

## ***Territory as cultural production and as context of identity reconfiguration. Interculturalism in Cochabamba, Bolivia.*<sup>1</sup>**

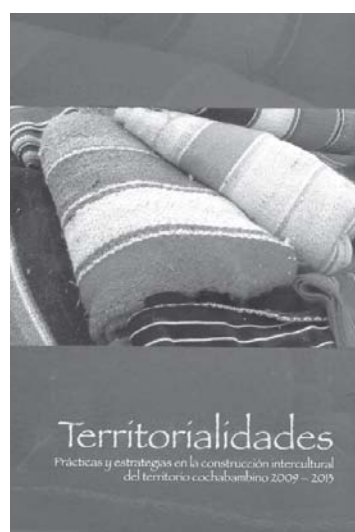
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Sturich Tamain, M.; Salinas, C.; Severiche, A.; Beccar, E.; Sandoval, E.; Araoz, J.; Arce Camacho, R. (2013). *Territoriality, practices and strategies in the intercultural construction of the cochabambino territory, 2009-2013*. Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Cochabamba, Bolivia.

This book is the result of studies within the framework of the “Comprehensive Recovery Program of Historical Areas of Cochabamba”, from the Research Institute of the School of Architecture and Habitat Sciences of the Mayor University of San Simon. Its main purpose is to share reflections and experiences of over four years of research within the framework of the Project named “Territorialities”, carried out by the team of the above mentioned program. It is about issues related to the territorial constructions taking a comprehensive and transdisciplinary approach. The territory, considered a cultural production, is studied from a social, geographical, economic and political perspective. It is an analysis of the representations and daily practices of the groups that live in and build up the territory of Cochabamba.

This research focuses on the study of the practices and daily discourse from which the individuals represent and reconfigure the territory, taking into consideration a multidimensional, multitemporal and transdisciplinary standpoint. The theoretical contexts to analyze the peoples of Linku and Antakahua is Albo’s “positive interculturalism”, which goes beyond tolerance, assuming the need of genuine interaction, taking into consideration other individuals and groups in an atmosphere of solidarity, reciprocity, learning and respect.



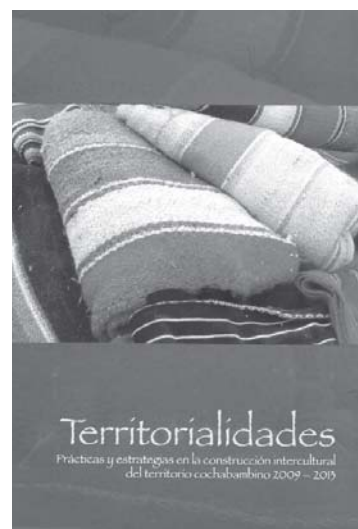
This research includes a detailed field study in Cochabamba so as to trace the community's cultural characteristics and practices of interculturalism through every day life. In this sense, *"territory is closely related to the notion of identity and therefore to the multiple peculiarities which make the Bolivian reality so complex"* [...] *"Identity is considered a central element in the construction and understanding of the territory"*.

The authors' primary objective is to analyze the intercultural processes of territorial development, taking into consideration sociocultural and economic networks from the Tacaparí and SipeSipe local councils and their relationship to the city of Cochabamba; contributing to the understanding of strategies and daily practices that determine the reconstruction of territorial identities.

This book has five chapters, each of which shows graphs, statistics, genealogical trees and maps that help the reader understand the research. The first chapter presents both the internal and external realities of the Linku and Antakahua communities. It shows the heterogeneous complexities that affect both communities: geography, the environment, society, demography and culture.

The second chapter presents an analysis of the practices and strategies of both communities to build up the territory and the homes and the multilocation in such geographical area. The main question in this chapter is related to what ways there are to appropriate the territory.

Chapter three refers to the analysis of the territorial representations taken from family strategies and it is also about the impact and intervention of institutions. In other words, here there is a close up to the relationship between the structure and the role of social representations and analyses how this correlation influences the construction of territoriality and identity. This chapter presents a general panorama of the diverse areas of representation of the communities, unions and public institutions.

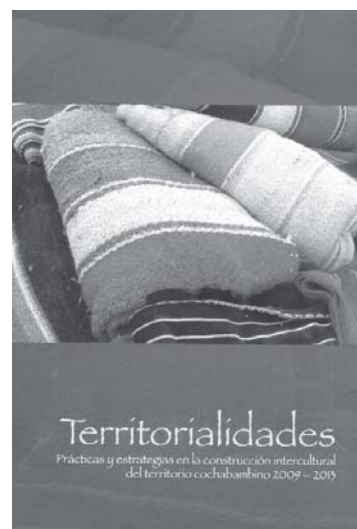


Chapter four focuses on and acknowledges the role of the varied cultural expressions and the processes of patrimonialization identified in space-building practices which are understood as patrimonial themselves. Thus, the territory is considered to be a permanent production of cultural patrimony. This chapter also shows how the culture of the communities is institutionalized and looked after. Such production of patrimonial activation is conceived to be of historical importance.

Chapter five continues with some aspects analyzed in the first chapters. It discusses categories that define territory as *“a product that reflects family identity as a crucial element when it comes to establishing bonds and networks that outline the ongoing process of shaping concrete social referents that define the community and family strategies. From this perspective about territorial development, these referents configurate family territoriality according to the interests and objectives of a specific moment in a particular context”*.

Finally, the authors claim the process of territorial development is mediated and articulated by the social representation of “territory” shared by the community. In these representations, the relationships between the social and spacial dimensions are consolidated and either new symbolic codes emerge or the existing ones are modified.

This work is, undoubtedly, an interesting contribution to the field of Social Sciences and to the understanding of a complex territory from a critical perspective that allows the reader to identify relationships and individuals. The fact that it is set in the Latin American space, particularly in Bolivia, offers unexpected potential and invites new perspectives of analysis.



## Notes

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