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# Coca, Capitalism and Decolonization: State Violence in Bolivia through Coca Policy

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Macalester College

**Coca, Capitalism and Decolonization:  
State Violence in Bolivia through  
Coca Policy**

Margaret Poulos

Honors Thesis

*Advised by Professor David Blaney, Ph.D.*

*Political Science Department*

April 2018



# Abstract

I approach Bolivian coca policy under Evo Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous President, as a site to examine the broader issue of decolonization. My paper argues that the new General Law of Coca, passed in March 2017, is part of a larger systemic pattern of violence towards historically disenfranchised communities in Bolivia, despite Morales' indigenous Aymara identity and pro-coca activism. Drawing on interviews I conducted and a postcolonial theoretical framework, I analyze how although Morales has rhetorically advocated for indigenous communities and decolonizing Bolivia, colonial legacies supplanted in the subjectivity of Bolivians and institutions of its government have persisted. I suggest that it is not possible for any postcolonial state to decolonize if it embraces the forces of global capitalism — the same forces that drove the violence of colonialism. I use international relations theory and social movement theory to aid in the imagining of a path towards decolonization.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The first time I chewed coca I felt very out of place. Awkwardly, I tore the leaves at the center trying to copy what I had seen locals in the street doing. I didn't love the taste, or the way the leaves felt along the back of my mouth. I arrived in Bolivia with the shallow knowledge that coca was a plant, an ingredient in cocaine, and a classified narcotic according to the United States and United Nations. But as my relationship to Bolivia deepened, so did my understanding of the importance of coca. I remember being guided into the vast silver mines of Potosí with a handful of leaves packed into my jaw, and more in my pockets to offer to El Tío, the lord of the underworld. When I had salmonella poisoning, my host family brewed me coca tea to soothe my stomach. In religious ceremonies honoring Pachamama, indigenous Andean priests offer Mother Earth coca leaves. Bolivians have a special, historic relationship to coca, and participating in a custom close to their culture made me feel like a member of their community.

Public outcry in opposition to a new coca law passed in March 2017 inspired my honors thesis. At the time, I was living in Cochabamba and attending classes at the University of San Simon in the School of Social Sciences. Professors, activists, experts, and *cocaleros*, or, coca growers, were coordinating events and meetings in an effort to organize in protest to the law, and I became involved. Another side of coca was making itself known to me — its deeply polarizing, political quality, reflective of Bolivia's five hundred-year struggle against colonial and neoimperial forces. Embarking on two months of field research, I conducted interviews with

the active opposition to Law 906. My research revealed to me an incredible amount of controversy and complexity surrounding coca, so much that it was easy to forget that coca is simply a plant.

Law 906, also known as the General Law of Coca, is an ideal site to examine both Evo Morales' Bolivia and Evo Morales. An examination of the law demonstrates the complexities that come with the initiation of a process of decolonization in a globally interdependent world, where sovereignty is framed almost exclusively within the model of the liberal democratic state. Over the past decade, Bolivia has implemented a project of controlled coca legalization, in keeping with Morales' broader political rhetoric surrounding indigenous pride. Morales' articulated vision for the decriminalization of the coca leaf has been easier said than done; he was immediately met with foreign disapproval, and was faced with the task of appeasing the various factions within the coca sphere, including cocaleros in ancestral regions and those in the Chapare, home to Morales' coca union.

Morales' relationship to coca policy was forever altered when he was elected president, and like any politician, he had to learn how to navigate federal political institutions. As a seasoned coca activist and social movement leader, he was familiar with operating outside of and in opposition to the Bolivian government. *President* Evo Morales, on the other hand, has the responsibility to lawfully uphold the constitution and support the functions of a democracy. Through an analysis of the most recent coca legislation passed with Morales' support, we can also examine the capabilities and tensions between the indigenous and Western worlds defining Bolivian state institutions.



My paper has multiple layers, approaching the wider issue of decolonization using the site of coca policy under Evo Morales. I will begin by providing a detailed history of Bolivia and Evo Morales in order to contextually inform my case. The chapters to follow will describe current coca policy and its implications, based on the field research I conducted while in Bolivia. Next, I will ground my qualitative research in postcolonial theory,<sup>1</sup> and apply it to relevant literature in the areas of indigenous politics, international relations, and social movement theory.

I find in my paper that the General Law of Coca demonstrates a continuation of the historical, colonial disenfranchisement of marginalized communities, but masked by state co-optation of the symbol of the coca leaf. Morales was transformed from coca activist to institutionalized political figure bearing the weight of national, indigenous, and foreign interests; tensions between the three have become more apparent over time, reflective of Morales' attempted commitment to all interests. In the realm of coca, contradictions between rhetoric and actual policy have incited violence between the Bolivian military and cocaleros in ancestral regions. I connect my analysis of coca policy and the interviews I conducted with the opposition to postcolonial theories of subjectivity formation, nationalism and colonial legacies in the state. Morales' promise of decolonization will continue to be burdened by coloniality until Bolivian institutions are reorganized by a non-sovereign multitude, on the basis of indigenous ontologies shared on a national scale.

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<sup>1</sup> In unison with other scholars, I take issue with the term 'postcolonial'. Its inability to capture the modern presence of coloniality by creating a linguistic divide between explicitly 'colonial' periods and those to follow is simplistic and misleading. In my paper I deploy the term with knowledge of its limits.

# Historical Context

(redacted for copyright reasons)

- Grady Hillman, with Guillermo Delgado P.  
“Quechua Fifth Hymn”  
*The Return of the Inca*<sup>2</sup>

Bolivia waves two flags, often side by side. One was adopted in 1826 as its official emblem, and includes red, yellow, and green stripes, to signify the bravery of its army, the abundance of its mineral deposits, and the fertility of its land, respectively (*Britannica*). The second, known as the *wiphala*, is said to have derived from the Inca empire thousands of years ago (*El Pais*). The multicolored flag unites indigenous ethnic groups across the Andean region on the basis of its multidimensional symbolic meanings; its seven colors represent the harmony and strength of the Andes, and it takes on different meaning depending on the social or cultural context of its use. Most relevant to the current goals of Bolivia, it represents a history of indigenous solidarity and their fight for equality. The government authorization of dual flags is a testament to the mosaic of culture, ethnicity and history that is the heritage of Bolivia, but also demonstrates how pre-Columbian and post-colonial society have attempted to coexist in contemporary times.

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<sup>2</sup> Hillman, Grady Lamar, and Guillermo Delgado. *The Return of the Inca : Translations from the Quechua Messianic Tradition*. Place of Herons, 1986, pp. 4.

Twice the size of France, Bolivia is a land of great geographical diversity and a long history of human settlement. The country is composed of three regions characterized by distinct geographies: the Andean region, consisting of the altiplano highlands and the most ancient civilizations, the sub-Andean region, composed of lush mountains and valleys, and *el oriente*, or, eastern lowlands, an expanse of grasslands and rainforests (Morales *Land of Struggle* 7). The Andean region offers an abundance of minerals, agreeable conditions for domesticated animals, and fertile soil for crop production, designating it the primary destination for colonial exploitation (Klein 9). The *yungas*, an Aymara word meaning “warm lands”, is a subregion of the sub-Andean region where coca has been cultivated since Inca times (Morales *Land of Struggle* 10). Throughout my paper I will refer to the *yungas* of La Paz and Vandiola, two locations granted the status of “ancestral coca zones” based on their long history with its cultivation.

Bolivia has been referred to as “a prisoner of geography and a victim of historical adversity” (Morales *A Brief History* vx ), “a constantly changing and vital multi-ethnic society,” (Klein xi) and as bearing “ a melancholic history repeatedly tinged with tragedy” (Morales *Land of Struggle* xi). At the core of these opinions is knowledge of Bolivia's diverse indigenous demographic and its struggle with colonization — the two most significant clues into the current realities Bolivia faces. Though Bolivia’s present hardships originate from the confrontation between its native people and colonizers, its rich plurinational quality can be traced back much farther in history. As early as 10,000 BCE, pre-Incan civilizations began inhabiting the Andean plateau surrounding Lake Titicaca (Morales *A Brief History* 2). As these numerous coastal and highland societies went into decline, a large migration from central Peru to the Bolivian altiplano

resulted in the dominance of the sophisticated Tiwanakan empire by 600 ACE (Morales *A Brief History* 4). Around 1200 ACE, the empire dispersed into various Aymara nations and kingdoms — the direct ancestors of Bolivia’s Aymara natives — despite falling to the Inca invasion nearly 300 years later. The highly structured, complex organization of the Aymara kingdoms, as well as their religious *cosmovisión*, organized around the reverence of Pachamama, was absorbed by the Incas. To this day, Pachamama, also referred to as *Madre Tierra*, or, Mother Earth, is revered as the feminine goddess of fertility and life.

By the time Spanish conquerors arrived in the early 16th century, the Inca empire was suffering divisions and internal feuding, allowing Gonzalo Pizarro’s forces to overpower the Inca army of 40,000 (Morales *Land of Struggle* 35, Morales *A Brief History* 17). Lasting from 1532 to 1809, Spanish Colonial rule would forever change the cultural, economic, and political landscapes of Bolivia. Extractive mining was the focal point of the colonial economy, setting a precedent for Bolivia’s economic future and stimulating the exploitative *encomienda* and *mita* systems, used to secure forced tribute labor (Morales *Land of Struggle* 36). The *encomienda* system granted *adelantados* (Spanish governors) and soldiers possession of land, the ability to employ indigenous labor, and the power to extract surplus through taxes and silver, essentially creating a semi-feudal institution of colonial control (Morales *A Brief History* 31). The Catholic Church and its missionaries also played a substantial role in colonization; it emphatically promoted religious values that coincided with, and often worked alongside, the system of economic and political control systematized by the crown. Numerous indigenous uprisings and revolts followed the dawn of Spanish rule, the most prominent being the “Great Rebellion” of Tupac Amaru, during which an estimated 100,000 perished (Morales *A Brief History* 32).

Unparalleled across the New World, Bolivian indigenous uprisings caused a crisis of colonial power and provoked a wave of revolutionary insurrections throughout South America.

Native rebellions for independence, coupled with the invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte's army in Spain, created the ideal conditions for the consolidation of independence in Bolivia. In 1809, Bolivians proclaimed self-rule with the establishment of a popular citizens' council (*cabildo abierto*) and a governing junta (*junta tuitiva*), making it one of the first colonies to rebel against Spain, yet one of the last to be liberated over a decade later (Morales *Land of Struggle* 38). The initial Post-Independence era, lasting from 1825 to 1880, was rife with corrupt dictators, violence, and economic hardship. Military strongmen referred to as *caudillos* centralized authority regionally, using resources to secure feudal-like control of land and suppress civil society organization (Morales *A Brief History* 58). This period of sustained instability and competition for power set the postcolonial country's first precedent of hybrid military-authoritarianism. The era of Republican rule (1880-1930) arose from the War of the Pacific, during which Bolivia lost its coastal territory to Chile, discrediting the military and leading to the emergence of Bolivia's first major political parties (Morales *Land of Struggle* 45).

The Chaco War (1932-1945) fought with Paraguay over the desolate Gran Chaco territory led to a massive political mobilization that precipitated the onset of the 1952 National Revolution (Morales *A Brief History* 99). Bolivia was in a food shortage crisis, largely owing to the hacienda system, a colonial legacy of the *encomienda* system, making unfair land distribution pervasive. According to Herbert Klein, "the six percent of the landowners who owned one thousand hectares or more of land controlled fully 92 percent of all cultivated land" (210). The majority of citizens were disillusioned by the endemic exclusion, inequality and corruption that

plagued politics, and rallied behind the MNR's (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) calls for radical reform (Morales *A Brief History* 137). On April 9, 1952, this "multiclass, multi-ideological" coalition launched their revolution, with the objectives of land reform, nationalization of mines, and universal suffrage (Morales *A Brief History* 142). Though these goals were met, within a decade later factionalism within the party and military forces of counterrevolution challenged the consolidation of the revolution (Morales *A Brief History* 163). Growing social unrest over the failure of economic development programs led the MNR to rely on military control to maintain peace, producing a military coup that reinstated the power of the military institution.

A military coup in 1971 launched Hugo Banzer Suarez's career as dictator. Banzer modeled his rule after Brazil's military, aligning policies with U.S. interests and the free market while maintaining a "repressive stability" (Morales *A Brief History* 187). By 1977, revolts of the peasantry, miners, and textile workers mounted pressure for democracy, but "a chronic pattern of underdevelopment" and extreme national debt prevented its crystallization (199). In 1985, Víctor Paz Estenssoro began his presidency of authoritarian democracy, aligning with United States policy to eradicate coca (207). Regular labor stoppages pressured thousands of unemployed miners to relocate from the altiplano to the subtropics in an effort to join the coca economy, and as the cultivation of coca increased, Estenssoro responded with the Law on the Regulation of Coca and Controlled Substances (209).

Also known as Law 1008, the decree made cultivation of coca illegal in regions that were not "ancestral" growing zones (areas legally designated as historically coca areas) and surplus areas in transition to growing coca. Coca grown outside of these designated areas was subject to

forced eradication, facilitated by militarization of the drug war and the guidance of U.S. advisors. Escalating violence led to severe human rights abuses perpetrated by militarized forces, as the cocaine crisis continued to worsen. During Banzer's 1997-2001 term as presidency, he solidified the eradication of coca with a "zero coca" policy outlined in his Dignity Plan (223). Violent confrontations between the military and coca growers resulted in soaring popularity for pro-coca presidential candidate Evo Morales, running with the MAS (Movement Toward Socialism) political party (224).

Morales made attractive promises to end U.S.-backed forced eradication, support a pro-indigenous policy, and nationalize privatized businesses, but lost the presidency to former president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who ran on a platform of promarket reforms and a continued, though moderated, eradication of coca (224). During his presidency, Sánchez authorized the U.S Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to relaunch its coca extermination program, agreeing to \$20 million U.S. aid in exchange for 12,500 acres of coca to be eradicated by March 1994 (Sivak 44-45). Cocalers were outraged, and effectively organized protests and marches using their network of unions. The turn of the century witnessed civilian demand for de-privatization of domestic resources, as seen in the Water War (1999-2000) and Gas War (2003), foretelling of future demands to decolonize and reject foreign influence. Postero writes, "Born out of a history of resistance to colonial racism, and developed in collective struggles [...] [indigenous activism crystallized], as poor and Indian Bolivian citizens have engaged with the democratic promises and exclusions of neoliberal multiculturalism" (Postero I). Morales' unique positionality as an indigenous man and cocalero put him at the forefront of social movement organization in Bolivia at the turn of the twenty-first century.

## *Morales' Bolivia*

In December 2005, Evo Morales was elected the first indigenous president of Bolivia in a historic, landslide election. He benefited from a solid consistency of robust horizontal social movements all applying pressure for progressive change, composed of coca growers, labor unions, and indigenous *campesinos*. At the time, he was a renowned coca activist and president of the Six Federations of the Tropic of Cochabamba (Seis Federaciones del Trópico de Cochabamba), a cocalero union located primarily in the Chapare, responsible for producing coca using industrialized means outside of designated ancestral regions.

Morales had been a vocal activist since 1981, after witnessing soldiers beat and burn to death a cocalero accused of cocaine trafficking (Sivak 40-41). Angered by U.S. pressure for violent eradication and aid towards militarization, he refused the \$2,500 offered to the cocaleros in his union for each acre eradicated (Sivak 41). Instead, he continued to campaign for the right to grow coca, became increasingly active in his local coca union, and proclaimed “Long live coca! Death to the Yankees!” (“*Causachun coca! Wañuchun yanquis!*”) (Sivak 42). Between 1984 and 1991 coca unions, or *sindicatos*, commenced a string of protests against forced eradication by organizing mass demonstrations and marches, hunger strikes, roadblocks, and occupation of government buildings, during which cocaleros were regularly beaten and killed (42).



In 1992, Morales embarked on international trips in support of the coca cause (Sivak 52). In one speech, he declared “I am not a drug trafficker. I am a coca grower. I cultivate the coca leaf, which is a natural product. I do not refine [it into] cocaine, and neither cocaine nor drugs have ever been part of the Andean culture” (Beare 53). He presented the coca leaf to the world as a symbol of Bolivian indigenous culture under threat by U.S. neocolonial oppression. Prevailing policies were not reflective of a true democracy; the majority of Bolivians wanted to decriminalize coca, and cocaleros were victims of the elite class who implemented neoliberal reforms to align with foreign interests (Harten 74). Morales’ language of decolonization and reclamation of control over Bolivian land, history and politics is what propelled him into office, though his current coca policies have not been an exact reflection of these ideas.

The idea of “decolonization” was and is the backbone of Morales’ emancipatory political platform. It is the outcome of Bolivia’s struggles with colonialism and imperialism, followed by neoliberal economic measures and military dictatorships, and connotes liberation from existing, oppressive hegemonies. Rosaleen Howard identifies decolonization in the contemporary period as “[involving] overthrowing the exploitative, unjust, and discriminatory order that persisted beyond independence from Spain and into the twentieth century; it evokes a range of related meanings from liberation to emancipation, democracy, and autonomy” (177). To have an indigenous cocalero and union leader rise up from grassroots activist to President of Bolivia inspired hope for change across the country, and to echo Benjamin Dangl, “the fact that Morales could be elected on a socialist, anti-imperialist platform after roughly 20 years of neoliberal economics was historic” (*Victories* 239).

Morales' "post-neoliberal socialist agenda" was principally distinguished through the new constitution adopted in 2009, officially renaming Bolivia the "Plurinational State of Bolivia". Article 9 Section 1 asserts the need "to construct a just and harmonious society, built on decolonization [...] in order to strengthen the Pluri-National identities." The Constitution explicitly states the goal of the Bolivian state to decolonize in all spheres, taking care to specifically include reference to natural resources, land, indigenous sovereignty, and coca; Chapter Seven, titled "Biodiversity, Coca, Protected Areas and Forest Resources," states that:

[t]he State protects the native and ancestral coca as cultural patrimony, as a renewable natural resource of the biodiversity of Bolivia, and as a factor of social unity. In its natural state coca is not a narcotic. The revaluation, production, sale and industrialization of coca shall be governed by law (Art. 384).

Morales codified Bolivia's plurinational identity and the protection of ancestral coca into the Constitution, emphasizing the country's sovereignty over efforts to cultivate the leaf.

One of Morales' first coca policies was the Strategy to Combat Drug Trafficking and the Revaluation of the Coca Leaf, which included the four pillars of "interdiction, integral development, prevention and social control" to expand cultivation in some areas and eradicate in others (Roncken "Dynamics" 13). The government initiated the eradication of *surplus* coca in areas such as the ancestral regions of the Yungas of La Paz and the Yungas of Cochabamba, including the towns of Vandiola, Arepucho, Icuna and Machu Yungas. Military confrontations provoked resistance from local cocaleros, leading to numerous injuries and deaths, which government authorities excluded from official reports about the new eradication policy (Roncken *Dynamics* 13). In August 2006, two cocaleros in the Yungas of Vandiola were killed defending

their coca and President Morales attempted to discredit the murdered coccaleros by labeling them ‘drug traffickers’— a strategy the administration has continued to employ.

In 2006, the Morales government approved the Fight Against Drug Trafficking Strategy and the Reappraisal of the Coca Leaf 2007-2010, establishing the National Council for the Reevaluation, Production, Commercialization and Industrialization of the Coca Leaf (CONCOA), the first institution responsible for implementing the public policy of coca. The new Council carried out a policy simultaneously promoting the cultivation of the coca leaf and vigorous crop reduction (Roncken “Dynamics” 13). The 2011-2015 Strategy to Combat Drug Trafficking and Reduction of Excess Cultivation of the Coca Leaf proposed capping coca production by region: 12,000 hectares in the Yungas region, 7,000 in the Chapare, and 1,000 in La Paz, far exceeding the European Union’s estimate of the 14,705 hectares needed to fulfill domestic, traditional consumption of coca leaves (*US State Department*). UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) officials have reported that 95 percent of coca grown in the Chapare is not used for traditional consumption, though it is unknown where it goes (*US State Department*). The 2011-2015 plan created two legal instruments — The General Law of Coca and the General Law of Controlled Substances — to regulate the production, commercialization and control of coca growing. UNODC estimates that 20,400 hectares of coca were produced in 2014, an 11 percent decrease from the year prior, resulting from Bolivia’s program of eradication (*UNODC*). The Vice Ministry for Social Defense (VMSD) was given the mandate of regulating coca production and fighting narco trafficking, and over 2,000 personnel assigned to the Joint Eradication Task Force were charged with manually eradicating coca plants (*US State Department*).

In October 2013, military authorities apprehended twelve peasants from the municipality of Apolo whose crops were located within a previously legally recognized traditional area. The detainees were presented as “drug traffickers” and directly responsible for “a cowardly ambush ... coldly planned” during which two soldiers were killed (Anand-Shaw). A combination of control and eradication has been a centerpiece of Morales’ coca policy, inciting violent confrontation between cocaleros and government authorities since his first term as President.

Adopted in 2015, Bolivia’s most recent program of coca control is the 2016-2020 Strategy to Combat Drug Trafficking and Reduction of Excess Cultivation of Coca, which designates coca cultivation zones different from those of Law 1008, and mandate a legal cultivation limit per area. The new General Law of Coca passed in March 2017, pursuing similar strategies of controlled cultivation, has provoked controversy and intense dialogue. The law legalizes more hectares in the Chapare than in traditional cultivation areas, and eliminates the legal distinction of “ancestral areas” of coca cultivation (Chp. 3 Art. 16). Upon successful legalization of 22,000 hectares of coca through the new law, President Evo Morales said: “It is time to bury Law 1008, which seeks to bury the coca leaf in Bolivia” (Gilchrist).

Evo Morales adopted a *campesino* identity as part of his political platform, utilizing widely recognized symbols of Bolivian heritage (such as coca) to convey his message of decolonization and indigenous pride, but has done so in a selective manner most befitting his political constituency. The socio-cultural symbolism of Pachamama is often referred to by the Morales administration to forge a national collective indigenous identity. Bolivia, like other Andean countries, has strong cultural ties to the coca leaf, making it a valuable site to analyze public policy and decolonization efforts. Additionally, Morales’ identity as an indigenous man

and pro-coca activist also make his efforts in the area of coca policy an interesting site to evaluate decolonization efforts.

## *Bolivia and Coca*

“The coca leaf has its own history. It therefore deserves its claim and autonomy as a historical subject of the past, present and future, in order to replace the prohibitionist vision that national and international pressure weighs on her.”

*“La hoja de coca tiene su propia historia. Merece por tanto su reivindicación y autonomía como sujeto histórico del pasado, presente y futuro, para lograr que se reemplace la visión prohibicionista que a nivel nacional e internacional pesa sobre ella.”<sup>3</sup>*

To properly grasp *why* coca has been the focal point of decades of controversy, it is essential to understand its deep roots in Bolivia’s identity, culture, and tradition. Bolivia was one of the first countries to cultivate coca, primarily in the Yungas of Vandiola region outside of Cochabamba. The earliest evidence of coca production was discovered on the northern coast of

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<sup>3</sup> COLI “Organic Coca”

Peru in the Huaca Prieta settlement (2500-1800 BC), confirming the presence of coca in pre-Inca times (COLI “Organic Coca”).

Carter and Mamani note that, “nowhere else in the world do we find such a vital substance in social integration like coca in traditional Andean communities” (290). The leaf continues to hold a significant, symbolic role in religious, cultural, and medicinal ceremonies; it is an integral component of many rituals performed by Quechua and Aymara indigenous groups, because according to Inca legend, Mama Coca is the daughter of Pachamama, Mother Earth. Shamans chew and smoke coca leaves to attain higher levels of spiritual understanding and communicate with deities (Stolberg 134). Coca leaves are also widely used in Andean medical practices. As many as 70 different traditional Andean medicines incorporate the use of coca leaves, and 80% of the Andean rural population rely on the medicinal uses of coca for their health (Stolberg 135).

Coca remains a powerful symbol of community solidarity and identification, functioning as a social lubricant, since meetings often involve the chewing of coca among friends (Carter and Mamani 290). It is said that the “handling, sharing, and consumption of coca leaves is governed by clearly defined rules of etiquette,” and that across Andean countries, social greetings are initiated with the symbolic sharing of coca (Allen 157). Coca plays a key role in the Andean cultural concept of reciprocity; in Andean culture, all social interaction implies an exchange. For instance, if an individual asks for *ayni*, or reciprocal help, they will offer a handful of coca to share in return (Hurtado). When coca is presented in the form of a petition, it symbolizes that the recipient accepts the terms of the agreement. In daily life coca is chewed or brewed in teas to ease altitude sickness, provide a jolt of energy and focus, and suppress hunger (Hurtado).

Considered an economic luxury, the leaves are used as currency or to barter with in the countryside (Spedding 69). Spanish conquerors made a brief attempt to eliminate coca cultivation due to its relevance in indigenous religion, but soon enough, they realized the stimulating effects of coca on labor productivity and exploited its use (Peterson & Stillman 19).

To this day, coca has maintained its prominence in Bolivia culturally, politically, and economically. Evo Morales, the native Aymara community, and other indigenous peoples of the altiplano claim that its symbolic significance justifies its legalization, but this dream is not yet a reality. Domestic and international tensions, forces of internalized colonialism, and mixed perspectives of social control, have made it difficult for Bolivians to agree on a steady path of coca policy. The most recent legislation passed by the Morales administration, the General Law of Coca, is representative of a controlled legalization of coca cultivation, a process of expanding coca growing zones in the area of Morales' coca union. The new law is a fascinating site to approach questions of indigenous identity, state violence, and decolonization, because it is reflective of Bolivia's complex relationship to its history, its people, and coca.

# Chapter 2

## Nationalism, Subjectivity, and Coloniality

Postcolonial theory provides a framework for analysis of Bolivian coca policy as a site of neocolonial state violence. Conceptions of postcolonial nationalist thought and subjectivity, as well as the colonial impact on Bolivian selfhood, aid in the examination of Morales' rhetoric of decolonization combined with his support of neoliberal legislation. Scholars such as Zavaleta Mercado, Tapia Mealla, and Anibal Quijano connect the powers of colonialism and capitalism, problematizing how decolonization is imagined and carried out. I also will refer to theories surrounding structural state violence to assist my analysis of *why* Bolivia continues to oppress traditional cocaleros despite Evo Morales' indigenous ethnicity and platform of decolonization.

Partha Chatterjee's account of nationalist thought following the independence of colonial states is useful when examining nationalism in Morales' Bolivia. The three steps Chatterjee emphasizes, the 'moment of departure,' 'moment of maneuver,' and 'moment of arrival,' describe the nationalist thought process postcolonial nations undergo. The three steps Chatterjee



outlines reflects how nationalism assumes colonial values due to its origins in colonial society, eventually becoming a component of state discourse. While there are aspects of colonialism that nationalism explicitly seeks to change, such as self determination over territory and resources, there are other factors, such as the power of indigenous elite classes or colonial institutions, that are not challenged by nationalist rhetoric.

During the ‘moment of departure,’ nationalism meets post-Enlightenment rationalist thought to justify the inherent cultural difference between the East and West (Chatterjee *The Nation* 6). Chatterjee elaborates more on this cultural dissimilarity in his explanation of the material and the spiritual world; the former is the domain of the West, of the economy and science, and the latter is the ‘inner’ domain holding the ‘essential’ markers of the colonized culture’s identity (Chatterjee *The Nation* 6). He claims that, although nationalism challenged colonial political domination, it largely accepted the premises of ‘modernity’ on which its domination was founded (Chatterjee *Nationalist Thought* 30). Thus, the Westerner and the native have separate domains, and there is an understanding that this difference subordinates the position of the native.

Following the ‘moment of departure’ is the ‘moment of manoeuvre,’ during which the nation assumes an anti-colonial, anti-capitalism ideology based in the mobilization of its peoples’ ideology. The voice of the multitude is developed in this critical stage. Once it is fully assembled, the ‘moment of arrival’ becomes a state discourse and organization (Chatterjee *The Nation* 48-49, 51). This passive revolution challenges the more direct, obvious forms of subjection to colonial rule, but does not address the issue of colonial institutions and the

domination of the state by elite classes (Chatterjee *Nationalist Thought* 185). Colonial values become deeply embedded institutionally and and far more difficult to transform.

Frantz Fanon's ideas of postcolonial subjectivity complement Chatterjee's argument that colonial values are deeply entrenched in both the minds and institutions of postcolonial states and societies. He echoes Chatterjee's claim that during the struggle for liberation, there is a moment where the native intellectual rejects Western values because they are "worthless simply because they have nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which [their] people are engaged" (Fanon *Wretched* 38). Yet, his work on the violence of decolonization positions the national bourgeoisie of newly independent states as a class supportive of neocolonialism (Fanon *Wretched* 152). Upon liberation, native intellectuals restored pride in the national culture as a means of rehabilitation and to build hope in the future (Fanon "On National Culture" 37). Natives began to recover their pre-colonial past that colonizers were intent on destroying through epistemic and physical violence. But the psychological trauma of oppression lingers on. Fanon's approach considers the long-term implications of the colonization of the mind, examining why the national bourgeoisie of the postcolonial state has difficulty negotiating its identity.

Though there are forces of independence in motion, there are also mechanisms of continued coloniality. Fanon argues that the national middle class identifies with the Western bourgeoisie, and takes on the role of intermediary; "[the role of the middle class] consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neocolonialism" (Alessandrini 152). While the native elite class is recovering native identity, it is also solidifying ties to capitalism. Fanon's critique of *bourgeoisie anti-colonial nationalism*, an ideology focused on the (re)attainment of

nationhood through an occupation of the colonial state by elite indigenous classes, emphasizes that its mission is to succeed in neocolonial class consolidation (Alessandrini 176). The legacy of the colonial period continues through the class inequality of native peoples and the elite classes' embrace of capitalism and its social relations. Vivek Chibber echoes Fanon when claiming that bourgeoisie power relations are actively reproduced in postcolonial settings because the bourgeoisie is not eliminated or transformed entirely, but merely adapts to new socio-political conditions (Chibber 89). Despite this, Fanon argues that the process of decolonization brings capitalism and neocolonialism into question, because there is a new possibility for a fundamental transformation towards anti-colonial options for political and economic systems.

The idea of *colonización interna*, or *internal colonialism*, as introduced by Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, further reflects the tension between coloniality and nationalism in postcolonial states (Rodriguez & López 439). He posits that colonial values are present in the phenomenon of subjectivity formation and the institutions of newly independent societies. Internal colonization is destined to repeat itself after the fall of regimes or political independence, due to the interconnectedness of colonizing and colonized forces (Rodriguez & López 439). Ruling classes preserve their relationship to minority ethnic groups, while the continued embrace of capitalism promises enthusiasm for the terms “progress”, “development” and “modernity” — the same concepts that justified colonization of Bolivia hundreds of years prior.

Mignolo writes that “it may have been the end of the colonial period (like 1947 was for India), but it was not the end of coloniality and of coloniality of power” there or in Latin America (Rodriguez & López 439). In Latin America, nation-building was in the hands of the

powerful Creole elite, whose very existence was based in the process of decolonization from colonial powers; it was this elite class that reproduced colonial values and encouraged internal colonialism in relation to indigenous groups (Rodriguez & López 439). The independence of states, especially in Latin America, was a rearticulation of the coloniality of power through newly established institutional bases (Quijano & Ennis 567). Though there have been legal and political changes during the transition from colonialism, the “structure of power” continues to be organized around the colonial structure (Quijano & Ennis 568).

Coloniality thereby transcends colonialism, persisting despite the presence of campaigns of independence or decolonization, due to its embeddedness in the nature of state and society (Mignolo 433). Referring to the values and structures of colonialism, *coloniality* is applicable to a broader discourse of neoliberalism because it connects the period of colonialism to modernity. Walter Mignolo asserts that coloniality is constitutive of modernity, both having roots in the consolidation of capitalism in the 16th century (Mignolo 425). He approaches subalternity from the angles of social class and power, as both are colonial foundations innate to the modern world system (426). Mignolo writes, “coloniality at large goes beyond decolonization and nation building [...] [it] is the machine that reproduces subalternity today in the form of global coloniality in the network society” (426). Ranajit Guha explores this relationship further, claiming that subalternity extends to social organizations and histories embedded in the interstate structure of power (Mignolo 428). The intimate relationship between colonialism, capitalism, and modernity are even more inherent to Latin America, and Bolivia specifically, because the capitalist world economy was born of the Americas (Quijano & Ennis 549).

Although there are cycles of liberalism and populism in Bolivia, colonial structures remain in the stratification of society and in the mechanisms of structural violence and domination. Enduring colonial governance structures are observed in Bolivia through the exclusion of marginalized voices and violence towards poor campesino communities, such as those in ancestral regions. The official discourse on coca emphasizes a nationalized shift towards self-determination, but existing governmental structures have hampered these objectives for marginalized groups. Bolivian philosopher and political scientist Luis Tapia Mealla writes that although there is a coexistence of different cultures and authorities in the neoliberal state, not all voices are articulated because there are some that are not recognized or lack access to mechanisms of democracy (Tapia Mealla *The Multi-Societal Condition* 11). The plurinational nature of the Bolivian demographic makes its situation more complex, because there are a variety of loyalties to different native groups (Tapia Mealla *The Multi-Societal Condition* 9). There is support for the reform of the nation-state towards economic and legal pluralism, but there is also Aymara nationalism present in Morales and his main constituency, which likely drives his decision-making as well. In the beginning of Morales' leadership in the 1990's, the cocalero movement shifted from "fully peasantist" discourse to clearly indigenist (Tapia Mealla 9).

Bolivian theorist René Zavaleta Mercado's notion of *sociedad abigarrada*, or, diversified society, refers to the disarticulated overlapping of various types of societies, including historical periods, modes of production, and forms of government, through the processes of colonial domination and capitalism (Carrasco 2). Capitalist social structures coexist alongside pre-colonial political and social forms, though certain socio-economic formations (such as

capitalism), dominate over others and rearticulate previous patterns in a economically 'functional' and 'productive' way (Tapia Mealla "Interview" 3). Tapia Mealla also considers Bolivia to be multi-societal, and with internal borders and exclusions established in the model of the modern liberal state as a product of colonization (Tapia Mealla "Interview" 3). The multi-social condition is categorized by the basic recognition of the autonomy of different peoples, but the central state remains unchanged and maintains the elemental structures of a colonial government (Tapia Mealla "Interview" 6).

Tapia Mealla characterizes the neoliberal multicultural democracy in Bolivia as attempting to paradoxically decolonize under the multi-social condition; people of diverse cultures are considered inferior to the federal government, contradicting Morales' rhetorical support of indigenous autonomy (5). Mealla uses Zavaleta's *sociedad abigarrada* to frame his definition of *social motley* — "the overlapping of diverse types of society that coexist in a disjointed way, establishing relationships of domination and distortion of some over others" (Tapia Mealla *The Multi-Societal Condition* 10). Bolivia's state and society are an amalgamation of precolonial and postcolonial ideas and institutions, creating an array of complicated relationships. Bolivia's shared, yet opposing value systems, consisting of both indigenous and Western beliefs, create the conditions for paradoxical coca policies.

These socioeconomic structures continue to generate inequality into the 21st century. Mealla claims that as long as there is capitalism, it will be more difficult to dismantle inequality entirely, due to the states need to develop more land, resources, and labor opportunities (Tapia Mealla "Interview" 8). The MAS party simultaneously encourages national development and the expansion of capitalism, yet it would be difficult to finance the plurinational state without

nationalization (Tapia Mealla “Interview” 9). Quijano argues that the democratization of society is a necessary condition in order to successfully nationalize, but in neocolonial states this is impossible. He believes that because the coloniality of power is based on the use of race as an instrument of domination, the postcolonial state is not able to properly, or fairly, nationalize (Quijano 569). In this way, capitalist modernization is a foundational component of structural inequality in the Bolivian state, directly connecting the postcolonial state to forces of neo-colonialism and internal colonialism.

The concept of *hybridity* in the context of postcolonial subjects is of relevance to my analysis of Evo Morales and his administration, in that it speaks to the complexity of subjectivity formation in postcolonial subjects. Similar to Zavaleta Mercado’s conception of *sociedad abigarrada* present in Bolivian institutions, the process of subjectivity formation blends indigenous and colonial values as well. Homi Bhabha refers to the hybrid identity as a “third space” in which traces of other meanings and discourses merge to create new culturally negotiated spaces for identity, and a place where internalized colonization is apparent (Rutherford 211). From this approach, we can see that histories, values and meanings can be opposing forces but also components of the same subjectivity. Similarly, Achille Mbembe argues that the postcolonial subject has several fluid identities that it mobilizes at a single time and that are constantly evolving (Mbembe 5). It is not surprising, then, that Morales’ own subjectivity is negotiating competing value systems, emphasized by the divergence between his rhetoric and policies. Tapia Mealla eloquently claims:

The consideration of the diversity of stories within a social phenomenon makes it possible to think about the problem of intersubjectivity of a way that should not only consider individual and collective subjectivities within the same cultural

matrix, but also considers the confrontation of collective subjectivities of diverse cultural matrix (Rodríguez & López 317).

Postcolonial identities are thereby in constant states of evolution and negotiation on both the individual and collective scales. The process of subjectivity formation occurring on a national scale is similar to that of Morales himself, through which Western and indigenous values are mixed. Hybridity speaks to the complexity of postcolonial subjectivity; this negotiation of traditional and colonial value systems underlies the paradoxical coca policies in Bolivia.

In summary, the theories above help to put the case of Bolivian coca policy into conversation with established theories of postcolonial institutions and the production of selfhood. Chatterjee's theory of accepting the "material" in postcolonial nationalism, Fanon's idea of the dominance of the bourgeoisie in postcolonial society, and Bhabha's ideas of hybrid subjectivity development, help to frame Evo Morales and Bolivian society as a complex blend of colonial and indigenous values. It would be impossible to separate the identity and nationalism existent in Morales' Bolivia from the colonial history it is seeking liberation from. This interpretation of subjectivity formation extends to the larger Bolivian public as well, whose selfhoods are also complex blend of indigenous and colonial values. The national bourgeoisie and Bolivian governmental institutions, with founding power originating from colonialism, have upheld their status by deploying both colonial values *and* indigenous ones, consciously and unconsciously.

Postcolonial theory also helps us to conceptually solidify the intimate relationship between colonialism and capitalism. Contemporary versions of colonialism, such as neoliberalism and neocolonialism, are mechanisms by which colonial values have steadily persisted in Bolivian society. The state continues racist campaigns of violence against marginalized communities due to the institutionalization of colonial principles in the state, while



Morales' embrace of neoliberal economic policies has encouraged and justified these campaigns. Morales' violent coca policy is a point of convergence for all of these issues; the hybrid subjectivity of Morales (as well as other Bolivians) is faced with institutionalized colonial values and an embrace of global capitalism, an inherently violent economic system.

## Methodology

While my research intends to shed light on the issue of state violence and coca policy in Bolivia, I also hope that my work will inspire conversations surrounding the importance of critical qualitative research in academia. My thesis is based on interviews I conducted with coccaleros, activists, researchers, and professors in Bolivia, and intentionally draws direct quotes from them. I attempted to interview government officials, but the majority of them were representatives of the MAS party and were not interested in participating in research that might be critical of Evo Morales. Regardless, the use of ethnographic interviewing techniques remained essential, because I wanted my research to draw predominantly from the experience and voices of ancestral coccaleros and their allies. Critical qualitative research can be understood as the embodiment of emancipatory values of critical pedagogy, similar to critical race theory; it “represents inquiry done for explicit political, utopian purposes [...] a reflexive discourse constantly in search of an open-minded, subversive, multivoices epistemology” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith 5). Interpretive research practices, including personal narratives, life stories, interviews, recordings, and field notes are forms of qualitative research that provoke a critical pedagogy, or,

a “space for critical, collaborative, dialogical work” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith 5). Research methodologies such as these are meant to counter the historically exclusionary research practices of academics that have continued to be colonizing and subjugating forces.

Decolonizing research of this kind is two-sided. It relies on the creation of a relationship between researcher and participant, meant to establish a discursive space where resistance and empowerment can emerge. I recognize that my positionality as a white, female, American student, visiting Bolivia was a factor in my research; there was no way to escape the resulting power dynamics inherent to this circumstance, but I attempted to counter its effects by building trust between myself and the interviewee by conducting multiple interviews and working closely with local organizations. Since my interviewees are outspoken activists engaging in public opposition to coca policy and Evo Morales on a regular basis, I believe that they were more comfortable than others speaking on the topic. Still, I recognize that my Western positionality represents hundreds of years worth of marginalizing academic research, which is a quality of myself I continue to interrogate.

As stated by Denzin, “decolonizing research recognizes and works within the belief that non-Western knowledge forms are excluded from or marginalized in normative research paradigms, and therefore non-Western and indigenous voices and epistemologies are silenced and subjects lack agency within such representations” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith 33). Traditional Western research is framed much differently, and is less focused on its ability to change societal injustices or create equal relationships. In comparison, “a decolonized academy is interdisciplinary and politically proactive”; it values social justice, respects indigenous epistemologies, and seeks to model research unconstrained by assumptions (Denzin, Lincoln &

Smith 12). This new academy wants to redefine the role of modern academia in the neocolonial system, and works to make colonizers confront colonization, promoting an atmosphere of tolerance and healing (Battiste xi).

By lacking a focus on specific models of research, there is no single methodology decolonizing research adheres to. The unyielding loyalty academia has historically held to Western scientific research methods is a contemporary colonial mechanism of native and non-Western exclusion, and by celebrating new forms of democratizing research, it is possible for research to assist in the decolonized restoration of indigenous ways of life (Smith 142). Colonization and Western academia acted in unison to conceive of a silent and submissive indigenous subject, serving to legitimize oppression politically and academically, and encrypt the subject as a “governable body” (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith 33-34). Decolonizing research works to reverse this pattern of oppression by using the voices and experiences of indigenous peoples. A goal of my work was to use a decolonizing model of research that places the experiences of Bolivians as the focal point of my thesis, and generate more awareness surrounding the colonizing nature of the modern university.

# Chapter 3

## Law 906

The Morales administration has gradually implemented a program of regulated legalization of coca, demonstrating to the international community the capacity of the government to control and reduce overproduction of coca leaf crops. Morales' coca policies paradoxically seek both to expand and reduce coca, resulting in an underlying tension between the appeasement of national and foreign interests. The most recent contradictory coca policy, Law 906, has generated fierce protest and contention between cocaleros in the Chapare and those in the ancestral regions. Over the course of this section, I will detail the controversy surrounding Law 906 and how it reflects a broader campaign of state violence, exclusion, and drug trafficking. The majority of my descriptive analysis emerges from the interviews I conducted in Bolivia, as well as news developments I followed upon return to the United States. A thorough examination of Law 906 reveals the paradoxes inherent to the goals and realities of

the Morales' administration — rhetorically, Bolivian national values motivate coca legalization, but legally, the federal government is also balancing foreign, neoliberal interests.

### *The Flaws of Law 906*

Evo Morales speaks highly of Law 906, exclaiming that the new law “guarantees the cultivation of the coca leaf for life for the producers of the Yungas of La Paz and the Tropic of Cochabamba,” adding that there should not be “envy” between the two groups of coccaleros (*Los Tiempos* “Coca for Life”). The foreseen jealousy arises from opposition of ancestral coca growers to Article 16, legalizing 14,300 hectares of authorized growing land for the Yungas of La Paz, and 7,700 hectares for the department of Cochabamba, home to Morales' coca union and major constituency (*Los Tiempos* “Coca for Life”). Law 1008, passed in 1988, recognized only 12,000 hectares of the coca crop in the Yungas, an area designated legal to cultivate due to its codified status as an “ancestral zone” (*El Deber* “New Law”). Bolivian coca researcher David Pereira Herrera notes that “[i]t has been widely known that since the pre-Columbian, colonial and republican times of Bolivia's history, there have been several coca leaf producing areas known as ‘*ancestral zones*’, precisely because of their constant productive activity” (COLI “Organic Coca”). Morales' new law effectively eliminates the definition of the ancestral region, putting it in direct conflict with Article 384 of the Bolivian Constitution, which states that:

the State protects indigenous and *ancestral coca* as a cultural heritage, a renewable natural resource of Bolivia's biodiversity and as a factor of social cohesion; in its natural state it is not narcotic (Layme).

Instead, the law approves cultivation in the provinces of Cochabamba, Chapare, Tiraque, and Carrasco, where coca has not been historically cultivated (*Jornada* “Opposition”). By eliminating the distinction between ancestral and other zones, coca grown in regions once known as ancestral zones is no longer protected from forced eradication. In this way, Morales’ policies have supported a program of regulated legalization in the Chapare, aiding in the fundamental transformation of the coca policy landscape.

Internal colonization established a marked difference between the cocaleros of the ancestral zones versus the Chapare. The cocaleros of the Chapare are ex-miners who left their homes in Potosí, La Paz, and El Alto in the altiplano, in the late twentieth century to find jobs growing coca illicitly (Crespo).<sup>4</sup> Communities of cocaleros in ancestral zones, by contrast, have lived and worked there for generations, making coca cultivation inseparable from their heritage and livelihoods (Crespo). By eliminating the designation of an ancestral zone, the Morales administration is also eliminating its history, rewriting and replacing it (Crespo).

Law 906 does not distinguish between coca produced traditionally and coca produced with agrochemicals. It is common knowledge to Bolivians that the coca safe to *pichar* (to chew), is cultivated in ancestral zones, while coca produced using industrialized means in the Chapare region is not safe for consumption; the chemicals used in production are known to cause cancer and other long term health problems. The concepts of “sustainability”, “living well” and “economic complementarity” are seen by some Bolivians as empty, because the Morales administration continues to ignore calls for organic and traditional coca (Gregorio Cari). Morales’ coca policies blur the lines between type of cultivation since “there is one ministry of

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<sup>4</sup> All cited interviews have been translated from Spanish to English.

coca and one definition for coca. Coca is coca” (Crespo). The government has financed studies about certain aspects of coca, including research “discovering” it to be necessary for the government to regulate coca, but there have been no studies about the use of agrochemicals or the prevalence of narco trafficking (Crespo). The new law does not reflect indigenous interests in the ancestral zones, instead demonstrating that the Morales administration has little motivation to advocate for coca policies that align with the indigenous value of *vivir bien*.

There is currently no market exclusively for organic coca. Though there are two legal markets located in La Paz and Chapare, when the coca is prepared to be sold, the leaves of organic and chemicalized coca are mixed (COLI “Organic Coca”). Of the coca consumed in Bolivia’s domestic market, 90% is contaminated with agrochemicals (COLI “Organic Coca”). One pound of coca yields the producer approximately 25 bolivianos, and since there is no difference between chemicalized coca and organic coca, there is no incentive to create legal definitions differentiating between the two (Herrera). It would be against the interests of Evo Morales to do so, because the price of the industrialized coca would drop dramatically in the domestic market. In this sense, Morales is catering to his political constituency of cocaleros in the Chapare instead of responding to calls for traditional coca production.

The significance of producing coca organically also lies in the cultural relevance of coca. Silvia Cruz Huanca, the current leader of the union of Producers of the Coca Leaf of Los Yungas of Vandíola, elaborates on this when saying:

[o]rganic production is not only for coca, but for all the products we consume, especially for health and for Mother Earth. I believe that organic coca extends life to humans and avoids many diseases that are currently appearing mainly because of the use of chemicals in production at all levels. Also as producers of the oldest production area ancestral coca we know that pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides were never used in the past. Coca is a

plant that existed 20 centuries before Christ, and at that time there were no chemicals. As producers of an ancestral zone, we recover its uses and customs” (COLI “Organic Coca”)

Based on Evo Morales’ platform, he should be most supportive of the traditional growing techniques promoted by ancestral regions. Presidential candidate and coca activist Evo Morales could easily include a broad pro-coca discourse in his rhetoric of decolonizing Bolivia, but the translation from platform to policy has been less straightforward. Law 906 supports the overall trend of increased coca cultivation in the Chapare region versus traditional growing zones. At the turn of the twentieth century, the department of La Paz was producing 97% of Bolivia’s coca, while the Chapare was exporting a mere 1% (Lohman & Saavedra). By 2000, the Chapare would be producing over 80% of the total national production, likely a result of the booming cocaine industry (Lohman & Saavedra). The new law legalizes an additional 7,700 hectares of coca growing territory in the Cochabamba department, home to the Chapare, while the Yungas has only seen a 2,300 hectare increase (Lohman & Saavedra). The majority of Bolivians I interviewed agree that industrialized coca should be eradicated, and that it is just because this coca is likely leaving the *pueblo* and exported for the drug trade, a sentiment echoed by the United Nations (*Página Siete* “Cocaleros”).

Coca policy is complicated indeed; there are several different coca unions, a variety of growing methods employed, and established loyalties to specific coca communities. Law 906 exhibits the inconsistencies between Evo Morales’ rhetoric of coca as a sacred symbol and the legislation passed during his administration which favors agroindustrial growers. Morales has struggled to balance indigenous values, continued support from his political constituency in the Chapare, and demand for coca by the drug trade, demonstrated by the legal departure from his rhetoric.



## *Exclusion from Discourse*

The Morales administration has excluded ancestral cocaleros from dialogue surrounding coca policy, conflicting with his promise to increase access to government for underrepresented Bolivians. Using its agenda-setting power, the government decides what kind of discussion it welcomes from campesinos and cocaleros, and which groups it wants to silence through exclusion from the political arena (Gregorio Cari “Panel Discussion”). Coca unions representing cocaleros from traditional zones across Bolivia have three major demands for the Morales administration: recognition of their coca as ancestral, a special market for organic coca, and attention to their demands and basic needs. However, without the capacity to formally vocalize their needs and demands, cocalero communities in traditional areas do not have the discursive space to express their opinions on coca legislation.

Exclusion of cocaleros from the Yungas is a common occurrence under the Morales administration. Don Gregorio Cari, leader of the ancestral cocalero community of Apolo, a municipality in the Franz Tamayo Province of La Paz, was removed from a public forum on coca policy in 2012. Located in the capital of La Paz, the debate was attended by experts, activists, and government officials. Gregorio Cari was invited by the international community but was escorted out of the venue by Bolivian government officials after he challenged dominant government coca discourse (Gregorio Cari). Although Cari has organized his community, the government has not contacted them for discussion; “Evo is only interested in business and there is none in Madidi National Park (the location of the community of Apolo), because there is a small population, few voters, and it is far away” (Gregorio Cari). The power dynamic between

the state and small coca growing communities has allowed for the Morales administration to dominant coca discourse. Alex Silva, a past leader of the coca union of the Yungas of Vandiola in Cochabamba, believes that the government is more likely to speak with cocaleros of the Chapare (Silva). Since ancestral cocaleros are not given a forum to voice their opinions, they resort to organizing blockades and orchestrating public demonstrations to demand visibility. Groups that criticize the government are intentionally overlooked and marginalized, displaying a colonial legacy of silencing the voices of government opposition (Roncken “Interview 2”).

Poor treatment of cocaleros is reminiscent of Morales’ actions toward indigenous opposition during the 2011 Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS) conflict, provoked by Morales’ plans to build a highway through indigenous territory and protected land. The government did not consult local indigenous organizations about the development plans, and furthermore, the communities were eventually told by Morales that the road would be built regardless of their petitions (Postero 123). Earlier in 2017, Morales remarked that “those who coordinate with the ‘right’ are the enemies of the coca leaf,” directed at the leaders of ADEPCOCA (Asociación Departamental de Productores de Coca), the union of more than 35,000 cocaleros in the Yungas of La Paz, who have filed a petition through the Plurinational Constitutional Court against Article 16 of Law 906 (*Correo* “Morales Reafirma”).<sup>5</sup> Similar to the TIPNIS conflict, the Morales government has ignored the opposition of cocaleros to current coca legislation.

Carlos Crespo, a professor in the School of Social Sciences at the University of San Simon in Cochabamba, believes that “the history of Bolivia is based on the exclusion of the

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<sup>5</sup> I elaborate more on the current conflict between Adepcoca and the federal government in the Epilogue.

indian and Evo's policies are reproducing this logic" (Crespo). In places such as the Apolo and Vandiola regions, communities feel abandoned (Gregorio Cari). They receive little or no assistance with education or health, while the Chapare receives more aid (Gregorio Cari). Alex Silva, a past leader of a union of cocaleros in the Yungas of Vandiola, echoed these sentiments when describing that "in [his community], there is little electricity, there are poor people, young people who are not studying" (Silva). Less attention is paid to the small ancestral zones because they are farther removed, and do not compose Evo Morales' political electorate. According to Gregorio Cari, the current government never talks about them or the problems they face; "[i]t is a cocaine government that is eradicating coca, and traditional communities are forced to defend their crops."

The rhetorical foundation of Morales' political platform was the inclusion of indigenous and cocalero voices in the legislative process, but this has not been the reality during his presidency. In the context of coca policy, it is apparent that the government is following along a similar exclusionary path to past presidents. If Morales was truly concerned with making government more accessible to marginalized groups, he would listen to the needs and demands of those he supposedly represents.

### *Violent Confrontation*

Clashes between ancestral cocaleros and militarized government forces has been a recurring consequence of Morales' coca policies since his entry into office. The first death under his administration occurred in the Yungas of Vandiola two months after his inauguration in August 2006 (Roncken "Interview 1"). The Joint Task Force, composed of members of the

Armed Forces and Bolivian police, murdered two coccaleros in the Yungas, to which Morales responded by claiming they were killed for being drug traffickers who resisted forced eradication (Roncken “Interview 2”; Crespo). Paradoxically, the administration enforces a policy of both controlled legalization and forced eradication. Campaigns of forced eradication have roots in violent programs supported by the United States in the late twentieth century, as well as even earlier connections to colonialism. Direct confrontation between government forces and coccaleros is an expected result of militarized forced eradication of “surplus” coca.

After Evo Morales was elected president, around 1,000 coca growers from the Chapare expanded their cultivation into traditional zones, to which Morales responded with vocal support of a forced eradication policy (Roncken “Interview 2”). Eradication of coca increased from 20,200 hectares to 23,100 hectares from 2015 to 2016 (*Página Siete* “Foresee Eradicating”). Figure 1 depicts that overall eradication has been steadily increasing from 2006, in areas including traditional zones (UNODC 2016 53). Rhetoric of nationalization has allowed the government to selectively eradicate coca in traditional areas such as the Yungas of Vandiola, since they are in the vicinity of National Parks or “protected areas” (Roncken “Nationalized Prohibition?”). The hectares of eradicated coca over the last 10 years adds up to 86,378 hectares, or an average of 8,637 hectares per year, but when combining the eradication and the amount of coca cultivation increased per year, there has only been a total of 7,700 hectares of coca eradicated in the past ten years (Lohman). There is a controlled tension between coca eradication and expansion; each year the coccaleros plant the same amount, more or less, of the coca plants previously eradicated.

Eradication policies have had harmful effects on not only cocaleros, but entire cocalero communities in the Yungas. Gregorio Cari recalled to me an instance when the military entered his community in Apolo at 3 o'clock in the morning on May 23, 2013 to eradicate coca (Gregorio Cari). The forces entered and burned houses, raped women and committed other violations of human rights. From May to October, sustained forced eradication could not be stopped because the community did not have money to bribe members of the army. On the October 18th and 19th, Cari was imprisoned because he was the leader of the community opposition (Gregorio Cari). Gregorio Cari described 2013 as a very difficult year for him and his community because he lost his home and could not afford to educate his son. He currently has 26 companions who, all but one, are incarcerated in different cities other than La Paz. The community does not have the money to help release them, nor do they have the finances to travel to the jails (Gregorio Cari). He also has comrades in the community who are under house arrest and cannot leave Apolo, which Cari noted as being a common punishment for people who speak out against government coca policy.

Similar violence and exclusion has been targeted at other communities of campesinos and cocaleros, and while Cari continues to defend his community, he feels that there is not much he can do; the government will not recognize their demands or the human rights abuses committed by the military. Following the passage of Law 906, there has been renewed violence in the Isiboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS), an area of land no longer protected from development. In 2011, TIPNIS was granted a special status defending it from development projects under Law 180, also known as the law of “intangibility” (Telma Jemio). Article 5 of the law prohibited illegal human settlements in the National Park, stating that

occupations carried out by persons other than the holders of the territory is grounds for eviction with intervention of the police force (Copa Pabón). The opposition says that this repeal “not only [breaks] the harmonious relationship of the government with Mother Earth, but openly authorizes the premeditated and systematic genocide of the Chimán, Yuracaré and Mojeño Trinitario peoples” (Copa Pabón). Law 969, the repeal act, has provoked demonstrations of activists and indigenous peoples in the streets of La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and Trinidad, because they believe the proposed highway development will encourage the expansion of coca cultivation, and will deforest 600 hectares of protected land (Telma Jemio). The law has also divided indigenous populations into factions in favor and against the road, causing ruptures in communities. Morales’ plans for the construction of the road follows a broader pattern of developmental expansion into protected indigenous lands.

TIPNIS is situated in the Cochabamba and Beni departments, encompassing the Chapare and part of the Yungas ecoregion (see Figure 2, UNODC 2017 39). The figure depicts in yellow how coca cultivation has encroached onto TIPNIS land in 2016, indicating in the left corner that thirty hectares of land has been invaded. Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate how TIPNIS has not been the only protected national park that has seen coca cultivation trespass; in fact, Carrasco, Catapata, and Apolobamba national parks each produced more hectares of coca than Isiboro Secure in 2016 (UNODC 2017 36, 37). Coca is a cash crop far more profitable than any other crop produced in Bolivia, with the average price per kilo at \$7.80, encouraging its illegal cultivation (Barbier). Ovidio Teco, a local farmer of cacao from the northeast of TIPNIS, said to reporters that “[the government] lied, nothing more. After the protest march we thought the park would not be touched. This situation is all lies” (Barbier). He claims that it is not the road itself

that is the problem, but what accompanies it — coca producers will settle on their land, clearing it of trees (McCormick). Other opponents of the law repeal, such as Magali V. Copa Pabón, an Aymara constitutional lawyer, claim that Law 969 represents a new phase of colonial power exercised over indigenous peoples and nations, and that the government is leading down a path of “greater authoritarianism, abuse of power, and use of violence” (Copa Pabón).

It has been debated whether or not the indigenous groups were properly informed and given the opportunity to voice their opinions on the development of the road. Until recently, the Office of the Ombudsman in place by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) has claimed that the consultation with TIPNIS residents was not prior or informed. The Office has since changed its mind, saying that the majority of TIPNIS residents agreed on the development of the road (Copa Pabón). Throughout my time in Bolivia, I often came across signs and advertisements paid for by the National Park Service reading “*Desarrollo + Conservación = Vivir Bien,*” or “Development + Conservation = Living Well.” The slogan embodies the policy dilemma facing the Morales administration in that they are attempting to promote the implementation of two opposing approaches to land-use and protection. In development and in coca policy, the administration is assuming multiple, contradictory policy positions, leading to violent clashes between campesinos and the military.

Instances of eradication in ancestral areas following the initial passage of Law 906 were all too common. On May 4, 2017, military forces entered the Apolo region once again. Government officials eradicated more than six hectares of coca in the communities of Tierra Blanca, Miraflores, and Copacabana, affecting 120 families and a total of about 1000 people (COLI “Testimonies”). In early July 2017, a confrontation between police and cocaleros from

five municipalities occurred at a blockade, leading to the death of a young man (*El Deber* “Death After Clash”). Cocaleros from Pocona, Pojo, Tiraque, Colomi, and Cocapata — all small municipalities in Cochabamba — demanded for the Minister of Rural Development, César Cocarico, to allot them 700 hectares of coca, that according to leaders had previously been agreed upon with Evo Morales’ coca union, but had been targeted for forced eradication (*La Razon* “Blockade”). Cocaleros, campesinos, and community members are demanding justice for the death, and for respect from government officials (COLI “Silva Interview”).

In late October 2017, clashes between Bolivian police and residents of Chamaca, a municipality in La Paz, resulted in eleven cocaleros arrested and an undetermined number of community members injured (Chuquimia). The altercation arose from the forced eradication of coca that had *supposedly* been agreed upon by the government, cocaleros, and ADEPCOCA leadership. The Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, José Luis Quiroga, commented that cocaleros appeared in the early morning and tried to take over the police camp, later dispersed with tear gas (Chuquimia). However, the cocaleros claimed that soldiers entered their houses violently, and eradicated legal coca. Franklin Gutiérrez, leader of the cocaleros of Chamaca and president of ADEPCOCA, said that he was unaware of any agreement with the government for a military camp to be settled there, adding that the location where forced eradication took place was indeed a legal area to grow coca (Chuquimia). Gutiérrez noted to reporters, “The government should attack the coca fields of the national parks and the Chapare, which are the places where illegal coca grows; in the Yungas we have traditional coca, but the government abuses the peasants” (Chuquimia).



Current coca policy has resulted in the conceptualization of a “new dynamics of exclusion and marginalization, social division and violent confrontation” (Roncken “Dynamics”). In an interview with Theo Roncken, a researcher for Acción Andina, a cocalero noted that the primary motivating factor of state violence is maintaining political order (Roncken “Dynamics”). Cocalero communities are questioning the legitimacy of Morales’ policies that contradict the Constitution, and because of this, authorities have resorted to intimidation and violence. Roncken asks “is it a priority of the Bolivian common good to eradicate coca crops in traditional areas and simultaneously expand in the lowlands, with the growing use of agrochemicals?” (Roncken “Nationalized Prohibition?”). The ancestral cocalero unions are organized and prepared to list their demands, but the Morales’ administration has not extended them the opportunity to do so. Given the current trend of state violence towards cocaleros, it is hard to imagine fulfillment of these demands under existing conditions.

### *Narcotrafficking*

The least publicly recognized, but perhaps most formative dimension of coca policy, is the influence of the global drug trade. A mechanism of state violence, narcotrafficking is intricately tied to the forces of capitalism and the economy of Bolivia. Most of the coca and cocaine produced in Bolivia is exported, establishing drug-related exports as a critical source of income for the country (Rose Mary Achá). Coca policies that cater to the Chapare region, reinforcing the simultaneous, paradoxical expansion and eradication of coca, exemplify Bolivia’s complex relationship to the drug trade and its own national values.

It is unclear where the majority of coca in the Chapare ends up, leading many to believe that it is used in cocaine production. In an interview with Carlos Crespo, he describes the new law as corrupt because even the government minister acknowledges that more than 90 percent is exported for trafficking. While there are 17,000 tons of coca produced in the Chapare, the legal market only receives 1,800 tons, meaning that 89% of the coca produced in Chapare is not entering the legal market (COLI “Testimonies”). In the Yungas of La Paz, on the other hand, 20,600 tons are produced and 20,091 enter the legal market (COLI “Testimonies”). According to economist Carlos Hoffman, Morales claims that controlled legalization of coca is for traditional coca consumption, but the government will collect an estimated \$2 million in taxes from trafficked coca through the new law (Hoffman). Around 58% of the coca produced in Bolivia overall is legal, the rest going towards the drug trade. Producing only legal coca would be prohibitively expensive; it currently costs 500 dollars per cato, or 10 dollars per kilo,<sup>6</sup> but if fully legalized, the price would drop greatly (Hoffman). Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Morales administration to control the legalization of coca, because coccaleros will leave the market if there is a dramatic price decrease.

A majority of the information I gathered about drug trafficking in Bolivia is from interviews I conducted with Gloria Rose Mary Achá, lawyer and member of Acción Andina, a Cochabamba-based organization dedicated to research of pertinent social issues in Bolivia. Figure 5 is a drug trafficking pyramid she drew to help visualize the components of Bolivian drug trafficking (Mary Achá). Only 2 percent of the cocaine produced with Bolivian coca goes towards “micro-trafficking,” or domestic drug trafficking; the rest of the cocaine is exported to

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<sup>6</sup> The retail price of coca in the legal market is 50-60 bolivianos per pound (0.46 kilo). The 10 dollars per kilo is what the producer receives.

neighboring countries to be sold and traded, making it a major source of income. A known problem with drug trafficking in relation to social control, as seen in the United States and other Latin American countries, is that only the most visible groups are arrested and accused, including groups of poor and young individuals who are mules, sellers and consumers. The Bolivian government has not concentrated its resources on stopping drug trafficking at its origin, the top of the pyramid. Morales has endorsed minor arrests instead of targeting drug cartels, because it is a way to superficially “address” drug trafficking without ending the economically advantageous export of cocaine. Rose Mary Achá and I visited San Sebastian prison in Cochabamba, a small colonial-era building, where nearly 900 men are imprisoned in poor conditions for minor drug-related crimes. Some do not have money for prison cells or food, and are forced to sleep on the floors.<sup>7</sup> The criminalization of marginalized youth is characteristic of neoliberal countries with a war on drugs, where strategies of social control are used to direct violence at poor segments of the population.

During the colonial era, the governing *criollo* elite adopted an anti-narcotics policy as a means of targeting the cultural beliefs and economic vitality of indigenous people (Hesselroth 64). Similar policies have continued to be reinforced through mechanisms of internal colonization and neoimperialism; in the late 20th century, the governing elite imposed US-backed anti-coca legislation that authorized forced coca eradication, largely punishing poor indigenous communities (Hesselroth 61). Bolivia underwent a symbolic change when Morales was elected, as poor, marginalized campesinos and indigenous people felt politically represented and included. The policies of Evo Morales include symbolic themes of Mother Earth and

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<sup>7</sup> Cocaine Prison (2017), a documentary produced by Cochabambina filmmaker Violeta Ayala, examines Bolivia’s War on Drugs through research into San Sebastian prison and its inmates.

indigenous pride, but also neoliberal development and support of the drug trade. A majority of the Bolivians I interviewed believe that the Morales administration has co-opted the symbol of the coca leaf, and that the government manipulates the historic relationship between coca and ritual in its social control policies (Crespo).

Bolivia's economic reliance on the drug trade ties the country to global forces of capitalism, despite Morales' rhetoric of nationalization. The War on Drugs, a product of neoimperialism in Bolivia, caters to the desires of rich cartels and encourages neoliberal programs of social control to criminalize poor populations. Law 906 strengthens the ties between Bolivia and the cocaine trade because it legally expands the coca growing area of the Chapare. Reminiscent of legislation passed in the late twentieth century, it encourages the militarization of government forces and forced eradication of coca through mechanisms of social control. Law 906 represents the flaws of the Morales administration, which emphasizes inclusion and indigenous values but codifies neoliberal principles. The exclusion, violent confrontation, and reinforcing of the drug trade, precipitated by the passage of the new law, exhibit this underlying tension.

The theories of nationalism, subjectivity, and coloniality I introduced in an earlier chapter aid in establishing a connection between Law 906, Evo Morales, and broader postcolonial processes. Similar to Zavaleta Mercado's conception of *sociedad abigarrada*, the new law has components of indigenous values as well as neoliberal ideas of eradicating surplus coca crops. Ideas of the coloniality of power and the persistence of colonial values through state institutions, as introduced by Mbembe, Mignolo, Quijano and Tapia Mealla, is also present in the site of Law 906. The law was drafted by excluding the voices of cocaleros from ancestral regions, and

entirely removes the designation of ancestral zone, eliminating the discursive space previously granted to cocaleros in these regions. Violent clashes between the military and cocaleros are also reminiscent of colonial violence towards indigenous peoples. State institutions that were adopted during the period of independence from colonialism, and the form of nationalism that developed, assumed the colonial values of capitalism and elite social classes. Chatterjee's idea of nationalism and Pablo Gonzalez Casanova's conception of internal colonialism speak to how Law 906 assumes colonial values, such as the exclusion of cocalero voices, outright violence, and forced eradication of coca.

The postcolonial concept of subjective *hybridity* is interesting in the context of Evo Morales and his administration, in that we are able to observe a blend of indigenous and colonial values in their policies. Though Law 906 does represent further legalization of coca and coca growing area, it more benefits Morales' political constituency and the foreign demand for coca leaves for narcotrafficking than ancestral cocaleros. Indigenous and colonial values are components of Morales' subjectivity, and are often mobilized simultaneously, leading to such paradoxical policy measures. The tension present in Law 906 between national and foreign interests is reflective of Morales' constant negotiation between opposing value systems existent in his subjectivity.

The new law has incited fierce opposition from ancestral cocaleros, and for good reason. The Bolivians I interviewed agree that it was drafted without inclusion of the voices of cocaleros, encourages further violence due to forced eradication, and strengthens Bolivia's economic relationship to the global drug trade by expanding coca growing in Chapare. The theory I introduced in an earlier section, on the themes of nationalism, subjectivity, and coloniality, aids

in the understanding of Law 906 as a component of broader postcolonial processes present in Bolivian institutions and subjectivity. The law is a site through which we can examine postcolonial processes at play, where the national and foreign interests blend to create a paradoxical coca strategy.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

Looking forward from the course of Evo Morales' second term as President, and taking into account the complexities of governing a neocolonial indigenous state, we should begin to consider what the future holds for Bolivia. To broaden the discussion about Morales' political and social policies, as well as suggest possibilities for alternative socio-political paths Bolivia and other indigenous states can take towards decolonization, I will place my case about coca policy into conversation with arguments presented by Nancy Postero in her recent book *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia*, Marisol de la Cadena's *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Assembly*. Postero's text focuses on Morales' relationship to indigenous

communities and the meaning of indigeneity, while de la Cadena examines how ontological difference in modern Peru frames the multiplex of social and political understandings. Hardt and Negri's text provides a framework for imagining forms of modern social movement organization that could support national decolonization.

I will use Postero's analysis of Evo Morales' complicated relationship to indigenous groups as a means to examine the similar alliance between Morales and cocaleros, followed by a discussion of how de la Cadena's book provides insight into potential alternative paths postcolonial indigenous states can take to carry out the process of mental and physical decolonization. From there I will segue into a discussion of David Blaney's critique of dependency theory, to conclude with an application of Hardt and Negri's calls for action presented in *Assembly*. Current literature in the fields of indigenous politics, international relations theory and social movement theory, aid in the contextualization of Bolivian coca policy and reveal its broader implications in the realm of decolonization.

### *The Indigenous State*

Postero establishes the basis for her analysis of Morales' relationship to indigenous communities and indigeneity by first reminding her readers that Morales promised to inaugurate a "cultural democratic revolution" as president (Postero 25). While it is likely that Morales believed his own words when stating that Bolivia's "communitarian capacity" was something the world could learn from, his treatment of indigenous peoples more closely resembled a only weak attempt to incorporate all Bolivian voices. Postero's work seeks to answer several questions about the current political realities of Bolivia: what does decolonization mean? How has the

Morales administration instituted this idea, and has it fulfilled its promises? What socio-political alternatives might an indigenous state produce? (Postero 3). Similar to my analysis that pits Morales' coca policy against his rhetoric of decolonization, Postero places Morales' Bolivia at the forefront of conversation surrounding decolonization in postcolonial indigenous states, raising similar questions about the possibility of success in decolonizing liberal states. Postero explores why Bolivia has yet to achieve its dream of decolonization by examining how the Bolivian indigenous state remains fundamentally liberal as Morales invokes "indigeneity" through performances of a state-controlled version of indigenous culture that legitimizes state power. She also raises the issue of suppressed indigenous local autonomy rights and state support for development projects despite indigenous disagreement. There are four central sites of contestation that she approaches, including (1) the fluid meaning of indigeneity (2) the multiple definitions of decolonization (3) what alternatives an indigenous state could produce, and (3) the current political struggles in Bolivia (Postero 5). For the purposes of my discussion, I will elaborate on the first two areas she addresses. Postero's analysis of these sites through the lens of indigenous issues parallels the paradoxes about identity, state institutions, and decolonization that I present in my argument about coca policy.

One of Postero's main arguments is that indigeneity in Bolivia has been altered from being a site of emancipation to one of liberal democracy-building (Postero 88). In recent years, inclusion in Bolivian social and political life has been in terms of class, rather than ethnicity, and Morales has focused his discourse of "economic liberation" — a blend of anti-neoliberalism with development — towards the new indigenous middle class (Postero 138). Not all indigenous people share these values, as many communities still wish to reassert their local sovereignty and



oppose liberalism (Postero 6). Postero references Robert Albro, who focuses his work on indigenous cultural policy in Latin America, whose analysis of Morales claims that his strength as a presidential candidate derived from his ability to bridge “local, collective, and culture-based indigenous communities and identities, on the one hand, and an urban pluralist recognition of indigenous heritage not tied to specific localities, on the other” (Postero 6). Also critical to Morales’ reconceptualization of *indigenismo*, or indigeneity, are state-sponsored staged performances of indigenous cultural rituals. Though Morales does emphasize indigenous pride, performances such as symbolic collective marriages give the state the opportunity to appropriate and enact customs to domesticate them, reformulating *indigenismo* to an essentialized notion of a prideful, yet obedient, indian (Postero 87). Postero frames indigeneity as a “relational field of governance, subjectivities, and knowledges,” meaning that the cultural performances put on display by the Morales administration are also key discursive sites that play a role in forming a government-approved indigenous national identity (Postero 10). She notes that instead of promoting a variety of knowledge forms or epistemologies, national performances of indigeneity act as a mechanism of state-making and establishing a pan-indigenous identity not separate from the Bolivian state, or MAS (Postero 74). As both an indigenous and liberal state, these issues raise questions about whether or not Morales is truly able to advance revolutionary politics or decolonization.

The concerns raised in Postero’s discussion of indigeneity are not dissimilar to those presented in my analysis of current coca policy. The first resemblance lies in Morales’ identity. Morales ran on a political platform emphasizing his identity as both an indigenous man and a coca union leader, establishing a strong constituency composed of both groups. At the same time

that he reaffirmed the importance of indigenous pride and increased political opportunities, he also promised the legalization of coca. Postero draws on Donna Haraway's idea of "potent fictions," which refers to the creation of a hegemonic redemptive narrative or reclamation of a national fiction for the advancement of a singular, collective, ambiguous national identity (Postero 37). It became clear early on in Morales' presidency that the boundaries of distinction between different indigenous communities and different groups of cocaleros were blurring, as the administration made clear which type of indigenous person or cocalero would be accepted by the new government.

Postero quotes Anna Tsing when saying that "powerful frames for indigeneity are also spaces for disagreement. Not everyone can fit into these frames" (Tsing 52). The same argument holds for cocaleros, in that some are traditional growers while others relocated to the Chapare in the late 20th century to grow coca industrially. Though Morales has sought to categorize all cocaleros *and* types of coca under a singular definition — as we have seen by the removal of the designation of "ancestral zone" — it would be impossible to encompass them all. The creation of pan-identities is almost always exclusionary and unequal, especially in Morales' case, as he more specifically represents the Aymara indigenous group and the cocaleros of the Chapare.

Indigenous activists from the lowlands claim that the MAS has only embraced plurinationalism rhetorically, but in its policies has reinforced a liberal, centralized state (Postero 11). For instance, in the past the MAS party has vetoed proposals for indigenous autonomy and established strict limitations on indigenous self-determination (Postero 11). Morales has co-opted the terms, histories, and meanings of indigeneity and coca to reformulate their fluid meanings in an economically and politically beneficial manner to the state.

Morales' poor treatment of certain indigenous communities is echoed by a comparable type of bias against ancestral cocaleros. Similar to his nationalist, anti-neocolonial coca rhetoric, Morales denounced capitalism as being the source of climate change in 2009 and 2010 at two different climate summits (Postero 91). He proposed a model for sustainable development that aligned with indigenous values and respect of Pachamama, but this has proven to be mostly a symbolic, rhetorical maneuver, because the government continues to exploit its natural resources and invite transnational corporations to develop land. The legalization of coca has followed a similar path; Morales has stressed the cultural and traditional importance of coca in Bolivia, though he has instead pursued the expansion of industrial coca grown using agrochemicals. Morales has been able to use language surrounding the relationship between legalizing coca and decolonization to further the coca growing abilities of his fellow cocaleros in the Chapare. Similarly, the government has linked natural resource extraction to decolonization by combining language of *vivir bien* and economic development, such as in The Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Vivir Bien (Postero 114). By doing so, Morales effectively silences groups outside of the government who are searching for alternatives to development that better align with indigenous values.

The recent passage of the General Law of Coca acts to censor ancestral cocaleros who want government recognition and acknowledgement of their sole legal right to grow coca. In co-opting language surrounding indigenous values and traditions, Morales defines what should be included in its definition; this is what Postero defines as “partial connectedness” — the ability for terms to mean “radically different things to the various actors who use them [...] it is this ambiguity, this ability to project various meaning onto them, that makes them such useful tools”

(Postero 176). Utilized by the Morales' administration, partial connectedness allows for Morales to rhetorically advocate for indigenous values by defining what they actually are. Jean Comaroff defines resistance as a "struggle for the possession of the sign," or an attempt to reclaim meanings from the government, which we have seen by indigenous and cocalero groups opposing Morales. Postero also refers to Elizabeth Povinelli's understanding of "indigeneity" as an "ethical substance," or, a shared and contestable idea around which subjects, including the state, can frame particular opinions (Postero 186). The concepts and identities presented by the Morales administration are fluid, and have the potential of being framed differently in varying contexts depending on the will of the speaker.

Postero dedicates a portion of her argument to the explanation of Morales' various interpretations of decolonization, framing her commentary through the understanding that "the discourse of decolonization is a way of representing or orienting these efforts, by drawing attention to past injustices and the forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivities that persist into the contemporary era" (Postero 12). She contends that the central paradox of Morales' efforts to decolonize is in the existing tension between Morales' "desire to overturn coloniality and all its legacies and the use of liberal state mechanisms to do so" (Postero 14). It is impossible to completely decolonize, especially if the government is empowering liberal ideology by further consolidating state power. In this way, she argues that decolonization can be a form of "policing" — Jacques Rancière's idea that laws can secure both participation and exclusion (Postero 17). For instance, the government has a focus on the reversal of neoliberalism but remains "enmeshed in an extractivist capitalist development model that adversely affects indigenous communities" (Postero 117). The state has the capability to employ rhetoric of decolonization to solidify its

own power, transforming decolonization from a process inclusive of alternative epistemologies to one recognizing government-backed multiculturalism.

In returning to a point I made earlier, the cultural democratic revolution Morales has sought to spearhead paradoxically relies on a Western liberal framework. According to Postero, MAS chose to “embrace a model of the state that it felt would give it as much power as possible to accomplish its goals, while protecting its political hegemony,” meaning that indigenous autonomy has been simultaneously limited by the Morales administration (Postero 58). Autonomy is only granted to municipalities that are majority indigenous, and follow procedures legally approved by the federal government (Postero 59, 163). The same tensions exist at the core of Bolivia’s development model, which attempts to incorporate and merge neoliberal economic conceptions with indigenous visions of *vivir bien*, as well as Morales’ coca policy. He has articulated a policy of “controlled legalization,” but it caters to his political constituency and the cocaine trade more than the legal growers of ancestral coca. The majority of Morales’ policies represent the paradox of dually embracing neoliberal and indigenous values.

### *Alternative Ontologies*

Marisol de la Cadena’s book *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*, based on fieldwork she carried out in the Peruvian Andes with two renowned traditional healers, Mariano Turpo and his son, Nazario Turpo, is helpful when considering the future of decolonization in Bolivia. Since Peru is a country socially, economically, and politically similar to Bolivia, the themes de la Cadena raises surrounding indigenous politics and the national shift from 1950 socialism to the neoliberal multiculturalism of the 2000s, parallels issues raised by

Postero. Both authors draw on the phrase “partial connectedness” to describe how language and ways of life can be translated, and although exist as different and distinct, are “partially and asymmetrically connected” (de la Cadena xii). Across epistemic and hegemonic divides, societies have varying understandings of realities; how do overlapping modes of understanding interpret different, yet intertwined, worlds? She claims that alternative ways of looking at reality should not be dismissed or celebrated, but rather, be an intentional and accepted means of ethnography.

De la Cadena recalls her experiences with Mariano and Nazario as being, at various times, moments that taught her about differences in communication and understanding. The medicinal knowledge and practice they offered were political and ethical obligations to both human *and* nonhumans (de la Cadena 235). De la Cadena grasped that “[their] communication did not depend on sharing single, clearly identical notions — theirs, mine, or a third new one. [They] shared conversations across different onto-epistemic formations” (de la Cadena xxv). In keeping with this, she notes that there were limits to their mutual understandings, as well as ideas that eclipsed their abilities to translate (de la Cadena xxvi). In communicating their work and livelihoods, the Turpo’s and de la Cadena had to accept that their communication did not rely on the clear overlapping of understandings, nor the creation of equivalent notions (de la Cadena 3).

De la Cadena notes that:

[Their] ways of knowing, practicing, and making our distinct worlds—[their] worldings, or ways of making worlds— had been “circuited” together and shared practices for centuries; however, they had not become one. In the circuit, some practices have become subordinate, of course, but they have not disappeared into those that became dominant, nor did they merge into a single and simple hybrid (4).

Essential to de la Cadena's ability to learn about the work of Mariano and Nazario was her ability to explore difference in a shared setting, where limits to each other's understandings were overcome by mutual acceptance of alternative ontologies.

Their work together revealed to her that "the historical ontology of modern knowledge" is exclusionary of "unreal" understandings that fall outside of its domain (de la Cadena 13). She highlights that while equivocations — the misunderstandings that usually occur in communications across worlds — are an important part of anthropology, it is essential to take note of the concepts we use to think other concepts (de la Cadena 27). For instance, Nazario's versions of historical events more closely resemble the Western definition of 'story', also made evident by the two terms used to refer to myths by anthropologists: *willakuy* and *kwintu*. The Quechua term *willakuy* refers to the act of narrating a past event to make it present, through which the act itself is evidence of the event (de la Cadena 28). In contrast, *kwintu* is used to define a narration of events that could or could not have occurred; but this does not revoke its eventfulness, even though the story is not necessarily classified under modern history (de la Cadena 29). The discussion of these two terms helps frame the issue of assumed onto-epistemic sameness, in that indigenous Andean understandings of history are not always relatable to Western conceptions of history.

The divergence of Western and Andean understandings is also apparent in imaginings of the political sphere. According to de la Cadena, the Andes region is a historical formation of indigenous and Spanish culture which hybridize to form the third space of the *mestizo* (32, 62). Andean nation-states, such as Peru and Bolivia, have implemented policies that, whether intentionally or not, address the plurality of domains. Instead of being inter-related, these realms

of identity are intra-related, and respective policies acknowledge the various parts of the whole of society (de la Cadena 32). This acknowledgement of plurality aligns with neoliberal interpretations of multiculturalism in that there is symbolic recognition of the parts of the whole, but not necessarily the implementation of ontologically inclusive policies that could threaten state sovereignty.

The Western conception of what is ahistorical, or a “non-event” affects how indigenous leaders and knowledge are treated in the political sphere. While the leadership of *campesinos* and indigenous intellectuals has been accepted because they struggle for better socio-economic positions, which falls within the boundaries of modern politics, the acknowledgment of medicinal healers is far less. ‘Non-modern’ natives are not compatible with modern politics, meaning that Mariano’s political activities have been largely ignored (de la Cadena 67). Chakrabarty’s term *asymmetric ignorance* refers to instances such as this, when those recognized as the sovereign leaders of a country do not acknowledge projects or leaders associated with socialist movements (de la Cadena 75). By doing so, the state effectively eliminates the socio-political possibilities that are not imagined by modern liberal democracies, defining what is legitimate political leadership. There are political forces present that shape the knowledge of the masses, leading people to ignore even what they see; the “implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants” is largely based on a dominant ontology reproduced by the modern state (Trouillot 73). Acknowledgement of plurality would encourage the visibility of traditional Andean socio-political beliefs that fall outside of the guise of the modern liberal state, thus threatening its supremacy.



The ontological division established by the West between humans and nature sets a corresponding limit on the presence of the natural world and earth-beings in the political sphere. The presence of spirits and gods in politics, as well as the environment, reflects the ontological heterogeneity of humanity in that what exists in the Peruvian political sphere may not exist in others (de la Cadena 104). In Mariano's demands for freedom and land, he was not motivated by solely economic reasons but also by the desire for state recognition of the ayllu collective (de la Cadena 109). Nature and earth-beings have become more public in the Andes as a result of their participation in socio-cultural events in the region and country of Peru, perhaps due to the large tourist market dedicated to runakuna practices (de la Cadena 162). De la Cadena notes that if in the 19th and 20th centuries the mission of liberalism was to encourage cultural sameness and assimilation, the contemporary project of neoliberalism is to continue a proposal for assimilation, but without the requirement for cultural sameness (de la Cadena 162). Within the Andean region and Peru itself there is a process of singularization of culture and beliefs. She argues that:

[m]arket recognition of "Andean culture" does not repair roads or cancel the state's abandonment of runakuna lives. It intensifies that abandonment—yet it does so nimbly, via benevolent practices that project the sentiment of egalitarianism and even democracy (177).

The state has encouraged symbolic, market-friendly steps towards the inclusion of runakuna practices, but has not adopted substantial policies towards representation. Similarly, Morales has sponsored symbolic events and policy measures that are inclusive of indigenous values, but has not supported substantial opportunities for indigenous representation in political dialogue.

Earth-beings disrupt the ontological separation between nature and humanity established by the West and the modern liberal state, proposing a cosmopolitics of relations between alternate

worlds (de la Cadena 281). They represent an alternative to the common state practice of homogenizing and “othering” diverse indigenous beliefs. De la Cadena notes that “by diverging from (or through ontological disagreement with) the established partition of the ‘sensible’, runakuna practices propose a cosmopolitics: relations among divergent worlds as a decolonial practice of politics with no other guarantee than the absence of ontological sameness” (de la Cadena 281). Earth-beings uncover the relational condition of difference — they disrupt the boundaries of what the modern state has identified as historical or real, transforming the “limit” (de la Cadena 275).

De la Cadena’s insight into the significance of onto-epistemic understandings assists us in reimagining the process of decolonization in Bolivia relating to its plurinational identity and the sovereignty of indigenous communities. To echo Viveiros de Castro, we need to “understand that understandings are necessarily not the same, and that they are not related to imaginary ways of ‘seeing the world’ but to the real worlds that are being seen” (11). A step towards doing so would be to accept that there are concepts and terms that are not possible to translate, because part of its true interpretation would be lost. For instance, the phrase *vivir bien*, translating directly to “to live well,” is multi-faceted in its application in Bolivian culture: it refers to eating well, thinking kindly, and engaging in your community, but also relates to the Andean concept of the interconnectedness of all living things. Direct translations are not able to capture the depth of *vivir bien*, and the phrase is not compatible with Western understandings of development or how to engage with the world. What has been defined as underdevelopment (the term itself coined by President Harry S. Truman in his inaugural address, also known as the Four Point Speech, focusing on how U.S. assistance can advance “underdeveloped nations”), is a term based in

Western ideals, values, and visions. The political awareness how differing ontologies shape realities could catalyze policies in Bolivia that support its plurinational identity and the autonomy of indigenous groups.

## *Dependency Theory*

David Blaney's elaboration of dependency theory illustrates how Western ontologies have dominated those of other societies whose notions of development are considered unequal and different. Dependency theory and other theories surrounding the "development of underdevelopment" speak to the persistence of international power inequalities (Blaney 460). In these developing and dependent countries, existing social structures reflect the paradox present under global capitalism; social dynamics represent external and internal influences, interests, and pressures (Cardoso & Faletto 26-27). One component of this paradox is the tension between the opposite logics of capitalism and the logic of sovereignty, more specifically, how in developing states global capitalism is also a form of imperialism that frustrates efforts towards complete sovereignty (Blaney 461). Put succinctly by Cardoso and Faletto, who succeed in describing Bolivia's current predicament:

the decision by local forces to rebel against colonialism and to create a nation implies an attempt to influence local history according to local values and interests. Economic links with external markets still impose limits to decisions and actions even after independence. The contradiction between the attempt to cope with the market situation in a politically autonomous way and the de facto situation of dependency characterize what is the specific ambiguity of nations where political sovereignty is expressed by the new state and where economic subordination is reinforced by the international division of labor [...] (Cardoso & Faletto 21)

Blaney defines sovereignty as “a form of national autonomy or autocentric development” that “figures as an ideal or counterfactual against which the realities of global capitalism may be challenged or measured” (Blaney 463). The struggles for sovereignty and self-determination by not only the Bolivian state, but also indigenous communities and cocaleros in ancestral coca growing zones, are challenges to the inequality preserved by global capitalism. This divergence in onto-epistemic understandings is what drives both the present inequality as well as social movement organization in economically dependent countries.

Dependency theory approaches capitalism through an analysis of its functions as an international system, one that constitutes national economics and subsystems that overlap and interpenetrate each other (Blaney 466). Bolivia’s current circumstance reflects an aspiration towards ‘national integrity’ through which the Morales administration is attempting to engage national interests and preserve political autonomy, while coping with a ‘situation of objective economic subordination to outside nations and enterprises’ (Blaney 466; Cardoso & Faletto 21). Contemporary political conflicts, those between nation state and those between social classes, have roots in the paradox that global capitalism creates between the fulfillment of national values and the strive towards Western values of development (Cardoso & Faletto 178).

Celso Furtado argues that a ‘polycentrist’ world of autonomous development would allow for an internally driven economy and encourage development in conformity with local culture (Furtado 64). Self-directing national economies are a means to counter the inequality reproduced by global capitalism. For Amin, the juxtaposition of sovereignty and capitalism are what “link national struggles and the wider socialist struggle against capitalist exploitation” (Blaney 476). The creation of autonomous, self-centered development is what can assist

peripheral economies in transforming beyond global capitalism to a socialist future (Amin 16-17). This developmental approach is focused on how local communities have the ability to resist larger economic processes and territorial infringement. A closer analysis of dependency theory indicates that it might support de la Cadena's conception of alternative ontologies, through its support of deploying local knowledge to counter oppressive systems with dominating ontologies. Blaney's elaboration of dependency theory helps us to imagine how alternative ontologies can be harnessed by both local communities and peripheral economies to assert the legitimacy of their local values. A true expression of Bolivia's plurinational identity would be state recognition of the autonomy of local communities, as well as a form of national development that more closely aligns to Andean values of *vivir bien* and respect of coca, rather than an economy that is extractive and relies on accumulation by dispossession.

### *Smashing the State*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Assembly* aids in the conceptualization of a path towards true decolonization in Bolivia, also reflective of Postero's analysis of indigenous politics, de la Cadena's conception of alternative ontologies, and Blaney's analysis of dependency theory. Hardt and Negri call for "strategy to the movements, tactics to the leadership," modeled from the idea that social movements and political institutions can be interwoven in such a way that people do not need political representatives (Hardt & Negri 27). Hardt and Negri express dissatisfaction with populist political formations, stating that it is "the operation of a hegemonic power that constructs 'the people' as a unified figure, which it claims to represent" (Hardt & Negri 23). While populist projects often recognize their origin in social

movements, they always end up detaching themselves, explaining that political power is in a sphere other than the social and that state power is essential to political organization (Hardt & Negri 23). In this manner, Evo Morales' administration and the ideology of *evismo* are reflective of a populist formation that paradoxically speaks to both the power of the people and of the state.

Hardt and Negri outline their 'calls and responses' to clearly communicate the steps for social movement success, including (1) a transformation of leadership through inversion of strategy and tactics; (2) an invention of nonsovereign institutions that unite multiple subjectivities; (3) a taking of power; (4) reappropriation of capital, and (5) sustaining cooperative forms of social life. In response to these calls, Hardt and Negri contend for a need to investigate cooperative networks that animate social organization, emphasize the "plural ontology of social being," and affirm the common (Hardt & Negri 287, 292). The freedom, autonomy, and self-determination that "smashing the state" requires is only compatible with nonsovereign power, insofar as sovereignty was born of colonialism (Hardt & Negri 289). Their idea of "smashing the state" means dismantling the gap between the rulers and the ruled; political and administrative institutions would be organized only as a means to organize the collective established from the bottom up (Hardt & Negri 289). The pair argue that:

[we] have other options, and, specifically, a non sovereign and truly democratic organization of society is possible. Instead of resurrecting the autonomy of the political, *the political must flow back into and be reclaimed by the social*: political rationality and political action can no longer be considered autonomous but always completely embedded in the circuits of social and economic life (Hardt & Negri 45).

Effective reform can only be a result of threatening ruling sovereign powers and institutions, forcing substantive transformation (Hardt & Negri 256). For example, past struggles for

decolonization, such as that of the Kurdish Liberation Movement from the mid-20th century, have successfully defined decolonization in nonsovereign terms (Hardt & Negri 39). Abdullah Ocalan, a Kurdish nationalist leader, advocates a shift from national liberation, or sovereignty, to a form of democratic autonomy (Hardt & Negri 39). Existing indigenous networks of organization can serve as a models for the establishment of nonsovereign institutions in Bolivia.

Private property, a foundational component of sovereignty, supports a “monopoly of access and decision-making,” warranting Hardt and Negri’s argument for preserving the common (Hardt & Negri 39). Restoring the life of the commune is a focal point of their overall argument, insofar that it has the capacity to replace the centralized sovereign power bourgeois state (Hardt & Negri 134). The creation of new and different institutions that focus attention on the protection of the commune and the collective would be a means of resistance against neocolonial and capitalist forces.

The production of subjectivity is a terrain of struggle full of potential for resistance (Hardt & Negri 222). Hardt and Negri believe that the inversion of social movement strategy and tactics must begin through the process of subjection. In the case of Morales’ Bolivia, the reproduction of subjectivity in each new generation represents an opportunity for building a multitudinous subversive, social struggle. They note that subversive actions operate within a biopolitical terrain and serve as the basis of reconceptualizing political realism — the idea that power is a set of social relationships that hold the capacity for resistance, creation, and conflict (Hardt & Negri 223). Relationships then become political through the power of the multitude, and this biopolitical transformation has the opportunity to imagine new forms of social organization (Hardt & Negri 257). The sociocultural tools for this transformation already reside

in Bolivians, who have a long history indigenous autonomous organization and networks for social movements; in order to harness this potential power, there first needs to be a unifying process of subject creation across different, or ‘partially connected’ ontologies.

The multitude will counter capitalism’s privatization of social life by constructing a common, relying on horizontal democratic and autonomous administration (Hardt & Negri 245). Transformed democratic institutions and their newly developed capacities will then administer the common, and support an expression of societal plurality (Hardt & Negri 228). The counterpower that the multitude claims represents an *altermodernity*, an ontology that opposes dominant historical narratives (Hardt & Negri 256). Hardt and Negri note that modern examples of this type of resistance are the Zapatistas of Chiapas, the Occupy movements of 2011, and Bolivian cocaleros, adding that the crucial element they share is the ability to build a strong, plural coalition (Hardt & Negri 256). Counterpowers work to make a *nonsovereign* claim on power and establish institutions keeping this in mind, which is an important element of Hardt and Negri’s vision of social movement organization (Hardt & Negri 256).

Current literature in the areas of indigenous politics, international relations theory, dependency theory and social movement organization connect Morales’ Bolivia to future possibilities for reimagining governance. Postero’s book elaborates on the ways Morales has defined indigeneity for Bolivia, while de la Cadena approaches the subject of international relations through alternative worldings, a model inclusive of subaltern ontologies. Blaney’s conceptualization of dependency theory, along with Hardt and Negri’s understanding of horizontal social movement organization, aid in the imagining of a path towards decolonization



in Bolivia.

## Conclusion

Coca policy under Evo Morales is an engagingly multi-dimensional site through which to approach the broader issue of decolonization. As the first indigenous president of Bolivia, the country with the most indigenous people in its demographic in all of South America, President Morales represents postcolonial hybridity in subjectivity and state institutions. The underlying tension present in Law 906 between national and foreign interests, and resulting violence toward ancestral cocaleros, exhibits the tension between Morales' rhetoric and policies resultant of the paradox of decolonizing in a liberal state framework.

My paper has sought to weave together qualitative research, theory, and current literature to engage various disciplines and knowledge. Based on field work I conducted while in Bolivia, the project has roots in pedagogical research methodologies intent to create discursive space in academia for historically marginalized voices. I applied the interviews to a framework of

postcolonial theory, with hopes to further contextualize coca policy in Bolivia and place it in conversation with scholarship in the areas of nationalism, subjectivity formation, and the coloniality of power. Next, I engaged my case with current literature in a variety of disciplines, including indigenous politics and international relations theory, to speak to broader Bolivian society and its future prospect of decolonization.

Bolivian indigenous values align well with the possibility of reorganizing national institutions around plural ontologies — a process of decolonization focused on the plurinational nature of the collective. Nancy Postero quotes Fanon when saying that “decolonization is a continuing constituent process carried out by actors whose subjectivities are only formed in the process of struggling for revolutionary change” (Postero 63). Hardt and Negri echo this sentiment, emphasizing that prior to any power or institutional change, the multitude must unify through a process of subjectivity creation. The model of alternative ontologies presented by de la Cadena clarifies the sociopolitical significance of creating these understandings, while Postero’s analysis of indigenous politics and indigeneity provides insight into the complexity of Bolivia’s race relations. If the Bolivian multitude were to unite on the basis of its indigenous ontologies and use its power in numbers to establish nonsovereign institutions, a process of decolonization unmarred by the forces of global capitalism (assuming there to be an autonomous, autocratic national economy as a consequence of indigenous assembly) would ensue.

Besides providing an in-depth case study of Bolivian coca policy under the Morales administration, a goal of my project is to speak to broader attempts to decolonize occurring in indigenous states. I was compelled by the Bolivian case because of the tension between decolonizing policies, such as the legalization of coca, and policies that are oppressive of

indigenous values. Bolivia has a number of qualities that make it a good candidate for an application of Hardt and Negri's call to assemble and smashing the state: its affinity for indigenous pride, public support for decolonizing policies, shared indigenous ontologies, and a history of social movement organization.

Philosopher Gilles Deleuze writes that, “[e]very institution imposes a series of models on our bodies, even in its involuntary structures, and offers our intelligence a sort of knowledge, a possibility of foresight as project,” echoing the significance of subjectivity formation in relation to reimagining institutions (Hardt & Negri 289). If the understanding that only sovereign institutions are valid is challenged, Bolivia would be better equipped to pioneer a new form contemporary-era governance compatible with their national values. The site of coca allows us interrogate this possibility on a micro-scale, while the paradox of decolonizing within the model of the liberal state is the larger issue currently embracing Bolivian indigenous politics. If the multitude assembles, demanding political and economic autonomy through non sovereign, plural institutions, Bolivia might effectively reimagine modern governance.

## Epilogue

Though I concluded data collection in December 2017, violent clashes between Bolivian cocaleros from ancestral regions and military officials have continued well into 2018. In February 2018, ADEPCOCA presented a list of thirteen demands for Morales, otherwise they would resume blockading the streets of La Paz (Alanoca Paco “Suspend Protests”). Sergio Pampa, the secretary of the organization, noted their demand for the withdrawal of military

officials from around their market in Villa Fátima, the resignations of Minister César Cocarico and Vice Minister Froilán Luna, and the reversal of Law 906 (Alanoca Paco “Suspend Protests”).

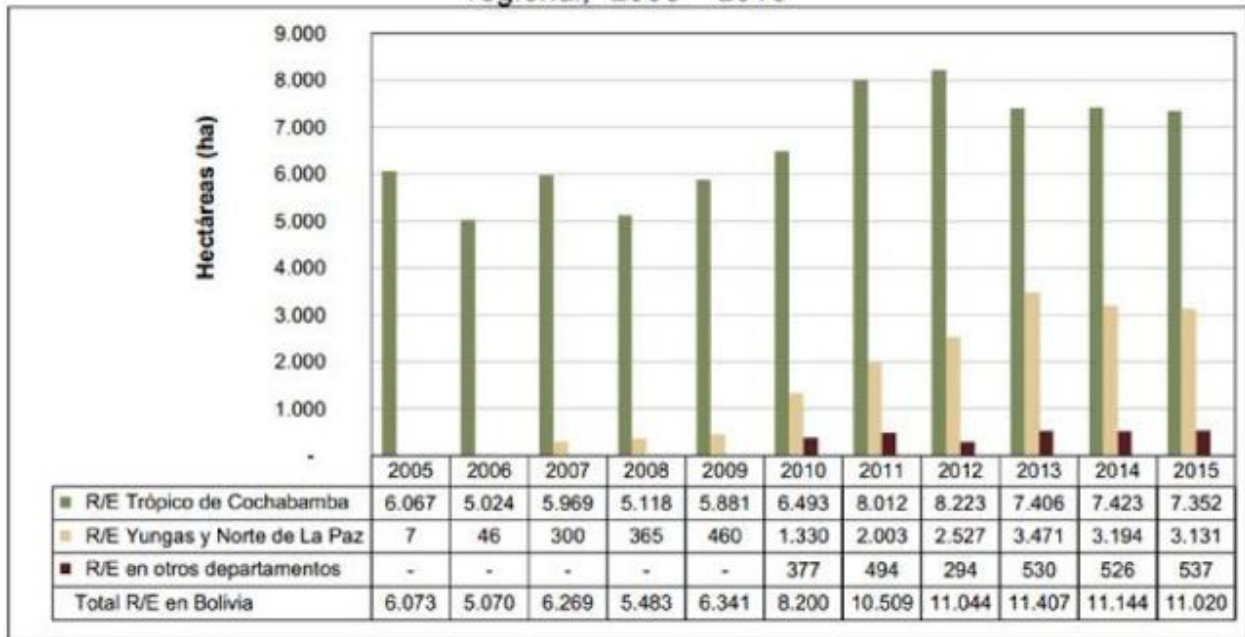
In early March, shortly after the release of ADEPCOCA’s list of demands, violent confrontation led to the arrest of 44 cocaleros and 12 wounded (*Sputnik* “Human Rights NGO”). On March 12th, an ad hoc committee accused of ties to the federal government, took control of the leadership of ADEPCOCA. ADEPCOCA’s board of directors, led by elected leader Franklin Gutiérrez, attempted to retake control of the union’s headquarters but the police were guarding the entrance (*El Mundo* “More Violence”). Violence continued, leading the ad hoc committee to announce that it would exit the headquarters, returning leadership power to the cocaleros. Before the transition was carried out, several cocaleros were seriously injured after being hit with pellets by police forces (*El Mundo* “More Violence”). At the request of the government, Honorato Atto, a founding member of ADEPCOCA, was briefly replaced Franklin Gutiérrez as leader of the union, but Atto soon after recognized the legitimacy of Gutiérrez (*El País* “Police Withdraw”). The ADEPCOCA Self-Defense Committee, supporting the leadership of Gutiérrez, was formed in response to the takeover of ADEPCOCA’s headquarters and leadership. They pressured for the acknowledgement of Gutiérrez as leader, the release of arrested cocaleros, and instructed cocaleros to paralyze activity in the Yungas until the headquarters was recovered (*Correo del Sur* “Government Pressure”). Gutiérrez exclaimed, “We are not a few, we are not a few, we are thousands and thousands of coca leaf producers who are here in vigil, and we are going to defend our institution, we are not going to allow the government to take ADEPCOCA as it has taken [...] different organizations at the national level” (*Correo del Sur* “Government Pressure”).

Celebrating the recovery of their headquarters, cocaleros of ADEPCOCA raised Gutiérrez on their shoulders, chanting “The coca of the Yungas is respected!” and “Franklin yes, Evo no!” (*El País* “Police Withdraw”). The cocaleros found that upon re-entering their headquarters, documents were missing and safes were broken into. Still, the confidence of the cocaleros and Gutiérrez was restored. Despite attempts from the government to remove him from office, Gutiérrez continued his presidency and his defense of traditional coca. After thanking his followers for the vigil in his support, he proclaimed “Long live the coca of the Yungas! Coca or death!” (*El País* “Police Withdraw”).

# Appendix

Table 1.

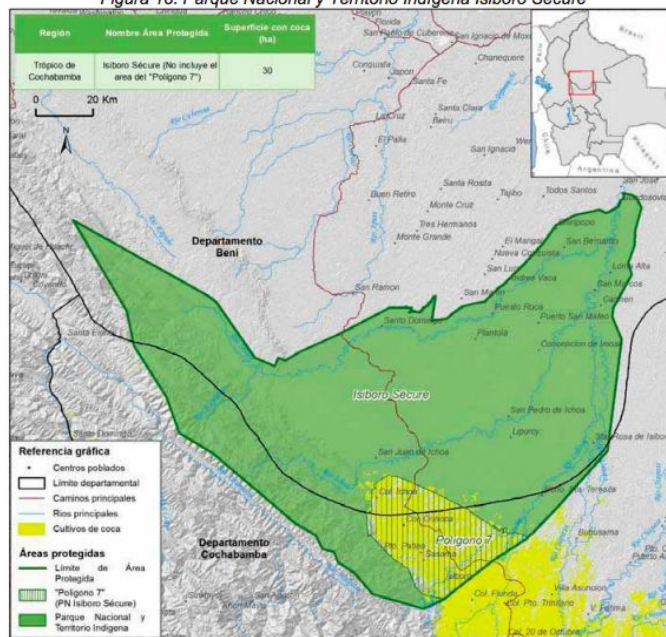
Figura 25. Racionalización/erradicación anual del cultivo de coca en Bolivia a nivel regional, 2005 – 2015



Fuente: DIGPROCOCA

Figura 18. Parque Nacional y Territorio Indígena Isiboro Sécure

Table 2.



Fuente: UNODC – VDSSC

Table 3

**Tabla 6. Áreas Protegidas de Bolivia afectadas con cultivos de coca**

Nombre de Área Protegida	Categoría
<b>Isiboro Sécore</b>	Parque Nacional <sup>16</sup> y Territorio Indígena (PN y TI)
<b>Carrasco</b>	Parque Nacional (PN)
<b>Cotapata</b>	Parque Nacional y Área Natural de Manejo Integrado <sup>17</sup> (PN y ANMI)
<b>Amboró</b>	Parque Nacional y Área Natural de Manejo Integrado (PN y ANMI)
<b>Apolobamba</b>	Área Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional (ANMIN)
<b>Madidi</b>	Parque Nacional y Área Natural de Manejo Integrado (PN y ANMI)

Fuente: UNODC – SERNAP

Table 4.

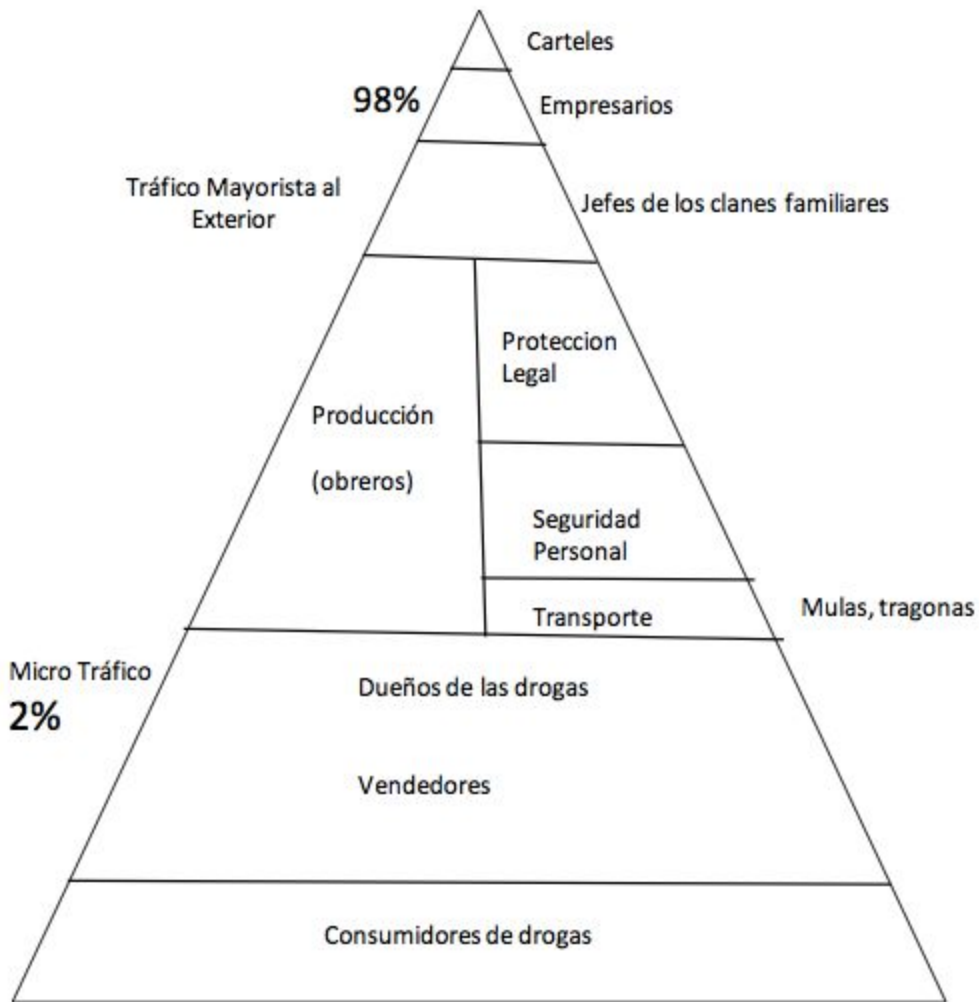
**Tabla 7. Cultivos de coca en Áreas Protegidas\***

Nombre Área Protegida	2015 (ha)	2016 (ha)	% Cambio 2015-2016
<b>Isiboro Sécore</b>	12	30	150%
<b>Carrasco</b>	104	95	-9%
<b>Cotapata</b>	31	39	26%
<b>Amboró</b>	27	23	-15%
<b>Apolobamba</b>	18	45	150%
<b>Madidi</b>	12	21	75%

\*No incluye la superficie de cultivos de coca del Polígono 7 y Línea Roja dentro de los Parques Nacionales Isiboro Sécore y Carrasco

Fuente: UNODC – VDSSC

Table 5. Drawn by Gloria Rose Mary Achá





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