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Mapping terrains of struggle: State space and the spatiality of oil mobilisation in Ecuador and Peru

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ABSTRACT

The analysis presented in this article departs from observing the differences in the spatiality of mobilising strategies regarding the most contentious and politicised oil projects in neighbouring Ecuador and Peru: Yasuní-ITT and Block 192. In the case of Ecuador's Yasuní-ITT, mobilisation has been national, removed from the oil project's spatial embeddedness and directed at oil extraction in itself. In the case of Peru's Block 192, mobilisation has been local, linked to territory and directed at the terms and conditions of extraction. The deconstruction and reassessment of context emerged through an exploratory and process-based cross-border comparison. The article analyses secondary literature, a large sample of news items regarding the two oilfields, and research interviews with key actors in Ecuador and Peru. It argues that approaches from critical state theory can be applied to explain the spatiality of mobilising strategies. Historical state spatial strategies to ensure accumulation through extractivism, mobilisation over the consequences of such strategies, and the degree to which they continue to enjoy a hegemonic position, are found to be important dimensions shaping the spatiality of mobilisation.

1. Introduction

Resource extraction is among the main reasons for social conflict in Latin America (Bebbington and Bury, 2013). Over the last few decades, both neoliberal and ostensibly post-neoliberal governments have promoted extractive mega-projects, either through state-owned companies or through facilitating international investment and extractive activity by multinational companies. A 'commodity consensus' has replaced the Washington Consensus (Svampa, 2012), leading to displacement, detrimental local socio-environmental effects, and social conflict. There is a large body of literature on contentious resource extraction in Latin America, which can broadly be divided into two main strands. The first examines the local scale, and local (often indigenous) communities' strategies for resistance and encounters with the state apparatus through processes of protest and dialogue (e.g., Acuña, 2015; Avcı, 2017; Avcı and Fernández-Salvador, 2016; Bebbington and Scurrah, 2013; Guzmán-Gallegos, 2017; Laastad, 2021; Orta-Martínez and Finer, 2010; Orta-Martínez et al., 2018). The second strand is the study of national governments' extractivism, their discursive legitimations and the degree to which there has been a real difference between self-proclaimed post-neoliberal governments and neoliberal governments in Latin America (e.g., Andreucci and Radhuber, 2017; Bebbington, 2012; Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011; Humphreys Bebbington and Bebbington, 2012; Kingsbury et al., 2019; Pellegrini, 2018; Van Teijlingen, 2016; Wilson and Bayón, 2017).

This article contributes to this body of literature through an analysis of the underlying reasons for differences in the spatiality of mobilisation. The empirical point of departure is the spatial differences in mobilisation regarding oil extraction in the most politicised and controversial oilfields in Ecuador and Peru. The Ecuadorian oilfield Yasuní-ITT and the Peruvian oilfield Block 192 are a mere hundred kilometres apart, on either side of the border between Ecuador and Peru in the Amazon. They are located in one of the most biodiverse areas of the world and superimposed on indigenous territories. In Ecuador, oil extraction in the ITT field (abbreviated from Ishpingo, Tambococha, Tiputini) in the Yasuní National Park has on several occasions led to nation-wide mobilisation (Coryat, 2015). It has been evoked in national political discourse, and it 'flows beyond its spatial specificity' (Kingsbury et al., 2019, p. 543). Block 192 in Peru is a mature oilfield which has been operating since 1971. Ongoing socio-environmental conflicts here are issue-based, and local actors engage in militant particularism, attempting to condition oil extraction upon service provision, local royalties and environmental remediation, rather than questioning oil extraction itself.

This article's understanding of mobilisation over oil production in

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these oilfields as geographical processes allows for an examination of the underlying processes and drivers that give rise to patterns and scales of economic and social activity (Bridge et al., 2013). The differences in the spatiality of mobilisation could be dismissed as simply due to apparent differences in the two cases, mainly regarding national contexts and temporality. Block 192 has been operating since 1971, meaning that production started in an era of less environmental knowledge and concern by governments and the population at large. Production in Yasuní-ITT started in 2016, i.e. at a time when awareness and knowledge of the detrimental effects of both local contamination and international carbon emissions has become higher. In addition to changing contexts caused by the passage of time, several authors have pointed out how 'preventive mobilisation' against extractive projects before they have been installed, has a higher success rate than mobilising to end pre-existing extractive projects (Conde, 2017; Özkaynak et al., 2021; Scheidel et al., 2020; Walter and Wagner, 2021). Even though the national mobilisation to avoid oil production in the Yasuní-ITT was unsuccessful, it may be argued that it is in any case easier to garner widespread support for protests against new projects, and that they may be more conducive to mobilisation at the national level.

The analysis presented in this article nonetheless attempts to move beyond such explanatory factors as different national contexts and temporal differences. It aims to utilise a cross-border comparison as a deconstruction and reassessment of context, to explore whether the different state projects in Ecuador and Peru, and specifically how the governing of accumulation through oil and evolving state spatial strategies to ensure economic growth through extractivism, have implications for mobilisation over oil and the spatiality of mobilising strategies. According to state theorists Brenner et al (2003) and Brenner (2004), state spatial strategies both shape and are shaped by socio-political struggle. Drawing on this assertion, this article utilises critical state theory and theory on state spatial strategy to study mobilisation and resource conflicts. Such a novel approach to resource conflicts allows for a relational understanding of state action and civil society mobilisation, cutting across analyses of both local opposition and state extractivism. The aim of this article is, therefore, to explore how the spatial dimensions of state accumulation strategies contribute to shape the spatiality of mobilising strategies. It is guided by the following research questions: *Which are the most important processes producing the 'terrain of socio-political struggle' over oil in Ecuador and Peru? How do they, in turn, contribute to shape the spatiality of mobilising strategies over oil production in Block 192 and Yasuní-ITT?*

After presenting the theoretical framework and analytical strategy of this study, the article elaborates on the different spatialities of mobilising strategies in the two cases. It seeks answers to the research questions through tracing, first, how historical state spatial strategies have incorporated the Amazon into state space as sites for extractive accumulation; and second, how indigenous movements in each country have mobilised in different ways over the detrimental socio-environmental consequences of such strategies. A third important process contributing to shape the dynamics of mobilisation concerns the degree to which an extractivist state accumulation strategy remains in a hegemonic position.

Historical state spatial strategies to ensure accumulation, mobilisation over the consequences of these, and the hegemonic position of extractivism as the state's main accumulation strategy constitute the 'terrain of socio-political struggle' over oil in Ecuador and Peru and contribute to shape how mobilising over oil production plays out spatially. In the case of Block 192, mobilisation occurs at the regional and local level. It concerns the conditions of extraction and does not challenge oil extraction in itself. In the case of Yasuní-ITT, the discursive decoupling of the Yasuní from the extractivist state accumulation strategy allowed mobilising actors to demand non-extraction per se at the national level. In conclusion, the article calls for further analyses identifying connections between the ongoing production and transformation of state spatial strategies and the spatiality of contention over the production processes involved in state accumulation strategies (Jessop, 1990).

2. Theoretical framework and analytical strategy

After reviewing previous research on geographies of contention, this section argues that a theoretical approach drawing on Gramscian-inspired critical state theory can be useful for understanding the spatiality of mobilisation. It concludes by presenting the methodology and methods employed to achieve this understanding in this study. Research on mobilisation and protest over resource extraction tends to focus on social movements' political opportunities, strategies and struggles (e.g., Bebbington, 2012; Brown and Spiegel, 2017; Cezne, 2019; Dukpa et al., 2018; Engels, 2018; Houeland, 2020; Mai-Bornu, 2019; Walter and Urkidi, 2017). Contentious politics is a commonly applied framework for analyses of those political opportunities for social movements which arise from the varying forms of interactions between governments and political actors, as well as the ways in which such political opportunities structure movements' repertoires of contention, that is, the methods of protest that actors use (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015). Tarrow (1998) posits that most political opportunities and constraints are situational. They will vary according to the uneven geography of state power and prior history of contention (Crossley, 2002). To further their claims and inspire mobilisation, social movements utilise ideas and meanings to develop collective action frames through which sense is made of events, blame, responsibility and solutions. Benford and Snow (2000) argue that cultural as well as political opportunities and restraints are important, as successful frames require cultural resonance. These arguments point towards the fundamental importance of geography to understand how and why actors mobilise, since social movements' political opportunities, repertoires and frames are both contextual and situational.

Several authors have called for spatial perspectives to be incorporated in studies of contentious politics to 'produce more illuminating understandings of how people perceive, shape, and act upon grievances and opportunities' (Martin and Miller, 2003, p. 143). Most scholarship which applies spatial perspectives to contentious politics focuses either on social movements' spatial representations and how they are utilised (e.g., Kurtz, 2003; Martin, 2003, 2013) or on how geographical location impacts mobilisation and protest (e.g., Sewell, 2001; Wolford, 2003). These works concern spatial practice (Lefebvre, 1991).

Notions of space more aligned with Lefebvre's representational space – the lived experience of space and the layers of meaning ascribed to it – have also been utilised in accounts analysing contentious politics. An example of this is Routledge's 'terrains of resistance', which he defines as 'the specific geographical, historical, political economic, ecological, and cultural contexts of movement agency' (Routledge, 1994, p. 560). Terrains of resistance encompass both the geographical ground and the representational space of social movements' action, and identifying its components can help explain why movements occur where they do (Routledge, 1996).

Such accounts provide situated and contextual analyses of contentious politics, eschewing mechanistic explanations in favour of processual ones. They do, however, employ a more contained notion of space, focusing on social movement actors' spatial representations, and how surrounding space mediates mobilisation. A similar emphasis on the spatial representations of movement actors is found in more recent geographic scholarship on resistance to resource extraction in Latin America, in which several studies employ territory as a main analytical lens. Territory is related to representational space, as it has more recently been defined as the 'totality of social relations historically produced in a particular space and the meanings different groups have assigned to it' (Avcı and Fernández-Salvador, 2016, p. 912). Laing (2020) finds in her analysis of the *Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro-Sécure* (TIPNIS) conflict in Bolivia, which concerned a road project that would have facilitated hydrocarbon exploration in a national park and indigenous territory, that throughout the conflict between the national government and indigenous organisations, territory was 're-inscribed, re-worked and re-signified' (p. 36). She argues that 'contentious politics is used to confront hegemonic forms of territorial power and control and open space for a plurality of alternative understandings of territory' (p. 29). Avcı and Fernández-Salvador (2016) demonstrate how territorial claims are a central factor in explaining the different trajectories of two mining conflicts in Ecuador. Resource conflicts can be understood as opposing territorialising projects, and social movements opposing extractive activity often articulate their opposition as a defence of territory (Avcı and Fernández-Salvador, 2016). In sum, territory is a main signifier through which actors ascribe meaning to resource extraction, and it directly impacts their degree of opposition.

Movement actors' identities and their relation to space are unquestionably fundamental for action. These are useful concepts for grounded and contextual analyses of the internal factors of resource conflicts, and how local actors represent their resistance. To analyse the spatiality of mobilising strategies, however, this article draws on approaches from critical state theory. According to critical state theory, socio-political struggles involving governments and political actors, as examined in contentious politics literature, can also be reflected within the state (Jessop, 2007, 2016). Critical state theory understands the state as a 'presupposition, an arena and an outcome of continually changing social relations' (Brenner, 2004, p. 80) and a 'contested and changing field of discourses, policies and social relations' (Kristoffersen and Young, 2010, p. 578). The spatial dimensions of such a processual understanding of the state are encompassed in the notions of state space and state spatial strategy. A state space approach sees the state's spatiality as 'actively produced and transformed' (Brenner, 2004, p. 80) and state space has been defined by Kristoffersen and Young as 'both the institutional spaces in which policy-making takes place, and the spatial strategies through which the state seeks to reconcile conflicts over economic growth, social justice and environmental protection' (Kristoffersen and Young, 2010, p. 578).

The article's approach to contention is based on understanding economic growth as one core function of the state (Hunold and Dryzek, 2005; Jessop, 1990), and an underlying driver of state spatial strategy, which contributes to shape the spatiality of mobilisation. State spatial strategy has been defined as 'the indirect socio-spatial effects that flow from apparently aspatial policies' (Brenner, 2004, p. 80) and 'the capacity of state institutions to influence the geographies of accumulation and political struggle' (Brenner, 2004, p. 91). According to Brenner et al., socio-political actors' actions are conditioned upon already 'established, emerging or potential state spaces' (2003, p. 10), and evolving state space therefore shapes the 'terrain of socio-political struggle' (2003, p. 11). Socio-political struggle at different scales also has the potential to produce and modify state space, however, through representations and articulations of space. Thus, there is also a representational dimension to state space. Understanding state space as the outcome of changing social relations and political practices implies that state space is negotiated and articulated, as well as continually produced and transformed, through a range of discursive and representational strategies, by both state and non-state actors (Brenner et al., 2003, pp. 10–11). This dialectical proposition suggests first, that state space is one important dimension of political opportunities for mobilising, and second, that examining both historical processes for articulations and production of state space, and previous processes of socio-political mobilisation, can help explain current spatialities of mobilising strategies.

Jessop (1990) discussed how the state apparatus is centred around consolidating support and facilitating a hegemonic position for the state accumulation strategy, defined as a 'specific economic growth model' (Jessop, 1990, p. 198). Jessop's state accumulation strategy is developed from Gramscian regulationist theory, focusing on the 'extra-economic preconditions and general strategy' for the realisation of state accumulation (Jessop, 1990, p. 198). It emerges when 'a model of economic growth is linked to a framework of institutions and state policies that are capable of reproducing it' (Brenner, 2004, p. 84). The main strategy for achieving economic growth and state revenues in both Ecuador and Peru is the export of unprocessed commodities, and 'justifying and advancing' extractive activity is a main policy objective (Arsel et al., 2016, p. 881). This article therefore defines extractivism as an accumulation strategy.

According to Gramsci, the capitalist state does not only rule through coercion, but also through hegemony, in which the ruling classes' norms and values become 'common sense' (Gramsci, 2012). Gramsci's hegemony is here operationalised by drawing on Gramscian-inspired analyses by Jessop (1990) and Valdivia (2008). Jessop argued that for a state's accumulation strategy to be accepted by the state's population, there is a need for a 'flow of material concessions' (1990, p. 161) – concessions which are themselves dependent on promoting accumulation. Within the state's strategies for accumulation there is still room for conflicts over policies, as long as they occur within an 'acceptable "policy paradigm" setting the parameters of public choice' (Jessop, 1990, p. 161). This policy paradigm constitutes a space within which 'conflicts over competing interests and demands can be negotiated without threatening the overall project' (Jessop, 1990, p. 210).

Valdivia (2008) introduced the term 'rentist compromise' to argue that when a state becomes responsible for national development through the use of ground rent, opposing extraction in itself would equal opposing progress; by governing petroleum, the state therefore also governs what is politically possible for citizens to opine. The 'rentist compromise' can be understood as a policy paradigm whereby the underlying conditions for economic growth through extraction are accepted as common sense, but the conditions for extraction and the distribution of benefits are subject to conflictual negotiation. In the case of Ecuador in the 1990s and 2000s, this has meant that protest regarding oil production has not concerned stopping production but, rather, the conditions of production, including improved management and revenue distribution (Valdivia, 2008). Perreault and Valdivia similarly argue, by comparing mobilisation over hydrocarbon resources in Bolivia and Ecuador, that the goal of opposing 'hegemonic practices of hydrocarbon governance' is not to stop production or abolish state structures, but 'to intervene in the terms and intentions of such governance' (2010, p. 697).

This goal changed with mobilisation over Yasuní-ITT, as will be discussed below. The 'rentist compromise' does, however, suggest that it is likely that the flow of material concessions and the policy paradigm within which conflict can occur will shape mobilisation over oil, and that the governing of oil – and the ways in which state accumulation through oil is articulated and represented – has implications for mobilisation over oil and the spatiality of mobilising strategies. If economic growth through extractivism has a hegemonic position, then mobilising will be over the negotiation of local and particularistic measures. If the hegemonic position of extractivist accumulation is somewhat destabilised, however, or decoupled from the oil project in question, then mobilisation can potentially address oil extraction in itself and break loose from its spatial specificity.

After analysing mobilisation regarding Yasuní-ITT and Block 192 as geographical processes and highlighting how they constitute spatially different strategies, this article identifies processes through which the spatial dimensions of underlying state accumulation strategies shape the terrain of struggle over oil in Ecuador and Peru. *Where* mobilisation can take place, that is, at which geographical scale, is influenced by past consolidation of state space and prior socio-political struggle. *What* can be mobilised over is dependent on the degree to which economic growth through extractivism has a hegemonic position.

Understanding state space as constituting the 'terrain of socio-political struggle' but also as continually produced and transformed through a range of discursive and representational strategies by both state and non-state actors implies, as stated above, that explanations of current features of state space can be found in historical and political processes and, consequently, sought in different points in time and space. Finding such explanations can be facilitated by a process approach to case studies, as was taken for this article. Unlike variable-oriented approaches to causal relations, which aim to generate generalised relations between variables, the process approach deals with events and the processes that connect them, resulting in contextually grounded findings and revealing processes and patterns to expand on theory (Maxwell, 2004). This approach entails a flexible, abductive and interpretive methodology, basically enabling the researcher to 'follow the inquiry' (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017, p. 120).

The oil projects examined were chosen for their similarity and dissimilarity. They are geographically proximate to each other, and both are located in mega-biodiverse areas of the Amazon, superimposed on indigenous territories. They have both been the source of long-term controversies in multiple parallel processes, as well as the subject of mobilisation and conflict. They are, however, highly dissimilar in terms of temporality, public reaction to oil extraction in the areas, and spatiality of mobilisation. To compare two cases that are similar (instances of the same thing) and dissimilar (in timing and context) can be particularly fruitful for theory development, as it entails a re-assessment of what is taken for granted about a social phenomenon, enabling it to be approached in a novel way and cast in a different light (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017). Comparing processes in two neighbouring countries, in particular, is a way to establish which explanatory factors are central in regard to differences in trajectories (Bebbington et al., 2019).

In practice, this approach entailed finding out as much about each case as possible, with the aim of identifying patterns. This analysis relies on peer-reviewed secondary sources and literature as well as a large sample of news items from the online archives of the two largest dailies of both countries. As major new developments occurred regarding Block 192 in 2015, the sample from Peru encompasses 487 articles from 2015 until mid-2018 from *La República* and *El Comercio*. The sample from Ecuador encompasses 317 articles from August 2013, when the Yasuní-ITT Initiative was cancelled, until mid-2018 from *El Comercio* and *El Universo*. These newspapers are not politically neutral, and I have been careful not to use them for causal analysis but, rather, to understand the context and timeline of events. This analysis was followed by semi-structured interviews with key actors in the two countries.[1] The analysis is thus the result of both within-case analysis and across-case comparison. The first of these involves an in-depth exploration of the case, while the latter facilitates the identification of themes and relationships between them (Ayres et al., 2003). Themes were finally synthesised into an analysis of the causes of the differences in the spatiality of oil mobilisation in Ecuador and Peru.

3. Spatiality of strategies

3.1. Block 192

Block 192 is Peru's largest and oldest oilfield, located in the Northern Peruvian Amazon next to the border with Ecuador. Operation commenced in 1971 under its previous name, Block 1AB. It encompasses an area totalling 4970 km^2, with 118 oil wells currently active, and produces approximately 11,000 barrels a day, which represents around 15 % of the total oil production in Peru (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] Peru, 2018). The oilfield overlaps with the Corrientes, Pastaza and Tigre river basins, where an indigenous population of 45,000 Achuar, Kichwa and Quechua people live (Instituo del Bien Común, 2016, as cited in Orta-Martínez et al., 2018). In 2015, the operating contract with the transnational company Pluspetrol expired. An international bidding round for new operators followed; however, it concluded without any international company expressing interest (El Comercio, 2015a). Fearing it would have to close down operations completely, the national government resorted to direct negotiations with three oil companies, which resulted in an interim contract with Canadian oil company Pacific Rubiales (renamed Frontera Energy in 2017) (El Comercio, 2015b). The public oil company Petroperú assumed ownership and production responsibilities in July 2021 (La República, 2021). There is general agreement that the contract with Petroperú and an operating partner with a duration of thirty years will be the last contract negotiated for Block 192, as the remaining reserves will most likely have been extracted by then.

The unsuccessful bidding round in 2015 and fears of a complete end to production led to considerable popular protest in Iquitos, the capital of Loreto, Peru's Amazon region where Block 192 is situated. The protests were instigated by the regional governor and his base organisations. They demanded that the national oil company, Petroperú, assume production responsibilities, arguing that it might be able to do so without expecting to discover new deposits and great future revenues, unlike international companies. In August 2015, a 48-hour general strike in Loreto, and a protest attended by 70,000 people in Iquitos, the region's capital, enabled these demands to be shifted upwards in scale. Public ownership became the subject of debate in Congress, where a law was ultimately passed allowing Petroperú to assume ownership in a joint venture partnership.

Parallel to regional protests calling for public ownership as a way to ensure continued production, indigenous federations representing the communities living inside Block 192 have developed mobilising strategies that take advantage of the state's hegemonic extractivist accumulation strategy. Local indigenous federations have the capacity to easily halt oil production through takeovers of oil installations. They have demanded environmental remediation, health services, development programmes and prior consultation. When these claims are not met, the indigenous federations threaten to occupy oil infrastructure, shutting down oil production. High-level government officials have tended to travel to the area to negotiate when such threats are made, which has led to a series of agreements between the government and the federations regarding some (heavily delayed and partial) government services and environmental remediation programmes (Bebbington and Scurrah, 2013; Guzmán-Gallegos, 2017; Laastad, 2021; Orta-Martínez et al., 2018).

3.2. Yasuní-ITT

Yasuní-ITT holds the largest oil deposits in Ecuador, totalling 850 million barrels, or 20 % of Ecuador's reserves (Rival, 2010). These deposits are located within the Yasuní National Park, one of the most biologically diverse areas on the planet (Bass et al., 2010). It is, furthermore, part of the traditional territories of the Kichwa and Waorani indigenous groups, and at least two indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation, the Tagaeri and Taromenane. In 2007, Ecuador offered to leave the oil in the ground indefinitely in return for international compensation totalling half the expected foregone revenues, equalling 3.6 billion USD (Larrea and Warnars, 2009). Former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa cancelled the Yasuní-ITT Initiative in August 2013, after a trust fund administered by the UNDP had only received 116 million USD in pledges and only 13 million USD in actual donations. The national oil company, Petroamazonas, began production in Tiputini in 2016 and in Tambococha in 2018, while production in Ishpingo is planned for 2022.

The decision to cancel the Yasuní-ITT Initiative caused nationwide protests (Coryat, 2015; Vidal, 2013), not least by the *Yasunidos,* a collective formed immediately after the decision to cancel was made. The *Yasunidos* consist mostly of disillusioned young people in urban areas who had grown up hearing about Ecuador's leading role internationally in keeping oil in the ground for the benefit of the planet. The Ecuadorian Constitution states that a referendum can be invoked on any issue, if signatures totalling 5 % of the electorate, equalling 583,324 signatures in 2013, were collected. In the months following the cancellation of the initiative, the *Yasunidos* collected over 757,623 signatures for a national referendum on leaving the oil in the ground in the ITT oilfields. Of these, the National Electoral Council disqualified 350,000, a decision that has been widely disputed. The number of signatures points towards the large degree of public support for non-extraction at the national level. The *Yasunidos* have continued to challenge the National Electoral Council's decision through legal and institutional means, a process which continues to be covered in the national media (e.g., El Universo, 2014, 2018, 2019, 2020).

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[1] In Peru, this consisted of representatives from NGOs with experience working with the indigenous communities in Block 192 (9), government officials directly involved in negotiations and policies related to Block 192 (7), one representative from the oil sector, engaged academics (2), advisors to the indigenous federations from Block 192 (3) and one leader of the indigenous federations representing the communities within Block 192. The sample in Ecuador consisted of former government officials who had worked directly with the Yasuní-ITT Initiative (4), representatives from NGOs heavily involved in contesting extraction (2), current government officials (2) and one academic.

Another factor suggesting the oilfield is a matter of national importance is how it has continued to be utilised politically. It was brought up in a presidential debate in 2021 (El Comercio, 2021) and in a national referendum in 2018, instigated by Correa's successor, Lenin Moreno, with the clear political purpose of distancing himself from his predecessor. Citizens were asked whether they would agree to increase an untouchable zone which surrounded the area of oil exploitation, in order to protect the indigenous groups in voluntary isolation, thus reducing the area of oil exploitation. Although 67.5 % voted in favour, and the untouchable zone has indeed been expanded, the government has allowed oil platforms to be built in the untouchable zone's buffer zone, in effect increasing the area in which oil extraction is permitted (Narváez et al., 2019).

Within environmentally concerned elements of civil society, the discursive emphasis of opposition to extraction has changed. The initial government outreach to the international community emphasised climate change and a novel supply-side carbon emission mitigation measure. When the initiative was cancelled, Yasuní-ITT evolved from a global proposal which positioned the Yasuní as an international space whose protection has planetary consequences to a national-level space. The focus is now on the country's responsibility for peoples living in voluntary isolation, particularly as operation in Ishpingo is set to commence. Ishpingo is particularly contentious, because it is not only the field with by far the largest oil reserves, but also the territory in which the uncontacted tribes live, overlapping the untouchable zone, in which extraction activities are vetoed, and its buffer zone. Two Ministers of the Environment have resigned upon being required to sign off on the final permit to exploit the area (Tarsicio Granizo, former Minister of the Environment, interview with author, December 2018).

4. Historical Consolidation of Amazonian State Space

This section uses the above cases to demonstrate the space-making outcomes of state accumulation strategy, and how this constitutes the present terrain of struggle shaping the spatiality of mobilising strategies. It does so by examining how the Amazon areas have been incorporated into Ecuadorian and Peruvian state space through an extractivist state spatial strategy, and it argues that this state spatial strategy has continued to condition the present terrain of struggle regarding oil extraction.

Historical studies help us understand how the incorporation of the Amazon into national state space in Ecuador and Peru has been conditioned by colonial and capitalist expansion. There have been three military border conflicts between Ecuador and Peru over Amazonian areas, and these areas were the last to be incorporated into national territory. Their incorporation into national state space is therefore of sentimental importance in patriotic understandings of the country (Esvertit Cobes, 2001), but it has nonetheless remained marginalised and peripheral. Grillo and Sharon (2012) argue that in Peru, the Amazon-as-space was quickly made part of the national territory through resource extraction and internal colonisation, but the Amazonian-as-subject was left out of national debates: being Amazonian constituted a continued marginalised identity. The Amazon has simultaneously been deemed empty (or with only dispersed indigenous communities spread over a vast area) and imagined as full of underutilised natural riches available 'to fuel the nation's growth' (Grillo and Sharon, 2012, p. 126). In Ecuador, the Amazon has similarly been represented as both *terra nullius*, or no man's land, (Potes, 2018, p. 171), and 'a land of superabundant natural wealth' (Wilson and Bayón, 2017, p. 57). Internal colonisation was encouraged, and in 19th - and 20th-century Ecuador, spatial imaginaries such as a 'promised land' full of natural riches were used (Esvertit Cobes, 2001). In Peru, President Fernando Belaúnde encouraged small-scale farmers to colonise the Amazon in the 1960 s by evoking the Amazon as 'a land without men for men without land' (Espinosa, 2009, p. 143, author's translation).

The colonial spatial imaginary of the Amazon in both countries has been coupled with an extractivist state spatial strategy. State space is melded into geographies of capital, and in the case of Ecuador and Peru, their position in the international economy as resource exporters impacts state strategies to ensure economic growth. The Amazon has been subject to an influx of economic activities caused by different resource booms, such as natural rubber, timber and oil. State strategy for the Amazon has been one of facilitating private extractive industries, with enormous detrimental socio-environmental effects for local populations. Dean (2002) argues that state presence has been contingent on interests emanating from beyond the Amazon, suggesting that 'state intervention in Amazonia has often followed on the heels of particularly brutal entrepreneurs' and that extractive projects and missionaries have substituted a state presence in the Peruvian Amazon (p. 201). Similarly, Sevilla (2013) argues that in Ecuador, the Amazonian areas were 'nationalised' and controlled through missions, whose function was to convert 'tribes of savages'. States' accumulation strategy has been to accumulate by dispossession (Harvey, 2004) by proxy.

Oil was first discovered in the Peruvian Amazon in 1939 (Chavez-Rodriguez et al., 2015). In Ecuador, massive oil deposit discoveries were made in its Northern Amazon in 1967 by the Texaco-Gulf consortium, and production started in 1972 (Gerlach, 2003). This development led Peru to take a renewed interest in the Amazon, and there was a major push for oil exploration in the area in the 1970s in both countries. This period has been named the 'first oil exploration boom' (Finer and Orta-Martínez, 2010). A second hydrocarbon exploration boom occurred from the early 2000s, triggered by high international oil prices due to sustained demand from China and other emerging economies, as well as a concern about the approach of peak oil (Bridge, 2010; Finer and Orta-Martínez, 2010). Both Ecuador and Peru had, by then, passed legislation to encourage foreign direct investment and exploration activity in the hydrocarbon sector, with the aim of increasing production. High prices meant that even remote areas with low-quality heavy crude oil were deemed financially feasible to operate, expanding the extractive frontier (Orta-Martínez and Finer, 2010). In 2008, 72 % of the Peruvian Amazon had been zoned for hydrocarbon activities, permitting the government to lease it to companies for exploration and production; in Ecuador, this was about 65 % (Finer et al., 2008). The extent of zoning for hydrocarbon activities demonstrates how state spatial strategy regarding the Amazon in both Ecuador and Peru continues to be founded on state accumulation.

Ecuador and Peru have similar histories of internal colonisation of their Amazon areas, state strategy facilitating accumulation by dispossession, and oil extraction. There is, however, a great difference in the relative economic importance of oil in the two countries. Oil is Ecuador's main export article, totalling 34.6 % of total export earnings in 2019, equalling 7,731 million USD (Banco Central del Ecuador, 2020). Peru's total oil export is worth 2,997 million USD, approximately a fourth to that of Ecuador, which, due to a much larger economy, totals only 6 % (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informatica [INEI], 2020). Ecuador also has the largest estimated crude oil reserves of the two: 8.3 billion barrels in 2019, compared to Peru's 1.2 billion barrels (US Energy Information Administration [EIA], 2020). Peru is actually a net importer of oil (EIA, 2020). While the national economic importance of oil extraction in the Amazon is well known in Ecuador and a topic which can gain national attention and traction, oil extraction in the Peruvian Amazon is not as important for Peru's economic development. Mining, predominantly of gold and copper, is far more important (INEI, 2020).

5. Prior socio-political struggle

In both Ecuador and Peru, the Amazon has been incorporated into state space as spaces of extractive accumulation. The Amazon has, of course, never been empty land; rather, it has been populated with dispersed indigenous groups, who have been dispossessed by a state accumulation strategy favouring private extractive industries. This dispossession constitutes the present terrain of struggle. Indigenous and environmental movements in both countries mobilise over the negative socio-environmental consequences of the extractive accumulation strategies taking place in the Amazon.

As established above, evolving state space shapes the 'terrain of socio-political struggle', but socio-political struggle at different scales also produces and modifies state space through its representation and articulation of space (Brenner et al., 2003). This dialectical proposition suggests that examining historical processes for the articulation and production of state space, as well as previous processes of socio-political contention, can help explain current spatialities of mobilising strategies. This section outlines the distinct histories of indigenous mobilisation in Ecuador and Peru. It analyses how their mobilisation is both conditioned upon existing state space and, potentially, re-maps that space, as well as the terrains of struggle over oil extraction.

As discussed below, the indigenous movements in Ecuador and Peru are highly different due to their historical and political backgrounds. Part of the explanation for their differing political space for contestation lies in geographies of state space. Peru is marked by a more profound regionalism, which is partly why indigenous groups there have not been able to establish a national organisation with political influence. The highly centralised state power in Lima limits access and participation, as does the geographical isolation of Amazonian indigenous groups (Dean, 2002). Peru's territory is 4.5 times the size of Ecuador's, and the Ecuadorian Amazon is closer to the capital city and better connected by roads than is the case in Peru.

The Ecuadorian indigenous movement is considered to be the most organised and institutionalised in Latin America (Bull, 2013; Macdonald, Jr., 2002). CONAIE, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, organises indigenous people from the coast, the highlands and the rainforest. While the majority of the indigenous population in Ecuador is Andean, indigenous organising grew out of Amazonian groups, who were the first to organise ethnically in the 1960 s in reaction to the state spatial strategy of internal colonisation and its consequences for their territories and livelihoods. Several of CONAIE's leaders have been Amazonian, and Amazonian indigenous struggle has been important in shaping CONAIE's strategy (Macdonald, Jr., 2002).

Highland, coastal and lowland ethnic groups all consider themselves to be indigenous in Ecuador, and they make up a significant portion of the total population, although the exact percentage depends on which source is cited (Gerlach, 2003). CONAIE is a consistent and powerful political actor at the national scale, as it has repeatedly mobilised its base groups to organise reoccurring contentious actions, including marches, uprisings, roadblocks, strikes and protests. Since the 1990 s, the Confederation has made demands that go beyond strictly 'indigenous' issues in the traditional sense, joining labour unions and environmental and other national organisations to protest government policies such as austerity measures. As CONAIE has been critical towards unpopular government measures, it has had strong public support (Macdonald, Jr., 2002). Its marches into Quito have been joined by many social groups and coincided with general strikes. Macdonald Jr. (2002) argues that by drawing away from single-issue and short-term action, CONAIE has attempted to become part of Ecuadorian society and influence it politically in a plurinational direction, rather than sustain the dichotomy between national and indigenous society.

Synergies and joint objectives have arisen between the indigenous movement and environmental organisations in Ecuador, not least regarding oil extraction in the Amazon. The campaign *Amazonía por la Vida* ('Amazon for life'), initiated in 1989, united several groups with the aim of spreading knowledge about the disastrous consequences of oil extraction in the Amazon, positioning the Amazon in the national consciousness. Oil production had not been heavily criticised until that point, having been seen solely as a source of national economic development.

Perhaps the most important propeller for national, and international, attention to the detrimental consequences of oil extraction in the Amazon is Ecuador's most famous lawsuit, which was brought against Texaco, later Chevron, by 30,000 local inhabitants who had been affected by large-scale pollution including oil spills and dumping of toxic wastewater. This lawsuit was the beginning of a drawn-out judicial process in several countries, with the most recent ruling in the Hague in 2018, and alleged corruption on both sides. It has nonetheless been framed as a David vs Goliath-like struggle, positioning local populations of a developing country against a large international corporation, a framing that the Ecuadorian state has also embraced (Lalander, 2016; Lewis, 2016).

This brief account of the recent history of indigenous and environmental organising in Ecuador demonstrates how the Ecuadorian indigenous movement has built up political power through contentious actions which have served as extra-governmental vetoes on government policy, and has joined forces with the environmental movement to highlight and fight against the detrimental socio-environmental effects of oil extraction in the Amazon. Through these actions, the terrain of struggle has been changed so that issues of oil extraction in the Amazon have the potential to be positioned at the national level, rather than being spatially confined and linked to territory.

No similar organised alliances have emerged between highland and Amazonian indigenous in Peru. Historical processes of assimilation have led Andean Quechua-speakers to self-identify as *campesinos*, small-scale farmers, a socio-economic rather than ethnic identity (Merino, 2019), and common ground has not been established between different regional groups. Amazonian indigenous groups have organised into two organisations, AIDESEP (the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest) and CONAP (the Confederation of Amazonian Nationalities of Peru), both established in the 1980s and both claiming to be the 'sole legitimate and authoritative voice of all indigenous peoples' (Dean, 2002, p. 216). This dispersion of organising power is clearly detrimental to their potential for contention at the national level, and their political power remains relatively weak (Dean, 2002).

Indigenous mobilisation in Peru is territory- and issue-based. AIDESEP and CONAP have focused on issues such as protecting indigenous territories and intercultural education. Professionals within law, public relations and advocacy work in Lima, and increasingly NGOs (such as *Cooperacción, Oxfam* and *Perú Equidad*) have 'accompanied' local indigenous federations and provided professional assistance for their claims of free, prior and informed consent, as well as socio-environmental remediation, as in the case of Block 192. The tighter relations between indigenous federations and Lima-based NGOs have meant a professionalisation of media strategies and advocacy work, but within the parameters of pre-existing terrains of struggle.

6. Hegemonic position of accumulation strategy

If extractivism has a hegemonic position, then, according to Jessop's (1990) 'policy paradigm' and Valdivia's (2008) 'rentist compromise', mobilising will concern the terms and conditions of economic activity. Hence, mobilisation will not destabilise the hegemonic position of the accumulation strategy itself but, rather, maintain it through material concessions. In research interviews carried out by the author regarding extraction and mobilisation over oil in Block 192, interview partners emphasised that in Peru, in general, people have interiorised the idea that development depends on the exploitation of natural resources; there is no way around this situation. Development equals economic growth, achieved through extractivism. The national political debate is subsequently in favour of natural resource exploitation, and Block 192 is one of many extraction sites. Mobilising actors in Block 192 also discursively connect oil extraction and development; indigenous leaders have stated repeatedly that they are not against oil production, as they are not against development (author, 2021).

What local indigenous federations do demand, however, are material concessions from the state, both in terms of socio-environmental remediation of five decades of local contamination, and public services at that particular oilfield. Local mobilisation over oil thus aims to shape state spatial strategy in a way that would provide more state attention locally, and mobilising actors engage in militant particularism (Harvey and Williams, 1995). Contention regarding Block 192 therefore does not challenge an extractivist development model; instead, local mobilising actors take advantage of the hegemonic position of the extractivist accumulation strategy to develop bargaining power through their potential ability to impact production by taking direct action. When the local indigenous federations have threatened to occupy or occupied oil installations, high-ranking government officials have offered to negotiate with them over their demands. Consequently, a major concern for all actors involved is what will happen when the oil runs out. With the state losing its economic interests in the area, the local communities will lose their disruptive power, and state presence will evaporate. The case of Block 192 therefore also demonstrates how state spatial strategy, i.e. the state's capacity to influence geographies of accumulation, contributes to shape the terrains of socio-political struggle over oil.

In addition to local mobilisation over the consequences of oil locally, the strong regional mobilisation to demand the nationalisation of production in 2015 can be explained by the proposition that the state is ensuring ongoing acceptance of the accumulation strategy through 'a flow of material concessions' (Jessop, 1990, p. 161). A clear example of state spatial strategy to ensure accumulation through material concessions, privileging certain spaces in a way which is conditioned upon continued resource extraction in Peru, is the *canon*. The *canon* is a specific tax under which a certain amount of revenue from oil or mining is directly transferred to regional and local governments. This system for local development engenders a strong dependence on extractive activity, and the regional government of Loreto is heavily dependent on the *canon*. The fear of a complete end to production in Block 192, and the resulting effects on the *canon*, resulted in considerable popular protests across the region.

With changing discourses and representations regarding economic growth and accumulation strategies, however, mobilisation may be directed at oil extraction in itself and be removed from its spatial specificity. The spatiality of mobilisation after the cancellation of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative must be seen in relation to the struggles between different interests within the Ecuadorian state. If we understand the state as a 'contested and changing field of discourses, policies and social relations' (Kristoffersen and Young, 2010, p. 578), then this was seen in Ecuador when left-leaning candidate Rafael Correa won the presidency in 2006. His political platform, *Alianza PAÍS* ('country alliance', but also the acronym of 'proud and sovereign fatherland' in Spanish), was originally a broad platform consisting of indigenous, environmentalist, statist and developmentalist voices (Novo, 2014). Correa's political project, the Citizens' Revolution, therefore initially implied a state which was more open to environmental and indigenous interests, and persons central to the environmental movement in Ecuador were given political and administrative positions in the state apparatus.

As part of its political project, the Correa government established a new development model based on the indigenous notion of *Buen Vivir*. There is no one definition of this term, but it is often suggested that it concerns 'living well and in harmony with nature', in contrast to always living better (Lalander, 2016; Radcliffe, 2012). Radcliffe (2012) argues that *Buen Vivir* has been formulated to be in discursive opposition to 'Western' and neoliberal development and that it is presented as a paradigm unique and appropriate to Ecuador. Acosta (2009), Escobar (2010) and others argued that this constituted an ontological shift from the hegemonic understanding of development as economic growth to understanding the economy as subordinate to ecological criteria.

To carry out *Buen Vivir* in practice, propositions such as changing the production matrix and using oil revenues to move away from oil dependency were launched. Alternative revenue sources, such as bioprospecting and tourism, were also emphasised through the state project of *bio-socialism* (Wilson and Bayón, 2017). This project's main idea was to use oil revenues to diversify the economy, through investments in strategic sectors such as those mentioned above. Such investments have, however, not materialised or have only partially materialised (Wilson and Bayón, 2017). The idea of living well and in harmony with nature, instead of relying on economic growth through extraction and export of natural resources, has mostly remained on a conceptual level. The need for immediate revenues to expand government services in Ecuador has actually entailed an increase in hydrocarbon and mining activities (Arsel et al., 2016; Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011; Lalander, 2016).

Despite the lack of real change to the state accumulation strategy in Ecuador, these developments nonetheless constituted a partial destabilising of the hegemonic project of the extractivist accumulation strategy, for a period of time. Oil extraction in highly socially and biologically diverse areas as an inevitable accumulation strategy was open for discussion, and the country's biodiversity was given a leading role in new political strategies. The proposal for the Yasuní-ITT Initiative – to leave the oil in the ground in return for international compensation – stemmed from civil society, but it was adopted and instigated by the Correa government as a concrete policy measure within the *Buen Vivir* framework in 2007 (Larrea and Warnars, 2009). The Yasuní came to occupy a central position in Ecuador's state space, as a national space with a non-existent regional and local scaling. It became detached from its physical surroundings and lifted up to become a signifier central to national politics in Ecuador. This state spatial strategy has created a different imaginary of the Yasuní to those of other areas of the Ecuadorian Amazon, such as the adjacent Cuyabeno National Park, which, although better connected and easier to reach than the Yasuní, with similar high levels of biodiversity and oil extraction, has not received the same attention.[2]

This de-coupling of the Yasuní-ITT oilfield, specifically, from state discourses on development through an extractivist accumulation strategy has had implications for mobilisation. Mobilisation has not occurred within the policy paradigm of the hegemonic accumulation strategy, where policies and conditions over economic activities can be negotiated. Mobilisation addressed non-extraction by actors at the national level who were not directly affected by the consequences of oil, and mobilisation was not related to territory.

7. Concluding Discussion

This article has examined the interlinkages between state spatial strategies to ensure extractive accumulation and the spatiality of mobilising strategies over the two most politicised oilfields in Ecuador and Peru. Geographically, these oilfields are situated a mere 100 km apart, but the geographies of contention regarding oil production in the two fields are opposite: mobilisation has been local, linked to territory and regarding the terms and conditions of extraction in Block 192 in Peru. In contrast, mobilisation has been national, removed from its spatial embeddedness and aimed at oil extraction per se in the case of Yasuní-ITT in Ecuador. This empirical observation led to an examination of context. Based on a large sample of news items and semi-structured interviews with key actors in both countries, as well as a back-and-forth process between different theoretical approaches and data, this article argues that approaches from critical state theory can be applied to explain the spatiality of mobilising strategies, demonstrating new ways in which this theory is of relevance to different contexts.

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[2] I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

The article finds that the historical processes of incorporating the Amazon into national state space as space for extractive accumulation, on the one hand, and mobilisation over the consequences of this, on the other, have shaped the present terrain of socio-environmental struggle in a dialectic fashion. The Amazon areas of both countries have been subject to historical space-making processes which represent them as peripheral and distant, and sites for extractive accumulation. The indigenous and environmental movements in Ecuador have, through decades of mobilising, enabled a national positioning of the detrimental socio-environmental consequences of oil extraction in the Amazon. In Peru, a more dispersed indigenous movement has not been able to push a broad agenda into the national political arena. The general attention to oil extraction in the Amazon is also higher in Ecuador due to the relative economic importance of the oil industry there.

According to Jessop (1990) and Hunold and Dryzek (2005), ensuring economic growth is a core imperative for the state. If the state accumulation strategy holds a hegemonic position that is accepted by the population through material concessions and a ‘rentist compromise’, whereby the state through its management of natural resources is seen as able to ensure development, then there is still room for protest over the management and conditions of resource extraction. This notion can explain the local and regional protests in Peru, which have addressed the management of oil production in Block 192, socio-environmental remediation, and the terms and conditions for continued extraction. Ending oil production in the oilfield is not a desired outcome for any party. In the particular case of Yasuní-ITT, there was a discursive decoupling of the oilfield from the state accumulation strategy through the government-led Yasuní-ITT Initiative to leave the oil in the ground in return for international compensation. Through this initiative, the Yasuní was represented as unique on a planetary scale and as a space to be protected. When the initiative was cancelled, mobilisation could address non-extraction, rather than the terms and conditions of production. Mobilisation occurred nationally, involving people who would not be directly affected, and it did not have a local origin.

Perreault and Valdivia (2010) argued that to ‘understand hydrocarbon conflicts and their outcomes we must be attentive to their spatialities, the role of situated memories of territory and nation, and to the political economies that structure resource access’. Previous studies have emphasised contained notions of space, such as social movement actors’ spatial representations, and how surrounding space mediates mobilisation, as main factors shaping the spatiality of contentious politics. Tarrow argued that ‘most opportunities and constraints are situational’ (p. 77) and, this article would argue, also dependent on the production and transformation of state space. This article follows up on Perreault and Valdivia’s assertion through analysing how the governing of accumulation through oil and evolving state spatial strategies to ensure economic growth through extractivism, have implications for mobilisation over oil and the spatiality of mobilising strategies.

In their analysis, Perreault and Valdivia (2010) analysed how nationalist discourse and imaginaries have been an essential part of hydrocarbon struggles in the case of Ecuador and Bolivia, and argued that ‘hydrocarbons and their governance shape meanings of the spaces and times of the nation state’ (p. 697), as through these struggles ‘imaginative geographies of the nation and its hydrocarbon resources’ (p. 689) have been produced. The analysis presented here regarding oil struggles in Ecuador and Peru and how state spatial strategies contribute to shape their spatiality demonstrate that the opposite is also the case: the spaces and times of the nation state contributes to shape hydrocarbon struggles.

The cases analysed here demonstrate how historical state spatial strategies to ensure accumulation, mobilisation over the consequences of these, and the way in which the extractive project in question fits into a hegemonic accumulation strategy shape mobilisation over oil. The connections between state spatial strategies to ensure economic growth and the spatiality of mobilising strategies could probably be expressed through different mechanisms than those detailed here, which are case-specific. This article nonetheless makes the case for a cross-fertilisation of critical state theory with contentious politics studies and connects the two main strands of literature on contentious resource extraction in Latin America, namely those on local-scale resistance and states’ extractivism. These tentative connections could be further explored through both in-depth studies of singular processes and variable-based comparative case studies. The findings of this article may moreover inform current debates on supply-side climate policy, as they demonstrate the importance of understanding historical factors to gain a fuller understanding of civil society’s present room for manoeuvre to push for controlling and phasing out oil production as a realistic climate measure, both within the state and as a challenge from outside the state.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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