REVOLUTIONS

IN BOLIVIA

Papers from the conference in March 2018 arranged by the Anglo-Bolivian Society and the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London

Edited by Into A. Goudsmit, Kate Maclean and Winston Moore

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

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The Revolutions in Bolivia conference organised by the Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) and the Anglo-Bolivian Society in London 2017 compared two twelve-year periods of social, political and economic transformation in Bolivia. The 1952 National Revolution led by the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) until 1964, and the Process of Change started by the Movement to Socialism (MAS) as of January 2006 and in power to this day through the uninterrupted leadership of President Evo Morales and Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera. Both are seeking re-election in October 2019 for a five-year term until 2025, to become Bolivia's longest-serving heads of state and for the MAS to complete 20 years in power.

The presentations convened for the conference examined Bolivia's experiences of revolution and reform in shaping its Nation State over these two periods. We were particularly interested in comparing MNR and MAS approaches to social transformation, and the extent to which the MAS administration has really achieved the radical, lasting transformation that merits the term 'revolution.' This is particularly pertinent as the current Morales' government is looking forward to being in power during the2025 Bicentennial of Bolivian Independence, in order to affirm its legacy, showcasing Bolivia as a prosperous, transformed and inclusive Nation State.

A further reason to assess both the National Revolution and Process of Change was to try and identify not only differences, but linkages and continuities between both processes. The MAS has repeatedly declared a break with past regimes, political parties, policies and ideology, and has been particularly critical of the policies of the new MNR led by president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada between 1993 - 1997 and briefly again from 2002 – 2003. In his first term Sanchez de Lozada partially privatized five leading state enterprises, introduced a regulatory framework, pensions system and more importantly a popular participation program to decentralize the state devolving resources and political decision making to establish hundreds of new municipalities and regional autonomies. Despite repeal of the popular participation law (LPP) by the MAS, its impact can be felt to this day. LPP transformed communities to become self-represented effective political players, shunning the discourses of the elites and later abandoning their parties. LPP had a boomerang effect starting the 1999 municipal elections when new local political parties and leaders emerged to destabilise and reposition Bolivia's state and party system. In just under a decade, popular participation paved the way for a bottom up emergence of the MAS starting 2002-03 when the axis shifted to redefine the terms of political play and competition enshrined in the 2009 Plurinational Constitution.

A lingering pre-conference question remained over whether the MAS and its Process of Change, represented a clear break with traditional highland and lowland elites, or did the MAS bargain its purpose and objectives as a left-wing political and social movement. The MAS has after 15 years in power marked a distance from many of its original bases of support and founding ideologies, including links to peasant Indian movements, the Suma Qamaña living well practices and associated cosmology. At times, this has even involved the suppression of social movement organisations, infringement of protected areas and harassment of

former supporters turned dissidents, in order to focus on the more complex and enduring agenda of creating a modern Nation State. The papers in this volume explore how the MAS has evolved from a ‘political instrument’ of the social movements, into a ruling party. This exploration includes an examination of the political strategies used to build a hegemony, and an exploration of the inevitable gap between the MAS’ discursive strategies and policy.

A further objective of the conference was to examine the continued relevance of the Revolutionary Nationalism that emerged from the 1952 revolution, and its significance as an enduring ideology of the Bolivian Nation State. This significance extends beyond the national revolution itself, to the formation of the MAS. After the transition period of military rule from 1964 to 1982, there followed a return to elected government, and the introduction of neo-liberal structural adjustment policies in 1985 to resolve the hyperinflation crisis. The closure of Bolivia's state mines led to the redundancy and relocation of thousands of miners, many of whom migrated to the Cochabamba tropics to cultivate crops and plant coca. Some twenty years later, the Chapare cocaleros surged to establish the Movement to Socialism (MAS) and Evo Morales as head of the six coca producer federations.

The MAS gravitated from the political periphery to win the 2005 elections, secure successive re-election with an absolute majority of votes and a secure majority of seats in the Plurinational Assembly. The MAS administration remains relatively unchallenged by political parties, but a major setback for Morales and the MAS came with the 21 February 2016 referendum when voters refused, by a narrow margin, to allow Evo Morales and Alvaro Garcia Linera to stand as candidates for a fourth term in October 2019, a decision subsequently overturned by Bolivia's Constitutional Court. The court’s decision is highly controversial and has been actively disputed in several demonstrations in the run up to the election.

An added purpose of the Revolutions in Bolivia conference was to examine the transformation of the Process of Change, of Evo Morales' leadership, of the structure and alliances established by the Movement to Socialism and the vital role played by the non-traditional coca leaf producing cocaleros where Evo Morales remaining to this day president of the six coca leaf producing federations whilst also President of Bolivia. This dual role reflects an emerging conflict of interest and national security concern as the Chapare coca leaf growers are now part of the base paste and cocaine production supply chain. In particular, we look at how well the radical potential of the indigenous cosmovision has been maintained as the MAS administration deals with the realities of power. A key point of contention throughout the MAS administration has been how much power has really been given to indigenous people in the new pluri-national constitution of Bolivia. To understand this dynamic, the MAS bases of support, and strategies for maintaining hegemony, must be explored as well as the impacts and interpretations of their policies.

The indigenous cosmovision provides the framework for our exploration here, and the motivation for examining Bolivian politics in terms of revolution. In the prologue to Silvia Rivera's "Oprimidos pero No Vencidos" (1984: 11 – 15), Bolivian philologist Luis “Cachin” Antezana says a complementarity of opposites double code or conceptual articulation that combines mythical, ideological and historical narratives that run both behind and alongside indigenous and popular grass-root actions, has a bearing on the historical horizon of the Bolivian state and society. This double code underscoring the importance of memory in tracing linkages and continuity between the 1952 National Revolution and the Process of Change, in the context of a broader decolonization agenda, can contribute to understanding the connection between revolutionary processes in Bolivia.

So, to finalise we also sought through the Revolutions in Bolivia conference to understand the continuing impact of MNR rule on current politics in Bolivia, and in the national imaginary, and the importance that indigenous philosophies may have had on restructuring revolutionary nationalism, the sense of nation / anti--nation and state in several moments in time. During, the 1964 to 1982 period of military rule, the return to democracy represented first by the role of the new MNRI in the UDP, the post 1985 implementation by the new MNR's neo-liberal structural adjustment policies, and the Plan de Todos (Plan for Everyone) applied from 1993 to 1997 together with the aforementioned Ley de Participación Popular (LPP) that gradually paved the way for the transformation of the Bolivian state and the bottom-up emergence of the Movement to Socialism (MAS). But we also wonder how the MAS, through an updated Process of Change, has continued the legacy of the 1952 Revolution, and what opportunities and risks the future may hold for a sustained radical politics in the Pluri-national State of Bolivia.

CHAPTER 1

The MNR, the MAS and the Meaning of Populism in Bolivia

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Few terms in recent times have gained such common currency to describe political developments as ‘populism’. It is, however, a notion that has long defied precise definition, often used more as a term of disapproval or repudiation than as an analytical tool. Political scientists have attempted to provide it with a precise meaning (Weyland, 2001; Panizza, 2013), while some have gone so far as to argue that the term should be avoided at all costs. Is it elitist or democratic? Is it just a political style, or more a strategy of legitimation? Can it be applied alike to right-wing regimes and left-wing ones? How does it change when applied to governments as opposed to movements seeking to overthrow governments?

In the case of Bolivia, it is a term with an extended pedigree. It has been applied to the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) both in its evolution in the 1940s as well as in its period in government between the 1952 revolution and the 1964 coup d’etat that ushered in a period of military rule. Similarly, it is applied to the origins and development of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) as well as its behaviour in government since 2006, as well as a number of governments – and not all civilian ones – in between. So how apt is populism as an analytical term to help us understand Bolivian politics over the last 70 years or so?

Here I will focus on the two periods mentioned above: the period of the MNR in the 1940s and 1950s and that of the MAS in the new millennium. At the risk of further muddying the definitional waters, let me chance my arm with a definition as to how I would use the term. I would argue: Populism represents a relationship between political elites (whether established ones or new ones) and the populous (or pueblo) by which the former seek to mobilise political support across different classes around an agenda for change, basing their legitimacy on an appeal to unity around a perceived ‘enemy’ whether internal or external to the political system (or both).

It is more than just about ‘style’ (Knight, 1998), and it (as is often the case) is ideologically ambiguous, used by both the left and the right in different circumstances to rally support and galvanise opinion behind their policies. In the final analysis, populism is part of a strategy of top-down mobilisation designed to win power and reinforce control, rather than one of bottom-up protagonism. Populism thus lends itself more to authoritarian rather than democratic or representational modes of governance. I use the term populism in a political rather than an economic sense; it is not just about spendthrift government seeking to use public money to curry support through redistribution as some economists would argue (Dornbusch and Edwards, 1991).

Use of the term in Latin America has undergone cycles that reflect changes both on the ground and how observers view those changes. Though originally used to describe movements of rural dissidence both in the United States and Russia in the 19th century, it came into vogue in the first half of the 20th century to describe the regimes that emerged as new elites sought to mobilise support around a modernising ideology linked to breaking the power of a largely agrarian oligarchy. Perhaps the case of Peronist Argentina represents the most poignant example of populist government (Hedges, 2017), although the term has also been used to describe Cardenismo in Mexico, the Estado Novo in Brazil and Aprismo in Peru. Not for nothing are many of the most well-known writers on classic populism Argentines (e.g. Di Tella, 1996; Germani, 1962; Laclau, 2007)

In subsequent years, use of the term diminished. For those on the Marxist left, populism represented an obfuscation of the true nature of class conflict. And in much of the region, it went out of use as right-wing military governments seized power and whose policies were anything but ‘populist’. Perhaps only in a few cases, like Peru under General Velasco (1968-75) can military governments be so described. By the 1990s, and even more into the 2000s, populism

once again gained salience as an analytical device in Latin America (De la Torre and Arnson, 2013). It was used, for example, in a new way – 'neo-populism' – to describe governments like those of Saúl Menem in Argentina (1989-99) and Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) in Peru (Roberts, 1995). And with the 'pink wave' that began in Venezuela at the end of the 1990s and brought the return of left-of-centre governments throughout much of Latin America subsequently, populism took hold once again as a way to analyse these governments (Cameron and Hershberg, 2010). The rise of the MAS, and its political dominance since Evo Morales' first election as president in 2006, forms part of that 'pink wave'.

The MNR and the 1952 revolution

How appropriate is it to describe the rise of the MNR in the late 1940s, its rise to power in 1952 and its subsequent role in government until 1964 as populist?

First established in 1941 in reaction against the pro-allies Peñaranda regime, the MNR emerged with clear pro-fascist ideas. Bolivia's defeat in the Chaco War (1932-35) and the reformist nationalism of the military governments that followed provided provided the context for its establishment. In 1943, after the overturn of the Peñaranda government, the MNR joined the nationalist military government of Major Gualberto Villarroel, but Villarroel tempered his pro-Axis sympathies as it became clear that Germany was unlikely to win the Second World War. Under the leadership of Víctor Paz Estenssoro, the MNR likewise adopted a more measured stance (Klein, 2011), aligning itself with the country's mineworkers and its more left-wing parties around a programme of reform involving, among other things, the nationalisation of the mining industry and agrarian reform. In its origins, the party was clearly influenced by the rise of Peronism in neighbouring Argentina and the populist politics that it exemplified. Basing its strategy around a poly-classist alliance involving the labour movement and middle-class sectors, it sought to mobilise wide sectors of the popular movement around a programme of reform. Under Paz Estenssoro and Hernán Siles Zuazo, the MNR leadership was in the hands of an educated middle class. Paz himself came from a landed family in Tarija, but as a soldier in the Chaco War he had come to realise the military and political ineptitude of the Bolivian political elite. The growth of the MNR owed more to its ability to court the leaders of popular movements rather than mobilise their rank and file (Mitchell, 1977). The MNR, until at least the mid-1950s, maintained a fiercely nationalist position (in both the sense of nation-building as well as opposition to foreign intervention), but one wedded to the need for political and social reform.

The revolution of April 1952 thus brought the MNR to power around a reformist programme, although it found itself allied with the country's much more radical mineworkers' union, the Federación Sindical Minera de Bolivia (FSTMB) (Dunkerley, 1984). Having seen the remnants of the army largely destroyed and struggling to maintain its political control over events, the MNR launched a programme of far reaching reforms (Malloy and Thorn, 1972). Among its first moves was to remove the literacy requirement for voting, creating de facto virtually universal suffrage. The voting population quintupled as a consequence. The revolutionary government found itself supporting the foundation of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), in which the FSTMB was the prime mover.

Under pressure from the mineworkers, the MNR government agreed to the nationalisation of the mining industry, forming the Corporación Minera de Bolivia (Comibol). It thus seized (initially without compensation) the assets of the three 'tin barons', Patiño Mines and those belonging to the the Hochschild and Aramayo families. At the insistence of the miners' union, Comibol was to be

‘co-managed’ by the workers themselves. The ideology of the FSTMB, as expressed by the the Trotskyist-inspired Thesis of Pulacayo of 1949, was well to the left of that of the MNR. In common with the spirit of the times elsewhere in Latin America, the Bolivian revolution sought to modernise the country’s economic and social structure by means of a statist model of development. Not only did it nationalise the mining industry, but the 1950s gave way to a strongly interventionist economy and a proliferation of government agencies charged with the task of spearheading development.

Then, in 1953, the MNR government enacted a wide-ranging land reform, confiscating the lands belonging to highland and valley haciendas and turning them over to a peasantry newly organised in rural unions (sindicatos). In practice, the reform was a response to de facto social pressures as the old system of landed tenure had collapsed with the revolution and the army was no longer there to prop up the status quo. Like it or not, the new government had little alternative to accept the outcome of land invasions, although -- as we shall see -- it managed to turn the new system of agrarian sindicatos to its political advantage.

The Bolivian revolution and its aftermath thus destroyed the traditional social structure based on landed estates and a small group of mining companies (known as the rosca), opening up society to new entrants. This would, in due course, lead to the development of a new elite, much of it linked to the power of patronage of the state. While the MNR had campaigned in the 1940s in favour of land reform and the nationalisation of the mines, in practice it was forced down this route by virtue of the strength of social forces – land invasions and the mineworkers – which offered it no alternative. While the MNR leadership helped mobilise these forces while in opposition, after 1952 it did its best to try to rein in the revolutionary impulse and to discipline the forces it had helped inspire.

The main force behind the conservative backlash in the mid-1950s was pressure from the United States, the government of which – or important figures within it – saw in the 1952 revolution the realisation of the nightmare of ‘communist insurrection’ in its own backyard. The revolution took place at the height of the Korean War and the Cold War climate which it helped engender. Using its economic muscle and taking advantage of Bolivia’s then prostrate economy, Washington was able to place pressure on Paz Estenssoro to corral the radical FSTMB and its leaders. The condition placed on economic assistance to Bolivia was the imposition of policies to end the co-management of Comibol and to remove miners’ leaders from key posts in the government. Also, in 1953, Paz Estenssoro signed a new code for the oil sector (first nationalised in 1936) that was subsequently to favour US investments. Then, in 1956 Siles Zuazo introduced the US-designed economic stabilisation known as the Eder Plan.

The US response to the Bolivian revolution might well have been more draconian but for the fact that relatively few US economic assets had fallen victim to nationalisation. But Paz Estenssoro (1952-56), Siles Zuazo after him (1956-60) and then Paz Estenssoro again (1960-64) expended great efforts to balance pressures from the United States with those emanating from the mining communities. The US embassy sought to isolate and, ultimately, destroy the mineworkers’ organisation (Field 2014). Though they failed in this endeavour, repression in the main mining zones led to a series of conflicts in which substantial numbers were killed during the period of military rule after 1964. At the same time, US aid was channelled into developing private-sector agribusiness in Santa Cruz in the eastern lowlands where the agrarian reform was never implemented (Heilman, 2017).

The MNR’s rural policy, however, emerged into one of domination and counterbalance to the power of the mining unions. It quickly became clear after the declaration of the agrarian reform that this

had largely slaked the political appetite of the country's peasantry, while providing a new organisational structure that leant itself to top-down social control. The MNR effectively dominated the rural sindicatos and used them in critical moments to mobilise them against the government's left-wing opponents. This was further developed by the military governments that followed 1964, especially that of General René Barrientos who used the peasant sindicatos as the lynch-pin of his Pacto Militar-Campesino, an essay in the co-optation of the union structure that was to lead to a new breed of peasant politics in the 1970s. The MNR's strategy sought to subdue ethnic identity around a broad definition of what it was to be a campesino giving rise to a subsequent indigenista reaction (Albó, 1985).

The 1964 military coup which brought Barrientos to power represented the end of the MNR era, until -- that is -- 1985 when Paz Estenssoro returned to office with very different political agenda. The rebuilding of the military apparatus, following its near destruction in 1952, was a direct consequence of the relationship struck between the MNR leadership and the US government during the 1950s. The army became the bulwark around which the government sought to limit the power of the unions and the left. Military repression, like the so-called Massacre of San Juan in 1967, became the hallmark of policy towards the mineworkers, with the military government of General Hugo Banzer (1971-78) seeking to re-found the country's politics along new lines.

So, in what sense was the MNR 'populist'? The party certainly bore resemblance, especially in its early stage, to other populist parties in Latin America, as an elite-based movement that sought to mobilise support for a reformist, modernising agenda, based around a statist model of development. It shared with them the concern to go beyond the organised working class, building poly-classist alliances that incorporated otherwise antagonistic forces around a decidedly nationalist agenda. It was never a 'liberal' party in which internal democracy was very evident. But nor was it a 'hegemonic' party; it constantly had to accommodate itself to grass-roots, bottom-up movements with their own agenda. The achievements of the MNR in office were substantial, but they also reflect the agendas of organised labour which the MNR was never able to fully co-opt.

Once in power and not withstanding its nationalist ideology, the MNR found itself forced to retreat from its more progressive policies, largely due to the constraints imposed by the United States. But it was able to establish a new political structure in rural parts of the country through which it was able to exercise a good deal of social control, a mechanism taken to its full conclusion after its fall from power with the Pacto Militar Campesino. The MNR that returned to power in 1985, in very different circumstances, had renounced its statist ideology in favour of free-market capitalism, a far cry from the party as it emerged in the 1940s. It had shed its populist instincts.

Evo Morales and the MAS

The Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS-IPSP) was not a party whose roots are to be found in elite politics; rather it was a bottom-up, grass-roots movement that sought to challenge the model of exclusionary elite-dominated politics that had taken root after Bolivia's return to democracy in the 1980s. 'Pacted democracy', as it became known, involved a scheme of power-sharing designed to underpin a liberalising economic model that led to a concentration of power in the hands of the business elite and their political allies. Despite regular electoral contests and a formal rotation of parties in government, 'pacted democracy' failed adequately to represent the interests of a large swathe of the electorate.

The MAS arose as a political movement in the non-traditional coca-producing Chapare region that challenged 'pacted

democracy' head-on in the late 1990s. With its roots among the coca farmers that had confronted the eradication policies of successive governments, it was a quintessentially 'bottom-up' movement (Harten, 2011). It grew out of the attempt to give a political voice to a social movement, calling itself an 'instrumento político' rather than a conventional party. Its rapid electoral growth – it only narrowly missed winning in the 2002 presidential elections – owed much to its ability to link up disparate protest movements, providing them with a channel through which to challenge the existing parties and their grip on political power. It was a political movement more 'popular' than 'populist'.

Its political expansion, both prior to and after the 2002 presidential elections, owed much to its ability to provide political leadership to an otherwise variegated sequence of social movements, helping to draw these together into powerful coalition (Crabtree, 2005). Rooted in traditions of peasant sindicalismo, the MAS drew in other sectors within the logic of electoral competition. By the elections of 2006, which brought Evo Morales and the MAS to office, it had incorporated substantial sectors of a disaffected middle class. While these sectors became increasingly influential, especially after 2006, the MAS remained a movement able to articulate and organise the positions adopted by the country's main peasant federations.

The MAS thus sought to weld a broad coalition of interests. To this end, it successfully brought together three powerful and inter-related ideological strands. The first of these was a pro-indigenous discourse that reflected the changes that had taken place in peasant politics since the 1960s when the MNR and later the military co-opted peasant unionism and sought to sideline expressions of ethnic identity. Whereas the MNR sought to suffuse ethnic politics in a discourse that highlighted the role of the peasantry, the MAS grew in a context in which pro-indigenous mobilisation was a driving force.The second was a potent nationalism, geared primarily against the United States and the international financial institutions which had sought to promote the neo-liberal model. The third was a renewed faith in the interventionist state as a route towards promoting greater equality. These three were to find expression in the elaboration of a new constitution, finally approved in 2009. There are certain parallels with the MNR era here, at least with respect to nationalism and state intervention, less so as regards pro-indigenous politics.

As with 1952 and the MNR, 2006 represents a dividing line, a shift from the MAS as a popular-based protest movement to one with the responsibilities of government: a shift from protesta to propuesta. Since taking office, it is certainly arguable that the MAS government has strayed somewhat from its popular origins. The representatives of grass-roots organisations, given senior posts in government in 2006, have tended to be eclipsed by more technocratic elites. There have been bouts of tension within the MAS between those who claim to represent its core values and those from middle-class groupings who have become more influential with time. Indeed, the 'process of change' (as MAS officials refer to the policies adopted since 2006) has led to the emergence of new elites whose interests may or may not align with the drift of policies produced by the MAS government.

The role of leadership has been crucial in maintaining support for the MAS government and keeping it relatively united. Evo Morales, more so than the leaders of the 1952 revolution, has managed in well over a decade in office to remain the personification of the 'process of change'. He stands as a towering figure over the politics of the MAS, if not quite the charismatic leadership qualities attributed to some interpretations of populism. His life story – from the humblest origins to becoming Bolivia's first-ever indigenous president (Sivak, 2008) – reflects the dreams and aspirations of the majority of citizens in this, the poorest and most indigenous country of South America. What has emerged is a highly

presidentialist regime (Mayorga, 2014), though not one that can ignore popular pressures.

Like the MNR governments before it, the MAS administration has had to adjust to political realities, sacrificing some of its original aspirations on the way. Arguably, the redistributive policies of the first years in office have given way to rather more conservative ones, respectful of the interests of existing elites. Perhaps this is clearest in the agrarian sector, where the policies of land reform pursued in Morales' first government (2006-10) gave way to a more accommodating stance towards landholders, especially in Santa Cruz. The near open rebellion in Santa Cruz in 2008 proved a political learning curve for Morales and the MAS, leading to acknowledgement of the need to maintain large units of landholding in the Bolivian oriente. During his second and third terms in office, Morales pursued policies designed to court the agro-exporting bourgeoisie of Santa Cruz (Wolf, 2016).

In its economic policies, the MAS governments pursued very cautious policies, certainly far removed the stereotype of populism associated with profligate government spending. Concerned to avoid any return to the sort of hyperinflationary situation that characterised the 1980s (which brought down the left-wing government of the Unidad Democrática y Popular in 1985), the MAS administrations adopted conservative monetary and fiscal policies. By 2010, the IMF found itself congratulating Bolivia on the success of its government's macroeconomic policies. Similarly, following the much-vaunted 're-nationalisation' of the natural gas industry at the end of 2006 (which added substantially to the government's tax take), the Morales government has sought to encourage foreign investment in this sector, aware that without it Bolivia's gas fields will soon be exhausted.

And in its pro-indigenous stance, which led to the extension of indigenous rights through the 2009 constitution, the Morales administration found it increasingly difficult to marry discourse and practice, particularly in seeking to promote the development of certain indigenous areas, notably those on which hydrocarbons resources were located. (Postero, 2017)

Although it is arguable that the MAS has become less 'democratic' and more 'presidential' in the way it operates, it is also true that it is unable to dictate to those of its component organisations, notably the country's peasant unions and the cocaleros, as if they were simply party offshoots to be manipulated at will. Popular movements that support the MAS retain considerable autonomy, pursuing their interests often vigorously and sometimes violently (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013). When the government has faced a barrage of protest over policies that go against the interests of allied social movements, it has been swift to switch direction. Basically, supportive movements have adopted militant tactics to defend their interest at certain points, such as the movement of mining cooperatives which, since the mid-1980s, account for the bulk of the workforce in the mining sector. They also wield significant influence in the MAS's selection of candidates for electoral office (Anria, 2018).

So how well does the MAS experience fit the populist tag defined above? There are certain elements that correspond to notions of populism. New elites that have gained access to power since 2006, a new order that seeks legitimation through appeals to lo popular in a country where popular democratic traditions remain vibrant. But there has been a shift towards a more bureaucratic and presidentialist system of government that is less responsive and permeable to popular interests. Representative institutions, especially in the formal political arena, have proved relatively weak. The Morales government has made use of 'direct democracy' through referendums to seek public legitimation at certain points. The MAS is not a 'liberal' party in the classic sense of the word, and in this respect, there are some resemblances to

the MNR. A degree of clientelism has crept in that has reduced the autonomy of grass-roots movements. And Morales has not shied away from nationalist appeals, whether against the United States or neighbouring Chile (over Bolivia's access to the Pacific) in ways designed to rally opinion in favour of the government.

But it would be a mistake, in my opinion, to view this new state structure as populist in the sense of its manipulation of subservient, quiescent clienteles. The powerful tradition of bottom-up social mobilisation remains very much alive in today's Bolivia, while the state (though larger and more intrusive than before) is insufficiently powerful to be able to ignore or subdue these. Government has frequently been faced by keen opposition to specific policies, and in most cases it has been forced to backtrack in order to maintain that support. Bolivia, I would argue, stands out when compared to other 'pink tide' countries in Latin America that lack its political traditions of autonomous social organisation and mobilisation (Silva and Rossi, 2018). These are part of the country's political culture.

Conclusion

We have sought here to compare two periods of Bolivia's recent political history, and to see the extent to which they can usefully be classified as examples of 'populism'. While, of course, populism is a slippery term, open to a variety of interpretations, we have offered a working definition. Clearly, no two periods in a country's history are directly comparable, but there do appear to be some continuities between the period of the MNR and that of the MAS that are worth bearing in mind. Both were predominant parties over extensive periods, both brought new political actors into play, and both presided over periods of social change. Both also claimed legitimacy on the basis of their ability to mobilise and engage popular sectors, albeit sometimes in clientelistic ways. The tradition of popular mobilisation that goes back to the 1952 revolution (if not well before) permeates the country's political culture and alive and well today. 1952, in my view, represents an important point of inflection that had a profound influence over successive generations. Such traditions remain today.

However, comparisons between periods some six decades apart should not be pushed too far. The MAS does not willingly hark back to any antecedents within the MNR, a party which (because of its role in the 1980s and 1990s) is seen as neoliberal and anti-popular. The MAS also seeks to proclaim an ethnic discourse which was never the vocabulary of the MNR in the 1950s and 1960s. Populism, as defined here, is not an entirely appropriate lens through which to view either of these two experiences and the complex relationships that have existed between elites, the common people and the state. While there are aspects to both periods that smack of populism, this interpretation again should not be pushed too far. Where popular movements retain autonomy and are capable of promoting themselves and defending their interests against the state, the notion of top-down mobilisation to manipulate opinion and legitimise government can appear somewhat wide of the mark.

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CHAPTER 2

The Pachacuti Vision of Filemón Escóbar: from Class Struggle to the Complementarity of Opposites

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Filemón ‘’Filippo” Escóbar was founder and second general secretary of the Movement for Socialism (MAS-IPSP)[1], Congressman (1989-93), Senator (2002 – 2005), advisor to the Six Coca Growers’ Federations in the Cochabamba Chapare tropics, ideological mentor to Evo Morales and founder of the Tupac Katari Revolutionary Liberation Movement (MRTKL). Perhaps more remarkable is the fact that Escobar, a notable left wing and labour movement figure of Trotskyist lineage renounces class struggle in favour of Pachacuti, a vision of holistic change based on Andean complementarity of opposites and reciprocity principles.

Filemón Escóbar developed this new political vision of change based on Andean principles of living well. It is influenced by the Indigenous Aymara notion of Suma Qamaña (or Sumaj Kawsay in Quechua) and advocates a moral and correct life based on a strong sense of community and relationship with Mother Earth (Pachamama), involving spiritual and material balance in human beings and a harmonious relation with all forms of existence. The Pachacuti vision of change is also inspired by ritual use of the coca leaf to interconnect the Andean symbolic system in order to stimulate the emergence of paradigms and practices different to the traditional left-wing conflict-centred approach. As Escobar clarified in an interview in 2014:

“The solution is to bring back a sense of humanity to the economy based on the reciprocity principles of giving, receiving and giving back found in in rural areas.

Reciprocity is about producing for the other, working for the other and giving your all for the other, instead of for your personal individual gain” (Nueva Economia, 2014; 8 April)

1 Movimiento al Socialismo – Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos (Movement to Socialism – Political Instrument for Sovereignty of the People). Known as MAS and/or Intrumento Político or MAS-IPSP.

In his search for political alternatives Escóbar admitted that he and the left were responsible for some very damaging processes, including the “political suicides” mentioned by former President Carlos Mesa in the prologue to his book, and he made clear his hope that these mistakes would not be repeated in the current ‘Process of Change’ being implemented by the MAS. To avoid this happening, Escóbar proposed the MAS-IPSP remain faithful to its founding ideology of the Complementarity of Opposites, and not reproduce the politics and ideology of confrontation typical of the traditional left.

“This process of Pachacuti, cannot end in another frustration, and that frustration will not be the radicalism of the old left, it will be more serious, because the Andean – Amazonian civilization will be answerable for this new frustration" (Escóbar, 2008: 296)

Coinciding with Escobar’s work on Pachacuti, the notion of Suma Qamaña was being developed by Aymara intellectual Simón Yampara and expanded by Javier Medina and other Aymara intellectuals including Fernando Huanacuni, Bolivia’s former foreign minister, and his predecessor David Choquehuanca[2]. Yampara declares Suma Qamaña, associated with other Andean cosmological principles like the complementarity of opposites and reciprocity, could shape a fresh political imperative to bring about change in Bolivia and the Andean region.

"Little by little we are going to able to open spaces and I think this will enable us to (develop) our own political school of thought (...) another orientation, another way of thinking that is different from Marxism, and different from liberalism." (Saavedra, 2010: 53)

2 “I think it's important to stop for a moment to close our eyes and open our hearts - to see what kind of world we have been able to create. A world in a sure race towards destruction. This Western model of society has taken us away from nature and our families have dehumanized away from nature. We face a crisis of principles and values that does not value our roots. We need a new horizon, new life, that is to “Live Well”. A new history, not of class struggle but of regional and global brotherhood.” David Choquehuanca, Keynote Speaker on “Taj Pa Chani” (Everyone and Everything) at the Fifth Annual CAF-LSE Conference on “Leadership, Resilience and Development in an Era of Instability”, London Friday 19 January 2018

When Fernando Huanacuni was removed as Bolivia's foreign minister, by President Evo Morales, in September 2018, he issued a similar reflection:

"I am a faithful servant of the process of change, an Aymara Indian, I am not a Marxist nor a communist, but I do respond to my indigenous principles and this enables me to have values for living well. I respect communism and Marxism, but we differ a lot in the methodology of struggle, as living well is a process of complementation. Marxism and Trotskyism are confrontational, while complementarity is not like that". (Los Tiempos, 2018: 5 September)

This chapter will examine the reasons and the implications of Filemón Escóbar's radical new determination by assessing aspects of and his role in the 1952 National Revolution led by the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the Process of Change started by the MAS-IPSP in 2006. The linkages he developed are extraordinary as they represent a break with the established class-based theory and practice of Bolivian left-wing leaders and political parties. The penetrating potential of his thought is widely acknowledged, and he has been described as "vital for understanding the second half of the 20th century in Bolivia" (Galindo, 2014) and portrayed as a key figure of "history in the strict sense of the word" (Mesa, 2017).

Former president Carlos Mesa describes Escóbar as a militant of his country and people. Militant given his worker background, political wisdom and unwavering commitment to the miners and their Federation; but, also a "volcano, who lucidly perceived the errors of a left seemingly enamoured in committing political suicide and for discovering the vitality of the cocalero movement". (Escóbar, 2014: 9)

His life-long political activism also speaks to this potential. Escóbar was a miner, iconoclastic trade union leader, one-time head of the Bolivian Miners Federation (FSTMB) and Catavi miners' union. Filippo's half-brothers were Guillermo Lora, Trotskyist leader of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) - author of the influential Tesis de Pulacayo - and Cesar Lora, a Catavi mine leader murdered in July 1965. Accompanied by Simón Reyes of the Bolivian Communist Party, "Filippo" led the 1986 "March for Life" to avert mass redundancies, closure of the mines and possible demise of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) and FSTMB.

Escóbar obsessively tracked the vicissitudes of Bolivian miners, left-wing political leaders, and 23,000 relocalizado, redundant miners who embodied the legacy of those who had lived and worked in the mines since colonial times. Starting 1986 these miners and their families migrated to the Chapare to become small-holders organized into trade unions around lucrative cultivation of the coca leaf. Wearing his emblematic woven ch'uspa coca leaves bag, he accompanied them on this journey and engaged with Amazonian indigenous communities at the Isoboro Secure National Park (TIPNIS).

Complementarity of Opposites and the Andean Cosmovision

Filemón Escóbar openly admits that he and the left are responsible for very damaging processes, hoping this will not be repeated in the current Process of Change. For Filemón this means the MAS-IPSP should remain faithful to its founding ideology of the Complementarity of Opposites, and not reproduce the politics and ideology of confrontation of the traditional left, as this would lead to political suicide of the MAS and Evo Morales.

"The “ch'ullas[3] of the traditional left, known today as "indigenous left" are pushing us towards confrontation with the other Bolivia, in wanting to wipe it out. On the other hand, the traditional right is seeking the same objective because it is also radically ch'ulla. It is One and never accepted parity, the Yanantin.[4] Both ch'ulla are seeking to wipe each other out." (Escóbar, Filemón, 2013: 380)

Escóbar declares confrontation does not exist in the Complementarity of Opposites, quoting the XIX century Aymara intellectual Vicente Pazos Kanki who believed the indigenous and Spanish cultures could come together to forge a grandiose civilization and do away with confrontation. The XX Century Aymara intellectual Fausto Reinaga envisioned One Nation and One Bolivia emerging from the organic, spiritual and psychological fusion of both nations. Therefore, Andean and Amazonian civilizations know not the concept of inclusion, as each civilization contains within itself the other civilization, in a subordinate or minimized mode, Filemón comments with reference to Fausto Reinaga. (See concept of Ayni below).

Filemón Escóbar’s other referent is Pablo Zarate Willka, the XIX Century Aymara federalist rebel who issued the "Proclama de Caracollo" (Caracollo Proclamation)[5] calling for mutual respect for the complementarity of differences between the Indian (Andean - Amazonian Civilization) and the white (Western Individual Civilization).

3 Ch’ulla = bad luck. Not a pair, but an odd number. A person without a partner. A missing or odd sock.
4 The union of opposing yet interdependent energies described in the complementarity of opposites
5 “Publíquese por bando solemne a todos los propietarios por lo Federación i por la Libertad que deseamos hallar la Regeneración de /…/ Bolivia, como todos los indígenas i los blancos nos lebantaremos a defender nuestra República de Bolivia, porque quieren apoderarse el traidor asqueroso Saco Alonsismo bendiendonos a los chilenos (…). 2. Con grande centimiento ordeno a todos los indijinas para que guarden el respeto con los besinos i no agan tropelías (ni crismes) porque todos los indígenas /han/ de lebantarse para el conbate i no para estropear a los besinos/;/ tan lo mismo deben respetar los blancos o besinos alos indijinas porque somos de una /misma/ sangre e hijos de Bolivia i deben quererse como entre hermanos i con indianos.” Zarate, el “Temible” Willka y La Rebelión Indígena de 1899 de Ramiro Condarco Morales por Luis Oporto Ordóñez, Pagina 59, FUENTES, VOL 5, No 15, La Paz, agosto 2011

Zarate Willka proclaimed the "Regeneration of Bolivia", with Filemón pointing to the "Refounding Bolivia" as its XXI century equivalent.[6]

Filemón Escóbar declares the time has come for the ayni collaboration between both civilizations, again stressing the need for high level political consciousness. He rebukes the bad luck Ch'ullas of the traditional left and traditional right for being unaware that we are living through a transition period where the myth of revolution will be replaced by the myth of Pachacuti which is not a Western style revolution. Andean people are renowned for their communitarian social practices and vibrant live philosophy despite the absence of philosophical texts or identifiable philosophers, thus

the veritable or real philosophical subject have become the anonymous and collective runa / jaqi, to achieve a fullness of human attributes. While Western philosophy has long searched for the origin arje, of what exists, that fundamental and irreducible principle of "reality". In Andean philosophy arje is present as relation, and not as a substantial "entity". Everything is relation and relata at the same time.

The arje of Andean philosophy is the relationship with everything, the network of nexii or links representing the vital energy of everything that exists. "A stone for example isn't simply a separate "entity" that exists on its own, in the Andean world a stone is the point of concentration of certain relations of "force" and "energy". (Estermann, 2012:109). Reality for the runa/jaqi unfolds or is "revealed" through celebration, a reproduction or recreation of that reality "becomes more intense and concentrated through celebration," something considered "magical" or "numinous" from a western perspective. (Estermann. 2012: 115)

6 Filemón also admired Andres Ibanez the first white man to propose an egalitarian and radical Federalist state for Bolivia in 1876. Ibanez’ federalists seized control the eastern lowland region of Santa Cruz for nearly six months, before being executed.

Two key principles in the Andean Cosmovivencia are relationality and complementarity. Relationality is a holistic principle that indicates everything is related (connected) in some way or other with everything. Complementarity in turn, emphasises the inclusion of complementary opposites into a complete and integral entity.

“In the West, formal "contradiction" is conceived as "absolute" or exclusive, in such a way that (A) excludes the other (B) and vice versa. Andean philosophy, on the other hand, interprets the formal contradiction as a material contrariety. A is different to B, B is different to A, but A and B can "coexist", (with possibility) as complementary parts of a third entity, that then strictly speaking, becomes a “whole” (entity). ". [...]"The Andean ideal is not one of "extreme" opposition, but the harmonious integration of both". (Estermann. 2012: 142)

Oppositional complementarity is a "celebratory mediation", whereby complementary positions achieve integration through celebrative rituals which are so common in the Andean communities. It also posits the question whether the recourse to violence and confrontation, “’is endogenous to the Andean region, or is perhaps the result of the conflict arising from the cultural, social, ethnic and economic impact of the Spanish conquest". (Estermann. 2012: 143)

Andean Ayllu communities and families use energy interactions to reconcile the material with the spiritual, both privately for their families but also in communal forms. This is made possible through ayni -- collaboration mentioned earlier by Escobar -- a ritual for reciprocal sharing or correspondence that reproduces a diversity of energies and common feeling of belonging to a solidary society, that Simón Yampara calls “cosmovivencia” or cosmic experience. (Yampara,2008: 8)

Pachakuti similarly represents permanent or ongoing change, the renewal of energies coming and going over time. The Quechua and Aymara indigenous people have long been searching for such renewal, beyond what has been offered through mere changes of government.

Non-confrontation and the revolutionary left

Although he advocated a non-confrontational politics of complementarity, Escobar valued the institutions of the left and of the revolution. He underscored the need to safeguard the political independence, credibility and integrity of the COB[7] and FSTMB by permanently encouraging, be it the miners or the cocaleros, to consider lessons learned in social and political struggles, and chart politically creative ways forward to avoid repetition of mistakes. Supported by the COB, Filemón Escóbar entered the Chapare in 1986 to help found the Movement for Socialism–Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP) and organized over 600 workshops and seminars in the 1990s -- teaching the cocaleros Bolivian and labour movement history, to not repeat the mistakes made by the traditional left, and dissuaded some cocaleros planning to establish a guerrilla movement in the Chapare tropics.

The Trotskyist Pulacayo Thesis (1946), was his initial referent for advocating “direct mass action and electoral struggle.”

7 The COB has currently (2018) lost its independence by toeing the MAS-IPSP government line. The COB's political and trade union credibility was based on a plural representation because as a labour organization it provided a space for a myriad of political positions to be heard and represented. It was this plurality that granted the COB a capacity to convene because political independence was guaranteed, and this was reflected in the executive committee which was very inclusive of all social and political currents expressed by trade union members and their organizations. Nowadays the COB does not represent other trade union and political currents different to the majority stance taken in support of the MAS, and the executive committee does not foster discussions and debate as part of its decision-making process.

“VIII. Direct Mass Action and Electoral Struggle. We reiterate the pre-eminence of direct mass action among the various methods of proletarian struggle. We know very well that our liberation will be the fruit of our own work, and that to achieve it we cannot wait for cooperation with forces outside our own. Therefore, in this stage of the workers' movement our chosen method of struggle is direct mass action; more explicitly, strikes and mine take-overs. […] Electoral politics are important, but in the ascendant stages of a revolutionary movement they play a secondary role. To become important, electoral work must be subordinated to direct mass action. Above all, congressional struggles must be directly linked to direct mass action. Worker deputies and miners must act under only one authority-the principles that are laid out in this Thesis.”[8]

The coca leaf, in turn, became the symbol of the Andean - Amazonian Civilization in marches and blockades, but also in elections. Inspired by the symbolism of the coca leaf, Filemón’s political thinking began to change after 1990. His mentor in the tropics was Jose Mirtenbaum, a Bolivia born half German anthropologist who developed the notion that ”coca is not cocaine” and invited Filemón to participate in the August 1990 “March for Territory and Dignity” to also draw a red line to prevent coca growers and settlers from moving into the Tipnis."The coca leaf interconnected the Andean symbolic system and paved the way for new paradigms for us in the Third millennia, which have nothing to do with the traditional left”(Escóbar, 2008: 267)

8 Pulacayo thesis. https://nacla.org/article/thesis-pulacayo

The Suma Qamaña in Aymara (or Sumaj Kawsay in Quechua) notion of a moral and correct life based on a strong sense of community and relationship with Mother Earth (Pachamama), but also involving spiritual and material balance in human beings and a harmonious relation with all forms of existence, was developed by Aymara intellectual Simon Yampara, but also in extensive studies by Javier Medina and Fernando Huanacuni, Bolivia’s former foreign minister, and his predecessor David Choquehuanca[9].

In the workshops Filemón Escobar organized in the Chapare tropics, he also referred to the lesson to be learned from the 1947 election results, when the miners’ federation FSTMB, founded three years earlier, formed the Bloque Minero Parlamentario (BMP) to secure two Senators and 7 Deputies. A qualitative leap for the labour movement during the rule of the “Rosca” mining and estate-owning oligarchy, as the FSTMB miners federation secured parliamentary representation. This election became a referent, as Filemón bet the MAS could achieve a similar result in the 2002 elections[10].

9 Current secretary general of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA).
10 1947 Election Results: Lesson to be learned

Congress				
Party / Alliance		**Senate**	**Deputies**	**Total**
Republican Socialist Unity Party	PURS	14	45	59
Revolutionary Left Party	PIR	4	36	40
Liberal Party	PL	7	16	23
Nationalist Revolutionary Movement	MNR	1	4	5
Revolutionary Workers Party	POR	1	3	4
Independents	Ind	0	4	4
Social Democratic Party	PSD	0	2	2
Independent (Bolivian Socialist Falange)	FSB	0	1	1
Seats		**27**	**111**	**138**
Mining Parliamentary Bloc (MNR + POR)	BMP	2	7	9

On 5 January 2002 Evo Morales and José Antonio Quiroga were chosen candidates for the 2002 General election, at an assembly held in La Paz[11]. Then Quiroga surprisingly declined the Vice-Presidential candidature and was replaced by Antonio Peredo, who took Evo to Cuba to meet Fidel. Introducing Peredo to the MAS was, Filemón says, the biggest mistake in his political career as he handed over the Instrumento Politico (the MAS-IPSP) to the old-fashioned traditional left.

"This left makes no commitment, it instead integrates as political leadership, displacing the Indian power and opening up the Instrumento Politico to a western rooted socialism, which is just like capitalism: homogenizing, industrialist, with the vision of 'dominating nature'". [....] This left that has taken control of the Instrumento Politico, never understood the meaning of community, reciprocity, Suma Qamaña and the complementarity of opposites."(Escóbar, 2008: 264)

The MAS came second in the 2002 elections with 20.9% of the vote, just 43,000 votes short of winning, but secured 27 out of 130 Lower House seats and 8 out of 27 Senate seats. The election result enabled the MAS to rise from the political periphery to rapidly establish alliances with other peasant, indigenous, settlers, cooperatives, mining and left-wing groups, and gravitate towards the political centre stage. The Chapare cocaleros resorted to smart radio station broadcasts to establish nationwide common ground with other marginalized groups. (Grisaffi, 2019: Chapter 7)

11 Nephew of Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, the minister of hydrocarbons who in 1969 nationalised the Gulf Oil Company and went on to establish the Bolivian Socialist Party (PS-1). Marcelo Quiroga was murdered and disappeared following the siege of the COB headquarters during the 1980 military coup led by General Luis Garcia Meza.

In a cocalero assembly in Lauca Ñ in the Chapare, Filemón forecast Evo Morales would win the 2005 elections, as the MAS was the only party standing following the 2003 resignation and flight of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. Knowing this, Filemón sought cocalero commitment that if Evo won the 2005 elections – "Not a single coca leaf will remain planted in the Chapare." Filemón went on to add, "Just as Evo Morales is a symbol of the coca leaf headed to become President, beware the coca leaf does not slit his throat". This resolution was approved at the Lauca Ñ assembly after the MAS-IPSP came second in the 2002 elections. However, after winning the 2005 elections, when the MAS-IPSP became the first political party since the return to democracy in 1982 to secure a majority, Filemón said Evo Morales did not honour the Lauca Ñ assembly eradication resolution, but instead legalized the Cato of coca (1,600 square meter plots).

Filemón charges that this decision undermined the political consciousness of the cocaleros, who started to believe that entering the drugs trafficking supply chain would be the solution moving forward.[12] Escobar noted that this would be a betrayal of both traditional left and Pachacuti virtues:

"There should be no coca in the tropics, it is not traditional, it is a business venture within a classic capitalist framework (drugs trafficking)", (Escóbar, Filemón, August 2014).[13]

12 When Filemón was standing as candidate for Senator of the Green Party (Partido Verde) in 2014, he pointed out that the Ley 1008 anti-drugs law introduced in July 1988 did not advocate forced eradication of coca plantation, but voluntary eradication with a right to compensation and an alternative development program to provide the coca growers a similar level of income to that earned from coca planting. Filemón proposed Morales comply with the Ley 1008 to prevent coca from the Chapare being used for drugs trafficking and pay coca growers US$10,000 for each cato. Escobar reasons that if no surplus coca was produced for drugs trafficking, the price of coca would not rise, and there would be no crime to punish. "I proposed we pay each family US$10,000 a year for ten years, which is what the cocaleros earn every year from planting coca. US$10,000 a year - based on one cato of coca, and not the three that they already hold -- until all the coca is cleared from the Tropics. But we maintain the Yungas coca as it is traditional coca." (Escóbar, Filemón, 2013)
13 Winston Moore interview with Filemón Escóbar August 2014

Filemón Escobar was unable to pursue his plan to eradicate the non-traditional coca leaf in the Chapare through a compensation program, as Evo Morales had him expelled from the MAS on 24 May 2004 for allegedly receiving payment to enable the Senate to approve, in his absence, a law granting immunity from prosecution for US military personnel in Bolivia. (Escóbar, Filemón, 2008: 270 – 276). The MAS – IPSP went on to win the 2005 general election with 54% of vote. According to Filemón, who was particularly concerned about the implications for coca production, Evo Morales and the MAS -IPSP entered “the Palacio Quemado (Presidential Palace), unencumbered, with no ties, although these would emerge in due course. This is one of the most dangerous risks in the current process, led by an Aymara at the start of the XXI century"(Escóbar, Filemón, 2008: 297 – 298). Anthropologist Thomas Grisaffi, who spent a decade doing field work in the Chapare noted, “coca growers are tied to the international cocaine trade through the production and selling of coca leaf and the processing of coca paste” (Grisaffi, 2019: 4), and cocaleros admit that “a great deal of their crop is used to manufacture cocaine.” (Grisaffi, 2019, 2)[14]

After becoming president in 2006, Morales shifted from the violent confrontation strategy of forced eradication implemented for over two decades by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), to safeguarding cocalero livelihoods through top-down provision of development assistance (education, health and road building) , reducing coca cultivation through a new regulatory structure, identifying alternative uses for coca crops and control of the cocalero unions to prevent them becoming illegal organisations. The cocaleros continued, however, to demand their right to cultivate unlimited coca, but were limited by the MAS government to cultivating only one cato per family.

As a result of this policy, the cocaleros became disillusioned and felt betrayed by Morales and the MAS, claiming he no longer looked after them, that he and other high-level leaders no longer pursued cocalero union goals and “lead by obeying”. Cocaleros also complained that their grass root democratic ideals had been corrupted and that the MAS was implementing top-down instead of bottom-up government.

The cocalero trade unions that Filemón Escobar helped establish through his workshops followed the unique deliberative and politically independent approach of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) and the FSTMB miners federation (see f.n.7), a legacy noted to this day: “the organization of the union is based on Andean self-governing principles mixed with Marxist traditions inherited from the miners who migrated to the Chapare”, (Grisaffi, 2019: 25). Coming from a tradition of Andean community practices reliant on the complementarity of opposites, the cocalero forms of democratic deliberation also differ from Liberal democracy as, “unions pursue direct participatory democracy whereby all members of the community meet to decide and enact their laws […] with strong pressure for leadership to remain deferential and collective, to “’lead by obeying””. (Grisaffi, 2019: 1)

14 Barely 10.7% of Chapare coca is estimated to be legally commercialized (El Deber, 20 July 2017). The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports 94% of Chapare coca does not pass through the legal market. Furthermore, drugs traffickers continue to operate under government noses as the number of people detained for illicit drugs production between 2005-12 fell by 79%, while those detained for trafficking fell by 42.11% (Cardozo Lozada “La Hoja Milenaria”, Pagina 7, 19 June 2018).
UNODC latest report says 67% of cocaine factories and 50% of cocaine laboratories destroyed in 2018 were located in the Chapare (Pagina 7, 26 January 2018), and that in 2017 and 2018 over 469 foreigners and 7,529 Bolivians were detained for drugs trafficking activities in Bolivia. (Pagina 7. 25 January 2019).
Also, most of the coca chewed in the Chapare, as well as the departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija and Oruro, highland mining centres, as well as coca leaf consumed in Northern Argentina comes from the Yungas region. President Evo Morales admitted this when promulgating the General Law on Coca in March 2017, “Some comrades said that only the coca from Yungas was chewed (pijchea) in the Chapare Tropics. Comrades you know, we salute and respect the Yungas coca leaf, but we don’t have the same economic possibilities. In the countryside, in rural areas, given that the coca from the tropics is cheaper more people buy it (...) those who have money purchase coca from the Yungas." (Correo del Sur, 8 March 2017)
http://correodelsur.com/politica/20170308_evo-asegura-que-en-el-area-rural-se-pijchea-mas-la-coca-del-chapare-por-ser-mas-barata.html

Conclusion: Pachacuti as permanent change beyond class struggle

The ongoing dynamic of political change in Bolivia has been one where the left replaces the right or vice versa, be it to introduce state control or free-market neo-liberal policies in pursuit of a Western centred dialectical logic that is confrontational as indicated by Filemón Escóbar, yet despite successive changes in government (or guard) much remains the same. Simón Yampara proposes the possibility of real change at a deeper level through the Suma Qamaña principles and a Pachacuti crisis, also posited by Filemón Escóbar by renouncing class struggle confrontation to embrace the complementarity of opposites as a guiding principle.

Escóbar charges that the Bolivian Communist party in 2009 delivered to the Constituent Assembly over 400 articles for a new Plurinational State Constitution, in the name of the 36 nationalities in country listed in Jorge Ovando Sanz's "National and Colonial Problem in Bolivia", a paraphrase of nationalities from the Soviet Union, removing at a stroke, the concept of Republic. By accentuating the identity of these 36 nationalities, he warned, the Plurinational State represents a philosophy of confrontation. This prompted concern among Aymara intellectuals that the government of President Evo Morales is not seeking Pachacuti, and hence: "It is not an Indian government, but one that has become prisoner and colonized by ideologies of the left. Bolivia has only witnessed discursive shifts from right to left in politics, and from polyclassism to plurinationalism." (Yampara, 2008: 5)

Yampara and other Aymara and Quechua intellectuals and leaders express concern over how the study of processes and interconnections between civilizations, that is the inter-learning and harmonization of energies, will be tackled. One of the reasons for this is that the Left over-simplified Suma Qamaña, to only mean "live well". Suma Qamaña should not be reinterpreted to mean "live better" instead of "living well", because living better implies comparison, suggesting some will live better than others. There is, however, optimism that the intercultural processes stimulated by successive political parties and governments over the last thirty years, and resultant rise of Indian self-esteem prompted the re-emergence of another system of values that needs to be seriously examined, as there is no historical understanding of this.

These ethical values were until recently treated as heritage value from times immemorial, can now be drawn out through the Andean notion of Ayni, which involves both conviviality, as well as complementarity and reciprocity, stimulates mobilization for the dignification and decolonization of the Andean people and can be generated at will by society. More importantly these values can be augmented as and when the matrices are updated.

The mission of Aymaran intellectuals, including Escobar and others, to recover ancestral practices will enable these rituals, over time, to augment by bringing them into the present, opening the spiritual and reterritorializing and decolonizing, in an imperative political project that Filemón Escóbar embraced by advocating the complementarity of opposites, reciprocity in a Pachacuti vision of transformation, rejecting confrontation and class struggle.

Escobar's vision received further political support, particularly from those critical of the MAS for abandoning its indigenous roots in favour of a modernisation project. According to Javier Medina, the MAS-IPSP government has been shamefully silent on this issue and was unable to implement a single project based on the Suma Qamaña principles. The agenda for national development also shifted to tension between the Pachamamist Indians in the foreign ministry (like foremer foreign ministers David Choquehuanca and Fernando Huanacuni) and extractivist left wingers in the Vice Presidency and their related networks of influence. A stalemate

that resulted in the ongoing application of the neo-liberal model. (Medina, p.2)

The Qullana of the Andes, through their vision of Pachacuti want to live together or coexist (convivir) with diverse worlds "including the world of people who are different to us, including the system of capital". (Yampara, 2011: 16). But, the Qullana also seek mutual respect for their model of organization, economy and diversity. The question of how to make this possible politically however remains. Based on Escobar's political experience, knowledge of Bolivian history and the failed realisations of Left and Right-wing political projects, he sees the need for a new imperative to bring closure to an enduring confrontational embrace by opening up to what the Aymara and Quechua vision of Pachacuti, reciprocity, UTA, ayni, and the complementarity of opposites can offer.

In societies like Bolivia which are culturally and demographically indigenous, a unique opportunity is emerging to explore shaping a social, economic and political agenda where both the West and the Quechua and Aymara communities can, despite inherent differences, engage in harmonious tension to realise their complementarity.

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CHAPTER 3

Revolutions in Toracari: Memorable Stories of Duty and Attachment

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Political analyses abound of the rise to power of the indigenous president Evo Morales and the political party he represents, the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). These have been written about extensively, both within Bolivia (e.g., Mayorga 2011) and outside (e.g., Pearce 2011): hopeful (e.g., Crabtree 2008), partisan (e.g., García Linera et al. 2010), inspired (e.g., Soruco Sologuren 2011) and highly critical (e.g., Lazarte R. 2010). All such scholars and commentators, though, appear to agree structural change is happening in contemporary Bolivia destabilising the entrenched interests of an accommodated elite.

The last time political events generated so much excitement among progressive activists and policy wonks, and so much despair among their conservative counterparts, was the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. The government that emerged after this revolution was led by the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) putting into practice its revolutionary promises, many of which were radical for the continent in its time: universal suffrage, nationalisation of the major mining companies, education for all including the indigenous population, and land reform. Accordingly, most scholars agree on the demise of the Bolivian landlord classes (e.g., Kohl 1978: 259; Albó 1979: 19, 79; Dunkerley 1984: 74; Malloy 1989: 421; Whitehead 2003: 49 n.13); although some small-scale ethnographic research by Healy (1982: 53-54, 278-279, 355-356), Izko (n.d.), and Rivera Cusicanqui and her team (Rivera Cusicanqui et al. 1992: 69-70) shows how landlords, shop owners, truck drivers and other traditional powerbrokers in Bolivia consolidated their positions, taking advantage of the newly established power structures. These studies emphasize the expediency for local elites to join the MNR and to display allegiance to the sindicatos, the rural labour unions it created in the countryside.

But how are such ‘revolutions’ and ‘structural changes’ locally experienced? Here, I will give some tentative answers to this question focusing on the Andean valley of Toracari where I have carried out anthropological fieldwork, on and off, since 2002. Toracari forms the uppermost part of the large San Pedro valley lying in the chawpirana (or taypirana) of North Potosí, an intermediate ecological zone between the Andean highlands and the warmer valleys of Bolivia. This location is significant as it represents a wider region in the country where for centuries ayllus (corporate indigenous groups), haciendas and small-scale mestizo landlords have co-existed. At present, landlords continue to own land in 14 of the valley’s 21 communities; in Yaykunaqa, the community that hosts me during most of my research, three of every 10 indigenous households work on landlords’ lands, all sharecropping.[1]

At the centre of the valley lies the town of Toracari, a typical Andean pueblo with a Catholic church, a town square with a bandstand, a small hospital, a high school with boarding facilities, a few small shops, the public registrar, the recently constructed municipal district office, several chicherías (bars selling maize beer), and a couple of water mills where farmers from the valley come to grind their grain. The cobbled streets of the town are lined by one- and two-storey adobe houses including a few old crumbling buildings which, with fancy balconies and large wooden doors that open up to spacious courtyards, are reminders of more prosperous times. These are the vestiges of the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries when Toracari experienced its last economic boom owing to the new tin mines around Llallagua. These boosted demand for local products such as wiñapu and muk’u (main ingredients for maize beer) and triggered a renaissance in the nearby town of San Pedro de Buena Vista increasing local commerce for all kinds of goods.

1 In line with my hosts’ suggestions, I decided not to name the specific community where I lived and carried out fieldwork for most of the time. I do not want this community to become emblematic in any kind of public debate. I have called it Yaykunaqa.

Today commerce has dwindled. Approximately 40 families still live in town, almost all of them mestizo landlords, surrounded by a countryside of indigenous communities populated by subsistence farmers.

Both indigenous farmers and landlords in Toracari would tell me fascinating stories about the aftermath of the 1952 Revolution that are interesting to compare with their more recent experiences of Evo Morales and the MAS. Of course, the MNR, more than 60 years ago, and currently the MAS changed the political playing field in places such as Toracari. However, if the local narratives of the 1952 Revolution and Evo Morales are anything to go by, they evoke more a sense of continuity than radical, let alone, structural change leading to the demise of the traditional elites; in particular, when listening to the stories of the local indigenous population.

Landlords looking back at the 1952 Revolution[2]

Landlords in Toracari experienced the period of the 1952 Revolution more intensely than the indigenous farmers, and talk about the resulting upheaval in more detail. Between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s they clearly felt the strain of forces that were partially out of their control. During the most conflictive period, the landlords would refer to a kind of siege, surrounded by a violent and hostile countryside. In general, they could still go to their fields but they never went out without a gun (cf. Carter 1971: 236). In bad times, even this was felt to be too dangerous. The landlords with houses in the indigenous communities abandoned them, deciding to live in town more permanently or migrate to the cities (cf. Buechler 1969: 199).

2 The sections on landlord and indigenous memories of the 1952 Revolution come from my book Deference Revisited: Andean Ritual in the Plurinational State (Goudsmit 2016: 202-210).

The family of landlord Uldarico Campoverde had ignored the advice to leave for town or city. They belonged to a group of small landlords who lived and owned lands in Yaykunaqa. At that time don Uldarico worked for the Servicio Nacional de Caminos (National Road Service) repairing and building roads in northern Potosí. He was a heavy machinery operator and had returned home after a few weeks of work on the nearby road to Sacaca. Arriving in Yaykunaqa, he was informed that his mother had been taken hostage by indigenous farmers. She was locked up in the house of the old community leader Tomás Chajmi, in the very same place where I had spent so many hours venerating the gods, drinking and laughing during the wakes for almas (souls) of the deceased. Don Tomás had brought Mrs. Campoverde to his house to force Uldarico, or one of his brothers, to give himself up. This duly happened, leading to the release of Uldarico's mother. Don Uldarico thinks he eventually escaped his lethal fate due to internal strife and disagreements among the sindicato leadership in Toracari.

That is not to say that the small-scale mestizo landlords of Toracari experienced the 1952 Revolution as a historical watershed. Landlords would usually mention the successful defence of the nearby town – and municipal capital – of San Pedro de Buena Vista when asked about the Revolution. While most towns in the region – Acasio, Yambata, Torotoro, Carasi etc. – were overrun and sacked by indigenous troops, the landlords of San Pedro de Buena Vista bucked the trend. They successfully defended their houses, goods and families. Landlords in Toracari also remembered the revolutionary blockade at Churuma that cut San Pedro off from the train station at Higuerani, the main commercial route in and out of the province (leading through Toracari).

Their favourite stories, though, were thoroughly local, focused on the valley. Somewhere between 1953 and the final attack on San Pedro de Buena Vista in 1958 – nobody was able to indicate the

exact year – Toracari got ‘visitors from Ucureña,’ well known for its early and successful struggle against the haciendas in the upper valley of the department of Cochabamba, just north of North Potosí (Dandler 1969; Langer 1989: 200). Two smaller trucks and a heavy Leyland truck arrived full of farmers from outside the region. The town of Toracari had been expecting them because the residents had found notes on their doorsteps announcing that their town was next on the list of ransack and plunder. Consequently, the female population had taken refuge in the church while the men had started collecting weapons and making grenades. The church bells were taken down and destroyed as scrap metal was needed to fill the shells. Frenetic cooking activities added a good meal to the maize beer that was already waiting for the Ucureños. The weapons would be used as last resort. San Pedro de Buena Vista seemed to have been the main target of the Ucureños, who found Toracari town on their way. It was described to me that at the first bend in the River San Pedro past Toracari, the peasant-soldiers were stopped by a ‘sound.’ An explosion? A crack of thunder? The sound had pushed the Leyland over on its side, severely hampering the Ucureña advance. Landlords assured me that it had been the Lord of Sak’ani, the patron saint of Toracari, who had protected his flock. On this occasion the troops led by Ucureña leaders did not make it to San Pedro de Buena Vista. That same night they were back in Toracari, without the ‘guts’ to pillage the town. Some people told me that the Ucureños slept in Toracari’s church, afraid of imminent attack; others assured me that they did not dare enter town, setting up camp in the riverbed below. All agreed the townspeople had been bolstered by the protection of the Lord of Sak’ani refusing the strangers dinner and maize beer. A couple of landlords finished their story indicating that by then the town’s authorities and the majority of its population had been dead drunk. Miraculously Toracari had escaped from imminent disaster.

Most importantly, most landlords stress the fact that the nearby indigenous communities never rebelled against them. They concede that the rural population participated in mobilisations to reclaim lands and that they were involved in acts of violence. However, the new sindicato leadership was to blame (cf. Qayum, Soux and Barragán 1997: 86-87), a leadership that included alien miners, peasant authorities from outside the region, the exceptional local farmer and, ironically, quite a few landlords from Toracari and San Pedro de Buena Vista. Local indigenous people did everything their leaders commanded, according to the landlords. In addition, the relationship between landlords and ‘their’ sharecroppers remained mostly intact. Indigenous farmers continued sharecropping on landlord lands and they did not fail to renew the bonds of godparenthood with landlords. The landlords highlighted stories of indigenous loyalty. With the self-assured gesture of his fist in the air, landlord don Pablo assured me that they had sent ‘their’ (indigenous) people to San Pedro de Buena Vista, smuggling weapons for the town’s defence.

Landlords agreed that as a group they had been able to preserve most of their landed properties. They reiterated that the Revolution had not fundamentally changed the Toracari valley. A few big landlords and their haciendas were affected but the large majority of small-scale landlords either came through unscathed or were able to buy new lands in the dismantled haciendas and from landlords leaving town. Accordingly, the blurred picture that emerges from the memories of the landlords indicates that the 1952 Revolution was as much about individual landlords adjusting and taking advantage of the new forces and opportunities created by the revolutionary reforms, as about some indigenous farmers being able to acquire lands and rise through the ranks of the sindicatos. The landlords did not attribute any degree of agency to the local indigenous communities, representing them as a play ball

of external forces. Order was fully restored with the ascent to power of General Barrientos in 1964, according to landlord stories.

Indigenous Experiences of the 1952 Revolution

When asked, older men in the communities of the Toracari valley were happy to tell detailed stories about the 1952 Revolution and the agrarian reform it ushered. In fact, prompted by a concomitant interest in landlords – patrones in their words – their stories would often start with Gualberto Villarroel, Bolivia's president between 1943 and 1946. Don Pedro reminisces:

Ñawpa karqa abusasqa karqanku. Lluqsimuq jistamanta jap'irqukuytawan apakapuq kanku uwijata, gallusta, wallpata, jap'irqukuytawan apakapuq kanku abusu karqa. Mana noqaykupaq ley karqachu kanpupaqqa. Entoncesqa laqha, laqhata uwijata ayqichina kaq, tutan ayqichina kaq. Mana usqay ayqichiqta jap'ichikuqtataq a punta maqay apakapuq kanku. Kunan chaymanta Gualberto Villarroelmanta chaymantaqri yasta libertasqa kayku, recien libertasqa kayku. Maypichá jap'iwaq kayku, puru garrote, mana sayarikunachu kaq burrutajina garrotewaq kayku… jina karqayku. Recien namanta Gualberto Villarroel kasqanmantari… recien chay garroteqa manaña recibiykuchu.

In the past there used to be abuses. [Landlords] disappeared from a feast and took a sheep, some roosters, a chicken, after they had caught them; after they had caught them, they took them, it was an abuse. For us [small-scale indigenous farmers], for the countryside, there was no law. So, when it was still dark one had to free the sheep, in the early morning one had to make them escape. He who did not get away quickly and got caught, they carried him off at gunpoint to beat him up. Now, from Gualberto Villarroel onwards, from that moment, we are free, only then, we are free. Wherever [a landlord] caught us, only the whip, one should not stand up, like a donkey he lashed at us… like this we were. Only from Gualberto Villarroel's time… only since then we do not receive that whip anymore (Toracari, 10 February 2003).

Events on the ground, a state sanctioned school curriculum and other developments conspired for don Pedro to remember president Gualberto Villarroel bringing 'law' to the countryside. Don Florencio pointed out that three apoderados from the region – representatives of indigenous communities – had visited the government in La Paz in the years leading up to the agrarian reform, denouncing landlord abuses. The most tangible impact of Villarroel's presidency was the construction of the first school for children of indigenous descent in the Toracari valley. In Yaykunaqa, its adobe remains still stand, provoking don Julián to share his first memories of learning how to write his own name. The worst of landlord abuses abated, checked by imagining just government. Nevertheless, this government was known to be distant, its decrees and its aspiration to education hardly effective in challenging the landlords' position of authority, both in practice and in the local farmers' mind – despite president Villarroel's progressive zeal (Heath 1969: 41; Dandler and Torrico A. 1987; Gotkowitz 2003: 166– 168).

If anything, the stories of the Revolution told by key indigenous informants in Toracari evoked stability. Probed by insinuating questions alluding to discontent and conflict, they definitely remembered violent clashes between landlords and indigenous communities (and within these groups as well) but they would emphasise that those were exceptional and temporary. Of course, the indigenous population noticed that the Toracari landlords were afraid and on guard. They had heard tales of landlords killing and being killed in areas outside the valley: for example, in Churuma, downstream the River San Pedro, where the emerging indigenous movement of northern Potosí had concentrated its first operations (Harris and Albó 1984: 75-76). As I previously mentioned,

Churuma is strategically located controlling the trade flows to and from the town of San Pedro de Buena Vista. With the dramatic gestures and polished sentences of a story often told, don Julián recounted the words of the wife of Churuma's principal leader, ex-miner Narciso Torrico. She had reported to the sindicato 'general assembly' how the landlords had forced her to carry her husband's severed head into the town of San Pedro de Buena Vista after they had murdered him. In one of the communities I was told in gory detail how the landlords in San Pedro played football with Narciso Torrico's head on the town's main square. The failed attack on San Pedro de Buena Vista by hundreds of indigenous farmers in 1958 was mentioned as well (Harris and Albó 1984: 80-81). However, for all but the communities that were nearest to Churuma, violent confrontations were downplayed. Few Toracari farmers participated in the early mobilisations of Churuma and the attack on San Pedro de Buena Vista. No stories were dished up involving the killing of Toracari landlords by the indigenous mob. Instead I was told the intriguing tale of a local indigenous family hiding a landlord from persecution (cf. Gareca Oporto 1989: 169-170, 180).

The sense of relative calm in the countryside must have been furthered by a feeling of continuity, though of a rather abrasive sort. The newly created FETCNP (Federación Especial de Trabajadores Campesinos del Norte de Potosí, Special Federation of Rural Workers of North Potosí) to which the newly established local sindicatos belonged, was at the heart of such continuity; a continuousness of external assertiveness. In 1955 its leader Narciso Torrico appeared in the libro de actas (record book) of Yaykunaqa, signing the minutes of a communal meeting. Yaykunaqa's record book also testifies the emergence of Pedro Carita Chamaco, showing his name and signature for the first time in 1961 (although he was illiterate). Once in charge of the Special Federation, Pedro Carita moved the Federation's headquarters from Churuma to adjacent Quchu, the hacienda where he had worked as a colono for most of his life labouring the lands of his patrón. He is one of the main characters whom older people in the communities of Toracari talk about when asked about the 1952 Revolution and its agrarian reform. They consider him extremely abusive, a person who uses his whip without remorse, killing people and 'driving us like sheep without explanation.' He was known to own substantial land holdings, and have many horses and livestock which he had expropriated from landlords in Quchu. In many ways he had become another patrón, landlord, people had to cope with, reinforcing their sensation of continuity after the agrarian reform.

Pedro Carita affected the lives in communities such as Yaykunaqa most directly through the regular visits of his comisiones demanding sheep, goats, potatoes and the like for his men in Quchu. Most commented upon was the forced sale of cattle by indigenous farmers to buy rifles for the cause of the rural sindicatos. A rifle cost a full-grown bull, a substantial capital for any subsistence farmer household. Communities would also take turns sending two of their members to Quchu to serve as Pedro Carita's guards. There was no escaping from these kamachis, obligations. A regular of Carita's commissions was Quli (Quechua, clotted hair).[3] He was widely known in the region, as the most vicious of the lot. Don Julián's memories of him may be atypical for the wealth of details but they graphically picture the general sentiments I encountered in the valley's communities. He was most vividly remembered by the local population. Quli was of indigenous descent and donned an immense mop of hair, which gave him his nickname: hair 'long like that of a woman' and 'flaky' like the bark of the qiñwa tree according to don Julián.

3 His real name was probably Máximo Choque.

People attributed ritual powers to Quli as his hair allegedly contained human bones and jatun jampis (great medicines), teeth of Chullpas (anthropomorphic creatures which lived on earth before humankind). With a subtle sense of showmanship don Julián would continuously scratch his skull behind his ears as he told about Quli mimicking the sindicato leader. Lice and other bugs must have plagued his head. In the early 1960s, Quli and his band visited Yaykunaqa at the request of the aforementioned Tomás Chajmi, the first and long-serving post-Revolution leader of the community. Tomás Chajmi had had problems with don Julián, his brother in law. In front of the whole community Quli brought don Julián into line, whipping him and beating him with a wooden rod. Don Julián related how Quli banged his knees, and how he burst out in tears lying on the floor in the midst of the gathering. A few years later Quli got arrested in the town of Sacaca in the neighbouring province of Alonso de Ibañez. As soon as don Julián got wind of the message, he set off on the nine hours walk. Arriving in Sacaca, the main square was packed with people receiving the apprehended Quli with loud tumult. Don Julián tells me that he made his way to the front coming eye to eye with Quli. Requesting the whip from the carabinieri, soldiers, he lashed out at his former tormentor. Quli reacted nonchalantly, almost amused by the lashes, recognising don Julián. 'Quli was a man after all,' don Julián conceded. The province's deputy prefect ordered his soldiers to cut Quli's hair, and insisted for Quli to eat it. The latter indignantly refused, arguing that his hair was 'full of animals.'

In different communities different and often contradictory tales of different leaders of the post-revolutionary period emerged. Heroes in one community could be villains in others. All the same they are remembered as acting like patrones, landlords, and they often were patrones. Don Emilio Ledezma was frequently mentioned: landlord, MNR party member and long serving leader of the Toracari branch of the Special Federation. Don Emilio remained leader of the Toracari sindicatos until the mid-1990s, grooming his son, Moisés, as a school teacher and eventually director of the Toracari school district. The person who don Julián most admired was newcomer Agapito Vallejos. He was a prominent rural leader and MNR militant from around Ucureña (Gordillo 2000: 68-71), where the first sindicato in Bolivia was created (in 1936). In 1953, Agapito Vallejos became deputy prefect of Charcas, the highest government authority in the province to which Toracari belongs. In this capacity he signed in the same year the first minutes of the Yaykunaqa record book by which the community turned from indigenous ayllu into rural sindicato. The community of Yaykunaqa visited him once in his office in the town of San Pedro de Buena Vista. On this occasion Agapito Vallejos scolded local landlord Evaristo Rendón, who by then had become the most important landowner in Yaykunaqa. The deputy prefect told him that he himself should labour his lands or lose these to his sharecroppers. These words, this posture must have impressed don Julián but remained without concrete consequences. Never again did his community return to Agapito Vallejos to claim the lands of the landlords. Some years later don Julián started sharecropping on Evaristo Rendón's lands.

In 1953 indigenous authorities also received a typed message from Agapito Vallejos. Don Julián had carefully kept it. It stated that the 'compañeros campesinos' (peasant comrades) should not carry out services anymore for the landlords. With big letters was added in handwriting: 'No more kamachis.' In this respect the memories of indigenous farmers and landlords may diverge. Where the latter stress the fact that the agrarian reform did not affect their hold on the lands, the former emphasise the diminishing grip of kamachis. No more need to work for days on end in the landlords' houses and on their lands whenever requested; collecting their firewood and transporting their produce from the fields to the landlords' houses in town or to the main road appeared to suffice (to be picked up by

a truck on its way to a Bolivian city). The landlords hardly talked about the kamachi obligations, my indigenous hosts only sporadically mentioned the lands. Paradoxically, the nationalisation of the mines in 1952 by the MNR may have primarily been responsible for the reduction of kamachis – though not their disappearance – as it caused the intensification of migration by the population of Toracari town. Landlords became ever more absentee.

Yet landlords and sharecropping are still very much part of today's life in the rural communities of the Toracari valley. Comparing indigenous experiences and landlord reminiscences, then, a shared experience of continuity stands out. The 1952 Revolution may have generated memorable stories, both groups may have highlighted different tales, but none of them expresses a fundamental rupture with the past. The memories of both groups confirm the longstanding dominance of landlords. The narratives that allowed for alternatives to the existing power relations present new actors such as Pedro Carita and Quli acting just like landlords. If anything, it was Gualberto Villarroel as a precursor to the Revolution and the agrarian reform, who provided the local farmers with an imagery of a supportive government reigning in the most abusive aspects of their relationship with landlords.[4]

4 Indigenous farmers in Toracari considered their elevation to the ranks of campesinos, the most radical change of the 1952 Revolution. The MNR government, for the first time in Bolivia, actively promoted the equal status of the despised indios, indians, of colonial times by officially turning them into campesinos, a class of smallholder individual farmers. They acquired the rights to vote and to go to school. All the same, these campesinos continued to experience the patrones, landlords, as critical actors safeguarding community and individual well-being (Goudsmit 2016: 119-143).

Evo's Revolution?

Twelve years of MAS government and Evo Morales in the presidency may be too short a period to generate polished tales of memorable events and accomplishments. Nonetheless, it is not too difficult to find signs of friction and, most of all, continuity considering the local authority of the patrones as experienced in the indigenous communities. I will explore a few contemporary political and social practices to get a sense of these experiences.

The prospect that Evo Morales, an indigenous small-scale farmer like them, could have a chance of becoming government, was already causing excitement in the communities of Toracari when I first entered the Andean valley in the Bolivian winter of 2002. Since his electoral victory in 2005, president Evo has generated the increased sense of indigenous self-esteem that Bolivian intellectual Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui witnessed in other parts of the country (in Zegada et al. 2011: 259). Don Julián most lucidly expressed the mood of indigenous confidence when he pointed out that 'one of us' – the president – has the intelligence (Quechua, umayuq) to tell the doctores (lawyers, government officials) what it is they should be doing. As a consequence of this enhanced confidence local patrones in Toracari complained about the 'rebellious' farmers and their current lack of 'humility' – although the landlords did not experience the sense of siege they had endured after the Revolution of 1952. Accordingly, the (MAS) mayor of San Pedro de Buena Vista was prosecuted and removed from office in 2008 reinforcing the justification of her dismissal by stressing the fact that she was a patrón. In fact, she was a landlord from the Toracari valley.

Municipal politics may be an obvious context to look for change. Indeed, considering the local political arena, it becomes clear that since 1999 the majority of municipal councillors in San Pedro de Buena Vista – the municipality to which Toracari belongs – has

been identifying as indigenous or rural. In 2003, the MAS hailed its first electoral win in the municipality ruling it ever since. However, indigenous and MAS political primacy does not reveal the extent of landlords' ability to remain in control. Similar to what happened to the MNR after the 1952 Revolution, local landlords managed to become party members of the MAS. Accordingly, two recent mayors were landlords, one of them starting his career as a regional coordinator of a Spanish NGO operating in the area. Other landlords would hold the decisive vote in an evenly balanced council or be elected president of the municipal council.

More markedly, landlords dominate and form the majority of the local teacher corps, as is not uncommon in the Andes (Gose 2001: 70). In 2012, the school director – Emilio Ledezma's son, Moisés – and 16 of the 26 teachers working in the nine schools that make up the Toracari school sub-district were related to landlord families (from Toracari and San Pedro de Buena Vista). These numbers had not changed much since 2003 when the school director and 19 of 25 teachers had landlord roots. This is important, because indigenous farmers experience the teachers as gatekeepers of a better (urban) future based on educación, education. This concept includes a certain refinement in knowledge, robustness in behaviour, and capacities such as being able to read Spanish and speak well in public (Howard, Barbira-Freedman and Stobart 2002: 2; Yapu and Torrico 2003: 309, 341). The indigenous population of Toracari feels they need educación in order to progress, while many teachers reinforce a condescending attitude towards the students' indigenous way of life (Canessa 2012b: 184-215).

And let us not forget that the relations between landlords and indigenous farmers in Toracari may be exploitative but they are also steeped in indigenous respect and affection. This is most prominently expressed by fictive kinship: relations between godparents (padrinos) and their godchildren (ahijados) and, importantly, between godparents and the parents of their godchildren (compadres). Godparenthood and co-parenthood were introduced to the Andes during the colonial period but it is highly likely that the latter, compadrazgo, has Andean roots as well establishing key inter-household relations (Isbell 1977: 102; Spedding 1998: 116). In the present-day valley of Toracari indigenous families continue to establish bonds of godparenthood and compadrazgo resulting in critical social and economic relationships; more important than blood relatives (Harris 2008). They craft relations of fictive kinship at baptism and marriage, in misa de salud (Mass 'for health,' consecrated by the priest) and by the ceremony of the child's first haircut (at the age of two to three years), the uma ruthuku or rutucha (Mayer 1977: 66).

Co-parenthood in the Andes creates bonds between godparents and a wide variety of groups such as close relatives, neighbours, landlords and strangers, including the anthropologist. In 2013, about 90 percent of Yaykunaqa households had established relations of co-parenthood by marriage or baptism with the patrones. Alternatively, twenty percent of Yaykunaqa relations of co-parenthood sanctioned by marriage and about 35 percent endorsed by baptism, involved landlords assuming the roles and responsibilities, and the feelings of affection, associated with padrinos and compadres. Hence, an average middle-aged couple of Toracari landlords has at least forty and often many more godchildren, the huge majority of whom are rural and indigenous. The profusion of these relationships of fictive kin between landlords and local farmers reinforces the reciprocal and affective features of social relations that bridge social and cultural distinctions in the valley.

Conclusion

Listening to the intriguing and revealing stories told by the indigenous subsistence farmers and landlords of Toracari, neither the 1952 Revolution nor the revolutionary intentions of the Morales government seem to have caused the structural changes that many political analysts identified. Local elites in places such as Toracari have often been more successful than the indigenous population in exploiting the changing political and economic environment. Of course, such changes are happening and political pressures on the landlords have waned and waxed, but landownership, the memories of the Revolution, present-day municipal politics, the teacher corps and compadrazgo show the resilience of landlord authority as lived by the local farmers.

The social obligations of indigenous farmers – kamachis – have gradually declined, though they are by no means defunct. However, the huge number of indigenous ahijados and compadres maintained by Toracari landlords, shows that this decline has not been accompanied by an equal drop in kariñu, affection. Kamachis and kariñu – duties and affection – are two sides of the same coin defining the asymmetrical but reciprocal relationship between landlords and indigenous farmers. No wonder I would overhear conversations of my indigenous hosts in the cantinas of Toracari town commenting on their day's labour on the lands of god- and co-parents: landlords. They would have been working these either for free or for compensation well under the market value. No wonder, landlords put their houses in town at the disposal of their indigenous compadres in times of want and ritual celebrations, reproducing a relationship that in the end both groups consider to be mutually beneficial.

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CHAPTER 4

New Bolivia: state of many nations or indianised nation-state?

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Since the promulgation of the new constitution in 2009 the new Bolivian state project has been based on the concept of the Plurinational State, fully recognising the ethnic diversity of society and incorporating thirty-six indigenous nationalities on equal terms, apparently without subjugating them to a dominating ethnicity nor its cultural/organisational patterns. This has been reflected in a new legal-administrative architecture of state.

The new state project is strongly promoting indigenous identities as a response to the historical exclusion of native cultures in Bolivia - through promoting indigenous cultural events, popularising native cultures in national TV broadcasts and incorporating indigenous symbology and beliefs into official state ornamentation. The incorporation of indigenous identities into the new concept of society and state is leading to the construction of a new nation based upon plural ethnic identities, but merged into a broad political nation, 'indianised' by traditions, values and practices of newly incorporated citizens. This new indianised Bolivian nation is intended to be inclusive and universal, and generalised indigenous culture is promoted as national culture.

The Plurinational State is discursively and symbolically pro-indigenous, but the implementation of indigenous rights fundamental to the plurinationality has been limited. These include rights to self-determination, self-government, parallel judiciary systems, and indigenous models of development (following the perspective of various indigenous peoples' organisations and scholars, I understand the plurinational state as a project based on the equal relations between all the indigenous peoples and non-indigenous sectors within common state, and with indigenous peoples' self-determination rights set as its fundamental organising basis and principle [Rojas 2018; Cordero 2018). The existing tensions, conflicts and contradictions of the plurinational state project prompt the question of whether the new state and society, prominent in the rhetoric of the MAS government, represent a genuine shift towards plurinationalism, or do they reinforce the practices of the old nation-state project of the 1952 National Revolution, decorated with indigenous imageries?

Nation-state building and the ideologies of the political nation

In Bolivian history we can distinguish three great revolutions: the anticolonial insurgency resulting in the foundation of sovereign republic in 1825, the 1952 National Revolution and, recently, the Democratic and Cultural Revolution of the Plurinational State[1]. Each of these profound historical transformations dealt not only with the question of a political project, but also envisioned a new version of political-cultural community: a nation.

The creole elites forging their republic in the 19th century excluded indigenous majorities and even worsened their situation in comparison to the late colonial period. The landlords, together with the large mine owners, formed the cornerstone of the oligarchic regime, increasingly encroaching on indigenous communal lands, justifying such practice with the arguments of ayllus' (local communitarian political, administrative, economic and social systems with a territorial base) backwardness and their alleged archaic structures contradicting the fundamental tenets of liberal thought and obstructing the progress of the country (Platt 1984; Irurozqui 1993, 2000). Through the drastic restrictions on citizenship rights (literacy and income requirements) the oligarchy created an exclusive political model reserved for a small group of accommodated creole elites (Barragán 2006). They developed a vision of the indigenous as naturally unable to assimilate the virtues of liberal citizenship rejecting them from the country's project, building a national community.

1 This is official name of the current political project, used by state authorities together with the denomination "process of change" (Schavelzon 2012). The Day of the Democratic and Cultural Revolution is celebrated every 18th December (that day in 2005 Evo Morales won presidential elections for the first time, http://www.diputados.bo/prensa/noticias/la-revoluci%C3%B3n-democr%C3%A1tica-y-cultural-permiti%C3%B3-incluir-sectores-eternamente). To commemorate the historical process the Museum of the Democratic and Cultural Revolution was built in 2017 in Orinoca, a place of Morales' birth.

The dominating ideology until the 1952 National Revolution drew on the "scientific" racism imported from Europe, including the measuring of skulls to prove the biological degeneration of natives. The intellectuals and politicians claimed not only the inferiority of "indigenous race", but even the necessity of its physical elimination as the ultimate solution of the so called "Indian problem." José Manuel Pando, the president of Bolivia from 1899 to 1904, argued:

a meagre brain of an Indian cannot develop as a muscle even through an intellectual training (...) How much money would we need to educate them? How much time would be enough? This would be an infeasible task. It would be much more pragmatic to eliminate them (...) the Indians are inferior beings and their elimination is not a crime but a "natural selection" (in Zavaleta 2008, 140; my translation).

Alcides Arguedas, one of the most prominent Bolivian intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century and active politician in the oligarchic era (he was national deputy, senator, leader of the Liberal Party and the minister of agriculture) wrote in 1905:

The animals and the Indians (be certain that I do not establish any difference between them) do not ask for anything else but to satisfy their organic necessities... it is also just to not to establish any gradation between them (…) an Indian is equally brute as whatever beast that grazes in a meadow (...) in certain period of the year when the current of the river grows, it is a custom in the municipality to give the dogs bread snacks filled with strychnine, in order to liberate us from this harmful and useless plague in an easy, comfortable, cheap, hygienic and edifying way. I propose that with the Indians we use the same method (in Piñeiro Iñíguez 2004, 121; my translation).

The physical elimination of indigenous majorities was not possible, even if it was desired by some, due to their crucial role in the economic, and thus political maintenance of the oligarchy, living from cheap indigenous labour in the haciendas and mines. Moreover, till the late 19th century the Bolivian government was extremely dependent on indigenous taxes (tributo indígena) paid by communities (Klein 1993, 113-5). The project of the oligarchic republic could not achieve the ideal of a nation-state, because it was based upon the economic exploitation and political subjugation of vast indigenous majorities deprived of any rights and excluded from the national community.

By contrast, in the era of the 1952 National Revolution, the Bolivian nation, as envisioned and promoted by the state, was based upon the narrative of cultural homogenisation of diverse ethnicities. The "Indian problem" was going to be resolved through a complete synthesis of Spanish and native elements, which in practice meant the assimilation of indigenous peoples and their cultural subjugation to the absolute dominance of the creole culture. Notwithstanding, and in contrast to the oligarchic period, this problematic and imposed incorporation permitted for the very first time the foundation of the Bolivian nation-state (Tapia 2009, 38). The process was never completed and the inner contradictions of the revolutionary project caused an indigenous ethnic revival of which the Plurinational State is one of the most contemporary expressions. This ethnic revival was partially and indirectly fostered (or rather provoked) by selective ideological and mainly symbolic use of some elements of indigenous culture and heritage by the National Revolution that sought this way to legitimate Bolivian mestizo nationalism, which has been contested by the indigenous Katarista/Indianista movement´s counter-narrative since the 1970s (Nicolas and Quisbert 2014). But above all, the emergence of an indigenous movement and the general empowerment of the indigenous peasant majority in the long run, were the fruits of the ambiguity and contradictory effects of social and political reforms of the national revolutionary era (agrarian reform, enfranchisement

and universal education) and the disillusionment of Aymara activists with the false narrative of national integration and equality and with the whole revolutionary project (Powęska 2013).

However, in fact the integrationist rhetoric of mestizo nation did not end until the rise to power of Evo Morales in 2006 and it was continued only slightly altered in the era of multicultural neoliberalism of the 1990s. The partial reforms recognized Bolivia as multiethnic and pluricultural and in a very limited and superficial manner recognized some indigenous social and cultural rights. At the same time, decentralisation reforms were introduced, that together with the neoliberal economic model assimilated indigenous peoples into state structures and neoliberal machinery. These measures in no way changed the power relations between the state and indigenous peoples nor undermined the state's colonialist character. (Powęska 2013).

The Plurinational State and the promotion of indigeneity

If the revolutionary nationalism of the post-1952 state sought the wide incorporation of the indigenous majority through their assimilation and the process of building an inclusive mestizo nation, since Evo Morales´ coming to power the indigenous peoples were central to the nation-building process. The Plurinational State postulates the equal recognition of all indigenous nationalities without subjugation to a dominating culture via the state. This was to be complemented by a new legal-administrative architecture of state pursuing inner decolonisation, with territorial indigenous autonomies, indigenous justice, and direct political representation of indigenous nationalities in national parliament (special indigenous constituencies).

The new state project strongly promotes indigenous identities as a response to the historical exclusion of native cultures. It is normal now to watch Aymara speaking broadcast presenters on tv. Traditional Andean rituals, for example ch'alla (offering) for Pachamama, were incorporated into official state events, accompanied by yatiris or jampiris (Aymara and Quechua wisemen, respectively). The ch'alla was performed, for example, at the teleférico (cable railway) construction site in La Paz, when building was about to start. The ch'alla has also taken place numerous times in the presidential palace. The inauguration ceremonies of Bolivia's new president Evo Morales had many Andean elements and it was organised in the pre-Columbian ruins of Tiwanaku. But not only elements of Andean tradition were incorporated into state ceremonies. Some typical indigenous social events also now receive state patronage. For example, in 2011 the Viceministry of Decolonisation organised a mass traditional Andean wedding ceremony for 350 couples, led by amautas (Andean philosophers, thinkers and wisemen) and with president Morales as padrino (godfather) for all the matrimonies. The willkakuti or machaq mara celebrations, the Andean New Year on 21st June, became an official national holiday. All the administrative buildings are decorated not only with la tricolor, the official Bolivian flag, but also with the wiphala, an Andean flag that has become an official state symbol as well. Indigenous languages have got official status in the areas where they predominate. All public facilities have names and signs not only in Spanish, but also in local indigenous languages. For example, the regional airport in Trinidad has bilingual denominations in Mojeño Trinitario and Spanish, and La Paz public places like hospitals or cable railway stations have denominations in both Spanish and Aymara. Finally, the employment of anticolonial heroes Tupac Katari and Bartolina Sisa in state ideology, symbolism and narratives is prominent. It is interesting to see how Evo Morales is discursively presented as an incarnation of Katari, and the Morales' government entire antiimperialist and decolonizing policy is presented as a continuation and fulfilment of Katari's political legacy. This is

expressed, for example, in the posters presenting Tupac Katari together with Evo Morales, both watching in the same direction as two incarnations of the same person or the same political project, coming to fruition more than two centuries after its inception. Such an idea is being explicitly expressed in the annual celebrations of Tupac Katari's death in Peñas, Department of La Paz, on 14th November, where a theatrical drama narrates the joint story of both leaders.

Notwithstanding the general recognition and incorporation of all Bolivian indigenous cultures, the dominance of Andean, mainly Aymara, cultural references is striking. It reflects the actual prevalence of Andean peasant sectors' influence in the government structures, together with the huge ideological influence of the urban Aymara intellectuals on the indigenous movements in Bolivia. This can be understood if we consider the state as a site for the interplay of economic and political influences of key groups that are differently situated in the system of power and thus have more or less influence on the state. The more powerful indigenous nations have a more prominent position within the common Plurinational State than others (Powęska 2017a).

Turning our attention to the implementation of structural and administrative reforms, the analysis becomes even more complicated. The Plurinational State is pro-indigenous, at least discursively, but in terms of the implementation of crucial indigenous rights, the results are limited. The recognition of indigenous justice is partial, and the Ley de Deslinde Jurisdiccional permits indigenous authorities to deal with only selected kinds of cases or affairs. Moreover, indigenous justice institutions cannot be applied to judge suspects that do not belong to the indigenous territorial jurisdiction, including persons from outside the community that break local indigenous law. In this way the act subjugates the communitarian justice to the ordinary judiciary, although the constitution stipulates their equal status, dismantling the notion of judiciary pluralism; it goes against the original proposals of indigenous peoples´organisations and contradicts the will of the constituent (Guery and Escobar 2012; Albó 2012). The limits put by this act are even considered to be more restrictive to indigenous justice than the previous neoliberal regulations (Tamburini 2012).

The indigenous autonomous institutions are officially known as autonomias indígena originario campesinas, indigenous originary peasant autonomies. This is an aggregate term invented in order to grant the same set of rights to collectivities that for historical reasons use different identity denominations. Up to date there are only three such autonomies in Bolivia (Uru Chipaya in Oruro department, Raqaypampa in Cochabamba and Charagua in Santa Cruz; in May 2019 Salinas de Garci Mendoza in Oruro approved in referendum its autonomy statute and awaits the inauguration of the fourth indigenous originary peasant government in the country), and generally the process of acquiring official recognition is highly complex and difficult. And as many activists and researchers say, "there is no Plurinational State without indigenous autonomies" (Exeni Rodríguez 2015; Vargas Rivas 2016), as they are crucial for the true change of power relations between the central state and indigenous territories, being the basis for indigenous self-determination.

The reasons for this failure of autonomies are manifold, related in part to the internal conflicts within indigenous communities, but the government's failure to adequately promote and support indigenous autonomies has complicated the problem. The primary reason of this failure can be found in the legal-administrative design of autonomies which put huge limits to indigenous self-determination. The competences of indigenous autonomies are mostly similar to those of municipal autonomy and the difference lies essentially in the design of the autonomous governmental structures and their nomenclature. For example,

indigenous autonomies cannot decide what to do with the subsoil resources in their territories, thus they cannot genuinely decide their own models of development (Powęska 2017a, 2017b). In addition, the free prior and informed consultation, a fundamental aspect and one of the key indigenous rights related to the self-determination (it gives the indigenous peoples right to be consulted about any legal, administrative decision that relates to them or any kind of project, e.g., infrastructural, planned to be undertaken in their territories, before any measure is taken), is yet another unachieved objective (Powęska 2017a, 2017b). The result is that the change of power relations between the state and indigenous nations and of their legal hierarchies has been obstructed with very little to show for. So, we have the Plurinational State limited to rhetoric and symbolism, while its structural-administrative aspects related to territorial power and politics, the main site for indigenous self-determination, is in its minimal expression.

Indianised Bolivia, a renewed nation-state?

There is a common element linking this weak governmental performance regarding the plurinational structural reforms and the question of a new national identity, or nation project. For María Teresa Zegada and George Komadina (2017), it is a strategy of the current government of the MAS-IPSP of building political hegemony. According to these authors, in structural-administrative terms, this strategy relates to clientelist relations seeking to secure political loyalty of local territories. There is also a question of clashing models or visions of development and manipulation of free prior and informed consultations, given that the revenues from hydrocarbons are crucial for the whole apparatus of power (Powęska 2017b). The Bolivian state holds absolute control over the subsoil and indigenous peoples have very limited power to decide about the development of non-renewable resources in their territories. Not even officially recognised indigenous autonomies have the authority to deal with this matter. All these aspects can be seen as facets of state centralism, despite the pro-autonomy rhetoric (Powęska 2017b). The need to control the system of power and the model of national development based on extractivism involve the construction of a coherent nation, or better said, a hegemonic nation/political community project that deters potential political counter-powers or political pluri-communities residing in indigenous nations. In other words, political domination is being achieved not only through winning elections, but at the same time through the construction of unifying identity.

And indeed, there is a top-down narrative of the new nation. Since the indigenous discourse became an inherent part of the state narratives and their symbolic machinery, the state tries to secure monopoly on indigeneity and its meanings that would not leave much room for bottom-up built plurinationality.

First of all, as Komadina and Zegada point out, if revolutionary nationalism was rhetorically based on the contradiction between nation and anti-nation, the MAS-IPSP tends to underline the antagonism between the colonialist, racist republic and the indigenous peasants as a revolutionary subject and a true basis for a new nation project, a new national identity (Zegada and Komadina 2017). But given the strategy of hegemony, that is, a broadening of incorporated groups of voters, the narrative had to be amended in order to put in the same category indigenous and peasant peoples, workers, miners' cooperatives, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and urban sectors as a whole (Zegada and Komadina 2017). This wide political platform corresponds to the rhetoric of anti-neoliberalism, and sovereign control of natural resources, as well as other prominent features of the MAS campaign. Another example of patriotic, unifying reference is Bolivia's campaign to reclaim access to the sea, although it was always a useful unifying political topic, irrespective of the political force in power. Thus, in the newer narrative the indigenous peasants are not

antagonistically juxtaposed to other sectors anymore. The antagonism has yielded to the rhetoric of common cultural roots and characteristics shared by the whole society. This is possible because of the indigenous roots of the vast urban sectors and the state promotion of indigeneity furthering ethnic revaluation and permitting the recuperation of ethnic self-esteem. If the indigenous peasants remain as a core and foundation of a nation, this became a basis for a building of a hegemonic, that is, inclusive and universal concept of nation, constructed around indigeneity.

This is reflected in the words of Vice-President Álvaro García Linera, the most prominent intellectual of the current state project:

In parallel to the recognition of indigenous national identities, the indianisation not only of the State but the indianisation of Bolivia. It is a double game (…)The right to indigenous national identity is recognised, but whosoever assumes this recognition right becomes internally indianised. (…) This is called strong or hegemonic plurinationality (…) the recognition of national identities and the indianisation of Bolivian identity (…) The nation has strength, the identity has very powerful cultural-historic strength that crosses classist identities, but which at heart is a form of long-term hegemony. Are they asking us what is nation? The nation is a form of durable hegemony. The language, culture, identity, traditions, all that makes us participate in a community of destiny, is a form of durable, centenary hegemony (…) Ultimately, the Indianists were right. The Indians are not the problem, the Indians are the solution. Only that the way proposed by the Indianists was powerless. They did not understand the social differences inside the Bolivian community, already consolidated with the workers' movement, urbanization, with the accumulation of traditions, symbols, educational system, that was impossible to erase. The Indianism did not understand this (García Linera 2017, keynote speech at the Vicepresidency of State, 21st November; author's translation).

So, for García Linera, borrowing from Gramsci, nation is a form of durable, long-lasting hegemony, a clear political project that (re)organises power relations in a society, drawing on cultural patterns of one ethnic/cultural/class sector adopted and popularised as "national culture" as the tool of this sector's political domination. The originality of the new nation project is a "dialectic game", a "double game" of "recognition of the indigenous nations on the one hand, and the simultaneous indianisation of Bolivia, of the Bolivian identity" on the other. For him, it is a "hegemonic plurinationality" with the fundamental role of indigenous peasant originario nations and peoples as a true and constitutive essence of the unified Bolivian nation (keynote speech at the Vicepresidency of State, 21st November 2017).

This discourse is also seen in García Linera's ealier thought:

In didactic terms, we can say that the 1952 Revolution awakens the beginning of a citizenry, but it tries to dilute it in a mestizaje marked with the hegemony of the whiteness of the oligarch elites, and it does not give the citizenry more possibilities of political development. In this new stage, fifty years later, the Indian is already an autonomous political subject that proposes a new model of expansive nationalism, a multicultural nation that underlines the "unity in diversity", as Evo Morales has repeated it so many times in his electoral campaigns (Garcia Linera 2006, 28; author's translation and emphasis).

This discourse has hence been developed and repeated for more than a decade. To describe the idea of new national identity that comes from the Plurinational State as envisioned in the new Constitution, the Vice-president uses words like amalgama (amalgam, cultural fusion, melting-pot), ensamble (assemblage):

We have not only a new sum or assemblage of social classes, but we have also a new assemblage of political, technological, cognitive practices, as much in health, education, technology, festivity, as in democracy, elections, study, teaching. So, we have an assemblage of different social classes and different collective interests, but also an assemblage of distinct civilisations. Every civilisation is an institution, this is the second component of the Plurinational State, the amalgam, the articulation, the assemblage of a diversity of organisational logics of the society, the new Constitution says it in many places (García Linera 2009, 13; author's translation).

In both fragments cited above the use of some particular words is striking – amalgam, assemblage, multicultural nation – and it is disputable to what extent it befits a vision of plurinational state as a project of radical change (alignment) of power relations between the central state and indigenous nations within the framework of inner decolonization and the right to indigenous self-determination.

The multiculturalist stance (granting cultural rights without real changes of power relations) of the new state project seems to be obvious if we look at the perspective of García Linera:

The Plurinational State materialises in the equality of rights, in the equality of cultures and peoples, in the suppression of colonialism and discrimination. (…) the Plurinational State is translated into the practical, institutional recognition of the equality of opportunities of peoples, of official languages, recognition of all the identities, possibility of being educated in one's own language if someone desires it and if not, only in Spanish, the recognition of indigenous languages in the equality of conditions in school, high school, university and public institutions of the State. The incorporation and articulation of heroes, proposals and symbologies of the peoples around the national statal symbology that unites us. This is the idea of the Plurinational State: equality of cultures, suppression of colonialism, of discrimination for language, skin colour or surname, equality of opportunities between an indigenous and mestizo and between a mestizo and indigenous, absolutely for all positions, appreciation of who we are, if someone is mestizo, OK; if someone is aymara, quechua, mojeño, trinitario: OK; we all are in the equality of conditions before the State, before public servant, before the law, before justice, but first of all, the recognition of the equality of the peoples. This is the idea of Plurinational State (García Linera 2009, 17; author's translation and emphasis).

The Vice-president claims it even more explicitly elsewhere: "What is plurinationality? It is the equality of rights of the peoples, of cultures in our country. It is nothing more than this. All in the framework of the sole Bolivian national identity. We are a nation of nations" (García Linera 2010; author's translation). So, what we deal with is a concept of the Plurinational State with the unique "state nation" embracing various cultural nations and peoples: "There is no alternative proposal to that of the decolonising plurinationality that consolidates a unique statal nation in which numerous cultural nations and peoples coexist" (García Linera 2011, 12; author's translation and emphasis).

In summary, thanks to the incorporation of indigenous identities into the new concept of society and state, a new nation is being constructed in Bolivia - based upon plural ethnic identities that are being merged into a broader cultural-political community, and a political nation, indianised by traditions, values and practices of newly incorporated citizens. This new indianised Bolivian nation is inclusive, all-embracing, integrating and universal, and its indigenous character is expected to be shared by the whole society; a generalised indigenous culture is to be established as the national culture (García Linera 2015). Alluding to René Zavaleta´s concept of lo nacional-popular (the national-popular), a term for the articulation between the process of democratisation by popular/subaltern classes of the Bolivian society and its statal

formation (Zavaleta 2008, 9), in the Plurinational State its updated version would be lo nacional-indígena (the national-indigenous). As we see, this vision of a new nation is greatly based upon the concept of “unity in diversity”, a 1990s multiculturalist fashion of a liberal nation-state, in which the political dimension of state (unifying model of political nation) is separated from its cultural dimension (cultural nations of indigenous peoples within the unitary and highly centralist state), and the political relations within the power structures are maintained.

Nevertheless, this project of inclusive, indianised “state nation” will still have certain characteristics of what Zavaleta coined as sociedad abigarrada (motley, clashing, variegated society), or if we prefer a more Andean conceptualisation, we can use the word ch'enko (from quechua), meaning "a mess or disorganised intersection, intertwining of objects and processes" (Laserna 2004). As the state is a site for the interplay of economic and political influences of different groups, more or less favourably oriented towards central power and thus more or less influential on the state, the presence and position of different indigenous nations would differ within the common Plurinational State (Powęska 2017a). The new Bolivian nation would be disorganised, irregular, chaotic and incomplete, but still a fusion.

Two interesting examples of building national hegemony around an inclusive and integrating indigeneity – with mostly Andean cultural references – relate to symbolic elements of Tupac Katari. The launching of the first Bolivian communication satellite in 2013, named after this anti-colonial hero, is presented as the great national achievement that unites all the society in its march to modernity and sovereign development. “Now the Bolivians we have a star in the sky” – said the official tv spot. “We are millions!” – hailed another official press release, alluding to Katari’s famous phrase he said before he was killed - “I will return and I will be millions”. Another intriguing reference is a poster presenting Evo Morales together with Tupac Katari and the slogan: “We have got back the resources. Now we have homeland. It is going well for us!” (my translation), referring to the nationalisation of hydrocarbons in 2006 and that the country for the very first time in modern history belongs to the Bolivian people (the period before the Plurinational State is described commonly as the time of state without nation and nations without state). The suggested connection between the state control of natural resources, national sovereignty and the sense of belonging to the homeland is striking here. This, with strong emphasis on economic and development sovereignty, together with redistribution, social programmes and presidential construction works programme “Evo cumple”, and the campaign to reclaim access to the sea, stresses the unity and national pride within the Plurinational State, provoking to coin it “plurinational nationalism”.

Another interesting example of adaption of various indigenous symbolic or identity elements to build a unified nation is the official use of Aymara New Year celebration. Although it is quite recent tradition re-invented in 1981 by a group of young Aymara activists as a symbolic tool for decolonialisation of Aymara people (Gutierrez Rojas 2019), with Evo Morales and the Plurinational State project it became official part of state cultural activities. Curiously, this celebration was recognised as “Intangible, Historic and Cultural Patrimony of the Nation” yet by Carlos Mesa in 2005 under the name “Aymara New Year” (Derechoteca), but in 2009 it was declared national holiday with suspension of public and private activities on every 21st June (Gaceta Oficial del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009). Moreover, last year the Senate changed its denomination and from now on the celebration is called officially “Andean Amazonian Chaco New Year”, underlining the unifying character of the event for all the indigenous sectors of society (Cámara de Senadores 2008).

An additional though no less crucial outcome of this project of "state nation" is that if the new nation is an indigenous nation and the plurinational state is an incarnation of such a new nation, the state has the power to define not only national interests and priorities, but also the meaning of indigeneity and scope of indigenous rights. The interest of the majority can be presented as the interest of all the indigenous peoples. We return here to the question of power, already mentioned before, embedded in top-down visions of society and national community. This way the rhetoric of indianised Bolivia and universalising national identity tends to hide the ongoing conflicts between various indigenous and peasant sectors, especially those that claim specific territories. One example of this can be the case of Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (Territorio Indígena Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure, TIPNIS), where the local people opposed the government project of building a highway through the middle of this reserve, arguing that this infrastructure would provoke extensive deforestation, further settlements of outsiders and expansion of coca cultivation, and ecological devastation. The indigenous sectors better oriented towards state power (Aymara and Quechua peasant communities, cocaleros, colonisers, indigenous middle-class etc.) and often in alliance with the government can impose their interests on some minority indigenous groups underrepresented in state power structures and marginalised by state policies, especially regarding land use, exploitation of resources and environmental protection in the indigenous territories (see Powęska 2017b).

Conclusions and final remarks

Now we can return to our main question - to what extent has the MAS administration been able to implement a project of a genuine pluri-national state, and to what extent does it represent a renewed version of an old nation-state project (inaugurated by the 1952 Revolution), only decorated with indigenous ornaments?

Silvia Rivera provides an interesting observation on Bolivian politics that can be useful in this regard:

In Bolivia, we can observe a sort of dissimulation of the elites that seem to respond to a great extent to the challenge of the indigenous insurgency, but who after some time finish in expropriating and deforming its demands, up to converting them into a tool of new state engineering. In the 1990s the official multiculturalism ... re-created an image of the indigenous as a rhetorical ornament of power, which served to legitimate [the] monopoly [of official power] (2008, 203; author's translation).

This fragment can be easily applied to describe also the current situation in Bolivia. Even if there are important differences regarding the projects of nation between the post-1952 state and the recent vision, especially regarding the subject of the nation, there is not much substantial difference between the neoliberal multicultural version of a nation-state of the 1990s and today's plurinational project. We are witnessing another version of a nation-state, eventually, a project of a political community undermining the premises of plurinationality that features indigenous nations with equal status to central state power. This project assumes a unity around shared elements made common, in typically nation-state fashion of a national community integrated under the common state power. It is an identity based on a fusion and built from diverse elements, but unifying the whole political community, a narrative of indianised, but unified Bolivian nation. Nicolas and Quisbert comment on this:

The Plurinational State considers, perhaps correctly, that the colonial republican state did not manage to build a nation; the paradox is that the Plurinational State is achieving it through the subordination of the indigenous nations to the great state nation. Perhaps there is nothing more emblematic of this paradox than the famous "military/indigenous parade" in which (…) indigenous

peoples walk in file in front of the state authorities and symbols to the rhythm of tirelessly repeated song “The Fatherland” (2014, 108; my translation).

This project can be successfully explained by the need of maintenance of the unity of the state and society, derived from centralist political-structural relations, counter to the officially declared pro-autonomous stance of the new state. Such relations are complementary to the economic and development model with key roles for the central state, dependent on the control of natural resource exploitation and resource export revenues.

Bolivia has witnessed three great revolutions: the anticolonial insurgency and the foundation of the Republic in 1825, the 1952 National Revolution and the present Democratic and Cultural Revolution. In general, each of these historical stages shows social forces pushing ahead with their own political projects, and social groups that benefit indirectly, in complex and often contradictory or at least ambivalent ways, leading to a new cycle of social and political upheaval. Although the creole elites dominated at the expense of the subjugated and exploited indigenous majorities, the republican project indirectly opened a way to the advance of mestizos. Culminating the contradictions of republican opportunities and limits to the mestizo incorporation, the latter stood behind the 1952 National Revolution as its decisive force. Being mestizos both promotors and main beneficiaries of change, their project indirectly and in the long run was crucial for the empowerment of the indigenous peasant majority. Now, we are witnessing the indigenous peasant Democratic and Cultural Revolution. If the indigenous peasantry is the engine and fuel of the last Bolivian revolution, who will be its indirect beneficiary?

In the above-mentioned keynote speech in 2017, García Linera said that the Indianistas were wrong in their understanding of the Bolivian society and thus failed with their political project. But the Aymara people constitutes the sector that probably benefitted most from the changes in Bolivian society today. They reap the rewards from steady economic growth and simultaneous promotion of indigeneity, many of them becoming prosperous entrepreneurs. If in symbolic and cultural terms the “process of change” and the Plurinational State have greatly contributed to the improvement of their socio-political position, economically the Aymara keep expanding as one of the most powerful and influential groups more in spite of than thanks to the active State policy (see Arbona et al. 2016). However, the prosperity and cultural openness in Bolivia today, with simultaneous disappointment about yet unfulfilled decolonisation among the Aymara nationalists and indianista movement, raise expectations about their own Aymara nation-state. Will they be the next proponents of change in the next cycle of political-social refurbishment of the Bolivian state?

The answer remains open. Important updates to the situation are the ongoing conflicts of interests and different positioning of indigenous and peasant sectors toward government policy, especially extractivism, and the implementation of plurinationality. Moreover, the integrationist, hegemonic rhetoric of the Bolivia indianizada (the indianised Bolivia) has been recently openly contested. It was provoked by the political conflict around the highly controversial issue of repostulación, Morales' re-nomination as official candidate to the presidency in 2019 elections. Although the Bolivian constitution permits only one consecutive re-election of president and Morales is finishing his second term in office, in November 2017 the constitutional court declared this restriction non-applicable. In particular, the reactions of the non-indigenous middle-class seem to reactivate ethnic or rather racist prejudices and, accordingly, to discredit the idea of plurinationality, associated with indigenous peasant sectors and for many, being personalist project directly dependent on the figure of Evo Morales.

To borrow from the title of James Malloy's book, we deal again with an "uncompleted revolution" (Malloy 1970), and similarly, the process of building a political community in Bolivia is incomplete.

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CHAPTER 5

Whose Autonomy is it anyway? Tensions between class and ethnicity in the formation of collective citizenship and self-determination in Plurinational Bolivia

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The construction of the indigenous autonomy and the indigenous originary peasant subject

In 2009 Bolivia was refounded as a plurinational state with autonomies.[1] Central to Bolivia's redefinition as plurinational was the recognition of the existence of indigenous nations and peoples with a pre-colonial connection to their territories and the right to self-government (Asamblea Constituyente 2009).[2] This article examines the implementation of this recognition of the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples in practical terms, through constitutionally recognised 'indigenous autonomies'. The article draws on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between February 2012 and March 2013 in the municipality of Charazani, in the north of the department of La Paz, one of eleven municipalities in December 2009 to vote to begin a process of conversion to an indigenous autonomy.

'Indigenous autonomy' is a shorthand, often used since the passing of Bolivia's 2009 constitution, to refer to autonomía indígena originario campesina (AIOC). The term indígena originario campesina (indigenous originary peasant) as a collective term, emerged through the writing of Bolivia's 2009 constitution in a constituent assembly in 2006-2008, to be inclusive of the collective identities of all of Bolivia's rural subaltern peoples whether living in indigenous communities in Bolivia's highlands (where the term 'originario' is favoured), the lowlands (identifying as 'indígena'), and rural people who identify as peasants (campesinos) rather than belonging to an indigenous community. The term came about in a compromise between the highland federation of originary communities CONAMAQ (Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas[3] de Qullusuyu [Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullusuyu]), the lowland indigenous peoples' federation CIDOB (Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia [Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia]) and the national confederation of peasant workers, the CSUTCB (Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia [United Union Federation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia]) to find a unifying term to describe rural Bolivian communities. The constitution uses the term indígena originario campesina as a catch-all, to describe a variety of identities, political organisations and histories. Despite this, I argue (following Cameron 2013) that the legislation creating the political vehicles through which the state will recognise self-government by indigenous originary peasant nations and peoples underestimates the internal political and ethnic diversity within municipalities that decide they wish to become AIOCs, a diversity which can threaten the indigenous autonomies as collective projects. The inclusion of both nations and peoples in the full term naciones y pueblos indígena originario campesinos (NyP IOC) emphasises the recognition of all collectivities able to trace their history as a group prior to the Spanish colonial period, regardless of size or local terminology (Albó and Romero 2009, 5). The constitution does not sate how many nations and peoples it recognises, though article 5 does recognise 36 official indigenous languages of the state, and so that number is often colloquially taken as the number of NyP IOCs in the Plurinational State.

1 In article one of the 2009 constitution, Bolivia is defined as 'a unitary social state of plurinational communitarian law, free, independent, sovereign, democratic, intercultural, decentralized, and with autonomies'.
2 Article two recognises 'the pre-colonial existence of indigenous originary peasant nations and peoples and their ancestral control of their territories, their free determination in the framework of the State, consisting of the right to autonomy, self-government, their culture, recognition of their institutions, and the consolidation of their territorial entities'

3 An ayllu is the traditional socio-territorial kin-based unit in the rural Andes, and a marka is the Aymara term for the hierarchy of two or more connected ayllus.

Articles 289-296 of the constitution laid out the provision for the creation of AIOCs, as the most significant manner though which the plurinational aspect of the state would be enacted in practice. AIOCs would allow indigenous originary peasant nations and peoples to follow their own culturally-specific judicial and electoral practices. Article 289 of the constitution defines an AIOC as 'the self-government of indigenous originary peasant nations and peoples, whose population shares a territory, culture, history, languages, and their own legal, political, social, and economic organisations and institutions'. This assumption of shared identity seems to be predicated on the idea that an 'indigenous peasant originary people nation and people' contains internal unity because it is either indigenous, peasant, or originary, though the ambiguous nature of this composite adjective allows for the possibility of crossover between the constituent identities. In practice, one municipality may contain communities affiliated to different rural federations, with different relationships to the national governing party, and differentiating themselves as indigenous, originario or peasant. This article reflects on the practical consequences for the construction of an indigenous autonomy project of just such a political fragmentation at municipal level.

Indigenous autonomies were proposed through a Unity Pact between originary, peasant and indigenous confederations that had called for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly to write a new national constitution. However, since Bolivia's constitution was passed, the different confederations, in particular CONAMAQ and the CSUTCB in highland Bolivia, have taken increasingly differing stances. For CONAMAQ, the self-determination of originary nations through AIOCs is part of their raison d'être and without which they believe there would be no plurinational state. Meanwhile, the CSUTCB is part of the grassroots of the MAS party itself, and has offered the government unwavering unconditional support (Salazar-Lohman 2015, 296). This 'passive subordination' of the social movements with ties to the MAS party has been likened to the military-peasant pact (Salazar Lohman 2015, 218), and has often left the CSUTCB out of step with other social movements at times of social unrest. Although law 3364, convoking the Constituent Assembly, was one of the first promulgated by Evo Morales after his election as President in 2005, many in the MAS party asked what the point of the indigenous autonomies was now that they were governing the country (Schavelzon 2012, 462, citing a conversation with Pablo Stefanoni), seeing indigenous autonomies as a threat to their political hegemony. As MAS activists and politicians have expressed scepticism of the AIOCs as a possible threat to their national hegemony, so the enthusiasm of the CSUTCB towards the construction of AIOCs has waned.

While this article will show local concerns to have been influenced by national politics and discourse, it also makes clear the limitations of assuming that national-level conflicts between the organisations are simply transposed to the local level. I found that the use of the discourse of the national-level confederations in othering one another has exaggerated local cultural and political differences. As each of the national confederations of rural groups has performed their collective identity, strategically, emphasising the differences between themselves and the rival federation (Lucero 2006, 39; Powęska 2013), they have effectively created the differences in identity that they perform (see Goffman 1990). Although class and ethnicity are fluid, rather than essential categories in Bolivia (Fontana 2014, 438), the performance of essential identities in relation to rival federations jeopardises the unity of the indigenous originary peasant as a collective subject, and form of collective citizenship in Bolivia. As I will show, this can undermine the project of AIOC self-government itself.

Inter-Federation tensions in the construction of Charazani's AIOC project

Charazani was one of 12 municipalities on the 6th of December 2009 to put to a referendum the question 'are you in favour of your municipality adopting the condition of Indigenous Originary Peasant Autonomy, in accordance with the principles established in the Political State Constitution?'[4] and one of eleven to vote in favour of the proposition. Charazani is home to the Kallawayas, one of the thirty-six indigenous nations implicitly recognised in the Bolivian constitution through their language Macha-jujay, which in article 5.1 is declared one of the official indigenous languages of the state. The Kallawayas are well-known in Bolivia as itinerant healers, but through their project to convert their municipality to the status of indigenous autonomy, they have increasingly been identifying as a nation.

For Charazani to undertake the referendum, they first had to satisfy the Ministry of Autonomies that they met the criteria set out in the constitution (for example, article 289, which emphasises the shared 'territory, culture, history, languages', and the 'legal, political, social, and economic organisations and institutions' of a NyP IOC) for an AIOC. After documentation is presented to the Ministry of Autonomies (which has been a Vice Ministry under the Ministry of the President since January 2017), emphasising, in particular, the inhabitants' historical connection with the territory, and the Ministry accepts that the municipality has met the criteria, a referendum can take place. From then, if the referendum is approved, an autonomy assembly is formed to write the statute by which the autonomy would be governed, and which must approve the statute itself in principle and in detail, before sending it to the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal (TCP) in Sucre who would check that the statute met legal requirements, and then sent back to the municipality for a final local approval of the statute in a second referendum.

In the municipality of Charazani, the initial autonomy referendum was approved by 86.6%[5], and an autonomy assembly was convoked whose mission was to write the statute by which it would be governed once its AIOC status was formalised. The autonomy assembly was initially formed in early 2010, with 37 members. However, the autonomy assembly was reformed towards the end of the 2005—2010 period of the municipal government, to make its composition more representative of the municipality's 68 communities. Despite the outcome of the referendum, in April 2010 the municipality had been obliged to hold further municipal elections, for which a candidate from the community of Amarete representing the MAS party was elected as mayor. At Autonomy meetings, he would make a point of emphasising that he was supporting the AIOC project, unlike mayors in other municipalities. Indeed, in other municipalities MAS activists actively campaigned against the AIOC (Tockman and Cameron 2014, 53-58), viewing the AIOCs as a loss of spaces of power (Exeni 2015, 68). As Schavelzon (2012) makes very clear in his ethnography of the constituent assembly in which Bolivia's plurinational constitution was written, the AIOCs were not a MAS project, and even in the first municipality to go through all steps and begin governance as an AIOC in 2015, Charagua, MAS supported the project very grudgingly, and at times the support of other rival political parties had to be strategically solicited, as Postero (2017) describes in her ethnography of "The Indigenous State".

When the Autonomy Assembly was reformed in August 2011 its composition took into account both the population of the

4 ¿Está usted de acuerdo en que su municipio adopte la condición de Autonomía Indígena Originario Campesina, de acuerdo con los alcances y preceptos establecidos en la Constitución Política del Estado?

5 Charazani was one of eleven of the initial twelve to vote in favour.

municipality's communities, and a division of these communities between three provincial federations. The highland communities (above 3,800 metres in altitude) are members of CONAMAQ, the valley communities (roughly 2,800-3,800m) are members of the CSUTCB, known locally as la Única ('the Only'), and the coca-growing communities of the tropical area of the municipality (below 2,800m) are members of their own provincial federation FOYCAE (Federación Originario Yungas Carijana Agro-Ecológico [The Agro-Ecological Federation of the Original Peoples of Carijana]).[6] It had taken until August 2011 for the Autonomy Assembly to be reformed, in part, because of a lack of agreement over its composition, and a general unwillingness of the three federations to which Charazani's communities belonged to cooperate with one another locally.

The communities at the different altitudes of the municipality were jointly part of the same peasant political organisation from 1953 until the 1990s (what in 1953 was the provincial branch of the Departmental Federation of Peasant Workers of La Paz [FTDCLP], and is now the provincial branch of the Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Campesinos de La Paz-Bautista Saavedra [FDTCLP-BS][see footnote 6]), and there is a common identification between communities of the different federations to Kallawaya culture and the Kallawaya Nation. Syndical communities throughout the municipality were officially reconstituted as ayllus in the mid to late 1990s with the help of the Bolivian NGO Taller de Historia Oral Andina, regardless of their history as ex-hacienda communities (most of those located in the valley) or as pre-colonial ayllus (most of those in the high valley and highlands). What has united the Kallawayas as one people is the shared veneration of the same mountains, related to as ancestral deities (see Alderman 2015). However, as I have related elsewhere (2015), since the break up of the different Kallawaya communities into different federations, despite their shared local political history and rituals, representatives of communities belonging to the three federations no longer find a common political space to meet together, and certain rituals which once joined the Kallawayas as one people are no longer performed. Local political rivalries were alimented by the fractious break-up of the unity pact of their national-level organisations due to their differing responses to the MAS government's plan to build a road through the TIPNIS national park (Laing 2015; Salazar Lohman 2015, 282). The politics of competition between three rival local federations therefore stymied agreement over how to conform the Assembly.

The provincial leaders of the three federations eventually agreed that there would be 65 autonomy assembly members, based on the density of population of the communities belonging to the three federations. This resulted in the CONAMAQ-affiliated communities having 30 assembly members, the CSUTCB communities with 20, and FOYCAE 15. A six-man executive board was elected by the Assembly, composed of two members from each of the three federations.

In January 2012, the Autonomy Assembly met in the village of Chajaya, where it wrote the first draft of the autonomy statute, in which the phrase Nación Kallawaya would be ubiquitous. The Assembly divided into six commissions to write the different sections of the statute. Five of the six presidents of the commissions were from Amarete, a community affiliated to

6 Following 1953 Agrarian Reform all of Charazani's communities in the highlands, valley and lowlands became part of the provincial branch of the Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Campesinos de La Paz (FDTCLP, Departmental Federation of Peasant Workers of La Paz), and the Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CNTCB, National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia), as the Federación Departamental de Trabajadores Campesinos de La Paz-Bautista Saavedra (FDTCLP-BS). By the 1980s, the departmental federation and national confederation became the Federación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de La Paz – Tupaj Katari (FSUTCLP-TK) and the Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB) respectively. The coca-growing communities in Charazani's lowlands (below 2,800m) left the CSUTCB in 1994 to form their own federation FOYCAE (Federación Originario Yungas Carijana Agro-Ecológico), which is affiliated to the CSCIOB (Confederación Sindical de Comunidades Interculturales Originarios de Bolivia, representing Andeans who have migrated to tropical areas) at national level. In 1999 Charazani's ayllus and markas (above 3,800m) left the provincial branch of the FSUTCLP-TK to reconstitute as ayllus and become members of CONAMAQ. This left the FSUTCLP-TK only representing the municipality's valley communities (2,800m-3,800m in altitude).

CONAMAQ. This combined with the number of Assembly members representing each federation, meant that the first draft of the statute was seen by communities affiliated to the other federations (particularly those affiliated to the CSUTCB) as representing the perspective of CONAMAQ.

In February 2012, members of the executive board of the Assembly embarked on a series of meetings[7] from the lowlands to the highlands of the municipality, over the space of ten days (one meeting was scheduled in a different community each day). However, though the two meetings in the tropical communities of Sotopata and Carijana took place as arranged, as did those in the four communities affiliated to CONAMAQ—Kaata, Amarete, Moyapampa and Qotapampa, not one of the four meetings scheduled to take place in communities affiliated to the Única, went ahead as planned. The first meeting, in Chullina, was cancelled in advance because of the opposition of the local union to the autonomy project; the next day, a meeting planned to take place in the community of Chari, around an hour's walk from the town of Charazani, was cancelled when no community member turned up to the meeting. The following day, in Chajaya, there were more people present to publicise the statute than there were community members (the latter certainly didn't reach double figures), and this event also had to be cancelled, with the blame for the lack of attendance placed at the assembly member for Chajaya by the authority of the local branch of the union.

The next scheduled meeting, in the community of Inca Roca (in the district of Charazani), went ahead, but the strength of feeling of the community authorities from Inca Roca and the other nearby communities towards the autonomy project, was not just was one of disinterest, but of downright hostility. When the meeting began, the Secretary of Relations, representing the union office of the district of Charazani, launched into a furious diatribe against the autonomy project and the way that it was being run, without allowing the Autonomy Assembly president to present the draft of the statute. When he had finished speaking, he handed the President two letters stating the position of the local union of the district of Charazani, and stormed out, followed by about half of the community members. Somewhat comically, he had to return five minutes later to tell the rest to come too, though they had appeared to want to stay to find out more for themselves.

The first letter made clear that the reason why the communities were hostile to the autonomy project was that they feared domination by communities affiliated to CONAMAQ. It stated that in a sectoral meeting of the 'ayllus and sullk'a ayllus[8] Valle Unificada Charazani[9]' on 4th March 2012, after extensive analysis of the redaction of the project of the AIOC statute, it had no legitimacy, nor sufficient participation of the organisations and institutions of which the communities in the district of Charazani were affiliated. Secondly, it stated that the project was being manipulated by the leaders of CONAMAQ who were being advised by people from the neoliberal right, and made specific reference to two members of the consultancy which was assisting the assembly, one an ex-regional leader of CONAMAQ, and the other an ex-mayor of Charazani from Cochabamba. The second letter was from the community of Jatichulaya, informing the executive board that the assembly member from their community would be resigning from the assembly (Jatichulaya was the community of

7 Members of the executive board of the Assembly were accompanied by a case worker from the Ministry of Autonomies, and a technician, employed by the municipal government, as well as workers from an NGO, employed by the Ministry of Autonomies to assist in the writing of the statute, and myself and a sociology student from Cochabamba.

8 A sullk'a ayllu is a smaller ayllu, an ayllu within an ayllu, an ayllu being a homologous structure a bit like Russian dolls.
9 In Charazani the CSUTCB was made up of communities officially identifying as ayllus.

the secretary of relations of the district of Charazani). The letter from the district of Charazani encapsulated two themes that would be present time and again in Única protests about the autonomy project: that the communities had not been sufficiently well-informed about autonomy,[10] and that the project was being run by CONAMAQ and the neoliberal right.

Despite minimal participation of the peasant union communities close to the town of Charazani, the writing of the statute continued to progress. However, local Única leaders did their best to stymie the project. In the autonomy assembly held in Charazani on the 24th of March disagreement with the process was expressed in several letters read aloud by the Assembly President which he had received from local authorities of peasant union communities in Charazani, including one letter from members of communities in the district of Chari stating that they had read the statute and that it did not truly represent Kallawaya culture, and another from leaders of the Chajaya union branch denouncing the presence of "right-wing" parties such as the MNR, MIR and MSM in the autonomy process (this seems to have been a reference to the Cochabambino ex-mayor). Then at the next assembly one well-known healer entered the hall to hand the Autonomy Assembly President a letter denouncing the autonomy project currently underway and complaining that they had not been properly informed about it. The complaints about the lack of information at the time suggested a lack of organisation on the part of the assembly members, whose role it supposedly was to inform their communities; however, when I later attended general union meetings, both at community level in Charazani and Chullina and also at provincial level, I found that the topic of the autonomy project was put last on the agenda, and that often when someone did want to raise it, they were shouted down by others who preferred to imagine that if they did not acknowledge that the autonomy process was happening then it would simply stop. Although at the time this seemed like wishful thinking, such behaviour was actually surprisingly effective.

At a provincial meeting of the peasant union on the 22nd of April 2012, the union leaders from the four communities in the district of Charazani belonging to the Única all expressed their intention to officially withdraw their members from the assembly and prohibit them from attending further assemblies. One union leader proclaimed that all assembly members who continued to attend the assembly should be considered accomplices to a fake statute ('un estatuto chuto') and be made 'persona-non-grata' in Charazani. It was not spelt out what this would have meant practically for the assembly members, though the union does regularly threaten members with fines for non-compliance, and, at least in theory, a community member's land could be confiscated by their community. At another meeting a week later, two of the four assembly members for the town of Charazani officially handed in their resignations, and a letter expressing the Única's rejection of the autonomy project was written. The provincial executive of the Única took the letter to the assembly meeting in Amarqha two days later, where it was read aloud by the Autonomy Assembly President in front of the assembly members. It accused the assembly of acting in the interests of a handful of people, and of not representing the Kallawayas, particularly objecting to what it said was CONAMAQ trying to represent the Kallawayas. The rejection of right of the communities affiliated to CONAMAQ to speak for the Kallawayas stems from a divergence of meaning over the term Kallawaya. While the Autonomy Assembly had been attempting to write into the statute an inclusive notion of what it meant to be Kallawaya, connected to territory, the representatives

[10] One of the problems in this respect was clearly the change in authorities. I had been told by an ex-authority of the community of Chari, that when initial workshops had been held by the NGO Kawsay in his and neighbouring communities, those present had been very enthusiastic towards the autonomy project as it had been presented to them. However, when the next set of authorities took their turn in the positions of leadership, they were not well-informed, having not attended the workshops.

of communities from valley favoured an exclusive definition of Kallawaya, as meaning only the itinerant healers, who traditionally come from around half a dozen communities in the valley of Charazani, all of which are affiliated to the CSUTCB, rather than to CONAMAQ.[11]

The leaders from the ayllus and markas affiliated to CONAMAQ were apoplectic, and made clear their independence as a provincial organization from its national-level in La Paz. The Mallku[12] of the Suni (the term in Aymara for the highlands) emphasised that 'there is no CONAMAQ in this province'. The Kuraq[13] Mallku of CONAMAQ for the Nación Kallawaya was equally vehement, declaring that they may be affiliated to CONAMAQ, but that CONAMAQ does not have a single assembly member. He angrily told the provincial and departmental heads of the peasant union that the time had come for them to stop arguing amongst themselves and declared that the only thing they were really defending was the haciendas. After the assembly in Amarqha in a conversation with the Autonomy Assembly President, he similarly emphasised to me that 'we are not CONAMAQ, we are the ayllus and markas of the Suni'. Although I found this defensiveness curious at the time, when I analysed it later, it seemed to me that these local leaders from the ayllus were emphasising the organic nature of the organisation. As has been noted by Powęska (2013, 219), CONAMAQ activists do not view the organisation as an artificial superstructure, but as simply the natural national manifestation of the ayllus and markas (which they contrast to the union model of the CSUTCB they portray as foreign). The ayllus and markas of the Suni also appeared to be trying to distance themselves from the critical stance of the national body of CONAMAQ towards the national government. The mallku of Amarete later informed me that having received support from the state in the form of public works, as well (I was pointedly told) as being the first destination within the province of Evo Morales once he became President, they felt no reason to be critical towards the government. As Pallares (2002) shows with reference to Ecuador, particularist ethnic movements are often at odds with national confederations, which can become a source of internal tension. has argued that one thing that makes CONAMAQ distinctive from the CSUTCB is their coherence as an organisation at all levels. However, my ethnographic data suggests that the authorities of ayllus can also found themselves at odds with the national leadership of the organisation.

In Amarqha, many of the assembly members who had been prohibited by the leaders of their union branches were nonetheless in attendance. However, by the time of the next assembly meeting to finalise the second draft of the statute in Carijana on the 17th—18th of May, few assembly members from peasant union communities made the trip, and no more than five of the twenty Única assembly members were present when the statute was approved en grande (in principle) in Amarqha on the 15th of June 2012. Although the decreasing numbers of assembly members in attendance at assemblies caused the leaders of the assembly some discomfort, they resolved to continue with the project, and an assembly to approve the statute in detail was tentatively scheduled for August. However, the lack of cooperation between the federations combined with conflict over the location of the seat of government of the autonomy (see Alderman 2018) made arriving at agreement to convene further assemblies difficult. The tension

11 Louis Girault (1988, 403) and Thierry Saignes (1985, 193) specify that there were only six Kallawaya villages: Curva, Chajaya, Khanlaya, Huata Huata, Inca and Chari (all of these except Curva are in the municipality of Charazani); these being the communities specialising in medicine. Meanwhile Oblitas Poblete (1963, 13) identifies five Kallawaya communities (the same as the above mentioned, minus Inca).
12 'Mallku' is the name for the Aymara authority at the level of a marka (the term for a group of Ayllus in Aymara). It is also the Aymara word for Condor. In pre-colonial Aymara communities, according to Choque and Mamani (2001, 211) authority was held in the figure of the mallku, who governed various ayllus or markas. However, during the colonial period the function of the mallku came to be that of an intermediary between his ayllu and the colonial structures of power.
13 A higher authority, representing all of the markas of the Kallawaya Nation.

within the municipality became increasingly apparent to the Ministry of Autonomies through the multitude of letters that they received rejecting autonomy, both from mestizo residents of Charazani living in La Paz (who apparently saw the AIOC as a potential threat to their private properties in the town), and from the local leadership of the Única. The Ministry allowed a cuarto intermedio (a break in proceedings) because, according to the Autonomy Assembly President, they became scared by the complaints from the Única. Indeed, such was the hiatus, with the leaders of the three provincial level organisations failing to come to agreement, even after the Única and FOYCAE had had a change of provincial leadership at the end of 2012, that no more autonomy assemblies were planned to take place until April 2013, and the approval of the statute in detail was re-scheduled for July 2013. Although meetings took place in 2013, the three organisations have still not come to an agreement for the statute to be approved in detail. At the time of writing in mid 2018, the process is still in limbo.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the multi-layered nature of tensions between class and ethnicity-based organisations in Bolivia, and the tensions inherent in the composite IOC subject. While projects to create AIOCs are based on assumptions of shared histories and legal and political institutions, it is precisely the lack of political unity in a municipality in which different communities belong to separate federations that can undermine any unity of purpose and the entire local AIOC project itself.

Powęska (2013) identifies each national organisation as strengthening the content of their own identity by direct comparison with their rivals. The same appears to be occurring at a local level within Charazani. However, it is very likely, as Blanes (2000, 7) suggests, that the affiliation to different federations accentuates existing rivalries previously suppressed within the single structure of the peasant union. The discourse of local community leaders did not mirror then exactly the national-level discourse of their confederations. Evo Morales and his MAS party had retained widespread support amongst members of both CONAMAQ- and the CSUTCB-affiliated communities throughout the process of writing the autonomy statute. The fact that the mayor was from a CONAMAQ-affiliated community and a member of the MAS party (and therefore well-placed to bring the President to the municipality on several occasions), seemed to play some part in bridging the gap between CONAMAQ's contestatory position towards the government and the feeling that Evo Morales was their President.

As much as the different communities were members of different provincial and national bodies with different priorities towards the government and the state, and which (certainly since 2011) have deliberately distanced themselves from one another, what was at stake in Charazani were local power relations. While for the CONAMAQ ayllus, the conversion of the municipality to an AIOC represented an opportunity to govern autonomously their way, for the outnumbered communities in the valley below in particular, this was precisely the problem. This is why the significant question around the autonomy project of Charazani became whose autonomy it was anyway.

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CHAPTER 6

Whose autonomy and autonomy from what/whom? Insights into the nationalist revolution and pluri-national refoundation through demands for autonomy

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Writing this essay on two highly complex and different historical events, the 1952 nationalist revolution and the 2009 pluri-national refoundation of Bolivia, it is crucial to start thinking of ways to tie both scenarios together - revealing their similarities, differences and connections, while fully recognising the specificity of each revolutionary scenario. I suggest that the concept of autonomy, which I use here interchangeably with self-determination, provides us with a promising vantage point for such a comparison.

When we speak of social revolutions or moments of revolutionary change, we usually refer to some kind of transformation in power relations within a given society (Latin: revolutio, ‘a turn around’). A formal change in power (for example, a regime change) is commonly triggered by uprisings against and/or for emancipation from conditions of oppression. Here, the demand for autonomy becomes a powerful lens, focusing 'a deep desire to expand collective capacity for self government' (Chatterton 2010, 899). However, autonomy itself can refer to a multitude of very different projects – one can ask what or who the ‘self’ or ‘public’ is and to what and whom ‘government’ refers. In the past 25 years, the ways in which scholars have reflected on the concept of autonomy has changed with debates on the subject broadening. A critical event in shaping this new style of political discourse was the 1994 Zapatista uprising, which famously challenged the logic of modern ontology by creating a unique set of autonomous relations. Unlike separatist autonomous movements, the Zapatista’s aim was not to separate people but to bring them together. For them, autonomy refers to ‘[a] different way of imagining life, to an other mode of existence’ (Escobar 2011, 139; italics in the original). Self-determination is here closely connected with respect for traditions and customs and the exercise of power at the community level. In this new world in which many new worlds fit, the universe is replaced with the pluriverse.

At the same time, the 2009 refoundation of the Bolivian state cannot be understood without paying attention to the notion of plurinationalism/-ity, which is in turn closely linked to autonomy. Following the pluri-national state idea, the state does not only recognise the existence of different cosmologies, but also facilitates the autonomy of peoples, understood as nations in their own right, and promotes their participation in decision-making on matters that concern them all (Garcés 2011). For Tapia Mealla, ‘in order to be democratic, it is not enough that it is co-government of representatives of different cultures but co-government in and from the bosom from each of those [cultures]’ (Tapia Mealla 2007, 174; author's translation), which is impossible without peoples’ self-determination. The pluri-national horizon is hence predicated on an aspiration for a different kind of state reflecting a different mode of existence. Looking at the scenarios of 1952 and 2009 through the concept of autonomy, therefore enables the incorporation of the pluri-national idea, an idea that goes beyond the struggle for state power (Quijano 2006).

In the following section, I briefly look at the key demands for autonomy in the struggles that helped to bring about the 1952 nationalist revolution and 2009 pluri-national refoundation. As the state and its power are crucial in both scenarios, I will not focus on autonomous practices, as such, but focus on three demands for autonomy related to the state and their roles in the 1952 Revolution and the 2009 refoundation. These are ‘autonomy as (pluri-)national self-determination’, ‘peoples’ self-determination[2]’ and ‘deepened decentralisation’. Making reference to different intellectual traditions, I then show how these demands became

2 Peoples’ self-determination and indigenous self-determination are generally used interchangeably throughout the text. While I sometimes use ’indigenous’ to ensure clarity, I prefer the notion of peoples’ self-determination, because in the ’Pact of Unity’ (see footnotes 8 and 9), representatives of highland organisations refused to see themselves as ’indigenous’ and advocated the notion ’originals’. This was because ’indigenous’ was seen as a label introduced by others and giving the peoples’ a passive role. ’Originals’ would in turn enable seeing the connectedness of struggle of ’originals’ around the world, leading to empowerment and unity.

(dis)articulated in the state and translated by the respective governments. This analysis draws on fieldwork, which I undertook in 2015 and 2016 as part of my PhD research and involved data collection in seven of Bolivia's nine departments.

Demands for autonomy prior to the 1952 revolution and 2009 refoundation

Autonomy as '(pluri-)national self-determination' in the 1952 revolution and in the 2009 refoundation

The first idea of autonomy discussed here is that of 'national self-determination' – a key principle of international law, commonly considered ius cogens and, for example, enshrined in the UN Charter from 1945. It was a crucial stake in the struggles leading to the 1952 revolution and in contemporary struggles for 'pluri-national self-determination', recognising the diversity of Bolivians. As I will describe in some detail in the following paragraphs, both scenarios were about redefining the Bolivian pueblo (in the case of the 1962 revolution) or pueblos (in the case of the 2009 refoundation) and realising sovereignty of the Bolivian pueblo(s)[3] through control of the state and ultimately, the destiny of the (pluri-)nation. To achieve this, not only inclusion and participation were crucial, but also working towards an end to Bolivia's dependency on the boom and bust cycles of the international markets, which has characterised the country's economy since the conquista. In what follows, I first summarise the struggles for national self-determination feeding into the 1952 Revolution and secondly, the presence of a very similar idea in the times predating the pluri-national refoundation in 2009.

3 With pueblo(s), I refer to the 1952 scenario, in which the pueblo was emphasised as well as the 2009 refoundation, in which pueblos is used to highlight the diversity of the Bolivian population and peoples.

The social struggles which resulted in the 1952 revolution were fundamentally struggles for inclusion and participation in the state which at that time formally excluded the vast majority of indigenous population. The 'Chaco War' (1932-35) led to a 'disintegration of the established order' (Klein 2003, 178) in which nation and state became disarticulated. Young, literate veterans, also known as Chaco generation, who were often not recognised as 'citizens', held the traditional political parties and hydrocarbon firms responsible for the war and began setting up more radical parties as alternatives to the established ones, for example, political groupings such as the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, MNR) (Mesa Gisbert 2003a). The existing system of political representation, which had for the previous decades been dominated by the two established parties, the Liberal Party (Partido Liberal) and the Conservative Party (Partido Conservador), was increasingly incapable of containing the struggles emerging from the Chaco generation and other excluded and increasingly mobilised sectors of society. Yet, powerful players and supporters of the established system were not in favour of the mobilisation of the increasingly urban working and middle classes, a mobilisation which had been fuelled by intensifying repression (for example, the massacre in Catavi, Potosí in 1942).

Meanwhile, World War II increased the demand for tin, and the so called 'Tin Barons' became wealthy and powerful mining magnets; they were responsible for almost 80 per cent of Bolivian tin extraction in the 1940s (Romero Bonifaz 2005). Despite this, state taxes on mining profits did not rise significantly, even though the greater revenue generated for the public purse could have been crucial in responding to the demands of the Chaco generation and other disaffected sectors of the population. Frustrated by their formal exclusion from the state, the Chaco generation and others demanded a redistribution of land and wealth, (better) education

and more progressive social policies be provided by the state. With the end of World War II, the demand for minerals dropped dramatically and the power of the mining oligarchs weakened. This opened up a window of opportunity for rapid change, which culminated in the 1952 revolution.

The idea of the recovery of national self-determination also played a key role in the struggles predating the pluri-national state. In the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s, growing resistance to the first wave of neoliberal reforms and their socio-economic effects, alongside the dominant role of the US and frustration with a recently re-established democracy, that suffered a 'representation deficit' (Assies and Salman 2005, 269), found expression in the growing strength of the Cocalero unions. The emphasis on sovereignty is seen already in the name of the then latterly established 'Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Pueblos', the MAS-IPSP founded in 1998 (Harten 2011). As with the earlier nationalist revolution, self-determination was associated with self-determination vis-à-vis the external world – control over the state and the course of development - yet, unlike in 1952, the diversity of the Bolivian pueblos to be included in and represented by the state was foregrounded. I therefore refer to this idea as 'pluri-national self-determination'.

Two more sets of struggles for autonomy predating the 2009 refoundation

Autonomy, though, can mean more than national self-determination. In Bolivia's recent history, autonomy has turned into a buzzword for different projects and ideas. Here I focus on two sets of struggles which I perceive as crucial for understanding the pluri-national refoundation: 'Peoples' self-determination' and 'autonomy as deepened decentralisation'.

First, the idea of 'peoples' self-determination', which has become increasingly relevant and concrete in Bolivia in since the second half of the 20th century and which cannot be understood without reference to the memories of 1952 revolution (Svampa 2007). Partly in reaction to the 'campesinación' (Albó 2009, 31) that took place during and after the 1952 revolution, where indigenous people were only recognised by the state as peasants and not as ethnic subjects, the Katarista-Indigenista movement emerged in the highlands of Bolivia in the 1970s. Given the large percentage of Aymara and Quechua people in the population, they envisioned a hegemonic project that would change the state altogether. In his 'Tesis India', the intellectual father of this movement, Fausto Reinaga, argues for a transition towards a style of governance inspired by traditional peoples' systems (Reinaga 2006 [1971]). Such ideas fed into the 1973 Tiwanaku Manifesto, which envisioned, alongside cultural, political and economic decolonisation, a pluri-national state in and through which peoples' autonomy could be recovered (Choque Canqui 2010). This demand for autonomy was made at an ontological level – it was not a struggle for state power, but the search for a different kind of state in which many 'worlds' would fit. Yet, the strategies and approaches to these highly contested aims varied.

Meanwhile, in the lowlands, indigenous peoples voiced a desire for self-determination, a desire that had gained prominence at the international level as a result of the decolonisation processes in Africa (see UN General Assembly Resolution 1514/1960). The demand for autonomy expressed by lowlands peoples appears to be primarily one for state recognition, seeking protection vis-à-vis big landowners and the extractive industries, which has increasingly posed a threat to their livelihoods since the second half of the 20th century.

After democracy was restored in 1982, hope grew for achieving recognition and self-determination, but the 1980s and 1990s

proved disappointing. Certainly, during the early 1990s, Bolivia was the first Latin American country to ratify ILO Convention 169 (i.e. Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention) and in the aftermath of the indigenous ‘March for Territory and Dignity’ (1990), Bolivian president Paz Zamora granted the first 'Original Peoples’ Lands' (Tierra Comunitaria de Origen TCO) to lowland communities. While these advances were initially celebrated, it became apparent that ‘land’ (tierra), not ‘territory’ (territorio), was the legally recognised concept. While ‘land’ is associated with the bio-productive system that can be seen as a mercantile object, ‘territory’ refers to the concrete occupation of space conveyed through social and cultural structures (Valenzuela 2009). In other words, ‘land’ is a far narrower and more restrictive concept than ‘territory’. The 1994 Constitution recognised the TCO, yet not as a formal territorial state organisation dividing Bolivia into smaller entities like department and municipalities. This also applied to the traditional type of Aymara and Quechua community in the highlands, ayllus, the recovery of which had been supported by Vice-President Cárdenas (1993-1997, the first self-identified indigenous to hold such a high political post (Mesa Gisbert 2003b).

The famous Law of Popular Participation (Ley de Participación Popular, LPP, 1994) brought about the municipalisation of Bolivia and included: the granting of competences to the (partly newly established) municipalities; the transfer of 20 per cent of state budget to the municipal level (Mesa Gisbert 2003b, 770), and the recognition of indigenous communities and organisations.[4] However, this legal recognition resulted in the imposition of borders which did not necessarily correspond with the ‘territories’ claimed by various indigenous peoples.

In addition, after continued and intensifying pressures from lowland groups, the long-awaited land reform law INRA (Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria) was enacted in 1997. This ordered a review of all properties and titles, to differentiate between those who could prove that they had obtained their land legally and used it for socially or economically productive purposes from those who had not obtained it legally) and / or used it solely for the purpose of speculation; and proscribed the latter (Colque 2014). Within ten years, all large, illegal landholdings were to be recovered by the state. Yet, the law bureaucratised and slowed titling down (Albó 2009) and according to the most recent available documentation by 2007, less than ten per cent of the land had been reviewed (Barragán, Colque and Urioste 2007).

As a result, while some aspects of the struggles of peoples in the highlands and lowlands had entered the state agenda, their promise remained unfulfilled. The state did not become a fundamentally different one, nor did it protect the autonomy of indigenous peoples, many of whom faced increasing threats to their ways of life. Instead, the multicultural reforms can be perceived as part of the cultural project of neoliberalism, which ‘may celebrate cultural pluralism’, but fell ‘short of addressing issues of the redistribution of power and resources’ (Assies and Salman 2005, 269). For example, the above-mentioned LPP is often seen as a government strategy to diffuse the struggles of peoples and redirect them to the local level (Garcés 2013). Critical scholars such as Hale (2002) argue that the shift of focus towards cultural rights has served to redirect political energy away from opposition to neoliberalism itself. Yet, despite their limitations these largely disappointing experiences were crucial in germinating the growing mobilisations, which opened the door to the pluri-national refoundation (Assies and Salman 2005).

The second additional set of struggles predating the refoundation of the Bolivian state by the 2009 Constitution, relate to what I term ‘autonomy as deepened decentralisation’. Struggles for and against de-centralising power have been a vital aspect of Bolivian

4 See Faguet (2012) for an in-depth study of the Law of Popular Participation

history as shown, for example, by the Federal Rebellion in the late 19th century and the struggles for the eleven per cent of hydrocarbon royalties[5] (GAD Santa Cruz n.d.). With the rapid development of the lowlands, especially Santa Cruz, in the second half of the 20th century and the growing agro-industrial and hydrocarbon sectors, voices for decentralisation of power and resources became louder from the lowland departments of Santa Cruz and Tarija. Under President Banzer (1971-1978), who strongly identified with the lowlands, regional development corporations were established in all departments and their major source of income came from hydrocarbon royalties, with Santa Cruz especially benefitting (Céspedes Cossio 2005).

In the context of democratisation, some influential actors, including politicians and academics, pushed a model of decentralisation towards the municipal level (i.e. the local level) (Molina Saucedo 2015), while others, closely associated with the powerful lowland families, advocated strengthening the departmental level (i.e. the regional level) (Urenda Díaz 2007). With the abovementioned LPP from 1994 it became clear that Sánchez de Lozada's government (1993-1997) had opted for municipalisation. The 1995 Administrative Decentralisation Law (Ley de Descentralización Administrativa, LDA), which regulated the role of the departments in the new model of state organisation, confirmed this decision: Disappointed regional actors complained that the 'departmental level' functioned as no more than an extended arm of the central government; as transferred powers and resources were severely limited and, for example, the departmental prefects were directly appointed by the president.

For those who had pushed for a stronger regional powers vis-à-vis central government, the term 'decentralisation' became associated with the disappointing experience of the LDA and as a result, the notion of 'autonomy' became more prominent among them. This was not a new concept as, for example, Juan Carlos Urenda, lawyer from Santa Cruz had advocated since the 1980s a model based on autonomous regions inspired by the Spanish Constitution of 1978[6]. While there have indeed been sometimes separatist voices in the struggles for regional 'autonomy ', backed by local elites in the first decade of the 21st century, it has mainly been a struggle about increasing leverage vis-à-vis the central state. Autonomy, here, fundamentally meant deepened decentralisation to the departmental level, including the direct election of departmental prefects, and the a greater devolution of competences and resources.

In brief, 'autonomy' in the struggles for the 1952 revolution primarily stood for the idea of 'national self-determination'. The recovery of national self-determination, yet this time emphasising the diversity of the pueblos, hence 'pluri-national self-determination', was also was a key feature in the struggles leading up to the pluri-national state. In the lead up to the pluri-national refoundation two more sets of struggles for autonomy were crucial: 'autonomy as peoples' self-determination' and 'autonomy as deepened decentralisation', for both of which the earlier nationalist experience of the mid-twentieth century was again a key impetus.

5 These should be given to the regions, in which hydrocarbons were extracted. As there are nine departments in Bolivia, a share of eleven per cent would mean an equal redistribution. However, the point of reference of the eleven per cent changed and today it is usually referred to eleven per cent of revenues from hydrocarbon extraction in the department and not from the whole of Bolivia.

6 The Spanish Constitution of 1978, divided Spain into politically and administratively semi-autonomous communities (and cities). This aimed at guaranteeing limited autonomy to the regions and nationalities of which Spain is comprised.

Translation of demands in and after the 1952 revolution and 2009 refoundation

Autonomy as (pluri-)national self-determination: Unfinished or impossible?

Assessing how the demands for (pluri-)national self-determination were integrated into the state and mediated by the government, I first look at the quest for inclusion and unity (i.e. being included in the state and united as an integral part of the (pluri-)nation), which aimed to enhance the control of the pueblo(s) over the state both after the 1952 revolution and in the 2009 refoundation. I then focus on Bolivia's sovereignty in the global sphere. Finally, I point to the limitations of the nationalist revolution and pluri-national refoundation, both in terms of the quest for inclusion and unity and self-determination vis-à-vis international markets.

The demand for national self-determination entered the public agenda following the 1952 Revolution which had intended to create a sense of inclusiveness and pride among Bolivians (Albó 2009). The introduction of universal suffrage was a key measure to enhance the control of the pueblo over the state. This was to go hand-in-hand with the introduction of a state-led modernisation strategy, which aimed to break up the provincial fiefdoms of local elites who controlled the large agricultural estates and lucrative mining businesses[7], change existing social relations, and build a modern, industrial, and more egalitarian society (Dunkerley 1984).

The pluri-national transformation involving the 2009 Constitution and other critical policies implemented by the MAS-IPSP set about diversifying political and judicial representation. For example, in several of the nine departmental assemblies, seats are now reserved for representatives of minority groups belonging to indigenous sectors of the population and are elected following the group's own practices and customs. This is particularly relevant in those departments where the representation of indigenous groups is not expected to automatically take place (as it is in the highland departments where Aymara and Quechua groups make up a large share of the population). At the same time, an innovative measure included in 'Article 179 II' of the 2009 Constitution places ordinary and peoples' legal jurisdiction on an equal footing. This legal pluralism also insured that representatives from both jurisdictions serve as judges in High Courts ('Article 197'). In addition, the 2009 Constitution states that all public servants speak at least two of the country's official languages, which enhances the accessibility of the state for the indigenous population. Yet, how effectively these rules have been translated into practice needs careful elaboration, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Regarding the second aspect of the renewed demands for self-determination – Bolivia's sovereignty in the international marketplace – state-led development projects were key to the government agendas in both the 1952 Revolution and the 2009 re-foundation. A key feature on the agenda of the first government of the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, MNR) was enhanced state control over the economy to both enable redistribution and facilitate industrialisation. The nationalisation of the largest mines served as a first key measure, which should fill the public coffers and facilitate investment in other sectors. Policy-makers in the Global South, often perceive Industrialisation as a crucial means for improving a state's position in the world market and ending dependency on the export of a few primary materials which are vulnerable to the booms and busts of the international commodity markets.

The social-communitarian model, introduced by the MAS-IPSP government during the first term (2005-2000) goes in a similar

7 The powerful elites, above all the 'tin barons' were, unlike previous more nationally-oriented elites in outlook, orientated towards international markets. They influenced national politics rather indirectly through pressure groups.

direction and is a response to and a break away from neoliberalism. Following the model developed by members of the Grupo Duende, most notably the long-term Minister of Economy and Public Finance Luis Arce, together with Vice-President García Linera, the state's share of revenues from key strategic sectors (mining and hydrocarbons) has increased. These revenues have then been invested in social policies and other sectors which are considered crucial for job creation and the diversification of the economy (Arce Catacora 2011).

However, the 1952 revolution and 2009 refoundation remain 'unfinished' (Finot 2016), and have been contested from both within and outside the state. This reflects disagreement over who the pueblo is and for whom the government speaks. In the aftermath of 1952, severe tensions arose within the MNR over the course of the revolution and lead to deepening divisions within the movement (Mesa Gisbert 2003b). Likewise, since 2009 tensions have emerged within both the pluri-national state (see below) and the MAS-IPSP.

As noted above, the Katarista-indigenista movement challenged the idea of the strong united nation, promoted by the governments of the 1952 revolution, in which indigenous peoples were only included as a homogeneous class of peasants. In Santa Cruz, on the other hand, the abovementioned struggles for the eleven percent intensified in the early years of the 1952 revolution (GAD Santa Cruz n.d.). Regarding the pluri-national refoundation, the unity of Bolivians is also increasingly contested as shown by the rupture of the 'Pact of Unity'[8]. In 2011, two key organisations that had supported the process leading to the 2009 Constitution withdrew from the Pact. Additionally, and most significantly, on the 21st of February 2016, Morales lost a national referendum where he asked the Bolivian public to extend the limits of presidential re-election from three terms to four. By exposing the new constitution to such specific amendments so early on in the development of pluri-national Bolivia, Morales clearly revealed an attempt to consolidate his position as revolutionary leader of Bolivia.

Economically, the 1952 Revolution dismantled the oligarchic-feudal power relations, but it did not increase productivity and consumption (Mesa Gisbert 2003b). In other words, the aspiration to rebuild Bolivia as a 'modern' and productive nation did not take shape. This was reflected in the country's relatively unchanged position on the global marketplace as provider of raw materials (Romero Bonifaz 2005). The economic upheavals led to increasing pressures on the MNR's regime and played a crucial role in triggering another regime change. In 1964, a military junta overthrew the MNR government.

Over the 12 years since the MAS-IPSP took power and after almost a decade of the pluri-national state, the diversification of the economy has not advanced as many had hoped. Pointing to the increased importance of China, Achtenberg (2017) assesses that '[b]ehind the discourse of financial sovereignty, the reality is one of greater dependency on extractivism and foreign capital'. While it is without doubt too early to pronounce the failure of the project after such a short period of time, it nevertheless seems unlikely that structural and sustainable changes in Bolivia's economy are underway (see also, Webber 2016). This lack of profound change towards diversification can be understood in terms of Bolivia's position on the world market, which also allows reflection on how far this could eventually change through state-led reform.

8 With the erupting of social conflicts of the early 2000s, peoples' from high- and lowlands as well as peasant organisations united in their rejection of neoliberalism and the established political parties to found the 2004 'Pact of Unity' (Pacto de Unidad). In this forum, a joint proposal for a constitution was developed, which became a key reference point for the MAS-IPSP in the constituent assembly (Böhrt Irahola 2015, 12).

Three types of autonomy in the pluri-national state: Impossible reconciliation in and after the 2009 refoundation

The social-communitarian model described above signals how the demand for pluri-national self-determination entered the pluri-national state and is found in government and development plans. However, due to a lack of emphasis on the diversity of the Bolivian population, the model still seems to focus primarily on national rather than pluri-national self-determination. This is visible in the 2009 Constitution, which declares that the pueblo (not pueblos) has ownership of natural resources and that the state administers it in their interest (Art. 348 II, Art. 349 I CPE). Hydrocarbons are then found among the competences of the central state level (Art. 298).

The other two demands for autonomy – peoples' self-determination and deepened decentralisation – have also entered the pluri-national Constitution and legislation and are reflected in the administration of the pluri-national state and government policies and discourse. 'Article 2' of the Constitution grants peoples' self-determination. Next to peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), the most important concrete category of how this has been translated into polity and policy is the Indigenous Peasant Originals' Autonomy[9] (AIOC, Autonomía indígena originario campesina) which is part of the 'autonomy regime' introduced in the third part of the Constitution and developed in more detail in the 'Framework Law of Autonomies and Decentralisation' (Ley Marco de Autonomías y Decentralisación). Municipalities and Peoples' Territories (TIOCs, Territorios Indígena Originario Campesinos, previously TCOs) can undergo a transition process which will see them redefined as AIOCs, in which – within the limits of existing norms and law – a traditional mode of governance is possible. In the (Vice-)Ministry of Autonomies,[10] the Vice-Ministry/Directorate of AIOC accompanies the transition processes.

The demand for 'autonomy as deepened decentralisation' is also recognised by the pluri-national state. In contrast to the previous LDA, regional and departmental territories, like municipalities, are granted competences, resources and the right to elect their own authorities. As such, the system resembles a more or less classic model of decentralisation. Staff in the (Vice-)Ministry of Autonomies, many of whom already worked on the LPP inspired drive for municipalisation in the 1990s, support these so called autonomous territorial entities (entidad territorial autónoma, ETA) exercising their competences. Following the Framework Law, the National Autonomy Council, chaired by the President, was founded for political coordination and a 'State Service of Autonomies' that can be consulted by public servants from departments and regions as well as from the local level, is responsible for the technical coordination and facilitation of the management of the ETAs.

These three kinds of autonomy – (pluri-)national, peoples' (i.e. indigenous) and decentralisation – found in the pluri-national state do not just coexist, but are in conflict with one another. Firstly, tensions between pluri-national self-determination and decentralisation came to the surface in the heated debates on the generation, distribution and spending of public resources through the 'Fiscal Pact', negotiated among representatives from government and territorial autonomous entities.

Over recent decades, the share of resources going to the various departments has fallen and exacerbated by declining hydrocarbon

9 In Bolivia and in academic texts in English, 'indigenous autonomy' is often used to refer to AIOC. The notion of the 'IOC' goes back to the 'Pact of Unity' and translating it as 'indigenous' is not unproblematic (see footnotes 2 and 8).

10 In 2010, the Ministry of Autonomies was founded. Yet, in early 2017, President Morales degraded it into a Vice-Ministry within the Ministry of the Presidency.

prices, the total revenues of the departments has been reduced, putting them under significant fiscal pressure. Yet, the Vice-President argued that the fiscal pact 'has to contribute to, maintain, sustain and make the successful pluri-national development model better, it has to take place in the framework of the government plan for a strong presence of the a redistributive state…' (García Linera, cited in Chávez 2015, author's translation). For him,the camouflaged neo-neo-liberals which are in some gobernaciones try to take from the central state, which has transformed itself into the motor of development, production, equality, they want to eradicate it while the attitude should be how do we produce more wealth (García Linera, cited in Erbol 2015, author's translation).

As such, the clash seems to be one between centrifugal and centripetal logics of organising the state and distributing power.

Secondly, within the (Vice-)Ministry of Autonomies and other public bodies dealing with the matter, the tensions between 'autonomy as decentralisation' and 'autonomy as peoples' self-determination' are apparent. For a former Director of the AIOC,

there are different strands and visions […] we experience this in the Ministry of Autonomies; there are people with a developmental vision, municipalista and occidental, and there is the indigenous autonomy, which are the weird creepy-crawly [bichos raros], who work on something else and propose decolonisation. (La Paz, 04/04/2016)

For the Director of Municipal Autonomies, who has, like most of his senior colleagues, supported the municipalities since the Law of Popular Participation, strengthening the municipalities would be more important than the departmental or AIOC processes since, they argue, the municipalities are closer to the people than the departments and unlike the AIOC are concerned with all, rather than merely some, of the people. There is a limited willingness to grant the AIOC specificity, which would allow it to go beyond the idea of autonomy as decentralisation. As a state employee, mainly involved in municipal and departmental autonomy asserts:

They are the state, too; they are an indigenous autonomy, but they are [part of] the state and they have to give the information [to the state], it is not impossible that they receive money and you do not know what they did with it. (La Paz, 31/03/2016)

The staff working for the AIOC however argue that those working for the municipalities and departments do not (want to) understand the idea of peoples' autonomy. While in both visions of autonomy, emphasis is put on local control, it seems that the ideas clash at a deeper level, meaning that they seem to speak of different realities - which are hardly compatible.

Thirdly, clashes between national self-determination and peoples' self-determination are illustrated in the conflict around the TIPNIS (Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous Territory). In May 2017, the government enacted a law authorising the building of a motorway through the TIPNIS, which was based on the 2012 consultation process with local people. While the government argues that the road will benefit all Bolivians as it will bring greater development, many observers pointed out that in this process the right to FPIC was violated and that the road would severely restrict the self-determination of peoples living in the area. When in 2015 decrees were enacted, which had a detrimental impact on peoples' self-determination (by limiting the time for FPIC, opening up national parks for oil and gas exploration and exploitation), the President of the Pluri-national Assembly explained that this was 'just an interpretation of what the Constitution prescribed and that the Bolivian pueblo has the right to utilise its natural resources in order to create a welfare state' (Arce, cited in Layme 2016; author's

translation). This indicates how the government prioritises pluri-national self-determination over peoples' autonomy.

Revising the tensions between the three ideas of autonomy found in the pluri-national state has clearly shown that there are contradictions within the state that cannot be reconciled. The clashes are inherent in the pluri-national state and not 'creative tensions' (García Linera 2011) in its consolidation. Even if the government prioritises pluri-national self-determination over decentralisation and peoples' self-determination, the latter two still remain part of the pluri-national state, its constitution, legislation and bureaucracy.

Finally, what happened to the idea of the different state, i.e., a state that not only recognises the existence of different cosmologies, but also facilitates peoples' autonomy and fosters their participation in the making of decisions that affect them all (Garcés 2011)? When looking closely at the incorporation of the demand for peoples' autonomy into the 'autonomy, which is without doubt a major achievement of the struggles, it becomes apparent that the aspirations for a different state were little more than an afterthought. A different state would require a turning around not just of some elements of the workings of the state but a decolonisation of the state as such. For a different state that lives us to the pluri-national idea, it is, for example, not enough to ensure representation of indigenous groups if the decision-making rules remain unchanged (Tapia Mealla 2007). The limited achievements in the Bolivian case can understood through the lenses of decolonial thinkers like Grosfoguel. He argues that the modern state is in its essence deeply colonial, as modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin (Grosfoguel 2009). Hence, a decolonisation of the modern state is impossible and is also beyond what can be achieved through revolutionary change - with the state still at its centre, however ambitious the goals.

Concluding remarks

In this essay, I used the concept of autonomy as a lens through which we can explore the nationalist revolution and pluri-national refoundation in Bolivia. While inclusion in the nation and control over the state and the nation's destiny was a main priority for the 1952 nationalist revolution, a key aspect in the pluri-national refoundation of Bolivia was recovery of (pluri-)national sovereignty, while simultaneously emphasising the diversity of the Bolivian populations. In both scenarios, profound formal changes took place at the state level, which only a decade before seemed unachievable.

In both scenarios, though, the quest for social unity was inherently limited and a variety of tensions among those who had backed the respective revolutions became apparent. Moreover, in both cases, the state-led development strategy, seeking to promote a diversification of the economy, has failed to end Bolivia's dependency on international commodity markets.

The rearticulation of Bolivia as a pluri-national state invites us to add two more ideas of autonomy to the discussion: 'autonomy as (indigenous) peoples' self-determination', closely connected with the pluri-national state idea, and 'autonomy as deepened decentralisation'. These two sets of struggles, which have a long history, but gained significant strength after democratisation in the 1980s, are found alongside the idea of pluri-national self-determination in the pluri-national state; reflected, for example, in the Constitution, legislation, bureaucracy and policies. Yet, the three ideas of autonomy are in tension with one another. Even though the government has prioritised 'pluri-national self-determination' over the others, this has not led to a mitigation of these tensions.

While the Bolivian state has become more plural through its refoundation, which includes progress in the recognition of peoples' rights, it has not turned into a different state, which facilitates self-determination. This process shows the limitations of the decolonisation project as embodied in the contemporary Bolivian state.

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CHAPTER 7

Just another protest cycle? Bolivia's indigenous peasant movement and "their" government

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A ‘process of change’?

The famous ‘process of change’ that we have so closely witnessed in Bolivia emerged on the shoulders of indigenous, peasant and other popular social movements, to coalesce around several goals—including natural resource nationalisation, land redistribution, and recognition of indigenous identities and autonomies—and the overarching demand to fundamentally re-structure the political system. As Sian Lazar and Ana Dinerstein have pointed out, together with other scholars, Bolivia’s recent history is as much a story of hope as it is that of unfulfilled expectations (Dinerstein, 2015; Lazar, 2017). Bolivia is thus a perfect case to examine how movements came from the ‘street’—Bolivian social movements have achieved notoriety given the strength and impact of social mobilisation—to put forward alternatives for a different world, and how successful they have been in achieving this.

Although indigenous peasant struggles in Bolivia need to be understood in the context of the material realities of indigenous communities and a history of peasant union organising (that is redistribution struggles), they cannot at the same time be divorced from alternative visions of ‘living well’ and the distinct indigenous cosmovisions in which these expectations are embedded, and the associated struggles for identity recognition and anti-discrimination (Fraser, 2003; Hale, 2002; Yashar, 2005). In this context, I investigate how successful different elements within the indigenous peasant movement in Bolivia have been at getting their voices heard and demands met. Have they been co-opted, institutionalised, marginalised? Should we study key transformative moments, or trace the ongoing resistance of different indigenous and peasant actors under a self-proclaimed indigenous government?

This paper is based on a chapter of a doctoral thesis completed at the University of Oxford, which examines indigenous movements in Latin America from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The chapter itself investigates the strategic choices of five nationally important indigenous and campesino (peasant) organisations in Bolivia. They are the two recognition-focused indigenous “twins” of CIDOB (Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia, Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia) and CONAMAQ (National Council of Ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu, Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas de Qullasuyu), and the more class-based indigenous-peasant “triplets” of the CSUTCB (Unified Union Confederation of Bolivian Rural Workers, Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia), CNMCIOB-BS (National Confederation of Peasant Indigenous Original Women of Bolivia-Bartolina Sisa, Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Indígenas Originarias de Bolivia-Bartolina Sisa), and CSCIOB (Union Confederation of Intercultural Communities of Bolivia, formerly the Colonizers Confederation, Confederación Sindical de Campesinos Interculturales Originarios de Bolivia).

Logos of the five organisations studied

The chapter then traces the impact they have had on government decision-making before (2000-2005), during (2006-2010) and after (2011-2016) the constituent assembly process that promised to radically reform the republic after Evo Morales was elected President in 2005. This analysis, a shorter version of which is presented below, challenges the protest cycle conceptualisation of social movement outcomes, and questions the usefulness of the concept of co-optation for understanding the impact of social movements, especially once "their" government comes into power. It is common knowledge that much has changed in Bolivia since 2005, despite the ongoing debates about how radical these transformations have been (e.g. Kohl, 2010; Postero, 2017; Svampa & Stefanoni, 2007; Svampa et al., 2010; Webber, 2008). What is clear is that the recent story of Bolivia is a story of both unprecedented inclusion and of new exclusions. It also highlights the contradictory notions of what political indigeneity means. It illustrates how the unity of cultural and material focused indigenous organising—the combining of recognition and redistribution—has now largely been eclipsed in Bolivia. In this context, how can we make sense of the recent trajectories of these organisations, and to what extent do general theories of social movements help us understand their successes and failures?

Social movements in theoretical dialogue

The narrative of Latin American popular and indigenous protest in the last two decades, retold so frequently in recent academic writing as a story of dramatic protest cycles and key transformative moments, corresponds to Tarrow's classic protest cycle hypothesis, which conceptualises movement trajectories into emergence and mobilisation followed by partial institutionalisation and the side-lining of more radical demands, resulting in co-optation and eventual decline (Tarrow, 1993, 1994). At first glance, this seems to have happened in Bolivia. Indigenous and popular movements that had thrown their weight behind Morales are now going through a process of both inclusion and institutionalisation, and exclusion and radicalisation (della Porta, 2013). This is not the full story, however. The social movements organisations studied here have been both heard and had many of their demands met, and in this evolving context continue to devise new strategies to maintain their influence. As such, I argue that the story of Bolivia's 'process of change' is rather more complicated.

In order to start to analyse the trajectories and outcomes of Bolivia's indigenous movements, an interdisciplinary approach was needed. This theoretical take emerges from putting into dialogue the general sociological literature on social movements, and the regional studies of identity politics in Latin America. In the former, there has been a renewed interest in analyses of the successes and failures of social movements. Yet despite this recent surge in interest, the determinants of success of social protest remain contested (Amenta, 2014; Biggs & Andrews, 2015; Bosi et al., 2016; Giugni et al., 1999; Kolb & Tarrow, 2007; Suh, 2012). Some studies even suggest that the direct influence of overt protest, especially on public policy, is minimal, if not sometimes counterproductive (Giugni, 2007; Olzak & Soule, 2009). This is another reason why Latin America in general and Bolivia in particular present perfect cases to study, as we know from the literature from and about Latin America that popular and indigenous movements have brought countries to standstill, forced multicultural reforms and even deposed presidents (Aguilar & Escárzaga, 2014; Lazar, 2008; Postero & Zamosc, 2004; Svampa, 2008; Van Cott, 2005; Yashar, 2005; Zibechi, 2012).

Neither strand of scholarship relevant for making sense of social movements in Bolivia has, however, engaged in direct dialogue with each other. What emerges out of attempting such a North-South dialogue, among other insights, is the need to pay attention to the ongoing everyday strategies of social movement actors beyond iconic 'transformative' moments of mass

mobilisation (Svampa, 2008, 2017; Tarrow, 1995, 2011; Zibechi, 2007, 2012). The protest cycle conceptualisation does highlight the importance of the state in influencing the trajectory of social movement activity. However, rather than assuming that the state always responds predictably—meeting less radical demands at first, then repressing the more radical sections of the movement that remain—it is more analytically fruitful to see the relationship with the state as a factor that can have different consequences under different circumstances, ranging from institutionalisation and co-optation to radicalisation and decline.

Investigating social movement outcomes

In order to explore those strategies, I conducted my latest research in Bolivia in the summer and autumn of 2016, following a previous stay in 2011. I collected a) semi-structured interviews with movement leaders and activists, past and present, other civil society actors and government representatives, as well as b) participant observation of meetings, encounters and workshops organised or attended by representatives of the organisations under study. I then explored the evolution of their strategies before and throughout the Morales administration using the method of process tracing (Brady & Collier, 2010; George & Bennett, 2005).

The complexity of ethno-linguistic and class-based identities and self-identification in Bolivia is well known by now (Grisaffi, 2010; Postero, 2007). Despite the rhetorical efforts to create a new political identity of the indígena-originario-campesino (indigenous-original-peasant)—now codified in the 2009 constitution—politicized identities in Bolivia are complex, competing and contradictory. I use the term indigenous and indigenous peasant for the collective actors I studied, since they use these terms themselves, at least some of the time, and since cultural identity features as part of their struggle at least to some extent.

The five indigenous and campesino social movement organisations (SMOs) arguably capture the diversity of indigenous organising in Bolivia in including both recognition-focused and more class-based movements, in both lowland and highland parts of the country. Despite the strength of indigenous mobilising, it has never been possible to speak of one indigenous movement in Bolivia (Albó, 2008; Lucero, 2008; Postero, 2007, 2017; Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987; Yashar, 2005). There was a period of relative unity of indigenous and peasant struggles, in the early 2000s, culminating in the official signing in 2004 of the so-called Unity Pact between the five organisations studied, among others. In doing so, they threw their weight behind MAS as “their” electoral vehicle (numerous interviews, 2016; García Yapur et al, 2015). The pact had been years in the making, with its concrete foundations already laid during the 2002 March for the Constituent Assembly.

The coming together of these five Bolivian indigenous organisations in the early 2000s showed their ability to eclipse their differences, even if temporarily, in order to develop a common agenda and a common strategy of struggle. This is a crucial part of the story of the historic Morales election in 2005, at the helm of a social movement ‘electoral vehicle’, and the subsequent constitutional reform process, which culminated in the popular approval of a new radical Constitution in 2009. However, the long-standing antagonisms between indigenous and peasant social movement organisations have since resurfaced forcefully. As of 2016 when I conducted my latest field research in this ever-so-fascinating country, two of them, CIDOB and CONAMAQ, had left the Unity Pact; in actuality, they have split into two organisations, one in support and one in opposition to the government.[1] This follows the well-known TIPNIS conflict (Achtenberg, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) and represents the

1 The opposition, so-called organic—organisations have maintained more continuity of leadership and more legitimacy, especially internationally, thanks to their independence from the government, and an increasingly environmentalist stance.

turning point in the relationship between Bolivian social movements and “their” government. Social movements in Bolivia have since experienced unexpected successes as well as disappointments.

What is ‘success’ for social movements?

As hinted at above, ‘success’ of course needs to be defined. Elaborating on Gamson’s influential study, success for the five organisations studied over time is defined as the level of ongoing influence on national decision-making processes (Gamson, 1975, 2014). In this sense, the five indigenous organisations were coded according to the nature of their interaction with state institutions, ranging from exclusion to inclusion (Stahler-Sholk & Vanden, 2011; Vergara-Camus, 2013; Zibechi, 2007). However, this also takes into account the extent to which the organisation’s agenda continues to be reflected in government policy, and whether the organisations’ influence can prevent government actions that go directly against its interests.

Certainly, in the case of Bolivia, the indigenous organisations under study have generally not experienced either extreme of complete exclusion or full state control, but fall somewhere in between. The closest to the exclusion end of the spectrum is the experience of the CSCIOB during the neoliberal period (specifically 2000-2005), which as an organisation did not play as much of a role in the mass mobilisations of the Water (2000) and Gas (2003) Wars as the other “twins” (Crabtree & Whitehead, 2008; Lazar, 2008), and which was criminalised by neoliberal governments as part of their ‘war on drugs’ efforts.

The two other redistribution-focused “twins” (CSUTCB and Bartolinas) were also largely unsuccessful before the election of Evo Morales but did play a role in those ‘Wars’ and did attend negotiations with neoliberal governments on a number of occasions. At the same time, the recognition-focused CIDOB could claim some advantages from the neoliberal period, especially the granting of territorial rights to indigenous communities claiming ancestral rights, with the introduction of the TCO (Tierra Comunitaria de Origen, collectively owned and protected indigenous territories) regime in the 1990s. It still had limited influence on national decision-making, and so did CONAMAQ, which due to its more radical demands and more open opposition to both the neoliberal regime and recently also the MAS administration, has experienced the least positive outcomes of the five indigenous SMOs throughout the period studied (numerous interviews, 2016; Albó, 2008; Lucero, 2008; Postero, 2017; Yashar, 2005).

Beyond ‘co-optation’

Now to what extent does the theory of a protest cycle in general, and the concept of co-optation in particular help us make sense of these trajectories? The fact that many social movement leaders—especially of the “triplets”—have taken up government positions in the Morales administrations would suggest that these organisations have been co-opted. Yet, under Gamson’s influential classification of movement outcomes (Gamson, 1975), co-optation means acceptance of the organisation as legitimate, but without any kind of advantages. However, it is undeniable that under the administrations of the MAS, all five organisations of the Unity Pact have benefited from a number of achievements reflecting their programmatic agenda, in terms of political participation, the text of the constitution, and its implementation (numerous interviews, 2016; Garcés, 2013; García Yapur et al, 2015; Postero, 2017; Zegada & Komadina, 2014). Then, it is difficult to speak of co-optation if at least some of the demands of all the organisations have been met. In the current MAS administration, some leaders and activists of the organisations themselves are part of the state, and those who were elected tend to still insist they consider this a

major success. Although this means also having to face the challenges of public administration, this tends to be seen also as a positive outcome.

The CSUTCB and the CSCIOB, in particular, make a forceful argument that being part of the state's bureaucratic apparatus is one of their main victories as social movement organisations (numerous interviews, 2016). The access their leaders have gained to decision-making spaces is unprecedented for indigenous peasant leaders in a post-colonial country like Bolivia. I interviewed Victor Cabezas, the General Secretary of the CSCIIB, on 4th November 2016, and Hugo López, Secretary for Participation and Social Control of CSUTCB there days later. On both occasions, in their respective La Paz offices, the leaders insisted that this is what they had fought for (Interview with Victor Cabezas, 4th November 2016; Interview with Hugo López, 7th November 2016). Since, they have focused on getting their demands pushed through the Bolivian state institutions. In researching unions and the relationship with the state, Lazar highlights that without understanding more fully the experiences of so-called co-opted leaders, "we should not take co-optation for granted as either inevitable or inevitably bad for … members" (Lazar, 2017: 12). Thus, 'co-optation' can also be a way of getting advantages for members, with the results of this integration into the state depending on the internal structure of the organisation.

This last factor is crucial. This combination of loyalty to the government and loss of the most experienced leaders has indeed weakened Bolivia's indigenous social movement organisations, especially compared to the height of mobilising capacity they had in the early 2000s. The organisations themselves are aware of this, however, and have been devising strategies to respond to this unintended consequence of helping bring to power a government of their own choosing. When I visited the departmental branch of the Bartolinas in Santa Cruz in October 2016, their office was hosting a leadership workshop for female leaders, activists, and new members alike. This was organised by María Muñoz, the Executive Director of the departmental federation, with the support of the MAS senator Felipa Merino (and the federation's ex-director) and congresswoman (MAS) Isabel Ortega, formerly Vice-minister for Indigenous Justice ('Indigenous Original Peasant Justice'). Isabel Ortega, in fact, was leading the workshop, sharing her experiences from years of struggle as a Quechua peasant woman.[2]

This workshop thus showed the continued interactions between social movement organisations and the MAS government. The female leaders and politicians showed both loyalty to the government they felt they had helped bring to power, and insistence on their organisational and programmatic autonomy. There was clear recognition of the need to continuously strengthen the organisation and train new leaders not forged in the fires of road blockades and street battles, in order to continue to fight for the interests of indigenous peasant women in the country.

This was clearly combined with acknowledgement of how far they have come. In a personal interview, the Santa Cruz Bartolina director told me that access to property rights, political posts and anti-discrimination laws are considered within the indigenous women's federation as the greatest successes, fruits of years of struggle. Although she thinks that the vice-presidential posts should have been offered to a female leader—to "accompany Evo", according to the Andean indigenous logic of gender 'complementarity'[3]—she was clear that many of the central goals

2 In fact, just like Evo Morales, Isabel Ortega moved from the Quechua highlands to Aymara valleys, and has thus been described as both Aymara and Quechua, and involved in combined indigenous peasant struggles. This example thus brings to the fore the complex question of what 'indigeneity' means in Bolivia, especially politically.

3 Although the organisation was established by indigenous peasant women, who felt their interests could not be fully represented in the 'macho' CSUCTB, the taking up of Bartolina Sisa's name in relation to the CSUTCB's Tupac Katari symbolises a reaffirmation of the Andean indigenous notion of chachawarmi, or gender complementarity.

of the organisations have been, or are in the process of being, met (Interview with María Muñoz, 22nd October 2016). To put this into context, these three indigenous peasant leaders told me numerous stories of how a woman de pollera (traditional Andean dress) like them before 2005 could often not enter banks, taxis would not pick them up, and restaurants would refuse to serve them in all the cities in the country.[4] Isabel Ortega recounted in a recently published collection of life histories, for example:

"When I was elected as a representative [to the lower chamber], even though I had my credentials, the police would not let me enter Plaza Murillo; then the international press arrived, and only thanks to them were we able to enter to be sworn in. Once in the Legislative Assembly, they called us names, insulted us, and wouldn't leave us alone" (Isabel Ortega in García Yapur et al, 2015: 43).

Racism and discrimination in Bolivia have not disappeared over night, but the idea that indigenous rights are legitimate has gained incredible traction in Bolivian politics. Going back to Gamson, how useful is the term co-optation when a significant proportion of the organisations demands have been met?

Beyond 'transformative moments'

At the same time, what about the demands for a more radical transformation of the state? The emphasis on learning how to do public administration ('from protest to proposal'), has meant that efforts to transform the institutions of the state in a more profound, radical way seem to have all but vanished. Thus, this new wave of incorporation (Rossi, 2017) appears to be just that, rather than an actual transformation of the institutions of the state as many had hoped. Access by social movement organisations to decision-making is mediated by the MAS social movement-cum-political party, and the promise of direct democracy remains unfulfilled. The MAS has been behaving much more like a traditional political party than it had promised, as evidenced in the emerging Bolivian literature on this topic, such as a recent review of parliamentary proceedings by Zegada and Komadina (2014). Formal rules for managing the relationship between MAS and the social movements that brought it to power were not established once MAS became the governing party. There is no legal framework that I am aware of, for example, requiring the MAS to obtain formal consent of the Unity Pact organisations before making political decisions.

One organisation that could be seen as an attempt to institutionalise social movement participation in government is CONALCAM (National Coordinator for Change). This is ostensibly a forum for Unity Pact organisations to meet, discuss their proposals, and evaluate government policy. This is a space where real debate could take place and through which popular sectors' demands could be articulated to the inner MAS circle. At the same time, in many of my interviews, CONALCAM was described as only a space to 'show-off' the plurinational and indigenous nature of MAS to the media, without any real debate. Similarly, when I visited the La Paz offices of the CSUTCB in November 2016, a call to participate in a MAS congress was stuck to the wall; not only did this state that attendance for the Unity Pact organisations, and their numerous affiliates, was compulsory, but also stipulated in a prominent place in the letter that attendees are required to "bring their flags and dress in traditional clothing".

This suggests that reunions with and among social movement organisations are perhaps more of a way to reinforce the MAS legitimacy as both an indigenous government, and a government of social movements, than spaces where a 'social movement government' can actually be exercised. Thus, despite the fact

4 Fabricant (2009) recounts similar stories specifically for Santa Cruz.

many of the demands of the SMOs under study have been met though constitutional reform, legislative change, and implementation, and at least some of them continue to have unprecedented access to spaces of decision-making, their impact on those decisions is more complex and less significant than might be expected under a so-called ‘social movement government’.

Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that this description of experiences of access to decision-making apply much more to the “triplets” than to the “twins” of CIDOB and CONAMAQ. Although the CSUTCB and CSCIOB in particular see their bureaucratic participation positively, there are current and former members of all five of the indigenous SMOs studied, who complain that those who truly have struggled, the so-called organic members, are being marginalised by 'invited' technocrats (numerous interviews, 2016; Garcés, 2010; García Yapur et al, 2015; Schavelzon, 2012; Zegada & Komadina, 2014).

Indeed, in pursuit of bureaucratic efficiency, new ‘invited members’ began to occupy parliamentary positions, indicating, in Dinerstein’s words, “a step away from the initial government’s direct identification with indigenous-popular movements” (Dinerstein, 2015: 161). In its concern with expanding the state, effective governance and the implementation of public policies—although as Kohl argues, those are arguably legitimate aims in their own right (Kohl, 2010)—the governing party has indeed limited internal spaces of debate. In fact, this was cited as a serious problem by leaders and activists within all five of the organisations I studied.

This also relates to the question of whether and how minority representatives, despite their access to spaces of political decision-making, can get their agendas reflected in government policy. As Yashar (2005) has highlighted, indigenous movements face a number of common and fundamental problems when joining electoral politics. As discussed above, most experienced leaders join the state, and potentially leave the organisations weaker. The usually small number of elected representatives find it hard to get their communities’ and organisations’ agendas pushed through as a minority. The latter has indeed been an obstacle that the CIDOB and the CONAMAQ, despite their participation in the constituent assembly, have not been able to overcome.

After the 2005 election, many CIDOB and CONAMAQ leaders took up positions within the MAS government; however, their experiences have been largely disappointing (Zegada & Komadina, 2014). Bienvenido Zacu, a long-time indigenous activist, former Land and Territory secretary of the CIDOB and a MAS congress-member in the first Morales administration, recounted to me how felt he was simply expected to the vote for whatever the government proposed (Interview with Bienvenido Zacu, 19th October 2016). Consequently, Bienvenido Zacu decided to leave and return to Santa Cruz. This limiting of spaces of internal debate has been a much bigger problem for the CIDOB and CONAMAQ since their demands are increasingly at odds with MAS policy, unlike the demands of the CSUTCB, CSCIOB and the Bartolinas.

Conclusion: Just another protest cycle?

As the MAS government has not pushed for a more radical transformation of the state and the economy, with continued reliance on extraction, the increasing exclusion of CIDOB and CONAMAQ contrasts with the continued inclusion of the “triplets”. Even for the latter, however, there seems to be increasingly less clarity in the relationship between the institutions of the state, the Morales administration, and the social movements that had helped bring it to power. Moreover, many of the street-protest hardened leaders report a certain distancing from Morales himself, and the closing of the direct channels of communication that many of them used to enjoy (numerous interviews, 2016; García Yapur et al,

2015). Most of the current leaders of the CSUTCB, CSCIOB and the Bartolinas, as well as MAS ministers and vice-ministers, described to me the continued cooperation and coordination between the organisations, the so-called political instrument of the MAS, and the executive. At the same time, even they were not able to say in concrete detail how conflicts are resolved and who gets to have the final say in contentious situations. Only saying that 'consensus' is always sought, this leaves the mechanisms of conflict resolution unclear.

The social struggles in Bolivia created a vacuum of hope in which anything seemed possible. Yet with the nature of this potential future contested, however, it seems that, in terms of the institutional structure of the state at least, the weight of much of the status quo has prevailed. At the same time, at least some of the programmatic agenda of all five organisations has been reflected in government policy, and, especially as indigenous women appear to be taking a more protagonist role in recent years (Krausova, 2017; Rousseau & Morales Hudon, 2017), indigenous and peasant struggles seem unlikely to disappear in Bolivia anytime soon. As such, the protest cycle conceptualisation—suggesting the inevitable decline of social movements through simultaneous co-optation and radicalisation—can only help us so far in understanding the ongoing impact of social movements on government decision-making in the country. It misses the ongoing, everyday collective agency and strategic decision-making of leaders and activists on both sides of the institutionalisation barricade.

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CHAPTER 8

“Clases a medias” – the changing contours of Bolivian middle classes

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Evo Morales has traditionally referred to the Bolivian middle class in dismissive terms. In speeches aimed at different audiences, it was customary to hear the President citing sociologist Sergio Almaraz (Morales Ayma quoted in Maldonado, 2014; Morales Ayma, 2014, 2016), who famously called it a “clase a medias”, a “half-baked class”. The expression did not just seem to address the elusive contours of this social category, but can be also interpreted as a jibe of sorts, alluding to its membership in terms of individualism, political disloyalty, and lack of class consciousness. Such a stance is not atypical among the Latin American left. In a recent publication, Hernan Vanoli compiles a brief inventory of attitudes towards the middle class, which elsewhere in the region has historically been perceived to be “arriviste and insincere, mercenary [cipaya], and treacherous, pliable [acomodaticia] and discriminatory, impotent and mediocre, alienated and banal” (Semán, Trímboli, and Vanoli 2016, 40). But towards the end of January 2018, after a series of significant political events and mobilisations during the previous two months, President Morales made a surprising statement: “we need to improve, look into, and gather the aspirations of the new middle class” (Morales Ayma 2018a). What could have caused such a shift in the government’s stance towards this “imagined constituency” (Wahrman 1995)? In this article, I will offer two possible explanations. The first relates to socioeconomic changes during the past 13 years, which have not only significant altered Bolivia’s socioeconomic structure, but have required a new set of categories to understand the country’s social landscape. The second explanation involves recent political events, which have seen “traditional middle classes” (García Linera 2018) pour into the streets in protest against the government. Based on these explanations, I will discuss how the middle-class category has become contested by politicians and intellectuals in recent months, as an inroad into understanding what is at stake in this discursive dispute.

Socioeconomic transformations in Bolivia, 2005-2017

After over two decades of coalition governments, Evo Morales was elected President in 2005. A combination of economic inclusion policies and sustained economic growth came together to significantly reduce income inequality. GDP growth between 2006 and 2016 averaged over 5% per year, well above trends in the rest of Latin America (World Bank 2018). The minimum wage was raised from Bs440 in 2005 to Bs2060 in 2017[1], a nominal increase of 454%. A program of conditional cash transfers (including Bono Juancito Pinto aimed at schoolchildren; Bono Juana Azurduy for new and expectant mothers; and Renta Dignidad, a modest universal pension scheme) was implemented, injecting money into the economy and fuelling internal demand. Before Evo Morales came into office, the 10% richest earners in the country generated 128 times that of the bottom 10%; by 2015 this difference had been narrowed to 39 times (Ministerio de Comunicación 2016). Measured in terms of income, the government reduced moderate and extreme poverty by 23% since 2005. Between 2010 and 2012, the country silently underwent a remarkable point of inflection: its population went from being classified as predominantly poor, to predominantly middle income, and by 2018 over 58% of the population were part of this segment (Morales Ayma 2018b).

In order to bring into focus the group which in recent years has increasingly come to be known as the Bolivian “middle class”, it is crucial to understand that this (arguably residual) category is defined as those living above the moderate poverty line (the income threshold which allows for the fulfilment of basic needs), and beneath the high-income threshold (set at around 5%). In 2017, the moderate-poverty line was Bs766.70[2] per person living in an urban area, calculated through total household income. This

1 Approximately equivalent to £30 to £210, at historical exchange rates.
2 Approximately £2.75 per day.

means that a two-person household with a single earner on this salary would be well within the middle-income bracket. The upshot of the latter is that this category can feasibly include domestic servants, architects, building porters, minibus drivers, lawyers, and street vendors, irrespective of levels of education, occupational stability, consumption patterns, or a shared set of values.

Approached as a grouping, this bracket may seem absurdly heterogeneous in terms of its social composition, yet trying to contrast it with measures based around self-identification further complicates matters. According to the latest World Values Survey (Moreno, Villanueva, and Schwarz 2018), 66% of the adult population (and 78% of those aged 12-17) considered themselves to belong to the middle class. Of course, one may argue that a survey instrument elicits categories which may not reflect spontaneous self-positioning, and respondents typically converge around middle categories along most scales. But this figure is remarkably high even by international standards; the global average in the previous wave of the survey (2011-2014) was 57%, with Peru at 55%, Argentina at 60%, and Brazil at 40%. As a further point of contrast, 66% of respondents in the United States self-identified with belonging to the middle class.

The foregoing discussion aims not only to give an overview of socioeconomic transformations in Bolivia over the past decade, but also how the government has sought to portray inequality reduction figures. Indeed, during the campaign leading up to Evo Morales' re-election in 2014, the government listed (among its key accomplishments since coming into office in 2005), having taken a large percentage of people out of poverty, not into the middle-income segment, but into the "middle class" (Ministerio de Comunicación 2014). Notwithstanding a Marxian ideological heritage (more closely aligned with occupation-based class categories tied into social-conflict dynamics), income-based stratification rapidly became part of the governmental discourse around inequality reduction. The middle class gained a newfound protagonism, yet its contours and composition were only beginning to be explored.

Of course, the middle-class category can mean very different things, depending on where it comes from. A recent publication estimated 150-200 definitions, based on two literature reviews (Adamovsky, Visacovsky, and Vargas 2015). A single volume on economic perspectives on the middle class in Latin America makes use of 6 definitions over 9 chapters (Dayton-Johnson 2015). Beyond the polysemy of this category, it is clearly a site of theoretical and technical debate.

Middle classes in Latin America and Bolivia

In the Latin American context, debates surrounding these groups go back several decades. Through an examination of political trends in the first half of the 20th Century, Johnson's seminal book on Political Change in Latin America (1958) argued that "middle groups" across the region had begun to change their political position, shifting from being a clientele of old elites, to forming new alliances with "working elements", altering the balance of power and bringing about a potential for progressive politics. While scholars such as Pike (1963) and Wagley (1964) fundamentally questioned Johnson's premises, a debate had been installed around middle classes and their political role in the region. Like kingmakers, through their expansion they were seen to be able to sway the balance between the polarised interests that confronted elites and working classes. Samuel P. Huntington (1968) went as far as seeing in them a revolutionary potential, but predicted that as they age, they also become more conservative.

Bolivia's rapidly-expanding middle-income segment is largely concentrated in metropolitan areas (PNUD 2016), and includes a growing proportion of formerly impoverished (or otherwise

excluded) ethnic groups, notably the urban Aymara. Predominant approaches to social ascent in Bolivia from the late 20th Century onwards have focused on cultural and identity dynamics, starting with the fundamental question of what to even call middling segments with mixed status markers. In particular, there is a longstanding debate regarding how best to denote prosperous urban Aymara and mestizos of Aymara extraction. Referring to this group under the broad brush of "cholo bourgeoisie" (Toranzo 1991), early contributions to this debate portrayed them (often pejoratively) as a distinct, and at times adversarial, segment to traditional middle classes.

Other labels have since appeared such as "parallel middle class" (Himpele 2003, 2008) "Aymara bourgeoisie" (Miranda 2008), and even "non-bourgeois middle class" (Gran Poder priest, cited by Tassi in Soruco, 2012), with the emphasis variously placed between ethnic origin and primary economic activity. More recent labels have included "proto-bourgeoisie" (Salazar, Rodríguez and Evi Sulcata, 2012), "moneyed plebeian [popular] class" (Tassi et al., 2012). Like Portes and Hoffman before her (2003), Rea Campos (2016) tends towards a definition which characterises these subjects as part of a "petite bourgeoisie commercial middle class", which she also calls "new commercial Aymara petite bourgeoisie".

What is striking about the direction of this debate around labels, is the ever-increasing complexity of concepts used to denote these groups. Many of these names include components relating to occupational activity, and position within a perceived social structure, emphasising the attempts at creating a multi-dimensional class concept which, importantly, includes a strong ethnic component. Intersectionalities which cut through Bolivian society are palpable in the permutations of social categories which need to be remixed to account for the country's recent social transformations.

Other approaches have focused on these actors' capacity for ethnic reaffirmation in an urban setting (Guaygua 2003), and the limited degree of assimilation of these groups within traditional class structures, notwithstanding their economic integration. Tassi, for example, has argued that despite this group's growing prosperity and visibility, "this success has not been accompanied by social refinement and an adjustment to customs and practices of the traditional middle class" (cited in Soruco 2012). Regarding these (at times paradoxical) mixed status markers, a recent article related to the gendered dimensions of urban real-estate transformations in La Paz points out how "a striking feature of these patterns is that the image of the person who has accumulated enough wealth to displace people, is that of an indigenous woman" (Maclean 2018, 2). Other approaches have sought to characterise Bolivia's "new middle class" in settings beyond metropolitan centres, including secondary cities (Shakow 2014) and an emerging "peasant middle class", made up of affluent Aymara coca growers who are able to forge an identity "without becoming part of the mestizo middle class" (Pellegrini Calderón 2016, 21).

While academics have long been debating the ascent and fragmentation of middling classes in Bolivia, the topic has only recently regained centrality in national politics, a discursive arena to which I will now turn.

Bolivian middle classes take to the streets

Over the course of three months, from the end of November 2017 to February 2018, a series of political events and debates within the public sphere continued to shape contemporary understandings around social class in Bolivia. On the 28th of November 2017, the Constitutional Tribunal (TCP) issued a ruling allowing Evo Morales to seek indefinite re-election, despite losing a referendum on this point by a narrow margin in 2016. A variety of

social actors poured into the streets in protest in the days that followed this ruling. During subsequent weeks, medical doctors from across the country entered the foreground in protest against a substantial reform to the Penal Code. Many of them were upset at what they perceived to be a draconian treatment of their profession through increased penalties for medical malpractice. After a series of confrontations with the police and failed negotiation attempts, the government took a U-turn and agreed to abrogate the proposed reform to the Penal Code on the 21st of January 2018, ending the 47-day strike. Beyond the dispute between doctors and the government, the wide popular support which mounted in the favour of doctors arguably served as a vehicle for the mobilisation of the discontent with the government over the TCP ruling.

On the 43rd day of the protests, vice-president Álvaro García Linera provocatively stated that these mobilisations amounted to a "rabble [asonada] of a decadent middle class". Opposition leaders and analysts were quick to take up the challenge, partially accepting the class category in which the social protests were portrayed, but rejecting the pejorative connotations. On the 7th of January 2018, former president Carlos Mesa (a prominent opposition leader highly critical of the government) published a piece in which he portrayed the middle class as "an idealised space" towards which all societies should head (Mesa 2018). As a riposte to the traditional class prejudice of middle sectors being conservative, reluctant to change, and generally incapable of mobilisation, Mesa saw renewed political potential in this group, arguably overlooking its heterogeneous –and largely underexplored– composition. Characterising the middle class as the "main depositary" of democratic values, he went on to call them the "arbiters" of the electoral destiny of political parties and candidates alike. In turn, vice-president García Linera outlined his position in a newspaper article published on the 17th of January (2018). In this piece, he remarked upon what he perceived to be a dual composition of this large grouping, made up by over half of the country's population, whose main cleavage lay between "decadent" traditional groups, and "new" groups.

Social ascent, between continuity and change

My own perspective on the trajectory of the so-called "middle-class" segment is the following: largely marginalised social sectors at the turn of the millennium converged around a series of demands aimed at deep political change, chiefly around anti-neoliberal and anti-imperialist slogans, and a redefinition of socioeconomic inclusion. Many of these expectations have largely been met, with the arrival of the MAS government, the enactment of the new Constitution in 2009, and widespread socio-economic transformations over the past decade. As the social landscape has become transformed, I believe that many of the new demands generated by ascendant segments are being sought in the market, rather than in the state.

Significant media and academic attention has been directed towards traditionally "conspicuous" forms of consumption, with cholets[3] and prestes[4] as emblematic of 'plebeian' [popular] self-affirmation. If the social segments which have experienced an increase in prosperity during the past 13 years are chiefly concerned with maintaining or increasing their capacity for material consumption, this paints a rather simplistic picture of their political demands. Conceived in this way, their political choices cannot be seen in terms translatable into ideological positions, but as a function of pragmatic concerns surrounding their economic stability. Should these groups merely aim to continue in this

3 Exuberant neo-Andean architecture edifices which typically fulfil residential and commercial functions. The word is a portmanteau of cholo (an often-pejorative term for urban dwellers with an ethnic background), and chalet (which refers to the houses atop these multi-story buildings).
4 Large celebration sponsored by an affluent individual, family or fraternity in the community, often celebrated within a cholet (see above).

trajectory, a continuation of prudent macroeconomic management, sustained economic growth, redistributive policies, and expansion of housing and consumption credit would viably yield a vote of continuity rather than change. Yet such a reading would overlook less visible consumption tendencies which are more indicative of tectonic shifts in status and identity.

Public services are an arena through which the state comes into most intimate contact with citizens. Trends surrounding health and education consumption can be seen as important indicators of a family's trajectory of mobility within Bolivia's changing social landscape. Shifts towards private schooling and healthcare provision signal a movement not only in status, but in disposable income available for these types of expenditure. Symbolic boundaries between social groups have traditionally been sought through choice of private schools, insofar as they mark forms of distinction (see Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz 1996), and offer access to elite social networks. To this extent that this is true in the Bolivian context, private education is central to the basket of goods which has traditionally enabled social differentiation. Private healthcare, in contrast, rather than signalling a "conspicuous" form of consumption, will generally involve opting out of state-provided services in search of a higher quality of service. A recent study (CIS 2018) has monitored consumption trends over a 10-year period, revealing increases in expenditure towards private services across all socioeconomic segments, with increases markedly more pronounced among those in lower strata.

Should these trends continue to deepen, then the type of social mobility that will be most politically relevant for the upcoming elections of 2019, will not necessarily become apparent by observing patterns of material conspicuous consumption, but through a gradual breaking away of the "new middle income" constituency from state-provided services. This tendency is supported by observations such as there being more private security guards than state police in certain parts of Central America, or Mexican "lower middle classes" having a tendency to opt for private university education (Lopez-Calva 2014). The relevance of these moves is that they alter the social contract, understood as "the combination of implicit and explicit arrangements that determine what each group contributes to and receives from the state" (World Bank 2012, 11). A reduction in use of public services decreases the incentives held by these groups to generate collective demands geared towards progressive notions of the common good.

Bolivia continuing along this familiar path of socioeconomic development would be a further confirmation of Huntington's prediction that middle classes become more conservative as they increase in size (1968, 77). Recent data from the World Values Survey in Bolivia (Moreno, Villanueva, and Schwarz 2018) shows that on an international level, Bolivian society today is comparatively conservative regarding the relation between citizens and the State. For example, most Bolivians expect incentives that promote enterprise and individual effort (presumably through a reduction in state intervention in these spheres), and tend to believe economic success is a mark of individual achievement and hard work rather than opportunity. These tendencies are at times strangely combined with forms of nationalism with regards to state ownership over natural resources, or high degrees of associationism, despite extraordinarily low levels of interpersonal trust (54-67).

The upshot of the previous discussion is that, through a State-centred redistributive socioeconomic agenda, the Bolivian government may inadvertently have brought about the rise of a constituency (if not decisively a class) of voters who may turn against them in 2019. In being lifted out of income poverty, the relation of these segments to the state apparatus undergoes a fundamental shift, along with their demands. At the same time, the

government has not substantially updated its ideological discourse, and continues to espouse anti-imperialist or anti-neoliberal slogans, a rhetorical strategy decisive in the political juncture of 2005, but which has since diminished in its saliency and capacity for attracting political support.

Alongside substantial MAS political rallies, the 21st of February 2018 (second anniversary of the 2016 referendum) saw large opposition-led protests across the country's main cities. It is hard to establish with certainty, exactly which segments of society poured into the streets, at least in terms of their class identity and trajectories of social mobility. Yet those who took part did so in surprising and creative ways, across districts more commonly associated with the upper echelons of Bolivian society, such as Equipetrol in Santa Cruz and Calacoto in La Paz. From women saluting the sun on yoga mats blocking a roundabout, to someone in a Chewbacca costume (the towering hirsute character from Star Wars) blocking a small street, or a neat line of empty wine bottles blocking another: the iconography and performance of the protests did provide some clues. These protests suggested an expansion not just of the traditional "repertoires of contention" (Tilly 2006), but of the social backgrounds of citizens associated with mass street protests. There may be some truth in the idea that these mobilisations were in large part led by the "traditional middle class", but it was hard to understand where the supposedly "new" middle classes were on the 21st of February. If some joined in, they blended in seamlessly. Others may have joined the MAS rallies, or stayed at home. It may be more insightful to ask who didn't take to the streets on the 21st of February, to understand the constituency likely to define the country's political future at the upcoming elections of 2019.

Barthes once wrote that "the taxonomic option implies an ideological one. There is always a stake in where things are placed: tell me how you classify and I'll tell you who you are (1988, 47). Voices from across the political spectrum affirm the expansion of a "middle class", but generally overlook the question of whether a middle-income segment can be equated with a coherent class category, at least in a sociological sense. The opposition would generally aim to conceive it as a univocal constituency, bestowed with virtues reminiscent of the Aristotelian Golden Mean, according to which the good is to be found in moderation, around the midpoint in between two vices (excessive wealth or poverty). On its part, the MAS government's natural position regarding the middle classes has historically been adversarial, but due to the growing size of the middle-income segment, there is a shift towards a dichotomic conception of "traditional" and "new" sub-categories. Faced with expansion of the latter, the traditional position has begun to change, in the form of a renewed interest in understanding middle-class demands (Morales Ayma 2018a). At the same time, there is a marked dismissal by the government of the "traditional" segment, perceived to be a bastion of conservativism.

Recent debates surrounding the changing contours of the middle class have essentially involved imbuing them with a set of political tendencies. Indeed, the practice of grouping large brackets of the population into social categories is a standard process in the development of political strategy and discourse. Conceiving the middle class (in the singular or the plural) as a constituency is therefore both a heuristic and a rhetorical device. It is not reached through technical means alone, but rather, it involves a significant amount of theorisation, ideological positioning, inference and, most importantly, imagination.

It is in this light that the contests surrounding the characterisation of the changing middle class, become above all contests in imagining them as constituencies, and furthermore projecting them as coherent groups able to come together within a class identity around shared interests. While the recent protests and political

events have also shifted public understandings of Bolivia's social landscape, the extent to which recent debates between politicians, journalists and intellectuals have influenced these understandings is likely marginal. Not much seems to be at stake in the realm of class discourse beyond gaining the upper hand in debates around the best way to neatly describe the country's changing social composition.

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CHAPTER 9

The “steering wheel class” during the process of political change in Bolivia (2006-2014)

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Evo Morales took office in January 2006 during the so-called “shift to the left in Latin America” (Beasley-Murray et. al, 2010). Ever since then, Bolivia has been characterised by two crosswise aspects. The first involved the recovery of some state capacities to break hardcore neoliberalism (Ramírez Gallegos, 2012), with the state shifting towards a national project strengthening domestic sources of production, controlling markets and boosting public revenues to redistribute these among the most underprivileged sectors. The Morales administration, in this respect, sought broader state autonomy from global capital and national interest groups committed to the preservation of the neoliberal project. Secondly, the government tried to restructure the system of political representation in order to contain a historically mobilised and conflictive civil society. Evo Morales was elected president amid a crisis of the partisan mediations and a strengthening of grassroot organisations (given their political proposals and capacity to incite social conflict), in particular trade unions and indigenous-peasant organisations.

One such organisation was the Confederación Nacional de Choferes de Bolivia (CNCB) (National Confederation of Bolivian Drivers --), a long-established trade union in a politically strategic sector, with a significant power of veto given its ability to paralyse Bolivia’s economy. This union forged a political alliance with the government of President Evo Morales in order to secure resources and political influence. For the government, the political incorporation of this social actor was key to assure governability and expand its social network for political support.

This paper details some of the empirical and comparative research outcomes resulting from studies undertaken over the last three years to primarily determine the political relationship between so-called post-neoliberal governments (focusing on Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia) and one particular social actor: the land transport trade-unions (bus and truck drivers ´organisations). Here we will focus on the Bolivian case between 2006-2014[1].

The paper is organised in two parts. We begin describing some features of the transport sector, specially its main trade union, the CNCB, as well as the most important social demands and conflicts that arose involving the transport union leaders during Morales’ Government. We then move to develop what we call "logics of political representation" (LPR) given the way trade unions connected with the national government and the State. By LPR we understand a political practice through which someone is recognised (via election or appointment) as capable of acting on behalf of or representing others in order to satisfy their interests or social demands. This practice does not dissolve the distance between representatives and represented. Indeed, the gap between them is the condition for the existence of the practice of representation, but given this insurmountable gap, representation will for ever remain a distorted exercise. This is because it is impossible to literally translate the aspirations of the represented. In order to represent, the representative should divest from any original and particular interests. The represented cannot at the same time be attended unless they delegate part of their capacity of agency to an "other" who can operate as spokesperson and get the group recognized as such. This notion of political representation, that we support, comprises but goes further the classic political representation whose main arena is political parties[2]. This does not mean ignoring the significant importance of political parties in contemporary politics, but rather to broadly consider the ways in which political representation is configured.

1 We applied two qualitative techniques: interviews and secondary sources. We conducted a total of 30 in depth-interviews with trade unions leaders and public officials in areas related to transportation; and we made a systematic revision of three Bolivian national newspapers (La Razón, El Diario y Página 7) to collect information about the main social conflicts during the period under study.

2 Authors like Urbinati (2006), Rehfeld (2006), Arditi (2015) make reference to this form of political representation compared to the standard perspective of political representation based on the primacy of political parties and elections.

In our case study, we have identified mainly two LPRs through which the CNCB and the national government interacted: a corporatist LPR and a parliamentary LPR. These forms of representation activate tensions inherited in any political representation dynamic: the representatives will seek to defend sectorial interests but also stand up for broader interests in a way that their practice is inscribed in the political discourse of the MAS, the party embracing them. Therefore, although political representation reduces complexity by regulating interests inside the political system as well as anticipating expectations of what is politically possible, its incorporation entails strategic difficulties for social actors.

The "Confederación Nacional de Choferes de Bolivia"

Following Gray Molina (2010), the Bolivian economy can be described as structured by three gears: first, the most dynamic sector is hydrocarbons and mining; then the export sector enjoying continuous growth since the eighties; and third, the massive transport sector that employs a large section of the urban population.

The current public transport system (both passenger and freight) was inherited from the previous decades of neoliberal structural adjustment. Decree 21060 of 29 August 1985 liberalized all markets. Transport was completely deregulated. Small land transport companies flourished and began to function with high levels of outsourcing and informalization of the workforce. Railways stopped being the most important modality of transport, giving way to land and motor transport as one of the most important sectors. These new companies chose their own routes and set their own fare ticket prices. This resulted in an overlap of routes, disorganisation of the public transport, an increase in road accidents (due to the speed as drivers rushed to overtake others and "upload" more passengers, in what became known as a "penny war") (Alemán Vargas, 2009; Imaña Romero, 2006). Also, mass migration during the implementation of the neoliberal model, following the "relocalisation" (forced redundancy of some 24,000 miners) downsizing of the state mining company COMIBOL and the privatization of several mines, led to the growth of the urban public transport sector. A large number of migrants found a real source of employment in the transport sector as it did not require much specialisation. This happened within a legal vacuum. By 2003 transportation was the only strategic sector within the Sectorial Regulatory System (Sirese), created in 1994, that didn't have its own regulations, while the telecommunications, electricity and hydrocarbons sectors had their own norms.). This meant every transport company operated according to its own particular rules, competing fiercely with each other. The State did not intervene in such disputes, which ended up affecting the population at large through arbitrary transport ticket price increases, permanent blockades, and other actions.).

This situation started to change when Evo became President, as the government tried to actively regulate the transport sector, with mixed results. The CNCB was one of the organisations that most resisted state intervention. The government had to address the "strategic selectivities" of the State (Jessop, 2016), including structural difficulties like the lack of public transport companies and poor quality of road infrastructure, and also attend political factors, like the power of veto enjoyed by several different trade union transport leaders permanently reluctant to any change likely to damage their position or interests.

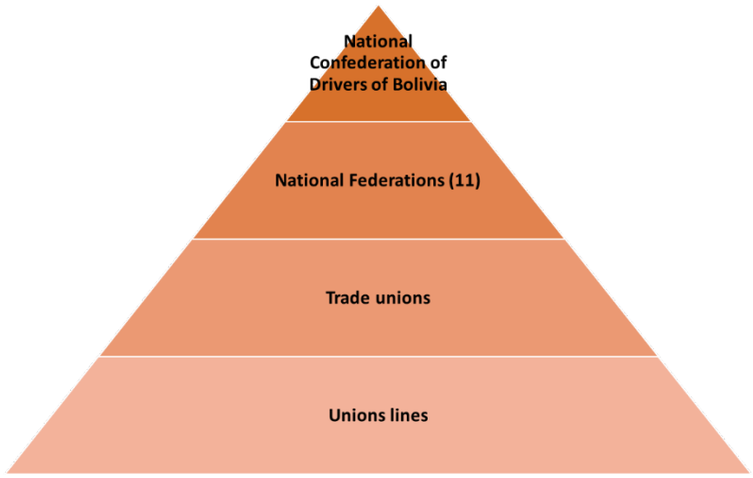
We have chosen to focus on the CNCB as it is the oldest organisation (formed in 1936) and represents the largest number of people in the transport sector (with around 250,000 people reportedly represented by this confederation). It is the most representative organization for the transport sector nationally and it has a hierarchical structure and forms of operation. The CNCB groups all modes of transport (transfer of passengers by taxis,

buses, minibuses, “trufis” and freight transport) and all political-administrative levels (local, provincial, interprovincial and national) (see picture N°1). It is an organization of ambiguous representation given the varied socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds of its members. This is because CNCB formally represents workers and waged labourers who basically work as drivers, but in practice this confederation promotes the interests of the owner-drivers and small entrepreneurs (owners of cooperatives that informally hire drivers and who are union leaders at the same time). This means the confederation acts as a union but, from time to time, it also serves as a chamber.

In this sense, transport workers in Bolivia have fallen behind in securing labour rights (they do not enjoy holidays, an 8-hour workday and social security benefits). By the year 2005, the informality of the sector accounted for approximately 75%[3]. Indeed, during the Morales government the demand for retirement was a constant claim. In this context, one of the significant on-going conflicts relates to the tax burden the government imposed on this sector. Increasing taxes would reduce the levels of informality and improve the living and working ´conditions of workers.

3 This trend is not independent of the level of the general informality in the Bolivian economy that remains high: with a 60% rate of informality reported in 2008, 63.4% in 2009, and 65%, in 2010 with commerce and transport being the largest sectors employing informal workers.

Picture N°1. Organisational structure of the transport unionism



Transport trade unions always demonstrated a great capacity to mobilize and exert pressure to safeguard their claims and interests. Throughout the neoliberal years (from dictatorship in the 1970s to the arrival of Evo Morales), the CNCB had a collaborationist position with political power (Bretón et al, 1999). Indeed, in 1965 it was expelled from the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), Bolivian Workers' Confederation, for lending support to dictatorial governments. The transporters always allied pragmatically with governments in exchange for sectorial benefits. Increases in ticket fares, subsidies for gasoline, and the removal of customs tariffs on imported goods were some of the on-going demands of transporters. If these demands were not satisfied, the carriers went on strike or staged blockades. These demands showed their anti-popular withdrawal especially when these claims affected citizens in general. Governments, concerned about their stability, usually ended up meeting such claims.

This would in fact be one of the legacies of the MNR period inherited by the Morales government in order to rebuild the State, again by prioritising the general interest over particular pressure group interests. When Evo Morales took office, the transporters were not part of the grass-root support bases of the “process of political change”. Afterwards, there would be a political incorporation in an

attempt to break neoliberal forms of relationship between trade unions and governments.

Logics of political representation as conflicting ways of political incorporation

I have identified two logics of political representation the CNCB implemented to safeguard their interests and identities: a corporatist LPR and a parliamentary LPR. The Corporatist LPR addressed the political representation of groups recognized by the State to act from within as a “esprit de corps” or shared spirit of comradeship. These groups secured representation through their leaders who directly participated in state institutions. Public authorities recognized and appointed those leaders to state positions (and in some cases were also designated by the rank-and-file members of organisations). This participation developed via two aspects: a) the holding public positions, such as ministries, commissions, state agencies, etc. and/or b) through participation in the drafting and implementation of public policy/legislation or the influence on public decisions[4]. In our case study, this LPR developed systematically, especially due to the second aspect. Parliamentary LPR involved a political practice by getting the leaders of social organisations to also operate within the parliamentary arena by becoming members of congress. The difference is that these Congressmen would represent their rank-and-file union membership–the workers- instead of the grass root membership of the political party supporting their candidacy. It is assumed that legislative politics is another way for trade unions leaders to reinforce their influence over the political system.

In Bolivia, the corporatist LPR penetrated political dynamics starting from the 1952 Revolution, specially through the MNR – COB “cogobierno” or co-government mechanism that faded over time. This legal mechanism consisted in direct participation of the COB organisations inside the State (albeit as a minority): they had the right to appoint four labour ministers and veto mining policy. This practice led to a corporatist type of society through which civil society organisations, specially workers and trade unions, had direct participation in the exercise of political power. Evo Morales introduced this mechanism at the start of his administration as a means of containing social organisations and also granting them representation through direct participation with the potential to make public policy decisions.

In the case of the transport union under consideration, its leaders tried to use this mechanism as well as the so-called “cuoteo”, that is, the informal practice of suggesting to government that social leaders occupy positions to secure vital institutional representation. Surprisingly, they did not obtain the same level of success achieved by other organisations, like the cooperative miners. Despite persistent pressure by leaders to apply for executive positions in ministries and secretariats, President Evo Morales refused to yield. Those positions were taken up by civil engineers with a technical profile and not linked to trade unions.

Indeed, in the first conflict involving interdepartmental carriers over their refusal to pay taxes, Evo said: "the fleet employers are angry because I rejected their request regarding institutional charges for their sector” (La Razón, May 8, 2006). Several newspapers reported that the carriers were upset over the lack of prior consultation with the sector. One of the union leaders said: "we must have a quota in that area; unless the government creates an entity within the National Secretariat of Roads which is under our authority, we are going to stage a series of road blockades” (Opinion, February 27, 2006). Two former union leaders whom we interviewed confirmed this: "it was always like that, two or three important positions at least corresponded to our trade union", one

4 This definition combines elements of different approaches about corporativism, such as Schmitter, Streeck and Lehmbruch (1982); Schmitter (1998) y O´Donnell (1998).

of them told us. Given that the corporatist logic was a learned practice, that formed part of the identity of these types of trade unions, union leaders were completely bewildered at the position adopted by Morales. It was vital for Morales to preserve these positions disconnected from the influence of the trade unions. There were, however, two identified exceptions to this: the maximum authority of the Motor Vehicle Registry service and one executive office within the Ministry of Public Works, taken by transport unionists of the CNCB at the end of 2014. This drew resistance from “Free Transport Association” –another transport trade union at odds with the CNCB- whose leaders demanded the government appoint a "neutral" person who curried nor interest favouring any particular trade union. Similarly, some executive positions at departmental and municipal levels were occupied by transport union leaders, especially those in charge of authorising public transport lines: "It is vital that we hold debates in all these spaces, in the Executive and the Legislative Branches, in order to be heard”, a union leader told us.

If we move to the second aspect of the corporative LPR, a greater dynamism is observed. Two important legislative processes were directly influenced by the CNCB: the constitutional reform (August 2006-December 2007) and the debate and approval of the “General Transport Law” (LGT) (N°165) during 2010-2011. During the period of the Constituent Assembly, transporters, like other social actors, convened to discuss certain articles of the future Constitution (Schavelzon, 2012). The government tried to incorporate transport as a "state public sector". But, carriers refused to be included in this category, because by remaining a private sector they could continue to call their workers out on strike (the constitution prohibits strategic sector public workers from striking). This was one of the constitutional aspects most strongly resisted by all transport unions. Despite their differences, they acted as an articulated group: “At the time I was the union leader of the Federation in La Paz. All transport trade unions formed a solid block and we mobilised to Sucre (where the constitutional process was underway). We were about 5,000 people and we managed to amend that constitutional clause”, we were told by a leader who went on to become a Member of Parliament for the MAS.

Regarding the General Transport Law enacted in August 2011, this was drafted with strong influence from the transport unions, to become Bolivia’s first transport law. A Member of Parliament who belonged to the CNCB drafted the regulation guidelines. Half of the 37 people who participated in the discussion panel on land transport came from the CNCB. The remainder belonged to the Free Transport Association and to different business transport chambers. Although the participation of neighbourhood associations (“Juntas Vecinales”) was significant, they played a diminished role in drafting the regulations. They rejected the way the Law was approved as well as its content because they said it did not consider citizenship rights, such as the right to enjoy quality public transport. The Law also approved the creation of a Sectorial Coordination Council with national level representatives as well as delegates from different transportation modalities designated by ministerial resolution, all with a right to speak and vote.

Concerning the parliamentary LPR, the relationship between the transport trade unions and the government became stronger after 2010. This type of LPR was not unprecedented for both carriers and the MAS government. From the beginning of the Morales’s government, Parliament became a fundamental arena where different excluded social sectors found recognition and expression via direct participation. From that moment on, excluded popular social groups and certain workers' organisations used the legislative field to develop their own agendas and connect with the MAS political project (Zegada and Komadina, 2014). Transport union leaders always claimed to participate in the legislative lists of

the MAS starting the year 2006 (see Table N°1). It was President Morales who “invited” these leaders to participate in the legislative lists, in some cases partly due to pressure from labour leaders to secure greater opportunities for participation. Although the percentage of Members of Parliament from the transport sector is relatively low compared to other sectors, the increase of five transport representatives during the period 2010-2014 to eight representatives for the period 2015-2019 is significant[5]. According to Zegada and Komadina (2014), the mining cooperatives and transporters were the ones that most participated in Parliament and, had the greatest influence on legislative decisions.

Table N°1. Activity performed before being elected member of Parliament/Assembly (Bolivia, 1993-2014)

Activity/Year	1993-1997	1997-2002	2002-2006	2006-2010	2010-2014
Liberal Professions	48, 7%	37,80%	28,10%	25%	17,70%
Workers, craftsmen and primary sector	3,90%	11,20%	11,20%	18,60%	26,30%
Transport	**0**	**2,00%**	**1,20%**	**4,20%**	**5,20%**
Companies/private sector	24%	26,50%	27,30%	27,40%	19%

Elaboration: Author
Source: Observatorio de Elites Políticas en América Latina, Instituto de Iberoamérica.

This growing participation of the transport sector can be explained due to the worsening of the link between trade unions and government during Morales’ second presidential term. A range of measures adopted by the Morales government damaged this relationship: the so-called "gasolinazo" (increase in fuel prices that had to be reversed) of December 2010[6]; the approval of taxes that affected the carriers, the project to build an integrated urban transport cable car system in the city of La Paz that would undermine the monopoly of public transport of these unions, among others. In this sense, the government tried to strengthen the transport leaders’ support by increasing their parliamentary participation.

In addition, it is worth mentioning another feature: the second term of Evo Morales (2010-2014) opened a different cycle of political conflict. Morales won the elections with over 60% of the electoral votes. It was an unquestionable sign of political support but at the same time it represented a challenge. The MAS government stopped articulating with social forces that were part of the political project, like peasant-indigenous social organizations.

The study of the parliamentary LPR is partial if we do not assess the extent to which parliamentary inclusion of transport leaders strengthened or not their influence on public decisions. What have been the effects of this type of political incorporation? Based on the analysis of the testimonies from both the labour leaders and officials, and the analysis of the legislative debates, we can say that although the transport sector linked Members of Parliament who influenced the debate of some regulatory norms, such as the aforementioned Transport Law, their scope for political action was weakened. The testimony of a former transport leader who became a Member of Parliament is eloquent: "It is difficult to be in Parliament because rank-and-file members demand several things and when one arrives at the Assembly, one loses that power one had as a union leader. A leader at the federation level has much more power than a deputy. The President must now attend the new leader, who is the one who has the power to summon rank and file members to mobilise. By playing an active part in this process of

5 At the time of writing this paper, the information about the origins of the totality of the members of National Assembly for the period 2015-2019 was not yet available.
6 On December 26th 2010, the national government issued Decree 748, which increased the price of gasoline by 73% and diesel by 83%. The government tried to equate domestic prices with the prices of neighbouring countries to avoid having to increase public subsidies and prevent fuel leaving the country through contraband (Deheza, 2012). The price rises led to immediate increases in food products and public transportation fares rose 100% despite the fact that the government had only authorized a 30% increase. The CNCB called for a national strike in clear opposition to the national government. After five days, the government had to reverse its decision due to increasing conflict involving popular sectors, like the COB trade union confederation, teachers’ trade unions, neighborhood associations, housewives, etc.

political change, I must respond to this project". Another union leader who became a Member of Parliament complained that the President did not meet him anymore after he became a Member of Parliament.

Nevertheless, if we move to the analysis of the social action of this trade union, we can observe that it still shows great capacity to get involved in conflicts. Some analysts argue that political institutionalisation of collective action causes demobilisation and co-optation, the participation of union leaders in the Legislative Branch did not in turn result in a weakening of its capacity for social mobilisation and for shaping the political agenda. What was affected was the influence of the leaders as Members of Parliament, but not the social pressure exercised by transport workers and union leaders. In effect, the levels of social conflict associated with the transport unions remained high. By January 2014, transporters constituted the second social actor most involved in conflicts, after neighbourhood organisations. By the year 2011 in the context of Transport Law debate, transporters were among the first four social actors to trigger conflicts in the public space, despite having direct representatives in Parliament[7].

Conclusion

To conclude, this brief paper shows two main aspects of the political process in Bolivia during 2006-2014 from a study of the relationship between the government and the main transport trade union. It first of all shows us several breakdowns in the neoliberal cycle. The Morales government sought margins of state autonomy in order to implement a political project to benefit the people. The fact that the President did not accept that trade union leaders hold key public positions (until the year 2014 when we finished this research), like the Vice-Ministry of Transport, is indicative of his need to keep some strategic state areas free from the influence of the transporters'. Added to this, Morales arranged a kind of deal with transport leaders in order to freeze transport ticket prices. Contrary to the neoliberal cycle when transport rates fluctuated according to the political junctures, during Morales terms in office, these rates didn't increase. The State granted trade unions handsome subsidies provided they didn't increase fares or transport rates. To support this pact, the government sought by all means the approval of the transport law to regulate public transport, in order to undermine trade union intentions to increase transport rates.

Secondly, this analysis highlights a serious dilemma for transport leaders in terms of political representation. Representing sectorial interests as well as having to honour the political obligations requirements of the MAS government represented a major difficulty. This tension between particular and general instances is derived from the type of political make-up of the MAS. It combines a vertical and decisionist political style with a horizontal one, derived from the fact that the MAS is a set of social and communitarian associations organised principally as trade unions. The demand for party discipline was clearly observed in the "Gasolinazo" conflict. The confederation's rank-and-files members challenged the leaders who held Parliamentary seats, for their weak stance against that the Gasolinazo government decree raising fuel prices that directly affected the drivers. Although this is not the first time transporters managed to hold Parliamentary seats, three novel issues emerged during post-neoliberal cycle: a) the fact that their political actions were jointly implemented without representing (only) the particularity of each modality of transport (urban transport, freight, etc.), b) the organic incorporation of union leaders to the MAS political project, but not of union rank and file

7 These social conflict figures were taken from the UNIR Bolivia Foundation. http://unirbolivia.org/nuevo/. Date of reference: February, 26th, 2018.

members; and c) the simultaneous presence of the transport sector in Parliament and in Executive Branch positions at departmental and municipal levels (and to a lesser extent, nationally). To sum up, there is no doubt regarding the growing power enjoyed by transporters coupled with the tensions the face within.

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CHAPTER 10

Revolution and Communication

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On 4th February 2018, President Evo Morales addressed his "cocalero" supporters, at his political base, in the Chapare tropics of Cochabamba, and asked them to be ready for what he called a digital war that would take place in social media (El Deber 2018c). This digital war can be considered the new battlefield of ideas as the Morales Government is trying to consolidate and impose its narrative while other actors of the civil society attempt to challenge it.

This is not the first time that a central government is trying to impose its discourse. During the 1952 Revolution the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) Government used state media to influence society while it used different methods to try to control the private press. The military governments that followed also attempted to control the media. The arrival of Evo Morales and his "democratic revolution" have seen a different effort from the government to control the media, directly or indirectly, to impose his view. However, Bolivia's citizens have always had a way to find alternative voices. For example, by using miners' radios or social media the different actors of civil society (farmers, labour unions, professionals, politicians, etc.) have resisted or have tried to develop a different narrative.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and understand the impact of these two revolutions on the media, and how the battle of ideas has evolved and now includes the social media space.

National Revolution

Before the Revolution

In 1933 Armando Arce, a well-known journalist and intellectual, founded El Universal, a cultural newspaper that also covered international and political affairs. The paper was created when Bolivia was immersed in the Chaco War (1932 -1935). Under Arce's leadership and with contributions from Augusto Céspedes and Carlos Montenegro, El Universal was one of the first newspapers to launch vigorous campaigns for social and economic reform, challenging the establishment of the time. According to American Journalist and author Jerry W. Knudson, it was the only Bolivian newspaper which opposed the war. The government closed its publication in 1935 (Knudson 2009, 36-38).

Arce, Montenegro and Céspedes were part of a generation of intellectuals strongly influenced by the nationalist and socialist ideologies that gained ground after the end of the Chaco War. All three were long established journalists and authors. Through their writings, they instigated a social revolution in Bolivia. One year after the closure of El Universal, Arce and Céspedes founded in1936 La Calle or The Street, to combat what they called La Rosca, the mining and landowner elites that managed Bolivia's fate until 1952. The name of the paper "indicated that it was willing to take to the streets to wage war against entrenched privilege" (Knudson 2009, 37).

Journalist and media expert Rafael Archondo explains that the modern press in Bolivia was formed at the beginning of the 20th century. Most newspapers were aligned and identified with the mine or "tin barons" and large landowners. El Diario was founded by Manuel Carrasco and was under shareholders' control of tin baron Simon I. Patiño. In 1917, La Razón initiated its circulation. It was owned by Felix Avelino Aramayo (another tin baron). In 1919, Demetrio Canelas, an intellectual and journalist linked to Bolivia's large landowners, founded La Patria and in 1943 Los Tiempos. In 1929, Última Hora was launched. Another tin baron, Mauricio Hochschild, owned it. Archondo noted that perhaps the most notorious of these papers was La Razón, "its most famous bastion, the flagship of the so-called feudal mining oligarchy" (Archondo 2016).

La Calle was a newspaper setup in 1936 as an alternative to the conservative establishment broadsheets like La Razon, El Diario and Los Tiempos. Following the foundation of the MNR in 1942, the newspaper aligned with the party's political views. It also became one of the most forthright defenders of the nationalist principles upheld by President Gualberto Villarroel (1943-46), who governed with the MNR support. When he was tragically removed from power and hung in front of the presidential palace, the incoming government closed the newspaper. The journalists and editors of La Calle, including Armando Arce, Augusto Céspedes and Carlos Montenegro, became prominent MNR intellectuals who developed a revolutionary nationalist ideology to enable this political pary to seize power via a popular uprising on 9 April 1952, and introduce radical reforms that led to nationalisation of the tin mines, agrarian and education reform, as well as universal suffrage.

Knudson stated that the 1952 Revolution "would not have succeeded if the MNR had not aroused and sustained the social conscience of the thin middle sector through newspapers and literature. As La Nación, official newspaper spokesman of the revolution for twelve years once declared: 'Traditionally, the MNR is a party of journalists. The founding staff was [in 1941] almost totally composed of newspapermen who marked the awakening of the conscience of the Bolivian majorities from that memorable nucleus of revolutionary thought that was La Calle. As the years passed, those men occupied high functions in the government and in diplomacy, but almost always as a consequence of their activity displayed in the press.'" (Knudson 2009, 39)

The 1930s witnessed the emergence of a new media actor, the state radio. In 1929, the Costa brothers launched Radio Nacional, the first broadcaster in Bolivia. However, during the Chaco War, the government realised that it needed an instrument to keep up its citizens' morale. As a private broadcaster Radio Nacional did not fulfil this purpose. In 1932, the Centre of Propaganda and National Defence (CPDN in Spanish) designed a radio project with three objectives: organise a propaganda service for an international audience; spread propaganda at national level (which offered a commercial and cultural service for its local audience); and create links with the indigenous population (Aymara or Quechua) by broadcasting in their own language to educate them. In 1933, Radio Illimani began to broadcast under these principles.

French Historian Daphné L'Angevin notes that the project defined three spaces or "battlefronts": foreign countries, national population and the indigenous population. The fact that the indigenous population was clearly not included in the "interior propaganda" shows the divisions in Bolivia as this segment was excluded from national life (L'Angevine 2009, 8).

It was the first attempt by a Bolivian central government to influence the narrative using radio. The approach towards the indigenous population was paternalistic, and Radio Illimani was the voice that represented a small local elite in La Paz. By 1952, the MNR Government used the state radio to disseminate the principles of its national revolution.

The State and the Press

Just before the 1952 Revolution, the most important newspapers in La Paz were La Razón, El Diario and Última Hora. Each one of them represented the interests of the mining elite that controlled the country. During this period, the main political parties also had their own official papers such as En Marcha (MNR) and Antorcha (Falange Socialista Boliviana, FSB) (Tórres 2011, 149). In March, Presencia was launched. Born as a weekly newspaper, Presencia was supported by the Catholic Church and managed by a group of young intellectuals: Huáscar Cajías, Alberto Bailey and Alfonso Prudencio. This newspaper became one of the most important

media outlets in Bolivia, recognised for its professionalism and impartiality.

The rise to power of the MNR on 9th April 1952 had a deep impact on the media as several newspapers and radio stations were forced to close, sometimes violently. Several journalists lost their jobs or ended up in exile. At the same time, a new generation emerged, press unionism made its entrance, and state media reached a golden age.

Newspapers identified with the old regime were violently attacked. Such was the case of La Razón, owned by the mining mogul Carlos Aramayo. The newspaper's installations and equipment were destroyed, coercing it to close down. Los Tiempos in Cochabamba suffered a similar fate, as it was occupied in 1953 by MNR supporters after a failed coup against the government. Its facilities were seized, although the destruction was less extensive. This newspaper stopped circulating until 1964, when the MNR government fell. Both actions were criticised by international press guilds, such as the Inter American Press Association (IAPA), as violations against freedom of the press. In the case of La Razon, no police protection was provided by the government. Years later, questioned about that lack of official protection, Víctor Paz Estenssoro said: "I refused to shoot the people to protect the property of Aramayo" (Knudson 2009, 42). Rafael Archondo explains that the Revolution of 1952 clearly changed the balance. In fact, "the great miners' media system rushed to its collapsed" (Archondo 2016; my translation).

In its effort to have better control of the media, The MNR Administration created the Press, Information and Culture Undersecretary (SPIC in Spanish). Through it, the government controlled the distribution of supplies for the printed press. The SPIC monitored the circulation and content of the printed press. Any newspaper that was critical of the regime received reduced quantities of paper and ink. Another way to place pressure on these newspapers was to claim that imports of (spare parts of) critical equipment and tools had been delayed. Consequently, local newspapers, such as Tarija's El Antoniano (1896 – 1953), were forced to close because of a lack of supplies (Tórres 2011, 150-151).

The government not only intended to control or eliminate the critical press, but it also strengthened state media. The MNR realised the power of the radio. During an insurrection in August 1949, for example, several clandestine radios controlled by the MNR went on air. Once in power, the MNR strengthened Radio Illimani. Prominent leaders, such as Juan Lechín Oquendo, used the facilities of this radio station to address the nation (Quisbert and Simón 2013, 95).

To reinforce its views the government expanded its presence from state radio to other media outlets. La Nación, a state newspaper under the leadership of Saturnino Rodrigo, was launched on 12th October 1952. According to Archondo, a new generation of journalists aligned with the new revolutionary ideas emerged with the launch of this new newspaper. "Suddenly, a very conservative labour segment transformed into a new intellectual bastion of nationalism" (Archondo 2016; my translation).

"Our purpose was simple. It was to facilitate, through the press, the attainment of the objectives for which we were fighting. In other words, it was an attempt to enlist the help of the press for our revolution," said in 1963 Víctor Paz Estenssoro, during a speech before the National Press Club in Washington (Knudson 2009, 39).

The 1952 Revolution encouraged the organisation of journalists in unions. On 23rd March 1954, the Press Workers Union of La Paz (STPLP in Spanish) was launched, involving members of the "only three circulating newspapers: El Diario, Última Hora and La

Nación.” The APLP (Asociación de Periodistas de La Paz) initially opposed the creation of this press union, but later the guild and the union learned to live together. The former represented owners and media entrepreneurs while the latter served the interests of the workers (Tórres 2011, 153).

By 1963, journalists became less aligned with the MNR Government and radio newscasts were booming. Among them, Radio Altiplano, Nueva América, Fides and Radio Cruz del Sur stood out. Journalists were prepared to fight for freedom of expression, and the opportunity came in 1964 when the administration of Paz Estenssoro, who was controversially re-elected, imposed censorship. Both, members of radio and printed press, rejected the measure, and they stopped working. The protest continued until the deposition of Paz Estenssoro by a coup led by General René Barrientos Ortuño. Bolivia entered a new period characterised by authoritarian military regimes and the resistance of community or miners’ radios, which provided an alternative voice.

Alternative Media: The Miner’s Radio

The origin of community radio in Bolivia, most notably the miners’ radios, can be traced back as far as 1949, or even 1947 if Radio Sucre is included. The station was “founded in the mining districts of Catavi and Siglo XX by high school teachers in Llallagua, the local town close to the two mining centres. Second, came La Voz del Minero (1949)” (Gumucio-Dragon 2005).

Media and communications for development expert, Alfonso Gumucio-Dragon, explains that the miners’ radio network is one of the most outstanding examples of popular and participatory communication in the world. “It is not often that we encounter radio stations that have been conceived, set up, managed, technically run, financed and maintained by the community” (Gumucio-Dragon 2001, 13).

The Revolution of 1952 and the nationalisation of the mines encouraged the miners to continue supporting the creation of community radios as they helped them to express their voices, expand their culture and improve their economic situation. By the end of the 1950s, there was a network of around 30 community radios across the country. With the arrival of the military regimes during the 1960s and 1970s, the miners’ radio network became fundamental to resist authoritarian control.

The ‘Process of Change’

When Evo Morales rose to power, he almost immediately complained about what he called the lack of support from the media. Since then, his government took direct or indirect actions to control the media and impose its narrative. The relationship had been a difficult one, and the arrival of social media has complicated it even more.

Before the Confrontation

Evo Morales and his vice-president Alvaro García Linera were no strangers to the media. As leader of the coca growers in Chapare, Morales often appeared in the press for his protests and marches against the government’s drug policy that focused on coca eradication. García Linera, a former guerrilla fighter, became a public figure after he left prison in 1997 and appeared in different media outlets as an analyst or columnist.

Both political leaders opposed and questioned the governments of the time. Journalist and media expert Raúl Peñaranda argues that although there is no empirical evidence, it is evident that Morales and García Linera received broad coverage from the media, regardless of their leftist and anti-system views. They opposed the

excesses of the previous neo-liberal regimes, a view that regardless of media coverage, would become prominent in Bolivia. There is no doubt that press coverage helped them (Peñaranda 2014, 91).However, when Morales and García Linera competed for the presidency and vice-presidency, amid a polarisation trend in the country, the relationship with the press changed.

Evo vs. Media, polarisation

In a report on the 2005 Bolivian electoral process, Argentinian consultant Carlos Fara cited a study from the Asociacion Latinoamericana para la Comunicación Social, which found a clear trend to discredit Morales and the MAS. The report states that Bolivia's TV channels presented an imbalance in the way such news stories were covered drawing attention to a lack of sources and their one-sidedness, with no verification of facts or contrasting views presented. It notes that opinion pieces and editorials, which appeared throughout most printed media, explicitly rejected Morales and his party (Fara 2005, 136).

Raúl Peñaranda analysed 56 editorial and opinion articles from six national newspapers published before the elections in 2005. He found that 41 of the 56 stories favoured the right-wing candidate Jorge Quiroga (73%) and only 15 (27%) favoured Morales (Peñarana 2014, 94).

The media's negative attitude towards Morales left a deep mark. In his inauguration speech in 2006 Morales complained of being "subject to media terrorism by some journalists and media channels as if we were animals, as if we were savages" (Página 12 2006), describing the press in a subsequent radio interview as the "government's worst enemy" (Molina 2014, 46).

The first four years of the Morales Administration (2006-2010) were characterised by a deep polarisation and social tensions, stemming from clashes between the new MAS Government and the traditional economic and political elites which had concentrated their power in the eastern part of the country – in particular, Santa Cruz. This elite opposed, for example, the new constitution proposed by the Morales Government; demanded more autonomy for the regions they controlled and ultimately promoted a referendum to revoke Morales's mandate (which he won).

The Bolivian media felt the impact of the country's polarisation. In an article published in 2007 on the internet portal Rebelión, Spanish journalists Pascual Serrano (founder of the portal) and Ricardo Bajo (director of the Bolivian edition of Le Monde Diplomatique and columnist in various media in Bolivia) identified several media outlets aligned with what they called the Bolivian right and opposing the Morales Administration. Among them, they mentioned the national newspaper El Deber, owned by the Rivero family – a traditional bastion of the economic elite in Santa Cruz – and El Diario owned by the Carrasco family (a traditional elite family from La Paz). Bajo and Serrano also mention the Television network Unitel, owned by the late Osvaldo Monasterios, a conservative agro-industrial entrepreneur from Santa Cruz (Serrano and Bajo 2007).

Media expert and journalist Fernando Molina explained that a combination of economic needs and political differences between the government and media owners disturbed the independence of several newsrooms, as journalists found it difficult to do their jobs properly. "Journalists cannot comply with their duties because of a lack of resources and they urgently need extra support from the media owners, providing them with an additional tool to influence their decisions" (Molina 2014, 48; my translation). The media also depended on around 200 big advertisers and the central government was just one of them. Local and regional advertisers were important and many of them were aligned with the political opposition. This situation changed the nature of the media, which

was increasingly influenced by political decisions (Molina 2014, 48).

Meanwhile, the Morales Administration strengthened state media to express its views. Molina (2014) explains that the government launched the newspaper Cambio, continued reinforcing the state news agency ABI (Agencia Boliviana de Información) and renamed the state TV channel Bolivia de Televisión. It also changed the name of the state radio network Illimani to Patria Nueva and amplified its coverage through agreements with local and community radios across the country.

A 2009 report by Peñaranda found that between 2006 and 2009 the main news stories focused on the most negative aspects of the political and social conflicts that affected Bolivia during this period without providing proper context or balance. For example, on TV there was a total absence of any explanations of the nature, reach and causes of the conflicts. News stories were limited to showing the conflicts that occurred, the immediate consequences and the opinions of some protagonists, omitting any consideration which would allow for a better understanding of the situation (Peñaranda 2009).

Within the context of polarisation, covering the news became a dangerous business. A report from the National Media Observatory, an initiative of the UNIR Foundation – an organisation dedicated to promoting democracy and the enhancement of journalism in Bolivia –, revealed that in 2010 more than 100 journalists suffered aggression while they covered the news. The main aggressors were social movements, many of them favourable to the government, followed by the police. In the report, the authors mention that hostile acts by police officers ranged from the confiscation of equipment to beatings and arrests (ONADEM 2011).

Hegemony and Control

From 2008, the Morales Government began to consolidate its position by indirectly controlling several private media organisations in Bolivia and by limiting advertising to only those media outlets more favourable to the government. In his book Remote Control, Peñaranda claims that the Morales Government pursued a strategy of acquiring private media through entrepreneurs close to the administration, or in line with its ideology. For example, he mentioned that the TV station ATB and La Razón, both part of the Spanish group Prisa, were acquired by Carlos Gill, a Venezuelan businessman close to the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez (1999-2013), a close Morales ally. TV stations PAT, Full TV and Abya Yala would also become part of this network. Representatives of these media and from the Morales Administration denied these accusations (Peñaranda 2014; Molina 2014).

It is also important to note that by 2010, the Bolivian State became the leading economic actor. Within this context, state advertisement represented one of the main sources of income for Bolivia's media outlets. The Morales Administration, according to its detractors, has been denying state advertisement to those media considered not in line with its views, adding pressure on those organisations as there are few alternatives for income generation. The Morales Government denied the accusations and insisted that it cannot buy advertisement space in all of Bolivia's media outlets since there are thousands of them. However, President Morales said in a tweet published on 4th May 2017 that the media outlets that do not receive state advertisement "are the ones that lie, insult, defame and despise freedom of expression…" (La Razon 2017; El Deber 2017; my translation).

Economic and political pressure on media organisations has had an impact, with several well-known journalists forced to resign or

being sacked. An example is Amalia Pando, a well-known TV presenter and highly critical of the current administration. She quit the national network Erbol in 2015 arguing that she wanted to avoid what she called the government's economic pressure against this organisation regarding the need of receiving state advertisement (Erbol 2015). Some media companies have also been forced to shut down or limit their operations due to a lack of resources. Examples include Catolica TV, a national TV network which in 2018 cancelled its news programmes and fired 23 employees. In an interview with the national newspaper El Deber (2018a), Catolica TV's director, rev. Guillermo Siles said that there are a lot of restrictions from the Government regarding state advertisement and he also lamented the lack of support from the private sector.

Why did the Morales Government try to control the media? Fernando Molina identifies two possible answers. The first one relates to ideology: The government is anti-liberal and does not believe in the liberal principles of the media. It defends constructivism, where all actors can modify society. Journalists can contribute or destroy the model, so they need to be controlled. Finally, there is an ethical and intellectual superiority of collectivism over capitalism. The media are part of the state. Finally, there is the logic of confrontation, and several private media outlets are seen as the enemy.

The second thesis refers to the implosion of the political system and the crisis of the traditional media because of the arrival of the digital media and more direct forms of communication. The political system and the traditional media that was related to it lost their credibility and a new paradigm emerged (Molina 2014, 68-70).

International organisations have also been quick to question press freedom in Bolivia. A 2016 report by United Nations for Education, Science and Communication (UNESCO) found that while the 2009 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press in Bolivia, some legislation approved between 2014 and 2016 jeopardise these same rights (Torrico Villanueva and Villegas Taborga 2016). For example, art. 82 of the Electoral Act regarding the election of judicial authorities, does not allow public debate as it prohibits candidates to express views or opinions to the media and also prohibits media outlets to create spaces for public opinion regarding the candidates. Art. 16 of the law against discrimination and racism imposes economic sanctions or suspension of licence to any media outlet that authorises or publishes racist or discriminatory ideas.

In April 2018, Reporters Without Borders published its 2018 World Press Freedom Index which showed that Bolivia dropped three places, from 107 in 2017 to 110 in 2018, out of 180 countries studied in the report. It noted: "Bolivia's media are advised to refrain from any negative comments about [Morales] or his administration. Under Supreme Decree 181 of 2009, journalists who 'lie,' 'play party politics,' or 'insult' the government may be denied income from state advertising... Journalists who are regarded as troublesome are subject to judicial harassment" (Reporters Without Borders 2018).

Social Media: The Digital Battlefront

Bolivia's Digital Landscape

According to the international social media agency We Are Social, Bolivia has a population of 11.3 million, 70% of the population lives on urban areas, the median age is 24.6 years and literacy reaches 96% of the population.

The agency also revealed that there are 6.5 million active social media users (58% of the total population) and 6.10 million mobile active social media users (55%).

Tipnis, referendum and digital war

The high penetration of social media was noted by the Government, its opposition, the media, and civil society alike, which meant that a new front opened in the battle to control the political narrative in Bolivia.

The indigenous protest in August and September of 2011 against the government's plan to build a highway through the indigenous territory and national park, Isiboro Sécure (Tipnis) gained strength and visibility thanks to Facebook and Twitter. Activists jumped on the opportunities that social media gave them to organise and provide information about this protest. Clashes with the police also went viral. In an October 2013 article, Bolivian researcher and social media specialist, Natalia Chávez Gomes da Silva, identified 1,831 tweets about the Tipnis conflict in August and September 2011, 55% of them were information (broadcasting) and 44% reflect personal opinion (criticism, support, protest, etc.) (Chávez Gomes da Silva, 2013).

Social media also played an important role in Morales' defeat during the 2016 referendum that sought to allow him to bid for a third re-election. An influence-peddling scandal involving a former girlfriend of President Morales, Gabriela Zapata, went viral putting the government on the defensive. News of a deadly fire in El Alto city, days before the vote, linked to efforts to destroy evidence of corruption committed by a former MAS mayor also spread through social media contributing to Morales' referendum defeat. This prompted an angry response from the Morales administration, which accused its opponents of using social media for obscure purposes.

According to the Bolivian Agency of Electronic Government and Technologies of Information and Communication (Agetic) the most popular social media and messenger platforms in Bolivia are Facebook (94% of internet users), Whattsap (91%), YouTube (40%), Twitter (17%), and Instagram (15%) (Agetic 2017). Social Media analyst José Torrez notes that politics is one of the most important topics discussed on these social media platforms. Whether one has an opinion or not it is difficult not knowing about the situation of the country or any political activity on social media. This information does not come from official sources but from groups or citizens that use social media as a space for protest or support (Torrez, personal communication, March 15, 2018; my translation).

A 2016 report by researcher Eliana Quiróz explains that political parties, government authorities and political figures did not initiate the "interest in using the new digital spaces for public and political purposes; it started from civil society." However, journalists began to use it more frequently after the Tipnis conflict, and political opponents became more active after the 2016 referendum (Quiróz 2016).

The use of social media to express opposition against the Morales government became even more evident after the constitutional court ruled, on 28 November 2017, that he could seek a third re-election. This ruling ignored the result of the February 2016 referendum. Opposition to a new criminal code, led by the health sector, was also organized through social media.

The Morales administration has responded angrily to social media, announcing plans to create legislation to control it. On 24 February, a government representative, Leoncio Gutiérrez (the director of the department against racism and all forms of discrimination – which falls under the vice-ministry for "decolonization" – told reporters that his department is working on a proposal to regulate the use of social media. This has yet to materialize and, so far, there is no official legislation in Bolivia regulating the use of social networks.

Following the afore-mentioned protests however the government did implement a new strategy. Addressing his followers in his home turf of the Chapare, on 4th February 2018, President Morales asked them to be ready for a new digital war in Bolivia that will take place in social media. On 31 May, MAS leaders said that 80 youth activists had been trained as “cyber-warriors”. Grover García, the head of the MAS in Cochabamba, mentioned that another 500 people would be trained in the use of social media (Página Siete 2018). Critics of Morales have denounced that this “digital war” is being led by the Directorate of Social Media, created in 2016 with a budget of Bs. 5,000,000 (approx. US$700,000) to be used in 2018. Communications minister López explained in January 2018 to Bolivia’s press that the funds were originally allocated in 2017 but were not used then (El Deber 2018b). MAS leaders insisted that the cyber-warriors were trained as volunteers and that they do not work for the ruling party nor the Morales government.

By 2019, President Evo Morales opened accounts in Facebook and Instagram, to reinforce and complement his activities in his Twitter account, which he opened in 2016. His main political rival in the electoral race, Carlos Mesa, has been active in Twitter since 2011 and in 2018 opened Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts. But the battle of the ideas is taking place not only on the candidates’ platforms. Political leaders, journalists and cyber-activists all expressed their views with various levels of intensity, aiming to influence a large number of digital citizens, especially on Twitter. (Furlong and Cybel, 2019)

Journalist and media expert Rafael Archondo said in a 2017 interview that "the influence of social media will grow steadily. It is a battlefield in which the Government can lose or win, depending on its ability to distribute content successfully.” Today, these words are more relevant than ever.

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Revolutions in Bolivia

Image: Issagahan
Source: Wikipedia

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There is no doubt that Bolivia is currently going through processes of flux, upheaval and profound change on a social, political and economic level. The policies and symbolism of the MAS administration has transformed governance and the political landscape in Bolivia. The economic boom of the early 21st century has brought with it changes in Bolivian social structures that have seen the expansion of new middle classes with increased consumption power. New technologies have opened up spaces for greater communication, not only within Bolivia but across the globe. In this volume we have interrogated whether or not these transformations represent the 'revolutionary' changes that some have claimed them to be. A comparison with the 12 years of revolutionary rule under the MNR has been instructive here in understanding the current processes of change in Bolivia. Revolutions are never absolute, and the processes behind moments that come to be recognised as cardinal points in the history books are as remarkable for their continuities and contradictions as they are for the ruptures that they mark in a country's development and identity.

Many of the papers in this volume have suggested that the processes of change that were promised and hoped for with the inauguration of Evo Morales as President have not been fully realised. The inclusion of indigenous people, and in particular the promised administrative autonomy in a State defined by plurality, has come under particular scrutiny. On a discursive level we have seen that there were potential visions of plurality that could be far more transformative, radical, and inclusive of indigenous people. Moore argued that Filemón Escobar's vision of Pachacuti was far more challenging to the logic underpinning colonial domination than the modernist vision of inclusion that the MAS has promoted. This theoretical critique is reflected in empirically based observations of the way that the policies to achieve plurality and autonomy have fallen short, as argued by Powęska. Matthes' detailed study of claims for autonomy, very few of which have been realised, also explored the inevitable disconnect between rhetoric and reality, but with an emphasis on how new spaces have been created for new discursive and institutional developments that reflect the political desires and practical possibilities of a given historical moment.

The political processes behind these 'revolutionary' moments were discussed by John Crabtree and Anna Krausova. Crabtree focussed in particular on the engagement with popular sectors during both the MNR and MAS periods of rule. Whilst the term 'populism' should always be used with caution, as he emphasised, it is clear that support gathered from protest and patronage was key to the success of both parties. Comparing the different discursive strategies in these two periods underscores the importance of ideas of indigeneity to constructing the hegemony of the MAS, and the ultimately technical and economic factors which curtailed the populist promises of both governments. Krausova focusses on popular protest, which has long been a feature of Bolivian politics, and its crucial role in the MAS rise to power. The MAS, the 'political instrument' of social and political movements, once in power, had to move from 'protest to proposal', and, as Krausova illustrated, there has been a distancing of the government from social movements as the MAS project has adopted a modernisation programme based on extractivism. Stoessel's analysis of transport unions and their relationship with the Bolivian State over the early years of the Morales administration also reflects this dynamic. These chapters demonstrate the importance of understanding both continuity and change, as well as the economic and political landscape in which potentially revolutionary actors are working, in assessing whether or not these transformations constitute revolution.

Chapters also examined the interpretations of grand scale political changes at local scale. Into Goudsmit explored how the

undeniable structural changes associated with both the MAS and MNR rule were experienced in the valley of Toracari. The grand events and changes of both periods have been strategised and interpreted by people in their everyday lives in ways which both show the potential for real change, and the resilience of traditions and hierarchies. Jonathan Alderman's chapter looks at the local level negotiations involved in making the MAS promise of 'indigenous autonomy' a reality. His fine-grained analysis of constitutional and legal mechanisms is accompanied by in depth empirical work which shows how complex local identities, networks and power dynamics shape the real meaning of these legal instruments.

The economic and social changes which Bolivia experienced over both potentially revolutionary periods are perhaps as striking as the political transformations. Evo Morales' rule has coincided with a period of unprecedented economic growth in the country's history, and the worldwide explosion of social media. The rise of the middle class in Bolivia, and how it intersects with racialised hierarchies has attracted particular interest and is potentially an enormously transformative power. Villanueva showed how the consumption patterns and political choices of the middle class, including new modes of protest, are changing the country's political landscape and choices in public policy. The proliferation of technology is related to this rise in consumption power, and Souviron's chapter explored the influence that social media has had on political debate under the Morales administration, with particular reference to freedom of the press.

Whether or not the Morales' administration, and the changes that have accompanied their ascent to power, will come to be defined as 'revolutionary' is a question for history. The year 1952 is engraved in the national consciousness as the country's definitive revolution. It could be argued that the events of that year set in motion the processes of change that have culminated in the current process of change, although the MAS would question this argument as it explicitly criticises the MNR assimilation policies of the indigenous population. A consensus, reflected in this volume, would seem to be emerging that MAS policies have fallen short of the political rhetoric of their ascent to power, as did the MNR revolution. Nevertheless, there is broad agreement that national political structures have been overturned, and that Bolivia, socially and economically as much as politically, has dramatically changed since the years of protest which preceded the MAS electoral victory in 2005. It is important to keep in mind, though, that these transformations have played out differently in different parts of the country. Like the MNR reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, people from the low, middle and the high classes, as well as old and new elites, have been able to take advantage of the changing political circumstances. Both MAS and MNR politics had to confront culturally moulded attitudes to authority and expectations of well-being that have been difficult to change in 12 years of government.

In this current election year of 2019, there is heightened concern about the sustainability of the transformations that have taken place. The questions which dominate Bolivian politics at the moment are no longer framed by the discourses of anti-neoliberalism and decolonisation which characterised the protests of the early 21st Century. The dominant questions currently are the sustainability, both economic and environmental, of Bolivia's modernisation, the influence of China and, crucially, the question of succession, as Evo Morales, contrary to majority and much legal opinion, stands for President again. Experience elsewhere in the region would suggest that the 'pink tide' of radical governments which swept the continent in 2006 are about to be overturned by a populist pull to the right. The test of the MAS revolution will be the extent to which the social, political and

cultural changes which have been achieved, survive these pressures.