

# Decolonial Time in Bolivia's *Pachakuti*

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## ABSTRACT

Debates about cultural practices in Bolivia have increasingly unfolded around questions of which practices are deemed essentially indigenous or essentially Western and demands for decolonization, or the reestablishment of indigenous cultural hegemony. This article examines cases in which the construal of time (through calendars, clocks, and notions of the past and future) is depicted as being either essentially Andean or a colonial import and, thus, a target for reform. Advancing competing construals of time has become a feature of such contemporary state-led political interventions as reorienting clock faces on public buildings; reconciling the Gregorian calendar with an agricultural, Aymara one; replacing Spanish loanwords for the days of the week with neologisms; and framing the launching of a telecommunications satellite as the reconstitution of pre-Hispanic astronomical science. These debates draw on a salient difference in the space-time semantics of Andean languages. Aymara and Quechua are typologically unusual for linking front space with past time and anterior space with the futurity and for sharing a unified concept of "space-time," or *pacha*, a term that has become popularized through the widespread use of *pachakuti* 'the turning over of space-time', to refer to what, in other contexts, might be called revolution.

The contemporary experience commits us to the present—*akapacha*—which in turn contains within it the seeds of the future that emerge from the depths of the past [*qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani*]. The present is the setting for simultaneously modernizing and archaic impulses, of strategies to preserve the status quo and of others that

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signify revolt and renewal of the world: Pachakuti. The upside-down world created by colonialism will return to its feet as history only if it can defeat those who are determined to preserve the past, with its burden of ill-gotten privileges.

—Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012, 96)

We leave the colonial, republican, and neo-liberal State in the past.

—Preamble, Political Constitution of the State, Bolivia (2009)

**P***achakuti* is a word from both Aymara and Quechua, indigenous languages of the Andes, that has reappeared in recent decades within Bolivian political discourse by way of Indianist and socialist political registers. It is a term that projects a complex temporality, as the epigraph above from the Bolivian sociologist, historian, and public intellectual Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui suggests. *Pachakuti* intertextually evokes colonial history, while pointing to a future from a characterization of the present. Historically, *pachakuti* described the upheaval of Spanish invasion and the overturning of the Inca Empire, but it has also been used to describe moments of rebellion in the colonial and postcolonial history of the Andes. Since the execution of the last Inca emperor Atahualpa by the Spanish in Cajamarca in 1533, the hope of the Inca's return, and a return to Indian rule, has also been described as a hope for *pachakuti*: during the Taki Unquy, the "dancing sickness" movement of the sixteenth century; in the rebellions of Tupac Amaru the first and second; the uprising of Zarate Willka; the uprisings through the twentieth century; and, most recently, the uprisings at the opening of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

The election of Bolivia's first indigenous president, Evo Morales Ayma, in 2006; the increasing political hegemony of his party, the Movement for Socialism (MAS); and the rewriting and passage of a new constitution in 2009 have raised the question of whether this period of Bolivia's history marks the "return of the Indian," or *pachakuti*. Decolonization has been declared an aspiration of diverse sectors of Bolivia's indigenous communities social movements and of the Morales's government, which claims to represent them. The word *decolonization* itself builds on the trope of reversal, the Latin prefix *de-* promising the reversal of a process, the overturning of colonization. The Bolivian government has even appointed a vice-minister of decolonization within the Ministry of Culture. The content of decolonization continues to be contentiously debated, of course, but a general point of consensus is that the aim is to reestablish indigenous hegemony in arenas where Western hegemony persists.

1. Dunkerly 1984; Rivera Cusicanqui 1987; Stern 1987; Thomson 2003; Hylton and Thomson 2007.

*Pachakuti* is a dvandva compound of lexemes found in both Quechua and Aymara that can be glossed as ‘revolution’. *Pacha* translates as ‘time’ but also as ‘space’. Quechua and Aymara share with Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity the semiotic unity of time and space, making *pacha* perhaps best glossed as ‘space-time’. The second part of the word, *kuti*, means ‘return’ but also ‘to turn over’ and shares other senses of both ‘time’ and ‘turn’ with English, as in a turn playing cards, or time as in an instant, a fleeting, punctual moment in a cycle. The senses of time denoted by *pacha* and *kuti* resonate with the Greek *chronos* and *kairos*, as the difference between secular, everyday time (*chronos*) and the messianic event (*kairos*), between continuity and rupture, between flowing time and the fleeting moment. *Pachakuti*, then, is the turning over space-time, the overturning of the world. Like the *kairos* of St. Paul, *pachakuti* has a distinctly messianic temporality. *Pachakuti* is a time when, in the words of historian Sinclair Thomson, “Indians alone will rule,” an inversion of previously dominant social relations (2002).

*Pachakuti* may be left untranslated to leave the semantics of Andean metaphysics intact, to serve as a token of Indianist political discourse, an intertextual cue situating the one using it within indigenous Andean political thought. *Pachakuti* also describes a chronotope, what the early twentieth-century literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin called the life world of the novel—the time (*chronos*) and space (*topos*) in which characters and action unfold (Bakhtin 1981). Linguistic anthropologists have extended the chronotope concept to cultural phenomena as a way of describing the configurations of time, space, and actors configured through discourse that produce culturally authorized models of reality.<sup>2</sup> Whether the inaugural violence of colonial invasion, historic events of anticolonial rebellion, or current struggles of Bolivia’s social movements, *pachakuti* is chronotopic in that it entails spatiotemporal frameworks complete with social personae acting within them. Whether Atahualpa and Pizarro in the sixteenth century or Evo Morales and multinational corporate executives in the twenty-first, these figures diagram culturally shared models of conflictual social relations and epochal shift.

*Pachakuti* is a chronotope of epochal change and one that entails reversal and inversion. Aymara historian Carlos Mamani emphasizes the “turning of time” in his explanation of *pachakuti* and proposes that it is a concept that offers a specifically Andean reconsideration of how to understand the past. “Nay-

2. Silverstein 2005; Agha 2007; Swinehart 2008; Wirtz 2014; Hartikainen 2017.

*rapacha*: the olden days. But not olden as a dead past, lacking in functions of renovation. They imply that this world can be reversible, that the past can also be the future” (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012, 1). His commentary stands out as metaphysical, but it is also metalinguistic, insofar as he both translates an Aymara word (*nayrapacha* ‘olden days’) and gestures toward the contrast between the time and space semantics of Aymara and the language in which he is writing, Spanish. Quechua and Aymara share the typologically unusual alignment of space-time semantics in which front space aligns with past time and vision, and anterior space aligns with futurity and next in sequence (Hardman 2001; Adelaar 2004; Núñez and Sweetser 2006). Consider one’s field of perception while rowing a boat, for example, with the future in an approaching anterior space outside of one’s vision, with the past receding into a visually perceptual foreground. Mamani’s *nayrapacha* is past time but implicates forward movement, front space, and visibility. In the opening epigraph Cusicanqui makes a similar move by invoking an adage of Aymara folk wisdom: “Qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani” (Looking [*uñtasis*] behind and in front [*qhip nayr*] we’ll make our way [*sarnaqapxañani*]). A more idiomatic translation of this maxim would be “You have to know where you’ve been to know where you’re headed.” Both Mamani and Cusicanqui draw on a contrast between Quechua/Aymara and Spanish/Standard Average European semantics not to discuss language per se but to use language as a conceptual framework for their discussions of history and contemporary politics. By using linguistic difference, specifically the contrasting semantic alignments of time and space between European and Andean languages, as a source domain for political metaphor, Mamani and Cusicanqui expand the social domain of people for whom an aspect of grammar remains within their “limits of awareness” (Silverstein 1979).

Untranslated, *pachakuti* enters into Bolivian political discourse as an intertextual index pointing to other events of Indian rebellion, affirming that this historical moment is like others before it. The discourse of *pachakuti* is at once locatable through historical time and simultaneously concerns the nature of time itself. As an untranslated token of Aymara/Quechua in otherwise Spanish language discourse it becomes poetically salient as an Amerindian intrusion, one that invites metalinguistic explanation. As such, the word form *pachakuti* is an icon of Indian difference within political registers of contemporary Bolivian discourse. Previously this term belonged primarily to a political register of Aymara nationalists and other Indianist political currents. Since the ascendance to power of Evo Morales and MAS, however, this register has expanded and gained the backing of the Bolivian state. What had been a narrower social domain of

Aymara nationalist and Indianist discourse is increasingly coterminous with Bolivian state-led initiatives.

The chronotopic character of lexical items like *pachakuti* and decolonization has been buttressed by other emblems of indigeneity mobilized by the Bolivian state that foreground time reckoning for semiotic scrutiny. The resetting of clock faces on government buildings, the official celebration of a holiday that counterposes an Andean to a Western calendar, and the launching of a telecommunications satellite become moments in which rank and file state discourse legitimates and institutionalizes essentialized Andean modes of time reckoning. In what follows, we will see that material things, like calendars, clocks, and satellites, become enlisted in metadiscursive negotiations of indigenous politics, cosmology, and authority. These “things” come to be constituted as icons of Indian difference within Bolivian state discourse that draw on a chronotope of inversion and anchor time reckoning to both national and indigenous identity claims.

### Turning Back the Clock, Renaming Days

In 2014 the clock above the Legislative Palace in Bolivia’s capital was reset to run from right to left (fig. 1). The site of the Legislative Palace, the Plaza Murillo, is symbolic as the center of government but also holds a particular impor-



**Figure 1.** The clock face above the legislative palace in the Plaza Murillo. Photos by the author.

tance within the racialization of space in Bolivia. Throughout much of the twentieth century, Indians were barred from entering the Plaza Murillo. The horological volte-face was a gesture on the part of the Bolivian government to mark its commitment to decolonization, a literal *pachakuti*. An explanation of this change was given by Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca when he gave similar clocks to the delegates of the G77 meetings that were happening in Bolivia at this same time. “We’re in the south and, as we’re trying to recover our identity, the Bolivian government is also recovering its *sarawi*, which means ‘way’ in Aymara,” he said. “In keeping with our *sarawi*—or *ñan*, in Quechua—our clocks should turn to the left.” The president of the Chamber of Deputies of the legislature, Marcelo Elío, was quoted in the newspaper *El Diario* saying that this represented, “Our north is the south, as a clear expression of decolonization and anti-imperialism that sustain the peoples of Latin America. In the south are born ideologies that are trying to change the world of injustices made by the north. It marks the time exactly, but we have to change mental schemas to re-acustom ourselves to thinking from the south and not the conventional way imposed from the north” (*El Diario*, June 25, 2014; see fig. 2).

The wooden desk clocks distributed to the G77 delegates not only had left-turning dials but were also built as maps of Bolivia which, like the clock face, had also been reformulated. These maps of Bolivia included the coastline lost to Chile during the 1879 War of the Pacific and even some waves of the lost Bolivian sea. The loss of this territory has long motivated nationalist resentment against Chile in Bolivia. In 2013, the Morales government filed a lawsuit against Chile with the International Court of Justice in the Hague to reopen negotiations on sovereign access to the Pacific. In response to the G77 desk



**Figure 2.** David Choquehuanca holds a desk clock with a left-turning face set on a wooden replica of Bolivian territory that includes the territory and coast lost to Chile in 1879. Reproduced with permission by Agencia EFE.

clocks with the disputed territory, the Chilean minister of foreign relations responded, declaring that “Chile considers this surprising cartographic representation constitutes an unfriendly gesture towards our country.”

Choquehuanca mentioned the derivative nature of clocks themselves, as mechanical duplicates of the sundial, and sundials of the northern hemisphere. This observation is not his alone, and his proposal for an alternative mode of time reckoning resonates with earlier Aymara intellectuals’ discussions of the question of time. The linguist Félix Laime Pairumani, for example, published a piece on “Time in Aymara” in 1989 in the Aymara nationalist publication *Raymis* that included a diagram (fig. 3) laying out the hours of the day in “tetralectical form,” that is, in the form of the Andean cross, with the hours of the day moving from right to left, the hours of the day in the top half, and the night in the lower half. In the upper half of the cross’s interior space is the horizon view of the mountains visible from El Alto looking east. On the far right are the three peaks of Illimani, followed by the mesa-like Mururata, Chacaltaya (which has now lost its snow cover and glacier to global warming), then Illampu, the final

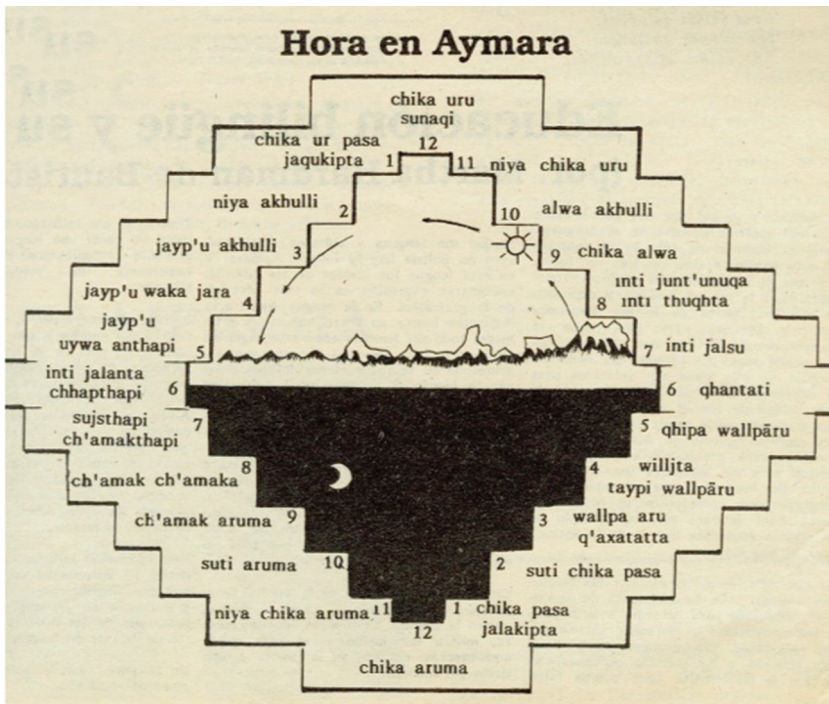


Figure 3. “Time in Aymara” by Félix Laime Pairumani. Used with permission of the author.

snow-covered peak, followed by the Cordillera Real running into the distant west. Arrows indicating the sun's movement arc from the east (right) to the west (left), and a night sky with a crescent moon covering the lower half. At the upper peak of the cross, above the arc of the sun's path, is the number 12 and the Aymara *chika uru sunaqi* (*chika* 'half', *uru* = 'day', *sunaqi* 'waning'; cf. Spanish *menguante*). Opposite this, at the nadir of the diamond/cross is midnight, *chika aruma*. The hours of the day are marked by the sun's activity (*qhantatati* 'dawn', *inti jalsu* 'sunrise', *inti jalanta* 'sunset'), agricultural activity (*uywa anthapi* 'gathering the livestock'), and the singing of the rooster (*wallpa aru q'axatatta* 'rooster crows before sunrise', *willjta taypi wallpäru* 'middle of the rooster crowing', *qhipa wallpäru*, 'last rooster speaking'). Other ethnographic accounts also discuss right-to-left movement in Aymara rituals, from dancing, to sharing coca leaves, to the pouring of alcohol over ritual burnings (Allen 1988).

Clocks are not just derivative of northern hemispheric sundials. They arrived in the Andes via colonialism together with other Western modes of time reckoning, such as the Gregorian calendar. Words for its twelve months and seven days of the week feature prominently among the Spanish loanwords used in vernacular Aymara. Such loanwords form the basis of lexical contrasts between vernacular Aymara and the dehispanicized register of Aymara used in educational, government, and media contexts. Often referred to as "pure Aymara," the deshispanicized register of Aymara is notable for its marked use of neologisms, often understood as archaisms, to replace the many Spanish loanwords in vernacular Aymara (Swinehart 2012). In vernacular Aymara, days of the week are phonologically assimilated or "Aymarized" loanwords from Spanish: *lunis*, *martis*, *mirkulis*, *jwivis*, *wirnis*, *sabatu*, *tuminku*. Dehispanicized Aymara days of the week and months were elaborated during the writing of materials for use in bilingual classrooms and have been adopted in official, dehispanicized Aymara. The neologisms reproduce the Greco-Roman and Nordic denotational etyma for Western days of the week. So Monday, which shares with Spanish reference to the moon, is *phaxsi uru* (moon day). The months draw on cycles of the Aymara agricultural cycle (fig. 4). The opening segment of a broadcast from one of the most widely listened to Aymara-language radio stations, Radio San Gabriel, from May 2007 provides examples of both the neologism used for Thursday, *illapüru*, and the month of May, *llamayu* (fig. 5). The radio announcer's innovation in the denotation of time includes more than just the neologisms *illapüru* (line 5) and *llamayu* (line 1) and the dehispanicized *päqanakas* instead of phonologically assimilated *sima-*



Spanish day	Aymarized loan	Neologism	Direct Gloss	English Gloss
lunes	lunis	phaxsi uru	moon day	Monday
martes	martis	saxra uru	war day	Tuesday
miércoles	mirculis	wara uru	star day	Wednesday
jueves	jwivis	illapa uru	lightning day	Thursday
viernes	wirnis	ch'aska uru	Venus (star) day	Friday
sábado	sawaru	kurami uru	rainbow day	Saturday
domingo	tuminku	inti uru	sun day	Sunday

**Figure 4.** Aymara neologisms: days of the week

*nas*(weeks). The announcer also thematizes the status of the calendar as an apparatus of time keeping as part of his announcing of the Andean new year. In lines 9–12, the radio announcer juxtaposes the Western, Gregorian calendar (“We’re arriving at the middle of this Gregorian calendar”) with the agricultural Aymara one (in that you know the new year is approaching) in lines 11–12. Hearing the broadcaster oscillate between “Western” and “Aymara” calendric time foregrounds for the listening audience a reality in which there are alternatives in the semiotic representation of time, ones which may even be set in opposition to one another. We might also extend this to the use of the neologism *illapuru*, which could similarly contrast with *jwivis*. Announcing the date situates the listener not only with respect to program’s broadcast but also within two competing, or at least copresent, semiotic frameworks for time.

### Happy New Year

On June 21, the night of the southern hemispheric winter solstice, people gather throughout highland Bolivia to make bonfires, socialize through the night, and greet the first rays of the dawn. This is a celebration of the new year (‘machaq mara’ in Aymara and ‘musuq wata’ in Quechua) or, alternately, foregrounding the solstice, it is called *willka kuti* ‘return of the sun’. The largest gathering takes place at the ruins of Tiwanaku and is an official state sponsored celebration. Tiwanaku was also the site of the first such celebration in 1980 by

1	<i>Jallakipana achachila awicha</i>	Greetings grandfathers and grandmothers
2	<i>kamaraki mama t'alla mallku kawrinakas</i>	also <i>mama t'allas</i> and <i>mallkus</i>
3	<i>jilata kullaka kamaraki wayna tawaqunakaraki</i>	brother, sister and even young boys, girls
4	<i>jisk'alalanaka jumanakasa arumtt'atxaraptawa</i>	and little ones you are all welcome
5	<i>jichhurux niyaw ukaxa illapüru ukjamaxraki</i>	Now that it's <u>Thursday</u> , like that
6	<i>aka llamayu phaxsin niyaw akaxa tunka urunaka</i>	in this month of <u>May</u> , ten days
7	<i>mäkiptawayxi. urunakas päqanakas</i>	are almost done. The days, <u>the weeks</u>
8	<i>phaxsinakas jalakpun jaliwa</i>	the months are always running, flying.
9	<i>chikamaru puriñanixa</i>	We're arriving at the middle
10	<i>aka Calendario Gregoriano</i>	of this Gregorian calendar
11	<i>ukanxa utjiti wasa yatiqsta</i>	in that you know
12	<i>machax maraxa jak'achasinkaraki.</i>	the new year is approaching.
13	<i>Jilata Martín Tarki jupampi chikañtasiñani</i>	Together with brother Martin Tarki
14	<i>ukjamaxa sapumayniw arumt'atapta</i>	every one of you is welcomed
15	<i>qallantañaniwa wakichawisampi.</i>	we'll start with our program.

**Figure 5.** Opening of *Lengua Aymara*, Radio San Gabriel, May 2007

activists affiliated with such Indianist political formations as the Movimiento Indio Tupak Katari (MITKa), Movimiento Universitario Julián Apaza (MUJA), and the Partido Indio. The inaugural event took place at the ruins despite objections from the archaeological site administrators and relative disinterest from Aymara locals (Portugal Mollinedo 2012). Three decades later, in 2010, however, the Bolivian government would designate June 21 a national holiday and sponsor large celebrations of the Andean new year at the Tiwanaku ruins.

Official state recognition of the holiday now also comes through smaller gestures, such as the greeting an Aymara member of the La Paz municipal council, Beatriz Álvarez, distributed among her constituents to celebrate the new year in 2016 (fig. 6). The flyers included an illustrated image of the councilwoman in the dress typical of an urban Aymara woman, or *chola*, with celebratory ribbons unfurling behind her and the logos of municipal officialdom along the bottom. The flyers were produced with text in both Aymara and Spanish, reading in Aymara, “May our eternal Ayamara nation’s *illas* and *ispallas* bring all the citizens of La Paz a good new year,” and in Spanish, “May the *illas* and *ispallas* in this new year



**Figure 6.** La Paz municipal council Machaq Mara greeting. Retrieved from Council-woman Beatriz Álvarez Jahuirá's official Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/BeatrizAlvarezConcejala](http://www.facebook.com/BeatrizAlvarezConcejala).

provide health, food, and welfare to maintain the unity of families and communities, renovating the spirit of *sumajakäwi*.” The Spanish version leaves key words of Aymara religious beliefs untranslated (*illas* and *ispallas* are spirits of the natural world) and also an Aymara phrase that has become a slogan of the Bolivian government—*suma jakäwi* (good life). In the Aymara version, “Feliz año 2016” remains in Spanish, as do the exhortations from the municipal council announcing that it is “YOUR municipal council” (TU consejo municipal; see fig. 6).

Whether in venerating the sun at the ruins of Tiwanaku or in the council-woman's address to “our eternal Aymara nation,” these celebrations of the new year invoke a deep historic past and foreground a traditional Aymara culture. In the process, they laminate a solar year beginning the morning after the winter solstice, in June, onto the Gregorian calendar which begins in January. Both the designation of the new year beginning in June and the holiday's support by the state are relatively new, yet the holiday is associated with Andean antiquity through the celebrations at archaeological sites or, in the case of the councilwoman's address, through invoking traditional religion and addressing her fellow Aymaras as an “eternal” people: *wiñay aymara markasan* ‘our eternal Aymara nation's’.

Official recognition of an Andean solar new year is part of a broader campaign of the Bolivian government to recognize and incorporate indigenous

Andean and Amazonian practices into official state practice in the name of decolonization. Some have charged the Bolivian government with mobilizing Indianist symbols cynically, of being an Indian government in show only. The editor of the Aymara nationalist publication *Pukara*, Pedro Portugal Mollinedo, for example, sees in the Andean new year's celebrations distortions of the intentions of those the Aymara nationalist activists who initiated these celebrations in the days of MITKa, MUJA, and the Partido Indio: "The intention was to dig up deep symbolism in order to rescue values that could serve as a platform for social and political transformation. These young men did not . . . imagine that their acts of protest in Tiwanaku would be transmuted into a 'New Year' that now conglomerates, in the middle of alcohol and incense, multitudes who confuse western New Age with Andean cultural identity" (Portugal Mollinedo 2012). If Portugal Mollinedo accurately describes elements of the large state sponsored celebrations at Tiwanaku, this characterization ignores ways in which this observance is taken up in earnest as an exercise of Aymara self-rule. Thirty kilometers to the south of Tiwanaku, in the department of Ingavi, the towns of San Andrés de Machaca and Jesús de Machaca and their surrounding communities gathered by the ruins of Qhunqhu Wankani to celebrate Machaq Mara. Hardly divorced from processes of political transformation, in the course of the day's celebrations community members elected their representatives to the local indigenous council for the coming year. Jesús de Machaca was among the first eleven municipalities to constitute themselves as autonomous indigenous municipalities in the wake of the passage of the new 2009 constitution. For the election of the new year's community leadership, the Jach'a Mallku and Mama T'alla community members vote with their bodies, similar to how candidates are elected in Iowa caucuses in the United States, by lining up behind the candidate they support. One community member told me, "Here there is no secret vote. You make a stand before the community and you're responsible for that decision." Candidates stand above the crowd on a chair, facing the sun, while community members line up behind them to demonstrate support, the candidates' future unfolding behind them.

### **Tupak Katari in Space**

In December 2013 the Bolivian Ministry of Communication's website counted down the days, hours, and minutes leading up to the launching of the country's first telecommunications satellite. Above the rapidly turning numbers of the counter rotated a series of phrases with a millenarian message. "The great day is arriving" appeared alternately as "¡El gran día está llegando!" in Spanish,

“Uka jach’a uru puriniskiwa” in Aymara, “Jatun punch’ay ch’ayamusan” (*sic*) in Quechua, and “Pe guasu ára oi guahe” in Guarani.

Named after the eighteenth-century Aymara martyr Tupac Katari, the satellite was built by the China Great Wall Industry Corporation, a subsidiary of the Chinese Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, in a collaboration between the Chinese and Bolivian governments. It cost 300 million dollars, 250 million dollars of which came as a loan from the China Development Bank. The 5.3 ton, roughly 2 meter by 2 meter satellite was launched on December 20, 2013, outside the city of Xichang in Sichuan Province.

People living in the more remote rural corners of Bolivia’s expansive territory, roughly one and a half times the size of Texas, have in many cases not had access to telephone, television, radio, or internet. The Tupac Katari satellite has changed this by ensuring coverage in all of Bolivia’s national territory. Schools and health centers in remote rural areas previously without access can now communicate with regional centers. One report featured on the telecommunications website describes the situation in the far east of the country, where a school now has internet but no sports equipment nor a fence to keep out snakes and wild animals: “Thank god, no snake has bitten anyone yet, they kill them before they can do that,” said the director of [a school in La Fortuna], Liliana Caballero, who applauds the arrival of the internet with the same happiness she would when, one day, the school has a fence.

As the satellite was launched from China, if the launch became a spectacle for Bolivians it was only through mediatized events. The Bolivian communications ministry’s campaign around the launch became a spectacle of modernity for Bolivian public with a representational logic reminiscent of what Brian Larkin (2008) discusses in the case of British colonial infrastructure. Larkin describes the bridges, roads, telephone lines, and infrastructure built by the British as having operated in a mode he calls “the colonial sublime,” spectacles of colonial rule that served to establish “the conceptual promise of colonialism and its self-justification—the freeing of natives from superstitious belief by offering them the universalizing world of science” (7).

The campaign surrounding the satellite’s launch is operating within a starkly different sociohistoric context but might be considered as an effort on the part of the Bolivian state to evoke a *decolonial sublime*. Here, too, the aim is to inspire awe through the promise of technology and infrastructure, but in this case the aim is also to inspire commitments to notions of indigeneity and ones with markedly temporal contours. The ministry’s online, print, radio, and television campaigns framed the extension of Bolivian telecommunications infra-

structure into space in Indianist terms. Naming the satellite Tupac Katari and the prominent use of indigenous languages on the website are examples of this. In addition to the satellite's name and the emblematic use of Quechua, Aymara, and Guarani, the ministry also drew upon Indianist semiotic frameworks for time in a television spot. The campaign promoting the launching of Tupac Katari presents Bolivia's technologically advanced present, and future, as an inheritance of an indigenous, Andean past.

The televised announcement opens with a shot of the Tiwanaku ruins with a female narrator announcing that "our indigenous first nations always observed the heavens to read our past and our future." As she continues, the frame cuts to a lowland Indian gazing out from the jungle toward the viewer and then shifts to one of the large satellite dishes at the Amachuma station. On screen, text announces that "Bolivia enters the space era." The female voice narrating continues, "Today technology permits us Bolivians to recuperate our cosmic inheritance." The video shows scenes from the inauguration at the Amachuma station, with jubilant crowds, including many men in ponchos, and public leaders donning floral garlands. President Morales's speech thanking the Bolivian people interrupts the female voice narration, while the text on screen thanks him for his vision and declares this event a "camino a un futuro milenario" (road to a millenarian future). The shot cuts to an image of the earth as viewed, we can presume, from the perspective of the satellite orbiting through space, with onscreen text imploring the viewer to "discover your cosmic inheritance" and the female narrator's voice closing by saying, "No existe un futuro sin un pasado presente" (No future exists without a present past). These closing words resonate with the Aymara adage cited by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui—"Qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani." The viewing public is implored to see indigeneity in modernity, to see their Incan past as the key to their future (fig. 7).

The Tupac Katari satellite is part of a broader investment in infrastructure by the Bolivian government that includes expanding and improving the national road network and, in the capital city of La Paz, the construction of an aerial cable car system, *Mi Teleférico*. Seven aerial gondolas connect twenty stations across the cities of El Alto and La Paz, currently covering a distance of ten kilometers (six miles) and a 400-meter change in elevation. The system began operating in 2014, and by the time of its completion it is slated to have eleven lines and thirty-nine stations and to cover 34 kilometers (21 miles). The gondolas have already dramatically reduced travel times across the two cities, altering the space-time configuration of urban life in Bolivia's capital. What could have been a two-hour journey on multiple crowded buses can now be less than

Female narrator	Nuestros pueblos originarios siempre observaron el cielo para leer nuestro pasado y futuro. Hoy la tecnología nos permite a los bolivianos a recuperar nuestra herencia cósmica. El dos de diciembre se inauguró la estación terrena de Amachuma.	Our indigenous first nations always observed the heavens to read our past and our future. Today technology allows us Bolivians to recuperate our cosmic inheritance. On December 2 the Amachuma Earth Station was inaugurated.	Tiwanaku ruins, wiphala flag
			Shirtless Lowland Indian looking out from behind bushes (Text: observar el cielo / 'observing the heavens')
			Satellite dishes in Amachuma (Text: Bolivia entra la era especial / 'Bolivia enters the space age' / Recuperar nuestra herencia cósmica / 'Recovering our cosmic inheritance')
President Morales	Felicidades hermanas y hermanos. Muchas gracias por su participación. Seguiremos avanzando dotándonos de medios para el bien de todo el pueblo boliviano.	Congratulations brothers and sisters. Many thanks for your participation. We will continue advancing endowing ourselves with media for the good of all the Bolivian people.	Scenes from the inauguration of the station. Crowds with men in red ponchos, floral garlands, national flags. (Text: 2 de diciembre / 'December 2' / Estación terrena Amachuma / Amachuma Station / Gracias a la vision de nuestro Presidente / Thanks to the vision of our President / Camino a un futuro milenarrio / Road to a millenarian future
Female Narrator	No existe futuro sin pasado presente. Satélite Tupac Katari. Tu estrella.	No future exists without a present past. Tupac Katari Satellite. Your star.	Crowds (Text: Futuro, Pasado, Presente / Future, Past, Present) View of Earth from Space (Text: Descubre tu herencia cósmica / Discover your cosmic inheritance)

**Figure 7.** Ministry of Communication public relations campaign for Tupak Katari satellite, <http://www.comunicacion.gob.bo/?q=20131205/13604>.

forty minutes in a suspended gondola with views across the city and surrounding mountains. This new transit system has also foregrounded Aymara within the linguistic landscape of the metropolitan area in a new way. Each of the twenty stations have both Aymara and Spanish names, with the Aymara names featured in larger print than the Spanish names on maps and signs (fig. 8).

**Conclusion**

The effort to scale political projects in terms of millennia is not novel, nor is innovation in marking time during periods that are revolutionary (or at least are considered to be so by their political leaders). France of the Jacobins, revolutionary Iran, and Chavez’s Venezuela, to name a few examples, have all seen



Figure 8. Aymara placenames on Mi Teleférico are placed above Spanish and in larger font. Photo by Susan Ellison, reproduced with permission.

governments reset calendars and clocks to mark the epoch as new, and we see this too in Bolivia. The resetting of clocks and the shifting of calendars in Bolivia, however, forms part of a material discursive struggle for indigenous authority, one that draws on Aymara/Quechua space-time semantics and extends a recurring trope of reversal and inversion. Material artifacts like clocks, maps,



and even satellites become recruited to foreground aspirations of *pachakuti*, of restoring Indian hegemony where previously there had been European dominance. A clock face turns backward toward a future where a Pacific coastline is returned to Bolivia. Celebrations of the new year are now held in the month of June, the halfway point of the Gregorian calendar. A country's first telecommunication satellite is presented as an inheritance of Inca astronomy. While seemingly disconnected phenomena, all of these events in contemporary Bolivia evoke the chronotope of *pachakuti*, an inversion and reversal of a space-time inherited from colonialism.

In these cases we encounter emblems of this chronotope that are presented as being essentially Andean and counterposed to Western modes of interpreting reality. Such essentialization introduces new erasures along the way. The *machaq mara* celebration has become an icon of Indianness, a status that obscures similarities shared with another celebration, also celebrated in Bolivia, throughout Latin America, and much of Europe—*la noche de San Juan*. The bonfires of *machaq mara* resemble the celebrations of the feast of Saint John the Baptist on June 23 throughout much of the Mediterranean Catholic world, and even in protestant corners of northwestern Europe and Scandinavia, making it a calque similar to European denotata in dehispanicized Aymara day names (sun-day, moon-day, etc; see fig. 4).

To starkly pose a contrast between Western and Andean systems of time reckoning recalls other contexts in which temporality becomes framed within a framework of colonial antagonism. On Barak (2013) discusses such a case in his work on technology and time in colonial Cairo in which a British/Western temporality came to be counterposed to an Arab/Egyptian one. Barak writes of the emergence of "Arab time" as a "countertempo" that emerged alongside a local conception and experience of the West through techno-infrastructure developments in Cairo. "Rather than 'othering' the West, effendi intellectuals 'factishized' it and began to view themselves as the West's 'others.' In this, they resorted to oversimplifications of timekeeping in the West, anointing 'Western time' as the gold standard. Europe, and increasingly also the United States as epitomes of mechanical punctuality, a status they enjoyed only in the colonies" (2013, 11). In the Egyptian case the juxtaposition of frameworks for time reckoning were oriented around metrics of punctuality and posed as counter to a Protestant "time is money" ethos. The Bolivian cases examined here are different in this regard in that, thanks to their anchorings to Aymara/Quechua space-time semantics, we encounter an alternate framing of advance and progress as a return to the past. This is not a return to the past in a nostalgic sense

but one that could be called “andinofuturism,” a forward-looking consideration of a time before colonization. As the cosmic aspirations of indigenous Andean tradition enter rank-and-file Bolivian state discourse, the Bolivian public is asked to “discover your cosmic inheritance,” to discover a cosmology of return, to a past visible before them, one that sees indigeneity within modernity.

The configuration of space-time and actors situated within it are as operative in notions such as “modernity,” “colonialism,” or even the nation as any realist novel. For indigenous Bolivians these were chronotopes predicated upon their exclusion, which included the figure of the Indian as tied to a traditional past, but in order to preserve a colonial order of exclusion. Placing the Indian outside modernity included physical exclusion, certainly from the government, but also from engineering programs in universities. Rather than simply rejecting or replacing previously dominant semiotic frameworks, we encounter here a recalibration between them. Enlightenment goals of progress and advance are not abandoned but reformulated, and their spatial underpinnings are set out for inspection by being contrasted with Andean space-time metaphors. While embracing a dichotomous opposition between Andean world views and Western ones, the initiatives here reject a dichotomy that sets Andean tradition and indigeneity outside of modernity or a technologically advanced future.

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