

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Layers of Indigenous Citizenship: Colonial, Republican and Plurinational Rights in Bolivia

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Abstract

This article explores the complexity of Indigenous citizenship in contemporary Bolivia through the analysis of a land dispute involving the Indigenous people of Coroma and a neighbouring Indigenous group. The Coromeños understand their rights as stemming from the colonial, republican and plurinational periods: their citizenship is thus described as ‘time-layered’. This study highlights the importance of the image of the state for practices of Indigenous citizenship in Bolivia, in contrast with an understanding based solely on rights of self-government. Furthermore, by comprehending these layers as social memories, the article underlines the importance of conceiving of citizenship as rooted in historical experiences and reproduced by practices of collective memory.

Keywords: Indigenous citizenship; land dispute; social memories; plurinationality; Bolivia; Coroma

Introduction

Bolivia was at the forefront of promoting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 and was one of the first countries to adopt its main principles in its legal framework, particularly through its new constitution, which was approved in 2009 and inaugurated the Bolivian ‘plurinational’ state. According to the 2012 census, 41 per cent of the Bolivian population self-declared as members of an Indigenous nation or people,¹ which makes Bolivia the country with the highest proportion of Indigenous people in South America.² Yet 14 years after the promulgation of the UNDRIP, the extent to which

¹Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE), *Censo nacional de población y vivienda 2012*, <https://www.ine.gob.bo/index.php/censos-y-banco-de-datos/censos/> (all URLs last accessed 6 Feb. 2022). The figures for the Indigenous population in this census were the subject of intense debate, since the 2001 census had indicated a higher percentage: 62 per cent self-declared as Indigenous. See Xavier Albó, ‘Censo 2012 en Bolivia: Posibilidades y limitaciones con respecto a los pueblos indígenas’, *Tinkazos*, 15: 32 (2012), pp. 33–45; Salvador Schavelzon, ‘Mutaciones de la identificación indígena durante el debate del censo 2012 en Bolivia: Mestizaje abandonado, indigeneidad estatal y proliferación minoritaria’, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 20: 3 (2014), pp. 328–54.

²International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), *The Indigenous World 2019* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2019). The IWGIA report also cites 2017 official projections indicating that Indigenous self-

plurinational Bolivia and the 14-year government of Evo Morales (2006–19) were able to guarantee Indigenous rights has been a subject of controversy. Conflicts have emerged between the Morales administration and Indigenous groups, and between Indigenous and other dispossessed groups.³

Against this backdrop, this article explores the complexity of Indigenous citizenship that emerges in the context of the recognition of its particular rights in Bolivia. It does this by analysing how the Indigenous people of Coroma (the Coromeños/Coromeñas) express their citizenship in the context of a territorial dispute with a neighbouring Indigenous group. Located on the north-east shore of the Uyuni salt flat in the highland department of Potosí, Coroma is an Indigenous district in the municipality of Uyuni and a traditional quinoa-growing area which has profited considerably from the increase in the price of this grain in recent years. As has happened in other quinoa-growing provinces, intra- and inter-community conflicts have emerged as plots that were previously used for llama herding or other collective uses became valuable for the cultivation of quinoa crops.⁴ In this case, the Coromeños are in dispute with the inhabitants of three municipalities, Pampa Aullagas, Salinas de Garci Mendoza and, especially, Santuario de Quillacas, all located in the neighbouring department of Oruro.

In precolonial and early colonial times, all of the region between the north-east shore of the Uyuni salt flat and the south-east shore of Lake Poopó, today split between the departments of Oruro and Potosí, was part of the Killaka Federation.⁵ The modern Jatun Killaka Asanajaqi, reconstituted in 1997 to bring together the peoples of the Killaka Federation, however, comprises only

identification within the Bolivian population could have reached 48 per cent by the time their report was published: [Leonardo Tamburini], 'Bolivia', in *ibid.*, p. 128.

³A well-known example is the dispute in the Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré (Isiboro Sécuré Indigenous Territory and National Park, TIPNIS), in which Morales's plan to build a highway met with fierce resistance from Indigenous groups. See John-Andrew McNeish, 'Extraction, Protest and Indigeneity in Bolivia: The TIPNIS Effect', *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 8: 2 (2013), pp. 221–42; Renata Albuquerque de Moraes, 'Desenvolvimento e Vivir Bien: O caso do Território Indígena e Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré (Bolivia)', unpubl. MA diss., Universidade de Brasília, 2014; and Jeffery Webber, 'Revolution against "Progress": The TIPNIS Struggle and Class Contradictions in Bolivia', *International Socialism*, 133 (2012), pp. 147–72. Other conflicts include the construction of the Rositas dam in Santa Cruz department and the difficulties with recognition processes of Indigenous autonomous entities. See [Tamburini], 'Bolivia' and Patricia Costas, "'Pedir permiso": Autonomías indígenas y Estado boliviano', in Pavel López and Luciana García Guerreiro (eds.), *Movimientos indígenas y autonomías en América Latina: Escenarios de disputa y horizontes de posibilidad* (Buenos Aires: Gergemsa/El Colectivo/CLACSO, 2018), pp. 69–87.

⁴In her study of a community on the shores of the Uyuni salt flat, Marygold Walsh-Dilley reports an increase in conflicts 'both within the village ... and in the area more broadly' due to the intensification of quinoa production: 'Tensions of Resilience: Collective Property, Individual Gain and the Emergent Conflicts of the Quinoa Boom', *Resilience*, 4: 1 (2016), p. 35. Tanya Kerssen, in her analysis of the quinoa boom and its impact on re-peasantisation (which she defines as 'the (re)affirming of peasant cultures and economies'), also notices its influence in the decrease in llama herding: 'Food Sovereignty and the Quinoa Boom: Challenges to Sustainable Re-Peasantisation in the Southern Altiplano of Bolivia', *Third World Quarterly*, 36: 3 (2015), p. 496.

⁵Thomas A. Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power: Ethnography and History among an Andean People* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), p. 155; Tristan Platt, Thérèse Bouysson-Cassagne and Olivia Harris, *Qaraqara-Charka. Mallku, inka y rey en la provincia de Charcas (siglos XV–XVII)* (La Paz: Plural, 2006), p. 272. I use 'Killaka' to refer to the precolonial federation and 'Quillacas' to refer

communities from the southern Oruro.⁶ The Coromeños question a common pre-colonial Killaka origin and define themselves as a different Indigenous group. Thus, the conflict described here emerges from interwoven territorial linkages involving two opposing Indigenous groups and their respective departments, four municipalities and many communities spread out along the borders between them.

In 2002, with the support of the department of Potosí, the Coromeños mounted a legal claim against Oruro, a dispute which remains unresolved. In 2010, the conflict moved to the departmental capital, the city of Potosí, and was one of the main drivers of a department-wide protest that challenged Morales's administration. Later, in 2013, when the fieldwork for this research was conducted, the Coromeños returned to litigation, having amassed further evidence of their traditional land occupancy. In this litigation, they presented an Indigenous citizenship based on certain rights, expressed in turn through multiple perceptions of legality inherited from previous legal frameworks. Here, I follow Sian Lazar in understanding citizenship as 'a bundle of practices that constitute encounters between the state and citizens',⁷ but I focus on practices expressing one particular dimension of citizenship: rights.⁸

These perceptions of legality represent the different eras in which the Coromeños' relationship with the state was formed. The Coromeños' first argument expressed notions of fairness bequeathed by the colonial order. To prove their rightful occupation of the disputed territory, they gathered together an impressive number of documents, some dating from as early as the sixteenth century. Central to the Coromeños' claim, these documents conveyed an idea of legality based on the so-called 'colonial pact' with the Spanish Crown, a system in which Indigenous territorial rights were protected in exchange for tribute and labour. The second argument supporting the Coromeños' claim was their regional connection to Potosí department and hostility towards Oruro department. This narrative was broadly related to the republican period of Bolivian history and to its idea of development based on a fair distribution of natural resources. Finally, the third argument was based on *usos y costumbres* (uses and customs) recognised as evidence of traditional occupancy by the most recent legal framework, the plurinational state. This new institutional structure encouraged the Coromeños to revisit old rites and practices.

The Coromeños perceive their citizenship as Indigenous and 'time-layered', a temporal adaptation of the idea of 'multi-layered' citizenship.⁹ The first part of this article explores this concept, relating it to the state and to the literature on Indigenous citizenship in Bolivia. The second part presents the political and economic context around Coroma's border claim that led to collective action in the

to a rival group that Coromeños identify broadly with the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas but which sometimes also includes communities from the other two municipalities involved in the conflict.

⁶John Crabtree and Ann Chaplin, *Bolivia: Processes of Change* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p. 39.

⁷Sian Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City: Self and Citizenship in Andean Bolivia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 5.

⁸Christian Joppke identifies two other dimensions of citizenship – status and identity – but these are not considered here: 'Transformation of Citizenship: Status, Rights, Identity', *Citizenship Studies*, 11: 1 (2007), pp. 37–48.

⁹Nira Yuval-Davis, 'The "Multi-Layered Citizen"', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1: 1 (1999), pp. 119–36.

city of Potosí in 2010. Then the article approaches these layers more explicitly: how the Coromeños relate to the legal frameworks of the colonial period, the republican era and the new plurinational Bolivian state, each of these layers indicating certain types of collective rights. I do not tackle directly the abstract political concepts denoted by 'colonial', 'republican' and 'plurinational', but rather the specific experiences of the Coromeños, and of Bolivian society more broadly, during those periods.

The empirical evidence for this investigation was gathered during field research in 2013. I first came across Coroma's territorial dispute while investigating contemporary regional struggles in the city of Potosí in September 2013, when I witnessed a protest by Coromeños demanding that a feeder road be built connecting their town to the Uyuni–Oruro highway. In this context, I met and interviewed Coromeño community leaders and rank-and-file activists and learnt more about their boundary conflict. In November, I was invited to participate in the committee meetings of Potosí department's Unidad de Límites (Borders Unit) charged with supporting Coroma's boundary litigation. I visited Coromeño communities on three occasions alongside this committee,¹⁰ during which I observed meetings between the committee and community members, and interviewed other current and former community leaders in Coroma.

Indigenous Citizenship in Bolivia

Indigenous citizenship can be defined as composed of a set of special rights 'that flow from [the Indigenous peoples'] relationship to their lands and their status as a preexisting political community'.¹¹ In this understanding, the main right identified with Indigenous citizenship is the exercise of self-determination and self-government within broader political boundaries, which should be guaranteed through procedures that counter power asymmetries between Indigenous peoples and states.¹² Self-government and self-determination are key rights granted by the 2007 UNDRIP, and have long been identified by citizenship scholars as special rights granted to Indigenous peoples.¹³ Although the conceptualisation of Indigenous citizenship as self-government is useful when analysing cases of Indigenous rights abuses promoted by state actors, such as the violation of consultation rights in the construction of highways or dams,¹⁴ it proves to be of limited value in examining Indigenous communities' complex experience of citizenship at the granular level. First, contemporary Indigenous groups are the product of their relationship with states emerging from Western colonialism, so precolonial

¹⁰On 9, 12 and between 24 and 27 Nov. 2013.

¹¹Carole Blackburn, 'Differentiating Indigenous Citizenship: Seeking Multiplicity in Rights, Identity, and Sovereignty in Canada', *American Ethnologist*, 36: 1 (2009), p. 67.

¹²*Ibid.*; Ulf Mörkenstam, 'Recognition as if Sovereigns? A Procedural Understanding of Indigenous Self-Determination', *Citizenship Studies*, 19: 6–7 (2015), pp. 634–48.

¹³Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory', *Ethics*, 104: 2 (1994), pp. 352–81; Iris Marion Young, *Global Challenges: War, Self-Determination, and Responsibility for Justice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

¹⁴The right of Indigenous people to prior consultation in such circumstances is granted in International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 of 1989 and is reaffirmed in the UNDRIP.

political and social organisations are not the only parameters by which to define their rights, as the case of Coroma will show. Second, if, as stated above, citizenship can be understood as ‘a bundle of practices that constitute encounters between the state and citizens’,¹⁵ Indigenous citizenship entails more rights than merely self-government, and includes multiple expectations to be delivered by the state.

Therefore, a deeper understanding of contemporary Indigenous citizenship necessarily entails an analysis of the state, the entity expected to grant the rights demanded by Indigenous peoples. To envisage the state through Indigenous citizenship is to conceptualise it through its margins and from an ‘off-centred’ perspective: measuring it against its boundaries, shortcomings and conceptual oppositions;¹⁶ through its ‘vernacular invocations’ and multiple political subjects and subjections.¹⁷ More than on the state itself, this perspective focuses on the ‘state effect’, the state as an idealised institution hovering above society and economy, independent of its inefficient and corrupt officials.¹⁸ The state is studied, thus, not as a material entity, but as a spectral presence, ‘a phantasm’ with ‘no material existence’ informing ‘practices through which bonds of identification and consent are solicited and bestowed (or not) on the agents of state’.¹⁹

Before moving on to understand how Indigenous citizenship – and its accompanying spectral state – is experienced in Coroma, it is worth briefly reviewing how this citizenship has taken shape in Bolivia’s current institutional context. With such a large Indigenous population, the country has, since the 1990s, been praised as one of the most successful in establishing institutional mechanisms for the development of Indigenous citizenship, particularly as it relates to land tenure.²⁰ The multicultural reforms of the mid-1990s created Tierras Comunitarias de Origen (Original Community Lands, TCOs), overturning previous assimilationist policies.²¹ These Indigenous rights were advanced with the election of Morales in 2005, who championed a constitutional assembly that would harmonically incorporate Indigenous rights into the framework of the state.²² The 2009 Constitution identifies the territorial, political and cultural rights of ‘Indigenous peasant native nations and peoples’ (Chapter 4, Articles 30–2) and acknowledges the country’s cultural and socio-economic plurality by declaring Bolivia a ‘plurinational’ state.²³ These newly institutionalised concepts, such as plurinationalism and

¹⁵Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City*, p. 5.

¹⁶Veena Das and Deborah Poole (eds.), *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁷Christopher Krupa and David Nugent (eds.), *State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 5.

¹⁸Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City*, p. 254; Krupa and Nugent (eds.), *State Theory and Andean Politics*, pp. 13–14.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰Willem Assies, ‘Land Tenure Legislation in a Pluri-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Society: The Case of Bolivia’, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 33: 4 (2006), pp. 569–611.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Carlos Romero, *El proceso constituyente boliviano* (Santa Cruz: CEJIS, 2005).

²³Constitución Política del Estado de 2009, <https://bolivia.justia.com/nacionales/nueva-constitucion-politica-del-estado/>. See Rafaela Pannain, ‘A crise do estado boliviano e a autonomia indígena’, unpubl. PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2014, pp. 150–99; Salvador Schavelzon, *El nacimiento del estado plurinacional de Bolivia: Etnografía de una asamblea constituyente* (La Paz: Plural/CEJIS, 2012);

suma qamaña (an Aymara expression meaning ‘good living’), have been characterised by Cristina Rojas as the result of ‘acts of indigeneity’, political acts carried out by Indigenous peoples in an attempt to build their own differentiated citizenship in Bolivia.²⁴

The institutionalisation of Indigenous rights in the framework of the state and the symbolic use of indigeneity by the Morales administration have been plagued by internal contradictions. Some scholars point out that the government has replaced the ‘mestizo citizen’ of the 1952 National Revolution by equally homogenising ideas of an Indigenous citizen and an Indigenous nation-state.²⁵ These state-controlled understandings of indigeneity have isolated ‘dissident Indigenous voices’ and undermined a previous pluralistic perspective.²⁶ Another strand points out that such identity recognition on the part of the state has resulted in the unequal allocation of resources among the equally dispossessed, fostering rural conflict between Indigenous and peasant groups, in a process that highlights the role of institutional frameworks in shaping the opportunities of social actors and changing their collective action strategies.²⁷

While it is straightforward to identify and to conceptualise Indigenous citizenship in the context of a struggle between Indigenous groups and ‘Westernised’ nation-states, the issue becomes increasingly complex when the conflict is between Indigenous actors themselves. However, it is exactly in this context that the impact of the state’s ‘spectral’ presence and its institutional frameworks can be perceived, since there is no reason why politically autonomous Indigenous collectivities would rely on an external entity to solve their conflict except for the fact that their ‘vernacular invocations’ of the state, as defined by Christopher Krupa and David Nugent,²⁸ are also constitutive of their indigeneity. Thus, what is of interest in this study is to understand how Indigenous citizenship is lived, expressed and built in this context and what roles are played by the state and its current and past institutional frameworks.

The case of Coroma sheds light on discussions about the persistence of Indigenous citizenship in Bolivia by focusing on localised and historically contextualised experiences of citizenship. Following Engin Isin, we can regard citizenship as emerging not as an abstract status restricted to the nation-state, but as a concrete

Gladstone Leonel Júnior, *O novo constitucionalismo latino-americano: Um estudo sobre a Bolívia* (Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Juris, 2015); Sue A. S. Iamamoto, *El nacionalismo boliviano en tiempos de plurinacionalidad* (La Paz: OEP, 2013).

²⁴Cristina Rojas, ‘Acts of Indigeneity: Historical Struggles for Equality and Colonial Difference in Bolivia’, *Citizenship Studies*, 17: 5 (2013), pp. 581–95.

²⁵Nancy Postero, *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017); Andrew Canessa, ‘New Indigenous Citizenship in Bolivia: Challenging the Liberal Model of the State and Its Subjects’, *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 7: 2 (2012), pp. 201–21; Aiko Ikemura Amaral, ‘Os caminhos da politização da indigeneidade: Um estudo sobre a identidade indígena na política boliviana pós-1985’, unpubl. MA diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2014, pp. 93–105.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁷Lorenza B. Fontana, ‘Indigenous Peoples vs Peasant Unions: Land Conflicts and Rural Movements in Plurinational Bolivia’, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41: 3 (2014), pp. 297–319.

²⁸Krupa and Nugent (eds.), *State Theory and Andean Politics*, p. 5.

practice that takes shape in the local body politic:²⁹ here, it is the Indigenous district of Coroma that appears as this primary reference. Citizenship is lived as ‘nested’, an experience that promotes an affiliation to the nation-state through the mediation of smaller communities;³⁰ it is a ‘multi-layered citizenship’,³¹ since it articulates different spatial linkages: the Indigenous district (Coroma), the department (Potosí), and the (pluri)national state (Bolivia).

However, these layers also refer to eras, in which different conceptions of political legitimacy dating from specific historical experiences (the colonial, the republican and the plurinational periods) are maintained and co-exist in the present. Conceptualising citizenship through historical ‘layers’ is not new and can be seen in T. H. Marshall’s classic identification of the emergence of civil, political and social rights in the United Kingdom.³² In Coroma, however, distinct rights exist in a tenuous relationship, and issues that appear to complement each other at a superficial level look contradictory when analysed in greater detail.

The idea of temporal layers of citizenship also draws on a long tradition of interpreters of Latin American Indigenous peoples, who have emphasised their multiple uses and references regarding the past in contemporary political and social struggles. This Indigenous historical consciousness has been analysed through the distinction between long- and short-term memories,³³ archaeological ‘horizons’ of memory,³⁴ the politics of memory³⁵ or social memories as platforms that foster collective action.³⁶ A common feature of the works referred to here is the investigation of how historical consciousness offers contemporary activists a ‘moral link with the past that is operationalized in the interests of achieving political goals in the present’.³⁷ However, while this consciousness has an explicit reference to the past, the content brought from the past that is studied here is not exactly a narrative of deeds or collective traumas, but of ingrained ideas of legitimacy and justice, translated into rights. Although these ideas are created by specific historical experiences, this historicity is less clear in their contemporary use, as they appear as a universal language of justice structuring present claims. This study conceptualises these temporal layers of citizenship as social memories, as a ‘variety of mnemonic processes, practices, and outcomes’,³⁸ at the same time contributing to exposing the

²⁹Engin F. Isin, ‘City.State: Critique of Scalar Thought’, *Citizenship Studies*, 11: 2 (2007), pp. 211–28.

³⁰Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City*.

³¹Yuval-Davis, ‘Multi-Layered Citizen’.

³²T. H. Marshall and Tom Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto, 1992).

³³Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *‘Oppressed but not Defeated’: Peasant Struggles among the Aymara and Quechwa in Bolivia, 1900–1980* (Geneva: UNRISD, 1987).

³⁴Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson, *Revolutionary Horizons: Past and Present in Bolivian Politics* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 7.

³⁵Joanne Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory: Native History Interpretation in the Colombian Andes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Waskar Ari, *Earth Politics: Religion, Decolonization, and Bolivia’s Indigenous Intellectuals* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

³⁶Sue A. S. Iamamoto, ‘Collective Memories and Social Struggle in Contemporary Bolivia: A Study of Narratives of the Past during the “Gas War” in La Paz (2003) and the Civic Strike in Potosí (2010)’, unpubl. PhD diss., Queen Mary University of London, 2015.

³⁷Rappaport, *The Politics of Memory*, p. 9.

³⁸Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 34.

connection between rights and historical experiences. Indigenous citizenship is, thus, understood not only as a result of the current interaction between state and society, but also of previous institutional arrangements that are reproduced through mnemonic (collective memory) processes such as legal litigation, document keeping, oral storytelling, rituals and other cultural practices.

Before these temporal layers of citizenship are presented, however, it is important to understand how the conflict between the Coromeños and their neighbours emerged, the immediate economic and political context of their actions, and how they perceived Morales's government.

Boundary Conflicts Over the Last 20 Years

Coroma, whose inhabitants are now known as the Coroma nation, is an Indigenous district in the municipality of Uyuni and, in 2010, was home to 6,571 people.³⁹ As an ethnic group, the Coroma nation comprises 11 *ayllus* (with 39 communities in total), some of whom speak Quechua and others Aymara.⁴⁰ Thinly populated, Coroma occupies a dry highland territory of around 4,000 km² on the north-eastern corner of the Uyuni salt flat, and its main economic activity has historically been llama herding. However, during the last decade, the region has profited considerably from the international boom in quinoa, a staple traditionally cultivated in the area.

In common with many rural communities in Bolivia, Coroma has historically engaged in border conflicts with neighbouring Indigenous groups. The roots of these conflicts can be traced to the incompatibility between the border demarcation imposed by the colonial administration and traditional Andean territoriality: Andean ethnic groups were not spatially continuous and occupied different ecological zones sometimes hundreds of kilometres apart, forming a 'vertical archipelago'.⁴¹ This incompatibility became particularly problematic after independence and the establishment of departmental borders, since these often separated communities of the same ethnic group; departmental administrations frequently used

³⁹Mariano Flores Choque, *Atlas de territorios indígenas y originarios de Bolivia* (La Paz: Ministerio de Desarrollo Rural y Tierras, Viceministerio de Tierras, 2010), p. 488.

⁴⁰*Ayllus* are political and geographical units that group together communities which were part of the precolonial Andean political and social structure; they continue to exist today in areas that were not occupied by haciendas (rural estates whose production depended on unpaid labour provided by the subjugated Indigenous communities). See Brooke Larson, 'Andean Highland Peasants and the Trials of Nation Making during the Nineteenth Century', in Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. 3: *South America*, part 2, pp. 558–703; Erwin P. Grieshaber, 'Survival of Indian Communities in Nineteenth-Century Bolivia: A Regional Comparison', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 12: 2 (1980), pp. 223–69; Herbert S. Klein, *Haciendas and 'Ayllus': Rural Society in the Bolivian Andes in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). *Ayllus* are also being recreated today in communities that seek to recover their pre-Columbian systems of organisation.

⁴¹John V. Murra, 'El "control vertical" de un máximo de pisos ecológicos en la economía de las sociedades andinas', in John V. Murra (ed.), *Visita de la provincia de León de Huánuco en 1562, Inigo Ortiz de Zúñiga (Visitador)*, vol. 2 (Huánuco: Universidad Nacional H. Valdizín, 1972), pp. 427–76; Ramiro Condarco Morales, *El escenario andino y el hombre* (La Paz: Renovación, 1970).

this situation as the basis for territorial claims.⁴² In the case of Coroma and Quillacas, as will be explained below, the conflict had already started in the colonial period, and it persisted during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In the mid-1990s, the Bolivian state initiated a land registration process (*saneamiento agrario*) that included the newly created TCOs. This process was complemented by the promulgation of Law 2150 (on Political Administrative Entities) in 2000, which set up administrative procedures to establish boundaries between departments. In 2002 the department of Potosí, under its governor, María del Rosario Vásquez, filed a case under this law to determine the borders between Coroma and the three Oruro municipalities with which it was in dispute. Several colonial and republican land titles and documents were cited as evidence of Coroma's territorial claim against Oruro.⁴³ The case made slow progress through the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning, with Oruro claiming that there were procedural irregularities. In 2007, the newly elected Morales administration enacted a law transferring responsibility for Law 2150 to the Ministry of the Presidency, setting a ten-month deadline for the resolution of the ongoing legal proceedings. However, this provision did not work and it actually put a halt to the boundary delimitation process.⁴⁴ In 2008, legal proceedings had to re-start because of the loss of documents, delays in their deposition and the need for the parties to agree on their legal validity, according to the UNIR Foundation, observer to the litigation.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, conflict increased, mostly related to the cultivation of quinoa in disputed border areas. In January 2010, four Coromeños were injured when they attempted to stop a group of Orureños preparing the soil for quinoa planting in a contested area.⁴⁶ In April the same year, the communities of Aucapi (Coroma) and Rodeo (Oruro) clashed over the harvesting of 34 hectares of quinoa.⁴⁷ Before the quinoa boom, because the main economic activity was pastoral and communities frequently shared the same lands to feed their herds, border conflicts did not usually result in physical confrontation. However, with the price of quinoa almost trebling between 2006 and 2010,⁴⁸ the disputed land suddenly became very valuable.⁴⁹

The communities were also in dispute over other resources. In January 2010, the department of Potosí released a study which, according to the local press, indicated that the region was rich in limestone and uranium: Mount Pahua, located in the

⁴²Tristan Platt, *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino: Tierra y territorio en el norte de Potosí* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1982), p. 43.

⁴³Alfredo Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma* (Potosí: Gobierno Autónomo Departamental, 2012), pp. 626–9, available in the Casa Nacional de la Moneda, Potosí (hereafter CNM).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 637–8.

⁴⁵Fundación UNIR, *Coroma – Quillacas: Aportes para la transformación constructiva del conflicto de límites* (La Paz: Fundación UNIR, 2012), p. 23.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 648.

⁴⁸Aline Quispe, 'El precio de la quinua casi se ha triplicado en los últimos seis años', *La Razón* (La Paz), 6 May 2012, <https://www.la-razon.com/economia/2012/05/06/el-precio-de-la-quinua-casi-se-ha-triplicado-en-los-ultimos-seis-anos/>.

⁴⁹For a deeper analysis of the impact of the quinoa boom on re-peasantisation, food sovereignty and local solidarity, see Marygold Walsh-Dilley, 'Negotiating Hybridity in Highland Bolivia: Indigenous Moral Economy and the Expanding Market for Quinoa', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40: 4 (2013), pp. 659–82; 'Tensions of Resilience'; and Kerssen, 'Food Sovereignty and the Quinoa Boom'.

disputed area, was said to contain 20 million tonnes of limestone.⁵⁰ In June 2010, in a political gesture, some Coromeños placed the departmental flag of Potosí on the summit of Mount Pahuá, angering Oruro's leaders.⁵¹

The promulgation of the 2009 Constitution also impacted the process, as the new departmental, municipal and Indigenous autonomous entities required boundary legislation. A previous draft of the Autonomous Entities and Decentralisation Law established that border conflicts be solved through referenda, a policy that was radically opposed by Coroma, since the Oruro municipalities had larger populations. Even though this regulation was dropped from the final version of the law (Law 31 of 19 July 2010), it resulted in more delay for Coroma: all border issues were put on hold for 180 days while a new law on territorial entities was drafted.

In this context of increasing frustration with the government, the Coromeños escalated their action. Mauro Cruz, a Coromeño lawyer from Caloga *ayllu*, and a member of Potosí department's Borders Unit, recalls this process:

In 2010, this [administrative] process was at the agreement stage, at this very stage, when the Vice-Ministry of Territorial Regulation was calling on the parties to agree, the Law of Autonomies [Autonomous Entities and Decentralisation Law] was approved. In one of its transitory provisions ..., the law suspended the process until a new law was approved ... Coroma ... was very critical of this law, arguing that the state was biased in favour of Oruro department. This was the reason why our lawsuit, which we had been conducting for eight years, never progressed.⁵²

During the first stage of the escalation, in June 2010, the Coromeños blocked local highways and railways. Then they joined forces with the local civic movement (Comité Cívico Potosinista, COMCIPO) and the departmental governor in the city of Potosí. Hundreds of Coromeños arrived there on 26 July, blocking the San Antonio entrance to the city.⁵³ COMCIPO was already actively organising demonstrations in support of a regional petition; with the arrival of the Coromeños, this petition now had six top priorities: an international airport, the Cerro Rico UNESCO site in Potosí, highways, the Karachipampa metal-processing plant, the Coroma cement factory and the resolution of border problems.

The Potosinos believed they were being reasonable: 'We were sure that our demands would be respected ... we weren't asking for the impossible.'⁵⁴ However, Morales and his ministers refused to go to Potosí in person to take part in negotiations around the petition (one of COMCIPO's preconditions), and the government's constant identification of the movement as partisan undermined the possibility of a rapid solution to the conflict. Government minister Sacha

⁵⁰'Potosí es rica en roca caliza para cemento', *El Potosí*, 29 Jan. 2010, <https://www.lostiempos.com/actualidad/economia/20100129/potosi-es-rica-roca-caliza-cemento>.

⁵¹'Coroma defiende los recursos potosinos', *El Potosí*, 18 June 2010, p. 5 (no URL found).

⁵²Interview with Mauro Cruz, Coromeño, member of Caloga *ayllu*, 7 Nov. 2013.

⁵³According to Coroma's then *kuraka* (leader), Alfonso Mamani, more than 1000 Coromeños took part in this action (interview, 27 Nov. 2013).

⁵⁴Interview with Jhonny Llally, Chairman, COMCIPO (2013), recently elected mayor of Potosí, 9 Sept. 2013.

Llorenti, for example, declared that the ‘real motivation’ for the action was defence of former Potosí city mayor René Joaquino.⁵⁵ Such declarations infuriated the Potosinos and, combined with the government’s inflexible position, caused an escalation of the direct action, with a civic strike that lasted 19 days in total.

This action ended only with negotiations held in Sucre, on 16 August 2010. Regarding Coroma’s territorial dispute, the government agreed to appoint a committee composed of department and municipality representatives to discuss the new law on Political Administrative Entities (to replace Law 2150 of 2000) and to create a commission specifically charged with establishing the boundaries between Potosí and Oruro, composed of representatives of the Ministry for Autonomy, the national mapping agency, the Borders Units of both departments and observer organisations.⁵⁶

The Coromeños were disappointed by the agreement: ‘We were not satisfied with the solution. As Coromeños, we said, “Why are people celebrating, if we haven’t achieved anything?”’⁵⁷ In 2010 and 2011, new peace agreements between the communities from both departments were signed, but this did not prevent conflict: the most serious was in 2012, with 25 people injured.⁵⁸ In 2013, the new law on Political Administrative Entities, Law 339, was finally approved and, in 2015, the departments of Oruro and Potosí started a formal dialogue to establish their borders. Different from previous legislation, Law 339 sought conflict resolution through local conciliation – i.e. not solely through legal and bureaucratic procedures – and was said to be especially designed to deal with conflicts such as the one between Coroma and Quillacas.⁵⁹ Since 2015, conciliation committees have been operating in the area, but agreement regarding boundaries has been elusive. In 2018 and 2019, both Coromeños and Orureños complained of land invasions, and a police station was built in Salinas de Garci Mendoza in order to curb and contain border conflicts.⁶⁰

The evolution of these conflicts over recent decades has impacted on how Coromeños perceived Morales’s administration. Aurelia Copa, a member of Rodeo Pallpa *ayllu*, whom I met in Potosí in September 2013, described the sense of disappointment:

We wanted to meet Evo, many comrades hadn’t met him [in person] ... He should have come to fix things here. He didn’t ... From this moment on we said he was not our father any more; he was a stepfather ... Because we

⁵⁵‘Potosí se blinda y Oruro está en emergencia; potosinos retoman bandera federal’, *La Razón* (La Paz), 3 Aug. 2010, <https://www.la-razon.com/nacional/2010/08/03/potosi-se-blinda-y-oruro-esta-en-emergencia/>.

⁵⁶Fundación UNIR, *Coroma – Quillacas*, p. 58.

⁵⁷Interview with anonymous Coromeña from Rodeo Pallpa *ayllu*, Potosí, 10 Sept. 2013.

⁵⁸Fundación UNIR, *Coroma – Quillacas*, p. 33.

⁵⁹‘Los problemas de límites se resolverán in situ, no en las oficinas’ (interview with Claudia Peña, Minister for Autonomy), *La Razón* (La Paz), 20 Jan. 2013, <https://www.la-razon.com/lr-article/los-problemas-de-limites-se-resolveran-in-situ-no-en-las-oficinas-claudia-pena/>. However, the law also dictated that if dialogue failed to establish interdepartmental borders the case should be sent to the Supreme Court.

⁶⁰‘Coroma denuncia que Oruro viola un pacto de paz por la quinua’, *El Potosí*, 26 Oct. 2018, https://elpotosi.net/local/20181026_coroma-denuncia-que-oruro-viola-un-pacto-de-paz-por-la-quinua.html; ‘Construyen módulo policial en Rodeo para garantizar seguridad en límite con Potosí’, *La Patria* (Oruro), 4 Sept. 2019, <https://impresia.lapatria.bo/noticia/1000414/construyen-modulo-policial-en-rodeo-para-garantizar-seguridad-en-limite-con-potosi>.

used to see him as father. He was from our class ... But now we call him a stepfather, and what does a stepfather do to his stepchildren? ... He doesn't treat us equally. A father should treat his children equally.⁶¹

As an Indigenous politician, there were at first high expectations for Morales, but Coromeños were offended when his ministers called their petition 'partisan', and they started to see a bias in his government in favour of Oruro, as Morales himself was born there. The traditional *wiphala*, the Qullasuyu flag used by many highland Indigenous peoples, was associated with Morales: 'We don't really understand the *wiphala* in the way that our stepfather [Evo] understands and uses it', explained Copa, stating she preferred to identify herself with the Potosí department flag. This friction between the department of Potosí, including its Indigenous groups, and Morales helped shape dramatic developments in the crisis that resulted in his removal from power in November 2019, when Potosí's civic leaders were at the forefront of those demanding his resignation.

This section has covered Coroma's boundary conflicts over the last 20 years and the Coromeños' tactics in defence of their territory. It has also explored their relationship with the Morales administration, which was perceived as partial, as one which did not treat them as it treated Indigenous peoples from other departments. The next three sections present the different time-layered concepts of rights defended by the Coromeños during this conflict: this will allow us to explore the history of the formation of Indigenous citizenship.

Colonial Rights

'Everything I say about the borders problem [can be reduced to] the following: Coroma claims that the deeds it has held since 1572 should be respected, while Oruro keeps encroaching [on our territory] little by little', explained Ignacio López, vice-chairman of Coroma's Borders Committee in 2013.⁶² He was referring to the territorial reform carried out by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in 1572, when the Indian population of the Andes was organised into *pueblos de reducciones*, Indian towns.⁶³ The *reducciones* were created to facilitate religious conversion and the recruitment of Indians for the *mita*, a system of forced labour for the Potosí silver mines. The Toledan reform, which determined the territorial divisions of the highlands, including the founding of provincial towns, had a huge effect on pre-Columbian organisation. On the one hand, it restricted former Andean territoriality and its 'vertical archipelago', forcing Indigenous groups to adapt to an Iberian urban model.⁶⁴ On the other, the reform incorporated many Indigenous features. According to Sinclair Thomson, the Indian town, also called *marka*, was the highest level of territorial organisation, which in turn was divided into *anansaya* and *urinsaya* (upper and lower moieties).⁶⁵ Each moiety had its own leader, called

⁶¹Interview with Aurelia Copa, Coromeña, member of Rodeo Pallpa *ayllu*, 10 Sept. 2013.

⁶²Interview with Ignacio López, Vice-Chairman, Coroma Borders Committee, 11 Sept. 2013.

⁶³Platt, Bouysse-Cassagne and Harris, *Qaraqara-Charka*.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 515–16.

⁶⁵Sinclair Thomson, *We Alone Will Rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), pp. 23–4.

kuraka, and was composed of *ayllus*, whose leaders were called *hilacatas*. The Coromeños, like many other Indigenous groups in Bolivia, have retained most of the structure described by Thomson: a *kuraka* is elected every year in rotation. Then, every *ayllu* has its own *hilacata*. The *ayllus* are also divided into two moieties: there are eight *urinsaya* (Espíritu Coroma, Huatacalla, Rodeo Pallpa, Caloga, Samanchi, Coroga, Andoga and Achuma) and three *anansaya* (Tawqa, Jilawi and Cala Cala).⁶⁶ Together, these 11 *ayllus* comprise 39 communities.

While Coroma's claim is based in its initial designation as a *pueblo de reducción*, López identifies a conflict between two landlords in the seventeenth century as the beginning of Quillacas's 'expansionism':

The border problems started in 1665, when Francisco de Choqueticlla [of Quillacas] ... established the borders unilaterally, because he was a friend of the Spanish ... In this period, the lands of Coroma were owned by Mateo Arosquita, ... who presented a demand [against Choqueticlla] ... This *amparo* [legal safeguard] annulled Choqueticlla's document [safeguarding Arosquita's rights over Coroma lands].⁶⁷

López's source is *El amparo de Coroma* by Alfredo Ramos Félix, a Coromeño priest and intellectual. The book was published in 2012 by the departmental government of Potosí in support of Coroma's claim, citing as it does an extensive number of colonial and republican documents. Other Coromeño activists also emphasise the legitimacy of local documents and of Ramos's book in proving the justice of their claim:

We have documents ... We have a collection of Coroma's documents, [showing] how things happened ... And I am going to give you this book, so you can read and know all the history of Coroma, so you will know we are not lying. We have documents. Oruro never puts its documents on display, while ours have been transcribed into books.⁶⁸

Ramos's book did not create this discourse out of nowhere. Most of the sources that he presents are Coromeño documents, kept in family and community archives. During one of its fieldtrips, I accompanied the Borders Unit committee in its search for an eighteenth-century document in a family archive in the community of Río Mulatos. (To its frustration, the document was a copy of one it already held.) Such documents are crucial for Coroma's legal battle and were included in the legal claim started by Potosí department in 2002, which stated that 'Quillacas does not have legal or historical documentation' to support its territorial claim.⁶⁹ The Coromeños frequently interpret the situation as one in which the national political authorities are acting to support Oruro's illegal claim: 'We have documents dating from 1572; since this period [this conflict] has been dragging on; we have

⁶⁶Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 18.

⁶⁷Interview, López.

⁶⁸Interview, Copa.

⁶⁹Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 627.

waited for centuries and the authorities or governments in power have not resolved [the situation] ... They have always brought in another law to derail it [the legal process]', complained Alfonso Mamani, who was *kuraka* of Coroma during the direct action of 2010.⁷⁰

The continuing existence of these deeds demonstrates a culture of documentation that was extremely important for the survival of Indian communities during the colonial and republican periods. The most important documents were the ones establishing borders, land titles called *deslindes y amojonamientos*. After centuries of colonial rule, however, these land titles started to contradict themselves. Thomas Abercrombie, in his study of a community of the former Killaka Federation, argued that colonial authorities 'sometimes took money and provided land titles as many as three times for the same bit of land, for three different classes of buyers', creating 'conflicting claims backed up by conflicting colonial land titles'.⁷¹

After independence, ancient land titles were considered important evidence in land litigation. Between the 1850s and 1900s, the Coromeños had many legal disputes with Quillacas, and both groups presented their colonial deeds as evidence in legal proceedings. On three occasions (in 1856, 1894 and 1901), the judges favoured Quillacas, considering Choqueticlla's 1665 document to be reliable evidence of their territorial claim. According to Ramos, the judges were unaware of the fact that Choqueticlla's title was later annulled by the colonial authorities.⁷² The Coromeños studied the history of the land litigation between the two groups, restaged the dispute between Choqueticlla and Arosquita and publicised the appropriate documents, allowing Coroma to have its territorial rights recognised.

These documents, however, were not only used in land litigation between neighbouring Indigenous groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but were of key importance in the legal defence of Indigenous communities against encroachment by haciendas.⁷³ Between the 1860s and the 1870s, a series of laws was passed threatening the collective property of Indigenous communities and opening the way to massive sales of 'vacant lands'. They were bought by non-Indigenous landlords and transformed into haciendas. In some areas, such as northern Potosí, the *ayllus* reacted to title inspections carried out in advance of the declaration of lands as 'vacant' and expelled from their territories the state officials charged with carrying them out.⁷⁴ For the Indigenous communities, these laws represented a backward step when compared to colonial times, and pressure from them forced the government to enact a law in 1883 (the *Ley Pro Indiviso*, or Law on Collectivities) that protected communities with valid colonial deeds from title inspections.⁷⁵

Many *ayllus* and Indigenous groups therefore nominated representatives to search for their colonial titles in archives as far afield as Buenos Aires. These

⁷⁰Interview, Mamani.

⁷¹Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power*, p. 286.

⁷²Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, pp. 153–4.

⁷³See note 40.

⁷⁴Tristan Platt, 'Liberalism and Ethnocide in the Southern Andes', *History Workshop Journal*, 17 (1984), pp. 3–18; *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino*.

⁷⁵Larson, 'Andean Highland Peasants', p. 668.

caciques apoderados (chiefs with powers of attorney) were particularly active in the first half of the twentieth century. They were mainly focused on protecting communities from land sales and encroachment by haciendas, but they also extended their demands to education and military training.⁷⁶ Even though the dry and cold climate made Coroma and many of the neighbouring communities unattractive for the hacienda system, Coromeño leaders supported the *apoderados* in their search for documents in the colonial archives in Sucre.⁷⁷

The documents, however, are only the outward expression of a broader conception of power legitimacy emerging from the colonial period: the so-called 'colonial pact' that inaugurated a system of two 'republics', in which the republic of the Spaniards coexisted with the republic of the Indians under the rule of the Spanish Crown.⁷⁸ In exchange for tribute and labour in the mines, this system granted Indigenous communities collective rights over their territories, which were later threatened by republican liberal reforms promoting individual property. The persistence of this idea of power legitimacy can be traced, for example, in how nineteenth-century Peruvian Andean communities echoed the 'Indian republic' while claiming their credentials as good republicans.⁷⁹ This also reverberated in early-twentieth-century Bolivia, when a group of *apoderados* cited an Indian law based on colonial law in order to advance a programme that combined the defence of territories with Andean religiosity.⁸⁰

In this section, 'colonial rights' convey an idea of legality based on documents and the written word. This legality has been one of the few tools that Indigenous people could use to protect their territories against the arbitrary regime of the Spaniards and, later, of the Bolivian creole elite. The Coromeños' insistence on the Toledan 1572 land titles was not fortuitous, since Toledo's reform marked a social pact when new territorialities and ideas of power legitimacy were founded. The establishment and recovery of such documents were the main arenas in which Indigenous collective citizenship was negotiated with the state, from the Spanish invasion until at least the early twentieth century.

Republican Rights

The relationship Coromeños established with the state and their idea of fairness went beyond colonial legality. But they also demonstrated a notion of justice that clearly stemmed from a more recent experience with the Bolivian state, an experience mediated by the role of regional linkages and an ideology of progress based on the exploitation and industrialisation of natural resources. The borders between

⁷⁶Andean Oral History Workshop, 'The Indian Santos Marka T'ula, Chief of the Ayllus of Qallapa and General Representative of the Indian Communities of Bolivia', *History Workshop Journal*, 34 (1992), pp. 101–18; Ari, *Earth Politics*.

⁷⁷Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 401.

⁷⁸Platt, *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino*; Mark Thurner, *From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Postcolonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁷⁹Mark Thurner, "'Republicanos' and "la Comunidad de Peruanos": Unimagined Political Communities in Postcolonial Andean Peru', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 27: 2 (1995), pp. 291–318; *From Two Republics to One Divided*.

⁸⁰Ari, *Earth Politics*.

Coroma and Quillacas marked the boundaries not only of two conflicting ethnic groups, but also of two conflicting departments, Potosí and Oruro. In June 2010, when the Coromeños made a political statement on Mount Pahuá, it was the flag of Potosí that they placed on its summit.

The Coromeño identification with Potosí is rather curious, since Coroma is not well integrated with the departmental capital, and the most important city – where Coromeños send their children to study and where they go to sell and buy produce – is Challapata, in Oruro. Thus, the choice of Potosí as a venue for the expression of their dissatisfaction was not obvious; the Coromeños could have gone first to the town of Uyuni, the seat of their municipal government, or directly to La Paz.

Coroma's attachment to Potosí department, however, counterbalances proximity to Oruro: 'There was a moment when ... Oruro said "Coroma is ours", with the intention of deceiving [us]. But now this has been reversed and Coroma is Potosí, Potosí is Coroma. This is a very steady identification at this moment.'⁸¹ The experience of the struggle in 2010, in which inhabitants of Potosí provided sustenance to Coromeños during their blockades, helped to foster Potosino identity among Coromeños: 'The people of Potosí supported us ... They gave us the strength to continue the struggle.'⁸² Copa explained this attachment in terms of regional identification: 'This [the city of Potosí] is our home. We're not demanding [territory and resources] solely for the district of Coroma, first it needs to be [for] the department of Potosí, Quijarro province ... This is why we came here [to the city of Potosí].'⁸³

This identification with Potosí can also be traced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when tribute, previously paid to the state by the Indians, started to be an important source of revenue for departmental finances. This strengthened links between local political elites and the Indigenous communities and fostered the idea that the department was the entity responsible for protecting Indigenous communities against encroachment by the haciendas and the Bolivian national state.⁸⁴

Coroma is not the only cause of rivalry between Potosí and Oruro. The two departments experienced long-standing rivalry during the whole republican period, since they – and particularly the two cities of Potosí and Oruro – both claimed to be the centre of mining activity in Bolivia. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the whole colonial economy was organised around the exploitation of silver ore in Potosí's Cerro Rico,⁸⁵ but when Bolivia became an independent republic in 1825, the city of Potosí was in decline.⁸⁶ In 1899 the 'Federal War' took place, in which conservatives linked to the silver elites and to the regional Potosí–Sucre axis fought liberals, who had interests in the newly flourishing tin industry along the Oruro–La Paz axis.

⁸¹Interview, Cruz.

⁸²Interview with Esteban Camata, Coromeño, municipal officer in 2010, 26 Nov. 2013.

⁸³Interview, Copa.

⁸⁴Platt, *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino*.

⁸⁵Carlos Sempat Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial: Mercado interno, regiones y espacio económico* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1982).

⁸⁶R. C. Padden, 'Editor's Introduction', in Bartolomé Arzáns de Orsúa y Vela, *Tales of Potosí* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1975), p. xiii.

The regional identity of Potosí, thus, has often been defined against that of Oruro, a department better placed to negotiate for development policies with La Paz, the political centre after the 1899 war. It is not surprising that the five-year public works plan to celebrate the fourth centenary of the city of Potosí in the 1940s included the construction of a new train station 'equivalent to or better than Oruro's'.⁸⁷ Similarly, Emilio Elias, a Potosí civic leader, said that he did not want the department to be irrelevant, like 'the fifth wheel of a vehicle', referring to the dispute with Oruro. (The four main drive wheels, in Elias's view, were to be understood as the departments of La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and Potosí – not Oruro.)⁸⁸

Although both have traditionally been mining departments, their share of national mining output has changed significantly over the past 20 years. In 2000, Oruro earned 60 per cent of the country's mining royalties, making it the first department in the sector, and Potosí was the second, with 30 per cent; by 2017 Potosí was responsible for 65 per cent, becoming the first department in the sector, and Oruro for only 8 per cent, dropping to third position.⁸⁹ Potosí's mining boom did not, however, result in improved socio-economic indicators: between 2010 and 2017, Potosí remained in the bottom position in the sub-national human development index for Bolivia's nine departments, while Oruro retained its fourth position.⁹⁰ Potosí is also more rural, and has a higher percentage of Indigenous inhabitants: 57 per cent of its population speak Aymara or Quechua as their first language (compared to 31 per cent in Oruro) and 46 per cent work in the primary sector (compared to 29 per cent in Oruro).⁹¹

As José Luis Roca has argued, attachment to regions in Bolivia is strongly related to the economics of natural resource exploitation.⁹² Disputes over the royalty income from these natural resources – how much should go to the central government and how much should be retained by the department – engender regional allegiances in Potosí and in other departments such as Santa Cruz. During the direct action of 2010, one of the slogans most frequently heard on the streets was 'Federal Potosí', a demand to manage 'our own resources'.⁹³ In Coroma's case Mount Pahua, rich in limestone, represented this defence of natural resources and the promise of development that it awoke among local people. Esteban Camata, who was Coroma's municipal officer (*agente municipal*) and helped to coordinate the blockade in San Antonio in 2010, explained the focus Coromeños placed on natural resources:

⁸⁷Mario Caro Martínez, *Potosí ille factum* (Cochabamba: self-published, 2011), p. 68. Caro Martínez's book is a compilation of historical documents relating to Potosí. It can be consulted in the CNM.

⁸⁸Interview with Emilio Elias, representative of the teachers' union on COMCIPO, 25 Sept. 2013.

⁸⁹Ministerio de Minería y Metalurgia, *Dossier estadístico del sector minero metalúrgico 1980–2017* (La Paz: Ministerio de Minería y Metalurgia, 2019), p. 30.

⁹⁰Subnational Human Development Index (SHDI) from Global Data Lab, <https://globaldatalab.org/>.

⁹¹INE, *Censo nacional de población y vivienda 2012*.

⁹²José Luis Roca, 'Estatidad: Entre la pugna regional y el institucionalismo', in Rossana Barragán and José Luis Roca, *Una historia de pactos y disputas: Regiones y poder constituyente en Bolivia* (La Paz: PNUD, 2005), pp. 22–3.

⁹³Interview, Llally; interview with Jorge Solares, member of the Central Obrera Departamental de Potosí (Workers' Confederation of Potosí Department), 11 Sept. 2013.

Why were we there? We were defending our lands, our resources. As I said, the cement [plant], the uranium, the salt lake, and other minerals. The people in Potosí didn't know how important cement was. It is starting to be scarce in Bolivia, so Potosí could be a source ... There will be jobs in Potosí, everything. The uranium, everybody now knows it is an important resource, but at that time people in Potosí didn't know. And now they know what we are fighting for.⁹⁴

Camata emphasised the importance of the cement plant, since the limestone would provide further development and opportunities for Coroma. In his view, the main slogan during 2010 was 'Coroma and its cement plant', which included the fight to establish the borders, since 'it [within these borders] is where the resource is located'.⁹⁵ Thus, many Coromeños supported the idea of having a 'federal Potosí', an institutional arrangement that would bring more benefits to the region:

I say an emphatic 'yes' [to 'federal Potosí'] ... The same way that we want Coroma to be independent in its decision-making, we also want Potosí to be independent, above all regarding its resources. For example, as regards mining, [Potosí's mining companies have paid] royalties for so long. The road to Santa Cruz [a strategic east-west artery] was built using Potosí's royalties, with Potosí's money. And how has Potosí benefitted? Not at all. It is the most underdeveloped department.⁹⁶

In the testimonies above, we perceive a defence of Potosí and Coroma's territory different from the one claimed in the context of the colonial legality discussed in the previous section. The territory is defended not against a landlord or a neighbour who threatens the existence of the community itself, but because it means an opportunity for development. There is, in Bolivia, a prototypical example of this perception of territoriality: the access to the sea lost in the 1879 War of the Pacific against Chile. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the lost sea access has been a defining characteristic of Bolivian nationalism,⁹⁷ remembered continuously in commemorative ceremonies, such as the Day of the Sea, and in the classroom.⁹⁸ In Coroma, echoes of the lost sea access also appeared in debates on its territorial claim. During a meeting between *Espíritu Coroma ayllu* and Potosí's Borders Unit to discuss strategies on the district's litigation with Oruro, one of those present drew attention to the Uyuni salt flat, claiming that Coroma was not paying it sufficient attention, just as Bolivia did not pay attention to Antofagasta (the main city of the former Litoral department) in 1879.⁹⁹

⁹⁴Interview, Camata.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

⁹⁶Interview with anonymous Coromeño, 5 Nov. 2013.

⁹⁷Laetitia Perrier Bruslé, 'La Bolivie, sa mer perdue et la construction nationale', *Annales de Géographie*, 689 (2013), pp. 47–72.

⁹⁸Aurolyn Luykx, *The Citizen Factory: Schooling and Cultural Production in Bolivia* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 136.

⁹⁹Fieldwork notes, 9 Nov. 2013.

The territorial threat, thus, appears embodied in enemy neighbours (Oruro or Chile), whose greed leads them to attack the natural resources of the other. This perception of legality and rights informs a defence of the regional ownership and management of resources, shifting towards a struggle for redistribution and reparation, since Potosí is seen as a region that has suffered from an unequal distribution of income and benefits appropriate to its resources. As Potosinos, Coromeños display a ‘nested’ and ‘multi-layered’¹⁰⁰ Indigenous citizenship that is deeply informed by and cross-cut with the dilemmas of Bolivian nationalism and regionalism.

Plurinational Rights

There was also a third way in which Coromeños conceptualised their relationship with the state and their ideas of rights and justice: through plurinational legality. As discussed above, since the latest Coromeño demand to establish borders with the municipalities of Oruro, in 2002, Bolivia has undergone deep changes in its political leadership and its legal system. The 2009 Constitution directly tackled the political recognition of Indigenous people, whose traditions, customs and ways of social organisation were acknowledged through the idea of ‘Indigenous autonomous entities’. The Constitution recognised the collective ways in which Bolivians exercise their citizenship and established a particularly important subject of rights: ‘Indigenous native peasant nations and peoples’, which was designed to be an umbrella term covering the different rural identities and social organisations of Indigenous peoples. So the concept of plurinationality was adopted by the Constitution to express the idea both of a state composed of many nations and cultural groups, and of a nation that is defined by its plurality.¹⁰¹

Additionally, the new Constitution established that political disputes could be resolved through referenda, to be held at national, departmental and local levels.¹⁰² At first, Coromeños felt that a referendum would not favour their cause in the borders dispute. Mamani explained this reasoning: ‘In one of its articles, it [the draft of the Autonomous Entities and Decentralisation Law] says that the territorial boundaries should be decided through the ballot box. But as Oruro has four municipalities and Potosí only one, we cannot do what the law says. So Coroma didn’t accept that we should solve the problems through a referendum.’¹⁰³

The new legal framework also gave prominence to the *usos y costumbres* of Indigenous peoples, which could be understood as a justification of land tenure through continuous territorial occupation, the *vivencia*. The Coromeños, however, felt that any claim based on *vivencia* was a weak and unfair argument for resolution of the border conflict, since it would legitimate earlier abuses. ‘We have documents that support our claim ... while Oruro goes for the *vivencia* ... They have been encroaching [on our land] year after year ... This is how they want to prevail,

¹⁰⁰Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City*; Yuval-Davis, ‘Multi-Layered Citizen’.

¹⁰¹Sue A. S. Iamamoto, ‘Nacionalismo e plurinacionalidade na Bolívia contemporânea’, in Clayton M. Cunha Filho and João Paulo Saraiva Leão Viana (eds.), *A Bolívia no século XXI: Estado plurinacional, mudança de elites e (pluri)nacionalismo* (Curitiba: Appris, 2013), pp. 229–54.

¹⁰²Jonas Wolff, ‘Towards Post-Liberal Democracy in Latin America? A Conceptual Framework Applied to Bolivia’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 45: 1 (2013), pp. 31–59.

¹⁰³Interview, Mamani.

but with no documents', argued Germán Blas, a young activist from Rodeo Pallpa *ayllu*.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, as seen above, the Coromeños distrusted the Morales administration, which had introduced the new Constitution.

In 2013, however, when I conducted my fieldwork, people in Coroma were becoming more accepting of the new legal environment and starting to realise that it could be as relevant to their own traditional practices as to those of Oruro. In his book, Ramos cites the UNDRIP, which states that 'Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired' (Article 26), to defend Coroma's territorial claim: the Coromeños are descendants of the Sevaruyo-Aracapi group, who inhabited the area before the arrival of the Spanish; records quoted by Ramos show that this group occupied an area extending up to the Cerro Gordo, around 20 km north of the town of Coroma, in what is today Quillacas territory.¹⁰⁵

Ritual places also started to receive more attention from the Coromeños. During one of the Borders Unit's fieldtrips, we visited the *inca* of Huatacalla *ayllu*. An *inca* is a sacred place with two ritual stones representing a female (*jach'a mama*) and a male (*jach'a tata*) ancestor, the founding souls of the *ayllu*,¹⁰⁶ placed inside a small adobe house. Every time a new community leader is chosen, he or she comes here to pay homage and to perform libation rituals. The Borders Committee mapped the ritual places and practices of Coroma, in order to present them as evidence in their territorial claim.

Many of these *incas* are in territories under dispute. One of the best known is Walconani in the former Coromeño community of Paria, part of Caloga *ayllu*, occupied by Orureños in 1901. The place is still used for Caloga's ritual practices, as explained by Cruz: 'Community leaders come here to offer a llama every year. A member of the community, when he gets married, brings his wife to introduce her to the *inca* ... Even if they [the Orureños] occupied the community of Paria, Caloga *ayllu* never let them [disturb] the *inca*. Right up to today people observe their rituals in this place.'¹⁰⁷ Ramos identifies another three *incas* in the disputed territory: Incamisa (Coroga *ayllu*), Santa María (Achuma *ayllu*) and Condoriri (Andoga *ayllu*),¹⁰⁸ which provide important evidence of traditional occupation of the area in support of the Coromeños' territorial claim.

Regarding their precolonial existence, Coromeños question the anthropological thesis that they were part of the Killaka nation, since the origins of the Sevaruyo-Aracapi group are unclear and there is historical evidence that Coroma was occupied by a community of the neighbouring Qaraqara nation before the arrival of the Spanish.¹⁰⁹ In addition, Coromeño *chullperíos*, or *chullpas* – precolonial funerary buildings that were formerly places of worship¹¹⁰ – have a different design from those of Oruro: they are built of stone and have a square base, rather

¹⁰⁴Interview with Germán Blas, activist, Rodeo Pallpa *ayllu*, 26 Nov. 2013.

¹⁰⁵Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, pp. 7–10.

¹⁰⁶Cristina Bubba Zamora and Xavier Albó Corrons, 'John Murra nos ayuda a cargar la responsabilidad de los abuelos y abuelas', *Chungara*, 42: 1 (2010), p. 117.

¹⁰⁷Interview, Cruz.

¹⁰⁸Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 5–9; Platt, Bouysse-Cassagne and Harris, *Qaraqara-Charka*, pp. 262–3.

¹¹⁰Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power*, p. 42.

than in adobe with a rectangular base.¹¹¹ ‘Chullpa’ is also used to designate the human remains buried in these places and the ‘earliest inhabitants of the Andes’, who were present before the arrival of the Incas and the Spanish.¹¹² Chullpa worship was condemned by the Spanish rulers during the colonial period, and the chullpas became increasingly linked to the dangerous and the wild, related to the realm of *manqa pacha*, the underworld.¹¹³ Despite this negative image, Coromeños recognise chullpas as their ancestors: ‘People say we are the remnants [sobra] of the chullpas’, explained a member of Jilawi ayllu,¹¹⁴ a tradition noted by scholars.¹¹⁵

It is possible that the Coromeños’ attachment to the chullpas results from their traditional cult of textiles. Chullpas usually contained ceremonial textiles; following the Spanish ‘Extirpation of Idolatries’, which forbade the cult of mummies, Andean peoples were able to ‘bring the *wak’a* [shrine or idol in a revered place] into being again by clothing some fragment of the old idol in the cloth that identified it’.¹¹⁶ Coromeños relate their ceremonial textiles, the *q’ipis*, with the chullpas: ‘The most interesting is their textiles, Coroma is rich in textiles from chullpas ... There are some textiles that, really, even I am astonished by. How did they manage to combine the colours in those bygone days? The textiles are very fine.’¹¹⁷ In the 1980s, the region became infamous for the smuggling to the United States of ceremonial textiles, some of which were recovered through the work of anthropologist Cristina Bubba.¹¹⁸

The Coromeños realised that these elements of traditional culture provided enough evidence to support their demands for recognition as another ‘nation’ within Bolivia. In fact, their main objective was to demand independence from Uyuni municipality and ask for Indigenous autonomy, but the border problem would have to be solved before they could start on this process. They therefore made an appeal for formal recognition – a *declaración camarál* – to the Bolivian Senate, which was approved in August 2013.¹¹⁹ Coroma is now known as the ‘Coroma nation’, rather than, as formerly, the ‘Indigenous district of Coroma’.

¹¹¹Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 4.

¹¹²Bubba Zamora and Albó Corrons, ‘John Murra nos ayuda’, p. 124.

¹¹³For an analysis of the changes that Spanish colonisation and Christianisation brought to the Andean world view, see Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne and Olivia Harris, ‘Pacha: En torno al pensamiento aymara’, in Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne, Olivia Harris, Tristan Platt and Verónica Cereceda (eds.), *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino* (La Paz: Hisbol, 1987), pp. 11–59. For the persecution of precolonial Andean religious practices, see Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power*.

¹¹⁴Interview with anonymous Coromeña, Jilawi ayllu, 26 Nov. 2013.

¹¹⁵Ramos Félix, *El amparo de Coroma*, p. 8; Bubba Zamora and Albó Corrons, ‘John Murra nos ayuda’, p. 124.

¹¹⁶Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power*, p. 179.

¹¹⁷Interview, Camata.

¹¹⁸Bubba Zamora and Albó Corrons, ‘John Murra nos ayuda’; Cristina Bubba Zamora, ‘Nos querían robar el alma’, *Cuarto Intermedio*, 23 (1993), pp. 34–55; and ‘Los textiles ceremoniales de Coroma’, in R. Querejazu and B. Mostajo (eds.), *Memoria. II Congreso Internacional sobre Patrimonio Histórico e Identidad Cultural 2001* (Cochabamba: UMSS-CAB-III, 2002), pp. 559–66.

¹¹⁹Adolfo Mendoza Leigue, ‘Nación indígena de Coroma es reconocida por preservar su patrimonio histórico-cultural’, *Prensa Senado*, 23 Aug. 2013, <http://adolfomendozaleigue.blogspot.com.br/2013/08/nacion-indigena-de-coroma-es-reconocida.html>.

This section has shown how the Coromeños cited evidence from their *usos y costumbres* in their litigation under the new plurinational legislation. They were open to working within the new legal system, because it, unlike the earlier the republican legal system, recognised their traditional practices. In the same way that the republican period transformed colonial documents into legitimising tools, the plurinational period transformed precolonial ‘documents’ (textiles, rites, *incas*, myths, *chullpas*) into evidence of legitimate land occupation. Unfortunately, these objects, places and practices do not convey unambiguous messages from precolonial times, and they have changed considerably over the last centuries. However, there is a multiplicity of meanings in every piece of evidence collected to support Coroma’s land litigation: over the centuries, colonial documents have been accepted as genuine and then later withdrawn, making it difficult for them to provide a definitive true version.

Final Remarks

Recent international advances in protecting and securing Indigenous rights have brought Indigenous actors to the fore in academic research, in a process that has increasingly investigated the complexity of the relationships between these actors, the state and the (pluri)national societies within which they live. Perhaps no other country in the world has presented more contradictions in these relationships than Bolivia, whose paradoxical support for and antagonism towards Indigenous peoples have astonished many local and foreign commentators. Through a very particular case – the border conflict between two Indigenous groups – this article has pursued a deeper understanding of this complexity, presenting a more detailed and nuanced view of the practices of Indigenous citizenship in Bolivia.

The first contribution of this article is to highlight the importance of the state to the practices of Indigenous citizenship in Bolivia, in contrast with an understanding based solely on rights to self-government. However, the state is relevant less for its actions and efforts and more for its absence, its spectral existence determining expectations never fulfilled: the ‘state effect’.¹²⁰ The persistence of Indigenous communities in Bolivia during the past few centuries has been explained as a result of either the state’s historical inability to extend its power over the whole national territory¹²¹ or of communities’ resistance to the tutelage and interference of the state.¹²² This study offers an alternative interpretation, combining both these views: Indigenous resistance has taken shape in order to achieve collective rights, mainly regarding control over territory, but this struggle was directed towards the state, because only the state can deliver these rights. Even if the liberal imagination was unable to conceive of Indigenous communities within the nation – they were ‘unimagined communities’, as Mark Thurner has argued for nineteenth-century Peru¹²³ – these communities have lived through the formation of the state of Bolivia and have not excluded themselves from their imagining of this state.

¹²⁰Krupa and Nugent (eds.), *State Theory and Andean Politics*.

¹²¹Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 62–3.

¹²²Rivera Cusicanqui, ‘*Oppressed but not Defeated*’; Platt, *Estado boliviano y ayllu andino*.

¹²³Thurner, ‘*Republicanos*’.

The Coromeños' land litigation provided them with an opportunity to uncover a long-standing mechanism by which they could review and renew their relationship with the state and what it meant to be an Indigenous citizen. The process is particularly revealing because (agents of) the Bolivian state are guilty of multiple failings during the dispute – cancelling the legal proceedings because of procedural problems and document loss, delaying them so that new legislation could be written, acting inefficiently or accusing some of the parties of illegitimacy because they were politically motivated. Morales's administrative style, which frequently viewed criticism of the state as a political attack on the ruling party, also hindered the process, even though the Coromeños were at first sympathetic to an Indigenous peasant president and identified with him. The agents of the state have not succeeded in putting forward the impartial and legitimate image of the state expected from them.

The solutions proposed by mediators and officials to the Coroma–Quillacas borders problem ignore the importance placed on the state by Coromeños and assume that the communities from the two departments are displaying a stubborn insistence on their territorial rights that impedes conciliation, resulting in an unsolvable problem. For example, in its report on solutions to the conflict, the UNIR Foundation proposes a 'strategy that is not based on an analysis of the historical documents, but on a process of conciliation among the parties involved'.¹²⁴ In opposing analysis of the documents and a consensual resolution to the problem, UNIR ignores the reality that a common ground for conciliation can be found only by considering the communities' perception of their rights, which includes, among other measures, taking their documents into account. Besides, this type of reasoning conveniently releases state representatives from actually overseeing the proceedings in an impartial manner, as is expected by the communities.

However, the role of the Bolivian state was not perceived by the Coromeños in a unidimensional manner. The temporal layers of Indigenous citizenship can be projected on to different ideals of statehood, with which Indigenous peoples have come to measure the deficiencies of the existing state. In a role inherited from the colonial experience, the state is expected to be an external mediator that oversees the observance of legal contracts, an impartial judge that offers its authority in exchange for tributes. From the republican period and its territorial losses there emerged a state that should have ensured a fair distribution of resources and promote Coroma's development through efficient use of its natural resources. Finally, the more recent multicultural turn points to a state that should recognise and promote Indigenous rights, particularly regarding territory, as a means to guarantee the reproduction of native political, social and cultural institutions.

Because what is at issue is a legal process, the different arguments are not mutually exclusive, but are accumulated in order to build a stronger case. Land litigation constitutes a mnemonic device in which inherited perceptions of legality, even when they are at odds with contemporary institutional frameworks, are recovered and relived. While institutional frameworks can be seen as both consequence and cause of collective action, since the institutional framework – when it is in use – shapes actors and strategies,¹²⁵ once these actors have been 'shaped', they

¹²⁴Fundación UNIR, *Coroma – Quillacas*, p. 26.

¹²⁵Fontana, 'Indigenous Peoples vs Peasant Unions'.

can actually continue to be affected by these institutional frameworks even when they are no longer in use.

Thus, the second contribution of this study is precisely to conceive of Indigenous citizenship as something that emerges from social memories, built by notions of justice and power legitimacy that are deeply rooted in specific historical experiences and are reproduced by mnemonic practices. This understanding runs parallel to the idea that citizenship can exist only as rooted in actual local spaces and embodied experiences, following Nira Yuval-Davis, Lazar and Isin.¹²⁶ In this article too, citizenship is understood as rooted in actual historical experiences, in which the language of power legitimation is communicated through political concepts framed by past experiences and passed on from generation to generation. While these political concepts emerge from the past, to analyse them as social memories, however, also implies their use in the present to make sense of contemporary challenges.

There is something remarkable about the way that Coromeños deal with their past and organise the strategies of their social struggles in the present. The fact that they are an ethnic group that has managed to preserve its precolonial ancestor cult through textiles, despite all the efforts of the Spanish to ‘extirpate idolatries’, and to save centuries-old colonial title deeds in its communal archives, says a lot about the determination with which Coromeños defend the social rites that provide meaning to their lives. This is not to say that Coromeños are stuck in time; quite the contrary. During this recent period, they have demonstrated their ability to change legal discourses and to adapt to new trends, identifying historical arguments that are more appropriate to their struggle. Mary Carruthers once emphasised, when describing ancient memory-craft, that remembering is a process that entails invention and creativity.¹²⁷ As social memories, the Coromeños’ layers of citizenship do not need to be interpreted as dead weights, attached to the past: they are better understood as instruments, as powerful inherited tools that can be used imaginatively to deal with a changing world.

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Spanish abstract

Este artículo explora la complejidad de la ciudadanía indígena en Bolivia contemporánea a través del análisis de una disputa territorial que involucra al pueblo indígena de Coroma y a otro grupo indígena vecino. Los coromeños heredan percepciones de sus derechos de los

¹²⁶Yuval-Davis, ‘Multi-Layered Citizen’; Lazar, *El Alto, Rebel City*; Isin, ‘City.State’.

¹²⁷Mary Carruthers, ‘How to Make a Composition: Memory-Craft in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages’, in Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 15–29.

periodos colonial, republicano y plurinacional: su ciudadanía es entonces descrita como formada por capas temporales. Este estudio subraya la centralidad de la imagen del Estado para las prácticas de ciudadanía indígena en Bolivia, en contraste con un entendimiento basado únicamente en los derechos de autogobierno. Asimismo, al comprender estas capas como memorias sociales, el artículo enfatiza la importancia de concebir a la ciudadanía como enraizada en experiencias históricas y reproducida por prácticas mnemónicas.

Spanish keywords: ciudadanía indígena; disputa territorial; memorias sociales; plurinacionalidad; Bolivia; Coroma

Portuguese abstract

Este artigo explora a complexidade da cidadania indígena na Bolívia contemporânea por meio da análise de uma disputa de terras envolvendo o povo indígena de Coroma e um grupo indígena vizinho. Coromeños herdaram suas percepções de direitos dos períodos colonial, republicano e plurinacional: sua cidadania é então descrita como formada por camadas temporais. Este estudo destaca a centralidade da imagem do Estado para as práticas de cidadania indígena na Bolívia, em contraposição a um entendimento baseado exclusivamente nos direitos de autogoverno. Além disso, ao compreender essas camadas como memórias sociais, o artigo destaca a importância de conceber a cidadania como algo enraizado em experiências históricas e reproduzido por práticas mnemônicas.

Portuguese keywords: cidadania indígena; disputa de terra; memórias sociais; plurinacionalidade; Bolívia; Coroma

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