

Navigating Multiple Temporalities:

Continuities, Ruptures and Rituals among Young *Alteños* in Morales' Bolivia



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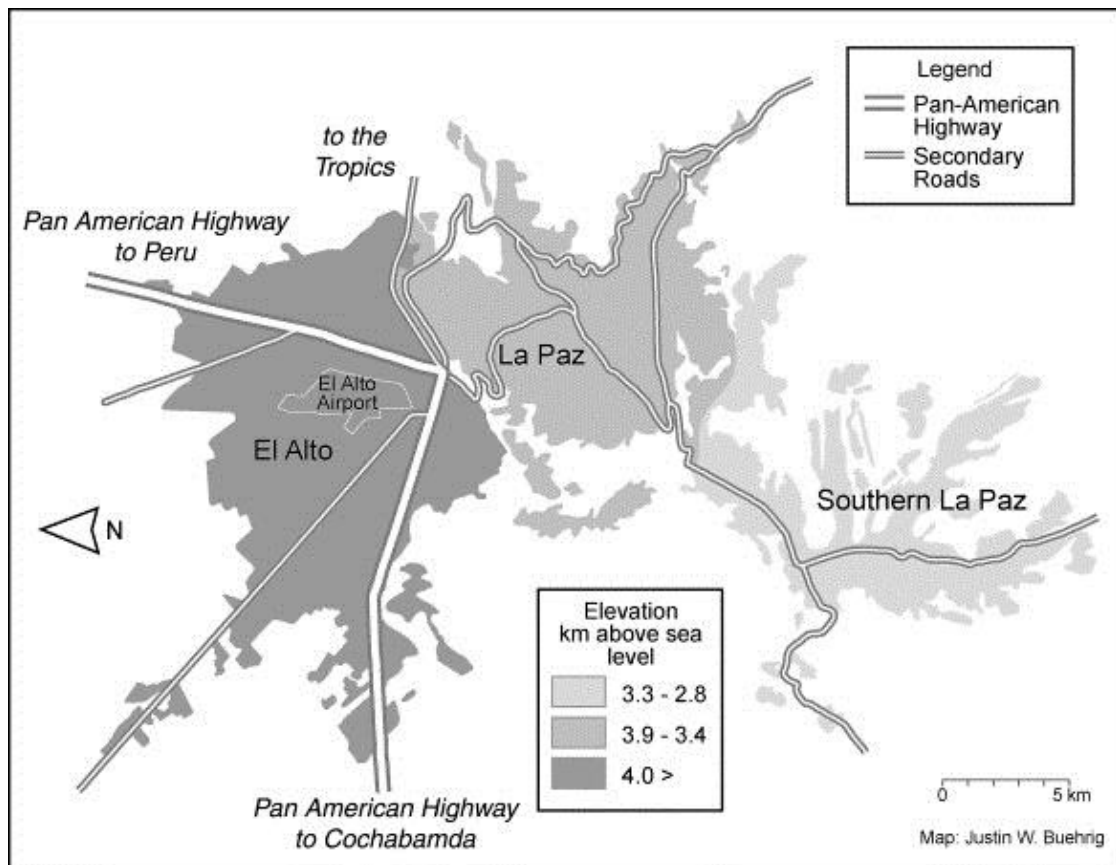
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Map of Bolivia



Note: This map is from 2006 and was downloaded from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map collection, University of Texas (see reference list). Currently Sucre is the capital of Bolivia, although La Paz is the political centre. El Alto is situated just east of La Paz but is very rarely shown on maps.

Map of El Alto and La Paz



This map is from the article 'City profile: La Paz–El Alto' by Arbona and Kohl (2004).

Chapter 1

Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Context

It was the day before the annual main-parade in the ex-miners' neighbourhood of *Villa del Santo*, El Alto. During the previous days the carousels in the plaza, the tents serving as bars, the provisional stage and stands all bore witness to a change from the everyday quiet mode of life to one ready for festivities, rituals and commemoration. The youth *fraternidad* (dance group) that I had joined had gone through the steps for the last time and gathered in one of the meeting rooms in the Catholic Church where we had practiced. Alejandro took charge and spoke to the dancers cramped together in the small room, standing and sitting shoulder by shoulder. "We represent the miners" ("*representamos los mineros*") he said proudly, and it was therefore important that we looked like them. He asked if everyone had got hold of their costumes: rubber boots, black jeans, a leatherjacket, a t-shirt, a miner's helmet, a chisel and a sledgehammer. We had and we seemed to be ready for the day to come.

Introduction

At issue in this thesis is the lives of the first urban generation of youth in an ex-miners' neighbourhood of El Alto, Bolivia. With the basis in ethnographic data collected through participant observation from June to December in 2013, I seek to understand what I argue to be complex and multiple temporalities shaping this generation's lives. A general argument that will be made is that religious and non-religious rituals, such as annual commemorations involving dance, work temporally in the way that through them people create and negotiate ruptures and continuities with the past and future. More specifically, I wish to explore how the

youth of the neighbourhood of Villa del Santo¹ managed, generated and intervened in temporalities through different activities, such as the main parade that the vignette above builds up to. Having also participated in the everyday life of my interlocutors, I will further give accounts of mundane activities, such as travelling through the city landscape and activities in the local Catholic Church, and show how the everyday is also, at times, infused with temporal dimensions. The recurring theme in all the following chapters, which all reflect the overall argument, is that the youth in El Alto actively position themselves in relation to temporalities. Further, these temporalities must be understood in relation to the context in which they appear as they can help us understand the recent political and historical changes.

In the subsequent section, I shall elaborate on the importance of studying urban youth and temporality in the Andean region. Previous studies on temporality as well as memory in the Andes have not focused specifically on the category of ‘urban youth’. This is despite the fact that such studies have often pointed out that the urban young differ from those in the countryside in the way they approach and relate to time. This omission of the temporalities of the urban youth is, then, explicitly something this thesis seeks to redress. Later, I will outline a theoretical framework focussing on a non-static understanding of time – what Gell (1992) calls ‘A-series time’ – as a vantage point to understand multiple social experienced temporalities. Before I shortly present the chapters of this thesis, I will elaborate on my methodological approach and present my interlocutors as well as the field context.

Temporality and Memory in a Changing Andean Landscape

Some important work has been done on temporality and mining in the Andes and some of these directly relate to and illuminate perspectives on the subjects that I would like to elaborate in this thesis. For one writings about time and memory in the Andes seem to have revolved around what one can call ‘indigenous’ and ‘rural’ people (Rappaport 1990, Orlove 2002). In contrast, in this thesis I emphasize the voices of urban, young *alteños*.² The youth of El Alto who I write about in this thesis all have religion, parents and grandparents with mining background and the Spanish language in common. To some extent these features differentiate them from the people living in the countryside who are habitually those studied

¹ This is a fictitious name of the neighbourhood I did most of my fieldwork in. All personal names are also altered in order to protect the identity of my interlocutors.

² Noun for residents of El Alto.

when it comes to the subject about time, history and temporality in the Andes as, for instance, Canessa (2012). In line with such approach Canessa writes: “The Andes is a profoundly historical place: Everywhere one travels there are churches, squares, houses, tombs, forts, and roads of the various people who have lived in the area over the centuries” (2012: 63).

Many anthropologists studying the Andean region have been preoccupied by the force and presence of history and memory. Studies such as Canessa’s, do not relate to urban youth in particular. It seems to me that urban youth as a category has been somewhat overlooked regarding the subject of temporality and memory in the Andes. Instead, most studies seem to focus on Aymara (or Quechua) speaking people living in the countryside.

A case in point is, again, Canessa (2012) who focused on a small village (Wila Kjarka). In his book, he explores the complexity of indigenous identities through different analytical lenses such as gender, linguistics, race and historical consciousness. In regards to the latter he found that his interlocutors divided history into three parts (the dawn, the time of the Incas, and the time of the Spanish) and that these three did not entirely disappear, but rather folding into each other.³

If we are to follow Canessa’s argument, historical consciousness, then, implies a concept of time more generally and not only ‘history’ as the past is not distant, but present and intimate. Interestingly, Canessa noted that those over thirty years did not want to answer his questions about these three periods. He notes, however, that there are rapid changes going on in Wila Kjarka and young people he spoke to often wanted to move to the cities for reasons he analysed as related to seeking upward mobility (Canessa 2012: 87). Interestingly, he provides no clear answer to why the youth seemed uninterested in the three periods of historical consciousness, but nevertheless, underlines how historical consciousness varies across generations and place.

In his extremely detailed book, *Pathways of Memory and Power*, Abercrombie (1998) examines the history of a K’ulta, an Andean community, by looking at both historical documents and non-written social memory. Similarly to Canessa, he writes that there is not a singular homogeneous social memory and that there is an “[...] increasing number of disaffected youths, schooled and ambitious, questioning the efficacy of the old techniques [of remembering]” (1998: 124). Further, some of the young traders seek the religious sacrifices of the urban class that might help them seek different goals than their fathers sought.

³ See also Canessa (2008)

A third example of influential work that examines time and memory is provided by Allen (2002) who analyses a community in Peru called *Sonqo*. The main focus of her book is how coca (the leaf) appears in different settings in her interlocutors' lives. She did her first fieldwork in 1975 and the last (before the second edition) in 2002. Also reflecting Canessa's argument she describes a community in rapid change and people aspiring to the possibilities for the future in urban areas. She writes poetically about a concept of the future as coming from behind: "Time moves ahead like a river to drop from view into that subterranean interior that contains both past and future. Future time does not lie ahead of us, but comes up at our backs. It wells up from under our feet; it catches us by surprise like a wind blowing from behind" (2002: 195).

All the studies mentioned above implicitly or explicitly explore the ways the Aymara and Quechua languages reveal complex understandings of time and memory. Such points are also supported by, for instance, a cognitive science study by Núñez and Sweetser (2006) which found that the ego-reference-point in Aymara speakers is reversed (in relation to the Western) regarding future and past. In other words, through studying body language and spoken language, they argue that the past is in front, while the future approaches, then, from behind. However, they did not find this bodily-temporal concept among (often young) monolingual Spanish speakers – they gestured as people would do in the Western world (2006: 35). This linguistic curiosity has also been noted by others Canessa (2008: 362) and by Miracle and Yapita (1981).

Summing up, in many of these texts, it is mentioned that youth (and urban youth in particular) have different ways of envisaging time and memory than the older generations, but they never explore this any further. Thus, while I draw a lot of inspiration from this research and its findings, this thesis, can be considered to be an extension of their arguments. In this thesis my aim is also therefore to fill what I believe is a gap in the anthropology of the Andes. Concretely, I will seek to fill this gap by emphasising the voices and perspectives of the Spanish-speaking, urban youth of El Alto.

Mining and Miners in Bolivia

In her socially critical book entitled *We Eat the Mines, and the Mines Eat Us*, Nash (1993 [1979]) looks at the conditions that Bolivian miners work under and their families. Her ethnography is analysed through a Marxian lens in order to make the argument that the miners are simultaneously dependent on the mining as a way of surviving and exploited as workers.

More concretely, in her analysis the miners lack the means of production and are thus dependent on the owners and managers of the mines and they are also exploited because of the uneven distribution of wealth coming from the mines (1993: 330). However, they are not ignorant of the uneven power relations they are subjugated to: On the contrary they are well aware of their position nationally as well as globally and thus have a strong sense of class-consciousness.

Through autobiographies Nash also explores the subject of the miners' history and myth and argues that the miners have developed a form of historical consciousnesses. Similar to Canessa, Nash states that historical consciousnesses differ between generations as they have had different historical experiences (1993: 24-25). In some ways this thesis can be seen as a continuation of her classic book, in the way that it tells the story of the children and grandchildren of miners and how they remember the hard working conditions as Nash describes – now in an urban context.

However, another way of building on Nash and others is provided by Taussig (2010 [1980]) who reinterprets the ethnography of Nash's book and compares it to his own experiences from Colombia. He argues that the Devil, also prominent in Nash's work, emerged as part of the process where peasants became part of the proletariat. The Devil and his ambiguous powers of giving wealth and causing accidents in the mines is understood by Taussig in relation to a specific historical and political context where the Devil appears as a mediator between different modes of production.

There are some other inspiring texts as well: Further, the previous miner and political activist Félix Muruchi wrote a book (co-authored together with Kohl and Farthing 2011) about his life. He pastured sheep until he was nine and then he moved with his family to a mining centre and entered the mines to work at the age of 16. After returning to Bolivia from exile in Holland in 1985, he settled in El Alto like many other miners. Arbona (2008) has also written about ex-miners in El Alto where he argue that memories and histories of the ex-miners re-emerged and became reframed in an urban context during the 2003 riots.

Again, what is striking about these important texts is that they do not consider the urban decedents of the miners and how the memory of mining becomes part of a historical temporality enacted in the present.

A Theoretical Framework

At the outset of my project and early in my fieldwork, I focused on the importance of youth's historical consciousness in El Alto. This approach was informed by an article by Canessa (2008) where he states that those under 30 years have a different historical consciousness than the older generation, as the youth often seek to urban areas. Further, drawing on Connerton (1989)⁴, I loosely envisaged a fieldwork that would focus on social memory as expressed through various forms of performance. During my fieldwork I did find what I set out to explore but when I exited the field and started to write I realised that the singular focus on social memory constrained the analysis of my ethnographic material. By exclusively focusing on social memory (past), the important aspects of how the future was perceived and structured actions vanished from view. In order to incorporate both ideas on past, present and future I shifted my focus to 'temporalities', in the multiple, and downplayed 'social memory'.

Temporality, the way I understand it, is similar to what Gell (1992) refers to as A-series time.⁵ In his theoretically driven book, Gell, synthesises some of the work done on the subject of time from Durkheim and onwards. Gell argues that while anthropologists are puzzled about the subject of time, we have no clear ideas about the metaphysics of it – how we can think about it in the first place. He argues that anthropologists have been leaping into a philosophical area that is beyond the limits of their ethnography and states:

The problem with Durkheimian anthropology is that in discussing this or that culturally constituted world, anthropologists have tended to seek a level of analysis which would imply that their findings have a bearing on the constitution of the world in general, on what kind of a place the world in general must be considered to be, and not just the culturally constituted world they are investigating. (Gell 1992: 55).

Thus, he pose the questions: "How does time actually become salient for us? How does it come about that there is a past, a present and a future?" (1992: 145). To answer these questions, Gell draws on philosophers (McTaggart in particular) in order to distinguish between two approaches to time – A-series time (past/present/future) and B-series time (before/after). A-series implies becoming and passage, that is, events come into the present

⁴ For a critique of Connerton and the alleged 'memory boom' in anthropology, see Berliner (2005).

⁵ The corpus on 'time' and 'temporality' in anthropology is too comprehensive for a complete review in this thesis. See Munn (1992) and Gell (1992) for extensive reviews of some classic works. For a more recent, but much shorter, review see the introduction in James and Mills (2005).

from the future and continue into the past. On the other hand, B-series time does not revolve around becoming but is rather static and entails an unchanging relationship between presentness and pastness. Gell positions himself as a moderate B-series theorist: “B-series time is ‘real’, i.e. it reflects the temporal relationships between events as they really are, out there” (1992: 165). Hodges captures the essence of Gell’s book when he states that: “B-series model, therefore, is the explicit foundation for his theory’s temporal ontology” (2008: 404).

In contrast to Gell, I am not interested in delving into questions concerning what time is objectively and ‘out there’. Rather, and informed by my work among youth in El Alto, I will approach temporalities as socially experienced and dynamic – the A-series time in Gell’s division. Crucial for such a choice is also that a strict B-series perspective on time only gives way to one type of temporality (the ‘objective’ and static concept of time), the A-series opens up for interpretations of multiple human temporalities which is what I aspire to do.

However, to focus on A-series time is not to deny the inevitable passing of time. This is illustrated in the book on the temporalities of death edited by Christensen and Willerslev (2013). In their perspective, death of a person highlights the contradictions between the inevitable passing of time (body decomposing) and temporal productions (such as rituals). When a person dies and the decomposition of the body starts, it becomes imperative to act on time in order to proceed with the necessary rituals and give the deceased person a proper burial. In this way death not only implies material decay, but more interestingly how humans craft and produce temporalities.

One of the ways that humans can craft time is through creating temporal ruptures and continuities. Lazar (2014) illustrates this by describing how different social experiences of time coexist and reach into each other. Ruptures are made, she argues, when continuous repetitions of political activity called ‘attritional time’ construct ‘historic time’. In other words when the everyday struggles become part of a historic narrative. A revolution is not necessarily experienced as a revolution in the moment of the event but, rather is constituted as such later when it enters a politics of time. Thus, Lazar gives importance to the political in consolidating and operating temporalities. Similarly, Munn, in her review article on time in anthropology also notes that the capacity to make discontinuities and controlling calendars may be called a “cosmo-political power” (1992 :109-112). Both Lazar and Munn, thus illustrate the non-static and political aspect of temporalities – perspectives that are in line with the argument about multiple temporalities that this thesis seeks to explore.

Another dimension that is important here is that temporal ruptures and continuities are created and managed through what can be approached as rituals. The vignette of this chapter builds up to such a ritual that contains both religious and secular facets (see Chapters 4 and 5). However, what I refer to as rituals in this thesis, then, are neither solely mediating contact between humans and the divine (although that will be treated in Chapter 5) nor are they only civic commemorations (as in Chapter 3). What the rituals in this text have in common, however, is that they are to a certain extent formalised as they are repeated within a certain interval. A ritual is also formalised in the way that it is “[...] the practice of which is marked off (usually spatially and temporally) from, or within, the routine of everyday life, and which has specified, in advance of its enactment, a particular sequential ordering of acts, utterances, an events [...]” (Kapferer 1983: 2). Whether they are civic and/or religious is of lesser importance to the overall argument and my understanding of them as temporal events.

In his book *How Societies Remember*, Connerton, precisely approaches commemorations as rituals and underline that they “[...] do not simply imply continuity with the past by virtue of their high degree of formality and fixity; rather, they have as one of their defining features the explicit claim to be commemorating such a continuity” (1989: 48). Thus, Connerton, in my view, points to rituals as temporal events. However, in contrast to him, I would also emphasise that through rituals one can also claim ruptures. This thesis will not argue, however, as it has been argued elsewhere (Nielsen 2011), that the future is present as a reversed cause-effect relationship where the effect is prior to the causes. Rather the present reaches into the future through aspiration and expectations of what the future will bring.

In anthropology there has been a debate about linear and cyclical understandings of time (see Geertz 1973, Bloch 1977, Howe 1981). It should be noted that this thesis does not evaluate whether one should emphasise one such concept over another⁶ – what I define as temporalities exhibit both linear and cyclic configurations. Rituals are cyclic in the way that they are celebrated within a certain interval but, simultaneously, they can be linear when they are enactments of historic events that are part of the past and not part of the envisaged future (Lazar 2014: 106). This will in particular be illustrated in Chapter 4 where a yearly parade is analysed as constituting a rupture with the past.

The title of this thesis, *Navigating Multiple Temporalities*, refers to both creating and socially experiencing temporalities and how they are negotiated and managed through, first

⁶ See Farriss (1987) for an analysis on how linear time and cyclic time of the Mayas were fitted into each other throughout history.

and foremost, rituals. Based on my ethnographic descriptions, I aim to illustrate a series of non-static temporalities constituted through rituals which relate to the future and the past in the present. I will emphasise young *alteños*' capacity to engage with such rituals in chapter 2 to 5. However, and as is clear from chapter 2 and more briefly in chapter 3, I will also write about the stately temporality of Morales and his government that is to a certain extent outside the control of my interlocutors.



Figure 1: City architecture.

Studying Temporalities in El Alto

El Alto is a city about 4000 meters above sea level in the Andes highland flats. The houses and buildings of the city are predominantly of red bricks. However some very colourful buildings called *chalets* with Andean motifs on the facades break up such consistency, as well as some adobe houses. In the middle of the city is the airport (green area in the photo) that geographically divides the city in two – north and south. The photo is taken from the north part of the city looking towards the south, where Villa del Santo is. In this section, I will elaborate on my approach to anthropological participant observation, how I established contact with the youth of *Villa del Santo* and provide an overview of issues relating to the context of my fieldwork more generally.

Participant Observation and Anthropological Knowledge

The preferred method for social anthropologists is considered to be participant observation which includes learning the language, gaining (and maintaining) access, developing rapport, learning to ask meaningful questions, taking notes and participating in daily life over a longer period of time (see O'Reilly 2012, Bernard 1994). At a later stage, one shifts gear to analysing and writing about what one found during ones fieldwork. A premise for producing anthropological knowledge, then, is a certain degree of shared experiences.

Also in this regard Gell's view on time is relevant to my fieldwork: "The time we experience immediately [...] is A-series time" (Gell 1992: 221). Gell draws on Husserl when he writes about A-series times as a set of 'temporal horizons' that constantly changes, like the landscape constantly changes while moving in it. Eventually, one cannot experience the experience of another person, but by living in the same conditions and engaging in everyday life as well as rituals and festivities I believe that it is possible to 'resonate' with each other and create mutual understanding despite differences in language and background (Wikan 1992). This shared experience is not evidence of what time is metaphysically or objectively but it gives valid anthropological knowledge of how one can interpret, in this case, young people of El Alto's understanding of the past and the future in the present.

Anthropological 'evidence' is based on experiences that "[...] cannot be external evidence of a particular situation, because experience cannot be attributed to an individual who stands outside of the situation that the experiences is evidence of" (Hastrup 2004: 465). Anthropological knowledge is thus based on experiences that do not stand as objective evidence of the world in a strict sense. Hastrup gives an example of her experiences with the hidden people on Iceland and concludes that her experience is not objective evidence of their existence but an experience that needs to be seen in relation to the context it emerged in.

Yet, it has been argued that there is a gap between the shared conditions during fieldwork and the way that anthropologists have represented their interlocutors when writing. In his critical book *Time and the Other*, Fabian (1983) argues that when writing, the anthropologist has denied their subjects (or the Other) temporal coexistence with the anthropologist – what he denotes as the 'denial of coevalness'. This creates a disjunction between fieldwork (where one has to communicate with interlocutors through what he calls 'intersubjective time') and the way anthropologists write about the cultures we study (the knowledge we produce).

Taking all this into consideration: I do not seek to write about time objectively – what Gell would call B-series time – but analyse how different temporalities appears and are navigated within the lives of the youth of Villa del Santo in the context that they live in. Methodologically this involves living in the same neighbourhood, participating in the same activities and existing in the same ‘intersubjective time’. The assumption that through participant observation I was able to gain an understanding of the social life in El Alto is the premise of this thesis and I hope that this is reflected in the way I represent my interlocutors.

Starting the Fieldwork and Accommodation

Prior to my fieldwork, I lived in La Paz for six months where I studied Spanish. I had learned some basic Spanish during my stay as an exchange student in La Paz in 2011 but my level was not advanced enough for an anthropological fieldwork-setting. So, I applied for one semester’s ‘leave of absence’ from my university in order to prepare for my fieldwork. When I lived in La Paz, ‘the field’⁷ was just a few minutes away providing me with the possibility to get to know the city before I moved there. The additional months in Bolivia also provided me time to contact different youth organizations, both in El Alto and La Paz, in order to build a small network. I was not interested in studying youth organisations *per se* but, from my stay in 2011, I understood that they might help me find interlocutors. By chance my Spanish teacher had heard a radio interview of youths who represented an organisation in El Alto. She gave me the name of the organisation and after doing some research I contacted them.

To make a long story short: before I moved to El Alto I met Alejandro who was the leader of the organisation that was interviewed on radio. He invited me to Villa del Santo so that I could meet his friends who gradually became my key interlocutors. Without the help of Alejandro and my language teacher, my fieldwork, as it turned out, would simply not have been possible or, at least, would have taken another form. By introducing me to his friends, Alejandro became the ‘gatekeeper’ of my field. Finalising six months of preparatory language studies in June 2013 I moved to El Alto, I became part of a circle of Alejandro’s friends and I eventually decided to focus almost all of my work in their neighbourhood. My key interlocutors were all core members of this circle of friends although, more ephemerally, I also met other youth of El Alto.

⁷ I am aware that there has been written critically on ‘the field’ in anthropology. While a discussion of this is outside the scope of this thesis, see Gupta and Ferguson, 1997 and Kurotani, 2004.

In addition to my key interlocutors, I hung out and sometimes worked with a charity organisation in *Villa del Santo* that helped underprivileged families through sponsors from the USA. The organisation had one office in the local church-centre of *Villa del Santo* (and other places in El Alto and worldwide) with one staff member on payroll in addition to students (interns). The people at the local office were all what I would characterise as ‘youth’ (see definitions below) who lived in other districts of the city and had different backgrounds.

During my fieldwork, I also kept in contact with some of the people I had met at a culture-house called Wayna Tambo in Villa Dolores close to La Paz (see Tarifa 2012). It became a secondary field area that was an interesting point of comparison from the youth of *Villa del Santo*. Although I do not write much about Wayna Tambo, I understood more about the youth in *Villa del Santo* by having gotten to know others in the same city (see Barth 1999).⁸ I will briefly mention some experiences from Wayna Tambo as well as the charity organisation throughout my thesis. However the main focus in this text, as well as during my fieldwork, revolves around Alejandro’s circle of friends.

The first neighbourhood I moved to in El Alto was Ciudad Satélite. But the constant commuting between Ciudad Satélite and Villa del Santo was draining of time and energy. Since I also wished to live close to my interlocutors in Villa del Santo, I decided to move. To find a place to live in Villa del Santo was difficult – no one seemed to want to have a foreigner living with them. It took me two months from when I started looking until I found a family to live with. Unfortunately, some of the family members in the house that would finally accommodate me had serious health issues that were putting a strain on familial relations. The problems in the household got to a point where I decided to move for the third time during my fieldwork. Again, I wished to live with a family for pragmatic reasons and because it would give me a general insight into *alteños*’ family-life. The third and final family I stayed with was the local Catholic Father (*Padre*), and his mother (Diana) and brother. This gave me a good (however brief) insight into how the church worked as an institution locally. It was also practical since many of my interlocutors regularly went to this church.

My accommodation situation was the biggest practical problem I had during my fieldwork. In retrospect, I understand that the advantage of living in three different places during a relatively short fieldwork period was that it gave me insight into different familial situations. Another advantage with living with families was that they taught me about safety in El Alto. I felt that as a foreigner the families I lived with took an extra effort in teaching me

⁸ This is perhaps similar to a methodology that Barth denotes as ‘field of variation’.

the ‘dos and don'ts’, such as telling me to go in the middle of the road to avoid people jumping at me (*saltar*) from the corners, and what taxi companies to trust (see Risør 2010 on taxis and danger in El Alto). They also noticed when I came home at night and some were not shy and gave me a scolding if they thought I came home too late.

A Miner's Neighbourhood

My curiosity for the *Villa del Santo* started with Alejandro's youth organisation but the reason I decided to do most of my fieldwork there was because of the openness to share and willingness to help that I found among the youth I got to know. A reason that reflected more directly my research interests was that the neighbourhood had an interesting background that was relevant to my topic as it is widely seen by residents of El Alto as a miner's district. This is partially because of the minibuses going by Plaza Bolivia⁹ in the neighbourhood where three statues – two miners and one *palliri*¹⁰ – made up a miner's monument. During my fieldwork, the plaza was renovated. The administrative leader of the neighbourhood told me that the idea was to have a new and bigger miner-statue and to hoist flags of each district of Bolivia on the flagpoles that surrounded the square. He also showed me the busts of famous leaders of Bolivian syndicates, including Juan Lechín Oquendo, which was going to decorate the plaza.

Lechín Oquendo is a greatly respected and important political figure in Bolivian history. He was the leader of the miners' union (FSTMB – *Federación Sindical Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia*) from when it was established in 1944 and continued for 43 years. As the leader of the union he was central in the 1952 revolution where the miners were key agents. The 1952 revolution emerged after the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR – *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*) won the elections in 1951 but was prevented from assuming the presidency as a military junta instead seized the power (Klein 2011: 206). Miners as well as factory workers took to the streets and ensured that Victor Paz Estenssoro representing the MNR did get the presidency (Nash 1993: 3).

The 1952 revolution entailed a series of changes. For Lechín Oquendo this meant becoming the leader of the national labour federation (COB – *Central Obrera Boliviana*) and the head of the Ministry of Mining and Petroleum (Klein 2011: 213). At a national level the

⁹ Like the name of the neighbourhood and personal names, this is also fictitious.

¹⁰ Usually the wife of a miner worked by sitting on the ground and hitting stones with a sledgehammer in order to extract minerals.

revolution brought with it changes such as universal suffrage and an agrarian reform that ended the hacienda system (see Chapter 3). Further, after pressure from the FSTMB and the newly founded COB, the MNR government nationalised the mines, thus ending an era dominated by three great tin barons (Patiño, Hochschild, and Aramayo).

Victor Paz Estenssoro became the president after the 1952 revolution. He was also the president in 1964 when Bolivia returned to dictatorship headed by Barrientos Ortuño, who succeeded in taking apart the FSTMB and even ordered a massacre on striking miners in 1967 – the so-called San Juan Massacre (Klein 2011: 224). After years of multiple military dictatorships Bolivia returned to democracy in 1982. Subsequently Paz Estenssoro was, again, elected as president in 1985.

However, this time Paz Estenssoro adopted economic liberalism that diminished the state-owned mining enterprise (COMIBOL – *Corporación Minera de Bolivia*) he had built up during earlier presidencies (Klein 2011: 245). As a result of pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Paz Estenssoro passed the Supreme Decree 21060 in 1985.¹¹ This was presumably done in order to repay foreign debt and recover the country's economy that had been suffering badly from inflation and declining productivity in the tin mines. The first effect of the Decree was the reduction of food subsidies on meat, bread, sugar and rice. This and the combination of frozen wages and increasing prices made the situation difficult for the miners who were dependent on the welfare provided by the state in the mining centres (Gill 1997: 295). A protest, the so-called 'The March for Life' (*Marcha por la Vida*) going from the miners' centres towards La Paz in 1986, was halted by the military. Further, the miners lost the struggle to save their employments as the FSTMB weakened when the workers gradually departed the mining centres to find new livelihoods in urban areas like Cochabamba and El Alto.

The most experienced miners were entitled to pieces of land through a cooperative housing program; while other less experienced miners had to use their kin networks or relations to find places to live (Gill 1997: 299). Discharged miners coming from the same mining centres were provided land in the same blocks of the neighbourhood (*mazanas*), so that miners who already knew each other and had worked together lived side by side in the

¹¹ All decrees referred to in this thesis are available from <http://www.lexivox.org/>. See the reference list for URL links. For a more extensive review of the 21060 Decree see Gill (1997).

neighbourhood. ‘Relocalised miners’ (*‘mineros relocalizados’*)¹² thus became a term used to represent the new residents of El Alto – and it is still used today. Villa del Santo was one of several districts that the miners moved to when the consequences of the 21060 Decree started to take effect in the mid- and late-1980s. In Chapter 3, I will explore further the growth of El Alto, suffice to say here is that the arrival of the miners has been one of several migration waves to El Alto. In chapter 4, I will also extend on this and write about the *Minero* dance that we danced in Villa del Santo.



Figure 2: *Plaza Bolivia* (under renovation) and the Catholic Church in *Villa del Santo*.

When I conducted my fieldwork, the idea of Villa del Santo as a miners’ district was very prominent. Even though the residents of Villa del Santo no longer work as miners; it is (using the present tense) a miners’ district. By emphasising this distinction, I want to make a point that being a miner is not merely working in the mines but is a wider category that also includes political orientation often associated with being a socialist and/or communist and standing in opposition to the State. For instance the miners were important in the 2003 riots, against Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, but can still, at times, be seen demonstrating in La Paz.

¹² Initially this term came from the promise that the government would offer the miners new jobs and relocate them to new part of the country. However, the government did not keep their promise and rarely offered them new jobs (Gill 1997: 299).

Nonetheless, one has to have worked as a miner at some point to be categorized as one. Thus the youth that grew up in the cities are not miners, even though they think of the neighbourhood as a miners' area (Chapter 4).

The Youth of Villa del Santo

As I said earlier, I contacted an organisation as a way to get to know my interlocutors. Friendship and camaraderie are important values among members of youth organisations in El Alto (Méndez and Pérez 2007: 46-50) and as it turned out the members of this organisation were also friends. What they had in common was that they lived in Villa del Santo, and the surrounding neighbourhoods. They also frequented the Catholic Church and the church centre in Villa del Santo. It was not just a place to go to pray or participate in religious activities; it was where my interlocutors met and hung out, updated each other on the latest gossip and planned coming events. The activities in and around the church constituted a great deal of my time in the field.

An important part of anthropological fieldwork is to get socialised into the group of people one studies. Briggs (1970) in her reflexive book about a small group of Eskimos¹³, she describes very vividly how she got integrated into – and in some situations rejected from – a family while learning how to become their daughter and sister. Through different activities I also got socialised, but as a friend. For example we played five-a-side football (*futsal*) on Sundays for a couple of hours behind the church. One time I was unable to come to practice and Alejandro asked me where I had been – after some time in the field I was expected to show up as part of the group. Even though one does not like to play or is not able to because of health issues, one is expected to come as a friend. Alexander and Javier (who had a bad knee) usually showed up during football practise even though they never played. My youngest interlocutor Marcos also always showed up, although he did not always play.

I was, no doubt, seen as a curiosity and as odd. An example of this was when I came one time to football practice in my shorts. I had already changed at home before I left. Javier smiled awkwardly at me when he saw me and asked if I arrived like that – wearing no pants. I replied 'yes' and I soon understood that it was not normal to walk around in the neighbourhood wearing football shorts which is why everyone changed right before playing. Through similar kinds of trials and errors I was socialised into the circle of friends. However, I did not stop being strange but I slowly understood what was considered normal, and what

¹³ With 'Eskimos' here I refer to Briggs' use of the category.

was out of the ordinary or hilarious. My most vivid memories from my fieldwork are from laughing together with my interlocutors and especially from the times when I, towards the end of my fieldwork, was able to tell jokes and make them laugh intentionally – which I took as a sign of a mutual understanding (see Bernard 1994: 137).

Some were more eager to teach me about being an *alteño* than others. Javier, for example, was that kind of person. Every Wednesday I went to Mass. I usually arrived a few minutes early to chat with Javier while he prepared to play his guitar in church. He studied linguistics at UPEA (*Universidad Pública de El Alto*) and when I started to take Aymara-classes, he would ask me “*kamisaki*” (“how are you?”), and I would reply “*waliki*” (“fine”), but the conversation in Aymara stopped there, and went over to Spanish. My interlocutors never spoke Aymara to each other and I only learned some very basic grammar and a few words.

After Mass, we usually met to chat outside church. Alejandro often sat in his car with Ignacio (his younger brother) and Mariela (his girlfriend) while the others stood around the vehicle. Alejandro was often the centre of attention and sometimes took the initiative for different activities, such as a football tournament as well as introducing the anthropologist. He was from a respected family in the neighbourhood: His grandfather was the president of the neighbourhood association (*Junta de Vecinos*) and his parents were familiar faces in church. Well-connected and respected he was the typical ‘gatekeeper’ (see O’Reilly 2012: 91).

Prior to my fieldwork, I did not believe that church was going to become such an important aspect during my stay. I am agnostic and I was, prior to my fieldwork, perhaps naïve about the extent that religion matters in the life of young *alteños*. In ethnographic fieldwork, religious belief can create dilemmas and highlight both tension and proximities between interlocutors and anthropologist (Blanes 2006). The fact that I did not believe in any God was puzzling for some of my interlocutors, but not unheard of and I never felt unwelcome because of my lack of religious belief. Some of my interlocutors believed stronger and were more religiously dedicated than others. Gustavo for example, who frequented the church as much as anyone, told me that he and his family were not strong believers either. Most people respected that I had taken a standpoint and usually I felt more than welcome to join the activities in (and outside) the church. Occasionally, I was even invited to participate in religious activities (or politely asked since they knew I was a non-believer) and I almost always joined even though it made me feel uncomfortable.

Getting access in a public sphere like church was relatively uncomplicated. I found it a bigger challenge to get access to the private and familial spheres (like when I had problems to find a family to live with). The private spheres are often closed arenas that are only open to friends or family (Abercrombie 1998: 83). Accordingly, the few times I visited the homes of my interlocutors I did that because I had become a friend.

Despite coming from different backgrounds, I felt that there was (or at least developed) a ‘resonance’ (Wikan 1992) – a certain common ground of understanding and empathy. We found common ground through living in the same districts and participating in the same activities. Also, knowledge of or consumption of the same popular culture helped. For example the first time I meet Ignacio he asked me if I liked *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, and other interlocutors liked the same type of music I did or had seen the same movies.

It should also be said that most of my interlocutors were mainly male youth. The girls I write about are nonetheless part of the same circle of friends but they were not expected to show up to football or dance practice in the same way that the boys did. Regarding the social context it would have been unnatural for me to pursue getting to know the girls for the sake of my fieldwork. Having grown up in Norway where there is a strong ideology of gender equality, the relative separated gender spheres were unfamiliar to me.

Two Definitions of ‘Youth’

What does it mean to be ‘young’ (*joven*) in El Alto, Bolivia? Youth is sometimes said to be the phase between childhood and adulthood but what this means will vary according to place and time (Honwana 2012: 11-14).¹⁴ I have been able to detect two different definitions of ‘youth’ in El Alto – one social and one legal. When I asked my interlocutors about what it means to be ‘young’, they often referred to the legal definition without reflecting much more over it. This is despite the fact that it is only valid in formal settings. However in my view, taking into consideration the way that people address each other in everyday life, the social definition of youth seems to be the one that is in use on an everyday basis. Like Bucholtz (2002: 526) has noted, the category of youth refers to the social circumstances rather than chronological age.

First, I will elaborate on the social definition. In El Alto one is considered to change from being a youth to an adult when one gets married or starts living together with a partner

¹⁴ Somewhat recently some scholars, like Honwana (2012) and also Singerman (2008), have analysed how the phase of ‘youth’ is prolonged. However, it is not the aim of this thesis.

(Calestani 2012: 542). This shift from youth to adult is reflected in the use of linguistic categories. *Joven* and *señorita*¹⁵ are polite but relatively informal terms used to address unmarried men and woman respectively. The members of one of the families I lived with for about three months sometimes called me, as an unmarried man, *joven*. “Is the *joven* here yet?” (“¿ya está el joven?”) I could sometimes hear through the adobe wall and the thin wooden door of my room before they locked the gate safely for the night.

Further, it is usual to address strangers by calling young supposedly unmarried men for *joven* and young supposedly unmarried women for *señorita*. For instance I was normally addressed as *joven* when *voceadores* (minibus-assistants) asked me to pay for my ticket (“*pasaje joven*”). If the linguistic categories of *joven* and *señorita* are used wrongly, it might be understood as slightly insulting. For example, Adriana a young and unmarried woman, who still lived with her parents, was once addressed as *señora* by an older woman who asked her for directions. After the older woman was out of sight, Adriana said, rather annoyed and a bit surprised, “am I *señora* now?!” (“¿estoy *señora* ahora?!”). The *-ita* diminutive suffix is dropped when addressing people with more seniority. Therefore ‘*señora*’ and ‘*señor*’ are, in contrast to *señorita* and *joven*, used when addressing adults.

When one gets married it is also normal to get addressed as ‘*Don*’ and ‘*Doña*’. It is similar to Mr. and Mrs. in English but is used together with the given name instead of the family name (e.g. the married couple *Doña* Maria and *Don* Martin). This is usually not said explicitly but Javier who studied linguistics explained it to me. Since I did my fieldwork amongst youth I rarely addressed people with those terms.

However, when I asked when one stops being a *joven*, most of the time I got a very clear answer: 28 years, because that is what the law says. According to the law 342 article number four of February 21, 2013 one is defined as youth when one is between 16 and 28 years of age (Ley de la 342 2013). Yet, this age-dependent definition of youth is not observable during everyday interactions and the legal definition is only used in formal contexts.

Javier illustrates the contrast between these two definitions quite well when he wanted to be elected as the next president of the City Youth Council of El Alto (*Consejo Municipal de la Juventud*). But he eventually lost faith in the fruitfulness of the project partly because he was defined by Bolivian law as an adult since he was over 28 years. He told me a bit frustrated, that he had been asked by the other candidates what he was doing in the election,

¹⁵ ‘*Jovencita*’ is sometimes also used for young girls.

since he was not young any longer. “But I am young at heart” (*“pero estoy joven de corazón”*), he said, hit his chest two times and laughed. Javier was single and still lived with his parents and felt like a youth but was over 28 years old and therefore by the legislative definition an adult.

My youngest interlocutor was 15 and my oldest was 29, both turning one year older during my stay. Regardless of the legal definition, all of my interlocutors were ‘youth’ according to the social definition. For that reason, when I speak of youth in this text I refer to the social definition that relates to a life phase that is not limited to age in a formal sense (in Chapter 5 I will expand on this analysis).

Ethical Considerations

During the first period of my fieldwork, I told possible interlocutors what I wished to do – that I was going to do fieldwork for my Master’s degree and that I wanted to participate in the daily lives of young people of El Alto – and asked for consent. Without exception they gave me permission to do fieldwork among them. Alejandro also introduced me more formally during one of the meetings with my dance group and told them what I was doing. Since I did most of my fieldwork among an extended group of friends, after a while people knew who I was and what I was doing. Nevertheless, during my fieldwork I tried to remind my interlocutors of my project – that I was in fact writing about what we did and the conversations we had. My small notebooks that I used to take jottings were of great help in this regard. When I was with my interlocutors, I always had it in my pocket slightly sticking out as a subtle reminder of my intentions.

Most of the time people did not seem to bother that I was present and sometimes I also felt that the need for privacy was not as strict as I was used to. However, one of my interlocutors who is not central in my thesis, but still present in the material, told me to go home. At first I was very disappointed because I thought he did not want me there under any circumstances. But I soon understood that he meant that he did not want me to observe and write about an argument he had with some of his friends (and I have not).

Although, I am well aware that it is impossible to fully know the impact of one’s research and how it can be (mis)understood or even manipulated (see Greenberg 1996), I believe that I have taken the precautions needed in order to ‘do no harm’ also during the writing process. I have for example chosen to use fictitious names of interlocutors as well as of key-places. Writing about temporalities, I find particularly important to take Fabian’s

(1983) point that no one exists in any form of static, non-changing time. I have therefore tried to avoid the present tense in my ethnographic descriptions. ‘The field’ is not just a spatial configuration but also temporal (Dalsgaard and Nielsen 2013) and when I returned home, life in El Alto obviously continued to change. This is relevant to ethics because anthropologists, as authors, represent their interlocutors through writing. And by writing in the ethnographic present one, at least implicitly, deny ones interlocutors the ability to change. In short: I think that I have represented my interlocutors with empathy and in a fair light – I truly hope they feel the same.

Chapter Outline

Reflecting the overall argument of this thesis, that we need to consider the multiplicity of temporalities, each chapter presents and analyses what I will argue to be a particular form of temporality. Taken together the chapters of this thesis aim to illustrate how different temporalities coexist and simultaneously create ruptures and continuities with the future and past.

The ‘state temporality’ of Chapter 2 will revolve around the Bolivian State and how Morales and his government seek to establish a new beginning – a break with the past as he proclaims the death of the oppressive colonial State. Simultaneously, he also claims continuity with certain elements of the past related to the archaeological site of Tiwanaku and the return of the indigenous Túpac Katari in form of a satellite.

Chapter 3 explores the paradox of the statement “I have not seen a change” in two sections that both relate to ‘urban temporality’. In the first part of the chapter, I will look at the expanding, but – counter-intuitively – not changing urban landscape. In the second section of the chapter, I will write about how the revolts of 2003 are remembered through a recent commemorative ritual. Both section of this chapter illustrate that what I have called ‘urban temporality’ lacks ruptures, in the eyes of the youth.

In Chapter 4 I will address what I have called ‘historical temporality’ – a temporality that emplaces the youth within the history of Bolivia as descendants of the miners. In the chapter I will argue that the past is brought into the present through a dance called the *Minero* – the miner. It will be argued that the dance creates a tension between past and present as mining is understood as belonging to the past.

Chapter 5 continues where 4 stops and takes into account the religious aspects of the same dance and argues that together with Catholic confirmation it constitutes what I have called 'liturgical temporality'. This chapter analyses the expected continuity of devotion into the future as scheduled by the liturgical calendar and the sacrament.

In the concluding section, I will explore the implications of the multiplicity of temporalities in order to highlight my main argument which is that the youth of El Alto navigate multiple temporalities through participating and making rituals and commemorations that constitute ruptures and continuities. We therefore need to talk about a multiplicity of coexisting temporalities that at times contradict each other.

Chapter 2

State Temporality: Decolonisation, Tiwanaku and a Satellite

In 2005 Evo Morales won the national presidential election and became the first self-claimed indigenous president of Bolivia.¹⁶ During his inauguration ceremony at the archaeological site of Tiwanaku the following year,¹⁷ he marked a new beginning by stating that:

[... T]he State which is now going, the State which now dies. A colonial State which permitted the permanent sacking of natural resources from this noble earth, a colonial disciplining State, a colonial State which has always seen us, the indigenous people of the world, as savages, as animals. I don't know how much we will change but we need to change, because the colonial State brings no hope for the peoples of the world. (as cited by Canessa 2014: 157).

In the same event, he also walked barefooted over coca leaves and got blessed by an Andean religious authority (Postero 2010: 18). With these words and acts, he sought to end what he and others saw as 20 years of neo-liberal capitalism and 500 years of colonialism, thus initiating the process to 'decolonise' Bolivia. Decolonisation can, of course, signify a great deal of different things. As has been argued by Postero (2010), Morales' political project involves establishing a hegemony through 'indigenous nationalism' that allows him to decolonise the country. Taking into account the quote, it involves putting an end to the

¹⁶ As noted by Canessa (2012: 276-277), Morales is not the first president of Bolivia to speak an indigenous language. René Barrientos (vice president of Bolivia who later led a coup in 1964) came from a Quechua-speaking background and spoke the language fluently in public but never claimed to be indigenous.

¹⁷ This was one of two inaugurations, the other one being held in the Congress building the following day.

oppressive Colonial State and, further, to give indigenous people influential positions and thus altering power relations. Additionally, it refers to the nationalisation of natural resources and a recuperation of indigenous languages (Howard 2010: 77) as well as a school reform (Lazar 2010). In short, it evokes a sense of taking back or recuperating what rightly belongs to the indigenous people of Bolivia.

Many scholars interested in Bolivia have started their books, chapters and articles mentioning this inauguration. This chapter aims to explore this further as it is based entirely on the president and Tiwanaku, and how he continues to use the site. Concretely, a non-static understanding of temporality, the A-series time, will be illustrated by looking at the government's initiatives to 'decolonise' the Bolivian state. And further how elements of the past and future become part of the present through imagery of, and rituals in, Tiwanaku. As the Colonial state supposedly died when Morales received the presidential baton, other elements of the past have been given new life. One might say that the Bolivian State is looking to the past while walking into the future.¹⁸

To analyse this Bolivian form of state temporality, I will use two empirical examples that both revolve around Tiwanaku and Morales' project of decolonisation. First, I will explore the Aymara New Year that is celebrated at Tiwanaku (as well as other sites around Bolivia) on the 21st of June every year. This will be analysed as an 'inventing tradition' as it is formalised through law. Secondly, I will write about a televised political commercial that illustrates Bolivia's entry into the space-age. The political commercial illustrates not just Tiwanaku, but also the resurrection of the Aymara military leader Túpac Katari (see appendix 1). This imagery will further be compared to the way that Kapferer (2014) analyses the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*. But first of all, I will shortly contextualise Morales' ascension to power and introduce Tiwanaku as an archaeological site.

Morales' Ascension to Power and Tiwanaku

In April 2000 the 'Water War' unfolded in the city of Cochabamba in opposition to the privatisation of water supplies. As a consequence, the State had to cancel their contract with the international company Bechtel Corporation (Goldstein 2004: 22-23). In 2003 the attention of the international media focused on El Alto when the uprisings against tax reforms broke out in February. The tax reform was renegotiated by the government, but the tension between

¹⁸ "Looking back, we will move forward" (Carlos Mamani Condori, as cited in Albro, 2006: 387).

the president representing MNR, Gonzalo Sanches de Lozada, and the grass root opposition escalated further when the president wanted to export natural gas via Chile. The revolts peaked and became violent in October, 2003. Organisations such as neighbourhood unions and trade unions facilitated the blocking of roads and demonstrations (Lazar 2008). During my fieldwork, I heard stories of how each household were obliged to block roads unless they wanted to get socially stigmatised. If one refused, one could risk getting one's house painted by the neighbourhood union to signal that one had not contributed in the revolts.

The demonstrations were effectively organised and the president fled the country on the 17th of October 2003, leaving approximately 70 people dead and hundreds wounded. "I am not going to renounce" ("*yo no voy a renunciar*") has become a famous quote by Sanches de Lozada and I sometimes heard it when the subject of *Octubre* – as it is colloquially called – appeared in everyday conversations and on the radio. The famous words of the ex-president have come to illustrate his unsympathetic character and his unwillingness to take into consideration the wishes of the people (*el pueblo*).

During these uprisings, and struggles 'cultural heritage' became a constructive resource in creating alternative ways for social movements to revitalise Bolivian democracy (Albro 2006). For example, during the *Octubre* (or 'Gas War') recuperating Bolivia's natural gas became a way of protecting the patrimony: "Such a claim rested directly on the precedent of the pre-existent 'territorial sovereignty' of indigenous people's communal land holdings [...]" (Albro 2006: 394).

This is the more recent context within which Evo Morales rose to power. He represented something new in many ways because he came from a different background than his predecessors. He was the leader of the *cocaleros* (coca farmer union) and represented the poor and marginalised in contrast to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada who was educated in the USA and was a mine owner. "Now we are *all* Presidents!" Morales stated on the election night (as cited in Canessa 2014: 159, original emphasis). My interlocutor, Alejandro said that Morales probably surprised himself when he got elected and that he probably never imagined becoming the president. Alexander, reminded me that usually the president of Bolivia has been someone with a higher education, coming from abroad like Sanches de Lozada. He even had a thick American-English accent to his Spanish.

My key interlocutors will be distant in the ethnographic data presented in this chapter. Nevertheless, the temporality that is described here is still part of their lives as it reflects the political context in El Alto and Bolivia. The implications that these revolts have for El Alto

and the urban youth will be further explored in the following chapter. Continuing in this chapter, I would like to present Tiwanaku as an archaeological site as it is central to the rhetoric of Morales.

Tiwanaku

Going by car or bus for about an hour and a half east from El Alto, is Tiwanaku – an archaeological site close to the Titicaca Lake and the border of Peru. In addition to some areas that are not excavated properly, the site is relatively big in extension containing different ceremonial complexes. Around 500AD Tiwanaku was the largest ritual centre in the area, and by 800AD it influenced a larger region of the south central Andes (Janusek 2006: 427). However, from about 1000-1100 AD, and after about 700 years of growth, it started to lose its influence due to changes in the climate and it subsequently collapsed because of a drier environment (Ortloff and Kolata 1993).

Today Tiwanaku is a well-known tourist attraction with an affiliated museum on site and with the possibility of guided tours. There are overpriced tourist busses going from La Paz, but there are also cheaper *micros* going between the archaeological site and the small town in immediate proximity. The site was endorsed by the UNESCO list of World Heritage in 2000 as an important pre-Hispanic political and religious centre (UNESCO 2014). The most famous monument at Tiwanaku is the Sun Gate (or Sun Portal) cut from stone and placed in the Kalasasaya complex. It has a shape of a broad doorframe and engraved in it (in the vertical part) is believed to be an important deity that is now called *Inti*, meaning sun in Aymara. Three strands of figures with wings that are facing the deity are believed to outline an agricultural calendar¹⁹ (Janusek 2006: 485-486).

It is not just an archaeological site, but also a good place to start when exploring the politics of Morales. When he was elected as president, he had two inaugurations: the official one that took place in the Congress building, and the one that took place at Tiwanaku (as described in the introduction of this chapter). It was also at Tiwanaku, surrounded by pre-Colombian relics and icons, that Morales, together with the Vice President and the Vice President's wife, celebrated the Aymara New Year which marked the beginning of the year of 5521.

¹⁹ The figure of *Inti* is present in different churches in El Alto (and I suspect also in other parts of the Andean region). Interestingly, when I visited the site in 2011 the guide told me that the nearby church is made from stones taken from the ruins.

The Beginning of the Year 5521

Each year on the 21st of June, the Aymara New Year is celebrated at Tiwanaku and other places in the country. Briefly explained, the Aymara New Year is about waiting all night for the sun to rise over the horizon in order to welcome it and unfreeze one's cold hands. Before sunrise the night is spent drinking alcohol (preferably *té con té*²⁰) while sitting around a bonfire outside the archaeological area. During this period of the year, it is cold in the Andean mountains and the arrival of the sun is therefore much appreciated.

At about five o'clock in the morning after having spent time chatting around the bonfire with my friends²¹, I decided to enter the archaeological site of Tiwanaku. It was freezing, the vendors selling blankets probably made good money. I stood in line for about an hour before I got inside the area. It was filled with Bolivians and tourists and the number increased. It was still dark but on the horizon one could see a very dim light slowly becoming stronger. People stood gazing at the brightest spot of the horizon that was sliding over the mountain range as the sun moved behind it.

The area around the Sun Gate was closed off by armed guards who faced us with their backs towards the horizon wearing warm jackets. As it was slowly getting brighter, people dressed in ponchos standing farther away from us inside the area appeared. They held flags in their hands – both the *tricolor* and the *wiphala*²². Standing completely still embraced in the morning mist, they were almost impossible to see. A band was playing folkloric music with what is widely believed to be traditional Andean instruments such as the pan pipes (*zampoñas*) and *charango*. On the right side from the Sun Gate was the Akapana pyramid where a film crew with big cameras were broadcasting.

A helicopter appeared in the distance coming from the direction of the city of La Paz. It circled over the site once or twice before it landed somewhere out of sight from where I was standing. People were filming and taking photos of it and I assume it was Morales arriving together with the vice president and his wife. From where I stood, I did not see Morales but the day after I saw pictures of him together with the Vice President and his wife in multiple

²⁰ Translated to 'tea with tea' and is an alcoholic beverage based on singani and *sultana* tea which is the peel of the coffee bean boiled in water with cinnamon and sugar.

²¹ This was in the beginning of my fieldwork and I was invited by a friend from El Alto who was (strictly speaking) not my interlocutor. None of my key interlocutors from Villa del Santo attended this event.

²² The first is the most widely known Bolivian flag of red, yellow and green. The *wiphala* is a multicoloured chess board patterned flag that is associated with the indigenous population of the Andean mountains. Both flags are national flags of Bolivia.

newspapers, warming their hands towards the sun, like everyone else who attended the ceremony did. Right before the sun appeared, it was almost as bright as during the day. When the sun finally arrived, everyone put their hands in the air, feeling the energy of the sunbeams. The mist in the landscape and the line of clouds that were just over the horizon vaporised and left the sky blue. People who wore gloves took them off to let the light shine on their hands. After a while the light from the sun became so strong it was blinding and most people quickly left the area, tired after waiting all night and most likely happy to go home to sleep.

The rising sun is an important image in Andean myth and religion. It was the sun that ended the time of the *chullpas* that lived at the dawn of time. As the sun appeared replacing the moon, the *chullpas* burned and some hid underground (Canessa 2008). The sun is also associated with the Christian God in the way that the coming of the sun marked the beginning of the time of the Christians (Harris 2006). The rising sun, then, marked a new beginning and a new year. The Aymara New Year, too, creates a break with the Colonial past. The ritual, placed at an ancient site, is harking back to the pre-Colombian times, giving new life to an apparently authentic tradition that had almost disappeared and in this way crafting a stately temporality. This will be further illustrated below where I will look at how the Aymara New Year has been formalised through law.

Inventing Tradition

According to Canessa (2012: 282) the Aymara New Year is a relatively new tradition that has existed in its current form for about thirty years. Nevertheless, it is depicted as an ancient annual tradition by the State with roots going back to the pre-Colombian era. ‘Traditions’ according to Hobsbawn (1983) can be divided into ‘genuine’ and ‘invented’ ones, where the latter is of a newer date but presented in an ancient garb. The Aymara New Year appears to be prehistoric where it is set in Tiwanaku responding to the ever turning of the earth. However, one should be careful with labelling a tradition as purely invented as it denies people’s right to claim continuity with the past (Harris 1996).

Nevertheless, I find it useful to use the term to refer to the Aymara New Year as ‘*inventing* tradition’. Put in Hobsbawn’s own words: “Inventing traditions [...] is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only imposing repetition” (Hobsbawn 1983: 4). The way I understand this is that ‘inventing’ refers to the process in which traditions get formalised through, for example, law.

It was Carlos Mesa who passed the 3018 Decree in 2005 which stated that the 21st of June each year would be the day to celebrate Aymara New Year (*Año Nuevo Aymara*) at Tiwanaku and that this was part of a historical and cultural patrimony. In 2009, after the new constitution was passed, the Supreme Decree number 173 was passed by Morales. This law extended on the Decree of 3018 by making the Aymara New Year a national holiday to be celebrated not just at Tiwanaku, but in the entire country. While the 3018 Decree states the necessity to preserve and promote (*preservar, promover*) the Aymara New Year; the 173 Decree sounds far less passive saying that it has an objective to recuperate and strengthen (*recuperar, fortalecer*) ancestral customs. ‘To preserve’ implies not to lose something one already has; ‘to recuperate’, on the other hand, implies finding something that has partly vanished. The state temporality of Morales, then, is one in which elements of the past need to be taken back into its natural form in order to give it new life in the present.

The 173 Decree also considers:

*That the pre-Colombian Andean and Amazonian cultures, for thousands of years until our time, celebrate the day of 21st of June of every year, the solstice of winter, Willkakuti in the Andean area and Yasitata Guasú in the lowlands, considered as the beginning of the new cycle or New Year, celebrating the fusion of earth and energy that makes possible the procreation of life and the time that allows Nature to renew itself.*²³

It thus attempts to include the people of the lowlands who have been inclined to be more critical towards the Morales government (see Crabtree and Chaplin 2013, Fabricant 2009, Canessa 2014). The multiple cultures and nations²⁴ of Bolivia are, through the ritual, temporally and spatially included by stating that the winter solstice (in its different versions) has existed during thousands of years across what today constitutes Bolivia. It is a relatively newly formalised ritual that comes in an ancient garb.

Through inventing tradition, Morales seeks legitimacy. Presumably, Bolivia has always been inherently indigenous and it should, necessarily, have an indigenous leader – Evo Morales. Invented tradition is legitimating (Canessa 2012: 282) in the way that it, not only refers to Tiwanaku, but the whole country – as already noted, it is a national holiday and thus seeks to include all the multiple nations and cultures. There is not just a claim to temporal

²³ See appendix 2 for original Spanish quote.

²⁴ The end of the colonial state entailed the beginning of the multicultural and plurinational state of Bolivia.

continuity and the indigenous nation. Inventing (or reinvention) of tradition is thus a way to legitimise a political objective (see McNeish 2002: 257).

Morales positions himself in relation to the past and seeks to give new life to ancient traditions by claiming continuity. As we shall see in the next section, this continuity also extends further into the future as Bolivia enters the space age.

A Satellite Called Túpac Katari

Coinciding with the launching of a new communication satellite, the Ministry of Communication (*Ministerio de Comunicación Bolivia*) aired a commercial on national television that caught my eye. The first time I saw it was towards the end of my stay while I was living with the Father of Villa del Santo and his mother. I was eating and the television was on in the background without me paying much attention to it. The picture and sound was always a bit distorted, had hints of white noise and the commercials were usually not too interesting. This commercial, however, was different from the others. I am not sure why I felt it jumped out of the TV, but it might have been the quality of the production in combination with the content of the video that I found interesting.

The commercial is just one minute long and is called *Túpac Katari: Cosmic Heritage* (*Tupac [sic] Katari: Herencia Cosmica*). In addition to being aired on television, it is uploaded to YouTube. In short, the video depicts different popular landmarks in Bolivia the salt flats, the Fortress of Samaipata (*Fuerete de Samaipata*) and more importantly Tiwanaku. During the video parts of Tiwanaku detach and reorganise itself in the form of a satellite before it launches towards space while people marvel at its ascension. Before I go on to write about the commercial, I will present Túpac Katari as a historical figure.

Túpac Katari

Túpac Katari was an Aymara rebel and military leader who together with his wife, Bartolina Sisa and his army, encircled the city of La Paz in 1781. This was done in order to gain independence from the Spanish rule and was part of the Túpac Amaru rebellion that took place from 1780 to 1782. It was not the first rebellion against the colonial power but it was larger and better organised than the previous ones (Klein 2011: 74). Túpac Katari and his army of about forty thousand successfully encircled the city in two periods from March to October and were able to prevent the entry of food to its inhabitants. During this encirclement,

about half of the citizens of La Paz had died (Klein 2011: 76). However well-organised, the siege was eventually broken when a relief army arrived.

In November of 1781, Túpac Katari was captured and executed by dismemberment (his limbs were pulled off between four horses). Before he was executed, he infamously said “I shall return, and I shall be millions” (Lazar and McNeish 2006: 158). His body parts are said to be buried in different places in and around La Paz and El Alto. His heart, I heard, lie by a statue of Jesus in El Alto that looks over La Paz named The Holly Heart of Jesus (*El Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*). And I have also heard that each of these places now have churches or statues of Saints, because the indigenous people started to visit these places as they became shrines.

However, Túpac Katari has not always been an important figure in Bolivian history. After the rebellions were stopped, he became a “[...] distant memory in the minds of the population of Upper Peru” (Klein 2011: 78). His legacy was silenced intentionally by the colonial authorities – his name was rarely mentioned among intellectuals and politicians. It was not until around the 1940s that he started to re-emerge in public discourse – in 1942 the first portrait of Túpac Katari was painted by Augusto Guzmán, the same year the first book about Túpac Katari, written by Zacarías Monje Ortíz, was published (Thomson 2003: 123). During the late 1960s, a *Katarista* movement emerged in memory of the Aymara rebel leader and later the movement split into two political parties in 1978²⁵ (Albó 1994). Currently, pictures of Túpac Katari appear in different State manifestations such as the Constitution Day as well as the Day of Dignity (see following chapter).

Scholars have, through analysing the violent uprisings that led to Morales’ ascension to power, asked the question if Túpac Katari’s prophecy of his return has been fulfilled (Lazar and McNeish 2006). As I will elaborate further, if Túpac Katari did not return to be millions, he at least returned as a satellite. He is not standing in El Alto looking down at the starving city of La Paz, like he did in 1781; but he is drifting around in space looking down at the earth providing the inhabitants of Bolivia with internet, thus, digitally becoming ‘millions’. It is a powerful image and, regarding current national politics in Bolivia, it is an important image because it illustrates Morales’ position and his idea of decolonizing not just Bolivian territory, but also space (personal communication with Nancy Postero, 2014).

²⁵ Of which one, surprisingly enough, entered government together with Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada’s during his first as a president from 1993-97. See Albó, (1994) for more details.

Political Commercial: Cosmic Heritage

The video starts with an image of the Sun Gate at Tiwanaku (see Ministerio de Comunicación Bolivia 2013, and appendix 1). The sky behind it is full of drifting obscure clouds, but the blue sky can be glimpsed. The weather seems to be shifting. The inscriptions in The Gate of the Sun start to glow increasingly as if they were cutting themselves out of the stone. A close up of the gate shows the figure of *Inti* ('the sun' in Ayamra) lighting up while the gate starts to shake and break up into pieces.

While the clouds get even darker over the mountain range with its snow-capped peaks, The Gate of the Sun has broken apart into squares that rearrange themselves into the shape of a satellite. The pieces slowly come together high above the flat Andean mountain plateau. The satellite/Sun Gate can be seen from all parts of the country (the highlands, the valleys and the Amazonian area) suspended in a vertical beam of light. A girl and her dog in the valleys, a couple in each other's arms sitting in a car and, a young man with a backpack can all see the satellite illuminated in the sky, while it takes off towards space. With a close up picture of the satellite as it ascends we see small pieces of rock that fall off only so that the high-tech piece of satellite hidden within can emerge. It surges towards the sky, while it becomes a satellite that penetrates the clouds, and reaches its destination – space.

The commercial continues with a picture looking down at the earth a sudden flash of light can be seen as the satellite leaves its initial earthly domain. The object which was previously the Sun Gate now appears as a high-tech satellite, but still it has the *Inti* of Tiwanaku (sun deity) engraved on its now golden surface. Túpac Katari, the satellite moves with great velocity into what looks like a ring shaped nebula – a cloud of gas and dust in space. But at the same time the nebula looks like a close-up picture of the iris of an eye surrounding the black area that looks like a pupil. The screen goes black as the satellite disappears into the black area enclosed by the nebula/pupil before it zooms out from a young girl's eye standing in a green forest, gazing motionless upwards.

The symphonic music reinforces the progression and the anticipation in the video. Throughout the video the dynamic of the music increases by becoming louder and by adding more harmonies and pompous percussion (timpani and cymbals). When the satellite finally reaches space, the music loses its punctuations only to be converted into a monotonous ambient synthesizer sound. Before it finishes, a dark woman's voice says: "[The] future does not exist without past/present. Discover your cosmic inheritance! Satellite Túpac Katari, your star." (*No existe futuro sin pasado/presente. ¡Descubre tu herencia cósmica! Satélite Túpac*

Katari, tu estrella”). The video finishes off with the logo of the Túpac Katari satellite, the emblem of the Ministry of Communication and a small picture of Evo Morales on a blue background.

Entering the Space Age

Morales was present during the launch in China and expressed his strong feelings about the happening:

It is our first communication satellite, Túpac Katari, after 232 years he is reborn to shed new light, he is our star that will illuminate us from space in order to communicate with us, to educate us... I feel very emotional for this launching of the satellite Túpac Katari. (Morales as cited in Corz 2013).²⁶

Morales asserted, as also reflected in the political commercial, that Túpac Katari has returned, however evidently in a new shape.

Further, I will compare this political commercial with how Kapferer (2014) analysed Kubrick’s classic film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The two videos are obviously of very different formats – *2001* being an extended science-fiction film. Nevertheless, their imagery makes an interesting comparison as they both depict return and metamorphosis. *2001* is filled with recurring symbols and images that are not explicitly explained in the film and are therefore open for different interpretations. By looking at the *2001* through a Nietzschean lens, Kapferer states that the film is “a contemplation of cosmological and mythological proportion upon the trajectory of humankind from its beginnings into the future and ultimately towards its own metamorphosis and potential re-origination” (2014: 278). I will not go into the details of the progression of the film here, as that would take up far too much space. In order to make my point it is sufficient to say that at the end of *2001* the main character, Bowman, returns as the last man alive from a space-mission that went wrong when the super-computer (HAL) turned against the crew of the space ship. However, he returns not as a full-grown man, but metamorphosed as a foetus – or a Star Child. Put in Kapferer’s words: “The foetus is enclosed in a light-emitting sac, a chrysalis, indicative of the metamorphosis taking place” (Kapferer 2014: 306). Similarly, the satellite-cum-indigenous hero is suspended in a light beam and, literarily, highlighted as an indication of his/its importance in punctuating political change.

²⁶ See appendix 3 for original quote.

Metamorphosis and return, then, are obvious in the imagery of the Túpac Katari commercial and *2001* alike. In the *Cosmic Heritage* film, the Sun Gate breaks up, rearranges, and finally converts into a high-tech satellite. At another level it depicts the return of the military leader Túpac Katari. Only this time, instead of starving the white population of La Paz, he seeks to decolonize space (at least symbolically). In the commercial Túpac Katari/the Sun Gate metamorphosis goes the opposite way of Bowman – the satellite ascends from earth into space. Thus, while the *2001* is an exploration of the imagination of human development, the political commercial provides an image of the progress of the Bolivian State as an indigenous one through the way that bits and pieces of the past re-emerge to build the future by way of entering the space age. As the woman's voice states towards the end of the commercial, the future does not exist without the past – the future is a metamorphosis of the past. In the Bolivian context I believe the video illustrates Morales' rhetoric of progressing through the pre-Colombian past, or how bits and pieces of the past are rearranged to create the image of indigenous future.

Both videos also say something about the international political relations. Kapferer notes in his analysis of *2001* that it reflects the push into space during the Cold War and humankind at the threshold of entering the space age (2014: 280-281). The *Cosmic Heritage* commercial and the launching of the satellite illustrate the claim to a place in space by sending up a returned Aymara military leader. It is a way of symbolically decolonising space that has earlier been dominated by the USA. This is also echoed in, literally, down to earth politics when for example the American governor, Goldberg, was expelled from the country. Allegedly he had, according to the Vice President, supported the independence movement of the lowlands (Farthing 2010).

My interlocutors' reactions to the mentioned advertisement were mixed – those who had seen it disagreed on whether they liked it or not. Alexander for example was more inclined to like it, I suppose because he was a bigger supporter of Morales than most (if not to say all) of the others I regularly spent time with. Alejandro, on the other hand, was a bit disappointed that the satellite would be shared with other Latin American countries. He also lamented that the satellite was to provide internet and telecommunication to the more remote areas of Bolivia and would to a lesser degree serve the urban inhabitants (the contrast between the urban and the indigenous will be elaborated in the next chapter).

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have written about the Aymara New Year that was celebrated at Tiwanaku and shown how the ritual is central to Morales and his government's idea of decolonising Bolivia. In the second part of this chapter I continued to address the importance of Tiwanaku as it is depicted in a political commercial relating to the satellite of Túpac Katari. Taken together, these two empirical examples comprise what I have called 'state temporality' – a temporal form that involves a break with the colonial and neo-liberal past; but simultaneously highlight continuity with certain selected elements of the past such as the Aymara New Year.

This latter aspect may also be taken further as it is not solely claiming continuity with the past. Through decolonisation Morales is claiming continuity with a past that has survived the oppression of the Colonial State and which, through Morales, is able to, once again, flourish and even continue into the space age. This state temporality, thus, gives new life to a past that was almost gone and seeks to further use the elements of the indigenous pre-Colombian past into the future. Crucially, this makes the state temporality assume a non-static form as the past and future are reworked through, for instance, the legislation of the Aymara New Year, the ritual itself and, finally, the image of the return of the Túpac Katari in form of a future-oriented satellite/archaeological site.

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on what I call 'urban temporality'. It will extend on this chapter by taking into account the youth's reaction to and perspectives of Morales' rhetoric. In contrast to the temporality presented in this chapter – given wide currency in media discourse and politics – the urban temporality, I will suggest, lacks (and is denied) a rupture or change.

Chapter 3

Urban Temporality: “I Have Not Seen a Change”

By ‘urban temporality’ in this chapter I refer to what can be described as a lack of rupture and punctuation. It was Ignacio who told me, while we were talking about El Alto, that “I have not seen a change” (“*no he visto un cambio*”). His statement surprised me at first since I had been thinking that the city, indeed, had changed. However, I did not make much of the quotation until I discovered that others I knew also said similar things about the city.

I will in the first section of this chapter explore this paradox, namely that the urban landscape of El Alto is constantly expanding into the rural countryside but at the same time such growth, in the eyes of my interlocutors, does not pose a real change of the city. Through exploring the possible connotations of this, I argue that in order to understand this seemingly paradox, we must first understand temporality as embedded into the city landscape. The growth of the city is *status quo* and is thus not part of a fundamental change in the eyes of my interlocutors. A crucial element here is that what in some ways defines El Alto is its growth driven partly by rural-urban migration – hence “I have not seen a change”.

The second part of this chapter will expand on the first one by elaborating on possible meanings of this and similar quotations. Such analysis will be done by taking into account Morales’ ideology and rhetoric of the ‘process of change’ (*proceso de cambio*) and how it contrasts my interlocutors’ visions of their city. In the previous chapter, I presented the 2003 revolts and Morales’ ascension to power. I will here write about how these revolts are negotiated as a temporal rupture and negated as such by my key interlocutors.

In contrast to the two subsequent chapters, the ethnographic descriptions presented here are not focused in one single geographical area of El Alto. Rather, in order to explore

what I have chosen to call an urban temporality, I will understand the city more holistically. Accordingly, this chapter is an anthropology *of* the city in contrast to *in* the city but instead of understanding the city through on single conceptual metaphor (see Low 1996), I will base this chapter on the quotation presented above in order to explore its temporality.

Urban Growth and Landscape

In this section, I will first elaborate on how the city has expanded from when its first urban settler arrived until today. Secondly, I will write about a bus trip that I took with my interlocutors in order to understand how the rapid growth of the city is visible in the urban landscape.

What today constitutes the area of El Alto was, at the turn of the century, the property of a number of hacienda owners (Sandoval and Sostres 1989: 18). The first settlers of the area started to appear in La Ceja (literally meaning ‘the eyebrow’) to do commercial activities related to the railway company that went through the area starting in 1904 (Lazar 2008: 46). In the 1940s some of the hacienda owners started to sell plots of land and thus initiated its urbanisation (Poupeau 2010: 433-434). The first neighbourhood to be founded was Villa Dolores in September 1942 and until the Revolution of 1952, five other neighbourhoods were officially established. Because of the Revolution, La Ceja in its entirety was liberated by expropriation from the hacienda called El Tejar and this made possible the foundation of Ciudad Satélite. Thus, La Ceja,²⁷ Villa Dolores and Ciudad Satélite (among other neighbourhoods) are part of the oldest urban settlements of the city called district one (*distrito uno*).

El Alto has been growing as a result of migration from rural areas. One can distinguish between three waves of immigration to El Alto (Lazar 2008: 47).²⁸ The first occurred after the agrarian reform in 1953 which followed the revolution in 1952. The second came after the construction boom of the dictator Hugo Banzer in the 1970s. The third –most the central to

²⁷ La Ceja is not per definition a proper neighbourhood as it does not have its proper neighbourhood union. It is the generic term for the commercial district and a transport hub that is formally part of the neighbourhoods like 12 de Octubre, Villa Dollores, 16 de Julio and Villa Bolivar A.

²⁸ Poupeau (2010: 434-435) also argues that there has been three waves, but in different periods: from the 1970s as a result of the agrarian reform in 1953; the first years of the 1980s due to drought; and from the 1985 onwards due to neo-liberal policies.

this thesis – was the migration flow that came after the 21060 Decree was passed in 1985 (see the introduction for more details on the 21060 Decree). El Alto was not just a result of national politics, but also emerged as a part of the second wave of international urbanisation that took place (in contrast to the first one) in the global south. This trend started in the 1970s as a result of deepening economic reconstruction and globalization (Pieterse 2008).

El Alto used to be a district of La Paz and only in 1985 did it become autonomous with its own municipal administration. In September 1988 the city became recognised as a separate city from La Paz by the National Congress (Sandoval and Sostres 1989: 31). Despite that it is a relatively new city; it is also a populous one relative to Bolivian standards.

Between 1976 and 1992 the population of El Alto grew with a rate of 9.23 percent annually (Lazar 2008: 47). If we are to believe the most recent census, the population of the city grew with almost 200 000 citizens between 2001 and 2012, going from 649 958 inhabitants to 848 840 inhabitants (Candela 2013). Perhaps surprisingly, during the same period La Paz' population decreased with 28 676 inhabitants ending at 764 617 inhabitants.

Further, the correct number of inhabitants in El Alto is probably much higher if one also takes into account the inhabitants who live both in El Alto and have land in rural areas (Derpic and Weinreb 2014). Many of the inhabitants of El Alto have strong ties to rural villages²⁹ because many still have family connections and plots of land with crops there. However, my impression is that the bonds to one's *pueblos* seem to be less present among the descendants of miners as they rarely own land dedicated to agriculture. None of the youth I got to know in Villa del Santo went to visit or talked about visiting the *pueblos* of their parents and grandparents. Some of the youth I knew outside the neighbourhood who had parents or grandparents who were peasants (*campesinos*), on the other hand, told me they regularly visited their *pueblos* during harvest time.

It is difficult to describe El Alto without talking about La Paz. Standing at the edge of El Alto, one can look down at La Paz and its city centre 300-400 meter below one's feet. As Lazar appropriately puts it, it looks as if El Alto is an urban stain that is a result of La Paz spilling over the edge of its bowl shaped location (2008: 29-30). Although, the city started growing from the edge of La Paz which today is the bustling area generically called La Ceja; its population to a greater degree migrated from rural areas.

Today El Alto is constituted by 8 districts (*distritos*) which each are subdivided into a number of neighbourhoods like Villa del Santo. Of these neighbourhoods it is Ciudad Satélite

²⁹ *pueblos* – literally meaning 'village' but often referred to as 'birthplaces'.

that is often understood as the most developed and affluent area of El Alto. Right before I started my fieldwork, the city's first shopping centre opened there including Bolivia's biggest, state of the art, fitness-centre and grocery store. These facilities are normally found in the more affluent areas of La Paz. Ciudad Satélite is sometimes called the *Zona Sur* (the most affluent area of La Paz) of El Alto.

The areas of El Alto that are closest to La Paz – those mentioned above La Ceja, Villa Dolores, Ciudad Satélite – are the oldest areas of El Alto. Ciudad Satélite in particular, but also the other older areas of El Alto stand in great contrast to its peripheries when it comes to infrastructure, electricity, sewage et cetera. The areas that were established first, had electricity and water during the 1950s (Poupeau 2010:434). It can take years and a great deal of work before a neighbourhood gets running water and electricity. The outlying areas of El Alto are also understood to be more prone to crime in contrast to the more established neighbourhoods.

To sum up: El Alto is a relatively new city which has a large population due to the migration trends of the country that have been taking place after the revolution of 1952. The growth of the city started in the areas close to La Paz and has continued going outwards into the open flat landscape. The next section will elaborate how this growth is experienced while travelling through the city.

A Bus Trip

In this section, I will borrow Ingold's definition of landscape: "In short, the landscape is the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them" (1993: 156). He elaborates further on this by arguing that the landscape is what we can see – the textured surface that is altered over time through, partly, human activity. Inspired by this, I understand that the landscape of El Alto consists of temporal layers. Former generations have been in, and worked with, the landscape – they have for example built houses, roads, grown crops and herded animals. Landscape is temporalised as it contains elements of the past actions but, I would argue, a landscape also contains elements of future expectations and aspirations. By travelling from one place to another, using the 'go along method' (Kusenbach 2003) we might see how temporal layers are embedded into El Alto – from its edges to its epicentre. To put it shortly: "*Landscape is time materializing*" (Bender 2002: 103, original emphasis). In other words as the city landscape has been expanding into the rural, immigrants arrived from different areas during different

periods, creating layers of materialised temporality. I believe that this can help to better understand the paradox outlined in the introduction of this chapter as it illustrates the ever-expanding city.

Our trip towards El Alto started from Huarina, a small village by the Titicaca Lake close to the Peruvian border. Javier had invited me on an excursion to *el altiplano* (the highland plateau), as he said. El Alto is also part of the flat highland Andean plateau but he referred to it as the countryside. After we had spent the day in the village together with Alexander, Gustavo and Tomás (a friend of Javier), we decided to go back home. A bit tired but content we found a bus going back to El Alto and sat down beside each other in the back of the vehicle.

When driving out of Huarina the landscape was open. The Titicaca Lake was visible, but after a short while, it disappeared from view and fields with small hills and bigger mountains appeared in the distance. Through the window we were able to see all the way to the high mountain ranges that encompass the flat highland. It was in the beginning of November, so the scenery of the countryside had become greener after the weather had gotten warmer and rainier. Occasionally, herds of animals that were grazing appeared and a few houses were scattered like small dots on the flat tundra.

While we chatted about everything and anything, the landscape outside the window slowly altered and became denser with people and buildings, as the vehicle took us closer to towards El Alto. The landscape got less and less open as occasional houses blocked the view towards the mountain range and there were more side roads that ran out from the main road to houses further away. But still there were animals and herders to be seen and small plots of land where crops were grown.

What surprised me (and I suppose other visitors as well) was that even inside relatively densely populated areas of the city one would still find small herds grazing on the small green areas and some small plots of agriculture. However, in Villa del Santo and other neighbourhoods closer to La Ceja I have never seen any agricultural activities or farm animals. The countryside and the city thus unevenly slide into each other and make the dichotomy between the open countryside and the closed city unclear.

This unclear boundary between city and countryside is also illustrated in the way smaller clusters of settlements disappeared as fast as they appeared outside the window. Gustavo broke a brief silence by asking us “are we in El Alto?” (“¿Estamos en El Alto?”) when we reached a relatively densely populated area along the way. No one was able to

answer. I find his question telling about the landscape when entering El Alto – it slowly becomes urban and its borders are difficult to define because of its bulgy expanding character.

Latin American cities have often been understood as socially and geographically divided between the poor and the rich (e.g. Gilbert 1994, Caldeira 1996). In El Alto, too, there are obvious differences between life on the fringes of the city and in the more affluent areas in the city centre. Nevertheless, the city is not a dichotomous entity as such (see Beall, Kanbur, and Rodgers 2012). This is reflected in the way the city expands and grows almost in an organic manner with one layer upon the other similar to a coral reef or the trunk of a tree. However, its limits are not definite like that of an organism. The buildings on the outskirts of El Alto are to a lesser degree completed than those in La Ceja. The foundation walls and perhaps the first bricks were laid on some houses; others were apparently in the process of building an extra floor, or were just without windows before they were completed. Yet others exist merely as ideas and piles of bricks, adobe or other building materials. Some houses existed merely as dreams and aspirations for the future. For example, the mother of one of the families I lived with, showed me pictures of a piece of land they paid for every month as part of an instalment payment, hoping that one day they would build a home there for herself and her children and husband.

“It’s like an improvised city” (“*es como una ciudad improvisada*”) Javier said, referring to the buildings outside. I felt the same way myself about the buildings and structure of the city. It looks like it lacks a plan as it continues to expand – layers and layers of houses. However, having an improvised feel to it does not mean that it is not at all organised (see Lazar 2008, Albó 2006). As I have mentioned the city is organised through *Juntas Vecinales* (neighbourhood administrations), but not all parts of El Alto are officially established as such. At the fringes of the city, roads and squares lack names, as they are still not official. Ignacio once told me that his father had to invent names on the streets of a newly established area where he owned land. They had finally gotten through with the municipality and were in the process of getting the area officially approved by the municipality. The main responsibilities of a *Junta Vecinal* is to acquire public work (Lazar 2008: 66).

While the city does not stop growing, it also lacks *obras* (that translates to ‘public work’) according to some of my interlocutors. *Obras* refers loosely to the development of public benefits such as roads, access to water, sewage, electricity et cetera. What is important to note in this chapter is that the differences between the neighbourhoods in El Alto as to what degree they have developed their district with *obras* is large. While some neighbourhoods of

El Alto have had access to water and electricity for years; other districts of the city (chiefly at its fringes) have just started the struggle with the municipality in order to get the basic necessities covered. Thus, what once were the challenges of one neighbourhood a few years back are now the challenges of another neighbourhood today. In this way it seems that the growth of El Alto spreads out from the oldest areas of the city towards its fringes.

At some point towards La Ceja, the road was no longer able to support the demands of the traffic, and the bus got stuck among other vehicles. A sense of frustration spread among the passengers – “what a hassle!” (*¡qué macana!*). It seemed that the road had not followed the increase of inhabitants and thus was not able to keep the traffic flowing. It is normal to be frustrated with the heavy and chaotic traffic and insufficient infrastructure of El Alto, but Javier was especially preoccupied with the problem. He told me several times how one ought to build a metro from one side of the city to the other and build wider roads that were not only going to supply the current demand, but the demand of the future – because El Alto will just keep on growing. But as we got closer to La Ceja, the road was wider and asphalted and the traffic flowed somewhat better.

At this stage it was impossible to get any overview of the city landscape, except for the long straight road ahead and a few smaller side roads that provide a longer view towards other parts of the city. However, there are some landmarks along the way that break up the continuity of red brick buildings – a few factories (like a milk refinery), a hospital and the public university with its distinct Andean architecture that stands out in the slightly monotonous city landscape. Close to our destination one will also find the new multicoloured sports hall and concert venue named Heroes of October (*Héroes de Octubre*) which is impossible not to recognise among the smaller residential houses and shops. Many of these buildings are relatively new, like for example the concert venue was officially opened in March of 2013 and built to pay homage to those who died in the gas war of 2003. Even in the oldest areas of the city, there is always some construction work in progress. Thus, El Alto is not just expanding outwards but growing upwards as buildings get higher in the oldest areas.

When we finally reached La Ceja, we got off the bus and blended with the crowd. We walked past the big Che Guevara statue, guarding the main entrance of the city with a fusil in one hand and a dove in the other. We continued hastily to where we could find a minibus to take us home to Villa del Santo. La Ceja is the always bustling commercial centre of El Alto, and there is no need to stay there unless one works there. Street vendors, shops and moveable stalls or trolleys (*ambulantes*) are densely scattered between vehicles and pedestrians who are

rubbing shoulders while running their errands or travelling to or from their homes. The thin air smelled of deep-frying fat, people, trash, fresh fruit, vegetables, and car emission mixed with the noise of vehicles. It is also a transport hub that connects both sides of the airport (North and South side). Loud *voceadores* (workers for the minibus chauffeurs) scream out the route of the transport. Cars honk their horn in unsynchronised chaos in order to scare off other drivers and attract possible customers.

This is not just a hectic place that people travel through. It is also in this area that the first urban settlers of El Alto arrived. One might say it is the historical epicentre of El Alto's continuous expansion outwards. Thus, La Ceja is not only emanating people out to the different parts of the city through public transport, it is also here that El Alto started as a small province of La Paz. Put differently, La Ceja was the first 'layer' of the expanding city that slowly started to materialise at the turn of the century and later became urbanised during the 1950s. Now, it is perceived as part of the nature of the city that it is expanding – because it always has. Indeed, I believe Risør made an accurate observation when she stated that “[...] El Alto seems to be a city that is permanently coming into being” (2010: 470). The uneven swelling of the urban area is not new, nor does it look like it is going to come to a halt, consequently this is not only about the past – it can also tell us something about how residents of the city see the future.

Continuous Growth

Aletños see the future in the city landscape because they expect the city to continue to expand. Sometimes people speak of yet-to-come changes in the city landscape as if they were already realised. Risør also writes that citizens of El Alto sometimes refer to plazas and roads that have still not taken proper form (2012: 109). I experienced something similar when, at a different occasion, some of my interlocutors invited me to travel to an area of El Alto none of us knew very well. The area was notably less formally urbanised regarding infrastructure and housing. The roads were not paved and the streets were badly lit, if lit at all and almost empty. It had a rural feel to it with a small herd of sheep grazing on the side of the road and small plots of land designated to grow crops of (perhaps) *quinua* grain.

Alejandro called it a trip to the centre of El Alto. Indeed, it is more or less the mid-point of El Alto geographically as places on a map. When we arrived at our destination, we met the priest of Villa del Santo. He told us that the Catholic education-centre had been there for some years now and it used to have more open space around it but now it is surrounded by

residential houses. Alejandro reckoned that it would probably be a good investment to buy a plot in the area taking into account its placement in the mid-point of the city and that it would probably be worth more in the future. This implies that the urban expansion will continue and will therefore not change.

Thus, when my interlocutors said that nothing is changing in El Alto they do not mean that neighbourhoods of the city are not getting new houses, roads, sewage systems, inhabitants et cetera. The way I understand what they said is that the expanding character of the city is the same as it has always been. And that the need for *obras* is pushed outwards towards the more recent established areas of El Alto. Villa del Santo also used to be vacant and has developed as part of the outwards expansion described above. Some of my interlocutors stated that Villa del Santo used to be empty – it was “full of nothing” (“*lleno de nada*”). It did not even have trees; it was vacant tundra before the miners lost their jobs and arrived at the city. Consequently, the miners and their decedents, too, became a ‘layer’ of the expanding city.

Thus the expansion of the city is constant: Villa del Santo used to be vacant, just as other areas at the current uneven fringes of El Alto are. But in the future they, too, will be urbanised parts of El Alto. In this way urban expansion does not pose a change, given that the expansion is – although uneven and bulgy – constant.

The 2003 Revolts: Urban Youth and the Indigenous President

“The existential core of urbanism is the desire for *radical change* to bring all the good implied in the original utopian association of ‘the city’” (Pieterse 2008: 6, original emphasis). If we take Pieterse’s statement to be true also for the youth of El Alto, there will be a certain frustration with a city that is not changing. Implied in the statement “I have not seen a change” we might understand a sense of disappointment. For the remaining part of this chapter I would like to expand the analysis of the possible meanings of the statement to include Morales’ rhetoric of ‘process of change’ (*proceso de cambio*). My interlocutors are of different political convictions and I do not mean to generalise their multitude of opinions. Nevertheless, many of them, regardless of political conviction, expressed a disappointment with the president and his rhetoric as it stands at odds with the experience of the city as not changing.

This disappointment is fuelled in particular by the feeling that Morales has abandoned the city despite the fact that (as illustrated in the previous chapter) the revolts that emanated from El Alto during 2003 against the government at the time facilitated his way to the presidential office in 2006. El Alto has fought for the country, like in 2003, but no one fights for El Alto, Ignacio once told me. This section will therefore move the attention from the urban landscape to the subject of the urban revolts of 2003 in order to further understand what the quotation says about the urban temporality of El Alto.

After Morales won the presidential elections in 2005, a set of proposals called the ‘October Agenda’ was to lead the politics of MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*) (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 8-15). This included a revision of the constitution and renationalisation of natural gas as well as a reorientation of the economy away from neo-liberalism and is part of what is generatively known as the ‘process of change’.

The new constitution was passed in 2009 and included the various indigenous people by redefining the Bolivian State as plurinational and multicultural and the hydrocarbon industry was nationalised in 2006 (Crabtree and Chaplin 2013: 111). As will be illustrated here however, is that the changes in El Alto are still pending in the eyes of my interlocutors and that Morales has somewhat left the city behind. Gas ought to be free in El Alto because if it were not for its citizens, the natural resources of Bolivia would be in other people’s hands, I have heard people say. This also points to the unequal distribution of revenues between the different departments of Bolivia. The department of Tarija, where much of the oil is located, receives about 30 per-cent of the oil revenues but only constitute about five per cent of the population (McNeish 2012: 54).

The quote “I have not seen a change”, then can be understood as a criticism of Morales’ politics. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will elaborate this further by looking at the negotiation of the significance of *Octubre* during its ten year anniversary but first I would like to situate the quotation in its initial context.

2003 and the Burnt Town Hall

A day in July, I was waiting for Ignacio and some of my other interlocutors outside the Burnt Town Hall (*Alcaldía Quemada*), in the middle of La Ceja. We were going to a meeting with the youth organisation that Alejandro was the leader of. Until February 2003 it was just called the Town Hall of El Alto when it was set on fire by protesters. Later it was renovated as an

arts school of sorts and this day seemed to be normal: I could hear a metronome giving the pace for a percussion class and see girls in pink ballet-skirts rushing to dance lessons.

After some time Ignacio finally arrived and, we ended up talking for some minutes while we waited for the others to come. The conversation went in the direction of politics and Morales' 'process of change'. Morales has helped a small number of indigenous people in the countryside, he stated, but El Alto is still the same – "I have not seen a change". There is a lack of jobs in El Alto, projects (such as the planned hospital in Villa del Santo) are never realised, and money disappears in the municipality, he mentioned. I asked him if there are not indigenous people in El Alto as well. He replied that there is and that they believe in Morales' politics, but they are too proud to admit that Morales' government is not working.

I was surprised by his account in the way that El Alto is often seen by academics (e.g. Lazar 2008, Muruchi Poma, Farthing, and Kohl 2011) and locals alike as an indigenous city. During this conversation Ignacio distanced himself from the category of 'indigenous' as they, for the most part, live in the countryside. He was born and grew up in El Alto and like most of my interlocutors did not categorise himself as indigenous, although some young *Alteños* would say that they were decedents of Aymaras and Quechuas (as well as miners, see chapter 4). It was no doubt however, that the 2003 revolts were still important – people had vivid personal memories of what happened – but whether it constituted a temporal rupture or not was negotiated.

Ten Years After: National Day of Dignity

Lazar (2014) insightfully reflects on revolutions and temporality when she argues that revolutionary moments are not inherent in the moment as they unfold, but only come to signify a rupture later. Equally, *Octubre* and the revolts of 2003 which Bolivia underwent do not in-itself constitute a rupture but is negotiated as a rupture (or not) when remembered. Without aiming to establish if 2003 was a real rupture or not I will here present how it is negotiated through commemorations and the lack of it. "I have not seen a change" implies the lack of a rupture. However, the government, on the other hand, sought (again) to establish and formalise such rupture through an introduction of the new law number 424 on 17th of October 2013 that sought to establish the 'National Day of Dignity' (*Día de la Dignidad Nacional*). The law states that every 17th of October should be a day of remembrance of those who lost

their lives between 11th and 17th of October 2003,³⁰ because their sacrifices helped recuperate the natural resources of Bolivia and establish the new constitution.

The ratification of the law that was to be held on the 17th of October, ten years after the president at the time, Sanchez de Lozada, fled the country, was announced some days prior in various news papers. However, when I talked with some of the representatives of Fejuve (*La Federación de Juntas Vecinales*), the neighbourhood association of El Alto that was very important during the revolts of 2003 (Lazar 2008), in their main office in La Ceja, they told me that they were uncertain if they were going to support the ratification. In fact Fejuve had blockaded the city for 24 hours during the 15th of October and were thinking of expanding their opposition to an indefinite blockade (*paro indefinido*) to oppose the ten year anniversary of *Octubre*. The initial demand was related to better the traffic situation in El Alto but the demands increased to include a compensatory fund for the damages of *Octubre* (Rivas 2013). Nevertheless, Fejuve seemed to decided to support the signing when they opened the roads.

To block roads is in Bolivia a common way of getting attention to political claims (see McNeish 2006) and the signing of this law was no exception. On the 17th of October, the main avenue of La Ceja (6 de Marzo) was blocked in both directions for the occasion of the ratification of the law. And a stage was placed close to Calle 6 and Calle 7 that cross the avenue. I met Javier after he had lectures in the UPEA. The street was dense with people as usual, however there were no vehicles as it usually was. Some vendors walked around, but this day they sold more DVDs about *Octubre*, and book and maps about Bolivia than usual. Different organisations and institutions had hanged banners from the buildings around (including Fejuve, Universities and workers' unions). Despite the seemingly normal chaos of the area, different workers' unions were also present with representatives that filled up the street as they walked in an organised manner towards the stage. The host of the ceremony (who never presented himself) talked about the 'process of change' and that people have given their lives "in order to protect our natural resources" ("*para proteger nuestros recursos naturales*"). This is an historic date, he stated.

Javier arrived right before Morales took over the microphone on the stage. After a symphony orchestra had played, Morales appeared and quickly signed the law and lifted it up so that the crowd could see it. Subsequently, he held a speech where he declared that the October Agenda had been completed and that the natural recourses belonged to the Bolivians

³⁰ See appendix 4.

now, not the '*gringos*' (derogatory term for 'white people'). It has been a long fight against neo-liberalism, he declared, that ended this day when Saches de Lozada finally left Bolivia.

When Morales finished his speech, Javier told me that he usually did not go to these kinds of events. He would not have gone if I had not asked him to go with me. Concerning the president's speech he simply said that he had not heard anything of what he said. We started to walk towards where we could get transport back to Villa del Santo. This new formalised ritual, then, did not gain much attention from my key interlocutors. This will be further elaborated upon below.

Youth and Octubre

Alejandro wanted to arrange an event with his youth organisation in commemoration of the ten year anniversary of the *Octubre* revolts. He had been thinking about arranging it in an area of El Alto called Senkata which is a few minutes away from Villa del Santo on the road towards Oruro. The area was central during the *Octubre* since it is where the gas refinery was (and still was during my fieldwork). It was from this area that trucks containing natural gas were about to get exported to Chile. For this reason it was a strategically important place for the protesters. The roads around the refinery were destroyed and blocked in order to prevent export of the nation's natural gas.

The organisation was engaged in different activities like for example visiting children in hospitals during Christmas and arranging talent shows. The very general goal of the organisation was to raise consciousness, as Javier put it, and promote youth's participation in the city. At first Alejandro seemed excited about the commemoration. He wanted to arrange something nice, he said, in memory of those who had died. But they had to be careful in order to not insult anyone – it could be a sensitive subject for those who had lost someone or knew someone who got injured. Towards the end of September of 2013, the organisation arranged a talent show in the Burnt Town Hall. After performances of dance, rap, music and stand-up comedy, Alejandro finished off by telling about the plans for the rest of the year and mentioned that they wanted to visit hospitals during Christmas and the commemoration in Senkata on the 12 of October.

The organisation consists of several active members, but it was Alejandro who made the final decisions and without his initiative, nothing was going to get arranged. As it turned out, that was exactly what happened – he decided not to arrange anything. When I talked with Alejandro two days after the Day of Dignity that took place in La Ceja, I asked him why he

did not arrange a commemoration. He replied that “it is very heated” (“*es muy calliente*”) and added “it is political” (“*es político*”). Important to point out is that Alejandro once told me they feel that Morales’ has seized *Octubre* for his own gain. Morales was not in Bolivia during most of the revolts, he came at a later point. In other words he did not stand at the barricades in El Alto, and he still does not fight with the *alteños*. If he is not fighting the cause of El Alto, it is understandable that the youth will not commemorate the revolts that led to Morales’s electoral victory.

However, other organisations and cultural houses³¹ collaborated in order to arrange commemorations and ceremonies together. They scheduled a tour to different neighbourhoods in the city where they publicly screened films and had public theatres, dances and music performances. One of the cultural houses that participated was Wayna Tambo which I was in contact with during my fieldwork (as mentioned in Chapter 1). One of these commemorations was in Villa del Santo. After the usual football practice we had in the church centre, we saw that they prepared for the commemoration in the Plaza Bolivia. However none of my key interlocutors seemed interested in it, although Alejandro told me that I should go to see the event. It would probably be interesting for me, he said having noted my curiosity in *Octubre*.

The youth organisation could have arranged their own commemoration if they wanted to, or they could have attended others. The way I see it, my interlocutors refrained from participating and making commemorations because they did not want to declare *Octubre* to be a rupture and declare the success of the ‘process of change’. The revolts of 2003 and in particular *Octubre* were important to my interlocutors and were even said to be the awakening of El Alto. Nevertheless, it did not entail change.

It should be noted that the fact that they did not commemorate *Octubre* does not mean that they do not remember what happened or that it is not important. Through videos (DVDs, documentaries, music videos online and on computers and cell phones) people see what the city went through. When *Octubre* came up in everyday conversations, I was often asked if I had seen one or more specific documentaries of what happened. At two occasions I was simply given a cell phone with a music video illustrating the revolts. Most of my interlocutors were very young at that time of the revolts and did not go outside to demonstrate but they remember the lack of food in particular and the insecurity and the fear of the military.

“I have not seen a change” then can be understood as a direct critique towards Morales and his rhetoric. Further, it illustrates the lack of co-creating the temporal rupture that Morales

³¹ A term referring broadly to centres working with music, theatre and other forms of stage performances.

seeks to create. This is fuelled by the perception that the city is not changing, despite the fact that its citizens stood at the barricades in 2003 and lost their lives. Through not participating in the commemoration and from not organising their own, they question the way in which Morales uses 2003.

Concluding Remarks

It is a not uncommon experience for anthropologists today to think they are witnessing irreversible change in what they are studying, and yet to be told by the local people themselves that nothing has changed, that in key respects everything has remained the same.

(Harris 1996: 13)

The main focus of this chapter has been to understand the paradox of the statement “I have not seen a change” in two different ways that both reflect on ‘urban temporality’. What I have argued to constitute an ‘urban temporality’ in this respect is of a kind that does not meet the potential for real change. By looking at the city landscape and its expanding character, and the commemoration (and the lack of it) of *Octubre*, it has been illustrated that “I have not seen a change” expresses the lack of temporal punctuation and rupture.

The non-static A-series time in this chapter has been illustrated by how urban temporality is embedded into the landscape and negotiated through commemorations in the city (and the lack of such). Again (as in Chapter 2) temporality is found not to be static: In the landscape of El Alto it is illustrated how it unfolds unevenly and organic – constituting a temporal parallel to the spatial expansion of the city into the rural areas. Through the commemoration we also see how change is negotiated, and how the 2003 riots are framed by Morales within an approach of revolution and rupture.

While in this chapter a sense of non-transformation was conveyed, we will in the next see how the youth are very active in creating a temporal rupture through participating in the yearly parade of Villa del Santo.

Chapter 4

Historical Temporality: Dancing the *Minero*

This chapter is based on my experience from participating in the annual anniversary of Villa del Santo. This includes an *entrada*³² that started on the spatial outskirts of the district going to its centre (Plaza Bolivia) and ended inside the local Catholic Church by *Apóstol Santiago*, the patron-saint of the neighbourhood. In order to be able to disentangle what I see to be two crucial temporal dimensions – historical and liturgical – this chapter will stop at the plaza while the next chapter will continue from the square and into the church. That is to say, this chapter will focus on the youth dancing the *Minero*, while the next chapter will (based on this) go in depth into the religious aspects of the *entrada* and its temporal implications.

Specifically, it will be argued in this chapter that dancing the *Minero* creates a temporal rupture with the mining past in two interrelated ways: First, by being performed on the anniversary of Villa del Santo thus commemorating its origin as a miners' area (see Chapter 1) and, secondly, through the exposition of a generational rupture between the parents and/or grandparents that were miners and my interlocutors who grew up in the city. This temporal rupture is generated by putting elements of the past – such as miners' costumes and miners' helmets as well as steps enacting miners' work – into the present and thus highlighting the contrast between the past and present.

Lazar defines historic temporality as “[...] a sense of emplacement within a historical narrative of political action that looks back to the past and to illustrious ancestors and forwards to an imagined set of possibilities for the future” (2014: 91). The historical temporality I will present here also entails a sense of emplacement within history. However, it

³² An ‘*entrada*’ means ‘entrance’ in English but refers to a procession with folk dance groups called *fraternidades*. It is similar to necessarily carnival but not referred to as such.

is not a linear narrative divided into epochs as such, but an embodied form of historical temporality. Lazar's concept of historical time is similar to what the historian Koselleck (2004 [1979]) understands as comprised by 'experiences' of the past and 'expectations' for the future. However, in this chapter I will not focus on expectations for the future (see the following chapter) as the dance is oriented towards the past. Through what I understand as a historical temporality, I will explore the past as present as it is socially remembered (Connerton 1989).

In the subsequent pages, I will first provide a general background to the *Minero* dance and the *entrada* emphasising the active involvement of youth through the important preparations to the *entrada*. I will then describe the parade in itself with great ethnographic detail elaborating the movement through the streets of the neighbourhood.

The *Minero* and *Entradas*

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of folk dances in El Alto and Bolivia in general. They appear in different settings, most notably in the form of public *entradas* and festivities. Some of these public festivities are large and gather people from all over the country, like the annual carnival in Oruro. Others are smaller with just one performing *fraternidad* (dance-group) arranged by a company or family. El Alto is no exception and each well-established neighbourhood has its own anniversary to celebrate its foundation. This is done with drinking, social and religious activities and most importantly an *entrada* where folk dance is central. At times it felt like there was always a district that was preparing for an anniversary by practicing the dances in the streets after school- and work hours, or had one and thus, partly, blocking the already overloaded traffic. The *entrada* in Villa del Santo is relatively big for El Alto standards, and was said to be one of the three largest in the city.

It is in the *entrada* in Villa del Santo that the *Minero* dance has been performed annually by the youth since 2007. It is not frequently danced in Bolivia but I was told that several sociology students at *Universidad Mayor de San Andrés* (UMSA in La Paz) organised a miner *fraternidad*. During my fieldwork there was only one group that danced the *Minero* in Villa del Santo but previously there had been three. Two of them had dissolved for reasons explained to me as related to conflicts and economic problems.

According to Ignacio, the *Minero* is not very well renowned – it is a dance of a more recent date. Javier estimated that the dance was perhaps 20 years old while the *Morenada*

dance, which illustrates the Afro-Bolivian slaves in the mines and their Spanish masters, has been danced for perhaps a hundred years.³³ While there are obviously contact surfaces between previous works on dance in the Andes (some presented below) and this, I will, as far as I know, be the first anthropologist to write about the *Minero*.

However, dances and related activities in the Andes have been analysed and written about in a variety of ways.³⁴ For example, Nash (1993) understands the carnival in Oruro, including an *entrada*, to be an interpretation of the past as well as the present. This is because, as she argues, the carnival weaves together pre-conquest and Hispanic traditions through religious rituals, dance and a theatrical performance. Such different traditions do not merge into each other. They are distinct and divisible from one another and are illustrated in dances and dramas. The carnival and communal celebrations “[...] are occasions for expressing community solidarity and continuity with the past” (1993: 125). One of the overarching themes of the carnival, she argues, is the Spanish conquest and the subsequent Indian subjugation to forced labour. Somewhat similarly, Mendoza, writing about Cusco, Peru, emphasises the ambiguity of dance as dancers “[...] bring together images of their own past as well as of outsiders and creatively weave those images into their sociocultural reality” (1998: 86).

Reflecting some of these structural elements from elsewhere in the Andes, the youth of Villa del Santo similarly bring images of the past into the present by enacting miners. As such and at a very general level it illustrates that when arriving in El Alto the miners – or rather, the ex-miners and their families – did not forget their past. On the contrary, their memories from the mining centres instead became a driving force during the social upheavals in El Alto during 2003 (see previous chapter) when their history of social struggle was actualised and reframed within an urban setting. Their experiences with opposing the State became a recourse when facing the difficulties during *Octubre* or ‘war of gas’ (Arbona 2008).

Now, my young interlocutors never worked in the mine shafts and accordingly were not categorised by themselves or others as miners. Nevertheless, through the dance they reached into the past by putting on a role that was not known to them through personal experiences. How we prepared for this will be explained in the next section.

³³ See also Goldstein (2004: 148-149) for more about the *Morenada*.

³⁴ For a more general review on dance in anthropology see Reed (1998).

Preparing for the Parade

In this section I would like to take the reader through the process of learning the dance, and also shortly explain how the youth I got to know organised their *fraternidad*. As I noted in the introduction of the thesis, the youths themselves manage temporalities. Obviously, close family may support and admire their initiative but it is not obligatory in any way to participate. In contrast to many other dance groups that included people of all ages, my *fraternidad* included (with a very few exceptions) young people only. To write about learning the steps is therefore important in order to understand how they position themselves in relation to a historical temporality and bring the past into the present. The practice of the steps also illustrates that it is a collective dance where the coordination between the dancers is essential. Other anthropologists, like Lazar (2008), have also emphasised the sense of community and ‘togetherness’ created through dance.³⁵ As will be illustrated further, this is also crucial for my interlocutors’ *fraternidad*.

Practicing the Steps

The first practice was held in the beginning of July and we continued practicing every night for about three weeks. On the night of the first practice, the winter air was chilly and the sun had set but yellow-coloured floodlights lit the square in Villa del Santo. A couple of loud speakers were provisionally installed there as well. They used the electricity from a building close by to play a *Chacarera* tune for the dancers in the plaza to practice to. The sight of the dance groups that were practicing in public was normal a few weeks before the parade.

I initially thought that my dance practice was going to be held in the plaza but I did not see anyone I knew. After a while I saw Ignacio behind the wired fence by the church centre waving his hands like he was signalling ‘here I am’ while he was calling – “Osmund!” The church centre was not (yet) lit but his bright jacket and his smiling face were easy to see in the shadow. I waved back and approached him, we shook hands as usual and started to small talk about what we had done during the day.

We were the first ones to arrive for practice and I asked him about the dance. Before I started my fieldwork, I had some knowledge about Bolivian dances but I had never seen or even heard of this one before. He told me it is similar to the *Morenada* in terms of the basic steps being more or less the same and it is called the *Minerito* (*Minero* and *Minerito* were

³⁵ Lazar argues that dance is a central citizenship practice. For dance and citizenship in Bolivia see also Vleet (2005).

sometimes used interchangeably, I will elaborate on this later in this chapter). The *Morenada* is a very popular Bolivian folk-dance often called a ‘heavy dance’ (*danza pesada*) due to its movements but also because it is expensive to participate in. In fact, the *Morenada* is the most prestigious dance and the only one that is categorised as ‘heavy’ (Lazar 2008: 121). Although the *Minero* is similar to the *Morenada* regarding the basic steps, the aesthetic similarity also stops there as the latter involves much more elaborate costumes. Further, the *Minero* is much less prestigious than the *Morenada* and is categorised as a ‘light dance’ (*danza liviana*), like most other dances.

Still waiting for the others, Ignacio showed me the basic steps. They were not complex and (to my great relief) could be danced by anyone with fundamental coordination skills. It consisted of moving one’s legs back and forth while advancing in a forward direction. While the torso panned from side to side – left, right, left, right. One usually started standing with the right side of one’s body to the moving direction but once started the movement has no definite or natural finish. One simply stops dancing when the music stops. The movements of the basic steps were temporarily broken up by the special steps that have definite beginnings and ends. While standing there waiting for the others to arrive, Ignacio tried to remember the special steps but he smiled and said he could not recall how they went.

Some of the others started to arrive and after a few minutes we were eight people in total. However we were not able to practice properly as Marcos, who was supposed to bring the CD-player, was still not there. Ignacio was impatient and called him with his cell phone. He answered and said he was on his way. Short of breath and carrying a backpack, he arrived a few minutes later. He had been running. “So late!” (“*¡Tan tarde!*”), someone called out to him when he entered the gate to the church centre. He took the CD-player out of his backpack placed it on a bench, plugged it in the socket, put in the CD and pressed ‘play’. We organised ourselves in rows of three dancers and started to dance like Ignacio had tried to teach me just a few moments before. Marcos stood in front between two of his friends (Daniel and Eduardo) and gave us instructions.

The *Minero* is similar to most other Bolivian dances in the way that it consists of the basic step and of several special steps. The choreography is not fixed, that is to say the special steps do not come in any particular order in accordance to the different segments of the music. The role of the guide is to lead the group by controlling its progress forward, and most importantly indicate when to break up the continuation of the basic step with a special step. In the *Minero*, the special steps usually consist of hitting the chisel with the sledgehammer while

moving in different directions, however during practice we used our hands to clap instead. These steps demand a higher degree of coordination and understanding of rhythms, but I would say they are still fairly easy for a person with no background from dance like me.

You never dance Bolivian folk dances without a group; it would not make any sense as the effect of the dance comes from the coordination between the dancers. This is also the case when it comes to the *Minero*. When Marcos wanted us to do a special step he raised his hand shouting the number of the special step and counted to three – “*uno, dos, tres!*” – and with a strict movement puts his arm down again as a sign for us to do the mentioned special step. This illustrates the group effort of the dance. It is done together and if one of the dancers sticks out in a negative sense, the overall impression that the whole group makes is undermined (see also Lazar 2008: 127). The three weeks of practice, then comes down to making the hit on the chisel sound like one and not sticking out by doing the same movements at the same time and being ‘in tune’ with each other.

I also recognised that we responded to the music not only by moving in its rhythm but also by using more energy during the more lively sections of the song. Marcos often indicated these parts of the song by sometimes shouting “further down!” (“*¡más abajo!*”). He did so as a way of saying that we should dance with more energy and rotate the torso and legs more so that the upper part of the body leans forward and down. This way, despite the fact that the basic step is a repetitive movement, when dancing we responded, simultaneously, to the intensity of the music. The dynamics of the dance were also evident during the main-parade, where the intensity increased as the parade advanced.

The basic step of the dance is set and is the same from year to year. This is in contrast to the special steps where only some were the same from the previous year and others were invented or remade and altered. We ended up with 8 such special steps. Thus there is a creative aspect to rehearsing as well by using both new and old elements. Many suggestions were up for discussion, but most of them, like the Michael Jackson moon-walk-inspired step and the robot step, were discarded or never performed during the main parade. However the ‘sexy step’ (*‘paso sexy’*) where we swung our hips and whistled, to the amusement of the spectators, was performed during the parade. Bolivian miners are known to be particularly masculine and this step played with that stereotype as swinging one’s hips is hardly manly. That being said, most of the steps simply illustrated the work of the miners, hitting the chisel, whipping sweat from the forehead and snot from the nose.

The Organisation of the Fraternidad and Costumes

The way that my *fraternidad* was organised was a bit unusual and demanded extra effort on the behalf of the dancers. Both Lazar (2008) and Goldstein (2004) mention that a *pasante* is an organiser of a *fraternidad*.³⁶ They are often a married couple who take on the responsibility of paying for everything in a *fraternidad* – costumes, band, beverages et cetera. They can use one year of savings on just one parade I was told several times. However, a term more frequently used in Villa del Santo while I did my fieldwork was *preste*. Javier explained that there can be several *prestes* for one *fraternidad*, but that a *pasante* is usually a married couple. Javier made the distinction clearer to me than many others who seemed to be using *pasante* and *preste* interchangeably.

Similarly, Abercrombie (1998) argues that sponsoring a hamlet's patrons Saint's annual festival is one the first steps for a married couple to obtain a higher rank as they advance on their 'pathway' ('*t'aki*'). An important feature of fiesta obligations is that they are transferred to a new couple the following year. The obligation of finding a new sponsor (regardless of what they are called) is also the ideal when it comes to being sponsors for *fraternidades* in El Alto. Normally one holds the position of *preste* for one year before passing on the responsibility for the following year when the main-parade is done.

The problem in my *fraternidad* was that the previous *preste* left his job unfinished without assigning a new one. I understood that it was an unusual and disadvantaged situation and I was told that it was the first year that this had happened and that the youth had to organise everything themselves. They had to organise the practice sessions, find a band (and negotiate a price), and decide on and find costumes. At times this was a challenge because most of them were studying (or had jobs) and the responsibility was not assigned to one person therefore sometimes creating an uncertainty about who was doing what.

The organisational problem went hand in hand with the economic situation as the *preste* usually is a donor in addition to his organisational responsibilities and who also sometimes finds *padrinos* who pay for minor expenses like beer or parts of the costumes. In order to raise money for different expenses, in particular the band which is by far the biggest expense, Alejandro figured that every dancer should pay a share each. With the money paid by the participants in addition to donations from a couple of parents and Alejandro's youth organisation, we were able to pay for the expenses that were necessary.

³⁶ Or *comparsa* as Lazar calls a dance group, a term I am not familiar with from my fieldwork.

My impression was that in the lack of a *preste*, the guide of each *bloque* became the leader of the group. Each *fraternidad* is divided into *bloques* (blocks, or groups) that practice separately and even develop different special steps. In the *fraternidad* I participated in, there were three *bloques*: one for girls and two for boys.

Usually each *fraternidad* decides on the same costumes. In our case each block decided on what they were going to wear and each dancer had to find his or her own costumes. The ideal in my *bloque* was to use black jeans, black leatherjackets (*chamarra de cuero*), red t-shirts, black rubber boots, and (most importantly) a brown miner's helmet, in addition to the chisel and sledgehammer for the main parade. Nevertheless, some of the dancers were not able to get hold of the exact costume. It was a matter of what one was able to acquire through friends and family and how much (or if) one was willing to spend money on the costumes. For example, some used black raincoats instead of a black leatherjacket, or a smaller hammer instead of a sledgehammer like I did. Rather than buying all the items for the costume, I borrowed a chisel from Javier and a leatherjacket from the family I lived with.

In contrast to many other Bolivian dances the costumes that are used when dancing the *Minero* are simple and everyday-like; lacking some of the extremely elaborate and colourful details that one wears when dancing some other dances like the *Morenada*. Security is a real concern for some of the *Morenada fraternidades* that use expensive jewellery made of precious metals as part of their costumes. This is not the case with the *Minero* considering the only metal that was part of our costume was the sledgehammer and chisel.

This illustrates the effort the youth went through in order to dance and thus also how they intervene with and craft the historical temporality. It does not only come down to dancing the steps and the ritual itself but also organising the group and paying for the band. Despite the organisational and economic difficulties that came with not having a *pasante* the youths were able to dance in 2013 as well. Their strong connection to church certainly helped as they were able to appropriate the church centre for practices. Nevertheless, it was not initiated by the priest or the church in any way.

The *Entrada*: Dancing the *Minero*

There are three categories of parades that are prevalent in Villa del Santo: *pre-entrada* (pre-parade) held a week before the *entrada* (main-parade), and the *diana* (held early the day after the main-parade). The *entrada* attracts the most spectators and is the climax of the festivities

but there are also other events that do not involve going in procession. For example, there was Mass, extensive drinking, parties, concerts and competitions for school bands. Here however I would like to focus on the *entrada* as it is the most important event during the festivities.

The *entrada* as will be described below stands in contrast with how Geertz, in his classic essay called *Person, Time and Conduct in Bali* (1973), describes Balinese time and social life where an absence of climax and self-containment are key. This is also the case even when it comes to the celebration of Rangda-Barong that ends as it started. Geertz sounds almost disappointed when he says that as an observer one is left “[...] with the feeling that something decisive was on the verge of happening but never quite did” (1973: 403). He concludes that: “Balinese social life lacks climax because it takes place in a motionless present, a vectorless now” (Geertz 1973: 404). While Geertz’ interpretation might be valid in the case of Bali,³⁷ the *entrada* which I will present here does not lack climax. In fact, the main parade is arguably the single most important collective event in the district during the year. For that reason I would like to focus on the *entrada* as I believe, through putting elements of the past in the present, the youth intervene temporally by highlighting a rupture with the mining past. I have for pragmatic reasons divided the performance in five parts. The last part will be the subject matter of Chapter 5.

A Big Miner’s Helmet

At 12.00 on the day of the parade, we were supposed to be ready at the designated starting-point of the parade. We were scheduled to be the fifth group to enter and it was important to not get behind schedule as there were 15 *fraternidades* behind us. Javier had told us that if the *fraternidad* did not keep up with the timetable we were going to have to pay a fee to the organisers. Nonetheless, when it was our time to enter the procession we were not ready. I found Javier, Marcos, Gustavo and a couple of others in the shade from the sun in the church centre. They were repairing the huge miner’s helmet which was going to be placed on the roof of Alejandro’s car (see picture on the following page). Alejandro was ill and was not going to dance. He had even lost his voice and decided to drive his car which was going to drive in front of the dancers of the *fraternidad*. The helmet had the typical round shape of a miner’s helmet with the brim going all the way round. It was mostly made out of old newspapers, wire and tape, and was spray-painted in the same brown colour as the helmets we used as part of

³⁷ See Bloch (1977) for criticism on Geertz’ premise that thought (including the way we think about time) is socially determined.

our costumes. A lantern made by aluminium foil was attached with tape in the front of the helmet.



Figure 3: A big miner's helmet

The helmet is an important symbol of the miners. To place the helmet in the front of the *fraternidad* left no doubt who were expected. A few days earlier Alejandro, during the preparations to the *elección de palla*,³⁸ said that those who had them should bring helmets to the election but that we had to be careful with them because they are important keepsakes (*recuerdos*). The way I understand this is that they are memories or reminders of the work that their grandparents and parents did before they lost their work and were forced to move to El Alto. His comment highlights the fragile quality of memory. It is something that one must be careful with and not loose or break even though it is a bulky helmet made to handle hard hits and blows. The memory of the miners is something that must be sustained, which also explains the effort and energy used in order to dance.

When the helmet was fixed and we had dressed up in our costumes, we were ready to go but we were late and the *fraternidad* that was scheduled as number 11 had already entered and was advancing along the route of the *entrada*. So, we had to run past the others towards

³⁸ *Elección de palla* is a competition of the best female representative of a *fraternidad*, held yearly prior to the main-parade.

our position between number four and six. When we arrived to our spot, Alejandro was already there with the big miner's helmet attached to the roof of his car. After a few minutes the band was ready and started to play their instruments, Marcos instructed us where to stand and we started to dance.

At first it felt a bit awkward to dance to the sound of the band and not the CD-player and it took (at least for me) some minutes before I started to feel comfortable with the pulse and tempo of the band and also the movements of the rest of the dancers in my *bloque*. Once the music started, Marcos mumbled some vulgarities. He seemed to have some difficulties in starting but as soon as we got into the beat of the music, we got rid of the initial hitches and danced well.

The intensity of the dance slowly increased along the route as we moved towards the plaza. My experience was that there were very few spectators along the first part of the route going from the starting point to the avenue. However, there were a few people scattered there as well. Some of which had set up provisional eateries and kiosks where the dancers could get beverages, sweets and food so that they were sure that they had enough energy (and/or sufficient alcohol-blood concentration) for the parade.

The Avenue

When we reached the avenue, the number of spectators standing on the side of the road slowly increased. At this point some of us also started to get drinks from the spectators as a friendly gesture, which one has to drink down (*secar* – to dry) after having poured a sip to *pachamama*.³⁹ The inhabitants of Villa del Santo who stood on the sides of the avenue were not the only ones who saw the dance; people driving by in their vehicles could also (at least shortly) see the parade. Some vehicles were also blocked by the parade as we went along it. Residents of El Alto are used to parades (as well as demonstrations) that block the roads, but it nevertheless creates some frustration. However, in Villa del Santo one could easily have found an alternative route. Some semi-trailer drivers were definitely not happy with our presence. A couple of transport vehicles came into 'our' lane and drove by. One of them also honked the horn and signalled with gestures that we should get out of the way. A woman, who I believe was the mother of one of the dancers, passed me and said a bit irritated that we should just continue to dance in the road. Nevertheless, most of the vehicles moved past us

³⁹ Female spirit of the earth often translated to 'mother earth' in English.

without being interrupted by using one of the other lanes. (The use of roads in demonstrations and commemorations was also mentioned in the previous chapter).

When one drives on the avenue, one goes between the districts of El Alto – one only sees the houses and buildings on the outskirts of the district. As I mentioned above, this avenue is an important thoroughfare in El Alto and is used by people going to cities in Bolivia and even to Chile. When the parade went by the avenue, it entered a bigger stage where the spectators are residents of El Alto and the country in general. Goldstein (2004) argues that through performing folk dances, people of a semi-urban neighbourhood of Cochabamba claim to be bearers of national identity. Indeed Bolivian folk dances are often proudly said to be part of a Bolivian culture. Similarly, by dancing along the avenue the parade forced itself into a national and even international ‘stage’ as there are busses with tourists going to and from the city of La Paz. The *Minero* in that sense, was displayed to a wider audience, and represented the ‘culture’ and miners of Villa del Santo, El Alto and Bolivia in general.

In the original pre-rehearsed lyrics that we sang during the *entrada* (of which origin is unknown to my interlocutors) we sang about “the miners of Bolivia”. Although most of the time we switched “Bolivia” with “Villa del Santo”, thus linking the history of Bolivia with that of the neighbourhood.

The miners of Bolivia (Villa del Santo)

Everyone has gold and silver

With his sledgehammer and chisel

Working day and night

Dark days in the mine shaft nights of tragedy

Despair, disillusionment – it’s felt in my soul

In this way my life goes by because miner I am

Miner that for my homeland I give my entire existence

[...]

The miners of Bolivia everyone works

With their coca and their cigarette

In the deep mine shafts⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See appendix 5 for the complete original version in Spanish and notes on translation. Also see next chapter.

At a later occasion I asked Alexander about these lyrics and he responded that: Before Bolivia had silver and tin as important natural resources, “now it is gas and all this” (“*ahora es gas y todo esto*”) and in the future, who knows what we are going to live off? Similarly, Marcos said about the first time they danced in the *entrada* that people of the neighbourhood realised that: “There are youths who do know the history” (“*hay jóvenes que si saben la historia*”).

The dance is quite explicitly, then, related to the past of the history of Bolivia and the constitution of the district as a miner neighbourhood. However, after having danced to a wider audience, the parade soon continued inwards to its centre.

Entering the Neighbourhood

Along the route the parade sometimes stopped, and we got the possibility to relax, drink and chat. One of the places the parade halted was just about where we took a 90 degrees turn to the right to leave the avenue in order to enter the Villa del Santo. From this point, one could see the straight street of Villa del Santo that led towards the Plaza Bolivia. Along this part of the route there were more spectators than earlier. When we started to dance, the number of participants was a bit disappointing – many of the people that were at the rehearsals did not show up from the beginning. The guide of my block, Marcos, seemed a bit let down due to the absence of some of his friends. But his face lit up when Daniel and Alberto turn up ready to dance when we were about to enter the district. Thus, it was not only the number of spectators that increased along the route, the number of dancers did as well, emphasizing the general increasing intensity. Towards the end of the parade we were more people than we had ever been at any point during the practice and Marcos said “we are maaany!” (“*¡somos aaartos!*”). For the reason that we were numerous, towards the end of the parade those of us who were dancing in the front had problems hearing the band that was in the back.

Part of our costume was also a small (often green) plastic-bag of dried coca leaves. Coca leaves are frequently used in Andean religious rituals, as tea, chewed to avoid fatigue when working and at social gatherings and during rituals (Allen 2002). It is also often used by miners when working to better stamina and in rituals to the *Tío*⁴¹ (Nash 1993, Taussig 2010). But I never saw my interlocutors use it in their everyday life and I never saw them using it during the *entrada* either. The miners are well known for having a huge bulking lump of coca-leaves under their cheek. When I told friends in other parts of El Alto and in La Paz that I was

⁴¹ The devil in the mines to who the miners have to sacrifice in order to avoid accidents.

going to dance the *Minero* I was sometimes told that I had to chew coca – that is what the miners do. Some of the spectators were disappointed in the dancers not visibly chewing coca as part of the performance. Although the few who did chew only had a very few leafs so that it was impossible to see that they had anything in their mouths. Ignacio also pointed out to me at a later occasion when he said that he heard someone complaining that we were not real miners since we did not chew coca.

This highlights the generational break between the real miners and decedents of the miners. As illustrated in the introduction of this thesis, the difference between the *señora* and *señorita* are crucial. The diminutive suffixes *ito/ita* can be used in order to express smallness and to illustrate affection. In general terms we might say that it is used to soften the initial meaning of a noun. In the same way there is a difference between *minero* and *minerito*. We were not miners but *mineritos*. A term I heard used by both my interlocutors and the older generation alike about the youth *fraternidad*.

The Box Seat – El Palco

When the *fraternidad* in front of us started to advance again after a pause, the band got ready and started to play, we got in our positions and started to dance following the guide. During the parade, Marcos used a whistle to signal when to take special steps. The noise level was at times simply too loud for us to hear him properly, even with the whistle. This was the case when we reached the *palco*. ‘*Palco*’ in English can mean ‘box seat’ or ‘gallery’ where the elevated more exclusive and expensive seats are in a theatre or sports venue. A *palco* in a parade in Bolivia is similar to a gallery in the way that they are seats elevated over the street (or the stage) where the performance takes place. Seated in the *palco* are different representatives from the folklore association of El Alto, together with people from the local folklore association and the local neighbourhood association. These people oversee and evaluate the dances and decide on who is to win prizes in different categories, such as for best dance and best band.

On the other side of the *palco* there was a stand for ordinary spectators that was filled to the brim with people by the time we arrived. For the spectators the experience of the parade is obviously different than for those of us who were dancing, because they constantly see new dancers and *fraternidades* coming and going. What was for us the climax of the parade itself, was for them just one of several *fraternidades* reaching the final step of performance. For us

as dancers it was therefore important to outshine the other dance groups especially at this area.

The band we had hired entered before us to perform alone for the judges. They had a fixed routine with their own steps and music. While we waited for them to finish, we prepared and Marcos instructed us to dance with a lot of energy all the way out of the *palco*. When the band was done the miners' song was played over the speakers for us to dance to. When we entered, Alejandro lit several firecrackers as the music started. The music was extremely loud and it was impossible to hear anything else. Thus, it became important to be able to see the instructions of the guide in order to dance synchronised. The distance between the dancers was much larger than during the rest of the route and there was a shared sensation that we had to fill up this space by dancing with a lot of energy. To stand far from each other also made it a challenge to synchronise each other's moves because it was difficult to see what the guide instructed us to do. It was the climax in the performance where it was expected of the dancers to dance better than anywhere else. At the same time to dance well implied a certain degree of self containment as the focus is on the group dancing together.

The jury awarded us with the 'acknowledgement prize' (*reconocimiento*) consisting of a trophy and diploma. As Marcos and Mariela told me, it was because the *Minero* is rarely performed but also because we danced the *Minero* in a miners' neighbourhood. As the evaluation from the judges indicates, the *Minero*, despite of not being a very prestigious dance, is a highly appreciated one, as it resonates with the past of many of its inhabitants' neighbourhood. In the following chapter I will continue with the last leg of the parade going from the *palco* area to the local Catholic Church.

Concluding Remarks

While discourses about mining are always future-oriented in order to attract new investment (Luning 2014) and to secure the continuity of mining companies (Jamon Alex Halvaksz 2008), in the lives of the descendants of relocalised miners, mining is oriented towards the past. This is reflected in the fact that the dance was understood as relating to history and memory. Through the dance realities beyond individual experience are opened up. Put differently, it is not something they have personal memories of but the miner past is no doubt remembered as a socially situated memory (Connerton 1989). Arguably, therefore through the dance my interlocutors remember as well as embody the past – the work in the mines.

In this chapter I have illustrated a tension where the past differentiates from the present. In contrast to the previous chapter where the rupture (as proclaimed by Morales) can be pin-pointed to the exact date when Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada fled the country, this is not the case with the dance. The historical temporality presented here is not a narrative in the conventional sense of as linearity; it is a rupture that is crafted and is highlighted by dancing the work of the parents and grandparents of my interlocutors through the miners' neighbourhood. However, this dance can also be understood as a way for the youth to position themselves within the historical context of Bolivia, as well as the neighbourhood as descendants of miners.

This argument of a historical temporality resonates with the notion of A-series time as it is non-static and managed through a formalised ritual – the scheduled parade that is prepared for and repeated yearly. Their cyclic natures as well as the effort taken to prepare for the parade both illustrate the importance of the ritual. Crucially, this ritual is one where the youth themselves actively engage with and create historical temporality as they go to great lengths in order to be able to dance.

Before I finish this chapter it should be noted that many of my interlocutors stressed the importance of the continuity of the *fraternidad*. For example my youngest interlocutor Marcos, stated that he wants his kids to dance the *Minero* in the future. He also stressed the importance of having new dancers each year in order to keep the *fraternidad* alive, and thus, also the memory of the miners. As far as the mining past as enacted through dance which I have presented here reaches into the future, it is as an expectation of a sustained past – a past that continues to be remembered in the future.

Chapter 5

Liturgical Temporality: Saint and Confirmation

Where the previous chapter analysed how the *Minero* creates a rupture with the past, I will in this chapter emphasise the repetitive aspects of the dance as devotion to the neighbourhood's patron-Saint. I will further explore the Catholic confirmation as this, as well as devotion to the Saint, is part of what is conventionally known as the liturgy and make up what I have chosen to label 'liturgical temporality'.

Anthropologists' focus on cultural continuity is problematic when it comes to Christianity, Robbins has argued (2007). This is partly because anthropological and Christian models of time differ: Whereas anthropologists focus on continuity, the Christian model of time is open for radical change through creating ruptures between past, present and future. Such breaks are present not only in the history of Christianity but are also central elements in personal stories of conversion and radical change. An example of the Christian model of time is illustrated by Gill (1990) who wrote about how first and second generation immigrant women in La Paz sought new social relationships in a Pentecostal church. Although Robbins might have a valid point in some cases, I will here focus on how Catholicism is understood to be a continuing aspect in the lives of young *alteños* through activities related to devotion. What I would like to propose is that the religious practices presented in this chapter comprise a liturgical temporality that suggests that both repetition and a certain degree of predictability connect humans with what is experienced to be the divine.

In the first section of this chapter, I will develop such arguments through extending the analysis of the dance and the *entrada* as a case. This will be done by highlighting the religious aspects of the performance as my interlocutors dance for, and go in procession with, the patron-Saint of the neighbourhood. In the second section, I move on to describe the confirmation course that some of my interlocutors participated in and arranged in the local

church of Villa del Santo and the subsequent confirmation ritual where dance, again, is central.

Apóstol Santiago and Devotion

The last part of the parade's route does not simply reflect historical depth or is a re-enactment of such, as was illustrated in the previous chapter: it also has religious facets. According to the programme (made by the organisation committee) of the festivities that circulated among the *fraternidades*, the anniversary of the district falls on the 25th of July because “[...] on that date one pays homage to and one remembers *Apóstol Santiago*, patron of Villa del Santo.”⁴² However, the schedule makes it perfectly clear that while the official date of foundation of the *Junta de Vecinos* is the 7th of September 1972, the main-parade is moved to coincide with the celebration day of *Apóstol Santiago* according to the liturgical calendar. Thus, the historical origin in terms of the official establishment of the neighbourhood and the liturgical temporality in terms of celebration of the patron-Saint merge and are mutually articulated within the context of the festivities.

Further, some practical considerations are also taken and the main-parade is moved again to fall on a weekend. The day of celebrating *Apóstol Santiago* is the 25th of July, which fell on a Thursday in 2013; consequently the main-parade was moved to Saturday the 27th of July. Ideally the day of the Saint and the main-parade would coincide. However, since the alcohol consumption is high and since many were working or went to school during the week, the main-parade was moved to the weekend.

As noted by others writing about El Alto: These festivities of the districts of El Alto are organised to honour its respective patron-saints and to ask for their protection for the following year (Calestani 2009: 151). Lazar also notes that dancing is a way of gaining blessings for individuals and the community (2008: 144-171). Similarly, in the following subsection I seek to demonstrate, through my ethnography, how the youth relate to the liturgical temporality as we danced towards the church.

⁴² Original phrase with the real name of the district altered: “[...] en esa fecha se rinde homenaje y se recuerda al Apóstol Santiago, patrono del Villa del Santo.”



Figure 4: Silhouettes of devotees and *Apóstol Santiago*.

The Last Leg: Received by the Saint

After having danced by the *palco* – as shown in the previous chapter – we embarked on the last bit of the route: from the *palco* to the church. This part was particularly dense with people and we had to dance closer together, shoulder to shoulder, so that we were able to pass through the crowd. The spectators moved to the sides, creating a narrow tunnel of people, in order for us to dance towards the church of Villa del Santo. Although, I expected that we were just going to stop dancing at the *palco*-area like we did during the pre-parade, I was wrong. We continued dancing all the way to the church. On the way spectators were close and there was hardly any room to move. I heard a woman saying “how beautiful!” (“*¡que lindo!*”) about the dance several times while standing practically just a few centimetres from my ear. Dancers from other *fraternidades* were standing behind the audience, relaxing, sharing drinks with their friends and sweating after having danced in heavy costumes. Musicians, too, stood idly with their instruments after hours of work.

Since we could not hear the band that was far behind us, we sang the pre-rehearsed text and melody *a capella*:

*But, in the life I shall suffer so much ingratitude
 My big tragedy shall end far away from here
 Predestined to live I am in the sacred heaven
 That is why I ask God to die like a good miner*

[...]

*Oh! Beloved miner what are you going to do?
 You are going to work until you die
 With his sledgehammer and chisel
 In the deep mine shafts⁴³*

“Don’t you want to enter?” (“¿no quieren entrar?”), Dina (the mother of the neighbourhood’s Catholic Father) asked us rhetorically and directed us towards the side door of the church. At the moment we crossed the threshold, we stopped dancing and removed our brown miners’ helmets. With the tension in the air and a sense of shared purpose in the moment, we were about to enter, I understood that this was an important moment for us dancers. The figure of *Apóstol Santiago* stood right in front of us facing the side entrance, which is why Dina wanted us to enter here and not the main entrance. Except for the muffled sounds coming from outside, it was completely quiet inside and our band was still far behind us. The Saint had been taken out from his glass showcase in the back of the church (where he usually was) and was placed at the side of the altar. Encircled with white flowers and white candles, he stood in his usual posture – on a white horse about to swing his blade⁴⁴ – and was ready to welcome us. Two strings were hanging over his head from the roof with golden letters reading “*Apóstol Santiago*” on an attached sign. All the participants got down on their knees in front of him, closed their eyes to pray and I followed their example. When we stopped dancing, took off our helmets and entered the church, what seemed to remain of the parade was religious devotion, or more precisely devotion to the Saint.

⁴³ As already noted in the previous chapter, this is my translation of the Spanish version, see appendix 5 for original version and notes on the translation.

⁴⁴ *Apóstol Santiago* has killed different categories of people throughout history. See for example: Garneau (2004) and Ade (1983).

The contrast between dancing for hours to loud music, hammering on a chisel, and then abruptly standing still on one's knees in a silent environment was immense. Marcos knelt in front of the Saint, squeezed his eyes shut, spread his arms and stayed there for a while before he got up on his feet again. Others were briefly kneeling and said shorter prayers. Standing beneath the Saint was a wooden box with a lock for church collection. Ignacio quickly put 20 Bs. in it before he sat down – and so did others. After a while the *bloques* (fractions of my dance group) behind us arrived doing the same. Finally, our band entered and broke the silence as they finished the last measures of the song.

It was a moment that is difficult to explain or convey the sense of because it was filled with an absence – no one said anything and the audience was not inside the church, but there was prayer and devotion. After having danced together for hours (and practiced every night for three weeks), I assume that we shared the same experience through the performance (see Kapferer 1986). I felt a strong sense of accomplishment for having finished the whole route. Furthermore, I felt proud of what we had done and I can understand that it was an important spiritual moment for my fellow dancers.

Writing about a similar parade in La Paz, Tassi (2012) argues that through the use of costumes that resemble religious images, the dancers generate access to the divine as the domains of the material and spiritual intersect. This contrasts somewhat with the *Minero* that depicts the work of the miners. When we entered the church and took off our helmets and thus stopped enacting the miners, what remained important was that we had danced in devotion to the Saint. At the point when we knelt for the *Apóstol Santiago*, the dance we had performed and the costumes we had worn were of lesser importance compared to the fact that we had danced in devotion.

Showing one's devotion through dancing is not simply done one time. It needs to be repeated. Poole writing about a religious pilgrimage and dance in Cusco, states that: "On the 'supernatural' plane, the pilgrimage functions to guarantee the certainty not of an idealized past, but of a future whose unknown threat is each year postponed by those blessings the Christ of Qoyllur Rit'i bestows on his pilgrim devotee" (1990: 99). Similar to the argument made in this chapter, this illustrates the continuity of devotion into the future through ritual devotion that is formalised as it is done on particular days during the year.

Something that was pointed out to me several times is that the patron-Saint can perform miracles but one has to show one's devotion to him by dancing three consecutive years to make them come true. For religious devotees, then, the Saint plays an important role

in the parade in the way that they seek blessings and sometimes material gains as well as immaterial gains from the Saint. Further, I will elaborate how the ritual dedicated to the patron-Saint is, not only part of the formal liturgical calendar, but also how it should be repeated in sequences of three.

Repetitions of Three and Miracles

The sequence of three can generally be regarded as creating a sense of continuity. Allen (2011) has stated that the number three reappears in Andean stories and social life. “If two is good then *three* is excessive—and yet three is the perfect number, the prototypical union of odd (1) plus even (2)” (Allen 2011: 92, original emphasis). The sequence of three also appears in *Todos Santos* when the souls of the dead visit the world of the living. The soul of a deceased person comes down in order to eat and drink. The family of the deceased bring his or her favourite food and beverage to the grave in order for the soul to eat with them. Ignacio told me that after having travelled for a long time to our world, the soul is very tired and hungry. When a person dies, it is important to visit his grave for three consecutive years.

Following the same logic, I was told that if one dances four consecutive years, the fourth is just the first of a new series of three that has to be completed. Ideally, then, dancing in the parade should be repeated in the series of three and if one should fail to dance three consecutive years, something bad might happen. The ambiguous power of the saints has also been established in other studies.⁴⁵ For example, Harris notes that saints need to hear Mass at least once a year “[...] or else they become angry and turn their powers against the community” (2006: 57). Nash mentions that Saints have feelings like humans and can become envious if one is not loyal to them but also that they are powerful and that their powers can be controlled (1993: 315). I also found similarities to this during my fieldwork.

The possibilities of bad and good fortune and blessing also apply to foreign anthropologists. During my fieldwork, I was sometimes told that I have to come back, followed by a request to dance three consecutive years. My default reply was that I would like to but that I will not have the time and money to make the journey. With a couple of my interlocutors, I joked that I could dress up as a miner (helmet, sledgehammer, boots and everything) and dance from home – via Skype. They could bring a computer with a modem to

⁴⁵ This also goes for several deities in Bolivia. The most notably work on this subject is perhaps Taussig’s book (2010 [1980]) on the Devil in Latin America and how he can bring ephemeral wealth to proletarianised peasants working in sugar cane fields in Colombia and the mines of Bolivia.

the parade and carry ‘me’ in the procession and in that way solve the problem. When I told a middle-aged woman that I had danced the *Minero* in the district and humorously said that next year I will dance via internet, she replied almost aggressively that I have to dance three years in a row or else “something bad is going to happen to you!” (“*¡algo te va a salir mal!*”). Although she never elaborated what that could involve.

My key interlocutors were never that blunt with me. However, Gustavo said that not dancing three years was bad luck. And I was told by Alejandro that one has to dance out of faith (which I did not since I was an agnostic) in order to be prone to possible malevolent forces of the Saint. Further, a conversation about the powers of the *Apostol Santiago* or other saints was often short and there seemed to be some disagreement about the powers of saints in general. For example, one of my more peripheral interlocutors claimed that “there are no miracles” (“*no hay milagros*”) in a firm tone. Ignacio disagreed and said that the *La Virgen de Copacabana* (the famous Virgin Mary of Copacabana, Bolivia) once did a miracle on him, but he did not want to tell us exactly what. While Ignacio abstained from telling about miracles, his brother Alejandro told me a story about the *Apóstol Santiago* performing a miracle on an old man. A friend of his had a grandfather who was sick, and he did not seem to get any better. But after his grandson had prayed to *Apóstol Santiago*, his grandfather became better. Further, the celebrations also have a more formal aspect to them where people of the neighbourhood walk in procession with the patron-Saint. This will be explained bellow.

Formal Procession of the Patron-Saint

As I mentioned, parades are arranged in accordance to the liturgical calendar in a pragmatic manner when it is moved to a weekend. When I asked why people danced, I got different answers. Some replied that they danced for enjoyment, because they wanted to try something new, or that they danced in devotion for the Saint. Ignacio, who was one of my more religiously devoted interlocutors, said that one must dance and have fun with the Saint; in contrast to in Europe, he stated, where one goes in tranquil procession with him. His comment pointed to the religious and the festive aspect of the parade and that one is supposed to have fun and, not just dance for, but *with* the Saint.

However, there is also a more tranquil procession with the patron-Saint which also involves devotion and asking for blessings. This procession takes place two days prior to the main-parade on the feast day of the Saint (25th of July). The Father of the local church arranged a procession with the Saint around the square and the market of the district. It was a

ceremonious event, and even the bishop of El Alto had prioritised to come. The square was filled with games and carousels – the district was preparing for the fiesta. The Father seemed a bit worked up. He cleared the table on which the figure of the Saint was placed with swift movements so that it could be carried out without anything being in the way. The Bishop sat on a bench in the back, folded his hands and seemed rather relaxed.

A few minutes later, some of my interlocutors arrived. Ignacio poked me in the back and started to talk. I had just bought a miner's helmet for the parade and I showed it to him. He confirmed I could use it and then went into the sacristy to change into his white garb for the procession. Marcos and Eduardo also arrived and changed into their garbs as they were going to participate as altar boys. The Father started the procession by saying that like the Saint, we need to follow God and then asked for volunteers to carry him. Ignacio was appointed the task of going in front of the procession carrying an Andean-cross with a picture of the Virgin Mary and seemed to take the task very seriously. Quite a few followed the procession and it was at times difficult to hear what the Father said when we got outside. At the first corner of the square, he asked for the Saint to help the young people who had embarked on tasks like education. Subsequently he prayed for the mothers (especially those who worked), for families, and then even for the development (*desarrollo*) of the country.

After having finished the procession around the square, the bishop held a church service. During his sermon he said that one has to ask the Saint for important things, things that matter. He used his own mother as an example. She prayed for him when he was a child because he was very sick, and now he is a bishop, he said.

Devotion to the Saint, then, comes up in different settings during the festivities of the neighbourhood – during the official Saint's day, as well as the parade two days later when one danced in devotion. What makes the procession and the parade different is that the dance is a bodily devotion where words, with the exception of quiet prayer, are unnecessary. In contrast, during the formal procession of the Saint the Bishop and the Father explicitly asked for blessings. A similarity between the two is that they are done in devotion to the patron-Saint and are part of a repeated and scheduled devotion.

Beyond Youth

Canessa (2012) writes about how the people in a small Andean community throughout their lives continually become humans (or people – *jaqi*). A newborn is not a baby, but referred to

as a foetus and is included into his/her kinship unit through the ritual of naming (*sutiyaña*) and baptism. Later, after the ‘first haircut’ (*rutucha*), the child enters into the community as a social person – it is “[...] the first rung on the ladder to personhood” (2012: 139). Further, it is important to get married in order to become a complete person and have children with one’s partner. Three consecutive years after one’s death one is celebrated during *Todos Santos* in order to become an *achachila* (ancestor spirit in the mountains). When one is dead one ends up as dry bones, before one gets rehydrated and becomes part of the wet world of the dead (2012: 158). The cycle is repeated as the wet newborn children (or foetuses) is associated with the *achachila* becomes drier and older. The life cycle of a person can also be understood as a ‘path’ (*t’aki*). Abercrombie writes (1998) that paths are reflected in the deeper past of a myth of origin that refers to responsibilities and fiesta sponsoring during a lifetime (see also previous Chapter on sponsoring the *fraternidad*). These paths refer to, amongst a variety of other phenomena, the process that a young person undergoes in order to become an adult.

During my fieldwork, I did not come across the same ideas of becoming *jaqi* or walking along paths. However, I found something rather similar while participating in the confirmation course that is part of the Catholic Church and the liturgy. In this section, I will expand on the assertion that youth as a category builds up towards something in the future. In the Chapter 1, I argued that a person who is *joven* (young) lives with his parents and that it is not until one cohabits with a partner that one becomes an adult. Further in this section, I will elaborate on this by looking at how the youth of Villa del Santo work towards becoming adults through concrete religious activities. These activities go beyond the life phase of youth in that they are a preparation for marriage and thus also the future. I will use the preparation for confirmation and the confirmation ritual as empirical examples in order to further understand what a liturgical temporality might imply.

Confirmation Catechesis

Every Saturday from 15.00 to 17.00 an obligatory catechesis was held for those who wanted to complete their confirmation. This was one of the activities I participated in every week. The participants were divided into two groups according to level: *confi nueva* and *confi antigua* (short for ‘new’ and ‘old’ confirmation). Those who had completed the *confi nueva* would advance to the *confi antigua* in order to complete their confirmation.

The *confi nueva* groups were subdivided into two smaller groups, one of which I participated in. But there was only one *confi antigua* group that was going to complete the

confirmation that same year. Despite attendance being obligatory (or perhaps because of), they had problems with people dropping out and not completing during the course. The catechesis took place in the church centre in one of the several rooms used for meetings and teaching related activities.

All the rooms had a whiteboard, some shelves, wooden chairs and tables; to me they looked very much like classrooms. The floor was of gray concrete and the metal doors had different colours. The room my *confi nuevo* group used had homemade posters with the Ten Commandments written with big letters, as well as pictures of Jesus. During the catechesis, the tables and chairs were arranged in a half-circle, while one of the catechists (normally Ignacio) talked and gave instructions to the group of prospective candidates of confirmation.

During one of these sessions, we went through the Holy Sacrament (*Sacramento*). Ignacio took the lead and drew seven steps on the white board with a black marker and wrote God on the final one – seven steps going up towards heaven. He went on to explain the sacrament to us and when the different steps are normally completed. The first step is baptism (*bautizo*) normally done between the ages of 1 to 11 years. The second is the first communion (or the first Eucharist – *primera communion*) which is the first time one receives the body and blood of Christ (*vino* and *hostia*) normally done between 9 and 15 years of age. The third step is confirmation (*confirmación*), which is possible to receive from 15 years old and onwards. In each step there are different signs, some are invisible and others are visible. Of the visible signs in the confirmation ritual are the white cloths worn that symbolize purity, candles which are the light of Christ and also communion-bread and wine. To go through with confirmation is to illustrate one's faith, Ignacio explained to us. Many choose to convert to Protestantism which is like "making fun of Christ" ("*hecho la burla de Christo*"). He continued by using an analogy to football and how one continues to support the same team.⁴⁶

The steps after confirmation are penance (or confession – *penetencia*), marriage, and then the Holy Order (becoming a Catholic priest – *Orden Sacerdote*).⁴⁷ The seventh and last

⁴⁶ While this could have been analytically worthwhile, it is not my intention to focus on the conflict between the Protestantism and Catholicism as these unfolded in El Alto as this would not be directly relevant to the Catholic youth I analyze. See however, Vleet (2011) and Lazar (2008, Chapter 5) for discussions on the conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism in Bolivia more generally.

⁴⁷ The Holy order and marriage contradict each other as priests are not allowed to get married in the Catholic Church.

step, right before one dies, is the anointing of the sick (*unción de enfermos*). It is done in order to receive salvation during the last minutes of life, but “rarely we have the chance to give it” (“*raras veces podemos dar*”), Ignacio added.

What I found most interesting with how Ignacio explained the different stages of sacrament was the drawing on the whiteboard. It was illustrated as a stage-like progression from baptism to death in a sequential manner; the final destination being heaven, which is why Ignacio wrote God on the final step. It explained life phases that involves expected changes in an individual’s life that alters his/her status. For example to get married, according to the local definition of youth, will make a person go from youth to adult as people would call the wife *Dona* and the husband *Don* (see also Chapter 1). In order to get married in the Catholic Church, one has to have completed confirmation, and in order to complete one’s confirmation; one has to have gone through the obligatory course. No exam is necessary, but a minimum of continuous attendance is. Thus, not only is it the confirmation ritual in itself that is necessary but also the course every Saturday between 15.00 and 17.00. In this way, I would argue that it amounts to an aspiration for the future. To go through with the confirmation, one might say, is a way of preparing oneself for marriage and becoming an adult.

The Confirmation Ritual

At the end of November it was time for the *confi antigua* to go through with the final ceremony of the confirmation. The *confi nueva* group, that I was part of, was going to perform a dance during the ceremony for the confirmation candidates and their families. This was done every year. The following year when my group would be the *confi antigua*, the *confi nueva* group would dance for us. I was among the six people – three boys and three girls – from my group who volunteered. During my fieldwork, I often prioritised to participate in activities if I had the chance. In retrospect, when I read through my field notes, I understand that this gave me a certain focus while missing out on other things. In regard to the confirmation for example, I was busy preparing for the dance. We had not had much time to practice and as a result most of the preparation was done the last day and in the minutes before the performance. Consequently, I was not able to observe the progress of the ceremony itself. Nevertheless, the few times we were able to meet and practice, we based our steps on the moves that the other five dancers already knew from previous occasions and integrated new ones to make them fit with the music played by Javier.

The dance we performed is called the *Cueca* and it is normally performed during weddings, I was told, and it illustrated the courting between man and woman. While there are different versions of it, the one we danced was from Tarija (in lowland-Bolivia, by the Argentinean border). The climate there is warmer and the costumes are therefore lighter compared to for example the *Minero* and the *Morenada*. We chose to dance barefooted, wearing black pants, white shirts and black vests with our sleeves and trouser legs rolled up. And the girls danced in black shoes, red or yellow skirts, white shawls and white tops. They also had round white hats with blue rims. The version we performed has light steps and jumps and is in many ways the direct opposite to the *Minero* where one makes noises with tools, wears rubber boots and sings about the life and death of the miners. They are also different in the way that in the *Minero* the men and women dance separately, while the *Cueca* is danced in pairs. An important part of the costume in the *Cueca* that we danced is the handkerchief (*pañuelo* – essentially a small piece of white cloth) that the men threw around the waist of the woman and then lead her going backwards. The steps of the dance essentially illustrated how a man and woman get to know each other through different encounters – we greeted, switched places and at the end of the song the man went down on one knee – figuratively asking for her hand while the woman placed her foot on his bent knee.

The *Cueca* symbolizes a man and a woman getting to know each other and leading (perhaps) later on to a marriage. It thus illustrates the life phase of youth – the spring of one's life, and the coming of marriage and cohabiting with a partner, and accordingly the coming of what my interlocutors would call 'the next step in life'. The metaphor of spring as reflected in the light cloths is central here. September is the first month of spring (*primavera*) in Bolivia, when the weather is getting warmer, but the rainy season is still far away, and is widely perceived as the best month of the year. After having managed to survive yet another cold winter, spring comes with a certain sense of optimism and for the youth that go to school, the summer/Christmas vacation is not too far away either. Spring is a commonsense metaphor for the time of youth because both signify the start of something that extends towards the future. Being young is a life phase as spring is a time of the year and advent to summer.

Such connections are reflected also in the language and common expressions where September is not just the first month of spring, but it is also the 'month of youth' (*el mes de los jóvenes*) or 'the month of love' (*'el mes del amor'*).⁴⁸ As Alexander put it, it is the month

⁴⁸ *'El mes de los jóvenes'* and *'el mes de amor'* are often used as synonyms.

of youth because it is spring. This is also reflected in the flirtatious and playful character of the steps as well as the rolled up sleeves that indicated a warming of the climate.

In a more obvious way, the dance also relates to the sacrament and the liturgy – after one has gone through with the confirmation, one can get married and become an adult. Thus, the dance as well as the sacrament, Ignacio taught us, illustrates the continuity of religion in the life of the youth. Whether that is going to be the case, or if some of them turn to a Protestant church, become an atheist or otherwise turn away from religion is not the point here. The point is that it is presented as such, as the rites of passage are laid out in a sequential manner where the different stages include different rituals.

Concluding Remarks

The word ‘liturgy’ stems from Greek and means ‘public’ and ‘work’ (Walsh 2005: 91). Thus, the original meaning of the word refers to the collective or corporate acts aimed towards worshipping and demonstrating devotion to God and saints, which are all aspects that are arguably exemplified through the activities above. The liturgy is outlined by the Catholic Church but is practiced in a local context and might highlight a limit to Christian meaning (Orta 2006). For example, the *Minero* is an enactment of the miners and simultaneously a way to show respect to the patron-Saint. Equally the *Cueca* refers to the local context as it illustrates the coming of age and the next phase in life. Given that devotion constitutes a kind of ‘work’, I would argue, that the ethnography depicted above illustrates how the young *alteños* work creatively despite the given framework of calendars and liturgy already by the Catholic Church – they developed dance steps and made them fit with a piece of music, found costumes that went with each other.

In this chapter, I have illustrated how different types of religious activities constitute a form of liturgical temporality that extends throughout one’s life punctuated by scheduled devotion. Through these rituals they create expected continuities into the future and a certain degree of predictability. Thus, it is an attempt to understand expectedness that is illustrated through religious temporality, and not inevitability or certainty of what the future will bring. In that sense Robbins (2007), as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, is right in that we have to be open for radical change in people’s lives but I would argue, that we simultaneously should be open for religious continuity. As Ignacio taught us when drawing

the steps of the sacrament on the whiteboard, this continuity go beyond the lives of my interlocutors, all the way to God.

Still, it should be said that the future is always uncertain. Others have argued that when writing about youth, anthropologists should write more open-ended and avoid to predict the future of their interlocutors (Dalsgaard and Frederiksen 2013). Likewise, I have to point out that my aim is to try to understand how the present reaches into the future.

Taken together, the previous chapter and this, illustrate how different temporalities fold into each other and become part of the same moment – the *entrada* – despite containing seemingly mutually excluding temporal forms: The historic time that inheres a rupture with the miner past; and the continuous elements of the liturgy that entails continuous devotion. Thus, an understanding of a singular temporal model, whether that be linear, cyclic, or static (B-series) is not apt to illustrate the richness and multiple layers that comprise human temporalities. In the last part of this thesis, I will elaborate on this further by also taking into account and reframing all the chapters of this thesis.

Navigating Multiple Temporalities

In this thesis I have presented what I have argued to be four different temporalities. In Chapter 2, I presented the state temporality through which Morales seeks to breathe new life into apparently ancient traditions and the Aymara rebel Túpac Katari. It was argued that this was not only in order to bring the past into the present, but also to bring an altered past into the future. Thus, change apparently came as a result of Morales' politics of decolonisation. In contrast to this, Chapter 3 explored what I call urban temporality which, in the eyes of my interlocutors, has not brought about change. This was illustrated through the quotation "I have not seen a change" as it related to the city landscape and the ten year commemoration of *Octubre*. The historical temporality of Chapter 4 is one that looks back to the past of mining and reflects on the rupture that occurred when the miners lost their work and moved to El Alto and Villa del Santo. This temporality is crafted through ritual dance performed annually in the district of Villa del Santo. In Chapter 5, I exemplified how dancing in devotion and Catholic confirmation make up a liturgical temporality that continues into the future. In that sense the expectedness of continued devotion as scheduled through the liturgical calendar and the sacrament was illustrated.

What we can understand from this is that the young *Alteños* navigate in a landscape of contrasting temporalities by way of actively positioning themselves in relation to them. This is done through participating in rituals and, thus, sometimes crafting and sometimes negotiating temporal ruptures and continuities extending to both the past and future. I draw inspiration from Lazar (2014) when arguing that we need to look at the coexisting but separate temporalities. The way I see it, this perspective stands somewhat in contrast to what Leach wrote about 'time' using the singular: "[...] we *create time* by creating intervals in social life." (1961: 135, original emphasis). Another anthropologist writing about time in the singular is Geertz (1973) who argue, as mentioned in Chapter 4, that 'Balinese time' is a vectorless now. Others have recognised the coexistence of linear and cyclical forms of time but still argue that they need to be fitted or incorporated into each other as one, more or less, coherent concept (Howe 1981, Farriss 1987). Instead of collapsing the richness of temporalities into an overarching idea of 'time', I argue that we need to understand how a manifold of temporalities coexist and simultaneously contradict each other. A perspective on multiple temporalities is perhaps especially important in order to understand that politics and power as ruptures and continuities are not given, but crafted and contested. This might be

especially so in contemporary Bolivia where, as illustrated in Chapter 2, the past as well as the future have become important elements in the rhetoric of decolonisation. Put differently, based on my ethnographic material I argue that we need to be open for a lack of temporal harmony and coherence.

Nevertheless, what all the temporalities I have presented have in common is that they reflect a deeper sense of time in the way that they transcend the lives of my interlocutors. They are of historical and religious depths that the youth of El Alto have no personal memories of. To continue with the landscape metaphor used above, we might further understand this by using Ingold's (1993) analysis of a landscape painting called *The Harvesters* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder from 1565. Imagining to stand inside the picture he discerns between different temporal depths – the hills, the paths, the tree, the corn, the church and the people. While the general topography will stay more or less the same during individual lifetimes, the people themselves and how they respond to the maturation of the crops and the activity of each other is more ephemeral. The temporality of the topography is similar to what Irvine (2014) denotes as the 'deep time' of geological and planetary ranges. What is important to note here is that everyday rhythms as well as the planetary time (as Irving calls it) are both experienced in the present. Deep time is not just an abstract concept, Irving suggests, but "[...] is something that impacts on people at the level of experience" (2014: 164). Likewise, the temporalities that have been discerned for youth in El Alto are not just abstract categories as they are part of what people do – such as rituals – and how youth experience the world around them.

El Alto is a particularly interesting case in this regard because it is, comparatively speaking, a recent city and thus lack the sense of temporal depth as, for example, the city of La Paz and Tiwanaku exhibit. El Alto is a place that is comprised of people coming from various parts of the Andean Bolivia. What differentiates my interlocutors from many of the people in the city, however, is that most of them have no strong connection to the countryside as they grew up in El Alto – they are the first generation of urban youth. Thus, I believe, it is important to understand how they engage with the past and aspire towards the future in order to understand how temporalities are crafted and navigated in the present.

In the introduction I quoted Canessa: "The Andes is a profoundly historical place [...]" (2012: 63). Indeed, anyone who travels to the Andes feels that there is a sense of 'pastness' in the area – including myself. But Bolivia is also a place of the future – El Alto perhaps being one in that it is the site to which the miners (and others) moved to in order to seek new

horizons of future possibilities. Appadurai (2013) has pointed out that anthropologists have lacked an explicit focus on the future as a cultural fact. The future, he argues, has been the focus of economists while anthropology and culture have been concerned with the past. This thesis addressed both future and past, and the analysis of temporalities above has, I believe, shown that past and future may be impossible to disentangle. Nevertheless, I think that being more explicit about the future, as reflected in the present, will perhaps aid anthropology in shedding new light on the study of time and temporalities in the Andes. This is not to say, however, that anthropologists writing about the Andes (or other regions) have not been writing, at least implicitly, about the future. Rather, there has been a lack of studies explicitly taking into consideration how the future structures people's lives and also how the future is structured through human activity.

Appendixes

All original Spanish quotes that are 3 lines or longer are added as appendixes in order to not intervene too much in the text.

Appendix 1:

See enclosed CD for the political commercial, *Tupac Katari: Herencia Cosmica*.

Appendix 2:

Que las culturas precolombinas andina y amazónica, desde hace miles de años hasta nuestros días, celebran el día 21 de junio de cada año, el solsticio de invierno, Willkakuti en la zona andina y Yasitata Guasú en las tierras bajas, considerado como inicio del nuevo ciclo o Año Nuevo, festejando la fusión de la tierra y la energía que da paso a la procreación de la vida y el tiempo que permiten que se renueve la naturaleza.

Appendix 3:

Es nuestro primer satélite de comunicación, Túpac Katari, después de 232 años renace para dar nueva luz, es nuestra estrella que nos iluminará desde el espacio para comunicarnos, para educarnos...Siento una enorme emoción por este lanzamiento del satélite Túpac Katari.

Note on translation: The pronouns in Spanish are usually omitted since the verbs are conjugated according to time as well as person. It is therefore open for interpretation if the translation should be third person 'he' (the person Túpac Katari) or 'it' (the satellite Túpac Katari).

Appendix 4:

Se declara el 17 de octubre de cada año "Día de la Dignidad Nacional" en reconocimiento y conmemoración a quienes perdieron la vida entre el 11 y 17 de octubre de 2003 en la

llamada “guerra del gas”, cuyo esforzado sacrificio ha generado la recuperación de los recursos naturales, en apego a lo que establece la Constitución Política del Estado.

Appendix 5:

Los mineros de Bolivia (Villa del Santo)

Todos tienen oro y plata

Con su combo y su punta

Trabajando día y noche

Sombríos días de socavón noches de tragedia

Desesperanza desilusión se siente en mi alma

Así mi vida pasando voy porque minero soy

Minero que por mi patria doy toda mi existencia

Mas en la vida yo he de sufrir tanta ingratitud

Mi gran tragedia terminará muy lejos de aquí

Predestinado a vivir estoy en el santo cielo

Por eso a Dios le pido morir como buen minero

Los mineros de Bolivia

Todos trabajan con su coca y su cigarro

En los profundos socavones

¡Ay! ¿Minerito que vas a hacer?

Vas a trabajar hasta morir

Con su combo y su punta

En los profundos socavones

Notes on translation: The ‘haber + de + infinitive’ construction, as in ‘he de sufrir’ in the text, is not common in everyday speech in Bolivia. I have chosen to translate it to ‘shall suffer’ as it usually conveys a slight sense of obligation. I have translated ‘minerito’ to ‘dear miner’ but it might also mean ‘small miner’. As already discussed the gender specific *ito/ita* suffixes are often used to illustrate affection or to soften the meaning of the word.

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