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'Memory, mobility and social change in a Bolivian town'

The following is all my own work.

Abstract

This thesis addresses social change in Tapacarí, a small rural town in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Tapacarí, which was once an important colonial town and home to an elite controlling the peasant population around it, is now largely empty due to high levels of migration to urban centres. The town retains symbolic and ritual importance for indigenous peasant people and former townspeople in different ways, but has become more economically marginalised as the economic and kin relationships between these groups has changed. The thesis proposes that the town now be seen as one point on a wider array of multiple residences used by indigenous and peasant people as they respond flexibly to unpredictable economic conditions and build autonomy. At the same time the town exists as a place of memory and history for the people who no longer live there, and who come once a year for the fiesta.

Based on long-term multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, the thesis locates small-scale processes of cultural production, discrimination and resistance within larger national and international political and cultural narratives. Through examination of spatial divisions, ritual and local government bureaucracy, a depiction of the fractures and tensions of small-town life emerges. It engages with the elasticity of 'the local' and the different ways of belonging to a place where few people now live, in the context of a wider conversation about indigeneity, identity and memory arising from political and social change in Bolivia in the early years of the twenty-first century, including the election of Evo Morales. Through discussion of religious and civic events as well as everyday life, this research shows that those who belong to the town form intimate and contradictory relationships which both fracture along and cross over barriers of class, location and ethnicity.

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Introduction

This is a thesis about space, inequality, memory and social change, looking specifically at one small town in the Bolivian highlands. Bolivia is a postcolonial country whose history and current reality is influenced by a series of popular struggles against domination from external forces and internal minorities. Its economic profile is one of high poverty levels, including high levels of extreme poverty in rural areas, and striking ethnic and cultural diversity. Bolivia is also notable for a high degree of political mobilisation and a strong history of trade unionism which since the 1980s has coexisted with social movements originating around identity politics, particularly indigenous or peasant self-identifications. In the first years of the twenty-first century, the wish for control over natural resources and a redistributive economic policy, along with a revindication of indigenous identity, was reflected in the election of Evo Morales and the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (Movement Towards Socialism, henceforward MAS) party. On a smaller scale, indigenous communities and marginalised people continued to struggle against the entrenched racism and economic inequalities which were still part of their daily lives.

However, just as the continued presence of indigenous communities with distinctive traditions within a larger state should not be reduced to a simplistic dualism between indigenous and *mestizo* (mixed-race), processes of resistance to class domination or external impositions cannot be considered solely at the level of political mobilisations. Social change is incremental, even at times of dramatic upheaval such as the period between 2005 and 2007 when fieldwork for this thesis took place. With the details of social movements, electoral cycles and changes in political consensus amply covered by other, more capable authors this thesis focuses on the very small-scale negotiations and strategies of resistance in everyday interactions between indigenous peasant people and others positioned close to them on scales of class and ethnicity.

The chief location from which much of this material is drawn is the town of San Agustín de Tapacarí, capital of the province and municipality of Tapacarí, located in the mountainous interior of Cochabamba department, bordering La Paz and Oruro. The town of San Agustín is often described as abandoned. It was previously home to a regional elite who held lands and benefited from the labour of the indigenous majority. These elites have now mostly left for the city and further afield, leaving the town of San Agustín, or Tapacarí as I will refer to it in the thesis, to the indigenous peasants. The elite, whose dominance was previously much more pronounced, still retain some social privileges, but mourn the passing of Tapacarí's golden era. The indigenous peasants of the area use the town as one stopping point in a chain of residency which includes their smallholdings in rural communities as well as rooms in the city and other areas of the country which they live in when seeking work in those areas. They also put the town to use during Carnival, when it serves as an empty space for them to carry out *tinku* ritual battles between different moieties. The town, therefore, is a space which has passed out of use by elites and has been repurposed by local indigenous people. The remains of economic and social domination by the non-indigenous can still be found in systems of godparenthood and the use of buildings, but it is clear that this is changing irreversibly.

The elites, now largely living in the city of Cochabamba, retain their links to the town and it would be remiss to suppose that they have relinquished it. However, these links are based around memory and nostalgia rather than everyday economic investment or regular residency. An important and under-researched theme emerges from this: that of the connection between indigenous and non-indigenous in a country sometimes (incorrectly) described as 'two Bolivias'. In fact, distinctions such as indigenous and non-indigenous, while useful for clarifying who is being referred to and what social position they occupy, do not cover the nuances of ethnic and class differentiation at play. This is best revealed by detailed description, to which I will return later. Such detailed explorations provide an important counterpoint to portrayals of Bolivia as divided and

unstable. In 2008, while conflict raged in the east of Bolivia between right-wing and proto-fascist supporters of the 'Half Moon' bloc of departments, and government loyalists, it was common to hear of a 'divided republic' prone to fissure. The social reality shown by this research does indeed feature division and inequality, but also demonstrates that people with different class and ethnic backgrounds lead lives which are deeply interwoven. The intimacies of existence in a small rural town are such that people may ascribe different and sometimes oppositional identities to themselves and to the neighbours with whom they cook, work and gossip.

A key strength of anthropological work is the multiscalar nature of its analysis, which can show how large processes or structures impact on day-to-day interactions and vice versa. Processes as mundane as eating or travelling to work, when placed within a wider context, can illustrate how class, gender and ethnicity interplay distinctively, and also how systems of domination and subordination have endured or eroded. The usage of everyday life in social analysis was championed by Joanna Overing in her essay 'Under the Sky of the Domesticated' in which she argued for the privileging of routine events, using the 'simple' society of the Piaroa in Venezuela as an example of a group in which documenting language and normal interactions revealed more than paying attention to spectacular events. The spectacular and the routine both take their place in this thesis, as I consider everyday life in an 'abandoned' town alongside the way in which this same town is animated and populated by visitors during its annual fiesta. I also describe the daily life of a municipal office and the strategies used to ameliorate power differences.

Spatial strategies: indigenous resistance

Everyday existence and also regular ritual events in the town of Tapacarí show the persistence of characteristically 'indigenous' uses of space. This can be seen in the long-term failure of one colonial project, the 'reduction' of indigenous communities into 'orderly' towns. San Agustín de Tapacarí, a colonial town surrounded by indigenous communities, has now become an extension of

those communities, rather than accelerating their inclusion into 'civilised' society. Indeed, indigenous and peasant people in Tapacarí continue to live in settlement patterns that reflect the historic 'vertical archipelago' described by Murra in 1956. This historical allegory should not be taken as a literal description: the idea of an archipelago of different settlements of the same kin group which exists to exploit multiple ecological niches is not identical to how *tapacareños* live today, but is still useful for understanding the resilience of indigenous people in the face of poverty and marginalisation. In this respect it also resembles in some ways the ethnic economy described by Harris (2000) for the Laymi. This is not due to *tapacareños* living in 'cold' societies as described by Levi-Strauss, in contrast to the 'hot' and constantly adapting Western societies, and thus enacting a pre-existing indigenous mentality: rather, it is because Bolivia's economy is dominated by the extraction of natural resources, and this means periodic booms and busts in different areas and therefore constant movement of whole families moving to and from those areas. In addition, the mountainous terrain in Tapacarí makes it very difficult to effect even development of electricity, roads and other amenities, meaning that it is very difficult for large families to make a living by remaining in one place.

Bolivia is not divided into two nations. At a minimum there are three main economic/class groups: urban middle-class people, mobile *cholo* traders and rural indigenous people. Most ethnographic studies concern rural indigenous people or *cholo* traders who live in urban areas. This study looks primarily at the border ground between the second two. It foregrounds movement between places as constitutive of social identities. It addresses a deficiency in the literature of Bolivia and ethnographic studies of the Andes in particular by telling the stories of middle-class people. Both recently and historically, anthropological accounts of Bolivia have focused on the poor, the marginalised and the indigenous, three categories which overlap. As the national population became more urbanised, an increasing number of anthropological studies also focused on city neighbourhoods inhabited by migrants from the countryside. In documenting the social and

political impact of migration from country to city, urban ethnographers such as McNeish (2001), Lazar (2008), Goldstein (2004) and others showed the importance of problematising the equivalence between rural::urban and indigenous::*mestizo* (mixed-race, understood to be culturally non-indigenous) by demonstrating the continued indigenous self-identification of urban people. Currently, Bolivia's cities are home to people whose ethnic self-identification may fall anywhere on the spectrum from indigenous to white, depending on political context and personal circumstances. The city of El Alto in particular, which grew from a few streets in the 1960s to being one of the largest urban conurbations in the country by the end of the century, is sometimes described as 'the first indigenous city of Latin America' (*New York Times* 2013).

However, the tendency to equate rural with indigenous and urban with *mestizo* has not yet been fully addressed. If the urban indigenous have been participants in as well as objects of study for some time, the rural *mestizo* is still absent from most accounts, or makes glancing appearances in ethnographies of rural areas. For example, Canessa (2005) describes encounters between his informants from the hamlet of Pocobaya and shopkeepers in the town of Sorata, and Rockefeller (2010) considers the local elite in the town of San Lucas in Potosí in terms of their relationship with people from the village of Quirpini. The placing of otherwise marginalised indigenous people at the centre of the narrative has much to recommend it, but there is also a need to look up close and over the long term at the ways in which the rural middle classes gained and retained their grip on power, both economic and cultural. As I go on to show, the rural elites from Tapacarí who moved to the city were able to use the wealth they had accumulated in the rural economy to consolidate their social and economic advantages in the city, thereby replicating and in some cases exacerbating the unequal power relationship between themselves and the rural indigenous people with whom they shared their town and their lives. There is an absence of scholarship on the transition old elites undergo from rural landholding to professionalisation and entrenchment of social and economic advantage, which future work would do well to address. The economic and social privilege of

former rural elites is only touched on in this work, which focuses mostly on the internal workings of a small-town society and the people who continue to live there. However, visiting elites are a part of this picture, as they keep their links to the town alive through visits and other acts of memory.

Intimacy and antagonism: the intertwined lives of rural towns

When using blanket terms such as 'middle class' or 'rural indigenous', it is easy to create an impression that people from different backgrounds lead their lives independently of each other, coming into contact occasionally when working, buying or selling. This is supported by the implicit assumption that most people who live in the country are indigenous, and do not have family members or friends who are non-indigenous. Popular discourses have tended to reflect this, most notably in the political climate of 2008, when Bolivia came close to a civil war between conservative forces in the east of the country allied to regionalist parties, and the pro-indigenous popular bloc in the west of the country which supported the Morales government. I show through detailed accounts of everyday life that rural middle-class people share their lives with indigenous peasants in almost every way. This undermines the impression given in popular discourses and in the media of a country divided along race lines, and can help to illustrate the ways in which economic and class divisions inform political activity.

Many members of the urban middle classes of Cochabamba have strong family links to the countryside which surrounds the city. These connections must be taken into account when considering, among other things, the structures and dynamics of the local economy and of social movements. However, in doing so it is also important to critically consider the ways in which urban visitors engage with the countryside, and much remains to be written on this topic. It is worthwhile to discuss the experiences of rural people as they come into contact with 'others' in the form of teachers, healthcare workers, politicians and anthropologists, but also necessary to provide the reverse point of view – that of the 'others' as they move through the countryside and interact with

indigenous and peasant people – in order to understand the persistence of inequality. For example, in order to understand the uneven application of state law, the lack of an effective justice system and the associated incidence of 'community justice', it is helpful to look at rural policemen and judges, if only to see how little reach they have. Such material appears frequently in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 3 which focuses on the workings of local government and the experiences of urban people who work in the country. In Chapter 1 there is also a discussion of the need for an ethnographic approach to assess the workings of local government in an era in which political gains have been made, putting indigenous people in positions of political power, but persistent inequalities in access to education and professionalisation mean that the work of government is still carried out by urban professionals unaccustomed to taking orders from indigenous peasants.

Memory and movement in affective relationships with the past

For people whose everyday lives happen in urban milieux, but whose childhoods and family ties link them to the country, memory, loss and senses of belonging play active roles in the way they relate to the countryside. More than mere nostalgia for the full experiences of an adult life, people recollect the partial emotions and intimacies of childhood. In places such as Tapacarí, a fuller and more prosperous past introjects strongly into a dismal present. The degree to which the past continues in the present, in stories, material spaces and existing relationships, is variegated across people of different class and ethnic backgrounds. The shared spaces of the town hold different associations for the various people there, and are put to different uses, sometimes simultaneously. Describing this plural usage builds on existing literature on memory, specifically 'memory practices', that is, the ways people experience the past through their own movements and actions.

One aim of this thesis is to give a picture of the town left behind. 'Left behind' has two dimensions here. In one sense, Tapacarí has been left behind by the progress of history, but it has also been left

behind by the many people who have gone away to the city or to other regions where they could make lives for themselves.

Many *tapacareño* townspeople attribute the start of the town's demise to the agrarian reform of 1953, with the common refrain that 'with the agrarian reform, everything was ruined' ('*con la reforma agraria, se arruinó todo*'). Rockefeller (2010) offers a contrasting view from Potosí, suggesting that inequalities in rural towns were heightened following the reform, when many landowners lost their estates and relocated into local towns, where they became concentrated into small social groups who could continue exercising dominance over the peasant population. Albó (1974), on the other hand, wrote in the 1970s of the waning importance of colonial towns, which have died down in importance and size.

Regardless of the exact time at which Tapacarí ceased to be an important and populous centre with a thriving middle class, it is certainly abandoned now. Yet the sensations and words of town childhoods are carried within the memories and affections of those who lived in them as they travel through successive years and foreign cities, and have a continuing influence on their personhood as Bolivians, as Cochabambinos, as people with the privilege to recall and retell their version of a past which is 'lost'.

The town of Tapacarí is a place where the memory and nostalgia of people with family ties to the place can be exercised, whether discursively, remotely from the town, or within the town itself through its fiestas. The active nostalgia of these former town inhabitants, known as *residentes*, enables them to distinguish themselves from their peasant compatriots in a more active way than those who continue living in the town. Their memories and their connection with each other is part of the maintenance of a community based on loyalty to a fondly imagined past. Within every narrative of forgetting or remembering, of leaving a beloved place and retaining it in memory, and

of reliving those memories by returning and tracing the steps of previous years around a plaza, are the twin processes of the constitution of self and the recreation of relatedness. The shared or disputed memories of the town of Tapacarí, like its absences, are sometimes hard to adequately describe, since all accounts are partial and decontextualised by having been recorded, saved and reproduced in the pages of this text, detached from the conversations they were part of. A reflexive look at the production of this work immediately reveals the ironic twist to it: my individual memory, relying on the culturally sanctioned repositories and cues of memories (notebooks, recordings and photographs) is called on to describe the memories of *tapacareños*. The description of their absence from the town is made possible by my absence from the town; one more person in the world for whom the last weekend in September will forever be *Virgen de Dolores*.

Broader context of this study

2005 was one of the most interesting turning points in recent Bolivian history: the collapse of unpopular neoliberal government after three years of sustained public protest brought almost two decades of pro-free-market economic policies to an end, and also signalled the rejection of the cautious multiculturalism of the 1990s, memorably described by Charles Hale as the era of the 'permitted indian' (2002), in which indigenous inclusion in state politics was heavily conditional on compliance with pre-existing political discourses shaped by non-indigenous actors. Evo Morales' presidency foregrounded his indigenous identity and commitment to his indigenous 'brothers and sisters'. In the place of a sustained political crisis which ultimately involved the state being so weakened as to be unable to fulfil its basic roles, there was a new administration whose organisational roots were in social movements, which had expanded to include actors from across society. In its early years in government, the MAS still resembled a broad collection of civil society groups and social movements more than a political party (Harten 2011). The MAS as a political entity originated in the strong resistance movement of the coca growers in the tropic of Cochabamba to US-led efforts to eradicate coca. The coca growers had themselves inherited a

tradition of militant trade-union organising from displaced miners who relocated to the tropics following mass mine closures in the 1980s. Morales and his colleagues in the *cocalero* movement adopted the vocabulary of indigenous identity as part of their political organising (Grisaffi 2010). This adeptly combined the organisational practices and political legacy of trade unions with indigenous and popular movements, thus closing a gap which had opened up in the 1980s when traditional trade unions were weakened by the inadequacy of their ability to respond to a profound economic crisis (Zavaleta 1987). At the time, indigenous movements were in their ascendancy, building up to an unprecedented level of visibility around the quincentenary of Columbus' landing, and also marking important milestones such as recognition by the International Labour Organisation in 1989 with Convention 169 and a historic march in Bolivia from the eastern lowlands to the capital demanding land rights and recognition for Amazonian ethnic groups. The MAS was able to deftly knit together Bolivia's traditional trade unionism with the broad, populist style of social movements, involving neighbourhood groups, rural peasants, federations of small traders, students and others. This stood in contrast to the small and fragmented political elite, who maintained themselves by forming increasingly overstretched coalitions and brokering deals with each other in order to stay in power. By taking up a position of opposition to traditional politics, including a period of being expelled from Congress in 2002 for his alleged involvement in a disturbance, Morales became the popular candidate of choice.

However, the spaces for political action opened up by the neoliberal multiculturalism of the 1990s cannot be discounted. The law of popular participation in particular had brought the state within reach of local populations: in addition to allowing more state incursion into indigenous communities it had also presented marginalised rural people with a sense of political agency in the election and monitoring of their local authorities. The peasant trade union continued to be the driving force of political organisation in Tapacarí, albeit with strong indigenous influences. Local political leadership was structured around the hierarchy and habits of the peasant trade union. This

represents a development in the wider relationship between indigeneity, trade unions and the state in Bolivia discussed by Zavaleta (1987) in his article 'Dual Power', which posits that the Bolivian state and trade union infrastructure have, since the 1950s, represented parallel means by which people could appeal to power: the state with its monopoly on force and the trade union by the threat of collective action. The presence of indigenous leadership systems and recognition of particular indigenous types of community organising such as the rotational *cargo* system did not enter into these kinds of power bargaining until the neoliberal multicultural reforms of the 1990s created a category of indigenous community which could be legally recognised: the Communitarian Territory of Origin (TCO). Comparatively few groups applied to form TCOs, however, compared to the number of new municipalities which were created. However, in the local government of Tapacarí, positions of power were and are occupied by indigenous leaders who brought indigenous peasant styles of work and leadership to the office.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, scholarship on the neoliberal multiculturalism of the 1990s and its results is extensive. The Law of Popular Participation in particular has been extensively discussed and evaluated in terms of its implications for governance and indigenous organising. However, there remain few ethnographic accounts of work inside municipal government. As Chapter 3 shows, municipal governance in Tapacarí is complicated by several social and geographical factors. First among them is the fact that the local authorities – councillors and mayor – are from indigenous peasant backgrounds whereas many of the people they exercise authority over – 'engineers' and professionals – are from the urban middle classes. Resisting the commonplace urban racism towards indigenous people in the office environment is therefore a challenge, which is met creatively, but not unproblematically, with plentiful use of alcohol and forced conviviality. The second challenge is not immediately social (although historically and economically determined): Tapacarí is a remote and physically challenging place in which to work. Facilities are scarce and travel is arduous. I argue therefore that the experience of working 'in the

country' creates commonality among workers through shared physical experience, akin to the way that former *tapacareños*' memories are shared and revisited through physical sensation. I also show that the rural, marginalised people in Tapacarí and their municipal representatives are aware of how their ethnic distinctiveness can be used to attract development funding, or to underline political legitimacy. In two examples from different events, I demonstrate that *tapacareños* will stage-manage the circumstances under which images of ethnic diversity are produced and resist undue appropriation.

The thesis also addresses a gap in the literature around towns. While traditional ethnographies of small rural villages in the style of Robert Redfield's 'little community' (Redfield 1955) are no longer the default type of anthropological study, in Bolivia they have largely been complemented by studies of urban populations. Bolivia has undergone, and continues to undergo, a high degree of urbanisation, along with which there has been an increasing indianisation of urban space. Following this increase in urban populations, much attention has been paid to the efforts of new migrants to claim their rights as citizens, but very little has been written about the places left behind – the places where old structures have been replaced with an empty space after everyone has gone to the city. This thesis redresses that.

Dual residency is very important and understudied. Changes and formation of social movements because of rural to urban migration has been studied (Lazar 2008, for example), but the other half of the picture has yet to be given.

In addition, ethnography of the rural areas of Cochabamba has been limited in reach. Authors such as Paulson (2002) and Laurie (2006) in Raqaypampa in Mizque the strong degree of indigenous organising and the community's long-term involvement with the Centre for Andean Communication and Development (CENDA) has led to participative work on land rights, community justice and

water management. CENDA has also produced research on other municipalities within Cochabamba's Zona Andina, such as Morochata and Ayopaya, but no in-depth ethnographies of Tapacarí have been published at the time of writing. There is also a growing body of work on the Chapare, documenting the impact of the coca economy and of attempts to eradicate it. In anthropology of rural communities, towns are rarely studied. Townspeople are peripheral at best. This thesis goes some way to filling that gap.

Methodology and timetable of fieldwork

In terms of the scope of my activity and investigation, the information in this thesis is based on 18 months of fieldwork carried out between November 2005 and April 2007. Over that time, I lived in five houses and rooms in different locations around the department of Cochabamba. Two were rented rooms located within the city of Cochabamba itself, one was a room in a boarding house in Quillacollo, a small city just outside the main urban centre, and in Tapacarí itself I spent several months in the public boarding house (*casa comunal*) before renting a room from a family who maintained their house in Tapacarí but lived in Quillacollo. Like many people in Tapacarí, I rented my room there and my room in Quillacollo simultaneously and moved between them irregularly, seldom spending longer than three weeks in Tapacarí or a week in Quillacollo.

In trying to identify and trace strands of belonging to a particular place, to and from which people regularly move, I carried out multi-sited fieldwork between the city of Cochabamba, the rural town of Tapacarí and some rural communities there, and the periurban town of Quillacollo, essentially following *tapacareños* during their daily lives. Much of my fieldwork was spent in transit, on the buses, four-by-fours and lorries which ran between the town of Tapacarí and the city. Lorries and other vehicles were socially rich environments, full of people with different stories and motivations, forced into physical proximity and commonality. If fiestas were environments in which people danced alongside each other and drank together, showing voluntary physical commonality and

enacting connection to a place through the force of their bodies, then transportation was a situation in which the shared experience of being *tapacareño*, or being rural, was unavoidable. This constant travelling extended the 'field' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) into a relational state, and thus enabled understanding of how being *tapacareño* stretched the boundaries of what can be considered 'local'.

From November 2005 to January 2006 I lived in a rented room in a family home and spent much of my time with friends from the city who attended political youth groups in the city. These youth group meetings provided an easy way for me to meet people, make friends and enter into long discussions about the changes to come for Bolivia and the positive and negative aspects of the new administration, as well as broader questions of gender, ethnicity, class and education. Some of these friendships lasted for the rest of my fieldwork and well beyond, and through my peers and friends from these groups and their families, I was able to form a more complete picture of kinship, livelihood and migration in families in Cochabamba and other parts of Bolivia. Most of the participants in these groups were from lower middle-class origins, with parents or grandparents who had come to the city from the country and forged a better life for their children. Many spoke Quechua at home with their parents or grandparents, but were keen to learn English for use in the wider world, and aspired to travel and study in other countries. Even when I went on to spend more time in the country and only periodically returned to town, a small number of the people I met at this time formed my core group of friends and informants. We kept each other company in daily life when I was in the city and had many long conversations about family, education, global politics, national politics, migration, feminism, sexuality and food. I am deeply indebted to them for taking me into their families, for showing me around, and for making the Bolivian perspective on things clear to me when it was on occasion opaque. With them, I also shared the heady times of Evo Morales' election and inauguration, and the new days of what seemed like a brightly dawning political reality focused on social and economic justice and dignity and support for the poor. The MAS, in late 2005, was a political movement loosely formed into a party, the 'Political Instrument

for the Sovereignty of the People', which did not simply pay lip service to Bolivia's diversity, but encompassed within its ranks people from every conceivable ethnic and class stratum and had at its head the personification of the newly overturned Bolivia: an uneducated, Aymara-speaking peasant union leader who had grown up herding llamas and had gone on to grow coca and to defy conventional political norms by becoming the president elected with the highest share of the popular vote since the restoration of democracy at the start of the 1980s. The MAS, with its regional base at the headquarters of the Six Federations of the Tropical Zone of Cochabamba (the local coca-growers' union), was part of my social ambit too; many friends were party members, with varying degrees of loyalty and activity.

From January to June 2006, I rented a small apartment within a family complex in the centre of the city of Cochabamba, which I used as a base while exploring the options for potential sites for fieldwork and, eventually, spending most of my time in Tapacarí. The family provided me with hospitality, support and guidance on matters ranging from Quechua tuition to the purchase of a motorbike helmet. During this time, I took Quechua lessons, battled bureaucracy in order to be allowed to remain in the country for eighteen months and to be allowed to carry out fieldwork in Tapacarí, and built and maintained networks of friends and acquaintances through offering English lessons and attending public events. I also travelled, in the chartered coaches of the Cochabamba MAS party, to the inauguration of Evo Morales and Alvaro García Linera in Tihuanaco and later La Paz, in January 2006.

The search for a field site was determined by several factors. I wished to conduct traditional-style, Malinowskian ethnographic fieldwork in rural community in order to look at how indigenous or peasant women navigated the complexities of different gender roles according to the forms of organisation used in their community. Were traditional *ayllus*, famously captained by couples rather than individual men, actually more conducive to the empowerment of women than communities in

which the peasant trade union, the *sindicato campesino*, operated? What did 'empowerment' mean in this context and, as with many women's movements, was it the case that women from marginalised minorities preferred the advancement of everyone in their society over a specific focus on female emancipation? What was the influence of NGOs and development attempts which focused on gender, particularly the heavily contested *equidad de genero* (gender equality) agenda, and how did this square with Andean ideas of binary complementarity?

However, the lack of anthropological work on the *ayllus* of Cochabamba has an obvious explanation: there are very few *ayllus* there. There are, moreover, few areas where highland communities organised along indigenous lines persist rather than having been replaced by a semi-proletarianised peasantry. In addition, my pre-formed idea of which communities were of anthropological interest was led by romanticism and a search for the 'pure' ethnic other, which was to be replaced in time by a more realistic idea of the limitations presented by life in a small rural community, and a fascination for the messy details of indigenous-town interactions in Tapacarí. But while searching for a place to settle and to study, I made trips to Ayopaya and Tarata and came face to face with the difficulty of settling down in a place where I knew no one, had no approbation from the local council, only the rudiments of the local language, and no well-structured plan short of 'go somewhere, find people to live with, write about it later'. In addition, the parlous state of rural roads made a search for a remote place to live unappetisingly dangerous, and local introductions were inadequate. Stalemate ensued.

In early March 2006, while keenly interested in hearing the perspectives of those who found themselves in the unaccustomed position of government, I made the acquaintance of Eugenio Zarate Willka, 'The Architect', described by the man who introduced us as 'Evo's right hand'. I asked the Architect if he would grant me an interview and he agreed, once I had demonstrated goodwill by drinking most of a bucket of *chicha* (corn beer) with him and dancing several *cuecas*. He directed

me to come to the *'Enlace'* office of the municipality of Tapacarí, to find him there in his capacity as Official Mayor. When I did so, the secretary directed me to the 'engineer' in charge of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and we began the first steps of a partnership between myself and the municipality, one that would define and make possible the rest of my fieldwork. Wilson, the civil servant in question, and his boss *'Ingeniero David'*, the head of Human Development, listened to my proposal for carrying out a study in the peasant communities of Tapacarí, asked whether I could offer support in the area of tourism, and suggested that we draw up a legal agreement (*convenio*) outlining permission and support for me to carry out my fieldwork in return for my input in matters of tourism and culture.

The drafting and approval of the *convenio* took a further six weeks, after which I returned to Scotland for a visit. At this time, the new government carried out the long-anticipated nationalisation of Bolivia's gas reserves, or rather, renegotiated contracts so as to take 85% of income in the form of the Direct Hydrocarbons Tax (IDH), which would prove a significant boost to municipal government budgets.

When I returned to Bolivia a couple of weeks later, the nationalisation of the gas was still a happy novelty, and the other key electoral promise to the social movements and to society as a whole, the *Asamblea Constituyente*, was in train. From the early 1990s onwards, indigenous groups and others had campaigned for serious reform or rewriting of Bolivia's constitution, a further-reaching reform than the rewriting carried out in 1994 which affirmed that Bolivia was a 'multicultural, pluriethnic' country. However, this rewrite was publicly perceived as having been carried out by World Bank-influenced technocrats, an opinion shared by many of those who studied the process. There was a long-standing and deeply felt public demand for a complete rewrite of the constitution, led and carried out by a popularly elected assembly, and starting the process of calling elections for this assembly was one of the new government's first actions (the very first being the crowd-pleasing

gesture by the President of cutting his own salary, and that of Congress, by half). The election date of 2 July was announced, and I had the opportunity to see not one but two electoral campaigns within the space of seven months – the first mostly observed in the city and the second mostly in Tapacarí.

In May and June, as campaigning intensified, I made several journeys out to the province of Tapacarí from the city, in the company of people from the municipality. In the dry winter months between April and November, the riverbed road which leads up to Tapacarí and past the centres of Ramadas and Tunas Vinto is passable, and trips out along it are frequent. Not coincidentally, these months include the most active period for municipally organised fairs for food and textiles, which are often tacked onto pre-existing local entertainments and events in the ritual calendar, such as bullfights. The period between June and October in Tapacarí is punctuated by (among others): three large and locally organised bullfights which happen around the same time in June, one of which also features a food and textile fair; Independence Day celebrations on 6 August; the small fiesta of St Augustine at the end of August; and the much larger fiesta of *Virgen de Dolores* (Our Lady of Sorrows) on 24 September. There is an additional textile and food fair in the town of Tapacarí at the start of September, and other small fairs organised around food or livestock strewn around the period, on moveable dates. I attended each of these, first exclusively as an adjunct to the municipality, coming along to the planning meetings and then to the events, but always returning to the city at the end of the day; then, as time wore on, more as an inhabitant of Tapacarí. By the time of the Independence Day celebrations on 6 August, I was a more or less permanent resident of the town and from then on returned to the city at intervals of about three weeks to buy groceries, see urban *tapacareños* and catch up with city business.

During June, July and August I also attended several workshops held by popular educators working for the municipality, giving peasant leaders basic education or training local people in healthcare

outreach. These workshops were delivered as components of various governmental or non-governmental programmes aimed at reducing infant mortality and monitoring child health in the countryside, with titles like *Yuyay Purichej* (Walking in Knowledge), *Kallpa Wawa* (Strong Baby) and Training for Women Leaders. They lasted for several days, and were held in the communal lodging house in the town of Tapacarí and led by young trainers who were usually from the province, but had managed to pursue a high school and then university education – a difficult feat, given the lack of secondary schools in the area. Many of the training team were active MAS members, and it was through friends in the party that I met them. Most of them lived on the outskirts of the city with family members and continued studying but earned a living by working 'on the ground' for centrally coordinated projects.

For the duration of the workshops the participants and leaders stayed in the lodging house and were provided with food by women in the town of Tapacarí who had been contracted for this purpose. Some guest workshop leaders were not from Tapacarí, but rather from other places around the department of Cochabamba, and worked in related areas such as child protection or popular education. They spoke enough Quechua to effectively communicate with a hall full of peasant leaders, very few of whom spoke Spanish. I was invited to attend and sometimes give presentations at these workshops by the educators giving them; they were one of the ways in which civil servants and outreach workers interfaced with people from remote villages. At other times I observed from the back of the hall, or took part in cooking for the workshop participants. I also attended and helped with the cooking for the several local and municipal meetings organised in the *casa comunal*, which took place at regular intervals so as to give representatives from Tapacarí's scattered rural communities an opportunity to meet with their elected officials and bureaucrats, hear about progress over the year and hold the authorities accountable for any shortcomings.

Between June and September 2006, I stayed intermittently in the *casa comunal*, the communal

lodging house in the town of Tapacarí where the workshops and meetings were held. It boasted two large dormitories adjoining its main hall, and lodging quarters for the porter's family. These dormitories were used by municipal employees, workshop leaders, people working on NGO projects and, occasionally, peasant leaders. I shared accommodation with a selection of drivers, engineers, payroll clerks, teachers and bureaucrats and, when the *casa comunal* was empty, with the Marca family, who worked as porters. Peasant visitors, of whom there were many, seldom paid the token fee for a bunk and bedding in the dormitories, but were issued with a straw mattress and blanket and slept in one corner of the main hall. During workshops, the participants likewise bedded down on straw mattresses alongside each other at the end of the day, with the mattresses being dragged out and arranged by the Marca children and blankets carefully allotted. A sharp introduction to the mentality of some local government workers came when, during a workshop, I suggested to a colleague that the participants be invited to stay in the dormitory rather than out on straw mattresses in the chilly, wide-open main hall. A veteran activist with the MAS and an outspoken anti-racist in her training sessions and political outlook, her face crumpled in horror. 'You can't invite those people in here! They're dirty, and they'll get the bedding dirty. They're used to sleeping on the floor all together, they're fine.' Indeed, the only time I knew peasant organisers to sleep in the dormitories on bunk beds was the night of the election for the *Asamblea Constituyente*, when the local political leaders, elated from the count which had shown an overwhelming result for their candidate, ended a hard week's campaigning by tucking themselves up in the dormitories with the air of people who did not quite believe they were getting away with it. It was later to become clear that this kind of policing of domestic space, with some people allowed to sleep on beds in a bedroom while others were expected to make do with straw mattresses on a floor, was a long-standing pattern inherited from many generations of multi-family houses in Tapacarí, more of which in Chapter 2.

Workshops provided a good excuse for staying in the town, but I was curious to learn more about

the rural communities surrounding it, and to see how their community organisations interacted with the new government, and what the gender and kinship dynamics in these communities were. For this reason, I visited a number of villages in various corners of the province, first with the workshop leaders making visits to their project sites, then to their homes and eventually at the invitation of workshop participants. In this way, I was able to get to know a number of people from different villages and become familiar with their families, living conditions and concerns. This also meant that when people from the villages I had visited visited the town on market days or during fiestas, we were already on cordial terms and I could ask more questions and observe who they spoke with, what they were there to do, and how they interacted with people in the town. During the months of June and July I visited seven villages in the cantons (provincial subdivisions) of Tapacarí and Challa.

In early August, soon after the Independence Day celebrations described in Chapter 5, I slipped and fell on a slope outside of town and injured my ankle. The doctor in Tapacarí forbade me to walk any significant distances for two months. This put a kink in my plans to stay in an outlying village, since most of the rural communities around Tapacarí are only reachable on foot. I spent some of the recovery period in Quillacollo for the gigantic fiesta of Urkupiña, before returning to Tapacarí, resigned to staying in the town itself rather than venturing out. At that time the focus of my research shifted unalterably towards the people moving in and out of the town itself, those living there and those who had left.

The people who lived in the town of Tapacarí seemed to occupy a muddy middle ground between city dwellers and those who primarily lived in rural peasant communities, sharing characteristics with both but distinct from either. In a literal sense, they were akin to both peasants and the urban middle classes, as branches of their families encompassed both.

The months of August and September went by quickly. The fiesta of St Augustine followed on the heels of Independence Day, with Cochabamba's departmental holiday and a fair close behind in September. September culminated in the enormous fiesta of the *Virgen de Dolores* (Our Lady of Sorrows), which attracted large numbers of celebrants, including many people who did not ordinarily live in the town, but considered themselves to be closely linked, or to 'belong' to it. Over this period I began to attend the meetings of the Tapacarí Residents' Association in Quillacollo, a group of people whose families were connected with the town but who rarely visited. Following on from contacts made during the fiesta, I carried out interviews with some of them in Quillacollo, and made visits to their businesses to chat about Tapacarí and their connection to it.

From August onwards, I had been looking for a room to rent in the town of Tapacarí. This was a vexing process, because although the town had more empty rooms in it than occupied ones, they were invariably behind the padlocked doors of empty houses whose owners were nowhere to be found. Other people from outside the town who spent weeks on end there, such as the teachers and police, had purpose-built quarters, and those who had reason to stay for a few days periodically, such as the popular educators who led the workshops I had attended, had arrangements with relatives or godparents for the use of their spare rooms. Asking around town who might have a room to rent brought a predictable response: 'Señora so-and-so has rooms in her house, but she doesn't live here. She'll come for the fiesta, and you can ask her then.' Or, 'You could ask Mr so-and-so, he has had lodgers, but he lives in the city. No, I don't know how to contact him. But he'll come for the fiesta.' It seemed that if I wanted to contact most of the people who owned houses in Tapacarí, I would have to wait for them to appear at fiesta time.

At the same time, it had become clear that *tapacareños* who did not live in Tapacarí tended to settle in Quillacollo, a small city 13km outside Cochabamba on the way to Tapacarí. In order to obtain a

fuller picture of *tapacareño* families and the way in which they straddled various parts of the Department, it would be necessary to spend time in Quillacollo – which made a convenient place for a city 'base' anyway, being within reach of the city centre, the municipal government office and the main road to Tapacarí. Indeed, when walking around Quillacollo with friends who lived there, it was common to run into people from Tapacarí on the street or sitting outside their houses. The process of finding a room to rent in Quillacollo was much more straightforward; it could almost all be done in Tapacarí. When chatting with Doña Octavina one day outside her shop on the corner of the plaza, she introduced me to another middle-aged woman, Doña Georgina, who had recently come to the town and started selling food from a kiosk. 'There are rooms for rent where you live, right?'

'Several. It's down by the Manaco factory. The landlord is mean, but his wife is nice – she's from here. It's cheap, too. There is no shower, just buckets, but the floors are concrete. When you are in the city, you can come and look.'

I went along to the address she gave me next time I was in Quillacollo, and was let in by her youngest daughter. The landlady, Doña Elsa, greeted me and asked how I liked Tapacarí. I said it was fine, and she commented that it was 'silent' (*'muy silencio es'*). She then asked if I knew her sister, Doña Angelica or Angela, and I saw the resemblance (Doña Angela ran a boarding house and *chichería* – drinking joint – along with her husband, in Tapacarí). The sisters seldom saw each other, because Doña Angela disliked coming to the city and Doña Elsa's jealous husband did not let her travel anywhere, let alone to Tapacarí. Doña Elsa, therefore, was hungry for gossip and news of her relatives and goings-on in the town. I rented one of the rooms in the small block she and her husband had built. Four other rooms were let out to couples or families, and of these, two rooms were let to families from Tapacarí – Georgina and her young daughters, and Lucia and Mario, with their daughter Saida. Lucia, who was younger and originally from Tikira, an outlying hamlet in

Tapacarí, likewise identified herself by marching up and asking if I had any news about her brother Germán.

These three women – Doña Elsa, Doña Georgina and Lucia – represented a fair cross-section of the kinds of people and living situations *tapacareños* created away from Tapacarí. Elsa was in her fifties, long-married, and made her living from letting out rooms. She had left Tapacarí as a young woman and married a man from the neighbouring province of Morochata. He was violent and controlling, and as a result she seldom went out, but stayed in and talked to her lodgers. Her two children were both university students, and her son was studying medicine in Cuba with one of the new scholarships afforded by government co-operation with Cuba.

Doña Georgina was 42 at the time of fieldwork and had six children with two different men, neither of whom were present in her life. Her two oldest daughters had left home and were raising their own children in Santa Cruz, and her two teenage boys lived by themselves in a room she rented for them while they went to school. She lived with her two younger daughters, who were ten and seven, and sold hot food and sundries in Tapacarí when there was seasonal trade, returning to Quillacollo periodically to buy provisions and see her sons, and to go to meetings of a small savers' club akin to a microcredit organisation. Like Doña Elsa, she dressed in pencil skirts, blouses and cardigans, and wore her straight hair in a single plait down her back.

Lucia was 23, and lived with her husband Mario, 24, and their daughter Saida, who was three. She was one of the daughters of the Gandarillas family of Tikira, with whom I ended up spending a great deal of time. Lucia was a *cholita*, that is to say, every day she wore a pleated *pollera* skirt, a beaded blouse and a white sunhat and plaited her hair in two braids on either side of a central parting. Lucia had worked as a community leader and as a cook in Tapacarí, and she and Mario had

also worked in the Chapare cultivating coca and tropical fruit. At the time of fieldwork, Mario supported the family by working in construction, and Lucia took care of Saida and traded in produce (chiefly fruit and tomatoes) with her family. Many family members came to stay with them in their room, which eventually caused Don Willy, Doña Elsa's husband, to evict them.

These three women were brought together by the convenience of pre-existing connections made in the town. All of their parents had known each other, and indeed Doña Elsa and Doña Georgina had known each other and probably also Lucia's parents, from childhood, but in Tapacarí as in Quillacollo, their social positioning shaped the degree of precariousness with which they lived, their livelihoods and relationships with each other, and even their dress. With the advantage afforded by capital assets and a family in the town of Tapacarí who had a successful business, Doña Elsa had been able to set herself up as a landlady; Georgina used her family home in the town of Tapacarí to live in while she worked there as a cook, but was reduced to renting a small room when in Quillacollo. Her income was precarious and her family responsibilities large. Lucia was one member of a large peasant family who formed a mutual support network strung out along several locations and forms of livelihood. All three were bilingual, but more comfortable speaking Quechua than Spanish, and had very limited literacy but considerable business acumen. For the rest of my fieldwork, I spent most of my time in the company of Georgina, Lucia or members of their families. In Tapacarí, I cooked with Georgina at her kiosk on the plaza, passing the time with her family and the family who ran the next kiosk over, as well as with the work crews and visitors who ate there, the peasants who came to sell her produce and to buy her goods, and the passers-by who lingered about the plaza.

In Quillacollo I spent days and evenings with Lucia, Mario, Saida and a constant stream of visiting family members. Together, we looked for a new set of rooms for them to rent when Doña Elsa and

her husband evicted them after Christmas, and found that all three of the places we looked at in Quillacollo were owned by *tapacareños*.

In August I became aware of the Tapacarí Residents' Association, as mentioned above, and began attending their meetings, which were held around the corner from the Quillacollo house. The *Residentes* were a group of city dwellers with strong family links to the town of Tapacarí. Some of them had lived there as children, some had not. Some, like Doña Elsa, had relatives or siblings still living in the town. A very small number spent a few weeks a year there. The majority, however, had made their permanent homes in Quillacollo or neighbouring towns such as Tiquipaya, or in the city of Cochabamba, and visited the town of Tapacarí only for the fiesta of *Virgen de Dolores* in September. Most of the attendees at the Residents' Association were elderly or middle-aged, and had known each other throughout their lives. The fiesta, however, drew people of all ages and backgrounds to the town, including those who had no previous link but simply wished to join the party. After the fiesta, the number of attendees at the residents' meeting burgeoned briefly as people in the city were reminded of their connection to the town and were determined to fulfil their obligation to it. Over the following weeks and months, however, the numbers declined again.

This decline, however, was nothing compared to the decline in numbers of people in the town of Tapacarí over the same period. In August and September, fairs and fiestas drew people to the town, and in the weeks leading up to the fiesta of Dolores, construction work accelerated on the houses that were to be used by the visiting *residentes*. There was also ongoing construction work on the boarding school, and schoolchildren filled the town in the early morning and afternoons. A bus ran a route along the riverbed twice a week, along with the regular *camiones*, lorries carrying goods, livestock and passengers. Civil servants from the municipal government office arrived and left regularly on motorbikes or in pickup trucks to visit their projects, and gatherings of young leaders for the workshops described above, or for training and payment for other programmes, took place at

regular intervals. The fiesta itself, spread over the days surrounding the official date of 24 September, attracted a surge of thousands of people from all backgrounds and caused the town's shuttered homes and businesses to open. For three extraordinary days, the town overflowed with people and activity and resounded with the noises of firecrackers, fireworks, brass bands, groups of flute players and singers, sound systems and shouts of drunken revelry.

After the fiesta of *Virgen de Dolores*, which saw the town inundated with visitors, *residentes* and *campesinos* for a week, things quietened down a lot. By mid-October, the encroaching rains meant that the road down the riverbed was jeopardised, and journeys along it, even in four-by-four vehicles, became more hazardous. Once the rains started in earnest, around the time of *Todos Santos* at the start of November, the riverbed road was no longer passable and instead vehicles had to take the main highway up to Sayari, at an altitude of 4300 metres above sea level, and then follow a precarious, winding road back down the mountainsides, culminating in an alarming descent known as 'Seven Curves' and a short crossing of the riverbed across to the town. On days when the water level was too high to cross the river, the laden-down lorries and their passengers were forced to simply wait on the other side of the river until the floodwaters went down. The journey down the riverbed to the main road and back to the city, which took two hours on a motorbike or in a four-by-four, or four or five hours in a lorry which made frequent stops, became a three- or four-hour journey in a private vehicle, and a seven-hour ordeal in a lorry. The lorries which ran to the town went less frequently – twice a week – and even the vehicles from the municipal government, on whom I relied for lifts, were reluctant to come into the interior of the province for fear they would get stuck. Consequently, the town quietened down a great deal.

Habitual visitors like municipal government employees, construction workers and lorry drivers were not the only ones to stay away, though. As the rainy season advanced, the town leached inhabitants, many of whom went 'downstream' for the wet months. After all, as the flow of visitors

(never numerous) lessened, so too did the trade in hot meals and *chicha*. In the households which survived on the sale of these, people focused their efforts instead on growing crops on their small parcels of land on the fringes of the town, went downriver to Quillacollo to stay with relatives for a few months, or simply braced themselves for another slow, wet summer. After passing the months of November and December with very few interviews, events or even conversations, I decided to spend the period from Christmas until the end of January in Quillacollo, pursuing archival research and interviews with *residentes*. In January, violent civil conflict broke out between peasant protesters discontented with the actions of the departmental prefect and city dwellers, and I was able to witness some of the fighting and take part in cooking for delegations of marchers from Tapacarí, as well as conducting some interviews about the motivations behind the conflict. Witnessing the public reaction in the city to the presence of 'disorderly' peasant bodies occupying the central plaza cemented some of the ideas I was beginning to develop around plazas, territoriality, movement and power.

At the end of January, I returned with the entire staff of the municipal government office to celebrate the province's foundation day, 26 January. This celebration was more muted than the comparable celebrations on 6 August when the entire municipal government staff was also expected to come and stay in the town, but there was a procession, some speeches and a great deal of drinking nonetheless. When the rest of the staff left, I stayed behind. In the following weeks I made two more trips to the city to buy supplies for parties held to welcome two young men back from military service. The format of these parties provided an insight into the way in which structures of kinship and dependence are built and maintained in Tapacarí and beyond.

In February, Carnival revived the town. The official celebrations on the part of the municipal government included burning two ceremonial offerings at the office in Cochabamba and again in the official government office in Tapacarí, and a fancy-dress parade through the town to the sound

of music. There followed three days of revelry on the part of peasants from the communities around. Carnival was followed by more weeks of rainy season, enlivened only by the 'Virgin's birthday' celebrations described in Chapter 5. At the end of April 2007, my fieldwork concluded.

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Context of Fieldwork

Ethnic politics: the cycle of reform and rebellion

The way in which the past makes itself felt in the present is a recurring theme in Bolivian political and cultural processes. From Jorge Sanjines' classic film *The Clandestine Nation*, which employs cutaways and a discontinuous timeline to demonstrate the cyclical and nonlinear nature of indigenous history as perceived by the director, to the photographs of deceased leaders feted at official *Todos Santos* celebrations in November, to Tupaj Katari's reported dying declaration that he would 'return and be millions', the relationship between past and present is one of constant dialogue. The past is never absent, but neither is it uniform: the ways in which it is called on or appealed to in the present vary according to its intended use. The present work brings some theorising on history and memory to bear on detailed descriptions drawn from participant observation, in addition to summarising recent trends in anthropological monographs of Bolivia to locate this thesis' emphasis on movement, ritual and everyday interaction. In this chapter I run through a brief discussion of the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s before turning to the literature covering the election of Evo Morales, which took place during fieldwork. This is followed by an examination of how different categories of person have been produced over time by colonial discourses in the Andes, and how people belonging to these categories have been depicted in scholarly works. I make a case for building on the large body of work concerning the lives of indigenous peasant people by adding a complementary focus on a third category, the 'undertheorised middle'. This category includes the transient, mercantile classes who move readily between country and city, speaking both Spanish and Quechua, sometimes attaining professionalisation but

retaining links with their rural origins. I explore how this often-ignored class of people in Bolivia complicates a dualistic understanding of ethnicity and class. I then briefly consider two of the theoretical themes which arise in the methodology and results of this research: an emphasis on space and place, and the nature of memory.

If events in the recent past form part of a political cycle, when do we take the starting point of that cycle to be, and what are its distinctive phases? Do we start in 1952 with Bolivia's relatively precocious revolution and consequent 1953 agrarian reform, in which the MNR party assumed state control of the mines, redistributed lands and, in the interests of promoting a unitary class identity and discouraging discrimination, encouraged the adoption of 'peasant' rather than 'indian' to describe the rural subaltern classes? When can this cycle have been said to come to an end – with the multiculturalist reforms enacted by the same MNR in the 1990s, proclaiming Bolivia a 'pluricultural and multiethnic' nation while simultaneously yielding to the demands of privatised industry, or with the wave of nationalisation and support for ethnic distinctiveness which has followed the election of Evo Morales? How far back can one go in examining the nature of mediation between the Bolivian population and those in power – by discussion of indigenous *caciques* in colonial times, as done by Brooke Larson (1998), or by considering instead the reach of the post-1982 state?

In terms of historical events and their influence on the decline of the town of Tapacarí, many townspeople blamed the 1953 agrarian reform and still harboured resentment over the confiscation of their parents' *haciendas*. These complaints were often aired when they visited the town professing affection for the place of their memories, but condemning its condition in present times. In their view, the mobilisations of the early 2000s had little to

do with the perceived decline of the town. The election of Evo Morales registered in Tapacarí as an inspiration for rural indigenous people and *mestizo* townsfolk alike, who both saw Evo as a champion of the poor and marginalised. However, while Evo's election emboldened and inspired indigenous people in Tapacarí, the groundwork had already been laid for greater indigenous participation by the multiculturalist reforms of the 1990s and also by popular mobilisations. It is therefore worthwhile to discuss some of the literature around these reforms and the kinds of possibilities that were afforded by them. As a note on terminology, it is also worth signalling that I will be using 'indigenous' and 'peasant' interchangeably throughout this thesis, while acknowledging that the identities described by these two words are not coterminous. In this I acknowledge Postero's assertion that being indigenous and being a peasant can be seen as two sides of a lived identity (2007: 12), as well as emulating Xavier Albó, who has used 'indigenous peasant' freely as a combined term of description since at least 1995.

Following the revolution of 1952, throughout the middle of the twentieth century the Bolivian state presided over a state economy based on extractive industries, maintaining power by means of an alliance with the military, who 'defended the achievements of the revolution' by quelling any further left-wing uprisings. In the 1980s after a period of instability, redemocratisation and economic crisis, the state-centric economy was supplanted by free-market policies. At the same time, there was a surge of mobilising around identity politics which nonetheless did not immediately translate into electoral success for indigenist parties. However, increased activity across Latin America by indigenous groups began to make its influence felt at state level in the 1990s, contributing to new discussions about the nature of citizenship and participation at national and international level (Yashar 2005, Brysk 2000). This was, depending on one's point of

view, embraced or co-opted by the neoliberal Sánchez de Lozada administration of 1993-1997. Sánchez de Lozada, known for his part in the economic structural adjustment reforms of the 1980s, took an Aymara intellectual, Victor Hugo Cárdenas, as his running mate for the 1993 elections. Cárdenas, who had previously played an active role in the Katarista indigenous movement, was the first indigenous person to achieve a rank as high as vice-president, and was in some ways a forerunner of Evo Morales in that his presence in the higher echelons of power was seen as an example of indigenous empowerment (Albó 2002, Postero 2007: 141). The Sánchez de Lozada and Cárdenas government enacted a series of multiculturalist reforms which were at the time recognised as significant, but also criticised for their restrictive view of ethnicity as a unidimensional category which could be addressed in isolation, and the extent to which they facilitated state incursion into communities and systems which had not previously engaged with political parties as their primary means of communication with the state. The degree to which this administration took on board the political messages of indigenous mobilisations from the previous decade has also been covered by Healy and Paulson, who explore the tensions of regional and ethnic identity as they fed into the multicultural project (Healy and Paulson 2000).

Key among the laws passed between 1993 and 1997 was the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (LPP), which created 311 new municipalities and allocated 20% of the national budget for municipal spending. Debate about the Law of Popular Participation has been vigorous: some, such as political scientist George Gray Molina (who was also one of its architects) pointed out that the law effectively reversed the proportion of budget distributed between the central state and regional government (Gray Molina 2001). However, Postero (2007), Gustafson (2002) and others argue that the Law of Popular

Participation did not produce meaningful redistribution of resources or change structural inequalities of power but was rather a palliative for the negative impacts of the accompanying economic policies, which aggressively privatised state assets in a process referred to as 'capitalisation'. Harten (2011) regards the LPP as an attempt by the MNR to 'shore up' its power base by taking advantage of the degree of penetration into the countryside it enjoyed, as 'the party of the revolution [... calculating] – incorrectly - that its relatively elaborate territorial structure would make it the prime beneficiary of local elections' (Harten 2011: 94). Decentralisation and the promise of greater participation for indigenous people in this case was reminiscent of James Ferguson's description of development as an 'anti-politics machine', a series of mechanisms whereby political initiatives could be presented as neutral and beneficial and the presence of a repressive state could be extended to rural areas (Ferguson 1990).

Healy and Paulson (2000) concur that the reforms 'refocused the social problem by prioritizing issues of cultural identity' (2000: 11), thereby drawing attention away from the destructive effects of free-market economic policies. In addition, pragmatic problems evolved with the decentralisation as it responded (or failed to respond) to indigenous jurisdictions. For example, Ricardo Calla (2000) pointed out that the discontinuous layout of *ayllus*, indigenous units of landholding and social organisation, meant that one *ayllu* could be split across two or more municipalities and be responsive to different governments: while this is not the case in Tapacarí, it is true that the *ayllu* coexists with the subdivisions of the municipality and therefore falls across two different *cantones*. This was dealt with in 2006-7 in Tapacarí by giving the *ayllu* leadership their own role in consultation and planning, akin to that of leaders in the trade union structure. Paulson (2002) lauded the attention paid to ethnic concerns, but criticised the narrow focus on

categorisations of 'ethnic' and 'gender' concerns which placed the onus on indigenous people and women as the carriers of marked 'ethnic' or 'gendered' status, rather than looking critically at the panorama of ethnic diversity in the country.

Charles Hale's examination of 'neoliberal multiculturalism' in Guatemala (Hale 2002) also clarifies some of the problematic elements of the multiculturalism of the 1990s and public and institutional reactions to popular protest in subsequent years. Hale lays out how neoliberal discourses of individual rights create permitted spaces for social engagement which not only exclude the possibility of collective action or ownership but go so far as to intensify the stigmatisation of indigenous movements who operate outwith these permitted spaces, presenting a 'menace' to movements which do not conform to the narrow paradigms of permitted indigenism. Racism against those who choose to appeal to collective identities or to push for greater recognition of economic rights or social justice is exacerbated by the pervasive belief that minorities are already adequately served, and that any further campaign for rights is an expression of 'reverse racism' or racial hatred against the dominant class. Such criticisms were recorded by Gustafson in 2002 as the mainstream press and right-wing political commentators in Bolivia reacted to a series of popular mobilisations, decrying the 'anti-democratic' social movements and expressing condemnation in highly charged racist language, and could also be heard in Cochabamba during violent confrontations in January 2007 (Webber 2011). In this way, 'permitted multiculturalism' can be seen not just to open up limited spaces for indigenous participation, but also to legitimise the resentment of the dominant class when faced with further demands.

In the same article, Gustafson declared the end of the era of neoliberal multiculturalism,

asking whether state-led multiculturalist policies had run their course. Condemning the 'new tactics of governance' seen in the 1990s reforms as 'discourse and institutions through which the elites seek to insulate centralised power (spatially, conceptually and institutionally)', he goes on to point out that 'new forms of social mobilisation and paradoxes of the reforms themselves suggest that, as in the past, government projects are hardly guaranteed to obtain that which they seek and may in fact produce [...] unexpected outcomes' (2002: 270). The Law of Popular Participation's impact on the popular classes in Tapacarí was positive, however: it transformed the possibilities for poverty alleviation and political emancipation among peasant people there. Indeed, the Law of Popular Participation played a crucial role in opening spaces for political engagement and enabling the fusion of peasant trade union organisation and electoral politics. However, this did not result in loyalty to the MNR party which had passed the law. In 2005, 2006 and 2009 the people of Tapacarí near-unanimously voted MAS. 'Our brother Evo' was personally identified as being an emblem of triumph for peasant *tapacareños* in much the same way Victor Hugo Cárdenas had once been championed.

If the era of neoliberal multiculturalism had brought ethnic concerns and recognition of diversity to the fore, it still failed to adequately respond to the poverty brought about by privatisation. Privatisation of natural resources and perceived illegitimacy of the government brought about a series of popular mobilisations across Bolivia starting with the 'Water Wars' in Cochabamba in 2000, in which citizens put up such concerted resistance to water privatisation under an unfair and secretly negotiated contract that the contract was cancelled and the company concerned (Aguas de Tunari, a subsidiary of Bechtel) backed down and subsequently sued for loss of investment – eventually losing. Of the many interesting features of the Water War, it is particularly salient that the

mobilisations represented a coalition of popular sectors across rural and urban areas. In 2002, to the surprise of many, Evo Morales came close to winning the presidential election but was beaten by returning president 'Goni' Sánchez de Lozada who found himself forced to form a large coalition in order to stay in power. In 2003, two more large-scale protests took place over an unpopular and unsustainable tax hike and the privatisation and sale of newly discovered natural gas deposits. The government, committed to wealth creation through free trade and a minimal state presence, proposed to sell the gas to the USA, via Chile, retaining only a small portion of the income as taxes. This met with fierce resistance from a public demanding that the gas be nationalised, with (then congressional deputy) Evo Morales at the forefront. The techniques used in the Water Wars and previous civil confrontations were put into action again, with road blockades being put up to prevent movement of gas and, eventually, any other traffic. In October 2003, after a prolonged confrontation, the Sánchez de Lozada government deployed the army to break the blockades around Senkata and El Alto which were preventing the passage of vehicles and gas into La Paz. With little crowd control training, the army fired on demonstrators, killing dozens. Along with the 64 lives lost, Sánchez de Lozada's domestic political career perished and the neoliberal/conservative hegemony which had ruled in Bolivia since the mid 1980s was fatally wounded. In the wake of the massacre of October, 'Goni' fled to the safety of the USA and his vice-president, Carlos D. Mesa, presided over a faltering regime before throwing his hands up and ceding control to the head of Congress, Vaca Díez, whose rule lasted merely a few months before an election was called for 15 December 2005.

The December elections were won decisively by Evo Morales for a number of reasons. He was opposed by two veteran politicians, Samuel Doria Medina and Jorge 'Tuto'

Quiroga, both of whom were from the ranks of the moneyed national elite, in contrast to Evo's upbringing in rural poverty. Quiroga had already served as president from 2001-2002, when he succeeded former dictator Hugo Banzer Suárez after the latter died of cancer. 'Tuto' was therefore strongly associated in the public mind with the right-wing 'old guard': pro-finance, concerned with maintenance of their own political and social power, and violently repressive on occasion. Doria Medina, a business magnate from Santa Cruz, consistently failed to attract broad support across the country. In contrast, the *Movimiento al Socialismo* drew strength from the extreme breadth and inclusivity of its bases and from the charismatic 'everyman' appeal of Evo Morales. Harten (2011) uses interviews and fieldwork with MAS as political movement to track the key organisational and campaigning themes, looking at the frames of reference used by Morales in his career and the degree to which MAS can be said to be a political party. As of 2011, Harten concluded that MAS was still in transition from its origins as a popular movement which out of need took on the form of a political party. This loose articulation between popular movement bases and party structure served MAS well in 2005, when it was able to call on support from volunteers without demanding their incorporation as party members. Operating in explicit opposition to 'traditional parties' and maintaining direct links between the party and the population through its leadership, MAS symbolically aligned itself with the wider Bolivian population: aggrieved at the economic injuries of the past twenty years, disillusioned with the political elites and ready for a change in political consensus. This can be seen in MAS' campaign language, which made reference to indigenous peasants, to working-class urbanites and to 'the people'. The nature and action of 'the people' in political discourse is variable over time (for an extended discussion of the complexities of 'the people' with regards to the 2005 election, see Harten 2011: 154-73). In the MAS narrative of 2005, the expression and actions of 'the people' in

popular mobilisations and continuous political organising held as much if not more validity than their regular participation in elections and other features of liberal democracy. This recalls Hale's (2002) analysis of multiculturalism, drawing attention to activity and expression of identity beyond the bounds of acceptable liberal spaces. In 2005 and 2006, the 'permitted space' of political consultation and organisation was broadened out, and the leader who had previously been characterised – and to some extent embraced the characterisation – as 'anti-systemic' achieved the highest percentage of the vote since redemocratisation.

MAS as a political party grew out of social movements braided together public dissatisfaction with economic policies which favoured international capital with the indigenist motifs of the 1990s and their emphasis on cultural identity and dignity, as well as the trade union history inherited by Chapare coca growers from the flood of displaced mine workers who moved to the tropics in the 1980s after losing their livelihoods in the wave of mine closures following structural adjustment reforms. The breadth of the movement meant that each strand of organising could be incorporated without overreliance on any one in particular. Indeed, while Evo's status as the first indigenous president in South America causes him to stand out, this aspect of his identity is one amid a collection of other features which are in turn appealed to such as his poor upbringing, role as sportsman, trade union leader and patriot who completed military service. In other words, he is an apt leader for a country where people have many overlapping identities which are situationally influenced and politically instrumental.

This thesis presents an ethnographic snapshot of the first period of Morales' government. It shares this time period with prior work by Thomas Grisaffi in the Chapare (see for example Grisaffi 2010). The ethnographic nature of the work acts as a complement to

more analytical work such as Webber (2012)'s volume which critically engages with the revolutionary promise and reformist reality of MAS, or the work of engaged activists like Kohl and Farthing whose many articles and book *Impasse in Bolivia* reflect their long-term commitment to disadvantaged social sectors and campaigns to secure control over natural resources (Kohl and Farthing 2006). Still other scholars look at political cycles from a historical perspective: Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thompson appropriate the idea of archaeological 'horizons', usually used to describe the rise and fall of civilisations, to describe the upheavals of the early part of the twenty-first century and compare them to the '*pachakuti*' of the indigenous revolutions of 1781. They emphasise the use of the past in the present, concluding by reference to the Aymara expression '*quip ñayr untasis sartañani*' – to walk forward while looking backward into the past. This expression is echoed in the subheading 'Forward with the Usable Past' in Dunkerley's 2007 essay 'Evo Morales, the “Two Bolivias” and the Third Bolivian Revolution', which casts a critical eye over Hylton and Thompson's comparisons with 1781 and contests the idea that Evo Morales' ascension to the presidency can accurately be said to represent a revolution. It is to some of Dunkerley's secondary remarks on the composition of the Bolivian population that I wish to return later: an introduction to ethnicity and ethnography in the Andes is, however, in order first.

Lo Andino and the undertheorised *mestizo* classes

After discussing the election of Evo Morales and mentioning at length the idea of liberal multiculturalism and indigenous empowerment, it is time to give some consideration to ideas of race, ethnicity and class in Bolivia and the wider Andes. In order to make it clear how the subjects of this thesis are positioned and position themselves within wider understandings of indigeneity and class, it is worth going over distinctions between

indigenous, mixed-race and white, and in turn how these are influenced by other factors. This thesis is largely concerned with the overlaps and fractures between indigenous and *mestizo* in a small town, and how these historically constituted divisions play out in the post-neoliberal Morales era. Below, I give a brief overview of what we mean when we talk about indigenous and *mestizo* people.

The most commonly used contemporary definition of indigenous is drawn from the International Labour Organisation declaration 169, published in 1991 and ratified by Bolivia in 1997. It lays out a number of criteria by which indigenous people can be distinguished from the societies in which they live, and outlines the special legal and social considerations which indigenous communities should enjoy. The former include minority status, distinctiveness in language and custom, continuity of tradition throughout colonisation and also long-term dependence on ancestral lands. ILO Convention 169 was influenced by, among other things, interaction with peasant communities in the Andes, where distinctions between indigenous and *mestizo* developed from the early years of colonisation, when autochthonous people were distinguished from creoles (Spaniards born in the New World) and *mestizos*, those of mixed indigenous and creole descent, and this distinction was maintained for several centuries through different methods of taxation and, in the republican era, ideas of citizenship. In Bolivia, the duality of 'the republic of indians' and 'the republic of Spaniards' was only effectively disrupted in the 1950s (albeit after an abortive national movement for recognition of indigenous territories and rights in the 1940s, which ended with the death of progressive president Villaroel – see Dandler and Torrico 1987). Even the reforms which followed the revolution of 1952 addressed the 'indian problem' by resorting to assimilation, relabelling indigenous people as 'peasants'.

Despite the persistence of official duality, the division between indigenous and *mestizo* has been porous and frequently shifting, determined by fiscal categories and locality as much as genetic inheritance: it has always been possible to cross over from indigenous to *mestizo* by changes of name, livelihood and dress (Harris 1995). On the indigenous side of this shifting line, Andean communities' complex history of colonial interaction and resistance, along with the cultural continuity of organisational principles and ways of engaging with the landscape and cosmos, have made them attractive targets for anthropologists and historians. In particular, ethnographies deeply rooted in place have catalogued the complexities of agricultural management (such as Orlove and Custred 1980), organisation of kin groups and settlements in binary moieties which interact ritually (such as Isbell 1985), and complex systems of reciprocity and spiritual practices which locate human communities in a set of interlocking relationships with tutelary deities in the landscape and sky as well as colonial narratives of saints and virgins (such as Allen 1988). They have also shown repeatedly the senses indigenous Andean people have of themselves as belonging to the places they inhabit and also of their social position as subalterns in a dominant society. However, acknowledgement of their subjects' positioning as racialised subalterns did not save Andean ethnographies of the 1980s from accusations of insularity. Studies of the Peruvian highlands in particular were subject to a strong critique from Orin Starn, who in 1991 took fellow anthropologists to task for creating the static and essentialist category of '*lo andino*', 'the Andean', and thereby excluding events and movements which fell outside the limits of community lands – such as the mass movement of young indigenous men to urban centres where they were often recruited into the *Sendero Luminoso* terrorist movement. Subsequent ethnographies and 'testimonials', whether influenced by Starn's critique, by greater engagement by

indigenous people in transnational politics or by a more general postmodern turn which privileged analysis of networks over concrete examples of community life, have tended to foreground the flexibility of identity and interaction with wider society. However, close engagement with *mestizo* people is conspicuous by its absence, just as their habitats, colonial towns, only make glancing appearances in most monographs. Peter Gose's work in Huaquirca, Peru (Gose 1994) stands out as an exception. Although he devotes some space to discussion of class relations and distinction, most of his ethnography of this rural Peruvian town is focused on agrarian rituals and the cosmology of production. Likewise, when describing the way in which spatial divisions in the town correspond to differences of perceived ethnicity and class, he restricts his discussion to the everyday workings of the town itself without broadening out to look at regional or national context.

Cholas or *cholitas*, urban mixed-race or indigenous women who wear distinctive clothes, are arguably the most visible urban *mestizos* in anthropological literature, illustrating as they do the ambiguities and stigmatisations of the popular classes who move between country and city. *Cholas* have been the subject of dedicated volumes by Mary Weismantel (2001) and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1996). Weismantel, working in Ecuador, describes how they are seen as embodying warm and fecund popular authenticity, with overtones of anti-patriarchal rebellion, in contrast to the sterile and death-dealing *pishtaco* or fat-sucking vampire, who is often given the aspect of a white male foreigner. Rivera Cusicanqui concerns herself more with the political economy of race and sex, condemning the 'pigmentocracy' that results in the exclusion of lower-class women, including *cholas*, from networks of power even as they are held up as hypersexualised representations of popular *mestizo* femininity. This is of necessity a crude précis of Rivera Cusicanqui's wide-ranging work, which also considers the situation

of '*birlochas*', or '*chotas*' as they are called in Cochabamba: working-class women of rural origins who do not dress in the distinctive clothes of the *cholita* but suffer some of the same discrimination. *Cholitas*, however, are only one subgroup of the wider *mestizo* strand of society.

Mestizo as a category is a product of the colonial encounter and postcolonial contemporary reality. Rather than describing cultural continuity or distinctiveness in dress, language or other attributes, it is defined by its opposition to indigeneity, or more precisely, the middle ground it occupies between indigeneity and whiteness. *Mestizo*, specifically, is that which is neither indigenous nor European, but which springs from the meeting between the two. Salomon and Schwartz (1999) discuss the process of ethnogenesis, the creation of new subgroups of people, in the early colonial period and signal that the idea of a '*mestizo*' or mixed-race group comes about as a result of Spanish preoccupations with blood inheritance at the time of the colonisation of the Americas. Salomon and Schwartz insist on the importance of examining the historical circumstances which give rise to such shifts in categorisation rather than assuming the internal uniformity of ethnic designations. Olivia Harris (1995) builds on this history of *mestizaje* (*mestizo*-hood) in her essay on the development of ethnic identities through commercial and tax categories, showing how *mestizo* status could be arrived at in the colonial period through deliberate connivance by people seeking to avoid onerous tribute and labour obligations. The idea of indigenous people, particularly indigenous women, using the tactics available to them to ensure better lives by cultivating *mestizo* identities is echoed in Thérèse Bouysson-Cassagne's essay 'In Praise of Bastards', in which she describes the way in which Alto-Peruvian women in the early colonial period deliberately misregistered the parentage of their children, occluding their links with indian communities liable to be

called on for labour tribute. Bouysse-Cassagne sees the mutability of *mestizaje* as its defining characteristic: 'An Andean mestizo was recognisable not by his skin colour but by his capacity for changing it' (Bouysse-Cassagne 1996: 123).

Gloria Anzaldúa, writing on the topic of *mestiza* identity in the Texas-Mexico borderlands, also embraces this idea of mutability and *mestizaje* as a space in which the absence of fixed identity or allegiance to one state opens the possibility for plural new identities and ways of being. Marginality and the overlapping of different regimes of power produce, in the *mestiza*, a flexible, even postmodern subject, who continually incorporates and appropriates cultural material from the different discourses she operates within:

The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mood – nothing is thrust out, nothing abandoned, nothing rejected. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else (Anzaldúa 1987: 101)

Anzaldúa's poetic and personal manifesto seeks for the borderlands, *la frontera*, to be considered as the site of cultural production, where contact and friction engender new social realities. For her, the *mestiza* is forced into a state of constant creativity, carving out a space for survival between two colliding worlds, while being denied full membership of either. In seeing the fringes as the site of cultural production she keeps company with Fredrik Bath (1969) who also saw zones of contact between groups as more constitutive of those groups' self-definition than their heartland. In the Cochabamba

valleys, too, the intricacies of ethnicity and class are laid out in interactions and coexistence between *mestizo* townspeople in Tapacarí and the indigenous peasants with whom they share their lives.

Within this, there is a danger of essentialising the *mestizo* and reducing persons down to what they are not (indigenous, or white) rather than critically examining their social roles and identity. *Mestizo* is a social category which within Bolivia alone contains considerable internal diversity. For example, it applies equally to people who live closely alongside indigenous populations (as is the case with the town of Tapacarí) and people who have lived in the city for several generations with few family connections with rural people who speak indigenous languages. Harris (1995) draws together some common threads of the *mestizo* experience: that while *mestizos* might continue to make a living from agriculture, it would be 'organised along different lines to the indian's productive activities', and that 'transition to a *mestizo* identity is [...] connected with increased participation in the markets, a shift away from subsistence production to forms of trade, employment of the labour of others or waged employment' (Harris 1995: 364). Harris underlines how *mestizo* identity comes about as a break from indian identity through migration, changing of one's name, negation of shared history and an overall 'radical denial of similarity' and 'the establishment and reiteration of difference between themselves and Indians' (1995: 365). I return to the subject of remembering and forgetting as social and collective acts later in this chapter. Here, it is worth describing further what others have noted about rural *mestizos* in order to give greater context to a discussion of Tapacarí.

Two or more Bolivias?

As I have mentioned, *mestizo* identity encompasses groups as diverse as professional city dwellers of mixed Bolivian and European parentage, and people from the precarious rural mercantile classes, who feature in this thesis. The breadth of *mestizo* identity complicates any attempt, no matter how pervasive in popular media or political discourses, to present Bolivia as a country divided in two. This narrative was particularly strong in the first two years of the Morales administration, when the eastern departments of the country, whose political leadership was composed of wealthy agribusiness and commercial leaders, made concerted attempts to break away from the Andean and broadly more socialist west. The idea of a country divided in two waned after two developments. Firstly, a few months of intensifying violence between proto-fascist youth organisations in the east and indigenous peasant settlers reached its nadir in a confrontation on 11 September 2008 in Pando which resulted in several deaths, after which the public tolerance for such disturbances subsided. Secondly, the new constitution promulgated by the Morales government in 2009 effectively disarmed the regionalists' claim for 'autonomy' by granting it, albeit in a different form (Webber 2011). The presentation of Bolivia as a country split between an indigenous majority and a small white-*mestizo* elite has also been criticised by Carlos Toranzo Roca (2008). Toranzo Roca questions the design of the much-vaunted census of 2001 which resulted in 62% of Bolivians declaring themselves to be indigenous, and underlines the importance of taking into account the large and diverse population of *mestizo* and *cholo* workers in all economic and social sectors. 'If we do not open our eyes to this multiplicity,' he thunders, 'we cannot begin to grasp the kind of social change which has taken place in Bolivia over the seventy-five years since the Chaco War, or even the fifty-five years since the national revolution' (2008:43). Toranzo's enthusiastic defence of the diversity of *mestizo* identity is undermined by his ready conflation of *cholo* and *mestizo*, which he insists are 'much the same thing' despite *cholos* and *cholaje* being

widely recognised as a distinct subset of *mestizos*, closer to their indigenous and working-class roots than the professional elites (see Tassi 2010, Buechler 1996).

It is clear, then, that there are gradations of class within *mestizo* society. The particular *mestizos* who feature here are the former rural elites, some of whom have experienced a drop-off in power following the agrarian reform and some of whom have deftly positioned themselves as intermediaries between rural indigenous people and markets. This position as intermediary is also a vulnerable one, and I show in later chapters how indigenous peasant *tapacareños* work around the 'strategies' of the elite by using what philosopher de Certeau called 'tactics' – that is, defensive and opportunistic means of resistance against structural subjugation (de Certeau 1984).

The rural *mestizos* living in the town of Tapacarí, or who have departed the town of Tapacarí but still occasionally return, fall into the second of three categories described by Dunkerley (2007), in which he neatly undermines the idea of the 'two Bolivias' in the title of the same article:

Around 35% of the (Bolivian) population operates within an informal economy of essentially family-based activity, often migratory in character and including an urban element [...] which devotes its savings to conspicuous consumption in carnival-based activity derived from the provincial culture to which it still belongs (2007: 35)

This echoes a similar structure sketched in less detail by Xavier Albó thirty years earlier in his survey of Quechua use in Cochabamba, *Los Mil Rostros del Quechua*, in which he distinguishes between 'upper, central and lower' classes, describing the 'central' as

follows: 'The new migratory flow to the city [...] comes most of all from the provincial towns (which have lost their importance relative to the countryside which surrounds them) and also from the farms and estates' (1976: 66). He also mentions the emergence of new elites made up of those with access to transport, a subgroup studied in greater depth by Maria Lagos (1998): 'Due to their high mobility in every sense, this group plays an important role as cultural and linguistic intermediary' (*ibid.*). Albó goes on to prefigure the content of this thesis by remarking on the material loss of power of colonial towns, discussing how the activity which was historically concentrated in them was, in 1976, being dispersed out to other settlements, most importantly in the form of schools and agricultural fairs. '[The secondary towns], as well as losing their monopoly, have not been successful in finding substitute occupations, but despite this, there is still a greater concentration of services in these towns than in the countryside or in new towns,'¹ he concludes. The decentralisation reform of 1994 intensified this process and removed access to many of these services. Given the depopulation of the town and the strength of peasant union organising, the municipal government relocated the focus of its services – not just schools but the building of infrastructure and provision of rudimentary social care – out to rural communities.

Mobility and the field

This thesis focuses on people with flexible identities and mobile lives, who live precariously between country and city. In order to fully understand the lives of people in

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'Los pueblos secundarios han quedado debilitados. Con la Reforma muchas de las facilidades y servicios que antes eran monopolio exclusivo de estos pueblos se han expandido a áreas rurales circundantes. El caso más importante es el de las escuelas y ferias. Pero anundan los ejemplos en detalles como el poder producir y vender chicha en escala, tener camiones pequeñas tiendas, sanitarios, recibir frecuentemente visitas del cura etc [...] Los que salen perdiendo en todo este proceso son los pueblos secundarios que, además de perder el monopolio de servicios que aseguraba su existencia a expensas del campo, no han logrado encontrar ocupaciones sustitutas. Con todo, ahora hay mayor concentración de servicios en estos pueblos que en el campo o en los pueblos nuevos.' (1976: 68)

this subgroup, a flexible fieldwork between country and city was necessary, and an understanding that identities were forged not just in the community but also in rented and shared houses in the town, on the road and in peri-urban districts around the city. This necessarily involves critical consideration of where the 'field' is and how inhabitation of, or journey through a place can or must be understood. Gupta and Ferguson, in their discussion of the centrality of 'the field' and fieldwork to ethnographic enquiry, comment on how anthropological fieldwork must adapt to a changing and increasingly globalised world in which populations are more mobile than ever before. However, using multi-sited fieldwork still falls short of the task of capturing the ways in which *tapacareño* identity (and other identities such as that of the civil servant) is constituted, which is often on the road and in transit between locations. The constant movement of *tapacareños* between different places, and the ways in which former townspeople retain a sense of themselves as *tapacareños* despite having lived away from the town for many years, gives rise to a need for a more elastic understanding of 'the local' and, I argue, a de-territorialised understanding of peasantry, at least in the Cochabamba highlands, given that the separation of indigenous *tapacareños* from their lands when they travel to carry out migrant labour does not denude them of their ethnic and local identity. This call for a new understanding of 'the local' fits into a larger critique of the embeddedness of anthropological work in a particular place, most notably in the work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot. Trouillot claims that the postmodern approach to field and location in the work of Gupta and Ferguson and other products of the 'literary turn' such as Marcus and Fisher (1986) do not adequately address the way in which location and the field of study define each other. 'The problem is not fieldwork per se, but the taking for granted of localities upon which the fetishization of a certain kind of fieldwork was built and the relationship between such supposedly isolated localities and supposedly distinct cultures' (Trouillot

2003: 125). A holistic picture of the composition of *tapacareño* society must necessarily include not just the town but also the rural villages which surround it, the municipal government office in the city and a significant part of the population concentrated for half of the year in a periurban neighbourhood, several hours' travel away. The distinctiveness of the ways in which people feel and express their own sense of themselves as *tapacareño* is taken here as illustrative of wider dynamics of class, ethnicity and economic inequality rather than distinction for distinction's sake.

Trouillot's critiques are echoed by Michael Kearney (1996) in his exhaustive deconstruction of the category of 'peasant', whose formation he relates to changing schools of thought in anthropology itself as well as wider political developments such as the waning of the Cold War. Like Trouillot, Kearney sees the construction of peasantry as object of study as tied up with the dichotomisation of human life between an idealised communitarian past and an unstable, individualising modern present – what Trouillot would call the relationship between researchers from the 'North Atlantic countries' and their search for a 'savage slot' in which to place studied ethnic Others (Trouillot 2003: 16). Kearney, too, argues for a deterritorialised understanding of peasantry, influenced by the regular migration and participation in market systems by the peasants he has lived with most in rural Mexico. He emphasises the imposition of discourses of backwardness connected to centre-periphery relations.

Recent ethnographies of particular places in Bolivia stress the twin themes in this thesis of movement and intimacy: Andrew Canessa, who has carried out intermittent fieldwork in the highlands of La Paz for over a decade, writes primarily about the details of everyday life and the insight they provide into discourses of indigeneity and nationalism:

sex, food, domestic violence, schooling, and work. His contemporary Stuart Rockefeller, working in Potosí, carried out fieldwork on the move as well as in the community, looking at movement in agricultural practice and land management but also migration between Quirpini, San Lucas and Buenos Aires. Rockefeller mentions the town of San Lucas in passing, describing a social vista very similar to that of Tapacarí, writing of a dwindling hereditary elite who engaged in paternalistic relations with the peasants around the town:

Although the position of the town elite was steadily weakening, they still occupied the centre of a regional system geared towards reproducing their control. Campesinos, especially those of the valley, had little choice in living their lives but to play to elite strength allowing the elite to enrich themselves while entrenching their position (Rockefeller 2010: 179).

Elements of both Rockefeller and Canessa's methodological and theoretical approaches are seen in the present thesis; like Canessa, I privilege the small stories of everyday life as a way of understanding large questions of ethnicity, political engagement and power. Like Rockefeller I suggest that movement is critical to understanding the processes by which people develop senses of themselves and develop economic strategies for survival, and find de Certeau's idea of 'tactics' for resistance to be useful when thinking about marginalised actors finding creative ways to combat their own oppression.

Together with Rockefeller this thesis provides some background to the fact of large-scale migration from Bolivia, heading overseas. Taking the same starting point of assuming the central importance of movement to Andean cosmologies and memory practices, I also use

the template of the 'vertical archipelago' suggested by Murra (1956) in his account of how Inca and pre-Inca civilisations used distributed and discontinuous settlements to maximally exploit different ecological niches. This model has its roots in deep ethnohistorical accounts but is also adaptable for understanding the effects of a natural-resource-driven economy which goes through cycles of boom and bust and is sensitive to commodity prices, prompting a high degree of mobility in households.

Cochabamba: intermediaries and contact zones as sites of cultural production

Cochabamba is one of the ethnically 'messiest' zones in Bolivia, for historical reasons which I discuss in Chapter 2. The ways in which *cochabambinos* defy easy description is seen in the work of those who have covered mercantile development, political discourses and resource management in the Cochabamba valleys: work by Robert Albro (1998) on the political culture of Quillacollo, Susan Paulson (2002) on the strategic manipulation of ethnic and gender identity in Mizque, Maria Lagos (1994) on transport monopolies and the emergence of new elites, Tom Grisaffi (2010) on *cocaleros* and Daniel Goldstein (2004) on dance fraternities and community justice among new urban migrants show that Cochabamba society features many strands of ethnic and class variations beyond simply indigenous or non-indigenous. In any case, indigenous movements are far from uniform. As Gustafson puts it:

Indigenous movements do not represent any uniform response to neoliberalism as a set of governing logics. Rather, indigenous movements are sophisticated, multi-layered actors simultaneously engaging an array of international, national and regional processes. Our analysis should steer clear of dualistic framings which find their echo in popular racial discourses (Gustafson 2002: 293).

In Cochabamba, it is much commoner to find examples of people in rural or urban settings who strategically use indigeneity as a pole to organise around and claim rights with than people who consciously belong to a preexisting ethnic group. Andolina, Laurie and Radcliffe (2009) and others have demonstrated how indigenous communities in Raqaypampa, Mizque use community norms to administer natural resources, particularly water. terrain of market traders and people on the road. Key differences are of dress and clothing and access to capital or to lands. Some people sell their own products, some are intermediaries and sell other people's products. Language is also a key determinant: indigenous *tapacareños* are bilingual, trilingual in Quechua, Aymara and Spanish or monolingual in Quechua, whereas monolingual Spanish speakers are rarely found in the countryside.

Each of these works has areas of overlap with the scope of the present study. Maria Lagos' monograph on *transportistas*, access to markets and the formation of new elites in the wake of the agrarian reform describes some of the same means by which *tapacareños* establish advantages over each other. However, Lagos gives ethnicity only passing mention, noting that the new elites in Tiraque were as likely to wear traditional clothes and speak Quechua as the peasant farmers whose products they transported. In Tapacarí the racialised difference between indigenous peasants and townspeople is a factor in everyday life, and differences of language, dress, food and livelihood attract prestige or stigma very clearly. Likewise, Susan Paulson (2002) describes evocatively how women peasant farmers in Mizque subvert or make use of these racialised differences when negotiating with middlemen or selling their potatoes.

Goldstein's work on the neighbourhood of Sebastian Pagador in the south of the city of Cochabamba supplies an in-depth look at the links of solidarity and community organisation in a marginal neighbourhood populated by people who have migrated there from the countryside. Goldstein looks at the social hygiene expressed in urban planning and how squatter communities disrupt utopian urban visions by settling in socially and physically 'disorderly' ways. Without being able to rely on official services for water, let alone justice, the people in Sebastian Pagador create their community around the spectacular event of organised dances, a kind of irruption of social coordination and control which is reflected darkly in the other social irruption, lynchings. Like Lazar (2008) and other authors concerned with citizenship, identity and belonging in new neighbourhoods populated by migrants, Goldstein shows how a small community of incomers – in this case Orureños – steadily works to attain recognition from a city which sees their settlement as less than desirable. Robert Albro (1998, 2001), writing about the politics and religious life of Quillacollo, also touches on the plurality of the urban centre, where migrants from many areas of the country come to do business, make pilgrimages and sometimes settle. Albro's discussion of the discursive tactics of public indigenous-themed rituals as part of populist politics is highly relevant for Tapacarí, but like Goldstein and others his analysis still centres on the urban centre to which people come. At the time of writing I have not found any monograph which focuses entirely on a town or village which people have migrated from and pays attention to the shape left behind by their absence.

Memory

Tapacarí is a place whose past is much more expansive and impressive than its present. Therefore, most conversations of any length involved an unfavourable comparison

between the town as it then was and the town as it once had been, and often some recounting of memories. Townspeople remembered the years when the streets were fuller and louder; indigenous people also told of how they had been exploited and discriminated against during those years. *Residentes tapacareños* in the city related more to the town through memory than through actually visiting. When visiting during the fiesta, much of their time was devoted to talking with family members and recalling shared stories from their past. Another object of their visits at fiesta time was to store up new memories for the future, of good times spent in the old town, surrounded by family. Some older people visited the town so as to be able to escape the realities of their lives in the city and instead dwell in the same place they remembered. Between the recollections which filled conversations, and the presence of ruins and locked-up, crumbling houses, Tapacarí was saturated with memories and also things and people which had been forgotten. Below, I summarise a few key contributions to the literature around memory in social life, and comment on its application in Tapacarí.

Maurice Halbwachs was perhaps first among twentieth-century social thinkers to consider memory as a social process. In 1925 (translation published 1950) he published *The Collective Memory*, a work heavily influenced by the Durkheimian idea of collective consciousness, and also by Halbwachs' colleagues and mentors in the nascent school of psychoanalysis. Halbwachs reasoned that the idea of individual remembering, devoid of social context, was empty of meaning, and proposed that all acts of memory interplay with a sense of group belonging. This he demonstrated by pointing out that members of different social 'segments' may each carry away from an event distinct memories of it that are internally coherent within their social group but distinct from the recollections of others. This idea has much currency in Tapacarí, where distinct social groups have quite

different recollections of the same era. Indigenous people, for example, may remember not being allowed to sit down or unload their beasts of burden in the plaza; *residentes* recall with nostalgia the days in which the plaza was well kept and orderly. For Halbwachs, no act of remembering could be carried out without reference to such a wider social context. Paul Connerton, the sociological theorist of memory and history, describes how Halbwachs sees memories as bound together not by 'the fact that they are contiguous in time but rather the fact that they form part of a whole ensemble of thoughts common to that group' (Connerton 1989: 37). This connects with the thematic threads of memory in Tapacarí, whereby people recall conversations and events in relation to their families, or describe celebrations at fiestas of past years in one 'bundle' of recollection, even though years may have elapsed between the events they describe. Coherence is lent to the recollection by relating it to a group of people rather than a time period, leaving space for lacunae in the story such as, for example, the absence of references to repression or exploitation in the narratives of *residentes* who recall only happy and compliant peasants. Smith (1995) describes his experience listening to group accounts of remembered events in a similar way, comparing it to a river running over limestone: for most of the journey of the river, its currents are visible, but at intervals, the flow disappears underground into a spring before re-emerging. So too do stories have visible currents and parts of the version of accounts which are hidden from view, either through forgetting or through a conscious wish to emphasise or hide something.

Halbwachs also outlined a theme which would be taken up by the anthropologist Maurice Bloch: that of ritual and memory. For Halbwachs, the consistency of the ritual experience, particularly church-going, marked it out as a unique type of memory-event in which experience could be anchored in place and maintained uniformly. Bloch expanded

on this in his studies of ritual, in which he focused on the effectiveness of bringing a condensed and unchanging form of the past into the present, without allowing scope for contestation.

Paul Connerton divides methods of remembering into two kinds of activity: commemorative ceremonies and routine bodily practices (Connerton 1989). Ritual events in rural Bolivia tend to collapse this distinction, as fiestas and other kinds of spectacular event are animated by bodily practices, particularly marching and dancing: each commemorative ceremony features physical participation. The production of music likewise bridges bodily activity (both playing and responding to the music with dance) and abstract narratives of 'heritage', authenticity and belonging. Romero (2001), writing about the role of traditional music and dances in the Mantaro valley in Peru, demonstrates the links between music and relations of production and thence to identity building. For Romero, 'the sense of community and reproduction of the life-cycle [music] evokes in the memory of the valley residents are significant ingredients in [...] affirmations of regional identity' (Romero 2001: 65). Henry Stobart (2006) also describes how music played and danced to at different times of year is caught up in the maintenance of community reproduction and agricultural practice in the north of Potosí.

Connerton goes on to distinguish between three different classes of 'memory claims': the first and most relevant for recollections and use of the past in the construction of identity are personal memory claims which reflect upon oneself as much as the subject matter, including recollections of the part one played in the events which are being recounted. He distinguishes these from cognitive memory claims, such as recalling the layout of streets or certain facts, or the recollection of learning, and habit-memory, which refers to

skills and practices adopted in such a way that even if you cannot remember having learned them, you still know them. This can map onto the memory practices of drinking, dancing and moving through space in order to connect with the past, described by Abercrombie (1998) in his account of K'ulta boundary marking in Potosí, which involves elaborate and often improvised ceremonies of libation pouring, coca chewing and physical movement from place to place.

Claims to territory or legitimacy in other parts of indigenous South America (and elsewhere in the world) are strongly interconnected not only with movement but also with geographical features in the natural world. Joanne Rappaport's work on the Nasa people of the Colombian Cauca, for example, strongly links their claims for territory rights to recollections of landscape and movement through it (Rappaport 2000). As she puts it, history is:

encoded in physical space, and geography does more than carry historical referents. It also organises the manner in which these facts are conceptualised, remembered and organized into a temporal framework (Rappaport 1990: 11).

Keith Basso's essay 'Wisdom Sits In Places' (Basso 1996), in which he describes the rootedness of morality and language in place, also echoes the close interdependence between place and the ways in which stories, memories and morality are structured and reproduced. It is by recourse to common truths about the events which took place at certain geographical features that Basso's interlocutors can express moral values such as judgement and forgiveness. The experiential reality of place is inextricable from the stories and narratives based in that place.

For the town of Tapacarí, the framing and composition of memory is connected less to the mountains and landscape around it (as seen in Rappaport's work) but rather to the material of the town: its adobe houses, its sloping plaza and rutted streets. It is these which appear in the self-published recollections of one of its nostalgic sons and in the souvenir newspaper produced at fiesta time by visiting ex-townspeople. The town as material repository of memories is echoed in Michael Taussig's quoted description of a ghost ship, which becomes saturated with the stories told by crew members trapped on board:

Their stories never leave. A story penetrates the ship and every part of it: the iron, the steel, the wood, the holds, the coal-bunkers, the engine-hall, the stokehold, even the bilge. Out of these parts, full of hundreds of thousands of stories, tales and yarns, the ship tells the stories over again with all the details and minor twists. She tells the stories to her best comrades - that is, to the members of the crew. She tells the stories better and more exactly than they could ever appear in print. (Traven, 1994: 104, quoted in Taussig, 2004: 66)

However, in the case of the town, its emptiness means that its stories lack any 'best comrades' to be told to. The absence of visitors means that the construction of memory by interaction between people and place cannot be completed. Still more, the absence of the people who once lived in the town means that those who visit by themselves cannot experience a satisfactory memory process by themselves: it is necessary to return as part of a large group during the fiesta to be able to adequately revisit the past. If the possibility for visiting does not exist, or the idea of visiting is not attractive, memory may

be rekindled by seeking the company of others with whom to share it.

Svetlana Boym comments in her lyrical volume on nostalgia for the former Soviet Union that pre-modern space was experienced in relation to bodily actions (distances of arms' length or of a certain time spent walking) whereas modernity has made the measurement of distance and time external and uniform. Boym relates nostalgia to the idea of social 'progress', locating it in the disparity between the smallness and comfort of prior experience and the new expectations of a more challenging world. 'Nostalgia as a historical emotion is a longing for that shrinking "space of experience" that no longer fits the horizon of new expectations. Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress [...] not only of temporal progression but also of spatial expansion' (Boym 2001: 10). This perhaps supplies some explanation for the importance still accorded to the town of Tapacarí by those who have left: its small, knowable dimensions and reliably unchanging social structure provided the refuge of a smaller world, a place from which to shelter from the expectations and wider horizons of adult life. It is perhaps also for this reason that social change in the town, in which indigenous people come to occupy the houses abandoned by townspeople, is perceived as a threat, or disorder.

Later in this thesis I consider how different people occupying the same house at different times put the space to use in ways which are both pragmatic and also contribute to constituting their senses of self and their location in a wider society. Memory can form part of this usage, especially when inhabitation or abandonment of a house is tied up with associations from its past. Connerton (1989) distinguishes social memory from historical reconstruction and notes that in recognising an object which contains or represents traces of the past (e.g. an artifact, or ruins) one passes from saying something about the object in

question to saying something about the age from which it is left over. That is, rather than seeing simply a ruined house, someone who has experience or memory of the time when the house was standing brings this perspective to their perception of the object or place. Therefore the changes to a town or landscape are judged not by the results currently in evidence but the former uses of that space and the social dynamics which could previously be relied on. Philosopher Edward Casey phrases it even more simply in his contribution to Feld and Basso's 1996 volume, in which he addresses the phenomenological aspects of being in place and remembering. He describes the ways in which places 'gather and hold', echoing Rappaport's ideas about places contributing to the organisation of ideas in a temporal framework. Casey sees places as collecting together and making manifest 'a configurative complex of things'. Addressing the interplay between body and place, he states:

Places keep such unbodylike entities such as thoughts and memories. When I visit my hometown [...] I find this place more or less securely holding memories for me. In my presence, it releases these memories which belong as much to the place as to my brain or my body. Gathering gives to place its particular perduringness, allowing us to return to it again and again as the same place and not just as the same position or site. A place is generative and regenerative on its own schedule. From it experiences are born and human beings return to it for empowerment (Casey 1996: 26).

A house, particularly a childhood home, is a physical anchor for the sense of self and of belonging within a family. But houses in Tapacarí, as I explore in subsequent chapters, are also stages for quiet scenes of co-operation and resistance to old hierarchies. If the

old elites return to them to be 'empowered' by the continuity of what is gathered there, this space of 'perduringness' is also overlaid with contemporary struggles. Tapacari houses are both sites which hold onto memories for some people to return to, and also locations where different and overlapping strands of belonging and morality intermesh. Differing moralities and allegiances exist in the past as well as present, though, and are brought out in the dialogue between the two, since the past is not a discrete set of phenomena but is always remembered by being filtered through current experiences. Michael Lambek (1996) explores the three-way relationship between spatiality, memory and morality by:

situat[ing] memory in time and see[ing] it as a function of social relationships, in part a mutual affirmation of past interaction, in part the traces of our introjection of one another [...] Memory in this model is [...] activated implicitly or explicitly between people, a confirmation of the sense of continuity (caring) and discontinuity (mourning) that each person experiences in their interaction with others [...] more intersubjective and dialogical than exclusively individual (1996: 239).

In this way we find ourselves back with Halbwachs and his yearning for a collective experience, but this time emphasising the dialogue between different persons both in the past and in the present, noting the ways in which members of different social groups experience their encounter with each other as well as taking away different recollections of the same situation: as Lambek says, it is less a representation of the past and more a claim or set of claims about it. Former townspeople experience dysjuncture, absence,

mourning for the society they grew up in and which has now emptied out of the town. Indigenous peasant people maintain their continuous relationship with the town's spaces, both those they were historically permitted to use and those which are newly opened up. Somewhere in the nest of plural accounts and experiences is a holistic picture of a postcolonial town, where a class of rural *mestizo* people live every day with the indigenous peasants who they take pains to distinguish themselves from.

Chapter 2: Town and archipelago

From May 2006 to April 2007, I lived intermittently in the town of San Agustín de Tapacarí, the capital of the province and municipality of the same name, 67km from the city of Cochabamba. Here, the political novelty of an indigenous president and the claim of a new era and a united, inclusive country were put into perspective by the looming presence of four hundred years of history. As part of an early colonial land partition, Tapacarí was built as a '*reducción*' town with the intention of imposing order on the dispersed indian communities around it – a node of 'civilisation'. The town played a role as vanguard of colonisation in a rural area, and a Spanish-speaking bourgeoisie emerged, making a living from processing the products of country people and selling them on. Today, the people whose families have lived in the town of Tapacarí for several generations maintain their distinction from the country people with whom they trade and interact every day. These differences are racialised, and framed in terms of suitability for different kinds of labour and welcome or unwelcome presence in different kinds of spaces around the town.

A town in decline

The heyday of the town as a commercial and population centre is long gone. Its empty streets and abandoned buildings bespeak a long and terminal decline. The prosperous middle class who once traded and lived here are, with few exceptions, now based in the city of Cochabamba, and their houses sit empty apart from during the annual fiesta. Most of the people occupying or visiting the town are indigenous peasants and, while they are still treated with some condescension and hostility by townspeople, and in turn are often deferential or at least sanguine about mistreatment, I found that they were also actively

organising through the peasant trade union to resist abuses of power, and had, in recent years, begun to transgress the limitations placed on them by townspeople. People who had grown up in the town talked about the changes in the indigenous people they dealt with. 'Before, the people of the country were *bien educaditos* (polite), but now they don't let anyone dominate them. It seems they are defending themselves more, and now when they come they will talk back to you, even swear at you if they think they are being cheated.'

In Tapacarí's houses and plaza, and in the communities around its riverbanks, people negotiate the dynamics of class, ethnicity, political engagement and economic interdependence by encountering others who are differently positioned. While I shall focus on the plaza and houses which form the heart of the town, attention is also paid to conversations and interactions in peasant communities and the cities of Cochabamba and Quillacollo, where I also kept a room and carried out fieldwork. The numbers of *tapacareños* who lived in Quillacollo part-time and returned regularly to the town and to their communities to trade or work their lands demonstrate a tendency to a kin-mediated, multi-sited settlement pattern in which movement between different rural communities, rural towns and periurban districts is common, as well as movement overseas. The possibilities this affords in terms of seeking casual labour and distributing goods from different economic and climatic zones for sale, trade or consumption is reminiscent of the Inca-era 'archipelago' system for distributing goods between distinct ecological niches (Murra 1956) or the later idea of the 'ethnic economy' in which production and distribution within an ethnic group responds flexibly to variance in cash markets, prioritising internal flows of goods (Harris 2000). The town now is one island in the archipelago.

Tapacarí's townspeople are the remains of a local elite whose way of life depends on but does not resemble that of the people living in the rural hamlets around it. In the town, whose permanent inhabitants number only a few hundred, distinctions are carved out between indigenous and non-indigenous and between empowered and marginalised in dozens of everyday actions. But complications of these easy classifications follow, often through the contradictory actions and narratives of the same people. Proximity and shared history means that people in Tapacarí 'rub along' and spend their everyday lives in interaction with each other, rather than in enclaves of people similar to themselves. The material spaces in which they live – streets and houses – are home to overlapping polysemic meanings, in which senses of identity, belonging and resentment are created relationally in the interactions between peasants and townspeople. Identity formation and identification with political projects or ethnic or class groupings in Bolivia (as elsewhere) stems from the spaces of encounters between people, in different contexts. Simple categories such as indigenous and *mestizo*, themselves historically determined by economic and fiscal processes (Harris and Larson 1995), cover a great deal of internal complexity which is played out at an intersubjective level between individuals and families. The wider context for the racialised hierarchies and historical inequalities of Tapacarí and places like it is of a colonial and republican history which created and maintained the marginality of indigenous peasants from full political participation, until recently, and entrenched a social 'pigmentocracy' (Rivera Cusicanqui 1996) in which the physical appearance and social traces of indigeneity were stigmatised. Discussions of *tapacareño* society and social change there rest on an understanding of difference whose 'true defining horizon is empire ... understanding the imperial contest that shapes the world is the only way to understand how people perceive it' (Said 1978). To see, in

Anzaldúa's words, 'where one world rubs up against another and bleeds' (1987).

At its heart, it is a story of a town whose people used to exert considerable power over those around them and which now finds itself on the margins of regional and national networks of commerce and political power. How did this transformation come about? After an introduction to the town's history in the context of colonial and republican Cochabamba and some background information about the municipality and province of which it is capital, I identify the town's decline as part of a wider pattern of social change and migration prevalent in Cochabamba. The small number of people who live there occupy the interstices between indigenous and *mestizo*, cultivating relations of kinship, fictive kinship and clientelism with the indigenous peasants of the province and also with people now living in the city. The stories of a few families whose members move through the town illustrate that the borders between country peasant, town dweller and educated urbanite are porous, although discrimination and other issues face those who aspire to social mobility. Spatial and social boundaries between townspeople and peasants point to affection and interdependence within certain, strongly expressed limits. However, these limits are being transgressed more and more, in part due to external intervention and demographic changes, as well as the individual efforts and creativity of people in the town.

Finally, I argue that relations of centre and periphery have changed unalterably in Tapacarí, undermining the town's dominance of the countryside around it. The dwindling of economic power and better access to the city of Cochabamba has left Tapacarí by the wayside. However, the town is still used as a ritual centre and as an important stopover. The population of Tapacarí, indigenous as well as *mestizo*, is habitually mobile and

families occupy many dwellings simultaneously in order to gain from different environments. The town's houses – abandoned by their previous owners – now host a changing cast of indigenous peasants moving seasonally between their countryside communities, the schools and market of the town, urban centres such as Quillacollo, the coca plantations of Chapare and sometimes even further afield. Thus utilised, the town has adapted to fit in with a quintessentially Andean settlement pattern, the archipelago. By including the town, which was first built as a *reducción* with the precise intention of disrupting this kind of settlement pattern, the indigenous *campesinos* of Tapacarí demonstrate the enduring and flexible nature of indigenous social organisation even in a part of Bolivia not known for its ethnic distinctiveness.

Tapacarí's days as a major commercial centre are over, but there is continuity in its use by local indigenous people as a location for key seasonal celebrations during the fiestas, at Carnival, at Easter and with annual bullfights, in which it plays an important role as a focal point or axis for the articulation of indigenous space. In addition, a weekly barter market provides a space for the circulation of goods, in a way which circumvents municipal control of the flow of goods and money. The historical continuities and ruptures between the role played by towns like Tapacarí in the colonial project and their current uses can be taken to illustrate how indigenous peasant people in Tapacarí and elsewhere have benefited from the erosion of traditional power bases following the 1952 revolution. Rather than being pulled into the ambit of the town, they have re-incorporated it into their own circuits of commerce and kinship for their own ends.

Four kinds of people

Broadly speaking, there were four kinds of people found in the town of Tapacarí. These

categories overlapped, as I will show. The first category, and the majority, were indigenous rural peasants. An overview of the differences of dress, livelihood and language of the different groups of peasants in Tapacarí is given later in this chapter. 'Peasant' (itself a term with many, contested meanings – see Kearney 1996) is an imperfect translation of the Spanish term '*campesino*', but the closest approximation. When briefly surveying people from rural Tapacarí, this was the term they used to describe themselves, although the words '*indígena*' and '*originario*' were also used, mostly by political activists. In some parts of the province, with stronger adherence to cultural traditions and ancestral patterns of landholding, people referred to themselves as '*originario*' more readily; however, when it came to the villages immediately around Tapacarí, only one person self-identified, when asked, as '*indígena*' rather than '*campesino*'. He also affirmed that he thought '*indígena*' to be an accurate description of everyone in the communities in his sector. It was probably not coincidental that this person was a political activist leading a struggle in his *subcentral* to recover control of a small limestone mine from the former *patrón* of the area. At the meetings through which this campaign was carried out and organised (held in the riverbed, by the mine), the most active contributors made frequent references to the new government, specifically the fact that it was headed by indigenous people and was leading by example in nationalising natural resources, placing them back under the control of the 'people of the place' (*gente del lugar*). In these comparisons, the leaders and other participants of the campaign to take back the limestone mine explicitly placed themselves and their relationship to the owner of the mine as equivalent to Bolivia's relationship with the transnational energy companies with whom the government was renegotiating contracts to place natural resources under public control.

The town of Tapacarí was home to at least fifteen families whose adult members had been born in a rural community rather than the town itself. There were, in addition, several elderly people, mostly women, who lived by themselves in the town and who had come from rural communities. My neighbour Doña Olimpia was one such person, both originally a peasant and now an established *vecina* in the town. She had grown up in a rural village, came to the town when she got married, and stayed there when her marriage dissolved since she could make a living by herself selling *chicha*. She was *de pollera* and spoke Quechua in preference to Spanish, and her adult daughter who lived in Quillacollo was a smart *de vestido* professional who helped her out with a place to stay and money when she needed it. When she had first come to the town, she said, people called her '*india*' and were snobbish towards her, but over time they had mellowed.

Doña Olimpia had been settled in the town for many years and did not retain land in her community of origin, but there were also several families who lived in the town some of the time (for example during school term time) while continuing to have a house and plots of land in a nearby peasant community, where they would attend meetings of the peasant trade union (*sindicato campesino*) and thus continue to form part of the political organisations which apply pressure to (and form part of) the municipal government. In addition, many indigenous peasant people passed through the town regularly, staying for periods ranging from one night to several weeks or even months. Their living arrangements and relationship with the people whose houses they stayed in are discussed in Chapter 4.

The second category of people found in the town, a category in which Doña Olimpia would sometimes place herself, were those whose parents were from the town, and who

had grown up speaking Spanish as well as Quechua and, in the case of the women, wearing non-*pollera* clothes. (The clothes worn by the men were not obviously distinguishable between peasant and townsman, with the exception of shoes and hats.) Doña Cristina and Don Wilfredo – who owned the shop, *pensión* and *chichería* on the corner of the plaza – fell into this category. When they married, they took over Don Wilfredo's parents' shop. Don Wilfredo also operated a large bread oven, which he allowed others to use for a fee, and had also been named town *corregidor*. In addition, he was an ambulance driver, as well as cultivating a couple of fields of crops for domestic consumption, regularly earning himself mockery from other townspeople when seen returning from a day's work there 'dirty, like a peasant'. Don Wilfredo was keenly aware that despite his position of relative power and affluence in the town, he was also subject to wider hierarchies which marginalised and stigmatised him. Once, when drunk, he commented (with bemusement rather than anger), 'If I went to your country, what would they say to me? Fucking *indian*, right?' in explicit recognition of the way discrimination against indigenous people in Tapacarí scaled up to an international level in the form of racism against, and marginalisation of, Bolivians in the European countries to which they emigrated. He was a keen MAS supporter and had helped arrange the visit by then-parliamentarian Evo Morales to the town in 2002. This was an unusual position for a townspeople to take at that time. Don Wilfredo and Doña Cristina were on good terms with many of the peasants who lived in and around the town, and had a reputation for fairness. Like many townspeople, they complained that the town was 'silent' and empty, and they could not do business any more. Their three children were all pursuing their education in Quillacollo, the youngest being in high school and the other two in university.

The third group of people were the *residentes tapacareños* who no longer lived in the town, but had settled in Quillacollo, the city of Cochabamba or further afield and visited only occasionally, usually on the occasion of the fiesta for the *Virgen de Dolores*. 'Residentes' is a general title given to people no longer living in their place of origin, which was applied to all people from the town of Tapacarí (emphatically not the rural communities around it) who now lived elsewhere. It also referred to a formal *residentes'* group which had registered legal status and held weekly meetings, as well as regular campaigns intended to pressure the municipal government into moving their offices back to the town of Tapacarí. Most of the attendees of the formal *residentes'* association were university-educated professionals, ranging from successful lawyers to engineers and administrators, who displayed a keen sense of class solidarity with each other and worked to promote an image of the town of Tapacarí as a historic and distinguished place, previously inhabited by wealthy families. For the *residentes*, the town's past was a more comfortable topic than the present. They were unanimous in the opinion that the town had shockingly deteriorated since their youth.

The fourth category was of people not from the town who were working there. These were few in number: a dozen or so teachers, four police (two on duty at a time), a judge and prosecutor (present only intermittently), the staff of the cottage hospital, two nuns and a man who worked for the parish, and occasional visiting engineers or technicians. Some of the teachers were the children of townspeople, but most had grown up in Cochabamba or in other parts of the country and were doing an '*año de provincia*', a year of service in a rural community before passing on to a better job. The teachers usually arrived on the Sunday lorry and left on the Thursday one, rarely spending a weekend in the town if they could help it. The police came for two-week stints, and then had another

two weeks off to spend elsewhere. The nurses and parochial staff mostly spent time with each other, rarely venturing from their offices. Stuart Rockefeller describes a similar subset of people in San Lucas, Potosí, terming them the 'rotational elite' who passed through the town occupying the upper social niches and were sometimes co-opted by the town elites into personal or party political causes (Rockefeller 2010). Similarly, in Tapacarí the teachers, police and healthcare workers were courted by some townspeople as godparents, for their prestigious connection to higher education and the city. The teachers were, themselves, often from lower middle-class or rural backgrounds in other parts of Cochabamba or Oruro and had worked hard to attain professional status, distancing themselves from their origins – literally in some cases, by working in a different part of the country to where their family lived. As Canessa (2012) points out in the case of schoolteachers in rural La Paz, those who have gone to great pains to distinguish themselves from the peasant class from which their families come may be more inclined to disparage indigenous and peasant attributes than others of a more secure middle-class background. Teachers in anthropological literature of Bolivia are depicted as agents of the state, inculcating patriarchal norms and imposing physical and mental disciplines regarding movement, dress and language which can erode or coexist with indigenous practices (Luykx 1999, Arnold 2005, Canessa 2012). In Tapacarí, the chief criticism of the teachers was that they were often absent and cut short their working week in order to return to the city.

A forgotten town?

Brooke Larson and Rosario Leon discuss the waning of the town's power in their essay on markets and native elites in the province:

Fleeting impressions of a forlorn, forgotten town are [...] confirmed. In casual conversation with townspeople, the outsider listens to tales of a town slipping further into solitude, cut off from national political and economic life. People express their discontentment by eliciting images of a golden age, when [...] townspeople enjoyed great wealth, power and prestige.

Yet popular perceptions of a dying town do not invoke much nostalgia among most peasants who live beyond the reach of San Agustín [...] In apparent parallel to San Agustín's decline, the economic life of the province seems to have been dispersed among the smaller hamlets and villages scattered across the [...] landscape' (Larson and Leon, 1995)

Larson and Leon's portrait of a forgotten town surrounded by a bustling countryside is recognisable to anyone familiar with Tapacarí, and their combined ethnographic and historical analysis of the decline of the grain trade based in the town and the growth of decentralised peasant markets goes some way to explaining the decline of the town. However, their assessment of centre-periphery relations in Tapacarí overlooks several factors.

Tapacarí's status as centre of the small world around it has been transformed over the course of the twentieth century, beginning with the catastrophic flood of 1918 which swept away the entire town. According to the story built up around the flood, it was caused by the townspeople being mean-spirited and refusing to share their wealth. The town's elites were dealt a further blow by the agrarian reform of 1953, upon which many gave up their *haciendas* and moved permanently to the city. In 1994, the Law of Popular

Participation opened the doors of the town's mayoralty to the voting public, instituting the democratic election of mayor and councillors. In each subsequent election, *campesinos* with strong links to the *sindicato campesino* peasant organisation have been elected, rather than the hand-picked townsmen who served before. The focus of the current municipal government is on improving living standards elsewhere in the province, largely ignoring the town apart from on national and local civic holidays, when the authorities and civil servants come to march around the plaza in a symbolic circling of territory.

Commercial influence has also slipped through the fingers of townspeople. With better transport links and large-scale migration to the city, farmers are more able to take their goods directly to market or to pass them on to a sibling or cousin who can sell them and send the money – along with a few goods for sale in the town – back home. Also, as Leon observes in the article above, a network of thriving barter markets provides peasants in the province with the opportunity to trade directly with each other, removing the need for intermediaries in the town. In the town itself, a barter market provided local peasants with the opportunity to trade directly with each other as well as with townspeople.

Strassoldo (1980) reminds us in an essay on centre and periphery in politics that the decline of a centre happens in two ways: through the strengthening of the periphery and/or the creation of another centre. It is my contention that the strengthened periphery of productive and populous peasant communities, well served by the local government and with access to transport, indeed weakens the grip of elites in the town of Tapacarí but that this is equal in significance to the magnetic draw of the city of Cochabamba. 'Everybody has gone to the city' is a much more frequently heard complaint than 'no one comes here to buy any more'. In verbal lists of the town's inadequacies, it is compared to

the city and found wanting. Emigration by *tapacareños* to Cochabamba and beyond for education or work represents a ceaseless attrition of the town's demographics, particularly of people of working age who cannot find work in the town and so do not stay long enough to have families and set up businesses of their own, perpetuating the problem.

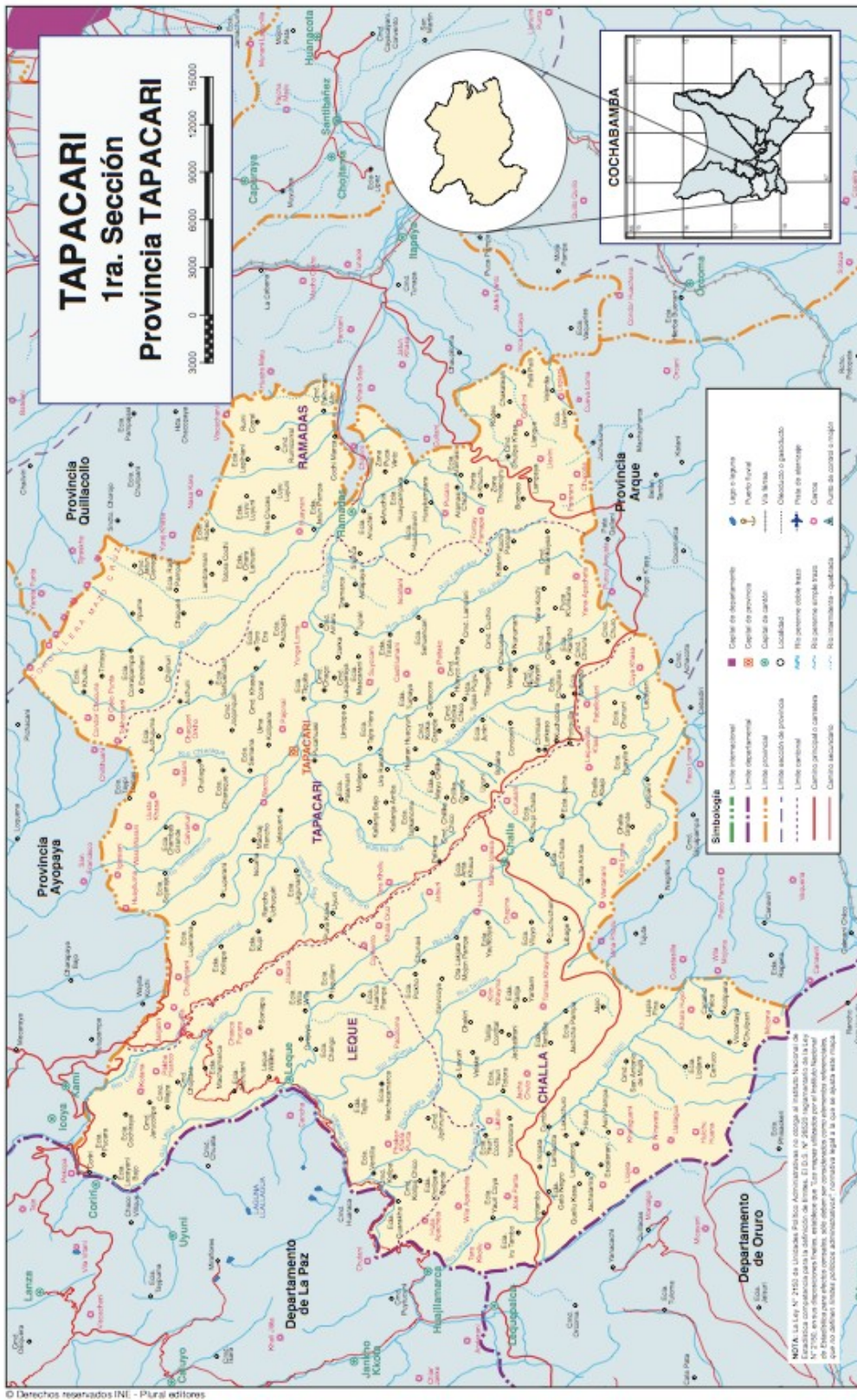


Figure 1. Map of Tapacarí Province.

History of the town

The Villa Real of Tapacarí sits on the old road which linked the maize-producing Cochabamba valleys and the more densely populated highlands. Although Tapacarí is a long-standing settlement and enjoys the title of being the first province founded in Cochabamba, it remains anomalous within wider regional patterns of 'agrarian transformation'.

Cochabamba's colonisation by the Incas, and then the Spanish empire, resulted in the disruption of populations in the valleys, and the prevention of any ethnic group continually inhabiting the same area. From chroniclers and archaeologists, we have learned that Inca occupation began under the reign of Tupaj Inca Yupanqui, whose forces made excursions into the valleys from the important centre at Paria and recognised that they represented an ideal site for grain production. *Tapacareños* claim that the Incas themselves travelled down via the province and bathed in the hot springs near the town, which are nicknamed 'bath of the Inca'. With the humid, warm climate allowing for two harvests a year, the territory that would become Cochabamba was soon put into use as the granary of the Inca empire. In order to facilitate this, the original inhabitants, Sipesipe, Cota and Chuye peoples, were swept aside and moved to the local frontiers of the empire to safeguard its borders, while colonisers were brought in from nearby nations. Under the Incaic *mit'a* system of centrally managed migration, the colonisers established nucleated settlements where they worked in the imperial grain fields for periods of several years without losing the right to land in their community of origin (Wachtel 1982). This was a formidable logistical project: as many as 40,000 'guest workers' came and went from the valleys every year in order to tend to the imperial harvest. Larson (1998) points out that

the volume of maize stored in the granaries at El Paso alone was more than previous estimates of the entire imperial maize harvest. Archaeologists have only recently begun to determine the number and size of similar storehouses in Paria, the first place the harvest was sent to before further redistribution around the empire.

In common with many other areas of the Andes, pre-Colombian nations controlled land in an 'archipelago' of geographically discontinuous locations, in order to benefit as much as possible from the products of various ecological niches. These 'vertical archipelagos', as Murra (1956) terms them, were administered with complex relationships of ritual and kinship obligation by large *ayllus*, ancestrally organised landholding groups. Although decentralised and fragmented, control of colonies and networks of reciprocal exchange tended to be dominated by settlements on the high plains, where at that time most of the population was concentrated. The occupants of the central valleys were emissaries from these nations: while many different *ayllus* and nations had representatives in the central valleys, few if any were governed chiefly from within those territories. Although it is disputed as to whether vertical control of dispersed settlements in different ecological niches originated with the Incas or well before, it is clear that the great population management project of imperial grain production had left its mark: at the time of the Spanish invasion, an ethnic mosaic covered the valley floor, and the linguistic diversity was such that one Spanish chronicler reported the use of 40 different languages, with Quechua as a lingua franca (Wachtel 1982).

When adventurous Europeans began to make incursions into Alto Peru from the safe territory of Lima, they found that the extreme cold and high altitude of the mining metropolis Potosí was not conducive to setting up rural estates. By contrast, the central

valleys of Chuquisaca and the *khocha pampa* (humid plains) on the eastern side of the Cordillera Real provided a climate that was liveable, and a fertile soil where not only maize, but wheat and grapes could be grown. Initially, the Spanish crown awarded *encomiendas* (land grants) which followed as accurately as possible the territorial limits of pre-existing ethnic groups so as to provide a ready-made, cohesive taxable population, but the potential for organised resistance that this accommodation of pre-existing organisation offered meant that tax revenue gathered from the indians was less than optimal, and the colonial project ran into problems.

Enter Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, meticulous note-taker, visionary administrator and architect of the second – and more lucrative – phase of colonial occupation, which irreversibly altered the spatial and legal design of the New World. Not only did he alter the system of *encomienda* grants so that they ceased to be heritable from one generation to the next, but he dramatically re-organised the indian population in order to extract maximum tax revenue and provide a steady supply of manpower to the mines of Potosí and Porco. Most pertinently, he reduced the power of estate owners (*encomenderos*) and, while demanding more tax from the indian population, also granted them legal 'protection' from exploitation. Andean indians used this recourse to legal processes and freely called on state intervention against abusive local leaders, both Spanish and native, as well as seeking court mediation for disputes over land, water resources and taxation.

Toledo's reforms continued the historical push to divorce Cochabamba's inhabitants from ancestral systems of land use and ownership. In order to raise revenue for the Crown and guarantee silver production he introduced tax categories which graded obligations according to social position. Indians with access to land in their community of origin,

known as *originarios*, were taxed most heavily, and were also obliged to carry out rotational labour service in the mines (*mit'a*); persons without access to land or not living in their community of origin, known as *yanaconas* and *forasteros*, not only paid less tax but were not liable for *mit'a* service. (Toledo modelled the rotational mining labour obligation on the previously discussed Inca *mit'a* system which moved such staggering numbers of people to and from the imperial maize fields every year.) In order to facilitate tax collection and discourage native rebellion Toledo also resettled the inhabitants of indigenous communities into easily countable, more 'civilised' Mediterranean-style settlements with an emphasis on country towns at the centre, laid out around a plaza. These '*reducciones*' made use of communally held lands more problematic and allowed for greater accumulation of lands by *hacendados*, who in turn required more labour in order to work the estates they acquired.

Following Toledo, the Royal Villas of Cochabamba were established in the 1570s, loosely based around the sites of the original land *encomiendas* of El Paso, Tiquipaya, Sipe Sipe, Capinota and Tapacarí. A small town further to the east near the Canata river valley was also founded on expropriated land: it was named the Villa Real de Oropesa but quickly became known as Cochabamba (Larson 1998). After the seizure of land on which to build a few streets around a central plaza, local edicts were passed prohibiting legal recourse by indians to recover any land within the town which had been obtained illegally, starting off five centuries of tension between the Spanish and *criollo vecinos* of the town and the native people in the surrounding areas.

Strategies on the part of indians to avoid both labour service and taxation were multifarious and widely used, as Bouysse-Cassaigne (1996) and others have shown.

These ranged from altering the parentage recorded when children were born (so as to place the child into a non-*originario* category) to deliberately misreporting access to land, or not reporting marriages between *yanaconas* and *originarias* which resulted in access to lands in a new community rather than the community of origin of the *forastero*. Chief among these strategies, however, was a direct and effective response: migration. As highland communities leached *originario* inhabitants, the *haciendas* of Cochabamba grew, the ranks of waged and bonded agricultural labourers swelled by men and their families escaping the burden of the *mit'a* and onerous taxation.

The population of Cochabamba, according to censuses, was always dominated by non-*originarios* and the number of *originarios* dwindled significantly as the years went on, while large *haciendas* grew. The mining boom to the south in Potosí meant that the demand for agricultural produce was substantial. The grain fields of Cochabamba's *haciendas* grew in response, even while indian men deserted their communities and looked for work on the same *haciendas* in order to avoid being sent to the mines themselves. The end of the first mining boom led to a recession in the agricultural areas whose economies were interlinked with those of the mines, and many *haciendas* in the valleys were forced to sell off land, thus creating a class of small-scale free peasant farmers as early as the mid-seventeenth century. By contrast, in other parts of the country, indigenous-controlled lands were not parcelled off for sale to landlords until the second half of the nineteenth century. This occurred after the Melgarejo government of the 1860s pushed through liberal reforms which undercut indigenous authorities, facilitating the private purchase of lands which had been hitherto controlled by the community (Platt 1986). By this time most of the territory in Cochabamba was beyond the control of large organised indigenous groups, which had not had a presence in the

valleys for several hundred years. However, Tapacarí retained a high percentage of people listed in censuses as *originario* (Larson 1998).

Today, the word *originario* is used as a positive description for indigenous peasants, and Tapacarí still has a high proportion of Quechua-speaking, textile-weaving, coca-chewing small farmers who work closely together in kin-mediated groups, living from agriculture with an emphasis on balanced and reciprocal relations between members of the community and between human and landscape (Delgado 2003). But the legacy of Tapacarí's *reducción* origins is seen in its orientation around a central plaza with a large church. The plaza persists as the venue for any ritual or public social activity, including civic and agrarian rituals as well as those related to religion. In addition, despite the *reducción* towns originally being intended for population by indians, the town in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries was home to people who lived at a degree of detachment from reciprocal systems of social organisation and ritual integration with the land, subsisting instead on incomes derived from processing agricultural goods into food, bread and *chicha*. People in Tapacarí do not often explicitly extrapolate racial categories from physical appearance, unlike the fervent racial or phenotypical policing which takes place in other class strata in Bolivia. It may however be worth noting that some people of the town, as well as dressing differently to indigenous peasant people, also have more 'European' features such as curly hair or green or blue eyes.

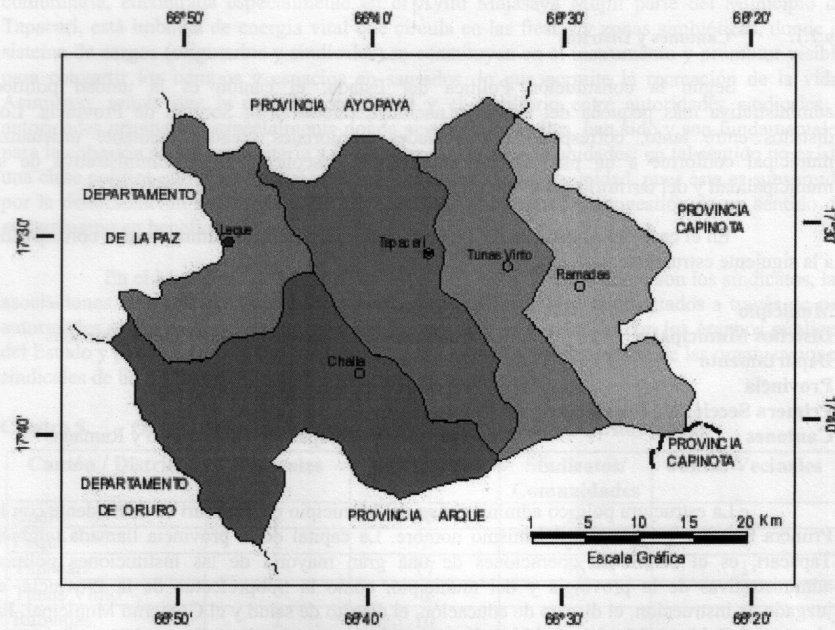
Municipal boundaries

Tapacarí is a medium-sized municipality, comprising 1538 square kilometres with a population of around 25,000 people. The municipality, created in 1994 with the Law of Popular Participation, has borders coterminous with those of the most recent incarnation

of the historic Province of Tapacarí, once the Villa Real of Tapacarí, whose borders extended up to the present-day city limits of Cochabamba. It is unusual but not unique for provincial borders, which may originate in republican times as is the case with Tapacarí (founded 1826), to coincide with municipal boundaries drawn up in 1994. Tapacarí's eastern neighbour Bolívar, for example, is both a province and a municipality: Ayopaya, on the western side, is a province divided into the municipalities of Morochata and Independencia.

In addition, the province of Tapacarí originally included a substantial tract of land and the town of Quillacollo, which has long since eclipsed the town of Tapacarí in size and importance. The area known as Quillacollo now incorporates several municipalities, and contains a population many times that of Tapacarí. Somewhat ironically, it is often the first pot of call for migrants from Tapacarí who wish to live in the city, and so retains a strong demographic link to the province of which it once formed a part.

Mapa 1. Ubicación, Límites y División Política del Municipio de Tapacarí.

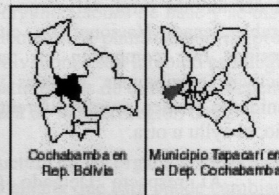


- ⊙ Capital de Provincia
- Capital de Cantón

REFERENCIAS

- Cantón Challa
- Cantón Leque
- Cantón Ramadas
- Cantón Tunas Vinto
- Cantón Tapacarí

MAPA DE UBICACION



Fuente: Fernandez – AGRUCO (1993)

Figure 2. Map taken from *Plan Diagnóstico Municipal de Tapacarí*, AGRUCO/Gobierno Municipal de Tapacarí, 2003.

The province and municipality of Tapacarí is composed of five *cantones* – Ramadas, Tunas Vinto, Tapacarí, Challa and Leque – each of which can be argued to be socially and geographically distinct from each other, with the possible exception of Tapacarí and Tunas Vinto, which are quite alike. Tunas Vinto operates as a *de facto cantón* rather than

a *de jure* one, being unofficially recognised as its own area in public policy and trade union organisation but not in historical record. While planning and carrying out fieldwork in *cantón* Tapacarí, my contact with other parts of the province was restricted to brief and irregular visits and assisting Richard in tourism promotion. The latter activity proved to be extremely sporadic, since he was based at the *alcaldía* office in the city and I in the town, to which he seldom came.

A brief introduction to each *cantón* is necessary to provide context for discussion of *cantón* Tapacarí and the provincial capital, where most of the research for this thesis took place. Topographical and population data comes from the *Plan Diagnóstico Municipal*, which is largely based on research conducted by AGRUCO at the University Mayor de San Simon.

Ramadas

Cantón Ramadas' terrain varies between about 2500 and 4600 metres above sea level and is mostly classified as 'valley' (40%) or 'valley head' (42.5%), which AGRUCO describes as being characterised by respectively 'having a dry and temperate climate ... an important zone for agriculture' and 'semi-temperate and dry climate, between 3000 and 3500 metres above sea level ... with important areas of cultivation of wheat, maize and barley, and on a lesser scale potato, peas, beans and quinoa. Livestock raised is largely goats and sheep.' The population in 2001 was 6552 people, or 25% of the population of the municipality.

The key settlements are Ramadas, a low-lying large village on the river edge, Aramasi up in the foothills, and Waca Playa. Aramasi hosts a textile fair once a year and is known for

its colourful, geometric woven bags and ponchos. Ramadas has a reputation for the brewing of *chicha*, both the conventional yellow kind and a purple variant. The village of Ramadas has a medical post, a school and a few streets. Each June a textile and food fair is held there at the same time as the annual *Toro Pujllay* bullfight, in which bulls are matched against each other to see which one can chase its competitor out of a ring drawn in the riverbed. Quechua is the most widely spoken language in Ramadas, and women tend to dress in the velveteen *polleras*, lacy blouses and white hats of *cholitas* elsewhere in the Cochabamba valleys and city. Women and girls wearing non-*cholita* clothes are more commonly seen in Ramadas than elsewhere in the province, apart from in the town of Tapacarí. Rather than home-woven *awayus* (carrying-cloths), people in Ramadas tend to use factory-woven *awayus* to carry belongings and children, as well as the thousand other tasks for which an *awayu* can be used. The textile traditions of Ramadas include ponchos, *chumpi* belts, *ch'uspa* coca bags and larger, satchel-size woven bags. The riverside and foothills hold parcels of fertile land and pasture. Ramadas is the first settlement reached when approaching Tapacarí up the riverbed.

Tunas Vinto

Tunas Vinto is next, an outcrop of village on a ridge above the riverbed with a school and dusty football pitch below. 2489 people live in the communities spread out among the foothills here, about 10% of the total population of the municipality. It also hosts a smaller *Toro Pujllay* celebration in June. Most of the people who live in Tunas Vinto, which is the smallest of the *cantones*, are in rural hamlets spread throughout the forks of the river and mountainside, with the terrain being divided between valley head and pre-*puna*. As in Ramadas and Tapacarí, they make a living from cultivating wheat, maize, beans, orchard fruit and root vegetables, and raise herds of goats and sheep as well

as pigs.

The *cantones* of Challa and Leque are not easily reached by road from the main riverbed route through the centre of the province. Transit between the villages of Challa and Leque and the town is mostly done on foot, and rarely at that. From the city of Cochabamba, the quickest means of access is along the main Cochabamba-Oruro/La Paz highway, which runs along the eastern edge of Challa and the border it shares with Arque and Bolivar. The road skirts Ramadas as it crosses the river Tapacarí before climbing to the *altiplano*, where it runs through *cantón* Challa on the way to Oruro.

Challa

Challa, where Aymara is the main language spoken, sits between 3700 and 4600 metres above sea level and scarcely resembles the green, fertile lower valleys: the terrain is rolling, arid and rocky. According to AGRUCO, most (83%) of Challa is *puna* – 'high plains between 4000 and 4500 metres above sea level, with a cold climate, characterised by grasses and other low-lying species which are used for the pasture of llamas and sheep.' Cultivable land is given over to potatoes, oats and *kawaña*. The freezing nights and bright sunshine at this altitude give good conditions for making *chuño*, dried potatoes. Around 25% of the population of the municipality, 6632 people, lived in Challa at the time of the 2001 census.

Challa contains several miles of former Inca road which still trace a recognisable line along its valleys, although the paving stones have been largely uprooted. It also features three villages on the sites of *tambos*, Inca waystations where passengers and goods were lodged and stored en route between Paria, the nearest highland imperial base, and the

maize-bearing valleys below. Challa Tambo, not far from the main road, features an old adobe church and a school reportedly built on the site of the old *tambo* wall. I did not visit Iru Tambo or Waylla Tambo, but according to Antonio Willka of Waylla Tambo, it is still considered obligatory there to house and feed visitors passing through and stopping for the night. However, based on personal experience, this does not differ significantly from other communities in the area: it is a social faux pas in the extreme not to feed visitors to one's community. AGRUCO point out that these communities still nominate individuals to serve as 'post-master', someone charged with the maintenance of the lodging and reception of visitors. However, this position has become more ceremonial than practical.

Cantón Challa as a territorial and social unit tends to come second to the pre-existing territorial and social organisations there, three *ayllus*: Anansaya, Urinsaya and Majasaya Mujlli. Clearly the names indicate binary pairings of *hanan* and *hurin* – upper and lower – in two cases, and Olivia Harris has commented that *maja-* also indicated half of a complementary pairing, prompting speculation that the companion *ayllu* to *Ayllu Majasaya* must be found in a neighbouring municipality (Harris, personal communication, 2007). The *ayllus* are part of the Sora nation, which extends southwards into Oruro as far as Lake Poopó, where there is another place called Tapacarí which may or may not have historic links to the Tapacarí in Cochabamba. Challa's *ayllu* authorities – *mallku* condor chiefs with their companions and co-leaders, *mama t'allas* and the community authorities, *jilaqatas* – are publicly known and respected as representatives of everyone living there and are commonly referred to as 'the indigenous mayors'. During the period of my fieldwork, they were closely involved with the municipal government and any municipal projects carried out in Challa involved, or were supposed to involve, consultation with

them. They were frequent visitors to the *alcaldía* office, and dignitaries at *alcaldía* events, as well as being present at protest marches and popular assemblies.

Clothing worn in Challa differs strikingly from the valleys. Both men and women favour bright woollen jackets embroidered with glittering designs down the front and sometimes on the back, of the kind worn by indigenous people across the highlands from Potosí, Oruro and other highland areas in Cochabamba. Men wear *ch'ulu* knitted caps worked in bright colours featuring squares of distinct designs, often animals or many-legged imaginary beasts and sometimes prosaic depictions of trucks, planes, maps, cars, bicycles or soldiers. On top of the *ch'ulus*, a tall, wide-brimmed *loq'o* hat made of sheepskin keeps the sun off. Most contemporary men wear jeans or formal trousers with a cotton pullover like men in other parts of Bolivia, but a few still wear traditional black woollen knee breeches with thick white stockings, a combination which is also seen on the legs of dance troupes. Ponchos are not uncommon, but tend to be plainly coloured or in bi-coloured stripes and made from alpaca wool.

Women sport the same embroidered jackets as men, in the same neon colours but also – more often – in black with the bright embroidery picked out in sharp contrast. A black head covering with embroidery matches the jacket and is worn underneath the same style of *loq'o* hat as the men. Hats usually feature a woven band showing squares of geometric designs or pictures, made by young women practising their weaving. *Polleras* worn by *challeña* women tend to be black with lines of embroidery down each pleat. Blocks of colour are also seen.

The visual distinctiveness of people from Challa makes them easy to identify when they

are elsewhere in the province, even before starting a conversation. The immensely rich symbolism and imagery of their weavings deserve fuller, further study.

Leque

Leque, the other Aymara-speaking *cantón* in Tapacarí, is squeezed between Challa and the neighbouring municipality, Morochata. 17% of the population of the municipality lived here in 2001, amounting to 14,342 people. Most of its terrain is *puna* or *pre-puna*, sitting between 3000 and 4575 metres above sea level. In addition to Aymara, its inhabitants often speak Quechua and Spanish. People from Leque seldom visited the town of Tapacarí: their closest urban centre was the mining town of Kami. Kami is a sizeable town, with tin and wolfram (tungsten) mines which attract migrants from a wide area: those who work in the mine and those who work outside it, sorting mineral or providing provisions and services to the miners. Many children and teenagers from Leque went to school in Kami, where there was an '*internado*' (boarding school).

Lequeños, once again, had a distinctive traditional outfit, more worn by women than men. The women of Leque dressed mostly in black, with full, black woollen *polleras* with one stripe of pink or red, or embroidery of large stylised flowers around the hem. Some wore red or pink *polleras*, always piled one on top of the other to give the largest bell-shaped silhouette possible. The lacy, beaded blouses worn by *cholitas* in the rest of Cochabamba were complemented by embroidered woollen jackets. Leque women's hats were made of pale sheepskin, although not as tall as the *loq'os* of Challa and Tapacarí, and were decorated with large bunches of flowers – real or plastic.

I have deliberately left the *cantón* of Tapacarí until last, not just because it was the

location of most of my fieldwork, but because it sits in the middle of the province and, containing the capital, provides a meeting point for the various cultures and organisations of the other *cantones*. The town of Tapacarí forms the navel of the province: historically it has been the centre for administration, ritual encounter, religious worship, economic activity and even kinship. It also stands out compared to the rest of the province and the *cantón* of Tapacarí around it for the lack of resemblance the people who live in it bear to their peasant neighbours, in language, livelihood, clothing and politics. Before the town is described, some discussion of the *cantón* Tapacarí is in order.

Tapacarí

Tapacarí is the largest of the *cantones* in area. Its population in 2001 was 5709 people, 22% of the municipality. Its terrain varies between valley, valley head, pre-*puna* and *puna* (valley 4.1%, valley head 30.3%, pre-*puna* 49%, *puna* 16.6%) – a diverse landscape which is referred to in social distinctions between 'the people from up above' and 'the people from down below'.

It includes the valleys of the four rivers which combine to form the river Tapacarí, and reaches from the green riverbanks to the surrounding mountain slopes bordering Tunas Vinto and Challa. Quechua is the language most widely spoken in Tapacarí, with some people bilingual in Quechua and Aymara living in communities on the border of Challa. The farmers of Tapacarí grow maize, potatoes, wheat, root vegetables and orchard fruits; they keep sheep, goats, pigs, cows and beasts of burden. The roads in *cantón* Tapacarí in 2006 and 2007 were few and basic, limiting vehicle traffic, but many more were under construction and may now be usable. Villages typically consist of a small number of households linked by kinship, engaged in working the land interdependently.

The clothes and textiles of people in Tapacarí varied: some women wore the classic Cochabamba *cholita* outfit of lacy blouse, velvet *pollera*, white hat and shop-bought *awayu*, but many more wore bright pink, red or green woollen *polleras* with sheepskin hats and embroidered woollen jackets or any combination of the two kinds of outfit. Men favoured brightly coloured embroidered waistcoats as a mark of local distinction and, on special occasions, large and ornate ponchos.

The textile arts of Tapacarí are very distinctive: old-fashioned *awayus* come in a combination of red, orange and black and feature intricate geometric figures. The same geometric designs, with straight lines, interlocking figures and rhomboids, are seen in newer *awayus* but these tend to be worked in finer shop-bought wool which comes in a brighter and wider variety of colours and which allows for staggeringly detailed, mathematically impressive '*saltas*' (detailed strips) of rhomboids filled in line by line with tessellating shapes. Most men have one or two 'dress' ponchos, worked in pink and orange with a loud burst of other colours in the same zigzags and rhomboids as on the *awayus*. These are not everyday wear, but are brought out with considerable pride for special occasions such as weddings or fiestas.

Men wear *ch'ulu* caps, as in the higher *cantones*, but under fedoras as well as *loq'os*, and the Tapacarí *ch'ulu* is a near-uniform combination of pink and orange worked in zigzagging lines or with a few simple designs. This kind of *ch'ulu* is worn by all males, from little boys to elderly men – even if the men are not of peasant origin.

These rules of thumb about dress, livelihood and language are much more variable in the

town of Tapacarí, where townspeople take pains to distinguish themselves from their peasant neighbours. Henceforth I use the term 'townspeople' to describe those who live there, as the closest cognate to the Spanish term they themselves used, '*gente del pueblo*' – 'the (decent) people of the town'. This may be considered similar in meaning to the '*vecinos*', '*q'aras*', '*gente decente*', '*gente bien*' or simply '*gente*' referred to in other places (Gose 2001, Allen 1988, Skar 1982, de la Cadena 1995) – that is to say, the people of a large town or city who think of themselves as 'decent' and by 'decent' mean primarily 'not indians'. The term '*gente*', with its associations of 'gentlefolk', is used both to mean people in general and also the particular class of person who is at least one social stratum removed from *pollera*-wearing, adobe-house-dwelling, land-tilling, Quechua-speaking peasants. While its translation in English is the same as the other term for a number of people, '*el pueblo*', the latter has far stronger connotations of solidarity and the popular classes².

'*Gente del pueblo*' was used, along with '*tapacareño*', by the people who lived in the town and whose families had done so for at least one generation before them. It was employed above all to distinguish between the people of the town and the indigenous peasants from the communities which surround it. Terms used to describe people from these farming communities varied according to level of respect, condescension or rudeness: I follow Xavier Albó in using 'indigenous peasants' in order to acknowledge both cultural distinctiveness and categorisation according to contemporary social class and livelihood. For city activists and those being polite, '*gente del campo*' was *de rigeur*. '*Campesino*'

2

This difference was employed strikingly in the 2006 campaign for the constitution-rewriting Constituent Assembly in which MAS focused on their by-then-iconic leader and the popular appeal by adopting the slogan, '*Evo Presidente – El Pueblo Constituyente*'. The opposition, at that point led by Jorge 'Tuto' Quiroga and PODEMOS, settled on '*Constituyente para la Gente*' – presumably devised both in order to sound populist and to get the votes of those citizens dissatisfied with MAS' emphasis on gaining power for the rural indigenous.

was a tightrope word, teetering between acceptable and pejorative: usually matter-of-fact but sometimes spat as an insult, it had to be used with caution. '*Cholita*' when applied to women, similarly so: '*cholo*' was rarely used and was intended as an insult when it was.

In Tapacarí, the long coexistence of townspeople and indigenous peasants, in relationships of varying inequality, had bred a kind of resentful coexistence in which commercial, kin, domestic and intimate relationships were intertwined but also carefully policed. People of different class and ethnicity in Tapacarí were not divided between neighbourhoods, but between rooms. But as well as the small-scale disputes, grudges and allegiances that structure social life in any small country, the relationships between *tapacareños* were also informed by larger political projects, and the ascendancy of Evo Morales and his first administration.

The river

The river Tapacarí is not deep enough to be navigable, even in rainy season, but it is deep enough to drown in. The riverbed is on average about 1km across, forming a wide alluvial plain strewn with rocks, boulders and driftwood and bordered by steep gullies and hillsides. In dry season its currents are so sparse that a road can be ploughed along this plain from the point where it meets the main intercity highway at Pirque. This road serves as the main thoroughfare for the town, as well as Ramadas and Tunas Vinto. The town is positioned at the conflux of four tributary rivers which then join into a steadily widening stream. At occasional elbows of land which the silt brought by the river has made fertile, crops are planted behind concrete defences, shaded by trees. The rich, black soil of the riverside is fertile, as long as the incursion of water can be prevented. The river has also provided current to power grain mills since wheat was introduced in

colonial times – in some communities hydraulic mills are still used, updated with new technology.

Peasant communities along the riverbed are dispersed and small: a few adobe houses, some with corrugated iron roofs and some thatched, fields of crops, some grazing animals and often a shelter belt of trees. Against this sparsely inhabited backdrop, the town is an unmistakable landmark, visible from the road hundreds of metres up. It sits on a narrow, pointed triangle of peninsula looming above the riverbed, with the small white hospital down in the toe and tree-lined streets snaking up to the plaza, then a steep ascent to the top where the primary school and tree nursery sit. Around the limits of the streets, houses perch haphazardly on the slope, with footpaths linking them to fields and to each other. This peninsula has only been home to the town since 1918: in previous incarnations, the town was located at the foot of the peninsula in the area known as 'the beach' and prior to that, across on the other side of the river in a different corner of land altogether (Mumford, personal communication, 2006).

Each of the riverside communities between Tapacarí and the main road was once a *hacienda* (Céspedes 2006). Shadows of the past also overlook the river road in the form of ruined mill houses next to lively streams, and the large, empty houses of *patrones* long since gone to the city.

Travelling along the riverbed is dusty, bumpy and slow in a large vehicle and hazardous in a small vehicle, especially at the start and end of rainy season when sudden spates of the river caused by rain further upstream can catch vehicles and their drivers unawares. It is necessary to cross the river up to 90 times between Pirque and Tapacarí. On foot,

walking up the riverbed is physically arduous because of the lack of shade, the muddy, dusty, rocky terrain and the frequent crossings through icy water.

There is fairly regular foot traffic around the riverbed, which increases as one nears the town of Tapacarí: people coming from nearby communities into town or returning home, people going to each other's communities, people going out to the field to water and weed crops and pasture their animals, girls bringing flocks of goats and sheep down to the water to drink. In dry season, children play in the sand and bathe in pools dug out where the current flows.

Townspeople are seldom seen walking in the riverbed unless it is to collect firewood: the suggestion of townspeople going out to visit people in peasant communities is met with public scorn, even more so if it involves an overnight stay. When I went out to nearby villages to see people, sometimes staying the night, people in the town seemed to see it as a bizarre European eccentricity and warned me to be careful in much the same way that people in the city warned me, sincerely, to be careful whenever I went out to the 'countryside' including the town of Tapacarí. This did not mean, however, that townspeople were unfamiliar with the peasant communities or the people who lived there. They knew with precision who lived where, and to whom they were related. When, at the end of rainy season, I began walking out to peasant communities more frequently, people in the town suggested that I ask people in one community for honey, since they had a source of it, or contract a particular woman from another community to make me a poncho, since she was the best weaver locally. Other people who live in the town and are originally from a nearby community themselves do often go on social visits or to make arrangements or purchases.

The flood

In December 1918, the four rivers flooded on the same night and swept away the entire town of Tapacarí, at the time a grand settlement with large shops, a school, civic buildings and a hall where, in 1836, Santa Cruz held the Peru-Bolivia congress. Many stories surround the great flood, giving Tapacarí a destruction, rather than creation, myth. According to the story told by a number of people, on the night of the flood Jesus Christ came in the guise of a scruffy beggar to a large and lavish wedding party in Tapacarí and asked for food. The couple getting married and the women in charge of the wedding refused rudely, scolding him for being lazy and telling him to go find work instead of begging. The only house in which he was received was that of a poor shepherd woman who offered him *mote* and cheese – food of the humble – in her house on the slope where the town is now located. This version was told by Doña Aleja Gutierrez:

They say there was a couple who were getting married, a big wedding with many barrels of *chicha*, food. They say a young man who looked like a tramp came, saying, give me food please. They had denied the young man, saying, 'Idler, vagabond, go and work, you are young, you don't have any reason to beg', they say.

He went up to the mountain where there were only a few houses, they say; there was a lady who had lots of children there and he went to the door saying, 'please give me food, I am hungry, I am thirsty,' he said.

'I don't have (it),' said the lady, 'I don't have anything right now, I only have *motecito* and cheese.' 'It doesn't matter,' said the youth, 'please give me some anyway.'

They say he sat on a stone and the lady took out a terracotta plate and the young man covered his face with some locks of hair, like this, and ate the food but the *mote* and cheese didn't run out, ever, but he was eating and eating, Jesus, they say. Then the lady with her children saw that no matter how he ate the food didn't finish, eat though he would the *mote*.

Then Jesus said, 'Tonight it's going to rain *so much*, there will be a storm ... so when it rains, when it thunders, you mustn't wake up and never open your door, better you should cover your eyes and ears and don't go out of the house.' The lady paid attention to him, they say. 'Now you will see,' he said, in Quechua:

[in Quechua] 'Now you will see, too – On the shore of the riverbed in that big town down below there.'

'What about it?' said the lady.

'They're bad people – they don't know how to be good to people' [back to Spanish] and just then the thunderstorm started and the young man left. 'That young man was strange, so quick to leave,' said the lady. His snot, they say she had wiped with her *pollera*, with the hem of her *pollera* and there it appeared to the lady, where she had wiped his face, in her *pollera* the face of Jesus appeared and in that

she discovered that it was Jesus.

The ruined buildings were a prompt for people to create their own 'memories' and recollections, which reflected how they thought the history should have been rather than how it was, to the point of claiming that Simon Bolivar himself had come to the town when there was no historical record of this.

You know that there used to be a town down in the playa – that's where the school was, the church too. There was a crossroads and two big streets, broad ones! A big hall, too, two storeys high, they say it had velvet curtains all in red – that was where Bolivar came, where the Mariscal came, that same hall (Plinnia Fuentes)

The saint and the virgin in the church were so important to the town's identity that they were thought to have been safeguarding the original town. As soon as they were removed, the floodwaters swallowed the town.

It rained and rained, (saying) they said [*diciendo habia dicho*] and they went to get the Virgin out of the church and carry her up top, you know, where the town is now. Once they had taken away the saint and the virgin, *sass*, the church was taken by the river – minutes after they took them out. Everything was taken by the river. And now this town is a misery (Georgina Guzmán)

The river is more than a backdrop to the communities strung out along its banks. It is the movement and force that provides and destroys whimsically. Its bed provides their road, albeit one that is unusable from November to April: a road which can be wiped out by a

heavy rain and whose dust gradually ruins the engines of vehicles which use it regularly. To the town of Tapacarí, it is not only its *raison d'être*, but also its curse. The riverbed has made any move to build another road along its flanks less necessary, leaving the inhabitants of the *pueblo* with only the winding, unstable road along the tops in rainy season. The lack of a good road paralyses any development in the *pueblo*, while fiscal and development priorities dictate that effort should go into building more roads, however cursory, to communities which lack them altogether. Until the 1994 *Participación Popular* reforms there was no secondary road at all, and anyone from the valleys around Tapacarí had to climb on foot for 1500 vertical metres to the Cruces de Challa in order to catch the bus.

Control over transport

Studies in other areas of Cochabamba – in particular Maria Lagos (1994) writing about Tiraque, although Paulson (2002) also mentions the importance of negotiating effectively with *transportistas* in an article on ethnic presentation and gender in Mizque – have shown how control over transportation of people and goods has been critical in the emergence of new elites in the wake of the 1953 Agrarian Reform. Haulage of agricultural products represents a 'pinch point' in the cycle of production and trade which is hard to circumvent. Stuart Rockefeller goes further in describing a situation very similar to that of Tapacarí in the Potosí town of San Lucas, in which, in Rockefeller's words, 'although the position of the town elite was steadily weakening, they still occupied the centre of a regional system geared towards reproducing their control' (Rockefeller 2010: 179). He saw control over transport to be heavily correlated with shop ownership, given that the goods sold in San Lucas were manufactured and packaged in the city. In Tapacarí, where barter between peasants was still a major form of trade, this was not as

true, but there was nonetheless a high degree of dependence on, and resentment of, *transportistas* who controlled access to markets as well as passenger transport. At the time of fieldwork, two lorries regularly served Tapacarí as their main destination twice a week, with more sometimes making the trip during busy season, as well as the bus (the driver of which claimed not to want to make the trip any more, because the riverbed dust ruined the engine of the bus and the need for constant repairs made it uneconomical to run). Several more stopped over in Tapacarí on the way up to the large peasant market at Chamacoma, one of the large rural markets which had taken away trade from the town.

One of the lorries was owned by Don Rodrigo, who demonstrated aptly how to make the transition from old town elite to new entrepreneurial elite. Don Rodrigo, so the gossip went, was from a family of wealthy landowners who lived in the town when not on their *hacienda*. After the Agrarian Reform, they were forced to abandon or sell their lands, and were left with a large shop and house in town. During the 1980s and 1990s the mayoralty of the town passed between a restricted number of male townspeople, but when the 1994 Law of Popular Participation was passed, Don Rodrigo stood as a candidate for the MNR, then in power, and won. When I interviewed him, he spoke proudly of the schools and healthcare posts he had arranged to have built during his period as mayor, greatly improving the provision of education throughout the province. He praised the Law of Popular Participation, saying that it made it possible to extend resources out to the province whereas they had historically been confined to the town. Don Rodrigo remained part of the MNR, but also supported peasant struggles around the town of Tapacarí such as the campaign to reclaim the limestone mine mentioned earlier, and was friendly with the leadership of the *sindicato campesino*.

However, gossip around town claimed that Don Rodrigo had stolen a great deal of money while he was mayor. People in the province had been unaccustomed to voting when they elected him, it was claimed, and they had elected the traditional elite, not knowing there could be an alternative. Don Rodrigo had commissioned a pump for the town's water supply, but had skimmed off half of the money for himself, leaving the town with a second-rate pump and himself with the money to buy his lorry. From then on, his financial security was assured: he could make money transporting passengers and goods between the town and the city.

Whether these rumours were true or not was impossible to verify. What was certain was that Don Rodrigo and his wife enjoyed a certain level of material comfort, employing a maid in their house in Tapacarí and sending their children to university. Their lorry continued to be one of the few means of transport to or from Tapacarí. Don Rodrigo and his family had effected a smooth transition from power through landholding, to politics, to control over movement.

Communications

The Entel (telephone company) office served not just as a point of telephone contact for the various institutions in the *pueblo* such as the primary school, high school and cottage hospital, but also a hub for peasant organisation, which fed directly into the running of local government. The office occupied one small room in the larger block of the old *alcaldía* building, now empty most of the time but for the lodging of the province's legal administrator and the offices of the leaders of the provincial *sindicato campesino*. Along the front there were four ground-floor offices opened out into the cloisters of the plaza, but the only other door which was open regularly was that of the police, who spent most

of their days sitting on the bench outside their office at a loss for what to do except gossip, listen to music and compare tall tales from more lively assignments. Next to them was the room assigned to the *subprefecto* or maximum authority of the province, who gave a regular surgery on Sundays, arriving by motorbike from his home in Ramadas (down the river) or the city. The rest of the week the office was locked. On the side of the Entel office was the space assigned to the municipal intendent, also the provincial co-ordinator of MAS.

Don Leonardo the *intendente* was not seen by the townspeople as doing much, but in terms of wider political participation was one of the key local actors in liaising between the peasant organisations, the local government and the regional leadership of MAS. He was often away attending co-ordination meetings in the city or in the communities around the province. But it was through Humberto that all correspondence flowed, since he was the only one with a computer and the knowledge to use it for typing up monthly reports and accounts of community meetings, where one leader could be deposed and another appointed, or a resolution made to ask the *alcaldía* for a new school, potable water system, training workshop or irrigation system. Such requests had to be phrased in formal language and written out in a letter which then had to be rubber-stamped (literally) by the official seals of those requesting it, before it was passed on to the relevant department at the *alcaldía* (a request for training would go to Human Development; a request for a micro-irrigation project to Public Works). Humberto, the Secretary and *Redactor*, was the first point of contact for a *dirigente* (community leader) proffering the handwritten minutes of a meeting which they needed to communicate to the *alcaldía*, or request a photocopy of their identity card in order to submit a *solicitud* or enrol their child in school.

Humberto talked openly about attempting to be an advocate for the *campesino* people who came to the office for services. He was among the first people to comment openly on how 'bad' (*malo*) the people of the *pueblo* were in their attitude to the country people who surrounded them.

My mum married my dad when she was 15, but she didn't have me until she was 18. And her mother in law was really wicked to her because she was from the country, not from the *pueblo*. She used to beat her every day, saying that she was a mule, she was a useless wife, because she didn't have any babies for three years, saying 'What are you good for?', calling her an indian, a *lari*.

A changing population

According to their own accounts, over the last 50 years the elite of Tapacará have gradually drifted away, mostly to the city of Cochabamba, leaving the town without a central core of determinedly *mestizo* society. At the same time, land shortages and the allure of the city have caused many rural people to also leave their communities and work in the cities of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, the tropical Chapare – or even overseas. The traditional townspeople have been reduced to a few households who survive by processing wheat produced by nearby peasant smallholdings into bread and beer, thus maintaining their position as economic intermediaries processing raw materials and adding value. Time and empty houses have also seen a gradual influx of peasant families into the town. These families have struggled for acceptance but ultimately provide much of the available labour in the town and so are not easily discounted. They have also taken over traditional town activities such as baking and brewing, exploiting the availability of

premises to do so. In addition, there is nowadays less discrimination against indigenous people, as a result of wider social and political change. In 2006 and 2007, Evo Morales was hugely popular in Tapacarí even among townspeople, who could relate to his claim to speak for the poor and marginalised as well as the indigenous. His visit to the town was spoken of approvingly – not since Barrientos, in his famous helicopter, had a president come as far as Tapacarí. The peasants around Tapacarí were if anything more acutely conscious of the political changes at a national level, and frequently participated in assemblies, summits and general meetings. At some of these meetings relationships with exploitative townspeople were discussed, and there were lively debates about some continued practices such as paying tribute in kind to landowners, or how to deal with the corrupt town registrar. Few of the attendees at these meetings were resident in the town, though; the town served as a convenient meeting point with a large hall, where representatives from peasant communities around the *cantón* or province could gather.

The current situation of the town of Tapacarí in terms of permanent residents is one of near-abandonment. Precarious transport links with the city, especially in rainy season, limit the mobility of people and goods. The peasant traders who previously came to the town in order to sell their goods to townspeople can now rely on extended kinship networks which give them the opportunity to pass crops and goods on for sale in the city by family members or trusted allies. The town is no longer at the heart of peasant commercial networks and consequently the accustomed standard of living for townsfolk there has dropped, as there is less trade. The traditional livelihoods in the town – operating grain mills, baking, fermenting grain to produce *wiñapu* for *chicha* and brewing – are now carried out as much by peasants living in the town as townspeople (see Chapter 4). The agrarian reform of the 1950s also prompted many to leave the town or the estates

around it, abandoning an agricultural power base and shifting households to the city. Over time, the indigenous peasants of the rural communities surrounding the town of Tapacarí have taken up temporary lodgings there and become used to staying in the town when necessary for training days, fiestas or stopovers for trips to the city. The town no longer enjoys the status of a centre: instead, it has become one more in the decentralised, kinship-mediated, discontinuous string of nucleated settlements which characterised pre-Columbian and contemporary indigenous settlement patterns. Rather than providing a force for order in the countryside, causing communities to gravitate to it and adapt to European models of occupation, the town has been reframed and reoccupied according to quintessentially Andean organising principles, which I now go on to describe.

The vertical archipelago

The mid-1950s were interesting years for students of Bolivian economic and political organisation. On the one hand, a precocious and remarkably bloodless revolution broke out, followed by agrarian reform (Dunkerley 1984, Dandler 1987, Grindle and Domingo 2003). Meanwhile, in academia, 1956 saw the publication of John Murra's doctoral thesis on the economic organisation of the Inca state, in which he described the distribution of ethnic settlements in the Andes as following a 'vertical archipelago model' – an elastic definition which Tristan Platt summarises as 'a dynamic model of the changing historical relations between Andean societies, the complementary ecologies they inhabit, and emergent state formations' (Platt 2009: 33). Murra elucidated how pre-Conquest South American ethnic nations generated and maintained a distinct system of control over territory that enabled smooth exchange of goods from a variety of places without a cash economy, and which helped ensure self-sufficiency for the group in question. It also made it possible for people to live sustainably in places with a climate and altitude

unfriendly to human life.

The term 'vertical archipelago' refers to a series of discontinuous, but ethnically homogeneous, settlements strewn throughout distinct 'ecological niches' (jungle, valley, arid high plain etc), all in communication with each other and populated by inhabitants consciously belonging to the same nation or group. These dispersed settlements would have as their axis a larger community and stretch of lands, usually positioned in the highlands where the bulk of the population was concentrated, but the 'islands' in distinct areas would allow the entire group to benefit from the possibilities afforded by different climates and conditions. The goods from these different areas would then be exchanged through the medium of kinship networks, tribute payments or ritual requirements: honey, feathers and fruit from the jungle, maize and coca from the valleys, potatoes and other tubers from higher levels, camelid fibres, dried meat, dried potatoes and quinoa from yet further up and fish, guano and mulli shells from the coastal areas. Pärssinen (2003), Wachtel (1982) and others have described how this system was moderated and amplified by the Inca empire, whose nobility, under the influence of a central bureaucracy, organised the mass resettlement of people throughout the region. The reasons for this were many: to mobilise labour forces for the imperial grain fields, to bring shock troops in to quell frontier uprisings, to resettle skilled labourers in places where they were needed and to disperse people from 'troublesome' groups across sufficient distances to suppress potential rebellions.

The latter tactic of strategic forced resettlement to quash rebellion is not exclusive to South America: it was also used by the Roman empire in the second and third centuries (hence Asturian inscriptions in parts of Hadrian's Wall, see Collingwood and Wright

1965), and by Charlemagne in the ninth (Scholz 1970), but in contrast to these and other centrally coordinated transmigration programmes, the Inca system allowed for *mitimaes* (migrants) to return home to their communities of origin after a term was served, and to retain land rights there. It is even recorded that *mitimaes* returned once or twice a year in order to fulfil ritual duties and reciprocal labour (Lorandi and Rodriguez 2003).

Lorandi and Rodriguez among others point out that the enormous demographic changes caused by Inca rule should be considered in combination with other imperial interventions such as road building, language shift, architecture and communications technology. So, too, is it necessary to consider contemporary mass movement of people in the full national and global context of the early twenty-first century, even if there is an identifiable underlying pattern that gives it a distinctively Andean character. The national context is framed by an economy heavily dependent on extractive industries, themselves vulnerable to international price shocks, and by international aid contributions. The economic background is one of a globalised capitalism characterised by its 'predatory mobility' (Appadurai 2002), whose incursion is best answered, judo-style, with a feint in the form of household mobility. But beyond simply going where the work is, *en masse*, extended *tapacareño* peasant families spread out in a wide net across which they are able to interchange products.

Of course, the archipelago model as applied to contemporary Cochabamba works better as an heuristic device rather than a factual description of settlement patterns. Andeans on the move, settling in multiple locations while still retaining a sense of belonging to one central point or regional identity, is a historical constant. There was the ethnic archipelago described by Murra – vestiges of which still remain in the north of Potosí,

among other places. Later came the massive Inca resettlement project which organised the transmigration of tens of thousands of people and permanently changed the demographic face of the continent. The upset to the population caused by Spanish colonial rule, chiefly people seeking to escape the burden of obligatory labour service, caused many to leave their communities of origin. Then there was the break-up of ancestral lands in the nineteenth century and the dissolution of *haciendas* in the twentieth. Eventually we come to the present day, and migration seems to be a bigger concern than ever with Bolivian cities swelling and the countryside emptying. Fully 20-25% of the population now lives overseas.

The kinds of population flux and settlement pattern described by Murra have persisted to a degree through all the changes described above. That is, many indigenous peasant people in Bolivia – and many who are neither – still migrate from their communities of origin in such a way that their households form a chain across different ecological and economic niches, enabling a constant flow of goods, money and people between each point. Furthermore, even while living in places that are distant from their community of origin, it still plays an important role in their self-identification, and they visit it regularly, if not frequently.

In addition to being a strategy for resistance to the unpredictability of Bolivian economy and exploitative middlemen, or as a kind of 'weapon of the weak' (Scott 1985), this distinctive settlement pattern reflects aspects of both the pre-Inca archipelago and later systems of *mit'a*. That is, that 'permanent' migration often features the spreading out of family members across a maximum number of 'economic niches', in such a way that it facilitates intra-group trading and movement, but also that much rural-urban or rural-rural

migration is temporary, and still allows for migrants to participate in the economic, political and ritual life of their communities – perhaps not in the form of still having access to land, but rather in other ways.

Push, pull and possibility

The particular conditions for migration in Bolivia in the later years of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first are, of course, determined by national and global factors such as economic instability, climate change and a broadening of personal horizons facilitated by communications technology. These fall into three loose and overlapping categories: the push, factors causing people to want to leave; the pull, factors causing people to want to go somewhere; and the possibility, factors making it easier for people to relocate temporarily or permanently.

The 'push' can be seen in the complaints of people in Tapacarí about its drawbacks as a place to live, constantly complaining that there was nothing there – no social life, no jobs and total '*silencio*'. On a deeper level, shortage of land meant that population growth was unviable and extreme weather patterns resulting from climate change have had severe effects on crops and therefore livelihoods there in the last few years.

The pull factor comes not only from the promise of work in urban centres but also the appeal of richer, more abundant land elsewhere. It is worth noting how much of this migration is not rural-urban, but rural-rural. While it is true that the urban province of Cercado, containing the city of Cochabamba, registers constant growth and swelled by about 120,000 people between 1992 and 2001, in terms of percentage growth rate, it was actually eighth out of 13 provinces in the department. Cercado's growth rate over this

period was 2.84%, and the highest growth rate in the department was that of Carrasco, a tropical province, whose population grew by 12.25% (Benavides 2006).

Beyond economics, though, people gave social reasons for wanting to move: for education, to see more of their family members who lived 'below', to get to know different places and to satisfy their curiosity. This curiosity also extended to foreign countries in the rest of South America as well as the United States and Europe.

In addition, most economic activity in Bolivia largely fits under the umbrella of the 'informal economy' – that is to say, beyond the regulatory gaze of the state. The term itself is unhelpfully broad here, but it is important to note that most work and money-making arrangements are sufficiently unregulated, casualised and insecure that moving between places and livelihoods is both possible and necessary. Moreover, Benavides (2006) suggests, in his study of urban growth and migration in Bolivia, that the natural resource-intensive economy of the country provokes a particular tendency towards internal migration: in other words, since much economic activity is focused around exploitation of primary mineral resources whose prices are subject to fluctuation in international markets, the people who make a living in the resource extraction economy have to be ready to change livelihood or location if there is a sudden drop in mineral prices.

Coca and cocaine

An obvious source of ready money elsewhere is the coca and cocaine business, in the tropical Chapare region. Many *tapacareños* have links to the Chapare and work there periodically, or own a small plot of land there to which they move for a few months of the

year, to cultivate coca and tropical fruit. Healy (1986) has discussed the economic magnetism of this area during the lean times of the 1980s, when it represented a bubble of wealth in the midst of a severe economic slump. Although the contrast is less sharp these days, the 'easy' but illegal money to be earned working in Chapare still attracts many. In Tapacarí the people who most openly talked about having worked in the cocaine economy were young, unmarried men leading popular education projects. They spoke of how they had worked '*pisando*', treading coca leaves to macerate them, in order to fund their studies, and claimed to have been paid \$200 per week – an astronomical sum. These men had left their communities as boys to attend boarding school in Kami, and had also worked in the mine there while they studied. Their layers of self-identification, proclaiming 'I am a miner!' during the same conversation in which they discussed their peasant families and higher education, belied simplistic categorisation of people according to occupation or language. Rather, it was clear that their success was predicated on moving where the opportunities were and using the tools they had at their disposal, be they proximity to a mine, or local social links and linguistic capabilities needed to lead workshops. In other discussions about crime and work, the money and power (and therefore impunity) associated with the cocaine economy were often highlighted. Young men working for the *alcaldía* or living in the town reported that they, as peasant youths, were specifically recruited because of their lack of education and access to other labour markets. 'You see a big white jeep driving round, up in the hills,' they related, 'and you know they are saying to the teenagers there, "Come work, it's good money". When you see this jeep you know there is no reason for them to be there out in the country where people are poor. They are looking for people to work.' There were also rumours of cocaine laboratories hidden in some of the more inaccessible parts of Tapacarí itself.

As for the possibilities, the more people establish households in different areas, the more easily their family members can move between them.

The weekly market

The town's weekly market, held in the plaza on Sundays, was an opportunity for townspeople as well as local peasants to receive goods sent to them from the city, and to sell or barter them locally. These were chiefly foodstuffs – tomatoes and chilli peppers, tropical fruit and bread, sometimes even ice cream. In this way, by receiving consignments sent on the twice-weekly lorries from daughters in the city or suburbs, some peasant families were able to compete with the well established shops of townspeople who were selling the same products, albeit with a greater range of non-perishable goods as well. Friends and family of the small-time traders – almost always women – would buy from them in preference over townspeople, almost all of whom had a reputation for rudeness and cheating towards the peasants who were obliged to buy from them. The money from the sale of goods sent from the city would go into the household budget, or be sent back to the city to be put towards more goods to sell. Likewise, when grain, potatoes or other goods were bartered for the city-bought produce, these would add variation to the household diet or be sent to the city to be sold. Overall, produce and money circulated horizontally between households in Tapacarí, the farming communities around it, the city and the tropics – each household linked to the other by kinship – rather than becoming concentrated in the coffers of the town's traditional elite. This partially echoes Harris' (2000) analysis of the 'ethnic economy' in the Norte de Potosí, in which Laymi people from different areas exchange goods based on use-value, avoiding the accumulation of money and controlling which goods are sold to non-Laymi.

Harris notes that this is made possible by group endogamy, and flexibility of land tenure. *Tapacareños* in the early 2000s – and people living in the Cochabamba valleys more generally – almost certainly experience greater interaction with markets and monetary transactions than the Laymi did in the late 1970s. Nor is endogamy a standard consideration in marriage practice, although the emphasis on courtship in large celebrations such as the patronal fiesta and Carnival may in part be informed by an implicit social preference for couples from the same background to get together.

It bears mentioning that the supply chains which kept the town's established shops and *pensiones* in food and goods for sale were also kinship-based, but had less direct links with market vendors and agricultural cultivation. Town-based merchants depended upon peasant *compadres* to supply them and upon being able to buy goods for resale in town. By contrast, when members of peasant families migrated they often took up agricultural work and were able to send home some of the products of their labour, like coca or tropical fruit, for resale.

Brooke Larson and Rosario León (1995) relate a similar account of small rural markets elsewhere in Tapacarí province, suggesting that the barter markets which operate at strategic points in the countryside provide a focal point for horizontal interaction and exchange which strengthens community autonomy, reducing dependence on exploitative urban merchants and *transportistas*. In their example, they describe the itinerant merchants who sell petty goods – mirrors, soap, combs, and the like – as being gently marginalised by regular peasant traders, a sort of symbolic example of the way peasant people shun outside intervention. I would suggest that the barter market in Tapacarí on Sundays involves little in the way of outside incursion from urban traders, but has

historically been dominated by the town's elite who, by their powers of monopoly and coercion, have steadily wrung money and labour from peasant villagers. Now, improved transport and a canny spread of co-operative households across economic niches means that supply chains can be put in the hands of peasant families themselves.

Nonetheless, this subtle expansion of peasant autonomy is still within certain parameters. The storage and transport of goods was controlled to a degree by town elites— they were still the owners of the houses people stayed in and the lorries goods were hauled around in. And in the city, they were also often the landlords of the peasant people who moved there.

Lucia and Mario

In the town of Quillacollo, outside Cochabamba, a cluster of *tapacareños* from hamlets as well as the town had established itself in the streets around the Manaco shoe factory. I lived here when in town, at a lodging house owned by a woman from the town of Tapacarí.

Lucia and her husband were both from small hamlets outside the town of Tapacarí, and had met and married as teenagers. Mario, her husband, had 'robbed' her from her family in a traditional 'mutual stealing' elopement (*suwanaku*) at Carnival and taken her to the Chapare, the tropical part of Cochabamba, where they had made a living as agricultural labourers for a few months before returning to the town of Tapacarí where Lucia worked as a cook and Mario got building jobs. After having a daughter, they had moved to Quillacollo, a town outside Cochabamba, and were living in a boarding house owned by a woman from the town of Tapacarí and her husband. Their relationship with their

landlady, Doña Elsa, had been long-standing and affectionate: there were several overlapping links of godparenthood between her family and Lucia's, but Doña Elsa's husband had evicted them in a tantrum after Christmas. I asked why.

He says there are too many people coming to stay. My brother Germán was here before Christmas, right? And my dad also was down last week, and Mario's brothers were here two days ago. Also my cousins from Chapare, who stayed over Christmas. Don Willy got annoyed with so many people. 'Door never shut,' he said, 'you have to be out of here in a week.'

Lucia and I went to several houses in the neighbourhood which advertised rooms for rent. She was looking to upgrade to two rooms, so as to be able to accommodate visiting family members more easily, and to store the products they brought with them – potatoes, wool and vegetables from her parents and siblings in Tapacarí, fruit brought from the Chapare and crates of tomatoes bought in Quillacollo, intended to be taken back to Tapacarí and sold. In the first two houses we went to, the landlords recognised one or both of us from the fiesta in Tapacarí – they were also originally from the town, but had their main house in Quillacollo. Eventually, Lucia moved in to a house with a woman she addressed as 'aunt', who occupied one set of rooms and left Lucia and Mario the other. The aunt didn't often travel to Tapacarí, but received vegetables from kinfolk there and sold them on in Quillacollo's main market square on market days. Like Lucia, she was *de pollera* and more comfortable speaking in Quechua than Spanish, but had a young daughter who dressed *de vestido* and spoke only Spanish.

Lucia, Mario and their daughter were very rarely alone in their two rooms. If not cooking

with the aunt next door, with whom they exchanged food and shared the outdoor living space, then they were playing host to siblings, parents, cousins or friends from Tapacarí. In the absence of relatives, their rooms were filled with the mattresses and blankets necessary to accommodate them, and with the produce they passed along. In this way, Lucia and Mario's house became a solid link in the chain of exchange, transport and trade that joined a rural hamlet outside Tapacarí, the town of Tapacarí, Quillacollo, certain neighbourhoods in Cochabamba, the Chapare, the distant department of Santa Cruz and countries even further afield such as Argentina and Spain.

Mobility and ethnic identity

In 1991, Orin Starn made an impassioned critique of essentialist and binarising tendencies within anthropological studies of the Andes, highlighting a marked tendency to construct a synchronic Andean 'other' whose community organisation and cultural practices owed more to long historical continuity and determined resistance to forces of change than to interaction with the world around them or the poverty in which they lived. Starn gives an unflattering but recognisable description of the typical 1970s anthropological vision of 'Andean societies' which recounts in detail the agricultural and religious rituals of peasant communities, their cosmology and kinship practices, but excludes analysis of the linkages between these communities and the world beyond their limits. Rather, they give a binary version of South American societies in which Quechua-speaking, poncho-wearing peasants are confined to the countryside and, in the event of moving to a city, move off the radar of the ethnographer. However, as Starn points out and as subsequent works (such as Lazar 2008) have shown, rural people's mobility between their communities, urban areas and other parts of the country such as tropical coca-growing zones, do not eradicate ethnic identity: rather, such movement may even engender awareness of

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people's class and ethnic positioning and cause them to emphasise their origins even more than those who have remained in the community, particularly as they experience education and are exposed to political discourse.

Likewise, while migration causes people of rural origins to be absent from the day-to-day life of the community, in other respects they fulfil important roles, such as participating in political events on behalf of their family, bringing intelligence and news back to the community on visits, selling, storing or buying goods, hosting family members and of course earning money to support themselves and others. People from the town of Tapacarí, the *residentes*, also maintained affective links to the town through their social organisation and occasional visits. These links were materially and qualitatively different, however, and relied more on shared memories and narratives of social prestige than the constant material interactions of trading goods and staying in each other's houses.

Chapter 3: *Alcaldía*

The municipal government of Tapacarí and the civil servants who worked there had a complex relationship to the provincial capital. At first glance, the municipality appeared to be a curious and uncomfortable combination of middle-class civil servants and peasant authorities, locked in a working relationship fraught with the potential for misunderstanding and insubordination. But as Foucault remarks, power held over bodies or used in the formation of people is not a static privilege but rather a series of 'dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques and functionings ... constantly in tension, in activity. Power is exercised rather than possessed' (1995: 72). The 'constant dispositions and maneuvers' of the peasant leaders in municipal government worked to develop their authority over civil servants, incorporating them in a literal sense – involving them bodily in rituals and working practices which followed a peasant aesthetic and ethos. In this chapter I recount some of the ways in which the municipal government office, known as the *alcaldía*, was the site of intermingling between different systems of prestige and production. First I discuss the emergence of the municipality as a governmental unit and describe how neoliberal reforms coupled with grassroots organising created the space for more effective representation of indigenous peasant people, shifting emphasis and resources away from the town. I then describe my role within the *alcaldía* staff and the working conditions there, which consisted of 'hard' work in the country and long hours, punctuated by 'celebrations' of an obligatory nature at which *alcaldía* employees were expected to drink and dance. These celebrations took place in the office itself and also in the town of Tapacarí or in remote locations where agricultural fairs had been organised. By describing these major celebrations, one on Independence Day (6 August) and the other on the town's anniversary (26 January), I show how the ritual power of the state was

mapped out onto the town and how urban people's encounters with the countryside were coloured by celebratory activity. I conclude by offering two examples of the ways in which image-taking in the form of photography and the foreign 'gaze' was accepted or resisted, and how this illustrates the instrumentalist way in which *tapacareños* and politicians used their own distinctiveness – and refused to allow it to be used against them.

Work environment of the *alcaldía*

In the first flush of the Morales/García Linera government, the mayor and councillors (who were indigenous peasants) and the professional civil servants were operating in a new and interesting political atmosphere. This had an inescapable impact on their day-to-day relations. New political priorities aside, though, there was still a productive friction between people of different ethnic and class backgrounds, which led to particular dynamics, which were themselves offset by narrative techniques and bodily disciplines, namely the adoption of a kinship idiom and the enforced presence of *alcaldía* employees in the countryside at certain times.

The municipal government authorities and the civil servants who worked with them provided material support for my research, in the form of transportation and lodging. The issue of support with transportation had initially seemed minor, but over time it became clear that being able to hitch a ride in government vehicles out to Tapacarí and back not only made life much easier, but also provided an insight into the production of social relations between municipal government employees and different understandings of 'work' as it related to the countryside. As with the people from the town of Tapacarí and the communities around it, mobility was key; local government staff had to be seen to be

'moving', and some of them spent more time in transit than they did at their desks. In addition to moving through physical space, the 'engineers' of local government were expected to be able to slip between ethnic and class categorisations with dexterity and so present themselves as skilled and masculine.

Over time, my own positionality within the municipal government office and its activities was also influenced by these sets of values. During the first few months of my fieldwork in Tapacarí, in dry season, I walked out to several different rural communities, alone and accompanied, firstly looking for a place to live and then eventually in order to get a sense of social order and how things were different in the peasant communities than in the town of Tapacarí. In June and July, for example, I visited six or seven villages in the upper reaches of canton Tapacarí and a few along the riverbed, staying overnight if the walk back to the town was too long. Although at the time I saw these as failed attempts to find a community to live in, they clearly made an impression on the councillors, Oversight Committee and other office staff members who came from Tapacarí, who would approach me and ask if it was true that I had walked up to such and such a village. When I answered in the affirmative, they would express surprise and approval.

In June 2006, I was tasked with supporting the organisation of a llama fair in canton Challa. While in the city, I helped with purchasing supplies, planning activities and ferrying round posters and publicity to different agencies and radio stations, including a day trip out to Challa Tambo to talk to people from the place where the fair was to be held and to plot out the site – and, in my case, ask questions about the *tambo* whose wall supposedly still stood there, forming part of the school in much the way described by Denise Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita in Qaqachaka (2005). This, while definitely

feeling like the kind of 'work' I had agreed to help the municipality with, did not meet with much reaction (although it did yield some good interviews).

The week before the *feria*, however, I was in the town of Tapacarí (altitude 2700 metres above sea level), and so in order to get to the llama fair I walked to Challa Tambo (4300 m.a.s.l.), staying overnight in the community of Ch'illca Grande with a popular educator and his family, and asking them many questions about the village *sindicato* and their resistance to the *ex-patrón*. When my educator friend and I arrived at the llama fair and announced that we had walked from Tapacarí, the engineer who had been organising the fair pronounced '*Qué macho!*' Unwittingly, I had complied with one of the fundamental qualities of an engineer or other fieldworker: demonstrating masculinity and acquiring knowledge by walking through the province.

Fortunately, the other qualities which engineers were supposed to display also came easily. As I discuss, communicative competence in the *alcaldía* was expressed through paperwork and written formalities, and through being able to fluently use a mix of Quechua and Spanish. Since I usually used my time in the office to write up field notes, this activity did not distinguish me too much from anyone else writing words, and being able to speak enough Quechua to get by was also an advantage. Neither was keeping up with drinking much of a problem. The heavy drinking sessions held in the city on *q'owa* nights and in the country as part of sojourns out for significant dates or fairs paled in comparison to the parties held out in the countryside for weddings or young men returning from military service, and being one of the only women who would stick around throughout a night's revelries resulted in a lot of conversations and the forging of some solid friendships. These relationships were consolidated on the many long and

arduous journeys through the province that I shared with other *alcaldía* staff, during which they freely discussed office politics, their experiences of the countryside, and municipal matters. In some cases I followed these up with formal interviews.

Implications of the *alcaldía* for indigenous peasant people

In the case of Tapacarí we can see how relations between country and city are embodied and described by its civil servants or *funcionarios*, and what is normatively considered 'work' for them. They operate in a complex relationship with the authorities they work for, who come from different ethnic and class origins with corresponding standpoints, which are sometimes at odds with those of the civil servants. Their expectations of what constitutes work and political service are rooted in strong traditions of peasant union organising, rather than professional careers. The relationship between authority and employee, and between state and community, is performed and reconfigured in daily practice and in a number of small and large rituals in which the cultural capital of peasant authorities is highlighted and privileged. This ritual process, in which indigenous, popular and civic traditions are combined, undermines institutionalised privilege and emphasises the authority of those who otherwise operate from a position of subalternity.

In this chapter I first lay out the legislative and historical factors which shaped the municipality of Tapacarí, and describe some of its main features and challenges as they present themselves to state employees and local authorities. I then go on to outline the background and characteristics of the people who are elected as authorities in the municipality, and show how they are different from the spectrum of people who find work as professional civil servants and other staff in the municipality. The relationship between these two groups of people can be seen as creating a kind of dialectic by which identities

and relations of domination and control are produced and contested, and tensions smoothed over by use of ritual and deliberate efforts to cultivate conviviality.

Neoliberalism and grassroots organising

The existence and management of the municipality of Tapacarí were brought about by neoliberal decentralisation reforms, which succeeded in disrupting the long-established concentration of power in its capital, the town of Tapacarí. Since these reforms took place in the 1990s, Tapacarí has been run by representatives elected from its peasant majority rather than a nucleus of elites. Since 2000, the representatives from the peasant union movement have consolidated their hold over power in the municipal government, to the point where it would now be very difficult for someone who did not have a career trajectory through the peasant union movement to attain power. This has several broad implications. Firstly, the municipal government authorities are closely identified with, and drawn from, 'the bases', the peasant farmers of Tapacarí's rural communities, and are hence subject to a high degree of accountability and social control. This social control does not come about through the legislation, but rather through there being a high degree of political organisation and well-articulated demands on the part of 'the bases' in Tapacarí. Secondly, the fact that they are drawn from 'the bases' means that the authorities are themselves peasant farmers with little formal education, having to work alongside highly educated urban professionals overseeing the management of complex projects. This leads to daily encounters in which the authorities and the professionals work to be intelligible to each other and to somehow create a comfortable mode in which peasants are in charge, and professionals are subordinate. Ultimately, those professionals and authorities who emerge from this challenge as 'successful' are those who can shift easily between modalities, and adequately inhabit several overlapping roles.

The municipality

The municipality of Tapacarí was created in April 1994 by Law 1551, the Law of Popular Participation (LPP), an initiative promoted by the neoliberal government of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. The LPP aimed at a radical decentralisation of public administration in Bolivia, in agreement with a classic liberal reduction of the power of central government. The aims of the law were to give local people more control over the services the state provided to them, to allow local authorities to focus their budgets on the area of greatest need and to encourage accountability and minimise corruption. In Pablo Regalsky's words:

The chief effect of this act is that there is now a state authority with territorial jurisdiction over the space of (peasant) communities, with the capacity to exercise the corresponding tasks in this jurisdiction, and which has the economic resources to do so (2005: 130, translation mine)³

To these ends, the law created 311 new municipalities, granting recognition to several existing ones, and channelled 20% of the governmental budget directly into their coffers. Most of the new municipalities were concentrated in urban areas, allowing more focus on deprived areas such as 'new neighbourhoods' where a high incidence of rural-urban migration had resulted in high populations in areas which lacked basic services. The law stipulated that a municipal government made up of a mayor and a council should be

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'La principal derivación de este hecho es que ahora hay una autoridad estatal con jurisdicción territorial sobre el espacio de las comunidades y con capacidad de ejercer las competencias derivadas de esta jurisdicción y que cuenta con recursos económicos por ello'

elected in each municipality. The council, made up of several representatives, passes directives and municipal laws and the executive implements them. In addition, to cut down on the corruption so endemic to Bolivian politics, an oversight committee (*comite de vigilancia*) is appointed to exercise social control over the council and mayor. The composition of the committee varies from area to area: the law included, for the first time, a specific affirmation that the social control over elected leaders was an appropriate task for members of grassroots movements or local indigenous authorities appointed according to the customs of the area in question, such as *jilaqatas* or leaders of *organizaciones territoriales de base* (OTBs) (Postero 2007). It was hoped that this oversight would ameliorate a common problem of decentralisation, the spread of corruption to every level. The accountability of the local government would be reinforced in regular popular meetings known as the *Consulta de Participación Popular* or CPP, which in Tapacarí take place on a three-monthly basis. In these direct meetings the mayor and council are answerable to an assembly of community representatives, and show up to give account of municipal activities and respond to requests or criticisms. Such meetings, when held in the town of Tapacarí, invariably filled the meeting hall to capacity.

Tapacarí is one of a group of municipalities collectively known as the *Mancomunidad de Municipios Andinos de Cochabamba*, which groups together neighbouring rural municipalities with low, dispersed populations in order to form a more powerful bloc.

Criticisms of the LPP have been wide-ranging. In some areas, the handing over of control to local groups has resulted in a retrenchment of power by traditional elites (Postero 2007). Regalsky (2005) suggests that the creation of competition between different peasant communities has 'weakened the capacity for community negotiating, and favours

the townspeople, who attain privileged access to scarce municipal resources'. Xavier Albó, when interviewed about the strengths and weaknesses of the LPP, warned of the danger that peasant leaders, 'attaining power without a solid organisation behind them run the risk of becoming "gentlemen", concerned with the personal advantage and not of standing for the interests of the people who they represent ... there is the clear possibility that the leaders prefer to be dressed in fine suits, rather than fighting for less personal causes' (Ayo 2004).⁴ Albó's specific mention of 'fine suits' brings to mind the ways in which distinction and prosperity, particular between indigenous peasants and city dwellers, is marked out through clothing. As this chapter goes on to show, this does not hold true for the municipality of Tapacarí.

Of course, Tapacarí as an administrative unit dates back to long before the LPP. The borders of the municipality coincide with that of the current province of Tapacarí, the oldest in Cochabamba. It was founded shortly after independence in 1825, but even prior to formal recognition as a province Tapacarí existed as an administrative unit in colonial times. The territory around the river Tapacarí, an important link between the highlands and the valleys, was awarded as a land grant in the 1500s and shows up in archival records as a '*partido*'. During the republican period the *partido* became a province, and post-1994 it is also a municipality. Over its life as a *partido* and province its borders have changed almost as much as those of Bolivia itself. Initially, it extended all the way to the limits of what is now the city of Cochabamba, but was reduced in size in 1825 and again in 1905, since which time the borders have not significantly changed. It extends across 1538 square kilometres in the south-west corner of the department of Cochabamba and

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'Es que llega a ser poder municipal sin una organización sólida por detrás convierte a los principales dirigentes en caballeros, preocupados por el provecho personal que pueden sacar antes que por velar por el interés general de la población a la que representan. Se da pues la clara posibilidad de que los dirigentes prefieran estar bien enternados que luchar por objetivos menos personales.'

borders onto the Aymara-speaking areas of Inquisivi, La Paz and Cercado, Oruro as well as the Quechua- and Spanish-speaking areas of Arque and Quillacollo, in Cochabamba. The population of Tapacarí, around 25,000 people, is dispersed across around 258 communities and a small number of urban settlements, comprising the towns strung out along the main highway, and the capital.

Early colonial occupation and the allocation of land grants notoriously sliced across pre-existing ethnic 'national' boundaries throughout the Andes, where territory was often held in discontinuous stretches (see Saignes 1986, Bouysse-Cassaigne 1986). The colonial Villa Real de Tapacarí included not only a generous stretch of valley and riverbed inhabited by Quechua speakers, but also territory whose population speak Aymara and who are culturally distinct from the valley dwellers. Later, despite repeated alterations to the reach of Tapacarí, it remained a territorial unit whose map-drawn borders did not reflect the ethnic differences between its inhabitants. The line separating Tapacarí from its neighbours did not take into account the pre-existing frontiers between different groups of indigenous people with the result that the *partido*-province-*municipio* of Tapacarí has, since its inception, had the kind of linguistic and cultural diversity on a micro scale that Bolivia contends with on a macro scale. The redrawing of boundaries did not alter this, as the Aymara zone has never been re-allocated, and Tapacarí persists with a significant linguistic minority within its already marginalised indigenous peasant population.

Tapacarí in 2006-2007 was one of the poorest municipalities in Bolivia, with 99.4% of its households classified as living in poverty by the National Statistical Institute in 2001, compared to an average of 55% in the department of Cochabamba and 33% in the city of

the same name. The people who lived there were marginalised economically by a poor transport network, scarcity of job opportunities and *surcofundio*, overpopulation and lack of adequate farmland. Its unforgiving topography meant that agriculture was still carried out using non-industrial methods and tools, and natural disaster was and is a ubiquitous threat to crops and therefore livelihoods. In 2008, for example, crops were damaged and people killed in a series of intense hail showers and floods. In order to find salaried work it is necessary to go to the city or to other rural parts of Cochabamba such as nearby Sipe Sipe or Chapare, the tropical coca-growing region.

Access to power

Until 1994, the majority of the people in Tapacarí, indigenous peasants, were also excluded from formal networks of power. The local government, such as it was, was the preserve of a small elite living in the capital of the province, and, according to the accounts of local people, largely limited its attentions to the upkeep of the town. Both townspeople and peasants described this as having been the case. Many townspeople complained that the town had been neglected ever since 1994, but few suggested that it would be preferable to revert to a pre-1994 situation in which it was necessary to travel to La Paz or Cochabamba every time attention was needed from the government. It seems that in previous years the *sindicato campesino* was the favoured form of community organisation and political mediation for the indigenous peasant population, and the mayor's office that of the townspeople (Mumford, personal communication, 2006). Before the LPP, informants told me, the mayor and council were elected 'at the point of a finger' (*por dedo*), and no peasant authority stood a chance of becoming mayor or councillor. Since 1994, all but the first mayor and council elected have been former peasant union leaders from rural communities.

All of these factors – the overwhelming poverty, the lack of infrastructure, the diversity and the lack of any pre-existing formal political systems – make carrying out the work of the state in the municipality of Tapacarí a challenge. The extreme poverty of Tapacarí means that greater intervention is deemed to be necessary, while the poverty and lack of infrastructure impede the execution of normal functions and of projects. For a project to be carried out province-wide, it is necessary for personnel to be able not only to plan and co-ordinate it remotely but also to explain it in Quechua and often Aymara too.

For these reasons and many others, the municipality of Tapacarí has been run since its creation in 1994 from the city of Cochabamba, about two hours' drive away from the closest reach of the province and up to six hours' journey from its furthest communities. While the original *alcaldía* (municipal government office) building in the town of Tapacarí is used primarily for storage and occasional events like workshops or elections, an '*enlace*' or satellite office in Cochabamba employs around 80 people carrying out all the functions associated with local government. The planning and execution of projects involves many aspects that require that they be in the city. For example, co-ordinating the construction of a new school building involves liaising with the people who wish for it to be built, whether that be the regional education authority, the community or both, surveying the site, contracting an architect to come up with the plans, buying materials from suppliers in the city, assigning a lorry and driver to take the materials out to the site, contracting and paying labourers and a foreman to carry out the work, moving machinery and fuel to the site for the construction, liaising with the funders who will pay for the project in cases when it is done with an NGO rather than municipal funds, and all the attendant paperwork. Very few of these can be carried out in the town of Tapacarí, which

has one unreliable phone line, no professional population, limited road access and no place to buy fuel for machinery or vehicles. Nevertheless, in the town of Tapacarí and among *tapacareños* living in the city, there was widespread discontent that the *alcaldía* did not shift its operations back there, increasing the population of the town, stimulating the local economy, and bringing *alcaldía* activity within closer reach. Even some *alcaldía* employees conceded that it would be preferable for some of the *técnicos*, low-level civil servants active in the countryside, to base themselves in the town of Tapacarí. At the time of fieldwork, however, relatively few *técnicos* or other officials were willing to stay in Tapacarí (the province or the town) for periods of more than a few days at a time.

Layout and composition of the office

The municipal office was made up of several divisions. The Executive office, housed at the front, included the mayor and two legal advisors. The municipal councillors also had their own chambers, a legal advisor and a secretary. Finances and Health occupied two more sub-offices, and then an open-plan area contained the desks for the divisions of Agronomy, Infrastructure and Human Development, each of whom had their own head and one to four subordinate staff, as well as the Head of Personnel. One very busy, trilingual secretary oversaw phone calls and correspondence for the whole office. There were also several administrative staff who dealt with logistics, timetabling and purchasing, and a porter who took care of the office. I was allocated to Human Development, along with Laura, who worked in child protection; Wilson, who had the brief for culture, tourism and sport; and Alvaro, who took care of early childhood education, specifically the 'Wawa Wasi' programme for intervention in early childhood care. All three of them were bilingual in Quechua and Spanish, had grown up in families

whose primary livelihood was agriculture, and had then studied at university level. Laura and Wilson were from the Valle Alto, and Alvaro was from Oruro. On any given day, two or more of them might be away from the office working on various projects or making visits to funders or other organisations in the city. Wilson and Laura were active MAS members. The head of division, Ingeniero David, was from Potosí originally and had worked in several municipalities and organisations. A proud and prominent MAS member, he spoke Quechua and Aymara and, in addition to agronomy, had studied law.

Like the members of staff in Human Development, the other *funcionarios* (civil servants) came from a range of backgrounds, with two things in common: they (almost) all spoke Quechua, and in some cases Aymara, and they (almost) all had been to university, except the auxiliary staff such as porters and drivers. Most had been recruited via newspaper ads seeking staff, rather than internally; staff turnover was high. Very few permanent staff members and no heads of division were from the province itself, where sparse provision of secondary education mitigates against the emergence of local professionals. Several people from the province were contracted in as *técnicos*, people working actively on outreach in areas such as child protection or education. One of these roles, Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents (*Defensor del Niño Niña y Adolescente*), was something of a springboard for a municipal political career: it had been held by the mayor, the subprefect and the leader of the peasant union. The office porter was from the municipality of Tapacarí, as were four of the five drivers, who played a critical role. The people from the municipality who most frequently came to the office were *subcentral* peasant union leaders with requests, grievances or problems, and workers who had been contracted to carry out paid labour on an infrastructure project.

The authorities

Meanwhile, the authorities, their bosses, came from the peasant communities of Tapacarí. The mayor and five out of the seven councillors were Quechua speakers from the valley part of the province, with two councillors from the Aymara-speaking highland region who also spoke Quechua. Two councillors were women, both of them monolingual in Quechua. Quechua was the language used in official meetings, although all municipal decrees and laws were written in Spanish, drafted by a lawyer. Each councillor had been a peasant union leader working up from community representative through to municipal authority, by first acting as community leaders (*dirigentes*) and then leaders of their *subcentral*, a small group of communities, then *central cantonal*, leader of their provincial subdivision and then in most cases *central provincial*, peasant union leader for the whole municipality. One was a former mayor. The two women councillors had been *central provincial* for women, who had their own separate, parallel leadership structure mirroring that of the men.

It was repeatedly affirmed in interviews with councillors and at peasant union meetings and gatherings in Tapacarí that no individual could be eligible to become a councillor or occupy another authority role without first working to serve their community. The councillors each emphasised, when I talked to them, that they had spent several years working up the hierarchy described above and then sometimes occupying a role in the municipal leadership such as member of the Oversight Committee, or Ombudsman for Child Protection. In a congress for women leaders which I attended in the town of Tapacarí, the subcommittee for organisation agreed that unless an individual had completed a term of service of one year at each level of the organisation, they should not

be allowed to progress further up the hierarchy, and that no one from the province should be supported in a bid for political office unless they had served in all the positions of the peasant union (*subcentral, central cantonal, central provincial*) and been a member of the MAS-IPSP party for at least five years. In subsequent years, some councillors from other parts of the province were elected under different party banners, or defected.

Peasant union leadership in Tapacarí required dedication and diplomatic skill, as well as a significant outlay of time, with consequent economic losses. From *subcentral* level upwards, leaders' time was no longer their own and they were expected to attend meetings and training workshops, mediate disputes and advocate for the interests of all the communities in the *subcentral* when interacting with representatives from the state, NGOs or other external agencies. According to the engineers, they only dealt with the *subcentral* leader when contacting a community to arrange an event or project: 'the others won't talk to you, or even give their names: they will just tell you to go talk to the *subcentral*'. *Central cantonal* representatives have a correspondingly more demanding job, and the job of *central provincial* is a serious, prestigious, full-time undertaking. The *central provincial* at the time of fieldwork, Don Valentin, described his job as one of co-ordination between the bases and the leadership of the Political Instrument (i.e. the MAS), but also one of conflict resolution within and between communities. The most difficult conflicts, he said, were over land, because they affected everyone: most of the disputes he was called out for involved arguments over borders between lands. The police in the town of Tapacarí backed this up in interviews, saying that they had very little to do with the resolution of disputes or punishment of offenders in the peasant communities; all this fell to the peasant union organisers. (Indeed, one of the only times I saw a peasant make a complaint to the police was when, in the fiesta, a community leader

complained that the people from his village had beaten him up and 'they shouldn't be allowed to do that, I am a *dirigente*, they should have respect and not hit me.')

Although the social organisation in the Aymara-speaking part of the province was centred around the *ayllu* in addition to the *sindicato campesino*, Don Valentin affirmed that he was also called on to mediate disputes in the upper reaches of the province in the Aymara-speaking communities, although he himself was from a Quechua-speaking community in canton Tapacarí. Being *central provincial*, he said, meant you had to spend a lot of time walking from place to place, since he had to visit many communities and had no vehicle in which to do so. Indeed, when he passed through the town of Tapacarí it was often before or after a several-hour walk out to a community where a problem had been reported. The same was true of the women peasant leaders who I knew: they spoke of the need to walk around their area, between communities, and also to travel frequently for meetings in the city with other peasant leaders, training workshops or gatherings of the umbrella union, the Bartolina Sisa Federation of Women Peasants. This work was made complicated, they said, by their duty to take care of livestock (in bilateral descent and gendered agricultural tasks, women generally inherit animals and have the job of animal husbandry, whereas men inherit land and have primary responsibility for crops [see Spedding 1997]) and the jealousy of husbands who did not permit their wives to walk freely from community to community or to travel to the city when necessary: for this reason many women peasant leaders were young and unmarried, had reached agreements with their husbands, or had gotten rid of them.

Although all were from peasant backgrounds, the councillors necessarily had to live in the city for most of the time while carrying out their duty. Most of the councillors described the transition from living in the country to living in the city as difficult, and took the

opportunity when they could to return to their country houses – one in particular was notorious for getting a lift back to his house in the country whenever he could, and asking to be picked up from there on the way to meetings. One of the female councillors had entrusted the care of her two children to her husband while she carried out her duties. The authorities, mayor, councillors, *subprefecto* and national political representatives were addressed in print and in speech as 'Honorable'. To omit this title was considered extremely rude, but it was often used in conjunction with less formal ways of speech, including use of the intimate 'tú' form in Spanish. As with the title 'Engineer', it was useful in cases of forgetting people's names. However, several of them had nicknames by which they liked to be known, emphasising aspects of their political self-presentation. One was known by all as the General, in reference to his prominent role in confrontations and the organisation of protests – his community had a reputation stretching back several decades for evicting abusive landowners. Another referred to himself as the *Campesino*, the Peasant, and retained his traditional dress and habitual coca-chewing when in the city – even carrying a green bag of coca with him when playing football. The mayor, in a consciously provocative move, wore tyre-rubber sandals, *ujutas*, when he went about his duties, a fact which provoked scandal among the *residentes tapacareños*.

The significance of language

These measures – the insistence on continuing to wear traditional clothes, even in the city, sticking to indigenous languages and being deliberately, visibly indigenous – attracted praise from some people who worked in association with the *alcaldía* in equal measures to the criticism and disgust of the *residentes*. 'Tapacarí is a very well run municipality,' a popular educator opined once in a break from teaching young peasant leaders at a workshop. 'The councillors here are real Aymaras and Quechuas.' When probed as to

what he meant by 'real Aymaras and Quechuas', he elaborated, 'Everything is agreed on, they work out a consensus ... in my hometown, Punata, the council are all Quechua speakers too, but they are working for their own interests. Two are lawyers, and the others wear suits, and there is a lot of division, they don't consult with the community. In Tapacarí they are more responsive to the *bases*.' Unknowingly, he echoed Albó's concern about authorities preferring to be '*bien enternados*' than working for the concerns of the people they represented.

All of the councillors and mayor preferred to speak in Quechua or Aymara around the office, partly for their own comfort (wishing to be absolutely clear when discussing important matters with heads of division, they naturally opted for the language they were comfortable in) and partly to underline a political point about the legitimacy and value of indigenous languages. If a staff member did not speak Quechua or did not speak it well, some councillors such as the General would make a special point of speaking to them only in Quechua until they improved. The first time I spoke with the General in Spanish was almost a year after first meeting him, and we were talking about languages – he also spoke Aymara and Yuracare.⁵ 'I speak Spanish perfectly well, but why would I speak in Spanish when I have a language that came from the Incas?' he reflected. The councillors held their weekly council meeting in the province of Tapacarí, in varied locations, to give the sense that they were still doing the business of government within the province.

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The General when he was a young man had lived in Chapare alongside Yuracare people, and was proud to have learned their language and followed their customs. 'They still hunted with a bow and arrow, and ate raw meat,' he said, 'but now they are civilising themselves a little.' He described the time he spent with them as formational in the development of his own identity as a Tapacarí *campesino* and, like them, indigenous: when he came home, he ate nothing but *mote* and drank nothing but water and did not speak for several weeks, and then he was restored to being *tapacareño*.

Funcionarios

The generic name for a male civil servant working in the municipal government office was 'engineer', with some exceptions. The word 'engineer' was used as a title in isolation from, or together with, personal names – that is, the secretary would call for 'Engineer Menendez', or simply 'Engineer!' This was applied whether or not the person concerned had a qualification in engineering; most, who had gone to university, had studied agronomy or finance. This title was also used by people in the country as a blanket term to refer to any agent of local government. This is not unique to Tapacará or even Bolivia: Mary Weismantel (2001) describes a similar tendency in Ecuador, to describe any middle-class or white man seen working in the country as 'the engineer'. I was myself sometimes referred to as 'engineer' by people in the town of Tapacará who did not know me (two old ladies also once had an argument in my hearing about whether I was a teacher or a *técnica*). Occasionally, subtle differences would be thrown in; women tended to be referred to as '*Licenciada*' (university graduate) rather than '*Ingeniera*'. Again, this was applied whether they had finished university or not, and was used as a marker of middle-class status. As Weismantel (2001) comments in the case of highland Ecuador, these titles were assumed to have been earned by many years of study and other forms of attaining middle-class distinction, whether or not a university title had been formally gained. It was common practice to refer to the civil servants of the *alcaldía* collectively as 'the engineers', a homogenising term which emphasised their status as educated professionals while occluding their diverse origins and level of attainment in education and also the office hierarchies.

The overwhelming majority of the *funcionarios* or 'engineers' in the *alcaldía* were men.

Those who went out to work in the country regularly, as opposed to accountants, office managers, secretaries etc., were all men apart from Laura and two women who worked in early child health and popular education. (There were also several female teachers and nurses working in Tapacarí, but they were employed by SEDUCA, the national education administration, and the *Caja Nacional de Salud* respectively, and so rarely came to the office.) The engineers attributed this gendered division to the 'hard' and 'tiring' nature of local government work, which involves a great deal of travel and relinquishing of evenings and weekends which would otherwise be time off. In the municipality of Tapacarí, one also had to be willing to work for indigenous peasant bosses, who worked to a different personal clock to that of city professionals, rising earlier, working longer and making corresponding demands on their staff. It was not uncommon for councillors or the mayor to call *funcionarios* at 5 or 6am demanding information, for example.

Travelling

In order to qualify for most of the positions, employees had to be willing to frequently travel to and from isolated hamlets throughout the province. 'Women don't want to travel' was a common refrain, sometimes expressed as 'Women can't use a motorbike, they prefer to stay in the office.' Notoriously, two young women working on tourism degrees had done some work in collaboration with the *alcaldía* and had declined to go out to the province in anything other than a 4x4 *wagoneta*, and their example was often cited as proof that women were unsuited to the harshness of travelling around. This obscuration of women's work which necessitated travel meant that the few women who did take on jobs which required them to visit isolated communities were rarely given provision for transportation, and often had to carry out their job walking from village to village. Like their male counterparts, they talked about the distances they had to walk with a mix of

enjoyment and protest. One told me in a lengthy interview how she had applied to work in Tapacarí because at the time she had a strong wish to leave the city of Cochabamba and go overseas, or to another department, 'but when I saw the distances in Tapacarí and how you have to walk, and can be there without anyone bothering you, it seemed good.' Others commented on missing their children or other family members when they were away.

The male engineers also repeatedly brought up the distances and necessity of walking and travelling in their discussions of Tapacarí. 'You have to walk far, far away from the road sometimes,' they reported, 'it can be very tough. It's cold, there's nowhere to get food, the people can be very hard. You don't get home until very late, sometimes. But if you don't go out there, how can you know what needs doing?' The emphasis on physical sacrifice and willingness to engage bodily with the environment in order to attain knowledge demonstrated how the ability of engineers was developed or proven in a context where multiple power relationships governed the knowledge or skills they could acquire and use. Chief among these power relationships was one of gender, and the primacy of masculine strength and fearlessness. Another obvious expression of this masculinity was an office environment in which the few women were subjected to a great deal of verbal and physical come-ons, most of which they ignored.

This can be understood as gender performance – neither dictated by external social forces nor entirely voluntarily created, but expressed and constituted through lived experience. Additionally, the physical actions of the job reinforced social status conferred not just by their university title but by the embodied experience of being an engineer, who travelled on a motorbike or in a pickup truck, wore boots and an *overol* (boiler suit) and could

manage projects and the language (literal and figurative) of the state, demonstrating a distinction between themselves and the people for whom they worked. At the same time, extended work in the countryside facilitated some identification with peasant people, especially on the part of those who were politically allied with the MAS. However, one's origins and political affiliation did not necessarily determine one's everyday actions.

Wilson and the Soldier

Two colleagues, from the same small farming town in Cochabamba, of the same age and similar backgrounds, sat in the same corner of the office. One of them, who went by the nickname 'Soldier', articulated a direct connection with the country people who we worked with, as well as the authorities he worked for. ('The General gives the orders and the Bolivian Soldier carries them out, ha!' he said, more than once.) He chewed coca while in the office and preferred to speak in Quechua, sometimes pointedly changing languages mid-conversation. On an excursion, he talked at length about the animals and land he had had to leave behind when he came to the city to study and work. 'You can't just raise animals like any other job,' he said, 'you have to treat them with affection.' The youngest of ten children who were scattered across several countries, he had set his mother up with a guinea-pig-raising business to keep her solvent, and worked in agriculture in Argentina to finance his studies. He was well respected by community representatives and sought out by those who came to the office. However, he preferred being on the road, and expressed impatience whenever confined indoors with paperwork.

His counterpart, Wilson, was from the same town and also spoke Quechua at home. His parents worked in agriculture, but he had other aspirations and had worked overseas in Argentina and the USA in order to fund his education. Where the Soldier wore rubber

sandals, Wilson sported Nikes. He expressed a strong wish to return to the USA to work, and asked me to teach him English and give him help to enter the country. Wilson was also a party member of MAS and sympathetic to the political project of Evo Morales, but had aspirations of social mobility beyond a job in the *alcaldía* where he had to work almost every weekend. Both men enjoyed being in the country, including the freedom it gave them to indulge in rural pleasures such as drinking corn beer and flirting with peasant women. But while the Soldier emphasised his peasant roots and presented his work in the country as formative of his own person, Wilson placed more value on his status as professional, and emphasised the distinction between himself and the people of Tapacarí.

Both Wilson and the Soldier were successful at moving between social strata: while the Soldier was adept at, and fond of, going out to the country and talking to country people about agriculture, animal husbandry and related matters, he was also still a salaried urban professional. Wilson, aspiring to take his professional life overseas, looked for job experience working in the countryside that would allow him to progress further in his career. He talked of commonality with *tapacareños* ('I am from the valleys and I share the Quechua-speaking cultural side, so we can understand each other a bit') but also complained of the long distances which had to be covered and the difficulty of communicating with Aymara speakers, who he described as very different from the people he had grown up with.

Evading office politics

The social production of the person of 'engineer' was, then, carried out in several sites and through several interwoven discourses. The embodied experience was one; the long,

uncomfortable hours spent travelling, the need to walk and the sensations associated with being in the country. The location of a civil servant's 'work' was fluid; they spent as much time travelling to and from different locations in Tapacarí as they did sitting in the office in Cochabamba, and this time spent in the countryside, even if it involved more time sitting in a car with the driver and other civil servants, was considered by the authorities to be 'work' more valuable than staying in the office. In turn, office work as well as countryside work was circumscribed by paper and paperwork, as I will later show. However, activity and physical engagement with people and the land was considered to be important. If a *funcionario* stayed for several continuous days in the office without going out to the country to oversee projects, there were complaints from technical staff and from the authorities, and sometimes people opted to go out to the field even if there was little need for them to be there, to avoid these criticisms. Sometimes the photos taken to document the progress of works included deliberately staged shots showing the engineers digging or otherwise helping in construction. This show of 'getting one's hands dirty' was intended to show that the engineer was properly engaged with the project, even if they put down the spade the minute the camera was turned off. Engineers often admitted that escaping to the country and driving around all day visiting projects made a welcome break from office politics.

'Last week the boss was giving it to me hard and I was fed up with his bullshit. I prefer to go out *de viaje* [on a work trip] when it's like that rather than staying and putting up with them all.'

This opinion was echoed by those who saw trips to the province as a way to escape from their bosses and get on with their jobs without being harassed. Harassment and

disciplinary measures from bosses were especially resented when they came from the councillors, who were identifiably indigenous and, as such, of lower status than the *funcionarios* to whom they gave orders. Although this discrepancy was glossed over in good times, when *funcionarios* were annoyed with their bosses, racialised insults started to flow, particularly the I-word, a strong swearword eschewed by all but the boldest. Said one woman, whose family were Quechua speakers with a strong connection to agriculture, 'I can't believe what an *indian* Engineer X was being the other day. He was so rude to me, I was furious!' I mentioned another head of division, who people often complained about. 'Now that one,' she said, 'is the most indian of all of them. I mean that guy is stubborn, ignorant, inflexible ... just indian, *indian*, you know?' and she shook her head in disbelief. Other people complained about the same man, mimicking his Aymara accent and way of speaking. 'He's annoying, it's true, but he's just an ignorant indian without power,' mused a Public Works engineer, Juan Carlos. 'The General, though, he's the absolute worst. An ignorant indian with power. He's always messing with my projects and he doesn't even know enough Spanish for me to explain, he just stands there going "I don't understand, I don't understand". He's what my mother would call an *i de eme*' (*indio de mierda*, shitty indian).

Note that the engineer problematised the councillor's lack of Spanish rather than his own lack of Quechua. The coy abbreviation revealed the strength of the insult; there was no worse ignorant indian than an ignorant indian who was also your boss. However, it was clear that from the General's perspective, the engineer's monolingualism was the problem. On one occasion, he walked into the office and saw me and a few others including Engineer Juan Carlos. He began a simple conversation with me in Quechua, carried it on politely for several minutes and then turned around and gesticulated at the unfortunate,

monolingual engineer. 'You can speak Quechua now, and you are from far away, from another country. But Engineer Juan Carlos, he doesn't speak a single word, does he?' The conversation was clearly not for my benefit, but intended to show up the monolingual engineer.

Normative 'work' and processes of validation and exclusion

In order for work in the country to be visible to the authorities it had to be processed and presented in the form of multiple documents. Catherine Alexander describes a similar 'documentary blindness' among the civil servants she worked with, observing that 'bureaucratic myopia (consists in) only being able to see objects through their documentary representation' (2002:69). Movement was theoretically controlled through paperwork; each *funcionario* had to present a timetable at the beginning of the month showing where they would be and when. This would then be circulated in order to facilitate co-ordination of vehicles and handovers of materials. At the end of the month they were required to hand in timesheets in which they provided proof that they had gone to certain locations at the time they said they would. The proof usually took the form of a signature or seal of a community representative who affirmed that the *funcionario* had come on a certain day. This precautionary measure was designed to ensure that the civil servant continued working when out of sight of the office, instead of 'losing themselves' in their own pursuits and shirking their duties. They also created a paper trail for the handover of resources, so as to minimise losses through corruption. While facilitating scrutiny, this method of ensuring people were working was only useful for a certain definition of work, which was being in the right place at the allotted time. The stamp or signature testifying to their presence was a sign that they had gone somewhere, but not what they had done. For example, in the case of equipment deliveries it was

commonplace for a car from the *alcaldía* to arrive and the *funcionarios* to deposit the things they had to deliver, solicit a signature on a form and then be gone without making sure that the right quantity had been handed over, or that the people knew what it was for. Additionally, there were many cases of illiterate community leaders being duped into (literally) rubber-stamping documents without knowing what was written on them. The process of creating the paper trail was dialogic, between the documentation of the office and the stamped approval of *dirigente*, engineer, authority and administrator. The stamps and receipts also indicated when objects or ideas passed in and out of different regimes of value and meaning (Appadurai 1988), weaving a relationship between those who procured items, carried them, received them and used them.

There was often a degree of slippage in the control of time when out in the country. This slippage was facilitated by the difficulty of controlling people when they are moving around in 'no-man's-land', out of reach of mobile phone signal and only accountable to each other. It was not uncommon for delegations to return in the early hours of the morning, if there was a problem with the vehicle or, equally often, if they had stopped over for an impromptu drinking session in one of the cafes by the side of the highway. 'Going to the country' was often used as an excuse by the men of the *alcaldía* when they spent time with their mistresses. By telling their wives they had been obliged to go on a trip out to see their projects, and turning off their phone, they were free to disappear from their normal lives for a few hours. Likewise, metaphors of mobility and vehicles were used by the engineers to talk about effectiveness in work or in courtship. When, at a *q'owa*, one of them appeared to be striking up a friendship with a young lady, his colleagues teased him the next working day by saying 'your motorbike was well parked up there' (*tu moto estaba bien estacionada*).

The office staff operated from a position of class privilege, as educated professionals, although many of them came from rural origins. Alexander again observes of civil servants in rural Turkey, who were closely associated with the town they worked in, that they were 'at once the faceless implementers of legal-rational codes and plans, and the citizens of the urban world in which they act and in which they live' (2002: 59). In the context of Cochabamba, urban living involved a wholly different kind of daily experience than that of the countryside, and one in which peasants were at best marginalised and at worst actively discriminated against. Despite the democratic and solidarity-focused rhetoric of many civil servants, this power disparity could be witnessed in their interactions in the office and in the country. In both contexts, the *funcionarios* exercised a degree of discursive and spatial power over those who came to request their attention. In the country, this was simply achieved by their mobility; after carrying out a ten minute consultation they could, and did, retreat to the pickup truck and head back to the city. It was also evident in their interactions with community representatives, who were often treated with condescension appropriate to an asymmetrical relationship of power and prestige. Each day, peasant community leaders with business to conduct in the *alcaldía* came to meet with the civil servants co-ordinating projects in their communities. These meetings were necessary to find out about progress of works and planning, co-ordinate the labour supply for construction, and many other tasks associated with the execution of projects. The location of the office in the city coupled with the poor availability of public transport in most of Tapacarí meant a lengthy journey for the community representative concerned, and an overnight stay in the city. Upon coming to the *alcaldía*, they would have to wait to see the 'engineer' concerned, and then face the possibility of the people with whom they spoke not being able to communicate with them in their own language.

Although most of the staff were Quechua speakers, and the secretary was trilingual, the gulf in communicative competence could be seen to be intimidating. It was often the case that when the community representative (always a man) arrived to meet with the civil servant concerned, they had left the building on another errand. Long periods of waiting were a standard part of the experience of doing business in the *alcaldía*, and visitors were often left sitting on a bench in the reception area watching TV. Once admitted to the area behind the partition where the civil servants planned, co-ordinated and wrote up, they were often left to stand while the person behind the desk (invariably a man) gave them a verbal report or directions. If the leader had not previously made an appointment or sent a *solicitud*, a document requesting a particular service or project, then sometimes the engineer in question would refuse to meet with them and instead continue with the pile of tasks ahead of them. This took place within my hearing several times.

The white-collar work of the office involved several prominent signifiers of prestige and education which were played with and disrupted by the staff themselves and peasant visitors. The most notable was the role played by paper and the written word. A close relationship to paperwork was one way of defining a civil servant, who in a pre-electronic organisation where communication was still carried out through the printed word spent significant periods of time putting together communiqués, reports, plans, timetables and checklists. The execution of a project was framed by the paperwork around it, including the anti-corruption measures which meant that everything had to be signed for and stamped. Interaction with community leaders and representatives from the 'subject' population was also mediated through the control of paper; the passing to and fro of forms, plans and permission slips was a crucial element in productive meetings and sometimes the only motive for a long trip out to a community. In common with other

areas, the authority of the document rendered power to those who held it. Making the *solicitud* or written demand the only acceptable format through which to make a formal request of state services privileged certain communicative facilities which were outwith the knowledge of most community leaders. Official documents were written not merely in Spanish, but a particular kind of highly bureaucratic Spanish with flourishes of formal courtesy directed to the authorities. This format was used within the bureaucracy of the office to request materials, time, meetings and consideration. The circulation of the piece of paper containing the *solicitud* was a key step in obtaining anything. Only by being expressed through this medium were interactions officially sanctioned. Subsequently, execution of projects involved a continuous flow of paperwork as materials and work were contracted and signed for. Even the daily journeys and working life of a civil servant was measured out in form-filling and signatures – if they left the office to travel to the province, it was necessary to obtain a signature and stamp from a representative of the community they had visited, in order to prevent truancy. This contrasted markedly with the cultural norms within Tapacarí, where literacy levels were very low and being seen writing in public tended to generate reactions of admiration, suspicion and sometimes hostility. Even for those who were literate, writing was an activity out of the ordinary, with the exception of signatures and rubber stamps which were part of the toolkit of political organisers. Writing and paper, then, were elements in the construction of what constituted 'work', a construction which was alien to the cultural norms of people in Tapacarí. If a project was not extensively documented, for the purposes of the bureaucracy it did not exist. If a request for a new project was made by word of mouth, it was considered illegitimate even if the community representative had made a considerable effort to come and make it.

That is, following Bourdieu's forms of cultural capital, we might surmise that the university-educated civil servants traded on their institutionalised capital of university education, work experience, titles and adeptness at dealing in the language of the bureaucratic world: projects, *solicitudes*, reports and the wider discourse of public service. At the same time, power in the office – to hire and fire, to control movements and the flow and distribution of money – rested in the hands of a group of elected officials who did not count on this 'institutionalised capital' of formal education, or conditional membership of the middle classes. Indeed, in order to keep their position in power tenable, the authorities had to continue protagonising a role which emphasised their commonality with the electorate which they served – to be considered legitimate authorities, they had to resist what Albó (cited in Ayo 2004) referred to as the temptation to 'wear fine suits'. Their authority as leaders was built on their experience as peasant organisers and as marginalised people, from which standpoint they were best able to act as representatives. They also were charged with the difficult task of giving orders to a workforce which had taken pains to distance itself from precisely this kind of class positioning, through social mobility and higher education.

Primer Viernes de Q'owa and performance of belonging and authority

The monthly *q'owa* ritual, also known as the First Friday *Ch'alla*, combined elements of Andean spirituality with reinforcement of the office hierarchy. Carried out on the first Friday of the month, it consists of burning a prepared offering to produce smoke and also making poured libations of alcohol onto the ground. The name *q'owa* comes from the sweet-smelling herb used in the burnt offering, and *ch'alla* from the action of pouring libations of *chicha*, beer or other alcohol onto the ground. Versions of this ritual are practiced in many parts of the Andes, although relatively little has been written about it in

urban contexts (exceptions include Buechler and Buechler 1971 and Albro 2001). Allen (1988) describes the *ch'alla* ritual in Peru, explaining it as a way of offering a sacrifice to tutelary mountain spirits through the medium of smoke, which can be consumed by non-human entities. Sallnow (1987) further describes the *ch'alla* as a way of communicating with capricious supernatural forces and persuading them to feed off the smoke and sacrifice of the offering rather than preying on human beings. Absi (2005) also describes the importance of *ch'allas*, including animal sacrifice, among miners in Potosí intent on placating the 'Tio' owner of underground wealth. This account of *ch'allas* as a placatory sacrifice offered in return for safety or success is relevant to the rituals at the *alcaldía*, where the aim of the ritual was often explained as 'to make sure things go well for us – to thank our *Pachamama*'. In Cochabamba, urban people generally describe their regular *ch'alla* on the first Friday of the month by saying that it helps things go well and protects against misfortune. If there is any reference to the recipient of the sacrifice, it is to the *Pachamama*, the pan-Andean earth deity, rather than the mountain spirits mentioned in other contexts. The *q'owa* is practised by a wide cross-section of urban society, not only peasant people but wealthy middle-class business owners. In the city of Cochabamba on the first Friday of the month it is possible to see travel agencies and lawyer's offices, as well as shops and cafes, burning their *q'owa*. There were also several folkloric *q'owa* celebrations featuring the public ritual of burning an offering, followed by heavy drinking of *chicha* and dancing to music played on traditional wooden flutes.

The use of *ch'allas* to mediate between different entities, supernatural and human, means that they play an important role in the ritual life of rural communities navigating their relationship with an unpredictable and dangerous natural world (van den Berg 1990).

They are also critical when mediating, or remembering, the past, in rituals which had consequences for legitimacy in the present. The most extensive exploration of *ch'allas* and their role in maintaining historical memory of boundaries is Thomas Abercrombie's account of the Aymara-speaking K'ulta, *Pathways of Memory and Power* (1998), in which he traces how the actions of walking boundaries and pouring libations can be seen as legitimising claims to land and authority through bodily engagement.

In a Bolivian political context in the last two decades, public *ch'allas* by politicians have taken their place alongside drinking *chicha* and popular dances as an expression of identification with the popular classes. Robert Albro (2001) discusses a public *ch'alla* held by the municipal government of Quillacollo to inaugurate new government vehicles, framing it as a populist act in which citizens in an area 'characterised by the exceptional intensity of racial mixing' (2001: 58) may appeal to common Quechua and Aymara ancestors and thus shape a shared political project. Albro sees the event of the *q'owa* as the opening up of a space to collectively reaffirm and reshape ethnic belonging. 'As rituals of marked tradition, *ch'allas* are decisive contexts where the recognisable shape of contemporary native identity is publicly and plausibly defined, disputed, debated and redefined' (2001: 59). This could be affirmed particularly at the large public *q'owa* celebrations in the city held by politically oriented youth groups, where young urbanites could enact the ritual in a social context which encouraged broader involvement in political projects as well as a reshaping of 'indigenous' customs to fit contemporary urban social mores. For example, young women in these folk groups often played cane flutes and drums as well as singing, something not generally seen in the countryside, where women sang and danced rather than playing instruments (Arnold and de Dios Yapita 2005).

As Albro sees it, though, the ritual previously associated with the maintenance of boundaries and historical memory in the highlands becomes, instead, the context in which family concerns are aired – and Quillacollo politics are deeply introjected by family structures, interests and connections. Likewise, in Tapacarí, both in the town and in rural communities, *q'owas* were a family affair, and were held in private households on auspicious occasions. (This was at least true of the riverside communities I was present in when they carried out *q'owas* for Carnival and First Friday: practices in other parts of the province may be different, particularly in the Aymara-speaking areas and in communities which form part of an *ayllu*). Indeed, the largest public *q'owas* in the town were held by the *alcaldía* on 6 August and during Carnival, the two key points in the agricultural and therefore ritual calendar. As I show later in this chapter, the social bonds between people working in the *alcaldía* were often described using kinship idioms, and the *q'owa* served as one way to bring civil servants from disparate origins into a commensal family-type relationship.

The *q'owa* at the *alcaldía* was an extension of office life in two important ways. Firstly, it reinforced the authority of the mayor and council, emphasising a connection between their status as civic bosses with an unofficial position as traditional leaders. Secondly, it provided an arena for the *funcionarios públicos* to experience belonging to and affection for the *alcaldía* by getting drunk together and relaxing. The symbolic and religious aspects of the ritual were also taken seriously. When, in June 2007, a driver in the *alcaldía* had a fatal accident, there were whisperings about the failure to carry out a *q'owa* that month and a public suspicion that there had been a connection between the lack of a ritual and his untimely, violent death. The situation was made worse by the

reason for the lack of *q'owa*, which was disunity and quarrels among the elected authorities. It was believed by some in the office that this disunity and the resultant lack of ritual had contributed to the bad luck of the accident. This suggests a persistence of the logic described by van den Berg (1990) in Aymara communities which links discord and violence within human society to retribution from nature in the form of catastrophic weather or bad luck.

The *q'owa* was co-ordinated by Wilson, responsible for 'Tourism, Culture and Sport', who bought the offering, coal, coca, food and alcoholic drinks necessary for the evening. On a typical first Friday afternoon he carried out these errands while his colleagues continued working, and started a fire in order to get the coals burned down to embers, sufficient to make the *q'owa* smoulder rather than go up in flames. At around five in the evening, the head of personnel instructed the staff to 'switch off your computers, and come and participate in the *q'owa* ritual'. A murmur of approval ran through the office and the men filed outside to receive a can of beer and a handful of coca leaves from Wilson. Accountants and economists stood chatting with their colleagues and chewing through a handful of coca while the offering was prepared. An orderly queue of people took it in turns to place coca leaves and extra offerings onto the little pile of herbs, coloured paper and talismans to be burned. The mayor made a small speech in Spanish, referring to the 'small cultural custom, the *q'owa*, which we do so that things will go well for our *municipio*'. Then, helped by a head of division, he lifted the offering, which was heaped on a large piece of paper, onto the fire. He then picked up a bottle of rubbing alcohol bought for libations and, working anti-clockwise, poured a splash at each corner before taking a sip. The head of the council followed him and repeated his actions with the bottle. After him, each councillor poured libations and drank, followed by the Official

Mayor, another authority, and the heads of division. After all the authorities had made their *ch'alla* the engineers and accountants stepped forward silently and made theirs, splashing not only the rubbing alcohol but also drops of beer in the same counter-clockwise pattern. A payroll clerk approached me with the alcohol bottle and invited me to make a *ch'alla*, intimating that it was a requirement rather than a suggestion. While the *q'owa* smouldered and its scented smoke rose into the air, the serious drinking got underway. Toasts rang around the group of people and an impromptu sound system was set up to facilitate dancing. The few women present were pressed into service as dance partners. Refusal to drink was not an option; more cans of beer were doled out, and followed by a whip-round to buy more. The mayor and councillors matched their staff drink for drink and in the middle of the party, many people approached the authorities with grievances and proposals, taking advantage of the chance to talk to them on informal terms. Full participation was expected of the authorities, and if they were caught trying to creep away they were jovially pulled back into the party and made to drink some more. It was not unknown for the mayor to stay the whole night in the office.

The licensed merriment of the *q'owa* thus had civic overtones, framed by official organisation, speeches and hierarchical practice. Its official character was reinforced by the fact of participation being obligatory. The *q'owa* was very popular with some of the more politicised members of the office, but those who did not participate were fined for non-attendance and stood at a social disadvantage. Those who did attend articulated their enjoyment of it in terms of sharing, tradition and appropriate workplace behaviour. 'My work is very solitary,' commented one, 'on the motorbike going from here to there ... I don't stop much in the office, so it's great to be able to see everyone once a month and

share a little. Even better if there are ladies,' he added.

The monthly *q'owa* was the most regular ritual, and the only one to take place in the city, but *q'owas* were also carried out by *alcaldía* staff in the country to inaugurate important events and to mark certain occasions in the ritual calendar. On these occasions the drinking and celebrations were even more thorough, and were known to go on until dawn.

The organisation of the *q'owa* served to highlight and legitimise the office hierarchy and the authority of those in power. While possessed of Weberian 'rational authority' from the fact of occupying official roles and exercising power, the mayor and councillors lacked other forms of social capital. Their lack of formal education put them at a disadvantage compared to their staff, and their embodied experience as indigenous peasant people living in the city meant that they were coded as subalterns within the racialising gaze of wider urban Cochabamba society. However, this same racialisation and indeed their embodied identities as indigenous peasant leaders enabled them to lead this popular ritual which privileged their knowledge and background over that of the urban middle classes. By carrying out the ritual in a strictly hierarchical fashion – mayor first, councillors second, followed in order of importance by heads of division – they braided together the spiritual/charismatic authority engendered in the ritual with their own organisational roles within the office society. The conflation of the roles of ritual leader and political leader was also a reminder of the indigenous origins of the authorities. Although popular with the staff, the *q'owa* was carried out on their terms, and reinforced their legitimacy as leaders of people who, in other arenas, looked on them as social inferiors. This recalls Carman Salazar-Soler's description of libation-pouring and ritual drinking in the Inka era:

During the time of the Inkas, these collective libations followed the rules

established by the authorities, followed a hierarchical order and had no place outwith the ambit of the fiesta ... The collective libations affirmed many of the social linkages outside the family group (Salazar-Soler 1993)⁶

Yet, returning to the ideas of cultural capital, it is important to remember that the significance of this ritual was counterbalanced by many other dynamics of privilege active in the office. The participation of *funcionarios* in the *q'owa* and other rituals involved their symbolic acceptance of the authority of the mayor, councillors and other bosses in a practice whose aim, if viewed from a functionalist perspective, was to create a sense of comradeship and positive sociality among workmates by allowing them an evening of officially sanctioned drunken revelry once a month, in which the conventional and rather elaborate norms of respect towards bosses were subverted. It would be tempting to regard the night of drunkenness which accompanies the *q'owa* ritual as a Rabelasian carnival inversion in which harassed civil servants could tell their bosses what they really thought of them. Instead, I find it more useful to think of it as one of the many processes which brought together the office staff in a convivial celebration and in so doing emphasised the normativity of having indigenous peasants as authorities. As Bloch and others have indicated, one of the chief advantages of cementing authority through ritual is that there is no opportunity for explicit refusal or questioning. However, in the municipal office of Tapacarí, the capability of political leaders to co-ordinate a local government was constantly called into question because of discrepancies, real and imagined, between their capabilities for governance and the task at hand. As in many instances of participation in subaltern cultural practices by the dominant class, it was far

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'En tiempo de los Inkas, estas libaciones colectivas o convites seguía las reglas establecidas por las autoridades, respetaban el orden jeraquico de la sociedad y no tenía lugar sino dentro del cuadro de la fiesta ... Las libaciones colectivas ... afirmaban gran cantidad de lazos sociales fuera del grupo familiar'
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easier for the *funcionarios* in Tapacará to perform the role of participants in the *q'owa* ritual, and by extension members in a loosely defined community of peers, than it was for the mayor and councillors to fully inhabit and dominate the role of civic authorities. However, refashioning the civil servants into peers and kinlike community members through commensality and shared ritual made them more receptive to 'soft' power regimes, by incorporating them into a social model which placed them in a ritual and kinlike relationship to their bosses in which, according to patriarchal norms, they implicitly had to accept their authority.

Participation in the *q'owa* and other rituals could be subtly altered in order to accommodate different tastes; making libations and drinking beer, for example, rather than rubbing alcohol. The role of civic authority could not be so easily played with, and deliberate subversions of the way an authority figure was expected to look, speak and behave were still considered worthy of remark by outsiders.

Work, movement and kinship

Mornings in the office were punctuated by the chief of personnel announcing the departure of various vehicles to different destinations, and the engineers of Infrastructure kept a whiteboard permanently annotated with the visits which were due to be paid on successive days to projects around the province. Sometimes the departures were announced out loud as if to issue an 'all aboard!' ultimatum to those who wished to travel, but sometimes vehicles left on the sly to avoid overloading uncomfortably with passengers. As well as the engineers, other employees and people working on associated projects, other hitch-hikers sometimes cropped up in the *alcaldía* vehicles: myself, for one, but also young people who had been studying in the city and had no other means of

public transit to get back to their communities; one old man who had come to the city for an operation on his foot and did not have the ability or physical resilience needed for a trip in a lorry; teachers; relatives of the *alcalde*; members of the peasant trade union leadership; relatives of the drivers; and people working for the national government on an initiative such as mass vaccination or issuing identity cards.

Upon leaving the city limits, the first thing that happened on a journey in a municipal vehicle was to stop 'for lunch', even if, as was usually the case, it was mid-morning. Out in the country, food could not be guaranteed, and the working day sometimes had no predictable timetable. In order to avoid going hungry later on, everyone in the vehicle disembarked at a roadside restaurant and had a large meal together. Hierarchy on these occasions was not dissolved – the person in charge had to make the call about when it was time to finish eating and move on – but displaced, as the *funcionarios'* commensality with each other pre-empted the possible commensality they might have experienced with people in the province. (It was still common for community members in the province to provide food to those working long-term on projects around their area, and inaugurations of new projects also featured food and drinking. It was uncommon for the *alcaldía* staff to refuse offers of food, but the regular practice of eating together was part of their shared experience of being on the road.)

The hierarchy of the office was spatially observed in the vehicles: the driver and the most important person present would sit in the front seats, and from there back the seats were allocated in an order that matched the importance or seniority of the people in the office. For example, on one trip the mayor and the head of Human Development sat in the two front seats next to the driver while behind them sat the leader of the peasant union for the

province, the head of the Oversight Committee and an engineer from Infrastructure, and in the back section two education *técnicos* and myself. Sitting in the back meant getting knocked about on the bumpy roads of the province and also accommodating oneself around whatever supplies had been placed back there, which could be anything from a bag of schoolbooks and sports uniforms to a barrel of diesel. This hierarchy was also observed on ritual occasions. However, on other occasions and especially in vehicles which were smaller, the hierarchy was replaced by a sense of companionship which was not as mediated by status and position. This was especially true on arduous journeys which lasted into the evening, where the aim of getting home intact superseded social divisions and long, casual conversations developed between drivers, engineers and guests alike. On many occasions the cars which had been sent out from the *alcaldía* in the morning did not return until well into the evening or, when the road was bad or a party was unavoidable, the early hours of the morning. For the mayor and councillors, avoiding parties was something of an art; if they passed through a town or village where a wedding or other celebration was taking place, they would be obliged by politeness to stay and drink heavily, which could disrupt their schedule and damage their public image. The in-jokes that developed among the personnel of the *alcaldía* often originated in conversations made while out on the road, and the shared experience of danger and adverse conditions provided a point of commonality for many different kinds of workers. Stories of pickup trucks breaking down in the middle of the night on cold mountain passes, of overloading, of bad road conditions or perilous river roads and heavy forced drinking were common. These experiences were primarily shared by men, and, I would argue, helped to shape a masculine identity for those engineers who worked out in the country, which rested on physical adversity as well as the mastery of different linguistic and bodily disciplines. This was also true of drivers, who were the core of the *alcaldía*'s

staff. The roads around Tapacarí ranged in quality from poor to abysmal, requiring advanced driving skills and fine perception of how the weather might shift and when to leave so as to avoid a washed-out road. Blockades on the highway were common, and in order to get back to the city at all the drivers would have to use the old and badly-maintained road that ran down the eastern reach of the province. Driving the *alcaldía's* vehicles required embodied knowledge and the linguistic and social skills to negotiate with different people, from urban mechanics and the military staff in control of checkpoints to villagers adamantly inviting officials to their village or encouraging the drivers to drink at an inauguration. The drivers also had the closest social links to the province, with many of them having family members there or having grown up there. They had the power to grant or refuse lifts to people who asked for them, therefore mediating between the public and the authorities by their control over the prestigious and much-coveted motor vehicles. They also had a collective reputation as flirts and womanisers, whose mobility allowed for the possibility of picking up girls or escaping from the control of their wives (this reputation was confirmed on several occasions in the town of Tapacarí, where some of the drivers passed the time they spent waiting for their bosses by courting local girls).

Engineers also felt the impact of travelling in physical ways. Over the course of fieldwork, no fewer than three men broke their collarbone in an identical way: falling off a municipal motorbike. The motorbikes, a cross-cultural symbol of youthful masculine virility, were used in town and out, and preferred for long journeys because of the freedom they represented: with a motorbike, there was no need to wait for a lift to be co-ordinated, and no obligation to wait for other *funcionarios* as they completed tasks, so as to give them a lift. However, as Laura's anecdote shows, this independence was still

enacted within a social framework that prioritised teamwork and trust building.

When I first started working for the municipality, the CPP (*consulta de participación popular*, annual municipal meeting) was scheduled. I asked for a lift, but there were no vehicles, they were full. Engineer David told me I could go on a motorbike with Engineer Edwin. I said yeah, okay, it didn't seem like I had an option. I didn't know Engineer Edwin and maybe I was a little bit nervous because you never know ... But anyway. It was rainy season and we had to go over the top up through Sayari. Several of us set off, but it was misty and we couldn't see them, and it seemed like we were lost, with them behind. You see how it is up there when it is cloudy and you can't see? I started to get a little bit afraid, I didn't know where we were going and I didn't see the others, and then we stopped up at the summit by Titaqhallu, you know the summit there? Engineer Edwin stopped the motorbike and he just said, "Listen, I want you to see something" and I listened and then a motorbike came up from behind us, and it was Orellana, his boss, and he went past us. And then we waited another five minutes, and Carlitos came past us too, and Don Guichi with Alvaro too, on motorbikes. There were four motorbikes all following us, and he wanted to show me how they were all right behind us. And then we carried on and when we came to the top of Seven Curves, Carlitos and Orellana were there again waiting by their motorbikes; it turns out they had been waiting for us to see that we were all right. "Look," he said, "we will take care of you as if you were made of cut glass. (*Vamos a cuidarte como si fueras nuestro vasito de cristal.*) They are all watching for you like a little sister."

The *alcaldía* was thus bound together by shared physical experience, especially of movement, but also by discursive and ritual emphasis on reproduction and kinship. In his speeches accompanying the *q'owas*, particularly at important occasions, the *alcalde* made reference to the municipal employees as 'one family, together' (*'uj familiajina'*), in an echo of the ways in which he and other peasant union leaders addressed their comrades. Allusions to kinship in the peasant union organisation were common, and were not clearly intended as metaphors. In this way, the female leader of the peasant union was not only known respectfully as 'Mama Simiona' by her younger colleagues, but sometimes also stated that she had 'many, many children' in the peasant union, confirming her position as senior leader and therefore overall mother. On at least one occasion she told me this in the context of a conversation in which she was describing the children she had given birth to, and what they were doing. Her two oldest daughters had moved to the city, she said, and her younger one was being taken care of by relatives 'because I have to work in the organisation'. However, she reflected, 'I have many, many children in the organisation'. Quechua expressions of ownership or belonging do not map directly onto Spanish or English sentence structures. The exact phrase used was '*noqaypata ashkha wawas tiyan*' (there are a lot of children for me). The mayor, who had worked up the ranks of peasant union organisation, had had his political formation in the same cultural environment, in which leadership was analogous to parenthood or at least brotherhood, as seen in the example given later of a *q'owa* held to inaugurate a water project. In other ways and in other contexts, though, idioms of kinship were used by employees to describe affection and perhaps relations of production – since what are families but systems of production for related human beings? Sometimes the comparisons between the *alcaldía* and a large family were explicit, and sometimes relationships between *funcionarios* assumed family-like qualities.

An example of the latter happened on the anniversary of the founding of Tapacarí, when the entire *alcaldía* staff were expected to come out to the capital, the town of Tapacarí, for a celebration and procession. It was January, and rainy, and the roads were terrible. Perhaps for this reason, the evening was focused even more than usual on drinking, and one of the drivers, nicknamed 'Bolivar', was well into his cups when he came to join a group drinking in a *chichería*. Bolivar was well known for his caustic wit ('Bolivar, why doesn't the radio in this truck work?' 'Why don't you sing, and stop complaining?') and appetite for drink, and he had clearly been indulging. First, he kissed one of the road engineers full on the forehead, and loudly proclaimed how much he loved him. 'We have been through some times, haven't we, Engineer?' he asked. 'Anybody who messes with this engineer will have to go through me, dammit!' Then he began to sing a light-hearted drinking song that was popular at *alcaldía* gatherings. The verses follow a theme, for example:

'A mí me llaman camión, a mi mujer la llaman camioneta

A mis hijos los taxitos y a mi suegra la volqueta'

(Me, they call the lorry and my wife they call the pickup truck

My kids, they call the little taxis and my mother-in-law the dump truck)

Determined to improvise, Bolivar sang:

'A mí me llaman concejil, a mi mujer la alcaldesa

Mis hijos funcionaritos y mi suegra comite de vigilancia'

(Me, they call the bastard councillor, my wife they call the mayor

My children are the civil servants and my mother-in-law, the Oversight Committee)

The civil servants accompanying him laughed and applauded.

In an example of the second type of kinship comparison, Laura, laughing, recounted how she had once gone to Engineer David with some organisational problems, and he had begun to tell her off 'like a strict father. I was having a bad day and he began to scold me, and I said, "oh, please don't tell me off, Engineer!" And you know, he just said "Ya, ya, ya" and it only lacked for him to say "wawitay". Like I was his daughter, you know? "Ya, ya, wawitay" like you would say to a child.'

The Head of Personnel also alluded to kinship when marshalling the engineers for another day's work, but did so in an ironic and semi-insulting way using Aymara. In order to get people's attention, he would call out, '*Jilatas!*' (Aymara for 'brothers'), but then sometimes substitute '*Jilazos*', a more insulting word.

Photography, images and legitimacy

In addition to paperwork, the authorities and civil servants at the *alcaldía* made use of photographs and film evidence to show effectiveness and to demonstrate success. When done 'right', photography and filming were understood to be positive things, which conferred legitimacy. On at least one occasion, though, the act of taking photographs in the wrong context led to a dramatic act of violence. Both the normal state of affairs and this confrontation revealed important things about *tapacareños*' self-knowledge and deliberate self-presentation as indigenous subjects, and about their acceptance of different

kinds of 'gaze' and regimes of power. They demonstrated a keen sense of control over use of their own image within political propaganda, and in this way resisted 'consumption' or appropriation of their own visual presence. Here I describe the ways in which photographs were used and detail two examples of 'acceptable' use and misuse.

For those who worked in the *alcaldía*, digital photography was a useful tool for those who were planning infrastructure projects. They could easily snap images of dimensions, topography and existing structures to demonstrate the need for a new sewer or wall, and to guide their plans. Project visits and progress reports were also documented with photographs, as were opening ceremonies for new installations (roads, schools etc.). In Human Development and related fields such as education, meetings, workshops and social activities were also photographed as they happened. This was an accepted and routine part of the workshop, and the photographs were taken in a formulaic style, from each corner of the room, from the front and from the back, so as to show the number of attendees. Initially, I was reluctant to photograph people who I did not know, but soon found that it was expected, encouraged, and considered necessary to show funders that the number of people attending meetings was not exaggerated. In addition, the workshop participants often requested formal photographs of themselves, posed in groups, and offered and expected to pay for these when I gave them copies.⁷ Photos also served as talking points for future discussions, especially when seeking explanations of some cultural activity or another.

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Tapacareños were accustomed to paying photographers, who would speculatively take photographs during significant occasions and then sell them back prints. They incorporated my picture-taking into this model of events, often requesting formal, staged pictures, and expressed surprise at my not charging them for prints. Abercrombie (1998) and others comment on similar situations in their fieldwork. Although I never charged for prints, there is little doubt that some of the recipients of photographs paid me back indirectly through introductions, food or other favours.

My reticence to take photographs was grounded in nervousness about what the process would make of both me and the photographed subjects. The taking of a photograph or image can separate the world into spectator and subject, rather than two co-participants, or create other hierarchical or paternalistic relations. In addition, I wanted to minimise the visible use of small silver gadgets in order to minimise the risk of being mistaken for a *kharisiri*, a malevolent stranger who appears friendly but who uses small technological devices to suck out the fat from unsuspecting Indians and, in different versions, uses it to grease their machines or to make cosmetics. The victim of a *kharisiri* sickens and dies while the *kharisiri* themselves becomes wealthy. In the 1980s, NGO workers in the north of Potosí who appeared wealthy in the middle of a famine were taken for *kharisiris*, with bad consequences (Rivera Cusicanqui 1990) and other ethnographers such as Abercrombie (1998) also had problems with being perceived as one. Mary Weismantel (2001) discusses *kharisiris*, known in Ecuador as *pishtacos*, in a book in which she explicitly opposes them to *cholas*, urban women of indigenous descent, and discusses the different narratives they represent: abundance, fertility and warm, disorderly life on the one hand and sterile, exploitative and impersonal death on the other. She sees the *pishtaco* as a metaphor for the physical burden of inequality and the way in which hard labour and poverty suck the vitality from peasant bodies, transferring wealth and power to white foreigners. *Khari-kharis*, to give them their local name, were reported to be active around the riverbed in Tapacarí after dark, and to be particularly dangerous to women on their own. This information was given in serious tones, unlike other, flirtatious warnings to single women, such as for example 'in Tapacarí there are foxes with long ears and foxes with short ears, which are more dangerous'.

However, workshop participants in particular did not object to photo-taking, and were

conscious of already being subject to a combination of disciplines and regimes of control associated with attending training sessions, all of which were outside their usual experience. Rather than visiting other communities, conversing, herding animals, cooking, weaving or tending crops, all according to their own timetable and needs, they were compelled to sit on benches in a hall listening to one person talk, or performing group collaboration tasks over a regimented timetable, punctuated by breaks and organised meals. All of these represented a much higher degree of control over their time and bodies than their everyday lives featured: having their photograph taken was familiar and trivial by comparison, and gave them an opportunity to emphasise their own links of friendship and relatedness. Moreover, as the young women from different parts of the province hustled into photos with each other, it became clear that they were seeking a souvenir of each other's difference: girls from the valleys, in their velveteen and nylon, tried on the sheepskin hats of the girls from the upper *cantones* and asked about their heavy wool *polleras*. When handed back photos, they talked about the different ways of dressing that their friends had, and explicitly accorded value to the pictures in which they appeared with people who were unlike themselves. The people who asked to be photographed were active co-participants in the process. Eventually, my camera went missing and turned up again with a number of photos on it which I had not taken: it turned out that the children in the *casa comunal* had gotten impatient with my reluctance to use it, and had run around for a day taking photos of each other and their friends posing in their best ponchos. After this, I conceded that photograph-taking and posing could be participatory.

In July 2006 on the feast of Tata Santiago, the *alcaldía* together with Caritas and people from the town of Tapacarí and the community of Walluma inaugurated a water collection

and pumping works designed to bring potable water down to the town. The site, close to Walluma and 12km away from the town, had been chosen for its spring of clear water and the fact that it was uphill from the town and therefore water could be channelled through a gravity-fed pipe to be brought down for use by the townspeople. There had evidently been some problems convincing the people of Walluma to donate their water to the town, whose inhabitants they did not greatly like. Nevertheless, the mayor had managed to convince them and the project was to go ahead.

That morning, a small group of peasant musicians were circling around the plaza holding an image of Santiago and playing *zampona* pipes, when three vehicles from the *alcaldía* and Caritas arrived. The vehicle from the *alcaldía* carried the mayor, the head of infrastructure and two engineers, while the two jeeps from Caritas had the local division head, the co-ordinator of the project, a Spanish volunteer making a documentary, the engineer who was to execute it and five visiting Italian donors from a specific region in Italy which donated money used in Tapacarí. They strolled around the plaza, where townspeople had brought out baskets of bread to sell, and filmed and photographed each other buying and eating rolls and *sarnosas*, candied squash pastries.

I hopped in the back of the mayor's car and we all drove in a convoy up to the site where the water capture was to be built. Several people were already waiting there, including representatives from Walluma, three women from the town along for the ride, and at least one man from the town.

The Caritas staff distributed *k'uyuna* cigarettes and coca leaves to everybody, followed by *chicha*, beer and rubbing alcohol. The Italians, chewing coca, set up a video camera on a

tripod and began filming and taking photographs as the fire for the *q'owa* was kindled and allowed to die down. When the embers were ready, the mayor and head of Caritas picked up the *q'owa* paper which had been brought from the city and placed it on the coals. They then began to make libations with wine and rubbing alcohol around the fire and site of the construction to come, and invited others to follow after them. The Caritas employees and then the Italian guests did so, while also continuing to film and take photographs of the ritual. Meanwhile, the women and men from the town and Walluma drank the *chicha* they had been given and talked and laughed noisily.

The mayor made a speech in a mix of Quechua and Spanish about the inauguration of the project. Expressing happiness and contentment, he thanked 'the *Pachamama* and God' for overseeing the ritual and commented that the decision was timely. He added that the *alcaldía* would be actively working in the town grading the streets, and that the decisions for this would be made together ('*tukuy decidikunasun*' – we will all decide things by working together). He emphasised that the water project was not being run by a company, but by the labour of the people themselves along with 'our partners' in Caritas.

The regional head of Caritas then said a few words of thanks in Spanish, including '*la Pachamama*, the *Apus* (tutelary mountain spirits) and our God'. He was followed by the community leader of Walluma, who opened his words by thanking the mayor and expressing confidence in him. 'I don't just believe him because he speaks Quechua,' he said, 'but I trust him because we are all of one blood. We, the people of this place, are now the owners' ('*Tukuy uj sangre kanchej ... noqaykyu del lugar duenios kayku*'). He took the opportunity to appeal for funds and support for an irrigation project, about which the mayor was noncommittal. When all the *chicha* had been drunk, the different parties

returned to the town in their vehicles and thence to the city. People in the town were unconcerned about the *q'owa*, but asked if the water was good.

In January 2007, conflict erupted in the city of Cochabamba as a result of a political standoff between the prefecture (departmental government) headed by Manfred Reyes Villa, and peasant and *cocalero* groups who backed the central government. The conflict stemmed from Manfred's sympathy for various right-wing causes, against the wishes of the Cochabamba electorate. Over the course of a fortnight, blockades and marches escalated into open violence, in which peasant protesters overpowered the police and stormed Cochabamba's central plaza, burning the prefecture building and attracting the wrath of many urban dwellers. A countermarch by urbanites followed, which clashed with the peasant march resulting in at least two deaths, one of a *cocalero*, Nicodemus Gutierrez, and one of a city-dwelling youth, Cristian Urieste. Manfred fled the city and toured around Bolivia denouncing the government for backing the uprising, but eventually returned and refused to resign. Hundreds of peasant leaders and community members from Tapacarí had participated in the marches, and experienced the deprivations of camping on floors and marching or guarding blockades in the city. In interviews from this time, *tapacareños* living in the city emphasised the hostility and disdain that they felt emanated from the prefecture and the city-dwellers who attacked the peasant marchers. Even in Carnival several weeks later, the conversations of those who were visiting from the city focused on the confrontations.

For several weeks after the confrontations, Manfred and the *prefectura* had run a television ad boasting of a successful term in office. The segment showed a montage of picturesque scenes from around the department, and shots of Manfred in various scenic

places. For a few seconds, the montage included a clip of people working on the distinctive road of Seven Curves, opposite the town of Tapacarí. Ironically, Seven Curves was the most dangerous and unpleasant part of the road between Tapacarí and the main highway, and the source of many complaints. When the ad appeared on the television set in the *alcaldía* office or the *casa comunal*, it was greeted with derision and outrage. Work on the road was not even funded by the prefecture; the ad claimed credit where none was due.

Two months after the confrontations in Cochabamba, the quarterly CPP meeting was scheduled in the town of Tapacarí. It was well attended despite the rainy season, and the *casa comunal* was filled to capacity with some 200 attendees. The CPP itself was preceded the night before by an *ampliado* meeting, which had gone on all night, between the mayor and councillors and 'los bases', the peasant union leaders, which I did not attend. For the CPP, the entire staff of the *alcaldía* was present, although only the heads of division had come to make presentations about the progress of their works. In addition, there were representatives of organisations, governmental and non-governmental, that had operational programmes in the province, including Caritas and the prefecture. The representatives of the prefecture carried cameras and took photographs of the peasant leaders assembling for the meeting, resplendent in brightly coloured, embroidered jackets and *loq'o* hats with woven hatbands, as usual. Two representatives from the town sat in the front row. The mayor, councillors, subprefect and peasant union leaders presided. The meeting proceeded as normal, with presentations about the annual budget and where it was being spent, the increase in income coming from the Direct Hydrocarbons Tax and the progress of various projects. As always, the sight of successful urban professionals projecting their voices to describe, in Quechua, the

advancement of their projects to a hall full of serious and demanding peasant delegates, was interesting. Those who seemed most polished and professional in the office struggled to make themselves understood, and had less dexterity and practice in fielding questions and criticisms from the floor than the authorities, who looked on impassively until it was their turn to speak.

When the turn of the representatives from the prefecture came, the mayor curtailed their presentation. He spoke over them, pointing out that there were no works paid for by the prefecture happening in the municipality, and as such they were *persona non grata* at the meeting. 'The prefecture is doing nothing for Tapacarí,' he told them. Normally a mild-mannered man, he began to shout. 'All you do is take photographs and never fulfil any of your promises. Seven Curves is appearing in your ad and the road surface is a disgrace! You cannot continue taking advantage of people. Delete the photos you have taken, hand your cameras over to us and leave from this place. Withdraw yourselves!'

Never had the phrase 'walk of shame' seemed so fitting. The two representatives, sheepish, began to work their way through the crowd of angry peasants back to the door. Shouts went up of '*Corruptos!*' and 'Why do you make us suffer?' Before they could make it to the door, the two men were set on by groups of men and women, who hit them, tore at their clothes and shouted. The head of the peasant union elbowed through the hall to intervene and prevent them from a more severe beating, and they fled. After this disturbance, the authorities admonished people to calm down and the meeting proceeded as programmed.

Later, the townspeople reported what they had seen. A group of peasant leaders had let

down the tyres of the prefecture's Land Rover, and it sat abandoned in the plaza. The two men had managed to get a lift back to the city in the back of a lorry, fleeing as if for their lives. 'Those poor men,' said Georgina, 'the *laris* [derogatory - indians] beat them badly, tore their clothes, took their mobile phones.' Other women, who had come to sell bread to the people attending the CPP, echoed her condemnation and expressed sympathy and pity for the men who had been beaten.

The Land Rover sat in the plaza for a few days, as the story of the beating of the prefecture staff grew wings and spread around the *alcaldía* and the town. The leader of the peasant union somehow arranged for the vehicle to be taken up to the *casa comunal*, so it could be kept in a locked yard. A week later, it was reclaimed by prefecture staff, who came to the town in the early hours of the morning backed up by armed police and cut the locks to the back gate rather than asking to come in. The porter was very indignant – he maintained that the vehicle should have been confiscated and donated to the *sindicato*, and anyway, why were they taking photos in the meeting? He was also cross at the manner in which it had been reclaimed, saying that there was no need to break in like thieves in the middle of the night, and wake his family up by waving guns around, when he would have let them in like anyone else during business hours. He blamed certain townspeople for denouncing the attack, and said that an investigation should be mounted into the photography and filming in the meeting.

These two incidents, in which photography and filming interplayed with exercises in public accountability and interactions between outsiders, authorities and local peasants and townspeople, provide several talking points. In most respects they were not alike, of course: one took place in a climate of tension and hostility, with violence and

confrontation fresh in the memories of the *tapacareños* at the meeting, whereas one was an optimistic ceremony carried out in order that the water capture project would go well. However, filming and photography played a prominent role in both. In the first instance, the elaborate and public *q'owa* was offered up to the Italian donors as an authentic experience, complete with libations and explicit references to the *Pachamama* and the *Apus*. The Spanish documentary maker filmed as the Italian donors took photos of the ceremony, and all were watched curiously by the people from the town and community of Walluma. The *alcaldía* staff and the people of Walluma and Tapacarí may well have held a *q'owa* for the inauguration of the project without the presence of the visitors, but perhaps not as large or as elaborate, with the full range of beer, *chicha*, rubbing alcohol, wine, coca and *k'uyuna* cigarettes. In this act, the mayor propitiated not just the *Pachamama* and the people of Walluma (with whom, apparently, he had already had several long and stressful meetings), but also the foreign donor gaze. Together with the local director of Caritas (an anthropologist by training) he did so adeptly, presenting an indigenous face which suited both visitors and local residents, who professed their trust in him because he was kin to them. He made no mention of the ethnic and class tensions between the people living in the town and the peasants in the surrounding villages, but rather deployed what Alison Brysk and others call 'strategic essentialism', smoothing over difference and emphasising ethnic distinctiveness with the aim of achieving a specific goal for all: drinkable, usable water in the town. After all, he too had family members living there. In a statement intended to highlight inclusion, he invited all to make decisions together, using the suffices *-kuna -sun* to imply that decisions should be taken as part of joint interaction. With this, he included in one sweep the townspeople who had come up to drink beer and *ch'allar*, the engineers and professionals, the villagers of Walluma and the Italian visitors.

In the second instance, underlying tensions simmered to life in a situation where the authorities and peasants of Tapacarí saw images of their lives being created and used without legitimacy or authorisation, in the service of a politician to whom they were opposed. The highest legal authority figure in Tapacarí, the subprefect Juan Phuru, told me that he had no relationship with the prefecture: in fact, the previous year after he had been popularly elected, one week later Manfred Reyes Villa had appointed a different person, one of his own supporters, to the role. After several weeks of pressure from the peasant union organisation, who demanded hearings from the prefecture and refused to recognise the appointee, the prefecture permitted Juan Phuru to begin exercising his duties. 'We have almost no prefecture projects happening in the province of Tapacarí because of this, just a small 6km stretch of road,' he said. 'I don't even have my own office here; this office is borrowed from the municipal government. I have meetings with the other subprefects, but there are no training courses or financial contributions to projects here, and Manfred and I don't speak to each other, we don't even greet each other.'

At least 40 representatives from Tapacarí had gone on the original march against Manfred in early January, travelling down from the municipality in an *alcaldía*-sponsored lorry. Many more had joined them in the following week. On the first night, they had slept overnight on the bare floor of the *alcaldía* office, '*q'arapampeando*' with no mattresses or blankets, until the central MAS-IPSP directorate had found space for them to sleep. For a week, Doña Simiona, the *central provincial* for women, had cooked for them all in an improvised kitchen on the *alcaldía* roof terrace, and *alcaldía* vehicles had ferried the giant pots of food down to where they were lodged. Friends and acquaintances had been

teargassed, or attacked by city dwellers. If the attendees at the CPP had not been personally involved in the conflicts, then they knew someone who had. They were in no mood for placatory platitudes from prefecture employees, and the TV adverts had added insult to literal injury. Not only was the image of Seven Curves being repaired dishonest (the road itself was badly flawed and built on soil prone to erosion, and so needed to be constantly cleared, rather than definitively fixed), but it was also being used in support of a politician they had been battling against. Now images of themselves stood to be used against them – their own visual distinctiveness captured and used falsely. The retaliation for this was to strip the prefecture representatives of their sources of symbolic power – not just their photo-taking devices, like the *khari-khari*'s small silver machine, but also their smart, clean clothes, their mobile phones and crucially, their private vehicle, leaving them to pile into the back of an overloaded, unsafe dirty lorry along with dozens of peasants. In other words, they had responded to the prefecture's bid to include them in its publicity, despite the conflict, by refusing in a violent and humiliating manner. Stripping the prefecture employees first of the right to speak in the meeting, they had followed this up by removing their means of communication and finally their means of mobility. This process was started by the mayor, in his reasonable if strongly voiced order for them to leave the meeting, and moderated by the *central provincial* when he intervened to stop them being beaten or lynched – which felt all too possible at that moment. The perspectives of the meeting attendees may well have been the same as that of the porter, who, like many of them, had had his political formation in the semi-militarised zone of the Chapare and therefore harboured suspicion towards intervening officials with recording equipment.

While in the first example, the *q'owa* in Walluma, the mayor had used the situation to emphasise democratic and collaborative decision making before the witnessing eye of the film camera, in this situation a request for use of Tapacarí's distinctive visual presence was met with fury, because of the hollowness of support and cynical political intent behind it. While *tapacareños* recognised their colourful traditions to be an asset (and complained if no TV cameras were present at their *alcaldía*-organised agricultural and textile fairs), they were prepared to delimit use of this asset by others when it detracted from their own power.

Chapter 4: Domestic Spaces

This chapter considers social change in the town of Tapacarí in spatial terms, by looking at how different *tapacareños* shared the spaces of plaza, streets and houses. This material shows how peasant and *vecino* families led overlapping and interconnected lives, and how received notions of the appropriate occupation of space were inherited, adapted and challenged as part of continuous historical processes. The division and use of space by diverse social actors (chiefly townspeople, *residentes* and peasants, but also visitors to the town and workers) created certain intimacies, coupled with social control. The conditions that allowed this curious intimacy and not-intimacy were created by fictive kinship and the absence of townspeople, which allowed peasant occupation of the town to flourish. The layout of houses, often including commercial and productive spaces, graduated between private family space and the uncontrolled traffic and social life of the street. In the space between these two domains, mediating and forming social ties, was the *chichería*, drinking house, where social and productive life is braided together.

In the first part of the chapter, I focus on houses and their divisions, looking at the ways in which townspeople allowed peasants to share their larger homes while retaining sections that were closed off and exclusive, in a physical parallel to the policing of lineages and maintenance of class division. I also show that the restrictions imposed by townspeople were readily overcome in their absence, and that the peasants occupying their houses continued establishing and maintaining economic and kin networks using the houses as one base in a larger string of domestic arrangements. This can be contrasted with the closed-off house which is used by townspeople as a space for coming together and remembering.

In the second part of the chapter I touch on the layout, use and history of the plaza. The plaza is the quintessential public space, used for rituals of civic belonging and public recreation as well as a

space of memory. However, plazas are also literally and figuratively policed, and which kinds of social activity or persons are permitted or prohibited there reveal social fractures and ideas about appropriate use of public space, gender and work. In the third part of the chapter I look at kinship and reintegration of domestic and public space by discussing *chicherías*, which mediate between the street and the home, and *chicha*, which acts as a solvent for social distinction.

I begin with a small anecdote. One afternoon, I was buying goods from Don Roberto, the town's most successful shopkeeper – and descendant, it was said, of its richest *patrones* - and asked for an object which was kept in the storeroom. Also waiting to be served was a middle-aged indigenous man. Before disappearing into the storeroom, Don Roberto pulled up one of two chairs and invited me to sit down. To the indigenous man, he offered not the other, empty chair, but a small footstool. As soon as Don Roberto left the room, the indigenous man rose, and seated himself on the other chair, smiling defiantly. When Don Roberto returned, he did not make any objection to the man's changed position.

This miniature act of refusal stood out as a small-scale example of the kind of incremental physical and spatial resistance to discrimination that the peasants of Tapacarí effected. In the countryside, it was common to the point of ubiquity for people to sit on the ground, or on any available boulder. This was, to a degree, gendered behaviour (it is far more comfortable to sit on the ground while wearing a *pollera* than trousers), and in the Aymara-speaking part of Tapacarí it was noticeable that at any kind of gathering it was women who sat on the ground, while men stood. (Canessa [2005] discusses a similar incident in the Aymara-speaking highlands, where a peasant man reacts with frustration to being 'treated like a woman' by a shopkeeper who expects him to sit on the ground.) This gender divide was less firm in Tapacarí, but the divide between people who were given chairs to sit on, for example at public events, and those who were expected to stand or sit on the ground, was very clear – at civic marches and fiestas, the chairs were occupied only by townspeople or

official authorities. By declining the footstool in favour of a chair, the indigenous man made a small reassertion of his dignity and comfort; by waiting until Don Roberto had left the room to do so, he did much the same as the many peasants who, once the owners of houses in the town had gone to the city, occupied their outbuildings.

Kinship and households in Andean social thought and Tapacarí social life

Much anthropological literature on houses has focused either on households as a physical expression of lineage and kinship, as with Levi-Strauss (1984), or as arenas for different modes of production (Gudeman and Rivera 1990). In the literature of the Andean region, discussions of households often focus on the interplay between the two, as with Harris' exploration of the married couple relationship as the core of household-building, work and reproduction, conflictivity included (Harris 2000). Enrique Mayer (2001) also discusses the relationship of the peasant household to the wider village community and physical environment.

In addition, physical buildings and their use and occupation are discussed with relation to differently gendered domains and spaces of different kinds of activity, as with Bourdieu's classic essay on the Berber house (Bourdieu 1970) showing a 'world reversed' in which external and internal spaces mirror each other. In Tapacarí, ethnicity, as much as gender, was spatially marked out in terms of where people were allowed to enter, to cook and to sleep. However, this was not static or structural: rather, it was contingent on the absence or presence of different actors. De Certeau distinguishes along these lines between the 'strategies' of classification, delineation and division used by the powerful in order to establish spatial dominance, and the 'tactics' of resistance used by the weak, such as furtive movement to contest this domination, without relying on the existence of a 'proper' space but rather manipulating or subverting the spaces nominally controlled by others (Cresswell 1997). Peasant usage of Tapacarí houses corresponds to this pattern of subversion and careful use of spaces, which historically and still on occasion in the present were

and are controlled by elites.

In Tapacarí, houses and the small shops within them were the locus of commercial interaction and different kinds of production and social reproduction, but connections between the owners of the house and those who lived in it were not always reducible to kinship or simple rental. Almost no houses in Tapacarí were lived in by the people who owned them, and in most cases the owners had not lived there for many years, or decades. Some only visited for the fiesta of the *Virgen de Dolores* once a year, or even less frequently. Nevertheless, the owners who rarely visited still referred to the house as 'theirs', and defended the internal boundaries of the house which marked off their private area within it from any other people who stayed there.

The flood of 1918 meant that no building in the town was older than this, and in life histories people often mentioned moving house within the town over the course of the decades, showing little attachment to the houses they had previously lived in. Moreover, family histories were often fractured, disputed and complex. Fights, separations, remarriages, deaths and migrations complicated the business of finding out who was related to whom, and *tapacareños* moved house according to changed circumstances. The most constant element in the use of houses was the relationship between townspeople and the peasant families who were related to them through *compadrazgo* (godparenthood): these relationships gave peasants, both individuals and families, the right to stay in town houses, when the owners were present or absent, within material and social limits. While the people using the house changed, their relationship to the owner of the house remained constant. Consequently, although many Tapacarí houses were large and rambling, it makes little sense to talk about them in the same way as, eg, Levi-Strauss' Kwakiutl houses or the historical European 'great houses' he compares them to. Levi-Strauss maintains that the house is the physical expression of the core of a lineage, or as he puts it:

(the house is) a moral person which possesses a domain that is perpetuated by the transmission of its name, its fortune and titles, along a real or fictive line, held as legitimate on the sole condition that this continuity can be expressed in the language of kinship or of alliance and more frequently of the two together (1984: 190).

This link is repeated in subsequent literature relating to houses – see for example most of the contributions to Carsten and Hugh-Jones' (1995) edited volume on houses and kinship. In these detailed examinations of kinship as both structure and process, lifelong monogamous marriage with the production of children is taken as the default form of kinship or lineage-building. Bloch discusses the example of Zafiriya people in Madagascar, whose reproductive success and marital happiness is given physical form in the houses they build, which over time become strongly associated with successful lineages and become 'holy houses'. McKinnon also demonstrates how the layout and spatial relationship of houses corresponds to a division between wife-givers and wife-takers, and different levels of prestige and certainty between households, with some houses being considered as having more 'weight' than others based on their reproductive power.

In Bolivia, kinship – both consanguineal and fictive – can be characterised as tangled and expansive. Early attempts to teach English to acquaintances in the city revealed this; when asked to give a basic introduction, students struggled to describe the extent of their immediate families in basic terms.⁸ Several decades of sporadic migration linked to an unstable, natural-resource-based economy and a general social tendency to move meant that families were spread out around many locations, in patterns of residence, reproduction and partnership which were not always predictable.

An example might run, 'I have four brothers, one is in Santa Cruz, two are in Oruro and one is in Spain. I have two sisters also. The oldest sister is not really my sister, she is my cousin, but she is like my sister because her mother, my aunt, ran away to Santa Cruz and had her when she was very young, and she couldn't take care of her so she was fostered by my mother and father. My other sister lives with me. My father is dead now, and my mother lives in Oruro with my niece, whose father is my brother who lives in Spain. He says he is going to come and get my niece and take her to Spain, so we are looking for someone else to live with my mother so that she is not alone.'

In keeping with this, in Tapacarí houses are owned, lent, rented and generally occupied by diverse configurations of people, some of whom are married couples and many of whom are not. One house may be an intermittent home to several different couples of the same generation, or the permanent residence of a single person, or shared between several siblings of different marital status, and their adult children. Moreover, it is common for marriages not to be monogamous, and for men to have a wife and children in the city and an openly-secret 'second family' (ie a secondary female partner and children) in another location. At least one woman in Tapacarí had a discreet partnership and children with a man who lived between Tapacarí and Quillacollo, where he had a wife and several older sons and daughters, and while this was the subject of whispered gossip rather than open acknowledgement, it was not thought to be particularly unusual. When men spent extended periods in the city or elsewhere, without taking their wives with them, it was commonly assumed that they were carrying on another relationship.

Household 'membership' or occupation fluctuates, and is not always known to everyone – the people staying in the physical house, who repair it and occupy it and cook in it, may not even be known to the owners of the house. But the house and the occupation patterns of the house do guarantee the endurance of some distinctive patterns of relatedness, which might cautiously be compared to Levi-Strauss' discussion of 'alliances'. The first is the perpetuation of communities of memory, that is, people who are brought together by periodically visiting the town and reliving, through shared memories, the good times of the past. These alliances, or relationships, tend to be formed by people of the same urban social class, whose chosen vehicles of memory are print media, organised meetings and occasional choreographed events. During the annual fiesta, the house itself plays a role in their remembrances of past times as they stay in it for a few days and encourage their friends and family to congregate there.

The second form of alliance or 'culture of relatedness' evident in day-to-day activity in Tapacarí is

relations of *compadrazgo* (godparenthood) between townspeople and peasants; the townspeople sponsoring new godchildren in various ways form a kind of lifelong contract in which they obtain access to labour and supplies in return for financial sponsorship, favours and contacts, and a place to stay sometimes not just in the town, but also in the city. The reproduction of this asymmetrical arrangement comes about because of, and connected to, the availability of houses for parties and for staying in when there are larger fiestas on. The parties held in town houses are attended by more peasants than townspeople, engendering links of friendship and *compadrazgo* from peasant to peasant. These horizontal links are made possible by the use of town spaces, 'borrowed' or re-purposed from their original owners.

The fragmented and very often not-coupled lives of *tapacareños* do not resemble static structures which inscribe belonging to a particular site: rather, the building of affine networks, of *compadres*, of friendships and alliances, is a skill developed by people who want to live across and through the town, using it as one stopping point in a wider cycle of movement. Just as the houses contained, at different times, different people, the people who stayed in Tapacarí often also had other houses elsewhere, or had footholds in other houses. The peasants who passed through the town on market days or on the way to the city, or who stayed in town for several days or weeks, had family homes in their hamlets of origin, and sometimes plots of land in Chapare. Many townspeople had additional houses, or were able to stay at the houses of relatives, in Quillacollo, Tiquipaya or other places close around the city of Cochabamba. Those who did not own a house outright 'below' in the city rented houses or rooms for their children to stay in while they were completing their education, or stayed in the houses rented or owned by their adult children.

In some cases, houses were rented or owned outright by people who had a stronger connection to peasant communities than to the old elite of the town, and these people generally had a steady stream of peasant visitors who stayed with them and interacted with them commercially as well, by

buying *chicha* from them or grinding wheat in their mill. When an individual or couple from a peasant background owned the house they lived in, they were proud and vocal about the fact, sometimes suggesting that ownership by a peasant of a house in the town was an act of audacity. 'I don't depend on anyone,' declared the porter of the *casa comunal* when asked about his house. 'I own my house, I own my mill. My children are all in school, every one.'⁹ Of course, he did 'depend on' the people who came to grind wheat in his mill, but the implication was that he was free from the domineering influence of townspeople. Ownership of the mill also meant being able to enter into *mink'a* arrangements with people who came with wheat to be ground, taking a share of the wheat for himself: this could be made into bread by himself and his daughters, using their own oven, and sold. The circle of interdependence therefore did not include townspeople at any stage: with an income from the municipal government for acting as porter – a post under control of the municipal authorities and by extension the *sindicato campesino* in which he had been active – and with a relationship with state authorities and civic legitimacy established by enrolling children in the school, the porter was able to claim both autonomy and advancement for his family without being tied into unwanted relationships with townspeople.

Intimacy

The link between houses and kinship is an obvious one, especially when food and cooking is thrown in. Carsten's work on Malay households and the links of kinship forged by eating together is one of the foremost examples of the role that the house, compound or flock has to play in reinforcing and enabling the continued production of related people and the advancement of a lineage. For Carsten's Malay informants, kin are formed not just in conception and pregnancy but also by eating food cooked on the same hearth, thereby ingesting the same essence from which their

Children's attendance at school was a marker of prestige or acceptability that recurred in conversations with peasants and townspeople alike, on subjects which often seemed unrelated. In this context, there was a strong connection in the mind of the speaker between his value as a citizen of the town and the fact that his children attended school. In other conversations, when dismissing or disparaging a third party, people sometimes remarked with scorn, 'and his children don't even go to school!' It was interesting to note that the social disapproval was not attached to the individual's own lack of education, but their unwillingness or incapacity to provide education for their offspring.

physical selves are made. This connection and commonality is particularly emphasised in the case of siblings, which fits into a general cultural emphasis on the duty of siblings to get along well together (Carsten 1999).

In Tapacarí much of the use of houses and the spaces within them is concerned with delineating difference and preventing inappropriate closeness, except during the elaborate ritual meals described in the next chapter, during which large numbers of people across the town eat the same food together. Control over intimate spaces is one of the ways in which townspeople retain a sense of distinction from the peasant people, who otherwise accompany them in different kinds of work and recreation. Even the closeness created by proximity or propinquity can be refused, or regulated. There is an indubitably gendered aspect to these encounters, but this rests in the kinds of activities carried out within houses, rather than restrictions to entry, or perceptible gendered spaces within them. The layout of houses, their use and occupation, and the kinds of activities which happen within them are geared to remind people of, and to reproduce, unequal relations.

Inasmuch as descent and family togetherness are expressed within the space, they are enacted by different kinds of people in different corners: the townspeople and *residentes* keep their family memories in one place, shuttered off except during the fiesta, preserving the family rooms as a kind of memorial, in the sense that the space is given over to facilitating the act of remembering or of generating new memories for those who come to celebrate. Rather than being a space of mercantile reproduction, or a stopping point for the circulation of goods, it is dedicated to social reproduction of the particular townspeople families who own it and use it infrequently, to the exclusion of the peasants who have taken over other spaces. The acts of remembering which happen within this space are framed by family interaction when groups of parents, children and other relatives come to the town on holiday, giving it associations with recreation rather than work.

By contrast, the peasant people who have gradually come to occupy the rest of the house engage in the kinds of everyday and ritual activities with each other which create and maintain wider links of relatedness beyond the immediate family, such as exchanging food, sharing space, baking bread and other personal and productive activities. When the owners of the house are present, the business of everyday life may overlap, but in most cases they are absent. The townspeople owners of the houses retained the most physically finished-off spaces for themselves and excluded peasants from these, but did allow peasant affines to sleep in their outbuildings or more second-rate rooms. By locking up parts of the buildings, the absent owners of the houses could still resist peasant incursion into their family spaces. However, their absence meant that their influence was tangibly weaker, and this was evident in the physical fabric of the house and the patterns of its use.

The houses also provided links of continuity and dependence between townspeople and peasants, since they were used for many overlapping purposes. Most houses in the town were used far more by peasants than by their owners, and the arrangements for renting or borrowing them varied. The townspeople who lived by themselves in their houses were either wealthy (retaining enough of a sense of distinction not to consider the company of peasants as acceptable within their homes) or extremely poor (mostly widows or childless, single elderly ladies); in the broad spectrum of people somewhere in the middle, almost all shared their dwellings under some conditions, with godchildren and *comadres*, tenants, overnight guests or caretakers.

When considering peasant occupation of houses, it is important to note the changes not just in relations of deference or intimacy, as with peasants newly occupying the house of their former *patrón*, but also relations of production, given that activity such as grinding wheat, baking bread and brewing *chicha* were made possible by control of household space. These economic niches, which had historically corresponded to townsfolk, relied on usage of town house spaces. This usage could be negotiated according to a spectrum of arrangements. In some cases peasant women

were contracted by town families to weave blankets for sale, with the sponsoring family paying for the wool and a token amount towards labour. This was known as *mink'a*, a term used elsewhere in the Andes for labour in exchange for payment or in exchange for part of the results of the labour (Allen 1988, Harris 2000). *Mink'a* was also sometimes used to describe collaborative breadmaking, in which *compadrazgo* and friendship connections were put to use to transform wheat grains into flour and flour into bread.

Finding a house

After finding a room in Quillacollo by asking in Tapacarí (see introduction), I found my house in Tapacarí by making enquiries in Quillacollo. In July and August in Tapacarí, no one was willing to let out extra rooms because, they said, they were anticipating the fiesta, when they would have dozens of guests to accommodate. This was true of townspeople living in their houses, or *residentes* who had come to carry out refurbishment to their homes before the fiesta. At the fiesta of the *Virgen de Dolores* in September, the owners of many of the empty houses came to town, and I asked some of them if they would let me a room for the year, but they expressed reluctance at letting a stranger live in their homes.

After a couple of false starts, I asked the president of the Residents' Association who might be a good person to approach, and she agreed to rent me one of the outbuildings of her own house.

The false starts provided an orientation in the use of houses by people who were not tenants or kin. In the first case, Don Rafael, a lifelong townsman, recommended that I ask the former *patrón* of Tikira, the village where the Gandarillas family lived. 'He's a nice old guy and he has some good rooms in his house on the corner of the plaza. He lives in Quillacollo but I can give you his telephone number.'

I sought a second opinion from Doña Simiona, the peasant union leader. 'I might rent a room from Don Alfredo,' I said as we walked back to town along the riverbed from a meeting in her village. 'I don't know him. Is he a good man, or not?'

'No!' she spat, shocked. 'Awful!' (*Mana, a! Sajrapuni*). That ruled Don Alfredo out. Later, I found out that Don Alfredo had been an unpopular *patrón*, refusing to sell land to the people in the village even when he was not using it, and appropriating limestone reserves for exploitation which had previously belonged to the community around it, through trickery with paperwork. He was apparently an active member of the Residents' Association, though I never met him. The president described him affectionately as 'oh, just a little old man' (*mayorcito es*). He was not spoken of fondly in the Gandarillas household; they, like Doña Simiona, regarded him as an exploitative 'bloodsucker'. Nevertheless, I noticed several months later that when they stayed in town, they tended to use his (abandoned) house – not the rented rooms, but a suite of neglected buildings below, and a courtyard with a fig tree in it. Did they rent it from him? 'No, we don't pay him, we just pay for the electricity,' responded one of the Gandarillas daughters when I asked. 'I think that he lets us use it because we said, you don't give it use and we will. Because he owes it to us, you know. He is a bad one, that old guy. We use this house to stay in for Sunday markets, and when the lorry comes and my sister sends us tomatoes to sell. We keep the tomatoes here and sell them in the market and stay here if we need to.'

The second false start came via an introduction from the *casa comunal* family, the Marcas. Their neighbours, two sisters who were both retired schoolteachers, were around for the fiesta, and they had some rooms at the back of their house, which adjoined that of the Marcas. Lucia and Margarita, both of whom I knew to interact confidently with all kinds of visitors, from engineers to councillors, suddenly became quiet and deferential. They waited outside the front door of the house while I went in, until invited in themselves. Once inside, they stood to attention silently, quite

different from their usual cheeky selves. The sisters showed the room which they intended to rent out, which was little more than a concrete shell overlooking the patio, with incomplete walls and no windows or doors. 'Of course, we close up the front room when we go away', they explained, 'but this is where our *compadritos* stay sometimes, down here below, and you can use this room up above. You don't have to talk to them. A bedframe would go in here, no problem, and we will send someone to put the windows in. You can use the back door.' I politely declined.

In Quillacollo, a friend of a friend (Aleja Gutierrez, whose version of the town's destruction myth appears in Chapter 2) gave wholehearted permission for me to move into her house in Tapacarí, where she had not been in years. 'It's empty, the house, I never go there now, so it will be good for someone to live in it. A *compadre* of mine is using it to store some things in, I think, but he won't mind. Ask him for the key when you go.' The *compadre* she named was Ricardo Gandarillas, who I already knew. When I returned to the town and asked him about Doña Aleja's empty house, he took me up to it to show me where she meant. The house was the one he lived in, along with his wife and their two sons. It was in obvious and constant use; they had their furniture, kitchen and belongings there, and pigs and chickens outside. 'Do you want to move in here? There's room in the shed!' they laughed. Ricardo explained that Sra Gutierrez owed them some money, and in the absence of a repayment they were entitled to live in her house, since she wasn't using it.

Repeatedly over the year of fieldwork in Tapacarí, I saw the occupancy of houses shift as owners visited from the city and left again, and different accounts of who was living there were given by owners and people in the town. On more than one occasion, I visited peasant friends and acquaintances in borrowed town houses as they cooked, baked or wove there, and then returned to the same house a few weeks later when the city-dwelling owner visited. The owner, when asked, would affirm with total certainty that they did leave the keys with certain peasant *compadres*, but only so they would occasionally water the garden or store belongings there, and no one used the

house in their absence. Almost inevitably, they would also reminisce about the town's former glory and historic importance, and complain sadly that it was in a decayed state because everyone had gone to the city. The empty appearance of the house seemed to underline this, but at other times when the owner was in the city, the same house might feature a floor loom for weaving a blanket under a *mink'a* arrangement, planks of bread rolls set out to rise before baking, or children playing. (All of these were to be seen at various times in one house belonging to an elderly woman who visited twice during the fieldwork period and punctuated our conversations with, 'You should go to the city! There's nothing here at all.')

The Alanes house as case study: spatial and social divisions within the house

Eventually Doña Aleja Alanes, sister of the president of the residents' association, agreed to rent out one of the outbuildings in their complex on the corner by the patio. They needed someone, she explained, to water the flowers there. Doña Aleja, who was an elderly woman who wore a *pollera*, unlike her sisters, and spoke more comfortably in Quechua than in Spanish, would have liked to have gone to Tapacarí regularly but her younger sister prohibited her from doing so, on the grounds of her ill health.

Despite this, in October all four sisters and some of their adult children came for an extended visit, with two aims: to remind themselves of the town in order to '*echarse de menos*' (miss it, feel its absence), and to make *fruta seca* biscuits for the celebration of *Todos Santos*. These, they insisted, tasted best when made in Tapacarí. Indeed, the family had been bakers in previous generations, and their house had been known for its large bread oven, which had since been demolished and replaced with a smaller one, so they made the *fruta seca* around their kitchen table with the help of friends from the town, and then baked it in an oven belonging to the same friends. (During *Todos Santos*, in her city home, the *fruta seca* and distinctive wholemeal rolls from Tapacarí were laid out on the *misa* for their dead family members, mixed up with colourful sweets and confections.)

When they were young, the parents of the family were given to drink, and so it fell to Doña Aleja, the oldest, to support her younger sisters and pay for their education. She earned the money for this by baking bread and brewing *chicha*, and transporting these by mule across the passes to Kami, a mining centre, for sale. Several women – she named two who still lived in the town – supported their families in this way. This was in the days before lorries and roads, and the journey took two days, during which all the women were in fear of being attacked by bandits or malevolent spirits. Doña Aleja recounted with a shiver stories of crossing the passes at night while feeling as though they were being watched, and fearing that they would be murdered for the money they carried, without anyone to help them. They timed their *chicha*- and bread-selling visits for payday, and camped in the plaza in Kami overnight, or until their *chicha* was sold. Some women also knitted sweaters to sell. With the money she earned, Doña Aleja was able to buy a house in Quillacollo and the ironmonger's next to it, which she lived in with her sister. The younger sister, who with Doña Aleja's help had become a university-educated professional and president of the Residents' Association, was highly resistant to letting her oldest sister make trips out to Tapacarí, and would hide the keys to the house or tell her that the roads were in a poor condition to prevent her from going. Despite this, Doña Aleja did manage to escape occasionally and spend a few peaceful days on her front step in Tapacarí gossiping with old friends and watching the life of the town roll slowly by.

During this time, as had been the case during the fiesta, the family occupied the area marked (A) in the diagram on the next page. This building opened onto the street, and Doña Aleja often sat in the open doorway, passing the time with neighbours. Inside, one end was curtained off and used as a bedroom, and in the other the open space was lined with shelves offering goods for sale. The comestibles for sale, such as bottles of soft drink, had been out of date for several years, but sat alongside the soap and matches, all sharing an even coating of dust. A large wooden table hinted at

family meals and social gatherings. To the rear, another door opened out to a covered patio and outdoor kitchen, where the work of making the *fruta seca* was carried out. After a week, the family went back to the city and closed off this part of the house, and I remained in outbuilding (B) on the diagram. The president had been using this outbuilding to store materials that she had brought to construct a small public library in Tapacarí; it contained two beds, several plastic stools and two tables.

Over the rainy months, Doña Aleja came back to the house twice; apart from these visits, the main shopfront remained locked. However, the house complex was in continuous use by Doña Aleja's *compadres* and *comadres* from the town and beyond. Sometimes Don Valentin and Doña Maria, who ran a food kiosk on the plaza, used the grass of the garden to graze a lamb for a few days between buying it and slaughtering it. 'There's no grass up at ours,' they would explain, tying it up to the water tank. They also gathered herbs from the garden, and sometimes used the water.

Figure 3. Doña Aleja's house

Outbuilding (C) was occupied for several months, on and off, by an elderly couple from the community of Pallumani. Don Feliciano was seriously ill and no longer able to work the land, and his wife Doña Julia had been doing all the work for both of them, but this wore hard on her at her age, and so they had handed over their lands to family members and come to town to be within easier reach of medical attention. Their children, she explained, were in the Chapare, Brazil and Santa Cruz, and could not help with the crops and animals. Initially they lived in outbuilding (C), but in February during the time of heaviest rains, they moved into outbuilding (D), because the tiles of outbuilding (C) had started falling from the roof into the interior of the room, and they were

afraid one might hit them. Neither outbuilding had a door, windows, plastered walls or electricity.

During the several stretches of time that they spent in the house, Doña Julia cooked on a wood fire outside their door. At her initiation, we began a cordial food-sharing relationship. When Doña Julia cooked a meal, she would dish out a plateful and bring it over to where I was, then wait patiently while I transferred the food onto one of my own dishes, rinsed out her plate and returned it to her with thanks. Correspondingly, when I prepared food, I would take a plate of it over to their outbuilding, call round the door and offer it to them. Doña Julia would tip the food into one of her own dishes, rinse my plate out and return it to me with thanks. Although we did sometimes sit together and chat sociably, we never sat down to eat together, and if I offered food while we were conversing, Doña Julia would politely accept it, take it over to her outbuilding, transfer it to her own dishes and bring the plate back, then resume talking. This was also true of their interactions with Doña Aleja when she was staying in the house; the same pattern of symmetrical food-sharing, without actually consuming the food together, was obviously a long-standing one with them.

This measured social distance, sharing-without-sharing, stands in contrast to much anthropological literature about houses and households, in which the primacy of the hearth is emphasised. Bloch, Carsten (1995) and many others underline that households in Madagascar and Malaysia respectively are based around a single hearth, from which the sustenance of the family comes. The food that is prepared on this single hearth constitutes a building block of kinship, and often the spatial layout of the house is oriented around it. In these examples and others, generational succession and the point at which married adult children leave to create their own home can be connected to the undesirability of having two hearths in a single home. The link between production of food and production of new people also seems evident: as the young married couple have children, the question of who is responsible for feeding the children arises, and households divide up or expand. The nucleation of households around food preparation serves as a reminder that the two processes

of people-making and food-making, with the latter contributing to the former, always run intertwined.

What, then, of Tapacarí, where multiple hearths may exist in one large house? Not only did Doña Julia and Don Feliciano prepare their food on a different stove, but in their interactions with the others living in the house, with whom they had relationships across lines of class and/or ethnicity, they worked out a finely tuned dance of commensality and coexistence. By accepting and offering food, they demonstrated that they were socially correct people – generous and able to provide, and also capable of forming social links that meant they could accept food. However, over their lifetimes it would certainly have been impressed on them that they were not considered by the townspeople to be fit to share a table with them. By explicitly incorporating this food into their own 'hearth' (pouring it into their dishes, and sometimes keeping it for a while before eating), they transformed its substance from something belonging to themselves, something suitable for them to eat. In fact, the symmetry and exact reciprocity of the practice meant that the boundaries between their house-within-a-house and the other occupants of the different parts of the house could be maintained, but that the links of affinity and politeness still existed. Just as there is a strong pan-Andean emphasis on reciprocity, this incorporation of potentially 'hostile' elements into the heart of sociality or kinship, in order to transform them into something nutritive or productive, can be seen in other arenas in the Andes, such as head-taking (Arnold and de Dios Yapita 2005) and also in Amazonian 'economies of predation' (Viveiros de Castro 1992).

The multiple hearths in Doña Aleja's house, and in many other houses in Tapacarí, indicated the presence and continuation of multiple, distinct threads of family and society, occupying the same physical space and tied together by convenient and polite coexistence, but bringing forth parallel, unequal kinds of people. The modes of interaction between these people – between townspeople and *residentes*, between townspeople and peasants, between peasants and *residentes* – was

changing, but it was changing at an uneven pace. People who lived in the town all of the time would reluctantly, but matter-of-factly, acknowledge their dependence on, and coexistence with, peasants: some of the *residentes* were less comfortable with the reality that their hometown of beloved memory was now populated by as many peasants as 'decent people'. *Residentes*, when discussing peasants and the growing peasant population of the town, often used dehumanising or derogatory language to describe the influx. For example, one woman, who was visiting her old family home with relatives, took a stroll around the town before coming back and reporting in tones of disgust, 'I don't think there is a single family living here, just peasants – and they are all drinking.' By 'family', she evidently meant a family of 'decent people', implying that peasant families were at best beneath notice, and suggesting that the idea of 'family' could not be applied to peasant kin groups. After our visit concluded, the family insisted on sending two young peasant boys with me as I walked back through the town to my room, as a kind of courtesy chaperone. The boys were not allowed to enter the living room of the house itself, but summoned to the patio from an outbuilding and given instructions to see me home. 'Are they your godparents or what?' I asked the boys, as we walked. 'No', they said, 'we just live in the house.'

As this shows, it would not be accurate to say that godparenthood mediated all of the relationships that allowed peasants to stay in the houses of townspeople. Nor, according to town informants, was the godparenthood relationship based on the relationship between former *hacendados* and the peasants who lived on what had been their estates – that is, when I asked *residentes* and people in the town who belonged to former *hacienda*-owning families whether their *compadres* and godchildren came from the villages which had previously been under their control, they denied it.

The influence of godparenthood was not limited to housing – it also solidified, for example, commercial relationships by creating preferential '*caseros*' to buy and sell meat and produce with, and could mean sponsorship of children's education or work prospects – and staying in town houses

was not always facilitated by *compadrazgo* connections, but could be arranged through acquaintances, or through secondary arrangements. Don Feliciano and Doña Julia's occupation of the house literally and figuratively opened the door for many others who knew them to come and stay there, benefiting from the flow of people who passed through. Periodically, the outbuildings filled with as many as five or six people cooking together, listening to the radio, chatting and sleeping on straw pallets. Some were visiting the town on market day and had decided to stay the night and return home the following day, but young men or couples who had been working in the Chapare and were on their way back to their communities also passed through regularly, offering up oranges and other fruit as a thank-you. Others spent the night in the house before going to the city or to the large market at Chamacoma on an early-morning lorry. At busy times such as the town's anniversary, Carnival and Easter, the outbuildings and patio of the house filled with relatives of Don Feliciano and Doña Julia, and other acquaintances who needed a place to stay. During Carnival, they and their visitors stored their *wajtins* and *pillus* there, and retreated to discuss the celebrations and keep on drinking when the plaza was too busy and they wanted to rest.

When Doña Aleja was visiting, the project to bring potable water from a source further up the mountain ridge back down to the town for consumption was well underway. The inauguration process and controversy of this project are described in Chapter 3. Doña Aleja contracted a labourer, also from Pallumani, to do her share of the pipeline digging. He was accommodated in the house, but not in any of the outbuildings or in the main house. Rather, she laid out a set of sheep and goatskins for him to sleep on, in the outside patio area next to the bathroom. Each morning, she cooked him a meal to take with him in a *t'ojpey* bundle up to the jobsite, which he received with a smile, and she took the blankets he had used for bedding back into the house until they were needed again in the evening. When I asked if the labourer was a *compadre* or *ahijado*, she responded in the negative; he was just a *peoncito* (labourer) who she was paying to do the job. It went without saying that she would include food in her payment to him. And so our spatial

hierarchy was established: Doña Aleja in her large, empty old house echoing with the absence of family, myself the tenant in my plastered, tin-roofed room, Doña Julia and Don Feliciano the *compadres* in an outbuilding, and a *peoncito* sleeping on a pile of sheepskins, open to the elements.

In this way the borders of acquaintance and family, kinsman and *compadre* were traced out. The home as a whole, with all its outbuildings, bread oven and patio, had a history as a productive base where materials passed through and were transformed into commodities. It was easy to imagine how, in the past, the patio and outbuildings might have held fermenting jars of *chicha*, or rising bread rolls, ready for baking. These activities, which had historically been the means of making a living for townspeople, were still carried out in similar ways in other houses in the town: maize became *wiñapu*, which became *chicha*, and wheat kernels became soup or flour, which became bread.

Bread baking had, according to town informants, been a traditional activity of those in the town, who controlled the bread ovens. In more recent times it had become a commercial activity which was carried out by both townspeople and peasants, with the latter either using the bread ovens in houses they had arranged to stay in through *compadrazgo* links, or by sharing out a portion of the bread they had made to the owners of the oven and to helpers. This bread could be sold for cash or traded for vegetables at the Sunday market, reducing dependence on wage labour. The slow encroachment of peasants into positions of economic contention with townspeople was made possible by the emptying out of the town's houses.

Bases, movement of goods and 'ethnic economy'

Gudeman and Rivera (1990) note in the case of Colombian peasant households, the importance placed on having a 'base' or a 'reserve', the foundation and security on which economic transactions can be built. The 'base' is that which maintains, supports and enables the flow of goods and activity,

'movement', from inside to outside. The house as base also provides an axis of connection to both land and other people, a place from which people set out to work or return to, with crops and money to maintain it. The movement of money, assets or work is verbally connected to physical movement into and out of the house, and physical maintenance of the house is connected to financial maintenance of the 'base'. In Tapacará, houses and the spaces within them cannot be uniformly described as a 'base' to all who live in them, though. Gudeman and Rivera's analysis holds firm for those houses where the owners continue living there, maintaining a business and farming the land, but these are now a minority compared to those houses where peasants pass through or develop their own parallel circuits of work, commerce and kin maintenance. The movement of goods brought about by the movement of peasants does not always reflect a stable centre around which crops or labour rotate around the house and are 'fed back' into it in order to maintain a base, but rather, some houses in the town served as one stopover point on larger circuits in which different actors pursued different strategic goals: for (most of) the townspeople, social advancement through the accumulation of capital, both economic and social, and for (most of) the peasants, continuity of connection with their communities, in addition to a wish for progress towards better living standards. In neither case could this be attained without at least spending time in, and preferably moving to, the city. Doña Aleja's 'base', the house and ironmonger's business she had sunk her money into, was in Quillacollo, although she continually longed to return to the peace and familiarity of Tapacará; for Don Feliciano and Doña Julia, their base would once have been their land, but they now moved between places where they could stay comfortably. In their case this was provoked by ill health and old age, but many other peasant individuals, couples and families also moved regularly between places where they could find work, or where their children were being schooled. Sometimes they retained ownership of their lands and allowed a family member to lease them; sometimes they relinquished this ownership. Peasant men and women who pursued higher education or professional careers, such as the *técnicos de educación* who were recruited by the municipal government to give popular education courses, retained houses in the town, in the city,

and also stayed with their extended families when they passed through their village, without evincing any permanent attachment to any of these places. While they made a point of attending *sindicato* meetings in their own communities whenever possible, they did not indicate a desire to move back and cultivate the land there: attending the meetings was itself a form of community belonging and participation, and it did not have equal weight to working the land there, though it maintained their presence.

The patio in past years would have been full of people, working at the baking and brewing that kept the family supplied with money to live on and to invest. But in addition to economic gains, this ability to muster a large workforce and produce goods which could be traded, through sacrifice and ingenuity, would have demonstrated the social capital of the family. The sheer number of *compadres* and *comadres* that Doña Aleja had accumulated bespoke her standing in the town; the activity on her house's patio would have demonstrated this in the past and still did at the time of fieldwork. However, the links of relatedness which made it possible for Don Feliciano, Doña Julia and the many other people from Pallumani to come and stay in the house's outbuildings had shifted in meaning and usefulness over time. For them, the ties of *compadrazgo* meant that they had a place to stay, indefinitely, when they needed it, and a stopover point for their many relatives and acquaintances who had need of a shed to store their goods in when in transit, and a roof over their head for a night or two. The roof in question may have been falling in through neglect, but it was preferable to the open plaza, or to making the long walk back to the community through the night after market day, or having arrived on the afternoon lorry from Quillacollo. When Doña Aleja and her sisters were absent, which was most of the time, the couple from Pallumani were able to host many more people than may have been permitted when the owners were in residence. Like Don Ricardo and Doña Paulina's relationship with Sra Gutierrez, they perhaps used the house rather more often, and for more people, than they let on to the owner. However, when they needed to stay in Quillacollo, they could not count on being able to stay with Doña Aleja there. Having them

occupy an outbuilding in the crumbling *casa de campo* was one thing: quite another would be to invite them into her pleasant, modern, tile-floored suburban home. Nevertheless, Doña Julia could often be found sitting with Doña Aleja in the street in Quillacollo, outside the latter's home, passing the time before returning to the room or corner she had found to stay in.

This made it clear that the demarcation of space, which began at the gate of the house in Quillacollo, took place inside the house in Tapacarí, meaning that peasant and townspeople lived (literally) at close quarters with another, and the domestic space of production and coexistence adjoined, but did not incur into, space that was maintained as the private and inviolable sanctuary of family and memory.

Connerton, in his study of the practices of memory, distinguishes between commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices as ways of remembering the past (Connerton 1989). He posits that in recognising an object or place as a trigger for memories or a trace of the past, one passes beyond appreciating the nature or quality of the object and instead judges it on the basis of the experience or entity of which it once formed part. That is, the material significance of an object or house goes beyond its current physical form, as it evokes past associations with the same place or object. The main houses of Tapacarí, with their heavy wooden doors, antique iron latches, scrollwork shutters and plastered walls, remained for the use of visiting *residente* families alone. For those who visited them, and for the isolated people who continued living in their family homes awaiting visitors, the empty space itself surrounded them with memories, both their own and shared. These memories, formed in recent years by visits during the fiesta, were of enjoyment, family togetherness and celebration. The less significant parts of the house – bread ovens and outbuildings, gardens in which peasant visitors grew squashes and herbs during rainy season, while the *residentes* were away – remained outwith the range of nostalgic interest. Despite this, these areas and the uses to which they were put enabled peasant self-sufficiency.

Compadrazgo

Doña Aleja, for her part, had little need of a workforce for her long-cold bread ovens. However, the link of *compadrazgo* was not severable when it ceased to be convenient; rather, it represented a lifelong affinity which could be called on. This affinity could be multigenerational; other townspeople in Tapacarí sometimes indicated that they had *compadrazgo* relationships with people from one community more than any other, and sometimes took two or more generations of the same family as *ahijados*. The community members, then, had a common anchor in the town, a place where not only they but all their family members and others from their community could stay. It was unclear whether this mass adoption of *ahijados* usually took place for communities where the sponsoring townspeople had once been the *patrón*, or in the family of the *patrón*. In some cases the sponsor from the town had at no point been a *patrón* or the relative of one. Although some peasant acquaintances maintained that the town itself was full of nothing but current and former *patrones*, (*'puros patrones nomás hay en pueblo'*) not everyone who lived there or who had grown up there had links to a landholding family. In any case, relationships between *patrones* and the members of the communities on the land which they had once owned were ambivalent, as the example of the Gandarillas family's relationship with Don Alfredo shows above. Ties of obligation or of mutual aid did not necessarily imply a relationship of affection. Neither, I would argue, did they represent an aspiration to privileged status, as Xavier Albó suggested in 1974:

There is some antagonism still to be observed between town and country, especially in the case of older secondary towns. The townspeople consider themselves to be superior, and are also resentful of those who they still privately call 'indians' or 'the indian hordes'.

Correlatedly, there are still some peasants who seek higher prestige by creating closer links to the town, for example by choosing people from the town as godparents (1974: 68)¹⁰

10 *'Se observa aún cierto antagonismo entre pueblos y campo, especialmente en el caso de los pueblos antiguos más secundarios. Los vecinos de estos pueblos se sienten superiores y al mismo tiempo resentidos a aquellos a quienes privadamente siguen llamando indios o la indiada. Correlativamente aún hay campesinos que buscan un aumento de prestigio estrechando sus lazos con el pueblo por ejemplo escogiendo padrinos entre los vecinos del mismo.'*

The first part of this statement is undoubtedly true, as examples throughout this chapter and elsewhere show. However, I would contend that choosing townspeople as godparents does not indicate a wish to cultivate closer links with the town in order to attain a prestigious status or become more like townspeople. Rather, it often seemed a matter of pragmatism, and a relationship which benefited the peasants far more than the townspeople. Having a contact in the town to sell goods to or to stay at the house of contributed more to the internal social and economic reproduction of peasant communities than to a transformation of peasants into townspeople. When surveying successful women in the town as to the number of *ahijados* they had, they gave a wide range of numbers (from a dozen or so to a couple of hundred) but all added, 'I don't want any more. It's too expensive' (*'Ya no quiero, mucho gasto es'*). Additionally, the number of godchildren did not correspond to how pleasant or popular the woman was, but to her economic position: women with large and successful businesses, or from wealthy families, had godchildren by the hundred.

Gudeman and Rivera (1990) highlight the use of the word *gastos* to describe expenses in Colombia, suggesting that in that context a *gasto* is an expense rather than an investment, a payment which must be disbursed without an immediate benefit returning to the house. Sponsoring godchildren in Tapacarí was indeed expensive – seeking help to cover the costs of a party was one reason godparents were approached, after all – and whereas in previous years the godparenthood relationship might have resulted in preferential access to peasant goods or labour, now, with the likelihood that a newly sponsored godchild would head off to the city or to the Chapare independently, the benefit for townspeople was less guaranteed. Of course, migrants to the Chapare still maintained relationships with their godparents in town, staying at their houses on their way back to their communities of origin and often leaving presents of tropical fruit or coca as tokens of thanks.

For others who continued living in their communities, the pattern of granting town *comadres* preferential access to goods and labour had not completely eroded: on one occasion I was present as a peasant man approached his town *comadre* with a poncho for sale, addressing her deferentially, but explicitly as *comadre*, as if to highlight the connection between them. The poncho was large and beautifully woven, and the going rate for such a piece of work was about 800 pesos. She disdainfully offered him 100, which he accepted. When somebody present said, 'She is cheating you, you know', he responded, 'I know, but my children are hungry.' The *comadre* clearly benefited, to the tune of 700 pesos profit if she sold the poncho, and the peasant, while knowingly being exploited at a vulnerable time, at least had a channel into the town where he could sell his material goods in order to survive.

Work and domestic space

Doña Aleja's house and the people who lived there provide one example of how the physical house can become a shell when its owners move to the city, and is then occupied by itinerant peasants who take over the abandoned space, within permitted boundaries. There were, however, many houses in Tapacarí which were occupied and used by owners and tenants and were the site of productive activities. These could be divided, with difficulty, into activities to sustain the family and wider kin group, such as raising animals, knitting, weaving and cooking, and directly commercial activities, which were generally concerned with the preparation and sale of bread, *chicha* and food. When the former were carried out with non-immediate family members, it was generally with 'horizontally' similar friends, ie peasants with other peasants and townspeople with other townspeople and, perhaps, (peasant) domestic servants. When productive activity was focused on goods to be sold outside the house (or sometimes within it, in the case of food), the domestic workforce was more diverse. (This is still leaving aside the work collaborations which went into fiestas, which were on a wider scale still, and involved the participation of many differently placed actors, so as to be able to call on different kinds of resources. This will be discussed along with the rest of the fiestas in the

next chapter.)

Water and households

The place where the two (or more) households-within-a-house overlapped was the water tank, an open concrete container, into which water from the mains was released twice a day. This basic resource was by necessity shared by everyone. On a wider level, the poor quality and scant supply of water in the town brought people together in conversation and in action, as they campaigned and worked for a better water supply system.

There is a strong preoccupation with water, irrigation and the animating circulation of fluids through the ground, the skies and human bodies in wider Andean cultures (Arnold and de Dios Yapita 2005), sometimes termed a 'hydraulic cosmology' (Rockefeller 2010), given which, the centrality of water in the layout of a house makes sense. After all, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, the progenitors of the Inca royal lineage, were said to have emerged from Lake Titicaca (Urton 1999). Thus, life and lineage emerge from water, and water must be kept in movement to keep humans, animals and crops fertile and productive. Water, unlike food or *chicha*, does not create bonds between people when consumed, but its availability is a necessary condition for life. It is worth bearing in mind that one of the formational political experiences of both urban and rural informants had been their involvement in the Water War of 2000 in the city of Cochabamba or blockading the roads which led to it, in protest against proposals to privatise water sources.

Tapacareños made a rare show of unity when it came to organising labour for the project that would bring water down to the town from Walluma. The water in use in the town at the time of fieldwork was pumped up from the river, and then pumped around the town twice a day at fixed times, two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. It was bad water, everyone agreed (another rare coincidence of opinion from townspeople and peasants). The high mineral salt content from the

river was bad for digestion and health, and the water was said to be harmful even when boiled or used to make soup. (In a country whose people run on daily lunches of soup the same way its economy runs on gas, this is not far short of a calamity.) Over the course of 2006 and 2007, the project to bring water from Walluma proceeded haltingly. The collection tank and water pipeline were funded and managed by Caritas, with participation from the municipal government. Caritas, operating according to a common principle of participatory development, supplied expertise in the form of an engineer and a plumber, as well as funding for materials, but made it a condition of executing the project that the intended beneficiaries, ie the people living in the town of Tapacarí, should contribute a *contraparte laboral*, that is, work for free on the physical labour of digging the trench and laying the pipeline to bring the water down to the town. Such a model for construction was common and successful in other parts of the province: villagers from Ch'illca Grande, for example, were proud of how they themselves had built their road. It was common, too, for the workers on road or infrastructure projects to be given food by the inhabitants of the places they worked as a consideration.

Neither of these factors – the *contraparte laboral* or the 'voluntary' hospitality – worked as well in the town of Tapacarí. On the latter point, the plumber complained bitterly that nobody around Tapacarí ever gave him anything decent to eat. On the former, the abandoned state of the town made the *contraparte laboral* problematic. It was explained to town representatives that if households could not contribute a number of days' labour from adult males, then they would have to hire labourers or pay \$80 (an unreachably high sum for most) towards the project. This met with general dismay and condemnation from those households who had neither fit adult men, nor the wherewithal to pay \$80. The lorry that left the town and drove up to the jobsite every morning for a few weeks carried a load of peasant workers, some of them resident in the town and working for their household, but many who had obviously been drafted in by townspeople. Of the 40 or so who worked digging the trench for the water pipe to run through, perhaps five were from the town. One

earned himself the nickname '*hijo del pueblo*' for his unique status as the only one on the work crew who had been born in the town.

Still more striking were the public meetings held during the initial stages of the project (which eventually became mired in delay and difficulty and was not looking promising when fieldwork ended). These were held not in the *casa comunal*, but upstairs in the *alcaldía* building on the plaza, above the Entel office, which gave them an air of official town business. The meetings were well attended by all of the people living in the town, and also attended by people who were absent. That is, at the start of the meeting, the man who had been given the job of liaising between the town and Caritas read out a roll call of citizens of the town, and those present answered, 'Present' – not just for themselves and their immediate families, but also when the names of the owners of their houses were read out, and sometimes for people with whom they had strong enough links to be entrusted with their proxy vote. Nevertheless, many names on the list referred to people who had not lived in the town for years, and when these were called out, the syllables hung in the air as a reminder of how many people had left the town. Some were marked as absent, but many were 'brought into' the meeting by those who stood in for them. Answering to the name of the owner of the house so as to confer legitimacy on the meeting and the water project was a necessary step to getting a supply of clean water to the houses they now lived in.

The plaza, the weekly market and 'public space'

Moving on from discussions of houses and households, it is also necessary to describe some of the uses and exclusions present in Tapacari's public spaces, principally the plaza and the streets around it.

The idea of public space carries with it some underpinning assumptions, discussed by Low and Smith (2006) in their book which attempts to cover both the discourses and overlaying cultural

narratives which imbue public spaces, but also to discuss the materiality of public spaces, and the phenomena experienced when physically present in them, in terms of embodiment, proximity and the tracing out of local knowledge in space. As they point out, the weakness of the existing literature 'perhaps lies in the practical means of translation from theories of political and cultural economy to the materiality of public space' (2006: 5). This is germane here not only because of the gulf between theories of political economy and engaged description of lived realities, but also due to the enduring difficulty of describing emptiness and distance. Conversations about the public spaces of Tapacarí – the plaza, streets and river – often happened dozens of miles away in Quillacollo or the city of Cochabamba, where *residentes* and other exiles spoke fondly or angrily of the deterioration of the town's physical environment. Inversely, in the empty town, the townspeople who remained spoke of the absence of their family members and friends who had previously lived there with them and inhabited the streets which were now badly cared for and empty. In reminiscences, they spoke not of individuals, but of happy masses of schoolchildren or large groups of people going from *chichería* to *chichería*, filling the space with noise in comparison to the '*silencio*' of the present. The difficulty of describing absence or exclusion once again surfaces: it was clear that the emptiness of the streets, which grew to seem normal after a few days in the town, was for them an offensive emptiness where there used to be, and should be, people.

The other notable absence in the town was that of the state, in the form of the municipal government. As shown in detail in the previous chapter, there were strong reasons for this absence, but it was felt by townspeople, including some who were sympathetic to the local government or employed by it, that the *alcaldía* had a moral duty to return to the town and boost the population and the economic activity there. This was also a key demand of the *residentes*, for whom the *alcaldía*'s indifference to the town was a sore point. The link between the physical condition of the town and the political presence of state order was sometimes made explicit by complaints about the poor state of the plaza. This brings to mind Low and Smith's assertion that the idea of public space

needs, as a precondition, the presence of the state and its opposition to the domestic or private:

Public space only comes into its own with the differentiation of a nominally representative state on one side and civil society and the market on the other. Implicated in this transition is the simultaneous pupation of the household as a privatized sphere of social reproduction (2006: 4)

Although the definition of 'privatised' in a non-economic sense is slippery, the material in this chapter demonstrates that houses in Tapacará contained multiple fields of social production involving people engaging with each other on various levels, some intimate and some carefully distanced. In addition, commercial activity also took place within households, as well as reciprocal labour arrangements (*mink'a*) for the production of bread, *chicha* or blankets. The state, however, was largely absent from the public spaces of the town on non-festival days apart from the discontinuous presence of two bored police officers and weekly visits by the *subprefecto*, a municipal authority working under the regional governor. On public holidays such as Independence Day and the town's anniversary, the town was ritually occupied by civil servants and others, as will be described in the next chapter. However, the plaza itself is arguably a physical representation of the colonial state and of respectable *mestizo* society's social mores. For example, as I show below, gender differentiation was more rigidly enforced in the town streets and particularly the plaza than out in the countryside, where women and girls were able to walk around freely unless they had jealous husbands who curtailed their movements. (The danger of having their freedom of movement limited was one reason young peasant women gave for remaining unmarried.) Drunkenness in the plaza was also officially frowned upon, although public drunkenness in other parts of the town was not generally considered a social faux pas for elderly women or men of any age, as demonstrated by the affectionate shouts of, 'Ha, a little tipsy, are you?' between elderly women when one of their friends appeared the worse for wear.

There appeared to be a strong link in the minds of many *residentes* between civic well-being and the condition of the plaza in particular. At the Society of *Residentes* meetings which I attended in Quillacollo, the disrepair of the plaza was an item which frequently appeared on the agenda, with nebulous plans being made to contract an architect or engineer to survey and possibly plan out repairs to the plaza. As previously stated, this focus seemed paradoxical given how relatively well-tended the plaza was compared to the deterioration of the roads and streets around the town. In reminiscences about the town, the plaza also featured heavily. Frequently, also, the disrepair of the streets and plaza – as well as the land around – was verbally connected to the town's peasant inhabitants.

When I was a girl, there were a lot of us in the school there down below, maybe forty. The streets were well maintained, not like now, with the rubbish, and everything falling down. The plaza is very badly taken care of, it seems. The people here now, they don't have the *formación* to keep the place up. Do you know the hot springs up at Incuyo? Lovely, aren't they? But they're not very deep now, there used to be more water. That stretch of land there, where the willows are, it used to be a *hacienda*. That place belonged to my family. With the agrarian reform, everything was ruined. They used to grow everything there, even *tumbos* [a kind of passionfruit], but now it's just a dried up strip of land. (Interview, October 2006)

In this example, a woman who had come to look for official documents held in Tapacarí had been sitting alone in the empty plaza, looking at the town around her. Upon being asked she told how she had left when young when her family moved to a mining centre to trade, and attributed physical decay of fields and hot springs as well as streets to the peasant population now in control of the space. In her view, the takeover of power during the agrarian reform and later, as non-peasants left the town, had led to declining standards as the population lacked the skill and education to maintain

a pleasant environment.

Here, as in many *residente* narratives, an explicit connection was drawn between peasant inhabitation and use, and physical decline, a link made between education (and therefore implicitly class background), action and the ability or qualification to maintain the physical environment. This crosshatch of discourse and materiality returns to the point of tension between narrative and physical environment described by Low and Smith, above, and also explored in Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga's edited volume *The Anthropology of Space and Place* in which various authors consider embodiment and space as an environment through which people move and inscribe meaning, whether through their own transnational and migratory movements or the building and inhabitation of houses and compounds which give concrete form to social divisions based on gender or class.

Having considered the spatiality of houses and the way people delineated divisions of it, it is also necessary to discuss the plaza at the heart of the town, and the commercial and social activity which took place there. The ritual role of the plaza in fiestas is covered in the next chapter.

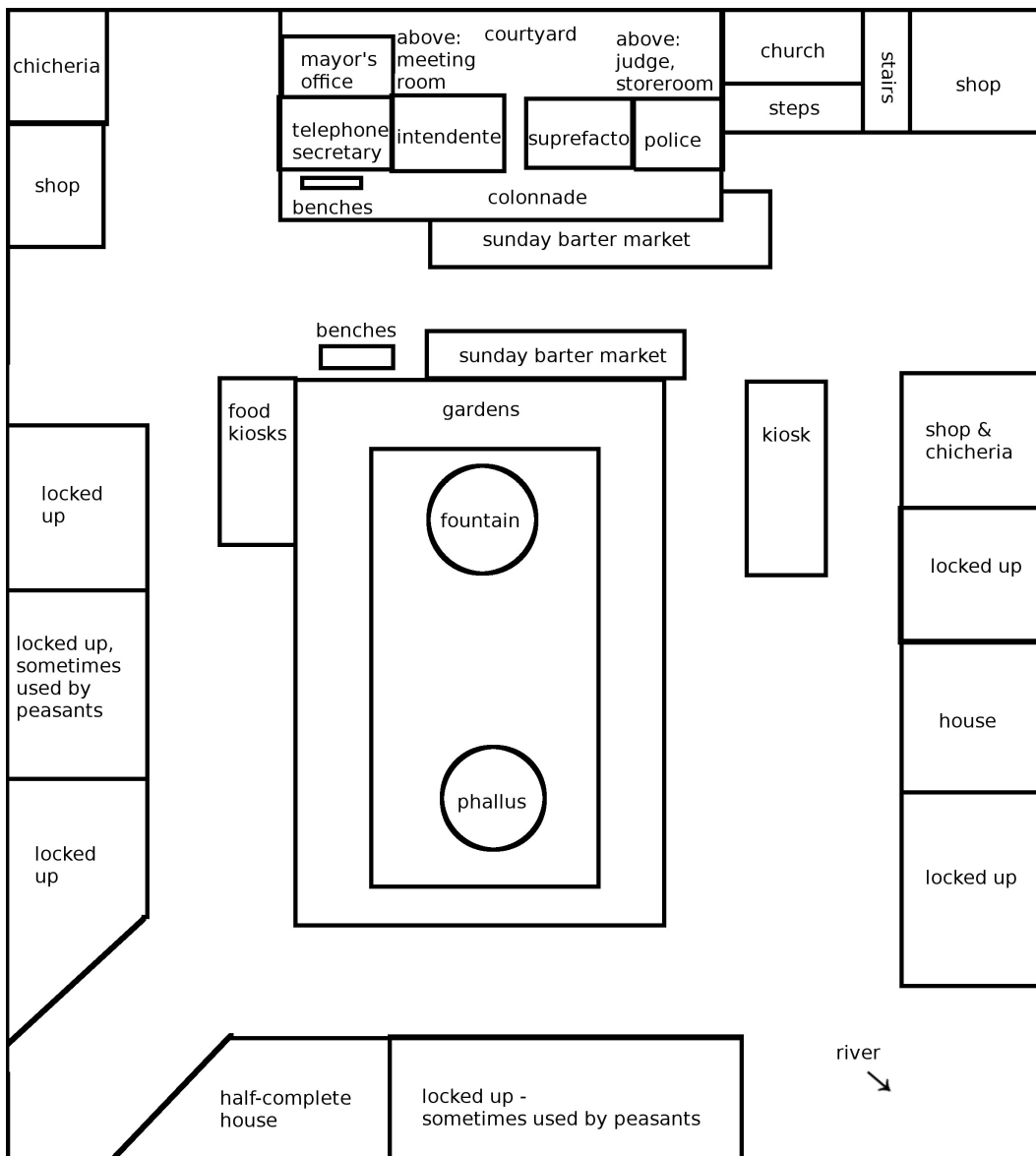


Figure 4. Plan of the plaza in Tapacarí

The plaza sat in the centre of the town insofar as that was possible, given that the town took the form of an inverted, sloping triangle. Plazas in Latin America have been written about as a focus of urban sociality and recreation (Low 2000) and of popular protest as with the example of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, but perhaps most relevantly for Tapacarí, as a physical imposition of Spanish spatial order on the dispersed settlements of the Andean highlands. Plazas were a central element of the *reducción* towns of the early colonial period. When, in the 1550s, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo set out to draw together indian colonial subjects into more easily administrable and taxable central settlements, obliging them to cease working far-flung lands and thus disrupting the management of

multiple ecological niches, the layout of these towns was predetermined so as to enable maximum imposition by the state. Rather than the scattered settlement patterns seen in rural villages (which in some areas in Tapacará follow a zoomorphic logic [Delgado 2003], and in other areas are described as having an anthropomorphic layout), *reducción* towns were planned on a grid system, based around a central plaza. With this, it was hoped that indians would settle in the town and make trips out to their lands nearby to work, with one possible effect being the decoupling of the intimate association between household reproduction, community organisation and agricultural production. At the heart of the town were the institutions of the colonial state: the church, the mayoralty and the prison. In the shadow of these buildings, social life in the plaza could take place, according to received social guidelines about appropriate behaviour based on colonial Spanish mores. For example, a short time after the foundation of the Villa Real de Oropesa, which became the city of Cochabamba, *chicherías* were prohibited within three blocks of the central plaza (Larson 1998).

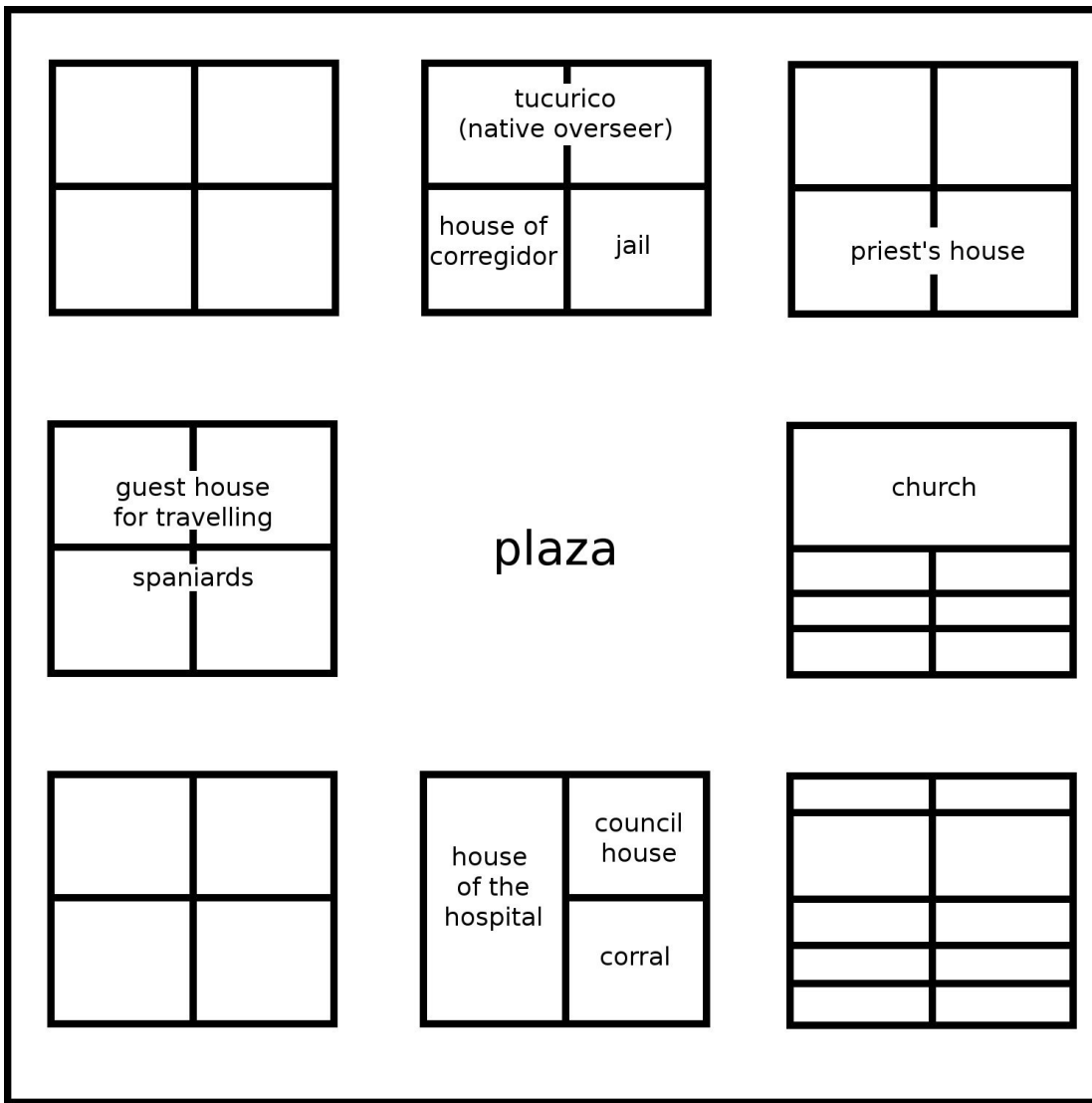


Figure 5. Plot of colonial plaza layout, copied from one elaborated by Thomas Abercrombie (1998)

Perhaps owing to its role as matrix of social-state interaction, the plaza was a focal point of historical discussions. In *residente* meetings in the city, maintenance of the plaza was a frequent topic, on a par with the state of the road. The state of the plaza was decried, and there were suggestions of accumulating funds to contract workers to refurbish it. This was surprising, given that the condition of the roads and streets in the town was so much worse, but made sense when considering that the plaza was the space for expression and exercise of class domination and reproduction of bourgeois sociality, and the *residentes* had, historically, had the upper hand in these dynamics. In their recollections of the town, too, the plaza played a prominent role. One informant, a young man who had grown up in the town, said,

Did you know that twenty years ago it was forbidden for the peasants to sit in the plaza?

They could pass through there, but if they sat down or unloaded their animals, then someone would come out and shout at them. They would fine them, too. That is why I always say that the people in this town are really bad: I have always tried to look out for the country people.

This echoed a repeated remark of Evo Morales at the time when he assumed power, reminding the public that 50 years ago, 'an indian could not enter Plaza Murillo', the plaza where the presidential palace is located, except in Tapacarí this exclusion was a much more recent memory. I asked about this in each subsequent interview with town officials, whose responses were remarkably uniform in their vague and uncomfortable denials. 'Well, it wasn't exactly like that,' they would answer, 'you know, they didn't always just kick them out. Maybe if they were drunk, it was a problem.' Others said, 'Oh, but that was a long time ago. It wasn't so tough as that, though. They just couldn't have their animals in the plaza.' Peasant accounts were less equivocal. 'That's how it was,' they answered, and listed the names of the townspeople who were worst for coming out and abusing them and telling them to move on.

In the present day, there was still a greater degree of regulation and hygiene for the plaza than the rest of the town. There was, for example, a specific employee whose job it was to sweep and clean up the plaza and the *alcaldía* offices. The current *intendente* (himself from a peasant community and a politically conscious MAS member) stated that there was a need for 'control' in the plaza, and that part of his job was ensuring that pigs and other livestock were not allowed to be let loose unconstrained in the plaza, and the sale of *chicha* on the plaza itself was forbidden. Although likely to have been intended to keep the plaza as a non-agricultural, 'urban' zone, the prohibition on pigs in the plaza also helped to safeguard the *wiñapu* which townspeople spread out to dry in the sun on the

ground outside their houses.

As previously noted, the word most often used to describe Tapacarí was '*silencio*'. The plaza and streets, people said, were empty and quiet, 'it seems like an abandoned town'. This was, of course, partly true. However, the lack of activity on the plaza and streets sometimes merely reflected that productive and social activity happened elsewhere. Most of the time, it happened in private homes, which served not just as dwelling-houses for people to sleep in, but also the sites of mercantile production, social interaction and the reduction of class and ethnic boundaries down to the movement of bodies through space. If the plaza was already the townspeople's space *par excellence*, the house was a more contested ground, the use of which fluctuated over the course of the year, where distinction between townspeople and peasant was not enshrined in legal codes or historical practice, but which was worked out in the messy details of interaction between people living side by side.

As the first part of this chapter shows, most productive activity in Tapacarí took place within domestic settings or in the fields. That is, trading, milling, baking, brewing, cultivation, animal husbandry, cooking and cash labour all took place in spaces in which domestic social reproduction (and differentiation) and mercantile production were commingled. Social activity among women – talking, eating and spending time with kin, fictive kin and friends – took place at the same time as working, whether that was domestic labour (washing clothes, preparing family meals), herding animals, weeding crops, or activities directed towards making money such as baking. Of these, cooking was the main activity during which women kept each other company, in houses and on the plaza, since anyone could pick up a knife and peel potatoes while they talked. Sociability between men, however, happened in other locations beside the home, specifically *chicherías* and the plaza. Men often came down to sit in the plaza for a few hours in the company of other men, forming a kind of background chorus and commentary to the goings-on of the day. The police, the telephone

secretary, the subprefect and the *intendente*, all male, whose offices all opened out onto the plaza (see fig. 3) were regulars, of course, and were joined by an even mix of town and peasant men passing through. This, coupled with the large phallic monument in the gardens, rendered the plaza as a kind of everyday masculine public space. The masculinity expressed there could be tender as well as aggressive. Often, the *intendente*, the *alcaldía* employees and other fathers of young families brought their children down to the plaza with them, or fussed over other people's children there. The company to be found in the plaza was valued by people who worked in the town, as a relief from the boredom and loneliness of being distant from their families and social networks. On one quiet afternoon, I was sitting with one of the younger police officers on one side of the plaza, when his sergeant, who was sitting by himself in the shade opposite, called to him. 'Come over here, lad, keep me company.'

'It's too cold over there.'

'I'll warm you up,' replied the sergeant.

The young police officer shook his head, but sighed and said quietly, 'I don't know what I'd do without him here. It would be so lonely.'¹¹

The plaza, which was usually empty, was transformed periodically by the Sunday barter market and by fiestas into a space full of movement and colour. In Tapacarí and the communities around it, women enjoy relative freedom of movement, and often go down to their fields to weed or water crops by themselves, or out into the riverbed to gather firewood. When it came to commercial activity, it was quite normal for women and men to sit around the plaza with goods for sale, usually bread. In addition to the female cooks at the food kiosks, there were also often women and girls

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'Ven, pues, aquí, chango, acompañaame.' 'No, me hace frío.' 'Yo te voy a calentar.' 'No se que haría sin él. Bien solitario sería.'

selling soft drinks at the side of the plaza. However, the plaza was not considered an appropriate place for girls or young women to spend non-working time by themselves, or in groups of fewer than three. Whether this was because they were generally needed at home to help with work, or because of the danger of them being courted by daring young men, or both, was not clear. Lucia and Margarita Marca, for example, often angled for excuses to go down to the plaza, such as carrying messages, and sometimes lingered for a few minutes on a bench there, but soon became nervous and left. 'It's not good to come down and sit in the plaza,' Margarita whispered one day, 'so we have to go back to the house and not stay.' 'The men are too forward,' added Lucia on another occasion.

However, this discomfort only extended to idle or solitary time: it was common for either of the girls, along with their siblings or relatives, to sell bread down by the plaza, sitting for many hours with the basket in front of them, very bored. At busier times, such as market days, groups of women selling bread and drinks sat together passing commentaries on the day and exchanging gossip.

Social discouragement against single women spending time on the plaza extended beyond teenage *cholita* girls, too. Acknowledgement of the taboo, if not respect of it, extended to the young female schoolteachers, who, when they spent free hours sitting around the plaza, referred to themselves as '*khalincheando*', behaving like *khalinches*, shameless women who acted like men.¹² The tone in which they made this remark suggested that they did not much care about social disapproval for women who idled in the plaza instead of working at home, but acknowledged it all the same. When women from peasant communities came to the town on market day, they did sit around the plaza, but not usually by themselves.

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The definition of '*khalinche*' as 'woman who acts like a man' was originally given by a woman in the city of Cochabamba who played in a 'traditional' cane flute group, to the protestations of men who told her and the other women that they should not play wind instruments. See Arnold and de Dios Yapita (2005) for a description of the gender divide accompanying music-playing, singing and dancing in the context of rural agriculture.

The streets were indeed usually empty, apart from on Sundays or other times when the electric mills ran, when donkeys or mules who had been loaded down with grain could often be seen outside the houses of millers, resting, with the *quintal* saddle-cloth still in place. On Sundays, however, the town came to life, as peasants came into town to buy, sell and barter.

According to several informants, the construction of the *casa comunal* in the 1990s has resulted in the displacement of Tapacarí's barter market. Previously, it had been 'up above' on the site where the lodging house now stood. In line with the prohibition on peasants entering or sitting in the plaza, the women who came to trade would assemble at a point midway between the church and the streets at the top of the town. However, when this space was taken up with the new building, trade shifted down to the plaza. This definitively turned the plaza from the carefully-maintained centre of genteel town-oriented social life, framed by the state, and implicitly declared it peasant territory. The town shopkeepers, rather than standing apart from peasant traders by the location of their shops, were placed in competition with them, selling packaged food and fancy goods alongside the fresh vegetables which could now be brought up from the city by traders who had greater flexibility. Peasant-to-peasant interaction became the centre of the town's trade.

Sunday market counterbalanced the emptiness of the week, especially in dry season. In the early morning people began to arrive, along with pack animals carrying sacks of potatoes or wheat to either sell, grind into flour or barter with. The town millers negotiated a share of the wheat, which they ground into flour for themselves to be baked into bread rolls which they then sold back to the peasants and to each other. Historically, the Tapacarí river valley had been home to dozens of watermills: in the town, the whirr of diesel mills was part of the aural landscape on Sundays and in the leadup to major fiestas.

Not only wheat and potatoes were brought for sale: according to the season, *campesino* traders – almost always women – brought baskets of vegetables and fruit which they sold or exchanged in small amounts. One or two itinerant traders from outside the town came regularly to sell tomatoes and fruit brought up from the city. These traders were also women *de pollera* who preferred to speak Quechua rather than Spanish, and made their trades and sales primarily with other *campesina* women. One woman came to Tapacarí for two days of almost every week with a cargo of bananas (and, when in season, small watermelons and pineapples), which she exchanged for other goods before returning to her home in the city. She stayed overnight in a house which she claimed was hers, and which was also used by others at different times.

By mid-morning on Sundays, from one end to the other the top of the plaza was full of movement and noise. Women in red and green *polleras* squatted on tarpaulin sacks next to the few conical heaps of vegetables they had brought to sell, and negotiated with buyers. Townswomen also sat on small stools next to wide wicker baskets of bread, covered with *awayus* to keep them warm. The kiosks which sold food were busy – on an average weekday they sold between two and ten meals, on Sundays up to thirty. The shopkeepers whose premises opened onto the plaza carried out all their goods and arranged them in eye-catching piles on tarpaulins and shelves or barrows. At one side, they kept two *quintal* sacks, to collect the products people brought to trade; one for potatoes, one for wheat. By the end of the day both would be half full with potatoes and wheat exchanged for pasta, oil, sugar, tomatoes or any number of other small commodities. The peasants who had come to sell their agricultural products or trade them for other necessities also socialised with all the other people who came for market day. In between picking over tomatoes and chilli peppers, selecting carrots and pouring oil, they chatted and sat down to rest in groups on the benches around the plaza or just on top of their *polleras* on the ground – something a town woman would never do.

The women traders of the town sat on stools in their doorways showing off the goods brought out

from their shop interiors to be displayed for the day. Placing themselves in the centre, raised up from their stalls, the women of the town surveyed the plaza and invited friends to join them as they sat regally, ready to be approached for trade.

By contrast, the female traders from outside the town lined up along the plaza sides and one adjoining street, *polleras* spread out on their tarpaulins flat on the ground, hats shading their faces. Like the townswomen, they dealt in a mixture of barter and cash commerce: unlike the townswomen, some refused to deal in money at all. Some would bring goods to town specifically to exchange for other goods, cutting out cash altogether. On various, separate occasions, I tried to buy different products and crops such as *chuño* from people only to be rejected because they were looking specifically for figs or other fruit, or because what they had brought was destined exclusively for people with whom they already had links – *comadres*, friends, preferred clients. Sometimes, scarce and prized commodities such as cheese would be brought to the market, in which case the seller had to be identified and carefully, politely approached to see if they would part with any. Barter was negotiated quietly in Quechua, although all used the Spanish word '*cambio*' ('change') for the practice.

After a successful day's trading, the *campesinos* who had come into town would hitch their bundles up onto their backs and start back off to their communities, go to settle in their townhouse, usually borrowed from a *madrina* or former *patrón* as previously mentioned, or if the day had been successful, visit one of the many *chicherías* who brewed up for Sundays and advertised the *chicha* for sale with a red flag outside the door. Townspeople did not just make a living from the sale of dry goods, bread and vegetables to *campesinos*: they also fermented corn, *wiñapu*, and turned it into *chicha* or sent it to the city to be sold to *chicherías* there. In side streets around town, radios played tinny music while libation after libation soaked into dirt floors, *campesinos* drinking in groups and the proprietor of the *chichería*, almost always an elderly townswoman, sitting primly in the corner

knitting by the large, sharp-smelling barrels ready to serve the next bucket.

Fluidity and merging boundaries: *chicherías* and children

So far I have shown that boundaries within houses in Tapacarí are controlled by townspeople when they are present, and subverted by peasants when they are absent. I have also briefly discussed the ways in which behaviour was policed in the plaza, and how the displacement of the market into what had previously been a space closed to peasants had broken down some of the barriers between the 'decent' space of the town and space in which peasant-to-peasant transactions and sociality could take place. I now move on to speculate about some other ways in which the overlapping spheres of peasant and town sociality blurred into each other, with commonality overcoming distinction. Firstly, in a direct spatial link between the street and the house, is the social and commercial environment of the *chichería*. This, the most common kind of business in Tapacarí, is typically based in the room in the house that opens onto the street, and is the household space which is most open to the public. Secondly, moving away from spatiality and into economic production, peasants and townspeople also collaborate in making food for sale to visitors and professionals staying in the town. A more in-depth discussion of this in festival contexts follows in the next chapter, but here I briefly mention how cooking can be a collaborative act between women of different backgrounds. Thirdly, I consider how children elude the spatial and social divisions in the town.

Chicherías in Tapacarí and in other rural towns in Cochabamba are one of the oldest forms of business in the area, and also the most ubiquitous. *Chicha* is brewed in large earthenware vessels which sit over a low flame: as a fresh product, there is a limited time before it goes sour, and so once brewed it must be sold quickly. Therefore, brewing or wholesale purchase is carefully timed to coincide with market days or other large events, and small *chicherías* do not have *chicha* for sale all the time. Most *chicherías* in the town of Tapacarí operated out of the front rooms of elderly, single women who sold *chicha* on market days as one source of income among many. By placing a

red flag on a stick outside the door, they signalled that *chicha* was available for sale: in the absence of a flag, the *chichería* was once again just a house. Unlike the larger *chicherías* and *pensiones*, the women who ran the small *chicherías* did not sell anything else or use their front room as a shop. However, the three small *chicherías* on my street also doubled crudely as lodging houses where the *compadres* of the proprietors and their friends could stay. The immediate commercial relationship whereby the *chichería* was open to those who wished to come and drink there, and the closer relationship in which favours, labour and goods were exchanged through the medium of godparenthood were closely related. The commercial calculations behind how much *chicha* to brew and also the more intricate figures of fictive kinship were combined and in some senses obfuscated by the image of a simple, welcoming rural *chichería* with its familiar sharp-sweet smell and dirt-floored interior.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui critiques the patriarchal association of rural Bolivian women with nurturing and motherhood, warning that the close association of indigenous and *chola* women (like the *chicheras* of Tapacarí) with '*cultura propia*' and rural identity alienates them from spaces of political and economic power. 'The maternal and homely world of the countryside becomes a kind of collective private world, linked only with the political society through the labour of representation, civilisation and mediation done by men' (1996: 24). The balance of commerce and other forms of transaction mediated through fictive and consanguineal kinship, as well as other affective links, was particularly susceptible to being perceived as a kind of general maternal benevolence, when in fact it was underpinned by precise distinctions between the *chichera* and her customers. Rivera Cusicanqui places the *chichería* and *chicha* itself at the centre of the problematic image of feminine nurturing qualities, which itself conceals the marginalisation and precarious economic and social existence of rural women and urban women from racialised *chola* or *birlocha* backgrounds:

Epitome of the maternal womb, the image of the swollen and warm earthenware jar of chicha slowly fermenting its golden elixir and providing for the fraternisation and affection of the communal or suburban fiesta is, without a doubt, a charming veil which covers the harsh realities implied by the long term and variegated presence of indigenous and chola women in domestic production, the urban market and itinerant commerce (1996:15)

Epitome del vientre materno, la imagen del tibio e hinchado cantaro de chicha fermentandose lentamente su dorado elixir y prodigandose en la confraternización y los afectos de la fiesta comunal o suburbana, resulta sin duda un encantador velo que encubre las duras realidades que implico esta large y multiforme presencia de mujeres indígenas y cholos en la producción doméstica, el mercado urbano y el comercio itinerante (2006:15)

Aside from forming an important part of the experience of visiting a rural town for those who came from the city for short spells, the *chicherías* of Tapacarí were also spaces in which men from different backgrounds were likely to spend social time together, sometimes in the evening following a day's *mink'a* work together in the fields in which workers were compensated with *chicha*, and sometimes on Sundays after the market or on other feast days when drinking was encouraged. I discuss drinking and drunkenness further in the next chapter.

Links between women, on the other hand, were often made while preparing food for sale to people who passed through the town, whether in small groups or in the large residential groups who stayed several days for workshops. These friendships or working relationships could be contradictory. On an average day, for example, I went to the *chichería* of Doña Angela to ask about her family. Doña Angela was from the 'old guard' of townspeople and, along with her husband, was the owner of two large buildings in different streets adjoining the plaza. In one there was a dirt-floored front room, which served as a *chichería*, and a large, tiled patio, where she kept a *pensión* (restaurant). This was

also used as a place to sell drink during large fiestas. On this particular day, Doña Angela was preparing dinner for a crew of builders who had contracted her to cater for them, in an area concealed from the patio. Helping her in this were her daughter, who was a schoolteacher, and two peasant women from communities close to the town. I joined in. After a couple of hours, we all had a bowl of soup, which had been prepared alongside the builders' meal. This much was unremarkable. The contradictory and confusing part came in two subsequent conversations. In one, Doña Catalina, who was one of the peasant women helping cook that day (and also matriarch of the Gandarillas family) commented that Doña Angela was a terrible person. In the second, I was asking Doña Angela about bread and *chicha* production in the past. She commented that when she was a young woman, there were several large bread ovens at Doña Aleja's house, and about a dozen people worked there, 'all from the families' (again, 'the families' being implicitly opposed to the peasant population).

'Were all the people who worked making bread from the town?'

'All of them.' (She listed the people who worked making bread and their family connections.)

'So there weren't any peasants who worked making bread, then?'

'No, it was all town people. You can't have peasants making bread or cooking.'

'And who helps cook now, in your *pensión*?'

'I do it myself. I don't have peasants do the cooking. I don't even have them peel potatoes. They're dirty, right? Their hands make the potatoes dirty.'

When, baffled, I asked Lucia, Doña Catalina's daughter, why Doña Catalina had gone to help such an unpleasant woman cook, when she had made it clear that she hated her, she laughed. 'Oh, my mum was telling me about that. She came into the town to wait for the lorry, and it was late so she was bored. That other (peasant) woman was going along to help so my mum went with her.'

Boredom and loneliness were more effective forces at bringing people together in Tapacarí than any amount of anti-racist consciousness raising. For women whose children had gone to the city and never visited, the company of younger women with children in tow was pleasant. Without motor vehicles to worry about, children had the run of the town, and ethnic and class divisions did not stop *vecinas* from several generations of *mestizo* town-dwellers fussing over the babies of their peasant neighbours or taking a half-clothed runaway toddler back to his peasant mother's house before he caught cold. The children of people living in the town played freely with the peasant children who attended the boarding school. In the informal day-to-day work of raising children and mentoring youths as they grew into adulthood, as well as the formal exercise of godparenthood, peasant and townspeople collaborated and developed affectionate, long-standing relationships. This period of egalitarianism often came to an end when children were sent down to the city for school when they reached twelve or thirteen years of age. According to accounts from teenagers from the town, interviewed on visits home or in their homes in Quillacollo, there was an even split between those who were sent down by their parents to improve their education and those who decided to go by themselves regardless of the support of their parents, working from eleven or twelve years of age at (other) family businesses and staying with grandparents or cousins. The female teenagers remaining in the town, who were few, and their friends from peasant communities nearby, all expressed impatience to move to the city and either continue their education or go into domestic service as older siblings had done. For young men, the detachment from the town came in the form of military service, after which few of them returned there to live.

Many young people identified the year they moved to town, regardless of the age they did it, as a moment when their self-expression shifted from a rural style to a more consciously 'civilised' manner of dress and expression. 'The first time I wore closed shoes was back then,' one boy remarked. 'Before then, I had just worn *abarcas* [tyre-rubber sandals]'. Girls also stopped wearing *polleras*, if they had worn them before, and switched to blue jeans and other clothes more common to urban teenagers. In the city, even in the periurban districts in which they usually lived, they found themselves speaking Spanish rather than the Quechua they spoke with their parents.

Youths and children from Tapacarí are obliged to make significant changes to their lifestyle and environment at a young age if they have any aim of social advancement or high school education. In previous generations, this took the form not just of pursuing education but sometimes being sent away to work in mining centres. (One elderly woman, whenever she got drunk, which was often, would break down into tears and relate how she had been sent away to work in the mining camp as a young girl and married off while still a teenager to an older man whom she loathed. Contemporary stories, at least, were seldom this bleak.) Given the sharp departure from a town in which they were known to all and enjoyed freedom of movement and play, surrounded by beautiful landscapes, to an urban environment in which fear of crime and traffic accidents was a daily concern, it is hardly surprising that the town attained a golden aura of nostalgia in the memories of those who no longer lived there but claimed links of belonging to it. The kind of happy innocence recalled by many *residentes* was best expressed by one elderly and distinguished engineer. After completing a lengthy interview in which he reflected on the twentieth-century history of Bolivia and Tapacarí's place in it, from his position as a very successful mining engineer, I turned the tape recorder off and a much more enthusiastic and heartfelt conversation started about his childhood experiences of being sent by his father out to the estate, to play. His father had been one of the more important and feared *patrones* and a judge, whose jurisdiction included Ayopaya at the time that the peasant rebellion of the 1940s was brutally repressed there (Dandler and Torrico 1987).

Evidently, though, he was actively involved in the communities over which he presided. 'Have you been to Chilligua?' asked my interviewee. 'The women there used to do their hair in a particular way, not in two braids, but in lots of small ones. It was so pretty. My father would send me up there to play, when I was a *ch'iti* [Quechua: little boy], and sometimes I would steal coca from his stores to give to the community leaders.' He smiled at the memory. 'I don't know why they sent me out there, to play with the ... with the indians, as we called them then. Strange, right? But it's a great place. Go, if you can.'

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how townspeople, *residentes* and peasants coexist in close proximity, occupying the same houses and the same plaza under a set of rules which are constantly renegotiated and subverted. As the townspeople have abandoned the productive potential of the town, seeking to earn their living elsewhere, peasant people have been able to take over the economic niches such as brewing *chicha* or baking bread, as well as trading vegetables and other agricultural products in barter or for cash. Steadily, they have been able to supplant much town economic activity, without altogether eroding the power base still held by old town families. Individuals and families trace out the permissible borderlines of their relations to each other through co-habitation and use of the same residential and commercial spaces. Even though these borderlines are well established in some cases, in others it is possible for the distinction between peasants, townspeople and *residentes* to become blurred. In the following chapter, I shift away from small daily interactions and focus on large, spectacular events in which these boundaries are once again contested and in some cases reinforced, in some cases broken down altogether.

Chapter 5: Fiestas

This chapter commits the traditional anthropological sin of omitting weeks and months of the tedium of everyday life in Tapacarí and focusing only on the occasions and events that stood out. It must be emphasised that everyday life in the town of Tapacarí was extremely dull, possibly even to the extent experienced and discussed by Peter Gow (2000) in his fieldwork with the Piro, who accord such importance to tranquillity as an indication of safety from capricious and dangerous forces of nature that they spend much of their time sitting quietly in hammocks not daring to disturb the universe. In Tapacarí, as discussed in previous chapters, so few people remained in the town that finding someone to talk to was a challenge. There were a great many empty days, when people quietly went down to their fields to work on their crops, set out *wiñapu* to dry, made *chicha* or bread, peeled potatoes, sat around in the plaza gossiping, wove blankets, went round to the house of whoever had a television to watch *novelas* and generally got on with the business of not very much. These long, quiet weeks were punctuated by the bi-weekly arrival of the lorries from the city, bringing visitors and returning family members and groceries, and the quiet months were likewise punctuated by a series of smaller parties, held by families and their godparent-sponsors, for weddings, ritual cutting of the hair of young children and to welcome home young men returning from military service. These followed a calendrical cycle: terms of military service ended in February or August and the parties happened then, accordingly, and a large number of weddings was held on Cochabamba's departmental anniversary, 14 September, but other weddings happened at other times around the year as well. If there was a rhythm or a 'right' time to carry out haircutting parties, I did not register it, and these happened seldom enough that I did not go to any. I was, however, present at several parties held to welcome back young men from military service, and contributed to two of them as a sponsor, or 'godmother'.

Aside from the steady cycle of small parties, the celebrations which *tapacareños* spoke most about

and looked forward to most were the large patronal fiestas and civic celebrations of Independence Day and the town's anniversary. The two patronal fiestas in Tapacarí took place in August and September, and in addition to these, there were four other quasi-religious celebrations at All Saints', Easter, Carnival and the 'Virgin's birthday', and two civic celebrations based on historical dates: national Independence Day on 6 August and the town's foundation day on 23 January. The anniversary of the foundation of the department of Cochabamba was also observed with three days of mass weddings. I divide these celebrations into three categories according to who the main attendees were, although all three categories of celebration attracted peasant participants and a variable number of local government employees was also present at all of them.

The fiesta calendar

Firstly, and most significantly, there were the two patronal fiestas which were led and attended by *residentes*, that is, townspeople no longer living in Tapacarí. The *Virgen de Dolores* fiesta in September was the largest of the year, but San Agustín in August was also large, and attracted people from beyond the town and province. The 'Virgin's birthday' and Easter celebrations were also nominally the concern of *residentes* or townspeople, but these took place during the rainy season when transport was difficult, and so were sparsely attended by *residentes*. During my fieldwork, the fiesta for the 'Virgin's birthday' was sponsored for the first time by a peasant couple.

The second category is that of celebrations organised or held by the local government. These fell into two subcategories. There were two mandatory calendrical celebrations, one on 23 January for the anniversary of the province and the other on national Independence Day on 6 August. On these dates, or on the eve of them, the entire personnel of the municipal government office came to stay in the town of Tapacarí for at least one night of partying and one day of speeches and political spectacle. The second kind of government celebration was the agricultural fair, a popular entertainment across Cochabamba. On these occasions, the local government office would, in

conjunction with other NGOs or organisations, invite local producers, cooks or artisans to participate in an exposition of their produce or works. Among the typical and well attended fairs around Cochabamba, for example, were the apple fair in Vinto, a trout fair in Angostura and the *guarapo* (grappa) fair in Sipe Sipe. Tapacarí's fairs included a llama fair in the Aymara-speaking part of the province, three textile fairs in Aramasi, Leque and the town of Tapacarí, and two culinary fairs in Ramadas and the town of Tapacarí, which featured local dishes and agricultural products. The municipal government office paid for other kinds of entertainment at these fairs, such as music, and awarded prizes for best entries. Some of them were overlaid over previous traditional celebrations such as bullfights (as was the case with the Ramadas culinary fair) and some were held on the most convenient date that year. The attendees at these fairs included the municipal government staff (who were ordered to attend), the participants and, if the fair was successful, visitors from the city. I attended three of these fairs – one in Ramadas, one in the town of Tapacarí and one in Challa.

The third category of fiesta followed the ritual calendar which had co-evolved between the Catholic church and the agrarian communities of Tapacarí, but these celebrations were sparsely attended by *residentes*, and townspeople did not participate in them either. Reportedly, in previous years the townspeople had also had their own versions of these celebrations which were held the day before or concurrently with the peasant ones, but as the town's population waned, the peasant celebration became the main one. Carnival was the most significant of these: in past years, the Saturday of Carnival had featured a large parade of townspeople in fancy dress, followed by three days of *tinku* mock-fighting. In Tapacarí at the time of fieldwork, the parade was very small, but the *tinku* still attracted large numbers of peasants to the town in the days that followed it. Due to its timing during the rainy season, Carnival celebrations featured no *residentes* whatsoever, and the *tinku* fighting was the preserve of peasants alone, with townspeople watching. There were also celebrations inside and outside the town for *Todos Santos*, Christmas and Easter, and a '*toro tinku*' bullfight in June.

There was a sharp contrast between the fiesta celebrations which took place during the dry months of the year and those which occurred during the rainy, cultivation season. This difference was primarily expressed through the presence or absence of the different kinds of visitors who came for each one. In the dry months large groups of visitors could come up the riverbed road from the city, in buses, minibuses and private cars. For the fiesta of San Agustín and the *Virgen de Dolores*, entire lines of buses from the city were diverted to bring passengers up to the town for the day, and the town filled with travelling merchants and city visitors, as well as peasants who had also come for the revelries. In rainy season, very few city visitors braved the roads and the danger of getting stranded in the town, and as a result the large celebrations of Carnival and Easter were only observed by peasants and townspeople.

In this chapter I give detailed descriptions of three types of celebrations. Through these extended ethnographic illustrations I show how the plaza is put to a variety of uses, and how the town comes into its own as a space for memories for visiting *residentes* and as a centre of symbolic social reproduction for peasants. The town and particularly the plaza play an important role in the ritual encounter between communities from upper and lower moieties in the surrounding countryside, taking the role of axis or meeting point for complementary halves. The state is also ritually brought to the town through Independence Day celebrations, which involve similar but different practices of inscribing legitimacy through the movement of bodies around the plaza, first in a controlled parade which recalls the Bolivian state's processes of citizen-making through school and military discipline, and later in popular indigenous ritual and drunkenness. I describe the festivities of the patronal fiestas, to highlight the presence of *residentes* and how they interacted with townspeople and peasants, discussing the formation and use of nostalgic memory. I then go on to describe the civic celebrations of Independence Day, 6 August, and the way the history and authority of the state, as well as symbolic belonging and brotherhood through inebriation, were inscribed on the town

through the bodily actions of civil servants and schoolchildren.

In the following section I briefly look at commensality, labour networks and kinship as mediated through small celebrations for life-cycle rites such as returns from military service or weddings, and give the example of a small but prestigious religious celebration which was sponsored for the first time by a peasant couple. Finally, I turn to look at Carnival and the ways in which peasants from opposite communities meet in town to drink, dance and play out a mock-fighting *tinku* which demonstrates the persistence of a tripartite division of ritual and social space in Tapacarí.

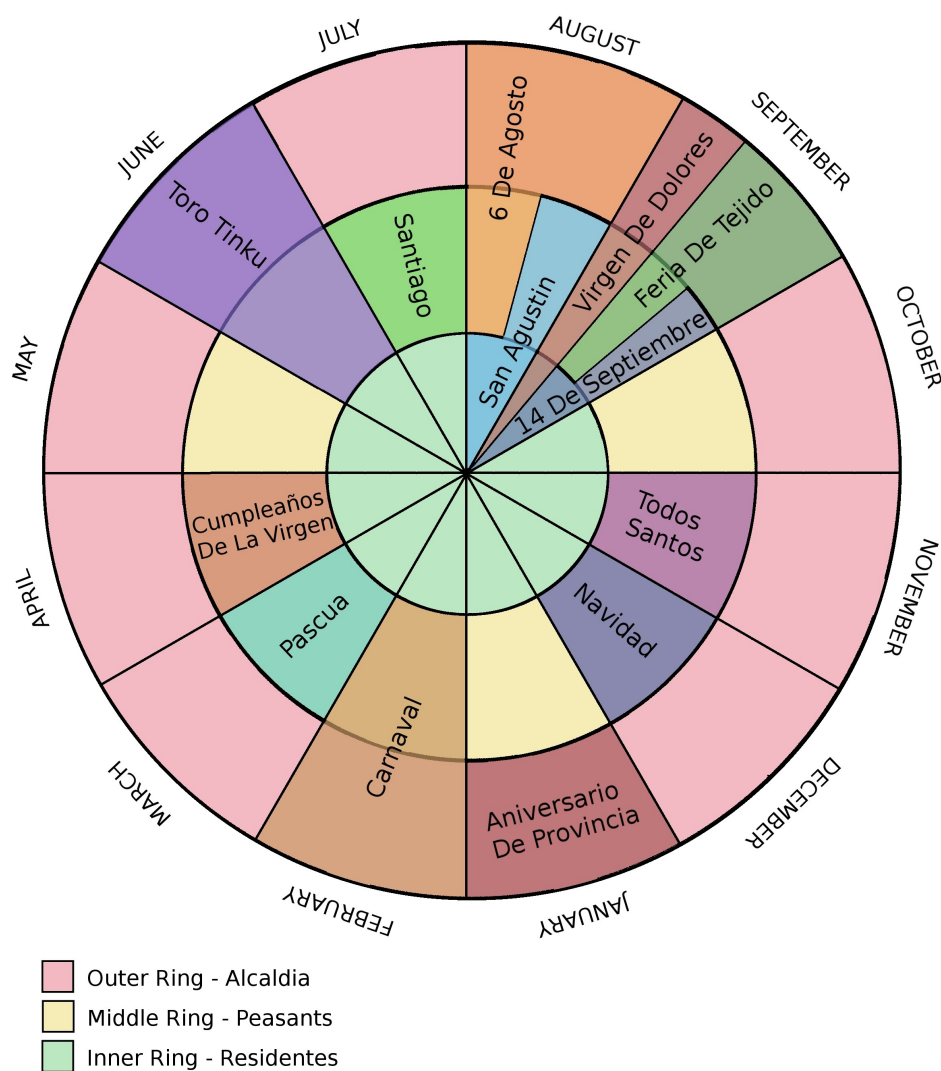


Figure 6. The fiesta calendar

Unfortunately, for reasons of space, it is not possible to describe each celebration or large public

event in the ritual calendar of Tapacarí. The diagram above gives a complete list, ordering them by time of year and also by the participation of different kinds of *tapacareños*. Some occasions, such as All Saints' (*Todos Santos*) were only observed by peasants. Some, like the Independence Day celebrations in January, were mostly marked by the *alcaldía*. A few, such as the large patronal fiestas, involved all three groups.

All of the civic, religious and agricultural fiestas celebrated in Tapacarí had certain elements in common which were not shared by the more recently imposed agricultural fairs, namely, the eating of special food, heavy drinking, dancing, and controlled movement around the perimeter of the plaza. In *residente* celebrations, the movement around the plaza took the form of a stylised entrance by the sponsors of the fiesta and then a dance parade; for the civic celebrations, the portraits of Sucre and Bolívar which usually hung in the *alcaldía* building were taken down and carried around it by the authorities, followed by a parade in uniform, and during peasant fiestas the plaza was the site of measured ritual interaction between people from communities on either side of the riverbed, or between people from riverside communities and hilltop ones. This ritual interaction took the form of a tug-of-war, bullfighting (fights between bulls) and of *tinku* mock-fighting between people, which were described as 'games' or 'customs' by the participants and spectators. All of the various entrances, parades, solemn processions and games happened around the edges of the plaza, rather than in the middle of it, in an encircling movement which went through each of its corners in turn, and in the case of the peasant festivities, pausing in each to carry out a new iteration of the activity. In addition to the spatial activity around the plaza, musical groups (both brass bands and peasant groups playing cane flutes) circulated through the whole town, filling it with sound. The eating and drinking which accompanied celebrations was also carried out throughout, and dancing for recreation inside *chicherías* happened in all parts of the town. However, the plaza was the undeniable focus of activity, for bonfires, fireworks, distribution of drinks, dance performances and public dancing.

Each celebration represented a surge of visitors, albeit of different types, and therefore a spike in the income of townspeople. Each one in turn was condemned by the townspeople for being smaller and quieter than previous years. In the case of multi-day celebrations such as the fiestas of San Agustín and the *Virgen de Dolores*, and Carnival, each day of the festivities took on a different character, with different protagonists dominating. And despite the easy categorisation of these celebrations – by townspeople, *residentes*, *campesinos* and myself – as corresponding to or protagonised by distinct groups of Tapacarí, each of them was attended by a cross-section of people, with each sector of the population represented by at least a couple of individuals present in the town for one day or more.

Different experiences of fiestas and celebrations were overlapping, but not congruent: peasant participants came with different motivations, and pursued different actions, than did *residentes* or *alcaldía* employees, both of whom again sought different things in the town's celebrations. Their movements, actions and experiences were all overlaid across the same space within the town, and some of their motivations as they described them were similar, but each group also came to celebrations with different stated aims, or described past celebrations in different terms. The dancing of the *residentes* inscribed their authority through weight of tradition, onto the material fabric of the town: as they paraded in family groups with the prestigious addition of brass bands, they traced out a physical knowledge of the place and demonstrated their wealth. Likewise, the parades and processions of the municipal authorities and employees brought the state to the town, embodied in the physical person of hundreds of teachers, civil servants, peasant leaders and authorities. By encircling the plaza with tricoloured lanterns, and later in matching smart clothes, they recalled the visual and disciplinary order of the state – and connected the physical persons of the authorities with historical heroes by carrying oil paintings around the plaza. In addition to their ceremonial and visual presence, the civil servants and teachers also filled the town with their social

presence by drinking and dancing in these celebrations and others, and including some *tapacareños* in these revelries. This was reminiscent of Denise Arnold and Juan de Dios Yapita's Andean application of Derrida's ideas of textuality, in which she posits that dancing or other controlled movements can be seen as a kind of writing as practised by the body (Arnold and de Dios Yapita 2005), and also of Abercrombie's (1998) dissection of K'ulta 'pathways of memory' in which Aymara people record and remember historical boundaries by drinking and marking libations around the perimeter of a territory. In fact, Abercrombie's work on libations and drinking is also worth bearing in mind when considering the large-scale *q'owas* and ritual activities of the municipal government as it marks out points along the temporal run of its *gestión*, term in office.

The peasants of Tapacarí were present at each celebration, putting the town to the service of their ritual and physical reproduction. Not only did they, like the *residentes* and the *alcaldía* employees, drink, dance and romance each other at fiesta time, but they also enacted rituals and carried out movements and actions connected to observance of a syncretic religious-agricultural calendar. Musical groups were present even at small celebrations, with rings of men playing cane *sikuri* flutes or pan pipes according to the season, and women dancing and singing. These musical groups, each one usually from a distinct community, were a visual and auditory counterpoint to the brass bands and black electric speakers brought by the *residentes* or *alcaldía*. It is my conjecture – because I do not have verbal explanations or affirmations of this – that playing and singing in the town formed part of their own agrarian rituals, as did herding small flocks of sheep and goats around the plaza, as well as the more choreographed 'games' of violence and tug-of-war. It is not surprising, then, that the festivals most heavily attended by peasants were in August, at the time of new planting and new beginnings, and, according to some informants 'the most important time to have rituals'; and at Carnival, in the midst of the fertile, rainy harvest season. The place of peasant attendees at the other fiestas, and the ways in which *residentes* and townspeople spoke to them or about them, were startling reminders of their marginality and oppressed status, even though they were in the majority.

The peasant majority in the province was visible and present at all celebrations, although for the celebrations of the winter months they took second place to the *residentes*: the *residentes* in turn were generally absent for the events such as Carnival and Easter which took place during the rainy season, but one or two elderly *residentes* turned out to watch, despite the hazardous journey to the town. Elected local authorities and civil servants from the local government office were, of course, most prominent in the civic celebrations of Independence Day and the province's anniversary, followed by agricultural fairs, but were also exhorted to come to festivities related to the religious calendar, such as Carnival and the two fiestas. Some came of their own accord, to simply enjoy the fiesta, but others were coerced into attending: non-attendance of major celebrations such as Carnival was punished with a fine. If civil servants attended but did not participate (e.g. by dancing) they were fined a lesser amount. This demonstrates the commitment of the municipal government not just to 'show a face', but to enforce the expected or correct kind of attendance, as expressed through bodily movement.

As with everyday life in Tapacarí, the calendar of fiestas was marked by absences and exclusions. There were many stories of sons, daughters, ex-partners, cousins and friends who had promised to come for the fiesta or for Carnival but did not show up, causing their loved ones sadness and sometimes financial hardship. There were also many stories of deceased or distant relatives or loved ones who inspired their surviving children or kin members to visit the town at fiesta time, to remember them or to fulfil a promise to dance in the parade to honour them. The fiestas of the present time were marked always by the shadow of fiestas past, and by tales of celebrations that had been bigger, louder and more spectacular, with more money, more beer, more food and finer clothes. Visitors, likewise, commented that the Tapacarí fiestas did not compare to those in their home town, and the teachers or students of tourism or agronomy who came to the town to do university projects remarked on how 'authentic', but how small and listless, the town's celebrations

were.

However, in comparison with Tapacari's usual ghost-town ambience, the fiestas seemed like an eruption of colour and noise. The buzz of commerce and food preparation, the sudden opening of all the shuttered houses and shops, the boom of firecrackers and endless rounds of music made the town bloom with life. In other celebrations – *buenas llegadas*, weddings, baptisms – connected to individual and family life-cycles, *tapacareños* also celebrated with food, music and drinking, but only in domestic spaces. During the two fiestas, Carnival and Easter, the town as a whole rose up singing, and its different elements made their claims to legitimacy, power and belonging in the case of the *residentes* and *alcaldía*, and enacted courtship, conflict and social reproduction in the case of the peasants. As with the domestic, life-cycle events, the two sets of claims and social processes mingled with each other but never fully merged.

Robert da Matta (1984), writing about Brazilian Carnival, states that it derives part of its importance and central role in Brazilian culture from its ability to cross the boundary between two discrete realms, the house and the street. For da Matta, whose structuralist analysis owes much to Louis Dumont, the two realms contain quite different kinds of action. He sees the street as being the location of outward-facing activity, sociability and work, and the house as the place into which people retreat to attend to their bodily needs: sleeping, washing, eating and having sex. During Carnival, these two realms introject each other as people hurry out to celebrate in the streets, where they embrace a physical existence that goes beyond normal work or sociability. People camp out on the streets to claim a good place to watch the parade from, sleeping out in public; they eat, drink, urinate, dance and sometimes have sex outside the boundaries of the home. The work of the home is externalised, and the result is the creation of a generalised national social bond.

As the previous chapters have shown, there are a number of reasons why this model does not easily

translate to Tapacarí: for example, a great deal of productive work and sociability happens in houses or in the in-between space of the *chichería* which mediates between the street and the house physically and socially. In addition, social distinction between townspeople, *residentes* and peasants was maintained in houses and out. However, da Matta's ideas of the intermingling of different kinds of social space is germane, particularly with regard to noise. During any large fiesta in Tapacarí, the music of bands and sound systems was heard all over the town, inescapably. Even small celebrations such as weddings or parties to celebrate returns from military service were marked out with spectacular auditory accompaniments: firecrackers, sound systems brought from the city on trucks, and sometimes a DJ. In the open patios of private houses and inside buildings, as well as out on the streets and plaza, music and firecrackers and sometimes the shouts and singing of drunken revelry were always audible. In large fiestas and in Carnival the music and sound did not come from a single source, but from a range of overlapping voices, as bands from different villages circulated the town playing flutes and drums and singing. During the celebrations which were attended by *residente* families, brass bands were hired to play throughout the fiesta, and sound systems also played recorded music in the plaza and in individual houses. The multivocality of the public musical performances and the ubiquity of sound characterised festival times as much as the presence of more people than usual.

It was this, then, that the people in the town identified as missing when they described the town as '*silencio*'. This, as has repeatedly been stated, was the adjective of choice when townspeople and peasants talked about the empty and abandoned state of the town. Rather than 'forgotten', 'abandoned', 'empty', the word for a place which no longer had a social presence was a word which described an absence of sound. A silent town was not just one in which voices were not heard, but also one in which the border between house and street was not crossed by music. It is worth noting, too, that music is not passively absorbed, without effect. Music, when heard, provokes the body to dance, and dancing as a shared activity is one of the most Bolivian ways of performing membership

of a social group. Participation in formal dance fraternities is a common way of expressing belonging to neighbourhoods, to shared interest groups and to the nation itself. As Lazar (2008) discusses in her account of participating in dance fraternities in El Alto, the precise co-ordination of bodies moving in unison brings together individuals as part of one collective project or movement, in a way that enacts local and national belonging (2008: 140). In addition, for indigenous peasants, dancing and singing are important components of agrarian ritual (van den Berg 1990, Arnold and de Dios Yapita 2005). Dancing in the plaza and *chicherías* of Tapacarí during large fiestas was one of the only times and places in which townspeople and peasants, and even occasional *residentes*, shared a physical experience. Another shared physical experience was of eating the same standard festive foods, shared out by sponsors who arranged for animals to be slaughtered for the purpose, or bought from traders who took advantage of the temporary population increase to make and sell special food.

Alcohol

The other means by which people shared a common physical experience, of course, was drinking. Drinking and drunkenness was an important (if unofficial) part of patronal fiestas and civic celebrations: it was essential to Carnival. The relationship between drinking, memory and social reproduction in the Andes has been explored at length by Saignes (1993), Harvey (1991) and others. Drinking and drunkenness facilitated relationships along two main axes: relationships between humans and the natural world, and relationships among humans. In both of these cases, both the altered state of being drunk, and therefore not 'in the same mind' as usual, and the physical process of consuming fluids, particularly *chicha*, played a significant role.

As stated elsewhere, Andean indigenous cosmologies display a pervasive preoccupation with the movement of water. This can be seen in a number of ways, ranging from complex social arrangements around water rights and irrigation (Andolina, Laurie and Radcliffe 2009) to origin

myths which describe the emergence of Inka ancestors from a lake (Urton 1999). Rockefeller (2010) and others have termed this a 'hydraulic cosmos', in which human bodies as well as natural bodies of water play a role. Randall (1993) discusses how in Ollantaytambo, Peru, the human body forms part of a cycle of liquids passing through sky, clouds, rainfall, drinking water, urine and the earth. Brewing and consuming *chicha* adds extra dimensions of fertility and generative power to this cycle. *Chicha* is generally formed of a thin, coloured liquid (*raki*) and a cloudy sediment (*qonchi*). According to Randall's informants, the *qonchi* part of the *chicha* is associated with femininity and particularly with female fertility, like the wet soil of a field or the 'wet' uterus. The *raki* is thinner and carries associations of male fertilising power. In Tapacarí, the cloudy *qonchi* sediment from *chicha* brewing was consumed by pregnant women 'to give strength', adding some weight to Randall's ideas. Since *chicha* is composed of a mix of these two elements, it already carries some generative force, and libations were therefore regarded by Randall's informants in Ollantaytambo as a way to increase the fertility of the ground they were poured on. Likewise, urine from heavy drinking was seen as beneficial to the ground and also thought to encourage plentiful flows of water in rivers and streams. The metaphor of receptive silt and fertilising water maps on well to Tapacarí's riverine environment, in which the most fertile patches of ground were silty alluvial deposits which could be effectively irrigated. Platt (1986) notes in his discussion of the word *tinku* or interaction between two halves, that as well as describing ritual battles, *tinku* can refer to irrigation or sexual intercourse. For Tapacarí's indigenous peasant farmers, preoccupied with the fertility of their land and crops, *chicha* was an essential component of ritual occasions and other parties. As I go on to show here, during Carnival, the festival concerned with getting things to grow, *chicha* was drunk not only in town but up in the maize fields of neighbouring smallholdings. Libations were an important part of any ritual, and formed part of social drinking too.

It is an understatement to say that drinking played an important role in social relations of the kind discussed in this chapter, based around festivities and religious and civic celebrations. Drinking and

drunkenness were essential to each of the events described: the carefree *residentes* catching up with each other and escaping their normal responsibilities to pass a weekend in the old town; peasants and civil servants carrying out their own Carnival rituals; and civil servants ritually occupying the town for one night in order to celebrate Independence Day. Like the music which penetrates through the town and which encourages the body to dance in response, collective drunkenness is a shared bodily experience in which people lose control and inhibitions and therefore share intimacies that are not possible when sober – a quality described by Harris (2000) as a highly desirable state for the Laymi in northern Potosí. Likewise, in Tapacarí being noticeably drunk on appropriate occasions was positively approved of. 'Appropriate occasions' were any party, Friday evenings, funerals, and Sunday after barter market. Drinking a little *chicha* with someone was also a necessary precursor or accompaniment to any business transaction or request for a favour, or a tightening of social relations via godparenthood. Indeed, Saignes (1993) comments on the shift from ritual drinking which is prompted by agrarian rites, as described by Randall, to a social model of drinking in which cross-class relations are established and cemented by sharing drinks:

If the rituals of drinking (circulation of 'obligatory' drinks) and the innumerable festive excuses (*cacharpaya* or farewell, family meeting) for binge-drinking seem to prolong indigenous modes of drinking, the collective framework is no longer the community but rather the circle of '*compadres*', ritual kin acquired throughout the life-cycle, who play a fundamental role in the construction of social life (1995). (*Si los rituales del tomar (circulación de las copas 'obligadas') y los innumerables pretextos festivos (cacharpaya o despedida, reunion familiar) de 'bebendurria' parecen prolongar los modales aytoctonos del tomar, el marco colectivo ya no es la comunidad sino el circulo de 'compadres', parientes rituales instituidos en el marco del ciclo de vida y cuyo papel en la construcción de la vida social es fundamental.*)

Here, Saignes describes a shift from drinking as part of the ritual practices of the peasant community to drinking as part of the integrative social practices of communities composed of differently positioned people, whose relationships to each other take the form of godparenthood, friendship or simply being in the same place at the same time. The form of collective drinking – the rituals of toasting, libation-pouring and drinking from one cup – outlive the content, where the content is close involvement with agriculture and a concern with land and fertility. The use of *chicha* to build social links remains important.

In addition to *chicha's* mediating role between indigenous peasants and their environment, and its importance to the economy of the town, it was part of the *residentes'* sensory experience in visiting their hometown. Tapacarí had a reputation for 'pure' *chicha*, without adulterants or sweeteners, a fact often mentioned in connection with the isolation of the town and the traditional style of its bread and brewing. In describing *chicha* as 'pure', 'natural' or 'the nectar of the valleys', the social relations, investment and labour which went into it were rendered 'natural', obfuscating the human action and economic context with the 'enchanted veil' mentioned by Rivera Cusicanqui (1996) (see previous chapter).

In passing now to a discussion of fiestas and festivities in the town, I focus again on the actors and processes which made up these events as well as the locations in which they happened. The plaza is critical to all of them, and as I go on to show, forms the centre not just of the town, but of a spatial system involving the peasant communities in canton Tapacarí, who are separated into two broad categories which meet and interact through ritual in the centre of the town. However, the fiesta celebrations (and their aftermath) and Carnival took place over several locations including the municipal government office in the town, on the road in official vehicles, at *residente* meetings, in the maize fields of nearby hamlets and in houses around the town. I will begin with Carnival.

Carnival in the *alcaldía*, in the town and in a small rural community

In the following section I describe Carnival celebrations in Tapacarí as a participant observer moving through space in the company of several different groups of people, showing how their overlapping celebrations emphasised different aspects of the same theme, fertility and reproduction. In the *alcaldía*, the celebrations focused on a heteronormative vision of sexual licence as part of workplace relations: in the town, Carnival was split into the celebrations which had traditionally been held by townspeople, which had dwindled away, and the *tinku* ritual fighting between peasants, which was still thriving.

On Friday at the start of Carnival, the employees and authorities at the *alcaldía* began the seasonal celebrations by soaking each other with water from the roof terrace when entering and exiting the building. The secretaries and employees from Finance and Human Development decked the office out in coloured streamers and balloons, and Wilson went to buy the biggest *q'owa* he could find, and several crates of beer. By the time dusk fell, many of those who had been out on trips to the province had returned, and the *q'owa* was well attended. (Non-attendance was punished with a fine.) Don Pedro, the *alcalde*, circled around the gathering with a bag of confetti and streamers, anointing everyone in turn with both and exchanging formal handshakes of celebration. When everyone was gathered and covered with confetti and streamers, and in some cases soaked in water, he made a speech before putting the *q'owa* on the fire, commenting on the advancement and work of the *alcaldía* in its service to the population of Tapacarí and reporting on the recent meeting he and the *alcaldes* from neighbouring municipalities had had with Evo Morales. The mayor and the General laid the *q'owa* on the fire, and, as was customary, began the counterclockwise libations, which were repeated by all of the staff, working down the hierarchy from councillors through heads of department down to engineers and secretaries.

After the offering had burned to ashes, drunken merriment and music took over. The male

engineers formed into a team, and the female administrators into another, and they began *taquipayanaku*, singing suggestive couplets back and forth. The aim, it was explained, was to think up rhymes quickly and outdo the other side with wit and ribaldry. 'The men sing something cheeky,' a financial administrator explained, 'and the women have to respond with something even ruder.' *Taquipayanaku* ('singing back and forth') is often described as a tradition of the *Valle Alto*, a Quechua-speaking semi-urbanised farming zone where many civil servants were from. The engineers threw themselves into it, using Quechua for the lewd and evocative descriptions:

'Ingeniero kaspá, imataj qoykiyman?

Ingeniero kaspá, imataj qoykiyman?

Cuadernoy patapi, jebergawan qoykiman

Cuadernoy patapi, jebergawan qoykiman'

'Being an engineer, what can I give you? On top of my notebook, I'll give it to you with my rubber (eraser)'

The women responded in kind:

'Qayna watapi, pollito karqanki

Qayna watapi, pollito karqanki

Kunan qhawariy, llip'ador kanki

Kunan qhawariy, llip'ador kanki'

'Last year, you were just a little chicken. Look at you now, you're a *llip'ador*' (thruster, pounder)'

The engineers and other civil servants emphasised Carnival's character as a holiday for sexual

licence, 'the green light to do everything which you are not supposed to for the rest of the year – this week it is allowed', as one put it.

After a long night of *taquipayanakus*, in the morning the personnel were divided up into delegations to Carnival celebrations in different parts of the province, including the town of Tapacarí. The vehicles carrying the *alcaldía* personnel made an unusual number of stops along the way, for the mayor and his staff to greet and drink token amounts with the people we encountered along the road.

After arriving in the town, the mayor and staff, including Wilson, called together anyone who wanted to participate in a fancy-dress procession. The procession took place, formed of the mayor in his best poncho and a few *alcaldía* employees and children, but since no one had dressed up, and not many had come to watch, the procession was held to be a failure. Some townspeople told me of their costumes in past years – women dressed in drag as soldiers and policemen, men dressed as animals, or in drag as *cholitas*, *cholitas* dressed as *chotas* – and lamented how few had bothered this time.

With the parade completed, the *alcaldía* staff stayed for a few hours and then went back to the city. Wilson had brought prizes (as always, known euphemistically as 'incentives') to give out to those with the best costumes, but since no one had dressed up, they went unclaimed. Nonetheless, townspeople complained, 'Since they started giving out prizes, everyone comes for the first day and no-one stays for the next few days. Before, Carnival was full here.' What kind of entertainments did people put on? 'There was fancy dress and *taquipayanakus*, and the men and women used to pelt each other with unripe peaches, using slingshots. Then they used to whip each other around the calves, in pairs.' (Van den Berg [1990] describes similar rituals in the Aymara *altiplano*. At the time I did fieldwork, people did not fire unripe peaches at each other, but some pairs of women did

whip each other's calves in the plaza, laughing).

In the evening, more and more peasants started to arrive in the town, having walked from their communities. Their calves and ankles were rimed with salt from having crossed the river on foot, and the women's clothing was plentiful, with multiple *polleras* and jackets, favouring bright red and pink colours. They also wore more, and more detailed, *awayus* than usual and carried blankets or other woven material tucked into them, across their backs. In the evening, two peasant women came out onto the top left hand corner of the plaza and began to take turns at whipping each other's calves with a long bullwhip, giggling. Another couple emerged, one of whom was wearing the hide of a mountain lion, cured stiff, fastened onto his back with woven belts. His partner swung at the hide with a weight made of braided dried bark, on the end of a long rope. The weight, when aimed properly, bounced off the lion hide with a loud 'thump'. They changed sides, and the former wearer of the hide handed it over and thumped the former weight-swinger. The townspeople, who were sitting outside their shops and kiosks with food and goods for sale, watched in amusement.

As dusk fell, other couples came into the plaza from the streets around it carrying more braided bark weights (which were called *wajtins*) and large shield-cushions made from tufted fleeces, dyed bright red and pink, and fastened to a base of sheepskin or sacking. These were called *pillus*. They were the approximate size and shape of turtle shells, if turtle shells were worn by humans: they were designed to be slung onto the shoulders using woven belts which fastened them, and covered from the shoulders to the hips, with a thickness of about 20-30cm. Being made of fleece, they were relatively light, but robust. In groups of four, men and women (in single-sex pairings, i.e. men fought with men and women with women), began to play *wajtinaku*. As with the lion hide, the recipient partner would swing the *pillu* onto their back with the help of a friend and stand, bracing themselves and grinning, as the active partner swung the *wajtin* around several times to build up momentum, and then aimed a blow at the centre of the *pillu*. Once the blow had been landed, with

a resounding 'thwack', the couple changed sides and the active partner put on the *pillu* with the help of their friend, and stood awaiting the blow from the *wajtin*. After one couple had had a turn, their friends took over and the couple who had been playing helped them on with their *pillus*. The players began on one edge of the plaza, wherever they had wandered in, and after playing a few rounds there, walked to another part of the plaza to continue playing. Little *wajtinaku* seemed to take place on the streets approaching the plaza, possibly because they were too narrow to comfortably swing the *wajtin*. Neither did any play take place in the middle of the plaza, which was occupied by people resting, watching or playing music.

The *wajtinaku* continued through the night, the entirety of the next day and night and part of the day after that. During this time, musical groups from different communities also moved around the plaza, walking or dancing, with men playing *pinkillu* and *sikuri* cane flutes and groups of women singing repetitive *huayño* songs, some of which recalled the cheeky couplets at the *alcaldía*. Their words made reference to courting, and to working as coca growers. The music also seemed to continue through the night – like the tunes, which had no clearly defined beginning or end but which simply revolved, the singing of them did not end at a particular hour or become concentrated in one place, such as a stage, but seemed distributed around the town, heard in all places at once and without spatial or audible beginning and end points. The groups who played and sang in the plaza moved back and forth as they did so: the musicians only stopped moving when they paused their playing and singing.

On Sunday, Lucia Gandarillas, her husband Mario and their daughter Saida arrived on the lorry from Quillacollo, to visit their families. They spent a few hours in the town talking to old friends, watching the *wajtinaku* and sampling the *murmunta* (edible algae) set out for sale by one of the women from the town, after which we all went over to the hamlet where Mario's mother lived. We stopped in a hamlet halfway between the two to share some *chicha* and food with an elderly cousin,

and Lucia and Mario described for him what they had seen and done in the confrontations of January between peasant organisations and the Cochabamba prefect, Manfred Reyes Villa. The cousin had been unable to march but had many questions about the political situation in the city, and clearly enjoyed the visit. Up at Mario's mother's house, the men and myself sat outside drinking *chicha*, while the women cooked inside the main kitchen, and then we all went up to the maize field above the house and shared the meal of goat meat and rice, drank more *chicha* and burned a *q'owa* inside the structure of a new, larger house they were hoping to move into. All of Mario's brothers were back to visit, including those who lived in the Chapare, and they had brought coloured confetti and streamers, which they solemnly scattered over each other while exchanging special-occasion handshakes. After the meal had been eaten and the *q'owa* burned, Mario, his brothers and their mother started a series of long discussions about how to manage the household finances and their plot of land.

None of the townspeople participated in the *wajtinaku*, even those who had originally come from peasant communities. They explained that the playing had to be done between people from opposing communities: of each four players, two had to come from a hillside community and two from a riverside community, or they could come from communities on opposite sides of the river. I asked whether people from certain villages always had to play against people from other named villages, but informants from several communities said this was not the case; they simply had to be part of a larger subset of communities.

People from the town could not play; they were neither in the upper, nor lower communities and would have no-one to play against. 'We are in the middle, you see? Not up or down, but in the centre, so they come here to play.' 'I used to play when I lived back in my place,' some said, 'but not since I live here. Who would I play against?'

It was common for people from opposing villages or from different *cantones* to get drunk and fight each other when they came to the town of Tapacarí on market days or during fiestas. This had been commented on by the popular educators who held workshops, some of whom were from different *cantones* and feared getting beaten up in a local *chichería* if this was found out, and other peasant men. The people who played against each other in the *wajtinaku* would also be likely to get into fights if they ran across each other while drunk on a normal weekend in the town, but the Carnival games had a playful, jovial air and were described by people as *pujllay* (game, play, used to describe football matches, children and baby animals). This impression was cemented when Doña Julia from Pallumani, mentioned in Chapter 4, greeted me in the house by prodding me, grinning and saying '*Wajtiway a!*' ('Come on, hit me with a *wajtin!*') before collapsing into giggles. It was also described as a *tinku*, a word with a rich set of meanings all related to the interactive relationship between two opposed halves. In everyday Cochabamba Quechua, '*tinkuy*' means to socially meet with someone or run into them in the street. It is also used to describe playful mock-fighting encounters such as the *wajtinaku*, and two-way encounters that involve a more real risk of violence, such as the *toro tinku* bullfights held in June, at which bulls were paired off and incited to fight.

Some of the festivities which had faded out of common practice, such as whipping each other's calves until blood was drawn and pelting would-be lovers with green unripe peaches and apples, were undoubtedly painful and violent, but the *wajtinaku* was more like a simulacrum of violence, a way of playing at being violent without causing any physical harm or genuine hostility. In fact, the only heated confrontation I saw over three days happened when a man was too drunk to aim the *wajtin* properly and ended up hitting his counterpart on the arm instead of squarely across the *pillu*.

The 'conflict and complementarity' of opposite communities in Tapacarí was not expressed through bloodshed, as Harris (1984) and Platt (1986) has described for *tinkus* in the north of Potosí and

others have commented on in other areas, but rather a playful and colourful encounter which followed the same spatial logic. As Platt outlined in his essay on ritual symbolism, language and cosmology, intercommunity and interpersonal relationships in Potosí follow a logic of '*yanantin*', the relationship between symmetrical halves or mirror-images. In this analysis, the binary halves which make up so much of Andean understandings of the world and social organisation are 'mirrored' once again to create a four-parted interplay between two halves, each with two halves. This can be seen in the gender-segregated *wajtinaku* which follows the pattern of other *tinku* battles in separating out women and men to fight amongst each other. Moreover, the *wajtinaku* was played in teams of two alternating people, meaning that each encounter among the many simultaneous ones happening around the plaza at that moment was made up of four players.

Beyond the four-part symmetry of the *wajtinaku*, the role of the town in the centre of the encounter also fits with the description of Aymara space given by Therese Bouysse-Cassaigne (1986) in which the two halves engage each other in a neutral third zone. Rather than the perfect symmetry of the ritual encounter itself, they suggest that the conflict between two sides always results in dominance by one side over another.

Behind the appearances of Aymara dualism and in the Inka system, we can detect, as though in a palimpsest, the rules of a society that understood spatial relationships in triadic terms: two elements and a center. Each term implies the presence of its opposite, but the symmetry is imperfect (male predominates over female, above over below, right over left) (Bouysse-Cassaigne, 1986)

Olivia Harris (2000) also reports that in contrast to the firmly expressed and pervasive principle of *chachawarmi*, gender complementarity in the formation of a household, when it came to the *tinku* amongst the Laymi they referred to one side of the fight as 'older brother' and the other as 'younger

brother'. From this she concluded that Laymi moieties existed in a state of 'antagonistic similarity' rather than a complementary coupling of dissimilar categories 'who could not fight' (2000: 176). This provides a useful framework for thinking about the *tinku* between equals in Tapacarí, especially in combination with the everyday occurrence of drunken fights between people from different parts of the province, in which, unlike in Carnival, there were winners and losers.

Carnival *tinku* offered a space of encounter in which people could play out the opposition of their communities, and also to display their own wealth and skill. The colourful fecundity of the season and the red of blood sacrifice was present in the vivid greens, reds and pinks of the *pillus* and of the women's clothes. The fat layers of *awayus* and shawls worn by women to provide another layer under the *pillu* displayed their ability as weavers, and as women capable of rearing abundant flocks of sheep. Their multilayered *polleras* signalled wealth and prestige – *polleras* are very expensive – as well as giving a striking visual effect when women spun around to strike each other with the *wajtin*. Wearing many heavy *polleras* also showed the strength of one's hips. (One townswoman commented when recalling the old days, 'Now they hardly wear any *polleras*, just two or three. You know that Quintina? Her mother, when she was young, she wore so many she couldn't get through the door!') This display of weaving skill may have been an element of courtship: although the Carnival in Tapacarí did not seem as focused on sex and courtship as that in the city, and at least as many people reported meeting their spouse at the fiesta as did for Carnival, there were nonetheless many references to flirting and pairing up. Lucia Gandarillas had been 'stolen' away to the Chapare by her husband after Carnival, for example, and amid all the drinking and dancing in the town, match-making was almost certainly taking place. Couple-courtship in the country seemed less important than in the city, though, perhaps because it took place in a context of fertile interaction on a larger scale: of irrigation, of harvest, of animals giving birth to young, of ritually fertile interactions between communities and the reinforcing of family and household ties.

There was no suggestion that Carnival be included as a tourist attraction and the *residentes* never spoke of it, despite the colourful spectacle and the obvious importance of the event to those participating in it. This could be attributable to the season and to the fact that the road was impassable but also suggests that the townspeople view the activities of the peasants as not social, as not pertaining to the town or the preserve of 'decent' social activity.

Commensality, collective labour and social change: small fiestas

Celebrations in Tapacarí involved the brewing and drinking of *chicha* but also the preparation, distribution and consumption of specific dishes.

This mass commensality during fiestas created kin and kin-like relationships and created and strengthened social networks through female labour. In this context, power, prestige and social standing were relational, created in reference to abundance, generosity and the ability to marshal a labour force. In contrast to the hollow power of the *residentes'* memories, in which they strived to differentiate themselves from *campesinos* and discussed the size of their family houses or the prestige of past celebrations, hearkening to a time of simple togetherness in which *campesinos* knew their place, the moral force of current celebrations involving food was corporeal and immediate. The status of families or couples who hosted or sponsored celebrations was predicated on their ability to bring together agricultural products and city-bought groceries: to enlist the help of peasant *comadres*, contacts in the city and neighbours in the town, and to manage a collective work project using incentives of food and conviviality rather than pay. In other words, prestige was built on the same flexibility and mastery of, or at least contact with, different social and commercial environments that was prized in other contexts such as the *alcaldía*.

The process of cooking, and the physical dialogue of feeding and eating, produced physical and social communality, but also played a role in the emergence of new hierarchies and the maintenance

of old ones. As with many of Tapacarí's interwoven and parallel social dynamics, it was possible for these to occur simultaneously. The commingling of different 'kinds' of people (peasants, townspeople) working together and eating together, followed by a formal celebration in which they were physically separated, foregrounds the way in which Tapacarí's economic and social life is dependent on effective collaboration between peasants and townspeople until the moment of presentation, when the peasants are once again marginalised. The 'old', or most persistent, hierarchies, could be seen in the consumption of the food and who was served first; the new or emerging hierarchies could be seen through looking at the people responsible for preparing and serving the food.

The force-feeding, or excess feeding, has been noted by Allen (1988) as a thing that happens in Peru, an indicator of abundance. Tassi (2010) also talks about *cholo* economies of abundance in La Paz and the ways in which displays of abundance fit into a cosmological outlook in which form/appearance is part of generating abundance or plentifulness in reality. This also seems to be the case in Tapacarí. This serves both to maintain old hierarchies and to allow for the emergence of new ones, or rather, maintain the position of some former elites in the apparent hierarchy but also allow for the emergence of new actors.

The dishes made for celebrations in Tapacarí used locally grown ingredients, namely wheat and kid goats, and were prepared by large work crews of women (with a few men) in the patios of private houses around the town which had been borrowed for the purpose. The work crews, who varied between five and fifteen or twenty people depending on the size of the celebration and the number of people to feed, did not work for pay: they were called in to help by townspeople who were their *compadres*, or who had some other connection with them. Many also 'just worked for food'. Work crews comprised peasant women, *de pollera* women from the town, town women who were *de vestido* and sometimes their daughters, visiting from the city. The language of interaction was

Quechua, and the conversation tended to the ribald and gossipy. The relaxation of social divisions between peasant women and women from the town was very noticeable. Two women who might speak guardedly if at all when in the plaza or the street, would sit comfortably in the same patio peeling potatoes side by side.

The quantity of food to be prepared was very large, and so several women might be found working on any particular task, such as peeling and slicing vegetables, jointing meat, soaking and peeling *chuno* or peeling potatoes. The by-products (vegetable peelings) went to the pigs of the person whose house it was, if they had any, but the women working on the food preparation had the right to take them home, too. Halfway through the day, a communal pot of soup would be shared out among all those who were present and working on the cooking.

The dishes prepared for parties in Tapacarí were a thick wheat grain soup called *llusp'iuchu* and *jawar uchu*, and roast kid goat with *mote* and potatoes. *Llusp'iuchu* and *jawari uchu* were two variants of the same soup, one coloured with red chilli pepper and the other left white. They were commonly made and served as part of everyday meals, separately, but during celebrations the two colours were swirled together.

The resources needed for roast meat were greater – it was impractical to cook it on a small scale and so it only made an appearance at festivals or the *alcaldía*-run culinary fairs. These dishes, which are both hearty and filling, were served consecutively or simultaneously, but always together: there was no possibility to eat only one of them. The wet soup and the dry meat were two complementary halves and could not be consumed in isolation. Likewise, the combination of red soup with white brought to mind the Andean understanding of fertilisation through the mixing of bodily fluids (female, menstrual blood and semen). This colour combination brought together in the warp and weft of textiles has been noted by Crickmay (1997) to be a signifier of fertile interaction.

Both dishes at once amounted to too much food to comfortably eat in one sitting, even if you were very hungry. It was not permitted to share them with other people who were present; each adult individual was given the two dishes. Refusal was not an option. I noticed that the peasant women who came to help prepare food often brought along a sealable container to pour their *llusp'iuchu* into, and tucked this carefully away in their *awayus*, eating only the thinner, more 'everyday' soup which was doled out to everyone who was involved in the food preparation. Likewise, they wrapped up the meat, potatoes and *mote* carefully to take away, extending the reach of the party commensality to the people waiting for them at home, who would also get to eat the food from the celebration.

The circuit of food-making and food-sharing which arose out of the celebration of festivals served to create and strengthen networks of kin, *compadrazgo* and affines, spreading out from the town in a spiderweb of relationships between women of different ages and backgrounds. These life-cycle events which tied people together through marriage and *compadrazgo*, godparenthood, and endowed young men with a relationship with the state, the outside world and their communities, were celebrated in rituals and festivities which were organised by their families and extended out links of commensality and shared drunkenness. As part of these rituals and celebrations, new links of *compadrazgo* were formed by the families concerned approaching people to sponsor different parts of the celebration. These went far beyond the scope of the predictable axes of sponsorship, such as baptism or religious ceremonies or even food and drink and extended to elements of the party which had come into fashion and added to the quality of the celebration but had to be paid for. Sponsor-godparent roles included *padrino de amplificación* (sponsor-godfather of the sound system), *madrina de la torta* (cake godmother), *padrino de refrescos* (soft drink godfather), *madrina de cotellones* (godmother of souvenir badges) and so on. In fact, the system of sponsorship was demonstrably used to reap the maximum number of elements necessary for an impressive celebration, and at the same time create links of respect and obligation that would bring the families con-

cerned together. Most of the people who families approached to be godparent-sponsors were already friendly with them, and enjoyed slightly more economic or political advantage. This asymmetry is a standard feature of Andean godparenthood practices, and it had much starker expressions when it came to godparenthood relations between townspeople and peasants, especially in previous generations. I was surprised to hear, for example, that Doña Plinnia, one of the most entrenchedly racist and elitist townspeople, had been the godmother at the wedding of Don Guillermo of the *casa comunal*, who was a dedicated peasant activist and MAS militant. Don Guillermo saw nothing strange in this, and tossed the information into the conversation in the middle of fulminating about how unwelcoming the townspeople were and how shamelessly they exploited the peasant population.

Halfway around the ritual calendar from the *Virgen de Dolores* festival, the town celebrated the Virgin's 'birthday'. This small fiesta took place during the rainy days at the end of March and so was virtually unattended by *residentes* or others who lived in the city such as the *alcaldía* employees. However, it did generate excitement in one corner of Quillacollo, where Lucia and Mario lived. Lucia's eldest sister, Doña Prima, and her husband, were to sponsor the fiesta, and they had sent word by phone for Lucia to shop in Quillacollo for food ingredients and also to gather together their other sisters who worked as maids in the city of Cochabamba, so that they could all come back to the town for the weekend. The fact that Doña Prima and Don Wilson were sponsoring the small fiesta was novel and exciting, since they were the first peasant couple to do so; historically, this fiesta, like others relating to the church, had been sponsored by townspeople. Moreover, Doña Prima, unlike her younger brothers, did not even live in the town part-time; she and her family lived in a nearby hamlet and worked the land.

On the Thursday before the celebration, all of Lucia's sisters who lived 'below' in the city, plus several cousins, helped load up the goods which would be needed onto the lorry to Tapacarí and set out for the town. The city *cholitas*, all in matching blue *polleras* and white blouses, were in a festive

mood and happy to catch up with each other during the journey, mingling Quechua and Spanish freely in their speech. Apart from Lucia, almost all of them worked as domestic servants and rarely saw each other or made it back to Tapacará.

In the town the next day, two activities related to the Virgin's birthday took place. The first of them was that the Virgin herself was brought down from her niche in the top of the church by two men from the town, and a man who worked at the parochial office. Two women from the town, helped by children, brought out the Virgin's jewellery from storage, and carefully washed her face and garments, replaced her silver halo and brooches, and placed a new set of rings on her plaster fingers. In carrying out this task, Dona Margo, who was usually full of jokes and innuendo, was noticeably quiet and reverent, diligently and tenderly arranging clothing and jewels and occasionally commenting on how pretty the Virgin looked. This activity attracted some attention, mostly from children, and the sponsors of the small fiesta also passed by the church and posed for photographs with the Virgin, in the serious and unsmiling pose recognisable from officially posed photographs of people across the Andes, as commented on by Deborah Poole among others.

In the meantime, a borrowed house was being used for the preparation of food for the occasion. The house, which belonged to Doña Martina (who had come from a peasant community but married into a town family) overran with women and a few men who had come to help cook. Some were peeling potatoes out in the courtyard, others were rinsing wheat grains, boiling *mote*, peeling carrots or sectioning meat inside the house or outbuildings. Among them were several peasant women from outlying communities, with babies or children, the sponsors' family members, from communities near to the town, and one or two townspeople. No job in particular seemed to be particularly prestigious; everyone worked in common, at their own pace, chatting casually as they peeled, sliced and stirred. Children ran freely around. In parallel to the preparation of the meal that would be served to guests in general that evening, a basic soup was prepared to be shared out to those who

participated in the cooking, and every few hours, this was dished out to everyone present and their children.

In the early evening, the Gandarillas siblings and cousins set up a long table along one wall of the patio, and decorated it with factory-woven *awayus*. They sent out child messengers to advise people in the town that the food for the celebration was ready, and as they arrived, the teachers, police, leaders of the peasant trade union, some townspeople and myself were invited to sit down at the table. Some twenty to thirty peasant celebrants also came to the house, and seated themselves around the edge of the patio, on the ground or on steps, sacks or boulders. The Gandarillas sisters, whose fine city *cholita* clothes now stood out amid the red and black wool *polleras* of the peasant women, began to distribute huge plates of food, first to the people sitting at the table, then to those seated around the patio. They were followed by the male siblings of the family, who brought round a bucket of *chicha* and served each guest individually, making sure all had at least one drink. The food was different from the normal *llusp'iuchu* and roasted goat, and I commented on this to Dona Georgina, who had been helping with the cooking. 'This is a special dish that we only cook for this celebration,' she explained, 'but it isn't cooked much now because the people who know how to make it aren't here any more. That's why they asked me to help, because I am the only one left who knows how to prepare it.' As usual, the quantity of food served was large, to the point of being physically uncomfortable to eat: many people around the patio wrapped up some or all of their helpings and bundled them away to eat later.

This brief illustration of a small party in Tapacarí illustrates a shift in some of the local hierarchies there, and the reinforcement of others in a hollowed-out form. For a start, as with other larger power dynamics in Tapacarí, the economic and social capital rested with those who were able to call on resources or family members in the city, and who had access to means of transport to bring food and other essentials back to the town, as is also documented in other parts of Cochabamba such as Tiraque (Lagos 1994). However, it was also necessary to have arrangements in place locally to pro-

cure meat, corn and *chicha*, which were attained from the family flock, through personal connections and through reciprocal labour arrangements. Access to mobility and the possibility of economically engaging with urban markets could only be successful when combined with agriculturally-specific social wealth: abundant flocks, or access to them, arrangements with a *chicha* maker, abundant crops, or access to them, and crucially, the ability to mobilise labour. Work in the production of food was carried out in a horizontal, non-hierarchical way, as a collaboration between townspeople and peasants under the direction (but not obligation) of the sponsors.

The distribution and service of the food is more revealing of enduring hierarchy, with the higher-status guests being given seats at a table and the peasants spatially marginalised along the edges of the patio, seating themselves on the floor. The order of service, such as it was also revealed this, with the guests at the table being served first. The sponsors, rather than those who had cooked the food, took on the task of serving, thus taking symbolic ownership of the act of generosity and public nourishment. They became the conduit by which the cooked food was transferred from its unindividuated, un-shared state in large pots and trays, to single plates which could be distributed to each guest in order of prestige and closeness to the sponsoring family: in this way, they were the arbiters of both togetherness and distinction.

Finally, the consumption of the festive meal, although mediated by hierarchy in terms of placement, represented an act of broad commensality between those present in the patio, and also those who were absent, but who would later eat the food brought home by their family members who had been present, thus spreading out a spiderweb of people connected by eating the same food. Each guest present was offered *chicha* from the same buckets, carried around in even rotation to enable all to drink in turn. Eventually, some groups were given individual buckets of *chicha* to share amongst themselves.

In terms of hierarchy and egalitarianism, then, this event acknowledged the contours of previously-existing social order, recognisable by the spatial positioning of 'important guests' at the

centre, but this was somewhat hollow when compared to the shift in social prestige and power when it came to the sponsorship. By assuming the sponsorship of the celebration, Dona Prima and her husband had taken on the role of symbolic progenitors, people affluent enough to feed the entire town as well as people visiting from other communities. Their affluence was demonstrated not just through the abundant food and *chicha* and Don Wilson's ornate poncho, but also through the Gandarillas sisters' fine, new *polleras* and successful protagonising of the flexible, liminal, attractive urban *cholita*. Unlike the small life-cycle celebrations, in which investment in food, *chicha* etc was repaid by cash and gifts to the couple or family, the money poured into the small fiesta celebration, like with other fiesta sponsorship roles (see Buechler and Buechler [1971] and Lazar [2007]) served to elevate the status of the sponsors, enable commensality and recognise existing hierarchies while giving rise to new ones.

San Agustín and *Virgen de Dolores*: *residente* celebrations

The fiesta of San Agustín is held on 28 August or the nearest weekend to it, in Tapacarí every year, followed almost one month later by the larger fiesta of the *Virgen de Dolores*. In the month between these two dates, *residente* visits to the town intensify as the religious and practical preparations for each fiesta mean frequent trips from the cioty out to the town in order to bring supplies, prepare houses or meet with the priest. The saint and virgin themselves resides in a glass-fronted case in the church for most of the year, among the plastic flowers and chipped plaster statues which adorn the other, smaller niches along the church walls. During the fiestas the church is hung with gauze streamers and fabric bows along its dark rafters. *Residentes* bring fresh flowers from the city wrapped in paper, which crowd along the back of the church behind the altar. A selection of women from the town, enlisted and led by the female pasante, bring down the corresponding statue and dress them carefully, rotating their jewellery and adornments. The fiestas are one of the few times of year when the church is full to capacity: on other Sundays there are often a few rows of pews taken up by children from the residential school, fidgeting and

whispering, but few other people attend, apart from a few elderly widows. It was not unknown to see the sacristan pull open the church doors on Sunday evening, then go to diligently ring the bell for Mass for twenty minutes, only to descend half an hour later, shut off the lights and close the door again without a single soul having entered to receive the sacrament. At fiesta time, though, it was a challenge to find a place to sit or stand in the church, and the frequency of Masses increased in the lead-up to each occasion. There was an important Mass a week before the fiesta and two on both the Saturday and Sunday, building up to the procession of the saint or virgin around the village, which even people who had not been to the Mass participated in. The Mass on the Sunday a week before each fiesta was well attended, both by people from the town and communities around it, and by visitors from the city. The priest, looking solemn, spoke of interior joyfulness and thankfulness for family and community, urging people to begin 'the fiesta of our hearts', and to dedicate themselves to their worship before embarking on several days of drunkenness, thus implicitly recognising the intensely alcoholic time to come.

The interior of the church was impressive in a town of small scale. New school buildings, square and clean in brick and concrete, had robbed it of its status as largest building in town, but it was the tallest building in the plaza and one of the oldest. After the flood which destroyed the town in 1918, it had been rebuilt. The walls were adobe, but plastered inside and painted without, so that it appeared to have the dignity of stone. It was, as churches tend to be, cool and a little dingy, with a hushed air. The fixtures were ordinary, but the calm gaze of the two antique plaster patron saints reminded one of its antiquity. According to Tapacarí's destruction myth, no sooner had they been hauled to safety than the original church had been washed away by the rising river on the night of the flood. The church from which they were rescued had a longer and more bloody history. Presuming it was the same building, which is by no means certain, it was the site of one of the worst massacres of the 1781 native rebellion. Indians from Ayopaya and Tapacarí joined in with the uprising led by Tupac Amaru, Tupac Katari and Bartolina Sisa, and recruited guerrillas in a chain of

communities in the hills around the town. In fear for their lives and property, the nucleus of ruling Spanish and *criollo patrones* in the town of Tapacarí took refuge in the church, barricading themselves in against the insurgents. The symbolic asylum of the church was not respected by the rebels, who ambushed them there and slaughtered everyone inside. Whether this was a symbolic reassertion of indigenous control over the area, a murderous reaction to personal exploitation, or both, is difficult to determine. When told, or telling the story, people's reactions varied. The indigenous activist who led educational workshops was delighted to hear about the rebellion. 'Great!' he roared as we walked up the steps by the church, 'good for them!' Some of the *residentes* told the story with a sense of outrage and awe, as if reconfirming their own ideas about the indigenous peasant people of Tapacarí's essential violence and barely repressed resentment towards them. It was a story which, no matter how many times the church building must have been replaced by then, hung in the air whenever one entered the church.

Inside the current church, the statues were pallid and European-dressed, and the worshippers dark-skinned. During the initial mass of the fiesta, the *residentes* who considered themselves most important occupied the front pews of the church – the adult children of one of the last *patrones* sat proudly in the front row. Behind them, rows of other families also took their place, meaning that the schoolchildren who usually occupied half of the church were squeezed towards the back. It was hard to find a seat, as the people who lived in the town year-round had also come to hear the service, even if this was not a usually part of their weekly routine.

This changed over the course of the days leading up to the fiesta, as more and more *residentes* arrived in the town in white minivans, private jeeps and pickup trucks and eventually large buses from the city. Buses ran directly from Quillacollo, packed full of merrymakers and *residentes* without their own private transport. The buses parked in the riverbed below the town in fleets, in the '*playa*' area where the settlement used to be: there was no room for them on its narrow, jagged

streets and rocky steps. Gaggles of children and bored adults climbed up to the topmost ledge where the water pump was and stood looking expectantly out over the riverbed at the dust trails of the approaching vehicles.

Meanwhile, those with a living to make had been hard at work for the previous week. Not only was the population of the town to explode over the weekend with revellers, but peasant *compadres* had come in to supply and prepare all the necessary food for guests and customers. The visitors would need to eat and drink as well as rest, and the town's dozen or so enterprising women with access to a kitchen and the capital to invest in food to cook and sell were ready to work, and to call on the labour of others. Most visibly, they laid in supplies from out of town. Some of the food which they processed came from peasant *comadres*, particularly meat, but a great deal was bought in bulk in Quillacollo by relatives there, and dispatched on one of the lorries that carried goods and people a few times a week in dry season. Additionally, many families sent representatives to the large market at Chamacoma, or Q'asawasa, up in Ayopaya. The lorries which went up to the large market in Chamacoma had many more people than usual on board on Friday, and came back so laden down, that people hung over the sides as they rolled into the plaza in the evening. Lambs grazed in many borrowed patios until someone could be found to come slaughter them, and people from communities nearby sold on their kid goats to the food vendors for them to make the classic *tapacareño* dish of roasted kid goat. The plaza filled with women sitting around its edges nursing large pots of *mote* and kettles of *chicharron*, spicy chicken stew, roast lamb and toasted wheat kernels for sale. Even beyond the plaza, many homes had open doors and a bench outside, but most of these were offering *chicha*. The houses which were usually kept locked up suddenly not only had open doors, but groups of people drifting in and out of them, and in some cases tables and chairs outside, and beer for sale. Itinerant traders from the city set up stalls around the edge of the plaza, stacked with peasant clothes, sweets, toys and cheap musical instruments. Perhaps the oddest-looking trader in town for the fiesta period, even more than the man who ran the table

football (*futbolines*) for children, was the shoeshine attendant who set up a mobile kiosk on one side of the plaza. At normal times, the number of people in Tapacarí requiring their shoes shined would be somewhere around none: barring a couple of men from the town, everyone wore either the tyre-rubber sandals typical of indigenous peasants all across the Andes, tennis shoes or slightly more expensive plastic sandals. 'Closed' leather shoes were part of another social context altogether, an urban social context which had temporarily come to the town. However, the shoeshine man did well out of the *residente* visitors who wished to look their best, and whose shoes quickly became dusty from the unpaved streets.

A great deal of labour was mobilised to make an intensely concentrated period of sale make up for the quieter following months. Not only did some children and adult children come home in order to pass the fiesta with their parents, dance, worship and reconnect, but they also came home because their help was needed to cook and cater for all the other visitors. Husbands also mucked in with their wives' businesses and the job of hosting high numbers of visitors, laying in credit for the nights of the fiesta when they could go get drunk, and crowds of smaller children ran errands from house to house.

The maintenance of kinship through food and hospitality was a major part of the fiestas for *residentes* as well as townspeople. It drew in people from a wide orbit, those who had gone to the cities, those who had married partners from other communities, and those who lived in the communities around the town and made the trip rarely. During the fiestas, the two biggest annual periods of activity, they made the town into a centre once again, regardless of how few people continued to live there year-round. In the case of the *residentes*, the link included kinship but was associated with piety and religious duty. Their presence, and not that of the peasants, 'made' the fiesta something significant: it was declared to be a success based on the participation, or lack thereof, of people from the city. It is difficult to disentangle this from commercial success: the

women of the town wished to sell as much beer and food as possible, but it is likely there was also an underlying and deeper connection and sense of obligation which was expressed as a duty to family and to the saint and virgin, as well as physical enjoyment of the town – the purity of the air and the superior taste of the food and *chicha*, which was understood to be beneficial to one's health. Outside of fiesta time, people understood on a practical level that life in the town was very difficult and expressed admiration for those who had the 'bravery' to stay (*'son muy valientes, los que aguantan la miseria'*). In essence, when transformed into a holiday camp at fiesta time the town had an irresistible draw, but was avoided the rest of the year because of the difficult material conditions and hazards of access.

Over the first day of the fiesta of San Agustín, the clamour of activity in the plaza and around town built. Many more vans drew up carrying passengers who, against the backdrop of Tapacarí, looked 'white' with their city-bought clothes, smart haircuts and shoes. They strolled around the town, chatting excitedly to one another, although most did not greet any of the town's normal inhabitants and ignored anyone they weren't buying things from. They took many photos of the church, the plaza and the old houses, as well as of Tapacarí's peasant people walking past quickly, bent double under enormous loads of firewood brought up from the river in order to fire the town's ovens and feed all the visitors.

In addition to the somewhat alien-looking visitors from town, many *campesinos* came from communities all over the province. Down in the plaza, people milled around or sat and watched. The benches around its perimeter were, as usually, full of men from the town who observed and commented on its goings-on every afternoon, but the interior of the plaza was occupied by many *campesino* families seated around *awayus*, eating food they had brought wrapped up in *inkuyña* cloths.

The town clattered and sang with noise. Town women shouted at their children to fetch and carry: *campesinos* carried transistor radios blasting music, vehicles arrived, *residentes* greeted each other, and the impressive wedding sound systems were cranked up in preparation for the evening's parties. A musical group came round the corner of the plaza, consisting of *comunarios* from the village of Jatun Pampa, about ten men and three women. The men had on bright, heavy ponchos, probably their finest garments, and were playing long cane flutes with a ponderous, wheezy, circular melody, a *huayño*. Some had large *sikuri* flutes, others *zampoña* panpipes. The women were likewise dressed in layers of matching pink wool *polleras*, zigzagging *awayus* on top of their long-sleeved blouses and sheepskin hats with ribbons around them. All of their hatbands were decorated with greenery, flowers and vegetation. They had joined hands in a circle and were dancing in circles to the music the men were making. In front of the small troupe was a small herd of sheep, lambs, goats and kids. There were perhaps twelve animals all told, being firmly herded around the plaza by other people who accompanied the musicians and dancers. When asked, my friend informed me that they were the sponsors. I remembered the last time I had been in town at the truck stop where the *camiones* for Tapacarí loaded up and had been greeted by one of the more successful members of the *residente* community, the sponsor of the *Virgen de Dolores* festival. 'Oh, San Agustín,' he said, 'that's when all the peasants have their celebrations.' He said this with a rather pained expression, dismissively, as though it were something he would rather avoid.

Now, though, the crowd of *residentes* was paying attention to the small group of *originarios*. They continued playing music and did three circuits of the plaza, before ending up at the steps of the church. They were quickly surrounded by urban admirers, who took photos and filmed them dancing, still determinedly solemn. Some parents of small children brought them up close to pet the lambs and kids, and took pictures. After paying their respects to the church door and to the saint – but not entering inside – the small troupe took off again up one of the hilly streets which led off from the plaza. 'They're taking the animals to slaughter,' explained my friend, 'so we can eat roast

meat later.¹³

By evening the plaza was full of unfamiliar faces, circling round in loose-ended drinking groups. The doors of small shops all around the plaza stood open, and *chicherías* throughout the town did good business. The gaiety and noise was a striking contrast to the town's usual abandoned self, but the women selling food out of cloth-wrapped pots still looked grim. '*Silencio es,*' complained one after the other, condemning the lack of attendance and consequent effect on sales. '*No es como antes* (It's not like before),' was the other refrain, usually accompanied by a wistful expression and a sweep of the arm. 'Last year, it was really full, the year before that too. This year there's nobody.' This was contradicted by the crowd of *residentes*, out enjoying themselves on the plaza to the late night music of many *sikuri* groups, not just the *pasantes*. In addition to the visiting residents, some members of the staff from the *alcaldía* were present, in small groups. The representative for Tourism, Culture and Sport – my boss, Wilson – was in the plaza, drinking lightly from one of the buckets of *chicha* distributed by the sponsors. I said how lively the fiesta seemed. 'Oh, this is only small,' he sniffed, 'it's much better in my town. Everyone comes, and it's not just one little band, there are loads. It's properly big, down in the Valle Alto, you should come and see. It's a shame,' he said reflectively, 'a shame that it's so silent here.'

Despite the 'silence' complained about by Wilson and by those selling food to the revellers, the

Soon after, more dancers appeared but with quite a different character. The *residentes* who were sponsoring the fiesta had hired a brass band to play throughout it, and the musicians appeared around a different corner of the plaza. They were ascending from the lower part of town, where the nicer houses had once been and where the school was expanding. The band appeared first, and behind them came the family who was 'officially' sponsoring the fiesta, arm in arm in a row. They were dressed smartly in city clothes, and looked like they were also taking the dancing seriously. The band and the dancers proceeded anti-clockwise around the plaza, climbing up the less steep side, and when they reached the church they paused to refresh themselves with *chicha* carried by a member of their party before disappearing inside to make their prayers. After emerging from the moment of worship, they rejoined the band, who had doffed their hats at the church entrance and were sitting relaxing on the steps with a bucket of *chicha* before resuming their serenade of the sponsors and the town in general for the rest of the afternoon. The sound of their instruments overlapped with the sound of the cane flutes and pan pipes played by the Jatun Pampa group, who also continued to dance their worship, or proprietary sponsorship of the fiesta, over the town for the next few days, although their livestock was taken to be slaughtered and roasted. The music of the brass band was irregular: they were frequently invited to drink for long sessions and then resume the music, although their playing became more and more bedraggled.

noise of the celebrations was present throughout the town, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The music of brass bands mingled with cane flute players and sound systems, and firecrackers were being set off.

The following day, the church was wide open and a constant stream of people passed through its doors to visit the saint. At noon the bell for mass was rung, and the church filled up with bodies, *residentes* seated at the front, townspeople interspersed throughout the middle and many peasants thronged in the aisles and at the back with no place to sit. The priest said a long mass mentioning the names of those who had paid to be included, and followed this by calling forth a number of sponsors to carry the saint forth out into the village. Four men took each corner of a carrying platform on which the saint was perched and hoisted him onto their shoulders, marching out slowly and solemnly through the crowd. At the church steps, people gathered to throw confetti over the saint and his bearers, muttering prayers with looks of intense and serious devotion of their faces. Some hurried up to him to place pieces of paper in his hands or around his garment, and many reached out to touch him. Earlier on in the day, the superintendent and staff had supervised the construction of four decorative archways on each corner of the plaza. They were built from flexible bamboo, and were about twenty feet high: with the aid of a stepladder, local women had decorated them with gauze and bright white napkins, and then on top of that stuck on silver ornaments, spoons and metal dishes, fresh flowers, ribbons and pieces of brightly striped cloth. The priest led the procession of the saint over to the nearest of these, holding a loudspeaker and a yellow bucket. He then said the *Pater Noster* through the loudhailer while the stretcher bearers lifted the saint to position him under the decorated arch, and hold him there for a few minutes. The crowd said the prayer enthusiastically along with the priest, and threw confetti over the saint. The smartly dressed *residentes* remained closest to the saint, with many peasant people also close by including some musicians. Men respectfully doffed their hats as the prayers were being said. The priest dipped a bunch of small white flowers into the bucket, and solemnly splashed holy water over the crowd,

who held out their hands for it and crossed themselves once they had been anointed. The crowd contained all kinds of *tapacareño* people: suited *residentes* in smart shoes, peasants in coarse woollen clothes and brightly embroidered jackets, young children, elderly people and townspeople of all ages. The *originario* musicians from the previous few days also attended, playing music to accompany the saint's passage, and quietening when the prayers were said. The procession continued down the plaza to the next corner, where the ritual was repeated: prayers through the loudhailer, echoed by the crowd, doffed hats, saint entering the arch, sitting there for a few moments and then being pulled out again, followed by a smatter of holy water over the crowd, which moved on then to the next archway. Having completed a circuit of the plaza, the saint was propped up in the church doorway where he remained for several minutes. People pinned banknotes to his vestments, and said prayers over him, and he was brought back inside the church to sit inside the doorway and receive visitors.

In the afternoon I was talking to one of the women from the peasant trade union leadership when a *residente* who had come for the fiesta from his usual home in the city came to converse with us – or with me, as he ignored the woman I had been talking to, and began to tell me about his love for the town and his plans to go to Europe soon and tour as a musician. While he talked, a university student I knew from the city approached us where we sat, carrying his backpack and sleeping bag. 'Where are you going?' I asked. He said that he had to return to the city, as he could not afford to pay for lodging in the *casa comunal*, where he had been staying the previous night. He had a letter of introduction from the university saying that he was a tourism student, but that didn't convince them ... and he shrugged, a little sheepishly. The *residente* man who had been eagerly talking about his appreciation of Bolivia's traditional customs became agitated. 'But how can that be, brother? That can't be so. No fucking indian subprefect can mess you around like this! The indians are the ones who are ruining things, goddammit ...' I got up and walked away, catching the eye of my friend from the peasant trade union. She looked completely unsurprised.

Up at the top of the town later, the members of staff from the *alcaldía* who were present gathered around the courtyard of the market building. Several vehicles and motorcycles were also parked up, and their drivers were doing their best to hastily dress them up with flowers, coloured paper streamers, balloons and greenery. 'The priest is coming to bless the vehicles,' they explained. The mayor and a few of the drivers opened bottles of beer, shaking some so as to spray them over the wheels of the vehicles in a *ch'alla* for their safety – some were decanted into glasses and shared around the company. The priest appeared with a bucket of holy water and a bunch of flowers, and addressed each vehicle in turn, saying a prayer over it for the safety of all its passengers and future journeys. He then splashed each wheel in turn with holy water and then blessed the keys and the hands of the driver. There was a respectful silence, apart from joining in with the prayers when appropriate, which contrasted with the atmosphere of merry-making and drinking which had been present a few minutes beforehand. The priest had hurried away to continue with the many duties of the fiesta when someone realised that half of the vehicles – the mayoral Jeep, the dump truck and two motorcycles – were in another section of the market and had not been blessed. 'What a shame!' said one of the engineers, and there were mutters of agreement that it was unsatisfactory that some of the cars should have gone unblessed. The *oficial mayor* Zarate, who was '*Pachamamista*', took up a bottle of *chicha* and a sponge, and proceeded to splash *chicha* on the wheels of the neglected bikes, shouting, 'Hail the Mother Earth, the coca leaf and *Pachamama!*' There were shouts of encouragement and laughter as he continued in a semi-serious burlesque of the priest, carried out with sacramental *chicha*. In this irreverent gesture, Zarate 'decolonised' a syncretic practice, that of splashing libations on vehicles to bless them, undermining the contribution of the priest and reintroducing explicitly indigenous authorities and images. His irreverent pantomime of the priest was combined with the observance of the quite serious business of libation-pouring, a pre-colonial form of engagement with the natural and spirit world. It would have been felt by all that to leave the cars unblessed would have been remiss: by extracting part of the ritual and recontextualising it,

Zarate had been able to make a political point as well as retaining part of the practice.

The staff of the *alcaldia* and the *residentes* both disappeared from the town over the evening, leaving only groups of *campesinos* still intent on merrymaking. The next day, the vehicles from the city and the colourful stalls selling clothing had also left, but the musical groups from different areas kept on playing, audible at various points around the town.

In the afternoon, a large group of peasants appeared with something of a fanfare, carrying between them the carcass of a goat which had been beheaded and gutted, then stitched up again. The goat was brought over to one corner of the plaza and two men squared up to each other, taking a leg each on opposite sides. Then, starting off at the same moment like an arm-wrestle, they both pulled as hard as they could. A group on either side cheered them on as they strained against each other. Eventually the goat legs slipped out of the grasp of one of the men, and he let go. The whole group then moved to the next corner of the plaza, in much the same way the saint had been carried from point to point, and the show began again with two different men.

'It's a game' was the explanation that came from others who had been watching, later on. 'The *pasantes* donate the goat, and then the two men who pull at it are from different communities. Generally, one is from up on the slopes and the other down by the river, or they're from opposite sides of the river. It has to be different, though, you can't play it between two communities which are both in the river.' As with Carnival, the town provided a meeting point for communities to ritually struggle against each other. When asked if townspeople ever participated in the goat game, in the Carnival celebrations or other games of two halves, the response was always, 'They can't, the town is right in the middle.' The town's centrality was still retained in the world of ritual, even as its status as economic and political centre had been eroded.

At the *residentes'* meeting following San Agustín, there was discussion and evaluation of the fiesta, at which representatives of the society had given out souvenir handkerchiefs and a newspaper they published, giving details of notable *tapacareños* of past and present (none of whom, needless to say, lived in the town any more). At this meeting, one of the *residentes* who had stayed on until the end of the celebrations expressed his dissatisfaction with the way that everyone else had left before the end of the final day. 'If you leave on the Sunday, it gets very bad', he said. 'Did you see it on Monday? It was like a peasant fiesta.' He shook his head in disapproval.

'Hay que echarse de menos': making a place for absence in memories of the town

One month later, the *Virgen de Dolores* fiesta filled the town once again, and while San Agustín had seemed crowded and busy compared to the usual quiet of the town, the second and 'main' fiesta eclipsed it. More vehicles, more open houses, more buses from the city and more religious services filled the town up again until the *casa comunal* was completely full, the plaza was crowded with people and even the upper streets of the town, usually inhabited by peasants, had visitors coming and going from houses which had stood empty for most of the previous months. I met the president of the Society of *Residentes* in the plaza, and she invited me over to her family home (the same one in which I would later go on to rent a room). 'You've got to enjoy it!' she said enthusiastically, 'you've got to get yourself to miss it.' (*'Hay que gozar; hay que echarse de menos.'*) She repeated this last point, but did not elaborate. The idea of 'enjoying' the fiesta clearly referred to the pleasures of drinking and seeing everyone all gathered in one place. Indeed, around the plaza knots of *residentes* were happily greeting each other and catching up on what they had missed in each other's lives since the last fiesta. However, the phrase '*hay que echarse de menos*' was more opaque. In straightforward translation, to *echar de menos* is to miss something or to have lost something. From context, it seemed that the head of the *residentes* was experiencing the town through the anticipation of missing it later. Her own absence from the place, and her subsequent recall of the sensation of being there, were a central part of her engagement with it in the present.

Michael Lambek, in his work on memory and its uses, attempts to broaden out Western conceptions of memory as a tool of recall which can only be evaluated in terms of accuracy or inaccuracy. This 'objectifiable [...] discrete, transactable and even commodifiable' conceptualisation of memory ignores the motivations and affective qualities of memory: its intentions and justifications. Memory, in this one-dimensional sense, is a thing about which we can discover the truth and which can be right or wrong.

However, Lambek's preferred approach

... situates memory in time and sees it as a function of social relationships, in part a mutual affirmation of past interaction, in part the traces of our introjection of one another [...] Memory in this model is less a completely private yet potentially objective phenomenon stored within the mind and capable of remaining there than it is activated implicitly or explicitly between people, a confirmation of the sense of continuity (caring) and discontinuity (mourning) that each person experiences in their interaction with others...more intersubjective and dialogical than exclusively individual, more act (remembering) than object and more ongoing engagement than passive absorption and playback (239).

In this sense, the wish of the *residente* to miss the town while still there and to base her experience on missing it, and indeed missing herself as part of the town, reflects the importance of her socially embedded self and relationship with the town and the others who came there during the fiesta. Her engagement with the town and with the fiesta happening in it consisted of saturating her memory with the pleasurable sensation of being surrounded by friends, family and celebration. '*Hay que gozar!*' Implied in this was future absence – her own absence from the town, and also the absence of the general social atmosphere in which she found herself. Following Lambek's idea of memory

as an intersubjective action which happens together with other people and in the context of a place or situation, the ambiguous statement 'you have to get yourself to miss it, you have to make yourself missed' (in the context of the plaza, full of people) embedded her in an unusually joyful time and place: her home town (usually quiet and dull), and the fiesta in full swing. The memory was to be captured, guarded and revived, and moreover it was to be put to use. The memory of the fiesta would be used later on to provoke a feeling of missing the town, of wishing to be there. Missing the town, after all, was the appropriate feeling to have about it, when one was away: it was much easier to miss the town when one's memory of it involved music and conviviality rather than emptiness or decay, or worse, the idea that the town was mostly inhabited now by peasants.

The three different kinds of celebration discussed here show various overlapping sets of social dynamics. In Carnival and in parts of the celebrations of San Agustín, people from the peasant communities around Tapacarí used the town as a neutral space to come together in dualistic games which knitted their communities together in a ritual relationship of friendly rivalry. In these games, the town featured as a backdrop due to its status as a neutral midpoint. The small celebration for 'the Virgin's birthday' showed how organisation of labour and food is centrally coordinated by one sponsoring family in order to share out food and *chicha* among the whole town and even among those who were not present. In the larger fiestas, San Agustín and the *Virgen de Dolores*, the town's usual quiet was overturned by an influx of visitors with family connections, who spent the weekend reconnecting with each other and with the town. Their engagement with the town was different to the productive or ritual engagement of the peasants, though: by visiting during the fiesta, they were able to reminisce in the company of their peers, and avoided the distasteful prospect of the town when it was empty.

Conclusion

This thesis addresses some gaps in the literature on political decentralisation in Bolivia, ethnic identity in the rural Andes and how the traces of past hierarchies are still visible in the present – and resisted when present. It does so particularly by looking at spatiality and movement. Through the material presented it is possible to get an insight into how political changes such as municipalisation interact with pre-existing traditions of social organisation, in places where the two coexist. It also demonstrates that, far from being divided into 'two Bolivias', at least in the Cochabamba mountain valleys people who might self-describe in different ways on a census form nonetheless live closely together in closely interdependent relationships. The high degree to which Bolivia has become urbanised in the last 50 years may account for the increased distance between people from indigenous backgrounds and people who claim not to be: this social distance can be observed in people who have migrated from Tapacarí and return only periodically. While current townspeople deal pragmatically and sometimes affectionately with indigenous and peasant people every day, their relatives in the city no longer have this kind of prosaic contact. Upon returning for the annual fiesta, they once again find themselves surrounded by extended family and people who, like themselves, lead a comfortable life in the city rather than remaining in the countryside. The fiestas and other commemorative acts provide former townspeople with opportunities to revive the glorious past of the town, whether imagined or not, and to reinforce the distinction with which they regard themselves as *tapacareños*. The acts and sensations of visiting the town form a set of memory-practices which not only recreate the visitors' relationship with the town but also their understanding of their position in relation to it and the 'others' who continue to live there. By not visiting the town at any other time, they are able to ignore the way that the houses and streets are now populated mostly by peasants. At other times, the poor material condition of the town is blamed on the new influx of peasants, who, townspeople complain, do not know how to take care of the town spaces properly. At other times the poverty and isolation of the town is blamed on the

municipal government, which, it is claimed, has 'abandoned' it. Very little blame, however, is directed at the people who have left, either for abandoning the town in the first place or for allowing their houses to be used by *compadres* in their absence, thus facilitating the presence of peasants and changing the character of the town overall.

Blame aside, the departure of the middle classes from Tapacarí is salient for a number of social reasons. First among this is the creation, by their absence, of new spaces for local indigenous and peasant people to strengthen inter-community relations and diversify their livelihoods. In the absence of the owners, long-term, semi-authorised occupation of town houses is easier. Having access to houses in town means having access to a horizontally organised barter market at which to exchange products with other peasants while bypassing the cash economy, and also access to transport to take agricultural products (and labour) to the city and beyond. Control over these transport routes is key to the emergence or maintenance of a contemporary elite, and this in itself signals a change in the nature of domination: rather than commanding labour or tribute from subalterns under threat of violence or eviction, control consists of being able to limit movement. The possibility of uninterrupted movement between economic 'niches' is a critical part of the survival tactics of indigenous peasants in Tapacarí. The centrality of movement to contemporary indigenous lives is both congruent with a pre-Hispanic logic of movement as engagement with the world, including exploitation of multiple economic or ecological niches, and a contradiction of racist imaginings of peasants as backwards, stolid people linked permanently to their lands. It is therefore better to consider peasant migration from the country not as a simple matter of land shortages but also as a strategy for securing a foothold in several 'economic niches', exploiting the possibilities for different kinds of work and trading. This strategic settlement expands the possibilities for autonomy and self-sufficiency by minimising the need to trade through intermediaries in the town. I do not advocate a literal interpretation of Murra's archipelago model being updated to the present day, but rather suggest its use as a device for understanding the pattern

and aims of migration from Tapacarí on the part of peasants, whose products and money are channelled back to their families. Couples and individuals who have moved from Tapacarí to different places such as Quillacollo and Chapare often continue being politically active in the peasant trade union, marching on behalf of their parents in protests, and acting as conduits for information when they return to their villages for Carnival. In addition, their homes serve as stopping points for family members who travel through carrying goods or ideas. This contrasts with the often unidirectional migration of young people from the town, who go to the city in search of education, a professional career and social advancement. This success, and dedication to a career, contrasts with the casualised and flexible labour adopted by peasants, and means that they are less able and inclined to visit their families in the town, except for the mandated once-a-year visit during the fiesta. If indeed farmers in Tapacarí are devoted to the lands they farm and use them as a base on which to live, they are also curious and adventurous. Young women as much as young men talk of their wish to see more of Bolivia and the world, and the strategies they intend to use to do so. This contrasts with a tendency observed by Beverly Skeggs (1997) that working-class people in the UK are perceived as socially static, in order to highlight the contrast between them and the progressive and mobile middle classes. In a similar way, while the strong link between indigenous people and land has good historical foundations and has also been an important part of indigenous peasant social movements, it is also a perception which is used to create an image of the unchanging nature of the rural peasantry and to set it against middle-class self-presentations of being dynamic and progressive. It is also true that people from indigenous peasant backgrounds lead mobile, flexible lives picking up work where they can and not always working in agriculture. This can be understood as a 'tactic' for resistance as described by de Certeau: contingent, flexible, and looking for ways around existing strategies or structures of repression. In this case the resistance is a question of economic and cultural survival. This mobile and flexible pattern of settlement and labour does not always diminish their sense of themselves as indigenous, or peasants: rather, it enables them to maintain links with family and community and to return when needed for harvests

or for festivals, thus continuing to play an important if occasional part in the lives of their communities. Therefore, a de-territorialisation of our understanding of indigeneity is in order: ethnic identities should be understood not only as being constituted by descent and kin relations but also formed in relation to other people of different backgrounds. At the same time, it is important to understand the spatial element of ritual and political action. The town provides a 'hinge' or focus point for people in surrounding communities to meet in ritual interactions as well as socially and commercially. During Carnival, the town occupies the centre ground, sometimes called *chawpi* or *taypi*, a space of encounter where the conflict between two moieties (or four sub-parts of two moieties) gives rise to continued existence. The conflict in this case takes the form of a kind of colourful mock-fighting between people from different villages. This pattern of dualistic interaction, *tinku*, appears throughout the Andes and has been written about in various places: here, with the focus on the town where it is played out, we see the neutrality of the town when it comes to conceptions of belonging to communities or moieties. In addition, the use of the town as a venue, and the fact that it is fuller and more lively at Carnival than almost any time of year apart from during the annual fiesta, shows that its spatial position within indigenous traditions is more important now than the imposition of civil order that the town presents through its streets and plaza. That is, the town is now more of an indigenous stopover and midpoint than it is an economic or political centre.

In addition to describing rituals and other spectacular events, this thesis covers small details of coexistence, in houses, workplaces and public space. It illustrates how closely people from different ethnic and class backgrounds live and work together, and how the inequality and racism which structure these encounters is perpetuated and resisted. By using a traditional ethnographic method of long-term, engaged fieldwork, it is possible to enter into and observe these daily exchanges and to extrapolate out to wider concerns of inclusion, migration and citizenship. Likewise, because of the detailed nature of the research, it can provide ground for broader analyses

of the subjects in question. Some indications of possibilities for future research follow.

Tapacarí, rich in history and diversity, is a place about which much more remains to be said. The town itself, precariously positioned between four rivers and yet still in existence, invites historical research which builds on that done by Brooke Larson and Rosario León, looking at how the indigenous groups of the eighteenth century gradually persisted and took the form of the *ayllus* and peasant communities in the highland areas now. Important events in the history of the town and province, such as the agrarian reform of 1953 which catalysed middle-class flight from the town, have yet to be studied in depth. Was it the case, as Rockefeller (2010) imagined in Potosí, that towns became even more entrenched zones of *mestizo* dominance following the reform, when *patrones* had to leave their estates and all gathered in one place? Or did the *patrones* of Tapacarí simply go to the city and leave everything behind, taking with them the power to invest and make the town grow?

Fifty-four years on, the effect of the 1953 reform was still current and changing. While the family of some landowners complained that it had meant that they had lost everything, in at least one case, a former *patrón* continued to hold large parcels of land and refused to sell them to anyone, charging rents in the form of shares of produce and livestock. In 2007, the Gandarillas family in Tikira, near Tapacarí, were finally successful in a long campaign to convince their former *patrón* to sell them some of the lands he held, but did not use. Why then, and not before? I asked. The explanation they offered was that 'the law arrived'. 'There is a law, they say, from before,' they explained, 'and it seems like a year, two years ago, the law arrived here. The *patrones* had everything before but now they can't be having everything.'

This explanation contains within it an evocation of the spatial and temporal distance between Tapacarí and the state, as well as urban society. A law might be made elsewhere, but until its

'arrival' in Tapacarí it existed only as an abstract notion without concrete expression. This prompts the question of not only why a law took fifty years to 'arrive', but also how the political changes of 2006-7 built on the previous, incomplete revolutions of 1952 and even 1994. What was it about 2007 that meant that a reform carried out fifty years earlier finally began to take effect, in the case of one small community where the *patrón* had held out against change? Were the indigenous families who petitioned the *patrón* for access to buy land emboldened by the new government in La Paz and that of their own local mayor, who was an indigenous peasant like themselves (and, in fact, their cousin)? Or did the *patrón* simply relinquish his land in the knowledge that he had no further use for it? This central tension underpins much of the material of this thesis: Tapacarí is now a peasant-dominated town, but this is so because of the absence of the erstwhile ruling class, who have now gone to the city where they lead more prosperous and comfortable lives than they could out in the province. Peasants, meanwhile, continue to migrate between several 'economic niches' in regional rural economies, relying on kin networks, access to land and casual wage labour. The entrenchment of advantage and inequality occurs in economic, as well as in political ways, and a detailed profile of families who have made the transition from rural elites to comfortable urban bourgeoisie would say much about mechanisms for the reproduction of power through generations, and the ways in which former *patrones* have managed to retain the privileges of their position even having moved away from the country. The present analysis shows only their presence in fiestas or sporadic visits, but the Society of *Residentes Tapacareños* also held regular celebrations in Quillacollo, emphasising their heritage and distinction from the indigenous peasants still living in Tapacarí.

The brief description of political activity by the *sindicato campesino* offered here also gives only partial coverage of a mechanism for organisation and accountability which could provide much material for further research. The decision-making process, internal procedures and authority of the *sindicato campesino* have been discussed by Delgado et al (2003) but not interrogated in detail, and

a study of the spaces in which the *sindicato* coexists with the *ayllu* in Tapacarí would provide a useful contribution to understanding of organisational traditions. *Tapacareño* indigenous peasants had channels of political access and influence through the rural trade union and their high degree of organisation, as shown in their participation in organised protests and the leadership of the municipal government, which strongly reflected the trade union leadership. However, the daily business of government as carried out by civil servants remained remote and sometimes inaccessible. This demonstrates the limits of local government when faced with difficult working conditions, as well as the tensions which persist between well educated urban people likely to get good local government jobs, and the population they serve.

In addition to considerations of government reach and the presence of the state, the present work also gives a view of a town where power relations between indigenous and non-indigenous are changing incrementally but which still reflect old patterns of domination. Both strategies of domination and tactics of resistance resist simple classification, due to the ambiguity of interpersonal relationships. People from different backgrounds may be affectionate or antagonistic at different times, conditioned by different circumstances. The boundaries within which the presence of indigenous people was accepted, in homes or in public space, shifted according to occasion. What is clear, however, is that not everyone in Tapacarí was indigenous or even a peasant. There was a well established middle class which had been present in the town for several generations, and although many of them had gone to the city and only returned periodically, their existence is a reminder that ethnic identities cannot be easily mapped onto divisions between urban and rural. In much the same way that indigenous migrants in periurban areas have created a space in the public understanding for urban indigeneity, it is necessary to remember that rural societies are also variegated and unequal. The material herein shows some of the ways in which people from different ethnic and class origins coexist in situations of great intimacy, while still retaining difference. This provides a counterpoint to studies which focus on one place or one group of people

and their internal group dynamics or interaction with the state, of which there are already many.

It also offers a snapshot of rural life in the wider political context of the first year of the first Morales/García Linera administration, in which the revindication of rural and indigenous identity was becoming a political reality. In Tapacarí, not only had genuine economic power left with the town elites who departed after the agrarian reform, but peasant leaders active in the *sindicato campesino* now had much more ready access to state power than those who had for years exercised power over them. Likewise, inspired by re-nationalisation of the gas, peasant people in Tapacarí were mounting campaigns to reclaim the local natural resources which they said had been taken from them by deceit. This action was explicitly described as 'taking back what belonged to our grandparents'. The person of Evo Morales, as important as his policies, provided a figure of admiration and aspiration for many people of different social classes, but among the rural indigenous peasants of Tapacarí, he was also regarded as both a brother and a family head, to be obeyed but also controlled through the consensus politics that emerged through meetings. Members of the *sindicato campesino* leadership, many of whom had participated in large mobilisations from the Water War onwards, expressed a sense of pride in having contributed to shaping Bolivia's national politics through their actions, and likewise remained ready to mobilise when called on by MAS or when the '*bases*' demanded. In mass mobilisations, the link between rural community and urban community members was retained, and people who had moved to the city sometimes marched in place of their parents. The archipelago of economic activity and settlement therefore also provided an organising tactic for political activity too.

At heart, this is a thesis about the failure of bureaucratic attempts to control space and economic organisation for colonial ends. The town of Tapacarí was given significance by being a *reducción*, an outpost of Spanish 'civilisation' in the countryside set to disrupt indigenous patterns of landholding, economic organisation and community cohesion. Likewise, the progressive political

tendencies of the 1950s, in relabelling indigenous people as 'peasants', built on a liberal narrative of history in which cultural and ethnic identity would become secondary to class solidarity. However, as the Katarista movement and others in the 1980s affirmed, indigenous cultural identity would not be left by the wayside: moreover, the end of the era of the 'permitted Indian' in the 1990s, when multiculturalist reforms accompanied punitive neoliberal economic policies, demonstrated that acknowledging indigenous identity and even social organisation was secondary to meaningful inclusion of popular organisations in political spaces and above all, economic justice, including sovereignty over natural resources. However, although the neoliberal multiculturalism of the 1990s is often strongly criticised, in Tapacarí the effect of the Law of Popular Participation was socially transformative in that it took control over resources away from the town elite, who spent their budgets only in the town, and channelled it instead to the small hamlets in which the majority of people in Tapacarí live. Building on the *sindicato campesino* leadership, the municipal government was able to be accountable and useful to normal indigenous peasant *tapacareños* in a way which had not been previously seen. Had this space for political engagement not been opened up by Popular Participation, Tapacarí may not have had such a high degree of mobilisation or means of dealing with the State.

The decay of the town of Tapacarí and the loss of townspeople to the city, compared to the continued survival and community cohesion of the indigenous communities around it, is a strong reminder of the resilience of indigenous social organisation. It disrupts, even reverses, the conventional flow of nostalgia: instead of an indigenous past being worn away by *mestizo* hegemony, Tapacarí has a *mestizo* past which has faded into memory, and a vigorous indigenous present and future.

Glossary of Spanish and Quechua terms

<i>ahijado</i>	godchild, child of <i>compadre</i> or <i>comadre</i>
<i>alcalde</i>	mayor
<i>alcaldía</i>	municipal government office
<i>altiplano</i>	high arid plateau
<i>ampliado</i>	open public meeting at which local government practice is discussed
<i>Apus</i>	tutelary mountain spirits
<i>awayu</i>	square carrying-cloth, often woven by indigenous women
<i>ayllu</i>	pre-Colombian Andean unit of extended kinship
<i>base</i>	peasant union membership
<i>bien enternado</i>	dressed in fancy suits
<i>birlocha</i>	woman of rural origins who does not wear indigenous or <i>cholita</i> clothes but whose appearance and mannerisms give her away as being from the lower classes. Paceaña version of the Cochabambino word ' <i>chota</i> '
<i>buena llegada</i>	welcome home party, usually from military service
<i>Caja Nacional de Salud</i>	national health service
<i>camión</i>	lorry
<i>campesino</i>	peasant
<i>cantón</i>	republican subdivision of a province. Tapacarí has five
<i>cargo</i>	duty, job, position of leadership
<i>casa comunal</i>	public boarding house
<i>casa de campo</i>	cottage
<i>casero</i>	either pertaining to the house, homemade, or a preferred partner in a commercial exchange
<i>central provincial</i>	peasant union leader for the province
<i>ch'alla</i>	ritual pouring libations of alcohol on the ground
<i>chicha</i>	corn beer
<i>chichera</i>	woman whose livelihood is brewing corn beer
<i>chichería</i>	place serving <i>chicha</i> , may be rustic or upmarket
<i>cholita</i>	woman of peasant origins who wears an unvarying outfit including braided hair, a <i>pollera</i> skirt and hat
<i>cholo</i>	man of peasant or rural origins living in the city
<i>chota</i>	see <i>birlocha</i>
<i>cocalero</i>	coca grower

<i>comadre</i>	mother of one's godchildren or sponsor of one's children, fictive kinswoman
<i>compadrazgo</i>	godparenthood
<i>compadre</i>	father of one's godchildren or sponsor of one's children, fictive kinsman
<i>compadrito</i>	affectionate diminutive version of <i>compadre</i>
<i>comunario</i>	member of indigenous community or labourer drawn from same
<i>contraparte laboral</i>	physical labour, given for free as 'collaboration' in a local development project
<i>corregidor</i>	colonial-era title given to town official
<i>criollo</i>	creole, originally used to mean Spaniards born in the New World, now often used to refer to the white elites or to 'folk' music or cooking
<i>cueca</i>	pan-South American folk dance commonly danced in Cochabamba
<i>cultura propia</i>	'one's own culture'
<i>dirigente</i>	community leader
<i>encomienda</i>	land grant
<i>enlace</i>	satellite office
<i>feria</i>	fair
<i>formación</i>	training
<i>fruta seca</i>	literally dried fruit; in this case, a kind of shortbread made for special occasions
<i>funcionario público</i>	civil servant
<i>hacendado</i>	owner of an <i>hacienda</i>
<i>hacienda</i>	extensive rural estate
<i>huayño</i>	circular, rhythmic dance tune, often sung or played on cane flutes
<i>intendente</i>	mayor's local representative and enforcer
<i>khari-khari</i>	fat-sucking vampire who assumes the guise of a white man, also known as <i>kharisiri</i> or <i>pishtaco</i>
<i>loq'o</i>	domed hat worn by peasants, made of stiffened sheep hide
<i>madrina</i>	godmother
<i>MAS</i>	<i>Movimiento al Socialismo</i> (Movement Towards Socialism) party
<i>mestizo</i>	'mixed blood', denotes someone who is neither indigenous nor white
<i>mink'a</i>	labour in exchange for payment or for part of the results of the labour
<i>misa</i>	Mass, or sometimes appropriations of Mass in indigenous

	ritual contexts such as the <i>q'owa</i> offering
<i>mit'a</i>	Inca system of state-organised migration and labour, later adapted by the Spanish to describe their own forced labour system in which Indians were obliged to serve
<i>MNR</i>	<i>Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario</i> (National Revolutionary Movement), party which oversaw the 1952 revolution and agrarian reform and subsequently became institutionalised as the default party of government, a right-wing party
<i>mote</i>	boiled corn kernels
<i>municipio</i>	municipality
<i>oficial mayor</i>	municipal chief executive
<i>originario</i>	First Nation, aboriginal, non-stigmatising political word for indigenous
<i>Pachamama</i>	earth deity
<i>partido</i>	(1) political party (2) colonial administrative division of land
<i>pasante</i>	sponsor
<i>patrón</i>	large landowner, rich landlord, member of the landowning classes, boss
<i>pensión</i>	small café
<i>pillu</i>	decorative 'shield' made of dyed fleece used in Carnival games
<i>playa</i>	'beach', in this sense the ruined part of Tapacarí on the riverbed below the town's current location
<i>pollera</i>	pleated skirt worn by <i>cholitas</i> and indigenous women
<i>Primer Viernes de Q'owa</i>	'First Friday' ritual of burning an offering to propitiate the gods
<i>pueblo</i>	town
<i>puna</i>	high, grassy plains with a cold climate
<i>q'owa</i>	sweet-smelling herb, burned in an offering
<i>quintal</i>	hundredweight sack
<i>Redactor</i>	scribe, secretary
<i>reducción</i>	colonial-era town intended to centralise indigenous communities
<i>residente</i>	former resident, one who belongs to a place but no longer lives there
<i>sikuri</i>	cane flute played during rainy season
<i>sindicato</i>	trade union
<i>solicitud</i>	written request
<i>subcentral</i>	subdivision level of peasant union organising, comprising

	up to half a dozen small villages, or the person with responsibility for representing same
<i>subprefecto</i>	'Deputy Governor', symbolic authority role subordinate to departmental governor
<i>surcofundio</i>	shortage of land
<i>tambo</i>	Inca-era waystation for messengers and guests
<i>tapacareño</i>	someone from the town or province of Tapacarí
<i>técnico</i>	technician, low-grade civil servant
<i>tinku</i>	ritual battle fought at Carnival
<i>Todos Santos</i>	All Saints'
<i>t'ojpey</i>	literally, to bundle up; in this case, a packed lunch
<i>Toro Pujllay</i>	bullfight between two bulls, arranged as a tournament
<i>toro tinku</i>	see <i>Toro Pujllay</i>
<i>vecino</i>	<i>mestizo</i> town resident, not indigenous
<i>de vestido</i>	woman who does not wear <i>cholita</i> dress
<i>Virgen de Dolores</i>	patron saint of Tapacarí, Our Lady of Sorrows
<i>wajtin</i>	weighted pendant made of braided bark on the end of a rope with which to hit people during Carnival games
<i>wajtinaku</i>	Carnival game of hitting each other with a <i>wajtin</i>
<i>wiñapu</i>	fermented corn or mix of wheat and corn used to make <i>chicha</i>

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