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Indigeneity as a base for rural development

A case study of the indigenous community Ramada, eastern Bolivia

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Semester/year: VT/2020
Course code: SGEM08

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Abstract

Central to the field of agrarian political economy, is rural development and capitalism's advancement in the countryside and its consequences for the peasantry, 'the agrarian question'. With the present case study, I examine the interplay between social relations of production and agrarian change in eastern Bolivia. Using the case study of Ramada, a small indigenous community, this dissertation investigates how their livelihoods are affected by their local administration, the territorial unit TCO Turubó, by adopting a framework of agrarian political economy. The purview of this thesis is local, however, studying class dynamics in Ramada is used to analyse how the community interacts with and how it is situated within a broader context of social relations of production, between actors and across scale. Fieldwork conducted in and around Ramada provided the key empirical data for analysis, including household interviews and interviews with key informants. The main results conclude that unequal resource distribution within the TCO leads to a class differentiation process between communities. This is something the TCO does not account for in its very foundational terms and legislation in its administration of the indigenous peoples. Moreover, the TCO reproduces essentialist and romanticising ideas of indigeneity, which do not correspond to the challenges the community faces or the future they envision in terms of secure livelihoods. The third key finding is that only through precarious wage employment are they able to reproduce themselves as labour and capital, processes the TCO is meant to shield them from. Although the research is specific to Bolivia, it illustrates the usefulness of adopting an agrarian political economy framework on the local scale, for analysing social relations of production more broadly. The results can be seen as a basis for future research on the interplay between rural development and class dynamics.

Keywords: *Bolivia, TCOs, Indigenous peoples, Agrarian question, Rural development, Agrarian political economy*

Word count: 19,509

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people who took their time to talk to me throughout the department of Santa Cruz; you truly made this thesis possible. A special thanks to Ramada; for sharing your houses, your food, and your thoughts and dreams with me, I am beyond grateful and honored.

I also want to thank my family, especially my parents and brother; I would not have made it this far without your endless love and support. Far too many have stood by me to try and cover it here, from Bolivia, to Canada, Europe, and Denmark - a heartfelt thank you to all my wonderful friends. A special thanks needs to go out to Lucasito, for being part of my La Paz adventures. Also to Klara, who provided me with sanity in the first few confusing and exhausting days of my fieldwork. Thanks to Anwenn, for sharing your insights and feedback during the ever baffling and exhausting time of writing this thesis. To my academic partner in crime and incredible friend, Mauwee, the biggest thanks of all. We followed each other's journeys since RUC, both on and off campus, and you still continue to inspire and amaze me. And to Mauricio, thank you for supporting me and being my rock, always.

Lastly, I want to thank my supervisor Mads for your brilliant supervision throughout this entire process. Thank you for sharing your enthusiasm, expertise and nerdy-interest into the world of agrarian studies.

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List of Abbreviations

ABT	Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra / Forest and Land Inspection and Social Control Authority
APU	Agricultural Production Units
AQ	Agrarian Question
FS	Food Sovereignty
Ha	Hectare, hectares
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística / National Statistics Institute
INRA	El Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria / The National Institute for Agrarian Reform
MAS	Movimiento al Socialismo / Movement for Socialism
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PFPA	Permanent Forestry Production Area
SC	Santa Cruz, department
SCS	Santa Cruz de la Sierra, department capital
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network (Bolivia)
SEF	Social and Economical Function
SJ	San José, municipality capital
SJC	San José de Chiquitos, municipality
TCO	Tierra Comunitaria de Origen / Community Land of Origin
TIOC	Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino / Indigenous Native Peasant Territory
WB	World Bank

At the time of writing 1 US dollar = 6.92 bolivianos

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1.Introduction

Daniela sat opposite of me in a red plastic chair under the palm leaf roof of her house; she took time off from her daily housework to talk to me. It is late January and in the middle of the harvesting season. This year is less busy, but it is only because their crops are not growing as they should. It worries Daniela and the rest of the community.

I had been in the Ramada for four days, it was the last evening of my first of two visits. We had just finished dinner and we watched the children play in front of the house; dogs, chickens, and piglets were roaming around between our legs. The sun sets early in these parts, and even though it was evening, the temperature was well above 30°C. Her husband Carlos was coming home at any time. He was out working on a soy farm and had been gone for more than two weeks. Even though he was needed in his fields, now was the time when he could earn the extra money they needed. Their community school is understaffed, so this year they were sending two of their five children to school in San José, a town more than 70 km away. It is expensive. It is a small community, without any businesses or companies, so the men have to travel long distances to find jobs, while the women stay at home and take care of the house. This year Carlos and many of the other men in the community have to take every odd job they can find to earn enough money for their families.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

“But what if the forms of capitalism, including industrialisation (to the extent that it is proceeding), in poorer countries today are incapable of generating sufficient and sufficiently secure, employment to provide “a living wage” to the great majority?”

(Bernstein, 2004: 205)

In the opening vignette above, we meet Daniela and her family, who live in a small community named Ramada, which is home to 44 indigenous Chiquitano families. With only one dirt road leading to their land, it is located in the middle of a tropical forest in the eastern part of Bolivia, in the Santa Cruz department (Figure 1). It is a pristine place, exuding

the hospitality and laidbackness the people living in this region are famous for. They farm their small-sized fields manually and without chemicals. And even though Ramada is located in San José de Chiquitos, one of the municipalities that experience the most deforestation in the country (Andersen & Ledezma, 2019), it seemed as if those forces had not reached the community. Bolivia is the world's 9th largest soy producer. It is the country's 4th largest export product worth more than US\$ 531 million (OEC, 2020). The production is almost exclusively based in the department of Santa Cruz. But not in Ramada. Here they grow a few selected crops; corn, beans and fruits, and animals for their own consumption, but nothing else. The apparent different stages of agrarian transition between neighboring properties and territories in this municipality are what sparked the idea for this thesis: what does it mean for the local population, when hyper intensive agro-industry, and small-scale, subsistence farming exist side by side? What part does the local administration of an indigenous territory play in this?

The capitalist, mechanised development of agriculture was supposed to release inefficient and uncompetitive labour required for industrial development. In a natural progression, people would move from rural to urban, from farm to factory (Li, 2017: 1249). It is over a century since Marx first coined what came to be the agrarian question. Yet, in our current context of globalisation, neoliberal policies and agro-industries, it seems more relevant than ever to ask these questions; what happens in the rural areas when it transforms into a capitalist production, what happens to the peasantry? (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009).

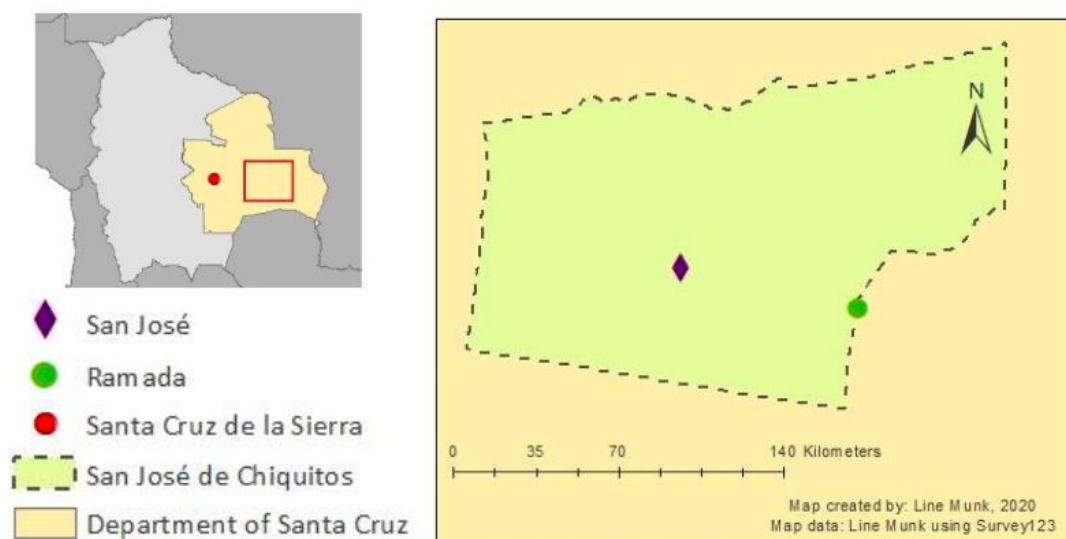


Figure 1: Study area with department and municipal capital indicated | Developed by author, 2020

Following Bernstein's rather provocative statement above, it seems as if capitalism has failed to provide a living wage to the global majority.

Focussing on Ramada, an indigenous community in the territory Turubó, this dissertation aims to contribute to the field of agrarian change and how this intersects with contemporary social relations of production. The following research question and sub-question will guide this study:

What are the implications of being part of the indigenous territory TCO Turubó for the inhabitants of the community Ramada?

In what way does the TCO institution Turubó permit or prevent the members of the community Ramada from transitioning into a contemporary capitalist agricultural production? And how does this affect their livelihoods?

This paper, therefore, aims to provide an empirical exploration of the organisational workings of a TCO and how it affects the livelihoods of the people in Ramada. This question must engage with a fundamental discussion of development in rural areas, and its consequences for the peasantry, the agrarian question. Any analysis of capitalist development should consider class relations as a key point of departure (Bernstein, 2010), which forms the grounds of my case study. Based on fieldwork conducted during three weeks in January/February this year, this thesis employs a historical materialist approach to the data. Here I investigate the social relations of production and class dynamics taking place in Ramada. This will help unpack and situate this community into broader mechanisms (historical and contemporary) of social and economic differentiation and exclusion processes found in the rural areas of eastern Bolivia (Kay, 2015; McKay, 2017).

1.2 Thesis Structure

Following this chapter is the conceptual framework used in this thesis, the agrarian question, which is situated within its historical roots and contemporary debates. Chapter three will place my case study within the Bolivian context of agrarian reforms and transformations and the development of the TCOs. Chapter four will describe the methods used to collect and analyse data. Chapter five will begin with an analysis of the class differentiation in Ramada. Then, under the headings of “farming”, “forestry”, “migration” and “climate change and deforestation,” chapter five will thematically describe and analyse the data, leading to chapter six: a discussion of the results concerning the posed research question and sub-question. The conclusion will summarise the key findings, limitations and usefulness of the framework, and suggest scope for potential future research.

2. Conceptual Framework

The following chapter outlines the conceptual framework used in this thesis to answer the aforementioned research questions. I use the transition of peasant farming into industrial capitalism and the newfound role of the peasantry in that mode of production as a starting point. The agrarian question (AQ), as the framework is termed, is primarily based on scholars such as Akram-Lodhi and Kay, who presents the historical roots of the AQ found in the classic works of Marx, Engels, and Kautsky; and Bernstein and McMichael, two of the leading voices within the contemporary AQ debate. The chapter is divided into four sections: the first section traces the historical roots of the AQ to the origin of capitalism. The second section situates the AQ in the contemporary debate and highlights how the AQ will be used to guide the upcoming analysis. The third section aims to contextualise this case study and the relevance of the AQ in a Latin American and Bolivian context. Lastly, the fourth section seeks to outline the central notions and concepts used in combination with the AQ in the upcoming analysis.

2.1 Capitalism and the Origin of the Agrarian Question

Marx traces the emergence of an agrarian capital to 15th and 16th-century Feudalistic England. Feudalism, as a mode of production, was expressed through class relations between landed property and peasant labour. The landlords appropriated the surplus produced by the peasants through various rent forms (Bernstein, 2010: 27). The peasant class cultivated and owned their own land but, at the start of the 16th century, the feudal landlords drove them off their properties, which Marx terms 'primitive accumulation' (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 181-182). Based on Marx's example, Akram-Lodhi and Kay underline that: "*primitive accumulation is, in this sense, not accumulation at all, but rather the conversion of the pre-capitalist means of production into capital and the consequent establishment of the capital-labour relation.*" (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 182). In the classic English case, this meant a separation of the producer, the peasant, from their means of production, the land, hence creating an expropriated, landless class of rural waged labourers, now 'free' to sell their labour-power (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 182).

Bernstein terms this 'mechanisms of dispossession', whereby the commodification of land, and hence expropriation, lays the very foundation of the capitalist process (Bernstein, 2010: 28). Although far from being the only one, the case from feudalistic England is now considered the classic example of how agrarian transition contributes '*to the accumulation necessary for industrialisation*' (Bernstein, 2006: 451).

When engaging with Marx's understanding of capitalism, it is necessary to emphasise its fluidity and dynamic nature. David Harvey strongly advocates a dialectic interpretation of Marx's method and approach, arguing that we have to take "*into account the unfolding and dynamic relations between elements within a capitalist system*" (Harvey, 2018: 11-12), to understand the transformative dynamism of capital (ibid: 12-13). Harvey derives notions of fluidity and movement from within Marx's method. Hence, Marx's understanding of how capital works is not a sudden shift from one mode of production or society to another; rather a gradual and, at times, contradictory process that evolves differently in time and across space (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 182).

2.1.1 New Path(s)

After Marx's original inquiry, the 1890s saw the appearance of the AQ as a field within political economy. This was marked by Friedrich Engels' publication *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* in 1894 and later Karl Kautsky's *The Agrarian Question* and Vladimir Lenin's *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, both published in 1899. All three cases take their point of departure in different societies and found capitalism to take different trajectories from Marx's original English case study (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009: 7).

Friedrich Engels saw a European market which, as a result of imperialism, was increasingly integrated into a globalised food system. This meant that European producers could not compete with the cheap imported grain, leading to dispossession of the peasants from their land. This tendency did not, however, take place in England or Prussia because of the presence of large-scale agriculture, hence a capitalist production (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009: 7). To Engels, labour was at the core of the AQ in Germany and France and, consequently, his primary focus was on the political implications of the transition (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 185).

Vladimir Lenin saw the process of capitalist industrialisation unfold and its effect on the Russian countryside in the 1880s. This included commodification of agricultural production, which ended pre-capitalist labour regimes and created the need for a labour force of wage-labourers. There was a rise in productivity-enhancing technologies in the rural economy and agriculture and an increased import of cheaper goods from urban centers. This, combined with early capitalist industrialisation, created the right conditions for the establishment of agrarian capital and accumulation, which again contributed to further industrialisation (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009: 8; 2010a: 186). Based on his experiences in Russia, Lenin argued that a stratum of three social classes was present in the countryside; rich, middle and poor peasants¹. The rich were the capitalist producers, able to accumulate a surplus and invest in expanding their production to the point of needing wage labour. The middle peasants would, eventually, either succeed and become capitalist producers themselves, or become part of the proletariat. The last strata of poor peasants are the rural proletariat, unable to meet their own reproduction from farming and destined to work as wage labourers (Lenin, 1964; Mann, 1990: 13).

As detailed by Karl Kautsky, the processes mentioned above created a need for surplus capital on the household level, which led to specialisation in agriculture to control the costs of production, resulting in a deepening dependence on the market to sell their products. Therefore, the peasants were unable to follow the ‘principles of capitalism’: *“expansion, innovation and a lowering of unit costs through scale of economies”* (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009: 8), and would instead work as wage labourers. This differentiation in the households’ productivity levels leads to the emergence of two distinct types of rural households *“[o]ne group produced for markets and accumulation, while the other strove to maintain subsistence in increasingly difficult circumstances”* (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 187). It also becomes clear that the now-exploited class is ‘free’ in Marx’s dual sense, free to sell their labour power to whom they want, and also free from the means of production (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009: 12; 2010a: 189-190).

Thus, we see how rural accumulation results in capital accumulation; the processes of change happening simultaneously with this new form of exploitation; and how capitalism

¹ In his publication in 1925, Soviet agrarian economist Alexander Chayanov was in direct opposition to Lenin’s class differentiation. Chayanov argued that peasants belong to a coherent group, differentiated based on the demographic cycle of the households, and not due to class formation (Bernstein 2009a; 2018; Narotzky, 2016).

and rural transformation takes different trajectories depending on the specific context (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010a: 195-196).

2.2 Contemporary Agrarian Question(s)

These classic investigations by Marx, Lenin and Kautsky propose a capital-centric reading of the AQ (Bernstein, 2006), being concerned with the development of rural areas and the fate of the peasantry² with the introduction of capitalism.

Today, the AQ remains highly relevant within contemporary debates and investigations in agrarian/peasant studies. In their two-part article (2010a; 2010b), Akram-Lodhi and Kay provide a thorough walkthrough of the origin and development of the AQ, upon which they identify not one but seven current variations. Beneath these questions are more or less sympathetic views to the pertinence of peasant agriculture and livelihoods in the 21st century, and how neoliberal politics and globalisation have changed the outlook of the AQ and further highlighted its relevance. I wish to examine the somewhat polarised positions of Henry Bernstein's (2006, 2009a, 2010, 2016) 'AQ of labour' and Philip McMichael's (2006, 2009, 2015) 'AQ of corporate food regime', as their debate highlights the very differences in the nature of an AQ in the 21st century.

McMichael argues that financialisation, supermarketisation, neoliberalism and a global food regime combined, foster a 'fetishisation' of commodities and accumulation in agriculture, and that this "subordinates a public good for private profit" (McMichael, 2009: 299). Furthermore, McMichael criticises how "*this food regime generates redundant populations and destabilizes social and ecological relationships*" (ibid: 300). He then proposes an AQ of food, one that simultaneously addresses the politicisation of food security and challenges the development narrative of agrarian transition. McMichael uses the global anti-capitalist movement *La Via Campesina* as an example of 'global agrarian resistance' and supports their view on food sovereignty "as an alternative model to farmers'

² The use and definition of the term 'peasant' and 'peasantry' continues to be a complex and non-settled debate in agrarian/peasant studies. Bearing my fieldwork in mind, it seems appropriate to use Bernstein's definition: "... the terms "peasant" and "peasantry" are best restricted to analytical rather than normative uses and to two kinds of historical circumstances: pre-capitalist societies, populated by mostly small- scale family farmers and processes of transition to capitalism." (Bernstein, 2010: 3-4).

rights to be ‘producers of society’” (McMichael, 2006: 475), thus localising control and access to resources to small-scale farmers.

Bernstein heavily criticises McMichael for trying to unite all “people of the land” into one, idealised, single class exploited by corporate capital, without recognising the heterogeneity of their specific local, regional or national processes of agrarian change or their specific rural class dynamics, histories and struggles (Bernstein, 2009a: 77; 2010: 120-121), which, going back to the origin of the AQ and Marx, was a crucial part of any inquiry into agrarian change. Bernstein criticises how this ‘peasant class’ in food sovereignty literature is portrayed as ‘capital’s other’, attributed with an ensemble of qualities such as principles of sustainability and visions of autonomy, diversity and cooperation (Bernstein, 2014: 1041). Bernstein argues that this romanticisation of ‘the peasant way’ obscures the complex and contradictory realities, when instead there is a need to combine a political sympathy “*with the critical inquiry necessary to adequate investigation, analysis and assessment*” (Bernstein, 2009a: 76). Furthermore, I argue, it also ignores the fluidity and movement in Marx’s method, which Harvey argues can be seen in the gradual and contradictory processes in the transformative dynamics of capital. In a later article, McMichael refutes this argument saying that ‘peasantness’ is a political rather than an analytical category, and used in a mobilisation on a ‘global mission’ (McMichael, 2015: 195; 199). Bernstein replies, that such acknowledgement remains gestural, stating that it impoverishes the understanding of the key drivers involved in any type of agrarian change and class formation (Bernstein, 2016: 642)³. Bernstein ends his critique of a homogenous global ‘peasant class’ by saying that “*in a capitalist world, understanding class dynamics should always be a point of departure and a central element of such analysis.*” (Bernstein, 2010: 123).

Bernstein instead advocates his own AQ of ‘fragmented classes of labour’ arguing that since the 1970s, globalisation has superseded the classic AQ of capital and marks a qualitative shift in agrarian class relations (Bernstein, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). He argues that the classic take on AQ has its limitations due to its original historical circumstances; industrialisation and international trade were some of the primary driving forces at the

³ Bernstein also criticises the ‘peasant way’ for not being able to feed the world’s growing and increasingly urban population, and how its advocates ignore this fact saying it is ‘yet to be resolved’ (Bernstein, 2009a: 76).

time, and not, unlike today, foreign direct investments, technological advances in transnational agribusiness industries and new forms of organisation and regulation of global commodity chains and specialised export production (Bernstein, 2006: 454-455; 2009a: 72). Furthermore, Bernstein argues, globalisation intensifies what he calls the fragmentation of classes of labour. "Classes of labour" refers to people who depend on selling their labour power for their own daily reproduction (Bernstein, 2006: 455). Fragmentation refers to the precarious circumstances under which classes of labour, especially in the global South, secure their daily reproduction that is: "... *insecure, oppressive and often scarce wage employment, often combined with a range of likewise precarious small-scale farming and insecure "informal sector" ("survival") activity, subject to its own forms of differentiation and oppression along intersecting lines of class, gender, generation, caste, and ethnicity.*" (ibid: 455). Furthermore, classes of labour are working 'across different sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural.' Bernstein continues, that all classes of the peasantry (following the Leninist class model) depend on 'activities and sources of income from outside their own farming' (Bernstein, 2009a: 73). Hence, it is in this crisis of reproduction that Bernstein identifies an AQ of labour.

Based on Lenin's rich, middle and poor peasants, Bernstein uses this stratum within contemporary classes of farmers. The strata of rich farmers are emergent capitalist farmers, who are able to accumulate surplus, expand their production and reproduce themselves as capital. The middle farmers can reproduce themselves as capital and labour on the same scale of consumption. And lastly the poor farmers are struggling to reproduce themselves as labour and capital. They are subject to simple reproduction squeeze, thus they often engage as wage labour (Bernstein, 2010: 104). These two last classes, poor and middle farmers, make up the aforementioned classes of labour. To undertake an analysis of class differentiation, Bernstein proposes four key political economy questions. Each refers to a specific aspect of the social relations of production and reproduction:

1. Who owns what?
2. Who does what?
3. Who gets what?
4. What do they do with it?

The first question is concerned with social relations of ownership and property; while the second is related to the social division of labour, and who perform and control which type of activities of social production and reproduction. The third question refers to the social division of the 'fruits of the labour' including both monetary and nonmonetary income. The last question examines how social relations of production and reproduction shape the social relations of consumption and accumulation (ibid: 22-24). I use the four questions to operationalise and frame interview questions and examine the relevant themes derived from my fieldwork material in my analysis.

2.3 The Bolivian Agrarian Question(s)

As we have seen in the two sections above, the classic AQ has taken new routes, and today's studies encompass themes such as land and resource dispossession, financialisation of food and agriculture, vulnerability and marginalisation, and the blurring of rural-urban relations (Fairbairn et al., 2014). In Latin America, studies concerning the AQ focus on the high levels of inequality, poverty and the 'quest for a "middle road" between state-led collectivisation and capitalist industrial agriculture that offers the rural poor a route to a better life' (Barham et al., 2011: 134). Through agrarian reforms and neoliberal policies, the Latin American rural economies and societies have undergone great transformation over the last century, and despite promises of change, inequality and poverty persist in the countryside (e.g., Kay, 2015; Vergara-Camus & Kay, 2017). Many Latin American countries are so-called export economies, meaning that their economy is made up of a large percentage of international trade, especially with high-value foods, including soy and beef (Watts, 2009), why the question on food sovereignty (FS), understandably, has received considerable attention. FS often implies the fight for or policy-making to ensure direct control over food production and consumption. The 'scale' of which this sovereignty is facilitated, on the national, regional or local level, continues to be at the centre of the contested debates in FS literature (McKay, Nehring & Walsh-Dilley, 2014: 1176).

The so-called pink tide of left-leaning governments in Latin America in the early 2000s meant a growing body of literature on the development of state-level FS efforts (e.g., in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia McKay, Nehring & Walsh-Dilley, 2014; e.g., in Ecuador and

Bolivia Tilzey, 2019). Most studies in Latin America concerned with the AQ and FS are based on the state-oriented macro-level. However, Isakson (2009) investigates the AQ and the role of peasant farmers in terms of FS based on empirical data from two villages in the Guatemalan highlands adopting a framework inspired by that of McMichael and La Vía Campesina. In general, most studies within this field in Latin America remain theoretical or on a macro-level and are rarely based on empirical material on the micro-level.

Besides the above-mentioned investigations into Bolivian FS, most publications within this field focus on land possessions and changes in social relations of production after country-wide Bolivian agrarian reforms (e.g., Kay, 2015; Kay & Urioste, 2007). Currently, studies focus on the macro-level, state-led FS programs, the agrarian reform in 1953, and 1996 (see Empirical Context) and do not go in-depth on community or household level. Furthermore, the question of the labour force within these agrarian transformations has received little academic attention, especially on the subject of ‘the processes of peasant differentiation in areas of colonization and small agricultural properties’ (Colque, 2014: 94 - own translation). Finally, the TCOs as administrative units remain an understudied field within Bolivia (Anthias, 2018). Thus, I intend to bridge this gap with the work of this thesis, by investigating the intersection and relevance of the AQ within an indigenous community and their class dynamics and place within the rural labour force by studying the household, micro-level within a community in a TCO.

2.4 Central Analytical Notions

The methodological approach guiding this study is agrarian political economy, which entails an investigation of the social relations and dynamics of production (Bernstien, 2010: 1). To undertake such an analysis, this section will outline the critical notions used in my study in combination with the debates surrounding the contemporary AQ(s) as previously presented.

‘Social relations of production’ is a central component in the framework that I draw upon, Walker concisely defines it as ‘the social conditions under which the human labour of transforming nature to support the populace is undertaken’ (Walker, 1985: 169). As previously stated, I will examine these relations by asking Bernstein’s four questions starting

at the local household level in Ramada to help unpack the broader trends of rural transformation processes in Bolivia.

Although using Bernstein/Lenin's peasantry stratum, other aspects to include in an analysis of rural transformation and class differentiation are 'petty commodity producer', 'simple reproduction squeeze' and 'semi-proletarianization'. Characterised by low levels of capitalisation and more labour-intensive work forms, small-scale petty commodity producers grow crops for their own subsistence and maybe for sales in the home market, and are differentially incorporated into the market logics (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010b: 273). A key part of rural capitalist transformation is the commodification of subsistence, in which previously independent small-scale farmers increasingly dependent on commodity relations for their own reproduction. Bernstein terms those who struggle to reproduce themselves as labour and capital from their farming activities on either an individual or household level as subjected to a simple reproduction squeeze (Bernstein, 2010: 65; 102-104). Lastly, semi-proletarianization is a process in which individuals still own small-scale farming plots in which they grow crops for their own subsistence, while simultaneously being hired as wage-labourers (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010b: 274).

However straightforward it might seem, class boundaries are inherently ambiguous and fluid, and people can move between positions and sites (Bernstein, 2010: 34; 110; Oya, 2004: 299), and that the processes linked to social relations of production (and reproduction) are 'historically and geographically specific' (Katz, 2004: x). Therefore, while the purview of this case study is local, in the upcoming analysis I will use the households of Ramada and the key informants in the TCO as my point of departure in investigating the social relations of production in a multiscale approach; going from the local, regional and national level, via different social actors and sites found in the Bolivian rural areas.

3. Empirical Context

To make an appropriate analysis of the contemporary rural realities of the indigenous peoples of Ramada, it is necessary to situate the reader within the 'adequate historical and geographical complexity' (Hart, 2004: 97) of Bolivia and its agrarian reforms and transformations. The following section divides into three parts; first, a detailed historical review. Second, an examination of the contemporary Department of Santa Cruz, its land distribution, social actors and agricultural production. Lastly, a case introduction of Ramada, located in the TCO Turubó. While maintaining a roughly chronological progression, there are shifts between scales, places, and social actors to illuminate the distinct but interconnected mechanisms influencing the community today.

3.1 *Agrarian Reforms and Transition in Bolivia*

3.1.1 **The *Hacienda* System and the 1953 Land Reform**

The Hacienda system was implemented throughout South America after the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. Upon their arrival, the Spaniards effectively broke down the traditional Incan communities and labour practices. In Bolivia, the wealthier Spaniards formed a new landowner class, *Hacendados*, that controlled large estates called *haciendas*, absorbing labour from the now-dissolved indigenous communities in exchange for the usufruct of land. This system was very similar to the European feudal institutions and practices of organising farming (Klein, 2011: 21-22; 49-50).

In Bolivia in the 1950s more than a century after their independence, the hacienda system was still the predominant production system and the hacendados remained in control over the most, and best, arable land, which often went underutilised and unproductive. The hacendados still relied on their peasant workers, who rented land for cultivating crops in exchange for their labour, which accounted for most of the production in the country. Those living outside of the estate still relied on the estate's resources for subsistence and seasonal work, as hacendados still owned the most arable land (Kay, 1980: 6).

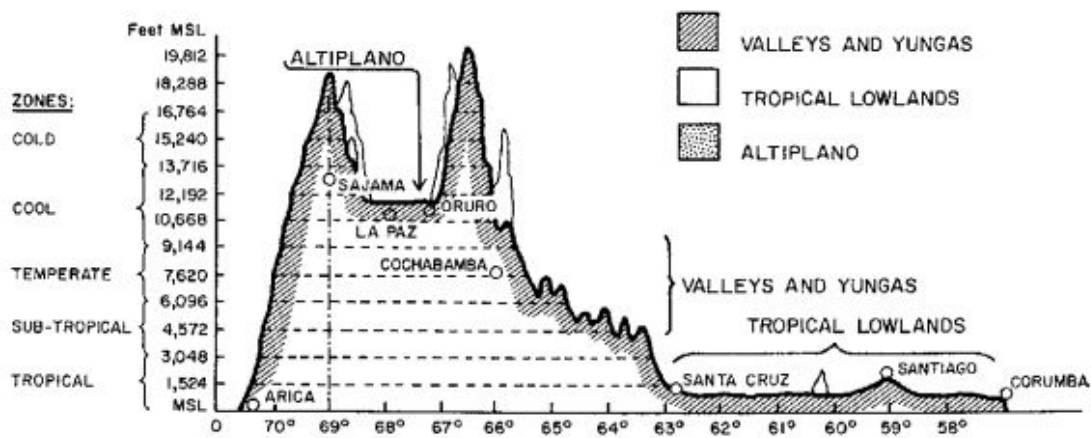


Figure 2: Topography of Bolivia | Klein, 2011: 3

At this time, Bolivia was primarily a rural society, with most of the rural population living in the western part of the country either in the altiplano or valley region, often termed *campesinos*⁴ (Figure 2). The northeastern part of the country, the lowlands, was, still, sparsely populated and consisted mostly of dense forests. 82% of the productive land was in

⁴ *Campesinos* are farmers of indigenous origin from the altiplano and valley region. Today they are not farmers in the strict sense of the word, but achieve incomes through their specialisation and other non-agricultural activities (Colque, Urioste & Eyzaguirre, 2015: 56).

the hands of 4% of the landowners, resulting in the highest inequality of land distributions in LA at the time (Webber, 2017: 333).

Following the National Revolution of 1952, the agrarian reform of 1953 supported a transformation of the hacienda system and liberation of the labour force (Webber, 2017). In the department of Santa Cruz (SC), these former large estates were often non-productive and after the reform turned into medium and large capitalist enterprises. The 1953 reform also meant a redistribution of former state-owned property granted as free titles, and investments made into the necessary infrastructure to support the new agricultural industry, including highways connecting the eastern and western parts of the country and international highways leading to Brazil and Argentina. This was all part of the state-funded plan to create an agricultural bourgeoisie in SC, in order to meet the domestic market needs, and begin exportation of agricultural products on a large scale (ibid: 333).

3.1.2 Neoliberalism and the Soy Industry

In the aftermath of the 1953 land reform, two structures of production formed that matched two types of land ownership. In the western altiplano and valley region, most of the production took place in family-owned small properties, *minifundios*. These properties would continue to fragment into smaller and smaller plots over the next generations, divided between the family's children. During the 1960s and 1970s, state-sponsored programmes led to settlements of altiplano campesino-indigenous Aymara and Quechua in the eastern lowlands where arable land was plentiful (Kay & Urioste, 2007: 44; Webber, 2017: 334). There, a proper capitalist agro-industry was underway. Between 1953-1993 more than 13.5 million ha of land were legally titled in SC, with more than half of these made into large agricultural properties exceeding 10,000ha. The era of neoliberal governments (1985-2005) was marked by the policies implemented after the collapse of the tin mining industry in the beginning of the 1980s. This meant a deregulation of the domestic market, public subsidy reduction, national currency devaluation, removal of the barriers to foreign investments, and land market liberalisations opening up for companies and large landowners. In the agricultural sector, the dominance of the agro-industry was secured through promotion of exportation of non-traditional exports such as soybean, a recovery of

their timber production and increased cattle production (Müller, Pacheco & Montero, 2014: 24-25; Webber, 2017: 333-334; Saavedra, 2018: 4).

After the 1980s' favorable policies in agriculture, the 1990s brought massive investments from foreign capital, especially Brazilian, to SC. This resulted in an accelerated expansion of the agricultural frontier in SC without any proper control of legal land tenureship (McKay & Colque, 2016: 586-587). The traditional campesino economy of the altiplano deteriorated as the SC frontier expanded; from 1963-2002 their contribution to the national production fell from 82% to 39.7%, while the industrial capitalist production had risen to 60.3% (Webber, 2017: 334).

3.1.3 The 'Sanitation' Process

The neoliberal reforms implemented throughout much of the global South in the 1980s and their devastating social impacts led development institutions to promote indigenous land rights as a precondition to achieve successful development. This resulted in new development schemes from the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) based on notions of participation, empowerment, social capital and traditional values and structures, in order to "enhance economic security for indigenous peoples" (Anthias, 2018: 34-35). This new wave of 'ethnodevelopment' was also enhanced by the sentiment of "*indigenous peoples as guardians of nature*," which resulted in somewhat of "*an explosion of policy and academic discourse on the links between indigenous peoples and biodiversity*" in the 1980s and 1990s (ibid: 35). These global processes served as the backdrop to the new legal framework concerning land and forest governance in Bolivia in the mid-1990s, better known as the INRA law. The land administration following the 1953 reform was highly unequal and corrupt. A growing number of illegal settlements and illegal expansions of large estates in SC amplified the pressure and dispossession and exploitative labour practices on the indigenous peoples and their ancestral territories (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015: 261; Colque, Urioste & Eyzaguirre, 2015: 27).

Come 1996; Bolivia began its land titling process, *saneamiento*, and its two-part INRA law. The Forest law sought to implement more sustainable use of forests and more equitable access to its resources. The Land law started the process of regulating land-ownership based on the demonstration of the Social and Economical function (SEF) of

the land, as necessary to establish legal tenure. There was also an allocation of land to rural landless poor and a recognition of ancestral tenure rights for indigenous peoples (Müller, Pacheco & Montero, 2014: 25-26; 35-36; Pacheco, de Jong & Johnson, 2010: 273-274). As a result, the new land title, *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (Community Land of Origin, TCO), was passed in 1996 as part of the government's new land regulation and distribution scheme. The TCOs are defined as the “*geographic spaces that constitute the living area for indigenous and native peoples and communities, to which they have traditionally had access and where they maintain and develop their own forms of economic, social and cultural organisation, in order to ensure their survival and development*” (Paye et al., 2011: 11-12 - own translation).

The TCO legislation gave the communities communal land rights over renewable resources such as forests, but not over subsoil non-renewable resources⁵. The initial titling process was scheduled to last a decade 1996-2006 but was met with many complications and delays. To this day, there are still ongoing disputes and negotiations over territorial rights from the many interests and users present on the same land (e.g. Anthias, 2018).

The process has been heavily criticised; especially because it did not lead to a redistribution of resources or territory, as 72.8% of the lands were transferred from state-owned property and only 27.2% came from actual expropriation, or partial expropriation from private titled land (Webber, 2017: 338).

3.1.4 MAS and ‘Post-neoliberal’ Era

In the beginning of the 21st century, a wave of left-wing parties assumed power in several countries in Latin America, also known as the pink tide. Bolivia’s first indigenous president, Evo Morales from the MAS party, was elected in 2005 following a series of mobilisations by campesinos, workers and indigenous movements (Anthias, 2018). Morales and the MAS party stayed in power through three terms up until the most recent election in 2019, where fraud allegations made Morales resign and an interim government took over (Kurmanaev, 2019).

⁵ Later during the MAS government, additional territory was given, *Tierra Indígena Originario Campesino* (Indigenous Peasant Land of Origin, TIOC), joining the two types territories under the same law. While having the same rights as the TCOs, these territories are meant for campesino communities in the west and the altiplano region.

Morales' victory came with promises to break free from the neoliberal development strategies of the 1980s and 1990s by nationalising Bolivia's oil and gas sectors (Kennemore & Weeks, 2011), and the national telephone company *Empresa Nacional de Telecomunicaciones* (ENTEL) (Arratia, 2009). Furthermore, Morales promised an 'agrarian revolution' redistributing expropriated land not serving the 'socio-economic function' established in the INRA laws (Tilzey, 2019), to support the campesino and indigenous farmers over the agro-industry, as a way to develop food security and sovereignty over export-oriented agricultural production, and to help further agrarian social justice over the prevalent inequality (Webber, 2017: 332).

However, there has been a massive critique of Morales for continuing and reinforcing the neoliberal politics of the 1980s-1990s in the hydrocarbon sector (e.g. Andreucci & Radhuber, 2017, Kennemore & Weeks, 2011), and the agricultural sector⁶. The agro-industry, and especially the soy economy, has only grown in size and importance during Morales' government. There has been an increase in foreign capital investments, mostly Brazilian, in which they have gained control over the later downstream segments of the soy commodity value chain. And thus, "[b]y the end of the first Morales term in office, most small-scale soy producers were selling their products directly or indirectly to these transnational enterprises further up the soy value chain" (Webber, 2017: 338). In his last term in office, the MAS government continued to support capital-intensive food production through neo-extractivist methods by promoting agricultural expansion through trade deals with China, last year promising 7 million ha of land for cattle ranching over the next 10 years (Jemio, 2019).

Another substantial critique of Morales has been the land titling process. The land-titled TCOs came from state-owned property and not private landholders, which meant that it did nothing towards the unequal land division. The agro-industry's properties continued to grow, increasing their average sizes from 1,500ha between 1996-2006, to 3,7643ha between 2010-2014 (Webber, 2017: 338; 341). Another aspect is the quality of land, where the marginal lands with poor or zero agricultural potential, "*tends to go to the rural majority and the productive lands to the agribusiness sector*" (ibid: 341).

⁶ The effects of the Morales' 'post neoliberal' policies in the agricultural sector also resulted in unprecedented high rates of deforestation in the Santa Cruz department (Redo, Millington & Hindery, 2010).

Morales' alliances in the east changed over the course of his presidential period. Starting off, he was elected and supported by the indigenous lowland's organisations, however, this relationship was somewhat disputed following his line of policies. Instead, he acquired new allies in the agro-industrial elite, and the campesino settlers from the west remained a back-bone of popular support for the MAS party and government (ibid: 334).

3.2 The Study Area

3.2.1 Contemporary Land Distribution in Santa Cruz and Relevant Social Actors

31,5% of Bolivia's surface is registered as an agricultural production unit, APU (INE, 2015: 17)⁷. Thereof, 40% is for forestry production, 38% for cattle ranching, 15,8% for crops, and 6,2% for hunting and fishing (INE, 2015: 29). The sheer number of APUs has risen. In 1950 there were 86.377 APUs covering a surface of 654.258,1ha, which rose to 871.928 units in 2013, covering 2.760.238,6ha of cultivated soil (INE, 2015: 12). Despite more land being in the hands of indigenous and campesino communities, there is still an uneven distribution of territory in the SC department (Figure 3).

Size of APU (hectares)	Agricultural Census 1984 (1)					Agricultural Census 2013 (2)				
	APU	%	Total area (ha.)	%	Average area	APU	%	Total area (ha.)	%	Average area
0,01 - 4,99	214.437	68,2	323.374	1,4	1,50	507.243	58,9	738.654	2,1	1,45
5,00 - 19,99	57.828	18,4	516.285	2,3	8,92	211.076	24,5	2.025.566	5,8	9,59
20,00 - 99,99	30.125	9,6	1.213.018	5,3	40,26	109.291	12,7	4.419.503	12,7	40,43
100 and more	12.160	3,8	20.617.475	91,0	1.695,51	33.608	3,9	27.471.258	79,4	808,02
Total	314.550	100,0	22.670.152	100,0	72,06	861.218	100,0	34.654.981	100,0	40,22

Sources: (1) Paz Ballivián Danilo (2004) Medio siglo de la reforma agraria boliviana. Revistas Bolivianas. Temas Sociales n. 25. La Paz. The data of the National Agricultural Census 1984 do not include any information on the department of La Paz (except for the Iturrealde and Franz Tamayo provinces), nor The Chapare in the department of Cochabamba.
(2) CEDLA's compilation based on INE (2015) National Agricultural Census 2013

Figure 3: Bolivian APUs with their total and average areas by size range | Saavedra, 2018: 31

⁷ In Bolivia, an APU is defined as production units dedicated to cultivation of crops, raising livestock, extraction of timber and non-timber products and for hunting wild animals or fishing (INE, 2015: 17).

Looking at the above graph, it becomes clear that the largest APUs' average area has been cut in more than half between the census of 1984 and the latest in 2013 from 1.695,51ha to 808,02ha. However, this group of agricultural capitalists represents only 3,9% of the APUs, and owns 79,4% of the land (Saavedra, 2016: 12). In another analysis based on the same data, it is argued that 88.7% of the APUs have the characteristics of small-scale farming with campesino or indigenous base, and the remaining 11.3% is medium- and large business units (Colque, Urioste & Eyzaguirre, 2015: 29)⁸.

In general, ethnicity and class play an important role in Bolivia's agroindustry. 36% of the cultivated land in Bolivia is planted with soybeans (INE, 2015: 32). As previously stated, soy production is very dominant in the SC department, where 58,8 % of the cultivated soil is for soy (ibid) Furthermore, the foreignisation of landed properties has been expanding. In 2007, Bolivians possessed 28.9% of the land cultivating soybeans; the rest was mostly dominated by Brazilians with more than 40%, closely followed by Mennonite settlers (Figure 4). However, in the latest census from 2013, no official data exists on the large commercial units in SC by size, type of production, or nationality of the owners. Furthermore, there has been detected a tendency amongst the large landowner to deliberately hide the true sizes and land tenureship in the SC department, by artificially fragmenting agricultural properties (Colque, 2014: 94).

⁸ This is not to forget that in Bolivia, there are 2,5 million landless peasants (Tilzey, 2019: 635). However, since I focus on indigenous communities in a TCO with land possessions, the landless peasants will not be addressed any further in the remainder of this report.

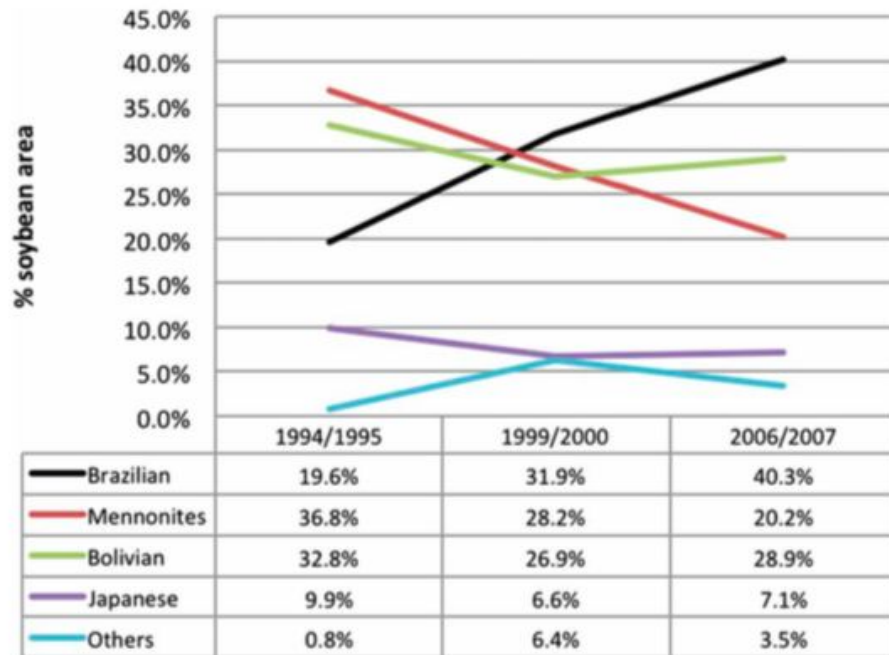


Figure 4: This shows the amount of soybean cultivation by immigrant producer origin, from 1994-2007 | Urioste, 2012: 447

Despite their decreasing domination in the soy economy, the Mennonite settlements still play an essential role for small-scale farmers. Their settlements consist of 200+ families and their farms are characterised by intensive agriculture, each family owning between 20-100 ha of land for cultivation. They acquire new land by buying or renting it (Balderrama, 2011: 28), from small- or medium-scale farmers. Furthermore, they rent their equipment and machinery to small- and medium-scale farmers. Lastly, they hire waged labour from the neighboring communities (Group interview in Mennonite settlement; McKay, 2017).

To acquire legal titles of land in the east, the campesinos need at least 20 families to form a new community. *La Central Campesina* represents the farmer syndicates⁹ in San José de Chiquitos, which facilitates, coordinates and selects the location of the new community, where every family receives 20 hectares of land, free of charge. The community, however, is

⁹ Syndicates are Bolivian unions, which have countrywide connections and divisions. The syndicates often join together under a primary governing body called 'La Central'.

responsible for establishing infrastructure and basic institutions such as schools and medical centres, and connecting basic utilities (Manager of La Central Campesina).

3.2.2 TCOs in the Bolivian Lowlands

As of July 2010 a total of 11,572,983 ha has been titled indigenous territory in the lowlands (Paye et al., 2011: 12). According to Anthias and Radcliffe (2015), the TCOs were formed in the wake of three interrelated global countermovements found in the 1970s up to their constitution in 1996; the environmental movement, the indigenous rights movement, and the social responses to neoliberalism. Anthias and Radcliffe argue that the TCOs function as a type of 'ethno-environmental fix' to protect vulnerable peoples alongside the high-valued natures they inhabit, and was framed as a way to protect them from the destructive effect of capitalism, while encouraging them to engage in sustainable nature and biodiversity conservation management (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015: 258-260).

According to the definition of TCOs, the indigenous peoples inhabiting this territory can "*maintain and develop their own forms of indigenous economies*" (Paye et al., 2011: 26 - own translation). They are small-scale subsistence farmers, and the economic activities found within the territories in the lowland are tied to three different types of extraction; hydrocarbon, timber, and mining. Because of the legislation's specificities, denying them rights over non-renewables, the TCOs only have full control over timber extraction. With the formation of the TCOs in the 1990s indigenous communities gained rights to legally engage with timber production and ensured market prices (Pacheco, de Jong & Johnson, 2010: 272).

A TCO can contain one or 30+ communities. Because each TCO is an autonomous administrative unit, it means that they can organise themselves as they please according to their traditions and beliefs. My case study of Ramada in the TCO Turubó is an example of a local administration and will be described in the following section.

3.3 TCO Turubó

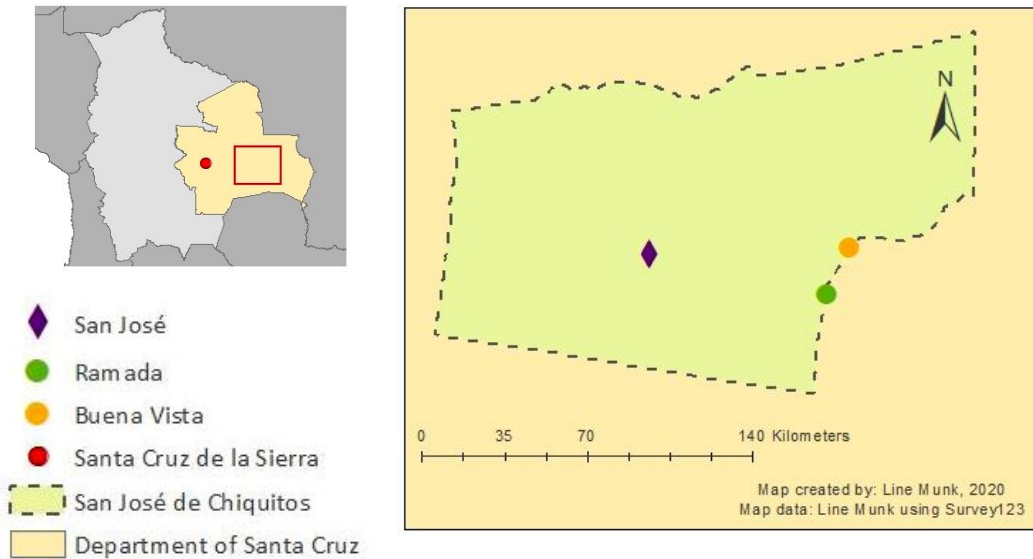


Figure 5: Study area and fieldwork sites inside Turubó | Developed by author, 2020

The point of departure for my analysis is the community Ramada, which is part of the TCO Turubó (Figure 5). Turubó is situated in the middle of the Chiquitano forest, which is characterised by a dense semideciduous tree cover and canopy heights of up to 30m. It is a tropical dry forest, with temperatures reaching 40°C during summer and 15°C during winter. The rain season is short and has a mean annual precipitation rate between 800-1400 mm (Müller, Pacheco & Montero, 2014: 5; Tejada et al., 2016: 51). Turubó has a total of five Chiquitano indigenous communities, Ramada included. They all speak Spanish and some of the older generations speak limited Chiquitano indigenous language. The TCO officially received its collective title for the land in 2006, and has a total of 82.103,4074ha (Paye et al., 2011: 136-137). Their permanent forest production area (PFPA) is 10.357,7400ha, corresponding to 13% of their territory (ibid: 136-137), and all five communities have communal rights to its timber.

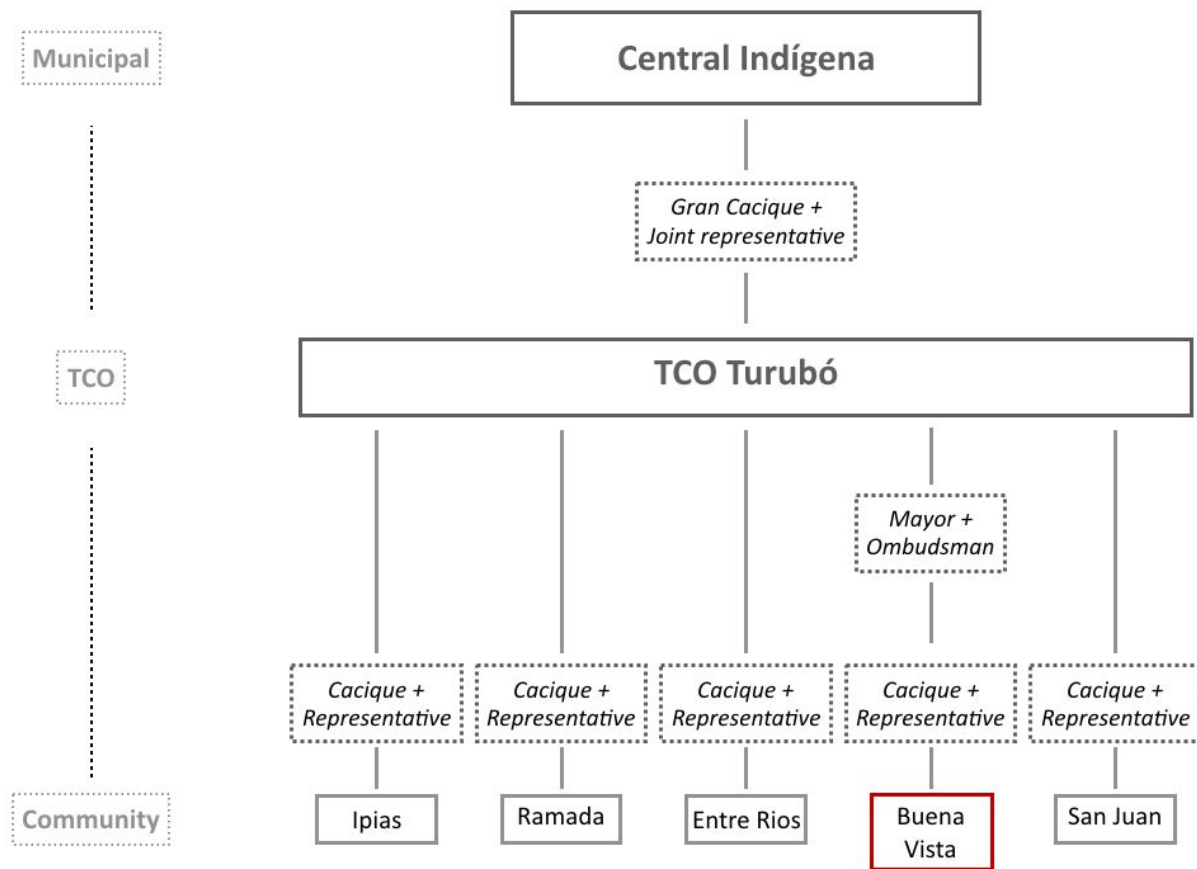


Figure 6: Organisational structure of TCO Turubó | Developed by author, 2020

The figure above is a visualisation of the organisational structure of Turubó. The smallest community, Entre Rios, has about 20 families; and the biggest, Buena Vista, is home to about 130 families. Every community has a *Cacique*¹⁰. The cacique is elected by the community for a two-year period, before possible re-election. The cacique's responsibilities are four-fold: to approve requests for establishing a new field; to call for community meetings and represent the community in meetings; to oversee forestry activities; and lastly to acquire projects to improve living standards and/or increase income for the community. The role as cacique is voluntary and without a salary. It is also a highly respected position, both in the community and outside of the TCO. As shown in the model above, each community also has a representative. Together, the representative and the cacique will represent the community in any meetings within the TCO, and sometimes to their main

¹⁰ Cacique is a historic indian title for regional chiefs originating from the Aymara kingdoms, before the Incan empire, in the Andes (Klein, 2011: 14).

institutional body in the municipality, *Central Indígena*, which is the central organisation for all indigenous communities and TCOs in San José de Chiquitos.

However, every decision that affects the community is decided through democratic voting. The largest of the communities, Buena Vista, is home to the town hall and also has a mayor and an ombudsman. The TCO as an indigenous territory is represented through a *Gran Cacique* and a joint representative, who currently live in San José where they sit in the offices of the Central Indígena.



Figure 7: Regional organisational structure of indigenous communities and territories in the Department of Santa Cruz | Developed by author, 2020

The Central Indígena communicates requests or complaints and facilitates projects with the municipality. It is one of 12 organisations, which make up the regional Chiquitano *Organización Indígena*. The TCO stands strong as a unit, and has gained more power in negotiations with the municipality over the years through their, now permanent representation in San José and the role of the Central Indígena (President of Central Indígena). Before the TCOs received the collective titles, the indigenous communities were more or less powerless against any intrusion on the lands, which they historically had a right to (e.g. Anthias, 2018; Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015).

3.3.1 Case: Ramada, Indigenous Community

The first generation of Chiquitano indigenous peoples settled on what is now Ramada, 75 years ago. Today Ramada has 44 families distributed in 26 households (Figure 8), of which I talked to a total of 9 households and 6 key informants (Appendix 9.2-9.3).

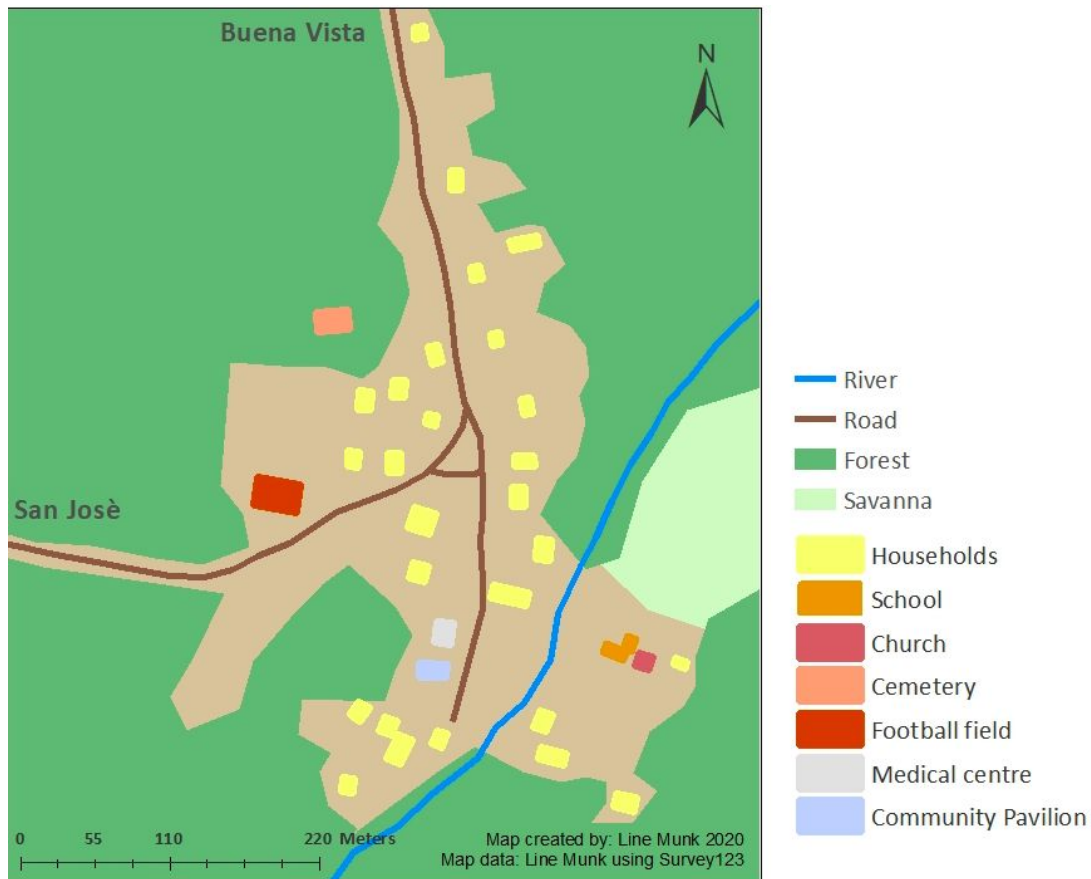


Figure 8: Ramada community | Developed by author, 2020

The two most typical houses in Ramada are made from either combining mud with hay between a wood pole construction (Figure 9a-9b), or from wooden planks (Figure 10).



Figure 9a-9b: (from the left). 9a A mud/wood pole house, one with a tin roof and one with a palm leaf roof. 9b The inside of a house where the mud/wooden pole construction is very clear with a braided palm leaf roof | Private pictures, 2020



Figure 10: Wood plank house with a tin and palm leaf combination for roof. In the background there is an oven, which is used for barbecues on special occasions | Private picture, 2020

Figure 9a shows the typical outline of a household plot, with one or two main houses and a toilet/shower located further away from the house. Over the last couple of years, additional structures made from bricks are appearing in the community (Figure 11). These structures are, however, much warmer and more expensive than the typical buildings, why these remain preferred.



Figure 11: An additional room built in brick | Private picture, 2020

Following Bernstein's definition, the inhabitants of Ramada can be characterised as small-scale family farmers, both in terms of size and lack of mechanisation (Bernstein, 2010: 4). Every household has an area where they grow their crops, a chaco on average 1 ha. Looking at the aerial shot below, it is clear to see the squares in the forest close to the community (Figure 12). These squares represent a chaco; either a new one (light green), an older one (the green-brown) or the ones in the making (the dark brown). The larger cleared areas dotted with trees are pasture for cattle herds.



Figure 12: Aerial shot of Ramada and their chacos | Google Earth, 2020

Below is a graph illustrating the agricultural cycle in Ramada. As indicated, they only harvest once a year during the course of three months. They use the so-called slash-and-burn method¹¹ to get rid of unwanted forest and vegetation and to renourish their fields making them ready for the next agricultural season.

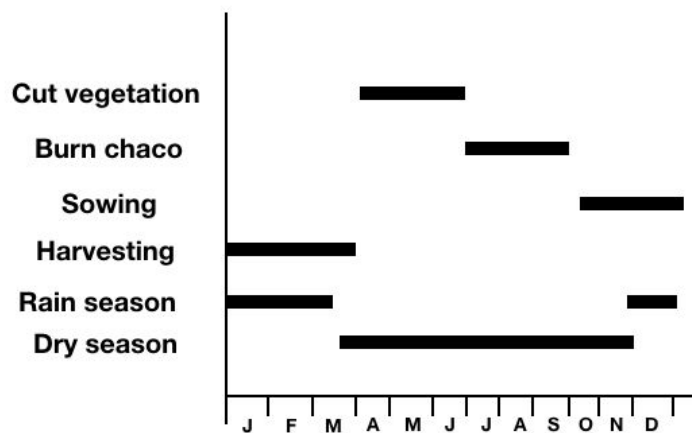


Figure 13: Agricultural cycle in Ramada | Developed by author, 2020

¹¹ Slash-and-burn is the most common method to deforest in Bolivia and South America (Tierra, 2019: 9-10).



Figure 14a-14b: (from the left) A chaco prepared last year for this year's harvest with corn and watermelon. The soil is still sooty from the burning. These pictures were taken in late January, where the corn usually stand tall and the watermelons ready to pick, but this year, most of the crops did not amount to much | Private pictures, 2020

The agricultural cycle is repeated every year, either to make a new chaco or reuse a location from last season (Figure 14a-14b; 15a). They stay on the same spot for 2-4 years, until the yield declines and they move on to a new location. The old location is, by some households, used for pasture for their cattle (Figure 15b) or it is left to either renourish itself over the next 2-3 years to be reused, or it is left for good. It is a non-mechanised or chemicalised type of farming, in which they grow maize, yuca, beans, watermelon and papaya for their own consumption.



Figure 15a-15b (from left): 15a A two year old chaco with papaya and beans. 15b Pasture for cattle herds | Private pictures, 2020

The households keep chickens and pigs for their own consumption, and some cattle to sell within the community. Farming is predominantly a male activity. During peak season or school vacation, the children and especially the older boys help out in the chacos. The women work as *ama de casa*, doing unpaid housework, two women earn an income, one being the community's nurse and other working as a teacher.

The only stable income for most households is forestry inside the TCO's territory. This work is called a 'censo'. The censo is carried out once a year per community, in the dry season. The censo guidelines are part of their forest management plan, provided by the Forest and Land Inspection and Social Control Authority (*Autoridad de Fiscalización y Control Social de Bosques y Tierra*, ABT) to ensure a stable and sustainable timber production (Gautreau & Bruslé 2019: 115-116). A group of 20 men from the community go to the permanent forest production area (PFPA) and select an area of about 200 hectares and divide this down the middle forming squares on each side marked by sticks and string. The censo process is shown below (Figure 16a-16b).

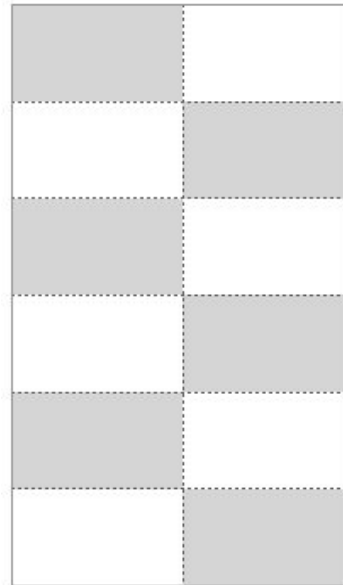


Figure 16a-16b: (From left) 16a The central path down the middle in a censo activity. 16b Table showing the censo procedure | 16a Private picture, 16b developed by author, 2020

Within the grey areas, the men mark the wanted trees, they will perform a censo in the white areas the following year. They zigzag their way in the dense forest and for every 10 meters they find five eligible trees, they mark one. If the tree is 'seeding', blossoming or producing fruit, they leave it. They present their request to the ABT, and if granted, an environmental engineer controls the area. Afterwards the community men proceed and cut down the trees¹². They sell their timber to the sawmills and wood companies inside the TCO. The total cost of a censo is around US\$ 4-6000, paying the engineer and the ABT, renting the equipment and the transportation of the wood. They fell approximately 800-1000 tree trunks in the 200 ha area, and their value depends on the particular year, the quality, quantity and species. In the end, the 20 men earn around US\$ 30,000¹³.

Some men supplement the censo income with illegal timber extraction, some take up short term contracted work outside the TCO on larger farms or simply a workmen in mining, construction, driving, mechanics etc., this will be discussed in detail later (see Class Differentiation in Ramada).

¹² By law the communities are allowed to cut down timber in all of their territory. However, they can only sell it legally from within their PFFA. If they choose to cut down trees by hand, they do not have to pay a fee to the ABT.

¹³ This amounts to around 10,300 bolivianos per person, in comparison, a month's payment on minimum wage is 1,680 bolivianos.

4. Methodology

As I am interested in the social relations of production and class dynamics taking place in Ramada and the conditions and broader mechanisms (historic and contemporary) under which these unfold, I have chosen to use historical materialism as the methodological approach guiding this study (Bernstein, 2010: 1). The particular version used in this study is found within the field of agrarian political economy and entails an investigation of rural class formation, social and economic differentiation and the processes of exploration (Kay, 2015: 79), in this case taking place within and around the community Ramada. Coherent to this approach, my ontological position is found in critical realism, which implies an investigation of the underlying conditions present for an event to occur, which are either structural (necessary) or 'contingent' (local, accidental) (Bhaskar, 1991). Critical realism is much similar to the scientific realism found in Marx, which Bhaskar defines it as *"the idea that the objects of scientific thought are real structures, mechanisms or relations ontologically irreducible to, normally out of phase with and perhaps in opposition to the phenomenal forms, appearances or events they generate"* (Bhaskar, 1991: 164).

The remainder of this methodological chapter is divided into four sections; firstly a description of my research process, followed by a section on my chosen methods. The third section highlights this study's limitations and ethical considerations, and the last section ends this chapter with details on the data analysis approach used in this thesis project.

4.1 Research Process

The empirical data collected in this research was gathered during fieldwork in the Santa Cruz department, lasting 22 days from January 12th until February 2nd (Appendix 9.1). Outlined below are the three phases of my research process.

The first phase consisted of research into relevant bodies of literature and background information about the municipality San José de Chiquitos and the relevant social actors in SC. My original interest was to investigate agrarian change in eastern Bolivia in SC, more specifically looking into drivers such as migration and deforestation. I chose the municipality San José de Chiquitos, as it is one of the municipalities that shows the highest

amount of deforestation in the country between 2016-2018, by any measure (Andersen & Ledezma, 2019), mostly due to cattle ranching and mechanised agriculture (Müller, Pacheco & Montero, 2014: 13-14). Furthermore, demographic data suggests that San José de Chiquitos experience both a rural-urban migration and rural-rural immigration tendency (Camacho, Bascon & Saravia, 2018: 113), the immigration supported by the high numbers of Quechua speaking indigenous peoples in the municipality (INE, 2019). I completed an internship as part of my studies in La Paz, Bolivia from August to December 2019 with SDSN Bolivia, and through their network, I reached out to NGOs and organisations working in or around San José de Chiquitos, with offices in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. First stop of my fieldwork was to interview these NGOs to get a more contemporary picture on the different social actors involved in the municipality and department.

The second and third phases can be characterised as iterative. By visiting multiple sites, interviewing diverse social actors, I was able to, through a constant reflexive approach, determine where I should focus my research (Crang & Cook, 2007: 133; Loubere, 2017). Therefore, I stayed twice in San José for a total of 10 days; first to interview the contacts I made via the NGOs in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and to get a deeper understanding of the dynamics and social actors that could be of interest for this study. Through snowball sampling (Valentine, 2013; 117), I was able to get in contact with the president of the indigenous organisation in the municipality, who directed me towards the TCO Turubó and more specifically the community Ramada. The second time I stayed in San José, I did follow-up interviews and informal conversations with the same people, additionally I interviewed a manager of a campesino community and I visited a Mennonite settlement, where I conducted a group interview. The time in and around San José proved valuable to my study, as it helped map relevant social actors and social relations of production, as a way to begin to understand the underlying structures, mechanisms and relations that influence the people of Ramada's livelihoods.

The third phase took off upon visiting Ramada, which unlike its surroundings, did not show typical signs of deforestation or large-scale agriculture. I also visited Ramada twice, for a total of 7 days staying in their medical centre and having most of my dinners with the cacique and his family. Upon my first visit I interviewed 9 households and two key informants. The second trip included follow-up interviews and/or informal conversation with all 9 households and interviews with 4 additional key informants. I also partook in a

community meeting and visited a chaco area and the site of a recent censo. During my second visit, I spent one day in Buena Vista, the biggest community in Turubó, where I had scheduled an interview with an employee at a sawmill, and also talked to their cacique and another key informant. It was through these two visits to Ramada that my study took shape and I decided upon the direction of this thesis. Furthermore, the material gathered from my two visits in the TCO makes up my analytical unit of this study and will be the main focus of my analysis.

4.2 Research Methods

To address my research questions, I used qualitative methods to ‘maximise my understanding’ and help inform and reshape the direction and questions used in this study (Valentine, 2013; 112). My primary data consists of interviews conducted during my fieldwork, divided into four subgroups, which is complemented by secondary data, to investigate my study in a broader historical context. My subgroups will be used differently through my analysis and this will be explained later in this chapter.

4.2.1 Primary Data Gathering

As mentioned, I used Bernstein’s four questions of political economy concerning social relations of production, “Who owns what, who does what, who gets what and what do they do with it” (Bernstein, 2010: 22) in my interview process. The data gathered during my fieldwork can be divided into four subgroups:

- 1) First, households in Ramada (n=9). The selection of households was not random, but based on a classification of the community, I made before and during my first round of interviews. I focused on Bernstein’s first and second question ‘who owns what’ (i.e. animals, sizes of houses and chacos) and ‘who does what’ (labour activities and work sites). This ensured that the 9 households I selected was a representative sample of the community both in terms of numbers (interviewing more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the community’s households) but also in terms of house sizes, generational dynamics, labour activities and gender (Appendix 9.2; 9.7). I interviewed either/or the female and male head of household. After the interview was done and the recorder shut off, often other members

of the household joined for small-talk or informal conversation. My interview guides were structured around Bernstein's four questions, however formulated in a more 'conversational and relational' language, encouraging people to share their life stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 71-72; 174-176).

- 2) Second, my key informants in Ramada and Buena Vista (n=9). The guides were also based on Bernstein's four questions, but focusing on the communities and TCO to deepen my understanding of the social relations of production within and between the communities, as well as outside the TCO (Appendix 9.3).
- 3) Third, key informant interviews in and around San José (n=5). These interviews included three important social actors in San José de Chiquitos (president of municipal indigenous organisation, Mennonite settlement leaders and campesino community manager) and a municipality representative, and were also structured around Bernstein's four questions but focusing on their specific role as a way to deepen my contextual understanding of the municipality and department (Appendix 9.4).
- 4) Fourth, interviews with NGOs in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (n = 4). These interviews helped me deepen my understanding of the historical and contemporary situation in the department and municipality in terms of social actors and development dynamics. I tailored each guide to suit the specific NGO and their work, but they remained similar in their outlook (Appendix 9.5).

I adopted Loubere's Systematic and Reflexive Interviewing and Reporting (SRIR) method for my fieldwork and interview approach. Instead of the more typical method of transcription, which "*reduces data after fieldwork through the transformation of the interview experience into text, thus stripping out non-verbal information*", I chose the SRIR method as it generates more "rich data" from the interview process (Loubere, 2017: n.p.). The SRIR method "*begins the process of coding and analysis in situ, and facilitates critical engagement with emergent themes during fieldwork*" (ibid - emphasis in original). Therefore, I made three flexible, semi-structured interview guides for my interviews and informal conversations; one for experts in SC, one for key informants and one for households (Appendix 9.6.1-9.6.3)¹⁴. During the interview "*researchers note responses,*

¹⁴ Due to the SRIR method, the three examples in the appendix are templates, which were readjusted and modified throughout the process according to emergent themes and discoveries.

observations, feelings, hunches and preliminary analyses—only recording interviews if possible and convenient” (Loubere, 2017: n.p.). After the interview, either immediately or during the evenings, I wrote an interview report based on my notes, and if possible, recordings. I continuously reflected on the emerging analytical points, possible uses of theory or literature, as well as potential improvements to my guides or follow up questions, which I would include in the following interviews. After visits to each ‘site’ of fieldwork (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, two times in San José and two times in Ramada) my interview reports were subjected to deeper analysis and compared with each other, which were used in an iterative process between data collection and analysis during my fieldwork.

As I have working proficiency of Spanish, I conducted all interviews without a translator and my notes and interview reports were written in both English and Spanish. The direct quotes used in this study were translated into English, and if needed, I checked the recordings for accuracy. I was able to record all interviews for subgroup 4. Within subgroups 1-3, I was able to make recordings of most of the interviews, but my data is also based on notes after informal conversations, walks and drive-alongs which took place throughout my fieldwork across locations (Loubere, 2017: n.p.).

4.2.2 GIS & Survey123

Geospatial data within the TCO does not exist on the community level. Therefore, for the production of a referential map of my community, I used Esri’s application Survey123, which is compatible with ArcMap to collect the data needed. The Survey123 software does not require WiFi or internet connection, and I was able to use it on my smartphone in the field. I used the application to map the community using categories such as ‘road’, ‘football field’, ‘house’ etc. and took pictures for further reference.

4.3 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

During my research, I was aware of my privileged position, in terms of wealth, education, and being a 'white female outsider', non-native speaker of Spanish, which all conditioned my insights (Valentine, 2013: 114). Yet, sometimes being 'an outsider' proved helpful. For example, I would get a question such as 'why do you need or want to talk to *them*'?, which was clearly a part of their local ethno-class divisions and histories. I framed my curiosity with a 'since I'm not from here, I need to see how it works', thus, I was able to, via my outsider position, which seemed, in my experience, less 'offensive' to the locals, approach different social actors.

My linguistic abilities were at times constrained and I occasionally had to ask my interviewees to repeat themselves or reformulate my questions. I also adopted a 'local language' for certain objects or activities, that I was not familiar with beforehand (ibid: 125), and it felt like my approach and informal, conversational Spanish created a common ground between us; me as a white, educated (female), 'wealthy' foreigner, vs a marginalised, poor indigenous community.

Before starting my recorder, and in general when approaching participants, oral consent was given to record and/or use the conversations for my thesis. I explained to every participant that they would remain anonymous and only referred to by alias. Furthermore, I 'split' one interview person into two separate people when using the quotes in my thesis, as this person provided me with information that could be of risk to them (ibid: 123).

4.4 Data Analysis

As previously explained, my primary data is divided into four subgroups; first household interviews in Ramada, second key informants within the TCO, third key informants in and around San José and lastly NGO employees in Santa Cruz de la Sierra¹⁵. In the following section, I will detail how subgroups 1-3 help me answer my research question and sub-question in different ways.

¹⁵ As described above, subgroup 4 was gathered during the initial stage of fieldwork, and was used to familiarise myself within the department and municipality of San José de Chiquitos. Therefore, this subgroup will not be used actively in the remainder of this thesis.

My analytical unit is found within subgroups 1 and 2. Using the household as an analytical unit comes with its own set of limitations and methodological issues and should never be seen as 'universal and unproblematic'. Furthermore, households should not be the 'end point' of an analysis, but instead used as a heuristic device to further the analysis of wider trends, processes and structures in the rural areas (Oya, 2004; 293-294). Therefore, I used the selected households as a starting point to examine how they interact with and take place within the broader social relations of production, social division of labour and rural transformations processes within the TCO, by using the example of the Buena Vista community.

The analysis was further strengthened by the interviews from subgroup 3, in which I investigated how Ramada as an indigeous community interacts with different sites of social division of labour in the municipality, and wider trends in the department.

Furthermore, I triangulated my primary data within appropriate literature on historic and contemporary Bolivian agrarian structures and reforms; developments in the agricultural and timber sector, formations of TCOs and major political changes to situate the dynamics found in Ramada and Turubó within the regional and national scale in my empirical context and analysis.

I chose to code the material from subgroups 1 and 2, however, there are several ways to code fieldwork and interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Following the SRIR method, I already started the initial analytical reflections and coding during my fieldwork. Upon leaving Bolivia I organised my interview reports and fieldnotes, and listened to my interviews from the TCO again and added anything I left out in my interview reports. Thus returning to the coding process, when reading through the material I highlighted single words, sentences or sections and gave it an appropriate 'code', which included themes, single words, feelings, or reusing their own statements (Crang & Cook, 2007: 139; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 223-224). Then I gathered every code into one document to synthesise them into themes or groups, moving back and forth between my original reports and the emerging themes. After coding my fieldwork material I found that the inhabitants of Ramada point towards some main obstacles to a 'reliable income' and 'the good life', in which they identify insufficient money, difference in territory, increasing deforestation in the Santa Cruz department, worsening climate, inflation in timber prices and immigration from the western part of the country. From the process five themes emerged; farming,

forestry, migration, climate change & deforestation, and TCO vs. other. The first four themes serve as the thematic division of my analysis and the last (TCO vs. other), helped spur my current research questions and engage with an analysis of the class differentiation in Ramada, which makes up the first section of my analysis.

My case presentation and analysis is built upon information obtained during my fieldwork and the material gathered in its entirety, however, when using a direct quote the exact person or household is indicated¹⁶.

¹⁶ For an exact overview of key informants and households described by gender, age and occupation, see Appendix 9.2-9.5; 9.7.

5. Analysis

Using the conceptual framework detailed previously, this chapter will describe and analyse the collected data. Firstly, I begin with an analysis of the class dynamics in Ramada, which will be used while exploring the themes which emerged from the data in the following four subsections. Following this chapter is a discussion of my analytical findings in relation to my research question and sub-question and into broader global capitalist development patterns.

5.1 Class Differentiation in Ramada

As already stated, I interviewed more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the households in Ramada and will in the following section give an analysis of class differentiation based on my fieldwork using Bernstein's four key questions as guidelines.

Household	Ages of male and female head of household	Household members	Adults/ Children	Number of rooms	Paid labour in household	Amount of people earning paid labour
1	40-50s	3	2/1	3	Censo, teacher	2
2	50-60s	8	6/2	6	Censo, workmen	2
3	20-30s	6	2/4	3	Forestry	1
4	50-60s	5	3/2	5	Censo, forestry	1
5	20-30s	3	2/1	4	Miner, mechanics	1
6	50-60s	3	3	3	Censo	2
7	30-40s	5	2/3	1	Workmen, driver, mechanics	1
8	50-60s	2	2	4	Censo, forestry	1
9	30-40s	6	2/4	1	Censo, workmen, security guard	1

Table 1: Household overview | Developed by author, 2020

This first table (Table 1), provides an overview of the households; the ages of male and female head of household, the number of members who live there, the size of the house, the type of paid labour they perform and how many earn an income. The second table is an overview of the farming and labour activities performed in each household (Table 2).

Chaco ha	Chaco labour	Censo income	Income earned	Illegal forestry**	Animals
Chaco < 1	Household	No	Only inside TCO	No	None
Household 7	Household 1 Household 3 Household 4 Household 7 Household 8 Household 9	Household 3 Household 5 Household 7	Household 1 Household 3 Household 6 Household 8	Household 5 Household 7	Household 7
Chaco 1-1,5	Household + family*	Yes	Mixed	Yes	Chickens, pigs
Household 1 Household 3 Household 4 Household 5 Household 8	Household 2 Household 6	Household 1 Household 2 Household 4 Household 6 Household 8 Household 9	Household 2 Household 4 Household 9	Household 1 Household 2 Household 3 Household 4 Household 6 Household 8 Household 9	Household 1 Household 3 Household 4 Household 5 (no pigs) Household 8 Household 9
Chaco 2	Household + paid labour		Only outside TCO		Chicken, pigs, cows
Household 2 Household 6	Household 5		Household 5 Household 7		Household 2 (+horse) Household 6 (+horse, ducks)

*Family outside household

**Carried out by male head of household, not every year

Table 2: Farming and labour activities according to households | Developed by author, 2020

When asking Bernstein's first question, "who owns what", we see that Ramada is shaped by the fact that they are part of Turubó, which ensures them communal land rights, leaving them without expenses to buy land for either farming or living. That being said, the houses and the chacos are different in size: two households only have 1 room, while most of them have between 3-4, and one has 6 rooms. Some work a chaco of 2ha, others down to 0.5ha. They own the means of production such as tools and chainsaws for their chacos. However, for the censo work, they need to rent larger machinery from the sawmills located in the TCO. The type of animals they keep varies; one household does not have any animals at all, but it is most common to keep pigs and chickens for the household's own consumption, to a maximum of 15 animals in total per household. Within two households they have cattle but no more than 15 per household, which they sell in the community and to a neighbouring community. The only households without at least one motorcycle are

households 1 and 6, since they earn their income within or close to the community, they do not need that mode of transportation.

Out of the total 41 people living in the 9 households, 17 of them are children and all except two, who are below the age of 5 years old, attend school. They are expected to help around the house and the older boys to help out in the chacos during vacations. All 12 women work as *ama de casa*, doing unpaid housework and one is employed as the community's school teacher. However, out of the 5 people who took a longer education than secondary school, 4 of them are women, but since there are no companies located in the community, only one of them uses her education¹⁷. All 12 men work as petty commodity producers in their chacos, except in household 7, where the woman is the main worker. The households experience 'commodification of subsistence', without the possibilities of accumulation of surplus capital or to reproduce themselves on a household level through their farming. They become subject to the dynamics of market exchange and only through integration into wider social divisions of labour and markets are they able to reproduce their subsistence (Bernstein, 2010: 33-34; 53). The members of Ramada are also timber producers, which is secured through their permanent forest production area (PFPA), and it is the only stable income for 6 of the 9 households. Another occupation is forestry, also on short term contracts, in sawmills in one of the other communities. In three households, a male member works as 'workmen', which in this case refers to seasonal and/or temporary jobs in farming or construction. This work is located outside the TCO on larger farms owned by either Brazilians, within Mennonite settlements or in San José. The men are hired on short term contracts, often just weeks at a time, and is a vital source of income. Households 5, 7 and 9 supplement their income by working as mechanics, driver and security guard respectively. Only within household 5, does a male member have a more stable job working as a miner outside the TCO. In 4 of the 9 households, the male members work *only* within the TCO, for 3 households they both work within and outside their territory and in households 5 and 7, they earn their income exclusively by working outside the TCO. These are also two of the three households who do not partake in the censo activities. Lastly, there is illegal forestry, which is performed by all households in times of need, except 5 and

¹⁷ Keeping Bernstein's words in mind, "*class relations are universal but not exclusive "determinations" of social practices in capitalism*" (Bernstein, 2010: 115), it is clear to see that there are gender related dynamics present in this community. However, due to space considerations, this will not be dealt with in detail.

7; 5 because they do not need the extra income, and 7 because he does not have any skills in forestry.

When looking at the third and fourth of Bernstein's questions, "who gets what?" and "what do they do with it?", I will start with the chacos. These are for their own consumption, fodder supplement for their animals and for seeds for the next agricultural year. The income they make from their timber production is crucial for the households' essential foodstuffs, electricity, cable and water bills, household and chaco goods, fodder for their animals, school materials, gas for their motorcycles and bus travel. Households 2 and 6 keep cattle, which they sell in Ramada and a neighbouring community. However, like I said before, in Ramada, the biggest difference between the households is the size of the houses, the chacos and the type of animals they keep. This is connected to what they do with their income, but it is also connected to a generational social differentiation (Bernstein, 2010: 20). The younger couples such as households 2, 3, 7, 9, send their children to school, 3 and 9 even send two children each to San José, and therefore they have increased expenses for their own reproduction. As the children grow older, they will either move out of the house (most of them out of the community) or start contributing with either labour and/or income on a permanent basis, as shown in household 2. When this shift happens, the households spend their income on improving and expanding their houses, such as seen in household 8 and 6. The only household that also spends some of their income on paid labour for their chaco is 5, while the man is out working in the mine. In times of need, the community helps each other out, with clearing a chaco, harvesting or as it is the case with household 7 supplying them electricity and portable water.

Going back to Bernstein's three rural classes of farmers, the people of Ramada fall under the strata of poor farmers, being petty commodity family producers subject to a simple reproduction squeeze, unable to reproduce themselves as labour and capital, which is why the income they make from the censo is vital for their own reproduction. It is, however, insufficient, for that reason 8/9 households supplement this income with other types of wage labour outside their community (Bernstein, 2010: 104; 106). That being said, it is also important to include that this class is intersected with their indigenous ethnicity (Bernstein, 2014; 1056). The people of Ramada belongs to a historically marginalised and dispossessed ethno-class and to this day, poverty in Bolivia remains indigenous (and feminine); with 78%

of its indigenous population living in the rural areas of which 80% fall below the poverty line (Kay & Urioste, 2007: 48; Soper, 2020)¹⁸.

Being part of Turubó they are secured access to land, unlike many cases from the global South (Bernstein, 2010: 105-106). However, the entry cost to mechanised large-scale production of any kind remains too high, and they cannot establish a larger production of either agriculture or livestock. The little surplus they earn, they spend on their households and nothing is left for a potential expanded reproduction. The prospects of these peoples are shaped by the activities that provide for their reproduction of labour and capital outside their chacos and community, and the income they make there (Bernstein, 2010: 106). The younger generations with small children are more dependent on precarious wage employment located outside their community (Bernstein, 2006). The older generations, who previously were engaged in wage employment outside the community and TCO, withdraw from these activities, as their needs change, which one older couple calls a “low expense, ‘tranquil’ lifestyle” (Household 8).

Based on the above, the people of Ramada are part of the fragmented classes of labour in the rural areas (Bernstein, 2006; 2009a; 2010), but any distinct class differentiation between the households does not seem appropriate. However, as Bernstein states, “*a class can only be identified through its relations with another class*” (Bernstein, 2010: 101). Therefore, in the following four sections I will investigate how Ramada as an indigenous community in a TCO interacts with different sites of the social division of labour, across scale in the TCO, the municipality and wider trends in the department and globally.

¹⁸ They belong to the Chiquitano indigenous group who historically were a hunter-gatherer peoples, which they still to some degree practice today. Therefore, they are not indigenous farmers as this is how the campesinos in the west, who also live in communities in the lowlands, define themselves. They define themselves as indigenous, as cambas, belonging to the Bolivian lowlands. However, since this study focuses on their production and labour activities, I rely on the stratum proposed by Bernstein for analytical purposes.

5.2 Farming

“I am only the owner of my work, not of the land” (Male member, household 4).

What the male member of this household is referring to, is the fact that, since their community is located within a TCO, the territory is communally owned between all members of the five communities. One consequence is that the inhabitants cannot take out loans on their houses, because they as individuals do not own the land. Instead, they buy groceries, tools, seeds etc. on credit in San José for smaller amounts. They are not able to meet their basic needs through farming, which is why they engage in their own communal timber production and as wage labourers in the area. In Ramada, they lack the sufficient agro-capital to invest in agricultural upstream inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and machinery, which would be necessary if they were to engage in any commercial large-scale agricultural production (Bernstein, 2010: 65). Or, as expressed by this member: *“We do not have the manpower, the money or the machinery to make a large-scale agricultural production”* (Male member, household 8).

Some people express gratitude at remaining ‘free’ from this type of industrialisation, because they see chemicals as an unnecessary source of contamination, and due to the increased levels of deforestation: *“We do not grow soy here. Even though there is more money in it, because of the question of deforestation. It would mean larger deforested areas.”* (Maria). Other voices in the community, most of them belonging to the younger generation with more expenses, would like to expand their fields and engage in soy production, because this would ensure a stable income and a work place close to home (Cacique of Ramada; Maria). However, as the cacique notes, *“Of course we would like to plant soy, ‘the golden seed’. But to make money, you need to spend money, and we don’t have any”* (Cacique of Ramada). Still, as we will see later on, it is not just their financial situation that keeps them from engaging in soy production (see Climate change & Deforestation).

In Ramada, their farming methods and technologies have not changed in any mentionable way over the past 30 years; *“We still make our chacos by hand, and we plant in such small scale that tractors have no use. It is a lot of hard work”* (Male member, household 1). However, this is not the case within all communities in the TCO.

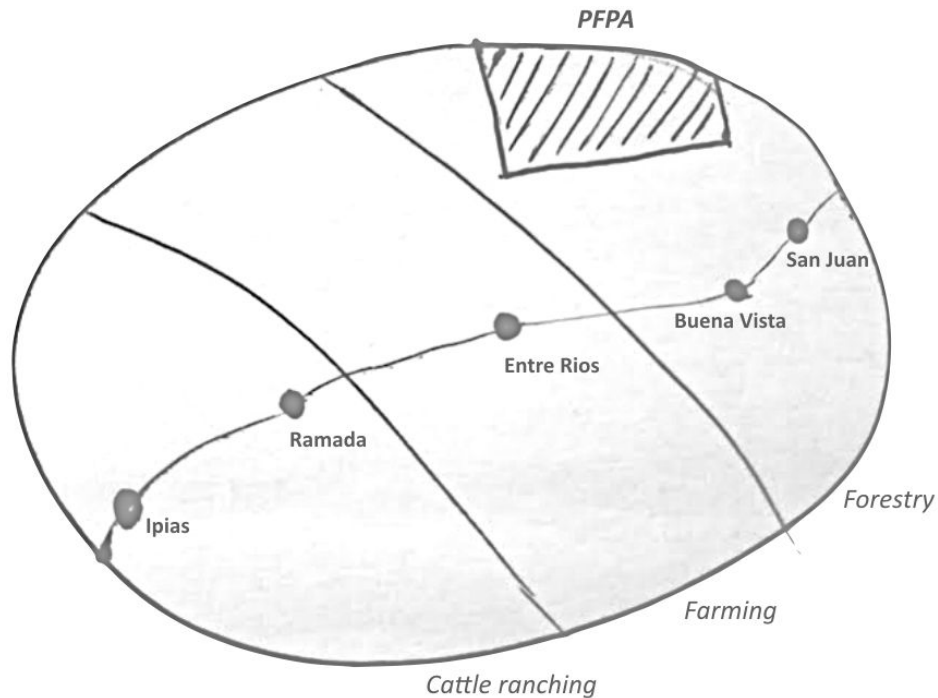


Figure 17: Sketch of ‘production sections’ in Turubó | Developed by author 2020

What we see above is a sketch of the Turubó territory with its respective resource areas¹⁹. The entire territory is covered in forest, but soil and forest quality varies from areas best suitable for cattle ranching, to farming, and forestry²⁰. As explained by Maria: *“Here [in Ramada, ed.] we only have ‘low forest’ and this is not for timber, so there are no wood companies here. In Buena Vista and San Juan, they have ‘high forest’, and the resources to develop these companies.”* (Maria). As previously stated, I visited the biggest community Buena Vista and a sawmill. Buena Vista is home to around 130 families with more than 800 inhabitants. The timber production takes place during dry season, and most sawmills have

¹⁹ The TCOs are odd in sizes and shapes and none of them round, but this is how everyone I interviewed, living both inside and outside a TCO, drew them for me. Its round shape is in contrast to the campesino communities and Mennonite settlements, whose territories and fields are rectangular.

²⁰ That being said, this is a rough division, and all types of production is possible throughout the territory, but these are the areas where the landscape predominantly is good for either of the three.

staff hired all year round, however reduced during off season. There is an increased female labour force present as well; in small shops and food places in the community and in timber production. In the sawmill I visited, out of their 22 people staff, five of them are women, employed as either administrative workers, cooks or plant workers. Some inhabitants succeed in investing their surplus capital in expanding livestock herds, and even in one case signing contracts to supply one of the biggest meat producers in Bolivia with 100 piglets pr. year. In spite of the short time I spent in Buena Vista, it becomes clear that there is evidence of all three classes of farmers; rich, medium and poor in this community and that most of this advancement is due to the presence of a more stable income, also for women, found in the timber production and the timber resources found in their surroundings.

Beyond the boundaries of the TCO territory, the landscape is completely changed as most farmers use heavy machinery for their farming and grow high-value crops such as soy, sesame or sorghum (Manager of La Central Campesina; Mennonite group interview). This corresponds with the previously mentioned expansion of Bolivian soy production and its importance since the 1980s. McKay and Colque argue that the expanding soy production has developed into a productive exclusion of small-scale farmers in SC (McKay & Colque, 2016). This is partly due to the high levels of foreignisation in agriculture, related processes of capital accumulation and the cost of agro-capital inputs, which as we have also seen with the case of Ramada, is too high. Furthermore, they argue, the agricultural production shifted from a labour-intensive to capital-intensive model, which effectively excludes the rural majority from the production, leading to a process of semi-proletarianization and petty bourgeois rentierism. While land possessions still remains an important factor, the control over storage, processing, distribution and exports in the soy industry is even more influential (ibid: 598; 603-606). This takes places outside the TCO e.g. in the campesino communities, where they rent out their land and rent machinery for their production, this aspect will be investigated later (see Migration). However, it has not happened in Ramada, yet. The community was approached by Mennonite farmers asking to rent community land for soy production, but the loss of control over their land and the farming methods employed, made the majority of the community votes against such an agreement: "*They [Mennonite farmers, ed.] would use machines and chemicals, following their ways of farming. But the community has not agreed to it yet, and maybe they never will.*" (Cacique of Ramada).

5.2 Forestry

“There used to be more work and money in forestry, because there used to be less regulation. We have a legal timber production with the right paperwork and we get more money for wood ‘with papers’ [legal wood, ed.], but we also have more expenses; we now pay for electricity, water and some send their children to go to school in the city.”

(Male member, household 8)

What this male member is referring to is the increased expenses due to payments of their permanent water supply and electricity, which was installed throughout most of the community a few years ago. Furthermore, their local school is understaffed and some families choose to send their older children to San José to finish secondary school, which means higher tuition fees and additional housing payments. The regulation he refers to is implemented by the ABT, as we saw in the case presentation. ABT has a huge implication on how the forests are managed and what types of activities and production takes place (Gautreau & Bruslé, 2019), also within the TCOs. To return to the quote, the households experience an increase in expenses, which coincides with a decrease in their income from their timber production and in forestry. In times of need, some men choose to engage in illegal timber extraction. The timber is sold for around half of the prices of wood from a censo to companies in San José and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, who pick up the wood inside the territory and falsify the paperwork and resell it throughout the country. For one day’s intense work, one man can make as much as 1000-3000 bolivianos (US\$ 145-435), which is roughly a month’s pay as a wage labourer. However, like Carlos adds “... *people don’t perform these illegal activities very often, only when it is necessary, because there is a fear of getting caught involved. We have our chacos and animals and that’s it. Many people do not want to risk it, and would rather prefer to live with less money but without the fear.*”

(Carlos).

Another member of the community, who also works in forestry, notes: “*The wood industry used to be better, but ever since larger companies started deforesting vast areas the price on timber went down, and nobody wants to pay more for ‘sustainable’ wood in these*

parts of the country.” (Male member, household 4). This corresponds with official numbers, which states that illegal timber amounts to almost 40% of the domestic market. This, by some, is blamed on the ever-expanding agricultural frontier into the forests of eastern Bolivia, and the need to claim an active presence on your land in accordance with the social economic function (Pacheco, de Jong & Johnson, 2010: 274). But as detailed, the community itself contributes to this as well, however on a much smaller scale.

As we saw previously, two communities are located in close proximity to the PFPA, where the timber companies and sawmills are located (Figure 17). These companies are owned by foreigners, mostly Brazilians, but hire local staff. The sawmills turn the logs from the censo into planks and poles, which they sell to commercial companies located in San José and Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Sonia; Cacique of Buena Vista). This is the most common model for timber production in lowland TCOs; the indigenous peoples have the exclusive right to the resources within their territory, but the high production and equipment costs force them to sign contracts with companies or investors from outside the territory. Paye and colleagues argue that capital outside the TCO develop different forms of subordination through subsidiary contracts with commercial or industrial capital in order to obtain the raw materials they require for export (Paye et al., 2011: 14-15). This effectively turns the community producers into simple suppliers of raw materials, while forestry companies control the rest of the value chain. I would argue that this resembles the dynamics found in the productive exclusion in Bolivian soy production. In timber production there is an equal foreignisation underway alongside an exclusion of the rural majority, in this case indigenous communities, from accessing the means of production or controlling the value chain (McKay & Colque, 2016), which only adds pressure on the livelihoods of these peoples.

Because the price setting of the timber is dependent on the global market it is subject to fluctuation (Pacheco, de Jong & Johnson, 2010), but the TCOs are not compensated in times of declining wood prices. They are also kept from increasing their production in times of high timber prices, because of the regulations enforced by the ABT. Therefore, this income is never enough, which is why every household supplements this by working as wage labourers and/or engaging in illegal forestry. The picture painted here is very similar to other TCOs in the lowlands, in which their subsistence farming is not enough to sustain themselves (Anthias, 2018; Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015). This was, however, part of the original thought behind the formation of the TCOs as a distinct indigenous territory in the

1990s. The TCOs were meant to 'support' indigenous communities and furthermore, "[t]he World Bank and European donors argued that TCOs would protect indigenous peoples from the negative impacts of capitalist development, enabling them to practice traditional and environmentally sustainable forms of development" (Anthias, 2018: 6).

According to the TCO definition, the indigenous communities would have their own mode of production, an 'indigenous economy' tied to their specific production activity e.g. timber extraction (Paye et al., 2011: 13-14). However, as we have seen with the case of Ramada, their produce is only for self-consumption and does not in any way cover all their needs, as one member comments: "*Sometimes I send my children to bed without food and it makes me very sad*" (Female member, household 7). Furthermore, the income they earn from their forestry production is insufficient to cover all of their expenses, thus the income from waged labor is essential for the reproduction of this workforce. This is supported by Paye and colleagues' argument, that a particular indigenous mode of production cannot be sustained within the TCOs: "*Since they [indigenous peoples, ed.] no longer produce everything they consume, they are required to purchase agricultural or manufactured products which can only be obtained through money. For that reason, a considerable proportion of the indigenous population is forced to sell their labour power*" (Paye et al., 2011: 13 - own translation).

As we have seen, these precarious circumstances not only apply to indigenous communities, but to the growing classes of labour throughout the global South (Bernstein, 2006; 2009a). Some, as in the case of Ramada, undergo a process of semi-proletarianization, where they remain in control of their land and means of reproduction, but for whom waged labour *and* their timber production is essential for their reproduction. Almost echoing Bernstein, O'Laughlin argues that, in the context of neoliberal globalisation 'older categories of class' are obscured; "*... and it is no longer the case that one finds capitalists hungry for cheap labour tearing peasants away from the fabric of rural life. Today a fragmented proletariat confronts informal labour markets and subcontracting. Individuals and households combine farming with off-farm labour, while others float between rural and urban areas, or between different rural areas. Old linear sequences are destabilized as workers may move from industry back to small-scale farming, and families retreat – or are driven – from urban areas to the countryside*" (O'Laughlin, 2009: 199).

5.3 Migration

“It affects us tremendously, because there is less work for us. My husband needs to look further and further away from the community and work for less and less money.”

(Female member, household 7)

What the female member refers to is the immigration of Quechua and Aymara campesinos moving from the highlands to the SC department and how it affects the members of the Ramada community negatively, in a so-called rural-rural migration pattern (Carr, 2009). As we have seen, migration has been used as a political tool in Bolivia over the years (see Empirical context). However, the campesino settlers are often unable to produce enough on their newly acquired land because the agro-capital inputs are too high, some therefore undergo a process of semi-proletarianization and petty bourgeois rentierism, as they, at least for a while, rent out their land to medium- or large-scale capitalist producers (McKay & Colque, 2016). This is called a *partida* arrangement; the campesino farmers provide land, while the other party provide the equipment and inputs necessary for the production. Until they can afford machinery of their own, they rent them from the large-scale farmers (Manager of La Central Campesina). In spite of this being only one encounter from a campesino community, it speaks into a wider trend. Throughout the SC department, these small- and medium-scale farmers are thus incorporated into the domestic market and exports through their production (i.e. corn or soy), made possible through their tight relations with the large-scale producers and their integration into the agro-industry (Colque, 2014: 88). Communities or individuals who fail to make this connection, rely on non-farm wage labour and become, as Colque argues, *“part of the floating population that is in a permanent process of marginalization and ‘semi-proletarianization’”* in the Bolivian lowlands (ibid: 89 - own translation).

The migration tendency characteristic for the people of Ramada is the classic rural-urban, which leads to an, admittedly slow but steady, depopulation of their community: *“they [the people of Ramada, ed.] might leave for work or education and find their partner, and the majority do not return to the community. So most people leave to find*

jobs, and a more stable income." (Maria)²¹. Similarly to the other small- and medium-scale farmers, the people of Ramada can also be classified as semi-proletarians, not disposed of their land, but not able to make a living solely from working in their community either; *"It is more difficult now, the men work more outside of the community and it affects us a lot that we do not have a source of work here"* (Female member, household 2). As Bernstein put it, the social divisions of labour include different sites and types of employment; rural-urban, farming and non-farming (Bernstein, 2010: 111). This 'strict' division between rural and urban areas has faded. Also, in the case of Ramada, there are several members living at times in Ramada and other times in San José either in a house or with family members. Maria's husband lives in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, but she moved back a couple of years ago *"I came back, to raise my kid with my family and to help my grandmother a bit, but I will leave again at some point"* (Maria). This, furthermore, speaks to the obscuration of older categories as previously mentioned by O'Laughlin (2009: 199) and highlights the complexity of class formation.

The process which takes place in the lowlands is not 'typical' land grabbing, or an absolute dispossession by accumulation, it is rather a systematic exclusion of the rural majority, by what Colque terms a 'silent agrarian revolution' led by the gradual incursion of transnational capital, backed by a small, but powerful landowning elite in the SC department (Colque, 2014: 92-93). As Bernstein argues, the influence of transnational capital in rural areas in the global South fosters a crisis of reproduction amongst the fragmented classes of labour, which only enlarges the global reserve army of labour (Bernstein, 2010: 264). Even though McKay & Colque (2016) carried out fieldwork in campesino communities, their predictions seem relevant for the indigenous communities as well. They argue that the agrarian transition taking place in Bolivian lowlands right now will create a growing reserve army of labour and force the next generation of would-be small-scale farmers off their land in a massive rural-urban migration (ibid: 604), and this is somewhat what is already taking place in Ramada.

²¹ The TCO struggles with bad infrastructure. There is only one dirt road leading into the territory, during rain season the communities are cut off from each other and the main road for weeks at the time due to flooding, making it impossible to maintain a fulltime job.

5.4 Climate Change & Deforestation

Over the last 20 years the community has experienced more severe wildfires in the area and a drier climate, resulting in an overall declining yield from their chacos. *“Like this year, we cannot grow anything because of the drought”* (Male member, household 8), which results in increased expenses to buy the extra food and fodder. This forces the men to work more outside the TCO to compensate for the lost yield, which makes them absent from the community for long periods of time:

“Right now, he [her husband, ed.] has been gone for 15 days. There is no phone signal where he is, and there is a bad signal here. He doesn't know if we're okay, or in need of food or anything.” (Female member, household 7).

Last year, Bolivia experienced one of its most severe series of wildfires losing more than 5.3 million ha of forest and grasslands (Infobae, 2019). The TCO was also affected, losing more than 20.000ha of forest and pasture, and their water sources have been contaminated ever since. Lastly, the government put the construction of new chacos on hold in what was termed an ‘ecological break’, making it illegal to burn fields in the preparation of new chacos for that agricultural season. The lack of nourishment, combined with the lack of rain, made the harvest particularly bad this year.

When asked in detail about what causes these changes, people in Ramada make a clear connection with the increased deforestation that takes place throughout SC; *“Look around us, everything has changed. Now there are much more private properties and they can deforest as much as they want. Their agriculture is mechanised and now they are able to grow in large scale, very profitable produce like sorghum, soy, sesame”* (Male member, household 4). There is evidence that the environmental degradation in the eastern lowlands has caused a significantly warmer and drier climate in the region and worrying ecological damage, including temperature increases, reduction of precipitation and impoverishment of soils (Urioste, 2012). In the 1990s the yearly average deforestation was at 150.000ha, but since 2016 deforestation rates have reached almost 300.000ha on a yearly average (SDSN, 2019). The transition into industrial farming around the TCO is in huge contrast to their low

intensity, subsistence family farming. In deforestation literature, mechanised, intensive agriculture, mostly soy and cattle production, facilitated by neoliberal policies, is one of the main drivers of the massive deforestation taking place in Bolivia (Müller, Pacheco & Montero, 2014; Redo, Millington & Hindery, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, the community decided not to engage in soy production, or rent out their land to capitalist farmers for the sake of their surrounding environment and their livelihoods. It is especially the older generation who rejects the idea of soy production, as this would entail deforestation and, as one member explains, *“we need a healthy environment free of chemicals.”* (Maria). The cacique explains that they feel a responsibility to leave the forest untouched; *“We know the answer to our problems is not in cutting down the forest ... We can't take out the entire forest or turn it into chacos or pasture, so we'll just have to make do.”* (Cacique of Ramada). The ‘problems’ he is referring to here are insufficient work for the men in the community and the financial problems most families are in, unable to pay for their children's education or having troubles covering unforeseen expenses. The ‘make do’ refers to living a more simple life with less expenses, the insecurities of not having a stable job and the fear of a failed harvest. They rely on the forest, not just for their timber production and hunting, but it also ensures moisture to their fields and it is more fire resistant than cleared land, keeping the flames at bay in times of wildfires. This protectionist or conservationist sentiment is also found in the political constitution in the original TCO legislation from 1996, in which TCOs *“... comprises production areas, areas for the use and conservation of resources and spaces for social, spiritual and cultural reproduction”* (Paye et al., 2011: 12 - own translation). The indigenous communities were meant to inhabit these territories, administered by their own representation and define their development *“... according to their cultural criteria and principles of harmonious coexistence with nature”* (ibid - own translation). However, as we have seen their realities and livelihood strategies are much messier and contradictory than simply living in ‘harmonious coexistence with nature’. So, even though these conservationist notions are expressed actively from the community members themselves, it is also a constant source of frustration.

“It is like the laws for the TCO are more for conservation, but without any help, without any compensation. We are left to make do, as we have always done ... The inequality of what is ‘allowed’ on different lands is enormous” (Male member, household 4).

In Ramada, we detect an expression of responsibility to preserve the forests, because they know cutting it down it will only worsen their conditions, but they do not receive any monetary compensation for leaving such vast areas of forest untouched, and so they revisit the idea of large-scale soy production. These contradictory sentiments, between preserving their forest and destroying it, is a clear sign of how nuanced and complex the reality of indigenous peoples is. A point that, in my opinion, is often lost in the indigenous and peasant movements’ literature. It is an argument that will be developed further in the discussion below.

6. Discussion

Having analysed the most significant findings from this study, this chapter discusses them in relation to the research question and sub-question and wider theories. The chapter is divided into three sections: The first section summarises the socioeconomic reality of the inhabitants in Ramada. The second section situates the findings in relation to the first research question and sub-question on the implications of being part of Turubó. Lastly, the third section aims to place this case study within wider global development trends.

6.1 Socioeconomic Reality

The family farmers in Ramada are subject to a simple reproduction squeeze, even with the income they earn from the censo activity. Due to regulations, they are unable to expand their timber extraction. Furthermore, they are not compensated neither for their sustainable production nor in times of price drops. There is practically no female employment opportunity in the community and no companies are located there due to the resource distribution in the TCO. They make ends meet through precarious wage employment across different sites and sectors; urban and rural, farming and non-farming. They cannot take a loan on their house, and in times of need most households engage in illegal forestry activities. Only when their need for capital subsides, when the children move out or start working (either paid or unpaid), are they able to gradually withdraw from waged labour outside the TCO. Through a combination of semi-proletarianization and simple reproduction squeeze, it seems like their fate is to become part of the growing reserve army of labourers, either working for the expanding soy industry and capitalist agricultural producers or migrate to the urban centres. Around them, other small- and medium scale farmers are part of the soy value chain, albeit also in a precarious and inferior position to the agro-industry and the capitalist producers. All of the above, adds pressure on every single member of Ramada and their decision *not* to rent their land. The members are subject to the fragmented classes of labour, and express conflicting sentiments of 'making do with what they got', living a more tranquil life with less expenses, and a desire to expand their production to secure job opportunities and the necessary means to send their children

to school. They express conflicting sentiments about clearing forests for yet another intensive agricultural production, and wanting to preserve the forests, but also wanting compensation for this 'sacrifice'.

6.2 No Transition does not Equal Resistance

My research question reads:

What are the implications of being part of the indigenous territory TCO Turubó for the inhabitants of the community Ramada?

Following centuries of dispossession from their lands, the TCOs as designated indigenous territories was a victorious moment for the indigenous peoples and movements. Being organised as a TCO grants them more direct access to local bodies of government as an organisation and their association with important indigenous organisations. In the case of Ramada and Turubó, it permits the communities to engage in legal timber extraction, which they historically had been denied (Pacheco, de Jong & Johnson, 2010; Paye et al., 2011). It remains the only stable source of income for most households in Ramada, and its contribution is vital for the reproduction of this labour force. However, it has also proven to be insufficient. The TCO as an administrative unit was meant to enable the communities to sustain an indigenous economy based on their resource extraction. It was also meant to shield them from the negative impacts of capitalist development, while enabling them to "continue" to live in harmonious coexistence with nature (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015; Paye et al., 2011). What we have seen in Ramada proves that this is not the case. They are subjected to the fragmented classes of labour and depend, directly or indirectly, on selling their labour power. And only through precarious employment, across sites and sectors, are they able to reproduce themselves (Bernstein, 2010: 111). Hence, they are in no way shielded from the 'negative impacts of capitalist development'. This, to begin with, is more of a utopian sentiment, and it remains to be seen if this is possible anywhere in the world. In this case, their possibilities in terms of social relations of production are tied to that of property, more specifically to the kind of land they inhabit and the opportunities this offers. We have seen

the presence of emerging capitalist small-scale farmers in another community in Turubó, Buena Vista. There are class differences *between* the communities in the TCO due to the resource distribution within the territory and the locations of the communities. This gives the people of Buena Vista clear advantages and, some at least, have been able to invest in expanding reproduction. In Ramada they become wage labourers, employed in the expanding capitalist production in Santa Cruz (McKay & Colque, 2016). The only way they can commence a capitalist production of their own is by renting out their land to capitalist producers, as a way to gain sufficient capital to re-peasantise their community.

However, my research question is closely related to my sub-question, which reads:

In what way does the TCO institution Turubó permit or prevent the members of the community Ramada from transitioning into a contemporary capitalist agricultural production? And how does this affect their livelihoods?

Therefore, when asking Bernstein's questions in the context of the TCOs, it goes beyond who owns what and what they do with it, towards why that is and what *can* actually be done with it. As we have seen, because of the resource distribution within the TCO, the sawmills are based in the other end of the territory, benefitting the two communities located there with a more stable source of employment. A further critique of the TCO legislation is raised by Anthias and Radcliffe, who argue that the formation of the TCOs was an 'ethno-environmental fix' (2015); protecting high-valued natures and vulnerable peoples at the same time, by securing them titled land and equal access to i.e. domestic timber production. In that regard, it becomes clear that the TCOs were *never* meant to foster any type of large-scale industrial, capitalist production, timber or agriculture, the very things the indigenous peoples needed shielding from. While I agree with their critique, I would like to expand it with a few points found in the AQ debate.

As presented in my conceptual framework, Bernstein criticises McMichael (2006) and other food sovereignty advocates for uniting the small-scale, poor peasant farmers into one single class, exploited by, and in opposition to, corporate industrialised agriculture (Bernstein, 2009a; 2014). Bernstein argues that this class is wrongly portrayed as 'capital's other' based on a presumed ensemble of qualities attributed to them including values and

practices of sustainability, diversity and conservation (Bernstein, 2014: 1041). As argued by Bernstein, the realities on the ground also in this case study are much more nuanced. In Ramada there exist contrasting positions towards implementing industrial agricultural practices and preserving their forest. The lack of industrial agriculture in Ramada is not so much due to indigenous cosmology connected to preserving Mother Nature or sustainability, or because they are part of a resistance movement, against capitalism. First of all, Ramada portrays a more authentic encounter found within these 'could transform' communities; they know that deforestation worsens the climate, and that they and their livelihoods depend on the forest. They, at times, portray a protectionist or conservationist sentiment, in that they refrain from using chemicals to protect their surrounding fauna and flora. However, they are also painfully aware of their current situation, the precariousness of their shifting employment, and the depopulation tendency found in their community. It seems the legislation behind the TCOs is to blame for the same kind of essentialism, as the one found in McMichael and food sovereignty literature (Soper, 2020). What remains problematic with the TCOs is that they are based on an *idea* of indigeneity, which is incompatible with an industrial, capitalist production or 'peasant' class dynamics. It ignores the indigenous who wants access to resources to "better situate themselves within global industrial commodity chains" (Soper, 2020: 283). Furthermore, just like McMichael and La Vía Campesina, it ignores the class differentiation and dynamics that exist between and within TCOs. Similarly, the TCO legislation is guilty of compiling heterogeneous groups of indigenous peoples into one single class obscuring their complex and contradictory realities, trying to keep the indigenous 'indigenous'.

6.3 Dispossession and the Surplus Population

“The uneven development of capitalism is structural rather than statistical ... [it] is the systematic geographical expression of the contradictions inherent in the very constitution and structure of capital.” (Smith, 2010: 4)

“Minimally, we have to recognize that the spatial and temporal unevenness of capital investment, already present in Marx’s time, is far more prominent today, as capital incorporates some places and peoples, and ejects or rejects others.” (Li, 2009: 68)

A recurring aspect, central to the themes explored in the analysis is the process of simple reproduction squeeze that the people of Ramada experience across all sites of social division of labour, which results in their incapability to sustain or support the life that they want for themselves and their children. Furthermore, they are subjected to processes of semi-proletarianization, and experience rural-urban migration, both of which are results of the current Bolivian rural transformation and capital’s hold on agriculture (McKay & Colque, 2016). Still, none of these processes are unique to indigenous territories, Bolivia or Latin America. Instead, it can be seen as an example of global processes creating a ‘surplus population’ of roughly 1 billion people, which are characterised as ‘chronically under-reproduced and precariously employed’ (Li, 2017: 1249). The population’s ‘labour is surplus *in relation to its utility for capital*’ (Li, 2009: 68 - emphasis in original). Due to modernisation and an overall more effective agricultural sector, people’s jobs in the rural areas are made redundant, and following the classic agrarian transition narrative, there would be a natural progression from rural to urban, from farm to factory (Li, 2017: 1249), however, more often than not, this does not happen.

Even though the sheer number of people who live under these conditions is astonishing, looking at the two quotes above, it is hardly surprising. Capitalism is based on and reproduces spatial inequalities, at all scales (Smith, 2010), and while the challenges were also addressed by Marx, Li argues that the unevenness has only intensified (Li, 2009). In a report by the World Bank it is suggested that unproductive and uncompetitive farmers should find employment in a different sector or migrate to the urban centres. Thereby

assuming that their labour is needed some place else, something that is as unlikely in Bolivia as it is across the global South (Li 2009: 68-69; McKay & Colque, 2016: 605). In capital's constant search for maximising profit, it is always looking for an ideal geography and thus relocating to new places with better opportunities in a 'spatial fix' (Smith, 2010). A spatial fix, as defined by Harvey, is the necessary locking down of capital through fixed capital (in built environment and means of production), which eventually is left behind to create new surplus elsewhere, through new fixations (Harvey, 2014: 78). This constant movement and relocation of capital, results in some places and peoples being rejected or ejected (Li, 2009), while others (temporarily) thrive. However, paraphrasing Li, what good are manufacturing jobs in China, if you are pushed off the land in the backwoods of Bolivia, because you are excluded from the lucrative soy production? (Li, 2017: 1250).

While the situation unfolding in and around Ramada is not unique, or maybe even surprising, it does offer certain aspects, which makes it an interesting case. In trying to protect the indigenous peoples from the 'destructive nature' of capitalism (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015), they received titled territory, which is something they historically have been denied. Surrounded by large-scale agricultural production, the people of Ramada inhabit a fairly unproductive territory, which results in their pursuit of stable employment and 'a better life' elsewhere. It therefore seems appropriate to ask, whether the TCO legislation does anything to 'protect' them, or if it is merely providing a false sense of security? The essentialist idea of indigeneity, which the TCO represents, is institutionalised in the very fabric of their territorial organisation, and as we have seen, does not match the reality these people face in the 21st century, living in a capitalist society. For now, they can still find employment in the rapidly expanding soy agro-industry, but mechanised agriculture reduces employment and employment is already saturating (Colque & McKay, 2016). Then what; where will they go, and what will they do? "*We know the answer to our problems is not in cutting down the forest ... We can't take out the entire forest or turn it into chacos or pasture, so we'll just have to make do.*" This is how the cacique of Ramada put it, so it seems that for now they just make do.

7. Concluding Remarks

The objective of this thesis was to investigate social relations of production and rural development in eastern Bolivia in the department of Santa Cruz, in and around the indigenous community Ramada. Much research done in this field is concerned with the theoretical and conceptual discussions of the peasantry, the AQ, and in the Latin American context investigations for the most part deal with the macro-national level (Colque, 2016). Therefore, the central research question was about the type of implications Ramada experienced being part of Turubó, which was closely connected to the sub-question, how the TCO permits or prevents the community from transitioning into capitalist agricultural production. The research methodology of this thesis consisted of qualitative methods, including household interviews, and interviews with key informants in and around the TCO, and informal conversations and general fieldwork material. The conceptual framework guiding this thesis was found within the literature and contemporary debates on the development of capitalism in the countryside and its influence on the peasantry, the agrarian question. Bernstein's four questions were used as a guideline for my interviews and analysis of class dynamics (Bernstein, 2010), along with additional notions concerned with agrarian political economy and rural development (Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010b).

This thesis contributes to the field of agrarian studies with a micro-level investigation of Bolivian class dynamics and challenges found in an indigenous community. These dynamics at the community scale, should not be seen in isolation from each other, on the contrary. It is through relational, and historical analysis that the intersecting dynamics across scale and between distinct classes in the countryside appear (Bernstein, 2010; Oya, 2004). Therefore, starting with an investigation into Ramada's class dynamics proved valuable to understanding the local processes linked to their social relations of production in a broader context, firstly within the TCO and onto the department of Santa Cruz and Bolivia.

This case study showed that the TCO as an administrative unit was never meant to support large-scale production, neither timber nor agriculture. Furthermore, it showed that the TCO legislation can be seen as essentialising and romanticising indigeneity, and compiling this heterogeneous groups of indigenous peoples into one single class, thus obscuring their complex and contradictory realities. Therefore, the TCO as an administrative

unit does not match their current challenges living in a capitalist society in the 21st century. It further showed that there are clear social and economic differences between the communities in the TCO based on resource distribution, something the legislation does not take into account. The case study showed that the people of Ramada were subjected to fragmented classes of labour and that they only can meet their own reproduction through precarious and unstable employment across sites and sectors (Bernstein, 2009a). Seeing how their realities are shaped by various social actors across scale and sectors, it also establishes that the TCOs as an administrative unit cannot 'shield' their populations from capitalist forces as it was intended (Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015). Lastly the dynamics detected in and around Ramada serve as an example of some of the processes leading to the growth of a surplus population (Li, 2017) and capital's inherently uneven spatial development driving it (Harvey, 2014; Smith, 2010).

Considering how many people still inhabit rural areas globally, and how rapidly these places are changing, there is still needed future research into agrarian transformation and capitalist development. This includes investigations into Bolivian rural development and the majority poorer, semi-proletised population, and especially investigating the different ethno-class dynamics and how they interact with and are subjected to labour trends in the agricultural sector (Colque, Urioste & Eyzaguirre, 2015). Furthermore, the TCOs remain an understudied field within academia and seeing as the TCOs are autonomous administrative units, there is still further research needed into how these particular units are organised and how this interacts and intersects with the above mentioned processes (Anthias, 2017).

In general, this case study supports Bernstein's argument that the agrarian question of the 21st century is one of fragmented classes of labour (Bernstein, 2010). Furthermore, seeing how time and place sensitive all of the above mentioned processes are, there is still much research needed on the local level in order to understand the social and economic differentiation dynamics taking place and shaping their realities. This could be done similarly to this study, by adopting Bernstein's four key political economy questions and applying them to research carried out at the village or community level. Furthermore, this thesis also seems to suggest that at least in a Bolivian context, land possession does not necessarily offer the security needed to ensure sources of livelihood in the countryside (McKay, 2017) or prevent the push towards the urban centres. Therefore, a further exploration of the interplay of an agrarian question of labour and property ownership or territorial

administration, both within Bolivia and across Latin America and the global South would be a great contribution to the field.

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9. Appendix

9.1 Fieldwork overview

Location	Dates	Activity
Santa Cruz de la Sierra	Jan. 12th-15th	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four NGOs
San José	Jan. 15th-20th	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental engineer - Municipality rep. forestry - NGO worker - Indigenous organisation
Ramada	Jan. 20th-23rd	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 households (2 rounds) - 6 key informants
San José	Jan. 23rd-28th	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental engineer - Municipality rep. forestry - Indigenous organisation - Campesino community leader
Mennonite settlement	Jan. 25th	Group interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mennonite religious leader, leader of agriculture and of settlement (+ 2 inhabitants) Visits to settlement and a farm
Ramada	Jan. 28th-Feb. 1st	Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 key informants Revisit households Partake in community meeting Visit burn site from fires in 2019 Visit censo site Visit chacos

Buena Vista	Jan. 30th	Interviews with - Cacique of Buena Vista - 2 key informants Visit to sawmill
Santa Cruz de la Sierra	Feb. 1st-2nd	Create an overview of analytical points from fieldwork

9.2 Household Overview

Household	Ages of male and female head of household	Interviewed head of household	Household members
1	40-50s	M	3
2	50-60s	F	8
3	20-30s	F	6
4	50-60s	M+F	5
5	20-30s	M+F	3
6	50-60s	F	3
7	30-40s	F	5
8	50-60s	M+F	2
9	30-40s	M+F	6

9.3 Key Informants in TCO

Pseudonym/function	Occupation	Age	Gender	Location of interview
'Cacique' of Buena Vista	Cacique, forestry, chaco,	60s	M	Buena Vista
Mario	Chaco, forestry	50s	M	Buena Vista
Sonia	Administrative worker in a sawmill, chaco	30s	F	Buena Vista
Daniela	Ama de casa	30s	F	Ramada
Maria	Ama de casa	20s	F	Ramada
Andrea	Ama de casa, chaco	70s	F	Ramada
Carlos	Chaco, forestry, workman	40s	M	Ramada
'Cacique' of Ramada	Cacique, chaco, forestry, workman	40s	M	Ramada
Juan	Teaching, chaco	60s	M	Ramada

9.4 Key Informants in San José

#	Occupation	Age	Gender	Location of interview
1	Environmental engineer	20s	M	SJ
2	Employee at Forestry department of municipality	30s	M	SJ
3	President of the Central Indigena	50s	M	SJ
4	Manager of the Central Campesina	40s	M	SJ
5	Group interview in Mennonite settlement Religious minister Manager of the settlement Manager of their agriculture Two members	40-50s	M	Mennonite settlement

9.5 NGOs in Santa Cruz de la Sierra

#	Occupation	Age	Gender	Location of interview
1	Manager of programmes with indigenous communities in the Chiquitano region	40s	M	SCS
2	Watershed programme coordinator of the Chaco and Chiquitano region	40s	M	SCS
3	Executive director of NGO	30s	F	SCS
4	Fire management advisor	40s	M	SCS

9.6 Interview guides

9.6.1 Semi-structured interview guide - NGOs in Santa Cruz de la Sierra

Introduction of me and my project

- Name, age, occupation
- Time in Bolivia and internship
- Thesis outline, treatment of data and publication

Introduction of the participant(s)

- Name, age, where do you live?
- How long have you worked with this organisation?
- What do you work with?

Department

- How long have you worked in San José de Chiquitos? In the Santa Cruz department?
- Do you work in specific areas/villages or with the municipality/department more generally?
- Can you tell me a little bit about this municipality?
 - Income activities, type of villages and communities, local governmental bodies and organisation

Agriculture

- What kind of changes has there been in agriculture in the municipality/department?
- Is it mostly small or big scale farming? Has this changed? (Who, how, where, why)
- What general kinds of changes have there been? (farms, fields, forest, technology)
- What kind of effect does this have on the migration to and from the municipality?
- What has these changes meant for your work?
 - For the people you work with?
 - For the places where you work?

Deforestation

- Where have you detected the biggest deforestation tendency?
 - When, where, how, who?
 - How has it changed over the years?
- How do you obtain permission to clear land?
 - Is there a fine?
- Is there any cause for concern regarding deforestation trends in the municipality?

Migration

- What does migration usually look like in San José de Chiquitos?
- Who moves from where, to where?
- Has this changed over the years? (Who, how, where, why)
- What has this meant for your work?

General

- What are the main challenges for the municipality?

Analytical points:

Reflections on method:

Follow up questions for other interviews:

9.6.2 Semi-structured interview guide - Key informants in San José, Ramada, Buena Vista & Mennonite settlement

Notes on interview setting:

Introduction of me and my project:

- Name, age, occupation
- Time in Bolivia and internship
- Thesis outline, treatment of data and publication

Introduction of participant(s)

- Name, age, where do you live?
- When did you move here? (if applicable)

Work

- What kind of work do you do? (Where, who, how much, how long)

Local governance

- Can you tell me a little bit about how this is organised? (central, organisation, settlement, community)

Change:

- In what way has this community/settlement/municipality changed since 2005 until now? (migration, sources of income, resources, surroundings)

Agriculture

- What kind of changes has there been in the agriculture in the communities here? Changes in ownership? (Who, how, where, why)
- In general, is it small or large scale farming? Has this changed?
- What general kinds of changes have there been? (farms, fields, forest, technology)
- Which laws have had an effect on the forms of agriculture?
- What effects do these changes have on migration to and from the municipality? To and from your community?

Migration:

- Can you say something in general about who leaves and comes here? (municipality, community, settlement - who, how, where, why)
- Which laws have affected migration to and from the communities?
 - Has this changed over the years?
- What laws of who facilitates migration?
 - Has this changed over the years?

Deforestation

Can you say something general about deforestation here?

- When, where, how, who?
- Has this changed over the years?

Analytical points:

Reflections on method:

Follow up questions for other interviews:

9.6.3 Semi-structured interview guide - Households in Ramada

Notes on interview setting:

Notes on house type:

Introduction of me and my project:

- Name, age, occupation
- Time in Bolivia and internship
- Thesis outline, treatment of data and publication

Household members:

#	Names	Sex	Age	Relation	Occupation	Level of education

Introduction of the participant(s)

- How long have you lived here?
- When did you move here? (if applicable)

TCO:

- How does it work being a part of a TCO?
- What type of activities do you and your family partake in? (censo)
- Do you work inside the TCO? (what, there, how long, how much)

House:

- How many years have you lived in this house?
- What are the family roles?
- What kind of animals do you have?
 - Is it to sell or consume?

Fields:

- Do you have a field?
 - How many hectares?
 - What do you produce?
 - Is it to sell or consume?
- How old is your chaco?
- What was there before? (Forest, another chaco)
- Do you work in the field all year round, or in certain months?
- What do you work with in the remaining months?
- Who works there, family, employees?
- Do you buy seeds?
- Do you use machinery/chemicals?

Income, expenses:

- Do you have any income besides your fields and forestry?

- What are your main expenses?
- Do you have any debt? (with the bank, in the market)

Migration:

- When and where did you move from? (if applicable)
- What type of migration tendency do you see in the community? In the municipality?
- In what way does the migration of Mennonites and campesino farmers in this region affect you and this community?
- What do you think about this tendency?

Changes:

- In what way has the community and its surroundings changed since becoming a TCO?
 - Have you seen changes in the main source of income?
 - Have you seen changes in the type of resources that you have access to in the community?
- Other types of change? (forest, fields, resources)

Analytical points:

Reflections on method:

Follow up questions for other interviews:

9.7 Household overview

	Gender	Age	Relation	Occupation	Level of education
	Household 1				
1	M	48	Husband	Chaco, censo	Halfway through secondary
2	F	50	Wife	Teacher, ama de casa	Teacher degree
3	M	9	Son	Student	Primary
	Household 2				
1	F	57	Wife	Ama de casa	Primary
2	M	59	Husband	Chaco, censo, forestry	Primary
3	F	28	Daughter A	Ama de casa	High school
4	M	22	Daughter A's husband	Chaco	High school
5	F	9	Daughter A's daughter	Student	Primary
6	F	20	Daughter B	Ama de casa	High school

7	M	28	Daughter B's husband	Chaco, workman	Secondary
8	M	2	Daughter B's son		
	Household 3				
1	F	27	Wife	Ama de casa	Secondary
2	M	34	Husband	Chaco, workman	Secondary
3	M	11	Son	Student	Primary
4	M	9	Son	Student	Primary
5	F	16	Wife's sister	Student	Secondary (SJ)
6	M	18	Wife's brother	Student	Secondary (SJ)
	Household 4				
1	F	54	Wife	Ama de casa	Halfway through secondary
2	M	56	Husband	Chaco, censo, forestry	Halfway through secondary
3	F	32	Daughter A	Ama de casa	High school
4	M	13	Daughter A's son	Student	Secondary
5	M	9	Daughter A's son	Student	Primary
	Household 5				
1	M	27	Husband	Miner, mechanics, chaco	Secondary
2	F	20	Wife	Ama de casa	Dropped out senior year in secondary
3	F	3	Daughter		
	Household 6				
1	M	51	Husband	Chaco, censo, forestry	Secondary
2	F	60	Wife	Ama de casa, crafts	Secondary
3	M	54	Wife's brother	Chaco, forestry	Secondary

	Household 7				
1	M	30	Husband	Workman, mechanics, driver, chaco	Dropped out senior year of secondary
2	F	32	Wife	Ama de casa, chaco	Halfway through primary
3	M	14	Son	Student	Secondary
4	F	11	Daughter	Student	Secondary
5	F	9	Daughter	Student	Primary
	Household 8				
1	M	54	Husband	Chaco, censo, forestry	Primary
2	F	59	Wife	Ama de casa, feminist activist	Halfway through secondary
	Household 9				
1	M	46	Husband	Chaco, censo, workman, security personal on empty plot	Halfway through secondary
2	F	34	Wife	Ama de casa	Halfway through secondary
3	M	15	Son	Student	Secondary (SJ)
4	F	11	Daughter	Student	Secondary (SJ)
5	F	11	Daughter	Student	Secondary
6	M	7	Son	Student	Primary