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GRASPING CACOPHONY IN BOLIVIAN HERITAGE OTHERWISE

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Abstract

A “fever” of heritage registration (*patrimonialización*) is raging at multiple levels of Bolivian society. Under the pro-indigenous government of Evo Morales, many laws have moved specific cultural expressions into legal framings as intangible cultural heritage. In part, this booming interest in heritage may be related to desires to capitalize on cultures, to support cultural rights claims, and/or some combination of these economic and cultural rights explanations. To help account for specific local uptakes of heritage assemblages and for differences between the levels of heritage dispute, however, this paper suggests also considering a “heritage otherwise” perspective. Rather than attributing local conflicts over heritage “cradle” declarations entirely to the impact of neoliberalism and UNESCO’s processes, this paper explores them in terms of the dynamics of origin politics and a preference for cacophonous modes of musical performance. Such dynamics and “cacophonous relations,” it is argued, are more about reproducing worlds than parceling them into new forms of property.

Keywords: intangible heritage; ontology; alternative epistemologies; indigeneity; cradle status; cacophonous relations; Bolivia

In 2012, we organized a four-day workshop titled “Rethinking Creativity, Recognition, and Indigeneity” in Coroico, Bolivia.¹ The aim of the workshop was to open up civil society discussions on issues of cultural property, and to do so with a group of Bolivians who usually were not in dialogue with one another. We framed part of the discussion on “heritage and knowledge” by posing the question: “What advantages and disadvantages do you believe may result when certain cultural expressions are officially declared as heritage?” This opened a Pandora’s box of what one participant called Bolivia’s “fever of heritagization” (*fiebre de patrimonialización*). Workshop participants from various regions gave accounts of the resulting quarrels when more than one locality or region had been declared the *cuna* (“cradle”) of a particular dance, music genre, or musical instrument. According to some participants, local politicians were using these declarations in politically instrumental ways. A consensus formed in workshop discussions around the identification of a serious concern: communities were fighting over the possibility of moving cultural expressions into heritage classifications and even talking about this process in terms of “patenting it as heritage.” In stating their concerns about this fever, some people emphasized the conflicts these policies sparked between communities; others questioned the property logic behind such enterprises.

While we attempted to bring a wide range of voices to the Coroico 2012 Workshop, various constraints on the ground still meant that those around the table generally entertained relatively cosmopolitan outlooks.² Also, a few participants had considerable knowledge of

¹ Details of the workshop can be found at: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/boliviamusicip/home.aspx>

² The “we” here refers to a five-person team that included the authors, a Bolivian musician of Aymara background who is active in CopySouth, another Bolivian musician with a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Brazil, and who has extensive fieldwork experience in the Bolivian lowlands, and a Hampshire College undergraduate student. In terms of the invited participants, we sought to balance highland and lowland representation, particularly given the Andean-centric position of Morales’ government. Gender balance was also a strong consideration throughout our organizing, although we did not come close to achieving it. We had two women on the five person organizing team and out of

UNESCO heritage regimes and experience in the Ministry of Cultures; for them, competing community claims to intangible heritage were particularly troubling. In our first reactions to the Workshop's discussions, we too shared participants' concerns about competing heritage declarations and aspirations to propertied claims. But as we began ethnographic work on the subject, collecting declaration stories for “intangible” Bolivian heritage, our outlook on these issues began to shift. We began to ask whether people with whom we have worked in the past--for example, rural indigenous peoples or urban migrants, many who have fewer cosmopolitan experiences--would have shared these same anxieties about competing heritage claims. Since our first reactions to the Workshop, we have come to propose what we call a “heritage otherwise” perspective, because we find that standard and even critical heritage approaches often lead to a limited set of pre-structured interpretations.

We came to the themes of this workshop as two ethnographers who have been conducting research on music and the politics of culture in Bolivia since the 1980s (Stobart) and 1990s (Bigenho). In these decades of work, “heritage” appeared relatively recently on our research agenda, and became central to our ethnography because our interlocutors wanted to discuss the topic. A notable moment in this regard came early in the 21st century when both of us were asked individually to participate in a roundtable in La Paz that focused on tangible and intangible heritage issues facing Bolivian music (annual ethnography meeting of the Museum of

20 invited participants, 5 were women. We also were wary of having too many participants who worked directly with the central or local autonomous governments. Could so-and-so of the Ministry of Cultures obtain permission to miss work and then leave her state work obligations at the door and participate as a musician and representative of civil society? We faced multiple dilemmas here. As we circled through names of possible participants, the heavy political issues of the moment—like the TIPNIS march that had arrived and set up a tent city in La Paz—also determined who might or might not have time to participate in a four-day workshop on the seemingly tame topics of creativity and recognition. The TIPNIS issue involved the proposed construction of a road through indigenous territory in Bolivia’s eastern lowlands. By 2012, TIPNIS activists had marched twice to La Paz in order to protest the road’s construction. The TIPNIS dilemma opened a major political divide between the government of Evo Morales and indigenous social movements that used to support his administration. The TIPNIS problem has been resolved officially through a “consultation,” but many opponents still question the legitimacy of this process.

Ethnography and Folklore-MUSEF)³ (Bigenho 2001, Stobart 2001). The heritage apparatus became even more familiar to Bolivians, at least in urban contexts after the 2001 declaration of Oruro's Carnival as a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity-- a declaration that strengthened national proprietary sentiments. Today, many Bolivians enthusiastically embrace UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the country's membership being ratified in 2006, the same year, Evo Morales took office as the country's first indigenous president.⁴ Since the early part of the 20th century, Bolivian "culture" and "folklore" have been national political themes, often falling within discussions of *indigenismo*-- a complex cultural politics we will gloss here as non-indigenous elites drafting indigenous expressions into the symbolic work that forges a national culture.⁵ However, in the long-term view, the heritage fever as discussed in the Coroico 2012 Workshop is relatively new in Bolivian politics of culture.

It is from outside the space of "heritage studies" and inside the ethnographic space of long-term work in Bolivia that we came to propose "heritage otherwise." Emerging from UNESCO's heritage policies, heritage studies' disciplining tendencies-- even for an interdisciplinary field--set up an array of standard questions and debates, a discursive structuring of the permissible (Foucault 1972).⁶ Heritage studies, a "booming field" (Kuutma 2013:1), attracts celebratory, practical, and critical voices from varied fields in and outside academia

³ This was titled, "*Mesa redonda: Patrimonio tangible e intangible en los ámbitos etnomusicológico, acústico y organológico andinos.*"

⁴ Morales' subject position as indigenous has been discussed in scholarly work (Canessa 2006), represented in films (*Cocalero*) and even set aside by Morales himself, who has instead emphasized his labor union background ("Evo 'nunca' se consideró un presidente indígena," *Página siete* 25 de septiembre 2011, pg. 7). However, Morales' victories in several elections and referendums, until that of February 2016, counted on voters who identified Morales as one of their own, whether through identifications that related to a shared idea of "being indigenous" or being from humble origins.

⁵ A discussion of the complexities of *indigenismo* are beyond the scope of this article. For Bolivian *indigenismo* see Salmón (1997), Bigenho (2005), and Bigenho (2006). For *indigenismo* in other areas of Latin American, see Favre (1998), and in Peru see Poole (1997), de la Cadena (2000), and Mendoza (2004).

⁶ For otherwise thinking, Restrepo and Escobar refer to the need "to move beyond the mechanical addition or melding of 'disciplines' that is often involved in the terms 'inter'-and 'transdisciplinarity'" (2005:116).

(archaeologists, cultural anthropologists, folklorists, development workers, museum curators, NGO workers, UNESCO bureaucrats etc.). However, this academic field--like any academic field-- engages a set of questions that drive but also limit inquiries. Some of these standard questions that would appear most relevant to our work in Bolivia include: What happens to indigenous heritage when UNESCO frameworks are built on nation-state membership (see Marrie 2009)? How can heritage programs be used in development agendas? What are the problems with using heritage in development (see Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000, Yúdice 2003)? What are the problems created by registering heritage (see Hafstein 2009)? In what ways does heritage intersect with concepts of intellectual property and the assignment of economic rights over culture (see Farah and Tremolada 2015)? How might heritage work lead to commodification and the ossification of creative work (see Kapchan 2014)? How are heritage policies a form of state sponsored dispossession (Hafstein 2014), another form of neoliberal governmentality (Coombe 2012), a neoliberal privatization of culture (Breglia 2006), or both neoliberal governmentality and openings for resistance and social movements (see De Cesari 2010, Albro 2010)? These are all pertinent heritage studies questions that resonate with details within the Bolivian heritage landscape. In “heritage otherwise,” however, we argue for interpretive space that, by starting from ethnographic work rather than the study of “heritage,” allows for narratives that run parallel to these predetermined debates. We do not deny the presence in Bolivian heritage “scapes” of UNESCO's discursive frameworks.⁷ Many Bolivians do hope to strike it rich in heritage, attracting tourism dollars to their communities. Other Bolivians are fearful of the transformations that have come with the tourism promotion of Oruro's Carnival, post heritage declaration. However, within Bolivia's heritage fever we are

⁷ For the "scapes" concept see Appadurai (1990). For the "scapes" concept as applied to heritage see Di Giovine (2009).

encountering elements that become ethnographically flattened by following the now naturalized UNESCO-driven heritage studies discourse.

We use “heritage otherwise,” not to name a specific reaction or local reading of heritage, like “ambivalent” (Chadha 2006, Breglia 2006, Scher 2012), “dissonant” (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, Smith 2006, Kuutma 2012, Cardeira da Silva 2012, Johnson 2014), or “counter” (Byrne 2009) heritage, all of which could describe different heritage practices in Bolivia; these descriptors still cling closely to the heritage studies discursive framework, albeit from contestatory angles. The heritage studies discursive apparatus structures its resistances and discontents. Instead, we propose “heritage otherwise” as an interpretive ethnographic approach that certainly does not replace this apparatus, but that attempts to open space around what has become all too foretold. We propose this opening in relation to both a global politics of knowledge and a rethinking of social science epistemological approaches. That is, we draw inspiration on the one hand from Latin Americanist scholars who, in an attempt to decenter dominant modes of analysis as emanating from the West, call for thinking “otherwise” about all knowledge production systems (Restrepo and Escobar 2005, Mignolo cited in Escobar 2004). On the other hand, we draw from recent work on ontologies (Viveiros de Castro 2013, de la Cadena 2010, Blaser 2013, Harrison 2013, Candea 2014), as well as from a specific call for ethnographic attention to epistemological difference (Gershon 2011).

In proposing heritage otherwise, we will refer to an example that was raised at the Workshop, and about which we have subsequently conducted further research: the *ch'uta*. This is a distinctive male dance figure with an extravagantly embroidered costume, who typically dances with a woman partner in Carnival. Caquiaviri and Corocoro, two distinct municipalities in the Pacajes province (La Paz Department), have been engaged in a heated dispute over the

origins of this cultural expression. Local rivalries were sparked in 2008 when La Paz Department declared Caquiaviri the *cuna* or “cradle” of the ch’uta (Resolution 2078). These hostilities were further complicated and intensified a year later, when a second resolution was passed by La Paz Department recognizing Corocoro as the cradle specifically of the ch’uta’s *costume* (Resolution 0207).⁸ In 2011, the ch’uta was then declared heritage at a national level, with the province of Pacajes recognized as its “cradle and place of origin” (Law 184). How should we understand the local hostilities over these heritage claims? How should we interpret the national-level declaration that attempts to defuse local conflict by identifying the ch’uta’s origins with the province (“Pacajes”) in which both towns are located?

In this article, we argue for a “heritage otherwise” approach to create an interpretive ethnographic space beyond UNESCO-driven heritage studies approaches. While we do not deny that UNESCO discourse structures many heritage expressions in Bolivia, we argue for putting ethnography first and for considering current heritage politics in relation to a longer-term historical perspective on local politics of culture. We do so in order to look at heritage dynamics at work within Bolivian borders, processes that cannot help but be connected to international regimes and nationalist politics, but that tend to receive less coverage, perhaps because they do not necessarily enter the officialdom of the UNESCO lists. We ask how we might better understand legally expressed battles between neighboring communities over the cradle status of a particular dance or music genre.

The rest of the article is organized in four sections. First, we consider the meanings of declaratory resolutions and laws about intangible heritage in Bolivia's contemporary political juncture. Second, we expand on what we mean by “heritage otherwise.” Third, we suggest that

⁸ “Corocoro y Caquiaviri se disputan el origen de la danza del ch’uta,” *Página siete* 20 de febrero 2012, <http://www.fmbolivia.tv/corocoro-y-caquiaviri-se-disputan-el-origen-de-la-danza-del-chuta/> accessed Aug. 4, 2015.

cradle status declarations, next to other ideas about creativity and recognition, may also be linked to specific ways of thinking about places of origin in the landscape, a concept we call *paqarina*. Here we cautiously redeploy a term with specific historical resonances in the Andean context, fully aware of the possible accusations of essentializing, Andeanism, and even imperialist nostalgia (Starn 1991, Rosaldo 1989). We use the term as a way to move forward with other ways of thinking about competing declarations of origins. Fourth, we argue that ch'uta cradle status disputes, fought through legal declarations, look something like forms of ritual competition that are central to reproducing social, natural, and spiritual relations in many Bolivian contexts. Because we work in music and will draw on examples from this experience, we refer to these as *cacophonous relations*: here reproduction depends on competition, but also upon the lack of officially declared winners, a practice that accommodates multiple and even contradictory stories of victory.

Dance by Dance, Law by Law in a Heritage Happy Country

Bolivia has been involved in several heated and headline-hitting international-level disputes over intangible heritage claims—quarrels that can be understood from a fairly standard UNESCO-driven analytical perspective. By contrast, the case of the ch'uta—which we examine in this paper—operates at a different and more localized level.⁹ To appreciate this point some background to the broader international context is necessary. For example, in 2009, Karen Schwarz, Peru's Miss Universe contestant dawned a stylized *diablada* or devil dance costume and stirred up an international controversy with Bolivia. The devil dance is one of the most distinctive dances of Bolivia's Oruro Carnival, the festival of UNESCO “masterpiece” fame.

⁹ Indeed, these different levels resist scalability (Tsing 2015:37-38). For heritage and scale also see Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000:181).

Although the devil dance has also long been danced in parts of southern Peru and northern Chile, its display by the Peruvian contestant in this high profile beauty pageant, provoked Bolivian government officials to threaten to take Peru to the international tribunal in The Hague for failing to acknowledge the dance's Bolivian origins.¹⁰ The controversy provoked a crusade to “protect” the perceived Bolivian origins of particular cultural expressions, and the founding of the citizens' Bolivian Organization for the Defense and Diffusion of Folklore (OBDEFO). In the words of Evo Morales, it was precisely “to avoid other countries claiming ownership,” that the 2011 law 149 declared the diablada dance as intangible heritage of the Bolivian nation. At the same time, ten other dances were similarly enshrined in legal heritage declarations.¹¹ Our ethnography has revealed similar declaratory legislations about heritage at departmental levels; the ch'uta case takes us between these different governing levels but does not yet enter the international fray. It does, however, showcase the use of a national declaration to smooth rough waters between local feuding towns. How do we make sense of this plethora of heritage declarations and the local heritage competitions that seem to be popping up all over Bolivia?

¹⁰ For further discussion see Bigenho and Stobart n.d.b.

¹¹ Of these eleven dances, some—such as the ch'uta (law 184), *taquirari* (law 210), *chovena* (law 213), Afro-Bolivian *saya* (law 138), dances of San Ignacio de Moxos (law 172), and the dances of the *Jalq'as* (law 178)—are regional in character or represent minority Afro-descendant and indigenous groups. The others—namely the diablada (law 149), *kullawada* (law 134), *morenada* (law 135), *llamerada* (law 136), and *caporales* (law 137)—are widely performed in urban ritual and folklore parades around the country and in the diaspora. The dances in the second listed group are hugely popular across mestizo and indigenous populations in urban contexts; their costumes and choreography are subject to constant innovation—as dance groups and the artisans who supply them constantly compete for novelty. Useful lists of these and other laws are to be found on the website *Apuntes Jurídicos* <http://jorgemachicado.blogspot.co.uk/p/leyes-de-bolivia.html> and the webpages of Jorge Medina, Bolivia's first Afro-Bolivian *diputado* <http://www.jorgemedina.org/p/leyes.html>. These laws were pushed in the legislature by Deputies Alejandro Zapata and Jorge Medina, and with motivations from the La Paz Association of Carnival Dance Troupes, <http://chutaboliviano.blogspot.com>. Over subsequent years several other dances or rituals involving dance have been proclaimed heritage by the Bolivian state. For example, in 2012 the Tinku ritual (law 237), Pujllay and Ayrachi of the Yampara culture (law 249), Waka waka or waka thocori (law 250) and the Siringuero-Castañero y Pescador Amazónico (law 330); in 2013 the “Chunchos” dance of Tarija was announced as entering the heritage process and, in 2014 the “Tobas” also entered these processes (law 511). See <http://www.diputados.bo/index.php/leyes/leyes-promulgadas> accessed Aug. 16, 2015.

Critics might dismiss these piecemeal heritage declaration laws that end up nowhere. They are passed symbolically, with the initiative of the representative from a particular place. Many consist of two succinct articles, one that declares the expression as intangible heritage of the nation or a specified region, and another that might name a place as “cradle” or “capital” of the expression. In our fieldwork, heritage-making actors at many levels of society lament the lack of regulations to accompany these laws. Although nobody was able to explain precisely how such “regulations” would function, people seemed to believe they might magically bring government funding for research and/or infrastructure. As an employee of the Ministry of Cultures and Tourism mentioned to us in 2015, the laws just sit on the books, because passing the corresponding regulation requires participation by “the communities of practice”— a loaded reference indeed as UNESCO heritage studies scholars attest (see Adell, Bendix, Bortolotto and Tauschek 2015) — and there the disputes begin. Within narrow formalist views of law, these declarations are read as meaningless because they include no clear statements about what they are meant to achieve, and because they never move beyond the declaratory legislation. Measurable heritage achievements, in UNESCO or other instrumentalized terms, will not be found within these declarations.

Even *sans* regulations, however, such legal declarations still produce social effects; these processes, while invisibilized within formalist legal views, remain analytically important within anthropological approaches to law that focus at once on cultural meanings, social relationships, legitimacy, political struggle, race, and global systems (see Merry 1992, Coutin 2000, Yngvesson 2010, Coombe and Weiss 2015),¹² approaches that take seriously the broader context

¹² Rosemary Coombe and Lindsay Weiss critique the “legal formalism” and “institutional instrumentalism” with which heritage scholars approach human rights (2015:52); an anthropological approach to law, on the other hand sees “law as an authoritative cultural discourse that provides legitimating political resources in social struggles...” (2015:52-53).

beyond artificially carved fields of inquiry, (Nader 2002:22), whether these fields are “law” or “heritage.” As ethnographers, we take seriously the recent multiplication of these laws that—even if not producing formal institutional outcomes—are motivating Bolivians in activities related to their own cultural practices.

Let's take a look at the national context in which these declaratory heritage laws are emerging. The Bolivian government's proprietary views of national culture date from well before the implementation of neoliberal policies in the 1980s, and run concurrently with what Rodney Harrison has described as an “intensification” of heritage activities, anchored by the 1972 World Heritage Convention (2013:67). The Bolivian government has played a proactive role in emerging global projects of managing national “folklore” and what would eventually become known as “intangible heritage.” Complaints about perceived appropriations of Bolivian dance and music forms by neighboring Andean countries have rumbled away since the early 1970s, when the Argentine musician Jaime Torres played the *charango* in the music film *Argentinísima* (Rios 2014). The global story-telling of intangible heritage often includes the 1973 communication sent by Bolivia's Minister of External Relations and Religious Affairs to the Director General of UNESCO requesting that a protocol be added to the Universal Copyright Convention that would protect the popular arts and cultural patrimony of all nations (Sherkin 2001, Kurin 2001, Guevara 2011, Hafstein 2014, Rios 2014). Even before this communication, in 1968, Bolivian legal frames placed folkloric music of unknown or deceased authors in the “public domain” as it also declared these expressions to be “property of the State.”¹³ These national proprietary concepts were incorporated into the Author's Rights Law of 1992, thus allowing the state to stand as the de facto author in the case of collective indigenous expressions

¹³ President René Barrientos' 1968 Supreme Decree 08396. In other writing, we address the particular readings of “public domain” in Bolivia (Bigenho and Stobart n.d.a, Bigenho, Cordero, Mújica, Roza, Stobart 2015).

(see Bigenho 2002:221-225). While the Bolivian state has a long 20th century trajectory of making claim to the “folklore” and now “intangible heritage” within its territory, we argue that something different marks the more recent declaratory processes we outlined.¹⁴

Bolivia’s contemporary heritage fever is raging in a country where a majority or near majority of the population identifies as indigenous.¹⁵ In his third term as of this writing, Morales oversaw the creation of a new constitution (2009) that re-founded the country as a “plurinational state” and granted specific rights to indigenous peoples; as part of a platform that promised a “process of change,” he has continued to hold forth, at least rhetorically, on an explicitly “anti-neoliberal” and “decolonizing” program. This moment of reconstituting the nation-state has brought civil society conversations of competing bills--about everything, not just heritage--that are expected to become laws and put in action the principles of the new constitution.¹⁶ One of these laws, the 2010 Law to Frame Autonomies and Decentralization, among other things, also sanctioned multiple levels at which specific heritage declaration laws might emerge. Such decentralizing moves, however, were preceded by the neoliberal frameworks of the 1994 Law of Popular Participation, which expanded municipal level governance. One of the still open questions in our work is: what has or has not changed between the neoliberal and decolonial decentralizing projects? Even while scholars continue to debate the rhetorical and real interruptions of neoliberalism in Bolivia (see below), we find “heritage as neoliberal governmentality” as an insufficient interpretation of the country's current heritage fever in all its

¹⁴ While Bolivia participates actively in UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, rather than “safeguarding” these expressions for the benefit of humanity, with these domestic laws, policy makers often have in mind a protection from perceived appropriation or claims of extra-national origins. In other writings, we develop further these nationalist heritage politics for the Bolivian case (Bigenho and Stobart n.d.b).

¹⁵ In the 2001 census, 62% of Bolivians self-identified as indigenous, and only 48% did so in the 2012 census. The details behind this difference are beyond the scope of this article. However, the shift reflects fluidity and complexity around the question of who is indigenous in Bolivia.

¹⁶ In a larger overall project, we are addressing this unique moment of legal re-founding and how to read heritage declarations within it.

complexities. What we can say to clarify the timeline is that the ch'uta departmental level “Resolutions” (2008, 2009) were passed during Morales' presidency (2006-), but just before the new Constitution (2009) came into effect, and that the national level declaration (2011) was passed just after the introduction of the Law of Autonomies (2010). The now “plurinational” legislature includes a special commission within the chamber of deputies largely dedicated to passing heritage laws. It also gives departmental governments (referred to as “*gobernaciones*” since the post-2010 autonomies rubric) the powers to pass laws (not just resolutions). Such lawmaking tends to take place in piecemeal style, one by one, declaring as intangible heritage specifically named ritual dances, festivals, regional cuisine, and even urban music teaching institutions.¹⁷

Legislative heritage declarations are proliferating at precisely this moment when Bolivians are attempting to reconstitute and decolonize their state. In contrast with previous state control over “folklore,” the present moment is characterized at the national level by detailed legislation, each dance and genre carrying its own specific law, sometimes brought forward by the local deputy in Congress from the corresponding region of the given cultural expression. Departments are passing similar genre-specific declarations. Some actors pushing these declarations view their work within a heritage ladder they hope to climb, working from local to national to UNESCO level declarations. Other actors are consciously and explicitly setting aside any UNESCO aspirations. These legislative practices differ from UNESCO's required practices of inventory, even as they produce “heritage inflation” in the process (LacARRIERE 2008:4-12). Indeed, scholars have noted that Latin American approaches to heritage have often been driven by the idea of *the collection* (Torres and Romero 2005:283). UNESCO convention materials do

¹⁷ Law 2872 (2004) declared a regional and national priority the building of the National Academy of Music ‘Man Céspedes’ in Cochabamba. Eight years later, law 294 (2012) declared the ‘Man Céspedes’ Academy “cultural and intangible heritage” of the nation.

not indicate that such inventoried materials should be codified, one-by-one in laws. Nor do they specify anything like the multiple and sometimes competing cradle declarations we can document for the Bolivian context. Perhaps responding to this distinctive Bolivian heritage uptake, UNESCO's coordinator for the region, Fabián Bedón Samaniego, in a 2015 visit to Bolivia, stated, "not all that is culture needs to be declared heritage."¹⁸

One might read the proliferation of heritage declaration laws as a part of an expanded management system, one that is quite consistent with other discussions of neoliberal governance and law. Neoliberal state governance can be described in general terms as a streamlining in social programs, but with a proliferation of new governing laws that set the terms of neoliberal management (see Sawyer 2004:7-9, 14). However, to date, all the heritage laws we mention are stuck in a pre-regulatory limbo. As such they appear as a set of local and nationalist political moves that rarely move beyond points of pride for the corresponding politicians and raised expectations of local populations.

What marks this heritage fever as distinct from previous politics of culture in Bolivia is the specific naming of genres and sometimes the naming of specific cradles within the Bolivian nation-state. In addition, local level initiatives have been given more political clout under the 2010 Autonomies Law. It no longer suffices to declare a general category of "folklore" as property of the Bolivian nation-state; instead, these expressions are named dance by dance, law by law, and the initiative for this legalization comes from both the state and local actors. The Comaroffs might call this "lawfare" (2009:56); John Collins might call it "enclosure" (2011), and Michael Brown might refer to the Weberian "iron cage" of total heritage protection (2003). In lacking their corresponding regulations, however, these multiple laws may not be leading to

¹⁸"No todo lo que es cultura tiene que ser declarado patrimonio," *Página siete* 28 de julio 2015 <http://www.paginasiete.bo/cultura/2015/7/28/todo-cultura-tiene-declarado-patrimonio-64570.html> accessed Aug. 14, 2015.

total enclosure or to neoliberal privatized heritage; but they certainly are stirring up animosities between neighboring countries and communities. Part of our argument suggests alternative ways of interpreting these competing legal maneuvers.

To summarize, genre-specific heritage declaration laws represent something different within the long-term trajectory of Bolivian politics of culture. While many national level declarations like that of the diablada clearly express nationalist anxieties about expressions that may be claimed by neighboring countries, we argue that the competing *ch'uta* laws at the regional level (departmental, in this case), can carry quite different meanings, outside a mere scaling down and repetition of national identity politics. For these alternative interpretations we turn to heritage otherwise.

Heritage Otherwise

In heritage otherwise, we refer to a theoretical framework that draws from an eclectic and some might even say contradictory set of inspirations--from those who have proposed emphases on “the otherwise,” ontologies, and alternative epistemologies (Restrepo and Escobar 2005, Ochoa Gautier 2006:820, de la Cadena 2010, Blaser 2013, Gershon 2011). Our argument is motivated by debates about politics of knowledge production and recent anthropological discussions that--to state in admittedly overly simplified terms--challenge scholars to take more seriously the ethnographic differences encountered in research. These two motivations are not completely disconnected, as conceptual frameworks emanating from the centers of power in the Global West/North have been critiqued for overtaking analyses of what is happening on the ground in the global peripheries, where narratives of Enlightenment and modernity tend to lose their universalizing explanatory force (Franco 1999, Pratt 2002).

Heritage studies tends to come from an admittedly Eurocentric position and that Eurocentrism often is configured as expanding out in the world through colonial projects (Herzfeld 2015:534). Part of our heritage otherwise approach calls for recognizing the politics of knowledge behind this apparatus, naming that dominance, and then allowing other heritage-like things to be revealed. What happens at the peripheries of these expanding projects cannot be summed up as some variation of or reaction to what happens at the core; or if it can be, we probably are not paying attention to ethnography and the historical specificities of our contexts.

A UNESCO driven heritage studies interpretation might express the concern as heard in the Coroico 2012 Workshop: UNESCO instruments are causing discord among “communities of practice.” Or it might open discussion of other pre-set concerns: the inventory process may lead people to expect some granting of intellectual property or economic rights, even though UNESCO operates primarily as a cultural rights regime;¹⁹ indigenous communities may be expressing resistance to the nation-state, a general problem of UNESCO regimes.²⁰ These interpretations are simply off the mark, however, when it comes to interpreting competitive legislations to claim cradle status for cultural expressions--cases that have nothing to do with “official” inventory processes of the Ministry of Cultures, cases in which participants are not clamoring for exclusive intellectual property-like rights over these expressions, and cases in which those pushing for declaratory legislation can hardly be interpreted as indigenous communities resisting the nation-state.

¹⁹ For debates on drawing a line between UNESCO's cultural rights programs (heritage) and WIPO's work on issues of economic rights (intellectual property), see Aikawa Faure (2009:15, 25, 33-34). Heritage claims may be about economic rights with an eye on future capital investments and heritage claims may be articulated with interests in cultural and political rights of marginalized populations, but practices show that the line between them is drawn rather artificially. Neoliberal frameworks often seamlessly combine these two rights regimes in neoliberal multiculturalism (see Albro 2010:160-161, Hale 2005). Indigenous peoples often move swiftly between these types of motivations; scholars note that outsiders often misread cultural property claims as purely commercial in intent (Greene 2004:224, Brown 2003:38, Coombe 2009:407).

²⁰ Framers of the UNESCO Convention were aware of these issues in relation to minority populations within the nation-state (see Aikawa-Faure 2009, Marrie 2009, Kearney 2009).

Other compelling heritage analyses read new heritage management schemes through the lens of neoliberalization. As Coombe and Weiss argue, however, in heritage studies neoliberalism is too often reduced to ideology: “a generic adjective for states, policies, and economic practices, a process of economizing heritage goods and/or promoting socio-economic development in competitive global economies. It is often conflated with economic globalization and the instrumental expansion of international tourism” (2015:44). We have no intention of rehashing neoliberalism's debates here because, like other monster interpretive frames, neoliberalism threatens to overshadow the particularities of ethnographic work, a point Gershon (2011) makes clearly in her essay on neoliberal agency, and to which we will return. However, there are two things to consider here: neoliberalism as interpretive frame and neoliberal politics in the context in which we work. We take a brief detour to situate Bolivia in relation to neoliberal policies and the government's contemporary “anti-neoliberal” “process of change.”

To summarize briefly, neoliberal policies, first applied in Bolivia in 1985, never achieved the Gramscian status of “common sense” as outlined by David Harvey for the US case (2005:39), and instead were consistently met by mobilized resistance throughout its different phases (see Nash 1992; Postero 2005, 2013). The legislative work required by neoliberalism's push for smaller states brought three new laws to Bolivia in the 1990s: the Law of Educational Reform that structured a World Bank-funded bilingual and intercultural program; the Law of Popular Participation that aimed to decentralize municipal governance and recognize existing indigenous organizations; and the Law of Capitalization that set up favorable economic environments for foreign capital investments.²¹

²¹ The laws of Educational Reform and Popular Participation, in which cultural difference played a key role, can be considered within what Robert Andolina, Nina Laurie, and Sarah Radcliffe refer to as “social neoliberalism,” what “emerged out of a dialogical partnership between neoliberalism, feminism, environmentalism, multiculturalism and the ideals of grassroots democracy” (2009:9-10).

Even as the three laws moved forward in implementation, oppositional sectors of society presented their own readings of the laws. The Bolivian Workers Union (*Central Obrero Boliviano* or COB) lost no time in calling this trio “the three damned laws” (Bigenho 1999:958); on the ground, these laws were interpreted as the state washing its hands of its responsibilities for the social welfare of its citizens. Others interpreted the multiculturalism embedded in these laws as new clothes on the same old assimilationist politics that failed to address the question of socio-economic inequality, and certainly did not touch on racism (Gustafson 2009:7). It was within this political milieu that Bolivian scholar, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui coined the term “authorized indian” (*indio permitido*) to refer to the culturalized subject that fits so well in neoliberal multiculturalism.²²

Nevertheless, these processes contributed to a neoliberalization of heritage politics, a process through which heritage privatization and management shifted to municipal levels particularly with the 1994 Law of Popular Participation. For example, Albro details how Cochabamba municipalities were encouraged to develop their heritage agendas through various fairs and festival performances in which cultural products and activities were defined as property assets, and these politics were buttressed further under the decentralizing processes of the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (2010:156). Such activities were consistent with practices that promoted culture as a path to development, usually enlisting local and non-state organizations in their implementation (Radcliffe and Laurie 2006).²³ Culture as object became seen as an area of private capital investment; but such framing also set the groundwork for potential political

²² Charles Hale extended the use of this term to discuss other Latin American intersections of neoliberalism and indigeneity (2004). In relation to the Central American context, Hale also argued that neoliberalism, with its supposed focus on individual rights, had no problem adopting a language of multiculturalism and collective rights as a “compensatory measure to ‘disadvantaged’ groups” (2005:12). What Hale coined as “neoliberal multiculturalism” can be seen in other Latin American contexts. For Mexico, see Speed (2008). For Bolivia, see Postero (2005) and Gustafson (2009).

²³ As Radcliffe and Laurie stress, this took place in a “multiscalar milieu” that involved local, regional, national and international actors (2006:240).

mobilization for cultural and political rights (see Albro 2005). As several scholars argue, for all of neoliberal multiculturalism's problems, these policies also sowed the seeds for the conditions that made possible local mobilizations, Bolivia's momentous social movements of 2000 to 2005, and the 2005 election of an indigenous president (see Albro 2010:161, Kohl and Farthing 2006:146-147).

Our work on heritage-making began with this shift to a new political moment, when the Bolivian government began upholding rhetorically an explicitly anti-neoliberal program. Scholars continue to debate the limitations of such moves within a global system. The success or failure of this David versus global Goliath move is questioned precisely because the country continues to function under the "resource curse," and within neo-extractivist thinking, even after Morales' "nationalization" of hydrocarbon resources and the indigenous centered "process of change" (see Hylton and Thomson 2007, Kohl and Farthing 2012, McNeish 2013, Postero 2013).

Cultural heritage also can be seen as one more resource for possible extraction, following a long list of other elements like silver during the colonial period, tin in the 19th century and gas in the twenty-first. Such an interpretation resonates well with the Bolivian government's protectionist legal rhetoric crafted around cultural heritage they feel has been usurped by neighboring countries. On this international level, heritage for tourism is an explicit project. We call attention to the relatively new binomial and pluralized name of the responsible government agency: the Ministry of *Cultures* and Tourism. Minister Groux's perspective on cultural heritage's potential was enunciated in an interview Stobart conducted in 2008, when this unit was still only a "*Vice Ministry of Culture.*" As Groux reflected positively on how the future of tourism was to be found in "the exotic," he also sized up Bolivia's prospects next to Peru's:

“Peru is the world’s third most popular [tourist] destination... What does Peru have that Bolivia does not?”

However, we find heritage as a resource for possible extraction--with its focus on the economic rights that might be imagined at some future point of tourism's returns-- as inadequate to explain all the complexities of the present Bolivian heritage fever. Unlike silver or gas, the symbolic worlds of cultural resources have the potential to be renewed indefinitely.²⁴

Additionally, they may be framed as “a commons” rather than as commodities (Alonso González 2014:365). The more relevant question here is how and why seemingly non-rivalrous resources (cultural expressions) become construed as rivalrous in heritage processes. We argue that those rivalries have different meanings at international and intra-national levels. While heritage as a national resource in need of state protection certainly fits some stories we have encountered in Bolivia, this tale does not fully explain the local level heritage uptakes like intra-national competing heritage declarations and obsessions with cradle status. For this reason, we return to heritage otherwise.

To engage these worlds of difference we refer to those who have taken the ontological turn (Viveiros de Castro 2013, de la Cadena 2010, Blaser 2013, Harrison 2013, Candea 2014), or the “ontological opening” as was refined by Marisol de la Cadena (2014). Matei Candea is concerned with a different kind of politics, a politics that might not look at all like politics from a Western ontology (2014). We take inspiration from the ontological opening, particularly in its suggestions to look for the political in unexpected places (de la Cadena 2010), to “recuperate radical differences as something other than tradition” (Blaser 2013:550), and to “seek explanations beyond all-determining interpretations of modernity” (Blaser 2013:549).

²⁴ Nonetheless, this seemingly obvious point is contested by “otherwise” thinking. Local Andean consultants sometimes say that mineral “grows” in the mine “like potatoes” and that, if permitted to rest, mines recuperate their fertility in the same way as fields left fallow (Harris 1995:313).

Indigenous worlds have been central to those thinking through this ontological opening. For example, in Ecuador and Bolivia, significant indigenous movements have influenced state policies that have led to the recognition of the Pachamama, or Mother Earth, as a legal subject with rights. For those in the ontological opening, this case perfectly shakes up how a Western ontology views politics, and leaves open possibilities not of a universe but of a pluriverse (Blaser 2013:555-557, de la Cadena 2010:335-338). The legal subjectivity of the Pachamama, as a perfect ontological opening, calls into question the classic Western ways of viewing the world, the divisions of nature and culture, the separation of earth beings and human beings etc. The rights of the Mother Earth go hand in hand with emerging policies of “good living,” the Bolivian government’s specified alternative to “development,” an alternative story of modernity (Blaser 2013:556). Living well at the expense of others (development in the usual Western model) is imagined to be replaced by good living in community with others.

While we find the ontological challenge worth engaging, we proceed with caution, heeding the various critiques. On its tendency, for example, to look a lot like old ahistorical romantic primitivism (Weismantel 2015:142), to homogenize into a single model the complexities of diverse indigeneities (Ramos 2012:489), or even, through entrenching difference, “to make anthropology complicit in the perpetuation of the tools of colonialism” (Abercrombie 2016:103).²⁵ In relation to indigenous politics, we listen to those who warn that the epistemology /ontology divide seems to send us once again back to the Western universe, one in which radical difference has too often served as a justification for oppression (Briones 2013:560).

²⁵ The dangers of essentialism highlighted by Abercrombie are confronted by Marisol de la Cadena (2015), who uses Strathern’s (2004) notion of “partial connections” as a politically potent analytical tool. She stresses the individual interests, “political vocations,” and “gappy” circuit of connections between the various protagonists — institutions, herself, and indigenous and mestizo people—noting how “partial connections enable the analysis of how they appear within each other and at the same time remain distinct” (de la Cadena 2015:xxvii, 33).

The complexities of indigeneity in Bolivia confound any easy reading of the Morales government's state-level call for good living and ayllu politics. In Bolivia, those who look “indigenous” to outsiders may not self-identify as such at all, often referring to themselves as “*originarios*” from a particular place (see Canessa 2012). Or they may reference their origins in relation to an *ayllu*, a complex Andean organizational form or political unit, linked to ethnicity and place; “ayllu” encompasses notions of inheritance and intimate connections between communities and the localities they inhabit; “ayllu” also refers to indigenous socio-political structures with pre-Hispanic roots, which encompass shifting levels of relatedness and which can vary according to context and level (Platt 1986:231, Salomon 1991:22, Allen 1988, Urton 1984:39). The state-proposed scaling up from the Andean ayllu, however, proves problematic because many Bolivians do not live in ayllus and therefore, they express their indigeneity in very different ways (Fabricant 2013:168-170).²⁶

Bolivian indigeneities include other variants as well: lowland indigeneity (see Gustafson 2009, Postero 2007a); urban indigenous migrants to cities like El Alto, where ethno-territorial units, like the ayllu, are not necessarily part of the mobilizing framework (see Lazar 2008); highland Andean migrants to lowland regions who use indigenous discourses to mobilize performance politics to collectively claim land (see Fabricant 2012); Andean migrants to lowland regions who also may clash with lowland indigenous groups over government infrastructure projects (like the road through TIPNIS) that might provide jobs for highland Andean migrants, but challenge lowland indigenous rights of consultation (see McNeish 2013); and indigenous

²⁶ For example, Nicole Fabricant’s look at Bolivia’s world positioning in relation to climate change provides a key example (2013). To resolve climate change issues, the Bolivian government draws on the good living model as imagined to work in relation to Andean ethno-territorial units or *ayllus*. Fabricant highlights the dangers of solving global warming by taking too literally a scaling up of good living via the re-imagined ayllu, pointing to the fact that many indigenous peoples in Bolivia find no relevance in this reference; she also underscores the fundamental contradiction of taking an anti-carbon or anti-fossil fuel stance when the country’s economy relies so heavily on extracting precisely these resources (2013:174).

discourses as applied in the anti-neoliberal and decolonizing rhetoric of the Morales state, perspectives that connect with global discourses of indigeneity rather than with the multiple lived indigeneities in Bolivian territory (see Canessa 2006, Postero 2007b, Fabricant 2012).

In light of these diverse indigeneities, state ayllu politics must be seen as political rhetoric, with its own import, but not as how people on the ground experience being part of an ayllu or being indigenous. Reading radically “other” state moves as representative of the country’s indigenous peoples presents a major problem of misrecognizing Bolivia’s multiple indigeneities and of misreading the scale of these moves. We therefore steer away from an ontological reading of the Morales government’s indianist-inspired state policies that may overlook diverse indigeneities. Such interpretations prove problematic in their application from local to national scales, and particularly across the matrices of race and class distinctions that mark Bolivian society. Thus, we point to but avoid definitive positioning vis-à-vis the on-going debates about whether or not “ontology” is just another word for “culture” (see *Critique of Anthropology* 2010). Ultimately, we veer away from the full ontological turn, because we find just as much traction in Gershon’s call for alternative epistemologies.

Gershon, in thinking about how neoliberalism has become the go-to point of many anthropological interpretations, calls not for a return to the culture concept per se, but rather for the fostering of an anthropological imagination that pays attention to epistemological difference and social organization (2011:543). In her article on neoliberal agency she suggests that when anthropologists moved away from the culture concept, the discipline was left without the analytical tools needed precisely to critique neoliberalism (2011:539). She reminds us of the translation work involved in the local articulations of all neoliberal projects (2011:544). If Gershon proposes that anthropologists turn attention to these epistemological differences in spite

of neoliberalism's seemingly homogenizing forces, we propose to do the same, in spite of the homogenizing frames of UNESCO-driven heritage discourse. Much like Weismantel's call for a more historically and materially situated perspectivism in a study of archaeology (2015), we call for a historically and ethnographically situated approach to thinking otherwise about heritage, one that resists essentializing indigenous experiences as much as it resists essentializing modernity, neoliberalism, and heritage-- the other monster concepts that can threaten to swallow ethnographic complexities.

To close this section, we call for thinking otherwise about heritage, in ways that make space outside those frames determined by the knowledge production of the Global West/North. We set aside debates over the differences between ontology and epistemology, taking inspiration from the former and finding, for the Bolivian case, specific uses in Gershon's combined thinking about alternative epistemologies and neoliberalism. Ontology alone, which looks for the political in unexpected places, leaves us in an untenable position within an ethnographic context where Bolivians themselves are hungry for more conversations about what heritage means, how they might position themselves officially and legally in relation to this assemblage, and how they might achieve political outcomes through law. An otherwise approach also moves beyond formal and instrumental readings of the law, because law produces other effects worth considering, like cradle politics and cacophonous relations.

Cradle Politics

Let us return to the above-mentioned ch'uta dance and the two locales vying to claim its cradle status. The ch'uta is a key male dance figure that now features in the La Paz Carnival as well as

in these provincial locales. His costume includes an embroidered short jacket and embroidered trousers that billow out at the knees and taper back in at the ankles, a bit like a bullfighter's costume, but loose fitting and heavily weighted down by its decorative work. He also wears a *lluch'u*, a woven cap that comes down over the ears and a blue-eyed mask that parodies a European's face. The *ch'uta* usually wears a tie and black boots or dress shoes. His female partner wears a peplum style top, also embroidered but in a distinct style from the men's costume; the top comes in at the waist and then billows out in a very full ruffle. Female dancers match their tops with a *pollera* or full gathered skirt and a bowler hat. Historically, this dance is said to have been accompanied by flutes (*pinquillos* or *tarkas*), although today it is more often animated by brass bands.

Caquiaviri and Corocoro claimed cradle status for the *ch'uta*—the former in 2008 and the latter, with reference to the *ch'uta* costume, in 2009. In their claims, Caquiaviri residents related the historical roots of the *ch'uta* dance to nineteenth century agricultural traditions connected with the first fruits of harvest, the rainy season, and fertility. On the other hand, Corocoro residents pointed to twentieth century origins of the *ch'uta* and drew connections to the town's mining history. They emphasized the importance of the specific embroidered costumes of the dancers, and even boasted a book dedicated to the topic, *Corocoro, cuna del chuta: patrimonio intangible de La Paz*, as written by one of its major champions, Ramiro Cusicanqui (2009).

In thinking otherwise, we suggest that cradle status heritage claims may have little or nothing to do with authorship's insistence on originality, or even a place-based inalienable "mark of origin" from which new rents might be extracted (see Coombe and Aylwin 2011). The idea of distinctive local or regional cultural expressions emerging from particular places is commonplace in the rural Andes, albeit not unusual from a worldwide perspective (Casey

1996:33). For the Andean case, this is encapsulated in a well-known myth recorded by the Spanish chroniclers Molina and Betanzos, which tells how the various peoples brought into being by the creator God Wiracocha at lake Titicaca were sent out along subterranean waterways to specific places of emergence called *paqarinas* (Betanzos 1968, Molina 1943). Emerging from springs, rivers and caves – with their own distinctive dress, languages, and songs – these “first people” were able to claim rights to lands and waters for their descendants (Sherbondy 1992:54).

Contemporary ethnography confirms similar kinds of connections between water, places, and cultural identities. A man living in a community where Stobart undertook long term research asserted that the water of the place a person inhabits determines the language he or she speaks. Hence, the man spoke Quechua, whereas other people speak Spanish, Aymara or, in Stobart’s case, English (Stobart 2006b:173). Similarly, the new melodies required for festive performance during Carnival each year in this community were attributed to aqueous spirit beings, called *sirinu*, which were claimed to reside in specific *paqarina*-like springs, rivers, caves or rocks (Stobart 2006a). The origins of music in Andean rural contexts is often attributed to the inspirations of *sirinus* (or *sirenas*), earth beings that play an important role in music creation during the Carnival season, a key moment in the Andean ritual cycle of reproduction (Stobart 2006a, 2006b:233-267; Sánchez 1988).

Musical creation happens here at the intersections of earth beings and human communities. Different melodies *are* the groups who play them, not just representations of them (see also Allen 2015:39), and their sounds motivate and herald agricultural productivity. Such practices have material value; they reproduce the very sustenance of the community, and articulate the social relations that make possible such production and reproduction. These melodies, created anew each year, embody the next generation of crops; by contrast, old

melodies from previous years are said to be *q'ayma* (“insipid,” “tasteless”) and “unable to do anything” (Stobart 2006b). Even if the creation of such music is attributed to forces of the landscape, rather than to human composers, it is still intimately associated with the communities that acquire and perform it. This strong identification of communities with particular expressions is made especially explicit in fiestas, the context in which most Bolivian music is performed.

Originality in a creative endeavor and origins in a geographic place are not the same things.²⁷ Nor should it be assumed that competing national heritage claims about the origins of specific cultural expressions are the same as internal cradle status competitions.²⁸ Seeing heritage otherwise, means paying attention to these differences. Cradle status references physical places and may not be so distant from intergenerational considerations and reproduction of the community. In response to an interview question we posed in 2015 about the meaning of “cradle” status, our Bolivian interlocutor invoked the image of an unclothed recently born infant who needs to be cared for by the community. This suggests the idea of nurturance, where the community metaphorically feeds, clothes and cares for an emergent entity, enabling it to grow, develop its potential, and acquire its distinctive identity.²⁹ From this organic life-cycle

²⁷ At first glance, cradle status seems to share some modalities with authorship. Authorship focuses on points of origin rather than those of shared derivation and intergenerational transfer (see Strathern 2005, Rowlands 2004:207). The thinking here is still under the overwhelming metaphor of authorship, either in relation to its presence or absence (Woodmansee and Jaszi 2003). Authorship falls under the protections of copyright; in the absence of “authorship,” the Convention on Intangible Heritage protects cultural expressions that supposedly do not focus on originality, and should not even focus on places of origin. How do we get beyond authorship’s shadow in an interpretation of cradle status claims?

²⁸ When UNESCO’s coordinator for the region, Fabián Bedón Samaniego visited Bolivia in 2015, he commented—within the context of Bolivia’s acrimonious dance origins spats with neighboring Peru—that originality is not a principle of the Convention, because this causes conflicts. (“No todo lo que es cultura tiene que ser declarado patrimonio”, *Página siete* 28 de julio 2015 <http://www.paginasiete.bo/cultura/2015/7/28/todo-cultura-tiene-declarado-patrimonio-64570.html> accessed Aug. 14, 2015.) Emerging nationalized inventories of intangible heritage look something like those mandated by the Convention of Biological Diversity, under which national sovereignty over biological materials is buttressed against the trends of a global commons (see Hayden 2003:64). However, as the UNESCO official tried to calm the rough waters of intangible heritage politics, between Peru and Bolivia, the discourse became dismissive of any exclusive nationalist claims or arguments for originality.

²⁹ Although “cradle” and “birthplace” (or “place of origin”) are commonly treated as interchangeable, such stress on nurturance leaves open the possibility that the “unclothed recently born infant” arrives from elsewhere or is adopted

perspective, the community's role might be seen to entail kinship-style responsibility, but also authority (P. Harvey 1998). What happens, then, when the entity matures and acquires independence? Do aspects of community authority remain? Should the community expect reciprocity or benefits from its investment? How much are the community's hopes for the future embodied in the entity (or expression) they have brought to maturity? Approached in this way, the "cradle" metaphor has potent resonances in the rural Andes, invoking kinship-style relations and sentiments, above notions of ownership. Without discarding the heritage interpretations that emphasize potential economic benefits and resulting political mobilizations, looking otherwise at Bolivian heritage constructions means engaging possible connections between local cradle status declarations and this pluriverse of creativity and reproduction.

Cacophonous Relations

Taking a heritage otherwise perspective also means asking about the significance of competing heritage declarations and the construing of non-rivalrous resources as rivalrous. The national-level Law 184 that in 2011 made the *ch'uta* "Historical Cultural and Immaterial Heritage of the Plurinational State of Bolivia," purposely elided the Caquiari-Corocoro competition by naming the shared Province of Pacajes as the cradle of this expression.³⁰ However, what if such competitions are not about winners and losers, not something "negative," but rather a key element tied to all kinds of reproduction?

The national-level *chu'ta* declaration (law 184) does not have any corresponding regulatory laws, and as of 2012, Javier Escalier, the director of Cultural and Artistic Promotion

into the community. This also raises questions regarding the relationship between heritage "cradles" and "capitals," terms that are both employed in Bolivian heritage making. We examine this theme in other writings.

³⁰ It should be noted that these different official declarations and writings often refer to "el *ch'uta*" in the singular and masculine form, pointing to gendered questions that are beyond the scope of this article.

of the Ministry of Cultures stated his hope that such regulations would help “determine the true origin of the dance.”³¹ Workers from the Ministry of Cultures expressed great concern about such cradle declarations that cause disturbances between neighboring communities and block regulatory laws for many heritage declarations. While determining the “true origin” of the dance may be important to some actors, a heritage otherwise perspective also engages alternative readings of the competition itself, ones that might not see such rivalries as problematic. One on-line blog post of February 2015 described Carnival activities involving ch’utas, mentioning the on-going Caquiaviri-Corocoro feud, and stating “There is no truce. The debate is more intense precisely in these [Carnival] times.”³² While these competing claims may cause concern within frameworks that demand clear boundaries and exclusive mapping of territories—governance practices generated through the State—, such competitions by neighboring places look and sound a lot like a well-known dynamic found throughout different ethnographic contexts in the Andes.

Contested heritage claims at these local levels might be read otherwise, as a part of a preferred aesthetic of cacophonous *relations*. For example, in festive performance in the rural Bolivian highlands, musicians representing different hamlets, neighbourhoods or *ayllus* compete with one another to dominate the soundscape, thus producing cacophony (Stobart 2006b:193, Bigenho 1999:966). In Yura, where we have both independently participated in fiestas, the musical competition is played out between the four ayllus that are nested within the large Ayllu of Yura (Bigenho 1999, Stobart 1988). In the celebrations of Reyes and Carnival, each ayllu is represented by a different troupe of flute players. When they all meet in the central plaza of the

³¹ “Corocoro y Caquiaviri se disputan el origen de la danza del ch’uta,” *Página siete* 20 de febrero 2012, <http://www.fmbolivia.tv/corocoro-y-caquiaviri-se-disputan-el-origen-de-la-danza-del-chuta/> accessed Aug. 4, 2015.

³² Quispe Villa, Marco Alberto, “Los ch’utas en la memoria colectiva de Caquiaviri,” *Jach’as: Comunicación, educación, y cultura* (blog), 16 de febrero 2015, <https://maquispe.wordpress.com/2015/02/16/los-chutas-en-la-memoria-colectiva-del-pueblo-de-caquiaviri/> accessed Aug. 4, 2015.

village of Yura, they do not take turns playing for each other. Instead, the aesthetic involves all four representative flute troupes playing at once. They play for hours on end, each troupe with the year's emblematic tune that has become identified with a specific ayllu. As each troupe circles around the pillar in the middle of the plaza, the musicians must aurally cling to their own tune as the other three troupes also try to do the same, all playing at full volume. The cacophonous meeting happens after each troupe has sonorously marked its own territory by playing music through its spaces; these practices of “sonorous sovereignty” differ greatly from those demanded by the state bureaucracies' legal mapping.³³

The emphasis on maintaining sonorous intergroup difference can also be heard in brass band performances, both in urban and rural settings. For example, during a rural feast in La Paz Department, Stobart witnessed two brass bands, contracted by different dance groups, standing side by side and playing precisely the same melody, but just out of synch with one another – a musically challenging feat (Stobart 2006b:193-194, see also Sallnow 1987:197).³⁴ Endurance marks winners of these competitions. In Yura, the winners are those still playing their emblematic tune in the wee hours of the morning, when others have moved away to other scenes of the multiday ritual. However, at this point, most people are in different places and in states altered by the consumption of alcohol. No group is definitively declared as a winner, thus leaving open the possibility that multiple groups may craft their own narratives of victory.

Musical competition and even fighting (tinku) between hamlet, neighborhood or ayllu-based groups are part and parcel of many Andean ritual performances. Even though such groups

³³ In other work, Bigenho looked at different Yureño articulations of space, through “sonorous sovereignty” of Carnival music and through the mapping concepts that became part of early applications of the Law of Popular Participation (1999).

³⁴ These dynamics are by no means exclusive to Bolivian musical practices. As in the confrontations between rival groups in Brazilian *congado* performance, a key musical challenge is thus to maintain ensemble identity and avoid entrainment to the rhythm of the other group (Lucas, Clayton, and Leante 2011).

may sometimes join together to express solidarity in the face of another large coalition (Platt 1986, Stobart 2006b:138-40), music powerfully marks identity and alterity, and also assures different kinds of reproduction. When Stobart recorded some sounds made by hungry llamas—after hearing people relate these animals’ cries to *pinkillu* flute sonorities—his host family in rural Potosí became very upset because they thought he was taking away in his tape recorder the power of the llamas to reproduce (Stobart 1996). His host referred to this appropriation as “*nacionalismu*” (nationalism).

The forms of musical competition we have described above appear to have considerable continuities with the notion of *tinku*, which literally means “encounter” in both Aymara and Quechua. Notions of winning or losing count little in *tinku* fighting, rather what is important is engaging, facing up to another individual or group. Thus, instead of talking of victories or defeats after such engagements, combatants proudly display their cuts and bruises as evidence of their bravery (Stobart 2006b:136). A heritage otherwise perspective asks what *tinku* dynamics might be at play when Caquiaviri and Corocoro quarrel over “cradle” status claims for the *ch’uta*. Caquiaviri and Corocoro residents may have tourism futures in mind as they try to claim cradle status for this dance. Local identity may also be involved. But along with these motivations, the on-going rivalry of these neighboring localities looks a lot like many ritualized competitions that occur regularly in the Andes. Heritage declarations may simply be another way to play out these on-going regional rivalries. For the local participants, the dynamics of competing heritage claims may be experienced much like the widespread practices of cacophonous competition. These competitions become more intense during crucial moments of the ritual calendar, but they ultimately reproduce the social order and allow for different narratives of success and inclusion.

Lest we fall into romanticizing those forms of competition that only seem to lead to warm fuzzy social reproduction,³⁵ we mention another kind of Andean competition, *ch'ajwa*, that indeed has winners and losers, includes battles over territory, takes place outside festive contexts, and can lead to major social transformations (Stobart 2006b 194-195). More ethnographic renderings of heritage uptakes are necessary to distinguish whether or not given local heritage competitions look more like a tinku or a *ch'ajwa* dynamic.³⁶

Given the differentiated race and class structures to which we have alluded throughout the article, we suggest that local cacophonous *relations* in the tinku aesthetic, much like the rhetorical ayllu as a development model, does not scale up easily.³⁷ Thus, when mestizo dancers cry foul at the Peruvians' use of the devil dance in their national representations, those involved in these national-international disputes--even under the Morales government's supposed pro-indigenous politics and emphasis on ayllu logics and "good living"--tend to be mestizos with cosmopolitan visions (see Arnold and Yapita 2005:147).³⁸ Ayllu logics resist some points of scalability, and at the State level they need to be taken as political discourse, perhaps as a political project, but not as what actually happens in moving up from the ayllu to the state. In that movement up, the sense of State appropriation may enter the picture (see Hafstein 2014:30). In the ethnographic terms already referenced, "nationalism" may steal llama sounds and rob these animals of their ability to reproduce. The challenge remains in to how to think otherwise as one

³⁵ The serious injuries and even deaths that sometimes occur during tinku fighting are hardly "warm and fuzzy", but the broader intent is conceived—at least locally—as socially harmonious (Stobart 2006b:138).

³⁶ Doubt also surrounds whether the competitive practices of tinku and *ch'ajwa* should be viewed as a binary or a graduated continuum, where the "play" (*pujllay*) of tinku may escalate into full scale warfare (Arnold 2015:169-70).

³⁷ Anna Tsing (2015) sees "scaling up" as a process that is closely connected with ideas of human advancement. A failure to "scale up," she argues, often has been viewed as a problem or as a sign of being archaic. To challenge such views, Tsing proposes a theory of the "non-scalable," highlighting the "mess" that so often results from scaling up, such as alienation and environmental havoc (2015:38).

³⁸ For a full discussion of this shift in relation to international heritage disputes and as related to on-line media platforms, see Bigenho and Stobart (n.d.b).

moves through different heritage scales and to consider the different uptakes--not as they measure up, or not, to UNESCO's framework, but as they are reworked by different local actors.

Conclusions: Reproductive Rivalries

While Bolivians' booming interest in heritage may certainly be related to desires to capitalize on cultures, to support cultural rights claims, and/or some combination of these economic and cultural rights explanations, we suggest also considering a heritage otherwise perspective. In heritage otherwise, we draw some elements from the ontological turn, but leave it to others to parse ontologies from alternative epistemologies. We are more interested in the frame that gives us interpretive purchase in relation to specific practices, as well as the approach that moves beyond the all-too-determining straightjackets of the "neoliberal" this and the UNESCO that. In spite of Morales' anti-neoliberal project, neoliberalism is alive and well in Bolivia, because of the country's place in a world where these economic, cultural, and political policies prevail. In a heritage otherwise perspective, however, we want to think about what that neoliberalism or neoliberal heritages might look like in specific Bolivian contexts. Even though Bolivian governments have played key roles in global intangible heritage agendas, many Bolivians experience heritage — in its "metacultural" production (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004)—as coming from the outside. Our analyses must account for how local actors make their own these globally circulating assemblages of both neoliberalism and heritage (see Latour 2005).

A heritage otherwise perspective attends to specific actors and communities with an awareness of location and scale. The apportioning of individual laws for specifically named dances and musical expressions marks as distinct the heritage politics under Morales' regime. Far from Morales' official policy, however, these laws are cropping up all over the place, at

different levels of government--testaments to decentralization in the 1990s and autonomies of the present moment. In general, these laws are not regulating a market of cultural goods, but they are motivating several kinds of local heritage practices, like competing declarations of cradle status.

We suggest that rivalrous heritage declarations in local Bolivian contexts, rather than being just another form of neoliberalized culture, may in part reflect particular cradle (or *paqarina*) politics and an aesthetic of cacophonous relations. As viewed from the outside, these heritage disputes may appear to sow discord. But a declaration of cradle status does not prevent a parallel declaration by another local entity, although these may take slightly different forms, like emphasizing a costume of the dance or naming a place the “capital of” a specific expression. Here again, winners can be multiple and successes depend more on narrative campaigns and publicity, than on any binding forms of mutually exclusive recognition that might look more like traditional regimes of property. These local rivalries over supposedly non-rivalrous cultural resources--although no less intense-- are not about divvying up scarce resources, market battles, zero-sum games, or “ethnicity, inc.” (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), but rather about reproducing worlds in all their dimensions. Alternatively, we might think of heritage declaration as just another medium for playing out longstanding and ongoing reproductive rivalries.

When two music ensembles from neighboring villages meet on a path, they hardly dream of joining forces. Rather, they employ renewed energy to cacophonously confront one another. We argue that such deeply held modes of socio-musical interaction should be considered as one in a series of interpretations about local understandings of heritage. The strident voices of competition in cradle status declarations—those that so vexed the employees of the Ministry of Cultures—may have less to do with communities making exclusive claims to heritage as property, and may have more to do with a mode of loud competition particular to the social

reproduction of Andean communities. Marking distinctiveness to place through cradle politics, along with robust competition among collective entities that identify with those places are about both reproducing communities and imagining futures. Nevertheless, a heritage otherwise perspective heedful of scale does not simply leap from these local reproductive rivalries to national and international levels. Indeed, in ongoing research we have found people interpreting heritage in many different ways. While some dream of UNESCO and “Bolivia, Inc.”—a nationalized version of the Comaroff’s “Ethnicity, Inc.” (2009)—, others fixate on roots and recovery, emphasize cultural vindication, bolster local livelihoods, or assert a reformulated indigenous identity. Sometimes, a declaration of intangible heritage emerges not as an end in itself, but rather as one tool among others that a community employs in ongoing campaigns that aspire to novel articulations of regional autonomies. In this cacophony of heritage making, ethnography, and careful listening to the otherwise often show that UNESCO is neither the most significant nor the most powerful local voice.

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