

PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AND THE EMERGENCE OF INDIGENOUS TERRITORIAL
FORMATION IN THE HONDURAN MUSKITIA

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ABSTRACT

The post-colonial critique of participatory mapping, once held as a tool of empowerment for indigenous peoples seeking property rights to their ancestral territories, has turned attention to the ways in which the law and mapping practices constrain rather than enable the prospects for indigenous autonomy. This critique, however, often fails to consider the effects that these participatory mapping projects have on the capacity of indigenous organizations to mobilize their own unique forms of territoriality. This paper seeks to contribute a different reading of participatory mapping by using theoretical insights from post-representational cartographies to analyze the case of the Miskitu peoples in Honduras. The Miskitu have collaborated in participatory mapping projects since the early 1990s as way of advancing their claims for the legalization of their ancestral territories in the Muskitia region. I engage with post-representational cartographies as a way of understanding maps, not as an ideological representation of space but as expressions of dynamic social practices. I conduct this post-representational analysis by contextualizing the social practices that led to the production of four maps of the Muskitia region and by observing how these maps were later re-inscribed and transformed into specific socio-spatial arrangements. Based on this analysis, I propose the idiom of co-production from science and technology studies as a productive way to engage with the multiplicity and contingency involved in participatory mapping.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Fernando Galeana Rodriguez, M.A., M.S., is currently a doctoral program on development sociology at Cornell University. Fernando received a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University and a master's degree in international relations and international economics from the School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University.

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This master's thesis project began as a reflection of my own professional experience working on land administration in the field of international development. I must acknowledge the intellectual influence of Wendy Wolford, who guided me through the complexities of qualitative social research and encouraged me to find my own unique contribution to a long-standing debate in critical cartography. I also must acknowledge the contribution of Ray Craib, who introduced me to seminal and new scholarship in spatial theory and helped me to think beyond traditional approaches in resistance studies. I received helpful comments to previous drafts during two graduate student-organized workshops held at Cornell, one with students from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and another with students from the University of Sussex. I particularly want to thank my fellow graduate colleagues, Ryan Nehring, Karla Peña, and Hilary Faxon, for their comments, revisions, and inspiration. The research was supported by an Einaudi Center for International Studies Travel Grant, an Engaged Cornell Graduate Grant, and the Department of Development Sociology. Of course, the research would not have been possible without the collaboration of the organization Unified Peoples of Mosquitia (MASTA), the Agency for the Development of Mosquitia (MOPAWI), and the project implementation unit of the Honduras Land Administration Project (PATH). I admit that the account presented in this research is only one of multiple perspectives and that it needs to be understood in conjunction with works that examine more deeply the role of political economy in constraining indigenous participation. My hope is that this work will contribute to the on-going debate about ways to re-imagine political action against the advancing hegemony of neoliberal governance.

Participatory Mapping and the Emergence of Indigenous Territorial Formation in the Honduran Mosquitia

Modern states have relied extensively on mapping practices to impose and legitimize socio-spatial orders (Thongchai, 1994; Paasi, 1996; Biggs, 1999; Craib, 2004; Sparke, 2005; Elden, 2010). In an attempt to counteract state territorialization, activists have collaborated with indigenous peoples in participatory mapping projects since the 1970s to produce alternative views on territory (Brody, 1981; Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001; Herlihy & Knapp, 2003; Chapin, Lamb, & Threlkeld, 2005; Parker, 2006). These practices of “counter-mapping” can be seen as an example of what Antonio Gramsci (1971) referred to as a “war of position” to describe the process of constructing counter-hegemony by negotiating positions of power within the system. Scholars involved in these counter-mapping projects, however, have questioned the effectiveness of these practices in producing the desired counter-hegemonic effects (Schroeder & Hodgson, 2002; Wainwright & Bryan, 2009; Bryan, 2011; Hale, 2011). This critique highlights that despite good intentions, mapping practices are always compromised and may even render opportunities for the state to entrench hegemony. One dimension that has been missing from this critique, however, are the effects that these participatory mapping projects have had on the capacity of indigenous organizations to mobilize unique forms of territoriality.¹

The empowerment of indigenous organizations was one of the original motivations behind counter-mapping. “Cartography in the hands of indigenous peoples is empowering” wrote Janis Alcorn from the Biodiversity Support Program in the preface to *Indigenous Landscapes*, a publication aimed at disseminating best practices in participatory mapping (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001, p. iv). The liberal ideology underlying the usage of empowerment in the development discourse, however, has come under intense scrutiny by both Marxist and post-structural approaches (Craig & Porter, 2006; Li, 2007; Dean, 2010). Nevertheless, a critical engagement with empowerment leads to the dilemma of whether the subaltern can wield the conditions of existence in which they are embedded. Positions on this dilemma range from those that emphasize the paradoxes and aporias of resistance (Spivak, 1988; Abu-Lughod, 1990) to those that underscore subaltern agency (Guha, 1982; Scott, 1985; Hardt & Negri, 2005). According to Arturo Escobar, the academic prognosis for subaltern mobilization “will largely depend on whose voices and perspectives one privileges, one’s space of enunciation, and the framework used to examine the encounter between the various actors in the play of identity” (2008, p. 202).

In this article, I suggest that many of the reflections about counter-mapping assume that it is compromised partly because they do not systematically explore the ways in which these interventions contribute to the positioning of indigenous collaborators. For example, Charles Hale (2011), an anthropologist known for his involvement in several mapping projects in Central America, describes the quandary imposed by neoliberal governance on indigenous organizations as a false choice between cooperation and aimless resistance. He calls for a re-thinking of indigenous autonomy to transcend this false choice, but he does not discuss differences in the ability of indigenous organizations in negotiating the terms of cooperation. Joel Wainwright and Joe Bryan (2009), two geographers who were also involved in similar mapping projects in Belize and Nicaragua, discuss the legal and technical dimensions of the recognition process in aligning the structures and expectations of indigenous organizations in ways that favor the state. In their analysis, however, the aligning is categorically top-down, with indigenous organizations having minimum control over the terms of articulation.

My own experience with these struggles, however, has led me to think that participatory mapping can indeed have transformational effects for indigenous organizations and that these effects do matter in terms of how regimes of governance are constructed and experienced. I clarify that my positionality in these struggles was on the opposite end from that of the counter-mappers. From 2005 to 2013, I worked intermittently for the World Bank as a land administration specialist, mainly collaborating on projects in

¹ Robert Sack (1986) defines territoriality as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area” (p. 19).

Central America that involved the recognition of indigenous land rights. My job was literally to “render technical” (Li, 2014) the struggles over land rights in a way that could be understood and acted upon by the World Bank. I often encountered the maps produced by counter-mappers as part of my everyday interactions with government officials, indigenous leaders, and other World Bank colleagues. As a result, I got to observe how these maps circulated and how actors used them to construct territory. In particular, I was drawn to the way in which one indigenous organization in Honduras, Unity of the Miskitu Peoples (MASTA), used maps to negotiate the titling of nearly 1.5 million hectares of land in the region of La Muskitia (about 15% of the country’s surface).² La Muskitia is a cultural region in eastern Honduras that co-exists with the department of Gracias a Dios. The titling was a remarkable achievement for MASTA, especially considering that Honduras’ legal framework was antagonistic to indigenous autonomy (Roldán, 2004). In spite of this legal constraint, I observed how MASTA made claims as the self-government of the Miskitu, which in some ways aligned with the expectations of government agencies and donors. Nonetheless, it was not until I returned to Honduras in 2015 to conduct independent research that I began to understand the role that participatory mapping projects played in building MASTA’s positioning for conducting these negotiations.

This paper examines how MASTA emerged as a collaborator with the capacity to shape the terms of articulation for the governance of indigenous territories. I argue that MASTA’s involvement in participatory mapping provided the conditions for this emergence. However, the aim is neither to fall back on the naïve definition of collaboration that permeated early work on participatory mapping nor to ignore the critique of uneven power relations. Rather, my objective is to understand the contingencies, unintended consequences, and re-articulations enabled by participatory mapping in the process of negotiating hegemony (Mallon, 1995). As such, I engage with post-representational cartographies as a way of understanding maps, not as an ideological representation of space but as expressions of dynamic social practices (Pickles, 2004; Kitchin & Dodge, 2007; Crampton, 2009). I conduct this post-representational analysis by contextualizing the social practices that led to the production of four maps and by observing how these maps were later re-inscribed and transformed into specific socio-spatial arrangements. I draw a connection between post-representational cartography and the everyday practices of state formation (Thongchai, 1994; Vandergeest & Peluso, 1995; Mathews, 2011; Erazo, 2013) in order to make sense of what these socio-spatial arrangements might mean for the governance of this indigenous territory. Based on this analysis, I propose the idiom of co-production from science and technology studies (Jasanoff, 2004a) as a productive way to engage with the multiplicity and contingency involved in participatory mapping.

Maps, Knowledge, and Representation

Drawing on Foucault and Derrida, Brian Harley’s work opened new ways of thinking about maps as expressions of power/knowledge (Harley, 2002). Harley treats maps as texts that need to be deconstructed to reveal power relations. This deconstruction suggests that alternative cartographic representations could reverse the order of these power relations, thus laying the promise of counter-maps, which was eloquently captured in Bernard Nietschmann’s phrase that “more indigenous territory can be reclaimed by maps than by guns” (1995, p. 37). Critical cartography, however, has evolved from questions of epistemology (i.e., how method affects the production of cartographic representations) to questions about ontology (i.e., what world is made implicit in the production of these cartographic representations). From an ontological angle, maps are always the representation of a spatial perspective that is contingent and relational (Crampton, 2001; Pickles, 2004; Crampton, 2009; Wood, 2010). In particular, Kitchin and Dodge (2007) make a call to shift the analysis of maps from a hermeneutic of representations (i.e., what worlds are produced by maps) to an ontogenesis of re-presentations (i.e., how maps acquire meaning through constant interactions). For these authors, the main conceptual difference between these two positions is the claim that maps acquire an “ontological stability” within the constant interaction of social practices. Otherwise, the image standing for

² I use the terms “La Muskitia” and “Miskitu,” which MASTA considers to be the appropriate spellings. However, some of the documents and organizations’ names mention in the article are referenced by the common terminology of “Mosquitia”.

a map is just “a set of points, lines, and colours” (p. 335). One of the main implications of their analysis is that “maps are constantly in a state of becoming” (p. 335) as human actors enroll them to solve spatial problems. Maps have to follow certain conventions in order to be recognized as such, but they also involve a number of contingencies leading to multiple possibilities.

I propose that these insights from emergent cartography can contribute to our understanding of how participatory mapping projects shape the positionality of indigenous organizations. From the perspective of ontogenesis, the cartographies produced by participatory mapping projects are not static representations but, rather, a “collaborative manufacture” (Crang, 1994, p. 686) that is constantly being remade in social interactions. Bjorn Sletto has applied this post-representational perspective to analyze his own involvement with participatory maps in Venezuela. He writes that “the potential to ‘counter’ hegemonic productions of space in participatory mappings lies less within the representation itself, but rather in the performative speakings-of and socially situated remakings of such maps” (Sletto, 2015, p. 941). This post-representational perspective is compatible with an analysis of uneven power relations. The key is to understand how actors develop an ability “to mobilize the representation and to solve particular problems” during the constant re-inscription of maps (Kitchin & Dodge, 2007, p. 339).

Furthermore, I suggest that there is analytical power in studying how actors become together with maps. Maps are an interface that mediate among cognitive, affective, and material realms (Caquard, 2015). As such, maps become privileged cultural artifacts that congeal social practices. Arjun Appadurai’s approach to the study of commodities as social objects is also suitable for maps. He writes that “from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context” (1988). Thus, engaging with post-representational cartographies has the potential of bringing back indigenous organizations into an analysis that focuses on the negotiations of space mediated through maps.

Methods

The analysis develops around the discussion of four maps that were produced at different stages during a thirty-year period when MASTA negotiated land rights over La Mosquitia with the Honduran government. I contextualize each map within a set of social relations and material conditions in order to trace MASTA’s organizational transformation. I engage each map to understand how MASTA’s aspirations to become the “highest authority in La Mosquitia” (MASTA, 2012) were mediated through its involvement in participatory mapping. Only two of these four maps, however, were actually the product of participatory mapping projects led by international experts. The other two were produced by MASTA, alongside NGOs, after participatory mapping in order to make the political organization legible to the state. The goal of the analysis is precisely to observe the ontogenetics of maps in this interplay between participatory maps and MASTA’s organizational transformation.

These four maps were certainly not the only ones to be produced during this thirty-year period. I selected them based on research I conducted in 2015 and on personal experience. I will explain each in turn. The formal research included a review of documents in the National Ethnographic Archive of Honduras and the institutional files of the NGO Development of La Mosquitia (MOPAWI). The materials were primarily consultant reports, memorandums, and aide memoires prepared as part of programs to assist with the legalization of indigenous lands in La Mosquitia. Reviewing these institutional documents and gray literature allowed not only a reconstruction of the events but also an observation of how notions of territory were formed as a result of these interactions with the government and donors. I also interviewed government officials, indigenous leaders, and NGO officials to learn about their personal involvement in participatory mapping. Moreover, I engaged with secondary literature written by counter-mappers on Honduras as primary texts for analysis. These exchanges with the archives and actors is what initially drew my attention to these four maps as catalyzers of affects and aspirations.

This research, however, is also deeply embedded in my personal experience at the World Bank. Part of my duties included the supervision of the Honduras Land Administration Project (PATH), which funded

activities in the titling of indigenous lands in La Mosquitia involving MASTA. This experience allowed me to be part of the capillary formations of power that constitute the development apparatus (Ferguson, 1994; Goldman, 2006). Thus, this research relies on my “insiderness as a methodological and analytical resource” (Butz, 2010, p. 139). The main insight I bring to the analysis is the effect that MASTA had on the making of the development apparatus. I argue that MASTA’s participation did more than merely legitimize hegemonic order; it actually had an influence on shaping the apparatus and mobilizing it toward its own objectives. However, this is certainly not the case for every indigenous organization in Honduras, and it was only possible for MASTA from the 2010s onwards. I claim that MASTA’s ability to command such influence can be traced back to how the group engaged with participatory mapping projects. In the next section, I present evidence supporting this claim and demonstrate how MASTA evolved from a gremial association to a political organization with the ability to command power over a socio-spatial order that it helped bring into being.

The Development of MASTA’s Political Positioning

The idea to establish MASTA was started by a group of Miskitu students and professionals living in Tegucigalpa (Barahona, 2009). In 1973, these individuals organized their own gremial associations. The majority of them were first exposed to social organizing through their engagement with teachers’ federations and student militant groups. During the brief period of military reformism (LaFeber, 1993), they seized the opportunity to found an organization to function as an intermediary between the population of La Mosquitia and the central government. With this objective in mind, MASTA was established in 1976. During this initial period, however, MASTA was mainly focused on obtaining scholarships for Miskitu students and had not yet developed a political agenda or established grassroots bases (Barahona, 2009). This absence of politicization of indigenous identity was not an anomaly in Latin America during the 1970s. During much of the twentieth century, indigeneity had collapsed with other identities, such as peasantry, and governments typically followed *indigenista* policies with assimilationist tendencies (Forte, 2013). Indigeneity did not start to develop into a political identity until the 1970s with the advent of self-determination in the Fourth World Movement (Deloria Jr, 1979; Engle, 2010). The diffusion of this political movement, however, was uneven throughout the continent and indigenous organizations. In Honduras, the political agenda of indigenous organizations remained disarticulated and their organizational structures weak into the 1990s (Barahona, 2009). In MASTA’s case, the organization remained tied to a network of Miskitu professionals, particularly school teachers, with little penetration into the social life of communities.

Paradoxically, the politicization of a Miskitu identity in Nicaragua had the spillover effect of decimating MASTA’s organizational capacity. In Nicaragua, the new Sandinista government attempted to bolster assimilationist policies in the early 1980s, threatening the relative autonomy that the Miskitu had enjoyed during the Somoza years (Hale, 1996). As a result, they joined the C.I.A.-backed Contra rebellion. They demanded indigenous autonomy for the Atlantic region of Nicaragua, which they achieved in 1987. However, during the conflict, the Miskitu Contras operated out of training camps in the Honduran Mosquitia. This militarization by Contra, Honduran, and foreign forces had a negative effect on MASTA. Although MASTA sympathized with the liberation of the Nicaraguan Miskitu, many of its members opposed American interventionism. They were branded as communist sympathizers by the Honduran military, Miskitu Contras, and the Miskitu Moravian Church (Chiriboga, 2002). As a result, MASTA was sidelined as an organization, and many of its leaders suffered repression.

MAP 1: 1992 Subsistence Zones Map

The conditions for MASTA’s organizational transformation were triggered by its involvement with the Agency for the Development of La Mosquitia (MOPAWI). This NGO was established in 1985 by an international humanitarian agency providing aid to Nicaraguan refugees to address the long-term needs of the Miskitu population in Honduras. In 1987, MOPAWI started the Land Legalization Program with the objective of protecting lands and forests from the advancement of the cattle agricultural frontier. MOPAWI

enlisted MASTA as its community partner in the program. Together, they issued a declaration demanding “a process of legalization of land tenure in favor of the indigenous peoples of Mosquitia” (MOPAWI & MASTA, 1988). The agency responsible for titling rural areas was the National Agrarian Institute (INA). In 1989, INA agreed to set up a process to title communal lands. This agreement was perceived as an important achievement since INA only issued titles to individuals or agrarian cooperatives. Three communities completed the process and received “provisional guarantees of occupation” (Herlihy & Leake, 1997, p. 710). A land use study conducted among the Tawahka, however, showed that the community titles only captured a fraction of the area used by indigenous peoples (Herlihy & Leake, 1990). As a result, MOPAWI stopped pursuing the modality of individual communal titling upon realizing that it would leave vast amounts of land under state control. Nonetheless, MOPAWI was unclear about how to move the dialogue with government toward a regional approach to legalization in a manner that would remain viable under antagonistic attitudes towards indigenous autonomy. The solution came in the shape of a regional map on indigenous land use.

The 1992 “subsistence zones” map became a new point of departure for enunciating indigenous territoriality. The map (figure 1) is on a scale of 1:500,000 and shows the boundaries of seventeen clusters of communities referred to as subsistence zones. During my fieldwork in 2015, I encountered copies of this map proudly hanging on the walls of government agencies, MOPAWI, and MASTA. The map resulted from a collaboration between MOPAWI and the Center for Native Lands. The latter was an American-based NGO affiliated with Cultural Survival. In 1991, Mac Chapin from Native Lands collaborated with the National Geographic Society on the map “The Coexistence of Indigenous Peoples and the Natural Environment in Central America” (Chapin, 1992). He had the idea of preparing a similar map for Honduras to show the extent of indigenous land use in so-called empty lands. Along with MOPAWI, they planned to unveil the map in a national meeting attended by indigenous groups from around the country and high-level government officials.

The map was commissioned to Andrew Leake, coordinator of MOPAWI’s Land Legalization Program, and Peter Herlihy, who was then a postdoctoral student from the Southeastern Louisiana State University. Leake and Herlihy had recently prepared a land use study in the Tawahka area. Instead of following on the original idea of producing a country-wide map, they proposed an adaptation of the methodology from the Tawahka land use study to prepare a map of “subsistence zones” (Herlihy & Leake, 1997). Their rationale was that the \$20,000 budget offered by Native Lands was insufficient to cover expenses for a national mapping project. The actual expenses were more than three times the original budget (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001). The budget is just one example of the general climate of uncertainty that surrounded the mapping project. Chapin reckoned that “[n]o one was clear at the time on what the specific impacts of the mapping would be; nor were we aware of the range of political uses to which maps, in the hands of indigenous peoples, could be put” (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001, p. 15). Regardless of these uncertainties, for these collaborators, mapping embodied the promise of producing knowledge about the territory in order to advance the Land Legalization Program. The intermediators of this knowledge production were 22 indigenous research assistants who gathered the land use data from the communities.

This view on the subsistence zones map, however, was fraught with contradictions regarding the claims made on indigenous territoriality. Wainwright (2011) elaborates a useful critique of these types of counter-maps in his deconstruction of the *Maya Atlas* in Belize. For Wainwright, the *Maya Atlas* was more of a reflection of the tropes of sustainable development, cultural ecology, and standard cartographic practices than about indigenous land use. Specifically, he critiques the way in which cultural ecologists essentialized the relationship between nature and culture when attempting to represent the “homelands” of indigenous peoples. Wainwright argues that no matter how much cultural ecologists try to re-present indigenous territory, they always end up re-inscribing state power. Turning to Spivak (1988), Wainwright concludes that the subaltern cannot map as the conditions of possibility for mapping are already embedded in state hegemony. It is useful to apply this deconstructionist critique to the subsistence zones map in Honduras. Specifically, the map claimed that the subsistence zones represented indigenous land use, but

these zones were already pre-determined during the preparatory stage. These zones were actually the equivalent of census sectors “to facilitate the logistics of collecting the information” (Herlihy & Leake, 1997, p. 715). The boundaries of these subsistence zones were drawn based on the relief features of the “official cartographic sheets” produced by the Honduran National Geographic Institute. Furthermore, the final number of subsistence zones was reduced from 22 to 17 in order “to make the map more legible” (Herlihy & Leake, 1997, p. 724). As such, the subsistence zones were indeed a cartographic artifice. Nevertheless, the map acquired a life of its own that went beyond these limitations.

We usually think of mapping practices as making space legible to the state (Scott, 1998) without a proper account for how they are made legible for local populations as well. In Honduras, Chapin’s own views on the subsistence zones map indicated that indigenous peoples themselves were as much part of the intended audience as was the state. Chapin explains the acquiescence of indigenous peoples in La Mosquitia with respect to environmental degradation on their lack of “region-wide consciousness.” He argues that without this consciousness “they felt no particular responsibility for what was occurring beyond the boundaries of their own communities” (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001, p. 13). Of course, Chapin believes that mapping would awake indigenous peoples from this geographical false consciousness. Herlihy and Leake (1997) describe a similar situation when noting that although the indigenous researchers were asked to collect data on practices that they were presumably already familiar with, “very few previously had the opportunity to sit and reflect on it in such a manner” (p. 717). During my fieldwork in 2015, I encountered similar responses when I interviewed some of the former indigenous collaborators, who by then were senior leaders in MASTA. They recalled how the map “opened their eyes” to the overlaps in land claims between communities and the need for a territorial approach to land legalization.

Although these views further reinforce Wainwright’s critique of academic collaborators acting as ventriloquists for indigenous peoples, they also hint at the emergence of new ways of being for the indigenous collaborators. Despite the cartographic artifice behind the subsistence zones, the collective clustering of communities conjured a new way of thinking about socio-spatial order in La Mosquitia. For MOPAWI and Native Lands, this new vision was to be expected since their explicit intention was to produce legibility for indigenous land tenure. However, it is unclear whether the actors involved expected that it would produce such an effect on La Mosquitia. The decision to downscale the project from a national to a regional map allowed for more in-depth collaboration with the indigenous research assistants. If MOPAWI and Native Lands had maintained the original idea to produce a nation-wide mapping, the collaboration of these assistants would have been less intensive. The more intensive mapping experience induced reflexivity as these assistants attempted to reconcile cognitive understandings of everyday practices with the problem of representing them in abstract space (Caquard, 2015). Many of these assistants already held positions of power in the communities, such as teaching, which were further reinforced by their new access to knowledge about territory. The majority of them continued to hold positions of power in MASTA and NGOs. In other words, the indigenous assistants started to develop their own “conquering gaze from nowhere” (Haraway, 1988, p. 581).

I deliberately use the term assistant instead of collaborator to underscore the relatively weak position of power that indigenous individuals had in this mapping project. MASTA’s organizational capacity continued to be feeble, and in many respects, the credit that the organization received in the production of the map was more an act of legitimization for MOPAWI and Native Lands than a reflection of their decision-making power. MOPAWI managed every operational aspect of the mapping process and Herlihy the technical details (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001). Despite this power differential, the subsistence map produced a legibility effect that shaped how MASTA would organize and legitimize its leadership structure. The subsistence zones gave credence to the idea of a natural order of things in La Mosquitia. MASTA capitalized on this notion and used it to pave its way to transition from assistant to collaborator. Thus, when I see the 1992 subsistence zones map still hanging on people’s wall, I am reminded of how this manufactured representation of indigenous territoriality became re-interpreted as the baseline for the re-configuration of socio-spatial dynamics in the region.

MAP 2: MASTA's Federations

I have proposed that the main effect of the 1992 subsistence zones map was to make indigenous leadership more aware about the spatialization of social order in La Mosquitia. When the mapping project began, MASTA's structure consisted of a municipal-based network of representatives. This model was based on the structure of national teacher federations. Since most of MASTA's leaders were teachers themselves, they would have been most exposed to this model. MOPAWI promoted the idea of re-organizing MASTA's structure into federations, each with their own territorial jurisdiction. MOPAWI considered that this organizational structure could solve the problem of accommodating indigenous land tenure. The idea was first planted among Miskitu leaders during a visit that MOPAWI organized to the Tolupan community in central Honduras in the late 1980s (Munguia, 2015). The Tolupan had recently established their own tribal federation in 1985, after nearly a decade of attempting other forms of inter-ethnic organizations, and were in the process of recuperating tribal lands (Barahona, 2009). Soon, indigenous leaders across the country began to organize into federations, drawing on the experience of the peasant and worker organizations. MOPAWI helped the Tawahka create their own federation in 1987, but it proved more difficult to do the same for the Miskitu. The Tawahka had a population of about 700 living in seven villages along the banks of the middle Patuca River (Herlihy & Leake, 1990). In contrast, the Miskitu population was about 35,000, distributed in 144 villages across the region (Herlihy & Leake, 1997). Thus, the organization of the Miskitu into federations was a problem of a larger magnitude. MASTA's highest organizational accomplishment during this early period was to obtain its legal inscription (*personería jurídica*) in 1987.

Efforts aimed at organizing the first federation were conducted alongside the preparation of the subsistence zones map. In September 1991, the government signed an agreement with the Stone Container Corporation over one million hectares for forest exploitation. Some of the communities impacted by the agreement had already organized into an Agro-Forestry Regional Committee as part of a project managed by the Honduran Corporation for Forestry Development (COHDEFOR). The threat imposed by the Stone Container Corporation inspired both the preparation of the subsistence zones map and specific efforts to legalize the lands directly affected by the agreement (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001). After eight months of preparatory work, the representatives of twelve communities met in July 1992 to establish the Federation of Indigenous and Native Peoples of the Río Segovia Zone (FINZMOS). The minutes of the meeting, however, suggest that these communities were organizing their federation independently from MASTA (FINZMOS, 1992). Faced with the threat of the company concession and ladino (non-indigenous) colonization, the communities reasoned that the structure of the Agro-Forestry Regional Committee was inadequate to seek legal protection for their lands: "with the term federation, we have more leeway and representation" (emphasis in original; my own translation). They agreed to contact MOPAWI to learn from the Tawahka experience. The minutes noted that the president of MASTA, who was one of the few external guests present at the meeting, interjected to mention that "MASTA should occupy the top position [in the organizational chart], that all the support to the federation should be channeled through MASTA." Nonetheless, the community delegates disagreed by noting that if they "were to rely on MASTA, it would be as an organization to support the Federation without any conditions." Thus, FINZMOS became the first Miskitu federation, but it sought to act autonomously from MASTA. In 1995, FINZMOS obtained its own legal inscription in order to operate forestry cooperatives.

On the margins of MASTA, an inter-ethnic alliance of Miskitu, Garifuna, Pech, and Ladino organized under the name of the Land Vigilance Committee (CVT) in 1990. Their main objective was "the protection and conservation of the special lands and forests of the Río Platano Biosphere Reserve" (CVT, 1990, p. 1). The Río Platano Biosphere Reserve had been declared in 1980 and covered approximately half of La Mosquitia. The indigenous and local ladino (native) population had organized to assert their land tenure rights against what they viewed as an illegitimate declaration of the reserve. Since the CVT did not have its own legal inscription, it depended on MASTA for legal transactions.

MOPAWI, however, continued to promote the idea of transforming MASTA into a confederation of Miskitu federations. The goal was to bestow MASTA with the recognition of being the “highest political authority” in La Muskitia. In this way, MASTA could conduct a collective negotiation with the state for the titling of all lands in La Muskitia. The subsistence zones map provided the baseline to configure the borders of the federations (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001). MASTA eventually subsumed FINZMOS and CVT into its organizational structure. Its president formally introduced the new structure of the organization in a declaration issued on April 21, 1994. The preamble to the new structure referenced the tropes of cultural ecology and sustainable development, building a direct nexus between the protection of indigenous lands and forest conservation. The declaration listed the seven federations and included a map showing their spatial distribution (figure 2). The map showed the entire area of the department of Gracias a Dios divided into a seamless collectivity of MASTA’s seven federations plus the Tawahka Federation (FITH). In contrast to the overlapping subsistence zones in the 1992 map, the federations map showed non-overlapping, fixed borders between these jurisdictions.

The federations map was the emergence of a “geo-body” for indigenous territoriality in La Muskitia. Thongchai describes the concept of geo-body as “a framework for thinking, imagining, and projecting the desired realm” (1994, p. 129). In Thongchai’s analysis, the map of Siam “was a model for, rather than a model of” the Thai nation (1994, p. 130). Similarly, the federations map became a way of enunciating La Muskitia as MASTA’s realm. Thongchai explains that foreign nations also played a role in shaping the form of the geo-body. In Honduras, external collaborators, such as MOPAWI and Native Lands, influenced the production of La Muskitia as an indigenous territory. “As we had hoped,” Chapin writes about the subsistence zones map: “the people of the Mosquitia began looking at the region as a whole, perceiving how threats were encroaching from several sides” (Chapin & Threlkeld, 2001, p. 111). Chapin’s point was to underscore what he considered to be the wake of regional consciousness, but the federations map was a claim for and not the expression of an already existing political organization.

As much as this new form of territorial organization claimed order, it also created disruption among the indigenous organizations. MASTA split into two factions. One supported the federative model; the other did not. In a letter, the dissenting faction implored INA to issue the titles to the communities and not to the federations. It also supported the right of Miskitu individuals to claim individual property. For this faction, this model “could lend itself to wrongful purposes” and was decided upon “at a distance” from MASTA’s assembly (MASTA, 1994). These protesters could have been referring to the fact that the declaration of the federations had been issued a few months earlier at a workshop in Tegucigalpa on conservation research organized by MOPAWI. The declaration also collapsed the representation of the Miskitu peoples and all peoples of La Muskitia as one and the same. This statement erased the cultural differences and rivalries among the ethnic groups in La Muskitia and positioned the Miskitu as the regional hegemon.

In spite of MOPAWI’s and MASTA’s efforts to put together the federative model, this organizational structure did not figure in the actual legalization proposal that they submitted to the government in 1995. Instead, the proposal made explicit reference to the subsistence zones map, which was argued to “show the ways in which the communities have used and still use land as a function of their social functional habitat” (MASTA, 1995, p. 4). The description of the legalization model was also rather broad and parsimonious: “[it] must be based on the concept of territoriality and modalities for the legalization of communal and individual lands should be established within each territory” (MASTA, 1995, p. 12). Most of the text in the sixteen-page proposal was dedicated to a socio-cultural profile of the ethnic groups living in La Muskitia, a description of customary land uses, and references to the legal framework. The proposal argued for a legalization model based on “social functional habitats,” a term borrowed from cultural ecology to describe the territory that indigenous communities require to reproduce their livelihoods and culture. A social functional habitat was a natural claim to the land in a scientifically-sounding language, whereas a federation was inherently a political construct.

Despite these efforts to represent indigenous land tenure as the natural order in La Muskitia, the government rejected the proposal. This rejection occurred at a moment when indigenous mobilization had

already peaked and the government was beginning to show signs of repression. With the increasing wave of democratization in Latin America, indigenous social movements resurged throughout the continent (Yashar, 2005). In Honduras, the largest mobilization occurred in 1994 when indigenous movements, including MASTA, organized a series of protests known as pilgrimages (Barahona, 2009). The government under duress agreed to ratify ILO Convention 169 but later sought to repress indigenous organizations in other ways. During the same year that the government rejected MASTA's proposal, it reprimanded the departmental governor for signing a declaration in support of promoting cultural exchanges between Honduran and Nicaraguan Miskitu. Two years later, MASTA presented a draft bill declaring La Mosquitia as an indigenous territory, which it had prepared with assistance from a group of international lawyers (MASTA, 1997). Compared to the previous proposal, MASTA was more assertive in this document about its claim to be the "highest ethnic-cultural authority in the territory" (art. 21). However, it continued to refer to the subsistence zones map as the representation of indigenous territoriality and not to the federations map. The comments made by a reviewer of the draft bill, most likely a Honduran lawyer due to his or her knowledge about the legal framework, reveal the oddity of this proposition from the state's perspective. The reviewer concluded that the draft bill "constituted the bases for the ulterior creation of an ethnic State, in which MASTA assumes the supreme power of the Miskito nation" (Anonymous, 1997). In sum, the Honduran state was not ready to accept a territorial vision for the legalization of indigenous lands, which was perceived as being the precursor to political autonomy and secession. The state's countermove was to promote decentralization by breaking up the two municipalities in the department of Gracias a Dios into six.

During the 1990s, MASTA intervened in the production of the subsistence zones map and the federations map. The latter claimed to represent a system of indigenous land tenure whereas the former claimed to inscribe a political order on this system. MOPAWI's and MASTA's legalization strategy favored the model of the social functional habitat represented in the subsistence zones map. Its adherence to the principles of cultural ecology elevated its stature as a baseline map for indigenous territoriality. Moreover, the open-endedness of the model, allowing for communal and individual land claims, could be seen as symptomatic of how contested the structure of the federations remained at the time. In other words, the geobody had been assembled, but it did not have sufficient legitimacy. Nonetheless, the idea of the federations began to engender new ways of claiming access to land and natural resources. This creation of new subjectivities is a feature that has already been identified in other mapping projects (Nadasdy, 2003, 2012). One of the most salient conflicts occurred between Miskitu and Garifuna communities in the multi-ethnic federation of the CVT (Mollett, 2006). The federation eventually split with each ethnic group conducting its own separate negotiations for land rights with the state. Thus, the geobody was beginning to be reinscribed in these conflicts between communities.

MASTA's political organizing, however, crumbled once more from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. After the failure to negotiate the titles, and with no more financing from MOPAWI's Land Legalization Program, MASTA's territorial agenda became disarticulated. Its leadership became increasingly focused on managing donor-funded programs introduced to the region to support reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch in 1998. This involvement with the state and donors fostered a clientelistic relationship that in many ways circumvented the federations (Bryan, 2011, p. 48). MASTA thus hit its point of lowest organizational strength in 2000 when its leaders were accused of embezzlement, and in an attempt to renew the organization, the assembly elected as president an individual without political experience (CACRC, 2003). In 2003, MASTA's leadership proposed to make "the re-establishment of the credibility of the highest organization of La Mosquitia" a priority for its upcoming general assembly (MASTA, 2003, p. 1). During this event, Charles Hale discussed a new participatory land tenure diagnostic financed by a World Bank-funded project. This participatory mapping project became a medium through which MASTA was able to become part of the technocratic efforts to modernize land administration in Honduras. These efforts were embedded in a neoliberal logic of territorial encompassment (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002) that opened a political space for imagining indigenous territoriality in ways that seemed inadmissible in the 1990s.

This support for indigenous land rights by states and multinational institutions, a juncture referred to as the “territorial turn” in Latin America, has been deemed paradoxical (Offen, 2003; Bryan, 2012). Hale (2011) explains this paradox in Central America by referring to a “structural break” in the economy that causes a centralization of capital accumulation in some areas of the country whereas others are left out as “empty spaces.” Instead of attempting to integrate these empty spaces into the dominant mode of capital accumulation, the neoliberal state devolves self-government to these areas, “which has the effect of constraining their political participation beyond the local level, especially in relation to broader structures of political-economic inequity” (Hale, 2011, p. 195). Indigenous organizations are faced with the dilemma of having to re-think their terms of articulation beyond claims for self-government to avoid being trapped by this inequity. From my experience at the World Bank, I can relate to this paradox of cultural recognition and neoliberalism. We were rather meticulous in asking questions about the legal framework and taking account of participation in consultations, in order to show due diligence to the World Bank’s safeguard policy on indigenous peoples, while at the same time ignoring the economic and political conditions against which the “beneficiaries” were stacked. However, this experience also allowed me to observe how indigenous organizations varied in their capacity to exert influence on the government and the World Bank. I suggest that indigenous organizations can and do change the arena for governance arrangements in these so-called empty spaces. In the case of MASTA, I posit that it was its further engagement with participatory mapping projects that strengthened its positionality.

MAP 3: Land Use Diagnostic Map

In 2002, the Central America and Caribbean Research Council (CACRC), a U.S. non-profit organization, conducted a land use diagnostic of 25 Garifuna and Miskitu communities. The study was led by Charles Hale and Edmund Gordon, who had recently completed a similar study in the indigenous areas of the Caribbean coast in Nicaragua (Gordon & Hale, 2003). They incorporated participatory mapping in their analysis, combined with village ethnographies. The map of the Miskitu communities (figure 3) showed significant overlap, as in the previous subsistence map. As a result, the study recommended legalizing indigenous lands by grouping individual communities into blocks. In some ways, the conclusions of the CACRC land use diagnostic were not very different from what MOPAWI and Native Lands had concluded from the previous subsistence zones map. The main difference this time around was that the study was financed by a World Bank-funded project, which inserted its conclusions into an on-going structural reform for property rights.

Since 1997, the World Bank had been working with the government in planning the modernization of land administration. A major milestone in this process was the approval of the Property Law in 2004, which unified the functions of the land registry, cadaster, and mapping into a single agency, the Property Institute. That same year, the World Bank approved the Land Administration Program (PATH) to support the implementation of the Property Law. The project was planned and implemented by a Project Coordination Unit (PCU), staffed by government consultants who were on the margins of the bureaucratic apparatus. These consultants occupied the interstice between the World Bank and the Honduran state, thus making them mediators in the implementation of the neoliberal agenda for the PCU. The priority was to modernize the land administration system in the areas of the country with the highest economic dynamism, confirming Hale’s explanation of the structural break. The World Bank, however, intervened to include the legalization of the Garifuna and Miskitu communities in the project. I argue that this inclusion was enabled by the CACRC land use diagnostic.

The World Bank had commissioned the land use diagnostic as a result of complaints among Garifuna organizations regarding the Sustainable Coastal Tourism Project.³ The diagnostic, however, was financed by another World Bank-funded project, the Biodiversity in Protected Areas Project. This project had some funds available because indigenous communities in La Muskitia had refused to accept activities geared

³ The Garifuna live on the north coast of Honduras, an area where land is under pressure for tourism and agricultural development.

toward the creation of new protected areas. The biodiversity project, however, sought the inclusion of the Miskitu in the study. Once the study was completed, the report circulated among various World Bank teams working on projects in Honduras. Although it is unclear whether these individuals actually read the report, the overall effect was that it provided concrete recommendations for addressing the land rights situation of Afro-Honduran and indigenous peoples. This was a powerful trope in an era when the World Bank was trying to promote “development with identity” (Davis, 2002). The report was the kind of knowledge product that the World Bank staff could circulate in order to justify new ways of being involved in Honduran policy. Eventually, knowledge of the report came into the hands of a high-level team of economists working on a multi-million dollar programmatic credit operation, which decided to include the land rights of the Garifuna and Miskitu as one of the development priorities of the country. With this leverage, the government could only accept to accommodate the “ethnic lands” component as part of its program to reform land administration (World Bank, 2004).

The inclusion of the Miskitu lands into PATH was fraught with contradictions as well as possibilities for MASTA. From the beginning, the World Bank and the PCU ignored CACRC’s recommendation to title indigenous lands in territorial blocks. Instead, PATH set the goal to title eight Garifuna and eight Miskitu (“individual”) communities. In addition, the PCU tried to bypass the indigenous organizations by establishing ad hoc consultation bodies, known as the Garifuna and Miskitu regional committees (*mesas regionales*). The Afro-indigenous Garifuna Organization (OFRANEH) harshly criticized this tactic on the grounds that it attempted to debilitate the power of indigenous organizations. OFRANEH’s elevated its complaint to the World Bank’s Inspection Panel, which conducted an investigation (Anderson, 2009). During the first four years of implementation, PATH made little progress in moving the titling process ahead. Meanwhile, the Ford Foundation became involved by commissioning CACRC with another participatory mapping project. This project had the specific goal of developing a methodology for titling MASTA’s federations. CACRC teamed with leaders from FINZMOS, possibly the most organized of the federations, to conduct this project (Bryan, 2011; Hale, 2011).

In 2007, FINZMOS submitted the cartographic materials produced by this mapping project to INA to officially request a territorial title. However, INA rejected the proposal, arguing that the materials did not comply with state regulations. Nonetheless, this experience did help to re-align MASTA’s commitment to support titling at the federative level and not to individual communities. The government eventually conceded to the titling of the communities as federations under a modality that became known as the intercommunal model. Although the PCU had initially undermined the process, it became instrumental for coordinating the harmonization of a methodology for intercommunal titling. This harmonization was crucial because multiple government agencies claimed competency over the process and, the government usually used this disagreement as a delaying tactic. The PCU had access to the government, the technical expertise, and the leverage of the World Bank to “render technical” the intercommunal model in a way that NGOs and MASTA could not. The government and MASTA agreed to pilot the methodology in the federation of KATAINASTA rather than FINZMOS because the latter considered that it would be a simpler case.⁴ INA delimited the perimeter of the federation in April 2009, but virtually all government programs came to a halt when the coup occurred two months later.

MAP 4: MASTA’s Twelve Territorial Councils

The post-coup political environment brought a new set of articulations that enabled MASTA to re-activate its vision for the indigenous geo-body in La Moskitia. During the 2000s, MASTA’s leadership had failed to enforce the federative model as a political space with any real power. Even during the FINZMOS mapping project, MASTA’s leadership was perceived to be coopted by the government to divert efforts toward the titling of individual communities (Bryan, 2011). In 2010, however, MASTA elected a president who revitalized the organization’s capacity for political advocacy. The new president broke away with

⁴ The territory of KATAINASTA is mainly composed of natural borders and has relatively fewer problems with land invasions compared to FINZMOS.

tradition as he was not a member of the teachers' guild, which introduced a more assertive leadership style. In addition, the Ford Foundation and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) supported the new administration with grants for its professionalization. Re-engaging with some of the earlier tactics of the indigenous movement, MASTA staged a month-long protest outside the Presidential Palace in Tegucigalpa in October 2011 to demand land titling from President Porfirio Lobo. Since being elected president, five months after the coup, President Lobo supported the construction of a hydroelectric dam that would affect Miskitu communities as well as the expansion of oil palm in the region. The protest turned out to be an effective means to get MASTA to negotiate a political agenda with the president. This alliance eventually led to the titling of twelve Miskitu territorial councils from 2012 to 2015.⁵ Filippo del Gatto (2015) has suggested that one explanation for the change in the state's attitude toward territorial titling was that the Lobo administration was in need of legitimizing its government after the coup and building new alliances.

At this juncture, MASTA was finally able to perform its role as the "highest authority in La Mosquitia" with more credibility. The materiality of this claim was captured in the document *Bio-Cultural Protocol for the Indigenous Miskitu Peoples* that MASTA prepared with assistance from IUCN. The main goal of this document was to establish that any government or donor initiative in La Mosquitia needed to be coordinated through MASTA. The document also explained the indigenous territorial administration of La Mosquitia. The region was divided into twelve jurisdictions known as territorial councils. This new model thus replaced the seven federations. The decision to change the name from federations to territorial councils revealed efforts to naturalize MASTA's control. The CACRC map had once again demonstrated the complexity of legalizing indigenous land tenure. MASTA's map (figure 4) resolved this complexity by ordering space according to its organizational structure. Except for the claims of other ethnic groups (Tawahka, Pech, and Garifuna), La Mosquitia and MASTA shared the same physical space.

MASTA's new socio-spatial organization also introduced "territorial council" as a new term to enunciate indigenous territoriality. On the surface, the change of terminology attempted to resolve a discrepancy in the way that the Miskitu were organized in comparison with the other indigenous and ethnic peoples in Honduras. MASTA was the only organization with multiple federations; the others were organized into single federations. However, beyond this legalistic explanation, there is an alternative that is closely linked to the emergence of a new socio-spatial order. The term territorial council invoked indigeneity in a way that federation, with its genesis in agrarian cooperatives and teachers' federations, could not. The term also strategically inserted indigenous territoriality in a way that could co-exist with the Honduran state. The government continued to reject the idea of granting political autonomy to La Mosquitia. However, a "territorial council" was not an "indigenous self-government." For the Honduran authorities, it was easier to accept this language because of its potential to mold it as part of a neoliberal approach to participatory governance. Despite the government's opposition to autonomy, MASTA was positioning itself as the natural leader of La Mosquitia.

Discussion

I have presented four maps as inscriptions to trace the consolidation of MASTA's claim as representative of La Mosquitia. I have contextualized each map in a set of social practices to understand how and why they were produced and what effect they had on MASTA's development. I have argued that these maps helped cement MASTA's ascendancy by naturalizing a political order over an already existing indigenous territory. The production of these maps, however, did not over-determine MASTA's transformation. The process was contingent and fractured. It depended as much on structural conditions defined by the dynamics of capital accumulation and was embedded in a set of cultural practices. The maps

⁵ The World Bank PATH project funded activities in five territorial councils. The remaining councils received support from another land administration project funded by the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and the government budget.

could have been very well buried without having any effect. In fact, some of the claims made in the maps, such as the political order imposed by the federative model, went dormant for some time during this period. This contingency is even more reason to explore how the materiality of the maps matter for setting in motion courses of action that may not have otherwise occurred. In other words, reading these maps side by side amounts to tracing an itinerary. De Certeau (1984) distinguishes between the itinerary, as a discursive set of operations, from the map, as a plane projection that totalizes observation. He observes that the map is the “erasure of the itinerary” in order for history to appear as a “totalizing stage” (p. 121). The field of critical cartography emerged precisely to question this totalization of history, and over the last decade, this critique has turned to participatory mapping as well. I have suggested, however, that the critique of participatory mapping has dedicated most of the analysis to how hegemonic forces make indigenous territories possible rather than how new forms of political representation come to be formed as a result of these entanglements. I propose that we need to recover this perspective of the itinerary to come to a more symmetrical understanding of the production of socio-spatial order.

I suggest that one way of re-thinking the analysis of participatory maps is to explain them as co-productions of knowledge that are part of broader processes of state formation. I find that the idiom of co-production can be useful for thinking about the ways that indigenous actors exert influence in these hegemonic entanglements. Sheila Jasanoff defines co-production as the “social and natural orders as being produced together” (2004b, p. 2). The hallmark of co-production is a commitment to observe the symmetry in the encounters among actors, asking how they influence each other. This symmetry does not pre-empt an analysis of unequal power relations but rather calls for paying attention to the texture of these encounters as well as the details that, no matter how small, may turn out to shape the course of interactions. Andrew Matthews (2011) applies this kind of analysis to study state formation in Mexico. He uses the term “intimate co-production” to define how indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico, were able to influence the production of official knowledge on forestry. He brings structural power more explicitly into his analysis by historicizing the communities and contextualizing the actual exchanges between government bureaucrats and community members. His analysis shows that in spite of these differences in power relations the communities had agency in the production, application, and circulation of official knowledge. He argues in favor of shifting from conceptualizing the production of official knowledge as “a scandal” to that of “potentially unstable performances” in which we all become part “as critics, witnesses, or participants” (Mathews, 2011, p. 241).

Following Mathews, I see the formation of territorial knowledge in La Muskitia as a case of intimate co-production. The government, the World Bank, and NGOs elicited the collaboration of MASTA in the production of indigenous territoriality in La Muskitia. These collaborations catalyzed MASTA’s organizational transformation, increasing its ability to command power through these cartographic representations. Maps became “boundary objects” (Star & Griesemer, 1989) with the potential to draw multiple actors together, but without necessarily homogenizing interpretations and actions. These boundary objects collectively produced a geo-body for indigenous territoriality, which itself implies a state effect. This re-production of the state in indigenous territories is at the core of Juliet Erazo’s (2013) argument on the “everyday forms of territorial formation.” For Erazo, however, indigenous authorities do not simply reproduce state practices; they actually create their own unique hybrids of state-like performances. I argue that de-centering the analysis of the geo-body as a practice mobilized exclusively by the state has the potential to shift our understanding of participatory mapping from scandals of neoliberal governance to dynamic processes of state formation in which indigenous organizations have the capacity to influence the formation of governance.

Conclusion

In his writings about the effects of participatory mapping, Hale describes the quandary of indigenous movements as “how to occupy the spaces opened for indigenous and black land rights in Central America, without being overwhelmed by their governance effects?” (2011, p. 201). In this paper, I have proposed the ancillary question about the ability of indigenous organizations to collaborate in the production of these

governance effects. Specifically, I analyzed four maps to show how the power of an indigenous organization was co-constituted within these hegemonic processes. In addition, I have suggested that we should de-center the analysis of state formation to observe indigenous organizations as agents shaping legibility and governance. I have also suggested that this complex process is better theorized as a co-production of territorial knowledge occurring within the contours of structural power that operate in conjunctures.

Nonetheless, re-casting the relations among indigenous organizations, state, and donors as co-productions does not dissolve the power differentials and the concomitant violence that they generate. From the perspective of state formation, this analysis suggests that indigenous organizations can themselves become new regional elites with the potential to legitimize their own forms of violence and dispossession. However, I suggest that there are two reasons why re-inscribing agency to indigenous organizations in the production of socio-spatial order contributes to our theoretical and political commitments to participatory maps. First, we cannot assume that indigenous organizations will simply reproduce hegemonic social order. When indigenous organizations become “entangled” in hegemonic processes of territorial recognition, they can and do produce their own unique forms of governance (Mathews, 2011; Erazo, 2013; Anthias & Radcliffe, 2015). An awareness of this potentiality can direct scholarly attention to the way in which these organizations mobilize around the formation of citizenship and governance rather than on the paradox of trying to practice cultural resistance within hegemony (Lyons, 2010). Second, thinking in the context of itineraries and co-productions invites a revisionist reading of the history of collaborations with indigenous peoples in participatory mapping projects. I think that Doreen Massey’s (2005) call to theorize space as relational, multiple, and open-ended is a fruitful way of writing a new spatial history of these encounters. I posit that the tracing of this itinerary could start with an appreciation of what Frank Bruyneeel (2007) calls the “third space of sovereignty”—the interstice produced by indigenous peoples in their refusal to be limited by the false choice of assimilation and resistance.

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