on the one hand, should be decolonized and, on the other, function as the basis for the institutionalization of alternative ideas through technical means. His use of existing development techniques illustrated a tendency to institutionalize new political discourses on the basis of existing state institutions and practices. And, indeed, this translation is a challenge that was well recognized by Aguirre himself, who, despite his political and ideological commitment to enhancing indigenous ideas, was deeply concerned about the translation of political discourses into bureaucratic practice. He explained to me in an interview that

> we know that we do not solely have to construct the philosophy . . . of *Vivir Bien* but, fundamentally, we know that we also have to construct a new model of development planning. Therefore, the notion of *Vivir Bien* has to have both a technical and instrumental side, as well as a political and ideological side. And this is our challenge. To combine the technical and the political is difficult; it is very complicated. It would be easier to follow what has already been written, what has already been worked upon before . . . But this is not what we want. We rather want to do something that has never been done before.

Aguirre was conscious of the contradiction between the ideals of radical political transformation and the realities of everyday life inside bureaucracies when he stated,

> Although many of us know what is meant by the notion of *Vivir Bien*, from time to time it betrays us. Colonialism (*colonialismo*) strikes back, and starts to function in our heads and bodies . . . It is an eternal battle in our heads and hearts to make a difference [between earlier development models and the new one]. When we are constructing the new paradigm, sometimes the old [habits] come back because they are easy [to implement].

In this statement, Aguirre identified previous development models and techniques with the coloniality of the state. Yet he also noted that the same coloniality lives on as internalized ways of being and doing in those who are trying to work with

the new terminologies and epistemologies (Ranta 2017a, 1611), thereby highlighting that the biopolitics of such governing practices as neoliberal rationalities function in intricate ways, both through economic, political, and social structures, and through the internalized conduct of individuals and groups of people. Thus, what Mignolo (2009, 16–17) has termed the body-politics of knowledge – a bodily technology engaged in decolonizing the knowledge responsible for the very coloniality of racialized others – has not effectively occurred.

The depoliticization of *Vivir Bien*

If some public servants at the sectoral workshop complained about the failure to render *Vivir Bien* policy ideas into a technical agenda, others complained about the exact opposite: they noted that too much technicality would change the essence of what should be a reflection of indigenous ideas, worldviews, and knowledge. Instead of demanding clearer technical guidelines for the translation of *Vivir Bien* into bureaucratic practice, they expressed concerns about traditional bureaucratic means. One of the public servants commented to Aguirre that, according to his understanding, the notion of *Vivir Bien* is not a "mechanistic neoclassical term" that could be applied and measured in bureaucratic planning in a similar way to universally disseminated policy concepts. Another public servant joined him and suggested that, as public servants and policy actors, they "should not fall into *mecanicismo*", mechanistic application of the notion of *Vivir Bien* which, in his opinion, rather referred to concrete life experiences of indigenous peoples in rural communities. By claiming that instead of being an achievable and measurable development goal, the notion of *Vivir Bien* signifies and symbolizes indigenous life (*vivencia*) itself, he (unconsciously) struck at the core of the criticism that many anthropologists and development researchers have made of indigenous policies. Scholars of indigenous knowledge, for example, have noted that when indigenous issues are raised as a policy concern, they are decontextualized and extracted from their local cultural contexts. This is problematic because the solutions that indigenous knowledge is supposed to bring to development are, by definition, local (Ellen and Harris 2000; Pottier 2003). One manager of the Planning Unit at the Ministry of Development Planning expressed these concerns to me in a later interview:

> The difficulty is the concept of *Vivir Bien* itself. In the NDP it appears as a very general concept whereas in real life there are various ways of thought and action that can be considered part of the idea of *Vivir Bien* in different cultures and geographic areas. Although [as a state policy] it appears as a specific way of thinking – as a general philosophy – in reality it is a very diverse concept. The difficulty is that we have to construct *Vivir Bien* as a paradigm of development for the country, but for others it is their life experience as such. One Aymara intellectual from *Taller Oral Andino* expressed this to me by saying that "for us *Vivir Bien* is everyday life". Solidarity, complementarity, and harmony with nature are integral parts of everyday life experiences in small indigenous communities but to take them to the level of the state is a problem.

> In urban environments reciprocity, complementarity, and solidarity have been lost; individualism, competitivity, and productivity rather predominate. So, for some [*Vivir Bien*] is the practice of life itself, but for us as public servants it is something that we have to examine, classify, and construct . . . In terms of development planning, it is not clear how to work with these diverse practices and life experiences [of indigenous peoples]. In order to plan, we have to have a clear change in mind; we have to have development objectives, programmes, and projects that can be operationalized. If we do not have concrete changes in mind, if the concept [of *Vivir Bien*] is not clear, we cannot work.

In this quote, the manager crystallized anxieties and challenges that public servants faced in their attempts to work with the *Vivir Bien* paradigm. Rather than reflecting the real-life heterogeneity, cultural diversity, and geographical specificities of the Bolivian population, he implied that *Vivir Bien* as a policy concept is detached from realities and, consequently, too generalized to address people's concrete problems. As was explained in Chapter 4, the notion of *Vivir Bien* has arisen from indigenous criticism of Western development discourses that, according to many indigenous activists and scholars, have concentrated on indigenous issues as "development problems". With the notion of living well, the negative idea that indigenous peoples are always lacking something –education, health, in general development – was transformed into a source of strength and aspiration. Yet from the point of view of public servants, this politically important aspect meant that new policy ideas were not represented as solutions to problems needing to be fixed – a condition requiring a technical and bureaucratic exercise. Instead, the notion of *Vivir Bien* appeared as a goal towards which to aspire or even as an already-existing state of affairs.

   Therefore, it was not clear what public servants should do and with what means. To give an example, one person from the ministry in charge of nationalizations commented to me, "It has now become clear to me that we have to do everything in the name of *Vivir Bien*. You can ask me what it means, but I don't know what to answer you." This led into a situation in which public servants interpreted and applied the notion of *Vivir Bien* through their own professional points of view, academic expertise, and technical capacities. A public servant from the Ministry of Education, for example, defined it to me as the satisfaction of basic needs and as access to education, health, and housing. Another public servant from the health sector observed that although indigenous life experiences were foreign to him, he could, nevertheless, relate to some ideals that were akin to his own rather conservative thinking. Public servants, therefore, identified those bits and pieces of the notion of *Vivir Bien* that were familiar to them. Similar remarks have been made of the South African concept of *Ubuntu*, which has been identified as a bloated concept that means everything to everyone (Fox 2011, 108). Therefore, it has been suggested that it should not be used as a constitutional or policy concept (Ibid.). For Aguirre, one way to surpass the interpretational ambiguity was the use of clear technical planning tools. Sticking to traditional techniques of development and to the bureaucratic language spoken by public servants enabled Aguirre to direct

public servants beyond the conceptual vagueness. Standard intervention models offered new – and inexperienced – political actors a tool to direct public servants with various interests towards a common effort.

During the period of my fieldwork, the notion of *Vivir Bien* provided a battlefield of disputes over meanings amongst political leaders and public servants, often reflecting the different positionalities of indigenous and nonindigenous actors. Valentin Ticona Colque, the Vice-Minister of Community Justice,[1] gave me an example of this:

> *Vivir bien* is a Spanish translation. And sometimes concepts make us fight with each other; they bring us difficulties and problems in this process [of change] . . . So, the problem resides in the concept: how does one understand it? . . . We should discuss these concepts profoundly; one should understand what we [the Aymara] really mean with the concept *Suma Qamaña* . . . We are trying to reconstruct these principles and values that still exist today amongst indigenous peoples so that they could serve for the whole society, for the whole country. We understand *Vivir Bien* as *Suma Qamaña*.

Ticona's point here was that as a Spanish translation, the notion of *Vivir Bien* does not necessarily capture all those elements that its indigenous advocates promote. As an indigenous leader from the *ayllu* Chullpa in North Potosí, one of the poorest regions in the country, Ticona was of the opinion that the Aymara concept of *Suma Qamaña* reflected the "real" characteristics and foundations upon which policy shifts should rely. A "proper" understanding of *Suma Qamaña* as an Aymara idea, worldview, or a way of life, whose characteristics were vividly described by Yampara in Chapter 4, was not being translated into the practice of government, and the notion of *Vivir Bien* had, therefore, become an extremely ambiguous term, accommodating diverse – and even contradictory – meanings. This coincides with Radcliffe's (2015b, 273) observation on Ecuador according to which "government policy did not encompass the full meaning and transformative potential [of *Sumak Kawsay*] either in its means or ends". Given Bolivia's ethnic diversity, where each group has its own cultural principles and conceptual formulations, there is an ongoing battle over whose principles count the most in the definition and use of the concept. According to Ticona, the notion of *Vivir Bien* left too much room for interpretation, which caused confusion and conflicts. As an ambiguous, overarching category, it was in the danger of losing its connections to the multiple meanings and political needs that the people who had most to gain from it attached to it.

Vaclav, a former consultant at the Ministry of Planning, told me in an interview in 2017 that in the practice of government, *Vivir Bien* had turned into a mere "Westernized container of indigenous images"; according to him, the term as it was used in bureaucratic practice during his time of service did not originate from indigenous peoples' own experiences. The same view was shared by Oscar Vega, a critical scholar, activist, and member of the *Grupo Comuna* whom I interviewed in 2017. He said that during the time of the Constituent Assembly, the notion of *Vivir Bien* still reflected the real-life political efforts and struggles of indigenous organizations. In ten years of executive and bureaucratic practice, however, he

suggested, *Vivir Bien* had been converted into "a depoliticized trademark" or "a logo". Although the governing regime continues to operate through the notion of *Vivir Bien*, its political potential has been emptied: depoliticization has rather taken place. As my observations of state operations have been indicating, this was already an ongoing tendency during my 2008–2009 fieldwork.

Micropractices of power in the practice of government

In the second sectoral workshop at the end of November 2008, Flavio,[2] a young technical consultant from the Ministry of Development Planning, introduced guidelines for monitoring and evaluation that he had elaborated with the approval of the ministry's political leaders. The well-structured technical tool kit that he presented to the audience of public servants resembled those used by development agencies and NGOs worldwide, a reflection of his many years of work experience in donor-funded projects in Bolivian ministries. He explained the logics of monitoring and evaluation and gave guidelines for the formulation of indicators. As had been the case with the formulation of vision, focus areas, and objectives, it was emphasized here that sectoral indicators should be simple, practical, reliable, and unambiguous. They should "reflect directly and without ambiguity the progress made towards the chosen objectives". Flavio also said that they should be formulated in such a way that data on the progress of indicators could be gathered systematically. At the end of his presentation, Flavio gave an example of a desirable logical framework matrix that public servants were supposed to formulate.

Although LFAs, objective trees, indicators, and other standardized development techniques had been criticized by many indigenous scholars as reflections of Western linear thinking, they were, nevertheless, used in the everyday practice of the ministry. This was problematic, as "standard intervention models and project cycles are designed to take out history, to exclude wider economic and political analysis, and to isolate project action from the continuous flow of social life" (Long 2001, 32). As such, this practice of government represented a contradiction in terms of policy discourses because at the level of principle, the notion of *Vivir Bien* was rooted in tackling wider economic, political, social, and cultural issues. Flavio commented on this to me in an interview in the following way:

> These [sectoral] plans that are made now are not based on new solutions. There are some new interesting ideas that have been included in them but mostly there is nothing that is totally different from before. And, in my opinion, there shouldn't be. Standardized planning models have existed for long time . . . In theory, new things are nice but in practice what has happened is that many [sectoral] plans are copied from old plans. Only minor details have been added so that they would fit into the new structure [of *Vivir Bien*]. It is much easier to continue to do what one has always done than to change one's orientation.

This extract reflects the disinterest in creating new technical tools and planning mechanisms in response to decolonizing policy agendas. In the practice of state

bureaucracy, it was easier to lean on existing ways of doing things rather than challenging the prior forms of knowledge and technical expertise of public servants. Thus, the incorporation of *Vivir Bien* into bureaucratic practice was constantly challenged by the coloniality of state practices and internalization of expert regimes. One of the programme directors at the Ministry of Development Planning expressed this in a somewhat similar way when he stated in an interview,

> At the moment, it can be seen that in those development plans that are being worked upon right now, such as sectoral development plans, we can explain the philosophical part [of the notion of *Vivir Bien*] very well. But when it comes to grounding these [philosophical ideas] in concrete and rational proposals that would still be within the framework of *Vivir Bien*, there emerges a rupture, a very clear rupture. Programmes and projects are the same as before; they are conducted within the same traditions as always before. And, as we do not have indicators of *Vivir Bien* yet, indicators evidently continue to be the same; they are the traditional ones. So, you can imagine what kind of rupture exists between the paradigm of *Vivir Bien* and the reality [of bureaucratic practice]; the reality is different.

This commentary makes one wonder where to locate the rupture and abyss between concepts and practices. Was it the lack of technical expertise? To some extent, it appeared that when the notion of *Vivir Bien* was brought into state-policy discourses, it did not respond to public servants' need for an identifiable problem that they could solve with specific technical means and with the technical expertise that they have. Neoliberal colonialism was such a wide problem that, in addition to technical tools, it would require major political changes that were outside the repertoire of public servants in order for it to be addressed. Issues such as the lack of indicators were an obvious source of disorientation amongst consultants and public servants, but not as crucial as the lack of knowing – or agreement on – what kind of transformation was sought. It seemed that the logics of the notion of *Vivir Bien* as state policy served specific political purposes, while the bureaucratic practices discussed here showed coherence and consistency within logics that continued to encourage institutional continuity and stability. Standard intervention models seemed to be overruling the alternative policy discourses that new and inexperienced political leaders were trying to promote.

These kinds of techniques as micropractices of power seemed to reproduce neoliberal rationalities of governmentality by depoliticizing *Vivir Bien* as an alternative discourse for development. My observations paralleled those of Oscar Vega, who commented to me in 2017 that "neoliberalism continues to be still in force in contemporary Bolivia through governmental technologies, languages, and words". He said that it is common in Bolivia to perceive neoliberalism as part of a specific epoch that ended with the election of Morales and the MAS. However, as he suggested, neoliberalism does not have to be tied to a specific ideology. Its strength is rather in its capacity to live on and to do things through individuals, this time impoverished indigenous citizens, who, for example, have become targets of

governmental operations through Morales's cash-transfer programmes. "*Vivir Bien* has been converted into a logo through which neoliberal rationalities continue to function," Vega concluded.

The critique of technical expertise by aid agencies

In its early stages, the Bolivian state transformation process was presented as an example *par excellence* of a critical challenge to development expertise. The first page of the NDP (República de Bolivia 2007) makes a dramatic remark on the role of donor-funded consultants in the process of neoliberal downsizing of the state, claiming,

> The withdrawal of the state has reduced the strength of the state and it has caused its functional dispersion. Employment in the public sector was dramatically reduced in favour of private consultants, financed by foreign donors. State bureaucracy was privatized and subordinated to foreign interests.

In principle, the notion of *Vivir Bien* negates the role of international experts and rather draws on local perceptions of what indigeneity means. This evoked a crisis of technical expertise on two levels: on the one hand, there emerged an increasing need for rendering indigenous ideas, knowledge, and worldviews into technical formats; on the other, as political-economic issues came to the fore, the whole notion of technical expertise was being questioned by many agents of change. A contradiction appeared between the fact that Morales's regime represents a group that had critically assessed and resisted the existence of neoliberal expert rule but which, as a governing regime, now faced the challenge of creating and implementing new kinds of practice in implementing governmental and expert schemes. When shifting from politics as contention to policy as state practice, overt politicization had to be tamed into something technical.

   Despite MAS critique of global development actors and universal development paradigms, international development agencies initially reacted very positively to the political rise of the MAS and their policy agendas. There were high expectations that pro-poor development agendas would be implemented and the inclusion of indigenous peoples promoted. It was recognized that the political rise of the MAS had occurred through democratic elections with very wide popular support, which provided strong legitimacy for the newly elected governing regime and its policies. The executive had now made very clear rules for development agencies: no conditionalities of aid would be allowed, and decisions would be made, and processes implemented, by the governing regime rather than by the foreign development community (Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 206). Many donors told me that they understood this; one self-reflexive foreign diplomat, for example, stated that "decolonization is understandable from the historical perspective considering the strong role of IFIs and multinational companies in the country". This is aptly

illustrated in a quotation from an interview with a Bolivian economist who, at the time of my fieldwork, worked for a bilateral donor agency but had earlier, long-term experience with the Central Bank:

> Some time ago the World Bank and the IMF and maybe even the IDB were very "pushy" with all the [Bolivian] governments . . . Neoliberal government X is getting along well with the Fund and the Bank and their technicians become friends and they work together . . . International Financial Institutions knew everything that was happening [in the ministries]. They penetrated the Central Bank and the ministries and had an influence on everything. When [Morales's] government entered, this modality [of close cooperation between government and donors] changed . . . Now [donors] have to ask for permission to do [things] and I agree that this is the way the cooperation should be. Bolivia has to make its policies independently and, for better or for worse, that is what it is doing now.

Another Bolivian development expert who identified himself as being of right-wing background stated with no hint of irony that many Bolivians – himself included – felt proud to have such a government that "intended to recover respect for the independence of the Bolivian state". There was a very strong and widely spread ethos of having had enough of the Washington Consensus. During the neoliberal regimes, Bolivia attracted one of the highest amounts per capita of aid in the Latin American region (Booth and Piron 2004; Nickson 2005). Between 1991 and 1994, for example, it ranged annually from US $660 million to $760 million, that is, equivalent to an annual average of 12–14 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Mendez Ferry 1997, 20). In 1994, almost 60 per cent of public investments comprised Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Ibid., 22). Although Bolivia's aid dependency declined towards the end of the 1990s, aid was still equivalent to approximately 6 per cent of the GDP in 1997–2001 (Nickson 2005, 400). Nearly 50 per cent of public investments consisted of foreign aid (Ibid.). The aid statistics presented by Webber (2011, 37) from the first year of Morales's presidency showed that, in comparison to the 1990s, aid allocations had drastically declined, totalling approximately 1 per cent of the GDP. The latest ODA statistics elaborated by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that in 2015 net official development aid to Bolivia was US $786.7 million. (OECD/DAC 2017). The main aid donors were the IDB and the International Development Association (IDA). The role of the United States as aid donor has fallen drastically, comprising US $18.6 million in 2015 in comparison to more than $120 million in 2007 (Ibid.).

When I sat down with the chief economist of the World Bank in 2008, I was expecting to hear strong criticism of the new approach. My interviewee, however, stated that relationships between the governing regime and the World Bank were very good. The World Bank had decided not to engage in any philosophical discussions over either the concept of development or the content of the NDP because,

he said with a laugh, for economists, "*Todo lo político es muy confuso* (all that is political is very confusing)". The chief economist also mentioned that, in practice, Bolivia was no longer in need of economic and financial guidance as it had been before. The state of the economy was sound because of oil and natural gas exports, favourable world market prices for both these and for the products of mining, and the cancellation of massive debt in 2005 and 2006. After severe conditionalities on the part of the HIPC and Enhanced HIPC, Bolivia had finally qualified for the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) with complete debt cancellation by the IMF (International Monetary Fund 2005), the World Bank (IDA) (World Bank 2006), and the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank 2007) (see also Calvo 2006, 50; Mollinedo and Velasco 2006, 136; Postero 2013, 40; Webber 2011, 33–5). Additionally, due to the GDP growth, Bolivia was declared a lower-middle income country by the World Bank in 2010. As a consequence, its borrowing patterns with the World Bank have been shifting from concessional loans to new financial instruments, equivalent to those of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico (Grupo del Banco Mundial 2010).

Bolivia has, however, continued to criticize both the World Bank and the IMF for loan conditionalities. While Morales did not sign the memorandum of understanding that was needed to launch a new period of cooperation between Bolivia and the IMF in 2006 (Webber 2011, 34), Bolivia returned to ask for IMF loans in 2008 and 2009 when the global financial crisis impacted its economy. In addition to difficult relationships with the IMF, relations between the governing regime and USAID have constantly remained tense, and the amount of its aid has declined (Webber 2011, 36–7). Historical memories of the role of the US in the militarization of the coca-growing Chapare, which led to the incarceration of Morales and fellow coca-union activists, as well as the continuous suspicion of US diplomatic influence on the political opposition, has made these relations tense. It did not help that USAID suspended its aid actions in the Andean highlands in 2007, shifting its focus to lowland municipalities where the stance of the political opposition is strong (Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 208). Consequently, Bolivia first prohibited the implementation of US-funded democracy projects in 2009, and, finally, in 2013, USAID was expelled altogether.

Although the responses of international development agencies to Bolivia's *Vivir Bien* policy ideas were initially positive and supportive, their reactions to the practice of government were less flattering. One Bolivian-education expert working in a bilateral donor agency, for example, criticized the practice of government as "purely improvisational". He was outraged because, in his opinion, the notion of *Vivir Bien* as it was portrayed in the NDP was merely political rather than stemming from any baseline studies, technical reports, surveys, or other accumulated data. Additionally, he suggested that there is no technical capacity to implement programmes and projects and that, although donors have offered their expertise to the governing regime, ministers have tended to decline their offers. This, in his opinion, had to do with the governing regime's "messianic" enthusiasm to construct all policies and practices from scratch; the government has, he said, "a syndrome of starting everything anew as if the past did not exist". This tendency, or Arendt's (1990 [1963]) revolutionary condition for a new beginning, was also mentioned by other development experts, one of whom noted that the government

wants to construct "a new world". For this reason, they suggested, Morales's regime refused to employ existing technical expertise: all those who had worked for or had some identifiable or imaginary link with previous governments or development agencies were bypassed as reminiscent of neoliberal colonialism.

This did not occur solely with economic expertise, but with indigenous expertise as well. Some donor agencies had worked for years with indigenous rights, intercultural bilingual education, and other indigenous issues. The German GIZ, for example, had, since the mid-1990s, supported the works of indigenous culturalists such as Javier Medina, discussed in Chapter 4. They had developed methodologies and techniques for incorporating indigenous issues into development programming and the concrete implementation of programmes and projects. Although GIZ experts, some of them anthropologists of indigenous origin, were thrilled with *Vivir Bien* policy ideas, they noted that the governing regime was not interested in applying their methods and techniques. In consequence, they criticized the governing regime for being unable to translate radical indigenous discourses into practice. They noted that, as a result, the practice of government continued to function through Western bureaucratic logics, executed by public servants whose mentalities revolved around technical expertise acquired in the age of neoliberal policies.

According to many development experts, another cause for the lack of implementation was the brain drain from the state to the private sector and to international development agencies. In their opinion, this had to do with salary levels. Many noted that due to the considerable decrease in salary levels – and obviously also for political and ideological reasons, although this was not often said aloud – there had been a major flight of human capital from the ministries to donor agencies, private consultancy firms, and to the private sector in general (see also Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 206). The question of salaries had to do with the fact that during the first months of his presidency, Evo Morales announced a Plan of Austerity (*Plan de Austeridad*), which drastically reduced the salary levels of all public figures, starting with the president himself (República de Bolivia: Decreto Supremo No. 28609; República de Bolivia: Decreto Supremo No. 28618). According to many development experts at the international development agencies, no technically capable consultant would work under these financial conditions. On the other hand, one of Morales's vice-ministers commented that the brain drain was a positive thing because he doubted that professionals trained in neoliberal traditions would ever be able to convert their mindsets and expertise to respond to the needs of the *Vivir Bien* paradigm.

One major concern for IFIs and development agencies was that Morales's regime devoted too much enthusiasm to politics. It was often suggested that the reason the governing regime concentrated so much on political and ideological issues was because they did not have the technical capacity to run the state (see also Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 206). A bilateral development expert, a Bolivian economist, commented,

> In my opinion, technical expertise does exist. What has weakened is the executive capacity. When we [as donors] analyze the capacity of the government,

we say that what is lacking is the technical expertise. But, what we mean is that technical expertise is lacking at the higher executive levels, because the state apparatus has actually been maintained as in the past in most ministries . . . There is expertise and the technicians are good, but the heads [of the ministries] are putting on the brakes.

This view showed clearly that the lack of expertise was identified as belonging to the executive, who had initiated the state transformation process. When accrediting public servants with good performance, the Bolivian economist suggested that, in his opinion, continuation under past expertise would have been the most convenient order, yet this had been disturbed by new political leaders. Another Bolivian expert from a bilateral donor agency, who had occupied major political positions during previous governments, continued along the same lines: "As many ministers have not even finished school, they would have needed very strong technicians." As this was not the case, he said, "public-sector management had become politicized". As a result, another Bolivian economist working for a different bilateral development agency criticized the notion of *Vivir Bien* as "*puro discurso politico*". According to him, it was political discourse rather than a technically implementable development model. He called it an "artificial cliché of indigeneity" that, in his opinion, tried to substitute previous economic logic (*lógica economista*) with the logic of solidarity (*lógica de solidaridad*). A third economist working for yet another agency, who had earlier claimed that development agencies were very supportive of Morales's regime and its policy ideas, later gave as his personal opinion that actually many regarded the NDP as "rhetorical, political, weakly elaborated, untenable, unviable, and infeasible".

While Morales's regime was criticized for being too politicized, donor experts' neoclassical economic expertise and universal ideals of development were considered scientific and knowledge-based rather than political and ideological choices. Yet many professionals currently working in technical positions for donor agencies had, in fact, been working as technocrats, consultants, or even as vice-ministers for previous governments that had proactive roles in promoting market liberalization, privatizations, and the withdrawal of the state in economic and social affairs. Technical expertise at the time of neoliberal restructurings emerged from "the paradox of intense state interventions and government by elites and 'experts' in a world where the state is supposed not to be interventionist" (Harvey 2005, 69). Therefore, their technical inputs had been framed by specific kinds of political and ideological stances that were very different from those prevailing in contemporary Bolivian policy discourses.

It can be argued that the penetration by social movements of the state, with tactics of contentious politics and an alternative political project that defied all prior knowledge and expertise, led to a dual crisis. The first was that of the legitimacy of IFIs and international development agencies vis-à-vis a Bolivian state that was opting for the retrieval of decision- and policy-making processes from global actors to the national (and local) level. The second was the crisis of well-educated and globally networked Bolivian development experts, many of whom no longer

found a work niche within ministries or other state institutions. This had led to their being transferred from state institutions to development agencies, and they needed to legitimize their new positions. The rise of political leaders from social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions had brought to the fore of the state people whose paths had not crossed socially with those of traditional elites and development experts previously in charge of the state. Now the newcomers were the rulers. For these two reasons, the question of technical expertise, and its politicization, came into strong focus.

Technicalizing indigenous expertise

Prior to Christmas 2008, the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination organized an internal meeting with its staff to discuss the content and meanings of the notion of *Vivir Bien*. The invited guest of the meeting, in which I participated, was Simon Yampara, whose ideas I presented in Chapter 4. The meeting was part of a series of discussions with indigenous scholars, anthropologists, and academicians, such as Javier Medina and Xavier Albó, who were expected to share their ideas on the notion of *Vivir Bien* with the staff of the vice-ministry. The aim was to help programme managers, consultants, and public servants to understand the new policy concept better and to give them practical tools to proceed with concrete programming. In a sense, they functioned as brokers of knowledge between state bureaucrats and indigenous communities (Lewis and Mosse 2006). Instead of consulting Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní, Chiquitano, Mojeño, and other leaders and members of indigenous communities about what living well means for them, the bureaucrats of the vice-ministry opted for expert translation of indigeneity.

Nearly 30 people were packed into a small, glass-walled conference room off an open-plan office, but all became quiet when Yampara entered. The meeting was opened by a programme manager in charge of development planning. He explained to the crowd of young, urban, middle-class consultants and public servants present that the Ministry of Development Planning wanted to collaborate with Bolivian scholars who have examined the notion of *Vivir Bien* in order to learn from their indigenous expertise. He told us that his personal interest lay in learning how to set up technical tools, such as measurable indicators, for this new indigenous policy idea. In an apologetic manner, he explained to Yampara that Western culture, of which bureaucratic practice, in his opinion, was part, is constructed upon the idea of change that has to be measured through technical means. Therefore, he said, for them as public servants, it is not enough to hear about worldviews and indigenous traditions on a general level; they had to be given concrete tools in order to work with them in practice. This was clearly a wish and a request directed at Yampara. The programme manager also said that he would like to know how it would be possible in the future to compare Bolivia statistically with other countries, if the new policy concept were so different from universally comparable policy ideas (such as those related to economic growth or poverty reduction) used by earlier regimes.

As a fierce promoter of Aymara traditions and self-governance through *ayllus*, Yampara ignored the programme manager's requests and rather concentrated on

explaining his understanding of the notion of *Suma Qamaña*. Before he started, Yampara gazed at the audience and stated sarcastically that it seemed that the people who had invited him were not taking the meeting seriously. "If this was a meeting to be taken seriously," he said, "coca leaves would be distributed to each participant. We would share coca leaves with each other as a sign of reciprocity and we would chew coca together as a sign of respect towards our ancestors and ancient Andean civilizations. Only after that we would talk." Young consultants and public servants smiled briefly and glanced at each other bemused. They were clearly impressed by Yampara's straightforward and slightly aggressive insight.

After a pause, Yampara started to lecture those present. He pointed out, critically, that the staff of the ministry was working with the concept of *Vivir Bien* in a very superficial way. In his opinion, public servants were using the term in policy documents and programming without any content: "The notion of *Vivir Bien* is just words on paper." Additionally, the NDP, in his opinion, still reflected the "mono-cultural logics" of Western bureaucracies, though it should rather be based on the logics of plural Andean worldviews. After this harsh criticism, Yampara explained that, for him, the notion of *Vivir Bien* paralleled Andean cosmological convivence (*cosmo-convivencia andina*), with the notion of *Suma Qamaña* being the Andean paradigm of life. In respect to technical inputs, Yampara refused to make any comment. He criticized the idea of formulating measurable indicators by saying that it is not possible to quantify everything. "*Suma Qamaña* is life," he said, and added that "it cannot be quantified". In sum, Yampara made a distinction between what the Aymara notion of *Suma Qamaña* entailed and how the notion of *Vivir Bien* was operationalized as bureaucratic practice. Furthermore, he was not willing to use his indigenous expertise in the translation of indigenous ideas into technical solutions.

After the meeting, I discussed their views of the meeting with three young consultants in their office space. One of them, Vaclav, with a background in left-wing student movements, suggested that, in his opinion, many indigenous scholars, Yampara included, provide overly idealistic images of indigenous communities. He regretted that their insights are seldom based on empirical analysis of their everyday lives; motivated by political considerations, indigenous communities are too often represented as havens of harmony and reciprocity that have no internal hierarchies or conflicts. Another consultant, originating from a highland Aymara community, defended Yampara. He said that he could recognize the principles and ideas of *Suma Qamaña* that Yampara presented as part of everyday lives in Aymara rural areas. He himself, for example, had worked for a year as a community leader, providing time and resources to its decision making as was demanded by community rules concerning rotational leadership. By doing that, he had fulfilled his share of community obligations and could continue with his university studies at the capital.

The third consultant, a university-educated woman from an Aymara background, commented that she had great sympathies for indigenous intellectuals, such as Yampara, because their ideas, in her opinion, were responses to centuries of dominance by "Western universalist views of knowledge". In her opinion, it did not matter whether Yampara's ideas were solely ideals. What was important, she

said, was that he was showing that indigenous communities have positive features, such as reciprocity and harmony, principles that each of us should cherish. Vaclav noted that they were referring here solely to Aymara perceptions and experiences. He said that lowland indigenous organizations, amongst others, had already accused the Ministry of Development Planning of being too Aymara-centric, and the visions of *Suma Qamaña* that Yampara presented did not help to solve these tensions. Indeed, Canessa (2014, 160) has made the remark that although indigenous diversity is explicitly lauded in Bolivian state-policy discourses and in the constitution, "the state is much more keen on celebrating highland values than lowland ones". The same observation has been made in Ecuador, where indigenous women in the Amazon region have raised the critique of the Andean origins of *Buen Vivir* discourses (Radcliffe 2015b, 269). Consequently, Vaclav said that, as technical advisors and consultants, they were "screwed" because they should incorporate indigenous worldviews from more than 30 Bolivian indigenous groups into viable planning mechanisms and they had no idea how to do it. Yampara's presentation had not given them technical tools to solve these critical questions.

An important issue in the use of indigenous expertise was the role given to indigenous communities themselves. In the second sectoral workshop, two stakeholders from the education sector pulled me aside, wanting to take a walk outside and to share with me their worry about the lack of grassroots representatives in the sectoral-plan workshops. This was an issue that had also caught my attention. When they had confronted Aguirre with the question of indigenous participation, Aguirre's response, later repeated to me in an interview, was that the elaboration of sectoral plans was "a purely technical task". Therefore, it was the task of public servants and technical consultants, he said, and added that "social movements and indigenous organizations were to be included in the planning processes later on, when technical issues had been solved". This remark caused confusion and disbelief amongst the education experts who came to talk to me. They were outraged that development planning, in their opinion, still appeared to be solely a technical exercise rather than a manifestation of decolonial state practices. Curiously, the governing regime promoting indigenous ideas as decolonial government seemed to be neglecting the participation of social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions in state technical affairs. Systematic ways of incorporating indigenous views from grassroots levels did not seem to exist.

Young consultants as brokers of policy knowledge

Let us move back to the first sectoral workshop in Chasquipampa. After workshop presentations by Aguirre and other keynote speakers, the workshop participants were divided into groups according to their corresponding sectors. The task of each group was to begin deliberating on visions and objectives for each sector. Each group was assisted by a young consultant who had been recruited to the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination on a short-term basis for the detailing of sectoral development plans. A few young professionals who worked at the Ministry of Finance also served in similar roles. I speak here of young consultants

because most of them were recent university graduates and relatively young, both in age and in professional career. In this sense, they marked a clear departure from the practice of previous governments when there was an abundance of donor-paid, high-end, senior professional consultants working in the ministries and for development agencies. A visit to any Bolivian ministry indicated that there was now an abundance of young people working on the staff. A young woman, head of a planning unit in one the most influential ministries, commented upon the influx of young directors and consultants as follows:

> There are a lot of young people in the ministries. They represent new blood; they are very enthusiastic. They enter [the ministries] with all those illusions of radical change, all those illusions characteristic of young people. They want to rule the world; they want to change things. That is why the minister has so much confidence in young people, and that is why young people are recruited.

During a break from group activities at the first sectoral-plan workshop, I took a walk in the nearby surroundings with a young female consultant from the Ministry of Development Planning. She was equally enthusiastic about the role of young people in the administration, and she seemed to believe that, although there have always been job opportunities for recent university graduates in Bolivian ministries, many more young people had been recruited during the MAS regime. With the recruitment of young people, she concluded, the governing regime aims to create a new, and more socially conscious, generation of public servants committed to the transformation of the state through such issues as social benefits, redistribution of wealth, and the increasing role of the state in economic and social affairs. Yet, despite these common characteristics, there was a notable diversity amongst these young consultants.

Húascar,[3] a 29-year-old economics graduate from the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA), the main state university in La Paz, represented indigenous culturalist ideas. He was a native from the rural Aymara region of Omasuyos, a politically radical area in the Andean mountains north of La Paz, from where he had migrated to the capital in order to study. Some of Húascar's previous professors, such as Carlos Villegas, were now working as ministers of the state. Although Húascar successfully combined university studies, bureaucratic work, and community duties (including a year of obligatory rotational community work typical of the highland Aymara), he noted that, in his opinion, there are two quite distinct and hard-to-combine worlds within Bolivia. His region of origin hosts many radical Aymara movements, including a semimilitary indigenous group, *Ponchos Rojos* (see Poma et al. 2008). In political terms, these radical *indigenistas* considered Evo Morales's regime to be a transitional period before the return to *Qullasuyu* could truly begin. The Aymara leader Felipe Quispe (*El Mallku*), who challenged Evo Morales in the presidential elections of 2002, originated from those areas as well. Húascar considered him the true representative of Andean indigenous peoples, while he identified Evo Morales as the leader of peasant unions (for similar discussions, see Albro 2006, 416–17; Morales 2012, 68; also Poma et al. 2008). Although

he believed in indigenous cultural values and fulfilled his commitments towards his community of origin, his opinion was that to combine Andean cosmological beliefs with state bureaucracy was almost impossible because state bureaucracy and its norms had, in his opinion, been brought to Bolivia from abroad. Yet he also criticized the tendencies of the ministries to treat indigenous peoples as a homogeneous group, as if social stratification or hierarchies did not exist amongst them.

Vaclav,[4] a 30-year-old graduate from the department of political science at the UMSA, represented left-wing tendencies amongst these young consultants. His teachers (Luis Tapia amongst them) had mainly consisted of radical left-wing intellectuals. Having been born and raised in the lowlands and educated in the highlands, he was strongly aware of the political tensions and factions in the country. On the one hand, he felt a constant longing for his place of origin, yet, on the other, he sensed that his lowland friends and family felt he had betrayed it because, despite oppositional resistance to Morales's regime in the lowlands, he had decided to work for it. Claudia, who worked in another ministry, had had similar experiences of the tensions of joining Morales's administration. In Santa Cruz, her friends and acquaintances had called her a betrayer of her region and a traitor to her social class. Claudia told me what had inspired her to make this choice:

> Bolivia will never be the same as before Evo Morales. Indigenous peoples will never again let anyone treat them the way they have been treated. You can no longer tell them, "Return to your community and take care of your *llamas*; that is your place." No! They now know their rights. They know they can go far and achieve a lot; they now know that they are entitled to equality with others.

Alongside indigenous culturalists such as Húascar, and those of left-wing orientation such as Vaclav and Claudia, there were also more technically oriented young consultants. Flavio, a 32-year-old political scientist from the capital city, with degrees from European universities, was technically skilled in project and programme management and the use of technical tools and frameworks. Despite his relatively young age, Flavio had had many years of experience in public-sector management with previous governments. Therefore, his discourses on *Vivir Bien* paralleled those of many development donors. Flavio understood it as an increasing participation on the part of the poor and as a solution to the problems of poverty and income inequality. Although many detested the notion of *Vivir Bien* as development, Flavio had no problem in defining it as a new model for achieving developmental goals. In fact, he had a hard time understanding the indigenous critique of development. He told me about the internal battles over meanings and techniques of *Vivir Bien* at the Ministry of Development Planning in the following way:

> The concept of *Vivir Bien* is very interesting, but it is not well understood yet. We do not even understand it at the Ministry of Planning. I think that our group of consultants who are working on this thematic have new, interesting ideas. Our views are not the typical views of public servants but still it has cost

us a lot to understand [the concept]. Sometimes we have had arguments with Noel [Aguirre] or other people because we did not understand the concept or because we did not agree upon it. At the moment, it is not clear how to translate the concept of *Vivir Bien* into public institutions. To change the mentality [of people in state institutions] is complicated. It gets even more complicated because it is not clear what one wants to obtain with this concept. The same has happened in our office [that is, the Ministry of Planning] and, it makes the implementation of sectoral plans, for example, very difficult.

Flavio's remark on how complicated it is to change the mentality of people in state institutions underlines the difficulties of transforming historically constructed forms of political reason. Although an alternative governmental scheme of social change was being promoted, difficulties lay in translating concepts and theories into practice. Because of the ambiguity of the concept, each young consultant seemed to rationalize it through their own mindsets. The personal views of various consultants reflected diverging interests: indigenous, left-wing, and technocratic.

Although young consultants at the Ministry of Development Planning implied that they had been recruited because they have a revolutionary spirit and they represent the new generation and new thinking, development donors tended to explain the recruitment of young and inexperienced consultants on the basis of political considerations and low salary levels rather than technical skills. They further argued that Morales's regime was unwilling to recruit anyone who had worked for previous governments or other "neoliberal agents", despite the fact that this has led to a deterioration of technical capacity and development expertise. To some extent, this delegitimized the new, young consultants in the eyes of development donors. Nevertheless, Claudia defended their roles forcefully:

In this process, it is not all about technical expertise. In this process of change there is no utility in having all the knowledge in the world and all the possible degrees and PhDs if one does not have social consciousness . . . There are people who have graduated from Harvard, who have master's degrees and doctoral degrees. Yet all they did during the previous governments was steal. . . Degrees do not guarantee successful public-sector management or a commitment to work for the benefit of the country.

Claudia's comment reflected the idea that political commitment to a socially inclusive state transformation process was a more important criterion for working with the governing regime than specific technical expertise. Additionally, she implied that experts originating from national elites in the past had used the state for personal political and economic gain rather than to benefit a common purpose. In this sense, the recruitment of new kinds of young consultants from outside the traditional elites symbolized a new beginning. Furthermore, the role of foreign donors in defining and determining policy content (and the nature of consultants)

in the Bolivian public administration had been diminished along the lines of the decolonization of the state (Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 206). In some sense, young consultants symbolized ideals of increasing sovereignty. They were a *tabula rasa* on which new meanings of governing were to be inscribed.

Notes

1 After the approval of the constitution in 2009, the vice-ministry was renamed *Viceministerio de Justicia Indígena-Originaria-Campesina.*
2 A pseudonym.
3 A pseudonym.
4 A pseudonym.

6 Bureaucracy as a disciplinary power

This chapter looks at the articulations between government and discipline in a state bureaucracy that is in the process of change.[1] It examines how bureaucracy, as a disciplinary power and locus of power relations, functions when it is challenged by discourses of decolonization. Although continuing analysis of the practice of government from the previous chapter, here it is extended towards the institutional and structural characteristics of the Bolivian nation-state, which reflect histories of the state's coloniality both in Bolivia and at the Latin American regional level. By identifying them, this chapter aims to provide a more profound explication of the continuation of the practice of government identified in Chapter 5.

First, I examine the views and actions of public servants who are, through their actions, producers and maintainers of bureaucratic power. My special interest resides in explaining the opposition amongst public servants towards indigenous decolonial policy. Second, I examine the political nature of state institutions, corporatism between the ruling regime and social movements, and the centralization of the state, all characteristics that are useful in explaining my ethnographic findings. The advantage of ethnographic scrutiny in this kind of endeavour is that it makes it possible to combine the personal experiences and concrete practices of diverse state actors with more institutional and structural aspects. Employing the ethnographic gaze, I examine how institutional and structural elements of the state are acted upon, negotiated, and transformed in a politically volatile situation. I focus on the indications of bureaucratic and authoritarian forms of rule that are in stark contrast to discourses of decolonization and democratization. While analysis is based principally on fieldwork data collected during Morales's first executive regime (2008–2009), they are complemented by recent interviews and academic literature.

I argue that the MAS transformational agenda faces severe challenges as the indigenous policy formations collide with the existing bureaucratic-institutional structures of the Bolivian nation-state. In many ways, these challenges are reflected in dual tendencies within the state: in discursive commitments to decolonize the state through the notion of *Vivir Bien* and in bureaucratic propensities to centralize its instruments of power and authority. While intending to liberate them as governing pluralities, a concept introduced in Chapter 4, the clash of indigenous ideas and discourses with the structures and institutions of the Bolivian

state bureaucracy and its colonial and neoliberal roots seems to convert indigenous peoples into disciplined masses – a term whose content and meanings will be elaborated and explained in this chapter.

The opposition of public servants

Since the mid-1980s' shift from military regimes to representative democracy and from state-centred development planning to global free-market options, there have been intense efforts to technicalize and depoliticize the Bolivian state bureaucracy through neoliberal expert regimes. The increasing role of technical experts and elites in the running of the state, as well as the superseding of the role of the state by global and local actors, was an integral part of neoliberal theory in which the state was seen as corrupt, interventionist, and too politicized (Harvey 2005, 66, 69). In Bolivia, a process of de-bureaucratization, "a drastic reduction in the number of civil servants and a simplification of the administrative procedures" (Urioste 2009, 112), was initiated. Established in 1990, the professional conduct of Bolivian public servants was regulated by the Law of Governmental Administration and Control (*Ley de Administración y Control Gubernamentales*, SAFCO) (Mosqueira y Azul del Villar 2006). The aim of the law was to instil in public servants a behavioural revolution based on ethics and professionalism in order to fight corrupt practices and political favouritism (Urioste 2009, 108–9, 111). According to the law, public servants must follow such principles as efficiency, transparency, and legality and obey the commands of their immediate superiors and other authorities (República de Bolivia 1990, 54).

The process of reforming Bolivian state bureaucracy was heavily supported by IFIs and international development agencies (Kohl and Farthing 2006, 86). The idea that overtly political states in the Global South need to be tamed is manifested, for example, in the SAPs that shifted the emphasis of economic and social policy from states to global and local actors, and from states to markets and civil society (Boås and McNeill 2003). In Bolivia, Urioste (2009, 112) has described the logic behind this thinking in the following way:

> Privatisation came down to transferring the previous management of resources by the discredited and dishonest state to a new space in which there was neither a misappropriation of funds nor the poor administration of national resources by public interest groups, because they were not subject to political forces.

After the SAPs, however, it was estimated that market reforms function best in a well-institutionalized, rather than a stateless, regime, which brought institutional reforms and agendas of good governance to the fore as recipes for taming the political nature of states in the Global South (Boås and McNeill 2003). Although there was a "recognition that 'rolling back the state' is in itself not enough to stimulate economic growth", an ideal of a minimal state still prevailed; however, it should be efficient enough to enhance economic reforms through such measures as

public-sector management, modernization of public administration, and privatiza-tion of state-owned enterprises (Ibid., 69–70).

When Morales's executive, originating from the political instrument of social movements, rose to power, public servants in state institutions were faced with a situation in which they were being led by political leaders originating from groups that had previously been almost completely marginalized from state administra-tion. Additionally, these political leaders – and policy documents prepared by them – forthrightly promulgated the political nature of policy and condemned the state as colonial. At sectoral planning workshops in Chasquipampa, most public servants appeared (at least in my presence) to be enthusiastic defenders of the notion of *Vivir Bien* as the state policy. After the workshop, I started to make appointments with them in order to learn more about their experiences in translat-ing policy ideas into bureaucratic practice. One case in particular led me to ques-tion whether the response of public servants to indigenous ideas was, in fact, as positive as it appeared. I had been trying to make a contact with a particular public servant whose ideas of sectoral plans had caught my attention at the workshop. After various refusals made over the phone by her secretary, I finally managed to get her to talk to me. Before I was able to introduce my research interests and moti-vations, she started a long and apologetic monologue in which she explained why her sector had not yet been able to send the plan to the Ministry of Development Planning. Then she hung up. The following weekend, while at the children's play-ground in a park with my son, I saw her there with her children as well. Delighted, I approached her. When she saw me, however, she quickly hid herself and left. The phone call had confused me, but I was now seriously puzzled.

I decided to call and to meet with another public servant who had appeared to be a very enthusiastic defender of the notion of *Vivir Bien* at the workshop. While Vice-Minister Aguirre was present, he stood up various times to congratulate him on the policy ideas. In another workshop, he portrayed himself as a notably articu-late person who had great expectations about the translation of the notion of *Vivir Bien* into practice. During sectoral group work, he lavishly praised the Ministry of Development Planning to me. This time we met at a cafeteria without the presence of political authorities, his work colleagues, or other public servants. Mentioning my strange encounters with his colleague, I explained my research to him and stated that I was in no way related to any Bolivian political authorities or institu-tions. It became apparent that some of the public servants had been suspicious about my role at the sectoral workshops and were wondering whether I was there to assess and control the elaboration of sectoral plans or to report what had been going on to the political authorities.

Although alarmed by being considered a sort of a spy, this incident was one of the breakthrough moments in my research. First of all, it completely changed my relationships with public servants. Rather than constantly hear overtly positive accounts of decolonial policy, I started to learn what they really thought about pol-icy change. Second, the incident showed that there was a mutual distrust between political leaders and public servants, and that the state bureaucracy was infused with the resulting power relations, producing an asymmetry that inhibited public

servants from expressing their opinions freely. Our meeting at the cafeteria turned into a very outspoken burst of complaints about policy. Alone with me, the public servant claimed that he could not care less about any decolonial policy change. At his institution, he stated, public servants do not know about the notion of *Vivir Bien* and they do not care about it. "Daily routines at the office are the same as always," he said; he further explained their strategy, according to which "the concept is just put into the documents but it is not practised". He called this strategy "make-up" that hid the fact that there was "zero, or very little, implementation".

I asked him why public servants at his institution felt the need to bypass *Vivir Bien* and to continue with existing bureaucratic traditions. He stated that personally his main interest was to retain his employment, which is why he acted at official meetings as if he complied with governmental discourses of indigeneity. He further commented,

> The motivation [for public servants to work for the government of Evo Morales] is not the job itself. It is just the means of living. It is not the office where you work, whether it is private or public. It is the job that provides you with food, you know, and it provides you with shelter. That is what motivates me to work there. I have, you know, material needs. I did not have a choice . . . That is what happens very often in Bolivia . . . You grab whatever is available; that is it.

Employment in the public sector has, indeed, been considered desirable by many Bolivians. Working for the state has provided job stability, the potential for social benefits, clearly defined work contracts, working hours, and so forth (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 271). Although SAPs' conditionalities reduced the number of state employees drastically, especially in the mines and other industries, between 1996 and 2005 the number of public servants constantly increased in the higher professional and technical positions (Ibid., 271). The number of directors and technical experts in state institutions has markedly surpassed the number of state-provided working-class jobs (Ibid., 262), and the Bolivian state has become an important provider of employment for the urban middle classes. Therefore, for many of the interviewed public servants, the main motivation to work in the public administration was not primarily ideological, nor based on the motivation to contribute to the process of change, but to maintain their institutional status and employment.

During the nationalist revolution, state institutions and industries became the main source of jobs as the state expanded as an economic and political actor. Typical of the Latin American region (Foweraker, Landman and Harvey 2003; Vanden and Prevost 2012), political positions and technical jobs in Bolivia were assigned on the basis of political favouritism, which enabled "corrupt practices such as the accumulation of salaries, under-the-counter payments, bribes and unwarranted authorizations" (Urioste 2009, 108–9). This complex set of "political negotiation with a highly dispersed network of state patronage", as Gray Molina (2003, 350) has suggested, was "channeled through networks of party sympathizers and

militants". Despite neoliberal reforms of public service, it has been argued that the so-called pacted democracy between major Bolivian political parties reproduced the clientelist political system by rewarding patronage positions in exchange for acquiescence in neoliberal policy decisions (Gamarra 1994). The integration of major political parties into a complex system of patronage that favoured its members effectively silenced any kind of parliamentary resistance (Ibid.). Additionally, it has been claimed that foreign aid funds operated as sources of income and employment for the middle classes, who were able to harness their technical skills and expert discourses to the maintenance of patron-client relations and exchange of favours (Rodríguez-Carmona 2008, 224). However, Grindle (2003, 338) has noted that "by the late 1990s, the capacity to form patronage-based pacts had diminished through state entrenchment and decentralization". As neoliberal policies reduced state resources, the capacity of the Bolivian state to recruit, to create positions, and to launch programmes and projects through which webs of patronage were established and maintained was damaged (Ibid.).

An interesting question is whether this historically deeply rooted system of patronage has reemerged with the strengthening of state resources during Morales's regime. Although his government has had a strong anticorruption stance, there have also been cases such as that in 2007 when a few MAS officials were caught selling jobs for political support (Van Cott 2008, 56). In respect to this, Javier Medina, a former technocrat himself, noted that "Bolivia is an apparently Western kind of a state, but deep down it is just a huge provider of jobs". Furthermore, a major corruption case erupted in 2015 in regards to the government-funded *Fondo Indígena* (Indigenous Fund), whose main aim was to support development projects amongst rural peasantry. Millions of dollars were lost, and amongst the accused were various key figures of the MAS: vice-ministers, peasant leaders, and senators.

Are public servants neutral?

In stark contrast to Weber's (2006, 52) description of the features of modern bureaucracy in which "normally the position of the official is held for life", it has been common in Latin America that "each time regimes exchanged power, they changed completely the identity of . . . those managing the state" (Dezalay and Garth 2002, 38). At the beginning of his presidency, it seemed that Evo Morales tried to avoid this by arguing strongly for the sustainability of public service in order to maintain institutional memory and the technical capacity of state institutions. Many responded by asserting that this had to do with the recognition that the sudden political rise of the MAS had not given them time to prepare to fill technical posts and to bring in technical capacities. Many public servants seemed to be proud of the stability of labour conditions that seemed only to have increased. One of the programme leaders at the Ministry of Health, for example, told me that

> there have been only minor changes in the state apparatus and labour stability has been guaranteed. What stands out with this government is that only

approximately 20 per cent of public servants have been changed, while during the previous governments more than 50 per cent of them were changed when the new regime took over.

One vice-minister at the ministry of one of the strategic economic sectors was, however, a bit more sceptical about this stability and the reasons behind it. As he noted,

> We have sacked only a few people but many new ones have arrived. This is normal in all ministries; no one is safe. Some ministries sack more people, others fewer. Unfortunately, ministries don't have any kind of labour stability. That is why, in Bolivia, public servants have membership in all the political parties . . . On the one hand, that is the tradition of the nation, and on the other, it is the economic situation that makes them do that.

What emerged as an important theme in respect to public servants in most interviews, as was exemplified with the earlier quotation, was the relationship between the technical neutrality and the political stance of the public servant. While public servants themselves tended to underline their neutrality and technical expertise, others, such as indigenous activists and young consultants, were often very critical of the perceived linkage between public service and belonging to a political party. Some of them seemed bitter that they had not been recruited by the MAS, while others were more critical about the whole idea of public service being related to political support for the leading party of the executive. One indigenous activist who had worked as a technocrat for previous governments, for example, complained that he had been overlooked in recruitment policies for political reasons. He thought that as he had worked for "neoliberals" and did not belong to the MAS, the government did not want to recruit him although he could help with the implementation of the notion of *Vivir Bien*:

> The most important thing is the access to jobs and in order to have access to jobs, you have to belong to a political party, in this case, the MAS. If you are not a militant member of the MAS, you won't have access to public-sector employment. They are not looking for people who know what they are doing because it would mean that those who are less qualified but belong to the MAS would lose their jobs.

He continued by analyzing technocrats and the public sector in general:

> There have been interesting [experiences] of technocratic management, but they were never capitalized upon, because these technocrats do not belong to any political parties. Therefore, they are always accepted as something necessary, but if you can avoid them, you will, because [technocrats] do not obey the rules of the party, and in Bolivia, that is serious. Therefore, the public sector is just mediocre in Bolivia. If you have obtained a job in state bureaucracy

for political reasons, it is not because you are knowledgeable. This is how it has been now, before, and always. It is not something typical to the MAS.

Flavio, one of the young consultants mentioned in Chapter 5, noted that he has been "lucky in not having had pressures to affiliate politically in order to get a job". Nevertheless, although recruited by Morales's regime, he noted,

> [T]his government is continuing with the same political practices, such as nepotism and the use of party networks in assigning jobs, as previous governments. It seems that for this government, it is very important that you belong to the MAS if you want to be recruited to the state bureaucracy. Of course, the same happened before too, but it seems that the government is no longer interested in combating this phenomenon. It rather seems to serve them in the process of state transformation to recruit people who are loyal to the party although they might not have any technical capacity to implement their views of change.

These quotations aptly describe the continuation of the deeply rooted phenomenon of political clientelism, defined by Chalmers (1977, 33) as "a pattern of relationships in which goods and services are exchanged between people of unequal status". Clientelism has been widely studied both in Bolivia (Domingo 2005; Lazar 2004; Urioste 2009) and elsewhere in Latin America (Auyero 2000). Lazar (2004, 232) has suggested that party-related public-sector jobs in Bolivia that are very important in terms of income generation and employment cannot be considered solely as gifts from the regime in power to its voters or as a sign of corruption; "rather they are part of the citizens' expectations". Indeed, during my fieldwork, it became clear that there was increasing pressure by social movements to reward them for their political support of the MAS by employing their leaders in state administration. One of the leaders of the CSCB, for example, lamented that peasant unions did not yet have the capacity to provide the state with technically skilled professionals but, instead, he felt that their leaders should occupy leading political posts. And indeed, if the state was to be decolonized, was this not a justifiable expectation?

However, the contrary seemed to be happening. As the MAS was unable to provide sufficiently qualified candidates to perform bureaucratic tasks, many ministers and functionaries outside movement struggles and indigenous activism appeared on the scene. This became clear, for example, in my interview with the leader of the CSCB, who told me that they did not agree with the president's decision to allow "neoliberals" to work in the sphere of the state. He noted that when the MAS obtained political power, many politicians and public servants who had worked for previous governments suddenly changed their political party in order to retain their positions. One of the young consultants, Vaclav, voiced the criticism that a phenomenon of political opportunism had emerged. Both earlier neoliberal technocrats and politicians and also left-wing university scholars and union activists who previously had no interest in indigenous affairs suddenly seemed to turn into *masistas* in order to maintain or achieve political power. The ex-leader of

the COB and one of the founding members of the MAS, Filemon Escóbar (2008, 302–3), for example, fiercely criticized the fact that professional left-wing politicians from such parties as the MIR, the *Partido Comunista Marxista Leninista* (PCML), and Trotskyite strands were able to reenter politics through the MAS after the disappearance of their own parties. This corresponds to a major dilemma inherent in both revolutionary processes and Marxist interpretations of them, as explicated by Foucault (1980, 59–60):

> [I]n order to operate these State apparatuses which have been taken over but not destroyed, it will be necessary to have recourse to technicians and specialists. And in order to do this one has to call upon the old class which is acquainted with the apparatus, namely the bourgeoisie.

Although many of these middle-class professional politicians and technicians originated from the political Left rather than the Right, numerous indigenous activists complained that as they have not had previous experience in state administration, they have been bypassed by actors who are more familiar with the institutional and structural logics of the state. Those social movements and indigenous organizations that entered the state with decolonial ideas and political demands for a radical state transformation have become replaced, disciplined, and tamed by those knowing how to run the state.

Racial orders under threat

Ethnic discrimination and racial prejudices became major topics when I met Vice-Minister Ticona at his office in the Ministry of Justice building on the city's main avenue, El Prado. Here, amongst public servants and lawyers who traditionally originated from, and had close relationships with, the political and economic elite, Ticona's presence as the political leader of the vice-ministry marked a difference. Having experienced discrimination in his own life, the driving force behind his political career was to change the course of things for future indigenous generations, as he recalled:

> I am motivated by my [indigenous] identity. We cannot continue to be discriminated against, marginalized, and excluded. One feels bad when that happens. I have experienced it in my own community, in the cities. When I travelled in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, I was treated as an inferior person, I was humiliated, I was treated as *indio abajo*, *indio casero*. As this cultural identity has been so discriminated against, we are now searching for equilibrium, equality, and complementarity . . . And I am telling my children, *hijo*, *hija*, my generation will be the last of *indios caseros*; you will not be called that. That motivates me, to continue to fight so that my children will not be treated as I was.

Dressed in traditional indigenous garments, Ticona, an indigenous leader, received a continual flow of visitors – most of them indigenous peoples from

rural communities and organizations – to discuss legal matters. Yet occasionally middle-class public servants also popped in. This fitted perfectly with Ticona's development thinking as became evident when he started to elaborate his political visions further:

> What we are dreaming of, our vision, is a complementarity between indigenous peoples and nonindigenous peoples. What would this complementarity mean? It means that we respect the rights of the non-indigenous peoples and they respect our rights. We certainly dance, sing, live, dress differently; our education is different; our languages are different; our forms of administering justice are different; but these differences must be respected. We have something good in our cultures, and they have something good in their cultures; therefore, there should be complementarity between them.

Until Morales's regime, it had been rare to see people in traditional indigenous dress in public-sector offices, especially indigenous women (Poma et al. 2008, 46). Now public servants were faced with a situation in which the executive was led by a peasant president and various ministers of indigenous origins who had traditionally been considered to be "below" the ranks of urban, middle-class public servants.[2] This was not an easy change for many public servants. One programme director at the Ministry of Health, however, noted that some positive changes had now occurred:

> What has changed is that we now work more according to intercultural criteria. In job announcements, for example, we no longer restrict who can apply for the job. In the case of secretaries, for example, one of the requirements that we used to have was that the person had to have a good appearance (*buena presencia*) and as a result, women in *pollera* [indigenous dress] were eliminated from the candidates. Today, you can already find many secretaries in the ministries in *pollera*.

Despite remarks like this, my interviews and interactions with public servants indicated that disdainful attitudes towards indigenous peoples still persisted. Many, for example, complained that indigenous peoples had attained political positions without having any capacity to run the state and with little or no formal education. This was considered unfair by many public servants who had been trained in universities. There were fears that in the name of decolonization, uneducated indigenous peoples aligned to the MAS would take the place of public servants recruited by previous governments. One of these mentioned that their biggest fear was losing the influence and the respect they felt to be their due. Another public servant from the Ministry of Education described the change that had occurred from a slightly different perspective:

> Most public servants originate from the middle class. What is being attempted now is to have more social inclusion of those groups that have been denied

access to public-sector jobs before so that they would also have better opportunities to participate in the management of the state, to fulfil their needs according to the knowledge of their own realities. So, the public servant has to change his current thinking, and to open up his ideological horizon, to open up [his thinking] because he has been trained in the tradition of exclusion and the tradition of not attending to people in an equal way. This process has already begun and we have to continue with it, because we know that it is a long road to change the attitude of a public servant in such a way that he would want to serve a society that is composed of many cultures.

For some, the contemporary process of state transformation was a source of astonishment and an awakening call, as if they had only recently come to realize how diverse Bolivian society is, and that each person, from whatever background, should have equal rights. One public servant stated in an innocently surprised way that "we have only now come to realize that there are different cultures and worldviews in our country. Now they should all have equal rights and equality of opportunities". Others were more concerned to state that, in their opinion, decolonial ideas, such as the notion of *Vivir Bien*, signalled "backwardness and decay". During a break in one of the sectoral-plan workshops, a public servant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told me that he does not have the slightest belief or interest in the notion of *Vivir Bien*. In his opinion, it was impossible for such a policy to work in the modern world. "Maybe it works in backward and static indigenous communities that do not have any development," he concluded. This parallels the remark that Goldstein (2004, 13) has made of racialized juxtapositions between modernity and tradition and progress and backwardness according to which "the countryside, defined in terms of 'Indianness' that is threatening and dangerous to whites, stands for the national past, contrasted with the urban centers that represent the nation's future". Yet, due to his work, this public servant had to participate in the translation of *Vivir Bien* into bureaucratic practice in the design of a sectoral plan for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Derogatory opinions of indigenous ideas as backward were further emphasized in the following remarks by the aforementioned public servant who told me that he works for Morales's government solely for the purpose of retaining a job. After an initial response related to the employment situation, he stated that many public servants suffered from the fear of losing influence and respect. Furthermore, he identified racism and fear as the main reasons for public servants' reluctance to embrace the policy framework and the state transformation process in general:

People do not know about *Vivir Bien* in the ministry and they also do not care. The first reason is racism. They do not like Evo. Or actually, this is an understatement; they hate him. They hate him because they do not want to be governed by someone who is not like them. Those who were under them have arisen. For them, *Vivir Bien* is part of Indian thinking and they reject it. The second is the fear of the unknown, the fear of losing influence and respect. Thirty years ago, the middle class was purely white but nowadays it is changing. The

middle class is experiencing the fear of losing influence. [Indigenous] people under them were earlier like dogs and now, suddenly, they are governing [the country].

Although he talked about "them", it became clear that, as a public servant, he also shared these same fears and prejudices about being governed by "backward dogs". This affected the relationships of such public servants with Morales's ministers, resulting in considerable antagonism and suspicion. Vice-Minister Fernández, who himself is not of indigenous origins, nevertheless identified this ethnic dimension as crucial in the contentions and power struggles that had emerged within the state bureaucracy:

> The most important reason for [contentions] are the prejudices against indigeneity. These prejudices were always underlying in dominant thinking patterns [of public servants] but now they have become visible in this conflict for power. It is pure racism: a complete and systematic denial of indigenous values, worldviews, and ways to understand the world, combined with an exaggerated estimation of all that is Western.

What, therefore, impedes the implementation of bureaucratic practice through indigenous ideas is, in Fernández's opinion,

> the dominant thinking that is thoroughly penetrated by pejorative and negative conceptualizing of indigeneity . . . This colonial legacy has been strengthened by [state] power mechanisms . . . that are maintained despite the clear demographic reality which is that indigenous peoples are a majority in this country. The only way to combat this reality is to declare [indigenous peoples] to be inferiors . . . It is not accepted that an *indio* thinks better or that an *indio* wins.

In other words, the state bureaucracy has historically functioned as a disciplinary power that segments different social groups into specific ethnically defined positions. The rise of indigenous peoples into the state administration and the adoption of decolonial state-policy discourses have challenged the status quo between privileged and underprivileged groups and overturned ethnically defined hierarchical relations and structures that have been so deeply rooted in Bolivian state-society relations. This, together with conceptual insecurities, fear of losing social position, and plain racism, has led to opposition amongst public servants and the retention of bureaucratic practice as it was prior to the introduction of *Vivir Bien* in an endeavour to hold change at bay. To an extent, it has reflected the colonial experiences of the "'racialization' of relations between colonizers and colonized" (Quijano 2005, 56–7). In a political context of major change, the continuation of bureaucratic practice as usual has been a way to maintain the disciplinary power of the state bureaucracy over those that it governs.

Co-opting social movements

In addition to public servants' opposition to *Vivir Bien* and their attempts to hamper decolonization, there were already clear indications at an early stage of the MAS regime that the MAS itself was adopting practices that seemed to work against the discursive ideals of *Vivir Bien*. As Postero (2017, 15) has argued, "the discourse of decolonization operates to enable certain practices and to silence others". I have already looked at clientelism in the form of jobs in the earlier sections, demonstrating that despite discourses of change, the MAS regime is not immune to the characteristics that have long defined Bolivian state bureaucracy. Corporatism, however, is of major interest in the following sections. The third feature of the politicized state, which is also of interest to me, is the MAS tendency to centralize political power. The following sections argue that the state bureaucracy as a disciplinary power has converted governing pluralities into disciplined masses.

We know from the classic literature on Latin American revolutions that the main characteristic of the institutionalization of radical change is the dismantling or reorganization of political institutions inherited from old regimes (Domínguez and Mitchell 1977; Eckstein 1983; Selbin 1999). This has crystallized in attempts to reorganize institutional structures from the bottom up, in the creation of decentralized grassroots approaches to replace the earlier top-down tendencies of the centralized state apparatus (Selbin 1999). Indeed, the NDP (República de Bolivia 2007) states that social movements are crucial agents in the construction and democratization of the plurinational state: the state is to be transformed not from above but from below by social forces. During my fieldwork in late 2008 and early 2009, it was, indeed, still common to hear a social movement representative assert that social movements were in power. Leonilda Zurita, a coca-union leader, former senator, and the president of the peasant women's union (FNMCB-BS) declared to me that

> we [peasant women's union] are part of the government; we are part of the political instrument [MAS]; we are pushing this process forward with President Evo Morales . . . As our president was born . . . from social movements, we oblige him . . . As he has emerged from the people, he has to stand by the people and by his social movements. In addition, he was born indigenous; we have a president who represents us. When we demand, he complies.

Zurita was here representing the voices of the peasant unions of *cocaleros* and Bartolinas, both at the core of the MAS. Another representative from the CSCB agreed and stated that, in his opinion, the country was governed by five peasant unions and indigenous organizations: the CSCB, the CSUTCB, Bartolinas, the CIDOB, and the CONAMAQ. Indeed, he talked to me about the process of change in the first-person plural: "we". He declared that "we have been able to consolidate the process" and that "we . . . are changing and transforming the country". In the early stage of the Morales's regime, notions such as indigenous popular hegemony

(Postero 2010) and states acting like movements (Gustafson 2010) were suggested to describe Bolivian social movements in a governing position.

These views challenge the idea common within social movement theories that argue that, unlike the guerrilla movements or left-wing trade unions of the previous decades, social movements, such as those based on ethnicity and indigenous identity, are not primarily organized to seize state power (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and Kuecker 2007). Instead, Heyman (2004, 495) has argued that "overt politics may challenge the bureaucratic status quo". The social movements, indigenous organizations, and peasant unions that have arguably obtained political power in Bolivia may be agents of popular actions and transformative struggles that, according to Heyman, can "constitute or reformulate an entire scenario of state agencies and state-populace relationships" (Ibid.). However, scholars on revolutions and social movements rarely analyze what happens to concrete bureaucratic practices after revolution or the political uprising of social movements. This can be attributed to the uneasy coexistence of terms like revolution and institutionalization, largely because institutionalization is often associated with bureaucratization – the depoliticization of the politics of contention – and thereby with conservative, rather than liberating, political tendencies (Selbin 1999, 17).

Attempts have been made by the Morales regime to control movement actions as a response to increasing provocation from its own support base: indigenous, peasant, and social movements (Morales 2012, 81–2). First, it created the Vice-Ministry of Coordination with Social Movements. Second, it has attempted to unite social movements into a civil-society decision-making body on the basis of the Unity Pact. This coordinating body of social movements, the *Coordinadora por el Cambio* (CONALCAM), was established in 2007 to advise the movement-based governing regime on social, political, and economic matters and to defend the process of change. In addition to the membership of the CSUTCB, the CSCB, the Bartolinas Sisas, the CIDOB, and the CONAMAQ, it includes such unions and organizations as the union of female domestic labourers, the union for retired workers, and the Cochabamba-based union of the users of irrigation waters. One of the leaders of the CSCB told me that the aim of the CONALCAM is to function as the nexus between social movements and the government in such a way that the country's political and economic issues can be negotiated and planned together. In his opinion, it is a channel through which social movements make proposals to the government on what it should do and how it should be done because, as he noted,

> the government is present solely in major cities and not in all corners of the country. Movement leaders, however, travel to all parts of the Bolivian territory and are present in even the remotest areas of the country. So, the leader gathers people's demands, picks up suggestions, and through CONALCAM, transmits them to the government. In this way, the CONALCAM makes the president aware of his errors and of the problems of the country.

The CONALCAM, indeed, functions in close cooperation directly with the president and a few other political figures. In this sense, social movements do have a

role at the centre of the executive powers in influencing state policies. Although loosely institutionalized, the Bolivian media, for example, has argued that the CONALCAM has an equal amount of power, or even more, than ministers in the executive (La Razón 2008). Indeed, this vision has been shared by the president, who has expressed the view that the CONALCAM should become the highest authority for making political decisions, even ranking above the ministerial cabinet (República de Bolivia 2008, 9). In official governmental documents, for example, it is stated that during the Unity Pact, there existed cooperation between the executive, the legislative, and social movements, but with the establishment of the CONALCAM, social movements have moved into a leading position in the country's governing structure (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Previsión Social 2015, 4).

Although stated to be independent from the state, the relationship between the CONALCAM and the state is blurred because some of the ex-leaders of the CONALCAM function as senators or parliamentarians for the MAS. Though blurring the boundaries between state actors and movement activists, both the composition of the governing MAS and the establishment of the CONALCAM assign social movements a role in the rule of the state. Although the incorporation of social movements into state governing structures can be considered a sign of the democratization of previously marginalized and excluded groups, it is, nevertheless, important to look at it from another point of view as well: whether this form of institutionalization of movement actions can be seen as a way to co-opt and control social movements. Let us look at this critical issue in the following section.

Disciplining the masses

In the governmental two-year implementation report, Evo Morales, although noting that the establishment of the CONALCAM has been one of the major achievements of his administration, complained that not all social movements had joined it (República de Bolivia 2008, 9), although its member base was drastically widened in 2008 to include student organizations, mining cooperatives, and neighbourhood committees, to name a few (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Prevision Social 2015, 4). Although Morales has claimed that movements belonging to the CONALCAM do not have to be militant members of the MAS, there has been criticism by unions and organizations that this coordinating body has been co-opted by the governing regime in order to promote its political goals. Some even argue that the CONALCAM functions as "officialdom's loyal 'shock troops'" (Morales 2012, 82). One leader of the COB, for example, complained to me that the CONALCAM lacks independence, as it is "a group of social organizations wedded to the government". As suggested earlier, the CONALCAM, as the coordinating body of a large number of social movements, has the potential to make indigenous and grassroots voices heard by the executive. The more dangerous implication of the institutionalization of social movements is that of harnessing social movements and indigenous organizations to the agendas of the governing regime and silencing critical political voices.

The relationship between the executive and the CONALCAM somewhat resembles cogoverning arrangements from the era prior to neoliberal reforms. During the 1952 state-centred nationalist revolution, the most visible representations of the emerging alliance between the national bourgeoisie and the popular classes were the political pacts or cogoverning arrangements that were used to "co-opt social groups and individuals into the system" (Casanovas Moore 1990, 36). The MNR attempted to institutionalize the revolution by a corporatist system of party control over civil society. In the early 1950s, the COB appointed three ministers to the ministerial cabinet. The head of the *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* (FSTMB) – the miners' union that during the 1940s had opted for an armed workers' revolution – became the leader of the COB, and the miners became the radical wing of the party (Klein 2003, 213–14). There was a constant oppositional Trotskyite faction within the COB and within the miners' union (Lazar 2008, 249).

In Latin American political theory, these cogoverning arrangements have been defined as a form of corporatism that is seen as a typical feature of Latin American politicized states (Chalmers 1977). In the classic text on the subject, O'Donnell (1977, 49) has defined the corporatism that has emerged from the 1930s onwards as

> those structures through which functional, nonterritorially based organizations officially represent "private" interests before the state, formally subject for their existence and their right of representation to authorization or acceptance by the state, and where such right is reserved to the formal leaders of those organizations, forbidding and excluding other legitimate channels of access to the state for the rest of its members.

The early history of relations between the MNR and the COB was an example *par excellence* of corporatist and clientelist arrangements between the state and unions. Progressive ideas such as workers' rights and issues concerning social and economic equality were co-opted to policy agendas by mainstream political party, "demonstrating that co-option is not necessarily a negative result for the social movement" (Prevost, Oliva Campos and Vanden 2012b, 8). The repressive military dictatorships that took over the state from the MNR retained, and intensified, corporatist arrangements, but this time with peasant unions rather than workers (Gray Molina 2003, 350; Klein 2003, 223).

Consequently, corporatism can be analyzed from two angles. On the one hand, it "opens up institutional areas of the state to the representation of organized interests of civil society" (O'Donnell 1977, 48). The other possibility, possibly more likely to occur in politicized states such as Bolivia, is that through corporatism, the state penetrates society and establishes control over it; that is, there occurs "conquest and subordination by the state of organizations of the civil society" (Ibid., 48). Lazar (2008) has suggested that this duality has been an integral part of the Bolivian political system. Movements, unions, and organizations have always represented a potential danger to the stability of the governing regime through contentious politics. Therefore, they were often included in direct negotiations with it. Tapia (2007) has referred to this as an alternative form of democracy in

which democracy was more than voting: it included direct participation in governmental decision making in deliberative arenas that cogoverning arrangements had created.

On the other hand, "collective organizations can certainly be the means by which Bolivian governments control their citizens" (Lazar 2008, 250). In regards to Morales's regime, Regalsky (2010, 47) has written that "what began as a demand for the reconfiguration of the state and an attempt to achieve recognition for communal indigenous autonomies has had its representative organizations subordinated to the state, thus reinforcing the system of party-based political representation". This dubious role of the CONALCAM was even recognized by some of the political leaders of the MAS, with one of the vice-ministers, for example, complaining to me that the role of the CONALCAM seemed to be defending governmental political goals by keeping social movements peaceful through the generation of their internal control.

In addition to disciplining progovernment movements internally, there were also signs that social movements co-opted by the governing regime were being used to suppress other civil-society movements. In 2011, for example, when the COB organized workers' strikes to demand wage increases, the governing regime confronted it through the CONALCAM. Hence it "pitted the pro-government social movements of the CONALCAM, primarily the peasant unions, *cocaleros* and 'Bartolinas', against the workers' movements" (Morales 2012, 82). Despite the confrontation and the aforementioned critique by one of the COB leaders of the CONALCAM, governmental documents indicate that the COB joined the CONALCAM officially in 2013, supporting Morales's electoral campaign in 2014 (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Previsión Social 2015, 4).

Additionally, cracks also appeared in the peasant-indigenous alliance in 2011, when the conflict over resource extraction, government development plans, indigenous rights, and ecological values erupted in the TIPNIS area (see Chapter 7). The CONAMAQ and the CIDOB were reported to have left the Unity Pact in response to the subsequent violation of indigenous rights, verbal and physical attacks, and repression of indigenous protesters by the government's troops and its peasant allies. Rightfully, the criticism has been made that, instead of *Vivir Bien* resulting in processes of democratization and decolonization, there have rather emerged processes of centralization of power, which are legitimized through the nominal participation of social movements. Vaclav, the consultant discussed in earlier chapters, stated to me in 2017 that the TIPNIS was a clear turning point in state-society relations. "Since then it has been an insult to claim that social movements are in power in Bolivia," he stated furiously and continued that, in fact, in his opinion, social movements never governed the country:

> All this time, it has just been a bubble around the president; a concentration of people around the figure of the president as *caudillo*. He has monopolized power. By assigning peasant leaders governmental positions, their complete co-optation has been hidden.

Let us look at the personalization of power in more detail in the next section.

Centralization of state power

On February 2016, Bolivians voted in a referendum to decide on a constitutional change that would allow Evo Morales to stand as presidential candidate for a fourth term (see Ranta 2017a). He is still widely endorsed by the Bolivian electorate. One part of the democratization project inscribed in the 2009 constitution was that president and vice-president can only run for two terms; however, as noted, attempts to change the ruling soon appeared. With regards to the division of powers within the state, Tapia (2007, 65–6) has argued that the introduction of the new constitution was successful in shaking up the liberal foundations of the judicial and legislative powers, while traditionally centralized executive powers were left intact or made even stronger. Indeed, the constitution recognizes indigenous justice systems (*justicia indígena originaria campesina*) exercised by indigenous nations through their authorities as equal and complementary to the liberal system of justice. In the sphere of legislative powers, the constitution states that while a proportion of the parliamentarians are elected through liberal party politics, in such departments where minority indigenous groups reside in rural areas, there is a special indigenous constituency. As a result, these decolonizing reforms in judicial and legislative spheres can be said to have an impact on the legal and political participation of indigenous peoples. Yet, while community traditions have been brought in to complement liberal forms in the aforementioned sectors, the constitution does not show signs of decentralizing executive powers. On the contrary, Tapia (2007, 66) argues that the constitution seems to strengthen the role of the president and emphasize majority rule, which, in a country with more than 30 indigenous minority groups, is not apt to make plural voices heard. Although Bolivians voted against the constitutional change in 2016, the relationship between the leaders' eagerness to retain power and democratizing and decolonizing social movement rhetoric remains problematic.

Even during my fieldwork in 2008–2009, some ministers and vice-ministers were already disappointed by their own experiences within state mechanisms, with Aguirre complaining to me that although state discourses and policy ideas are new, state structures and institutions remain the same and run on their own logics. An enthusiastic defender of social movements and indigenous organizations, Prada told me that what had unfortunately happened was that when the MAS entered the government, "it accepted the legacy of the old state, its ancient practices, architecture, norms, and behaviour". Despite discourses of decolonization, the MAS, as a conglomeration of various social movements, took over a state whose colonial practices had been constructed and maintained through hierarchical forms of disciplinary power often based on racial and ethnic discrimination. Instead of transforming the state through movement logics and indigenous ideas, Prada concluded dejectedly that "in three years of managing the state, the MAS had been swallowed by the state". The disciplinary boundary between the state and social movements that had been shaken by the rise of social movements to the centres of state power were being reconstructed.

While responding to indigenous political demands, the aim of state restructuring was to address "the traditional concentration and centralization of power that was

thought to have characterized the Bolivian state" (Urioste 2009, 111). Although some state institutions had also been decentralized during the nationalist revolution, with the widest territorial effects in the social sector, infrastructure, and national defence, there was a strong concentration of power in state ministries. To a large extent, decision-making processes were not delegated from specific state authorities to regional or local levels (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 253–4). One vice-minister representing the *Movimiento Sin Miedo* (MSM) political party – the left-wing political ally of the MAS from 2005 to 2010 – complained to me that serious contradictions exist between the idea of plurinationalism and the everyday functioning of state bureaucracy, voicing the criticism that the making of sectoral plans described in Chapter 5 had not been delegated to regional and municipal levels as, in his opinion, it should have been, according to the decentralizing logics of plurinationalism. In his opinion, most political actors and public servants did not really comprehend the extent of transformation needed in state practices in order to respond to *Vivir Bien*. Instead, he suggested that bureaucratic centralization still prevails, illustrating the claim with an anecdote about a public servant from the Ministry of Development Planning who had suggested to the vice-minister that they could centrally plan development strategies for all Bolivian municipalities.

In relation to this, Flavio, from the Ministry of Development Planning, explained to me that he had been advised that planning and monitoring of policy were the responsibility of public institutions and ministries, and that there was no need to involve social movements and indigenous organizations in these tasks. Furthermore, he stated that evaluations and impact assessments of policy practices were made for the information and use of the executive and the Parliament. These examples seem to suggest that the centralizing tendencies of the Bolivian state bureaucracy were still actively present. The coordinator of indigenous affairs at one of the central ministries took up this contradiction between state bureaucracy and plurinationalism:

> The central administration still imposes things. We know that we have the new constitution. We know that we have the idea of [indigenous] autonomies. But we have no idea how to relate the central government and autonomies. There is this difficulty and uncertainty of what is going to happen in the future.

The tension between policy discourses and bureaucratic practices that this excerpt exemplifies points to the articulations of various forms of power and rule, and the contradictions between them. Instead of decentralizing the country, the state-led process of enhancing plurinationalism and indigenous autonomy may rather function as a tool for further state control over territories and peoples. Indeed, it has been argued that the Bolivian state is a bureaucratic institution with a tendency to decentralize without equality. It is, in many ways, "a centralized state that enhances inequality and, in other ways, a decentralized state that does not enhance equality" (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 271).

Traditionally, public policy decision making has been executed from the top down, and from abroad, through the influence of IFIs and international development agencies, without recognizing a variety of local demands and needs (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 65). In the case of limiting the influence of IFIs and development agencies over Bolivia's internal affairs, the idea of decolonization – "the recovery of the capacity to decide" (República de Bolivia 2007) – seems to have functioned. The formulation of development priorities has clearly been transferred from foreign donors to state actors, as has been indicated in earlier chapters. Nevertheless, this has occurred at the expense of technical experts and consultants, as described by Flavio, who commented to me that "all negotiations related to development projects, contracts, and general guidelines are in the hands of those in high hierarchical positions". He continued to explain that

> because of the institutional instability, Bolivian institutions depend a lot on their leaders. Before, there was a clear dependency on the president and on the political power of ministers but now, as the MAS is a new organization that is not well consolidated, there are very few well-known figures on whom the ministries could rely. In many ministries, there are political leaders that public servants do not know at all. Therefore, decision making on many issues falls to the president and two or three ministers that have political power and influence.

To some extent, Flavio seemed to imply here that public servants expected to have strong political guidance for their work. Yet, as was previously suggested, antagonism and suspicion existed between many public servants and ministers for ideological reasons and even racism. Flavio's remark here also corresponds to the idea that because Bolivian state structures and institutions change each time the new governing regime is elected, institutional stability is weak (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo 2007, 253). As a result, the state may be easily identified with specific authorities and political figures. This is a characteristic feature of Latin American politicized states where, as Chalmers (1977) has explained, the personalization of power is common. In the absence of institutionalized rules of conduct and in the presence of the instrumental use of political systems, there is a higher possibility for the centralization of state power in politicized states than in institutionalized states.

The case of Evo Morales is a curious extension of this phenomenon, as he is the head of the state but also originated in the peasant unions. One Bolivian development expert at the World Bank actually stated to me that, in his opinion, the "government is Evo". "He has a very strong role in the executive," the person said, "but as the union leader, he has a lot of capacity to negotiate within social movements and peasant unions." Although Morales may have a lot of room to manoeuvre at the intersections of the state and society, the personalization of state power unquestionably contradicts the ideals of indigenous governance (Ranta 2017a, 1612). Ideally, if a *Vivir Bien* model for governing was taken from historical examples

of governance in Andean communities, described in chapters 3 and 4, political decisions would be made on the basis of participation, deliberation, and consensus amongst community members (Harris 1982; Medina 2008; Yampara 2001). Harris (1982, 48) has emphasized that for the Aymara, authority is "multiple and shifting, rather than focused on a particular figure". Additionally, the obligatory annual rotation of community leaders poses "extreme limitations to power" (Ibid., 68). In regards to these contradictions between the Spanish form of rule and the Andean form of rule, ex-Minister Patzi even suggested, as noted earlier, that in order to avoid the centralization of power, political leaders at the level of the state should rotate, as they do in communitarian democracy.

Given that Morales and García Linera have tried to opt for a fourth concurrent presidential term, countering what is stated in the constitution, this is unlikely ever to be the case. Indeed, Oscar Vega argued to me in 2017 that instead of social movement rhetoric, what defines politics in today's Bolivia is its personification. While the initial idea behind the state transformation process was the promotion of political alternatives arising from social movements, "there is an attempt to erase this memory and to solely talk about Evo and the party". This, according to Vega, has resulted in black-and-white juxtapositions of those supporting and opposing the MAS, hampering critical social and political analysis and self-reflection in regards to the continuation of neoliberal economic, political, social, and cultural practices.

Since a significant part of the Bolivian population voted against the Constitutional Reform, thus resulting in Morales's first electoral defeat during his ten years of presidency, it appears that there is a call for a more democratic system with rotation of power. There are, however, strong voices within the social movements supporting Morales's leadership – especially in peasant unions such as the CSUTCB, the CSCIB, and the Bartolinas – that argue that his symbolic leadership needs to remain intact for longer; indeed, the Bartolinas have recently started another political campaign to modify the constitution to favour Morales's reelection. The NGO leader promoting *Sumak Kawsay*, introduced in Chapter 4, also suggested to me that many social movements – including indigenous groups – continue to support Morales and the MAS "militantly". The justification for this is that many social movements and grassroots organizations fear – quite understandably when looking at Bolivia's turbulent history – that losing institutional stability would also lead to losing such state-generated initiatives as social reforms and indigenous autonomies that have generally been perceived as beneficial to them. Instead of demanding circulation of power at the level of the central state, he was of the opinion that "the circulation of power according to *usos y costumbres* should be strengthened at local levels". Vaclav was of the opposing opinion – demonstrating the truth of Vega's remark about the existence of stark juxtapositions – arguing that most people in Bolivia today are asking for democratic change. According to him, "the MAS has turned out to be authoritarian; it eliminates enemies and wants to stay in power forever". However, he agreed with the reasons offered by the NGO leader as to why people continue to support him: first, they are afraid of the return of neoliberalism; second, they support Morales as indigenous president, although, according to Vaclav, "he has never been indigenous, but rather a peasant union leader".

The rejection of Constitutional Reform for re-election can also be interpreted as marking the emergence of new actors and new spaces that could incentivize *Vivir Bien* practices, bringing them more in line with their decolonizing character. Interestingly, the sectors that did not accept Constitutional Reform were quite varied, ranging from racist, right-wing political opposition, through indigenous populations, to those who think that Morales's regime has *not* sufficiently implemented left-wing or indigenous politics. New actors at the latter end of the spectrum included youth groups, left-wing intellectuals, union leaders, and politicians and thinkers who had previously worked for the MAS (Miranda 2016a, 2016b). It is most likely that it also included some of the same urban ecological, feminist, and indigenous activists who can be identified as having aligned with indigenous causes during the TIPNIS conflict (Rivera Cusicanqui 2014), to be discussed in Chapter 7.

While the practice of government and discipline as forms of power function through specific techniques, modes, and details of bureaucratic practice, as has been described in the last two chapters, the identification of the forms of power of specific authorities or individuals has brought to the fore another form of rule: sovereign authority. Li (2007), who has suggested that practices of rule in the Global South often articulate contradictory forms of government, discipline, and sovereign authority, relates the question of sovereignty to coercion and violence. This is an issue to which I turn in more detail in Chapter 7, in which I focus on the contentious construction of the plurinational state at the intersections of extractive economies, state developmentalism, and indigenous rights, with an additional commentary on the role of violent and repressive authority.

Notes

1 I have previously examined state-society relations, corporatism, and the personalization of power in my article *Vivir Bien Governance in Bolivia: Chimera or an Attainable Utopia?* (Ranta 2017a).
2 Furthermore, Article 234 of the constitution states that in order to have access to public-sector jobs, one has to be fluent in at least two official languages of the country, meaning that in addition to Spanish, one has to know at least one indigenous language. In 2010, the parliament passed an Anti-Racism Law (*Ley 045 Contra el Racismo y Toda Forma de Discriminación*).

7 In the name of *Vivir Bien*

Legitimizing extractive conflicts?

While previous chapters have demonstrated contradictions between *Vivir Bien* ideals and its technicalization and bureaucratic applications, this chapter discusses the deeply rooted contradictions within the political-economic foundations of the Bolivian state transformation process. On the one hand, Morales and his governing regime speak of *Vivir Bien* as an indigenous, cultural, and ecological alternative to mainstream development. On the other, they are struggling to provide economic and social well-being to previously marginalized popular sectors in the context of a Global South characterized by poverty and inequalities. As indicated in Chapter 4, national development plans recognize that the country's dependency on primary-export development and the extraction of natural resources has been the main cause for its disadvantaged position in the global economy. Consequently, it has been stated that the aim of state policies is to transcend the extractive economy by shifting towards "a development model based on integrated, productive, industrialised and diversified development" (Webber 2016, 1862). This alludes to the will to construct a more heterodox political economy that would challenge existing dependency relations of countries such as Bolivia within the global capitalist system, which is sustained by Western cultural universalism (Wallerstein 1990).

Despite Bolivian policy discourses of an indigenous, communitarian, and diversified economy, Grugel and Riggirozzi (2012) have pointed out that progressive postneoliberal states in Latin America tend to continue to rely on the revival of the developmentalist state, economic growth, and the expansion of an export economy of natural resources. Escobar (2010, 20) calls this neo-developmentalism, which refers to "forms of development understanding and practice that do not question the fundamental premises of development discourse of the last five decades, even if introducing a series of important changes". Thus, the capacity of these regimes to offer real alternatives to global capitalism and to transform the underlying political-economic structures has been questioned (Petras et al. 2014; Veltmeyer and Petras 2014). Furthermore, extractive economies and growth agendas are detrimental to environment and climate change, standing in stark contrast with ecological values and sustainable human-nonhuman relationships of such alternatives as *Vivir Bien*.

In Bolivia, there is a long history of resource nationalism in which the nation-state has played a major role in the allocation of strategic resources. Some authors

have posited explicit linkages with Morales's regime and the 1952 MNR nationalist revolution (Hylton and Thomson 2007). Two things have, however, changed in comparison to the resource nationalism of previous decades, as Young (2017, 178–9) has noted, the first being the rise of indigenous rights discourses in close alliance with environmentalist discourses related to *Pachamama*, ecological sustainability, and climate change. Indigenous ontologies about human-nonhuman relations and nature-society relations embodied in such notions as *Sumak Kawsay* seriously challenge the commodification and privatization of nature and extractive projects acting against indigenous principles of living well (Radcliffe 2015b, 276). One of the key aims of indigenous political struggles has been the establishment of indigenous self-governance. According to the logics of plurinationalism, the control of natural resources, lands, and territories would then be assigned to indigenous nations and governed through *usos y costumbres*. This stands in stark contrast with the centralization of resources in the institutions of the nation-state. The second change in relation to the resource nationalism of previous decades is the regional and international political-economic context in which new political-economic alternatives are more welcome as a result of the ending of the Cold War, the challenging of neoliberalism, and increased South-South cooperation.

This chapter discusses battles and power struggles over the political-economic basis of Bolivian plurinationalism. It focuses on describing and understanding diverging views and interpretations amongst elements of the political opposition, indigenous activists, left-wing politicians, and social movements over who controls and distributes assets such as natural resources, land, and territories. It examines the emergence of state-led developmentalism and resource extraction as a challenge to the indigenous, cultural, spiritual, and ecological principles of *Vivir Bien*, thereby presenting contradictions between two types of governmental schemes of improvement. I argue that, ultimately, the question is about the development model: is *Vivir Bien* a decolonial option and an alternative to mainstream development that questions the commodification of life and brings to the fore other values than the economic – that is, cultural, ecological, and spiritual? Can it produce a more heterodox political economy in the face of the hegemony of global capitalism? Or does it rather represent a form of de-Westernization or alternative modernization, thus challenging the hegemony of the West in defining parameters for development but not superseding the basic foundations of capitalist accumulation?

Elite co-option of autonomy discourses

On a sunny November afternoon, I stood in front of the parliamentary building at Plaza Murillo, the busy central square of La Paz, waiting for a parliamentary assistant to pick me up for a meeting with one of opposition parliamentarians from the Bolivian lowlands. Knowing the fierce resistance of Bolivia's wealthy business sectors, large-scale landowners, and the traditional political and economic elite of the lowlands to the political initiatives of the MAS, I was anxious to hear the views of the PODEMOS parliamentarian. The front of the Parliament building

was crowded with people: parliamentarians passing the doorways, journalists surrounding them for quick interviews, and indigenous crowds waiting for news on the referendum for the constitution that was being discussed in the chamber. The deputy's assistant – a young man in a smart suit – greeted me and guided us through the crowds to the doorways and through the security checks. I followed him through the shabby corridors to PODEMOS's second floor conference room, which was covered with red and white campaign posters. Through the loudspeakers, I could hear the heated debates of the parliamentary session. A blond, blue-eyed male parliamentarian entered the room and sighed that he was glad to have me there so he had an excuse to escape from the quarrels of the chamber. Once seated he started to explain the battles over indigenous nations and the Bolivian nation-state in the process of elaborating the 2009 constitution:

> [PODEMOS] was successful in introducing the Bolivian nationality [to the constitution]. The Bolivian nation-state was not there; there were solely indigenous nations, Aymara and Quechua nations. The majority of middle classes and *mestizos* were left out, although the majority of Bolivians are *mestizos* no matter what the governmental pro-indigenous propaganda preaches.

The PODEMOS deputy thus framed the opposition as the defender of the Bolivian nation-state whose unity indigenous peoples were supposedly destroying through demands for indigenous self-determination. This statement reflected the fears and anxieties that existed within the opposition about the political demands of the MAS that could possibly endanger the position and authority of nonindigenous population. Vice-Minister Fernández, for example, had commented that from the point of view of the traditional economic elite, "what are at stake are the maintenance of the status quo and the complete denial of the emergence of new patterns of thinking and governing the country through its strong indigenous component".

Given the global free-market ideologies and suspicions about a centralized nation-state amongst lowland business elites and regional political factions, what was curious in the aforementioned extract was the defence of the unified Bolivian nation-state. Since the 1950s, the Bolivian lowlands had developed fairly independently at the margins of the Bolivian nation-state, whose centralized control and influence had concentrated on the Andean mining regions. Any attempts by the state to increase its central powers have been faced with suspicion by regional elites who see the Santa Cruz area, for example, as a form of nation, while the state is merely attributed to the existence of centralized administrative powers (Seleme Antelo 2008, 170–1). However, in response to the increasing participation of indigenous peoples in state centres, the defence of the nation-state came to signify the defence of the nonindigenous sectors of the population. The PODEMOS politician went on to explain to me about their political achievements:

> The second element that as an opposition we achieved were regional bonuses from the selling of hydrocarbons. The third fundamental element that we achieved is the inclusion of regional autonomies to the constitutional project.

> This recognition of regional autonomies has arisen from the parliament; it was not there before [in the previous versions of constitution elaborated by the Constituent Assembly].

Here he made an explicit link between economic interests and departmental autonomies. Since the collapse of state-led mining industries in the highlands in the 1980s, the lowlands, and most specifically the area surrounding the city of Santa Cruz, has grown into Bolivia's main economic hub due to export-oriented capitalized agriculture, livestock production, and hydrocarbons (Crabtree 2005, 48). Since the nationalist revolution, major flows of US development aid had been directed at transforming the agrarian structure of the lowlands into export-oriented capitalist agribusiness (Casanovas Moore 1990). Massive amounts of lands were granted to entrepreneurs who were in one way or another related to the governing regimes (Postero 2007; Valdivia 2010). While the MNR had drastically deprived the traditional economic elites of their properties (mining and lands) in the Andes, a new landowning and business elite was emerging in Santa Cruz. New landowning elites were given special treatment within import substitution policies. The emergence of *cruceño* economic elites as a counterbalance to the state-centred *paceño* elites was heavily supported by the US via the supply of agricultural technologies, credit schemes, infrastructure, education, and health (Casanovas Moore 1990, 36–7).

The question of land distribution worsened during the military dictatorships, when approximately 30 million hectares of land were granted to large-scale landowners in return for political support (Childress 2006, 474). Since the 1970s, lowland economic elites, landowning bourgeoisie, and military regimes alike were also involved in drug trafficking cocaine, which had a major impact on the economic development of the region (Casanovas Moore 1990, 49). With the SAPs, the lowlands saw a massive expansion of transnational corporations and foreign investments in agroindustries (soya) and oil (Valdivia 2010). During the 1990s, new natural gas resources were found, furthering its economic prominence and appeal for foreign investments (Postero 2007, 48). Export-oriented agricultural projects financed by the World Bank, IMF, and IDB augmented the land entitlements of transnational corporations and regional agrobusiness at the expense of indigenous peoples living in the area (Valdivia 2010, 70–1). Until recently the land distribution situation in Bolivia has been extremely unequal, with 10 per cent of all landowners owning approximately 90 per cent of land (Childress 2006, 471).

When Morales's regime initiated the process of nationalization of hydrocarbons in 2006 and organized a referendum over landownership in 2009, conflicts were inevitable. Both the nationalization of natural resources and fears over the redistribution of land touched upon the sources of wealth of regional economic elites and transnational corporations. By enhancing the role of the state, the Morales regime was perceived as attacking the foreign investments and transnational capital. After the nationalization of hydrocarbons, when the state's earnings increased, elite interests and transnational concerns became framed in discourses of departmental autonomy (Morales 2012, 62). Between 2007 and 2009, there were constant

conflicts, roadblocks, and violent protests between the lowland autonomy movements and the governing regime (Ibid.). They were promoted by the *Comité Pro Santa Cruz* (CPSC) (the most influential regional citizens' group that gathers together local elites with strands of conservative landowners and liberal business sectors); the *Unión Juvenil Cruceñista* (UJC) (a militant student group); the *Consejo Nacional Democrático* (CONALDE) (regional antigovernment coalition); and business associations including the Chamber of Industries and Commerce, the Chamber of Exports, and the Federation of Private Entrepreneurs.

Discourses of regional autonomy, however, were not new. Discourses of secession, especially in Santa Cruz, had always emerged, especially during left-wing regimes, when regional interests were in conflict with state policies. Due to the enormous economic importance of the region, central governments were forced to obey their demands (Crabtree 2005, 51–3). Until recently, however, claims for regional autonomy were merely symbolic; with indigenous resurgence, they were translated into political strategy (Seleme Antelo 2008, 173). Negotiations between the MAS and lowland authorities over the constitution in 2008, authorized later by the Parliament, led to a declaration in the constitution that states that Bolivia is territorially organized into departments, provinces, municipalities, and indigenous territories that can *all* be used for autonomy projects (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009, 97). Indigenous demands for indigenous autonomies and self-determination were thus compromised by the introduction of increasing regional decision making. Current landowning structures were left intact and indigenous autonomies were, in fact, subordinated to regional autonomy because their territories cannot cross departmental borders (Regalsky 2010, 37).

Social movements interpreted regional autonomy claims as the elite co-option of indigenous autonomy discourses. The disappointment and anger being created by elite autonomy discourses was reflected, for example, in the following words by a peasant leader of the CSCB when speaking to me at his Miraflores office in La Paz:

> In the early days, our grandfathers used to live in peace and harmony. During those days [indigenous] autonomy existed; it is just that they did not have a proper concept to describe it. Now the right-wing [opposition] pretends they invented autonomy.

This statement reflected the idea that autonomy is perceived and framed by many activists as an ancient custom and something natural to indigenous peoples. In contrast, elite discourses of regional autonomy were perceived as an invention by members of the right-wing political opposition whose purpose was to protect their privileged economic positions. It was clear that the obstructive tactics of the land- and capital-owning economic class posed a danger to indigenous peoples' goals for autonomy and increased use and control of resources within autonomous lands and territories. This, however, was not the only challenge. There were also contradictory stances on indigenous self-determination with regards to lands, territories, and resources within the MAS and the governing regime, an issue discussed in the following section.

Bypassing indigenous self-determination

After having been fired from the position of Minister of Education, Félix Patzi became a fierce critic of governmental policy and practice. In March 2010, Patzi launched a new political party, *Integración Para el Cambio* (IPC), in order to run as its candidate in the 2014 presidential elections. As an indigenous culturalist, he accused the MAS of both continuing with neoliberal economic practices and of being co-opted by left-wing actors. In January 2009, when I discussed this with him, he claimed that after his initial interest in indigenous ideas, Morales started to favour left-wing politics at the cost of indigenous approaches. Patzi stated to me that

> the president decided that indigenous actors and strands of thinking would no longer be present [in the government]. Instead, the leftist approach would; ideologically speaking, currently there are more people in the government from the traditional Left [than from the indigenous strand], from parties that had already disappeared [from Bolivia's political history]. Evo has revived this. The *indígenismo* is only used through left-wing language.

The bypassing of indigenous activists in the corridors of power led to internal contestations within the executive of the MAS. At the centre of these contestations were negotiations between indigenous culturalists and left-wing actors over the allocation of resources and the proper role of the state in respect to plurinationalism. Patzi described these contestations to me in the following way:

> The Left . . . has not been able to surpass state control [*estatismo*] in two respects: the economy and social rights; this is where the conflict is. They think that the state should function as an enterprise, and that it should be the state that takes care of the social sector. Meanwhile, *los indígenistas* do not believe in a state-led economy. They favour a community economy. This is a fundamental difference between the Left and *indígenismo*. In economic terms, the Left promotes state enterprises . . . *Los indígenistas*, instead, promote community economy, community democracy, and community justice . . . But the Left is present in the government, and they promote state enterprises.

With this statement, Patzi was suggesting that instead of promoting indigenous self-determination, the executive was governed by authorities whose interest was to enhance state-centred modernization schemes through the active agency of the state in economic and social affairs. While the Morales regime was – at least discursively – opposing transnational corporations, it seemed to be, at the same time, expanding the role of the Bolivian state in the very same areas, including resource extraction. This was overwhelming the idea of indigenous self-determination through *usos y costumbres*.

Patzi's views were shared by many indigenous activists. At the meeting that was held between Aymara scholar Simon Yampara and public servants at the Ministry

of Development Planning, Yampara expressed strong criticism towards the left-wing tendencies of the governing MAS. Although they have the struggle against neoliberalism in common, Yampara suggested that the goals of the Left and the goals of indigenous movements are fundamentally different. "Do we want to continue with the Bolivian nation-state or [to reconstruct the] *Qullasuyu*?" Yampara asked, and continued by noting that "they require different matrixes". The first, in his opinion, was a state-led developmentalism that the Left was opting for and the second was the reconstruction of *Qullasuyu*, a conglomeration of community-based, self-governing indigenous nations. The latter perspective was being bypassed in state governance because, in Yampara's opinion, indigenous peoples were merely symbolically present while real power was in the hands of others:

> Indigenous peoples are symbolically in power because of President Evo, but the rest [of those in power] belong to the old Left and, therefore, they are state and development oriented [*estatalista y desarrollista*] . . . So there is a dichotomy between Evo, the Aymara, who is merely a symbol, and the old Marxist Left with their dreams of industrialization and the strong state.

While indigenous activists and left-wingers were unified in their struggles against neoliberal colonialism, a major suspicion amongst indigenous activists of the involvement of left-wing actors in the executive seemed to have developed. As was explained in previous chapters, many felt that political opportunism was bringing politicians and technicians to work for the MAS who had previously served other kinds of ideologies. Partly, as I pointed out, there was a real demand for actors that were familiar with the logics of the state, but this did not negate the feelings on the part of many indigenous activists and unionists that the MAS was being taken over. Indeed, suggestions have been made that notions such as decolonization or plurinationalism that have arisen in indigenous discourses have been converted into "colonial . . . concepts of the state that is still governed by *criollo* [a category of pure Spanish origin] power using indigeneity as a disguise" (Chambi 2011, 85). Likewise, Oscar Vega suggested to me in an interview in 2017 that while concepts of decolonization and plurinationalism continue to be discursively important for the Bolivian state, "they have converted into logos": into concepts without meaningful content.

Raúl Prada, who served as the MAS's Vice-Minister of Strategic Planning in 2010 but who has since become a fierce critic of the MAS (especially in relation to the TIPNIS conflict discussed later), raised concerns about how the centralizing tendencies of state bureaucracy were challenging the democratizing potential of change. Prada told me in 2009 that he feared that rather than handing over decision-making processes to indigenous nations, the executive would centralize more power in itself. Although the idea of plurinationalism was inscribed in the constitution, Prada suggested that "we have to avoid the process of de-constitutionalization that can happen not solely through conservative sectors of the opposition, but through our own conservative sectors within social movements, the

MAS and the government itself". Based on his experiences within the executive, he suggested that

> there is going to be the incorporation of indigenous autonomies [to policy work], but the executive will not take the initiative to convert them into real organs of power. Much is going to depend on the capacity of social movements to free themselves from the tutelage of the state and to retake initiative, spontaneity, and the leadership of the process through constant mobilization . . . I think that the executive is, instead, going to convert the state into the real organ of power.

This quotation hinted that alongside the promotion of indigenous self-determination, there was a move to centralize power in the central state. This corresponds with my own observations amongst public servants and state institutions. In continuation, Prada suggested that some radical activists and intellectuals, such as Vice-President García Linera, who had earlier opted for radical democratization through social movements and indigenous nations, had, in the service of the state, been converted into fierce promoters of state-led developmentalism.

There were many issues that contributed to explanations for the suspicion and occasional hostility, the first being the fear of losing the battle for indigenous self-determination. In a sense, the 1990s neoliberal withdrawal of the state coincided with indigenous political goals of self-determination, enhancing indigenous autonomies through the TCOs, and indigenous political participation in municipalities through the OTBs (Albó 2008; Postero 2007). Newly revived state interventionism has, therefore, been regarded as a disappointing course of events because it has raised fears of increasing forms of rule and control by the centralized state. In today's Bolivia, indigenous autonomies (*autonomía indígena originario campesina*) can be achieved through the TCOs or through the OTBs in municipalities with an indigenous majority (Albó and Romero 2009). In their 2009 study, Albó and Carlos Romero – appointed Minister of Autonomies that same year (later the Minister of the Presidency and the Minister of the Interior) – enumerated 143 TCOs, of which 84 had been officially registered by INRA. Additionally, of 327 Bolivian municipalities, 187 can be categorized as indigenous. In 2010, 11 TCOs and municipalities applied for indigenous autonomy, of which five have been able to proceed with the process, while others have stagnated in internal conflicts. Only the Guaraní municipality of Charagua has been able to complete the whole process, thus becoming the first autonomous indigenous municipality in January 2017 established since the launch of the 2009 constitution.

A criticism has been raised of the increasing role of the central state in hampering the process of indigenous sovereignty (Postero 2013, 45–6). The state funding mechanisms, for example, impede the autonomous regions or municipalities from collecting taxes or raising funds, while the conditions and rules of the Law of Autonomies are so intricate that only a few communities have been able to qualify for the status (Ibid., 46). In 2016, the Quechua NGO leader whose organization was working for the promotion of *Sumak Kawsay* and indigenous autonomies told me of his worry about the strong role of the central state in the process of change.

He suggested that the governing regime was promoting "communitarian social-ism", although "indigenous peoples want something else: they want territories and their own ways to govern autonomies". According to him, the MAS was afraid of indigenous autonomies because political parties would not have power in them; rather, they would be governed through locally established *usos y costumbres*. Currently, he argued, "the central state is ruling, although the priorities should be established by the communities themselves". In addition, "no one is proposing the construction of a new type of state". These remarks signalled a contradiction between the aim of constructing a decolonial government through *Vivir Bien* and the real-life practice of centralizing power in the organs of the state.

Towards resource nationalism

Indeed, the role of the central state vis-à-vis autonomies (whether indigenous or regional), and especially in relation to the control of resources, seemed to be the key source of friction and disagreement not solely between the MAS and its diverse opponents but also within the governing regime and the MAS. One of the vice-ministers to whom I talked in an early stage of my fieldwork stated very clearly that indigenous issues were not his main priority. Working in an economic sector related to one of Bolivia's strategic resources, he rather emphasized the role of the state in economic and social affairs. Without any mention of the notion of *Vivir Bien* (or other indigenous terminologies), his interpretation of the state transformation process focused on changing the course of the intense processes of privatization that Bolivia had experienced during the 1980s and 1990s. Dealing with economic glo-balization and the functioning of the free-market economy was to be accomplished by increasing the regulatory role of the state, as he declared to me in an interview:

> Since 1985, all productive means have practically been given to the private sec-tor on very unfavourable conditions. Only scraps have been given to the coun-try and most of the benefits have gone abroad. Since 2006, the new national development plan has attempted to construct a dignified and productive Bolivia by emphasizing a strong state role in productive areas. The process of national-ization has been initiated . . . We are promoting development through the state.

The emphasis given here by the vice-minister was on bringing back the role of the state in resource nationalism and the promotion of development processes. The nationalization of natural resources was offered as the prime example of the shift towards state regulation of the markets. Conflicts over the control of resources and forms of governing became very prevalent during our discussion. He sug-gested that indigenous peoples had seriously misunderstood the nature of the state transformation process:

> For some reason, peasants have understood that they are proprietors of every-thing; if they live in some region, they think that they are owners of the land, owners of the subsoil, owners of everything. All assets are going to be

recovered [from the private sector] but it is the state that is going to administer them; a community member cannot administer [natural resources]. Yet community members have understood it the other way around; that assets would be recovered for them.

This excerpt revealed that conflicts emerged over the question of who is to administer the process of redistribution and the logic by which it will function. According to the vice-minister, indigenous peoples were demanding too much when opting for self-determination within their lands and territories. In his opinion, they did not understand the increasing importance of the nation-state in decision-making processes and in the control of natural resources and territories. Rather than indigenous autonomies, he stated that the agent of redistribution is the state. This tendency reflected the long history of resource nationalism in Bolivia: from the 1952 MNR-led nationalist revolution to resource struggles for water (2000) and gas (2003) (Young 2017).

The nationalist revolution had enhanced a homogeneous nationalist agenda at the expense of indigenous peoples' ethnic and cultural concerns. Common amongst Latin American left-wing movements where there was "blindness to any identity besides class, a category derived from material relations of production" (Stahler-Sholk, Vanden and Kuecker 2007, 10), the left-wing parties and unions of the time shared the homogenizing agenda of the state and despised indigenous agendas. This explained some of the suspicions, doubts, and hostilities held by indigenous groups: not necessarily towards the left as such but certainly towards the state – and state-centrism was associated with the MAS's left-wingers. Many indigenous activists perceived state-led developmentalism as the rebirth of the regulatory characteristics of the nation-state typical of the era of the Bolivian nationalist revolution.

Echoing discourses of the nationalist revolution, the vice-minister labelled indigenous peoples, collectively, as peasants. Eliding reference to their ethnicity or cultural difference, it became clear that he considered indigenous peoples beneficiaries of state-led developmentalist schemes. Related to the exploitation of natural resources in his ministerial sector, he stated that

the whole country has been declared [a territory for exploration]. It is of the state; the state administers it; it is from this point of view that we promote development. The role of the indigenous population is to benefit from development, and to make sure they become employees, technicians – to have stable work and income. We have consultation processes with them so that they know what is being done but they do not have the right of veto.

Instead of functioning as agents of change, the role of indigenous peoples – "peasants" in his mind – was to enjoy the benefits of the redistributive policies of the state. In his view, they were merely targets of development for the interventionist state.

The case of encounters between the state and indigenous peoples at the Madidi National Park serves as an optimal example of this. The question of indigenous

peoples in the Madidi National Park, north of La Paz, became an issue of conflict when Morales's executive authorized the exploration of oil by the Venezuelan company PDVSA on indigenous lands within the park. To extract oil in an ecologically fragile, protected area inhabited by indigenous peoples was hardly in line with the policy goals of *Vivir Bien*. Considerable indigenous resistance activity spanning the late 1980s and the 1990s was directed at transnational corporations entering their lands and territories, yet the MAS executive that rose to political power through this same protest movement was now repeating the actions of transnational corporations via state enterprises. In state practice, resource nationalism was used to deny the territorial rights of minority indigenous groups (Young 2017, 182), principally based on the claim that resource extraction was necessary for the reduction of poverty and the provision of welfare for the most marginalized (Postero 2017, 182). Resource nationalism, and especially the nationalization of natural gas and oil, has indeed been widely supported by Bolivians with the rationale that "this is the time for the formerly poor to receive their fair share" (Ibid., 111). According to Postero (Ibid.), many impoverished urban Bolivians are not as concerned about ecological issues or indigenous rights as they are about overcoming poverty.

Diverging interests between indigenous groups and other social movements were already visible during my fieldwork. While some interviewed representatives of indigenous organizations resisted the Madidi extraction plan, others perceived it as an opportunity for jobs and income generation. This concern was expressed in the words of an indigenous leader from one of the lowland member organizations of CIDOB whom I met in La Paz when discussing differences between indigenous organizations and peasant unions:

> We [indigenous peoples] have historical demands for lands, but currently in this process we do not agree with peasant unions, because they have another kind of ideology, another way of thinking than we have. As *indígenas* we have a very distinct ideology. A year ago, we were having problems in the north of La Paz, because [the government] wanted to make us indigenous peoples disappear from there; they wanted to make the Madidi National Park where we live disappear. The leaders of peasants and colonizers are interested in money and [the government's] projects, and we are not.

Here he criticized the fact that peasant unions had supported the plan of the governing regime to extract oil from indigenous lands. He also complained that peasant unions were interested in state-led developmentalism, while indigenous peoples in the area rather wanted to use and control their lands and territories without state intervention. During my fieldwork, the peasant response to the aforementioned indigenous criticism was that identity-based movements, and especially lowland *indígenas*, had been pampered by foreign aid agencies, NGOs, and neoliberal governments since the 1990s, as reflected, for example, in their collective land rights, while small-scale rural colonizers and peasants had been left in an unfavourable position. In fact, while some of the 500,000 peasants living in the colonization areas do economically well, the large majority of them live in extreme poverty

(Childress 2006, 474). This was reflected in the aggravated comments of a peasant leader from one of the peasant organizations at the core of the MAS:

> We are gradually shifting from bourgeois *latifundios* to indigenous *latifundios*. This is where those [indigenous persons] who manage the theme of lands are demonstrating their biases . . . We want the land to be redistributed in an even and equal way without preferences to anyone, because we are all *originarios* in Bolivia. The Amazonian *indígenas* are already privileged to have more extensions of land than others. For example, in the north of La Paz a few hundred indigenous peoples have around half a million hectares of land, while by its side there is a settlement living on barely 50 hectares of land.

However, indigenous positionalities vis-à-vis state-led development schemes are by no means univocal and unchanging. This is demonstrated by the reactions of indigenous populations to the contemporary case of the Chepete and El Bala hydroelectric megadams that Morales's regime is planning to construct in Madidi in order to export electricity to neighbouring countries. Many indigenous communities in the area have opposed the plans, arguing that as the consequence of the inundation that the construction of dams is likely to cause, approximately 3,000 indigenous people would lose their lands in their respective TCOs (Reaño 2017). However, representing the lowland indigenous groups of the La Paz department, the *Central de Pueblos Indígenas de la La Paz* (CPILAP) signed an agreement with the state electricity company in August 2017 in support of conducting technical studies and investment plans for the projected construction. The state, in turn, promised the CPILAP to respect indigenous TCOs and their *usos y costumbres*, while also providing solar electricity and health and education services to indigenous communities in the Madidi (Rojas Paz 2017).

The hydroelectric megadam plans have also been resisted on the grounds of unfeasibility by many environmental activists and NGOs, including, for example, Pablo Solón, one of the Morales regime's best-known human rights and environmental diplomats and the former ambassador to the United Nations. A defender of *Vivir Bien* and the protection of Mother Earth, Solón withdrew from the MAS in 2011 when the government increased prioritization of resource extraction and began to silence, sometimes violently, those defending indigenous and environmental causes. Solón's critique of the governing regime has made him the target of its silencing tactics. In June 2017, he was faced with criminal charges when the executive accused him of corruption, a course of action that it has started to use to silence critical voices, especially when coming from its own former members (see, for example, Fundación de Solón 2017).

Extractive conflicts: the case of TIPNIS

In the practice of the state, contestations over diverging governmental schemes of improvement have led to the escalation of conflicts.[1] Major conflict that aptly exemplifies contradictions between the transformative ideals of *Vivir Bien* and state-led resource extractivism has been the case involving the Isiboro Securé

National Park and Indigenous Territory (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Securé*, TIPNIS) (Burman 2014; Canessa 2014; McNeish 2013; Postero 2017). Commencing in 2011, the TIPNIS situation resembles that of Madidi, though more aggravated and conflictive, with a long historical record of contentious relationships between migrant peasants and lowland indigenous groups, and mobilizations against the state and colonizers in the name of indigeneity (for the history of the area, see Yashar 2005). At the centre of the conflict lie the plans of Morales's executive to construct a highway between the towns of Cochabamba and Trinidad through the TIPNIS ecological reserve and the TCO territory of the Yuracaré, Moxeño, and Chimane indigenous peoples.

From the point of view of Morales's executive, the justification for this plan was that road building would unite the Andean and Amazonian regions that have, historically, been largely unconnected. This would facilitate the transportation of Amazonian agricultural products to wider markets (Achtenberg 2011). The Villa Tunari–San Ignacio de Moxos road would also open up economic opportunities for approximately 100,000 Aymara and Quechua colonizers and coca-growing peasants, who reside south of the park, and whose individual and household-based landownership patterns differ from the collective landownership traditions of indigenous groups within the TIPNIS territory (McNeish 2013, 225). These peasant groups compose Morales's principal political support basis. Geopolitically, one of the aims was to improve connections between Bolivia and Brazil, which has developed into one of Bolivia's main economic partners. Eventually, the highway would have enhanced Brazil's access to Pacific ports through the planned cross-continent highway. The construction of the road was assigned to a Brazilian company with financing from the Brazilian government (Achtenberg 2011), which has clear interests in resource extraction – oil and natural gas – in the region. Contracts for natural gas reserves located to the west of the park territory have been transferred from the Spanish Repsol to the Petroandina, a joint endeavour of the Bolivian YPFB and the Venezuelan PDVSA (McNeish 2013, 225). Brazilian Petrobras has also owned petroleum concessions in the territory (Achtenberg 2011).

Plans by the executive to intervene in indigenous territories through large-scale development projects such as road building were resisted by many indigenous groups living in TIPNIS territory. It was feared that better infrastructure would further enhance Aymara and Quechua migration to the area, which would deepen conflicts over lands and territories. There were also many environmental concerns. The first was the possible contribution of the road to accelerating deforestation (Achtenberg 2011), a phenomenon contributing negatively to climate change. The second was the danger that the expansion of oil and natural gas extraction posed to local rivers and ecosystems, as well as the livelihoods of those local communities that were dependent on the use of natural resources (McNeish 2013, 229). Many indigenous groups in the TIPNIS, together with the CIDOB, actively framed their resistance in terms of global environmental discourses, thus utilizing the tactics Ulloa (2005) describes as the portrayal of indigenous peoples as ecological natives. Ultimately, the prime concern for local indigenous groups, national indigenous organizations, and other activists who joined the protest was the protection of

indigenous rights to autonomy and territories vis-à-vis state interference (McNeish 2013, 229). By not consulting indigenous groups in the area, the governing regime had actively violated their right to prior consultation as mandated by the constitution and international agreements on indigenous rights (Schilling-Vacaflor 2013, 202). Consequently, the aggressive intervention of the state into indigenous territories attracted the increasing attention of indigenous and environmental activists and NGOs worldwide.

Various indigenous groups in the TIPNIS initiated a massive protest march towards La Paz in August 2011, with the aim of halting the road building. They were supported by the member organizations of the CIDOB, and joined in the march by the Andean CONAMAQ and environmental and human rights NGOs (McNeish 2013, 229). Violent conflict and brutal police repression occurred when peasant unions confronted indigenous marchers through a road blockade. Many peasants, progovernment peasants' unions and coca growers, including the *Consejo Indígena del Sur* (CONISUR), defended the construction of the highway in order to enhance their economic opportunities. The conflict that resulted – and that, to an extent, still continues – was, as Burman (2014) has suggested, a defining moment in the relation between social movements and the government. Indigenous organizations such as the CONAMAQ and the CIDOB started to withdraw from alliances with peasant unions within the *Pacto de Unidad* (Rivera Cusicanqui 2014, 44) and the CONALCAM. This resulted in accentuating internal divisions in the CONAMAQ and the CIDOB: ongoing contestation and potential rupture in which progovernment activists were trying to displace their more critical counterparts. In the case of the CIDOB, for example, a group of progovernment activists formulated a new governing body that took over the CIDOB headquarters with the support of the police force (Postero 2017, 126).

As a result of the protest march, a law was passed declaring the TIPNIS an "untouchable area". The Brazilian loan was withdrawn and the process postponed. However, the executive's interest in constructing the road has not withered away over the years. In 2012, the government organized a consultation process, which was highly criticized by indigenous, environmental, and human rights groups as authoritarian and predetermined, but which, according to the government, gave legitimation to the construction process (Achtenberg 2012). Although both Morales and García Linera later acknowledged their mistakes during the consultation process, the initiative was revived during the 2014 electoral campaigns. In 2015, a government decree was passed that authorized exploration and drilling of oil and natural gas in protected areas, when it is "strategically important for the public benefit and development of the country; linked with the reduction of extreme poverty" (Paredes and Corz 2015). In 2017, Morales announced that the road through the TIPNIS area would be constructed "sooner or later". As a result, discussions started in Parliament in August with the aim of dissolving the law on the intangibility of the TIPNIS.

The government has continuously claimed that the pro-TIPNIS activists are channelling attempts by the right-wing opposition and foreign imperialism to shatter the governing regime. Recently, García Linera has accused the defenders of the

TIPNIS of being "colonial environmentalists" because, according to him, environmental NGOs and activists want to maintain indigenous peoples in the same living conditions in which they lived 500 years ago, without access to social services, education, trade, and transportation. He claimed that this image is beneficial for environmental NGOs that are financed by industrialized countries as part of their climate change politics, and institutions such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) partnerships and Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) (La Prensa 2017). By making this claim, García Linera tied his criticism to the defence of Bolivia's own alternative stance on climate change according to which global capitalism is the main cause for climate change, and solutions such as the green economy, proposed by international climate change conventions, are too market oriented and merely represent "colonial environmentalism" (Ministerio de Comunicación 2017). As an alternative, Bolivia, which suffers severe consequences of global warming – the melting of Andean glaciers, droughts, and so forth – has been active at global forums promoting indigenous epistemologies and the rights of Mother Earth as solutions to climate change. At the 2009 Copenhagen climate change negotiations, it defended the radical position of demanding an agreement that would hold global warming to less than one degree Celsius increase by the end of the century, instead of accepting the common consensus of two degrees. In Paris, however, it had already adopted a more pragmatic stance, one which was more in line with its own extractive interests.

A demonstration of Bolivia's alternative climate change stance took place at the World Peoples' Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, held in Cochabamba in April 2010 with the participation of social movements, indigenous organizations, and activist groups from all over the world. According to Vaclav, the young consultant working at the Ministry of Planning with whom I discussed the summit in 2017, it was the "climax of *Vivir Bien* for social movements" who proposed it as an alternative to resource extractivism and global capitalism. While social movements, such as CONAMAQ, were forcefully proposing *Vivir Bien*, he suggested that the executive started to withdraw from this position, thus initiating a fissure between the government and social movements. With the TIPNIS conflict, this fissure turned into a major rupture because it demonstrated that the executive that claimed to represent social movements had rather become "authoritarian, repressive, and brutally violent". Vaclav proposed that, since then, the discourse of *Vivir Bien* has been used by Morales's regime to control territories and to legitimize state-led exploitative resource extraction, which has resulted in many social movements and activists dropping *Vivir Bien* terminology because they identify it with the repressive politics of the state and the MAS. This claim is also made by Postero (2017, 181), who argues that indigeneity has lost its privileged discursive position in the post-TIPNIS period. According to her, the TIPNIS conflict showed that for the emerging indigenous middle classes and peasantry, the definition of citizenship is formulated on the basis of class rather than indigeneity. McNeish (2013), on the contrary, has warned against making simplistic interpretations about class and ethnicity on the basis of the TIPNIS conflict. According to him, what it has showed is that there are contradictory and conflicting interests within and

between indigenous communities, peasant groups, and regional economic sectors, all of whom have constructed historically diverging positions towards the extractivist Bolivian state.

The TIPNIS conflict has shown that the executive has a growing interest in extending its control over national territory and natural resources – and social and indigenous movements located in those areas – through large-scale development projects. Nevertheless, state-led development interventions do not solely discipline; sovereign authority that is maintained through the use and control of violence is also channelled through them. As the case of TIPNIS has demonstrated, the practice of government through indigenous ideas has clashed with the outright violence and repression of indigenous groups by the state. By endorsing violence, repression, and centralization of state power, the governing regime, though it purports to be committed to the principles of *Vivir Bien*, is giving rise to contradictions between various forms of rule. On the other hand, the reemergence of protest marches and activism has shown that the practice of politics as a critical challenge to the repressive forms of rule is constantly present – even within, and against, the executive that claims to govern in the name of social movements.

Socialist environmentalism or reconstituted neoliberalism?

When the MAS was founded, it predominantly represented the interests of coca growers and peasant colonizers in the Chapare region. The rise of Evo Morales as a political figure was, however, a manifestation of the much larger phenomenon of dissatisfaction with national politics and its dependency on foreign dictation of development paradigms on the part of various sectors of the Bolivian population. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 3, when elected, the MAS-led executive represented a conglomeration of diverging political and ideological views ranging from indigenous culturalism to different forms of socialism and NGO pragmatism. While the case of TIPNIS may suggest that the MAS executive has returned to its roots in supporting the class-based interests of peasant unionists, thus artificially turning indigenous and peasant groups, whose everyday lives often intersect, against each other, the conflict can also be interpreted as demonstrating a larger shift in the transformation process.

In an interview in 2017, Oscar Vega suggested that after the approval of the 2009 constitution a major change took place in the perception of which actors were considered fundamental to implementing the process of change. In the course of reassessment, private mining enterprises, hydrocarbon companies, banking and finance sectors, and agroindustries were drawn into the process. According to Vega, transnational, Latin American, and Bolivian capitalist interests, intertwined in complex ways, started to bypass indigenous and social movement perspectives. While IFIs and foreign development agencies welcomed the new government-capitalist alliance – the IMF, for example, offering new loans to Bolivia in 2009 – many supporters of the state transformation process perceived it as treason; for others, however, it was considered a pragmatic move because it was perceived that maintenance of the process of change required a solid economic base.

The meanings of the discourse of *Vivir Bien* changed when it started to be utilized by both capitalist sectors and the executive, with its concepts, along with those of decolonization, increasingly being used to legitimate neoliberal extractivism and the accumulation of capital. Vega argued that the radical indigenous and social movement content of *Vivir Bien* was dismantled: "It has become depoliticized." He went on to claim that the problem was that indigenous terminologies had been introduced to the state transformation process without any consideration of the overwhelming hegemony of geopolitics and the power of global capitalism. Indigenous policy was implemented to strengthen the nation-state, "as if Bolivia were an island". As an example, Vega observed that although the government hands over tractors, seeds, electricity, the Internet, and so forth to indigenous groups, it cannot transform the fundamental logics by which global markets work, which makes it impossible for small-scale producers to compete with transnational agroindustries; he added that indigenous peoples in the resource-rich lowlands suffer most from these capitalist encounters.

In a similar vein, representing the views of the executive, Vice-President García Linera has argued that transnational capitalists, private landowners, and NGOs hold the power in the lowlands (Postero 2017, 128), meaning that, according to this paternalist view, lowland indigenous peoples need to be protected by the state with the politics of "socialist environmentalism" (*ecologismo socialista*) (La Prensa 2017). According to García Linera, this governmental approach differs from "Western environmental colonialism" because it does not separate human beings from nature and it allows people to enjoy social services and economic opportunities while at the same time protecting the rights of the *Pachamama* (Ministerio de Comunicación 2017). One could, of course, claim that this is just another concept deployed to legitimize the government's extractive economies and state interventionism. Previously García Linera had used the term Andean-Amazonian capitalism (*capitalismo andino-amazónico*), referring to an economic system that combines capitalist and noncapitalist forms that, with state intervention, produce the surplus needed to transfer to a postcapitalist condition over time. While capitalist now, it incorporates the vision of future transition. García Linera perceived, as Webber (2011, 189–90) notes, "capitalist industrialization as a necessary transition between today's mode of production and the socialism that might be possible in a century's time". This view correlated with classic stagist ideas amongst Latin American communist parties (Webber and Carr 2013b, 9).

Although left-wing discourses seem to be bypassing indigenous views in the practice of government, it must be noted that numerous left-wing intellectuals and activists have been very critical about the process of change, arguing that transformations have been very moderate. During a meeting at his office, a well-known left-wing intellectual from the *Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario*(CEDLA) research institute drew my attention to the abyss between discursive critique of global capitalism and the practice of government:

> Although there are discourses of a complete change of paradigm, there is no
> profound discussion about changing the patterns of capitalist accumulation

in Bolivia. In practice, the government and the MAS are attempting to solve economic problems in very conventional ways. There is no questioning of the pattern of external dependency on the exportation of primary products because the government itself is fostering it. In the case of hydrocarbons, for example, while nationalization has enhanced the participation of the state in negotiations of the sector, it does not have control or leadership in the process . . . The economy is managed the same way as before.

During my fieldwork, many activists in trade unions and left-wing research institutes were disappointed by the scale of nationalizations and the influence that transnational corporations still wielded within strategic sectors of the Bolivian economy. While Morales's government's nationalizations increased the role of the state through tax returns and revenues, it did not mean closing the borders to private capital. For these reasons, some left-wing critiques have used such terms as neoliberal nationalization (Kaup 2010) to describe the contemporary situation. Across Latin America, the rise of left-wing governments was portrayed as an opportunity to overcome extractive economies and their subsequent dependency on the export of scarce natural resources and the hegemony of transnational corporations. Equally, it was perceived as an opportunity to strengthen the role of the state. In practice, their standpoint has rarely been postextractivist, or postcapitalist (Postero 2013, 46–7). Instead, they have instigated the diversification and industrialization of products, as well as the withering away of dependency on Western corporations and economic partnerships (Gudynas 2010), the latter being a move that Escobar (2010) would call alternative modernization.

In terms of the diversification of production and industrialization of raw materials, despite attempts to the contrary, it is clear that Morales's process of change has not been able to transform historical patterns of Bolivian dependency on resource extraction and the exports of primary products. According to Webber (2016, 1863), this dependency has actually worsened, thus contributing to reconstituted neoliberalism; in 2013, over 80 per cent of Bolivia's total exports consisted of mining products, hydrocarbons, and agricultural produce. The share of industrial products of all exports was 47.4 per cent in 2001, while under Morales's regime it consisted of 26.3 per cent in 2010 (Ibid.). Much of this can, of course, be explained by the increased significance of the exports of natural gas, primarily to Argentina and Brazil. Dependency on the exports of primary commodities has also remained typical for many other Latin American countries that have proclaimed their intentions to implement postneoliberal policies, with raw materials consisting of 55.4 per cent of total exports in Brazil, 92.8 per cent in Venezuela, and 91.7 per cent in Ecuador (Radcliffe 2015a, 862). Webber (2016, 1863–4) has also drawn attention to the fact that during Morales's regime, approximately 50 per cent of tax collection has relied on the export of natural resources, which is vulnerable to the volatility of prices in global markets. It has been argued that in order to build sustainable economies, tax reforms would be needed all over Latin America in order to shift from taxing sales and exports to taxing income and property, as well as tackling tax evasion (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2012, 10–11). However, governments claiming

to promote postneoliberal politics have not made much effort in this direction due to their desire to please their voters and corporate interests (ibid.).

Although acknowledging that government revenue increased drastically because of changes to the hydrocarbons tax regime in 2006, the report of CEDLA (2006) criticized the fact that transnational corporations still hold a share of 18–49 per cent of oil and gas extraction. Despite discourses of nationalization, the state does not control oil and natural gas industries; it has merely increased the royalties paid to the state (Young 2017, 181). In 2014, the Bolivian state-owned YPFB produced only 14 per cent of oil and gas exports, while transnational corporations produced 86 per cent (Postero 2017, 97–8). Resonating with this, Orellana Aillón (2006) has asserted that the MAS regime has left large-scale agricultural exports, the properties of the big landowners, and the functioning of transnational agroindustries almost intact (see also Ormachea Saavedra 2008). Indeed, Young (2017, 181) has suggested that "land redistribution and titling, while substantial, has been more modest than many had hoped and seems to have slowed since 2010, as critics allege government accommodation with the eastern landholding elite". This coincides with the previous observation concerning government-capitalist alliances.

What has faced a transformation, however, is the role of Western transnational corporations and economic partnerships. The economic importance of Argentina, Brazil, China, India, and Venezuela amongst others has become paramount for economic development in Bolivia. Exports to Latin American countries, and most specifically to Brazil, increased to two-thirds of total exports in 2008 (Webber 2011, 196). By 2013, natural gas exports to Brazil and Argentina contributed 54.7 per cent of total exports (Webber 2016, 1863). The role of South-South cooperation has increased significantly in the exploration and exports of natural resources. This has been exemplified by the involvement of Brazil and Venezuela in Bolivian extractive conflicts presented in earlier sections. To add another example, in 2007, Morales's government signed the single biggest deal in Latin America with an Indian company – in this case, the Jindal company – for resource exploration of iron ore reserves at El Mutún in the eastern Amazon (Postero 2013, 47). However, the concession was cancelled in 2012 after accusations that the company was interested in exporting the raw material to India rather than industrializing it in Bolivia. A new contract for producing stainless steel was signed in 2016 with the Chinese company Sinosteel through a joint loan agreement from the Chinese (85 per cent) and Bolivian (15 per cent) governments (de Souza 2016). China has become a major trade partner in resource extraction, as well as supplying Bolivia with much of its consumer goods (Postero 2017, 104). It is also interested in getting involved in the extraction of lithium in Salar de Uyuni, an area containing half of the world's known lithium reserves, although many Bolivians have high hopes in the economic benefits that the extraction of lithium would bring to them through resource nationalism (Komi 2017).

While the increased role of South-South cooperation rejects Western hegemony in defining global political-economic rules, thus confronting coloniality through de-Westernization (Mignolo 2009, 3), it does not question the basic foundations of the global capitalist economy. During the period of my fieldwork, many perceived

that Brazilian and Argentinean companies were cultivating exploitative relations similar to those that US and European transnational corporations used to have with Bolivia. Transnational corporations originating in the Global South continue to cause serious environmental damage, which often touches upon the everyday lives and livelihoods of indigenous groups at local scales. In the globalized economy, the exercise of force becomes complicated. Li (2007) has a suggestion as to how sovereignty, that is, absolute power, works in today's world: transnational corporations, she claims, are today's sovereign authorities. She has argued that while, in principle, claiming to operate by the rules of liberal democracies, their impacts on local people in the Global South in terms of resource extraction, land acquisitions, ecological destruction, and cultural homogenization differ little from the despotisms of colonial authorities, because transnational corporations "take what they want because they can" (Ibid., 17). Complex articulations between various forms of rule occur at the intersections of indigenous, state, and capitalist encounters.

Note

1 I have discussed the TIPNIS conflict in more detail in Ranta (2016, 2017a).

8 Concluding remarks

Latin America has long been a region where critical thinking and political action have flourished. It has been home to the development of dependency theory, import-substituting industrialization policies, and socialist revolutions that have challenged mainstream economics and ways of doing politics. Contemporary times have seen the rise of such economic and political alternatives as twenty-first-century socialism, decolonial thought, plurinationalism, *Vivir Bien*, and direct democracy initiatives. In this vein, it has been observed that Latin America was historically the region from which global capitalism and world-system theory emerged, and now it is the place where they are being challenged (Escobar 2010). This is what Escobar (2010) means by claiming that Latin America is at a cross-roads: countless social movements and many states in the region have opted to experiment with alternative forms of organizing the economy and doing politics.

The search for alternatives is understandable considering that Latin America has always been a region hosting some of the gravest inequalities and marginalization on earth; furthermore, exploitation has often been determined by ethnicity and indigeneity. Throughout its history, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, transformations in Latin America have occurred as complex articulations between global, national, and local processes and actors. During the last 20 years or so, resistance actions have tended to be reactions against neoliberal globalization and neoliberal restructurings in which massive privatization and reductions in the active role of the state had caused unemployment and poverty, while the launching of regional trade agreements and the opening of markets to transnational corporations had threatened traditional peasant and indigenous livelihoods, lands, and territories. Thus, a good deal of alternative politics has been practised in the name of postneoliberalism.

This book has portrayed the rise to prominence of the Bolivian notion of *Vivir Bien* as one of the regional ideals for an alternative future horizon. The Bolivian case offers us an important example of the fast-spreading movement amongst indigenous peoples of the Global South to take back control of the future of their lives and societies, thereby shaping the definition of development with their own paradigms. It is clear that the political strength of the notion of *Vivir Bien* derives from its being a local and national counterforce to mainstream universalist development paradigms; it provides people with a feeling of having a say over their own lives

and societies, thus gaining them a sense of seizing at least some dominance over seemingly uncontrollable processes of neoliberal globalization. *Vivir Bien* is also discursively portrayed as an ecologically and culturally sustainable solution to the problems caused by global capitalism, thereby providing hope to many spectators even outside Bolivian borders. The fact that *Vivir Bien* challenges understandings of development as rooted in global capitalism provides us with a much-needed opportunity to construct more heterodox political economies. However, my research findings have shown that beyond discourses, the concrete incorporation and usage of the notion of *Vivir Bien* in Bolivian politics and state policy making has been a highly contested process, involving multiple difficulties, contradictions, and exclusions. They demonstrate that *Vivir Bien* has become a battlefield over contested meanings. In the following, I summarize the key findings of this study.

Decolonial government

At the beginning of Chapter 2, I conceptualized *Vivir Bien* policy as a form of government. Ethnographers of development, such as Li (2007), have portrayed the Foucauldian-inspired use of the term government as the calculated means of shaping, guiding, and managing the lives of individuals and groups of people by the application and implementation of desired principles. International development interventions or state policies can be understood in this light. Thus government, here, is a form of power aimed at regulating and controlling populations by improving their living conditions and providing for their welfare. However, as I have claimed in this study, until the emergence of the *Vivir Bien* paradigm, such government has operated with the logics of neoliberalism, spread in the Global South by programmes like the SAPs and PRSPs. In the name of doing good, international development cooperation has functioned as a strong governmentality-producing mechanism spreading global free-market principles and assumingly universalist, but inherently liberal, Western development models. Through this neoliberal governmentality (Ferguson and Gupta 2005), the production of government in many countries of the Global South shifted from the locus of nation-states to global and local development actors. Thus, the power to decide on what is supposed to be good and desirable for the conduct of people in a certain place was transferred from democratically elected decision-making bodies to entities controlled by transnational corporate interests and Western nations. However, from the point of view of indigenous peoples, the weakening of the Latin American states – whose policies towards them have too often been assimilating, centralizing, authoritarian, and racist – was not so unfortunate, as I have demonstrated in Chapter 3. Indeed, in addition to transnational actors, governing functions were increasingly outsourced from states to NGOs and indigenous communities. Through neoliberal multicultural reforms that were undertaken in Bolivia in order to avoid resistance to neoliberal restructuring and privatization, indigenous peoples were in fact able to promote some of their political goals concerning self-determination and autonomy. In this sense, neoliberal and indigenous forms of government coincided.

As a challenge to neoliberal policies represented by SAPs and PRSPs, my book suggests that the policy of *Vivir Bien* functions, ideally, as a sort of decolonial government. This extends Foucauldian state-formation theorizing and Li's concept of government to respond to indigenous epistemologies and decolonial policy alternatives studied by such scholars as Escobar, Mignolo, and Quijano. Coloniality refers here to those patterns of power, hierarchies, and domination related to global capitalism, nation-states, and Western knowledge production that have subjugated indigenous peoples' own cultural premises and practices. The introduction of terminologies like *Vivir Bien*, and more specifically its indigenous equivalents such as *Suma Qamaña* or *Sumak Kawsay*, to state transformation processes by social movements and indigenous activists has the goal of decolonizing the economy, the state, and knowledge production. The notion of decolonial government here refers to forms of shaping, managing, and governing the conduct of individuals and groups of people through indigenous principles beyond and outside the premises of the liberal nation-state and global capitalism. Decolonial government emphasizes cultural difference and indigenous self-governance through pluralities. It also highlights the role of indigenous activists and social movements as active producers of alternative epistemologies and forms of governing.

In terms of *Vivir Bien*, the possibilities for constructing decolonial government operate at two levels: indigenous autonomies and the state. In Chapter 4, I have demonstrated that the key aim of indigenous activists, NGOs, and movements such as the CONAMAQ in elaborating indigenous terminologies has been the promotion of indigenous self-determination in the name of cultural difference. To this end, notions like *Suma Qamaña*, *Ñandereko*, or *Sumak Kawsay* have been portrayed as ecological, harmonious, and egalitarian ways of indigenous life, whose realization is portrayed as intimately tied to indigenous communities being able to use, control, and own land, territories, and natural resources. Indigenous peoples should, of course, be entitled to this, based on their occupation of the land prior to colonialism and centuries of state and corporate interference. However, it has often been less of a reality than a political goal. Furthermore, wrapping the political power struggle for lands and territories in the language of culture and environmentalism has proved more effective than references to class struggle, oppression, and exploitation, not least because this move has gained the backing of global indigenous and environmentalist discourses, as well as international indigenous conventions. Essentially, therefore, decolonial government refers to indigenous self-governance of indigenous territorial arrangements through *usos y costumbres*. Bearing in mind the plurality of indigenous cultures in Bolivia, I defined these decolonized forms of governance as governing pluralities: a plurality of political formulations that govern indigenous autonomies. The ideal of democratic community participation shakes up understandings of what democracy means, while also raising questions for the future about how issues such as women's rights and the position of LGBTQ persons, for example, should be approached.

At the level of the state, I associate decolonial government with the construction of plurinationalism: a conglomeration of a plurality of indigenous nations. Thus, if indigenous terminologies are to decolonize the Bolivian nation-state, they should

transform it into a pluri-nation, wherein indigenous peoples have the power to decide over the course of their own lives. At a central level, plurinational governance would function through shared decision making, ideally people's assemblies, an example being the Constituent Assembly; decolonial government would thus provide forums for radical democratization at multiple levels. I agree with Postero (2017, 184) that this challenge to the sovereignty of the liberal nation-state has probably been the most revolutionary undertaking of the MAS regime. The idea of the governed becoming governors is visible both in indigenous struggles for self-determination and in state-policy discourses opting for the creation of the plurinational state. As this study has shown, to make any radical, large-scale, indigenous transformation project work, it is not enough for it to be dealt with solely at local levels and in global forums; the state is needed even if its role has been seriously questioned in the age of neoliberal globalization. Yet the envisaged state is one that serves both as an object and subject of change: colonial, hierarchical, and centralized characteristics of the state, which in today's world are often deeply influenced by transnational encounters, are in a need of major transformation, while, at the same time, the state can be used to push forwards transformations, as has been demonstrated in the case of the shift in Bolivian policy and legislation.

The state and neoliberalism

Although plurinationalism as a radical appreciation of democratization has been promoted by numerous indigenous activists, and the understanding of the decolonizing potential of indigenous ideas has been shared by many in the contemporary Bolivian process of change, their translation into practice has, however, been challenging in many ways. My findings have shown that the emergence and usage of the notion of *Vivir Bien* at the level of state bureaucracy has proved it to be something quite distinct from the ideals that are projected by and onto it. In the final analysis, it is safe to say that indigenous terminologies have not effectively succeeded in transforming the coloniality of the state. When indigenous terminologies have been translated into technical language and expertise, their indigenous content has gradually been depoliticized by the colonial and neoliberal technologies of state bureaucracy. The technicalization of *Vivir Bien* has resulted in its depoliticization, as I demonstrated in Chapter 5. As many kinds of meanings can be associated with the Spanish concept of *Vivir Bien*, it has ultimately become an ambiguous and empty term. Indigenous terminologies as state policy have turned out to be yet another exemplar of development solutions through which neoliberal rationalities continue to function, thereby demonstrating their endurance. As Radcliffe (2015b, 274–5) has argued in the context of Ecuador, state-driven *Buen Vivir* can be perceived as "colonial move to police and manage indigenous agendas", while *Sumak Kawsay* represents a distinctive ontology through which to counteract mainstream development and the colonial legacy.

In order to identify the weak spots of revolutionary political alternatives, more attention should be paid to the internal functioning of state governance and its micropractices of power in processes of change. Within the state bureaucracy,

the execution of 20 years of neoliberal reforms, dictated by the SAPs and PRSPs, has left its mark on the internalized practices of technical experts and public servants, who tend to oppose indigenous change. This is the biopolitics of capitalism. According to Escobar (2010, 41), the implementation of revolutionary projects is so very complicated because neoliberalism works through our minds and bodies. While Latin American states have undertaken postneoliberal politics, they have failed to undertake

> a critique of the cultural regime of the individual, its alleged autonomy and separation from community. Mired in the "modern citizens" – that is, individuals that produce, consume, and make decisions out of their own free will – the State seems unable to tackle any re-composition of the cultural production of persons and communities.
>
> (Ibid.)

This formulation resembles those of Foucault's elaborations on power that have been used theoretically in this book to demonstrate how hard it is to change the neoliberal rationalities of modern state formation. Consequently, the continuation of neoliberal practices continues to articulate and, in doing so, conflict with indigenous policy. The translation of policy ideas into the practice of government that Li (2007) defines as the process of rendering technical has given rise to discord between different kinds of governmental schemes of improvement: indigenous and neoliberal.

The present-day configurations of the Bolivian nation-state originated in, and have been constructed on, the basis of colonial violence, racism, and economic exploitation, making the failure of alternatives more understandable. Bolivian state bureaucracy has traditionally disciplined those groups of people that it is now trying to liberate by deploying indigenous terminologies. Meanwhile, within the state bureaucracy, conflictive interactions between governmental, disciplinary, and authoritarian forms of power and rule seem to impede and challenge the potential of radically democratizing indigenous ideas by hampering their translation into bureaucratic practice. While Foucault noted that disciplinary and authoritarian forms of power coexist with governmental forms in Western state-formation processes, bureaucratic and coercive forms of power are also deeply rooted in the Global South. In Latin America, long-term historical processes have been strongly influenced by colonial and neoliberal dependencies, authoritarian traditions of rule through *caudillos* and patron-client networks, and the corporatist absorption of civil-society groups into the hegemony of the state; taken together, these precedents hamper the functioning of governmental forms of power. This is demonstrated by the Bolivian example, with its different forms of governing and rule: some aiming at radically democratizing practices, such as the one I described through the notion of governing pluralities, and others contributing to a situation in which rather than becoming empowered subjects of change, individuals and groups of people compose disciplined masses. As I demonstrated in Chapter 6, state bureaucracy is effectively taming social movements and indigenous groups

by drawing them into the sphere of state control through, for example, corporatism. Rather than dispersing state power, my research has clearly shown that Morales's regime is rather centralizing it in the state, in the MAS party, and in individual personalities, mainly the president himself.

Within the MAS, the pursuit of certain goals – such as the nationalization of natural resources, large-scale modernization projects through road building, infrastructure, and plans for industrialization – and the centralization of decision making amongst the executive and key members of the MAS show contrasting tendencies to those portrayed by decolonizing indigenous initiatives. This is partly explained by the diversity of actors within the MAS. While the MAS state has been eager to represent itself as the key reference point in expressing indigeneity, it has brought together a diversity of actors, as I have described in Chapter 3. The class-based interests of left-wing actors and peasant unionists differ from those of indigenous activists in regards to, for example, landownership, the control of natural resources, and the role of the state. In Chapter 4, I provided evidence of how these differences are reflected in the contradictory interests that are visible in Bolivian policy guidelines. While many indigenous groups hold a healthily suspicious stance towards the state and direct their decolonizing acts towards its decentralization, numerous leftists and peasant leaders have rather aimed at strengthening the state in terms of controlling the economy and providing social services. Postero (2017, 184) has demonstrated that the goal of the latter was state capture: "gaining control of the state and using its power to accomplish their agendas". The process of the Constituent Assembly provides an example of how party interests overruled activists' attempts to construct a new kind of people's forum for shared decision making outside political parties. Furthermore, while discursively claiming otherwise, the MAS regime has not undergone any radical transformation in the direction of plurinationalism. It has rather taken steps towards the strengthening of the central state in the tradition of the 1952 nationalist revolution, yet without challenging the foundations of global capitalism.

The main departure point for both leftists and indigenous proponents, however, is the stance of resistance to neoliberal globalization and transnational dictation of development paradigms; thus, the transnational character of neoliberal governmentality has been resisted by fostering national sovereignty. There is a sense of pride amongst Bolivians across the political spectrum in the greater sovereignty they have gained in selecting their national development paradigms. In this sense, the sovereignty of the nation-state has become the priority for many. Yet the enhancement of national sovereignty has also been increasingly utilized against local attempts to construct indigenous sovereignty. The perspectives of left-wing actors and peasant unionists differ fundamentally from those of many indigenous activists in terms of ideal governing patterns and the control of natural resources and other assets. Within the MAS's executive and some social movements, the role of the state – traditionally instrumental in the coercion of indigenous peoples – has been strengthened by the increasing deployment of state-led development schemes. Although a poor country's prospects of shifting from one of the most privatized economies in Latin America to a condition of complete nationalization have proved limited, the role of the state has been enhanced in economic and social

sectors. Given the country's marked inequalities and its previous heavy reliance on foreign development aid for the provision of social services, the strengthening of the regulatory role of the state has been a much-needed initiative.

Undoubtedly, the state has succeeded in improving the living conditions of many Bolivians. Through a moderate level of nationalization, it has gained economic strength, which has had an important impact on poverty reduction, the reason for the governing regime's continued popularity. If redistribution benefits the poorest, and levels income and other disparities, it could be perceived as a success for *Vivir Bien* as state policy: as the gradual recovering of balance and harmony between people (living well as others also live well). A fairer share of economic and social well-being may be perceived as a modern equivalent to the ideals of *Vivir Bien*: an ideal of a community – or the nation-state or the global world – without steep hierarchies and power imbalances. However, while Morales's regime focuses on equality, it does not cherish cultural difference. Consequently, social movements within the MAS have become increasingly split between those opting for indigenous schemes of improvement and those opting for the state-led initiatives. Political frictions between peasant and indigenous movements that were reconciled by the rise of Morales's regime to power have revived, reintroducing contestative politics in relation to the governing regime and its policies.

Furthermore, as I explained in Chapter 7, the state continues to be, and in fact, has become more dependent on resource extraction and the exportation of natural resources, thus showing little progress in confronting the capitalist economy or achieving sustainability. Dependence on the export of just a few natural resources makes Bolivia vulnerable to the volatility of global market prices. Instead of becoming an alternative to growth-based development, it appears that the notion of *Vivir Bien* has been translated into a new state-led development model that draws from both modernization paradigms and socialist traditions, with few concerns for environmental protection or indigenous peoples' rights. Developmentalist paradigms of economic growth, natural resource extraction, and the exploitation of nature still seem to prevail. Consequently, if neoliberalism is perceived as the hegemony of economic growth agendas and the commodification of social and environmental values, then neoliberal policy patterns are continuing in Bolivia, as Webber (2011, 2016), for example, has suggested. This is where neoliberalism and the state-led developmentalism practised by the MAS state overlap. However, if neoliberalism is about prioritizing private actors, then the Bolivian case resembles state-led extractive capitalism rather than reconstituted neoliberalism. To an extent, although not comprehensively, the state is replacing Western transnational corporations in, for example, resource extraction. The state has also found new associates in countries such as Brazil, China, India, and Venezuela through South-South cooperation. This may alter global power relations by challenging the Western hegemony in determining the parameters of global development. Yet replacing Western corporations with those from emerging economies is not transforming the foundations of the Bolivian economy, which has not proved able to diversify or industrialize. Indeed, the underlying political economy has not been transformed to the extent that discourses of decolonization suggest.

In counteracting neoliberal globalization through local cultural alternatives, it appears that the proponents of *Vivir Bien* have underestimated the power of global capitalism. A poor country that has a unidimensional production structure but wants to improve the economic and social welfare of its population has little chance of withdrawing from global processes. Global relations involve contradictory characteristics: while indigenized, or decolonized, policy may aim to transform the lives of individuals and groups of people in the name of alternative paradigms, the actions of transnational corporations, business sectors, and other forms of North-South relations tend to entail more coercive and authoritarian characteristics that often counteract local and national principles of improvement. Corporate actors function as today's sovereign authorities. An important corollary of this argument is that, if economic globalization and universal development paradigms continue to produce and reproduce structural economic and social inequalities in the Global South, divisions between individuals and groups of people will remain so marked that processes of change are likely to remain extremely conflictive because so much is at stake for so many people, both the rich and the poor.

In addition to contradictions and conflicts related to the role of the state in the economy, unresolved shortcomings of *Vivir Bien* in legitimizing state-led extractivism also include questions related to democratization, respect for pluralism, and environmental values. From the perspective of many grassroots indigenous groups, for example, threats that transnational and private actors used to pose to indigenous lands and territories, their income generation, and ecological sustainability are now partly superseded or replaced by state actors and their partners from the Global South. *Vivir Bien* as state policy has not enabled local communities' decision making with regards to their own parameters of development, as has been manifested in the case of TIPNIS and other extractive conflicts. Despite some attempts to organize consultations, the role of the governing regime in dictating in an authoritarian manner what is needed for the development of the nation has suppressed local struggles for indigenous self-governance. The use of violence, repression, and the silencing of protesters by force means that Morales's government does not differ greatly in these respects from its predecessors. The increasingly centralized character of the Bolivian nation-state has led to the elision of voices that contradict the state's interests in a move to tame and discipline the active agents of pluralism – social movements and indigenous groups. The centralization of the state in terms of decision making and governance is a sign of continuing coloniality, and it is where neoliberal and state-led models of development articulate: in resource extraction and centralized top-down processes of developmentalism.

Consequently, in terms of providing an alternative to the commodification of nature that the *Vivir Bien* paradigm originally promoted, no progress has been made. To the contrary, the state seems eager to open indigenous territories and ecological reserves to exploration and drilling for natural gas and oil, and the degrading environmental conditions that state-led extractive capitalism are producing are being experienced locally. Furthermore, dependence on the export of fossil fuels is not an ecologically sustainable choice, while also contradicting Bolivia's global discourses of combating climate change. However, the continued popularity

of the MAS largely relies on its poverty reduction and social programmes whose implementation depends on the revenues received from extractive industries. If it wants to sustain its popularity, the MAS needs new sources of extraction.

To summarize, three competing forms of government – decolonial, neoliberal, and state developmentalist – currently operate in the Bolivian state transformation process. Indeed, under the banner of *Vivir Bien*, a number of contradictory tendencies, ranging from the promotion of indigenous autonomies to the centralization of the state and the functioning of neoliberal extractivism, have been linked in an uneasy articulation. This triad sheds light on the complicated relations between decolonizing policy, the coloniality of the state, and neoliberal globalization. In Figure 8.1, I have gathered together and classified the characteristics of each kind of government as they have been discussed in the pages of this study. In order to enhance the analytical clarity of the study's theoretical inputs, classifications have been made on the basis of examples of policy frameworks, the type of use and control of resources, the form of sovereignty, and the form of the state.

As a result, my study concludes that the contemporary Bolivian process of change can be best understood as a contested battlefield involving different forms of government: decolonial, neoliberal, and state oriented. In complex and intricate ways, they overlap and often conflict with each other in the practices of Bolivian
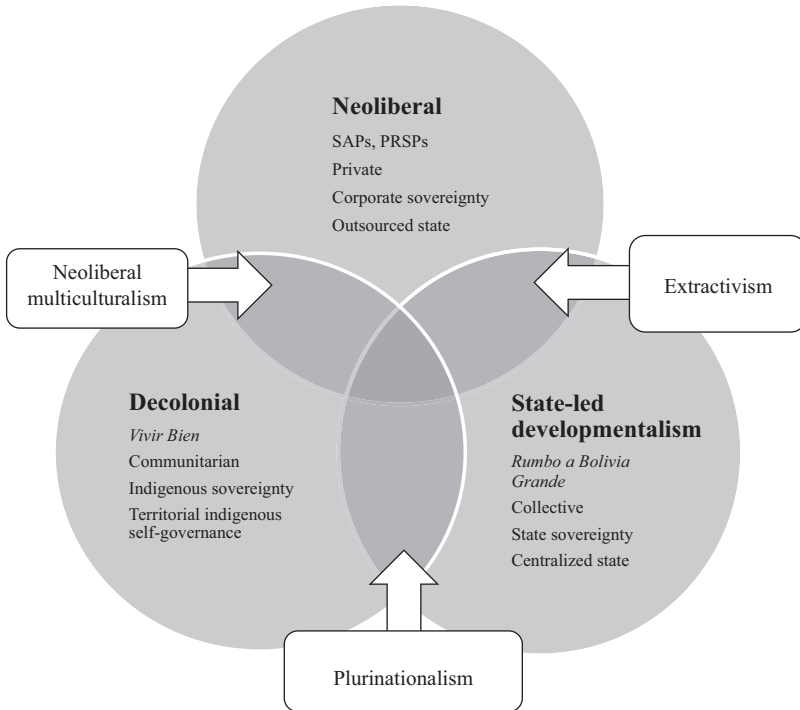
Figure 8.1 Competing forms of government

state transformation, illustrating the insight that the state works in complex and articulated ways in processes of social change. However, indigenous terminologies have been increasingly swallowed by both neoliberal and state-led schemes of development. Thus, I conclude, decolonizing and democratizing implications for indigenous liberation and ecological sustainability have been gradually losing the battle to state-led developmentalism and capitalist alliances. I furthermore conclude that, in this process, conflictive interactions between governmental, disciplinary, and authoritarian forms of power and rule impede and challenge the potential of radically democratizing indigenous ideas by hampering their translation into bureaucratic practice. Therefore, perhaps despite all intentions, the radically democratizing political project seems to be sliding towards more authoritarian poles. What *Vivir Bien* would require to regain its transformative potential to produce decolonial government is redistribution of the means of production, wealth, income, and social benefits, combined with increased internal democratization and respect for pluralism, indigenous self-determination, and ecological values.

Epilogue

I began this study with a reference to the female domestic worker of indigenous origin who challenged her employer by refusing to obey ethnically and socially determined hierarchies and power relations that had previously determined such relationships. According to the employer, the policies and politics of the MAS regime have allowed indigenous peoples to think that they are the equals of other Bolivians, and yet her employee had simply raised her head and looked her straight in the eye. Making explicit the confrontations between indigenous democratization and other more coercive forms of power and rule, this encounter symbolized what decolonization in Bolivia means and why it is so necessary. Despite failures in implementation, if indigenous policy ideas have the capacity to lead to a situation in which indigenous peoples will no longer accept the marginalized positions assigned to them, it has served an important purpose. On the other hand, if, despite opposition, it makes traditional political and economic elites aware of how society could be constructed differently, it might have sown seeds for change.

Claudia, the teller of this story, was a new, young, urban public servant, and self-termed revolutionary, working for the state. Being at the centre of a state that had served for decades as a playground for transnational conditioning, her commitment to the indigenous cause was also a signal of indigenous peoples' opting to take the future of their lives and societies back into their own hands, a trend visibly spreading across the whole of the Global South. While competing schemes of government – that is, decolonial, neoliberal, and state led – act as sources of contestation and power struggles, they also represent the plurality on which Bolivian society is constructed. If the meetings of these three schemes were to be successfully translated into effective articulations rather than contestation and power struggles, equality in difference would no longer be merely a potential but a reality. The end result notwithstanding, I believe that the domestic worker, the employer, and Claudia will never be the same again. The potential for change is in all of them.

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