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Evo Morales: A Bolivian Uprising

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Evo Morales: A Bolivian Uprising

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of International Studies

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by

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Introduction

The Bolivian election of 2005 saw Evo Morales, an Aymara Indian, garner 54% of the vote. This was an amazing accomplishment in and of itself, because for the first time since 1982 the Bolivian Congress did not choose the country's president since Morales had won a majority of the popular vote (Eaton 2005, 5). Bolivia has nine sub-national regions, and Morales won five of them. Significantly, all of the sub-national regions won by Morales are western and Andean departments. His opponent Jorge Quiroga won the remaining four departments in the eastern half of the country (Eaton 2005, 5). Tensions between the east and west of the country are nothing new in Bolivia. Much of the tension historically has to do with uneven economic development between the two halves of the country. Over 80% of Bolivia's natural gas reserves are in the east of the country, and, in 2006, natural gas comprised 47.7% of the total exports of Bolivia (Banco Central de Bolivia, 2007). In addition, the fertile farm ground lies in the east of the country; the west of the country is mountainous and the soil is not rich like it is in the Amazon basin. Though Morales did not win any of the eastern regions, he did garner 33% of the vote in the department of Santa Cruz, the opposition's stronghold in the east (Eaton 2005, 6).

The election of Evo Morales in 2005, can be attributed to two major interrelated factors. First, the arrival of neoliberalism in Bolivia in the 1980's, and all of the economic and social changes this ideology entails, created a strong backlash among many Bolivians who consider neoliberalism, with its emphasis on trade liberalization and privatization, to be a cause of the exacerbation of poverty and inequality in the country. The neoliberal economic model contributed to the struggle over natural resources because it advocated privatization and capital liberalization. Natural gas, minerals and coca are the three main natural resources in the country. Protests by indigenous groups calling for Bolivian

sovereignty over natural gas served as the catalyst for the Gas War of 2003. The Gas War constituted a massive uprising of Bolivian citizens which left close to 60 Bolivians dead and many more wounded at the hands of the security forces, but ultimately culminated in the resignation and exile of President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada in 2003. One of the key tenets of neoliberalism is the privatization of state run utilities. The privatization of the Cochabamba water authority resulted in the Water War, a massive protest by the citizens of Cochabamba which forced the state to renege on its contract with a foreign owned consortium and turn the water authority back over to municipality of Cochabamba. Indigenous groups have mobilized around a triad of natural resources coca, water and natural gas, all of which are perceived as being “under attack” from a combination of US drug policy, neoliberalism, and multinational corporations. At the Social Debt Summit in 2003, Morales declared, “We have no other alternative but to put an end to the neoliberal model” (Quoted in de la Barra 2006, 1).

Second, Morales rose to power with the help of social movements which gained momentum and support as political institutions and political parties were no longer capable of satisfying the demands of a majority of Bolivian citizens. The consolidation of these movements in many ways enabled Morales to win the presidency. The process of democratization facilitated the organization of these movements. Democratization ushered in the devolution of political powers to the municipal level through laws such the Law of Popular Participation (LPP). In many cases this law empowered indigenous groups at the municipal level; it led to the election of the largest number of indigenous legislators ever to Congress. The LPP helped to set the stage for the election of Morales on the national level. The mobilization of indigenous groups has led the *mestizo* political elite of Bolivia to employ the same normative structures indigenous groups have in an attempt to achieve their goals.

This thesis originally began as an attempt to explain how the US led War on Drugs affects the countries in which it is fought, particularly the ways in which the drug war contributed to the 2005 election of Evo Morales, the first indigenous president in Bolivia's history. But, as I began to read on the subject and on my subsequent visit to the country, I became fascinated with why the recent, sometimes violent conflict in Bolivia is an ethnic one.

The history of the Americas surely has much to do with the current situation today. While living in Honduras I saw first hand the impoverishment indigenous peoples endure both there and in Guatemala. Many of Latin America's indigenous peoples not only face economic exclusion, but also social exclusion as they have been labeled the "other" throughout the construction of nation states in Central and South America. Indigenous cultures and languages were not used as the basis for states in the Americas. Instead, many nation states have been constructed around a *mestizo* identity and the Spanish language.

A trip I took to the Mayan ruins in northern Honduras at Copan was lengthened by a day when my friends and I arrived and found the ruins closed because indigenous peoples had blocked off the entrance. I will never forget walking towards the ruins from the town and seeing large numbers of indigenous men each carrying three foot long sticks, heading in the same direction and wondering, "I wonder where they are going with those sticks?" When my friends and I arrived at the ruins, it was impossible to enter as the gate had been blocked by the hundreds of chanting protesters. In the afternoon, the Honduran president flew in by helicopter to negotiate directly with the protestors. When I inquired in town why the indigenous peoples were protesting I was told, "over money and land." I saw the ruins the next day. Making my way north to Guatemala, the large number of indigenous peoples/groups that exist in the country caught me by surprise. So it was with a great deal of

fascination and some experience in Latin America that I began this project on Bolivia, a nation where 65% of the population identifies as indigenous.

Winding down the road traversing the upper rim of the canyon which houses the city of La Paz one notices the graffiti spray painted and in some cases, painted on the walls. “*ORGULLO INDIGENA*” - INDIGENOUS PRIDE it reads. Then, “*SOMOS MAS*” - either “WE ARE MORE,” euphemistically, but in the Bolivian context, it also advocated adherence to the Movement for Socialism. This political artwork appeared on walls all over the city. The graffiti conveyed an indigenous confidence and warned all who passed by that there were changes on the way in Bolivia.

Indigenous groups have constituted a marginalized majority in Bolivia since the arrival of the Spanish. Jubenal Quispe, a Quechua from Peru living and working in Bolivia for the Maryknoll priests, described this marginalization in response to a question I asked him about a confusing experience I had with a Bolivian taxi driver. To an outsider, the taxi driver appeared indigenous. He had very dark skin and told me his parents both speak Quechua but he could not. To my surprise, when I mentioned Evo Morales, the current Bolivian president who is indigenous, the taxi driver was very critical of him. He said, “Evo Morales speaks terrible Spanish and does not have the capacity to run the country.” When I recounted this conversation to Quispe, he responded,

Brother, the problem is that there have been 540 years of mental and spiritual colonization. In these 540 years they (*mestizos*) have repeated that the Indian is useless, is synonymous with underdevelopment, uncleanliness, ignorance, and is the reason for the underdevelopment and poverty of the country. Within us there exists a permanent internal battle. In psychology it is called the double personality. In all aspects: philosophical, political, economic, cultural and ethnic, the *mestizo* American cultures are always negating what exists inside us. I think that the decolonization that people are talking about now justly has to start here inside (points to his heart) Express what it means to be indigenous and not be embarrassed by it. This also happened to me. I was embarrassed to be Quechua. Why? Because to be indigenous is to be worse, it is civil death. In Bolivia, in Peru, in what ever country in Latin America, to be indigenous is to be civilly dead. You can't ascend to public office,

because the moment you present your papers... “Ohh, your last name is Quechuan. Disqualified!” In the interview if you don’t speak Spanish well, “disqualified!” You have an indigenous accent, “disqualified.” I know people who have changed their last names. This is not indigenous people’s fault. They are products, or victims, of their history and circumstances. Today, there are families that don’t want their children to learn indigenous languages. (Interview Jubenal Quispe)

El problema hermano es eso, son 540 años de colonización mental y espiritual. En estos 540 años están repitiendo que el indio no sirve, es sinónimo de atraso de subdesarrollo, de suciedad, de ignorancia, son los culpables del subdesarrollo del país, de la pobreza del país etc. En nosotros existe una permanente batalla interna. En psicología se llama la doble personalidad. En todos los aspectos; filosofo, político, económico, cultural, étnico. El mestizo y la cultura americana siempre esta negando lo que existe dentro de nosotros. Creo yo que la descolonización de que se habla ahora, justamente tiene que empezar aquí adentro. Lo indígena se expresa como tal, y no sea causa de vergüenza. Esto me pasó a mí también. Yo me avergonzaba de ser quechua. ¿Por que? Porque ser indígena es ser peor, es la muerte civil. En Bolivia, en Perú en cualquier otro país en latinoamérica, ser indígena es la muerte civil. No puede subir a cargos públicos, porque en el momento que presentas tus papeles, “ah, tu apellido es Quechua. ¡Descalificado!” En la entrevista si no hablas bien el español, “descalificado.” Tienes acento indígena, “descalificado.” Yo conozco gente que han cambiado sus apellidos. Los indígenas no son culpables de eso. Son productos o victimas de su historia y de sus circunstancias. Hay familias que no quieren que sus niños aprendan idiomas indígenas. (Entrevista a Jubenal Quispe)

Quispe illustrates the problems indigenous groups have faced since the Spanish first came to the Americas. Indigenous languages and cultural customs have been under attack and subverted ever since the Spanish first arrived. Quispe explained very eloquently why the taxi driver I had met mocked Evo Morales for his “poor Spanish.” His response explained why the taxi driver did not have any desire to acknowledge his indigenous heritage or to learn Quechua even though his parents both spoke the language. To be indigenous truly has meant that a person is “civilly dead” for one could not participate in the state if one did not know Spanish, or had an indigenous name.

The changes taking place in Bolivia today involve altering a power structure that has been kept in place by an ethnic minority of the population since the arrival of the Spanish in Bolivia over 500 years ago. The presidency of Evo Morales is a result of a remarkable

resurgence of indigenous social movements organized in response to racial oppression, neo-liberal economic policies and disagreements over the distribution of Bolivian natural resources. This thesis documents the current ethnic conflict in Bolivia and the autonomy regimes this conflict has helped to create. I document the mimicking dynamic that can be observed in the *mestizo* elite's demands for autonomy, as many of their claims and demands mirror those of indigenous groups. I observe how such an autonomy discourse is employed by a broad spectrum of groups in Bolivian society and how it feeds ethnic conflict. I make a contribution by comparing these ethnic autonomy demands in order to help document them and hopefully bring about a greater understanding of ethnic conflicts in societies undergoing democratic transitions.

A *mestizo* elite has existed in the country since the beginning of the Bolivian state (Klein 2003). Their power has been entrenched since that time. Not only do the *mestizo* elite in eastern Bolivian department of Tarija sit on 85% of the natural gas reserves of the Bolivian state; to this day, they control large amounts of the fertile soil found in the Amazon Basin of eastern Bolivia (Carvajal 2006, 90). Lora observes:

In Bolivia there still prevails a regime of medium and large country estates that monopolize 90% of the cultivable land, while the remaining 10% of the land resides in the indigenous communities and the small producers. A smaller group of families maintains under its control millions of hectares. It is calculated that of the 16.4 million hectares in agricultural use, in the last four years, on average, only 2 million hectares have been used. (Miguel Lora quoted in Roca, 2005)

En Bolivia sigue vigente un régimen de haciendas medianas y grandes, que monopolizan 90% de la tierra cultivable, mientras que el 10% restante recae en las comunidades campesinas y los pequeños productores... Un grupo reducido de familias mantiene bajo su poder millones de hectáreas. Se calcula que de 16.4 millones de hectáreas de tierra con vocación agrícola, en los últimos cuatro años el promedio de explotación no supero los dos millones de hectáreas. (Miguel Lora quoted in Roca, 2005)

The *mestizo* elite in the east of the country control a great deal of Bolivia's land and natural resources. This is significant because the majority of Bolivia's natural resources are

found in the east of the country. This concentration of land in the hands of one ethnic group has contributed greatly to the ethnic conflict in Bolivia today. Indigenous groups own very little of the fertile land in east of the country, creating a form of slavery according to one indigenous man from the department of Beni, in an interview with a reporter for the bilingual rural newspaper of the Quechua Nation, Conosur Rawpaqman:

We want the reforms to be carried out in a way that would give us the opportunity to have land. There (in the east of the country) our land is full of ranchers, they have the power and appropriate the land. The ranchers make (indigenous peoples) work like slaves, the pay is miserable, the most they pay is 20 bolivianos. That doesn't compensate, but if the law says 8 hours of work, they stretch it out to 9 to 10 hours, some bosses make their young men get up at 4am to go to work. (Conosur Nawpaqman 3, Diciembre 2006)

Queremos que las reformas sean reformados de una manera que a nosotros nos de la oportunidad de tener tierra. Allá nuestra tierra, esta lleno de ganaderos, ellos tienen poder y se adueñan de las tierras. Los ganaderos hacen trabajar como en esclavitud y el sueldo es una miseria, el que mas paga son 20 Bs. Y eso no compensa, pero si la ley dice 8 horas de trabajo pero ellos estiran 9 a 10 horas, algunos patrones a las 4 de la mañana hacen levantar a sus mozos para hacer trabajar. (Conosur Nawpaqman 3, Diciembre 2006)

Many indigenous peoples are forced to work all day on land that they do not own, and are paid a miserable wage in the process. It is not difficult to see why this would cause resentment and provide an impetus for the non-landowning indigenous peoples to organize in order to change the economic situation in which they find themselves.

The culmination of recent events in Bolivia has produced the convening of a Constitutional Assembly to rewrite the constitution. Indigenous groups are attempting to effect broad national level institutional change in Bolivia. They strive to integrate their own forms of justice, governance and territorial demands into a new Constitution currently being negotiated in a Constitutional Assembly in Sucre, Bolivia. In response to this indigenous awakening, the *mestizo* political and economic elite is attempting to create an autonomous

space in the east of the country. This *mestizo* elite desires sovereignty over the vast amount of natural resources found there. This includes not only natural gas, but fertile farmland as well.

In examining the autonomy demands of both sides of the conflict in Bolivia this thesis finds that ethnic autonomy demands in democracies arise from economic and political inequalities among groups as well primordial¹ differences between them. This thesis argues that identity is primarily constructed and that at times identity is used strategically to advance one group's interests over another's. Though identity is used strategically at times, it is difficult to write off primordial attachments as simply strategic. The complexity of the ethnic conflict in Bolivia cannot be understated. The conflict has evolved and taken many different forms over the last 540 years. The phenomena that have shaped the current altercations between ethnic groups in Bolivia will be examined in this thesis in the lead up to the final chapter on autonomy.

The fact that Bolivia is a democracy makes the ethnic conflict taking place there different from one in a country with an autocratic government. This thesis will examine how democracy, and specifically the continued democratization of the Bolivian state, has impacted the situation in Bolivia. Indigenous social movements and the political party created by them, MAS, will be examined here. This party represents the social movements in their interaction with the state. Morales is the leader of this party. Morales became a popular figure as he rose through the ranks of the coca grower federations, established by highly organized coca growers in order to defend their right to grow coca as the US led War on Drugs pushed for the eradication of the plant. As the coca plant is an important part of indigenous culture and provides much needed income to the growers of the plant, the struggle over the coca plant became one channel for ethnic conflict. The struggle over coca

¹ Primordial refers to bonds of blood, speech and custom.

reveals the complex nature of the ethnic conflict in Bolivia and will be explored fully as the War on Drugs helped to launch the political career of Evo Morales.

Methods

To gather data for this thesis I traveled to La Paz and Cochabamba, Bolivia in December of 2007. Before leaving I submitted my initial research to the IRB and was approved to interview in the field. I stayed in Bolivia for a month, splitting my time equally between La Paz and Cochabamba. I conducted nine formal interviews with academics, researchers and former government officials. I attended two conferences on interculturalism, and spent a great deal of time reading documents in libraries, NGO's and bookstores in both cities. I attempted to hear and record both sides of the national story currently being constructed and reconstructed in Bolivia. The depth and breadth of my research was constrained by the fact I spent only a month in Bolivia. In choosing people to interview I relied upon contacts provided to me by an US academic. From there, I relied upon referrals provided to me by those I interviewed. Because of this, many of my interviewees were sympathetic to Evo Morales and his government, though not all were. I tried to balance this out by actively incorporating the views expressed on the Camba Nation website and the views of those unsympathetic to Morales. The conferences I attended on interculturalism came about as a result of referrals provided to me by those I interviewed. Reading the newspapers every morning apprised me of the current situation and provided ample ammunition to begin conversations with taxi drivers, kind Bolivians I met and others. During my time in Cochabamba a summit of Latin American presidents took place. I heard Daniel Ortega, Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales address an overflowing crowd at the Cochabamba soccer stadium, providing me with an important lens into how Bolivia is presently situated within broader struggles for change and autonomy in Latin America. The

translations are my own. I have left the Spanish text in the body of the thesis to maintain the original voice of the people I interviewed in Bolivia.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides a review of the literature as it pertains to multiethnic conflict, democratization and natural resources. I argue that multiethnic conflict is best explained by employing a combination of the various paradigms put forth by scholars in the field. The democratization literature reviewed demonstrates that a nation state with a democratic government presents ethnic groups with certain challenges and opportunities. I argue that the struggle over natural resources has provided ethnic groups a reason to organize.

Chapter 2 of this thesis provides an overview of the political and economic situation in Bolivia. I argue that indigenous social movements and *mestizo* civic committees have provided each ethnic group with a “vehicle” through which they interact with the state. I argue that indigenous social movements have contributed to the resurgence of an indigenous identity. I argue that the democratic nature of the state helps to create spaces for both indigenous and *mestizo* peoples. Finally I examine the neoliberal economic model and argue that it helped to contribute to and exacerbate economic inequalities between ethnic groups in Bolivia.

Chapter 3 examines the coca plant, its uses and cultural significance. I explain how the U.S. led War on Drugs exacerbated the ethnic conflict in Bolivia through its policies of forced eradication of the plant. I argue that the struggle over coca is useful to examine because it provides a window into the complex socioeconomic, historical and cultural aspects to the ethnic conflict in Bolivia. I argue that the War on Drugs and its consequences

provided Evo Morales with a stage from which he could address the more pressing concerns of the entire Bolivian population.

Chapter 4 documents the competing autonomy regimes being put forth by both indigenous groups and *mestizos* in Bolivia. I argue that there is a mimicking dynamic that can be observed in the autonomy regime put forth by *mestizos* as many of their demands and rationales are similar to those of indigenous groups.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This thesis examines the ever changing context of Bolivian democratization as a case study in multiethnic democracies. It examines a limited section of literature in three areas - multiethnic democracies, democratization, and the relationship between natural resources and conflict. Since the Spanish first came to Bolivia, over 500 years ago, a white/*mestizo* political elite has ruled the country. Indigenous peoples comprise a majority of the Bolivian population, but they have not wielded significant formal political power in Bolivia until recently. The demands put forth by ethnic groups will shape the Bolivian state for some time to come.

Multiethnic Conflict Literature

This review will begin by examining a selection of literature as it pertains to multiethnic democracies as well as the ethnic conflicts that arise within them. This literature comprises various viewpoints on the causes of ethnic conflicts. Mosseau finds that democracies in multiethnic societies have more violence than democracies in homogenous ones (Mosseau 2001, 564). But, this finding can vary by the number of different ethnic groups in the country according to a case study on Papa New Guinea by Benjamin Reilly. He attributes the democratic nature of the state and the large number of different ethnic groups, none of which has a numerical majority, in preventing large scale internal conflict in Papa New Guinea (Reilly 2001, 184). Mosseau's study finds autocratic regimes show decreases in political violence in ethnically heterogeneous nations, but a mature democracy with high level of economic development, has a better chance at conflict resolution (Mosseau 2001, 564).

Stephen A. Saideman addresses the theory of collective action. He assumes "collective action problems get solved, so ethnic groups can and do act as groups" (Saideman 2002, 105). This is an important definition to address as it establishes the extent

of human belief that individuals will perceive themselves as a group in a societal context. This is different from the individualist view of democracy. Saideman explores the concept of an electoral democracy. Saideman points out that individuals envision their chances at economic success in the way their ethnic group is perceived and treated by others in the society. This thesis lends support for Saideman's findings on collective action theory, that in fact indigenous people and *mestizos* do act as groups in order to advance their own group's agenda.

In the anthropological literature which attempts to explain why ethnic conflict exists between groups there are three major themes. One is the primordialist explanation for ethnic conflict. This is embodied in the works of such scholars as Clifford Geertz. Geertz is generally given credit for first articulating the definition of primordialism in his book, *Old Societies and New States*. Geertz argues:

By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens" - or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" - of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves... For virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural- some would say spiritual-affinity than from social interaction... In modernizing societies... it is this crystallization of a direct conflict between primordial and civil sentiments - this "longing not to belong to any other group" - that gives to the problem so variously called tribalism, parochialism, communalism, and so on, a more ominous and deeply threatening quality than most of the other, also very serious intractable problems the new states face. (Geertz 1963, 109)

On the opposite side of the primordialist explanation stands the instrumentalist explanation for ethnic conflict. Yalcin Mousseau uses quantitative means to identify the factors that lead to violence within democracies. Mosseau belongs to the instrumentalist camp which argues that "socioeconomic and political factors are the major motivating cause

of ethnic conflict” (Mosseau 2001, 549). His data supports the instrumentalist standpoint. He argues that the simple presence of different ethnic groups does not mean that human beings cannot live in peace. Mosseau concludes that, “contrary to the primordialist expectation, in none of the analyses was the variable for ethnic heterogeneity significantly related to higher levels of political violence” (Mosseau 2001, 564).

A third group of scholars argues for an integrationist approach to explaining ethnic conflict. Deborah J. Yashar examines Poststructural approaches which, despite their diversity, commonly assume that identities are not given or ordered but are socially constructed and evolving. Individuals do not necessarily identify with or act according to structurally defined positions (Yashar 1998, 29).² Yashar does not dismiss the primordialist and instrumentalist approaches in favor of a poststructural approach. Yashar writes, “the primordialist, instrumentalist, and poststructuralist approaches cannot individually explain the politicization of and organization around indigenous identity. However, they can not be summarily dismissed” (Yashar 1998, 30). Yashar argues for a combination of the three approaches and, importantly, for attention to the historical context of ethnicity in examining identity in Latin America. Yashar is successful in demonstrating that the historical context of the current situation must be taken into account; she eschews simplistic readings of ethnicity. Indigenous groups have been marginalized, but have still kept “other realities alive for centuries” (Escobar, 1992). They have cohered as an ethnic group and maintained structures of governance and community which present different models of co-existence. Yashar toes a fine line by not giving explanatory weight to exclusively one single approach. This thesis lends support to Yashar’s conclusions that a more integral approach to explaining ethnic

² This thesis finds that identities in Bolivia are constructed by Bolivians in order to facilitate their interactions with others. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

conflict is needed in the case of Bolivia in order to reach a more comprehensive explanation of the situation.

Support for a more integral approach to examining ethnic conflict does not end with Yashar. After examining primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism Anderson writes:

There seems to be merit in all of these perspectives, dare I suggest including the much maligned primordialist one. As I see it, the real dilemma surely lies in thinking that one particular perspective could explain ethnicity and ethnic identification... What seems clear enough is that we should not be too quick to dismiss the primordialist argument; after all, there seems to be ample - even increasing - evidence around the world today of primordial racial and ethnic sentiments and attachments, too often translated into harsh politics. (Anderson 2001, 219)

In the case of Bolivia the ethnic and cultural arguments put forth by growers of coca in order to defend the coca plant lend support to the primordialist explanation for ethnic conflict. But other factors, socioeconomic in nature, such as indigenous responses to threats to their livelihoods brought about by the eradication of coca plants lend support to the instrumentalist camp. The fact that *cocaleros* have changed and adapted their identity to the changes taking around them place suggest support for constructivism. The struggle over coca will be examined in this thesis, for it provides a microcosm of one aspect to the conflict in Bolivia which clearly supports scholars such as Yashar who argue for integrationist approaches to explaining ethnic conflict.

Allahar also advocates for a more inclusive approach to ethnic conflict. After identifying divergent claims in the literature, Allahar attempts to provide a reconciliation or synthesis that would demonstrate how “primordialism can be fruitfully combined with considerations of economic or class interests to explain political mobilization” (Allahar 2001, 198). He breaks primordialism down into the categories of “hard” and “soft,” arguing that

hard primordialism, the kind Geertz wrote about, is a bit extreme, but a “soft” reading of primordialism does provide explanation for ethnic conflict.

Democratization Literature

This section examines a selection of the literature on democratization in general as well the literature on democratization in Bolivia. Terry Karl, in “From democracy to democratization: before and after ‘Transitions from Authoritarian Rule,’” (1997) provides a synthesis of the classic work in the democratization field, “Transitions from Authoritarian Rule” by Philippe Schmitter and Guillermo O’Donnell. Karl first enhances the discussion with her critique of the term “election.” Karl writes, “More and more regimes have been adapting the formal trappings of elections while limiting the application of other democratic rules and processes” (Karl 1997, 102). Karl attributes this to the insistence of the West towards other countries that they should provide some evidence of democratic reforms in the aftermath of the Cold War, no matter how superficial they may be. This has not been the case in Bolivia since 1982. It has remained steadily and formally democratic since that date, meaning there have been elections and no military coups. The election of 2005 in Bolivia did not result in widespread calls by the opposition claiming the elections fraudulent. The democratic nature of the Bolivian state has enabled the ethnic conflict in Bolivia to take new forms. Democratic ideals and processes such as freedom of assembly allowed ethnic groups to mobilize and attempt to affect change on the state. In the case of indigenous groups, social movements were the vehicle through which they mobilized.

Karl challenges the idea that a high level of economic development ensures a lasting democracy. “While the level of development does influence the long-term durability of democracy, even here it seems to be a sufficient, not a necessary, condition of survivability” (Karl 1997, 104). Here Karl provides references to Bolivia as a country that has a low level of

economic development, yet has not reverted back to an autocratic regime. Though Bolivia has not reverted back to an autocratic regime, Bolivia is a case study which indicates a low level of economic development and high level of income inequality can lead to ethnic conflict in a state comprised of two major ethnic groups.

Saideman examines the type of democracy that exists in the countries within his study. He finds that electoral systems seem to be more important than whether a regime is presidential or parliamentary (Saideman 2002, 124). Even if a certain institutional design is considered better than another, Saideman pragmatically states that, “the real challenge ahead is to encourage politicians to adopt constitutional changes that might lead to more ethnic peace even if such modifications threaten incumbents’ positions” (Saideman 2002, 125). Bolivia is a democracy which has both presidential and parliamentary features. Since 1994 Bolivia has used a mixed-member proportional electoral system (Centellas 2006, 1). Thus, the presence of an electoral system in Bolivia should help contribute to ethnic peace in the country according to Saideman’s findings that the presence of an electoral system brings stability to a country’s political system.

Prior to the election of Morales, Robert R. Barr concluded that the problems the country faces were caused by a shift from corporatism to pluralism (Barr 2005, 69). Because of this shift, “representative institutions have not fully responded to the new pluralistic landscape, despite a range of political reforms. Many Bolivians find that their voice in government has weakened even as their needs have grown” (Barr 2005, 69). Barr examined the role of political parties in the process of creating and sustaining a democracy. As evidenced by the large number of protests in Bolivia preceding the election of Morales, the citizenry had lost faith in the capacity of the political establishment to address their grievances. As the legitimacy of political institutions was called into question, there were

increased demands for new forms of institutions. Barr's article sets the stage for how and why social movements came to be so powerful in the country. The fact that representative institutions did not respond to the needs of Bolivian people fueled the organization and effectiveness of social movements. These movements provided indigenous groups with an arena where their voices could be heard and were the basis for an awakening of indigenous peoples, who took control of the state in the election of 2005.

Barr argues that societal discontent existed in Bolivia by examining three factors - social unrest, electoral results, and public attitudes. Barr's description of social unrest includes a short discussion of the role ethnicity has played in the unrest. His section on electoral results reports that the three main political parties in Bolivia, the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR)*, *Accion Democratica Nacionalista (ADN)*, and *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR)* experienced a marked decrease in support since the early nineties (Barr 2005, 73). Barr attributes this to the parties' convergence "around a neoliberal consensus," an allegiance he does not explain. More than likely, the major parties supported the neoliberal consensus because they were forced to if their government did not want to run afoul of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Shultz 2005, 10). It is interesting that none of the three main parties articulated a different vision for Bolivia beyond the neoliberal consensus, though unsurprising since it was the political elite who benefited the most from neoliberal policies. There was no incentive for them to change in the short run. In attempting to maintain the status quo, the *mestizo* political elite united indigenous groups in their opposition to the political parties dominated by the *mestizo* elite and the neoliberal economic policies they advocated.

In addition to examining political parties, Barr examines public attitudes as well. He quotes a study by *Latinobarometro* that found Bolivians had a confidence level of a mere 6% in

their political parties prior to the election of Evo Morales. Barr presents some sobering statistics concerning Bolivians' attitudes towards democracy. Only 45% of Bolivians preferred democracy to any other form of government in 2003, and only 16% of Bolivians were satisfied with their democracy, down from 25% in 1996 (Barr 2005, 76). Barr, in describing the period prior to the election of Evo Morales concludes:

Although there have been improvements to the institutional arrangements, they have been insufficient to overcome the institutional deficits, at least in the eyes of the public. These deficits, in turn, contribute to both the tendency of society to go outside formal channels of representation and to the government's difficulty in handling social conflicts. (Barr 2005, 77)

Van Cott, meanwhile, examines the political struggles of indigenous people in Bolivia culminating in the elections of 2002, which resulted in the largest number of indigenous legislators ever elected to the Bolivian Congress (Van Cott 2003, 752). Van Cott attributes the rise of indigenous people within Bolivian politics to five factors - institutional changes that opened the political system, the collapse of two competitive parties, the consolidation of indigenous peoples' social movement organizations, the unpopularity of the Banzer - Quiroga government and the intense anti-government mobilizations it provoked in 2000, and the ability of the indigenous parties to capitalize on growing nationalist, anti - US public sentiment (Van Cott 2003, 751). Van Cott states that the most important of these variables was the "maturity and institutional consolidation of indigenous and peasant social movement organizations following twenty years of mobilization." Because of this, the organizations had deeply rooted networks that successfully placed the exclusion of the indigenous majority on the political agenda (Van Cott 2003, 753). Barr and Van Cott both mention that the neoliberal reforms changed the way the individual was represented in Bolivia. In the past citizens were given a voice in the running of the state through the union to which they belonged. After the privatization of state enterprises, these unions collapsed. This increased

the salience of social movements which reside outside formal political organizations. It is clear that ethnic interests, mobilized in opposition to neoliberal reforms undertaken by the Bolivian state, led to the deeper consolidation of social movements across Bolivia. This can be seen in the strength of the social movements and the political party Movement for Socialism (MAS) which they created in order to have a voice in the administration of the Bolivian state.

Van Cott highlights the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) as a major reason indigenous groups performed so well in the elections of 2002. This law is mentioned in much of the literature on Bolivia. Analysts argue that it has enabled many of the changes in Bolivia to take place, such as the election of a large number of indigenous legislators to Congress and the election of Evo Morales as president of Bolivia. This law decentralized the Bolivian government, empowering municipalities. The municipalities are now given funds by the central government to spend as they see fit. There were various problems with the implementation of the LPP (Calla 2000, 77-97 Halkyer 2000, 181-196). For instance, in municipalities where indigenous groups were a minority, decentralization helped to entrench the power of the local *mestizo* elites. Though the LPP did not empower all indigenous groups in the same way, it did provide a stage for ethnic politics to be played out at the local level. This law provided opportunities for the leaders of the social movements to join the political apparatus. For example, the municipal government in the Chapare region is made up almost exclusively of indigenous coca growers (Van Cott 2003, 763).

Indigenous groups are not only involved in struggles for greater representation in Bolivia. Yashar examines the effect democracy has had on Latin America's indigenous movements. She writes, "Latin America's indigenous movements are primarily a response to incomplete political liberalization and state reforms" (Yashar 1998, 38). In the case of Bolivia

political institutions were developed along lines of exclusion and did not incorporate the needs of the indigenous majority in Bolivia. Yashar is quick to point out that indigenous movements are challenging liberal democratic assumptions. “Rather than delineate a single relationship between the state and its citizens, indigenous organizations demand multiple types of citizenship with boundaries that guarantee equal rights and representation at the national level and recognize corporate indigenous authority structures in the indigenous territory” (Yashar 1998, 39). In Yashar’s view, institutions are important and must be improved to address indigenous demands. But the indigenous idea of what types of institutions are needed is different from what liberal democracy prescribes, particularly in regard to natural resources.

Natural Resources Literature

This thesis explores why natural resources in Bolivia have provided a reason for ethnic groups to organize. I argue that contributing to indigenous organization around resources was the perception that the natural resources of Bolivia, particularly coca, natural gas and water, were perceived as “under attack” from a combination of the US War on Drugs, neoliberalism and multinational corporations. In the case of coca, the small scale producer nature of coca growing created a cohesive, unified movement of *cocaleros*. The *cocaleros* were forced to defend their economic livelihoods as the US government encouraged and supported the Bolivian state in attempting to eradicate all coca in the Chapare region of Bolivia. The battle over water began after the Cochabamba Water Authority was privatized at the insistence of the IMF, and the Gas War of 2003 was the result of multinational corporations receiving a majority of the profits from the sale of Bolivian natural gas.

Karl focuses on oil states and the economic rents enjoyed by the political class. The state controls and distributes the profits derived from the sale of this valuable commodity.

Karl's ideas on economic rents apply to the Bolivian case because the economic rents enjoyed by the political class from the sale of natural gas helped to provide the political elite with a prolonged grasp on power. But it also created the reaction that loosened the elites' grasp on that power. The ownership of natural resources is seen by indigenous groups as the sovereign right of all Bolivians, not simply a select few.

In his review of the literature on natural resources and conflict, Ross finds that scholarship exploring the link between natural resources and civil conflicts only began in the 1990's. He finds two distinct patterns: first, "oil exports are linked to the onset of conflict," and second, "lootable commodities like gemstones and drugs are correlated with the duration of conflict" (Ross 2004, 338). Ross asserts that in Peru and Colombia coca has been linked to the continuation of conflict, but not its onset.

This is a limited analysis of the literature on natural resources and their link to conflict. In the literature reviewed here, coca has been linked to the continuation of conflict and not its onset, as it provides much needed income for insurgent groups. However, the Bolivian case seems to warrant a reconsideration of coca's link to conflict. This thesis suggests coca contributed to the onset of ethnic conflict which exists in Bolivia today. Chapter 3 will provide extensive evidence which documents the coca plant, those who grow it and the war against it.

Michael Watts critiques Ross for "ignoring how oil's contribution to war or authoritarianism builds upon pre-existing (pre-oil) political dynamics" (Watts 2004, 75). Watts finds that for indigenous groups in Nigeria oil provided:

An idiom in which claims-making and rights talk could be instigated: oil served as the ground on which claims could be made for corporate compensation and accountability, for resource control and self determination, for human rights violations and so on. (Watts 2004, 71)

In Bolivia, coca and natural gas both served in the context Watts describes. Both of these natural resources provided indigenous groups in Bolivia “an idiom in which rights talk could be instigated.” The Spanish exploitation of indigenous labor in the mining of silver, tin and mercury created an exclusive political class long before the first natural gas wellhead was drilled in the country. The exploitation of natural gas, and the exclusion of indigenous people from the decisions regarding it, simply became a continuation of the “pre-existing (pre-natural gas) political dynamics” that Watts wrote about.

Mililani B Trask links sovereignty, autonomy and development regimes as they relate to natural resources. She explains the right of self determination and notes that indigenous groups all over the world are demanding this right. Trask writes:

The interrelationship between political status and economic, social and cultural development is of critical importance. If self-determination is to be realized, Indigenous Peoples must determine their political status. Colonizer political status must be replaced by the Indigenous peoples choice through practice. This political status must include legal jurisdiction over land, water and natural resources. The jurisdiction must be exercised in fact – over the land, water and natural resources. (Trask 2003, 28)

Trask’s article helps to put the indigenous autonomy demands resonating from Bolivia within a context of a larger struggle for indigenous rights and self determination around the world. As will be explored in later chapters of this thesis, both *mestizos* and indigenous peoples, through demands for autonomy, are attempting to achieve legal jurisdiction over the “land, water and natural resources” of the Bolivian state.

The struggle among ethnic groups over the distribution and management of natural resources within democratic nations is one of the most pressing issues of our time. The Bolivian case suggests that when a single ethnic group monopolizes the management and distribution of natural resources ethnic conflict results. Ethnic conflicts rage around the globe from Iraq to Sri Lanka. The study of multiethnic democracies can help to prevent

conflict worldwide. Much like nation states were once organized around religion, the world is experiencing a redefinition of the nation state along the lines of ethnicity. As evidenced by conflicts around the globe, this can be a very bloody process. Reilly notes, “Of the 110 major armed conflicts between 1989 and 1999, only 7 were traditional interstate conflicts. The remaining 103 took place within existing states, mostly focused around ethnic issues” (Reilly 2001, 162).

Chapter 2: Politics and Economics

“[La] mejor garantía en Bolivia [son] los movimientos sociales!”

“The best guarantee in Bolivia is the social movements!”

(Evo Morales 12/15/06 Cochabamba)

This chapter and the following chapter will set the stage for explaining the autonomy demands resonating from both sides of the ethnic conflict in Bolivia through examining the primordial differences and political and socio-economic inequalities between ethnic groups. This chapter will examine how the continuing democratization of the Bolivian state affects the ethnic conflict in Bolivia. It will examine economic policies of previous governments and public reaction to them. Anti-neoliberal sentiments have played a substantial role in the consolidation of indigenous social movements in Bolivia and helped to create a synergy between urban and rural sections of the country. I will also examine how democratization has opened up spaces for the mobilization of indigenous groups and the *mestizo* elite. In response to these changes, indigenous groups have mobilized to demand both procedural and distributive justice. In Bolivia a marginalized majority is now beginning to exert itself within the political process as an indigenous man is now president of the country.

The practice of face to face dialogue runs deep in indigenous society and decision making. Much like indigenous peoples took Christianity and formed it in their own ways and in their own understandings, they are doing much the same today with democracy. It must be clarified here that democracy was not created in Europe. Indigenous societies were democratic in their own right long before Europeans brought their style of democracy to the shores of the Americas, as consultation among the group and the practice of rotating *cargos* among all members of the community have existed in indigenous society for centuries (See e.g. Weatherford, 1989; Grinde Jr. & Johansen, 1990). This is important because it illustrates that indigenous groups have a form of democratization that is different from what a liberal democracy prescribes. Indigenous communities have now mobilized effectively to challenge the *mestizo* elites' hold on power and are attempting to do so, at the time of writing, through

the creation of a new constitution in a Constitutional Assembly currently taking place in Sucre.

Since indigenous groups were marginalized and in many senses “outside” and excluded from the state, the social movement became the vehicle through which they contested their marginalization. In the past there has been a democratic cycle in Bolivia of “protest – negotiation – agreement - government reneging on its promises - renewed protest” (Lazar 2006, 185). Recently, social movements have joined together and created the “political party,” *Movimiento al Socialismo*. (MAS) Evo Morales was the MAS candidate in the 2005 elections. Morales has said, “the MAS represents the social movements, and is a political instrument of liberation. It is not the creation of *políticos* (political scientists), nor of political analysts, academics or politicians. It is born from a congress of peasants” (quoted in Albro 2005, 440). MAS leaders claim the party “governs from the streets” (Albro 2005, 440). Morales, the “leader” of the social movements is now in charge of the entire country. The “party” which he leads, “MAS” is an organization that valiantly attempts not to be labeled a political party. In fact, MAS’s organic structure is half political party half social movement (Albro 2005, 440). MAS is a political party but its origins are distinctly different than the others in the country, as the other parties have not been founded by social movements. Here we have evidence of a new way of constructing a political party, which supports my earlier assertion that indigenous people have a form of democratization in mind that differs from what liberal democracy prescribes.

In winning 54% of the popular vote, Morales received votes from both rural and urban areas. The synergy of support connecting urban and rural constituents was in many ways created by the backlash to neoliberalism. It is clear the neoliberal economic model affected both those in the countryside and those in the cities. For example, instead of the

majority of revenues from the sale of natural gas flowing back to the Bolivian government in order that social spending could be increased in both the cities and the countryside, neoliberal economic policies created a situation where the Bolivian government was forced to sign contracts with multinational corporations that gave those corporations the majority of the revenues from the sale of natural gas. As in any developing country, the disparities between urban and rural communities are vast. Education, income, family size, access to credit and language skills all differ. Albro explains how indigenous heritage is important to those who, living in an urban area, do not identify themselves in the same way an indigenous person from a rural area would:

In the case of Bolivia's MAS, expressions of indigenous solidarity acquire their potency as an invitation to the recognition of an indigenous heritage shared by all of Bolivia's popular sectors that is in explicit contrast to the perceived 'individualism' of the neoliberal market. (Albro 2005, 443)

Until the creation of MAS, indigenous peoples struggled to find a unified political voice. Indigenous nationalism, based on the story of the great Indian hero Tupac Katari, inspired movements in Bolivia and spawned small political parties. However, these parties never produced a president, nor fared well in formal politics. Much of their base was rural and they drew very few votes from the cities (Assies & Salman 2005, 287). As will be examined in the next section, neoliberalism, and resistance to it provided a focal point for indigenous energies in both the countryside and city.

The mestizo elite has not created social movements, rather, they interact with the state through the "*movimiento de los cívicos*" or *Comité Cívicos*. It is through these organizations the economic elites mobilize and interact with the state now that they are outside of power at the national level. The Civic Committee is to the opposition what social movements are to *pueblos indígenas*. It is through the Civic Committee that the opposition pushes its desire for

autonomy. Kathryn Ledebuer demonstrates how Civic Committees serve as vehicles to advance the platform of the opposition when I asked her to define *cabildo*. *Cabildos* are often convened by Civic Committees:

A cabildo is like a massive popular meeting or a town meeting, in the colonial period or in the independent period a cabildo would be all citizens getting together and making political decisions. There wasn't a Parliament when it was a colony it was an informal body that was considered a grassroots democratic movement, of course today within Santa Cruz the people participating in the a cabildo doesn't necessarily mean it is representative of the bulk of the Santa Cruzites. Because it is something organized by the members of the Comité Cívicos, organized by business interests, but the idea is to get together and declare autonomy and not wait on the decisions of the Constitutional Assembly on what their autonomy will be like because they are not happy with the way the voting procedures go or the lack of progress. (Interview Kathryn Ledebuer Cochabamba)

Quispe presented Civic Committees in a more recent historical context:

The Civic Committees rose in the 1950's. Why did the Civic Committees rise in the 50's? Because, the central government annulled the powers of the municipalities, because of this there wasn't a mediating representation between the state and society. There was only state and citizen. The citizens said, "we have to organize ourselves." The Civic Committees were then formed in each department. In 1985 the municipal governments returned again and the need for Civic Committees died down. But the business interests that began to suspect that they are going to be expelled from power have revived them. The Civic Committees do not represent the interests of citizens, but rather those of businesses. The Constitution doesn't say anything about Civic Committees. They are not in the Constitution. They are going to fracture in the future. (Interview Jubenal Quispe)

El Comité Cívico en el principio surgió, en los cincuenta. ¿Por que surgen los Comité Cívicos en la década de los cincuenta? 1954? El gobierno anulo los poderes de los municipalidades. Entonces no había una representación entre el estado y la sociedad. Solo era el estado y ciudadano. La ciudadana dijo, 'tenemos que organizarnos.' Los Comité Cívicos estaban formados en cada departamento. En 1985 regresan otra vez los gobiernos municipales, y la necesidad de los comités cívicos decayó. Pero los empresarios que empezaron a sospechar que iban a ser expulsadas del poder los han vuelto a poner en práctica. Los Comité Cívicos no representan los intereses de los ciudadanos, pero los de las empresas. La constitución no dice nada de los Comité Cívicos. No están en la constitución. Los van a fraccionar en el futuro. (Entrevista a Jubenal Quispe)

As observed in Quispe's quote, the civic committees are currently used by the *mestizo* political elite today in Bolivia to advance their interests, much like indigenous groups use

social movements. The parallels between why the two groups came to organize are striking. Indigenous groups did not have “mediating representation” between themselves and the state until the advent of social movements, and now the *mestizo* elite which fears they will be expelled from power have revived the Civic Committees in an attempt to ensure their interests are represented within the Bolivian state. Again, the democratic nature of the state has encouraged groups to mobilize along ethnic lines to address socioeconomic and political differences between them and/or to retain their grip over political power and natural resources.

A former government official of the Hugo Banzer and Jorge Quiroga administrations described Civic Committees in almost the exact same way that indigenous groups describe how social movements have enabled them to interact with the state. Jorge Quiroga is among the main opposition candidates in Bolivia; he finished second in the voting to Evo Morales in 2005:

Nowadays at the national level, regional interests do not have any type of representation, with the exception of Santa Cruz and Tarija, where there are Civic Committees that respond to regional interests. But in the case of Cochabamba and the rest of the departments, the Civic Committees no longer represent anybody, it is no longer a civic movement, it is a political movement in function to their interests. Then the vision of the Civic Committees in Bolivia has been weakened by the other departments, except obviously Tarija and Santa Cruz from my point of view. (Interview, former government official)

Hoy en día a nivel nacional los intereses regionales no tienen ningún tipo de representación, a excepción de Santa Cruz y Tarija, donde hay comités cívicos que responden a los intereses regionales. Pero en el caso de Cochabamba y los demás departamentos los comités cívicos ya no representan a nadie y dejaron de ser un movimiento cívico. Es un movimiento político en función a sus intereses. Entonces ya se ha desvirtuado la visión de los movimientos cívicos del comité cívico en Bolivia, exceptuando obviamente Tarija y Santa Cruz desde mi punto de vista. (Entrevista a un ex-oficial del gobierno)

He laments the weakness of the Civic Committees in the other parts of the country but acknowledges the strength and the “vision” of the civic movements brought about by

the Civic Committees of Tarija and Santa Cruz. He implies that the Civic Committees of Tarija and Santa Cruz are civic movements supported by many in the community, but he emphasizes that they do not function solely as vehicles to address political grievances of the *mestizo* elite. The importance and value of Civic Committees to the *mestizo* opposition to Evo Morales cannot be overstated and can be seen in the words of the former government official above. To him the Civic Committee is the movement through which the *mestizo* elite will be able to maintain their control over the political and economic power of the country, much like indigenous groups are dependent upon their social movements to change the political and economic power structure that exists in Bolivia.

The *mestizo* political elite's control over the resources in the east of the country and the economic power this entails is detailed by Felix Leon, a Peruvian working in Bolivia as director of ENLACE, a non-profit organization researching social science issues in Bolivia:

Now what is happening is these political sectors, which have traditionally been in control of the power in the country have seen themselves displaced nowadays by the emergence of these new social sectors, you could say it is true that these social sectors still don't have the power, but they are beginning to be in control of the political apparatus. Thus, for example you see that the prefect of Tarija is an ex-militant of the traditional parties, the same as the prefects from Pando, Beni and Cochabamba. You realize that by not being able to take the executive power they have found refuge in the prefects as departmental power and this explains the reasons for the autonomy demands... They (*mestizo* political sector) want autonomy in the use and control of natural resource, autonomy in the administration of the resources and the political decisions, but it is curious they don't want indigenous autonomy, there are indigenous communities in their territory, but there cannot be autonomy. Watch television to get a feel for what these civic movements in Beni, Santa Cruz, Tarija, etc. are about. They are civic/business interest movements that represent the economic sector, but they don't represent the population in general. (Interview Felix Leon)

Ahora que es lo que sucede, estos sectores políticos, que han manejado tradicionalmente el poder en el país se han visto desplazados actualmente por el surgimiento de estos nuevos sectores sociales, que si bien es cierto todavía no tienen el poder, pero vienen manejando el aparato político. Entonces tú ves por ejemplo en términos gráficos; el prefecto de Tarija es un ex militante de los partidos tradicionales, así como los prefectos de Pando y del Beni y el prefecto de Cochabamba. Entonces te das cuenta que al no poder tomar el ejecutivo, se han

refugiado en las prefecturas como poder departamental y esto explica por que de las autonomías... Ellos quieren autonomía en el uso y manejo de los recursos naturales, autonomía en lo que es la administración y decisión política administrativa, pero es bien curioso, no quieren autonomía indígena. Hay comunidades indígenas en su territorio, pero allí no puede haber autonomía...Ve la televisión para que te des cuenta de que se trata estos movimientos cívicos de Beni, de Santa Cruz, Tarija, etc., son movimientos cívicos que representan a sectores económicos, pero que no representan a la población en general. (Entrevista a Felix Leon)

Leon highlights the fact that departmental autonomy is being pushed for by civic movements that represent economic sectors. These sectors include *la Cámara Agropecuaria del Oriente (CAO)*, *la Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz (CAINCO)* and *la Federación de Ganaderos de Santa Cruz (FEGASACRUZ)* (Carvajal 2006, 86). These organizations, together with the *Comité Cívico Pro-Santa Cruz* which Leon states represents business interests, such as large agricultural producers who have banded together to form CAO and FEGASACRUZ, and not a majority of the population in the east of the country, are leading the charge for territorial autonomy. This concentration of economic power in the hands of the *mestizo* elite creates further resentment among indigenous groups. This resentment manifests itself in the social movements which have come to exist in the country, in response to these movements *mestizos* organize around their identity as well. The situation becomes a conflict of “us” versus “them.” The democratic nature of the Bolivian state shapes these movements in certain ways and provides spaces for them to exist. Much like indigenous groups, *mestizos* are organizing around their ethnicity in order to respond to changes in the traditional socioeconomic structure of Bolivia.

Democratization & the Resurgence of Indigenous Identity

The mobilization of ethnic groups has been facilitated and accelerated by the democratic reforms such as those in 1995 which ushered in the decentralization of the state under the Law of Popular Participation (LPP). The LPP shifted 20% of the federal budget

money to the 311 municipalities throughout the country (Postero 2004, 196). The LPP granted municipalities powers which had been reserved for the federal government, and created opportunities for communities in which a majority of the population is indigenous.

As discussed briefly in Chapter 1, the decentralization of the state through the devolution of powers to Bolivian municipalities has empowered indigenous peoples around the nation by allowing them to participate in the state recognized institutions which govern their communities, but it has also hindered them in some cases as well. Calla writes,

Municipalities have become the context for certain, specific political, economic and social processes. It is also the scene of local power struggles and confrontations of opposing interests and is articulated to the global Bolivian process. (Calla 2000, 80)

The large number of municipalities makes it hard to generalize about the affects of the LPP. In each local context distinct conflicts, styles of government and specific problems with varied potential solutions are encountered. In many communities local *mestizo* elites have been forced from power as a result of the LPP. For example, in the Chapare the LPP has increased the presence of indigenous peoples in government, due to the effective organizing the *cocaleros* have been able to create and sustain. In areas where indigenous groups are not well organized or numerically superior, such as the eastern lowlands, the LPP has not empowered indigenous groups as it has in the Chapare.

One of the limited successes of the LPP has been the granting of legal personality to the *ayllus*³ that organize indigenous society. The *ayllu* is a pre-existing organizational structure covering a certain territory based on kinship between families. Calla estimates, however, that as of 1999, 70% of *ayllus* had still not obtained legal personality (Calla 2000, 82). Halkyer points out that the most *ayllus* were fragmented by the creation of the municipal governments. Halkyer writes, “Instead of strengthening indigenous communities and

³ At the most basic level, an *ayllu*, “is a group of families claiming common identity through real and fictive kinship and using that claim to hold communal land rights” (Klein 140, 1993).

organizations, the demarcation of roles, attributes and shares of power consecrated in the Law on Popular Participation weakens them considerably” (Halkyer 2000, 194). The central government created the municipal districts without regard for the boundaries of existing *ayllus*. Thus, many *ayllus* were fragmented. The evidence is mixed when examining the successes and failures of the LPP. The decentralization of the Bolivian state has clearly helped indigenous groups mobilize in some areas of the country, and hindered them in others.

It is clear that indigenous people in Bolivia have been a marginalized majority forced to interact with the state through their social movements. Amenta and Young point out that the social movement literature tends to focus on the “outcomes” of the particular social movements; for example, whether or not the central government accepted the protesting group’s demands. Amenta and Young ask, how does one measure the success of a social movement, especially in a democracy (Amenta & Young 1999, 40)? It is important to remember here that social movements are not homogenous units. Instead they are heterogeneous units made up of many different sectors and interests (Tilley 1999, 256). Sometimes one group has its wishes fulfilled as a result of protest, but the other groups involved in the protest do not. So is it possible to label the movement a “success” in that scenario? Or what if, as a result of social action, a change is promised by the central government, but is never fulfilled, is that movement then labeled a success or failure?

In Bolivia, there have been immediate political and economic consequences in some instances as a result of mass protest. The Bolivian people were able to force Gonzales Sanchez de Lozada, the Bolivian president at the time, to flee the country during the Gas War in 2003 and force the Bolivian government to break its contract with Bechtel after the Cochabamba “Water War” in 2000. Because of the difficulty in measuring the “success” of a

particular social movement, I argue it is important to focus on the social impacts of the movements as well. In the case of Bolivia, one of the social impacts of social movements has been the call for a “refounding” of the nation state based not solely on a *mestizo* but an indigenous identity. Jubenal Quispe verbalized another of the social impacts of the movements by describing the recent resurgence of an indigenous identity. By this I mean that an indigenous identity is growing in value today in Bolivia. To be indigenous is something to be proud of and not be ashamed of:

Indigenous peoples, we don't feel bad anymore after the 18th of December 2005 (the day Morales won the election). ‘That Indian could do it, I can do it!’ The children in school can now think this way. This is indigenous pride, which heals one. It is one of the values Evo Morales has brought to the country and it is impossible to erase it. (Interview Jubenal Quispe)

Nosotros los indígenas, después del 18 del diciembre 2005 no nos sentimos mal. ¡Ese indio pudo, yo puedo! Los niños en la escuela pueden pensar así. Es orgullo indígena lo cual sana a uno. Es uno de los valores Evo Morales ha traído al país. Y es imposible borrarlo. (Entrevista a Jubenal Quispe)

The resurgence of the indigenous identity can be seen in the way in which Bolivians identify themselves. On the Bolivian census the number of people claiming indigenous heritage has risen over the last five years. Lindsay Hasluck, an Australian anthropologist/archaeologist who has lived and worked in Bolivia for over ten years explained the complexity of categorizations of an indigenous identity in Bolivia:

People say “I am indigenous,” of course that can also mean “I am *campesino*,” of course *campesino* and indigenous are so closely tied together that who is going to live that life unless you are born into it. But then you have a middle class, in the cities, who don't claim to be indigenous, but to Western academics they would appear indigenous, in that their parent or grandparents, or parents came from an indigenous/*campesino* background, but they are claiming to be urban, middle class, Bolivians. In terms of skin color, genetics, family historical background they are indigenous, they have a right under law to claim to be indigenous but because of pride they don't want to claim to be indigenous because of the implications of being a poor *campesino*. They want to claim to be urban middle class, professional, up and coming. But the *campesinos* are very proud to be indigenous. So you get people that switch between the two, “I am an urban professional,” but if they find themselves in a situation with *campesinos*, “I am also indigenous as well.” So that makes it very

difficult. There are others that claim openly, “I am *mestizo*.” And don’t want to claim indigenous. But there is a growing movement in the last 5 years that some of those people are also starting to say, yes of course my family was Spanish, but we married into Quechuan people, so starting to take some indigenous identity on board as well. This makes their life smoother for them with the changes going on in Bolivian society. Indigenous identity is very much up to the individual person, and whether they lay claim on it or not, depending on the situation they are in at the time and whether they need to prove their identity no? (Lindsay Hasluck interview La Paz 12/2006)

This fluidity of identities described by Hasluck exemplifies the increased salience of an indigenous identity in the Bolivian context. It could be argued that Bolivians’ sense of indigenous identity had been forced “underground” in the past by the socioeconomic and political contexts which have existed in Bolivia with colonization. Hasluck’s observation demonstrates that ethnic identities are constructed by people in order to facilitate their interactions with others in various environments.

The resurgence of an indigenous identity in Bolivia is linked to the social movements and the effects they have had on both the government and the Bolivian people themselves. The continued democratization of the Bolivian state has opened up spaces for the mobilization of groups’ interests along ethnic lines. But democracy and the continued democratization of the state are only part of the story in explaining the ethnic mobilization in Bolivia. The neoliberal economic model, and the controversy surrounding it, have also contributed to the ethnic conflict in Bolivia.

The Neoliberal Economic Model and Bolivian Responses

Neoliberalism and Bolivian responses to it are important to examine in order to understand the ethnic conflict which exists in Bolivia. I argue that neoliberalism magnified the socioeconomic imbalances between ethnic groups in Bolivia, causing ethnic groups to organize to address these imbalances. Indigenous groups have organized to improve the deleterious economic situation in which they find themselves, while the *mestizo* political elite

have organized to maintain their economic hegemony. The neoliberal model was introduced in Bolivia formally in 1985 through a package of reforms called the New Economic Policy. This model was promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The neoliberal economic model was labeled the “Washington Consensus” and called for a smaller domestic role for the state, trade liberalization and currency convertibility (Krueger 1997, 3). Bolivians responses to the neoliberal economic model have included massive, large scale protests - the most notable being the Gas War of 2003 and Water War of 2000. The Water War came to symbolize the battle against neoliberalism around the world after the citizens of Cochabamba were able to force the Bolivian government to renege on its privatization of the Cochabamba Water Authority. Oscar Olivera, spokesperson for the social movement which led to the Water War of 2000, explains the perception many Bolivians held regarding the effects of neoliberalism:

Since the start of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1985 there are fewer jobs and more unemployment. Working conditions have deteriorated substantially. Services are becoming more and more expensive. Because of lower revenues and higher costs, the state no longer has money to maintain public services. (Olivera 2004, 5)

One problem with the neoliberal model is its emphasis on capital liberalization (Stiglitz 2003, 110). Capital liberalization is the encouragement of foreign direct investment (FDI) with the hope that the capital brought in to the country will have “spillover effects” which will cause or lead to economic growth. There is still no statistical evidence that foreign direct investment (FDI) always leads to economic growth, yet that does not stop the IMF and the World Bank from implementing these policies (ECLAC 2005, 26). In Bolivia, this can be seen clearly in the natural gas sector. The IMF and transnational corporations encouraged, and pressured Bolivian governments to sign contracts for the sale of natural gas rights that increased the share of the profits foreign oil and natural gas companies received with the idea that investment and production would expand dramatically and Bolivia “would

actually make more than if it had retained ownership” (Shulz 2005, 19). When Morales took office in 2005, he inherited existing contracts for natural gas signed without a thorough and transparent public review process. The contracts, as they stood, gave 82% of royalties established on new natural gas well heads to the multinational corporation drilling them (Evitar 2006, 1). During his campaign, Morales’ platform called for the nationalization of the natural gas industry. After his election he did temporarily nationalize the industry, and then was forced to denationalize it as it became apparent the state run, *Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales de Bolivia* (YPFB) did not have the capacity, both financial and technical, to extract natural gas from the ground. Morales moved to a middle ground solution, improving the terms of the existing contracts with multi-national corporations, favoring the Bolivian government more heavily.

The privatization of key sectors such as public utilities is another important part of the neo-liberal economic model. Repercussions arising from the privatization of water services were severely felt in Bolivia. The IMF and the World Bank pushed hard for the privatization of water services in 1999 (Olivera 2005, 4). The water service was privatized, and a company by the name of Aguas de Tunari (a subsidiary of the consortium of London-based International Water Ltd. and San Francisco-based Bechtel Corp) was granted a 40 year contract to manage the Cochabamba Water Authority (Public Citizen, 2001). The World Bank stated that “no public subsidies should be given to ameliorate the increase in water tariffs in Cochabamba” (IMF Public Expenditure Review, 2001). In some cases, water tariffs increased by 200-300 percent (Public Citizen, 2001). The public staged massive protests in Cochabamba in February 2000. The protesters employed strikes, roadblocks, and other forms of civil disobedience, and they shut down the city for four days. Finally the Bolivian government terminated the water contract between the government and Aguas del Tunari.

Oscar Olivera, the spokesman for the Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y de la Vida (Coalition in Defense of Water and Life), which emerged victorious against the transnational organization - Bechtel, put the Water War in perspective:

We claimed the first space in which men, women, children, and the elderly were able to demonstrate, to the country and the world, against the neoliberal policies which had subsumed our lives. The neoliberal model, despite its presence in every aspect of peoples daily existence, was not able to win the hearts of people exhausted by state violence, whose human rights have been taken away, and who are furious at seeing their natural resources of their country given to transnational corporations by our own government. (Olivera 2004, 10)

Interestingly, the Water War united the city of Cochabamba as it brought people of diverse ethnic backgrounds together. It is important to note here that Olivera does not refer to indigenous identity in his description of the event. He refers to the people who were furious with the government. The neoliberal policies affected middle class Bolivians living in urban areas as surely as they affected the lives of *campesinos* in the countryside. Olivera's description of the Water War demonstrates the type of synergy that was created by neoliberal economic policies throughout Bolivia. This synergy can be seen in the Water War. The people of Cochabamba though not all sharing the same heritage, mobilized in a unified voice to protest the privatization of their water services.

Economic data on the reforms brought about by neoliberalism is mixed (Barr 85, 2005). Obviously, privatization has brought with it negative consequences for those laid-off by the state. Part of the problem is that "safety nets" are lacking in many developing countries. Safety nets help those negatively affected by economic reforms (Stiglitz 2003). Safety nets can take the form of severance pay, insurance, or unemployment checks. Furthermore, developing countries face unfair terms of trade largely resulting from trade liberalization initiatives promoted by the IMF and World Bank. Developed countries subsidize their agricultural industries very heavily, making it almost impossible for farmers in

developing countries to compete (Stiglitz 2005). This is evidenced by the agricultural negotiations during the Doha Round at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Bolivia is a member of two negotiating groups at the WTO, the G20 and Cairns Group. Both of these groups push for reduction in the amount of agricultural subsidies developed countries pay their farmers. At the time of writing, the Doha Round negotiations remain deadlocked, suggesting that even though the IMF pushes for developing countries such as Bolivia to lower their trade barriers, developed countries are not being forced to lower the amount of agricultural subsidies paid to their farmers which creates unfair terms of trade. These unfair terms of trade make it more difficult for Bolivians to grow economically and increase their wealth. This is important, because as noted in the literature review, multiethnic societies need democracy and fair distribution of wealth to be peaceful.

Although the neoliberal economic model has mixed aggregate economic results in Bolivia, the perception remains that it has failed the majority of the people in Bolivia. Barr argues:

Societal discontent has clearly been rising in Bolivia. The violent conflicts between protesters and the authorities provide the most vivid demonstration, but the declining support for the political class and the loss of confidence in representative institutions are no less revealing. Indeed the latter suggest *ordinary* Bolivians have grown increasingly dissatisfied for at least the past decade. The catalyst for the recent cycle of violence was the economic downturn of the Banzer administration. The brief recession added insult to the perceived injury of neoliberalism; as in several other Latin American countries, citizens have grown weary of the economy's market orientation. Although Bolivia enjoyed significant economic growth in the mid-1990's, neoliberalism has not meet the expectations of an improved standard of living. The prevalence of corruption, moreover, suggests to many observers that *ordinary* citizens pay all the costs of neoliberalism while the political class reaps all the benefits. Economic data provide only mixed support for the notion that the economic situation has deteriorated under neoliberalism. Nevertheless, the common perception is that neoliberalism has benefited only the elite, and this sentiment has affected public attitudes toward the political class. (Barr 2005, 85 emphasis my own)

Barr finds that support for “representative institutions” fell as many Bolivians did not observe any improvement in their economic situation since 1985. Barr does not tie ethnicity in any way to his argument here. Instead, in the quote above, Barr situates the current Bolivian conflict as an economic one, simply a struggle between the “ordinary” and by extension, the “non ordinary.” But, a large percentage of indigenous people have a marginalized or in Barr’s words, “ordinary” economic status. I noted in Chapter 1 that Saideman posits, “individuals envision their chances at economic success in the way their economic group is perceived and treated by others in the society” (Saideman 2002, 105). This allows ethnicity, specifically an indigenous identity, to become a cleavage along which people can organize in an attempt to change their current economic situation by demanding procedural and distributive justice.

Perreault argues that protestors in both the water war and gas war were demanding two types of justice, procedural and distributive. Procedural justice entails calling for greater participation and transparency in the decisions over the management of natural resources, while distributive justice is the more equitable distribution of the benefits derived from natural resources (Perreault 2006, 154). Those who felt obligated to act out against the injustices, real or imagined, of neoliberalism, went to the streets with greater procedural and distributive justice as their rallying cries in the Gas War of 2003 and the Water War of 2000. Postero argues that Gas War of 2003 was “an uprising centered on conflicts over the meaning of citizenship and the role of civil society in neoliberal Bolivia” (Postero 2005, 77). She examines the history behind the indigenous movement by examining how past governments, “systemically excluded Bolivia’s poor and Indian populations from participating in political decision making at the most important levels” (Postero 2005, 77).

Both Perreault and Postero detail the degree to which indigenous people have been excluded from the decision making process regarding the sale and distribution of revenues from the natural resources which are the property of all Bolivians. The exclusion of indigenous people from the management of natural resources, the lack of benefits they have received from their sale and the fact that indigenous peoples value the natural environment around them has led indigenous peoples to organize around their ethnicity in order to have some say over the administration of Bolivia's valuable natural resources. The extreme mineral wealth on which the nation state of Bolivia resides, and the little or no benefit the Bolivian people receive from the sale of their natural resources is recognized by the Bolivian people. Bolivians have a saying about their country, "Bolivia is a beggar sitting on a golden throne" (Carvajal 2006, 65). "*Bolivia es un mendigo sentado en una silla de oro.*"

As demonstrated in this chapter, democracy in Bolivia creates spaces for both social movements and Civic Committees. Ethnic groups then use each of these vehicles to advance their respective interests. The economic model instituted by the Bolivian state also helped to polarize ethnic differences in the country. The protests against the neoliberal economic model have been energetic and violent, underscoring the deep divisions it has contributed to in the country. Democracy and economics have shaped the Bolivian conflict, but in addition to these two factors, natural resources and the struggle over them lie at the heart of the conflict in Bolivia and the autonomy demands resonating from both sides of the conflict. The struggle over coca will be examined in the next chapter. The struggle over coca highlights the complex nature of the ethnic conflict in Bolivia. This struggle is important because it launched the political career of Evo Morales.

Chapter 3: Coca

This chapter will provide background on the coca plant, and those who grow it. It will argue that the United States led “War on Drugs” not only attacked the economic livelihoods of coca farmers, but also led the growers of coca to invoke cultural arguments in defending their plants because coca holds a place in indigenous cosmology. This attack on the coca plant led to the militarization of the Chapare region. Confrontations between *cocaleros* (coca growers) and the security forces led to injuries and deaths on both sides of the conflict. Between 1998 and 2004, security forces killed 33 coca growers and injured 570. During that same time period 27 security officers were killed by *cocaleros* (Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 3). Evo Morales began his political career in the Chapare, leading the coca federations. The *cocaleros* and their federations have now become one of the backbones of the MAS party in Bolivia.

History and Uses of the Coca Plant

To understand the effects of the drug war in Bolivia we must first examine the type of drug that the United States seeks to eradicate in the Andes. The main focus of the eradication component of the war on drugs in the Andes and Bolivia is the coca plant, for it is from the coca plant that cocaine is derived. The coca plant can be raised at elevations ranging from 1,500 to 6,500 feet above sea level. Optimum conditions include cultivation at altitudes between 2,220 and 3,500 feet, an average temperature of between 64F and 77F and humidity levels from 80 to 90 percent (Gagliano 1994, 15). Coca seedlings can be planted year around, but most planting occurs between January and March. A properly cultivated plant will grow to the height of four feet and will yield its first crop within two to three years. It can remain productive for up to twenty-five years. Three to four annual crops are harvested from the coca plant. To minimize damage all harvesting is done by hand, each leaf is picked individually (Gagliano 1994, 16). The characteristics of the coca plant make

alternative development plans difficult to implement since other crops usually only produce one harvest a year and take many years to mature.

The coca plant is primarily grown in the Yungas and the Chapare regions of Bolivia, which lie in the fertile valleys on the eastern side of the Andean mountain range. Coca is also turned into cocaine paste there as well.⁴ The US government decided on a policy of eradication of coca since its efforts at combating demand for cocaine in the United States were poorly funded and designed and generally not effective. Thus Bolivia became a battleground of the War on Drugs. Not all of the coca harvested in Bolivia, however, is used in the manufacture of cocaine paste. There are other uses of the coca plant and it is to these uses that we now turn.

It is important to remember that the coca plant has not always been used for the manufacture of cocaine. The coca plant has cultural significance to highland indigenous groups of Bolivia. "To chew coca leaves is to affirm the attitudes and values - the habits of mind and body - that are characteristic of indigenous Andean culture" (Allen 1992, 5). Archaeological findings demonstrate coca chewing has existed for over 4,000 years. Artifacts dating centuries before Inca beginnings show sierra warriors who had been wounded in battle employing coca as an analgesic (Gagliano 1994, 4). There are also many legends involving coca. One legend contends:

⁴ To make 1 kg of cocaine paste you would need 96kg of coca leaf, 1 liter of sulphuric acid, 11 liters of kerosene, and 4 kg of lime (Hargreaves 1992). The first stage is to place the coca leaves into a pit and sprinkle them with lime and water. They are left to stand for several hours to draw the alkaloids out of the leaf. Then kerosene is added to break the leaves down and the mixture is left to sit for a day or two. Then *pisacocas* stomp on leaves to extract the alkaloids from the mixture and transfer them into the water. Once thoroughly mashed, the liquid is drained. The dead leaves are discarded and the cocaine- rich water, known as *agua rica*, is siphoned off into plastic containers. Sulphuric acid and some more lime are added making the mixture "precipitate" and turn milky white. Finally the mixture is dried. The mixture is filtered through a big sheet and the precipitate wrapped in toilet paper to extract the moisture. It is left to dry in the sun and turns into a grayish clay (Hargreaves 1992, 34). The cocaine paste is then usually moved to Colombian labs where it is turned into the final product, powdered cocaine. The leftover chemicals are usually discarded into rivers or streams, which cause environmental problems downstream.

Before coca was a plant it was a beautiful woman. Discovered to be an adulteress, she was executed, cut in half, and buried. A plant that came to be known as *coca mama* and *macoca* began to grow. Only men were allowed to pick its leaves, which they kept in their pouches. The men soon learned that their pouches could be opened only after copulation with a woman, which they performed in memory of the beautiful adulteress. (Gagliano 1994, 15)

There are other coca creation myths as well. “*Santísima Maria*, Our Mother, lost her child. She began to wander aimlessly; in her grief she picked some coca leaves, chewed on them, and discovered that this eased her pain” (Allen 1992, 65). Coca is a part of Andean culture, and because of this, defense of the coca plant often centers on the importance of the plant to indigenous culture.

Besides the myths concerning the origins of coca and of coca chewing, there are rituals associated with the plant. In the highland community life coca plays an important role. Gagliano describes many of the various social rituals:

As a symbol of camaraderie, a host gives coca leaves to visitors when extending hospitality. If a *serrano* seeks assistance with a major task he will provide coca to his helpers before the work begins. Coca leaves serve to commit parties to an agreement, leaves are exchanged when contracts are negotiated. When a new home is built, the Indians place coca leaves in the foundation to ensure its occupants good fortune and protect them from evil spirits. Miners have similar customs. When seeking new mineral deposits they offer coca leaves to the deities they believe reside in the mines. Shamans employ coca leaves to interpret dreams, bring misfortune to their adversaries, and foretell events. (Gagliano 1994, 20)

Coca is part of the social fabric of indigenous culture and contributes to community cohesion. The uses of coca leaves in the customs of the Aymara and Quechua Indians are many and varied.

When friends chew coca there is a protocol to the proceedings. *K'intu* is the Quechua word for the “offering” of coca that one chews. Catherine J Allen described the *K'intu*:

To make the *k'intu* you choose three or more of the best leaves from your coca bundle. If your leaves are broken and ragged, you make do with them the best you can, but if they are moldy you throw them out. You place the leaves, shiny side up,

one on top of the other and hold the little bundle between your thumb and forefinger. If you offer the *k'intu* to a companion, you present the shiny side. If you consume it yourself, you hold the shiny side toward yourself. You wave the *k'intu* a few inches from your mouth and blow on it softly. This is *phukuy*, ritual blowing. As you blow, you make your invocation. Actually 'invocation' is not quite accurate; your words are more like the address on a letter, for they identify the recipients of the coca's fortifying essence. Your *phukuy* should always include the Earth, the Sacred Places, and your *ayllu*. (Allen 1992, 107)

The basic social organization of Andean communities is found within the *ayllu*. There are many different explanations offered as to what and who an *ayllu* includes. At the most basic level, an *ayllu*, "is a group of families claiming a common identity through real and fictive kinship and using that claim to hold communal land rights" (Klein 1993, 140). It is important to note here that one may also request something personal when performing the *phukuy* ritual. A person may ask for a safe journey or for a kind immediate environment by invoking the name of a street in front of a home in which they may be staying. Coca is not supposed to be dropped on the ground - this is considered disrespectful. Coca is not supposed to be spit either. After chewing the "quid" (the wad of coca in the mouth) the appropriate practice is to remove it with the fingers and then gently throw it away on the ground. *Phukuy* "draws the human actor into a relationship with the Earth and Sacred Places" (Allen 1992, 115). Coca binds the Andean people to their environment and supports their basic social structure and ethnic identity. Coca also helps to delineate hierarchies within Andean society.

Hierarchical social structures are evidenced during coca chewing sessions. When a person chews coca, there is always reciprocation between that person and the others in the group. If I were in a group, I would prepare a *k'intu* then perform *phukuy* and then give the *k'intu* to another. Then someone would do the same for me. Allen describes the social structures and how coca contributes to them in the following passage,

The social group is defined and organized by the *k'intu* exchanges, for social ranking is implied by the order in which *k'intus* are offered. High status individuals should receive *k'intus* before those of lower status. In practice, the relative status of participants is seldom clear-cut. Men rank higher than women, but age ranks higher than youth. A respected old lady may receive *k'intus* before a callow young man. Guests rank higher than coresidents, and the passing of many cargos ranks higher than marginal participation facilitating the passage of many cargos. Wealth itself confers high status only indirectly, by facilitating the passage of many cargos. The size of the gathering and the distance participants are seated from one another are complicating factors. One should rise and carry *k'intus* to a very high status person, whereas companions of equal status who sit at a distance may be politely bypassed. (Allen 1992, 120)

It is important to point out here that coca chewing is seen as an indigenous habit by those in Bolivian society. So chewing coca is a way for people to differentiate themselves between the two categories of Indian and non-Indian. Spanish missionaries initiated coca prohibition drives during many periods of post conquest history (Gagliano 1994, 46). Chewing coca the correct way is used not only as an axis of differentiation between Indian and non-Indian, but it is a means of differentiation between the young and old as well. For a young man to chew coca properly shows that he has come of age. Coca, then, is also used as a means of inclusion to the different social groups.

Coca leaves are also used for divination. This practice is called *coca qhaway* in Quechua which translates to "looking at coca" (Allen 1992, 164). The diviner spreads out a square cloth used to hold coca and places a coin in its center.

Taking a handful of leaves with his right hand the diviner lets the coca run through his fingers and onto the coin. Then he studies the configurations carefully to understand their meaning. Leaves landing right side up or pointing to the right are good signs; those falling upside down or pointing to the left are bad. The diviner picks out certain leaves as significant, as standing for particular individuals or objects. (Allen 1992, 165)

A diviner can also help sick people,

He throws down the coca leaves and they explain the nature of the illness and the prognosis. A large leaf sitting apart from the others can indicate a patient. If it points

away from the diviner the patient is “going away” and will die; if it points toward the diviner the patient is “turning back” and will recover. (Allen 1992, 166)

These examples demonstrate the prevalence of coca in the cosmology of the indigenous groups of the Andes. The coca plant does have an important place in the culture, religion and cosmo vision of indigenous people.

Coca and the Onset of Conflict in Bolivia

In her study of Yura, a “canton” or political division of the Bolivian state, anthropologist Michelle Bigenho observed how coca is included in the imagined Bolivian nation. No coca is grown in Yura, but many of the areas inhabitants travel to the Chapare region to participate in the harvesting of coca in order to supplement their meager incomes. It was the songs that the translocal workers brought back with them to Yura that piqued Bigenho’s interest. She argues that “coca as a trope of nation-ness combines class and ethnic politics through which Bolivians of many different subject positions imagine themselves as a community” (Bigenho 1998, 119.) That is how the gap is bridged between those that chew coca and those that do not. Since the coca plant is ingrained in the cosmologies of the indigenous people of Bolivia, and 62% of Bolivian society identifies as indigenous, it then becomes another category on which to build the imagined nation. Here we have a point of interaction between those that identify themselves as Bolivian but come from different “subject positions.” If coca was not a part of the cosmologies of the indigenous people and the imagined Bolivian nation, then people would not be able to organize around it the way they have.

While it is true that the cosmologies of indigenous populations are a vital component of the situation, it is important to observe the contribution made to social movement mobilization as a result of pressure to eradicate an aspect of Bolivian culture. The *cocaleros* are

an example of a well organized social movement mobilized in a time of crisis. In 1985, the state tin mines were closed as a result of neoliberal structural adjustment programs. In addition, in the 1980s prices for national agricultural products, which accounted for 70% of Bolivia's food, plummeted when neoliberal policies opened the country's borders to cheap imports (Farthing/Kohl 2005, 190). It was at this juncture in history that large groups of indigenous *campesinos* and miners flooded into the Chapare. Currently the population of the region is estimated at 150,000 - compared to a population of 40,000 in 1978 (Farthing/Kohl 2005, 192). Indigenous tin miners created the labor movement in Bolivia in the 1950s. The miners brought with them to the Chapare a wealth of knowledge about how to effectively organize. Coca federations were created which individual coca growers joined. These federations were organized mostly of indigenous people, giving them an ethnic characteristic. One of the coca federations began their address to the 1989 COB Congress (the main workers union meeting) "Our Aymara and Quechua ancestors knew the virtues of the coca leaf and, for this reason, it was considered a gift of nature for the happiness of men" (Healy 1991, 95). From the early stages of the eradication campaign against the coca leaf, *cocaleros* have seized on the cultural uses of the plant in defending it. The Izaquierda Unida (United Left), a liberal worker's party in Bolivia, prior to a peasant congress held in 1989 warned of dire consequences for indigenous groups should coca disappear in Bolivia:

In addition to the North American thesis, that in order to have no cocaine in Bolivia, there should be no coca leaf in Bolivia, there should be added another thesis, far more alarming than the former. They say that in order that there be no more coca in Bolivia, we must extinguish the Andean culture for, to the extent that this culture exists, there will always be coca. (Healy 1991, 100)

The integration of the coca plant in their cosmology provided coca growers or *cocaleros* with a legitimate reason to grow their plants for cultural purposes. This is a fact the US government has consistently underestimated. To the US government coca equals

cocaine. In 1996 the US ambassador to Bolivia Curtis Kamman, vocalized this belief when speaking of Evo Morales, “He comes from a viewpoint completely opposite of ours. He stands for a crop whose only use is to make cocaine” (Epstein 1996, 1). But to people in Bolivia coca equals culture. R.J Schmidt argues:

Where once coca eradication had jeopardized only the livelihoods of those who relied on its cultivation for trade, it now was framed as an assault on a specific people and their historical identity. These frame shifts allowed Bolivian indigenous groups to present an image with which international audiences could more easily sympathize. (Schmidt 2005, 15)

Bolivian indigenous groups have employed the image of the coca chewer in almost an imaginary way, not in defending a specific current practice but rather in defending a historical tradition that is under attack, no matter the numbers of people that still chew coca or use it in rituals. Regardless whether coca chewing is still practiced on a large scale today in Bolivia, the *cocaleros* imply that the eradication of coca is an attack on Bolivian cultural integrity and sovereignty.

Any examination of coca in Bolivia must address the US led War on Drugs and its implementation. Since the coca plant can be turned into cocaine paste, this provides the US government with a pretext for intervening in Bolivian affairs; we have also examined the cultural uses of the coca plant, which provides a backdrop to the resistance demonstrated by Bolivians. It is important to remember here that, although the US government is fighting a war on drugs in Bolivia, it is doing so through the Bolivian government, historically controlled by an elite *mestizo* political class. During the beginning of the implementation of the US War on Drugs, indigenous groups were not well represented in the political apparatus. But, due to the decentralization of political power through laws like the Law of Popular Participation, indigenous people came to have a voice in the political apparatus. Now that Evo Morales is president of the country he has changed the approach of the

Bolivian state with regards to coca growing. His motto is “Yes to coca! No to cocaine” (Evo Morales speech Cochabamba 12/2007). Morales reached an accord with the US government in 2006 that allowed 30,000 *cocaleros* in the Chapare region to grow coca on a 40X40 meter area (Economist 3/2006, 15). He also advocates for the use of coca in “legal” products such as tea, toothpaste, shampoo and flour.

US strategy has focused on a two-pronged approach to combating the coca plant in Bolivia, both of which have adversely affected the incomes of coca growers. One of the approaches has been the funding of alternative development projects. The hope that alternatives can be provided to Bolivian *campesinos* to grow other crops in place of coca lies at the heart of this strategy. Overall it has been an abysmal failure (Lupu 2004, 405-421/Farthing & Kohl 2005, 183-198). Alternative crops do not provide the same level of income, and tariffs on alternative crops are kept high by the US government in order to protect US farmers which is prohibitive to Bolivian agricultural exports. The second strategy is the forced eradication of the coca plant. Both of these strategies have led to increased mistrust of both the Bolivian and US governments among the Bolivian people. US aid to the Bolivian government is dependent upon its cooperation with US directives to combat coca. Since the mid-1980s, US drug control policy has been largely directed at the Chapare region east of Cochabamba. In 1988 the Bolivian government passed Law 1008. Developed by the United States, this law provided the justification and framework for the US War on Drugs in Bolivia and set out which areas would be slated for coca eradication (Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 36). While the majority of coca in Bolivia is grown within two regions - the Yungas and the Chapare, eradication efforts have almost exclusively focused on the Chapare, because the government sanctions 12,000 hectares of coca grown in the Yungas as “legal” and “traditional” in order to provide enough coca to satisfy domestic demand for the leaf

(Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 38). Destroying coca plants severely impacted coca farmers' already meager incomes. In order to protect their economic livelihood and culture, coca growers invoked cultural arguments to defend their plants.

The government of Hugo Banzer, who won the presidency in 1997, established the armed forces as the centerpiece of his anti-drug strategy. Banzer came up with *Plan Dignidad* (Dignity Plan) at the request of the US embassy in 1998. The United States promised \$700 million in debt reduction, alternative development projects, and counter narcotics assistance in exchange for promises to reduce coca production (Postero 2005, 80). The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) commanded this "assistance" and a US funded antinarcotics force, the UMOPAR. After the implementation of the Dignity Plan, UMOPAR troops wielded a great deal of power and operated with brute force, arresting and searching whomever they pleased (Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 36). Confrontations regularly left *cocaleros* dead or wounded. Banzer used the military to eradicate a record 45,000 hectares of coca, most of the Chapare's production, by 2000 (Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 39). US officials declared the plan a huge success, but accelerated eradication steeply increased human rights violations. Forced eradication also contributed to a strengthened opposition to other US backed policies promoting economic liberalization (Farthing/Ledebur 2004, 39).

Voluntary eradication has also been a centerpiece of the strategy. One early alternative development program actually paid farmers directly to eradicate their coca (Painter 1994, 65). Under funding of the program and the fact that the policy actually increased the incentive to plant coca doomed the idea. The program led to coca growers planting more coca in order to eradicate a portion of it and collect a financial reward. In the 1980s, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) focused on building roads in the Chapare, thinking that increasing the viability of transporting alternative agricultural

products to markets would encourage alternative production. USAID then turned around and destroyed the roads as they were being used as landing strips for small planes that were flying cocaine paste out of the country (Painter 1994, 70).

This model of alternative development has clearly not brought the promised benefits to coca growers; this does not mean some form of alternative development is not viable for the future of Bolivia. As Noam Lupu asserts:

Alternative development can and should be made to work for the elimination of coca and the simultaneous development and empowerment of peasant coca farmers. The lessons of past experiences suggest that the process of reducing the dependence of Bolivian farmers on coca cultivation will be long and require the active involvement of coca farmers. (Lupu 2004, 415)

As mentioned earlier, when the Bolivian tin mines closed in 1985, miners flooded into the Chapare. They brought with them knowledge of how to organize. The miners had been one of the best politically organized groups in the country. In an article on the rise of Bolivia's coca leaf producers, Kevin Healy dissects how the coca growers came to organize themselves into a very powerful force. In Healy's discussion of the coca growers' federations, we encounter the name Evo Morales. It is through his leadership of the coca federations that Evo Morales made a name for himself. During his tenure as president of the coca growers' federations, Morales became an internationally recognized figure as he advocated internationally for the right of Bolivians to grow the coca plant. Thus, in a sense, the War on Drugs and its consequences provided Evo Morales with a stage from which he could address the more pressing concerns of the entire Bolivian population and rise as a national leader. It was from this stage Evo Morales critiqued the neoliberal economic policies that the US government imposed on Bolivia through the IMF and World Bank (Shulz, Youngers personal communication).

The coca growers are organized through a network of unions (*sindicatos*). Healy advances the thesis that not only has the peasant *sindicato* movement blocked attempts of the state to both reduce coca production and coca leaf marketing, but that those same state policies have actually strengthened the Left-of-Center labor unions and oppositional political parties (Healy 1991, 116). As Healy observes,

While the international war on drugs has thus far proved only minimally effective in curbing the flow of drugs from the Andean region, it has succeeded in antagonizing the *sindicato* organization of coca leaf growers to the point that anti - US sentiment is widespread throughout the Bolivian countryside. (Healy 1991, 117)

Fast forward to the year 2000 and the election that Morales lost by one percentage point. The US ambassador to Bolivia warned of “consequences” if Morales won, namely an end to US aid (Kurtz-Phelan 2005, 5). This statement provided a large boost to Evo Morales. The Bolivian people did not appreciate an ambassador from the United States attempting to directly influence voting in the country. At the time, Morales joked that he might ask the US ambassador to start running his campaign for him, since the ambassador’s comments did not have their intended effect and instead actually caused more people to vote for Evo Morales (Kurtz-Phelan 2005, 5).

The struggle over, and organization around coca by an organized group of *cocaleros* provides an example of ethnic groups mobilizing because of primordial bonds and socioeconomic circumstances. The fact that a *cocalero* identity has changed and adapted to the political and economic changes taking place in Bolivia provides evidence for constructivism. This explanation of ethnic conflict is in line with scholars such as Yashar, Anderson and Allahar. This chapter on coca began by examining the history and uses of the coca plant. It described how the coca plant has a place in indigenous cosmology, and it demonstrated that coca growers’ economic livelihoods were endangered by a coca eradication policy pushed by the US government and implemented by the Bolivian government. To combat this crisis,

coca growers argued vociferously that indigenous culture was also under attack. The small scale producer nature of coca is what makes the social movement surrounding it extremely strong. The small scale producer nature of coca seems to create a stronger bond between the individual and the resource. The *cocaleros* are defending not only their economic livelihood, but indigenous culture as well. Resources such as natural gas and oil are point specific resources, and are not diffuse like coca. *Campesinos* are not out drilling their own natural gas wellheads. But, they are out planting and harvesting coca plants. *Cocaleros* produce and sell their product and are paid directly. In the case of natural gas and oil, the government distributes the revenues from the sale of the respective commodities. Unless a country's government is completely transparent, profits and revenues are hidden from public view. Unlike in Peru and Colombia, where coca has been found to lengthen or prolong the conflict, coca has appeared to contribute to the onset of ethnic conflict in Bolivia.

Chapter 4: Autonomy

“¡Autonomía! Administrar nuestros recursos propios!”
“Autonomy! To administer our own resources!”
(Manfred Reyes Villa 12/2006 Cochabamba)

This chapter examines the culmination of ethnic nationalisms in Bolivia: Indigenous groups are seeking territorial, judicial, cultural and economic autonomy in the current Constitutional Assembly; this has led the *mestizo* political elite to advocate for autonomous regions in the eastern departments of the country. But there are differences between the types of autonomy each group seeks (Interview Jubenal Quispe). The *mestizo* elite in the east of the country are a very powerful force. They are empowered by a combination of the largest natural gas reserves in the nation, and huge agricultural estates run by a *latifundista* - landowning class. Since the time of colonization, the *mestizo* elite have been constructing and imagining a national identity which negates the indigenous heritage of the Bolivian nation. The “colonization,” real or imagined, they claim is being practiced against them today by indigenous groups from “*Alto Perú*” (High Peru) has initiated a period of crisis, as indigenous groups are attempting to dramatically reshape the Bolivian state (Map 1).

Anthropological literature suggests that in times of crisis rituals are intensified (Wolfe 1999). We can characterize the *mestizo*/white elite in Bolivia as experiencing a time of crisis, as they find their grip on political and economic power in Bolivia slowly slipping away. In the eastern lowlands, a group of *mestizos* has created an imagined Camba nation. The construction of a Camba identity and rituals are intensifying as the group feels threatened by the indigenous social movements around them.

The literature on autonomy regimes in Latin America focuses mostly on the cases of successful and failed indigenous bids for autonomy. Diaz Polanco writes:

The autonomy claim should not be considered as one among a list of demands indigenous peoples make for special recognition and rights. Autonomy is the “articulating demand” through which all other claims are fulfilled. Autonomy is an explicitly political demand requiring a change in the distribution of political power and the creation of new institutions that facilitate the political participation of previously excluded groups. (Diaz Polanco 1998, 216-217)

But in Bolivia, the white/*mestizo* political elite in the east of the country is using the idea of autonomy as a means by which to maintain their power and control over natural resources and the revenues derived from them. This is not uncommon; there have been many secessionist or autonomist movements in resource rich countries the world over. It is not uncommon for these ethnic conflicts to be exacerbated by outside forces.

Diaz Polanco writes:

It is common for powerful metropolitan countries seeking to establish hegemony and political, economic, or military control of given areas they consider critical to foster separatist movements in dependent or relatively weak countries under the pretext of supporting struggles for “freedom” and encouraging “self-determination” of ethnic-national groups. These efforts have nothing to do with regional autonomy. The case of the Congo, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast illustrate the instigation of ethnic-national conflicts as a weapon of blackmail against peoples who are “rebellious” vis-à-vis the metropolitan states. (Diaz Polanco 1997, 108)

The case of Bolivia supports Diaz Polanco’s assertions. The US government emboldens many of those in the resource rich eastern provinces desiring regional autonomy through grants distributed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (Dangl 2/2008). Jose Carvalho, a press spokesperson for the main rightwing oppositional party, Democratic and Social Power⁵ stated as much when he said, “USAID helps with the process of decentralization. They help with improving democracy in Bolivia through seminars and courses to discuss issues of autonomy” (Dangl 2/2008). Clearly Bolivia as a case study in regional autonomy movements encouraged in part by other states is not an uncommon one.

In an extensive study of ethnic autonomy regimes in Latin America, Van Cott found:

Autonomy claims succeeded only when indigenous regimes were able to insert them into larger regime bargains and when temporary changes in the political opportunity structure - opened access to decision-making spheres and the emergence of an influential ally - in favor indigenous claims. Autonomy claims are unlikely to succeed when advanced in isolation, outside the context of a regime bargain, where claimants

⁵ *Podemos* or Democratic and Social Power is a party that supports regional autonomy efforts in the eastern half of Bolivia.

are not empowered to reject the entire bargain, and where they lack the support of an influential ally. (Van Cott 2001, 54)

Van Cott goes on to state that the two ways regime bargains are arrived at are either through a crisis in the legitimacy of the state which brings about a constitutional assembly, or peace talks to end armed struggle when the regime faced a serious challenge to maintain political order and territorial control (Van Cott 2001, 30). The data presented below supports Van Cott's assertions about indigenous autonomy. In the case of Bolivia, a crisis in legitimacy forced the government to present a referendum on a constitutional assembly, which passed. A constitutional assembly began and was still in session upon the completion of this thesis. This bodes well for the indigenous claims for autonomy in Bolivia at the moment. According to Van Cott's theory, indigenous groups in Bolivia will more than likely be successful in their demands for autonomy as they have forced a constitutional assembly and have an "influential ally" in President Morales, who supports indigenous autonomy.

Indigenous groups have been successful in realizing their demands for autonomy in other countries in Latin America. Van Cott writes that Colombia has incorporated significant changes into its constitution to recognize the indigenous groups that lie within its borders:

The Colombian case provides the most ambitious attempt of any Latin American state to implement legal pluralism. The singularity of the Colombian effort may be attributed both to the fact that its constitutional model of indigenous rights is among the most comprehensive and progressive to date, as well as to the fact that its indigenous population is among the smallest in proportion to its total population, presenting a more modest threat to traditional views of national identity and the interests of rural power brokers. (Van Cott 2001, 38)

There are four other Latin American states, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela which have codified ethnically defined autonomy regimes (Van Cott 2001, 39). Clearly, the fact that indigenous populations represent numerical minorities in these countries facilitated indigenous bids for autonomy. The political elite do not fear a small percentage of the nation's population having autonomous powers. This can be observed in

the Colombian case Van Cott describes above. But in countries such as Bolivia and Guatemala where a majority of the population is made up of indigenous peoples, indigenous autonomy would result in major changes to “traditional views of national identity,” as the state would no longer be based solely on a *mestizo* identity and culture. In the case of Bolivia, the fact that indigenous groups make up such a large percentage of the population means they represent a much greater threat to the political elite than a numerical minority would, which explains why the indigenous autonomy demands are being vigorously contested by the *mestizo* political elite in the country.

When people talk about indigenous communities there is a tendency to imagine that all practices of indigenous communities are thousands of years old. Van Cott points out that this is not the case:

Many practices indigenous communities claim were adopted quite recently. Indigenous communities continually adopt new practices as new needs arise. Although the antiquity of customary law is often invoked to legitimize it, the authenticity of these new structures and norms comes not from their age but, rather, from their autonomous adoption in the absence of effective access to the state. Thus, the challenge of articulating indigenous customary law to state systems, required by the new constitutional recognitions of customary law, is posed incorrectly, since this articulation has been negotiated and renegotiated in practice since colonial times in response to changing political conditions. The challenge now is to codify their relationship formally to represent the transformation in indigenous-state relations implied by the new constitutions. (Van Cott 2000, 215)

Van Cott states that many practices and customary laws of indigenous groups have been adopted recently due to their “lack of effective access to the state.” Indigenous groups in Bolivia, experiencing a lack of access to the state, were forced to develop their own forms of self government which have evolved and changed over time. Now indigenous groups, working with an indigenous president, are in a position in the Constitutional Assembly, to add their forms of governance to the structure of the state. The mobilization of indigenous peoples to change the organization of the state has pitted indigenous peoples against a

mestizo political elite committed to preserving the status quo. If indigenous groups are successful in implementing all of the changes they seek, the Bolivian state will no longer be defined solely by a *mestizo* identity and culture, but an indigenous one as well. Evo Morales in a speech delivered in Cochabamba, during a Summit of Latin American presidents proclaimed to the crowd, “We are defending this democratic revolution!” “*Estamos defendiendo esta revolución democrática*” (Cochabamba December 2006)! A democratic revolution is indeed taking place in Bolivia today. A marginalized majority has begun to achieve much greater representation in the state.

Indigenous Autonomy Demands in Bolivia

Indigenous demands for autonomy include territorial, judicial, cultural and economic autonomy. Jubenal Quispe articulates indigenous autonomy demands in this way:

Indigenous groups want autonomy. In the Constitutional Assembly we are going to talk of autonomy for indigenous groups also, not only autonomy for the departments. Indigenous groups have ways of governing ourselves, of administering justice, of behaving ethically. We are not looking for independence. (Interview Jubenal Quispe 12/07)

Los pueblos indígenas quieren autonomía. En la asamblea de la constitución vamos a hablar del autonomía de los pueblos indígenas también, no solo para los departamentos. Los pueblos indígenas tenemos maneras de gobernarnos, de administrar la justicia y de comportarnos éticamente. No estamos buscando independencia. (Entrevista a Jubenal Quispe 12/07)

Article 135 in the indigenous proposals for the current constitutional assembly in Bolivia describes indigenous demands as to the territorial organization of the state.

The unitary, pluri-national, communal state, adjusted to the cultural reality, geographic, socioeconomic, ecology of Bolivia is arranged territorially in: Original Indigenous Territories, Municipalities, Provinces, Regions and Departments. II. Politically and administratively it is organized in decentralized governments with autonomy which is expressed in a) Original Indigenous territories b) Original Peasant Indigenous, afro-Bolivian and intercultural community Municipalities⁶ c)

⁶ Intercultural communities are defined as the space being envisioned by indigenous groups in which indigenous people would interact with afro-Bolivians and the *mestizo* ethnic group in the “new” Bolivian state.

Intercultural Municipalities d) Original Peasant Indigenous, afro-Bolivian and intercultural community Regions e) Intercultural Regions f) Departments. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

I. El Estado Unitario Plurinacional Comunitario, adecuándose a la realidad cultural, geográfica, socioeconómica, ecológica de Bolivia, se ordena territorialmente en: Territorios Indígenas Originario, Municipios, Provincias, Regiones y Departamentos.
II. Política y administrativamente se organiza en gobiernos descentralizados y con autonomía que se expresa en: a) Territorios Indígenas Originarios b) Municipios Indígenas Originarios Campesinos, Afrobolivianos y de Comunidades Interculturales c) Municipios Interculturales d) Regiones Indígenas Originarias Campesinas, Afrobolivianas y de Comunidades Interculturales e) Regiones Interculturales f) Departamentos. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

It can be observed in Article 135 that indigenous demands do not include a federal state, but rather a decentralized one that would still have a “central government.” A “Plurinational Assembly” (*Asamblea Plurinacional*) composed of 167 members would have legislative powers. This is important because it marks a shift in democracy in Bolivia, to a further decentralized state with indigenous groups governing themselves according to “*usos y costumbres*.”

Indigenous demands for autonomy are non-negotiable, it seems, as Article 1 of the groups’ proposal reads:

This Constitution respects and constitutionalizes the preexistence of original peasant indigenous nations and afro-descendants, ancestral domain over their territories and guarantees their free determination which is expressed in the will to shape and be part of the Unitary Pluri-national and Communal state and in the right to control their institutions, of self government, to develop their own law and justice, their culture, forms of life and reproduction, the right to reconstruct their territories and the right to define their development with identity. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Article 146 of the *Pacto Unidad* section II addresses how indigenous, afro-Bolivian and intercultural municipalities would be delineated. Article 146, section II reads:

Original peasant indigenous municipalities, afro-descendants, and intercultural communities are those whose majority population defines itself as indigenous, original, peasant, afro-descendent or intercultural community. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Los municipios indígenas originarios campesinos, afrodescendientes y de comunidades interculturales son aquellos cuya población mayoritaria se define como indígena, originaria, campesina, afrodescendiente o comunidad intercultural. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Esta Constitución respeta y constitucionaliza la preexistencia de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios y afrodescendientes, el dominio ancestral sobre sus territorios y garantiza su libre determinación que se expresa en la voluntad de conformar y ser parte del Estado Unitario Plurinacional Comunitario, y en el derecho a controlar sus instituciones, al auto gobierno, a desarrollar su derecho y justicia propia, su cultura, formas de vida y reproducción, al derecho a reconstituir sus territorios y al derecho a definir su desarrollo con identidad. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

This is important because indigenous groups are articulating their right to shape and incorporate themselves into the state as they see fit, as in the past indigenous groups have been encouraged to conform to the *mestizo* identity adopted by the state. The Spanish attempted to forcibly incorporate indigenous peoples into the state by requiring them to learn Spanish and embrace Christianity. If indigenous people did not learn Spanish they were effectively marginalized, as they were able to neither participate in the state nor govern it. The demands of indigenous groups described here served as a starting point for negotiations within the current constitutional assembly. Like most all groups involved in negotiations, indigenous groups will not achieve the incorporation of all the 300 articles they have articulated in the *Pacto Unidad*. There will have to be give and take on both sides. The complexity of the negotiation cannot be understated. A final draft was supposed to be ready at the beginning of August, 2007. That date has now been pushed back to December, 2007 as the delegates have so far not been able to put together a draft due to disagreements.

Indigenous groups are seeking autonomy in order to govern themselves in a democratic way, but according to their cultural ideals as well. Indigenous forms of justice differ from the current Bolivian justice system which has been forced on the indigenous communities of Bolivia and Latin America since the arrival of the Spanish. Indigenous demands for their own justice system are articulated in Article 102 of the *Pacto Unidad*. Article 102 reads:

I. Original Peasant Indigenous jurisdiction is exercised through the authorities, norms and procedures of original peasant indigenous nations and communities. II. Original Peasant Indigenous jurisdiction and common jurisdiction have the same constitutional standing... V. The decisions within Original Peasant Indigenous jurisdiction have national validity and are not reversible by common jurisdiction. VI. In cases of conflict of interests with common or administrative jurisdiction or in cases of alleged human rights violations, the conflict will be heard by a jurisdictional court composed of authorities from the jurisdictions in conflict. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

I. La jurisdicción indígena originaria campesina se ejerce a través de las autoridades, normas y procedimientos de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios y comunidades campesinas. II. La jurisdicción indígena originaria campesina y la jurisdicción ordinaria tienen la misma jerarquía constitucional...V. Las decisiones de la jurisdicción indígena originaria campesina tienen validez nacional y no son revisables por la jurisdicción ordinaria. VI. En casos de conflicto de competencias con la jurisdicción ordinaria o administrativa o presunta violación de derechos humanos, el conflicto será conocido por una instancia jurisdiccional compuesta por autoridades de las jurisdicciones en conflicto. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

This article would establish the powers of indigenous judicial systems. Interestingly, indigenous groups have foreseen there may be cases in which indigenous jurisdiction and common jurisdiction overlap. In that case one judicial form would not take precedence over another, and a court comprised of authorities from the jurisdictions in conflict would hear the dispute. This is interesting because it highlights the equality indigenous groups seek between themselves and *mestizos* and not their desire to be in total control of the state. Many indigenous academics I met and talked with in Bolivia spoke of the founding of a *nuevo estado* (Alliance Francés - Multiculturalism Round Table Pablo Aymara & Esteban Ticona).

Not only would this “new state” embody legislative and judicial changes, it would also promote changes within the social sphere in Bolivia. The media in Bolivia is mostly in the hands of private families. These families are the oligarchic white/*mestizo* elite that have run Bolivia since the time of the Spanish. The reporting on President Morales’ government in these media outlets is generally critical and negative (Interview Father Steve Judd). For example, Demetrio Canelas founded the major newspaper in Cochabamba, *Los Tiempos* in

1943. Today the Executive Director, Executive President, Director and Co-Director of the newspaper all have the last name, Canelas (Los Tiempos 12/15/07, 7). Obviously, the newspaper has been kept in the family. The articles put forth by indigenous groups would change the press drastically. Articles 268 and 269 read:

The plurinational state guarantees that the ownership and control of the mediums of communication will not assume a monopolistic or oligopolistic character which is against society in general and the original peasant indigenous nations and peoples, and afro descendents under this specific law and social control. Article 269 - The mediums of communication will implement integral educative processes oriented towards development, respect, protection and preservation of ethical values and aesthetics of original peasant indigenous nations and peoples, afro-descendents, intercultural communities and the culturally diverse populations promoting the social solidarity. Fifty percent of the programming will contain cultural and general education content. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Article 268 - El Estado Plurinacional garantiza que la propiedad y control de los medios de comunicación no asumen carácter monopólico ni oligopolico en contra de la sociedad en general y de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios campesinos y afrodescendientes, bajo Ley expresa y control social. Article 269 - Los medios de comunicación social deben implementar procesos educativos integrales orientados al desarrollo, respeto, protección y preservación de los valores éticos y estéticos de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios campesinos, afrodescendientes, comunidades interculturales y población culturalmente diversa, promoviendo la solidaridad social. Un cincuenta por ciento de la programación debe contemplar contenido educativo cultural y genero. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Indigenous groups are attempting to break the monopoly the *mestizo* elite has over the press and media of communication such as television. It can be seen in Article 269 with the requirement that at least 50% of future programming to contain “cultural and general education content” that indigenous groups plan to use the media as a medium of education concerning the cultural differences that exist in Bolivia. There are questions as to how this would be operationalized; however, what is important to observe here is the way in which indigenous groups are attempting to reshape the state and power. There are indigenous newspapers in Bolivia, but they are not distributed on a scale comparable to the better

financed newspapers such as *Los Tiempos* in Cochabamba. This inequality between the groups would be removed if indigenous demands are accepted in the Constitutional Assembly.

Indigenous autonomy demands are not limited to the territorial and cultural identity of the Bolivian state, the use and ownership of natural resources figure prominently in their demands as well. Article 160 addresses Bolivian natural resources:

The control and ownership of all natural resources lies with original peasant indigenous nations and peoples, afro-descendants, intercultural communities and the culturally diverse populations of the countryside and cities that form the Bolivian population: the management and administration belongs to the Unitary Plurinational Communal State, approved and in agreement with what is established in this chapter. II. Original peasant indigenous nations and peoples, afro-descendants and intercultural communities will participate in a direct, real and effective way in the management, administration and decision making pertaining to the benefits coming from the use of natural resources expressed in the prerogatives and profits in the territories where the resources are found. III. The Unitary Plurinational and Communal state will distribute and redistribute the benefits and the profits from exploration, exploitation, industrialization and commercialization of natural resources founded in the principles of equality, solidarity and complementary to the other rules this Constitution establishes. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

I. El dominio y propiedad de todos los recursos naturales son de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios campesinos, afrodescendientes, de las comunidades interculturales y de la población culturalmente diversa del campo y la ciudad, que conforman la población boliviana: la gestión y administración corresponde al Estado Unitario Plurinacional Comunitario, en conformidad y concordancia con lo que se establece en este capítulo. II. Las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios campesinos, afrodescendientes, y las comunidades interculturales participan en forma directa, real y efectiva en la gestión, administración y toma de decisiones y en los beneficios provenientes del aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales, expresados en regalías y utilidades en los territorios donde se encuentren estos recursos. III. El Estado Unitario Plurinacional Comunitario distribuirá y redistribuirá los beneficios y utilidades del proceso de exploración, explotación, industrialización y comercialización de los recursos naturales, fundados en los principios de equidad, solidaridad, complementariedad y los demás que esta Constitución establece. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Control of natural resources has been at the heart of the inequality and conflict which has existed in the country since the Spanish arrived over 500 years ago. Indigenous proposals stress the sovereignty of **all** Bolivians over the resources that lie within Bolivian territory. The above Article 160, is specifically written towards “natural resources” in general. It can be

seen in this article that the management of the resources will fall to the communities in which the resource is found, but the profits from the sale of the resources would be distributed by the Unitary Plurinational and Communal state. Allowing communities in which the resources are found to control the resources creates certain issues, as indigenous people have a connection to the land which calls for its sustainable development. For instance, in the case of non-renewable resources indigenous groups are seeking the right to a *consulta*, which would give indigenous communities the right to veto any proposed development of non-renewable resources on their land, if the development of that resource would devastate their native land. This can be seen in Article 165 which describes non-renewable resources:

The management, administration and decision making on non-renewable natural resources on the part of the Unitary and Plurinational State, that are found in the territories and lands of original peasant indigenous nations and peoples, afro descendents, and intercultural communities or in areas subject to affect their habitat and their areas of influence, could only be carried out with the binding previous consent of the towns. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

La gestión, administración y toma de decisiones sobre los recursos naturales no renovables por parte del Estado Unitario Plurinacional que se encuentran en los territorios y las tierras de las naciones y pueblos indígenas originarios campesinos, afrodescendientes y de las comunidades interculturales o en áreas susceptibles de afectación de su hábitat y sus áreas de influencia, solamente podrán ser efectuadas con consentimiento previo vinculante de los pueblos. (Pacto Unidad 2006)

Here we see how indigenous ideas on sustainable development would be incorporated into the new Bolivian state. If, in pursuit of natural gas deposits, communities determine that the damage done to the environment would outweigh the benefits of the profits derived from the sale of the natural gas, then the community would have the right to veto the proposed exploration or extraction. This focus on living in harmony with nature, and not destroying it, is a characteristic of indigenous communities (Indigenous Peoples' Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development, 2002).

Mestizo Departmental Autonomy Demands

Indigenous demands for autonomy are being countered by the *mestizo* elite in the eastern departments of the country with parallel autonomy demands. The US media typically describe the resistance to the government of Evo Morales as originating from the territory of Santa Cruz or eastern Bolivia. This territorialization of the conflict implies that the western half of the country is indigenous and the eastern half *mestizo*. Kathryn Ledebuer, director of the Andean Information Network in Bolivia, described this territorialization of the conflict in the US media:

I get very, very frustrated with the US main stream press articles that say in Santa Cruz most of the population are descendants of Europeans and that's why they don't agree with Evo...this is not true. Oligarchies throughout Latin America and in every major Bolivian city are lighter skinned and have more European blood. Santa Cruz is no different than any other Bolivian city. You have a very small, kind of incestuous oligarchic group that is largely descended from Europeans, so the bulk of the population of Santa Cruz - Santa Cruz 25 years ago was a little teeny-tiny town - are migrants are from the highlands and from all places and they are indigenous. (Interview Kathryn Ledebuer Cochabamba 12/2006)

It is these light skinned, political and economic elites, described by Ledebuer, that are pushing forward with demands for autonomy in the gas-rich east in an effort to maintain their grip on the economic and political power they have controlled for so long. Ledebuer alludes to the fact that a majority of the population of Santa Cruz is comprised of indigenous migrants from the West of the country, which is important because in Western media reports of the conflict it is implied that a majority of the eastern lowland population is *mestizo*.

Jubenal Quispe explained the history of how a large number of the *mestizo* elite came to reside in the east of the country, and why demands for departmental autonomy are resonating from there:

Why does Santa Cruz now demand autonomy? Because after the changes of 2000, 2003, 2005 that elite which was governing the country from La Paz, has been expelled. And many have taken refuge in Santa Cruz, in Beni, in Pando. Who is the governor of Pando? He is one of the eternal senators of Gonzalez Sanchez de Lozada's (Goni's) time, Ricardo Fernández. Who is the governor of Tarija who is now demanding autonomy? He used to be the president of the Parliament for a long time, until he was expelled with Goni. Who is the promoter of autonomy in Santa Cruz? He used to be one of Goni's ministers, the Health Minister. When they used to be in La Paz, they never wanted autonomy, but now they do!

¿Por que Santa Cruz ahora exige autonomía? Porque después de los cambios del 2000, 2003 y 2005 esa elite que estaba gobernando el país desde La Paz ha sido expulsada y muchos se refugiaron en Santa Cruz en Beni y en Pando. ¿Quién es el prefecto de Pando? Es uno de los eternos senadores hasta del tiempo de Goni, Ricardo Fernández. ¿Quién es el prefecto de Tarija que ahora exige autonomía? Era el presidente de Cámara de Diputados por mucho tiempo, hasta que fue expulsado con Goni. ¿Quién es el promotor de la autonomía en Santa Cruz? Ha sido uno de los ministros de Goni, del ministro de salud. Cuando estaban allí en La Paz, nunca querían autonomía, pero ahora si. (Entrevista a Jubenal Quispe)

Jubenal's commentary creates a mental image of the current situation in Bolivia in which the *mestizo* political elite is being chased out of the mountainous, western region of the country and into the eastern lowlands. Now that the *mestizo* elite has been expelled from power at the national level, they have taken refuge in the departments in the east of the country where they can control the vast amount of natural resources and fertile land found there.

Nación Camba

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, most of the literature on autonomy in Latin America focuses exclusively on indigenous autonomy regimes. However, in Bolivia in addition to indigenous autonomy demands, there are autonomy demands being made by the *mestizo* political elite. It is important to study the demands put forth by this *mestizo* elite in order to better understand the processes that determine who has a say in shaping and reshaping the power structures of the state within multiethnic democracies. The case of

Bolivia provides the first example of such a phenomenon in Latin America and will be useful to scholars studying multiethnic democracies.

The group which lies at the center of the *mestizo* struggle for autonomy is the *Nación Camba* (NC), a right-wing Santa Cruz regionalist movement, which emerged in early 2001 and claims to represent not only Santa Cruz, but the whole eastern lowland region (Assies & Salman 288, 2005). The movement claims that the Cambas (the *mestizo* lowland population) are an “emerging nation” based in “tradition, blood, and ethnic-cultural unity.” It calls for a defense of eastern Bolivia against the highland kolas who invaded “their” lands and speaks of an Aymaran “occupation police” (Assies & Salman 2005, 288). The movement essentially claims the lowlands for the dominant *mestizo* population, or more precisely, for the *mestizo* dominant class.

The white/*mestizo* political elite is currently creating an imagined nation by imagining their own history in the eastern lowlands of the country. The Camba Nation website contains documentation of political views, descriptions of different organizations within the group, as well as three theses, one of which is 98 pages long, another is titled “400 años de la lucha autonomista cruceña” - a section for children, maps, symbols, and banners are available for viewing as well (<http://www.nacioncamba.net> - accessed 4/02/2007).

In the group’s “memorandum” there are six “Strategic Objectives in the 21st century.” Five of these objectives are socioeconomic in nature with the exception of the third objective which centers on identity.

The *Nación Camba*’s first objective, “Democracy” reads:

The reinstatement of democracy in Bolivia was a real possibility so that the people, exercising the right to vote, could transform the State. However, practice has demonstrated, clearly and objectively, that this mutilated democracy has only served, with a few honorable exceptions, to consolidate the business, centralism and prebend of the state.

The last constitutional reform, has not been sufficient and constitutes an embarrassing remission that has reinforced the internal and external dependency, the bureaucracy and colonialism of the State. The political, economic and institutional model imposed on the country, has agitated the regional disequilibrium's, the inequality, the corruption and the social marginalization.

The monopoly on public representation by the national political parties annulled the regional initiatives and leadership and has generated the logic of flattery and authoritarianism, among other things.

It is urgent then to radicalize the democracy to transform the nature of a ferociously unitary, dependent and servile State to construct the state of departmental and/or national autonomies, to perfect the State institutions and to democratize the power in their national, departmental and municipal forms. (Accessed 4/02/07)

La reinstalación de la democracia en Bolivia era una posibilidad real para que el pueblo, ejerciendo el derecho al voto, pueda transformar el Estado. Sin embargo, la práctica ha demostrado clara y objetivamente, que esta democracia mutilada, sólo ha servido - salvando honrosas excepciones - para consolidar el Estado-negocio, prebendal, centralista y ajeno.

La última reforma constitucional, no ha sido suficiente y constituye un vergonzoso retroceso que ha reforzado la dependencia interna y externa, el burocratismo, y el colonialismo de Estado. El modelo político, económico e institucional impuesto al país, ha agigantado los desequilibrios regionales, la desigualdad, la corrupción y la marginalidad social.

El monopolio de la representación pública de los partidos políticos nacionales anuló las iniciativas y los liderazgos regionales y ha generado la lógica del adulo y el autoritarismo, entre otras cosas.

Urge entonces radicalizar la democracia para transformar la naturaleza de un Estado ferozmente unitario, dependiente y servil, para construir el Estado de las autonomías departamentales y/o nacionales, perfeccionar la institucionalidad Estatal, y democratizar el poder en sus instancias nacionales, departamentales y municipales. (Accessed 4/02/07)

The *Nación Camba's* solution to the problems with democracy in the country is to further decentralize decision making to the regional level. *Cambas* assert that the state has failed the nation, much like indigenous groups claim. Indigenous groups also claim the last constitutional reforms did not go far enough in their changes. The parallels between the two

group's ideas of "democracy" and their claims as to the shortcomings of democracy in Bolivia are striking.

The second objective reads:

Self determination - We are in support of the right to national self determination, and the possibility of realizing constitutional reforms conducive to materializing these changes, we proclaim the necessity to convert Santa Cruz into an Autonomous Region, endowed with its own government and protected in a special statute of autonomy that expresses *Cruceño* power through the formal and legal recognition of our nation-state. (Accessed 4/02/07)

Autodeterminacion - Apoyados en el derecho a la autodeterminación nacional, y en la posibilidad de realizar reformas constitucionales conducentes a materializar estos logros, proclamamos la necesidad de convertir a Santa Cruz, en una Región Autónoma, dotada de gobierno propio y amparado por un estatuto especial de autonomía que sea la expresión del poder cruceño, como reconocimiento formal y legal de nuestra nación-estado. (Accessed 4/02/07)

Much like indigenous groups, here we see the *mestizo* elite's demands culminating in calls for autonomy. As can be seen above, the *Nación Camba* seeks constitutional reforms in order to implement the changes they desire. A major demand of indigenous groups in the run-up to the election of 2005 was a constitutional assembly. In the current constitutional assembly indigenous groups are able to directly negotiate the demands they have into a new constitution. In the past, the *mestizo* political elite exerted direct control of the constitutional reform process; this is no longer the case. Thus, another parallel between the groups' autonomy demands is revealed as both seek changes to the constitution.

The third strategic objective of the *Nación Camba* is titled "Identity." The inclusion of ethnic identity as an objective by the *Nación Camba* provides an example of why primordialism cannot be totally discarded in explaining some aspects of ethnic conflict within nations. The third objective reads:

Our identity which is the base of our development and is a result of our common history, language and the legacy of our heroes and ancestors defines the personality of this cultural nation that declares its right to difference, but ratifies its integrational

vocation, its ethnic democracy and cultural plurality as part of its national essence. (Accessed 4/02/07)

Nuestra identidad que es la base de nuestro desarrollo y es el resultado de nuestra historia común, de lenguaje y del legado de nuestros héroes y antepasados, define la personalidad de esta nación cultural, que declara su derecho a la diferencia, pero ratifica su vocación integracionista, su democracia étnica y el pluralismo cultural como parte de su esencia nacional. (Accessed 4/02/07)

In this objective the *Cambas* look to ensure their ethnic identity will be preserved in the Bolivian state and will serve as the basis for their autonomous region. As mentioned by Felix Leon, allowances for indigenous autonomy are not included in autonomy proposals put forth by the political elites in eastern Bolivia, though there are indigenous groups found there. In contrast, indigenous autonomy demands would seem to recognize a *mestizo* identity as associated with an intercultural community. Regardless, both groups call for their respective cultural and ethnic identities to serve as the basis for their own autonomous regions.

In the fourth objective, “Natural Resources, Territory and Power” (*Recursos Naturales, Territorio y Poder*) the *Cambas* employ a rhetoric of ownership:

The *Cruceño* natural resources are the inalienable property of the *Camba* nation. This natural and historic right is ours because our province existed before the Bolivian nation state.

Los recursos naturales cruceños son propiedad inalienable de la nacion *Camba*. Este derecho natural e histórico se remite al hecho de que nuestra provincia fue anterior a la creación del Estado-Nación Boliviano. (Accessed 4/02/07)

Like indigenous groups, the *Nación Camba* includes natural resources in its discourse on the Bolivian state. Parallel to indigenous claims of ownership of natural resources, the *Cambas* argue that since they settled the area before the creation of the Bolivian state, this gives them ownership of the natural resources beneath the surface of the land they own. Many indigenous social movements organize around the forests in which they live. The *Cambas*

claim ownership. “Our forest reserves and protected areas are untouchable” “*Nuestras reservas forestales y las areas protegidas, son intocables*” (Accessed 4/02/07). In making this claim, the Camba Nation implies that they are the “original” inhabitants of the area. This claim ignores the indigenous groups such as the Guarani that lived there long before the Spanish ever arrived on Bolivian soil.

To the *mestizo* elite, natural resources would constitute the financial backbone of their own autonomous region. The autonomy proposal put forth by the *media luna*⁷ would leave the prefects in charge of 70% of the estimated \$3 billion collected by the national government from the sale of natural gas (Fuentes 2007, 10). Obviously the stakes are high. The power that would come with the control of the money derived from natural gas sales would be immense. Indigenous proposals on the management of natural resources would have the “plural unitary and communal state” divide the profits among the departments of the country, while the *mestizo* political elite’s proposal would have the departments managing the profits directly.

Many indigenous groups are wary of organizations such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas) (ALCA) and MERCOSUR but the *Cambas* would like greater integration with them. The *mestizo* elite want unfettered access to the markets outside of the country and the ability to engage transnational corporations and to distribute the profits that would flow from contracts with them, as well as the ability to sign trade agreements. Related to this, the sixth objective is:

A NEW PACT WITH THE BOLIVIAN STATE - The objective conditions that transmit our reality have been altered, the Santa Cruz of the third millennium is not the Santa Cruz of the beginning of the 20th century. We are the proprietors of more than 1/3 of the country and we add up to close to 2 million of its inhabitants. We have a gross national product that comprises 1/3 of the national total and we possess

⁷ This is term used to describe the eastern departments of Bolivia because on a map they have the same shape as a “half moon.”

the highest human development index in Bolivia; however **we do not feel satisfied or fulfilled**. As in 1825 when they annexed us to Bolivia because of our institutional, demographic, and economic weakness, today we can demand not only equal treatment and equality with the state but also to impose a model of political and economic management that is adjusted to our own idiosyncrasies and our vision of the future. **A model of autonomy with executive, legislative and judicial capacity constitutes the minimum base for the negotiation of a NEW PACT with the Bolivian state**. To deepen democracy, to accede to national self-determination, to ratify our collective identity, to protect and defend our natural resources, to promote continental integration and to formulate a new pact with the Bolivian state must be the bases on which will set the structures of a new nationalism which is the expression of the Cruceña civilization. (Accessed 4/06/07)

UN NUEVO PACTO CON EL ESTADO BOLIVIANO. Las condiciones objetivas que transmite nuestra realidad actual se han modificado, la Santa Cruz del tercer milenio no es la Santa Cruz de comienzos del siglo 20. Somos propietarios de más de un tercio del país y sumamos casi dos millones de habitantes, tenemos un producto interno bruto (PIB) que alcanza a un tercio del total nacional y poseemos el índice de desarrollo humano (IDH) más alto de Bolivia, sin embargo, **no nos sentimos ni satisfechos, ni realizados**. Así como en 1825 nos anexaron a Bolivia por nuestra debilidad institucional, demográfica y económica, hoy estamos en condiciones de exigir, - no solamente un trato igualitario - de igual a igual - con el poder Estatal, sino de imponer un modelo de gestión política y económica que se ajuste a nuestra propia idiosincrasia y nuestra visión de futuro. **Un modelo autonómico con capacidad ejecutiva, legislativa y judicial, constituye la BASE MÍNIMA de negociación de un NUEVO PACTO con el Estado boliviano**. Profundizar la democracia, acceder a la autodeterminación nacional, ratificar nuestra identidad colectiva, defender y proteger nuestros recursos naturales, promover la integración continental y formular un nuevo pacto con el Estado Boliviano, deben ser las bases sobre las cuales se debe asentar las estructuras de un nuevo nacionalismo que sea la expresión de la civilización Cruceña. (Accessed 4/06/07)

Indigenous groups are looking forward to the creation of a “new state” in Bolivia.

The *Cambas* replicate their calls by advocating for a “new pact” with the Bolivian state. These competing visions are now colliding in the Constitutional Assembly. The *Cambas* point to demographic, economic and social statistics to separate themselves from the poverty in the western region of the country in the “*altiplano*.” This is important because, to put it simply, it demonstrates the *mestizo* elite do not want to share the profits from the sale of natural resources that lie in the east of the country. The reality is the soil is poor for farming in the west of the country and the fertile land is in the east, plus over 85% of natural gas reserves

are in the east. This suggests the need for effective resource sharing mechanisms in order that multi-ethnic democracies might function peacefully.

The *Camba* nationalism expressed in the preceding “strategic objectives” arises from socioeconomic and primordial conflicts between two ethnic groups in Bolivia. This chapter highlighted autonomy demands of indigenous groups and those in the political and economic elite. As demonstrated in this chapter, indigenous peoples have organized and structured their demands along ethnic lines order to advance their socioeconomic and political position, while *mestizos* have done the same in an attempt to maintain their socioeconomic and political status.

The future is impossible to predict, but what might the future look like in Bolivia? At the end of my interview with Jubenal Quispe I asked him whether or not he felt a civil war might erupt in Bolivia in the near future. He responded:

The indigenous; the Quechuas, Aymaras, Guarani don't see war in their philosophy. Why? Because the philosophy of an indigenous person, it is absolutely intercultural - open. It is not closed. For that reason, we (Quechuas) speak Spanish, English and our own language. In our religion we accept other presences. We are open, we are not closed. When thoughts or cultural identities are closed there is a possibility they could collide. There is not going to be a civil war. If the east wants a civil war or to divide the country the indigenous mestizos that we are scattered all over the country are not going to permit it. If Santa Cruz wants separation, the *campesinos* only have to block the roads, and they die. (Interview Jubenal Quispe)

Los indígenas los Quechuas, Aymaras, Guaranía no ven la guerra como parte de su filosofía. ¿Por que? Porque el indígena por su filosofía, es absolutamente intercultural, abierto. No es cerrado. Por eso los quechuas, hablamos español, ingles, y nuestro idioma. En nuestra religión aceptamos otras presencias. Somos abiertos, no somos cerrados. Cuando los pensamientos o identidades culturales son cerradas hay la posibilidad de que puedan chocar. No va haber una guerra civil. Si la gente en el Oriente quiere una guerra civil o dividir el país, no lo van a permitir los indios mestizos que estamos regados en el todo el país. Si Santa Cruz quiere separación, los campesinos solo tienen que bloquear las carreteras, y se muere. (Entrevista Jubenal Quispe)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter 1 of this thesis provided a review of the literature as it pertains to multiethnic conflict, democratization and natural resources. I argued that multiethnic conflict is best explained by employing a combination of the various paradigms put forth by scholars in the field. The democratization literature reviewed demonstrated that a nation state with a democratic government presents ethnic groups with certain challenges and opportunities. I argued that the struggle over natural resources has provided ethnic groups a powerful reason to organize.

Chapter 2 of this thesis provided an overview of the political and economic situation in Bolivia. I argued that indigenous social movements and *mestizo* civic committees have provided each ethnic group with a “vehicle” through which they interact with the state. I argued that indigenous social movements have contributed to the resurgence of an indigenous identity. I argued that the democratic nature of the state helps to create spaces for both indigenous and *mestizo* peoples. Finally I examined the neoliberal economic model and argued that it helped to contribute to and exacerbate economic inequalities between ethnic groups in Bolivia.

Chapter 3 examined the coca plant, its uses and cultural significance. I explained how the U.S. led War on Drugs exacerbated the ethnic conflict in Bolivia through its policies of forced eradication of the plant. I argued that the struggle over coca is useful to examine because it provides a window into the complex socioeconomic, historical and cultural aspects to the ethnic conflict in Bolivia. I argued that the War on Drugs and its consequences provided Evo Morales with a stage from which he could address the more pressing concerns of the entire Bolivian population.

Chapter 4 documented the competing autonomy regimes being put forth by both indigenous groups and *mestizos* in Bolivia. I argued that there is a mimicking dynamic that can be observed in the autonomy regime put forth by *mestizos* as many of their demands and rationales are similar to those of indigenous groups.

The ethnic conflict that exists in Bolivia today is the result of over 500 years of inequality. This ethnic conflict in Bolivia has been reinvigorated because indigenous groups have been able to organize around natural resources which have been under attack from the neoliberal economic model, US drug policy and multinational corporations. As this thesis has demonstrated, the neoliberal economic policies put in place by the Bolivian state during the 1980s and 1990s led to huge imbalances in wealth between the “ordinary” indigenous people and the “unordinary” *mestizo* political elite. These policies were perceived to, and in most cases did, benefit the *mestizo* elite at the expense of the marginalized in Bolivia

In addition, the continuing democratization of the Bolivian state created opportunities for ethnic groups to mobilize in order to take advantage of changes in the state. The spaces created for mobilization of ethnic interests due to the democratic nature of the Bolivian state have contributed to the current ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflicts have different rhythms and durations. They have continuity with past movements and they also have rupture from them. In the case of Bolivia there is a long thread of 500 years of inequality but recently the democratization of the state, neoliberalism and the Drug War have effected profound changes on Bolivian society.

The struggle over natural resources lies at the heart of the ethnic conflict which exists in Bolivia today. This struggle has provided a powerful reason for ethnic groups to mobilize around their ethnicity. The small scale producer nature of the coca leaf, the fact that it has a place in indigenous cosmology, and the crisis provoked by the US led War on

Drugs have all made the coca leaf an effective instrument around which to organize and advance ethnic interests.

The fact that autonomy demands arise from both sides of the conflict in Bolivia is an interesting phenomenon. The existing literature on autonomy regimes in Latin America focuses almost exclusively on indigenous autonomy regimes. Bolivia provides an interesting case study as there are two competing autonomy regimes with a number of parallels between the two groups' demands. This thesis has made a contribution by analyzing both indigenous and the *mestizo* political elite's autonomy demands in the hope that the documentation of the mimicking dynamic playing itself out in Bolivia may lead to a greater understanding of ethnic conflict within multi-ethnic democracies. As argued in this thesis, demands for autonomy are the culmination of ethnic nationalisms by individuals whose identity is primarily constructed. I have argued that autonomy demands are not unleashed primarily because of primordial bonds between people but because of socioeconomic and political differences between ethnic groups.

It is my hope that this thesis can be used as evidence that the primordialist view point on ethnic conflict has been overemphasized and a more integral approach to explaining ethnic conflict is more applicable in the Bolivian case. This thesis supports scholars such as Yashar who argue for a combination of the primordialist, instrumentalist and constructionist camps in order to reach a more comprehensible explanation of ethnic conflict.

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