

# Who Is Indigenous? Self-Identification, Indigeneity, And Claims to Justice In Contemporary Bolivia

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**ABSTRACT:** Recent events in Bolivia have brought indigeneity to the center of the national stage. More and more people are identifying themselves as indigenous whereas in the recent past they would more likely have seen themselves simply as *campesinos*, peasants, or urban *mestizos*. International agencies such as the ILO, UN and World Bank stress the importance of self-identification for indigenous people; and in the last (2001) census just over 20% of the Bolivian population identified themselves as indigenous despite no recorded ethnolinguistic marker that would suggest they would be; others who do not self-identify as indigenous were recorded in the census as being indigenous. This paper explores some of the issues behind self-identification and in particular examines the case of an Aymara-speaking community where people were recorded as indigenous and “ethnolinguistic markers” abound, yet do not self-identify as such. Despite its apparent homogeneity in terms of a strong sense of shared culture and kinship relations, the people of Pocobaya vary considerably in how they identify themselves as ethnic/racial subjects. Whereas outside groups, agencies, and

indigenous leaders are creating and recognizing an indigenous identity based on a particular view of history and conquest, many other people have a much more complex sense of who they are.

## Introduction

Who is indigenous? In the context of Evo Morales' election to the Bolivian presidency and the very public recognition given to his status as indigenous, I asked my friend Teodosio Condori if he was indigenous (*indígena*). Teodosio, an aged shaman renowned for his skills over a wide area in the northern highland of Bolivia, including La Paz, is a monolingual Aymara speaker who has spent almost his entire life in the village of Pocobaya. Teodosio is such an adept shaman that he can regularly speak to the ancestral spirits, including the Inkas. When I posed the question he chuckled at my ignorance and told me that no: the indigenous people lived down in the jungle; people in the highlands were not indigenous.

The term "indigenous" is being used increasingly widely and in recent years has occasioned some fevered debate among some anthropologists. Adam Kuper has recently sparked a controversy over the anthropological use of the term "indigenous people" (Kuper 2003a; 2003b; 2005) which has occasioned numerous responses to his original CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY article within the pages of that journal as well as some others.<sup>1</sup> Although much of Kuper's initial paper and a large proportion of the responses concern themselves with Central and Southern Africa the debates as to the analytical purchase and political use of the term have obvious implications for anthropologists of Latin America who frequently use the term, and who study indigenous movements or are actively engaged in them.

One of the features of the "indigenous debate" is that it focuses heavily on hunter-gatherers, in both Kuper's initial paper and the subsequent responses to him. Kuper mentions

the large and successful indigenous movements of Latin America only once in his original paper (2003a: 391) and then in the most tangential way. In a recent response to some of these Kuper reiterates that what notionally unites indigenous people is that they “are all (or once were) nomads or hunter-gatherers” (2006: 148), as indeed were everyone’s ancestors. One of Kuper’s principal concerns is that “indigenous” stands in for the “primitive” (Kuper 2005) and that indigenous hunter-gatherers are seen as representatives of a pan-human *Urkultur* (see also Barnard 2006); in an historical displacement of contemporary people they are regarded as if they were somehow living ancestors of humankind.<sup>2</sup>

There are many peoples in Latin America who readily conform to the broad description of those described by Kenrick and Lewis (2004) in their rejoinder to Kuper in that they are small groups marginalized by the state who are not or were not historically, settled farmers; and indeed some contemporary lowland groups are sometimes described as “living in the stone age.”<sup>3</sup> This does not, however, describe the many millions of people who are farmers and whose ancestors have a long history (at least five millennia)<sup>4</sup> of farming who are identified as indigenous, nor the possibly greater millions of people who are urban and also identify as indigenous. It seems at least curious that the “indigenous peoples debate” which revolves around a criticism and defense of organizing around the term “indigenous people” should so ignore the most successful examples of such organization. Furthermore, although it may appear “relatively easy” to say who is indigenous in Latin America, as is sometimes suggested (Barnard 2006: 8; Kenrick and Lewis 2004: 6), who is and who isn’t indigenous and what it *means* to be indigenous in Latin America is highly variable, context specific and changes over time.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, whatever indigeneity is about in Bolivia, it is not about a hunter-gatherer *Urkultur*.

There can be little doubt that Bolivia is an exemplary example of what has been described as an “indigenous awakening” (Bengoa 2000; Brysk 2000; Stavenhagen 2003; Wearne 1996) in Latin America and that Evo Morales’ winning of the 2005 presidential election is both a product of this “indigenous awakening” and a contributory factor in setting social and political conditions for an indigenous identity to be increasingly acceptable. A number of scholars have paid close attention to the institutional and constitutional changes that have affected Bolivia as its political structures becomes increasingly affected by the rising indigenous tide (van Cott 2002; Yashar 2005) . Still others have looked specifically at the role of indigeneity as a mode for expressing a desire for social change as articulated by indigenous leaders (Albro 2005; Canessa 2006).

The election of Evo Morales and his ability to command not only a national but international stage has placed the politics of indigeneity at the forefront of Bolivian political consciousness, particularly as it embarks on a process of radical constitutional change. Evo’s world renown as the world’s first indigenous president is considerable and he regularly receives homage from indigenous people’s around the world. On the 11th of June, 2007, for example, he received representatives from the Maori nation and sixteen tribes from the Unites States (under the auspices of the Organization for Indian Opportunity) who presented him with a peace pipe which was declared to be “very similar to the coca leaf” in its symbolism; awarded him the Taos Blue Lake Spirit of Indigeneity Award; and declared him to be the president of all indigenous people. These meetings are reported in the press and visual media and are a regular reminder of the global recognition of Evo’s indigenous presidency.

The Bolivian census of 2001 records 62% of the adult population as being indigenous (INE 2003: 157) or 66% of the entire population if children are included. Until the 2001 census, the principal diagnostic for indigenous identity has

been language. Despite the fact that significant numbers of people in Bolivia who do not consider themselves indigenous may speak an indigenous language,<sup>6</sup> native language has been considered a proxy for indigeneity for the Bolivian government as well as numerous scholars.

The 2001 census recorded for the first time that a majority (50.6%) of Bolivians had Spanish as their mother tongue (INE 2003: 143) but in this census people were given the opportunity to self-identify as belonging to an indigenous ethnic group and this element of self-identification is now a major component in calculating the numbers of Bolivians who are indigenous. The President himself is apparently such an example since, even though he was born into a small Aymara community, there is considerable doubt whether he can actually speak Aymara (his native tongue) or Quechua, the language of the region where he has spent much of his life. It is rumoured (Rob Albro pers comm.) that he is actively attempting to (re) learn Aymara (and possibly Quechua as well) but his personal sense of indigeneity is clearly not one profoundly rooted in language. Perhaps because he moved from one indigenous region to another and became involved in a coca-growers' movement his indigeneity is much less rooted in place and language than it is in a particular political perspective.

The surprising element of the 2001 census is that it runs counter to what has been a long trend in the 20th century and before of indigenous migrants to urban centers becoming increasingly absorbed into the *mestizo*<sup>7</sup> urban culture. Daily racism and weakening community ties (Harris 1995) have been seen as important factors in impelling people to de-emphasize their Indian roots and become *mestizos*. One feature is the phenomenon of Aymara-speaking parents who only speak Spanish to their children (Albó and Anaya 2004). All the more noteworthy is the fact that most indigenous people registered in the census are urban dwellers and a considerable majority of the Aymara population, the second largest indigenous

group in the country, live in towns and cities.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, and somewhat controversially, “mestizo” was not a category available in the 2001 census. There have been a number of recent articles in the press arguing for the inclusion of the “mestizo” category and suggesting that the “true” number of indigenous people would need to exclude all urban residents, e.g. the lead article in La Paz’s LA RAZON July 1, 2007.

### Being Indigenous or Indian in the Late 20th Century

Who is and is not considered indigenous is, however, by no means straightforward. For much of the Colonial period and until the 1900 census, the state recorded as Indians those who paid tribute to the state and were subject to the *mita*, the labor draft to the mines. The 1952 Revolution abolished the category “indio” (“Indian”) as it attempted to do away with the hacienda-owning class and abolished the many semi-feudal practices which sustained them.

The term “Indian” was replaced with “*campesino*,” peasant as the new ruling elite attempted to convert a notionally retrograde and anachronistic Indian majority into a class of yeoman farmers. Indian culture became, at best, national folklore and the principal nation-building project was to assimilate Indians into a national *mestizo* Spanish-speaking culture. As a number of scholars have commented, the rapidly expanding educational system was particularly directed to this end (Canessa 2004; Choque 1992).

In many contexts *campesino* became a euphemism for “Indian” (Canessa 2006; Lagos 1994) and was much more than simply an identifier of a particular class position; but the political language that went with it was very much that of class over culture, especially at the national and regional level.

For much of the latter half of the 20th century indigenous movements in Bolivia were weak and muted. In the highlands Fausto Reinaga's Partido Indio Boliviano served as the inspiration for some, but most Bolivians it seems acquiesced to the universalizing rhetoric of the revolution and identified as *campesinos* (peasants) rather than *indios*. Protest was based on class rather than ethnicity and it appears there was very little conceptual space for an ethnic-based movement in the highlands. The 1952 Revolution successfully co-opted indigenous people into a syndicalist structure as rural workers: Indians were to be transformed into unionized peasants. Indigenous cooptation was even more profound under the military-peasant pact which did not reach its demise until the 1970s. At the same time, labor organizations did not develop an indigenous critique or agenda because their class analysis left no room for it; indeed they were often wary of peasants because of their status as *petit bourgeois* small landowners. Although the 1952 Revolution afforded major improvements to the lives of many people, not least through the dismantling of the feudal hacienda system, over time Bolivian politics became increasingly autocratic and militarized; and by the 1970s all dissent was heavily repressed. The sustained repression of class-based political movements, and the latter's blindness to issues of race and ethnicity, led to the ethnicization of political protest particularly arising out of the CSUTCB (the peasants' union). The Tiwanaku Declaration of 1973 and the establishment of *katarista* (inspired by the 18th century insurgent, Tupak Katari) Aymara nationalism in the highlands lead to two decades of factional *katarista* politics. Despite having potentially large numbers to draw into their new ethnic politics, *katarista* parties and groups failed to reach out beyond their altiplano Aymara base and had virtually no success in electoral politics (Albó 2002).<sup>9</sup> By the 1980s it seemed clear that the indigenous population in Bolivia was in steady decline as the rural population became increasingly exposed

to Spanish language schooling and hundreds of thousands of peasants moved to the cities.

The failure of class-based politics to continue to secure and consolidate advances for working people was, of course, not confined to Bolivia, although the racial dimension is perhaps important to mention: one of the problems of seeing peasants, miners, and urban migrants as simply occupying a class position is that there is no vantage point for tackling the profound and pervasive racism that many indigenous people endured and continue to endure. As indigenous politics was gaining voices in Bolivia there were a number of significant international trends which contributed to a growing awareness of indigenous issues as the anniversary of the landing of Columbus in America approached. In combination these turned being indigenous from something that appeared hopelessly anachronistic and backward to an identity that was vigorous and progressive.

In advance of announcing a Decade for Indigenous People (1995-2004) the UN appointed Martínez Cobo to report to the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities (1986) in which he defined indigenous people as follows: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them."<sup>10</sup> Martínez Cobo's report has become a key reference document for other international agencies and nations in defining indigeneity (CEPAL 2005: 19; Saugestad 2001, 2004) and even anthropologists (Kenrick and Lewis 2004: 5).

Over the same period the International Labour Organisation was drafting its Resolution 169 which for the first time recognized indigenous people in international law when it came into force in 1991. ILO 169 has since been signed by a majority of Latin American countries including Bolivia.<sup>11</sup>



As with the UN, the ILO saw indigeneity as primarily a relationship between colonized and colonizers. Article 1 (b) defines indigenous people as: "Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization."<sup>12</sup>

ILO 169 (as well as Martínez Cobo's report) has proved to be an important legal basis for defining indigeneity and has greatly influenced the Bolivian definition of indigeneity in the Law of Popular Participation (1993) (article one) which similarly forefronts the concept of being descended of pre-Conquest populations as well as possessing elements such as languages and culture distinct from the dominant group. This article recognized indigenous rights for the first time in modern times in Bolivian law (Van Cott 2002: 53).

Finally, the World Bank's Operational Directive 4.20 September 1991 inaugurated the Bank's policy towards indigenous people having identified them as being particularly marginal and the sectors of the population which were most likely to be poor (Davis and Williams 2001). It is through these policy documents and treaties that the concept of indigenous people and rights has been established in international law and discourse (CEPAL 2005; Kenrick and Lewis 2004; Niezen 2003) drawing on Enlightenment principles of rights and western concepts of descent and territorial legitimacy.

In Bolivia although "indigenous peoples" and "indigenous communities" are mentioned in the Constitution (currently being revised) "indigenous" is not defined. It is, however, explained in the Law of Popular Participation (1994) which states in article 1 that indigenous communities are: "The human collectivity descended from populations settled prior to the conquest and colonization, and who are found within the current borders of the State; possess history, organization, language or dialect and other cultural characteristics, through

which they identify themselves as members, recognizing themselves as belonging to the same socio-cultural unit, maintaining a territorial link through the administration of their habitat and their social, economic, political, and cultural institutions" (author's translation).

These discourses have circulated back to communities who have begun, in turn, to express who they are into the language of indigeneity.<sup>13</sup> Redefining oneself as an *indigenous* group, or simply rediscovering one's indigenous identity, can be an important strategy for marginalized groups to gain recognition and resources from the nation state where lobbying through international NGOs can be much more effective than organizing nationally (Warren and Jackson 2002). Indeed, many indigenous activists have much better access to international organizations and power structures than they do in their own countries, and accessing transnational indigenous networks can be an effective way of circumventing antagonistic local bureaucracies.

These and other agencies do vary in how they define indigeneity and usually add elements such as attachment to a territory, a particular relationship to the environment, language, religion, and so on. There are, however, two key concepts: the first is understanding indigenous people primarily in terms of their being descended from pre-Conquest or precolonial peoples; and the second is the issue that self-definition is a key component in indigenous identity. These criteria are also included in Saugestad's (2001: 43) attempt at arriving at a synthetic definition of indigeneity and are the first and the last of her four criteria: first come (i.e., they were there before the dominant group); non-dominance; cultural difference; and self ascription.<sup>14</sup>

The importance of these two elements cannot be understated because they contain profound assumptions and implications. The first of these is that indigeneity is cast as an historical relation: indigenous people in American terms are

those descended from those who were in the territory before the Europeans. It also provides a vantage point for a critique of not only historical colonialism but neocolonialism. It is not surprising then that indigenous politicians across the spectrum in Bolivia focus heavily on the injustice of the Conquest and use it as a foil for a more contemporary critique of what are cast as neo-colonial issues. I have dealt with this in detail elsewhere (Canessa 2006) but a brief example from an interview with Evo Morales published in COUNTERPUNCH before his election demonstrates how this key historical relation of colonizer and colonized is used as a springboard for a broader political platform of a critique of neoliberalism, capitalism and the world economic order and a defense of environmental issues:

After more than five hundred years, we, the Quechuas and Aymaras, are still the rightful owners of this land. We, the indigenous people, after five hundred years of resistance, are retaking the power. This retaking of power is oriented towards the recovery of our riches, our own natural resources such as the hydrocarbons. This affects the interests of the transnational corporations and the interests of the neoliberal system. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the power of the people is increasing and strengthening. This power is changing presidents, economic models and politics. We are convinced that capitalism is the enemy of the earth, of humanity and of culture. The US government does not understand our way of life and our philosophy. But we will defend our proposals, our way of life and our demands with the participation of the Bolivian people (Dangl 2003).

The injustice of the Conquest is deftly turned into a political assault on the United States. In Bolivia, as in other parts of Latin America (Brysk 2000), the language of political protest has been indigenized and this has also been accompanied by a much broader set of issues being identified as indigenous as had previously been the case (Canessa 2006). Trade relations,

U.S. foreign policy and gas pipeline are all now viewed through the lens of indigeneity. Indigeneity becomes then a claim to (post) colonial justice.

For international agencies and indigenous politicians that key moment is the Conquest. Immigrants to what is now Bolivia a few years before the arrival of the Spanish, such as Inka colonists, are considered indigenous whereas those arrivals from Europe a few years later are typically not considered to be indigenous.<sup>15</sup>

There is a problematic arbitrariness to focusing on one, albeit key, historical moment five centuries ago in constructing identities, and an even more worrying focus on descent. This kind of essentialism may indeed be strategic, as Gayatri Spivak (1988) has pointed out, but it is nevertheless still essentialist and lies behind Adam Kuper's (2003a) criticisms of what he sees as many anthropologists' connivance with such essentializing discourses. More radical indigenous politicians such as Felipe Quispe have taken these ideas to the logical conclusion predicted by Kuper and advocated the elimination of whites from Bolivia (Vinelli 2002). In Quispe's rhetoric there are more than the echoes of the racist discourses of European nationalists. When he speaks of whites as *jayata jutiri*, those that have come from far away (interview with author, 2005), he is casting all whites as immigrants and consequently illegitimate occupiers of the land. Quispe would seem to espouse the "blood and soil" notions of identity and descent that Kuper identifies as a feature of indigenous identity and one that echoes Nazi ideology (Kuper 2003a: 395). Although it is important to recognize that some indigenous leaders, such as Felipe Quispe, employ a rhetoric which is essentializing, racialized, and would indeed appear to owe much to 19th century European ideas of the nation, this is by no means the case for all indigenous politicians either in Bolivia or Latin America generally. Evo Morales' expression of indigeneity (and it is important to note that he is the most successful

indigenous politician in Latin America if not the world) carefully eschews exclusionary rhetoric, much less arguing for special rights for indigenous people. Morales and others do not invoke an indigenous primitivism which Kuper suggests is at the center of indigenous identity but, rather, an indigenous positioning: indigenous peoples, because they have been excluded from the processes of colonization and globalization, are in the best position to develop critiques of neocolonialism and globalization; and indigenous people, because they have been historically excluded from the nation state, are in the best place to understand other peoples' exclusion, be they workers, women or other political minorities. The politics of indigeneity of Evo Morales' part (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) could not be more different from the narrowly focused, essentializing, and particularist politics which Kuper sees as characterizing indigenous movements, even though it is sometimes practiced by some of MAS's rivals. Its breadth and inclusivity is, moreover, echoed in the many new urban forms of cultural expression that Mark Goodale (2006) has recently described as "indigenous cosmopolitanism."

Indeed, I have argued that Evo Morales' sense of indigeneity is so inclusive that it threatens to ignore the perspectives and needs of those people who are on the margins of society and who might appear to be those who are most obviously indigenous (Canessa 2006). In discussions of indigenous movements and in the context of the "indigenous debate," it is important to recognize a plurality of indigenous movements, as well as a plurality of discourses *within* indigenous movements (Rappaport 2005).

The genealogical model of identity is, as Tim Ingold asserts, fundamentally a colonial one (2000: 151) but yet curiously one that some anticolonial indigenous activists adopt. What is interesting to note is that radical indigenous activists such as Felipe Quispe and international institutions such as the ILO share an understanding of indigeneity as one based on

descent and specifically from precolonial populations. It is by no means clear, however, that all people who might be considered indigenous think of themselves in these terms at all, even if their putative leaders express their collective identity in these ways.

The issue of self-identification is, however, key; and there is a significant tension between self-identification and the concept of indigeneity as being founded on historical descent and genealogical lineage. To the extreme chagrin of indigenous politicians such as Quispe, many urban people, intellectuals and leftists, have begun to identify as indigenous for these political reasons. In a country such as Bolivia where the vast majority can claim at least some indigenous descent this is perhaps not so surprising but it is also the case that individuals who are children of European parents also identify as indigenous as a way of expressing a political position. In fact, a variety of political positions (on some levels contradictory) are expressed through identification with indigenous heritage and culture. Countries with much smaller indigenous populations than Bolivia have shown the numbers of people identifying as indigenous to double or more in less than a decade. This was the experience of the U.S. in the 1970s and Brazil in the 1990s for different reasons. The potential for the numbers of Bolivians who do not belong to a recognized indigenous community, do not speak an indigenous language and have never spoken one, but who nevertheless identify as indigenous is considerable. The 2001 census recorded 20.4% of the population in this position and there is still virtually no research on this important segment of the Bolivian population. It would be certainly interesting to see if it grows or shrinks in the next census.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some members of this group identified as indigenous in order to express a political alignment with the broader political goals of the new indigeneity; concern for natural resources, globalization, and

U.S. hegemony. Scale is important here: on a global level many mestizo-creole Bolivians may see themselves as indigenous in terms of world power relations and because an indigenous identification makes them specifically Bolivian; on a more local level the same individuals may not identify with specific indigenous groups or people.

In recent years, however, when being indigenous can qualify you for particular aid or presenting concerns through the language of indigeneity<sup>15</sup> has greater impact, the identification of indigenous people has become problematic and contentious. In lowland areas of Bolivia, for example, in certain cases the number of people identifying as belonging to an indigenous group has more than doubled in two years<sup>16</sup>; in others people continue to be unwilling to identify themselves as such because of the profound racism in those areas. In highland areas the people who are most likely to identify themselves as indigenous are educated urban intellectuals or political activists, not the Aymara-speaking rural peasants who follow "traditional" lifestyles.

In the wake of the successful 1990 March for Territory and Dignity which saw thousands of highlanders and lowlanders arrive in the city of La Paz, various groups attempted to organize under a single banner. Most of the highland groups' representatives passionately opposed being identified as indigenous on the grounds that this term was a colonial imposition, preferring to be known as "originarios," originary people. Since Evo Morales' election, however, the use of "indígena" among highland populations has been spreading.<sup>17</sup> Since 1990 both groups have had considerable difficulty cooperating for a number of reasons; one of which is that lowlanders are strongly concerned about territory whereas highlanders typically have other concerns, such as political and economic autonomy. On some occasions both groups are in direct conflict, such as in the context of highland colonization of the lowlands. In the latter case two different "indigenous" groups are pitted against each

other with clearly divergent interests. One of the key issues here is scale: what is the area in which some people can be defined as indigenous? The international legal system explicitly relates indigeneity to the state and is a poor instrument for recognizing indigenous groups across international boundaries or when there is movement of people within a state such as in the migration of Aymaras and Quechuas to lowland Bolivia.

The codification of the concept of "indigenous people" within the UN system is indeed "an obvious point of departure" (Kenrick and Lewis 2004: 5) on the debate on indigeneity (and one might further add as it is codified by agencies such as the World Bank and the ILO), but one must go much further and explore what concepts people who are far from the UN system have that may be fruitfully translated as "indigenous."<sup>18</sup> What about the self-expressed identity of people who are native speakers of an indigenous language, do live in a community with rituals and social institutions different from that of the metropolitan culture, and continue to adopt markers of ethnicity such as hair styles and clothing and who nevertheless do not identify as indigenous?

In a recent book, Bruce Miller (2003) explores state policies which render indigenous people "invisible" by refusing to recognize them as such. What I explore below is an opposite example: one of people who are recognized by the state as being indigenous but who do not themselves normally identify as such. At root is the issue of the state deciding who is and who is not indigenous and of indigeneity being conceived as a particular relationship with the state, rather than a system of meanings generated from within a particular culture; but first I want to explore the Aymara New Year celebrations (Machaq Mara) to illustrate the diversity of indigenous expression, even within a relatively small area of Bolivia.



## The Aymara New Year

Indigeneity is regularly on public display in Bolivia and this takes multiple forms. Sometimes indigeneity is expressed in a particular mode for clearly political ends, in others it may be nothing more than adding “color” to an event.

In 1989, a small number of people chose to celebrate the solstice among the ruins of Tiwanaku with a ceremony, the site of the “Tiwanaku Declaration” of indigenous principles (above) over a decade earlier. Dressed in traditional ponchos and contracting shamans and wise men (*amautas*) they sacrificed a llama to the dawn of the New Year. By the turn of the century this ceremony was attracting over 40,000 people and in 2006 it became an important site for the recognition of Evo Morales’s presidency. In late June 2006, moreover, the president was working to increase the indigenous representation in the Constituent Assembly and was endeavoring to ensure that the issue of indigenous territories was included. His presence and encouragement of this (re)invented tradition must be seen in the context of the grounding of cultural expression in very practical political maneuverings.<sup>19</sup>

In the community of Khonkho in the municipality of Jesús de Machaca, a few hours’ drive from Tiwanaku, people began celebrating the Aymara New Year, in 1993, inspired by the success of Tiwanaku. In Khonkho there are a number of ruins which actually pre-date the classic Tiwanaku period.<sup>20</sup> When I observed the celebrations in 2007 there were several hundred people (mostly local) in attendance and two llamas were sacrificed to the New Year in the pre-dawn. The beating heart is cut out and the blood is offered to the deities. This year marked further development in ritual and the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on some of the ruins which were bedecked with flowers. People in attendance spoke of the importance of offering to the earth goddess, the Pachamama, as well as

paying respect to the ancestors. The culmination of the ritual is greeting the rising sun as the New Year dawns.

Interestingly, there was little consensus as to who these ancestors represented in the monoliths were. Some people suggested they were Inkas, others that they were people of Tiwanaku, and others still that they were simply ancestors. What all agreed, however, was that there was some link between contemporary people and those who had produced the monuments: they were "jaqi," a word which simply means "people" but is used to contrast "people" with whites and mestizos.

The celebrations including dances and music and significantly many of the dancers were dressed in homespun cloth. This, I was told, was a recent addition and rather surprised me since homespun is widely considered to be a cultural marker of inferior "Indian" status. Several people commented to me that superiority of homespun, which is warmer and better wearing. The dancing and music was a clear expression of ethnic pride and a revalorization of some of the symbols of indigeneity. In a parallel development a collective decision was made not to contract a (very expensive) brass band for the patronal feast a few weeks later but to use traditional wood-wind instruments. This was a decision taken, not on the basis of economy, but on "authenticity."

The Khonkho New Year celebrations are not, however, simply about cultural pride but are also about political organization and legitimacy. The New Year's celebrations are the occasion for the election of the new jach'a mallku the maximal leader of the regional clan (ayllu) system. The rituals and sacrifice add legitimacy to the process and underline the assertion of the political autonomy of the Indigenous Municipality of Machaca. The expression of a new ethnic pride as Aymaras is combined with an assertion of autonomy from the state.

In both Tiwanaku and Khonkho the past is invoked to assert an indigenous legitimacy and make claims against the state. In the provincial town of Sorata which, as with Tiwanaku and Khonkho is in the Aymara-speaking region of the Department of La Paz, the New Year celebrations take a different form. Sorata is historically a mestizo-creole town that in the early decades of the twentieth century had a number of wealthy German families attracted by its connections with the Amazon basin in the time of the rubber boom. Not only was rubber brought through Sorata but it had access to cinchona tree production, used in making quinine to combat malaria. Although surrounded by Aymara villages and having received large numbers of Aymara immigrants in recent decades Sorata is self-consciously not an Aymara town and even many children of Aymara immigrants make a point of distinguishing themselves from surrounding Aymaras whom they generally see as uncouth and sometimes uncivilized.

Sorata does not celebrate the solstice with a llama sacrifice but it does, in common with much of the Spanish-speaking world, celebrate the solstice on the 24th of June with the fiestas of San Juan which involves large bonfires to warm the revellers on "the coldest night of the year." In 2007 the celebrations were billed as "Machaq Mara," (New Year in Aymara) and featured "autochthonous dances" (bailes autóctonas). The dancers were not from Sorata itself but were obliged to come from each of the cantons that comprise the province to which Sorata is capital. This expression of indigeneity could not be more different to those from Tiwanaku and Khonkho: the dances are folkloric in that they are removed from their specific ritual and calendrical associations; and they are a prelude to the main celebration which involves urban style dancing to music played by a La Paz d.j. with a massive sound system. People from the surrounding villages tend not to stay for the night time festivities and are usually all back in their villages by nightfall. Sorata has an uncomfortable relationship with the

Aymara villages that envelop it and after a revolt and siege in 2003 where large numbers of people had to be escorted out by the army there was an explicit agreement that the police could re-occupy the police stations as long as they stayed in Sorata. The "autochthonous dances" add a contemporary legitimacy to the festivities, a nod to the prevailing mores; but should not be confused with a sense of indigeneity rooted in cultural practice, political engagement, or historical consciousness; dancers attend because they are compelled to do so, not because of a sense of ritual observance or an expression of cultural pride.

These examples show that indigenous identity is dynamic and changing and that its expression is often about a conscious assertion of power and autonomy. The same festival, for example the Aymara New Year, may, however have radically different political dimensions; it may be indeed include a sharp political engagement or, in the case of Sorata, may be better understood as the cooptation of indigenous imagery to add legitimacy to what is essentially a non-indigenous festival. That is, indigeneity can be deployed in multiple and contradictory directions. A key element of distinction is historical consciousness and how actors feel they relate to the past inhabitants of the territory or nation.

One of the Aymara villages in the area of Sorata is Pocobaya where I have conducted regular field work since 1989. Pocobaya is an Aymara-speaking hamlet in the Department of La Paz, part of a heavily Aymara-speaking area. This community of a little over 200 souls had until 2007 no road access and the people practice a mostly self sufficient lifestyle supplemented by the wages from seasonal male wage migration and some artisan work. People in Pocobaya have little political engagement compared with the communities closer to Sorata (it is approximately three hours' walk from the town) or those of the highland plain (altiplano) that includes Tiwanaku and Khonkho. Pocobayefios do not sacrifice a llama for the

New Year, nor do they dance, but they do paint their sheep for San Juan “in order that they be more productive.” The 24th of June is known in Pocobaya as “uywanakakx urupa” the “day of animals,” specifically sheep as opposed to cattle who are painted on the 24th of December, the other solstitial celebration.

I now consider what kinds of indigenous consciousness exists in Pocobaya, a village apart from the politically aware and active highland plain and at a far remove from the historically dominant mestizo-creole population which continues to have a strong presence in towns such as Sorata.

### **Being Indigenous or Not in Pocobaya**

Between approximately 1880 and 1953 Pocobaya was an hacienda. The overthrowing of the hacienda-owner is an important part of Pocobaya oral history which marks their sense of historical agency and the forging of a new relationship with the state. Pocobaya’s people have a long history of relating to the state, be it republican, colonial, or Inka. The local townsfolk of the nearby provincial capital, Sorata, readily identify the people of Pocobaya as culturally different from them, a difference that is sometimes racialized in terms of pre- and post-Conquest descendants. POCOBYEÑOS have a keen memory of discrimination and racism on the part of residents of Sorata in the distant and recent past and maintain a clear sense of distinction between them and Sorateños. In the 2001 census the community was returned as almost 100% indigenous; one person, almost certainly the school teacher, was returned as not being indigenous (despite being a native Aymara speaker).

It appears, however, that the people of Pocobaya were not among those in the Bolivian population that were asked if they identified as indigenous since, as is suggested by the CEPAL

(2005) report on the Bolivian 2001 census, such a question was redundant: census takers recorded as indigenous native speakers of an indigenous language and those whose first language was an indigenous one (even if they no longer chose to speak it). I was not able to observe the census-taking process in Pocobaya but I was able to ask people what they had been asked, and no one reported having been asked if they were indigenous or if they were a member of an original community.

If they had, many, and quite possibly the large majority, would have replied “no”; for in Pocobaya, *indígena* applies to the lowland groups who inhabit the Amazon basin and who, in the eyes of Pocobayaños, are considered decidedly inferior in social and cultural terms. This is why Teodosio, with whom I opened this essay, was insistent that he was not indigenous. Nor do Pocobayaños identify as “Aymara”: one cannot even say “I am Aymara” in the language spoken in Pocobaya since that phrase does not parse; rather, people say they are Aymara speakers but that is some way from identifying as indigenous since they put me (someone who is unambiguously European) in the category of Aymara speaker (*aymarparliri*).

When speaking of themselves they typically refer to themselves as people of Pocobaya (*pocobayankirinaka*) or *jaqi*, a word which can be glossed as “people” but clearly excludes most urban people, even some relatively recent migrants to large towns and cities. That is, people in Pocobaya do not recognize a shared ethnic identity with the majority, or indeed any, of those urban residents who were recorded as being indigenous in the 2001 census; and a considerable majority of those recognized as Aymaras are urban residents, 59.3% of the recorded Aymara population.

The word *jaqi* cannot therefore be seen as a simple translation of Aymara, much less indigenous. To what extent, then, can people in Pocobaya be regarded as indigenous if they do not define themselves as such? The solution, perhaps,

lies in historical consciousness. I would argue that indigeneity is not best understood in terms of a hunter-gatherer lifestyle as many of those involved on both sides of the “indigenous peoples debate” would have it, but rather as a contemporary social relation articulated in terms of the past. This, however, need not imply a genealogical relation with the past and there is no necessary reason that such an understanding be essentializing.

There are a number ways of discussing identity and the ways people distinguish themselves from those they consider “other” (Canessa 1999, 2000). Pocobayeños do not have descent groups and do not see themselves as sharing a substance such as blood which makes them *jaqi* or, Pocobayeños, much less Aymaras. Indeed, some key members of the community such as the shaman, Teodosio, are known to have mixed ancestry and this has absolutely no effect on either their position in the community or their identity as cultural traditionalists who can talk to the ancestors; one is not more or less *jaqi* simply on the basis of genealogy, even relatively recent genealogy. Pocobayeños do, however, recognize their ancestors but these are the collective dead who inhabit the mountains and other key geographical locations. One is related to these ancestors not by genealogy but by being part of a shared community and engaging in ritual exchanges with the mountain (and other ancestors) (*see, e.g.,* Paulson 2006).

Newcomers can be assimilated into the community so long as they conform to community ritual. There are many examples in the past of people successfully integrating themselves from the outside. The key issue is having some claim to land that may be inherited or acquired through marriage; blood genealogy plays no role whatsoever.

In this paper I do not want to focus on the many ways that Pocobayeños distinguish themselves from others through lived experience but on their sense of history and how they understand themselves in historical terms. If, as I argue, indigeneity

is essentially a social relation imagined in historical terms then it remains to be seen what historical consciousness people in Pocobaya have; we certainly cannot assume that their sense of identity is one founded on a colonial moment 500 years ago.

As many scholars have observed people's shared sense of identity is often historical, that is, they believe they share an identity rooted in the past. This is perhaps particularly the case for national identity. For many other groups who may not necessarily articulate an identity that is national, however, their sense of being descended from successful conquerors or being the first people in an area are important sources of solidarity. Historical consciousness is of course important if we are to discuss indigeneity since it clearly depends on a distinction between original people from more recent arrivals, on being able to say, "we were here before you." More specifically in the American context, being indigenous is about primarily identifying with the continent's pre-Conquest, non-European, inhabitants.

For non-literate peoples, history is transmitted through stories of the past, that is, myths. For Lévi-Strauss, myths were "instruments for the obliteration of time" and historical myths have functioned both to account for people's origins as well as to make that mythical past, not only intelligible but accessible. For many people in Pocobaya the historical past has not gone forever but is simply in another place. The past is immanent and intimate.

In Amazonia, mythic history accounts for, among other things, Europeans and the power and technology they possess (Guss 1989; Gow 2001). It is by now commonplace to assert that myths change over time. In a recent work, Peter Gow (2001) has demonstrated how mythic history among the Piro changes as, over time, new kinds of people entered the Piro world and were consequently accounted for in myth. The stories people tell in Pocobaya similarly deal with the important existential problem of "who we are" as well as "who the people around



us are." Insofar as mythic history deals with origins and identities it articulates what from the western perspective might be considered an indigenous consciousness.

Myths change, but they do not necessarily change uniformly across the community. That is, myths may need to change to account for the activities of missionaries but there is still a commonly recognizable corpus of myths, even if the authority for remembering and recounting the myths may be delegated to particular people. In Pocobaya myths doubtless change but what is striking is how different the myths are that people tell of the distant past. Older people tell very different stories than younger people but there are important variations within generations as well. That is, even small communities may not have a shared sense of history and, consequently, a shared sense of indigenous identity. This study differs markedly from other anthropological studies which show how a shared historical understanding is fundamental to many people's shared identity and ability to engage politically with state bureaucracies and other groups, especially as indigenous people (e.g., Rappaport 1998).

In what follows I explore how Pocobayeños relate to the past and in what sense they have a sense of who they are that can usefully be described as an "indigenous consciousness."

## **Pocobaya and the Past**

### The Dawn

Broadly speaking, adult Pocobayeños divide their history into three periods: *chullpa pacha*, *inka pacha* and *patruna pacha*. This basic historical framework is found all over the Andes. The earliest period mentioned by Pocobayeños is the dawn of time, when lived the *chullpas*. People talk of *chullpas* all over the Andes and Pocobayeños share beliefs that *chullpas* lived in cir-

cular houses with the windows to the east. When the sun rose they were burned to a crisp.<sup>21</sup> When I asked Pedro Quispe, one of Pocobaya's oldest residents, to tell me who lived there long, long ago he began with the *chullpas* whom he describes as ancestors (the grandfathers of the grandfathers, but they were few) and they saw the dawn of the world. Pedro describes the time of the *chullpas* as one where the land was shared and there was enough for everyone.

The *chullpas* are clearly of the very distant past but they are also, in an important way, in the present. Several middle-aged Pocobayeños describe spirits such as the *Pachamama* (earth mother) as being *chullpas*. Those *chullpas* who escaped the sun's rays hid in the earth, underground. The *Pachamama*, is the source of the earth's productivity and she is fêted with alcohol and animal sacrifices. To describe the *Pachamama* as a *chullpa* is to acknowledge that the past has not simply disappeared but is also present, merely in a different place. There is also an important sense of kinship with the *Pachamama*. The *chullpas*, the *Pachamama*, and other spirits which sustain life are the spirits of Pocobayeños deceased ancestors. It is this intimacy with the past and the spirits of the earth which is a clear element in older Pocobayeños' sense of who they are as human beings. The difference between older and middle-aged people's views on *chullpas* is that older people were able to give much more detail and present a rather more complex relationship between *chullpas* and other beings that live in the earth. Nevertheless, many adults were able to give accounts of the offering they make to the *chullpas*, such as a pig's trotter and maize beer. *Chullpas* are sometimes considered to be the cause of certain skin diseases and therefore need "feeding" to satisfy them. *Chullpas* can sometimes be disturbed when, for example, dynamiting is being done for a new road. According to Teodosio, when they were opening the new road in Quruma, the *chullpas* became upset and stole the souls of some of the workers. They had to be placated with lots of alcohol and some gold.

*Chullpas* are described as being a different kind of people. They lived in darkness (the night is their day), they did not know God, they were big and hairy but they were still people. Doña Francisca asserts that they were “people with big feet and heads.” Older people in particular describe the *chullpas* as people, that is, they are *jaqi*, the word Pocobayeños use to describe themselves and to distinguish themselves from *mestizos* and Creoles. Herculiano (in his 40s) describes them as “...not people of this world; these others were not wanted by God and were non-believers. Those people of the past were of the underworld, they were called gentiles, we call them gentiles.” But then he adds, “these *jaqi* are also our bretheren, they are not really then different. (*Ukax mä jaqi masisaskarikiw janitw ukaxa wasa jaqikikapunirakiti*).

To some extent the *chullpas* existed in a sort of parallel world; not only was their world one of darkness but wild animals today were their domestic animals. Manuel, in his 70s, told me: “For them there is no longer life for them here. If they had beaten God, well where would we be now? Perhaps we would be suffering as they suffer. Their animals are now in the wild. The *wikhu* bird is their chicken. The skunk is their pig. You see, they have everything.”

When talking about the *chullpas*, older women, and only older women, talked about how in those days animals and people could speak to each other and often intermarried. “Toads wore trousers and in those days people walked/lived with toads and foxes too.” “Young women went with snakes and gave birth to little snakes.” “Foxes wore ties and seduced young women whose babies barked when they were born.”

Doña Francisca and others also mentioned the treasures, pots of gold and silver, which the *chullpas* have which people in Pocobaya will occasionally still dig up when they are digging in their fields. The issue of treasure and wealth is also an important theme when discussing the Inkas who succeeded the *chullpas* on the surface of the land. The sun which killed

the *chullpas* banished the survivors underground (*utnakapana jiwaraskix pachpankaskiw sarakisa jaqhipa manqhan jakaspachay*). The sun also brought the Inkas who included the sun as one of their central deities.

## Inkas

This is how Pedro remembers the Inkas:

The Inka King was like that, up there on top of the mountain. Then we were children, we were like that small boy and it is then that the Inka lived although we did not see how he died. The Inkas stopped on top of that mountain...he was able to send big stones all over simply with the use of his whip...that is how he was...But in those times he didn't kill the Spaniards, they must have shot him... But when he was about to die, then he said, "there will be no more gold and silver," and so saying sent it all into the mountain with his whip. That is why the gold is in the mountain; that is why it is down there.

Pedro is here speaking as if he personally saw the Inka as a little boy, using the grammatical construction which denotes first hand experience (*ukjaxa nanakaxa akhama chikusipxkpachataya, khayamakisipxkpachathwa jisk'itakisipxkpachathwa*). This is somewhat unusual and Pedro is asserting an immediate connection with the Inkas. Pedro speaks with regret of the coming of the Spanish. He suggests that the Spanish may not have been bad but "God made the Spanish fight with the Jews. That is why they were fighting but if they hadn't killed the Inka king then things would have been different. He would have given us lots, he would have been alive...since he has been dead we do not know him (the wealth) is lost and there is none." The poverty of Pocobayeños today is understood in terms of the Spanish killing the Inka and forcing him to hide the wealth inside the mountains. For older people such as Teodosio the Inkas are

present in the mountains and sometimes appear to him : they are dressed in finery and appear at the mouth of a cave. Teodosio says they speak directly to him. If one is very fortunate and careful one can make a deal with the Inka and he can give gold. This is dangerous because the Inka will ultimately take one's life in exchange for his wealth.

The Inkas are living. You can go and look and shout and they will answer, saying "hello!" There is a door and a single house which can be seen from below. One day the Inka appeared to me.

I saw her with a red dress and a brown hat and a shawl. It was raining and on top of the mountain called Ququr she was singing: la la la... Before I could ask where she was from she turned and disappeared. I was very close. "Why did you go there alone," I was told when I returned. "That is an enchanted place. It must have been a yanqha (female chthonic deity) that Inka lady. She could have killed you."

That people can hear the Inkas voice is reported in other parts of the Andes (Arnold 2006: 180) but it is more common to hear the Inka speak as the wind, especially in the windy month of August when the chthonic deities are most present; it is apparently rare for people to say they have actual waking conversations.

Older people tell many stories about the Inkas, for example how "in this time of kings" he was able to build fantastic walls and cities merely by using his whip. If there is one thing that young people know about the Inkas, it is that he was able to use this symbol of traditional authority to move enormous boulders with ease.

The Inka king was ultimately killed by the Spanish but, like the *chullpas*, did not disappear altogether and some Pocobayeños say that the Inkas simply entered the rocks (*ukapi awist'askam q'arqaruw puritayna*). That is, rather like the *chullpas*

going underground the Inkas simply went to a different place, into rock or, as Pastor told me, to Paititi:

In the old days the Inka Atahualpa used to go to Illampu on top of which is an old city... They say that from the capital of the Tiwanaku Empire they went with llamas to Illampu on the way to Paititi which is in the jungle near Mapiri... I have seen it from afar but have not arrived there because one cannot. They say there is a big gold bell in the centre of the plaza and four big jars of gold. They say that the jars are always full but no one can reach this place because it is enchanted and protected by snakes.

### The Spanish and the *Hacendados*

Pocobayeños and others distinguish between *jaqi* people, and *q'ara* who are a different kind of people, living in cities and towns who don't have "proper" relationships with each other or with the spirits of the earth and mountains. The Inkas are unambiguously *jaqi*: "He was surely *jaqi*, that Inka King, he would have favoured us" (*jaqi kastatapaya uka inka riyixa, jaqi phawuratapaya*). It is also important to note that, for many older people, the Inka was a Christian. Christianity, many believed, came with the first dawn which ushered in a Christian era. Herculiano, in his forties, demurs: "in those days they only worshipped the sun. It was not their custom to worship God the Father." Herculiano calls this period of the Spanish the time of the Yankees: "This time of the Yankees is the time when Christopher Columbus entered then they possessed the land of Bolivia, Qullasuyu... Then when the Spanish came, another people from another country entered the land of Bolivia. Then from that time appeared the Bible."

Pedro, as with other Pocobayeños of his generation, does not associate Christianity with the arrival of the Spaniards:

We know the Christians since the time of our ancestors. They were owners of these lands and they organised the fields in terms of *sayañas*. They distributed the land and after then we had the land. We are continuing the path they left us but [the *q'aras*] did not want us to learn to read. After the Agrarian Reform we learned how to read and they left with their laws. The Agrarian Reform gave us new laws: the *patrón* would say that if the indians knew how to write then they could contradict us, that is why they took away our lands....In those days the *patrón* was not afraid to whip us or insult us. "Stupid ass" he would call us. We had to plough the furrows without a single mistake. When we got behind in the fields we would be beaten with a whip. Now we work for ourselves, the places which belonged to the *hacienda* are now ours. We eat from that earth (*nanakaya jichhaxa uraqi manq'asisipxkthxa*).

Pedro here, as with many others, associated the power of the Spaniards with literacy rather than a more powerful deity or superior technology. This is one theme that crosses all generations: the power of literacy which can be used to dominate people and, as a consequence, to liberate them. In the words of Edmundo: "The Spanish came to abuse our people; they abused us and treated us as animals. Our ancestors did not speak or read Spanish, and that is why they treated our ancestors like animals."

This comment illustrates why language in itself is not necessarily salient in defining indigeneity, particularly since being an illiterate monolingual has historically meant an inability to defend one's land. The schools' movement in the first decades of the twentieth century was explicitly aimed at learning Spanish in order to reclaim land stolen in previous decades. Today many parents (and teachers) are opposed to bilingual education because they fear that teaching children an indigenous language is designed to prevent them from acquiring the necessary linguistic skills (i.e., Spanish) to defend themselves and make economic and social progress. The inability to speak an indigenous language does not, therefore, have the same

political and symbolic consequences as it might in these parts of the world where speaking an indigenous language is central to claiming an indigenous identity.

### Youths' Version of History

The oldest Pocobayefios and those more or less above the age of 30 shared a basic historical framework, although with some differences. All the people in this group noted that beings of the past were still accessible in the earth below, be they *chullpas* or Inkas. Younger Pocobayefios had a different historical consciousness. Most assured me that they knew absolutely nothing about Inkas and *chullpas* and to ask their grandparents. When pressed they knew some basic things about them, such as the Inka moving stones with his whip, but I found no one in this age group who could produce an historical sequence or express any kind of personal relationship with the past. They were generally reluctant to respond at all to my questions; they claimed simply not to know.

It may of course be that young people in Pocobaya, as perhaps with young people elsewhere, are simply not interested in history, but it is also the case that this generation of young people has been exposed to much more schooling than the three years or less their parents received. Schooling, and the time spent on it, orients them away from activities related to the land and the spirits who animate it (Arnold 2006). The lived relationship with land and spirits simply becomes irrelevant. One of the clearest effects of schooling is that people look to "progress" through moving to the cities and speaking Spanish; in effect, upwardly mobile social progress which implies a change of ethnic status. As part of this project I also asked young school age people what their aspirations were. Without exception they all said they wanted to leave the village and live in a city or, at any rate, somewhere



else. If younger people want to leave the village they may not be keen to emphasize profound ethnic differences between themselves and others. For the older generation, who lived under the whip of the landowner, history provided a way of understanding the profound difference between indians and the whites and *mestizos* who dominated them. This history, too, rooted people to an intimate relationship with the land and its past inhabitants; that is, it gave them a profound sense of what we might call indigeneity, a sense of justice rooted in historical consciousness, even if even if they wouldn't use the word "indigenous" themselves.

Younger people have been brought up in a world where social progress is offered (if not always delivered), and they do not have the personal experiences of the violence and exclusion experienced by older generations. What is significant about these accounts of the past is that, although there are some clear common elements, there is considerable diversity within this small population, some of it generalisable across generations and genders. I found no evidence of a continuous narrative relating contemporary political processes and institutions to Inkaic ones that is offered in the very detailed ethnohistorical work of scholars such as Arnold (2006) and Abercrombie (1998). Both of these works show an evolution in the relationship between a particular indigenous group and the Inka, colonial, and republican states. Implicit in the argument is that indigeneity is rooted in the continuous, albeit evolving, engagement and resistance with the state where Inkaic models are consciously assimilated to contemporary ones. It is not always clear how generalisable these ethnographic examples are supposed to be but, more importantly, nor is there a sense that there may be internal disagreement within the community in how they conceive of history and their relation to it. I suggest that, not only does historical consciousness vary considerably across the Andes, but that it will vary within communities too, across generations and genders. Women, after all, have

a different relationship with the (post)colonial state and the way it employs structures and imagery which render Indians more feminine, and Indian women "more Indian" (Canessa 2005; de la Cadena 1995) as well as being more likely to have been subject to the sexual predations of Conquistadores and their successors in power.

## Conclusions

In a recent paper Mark Goodale (2006) describes the hybrid culture of newly urbanized adolescents in the large city of El Alto adjacent to La Paz and one of the principal centers of urban indigenous mobilization. These youths speak "Quechua, Aymara and Spanish, and idiosyncratic Hispano-Amerindian hybrids; are constructing new forms of cosmopolitanism that combine an emergent indigeneity with other, more global forms of inclusion and in doing so are, in a small way, reclaiming the meaning and possibilities of Bolivia's modernity" (2006: 234). Goodale, however, does not distinguish between different kinds of indigeneity and the contexts in which they are produced; he argues that anthropologists have lost sight of culture due to an overemphasis on political-economy. This paper shows that one needs to distinguish the multiple cultural expressions of indigeneity and that many of these have a clear political economy dimension. A llama sacrifice is not simply a cultural phenomenon but an assertion of a particular kind of political legitimacy. In Pocobaya that kind of political consciousness is not evident but historical accounts demonstrate a very clear awareness of social and economic injustice going back many, many years. The sense of who they are as *jaqi* (even if they do not see a common cause with others defined as "indigenous") is rooted in a keen sense that the world was once, and could be again, different; that *jaqi* did once, and might again, have wealth and power.

Their peers in Pocobaya, blithely ignorant of history, yearn to live in the city and slough off the cultural associations that mark them as “indios” in the eyes of many *mestizos* and creoles, and generally see indigeneity as being associated with jungle “savages” who are even less civilized than they. The rural-dwelling grandparents of both groups are likely to hold a profound consciousness of their ancestors that pre-date the Spanish and to be regularly and intimately involved with them through ritual.

Who is indigenous? El Alto rappers? Leaders of indigenous movements? Teodosio Condori with whom I opened this paper? Mark Goodale is right to note the cosmopolitanism of contemporary indigeneity in Bolivia: in its urban politicized forms it can draw on Enlightenment philosophy and Marx; in youth culture indigeneity can be expressed through rap; and in both examples it is simultaneously and self-consciously modern and traditional.

It is clearly the case that indigeneity is highly multifarious in Bolivia and that there are many people who have a profound sense of the past and a highly intimate relation with their ancestor, the Inkas, the Inkas’ predecessors, the *chullpas*. This sense of the past in the present reflects the importance of understanding being *jaqi* in terms of a shared social relationship with the ancestors. One cannot simply *be jaqi*; being *jaqi*, as it is understood in Pocobaya, involves living in a particular kind of way and, above all, engaging through ritual and labor with the living community as well as the community of spirits which is elsewhere. People’s dynamic relationship with the past is what underpins their social relations in the present. Historical consciousness becomes manifest in present social relations and, indeed, in urban rap.

The people of Pocobaya share with other marginalized people (e.g., Ingold 2001; Kenrick and Lewis 2004) a sense of identity which is dynamic and processual and rooted in contemporary social relations, even as they invoke an histori-

cal perspective to make sense of who they are. Lineal descent from Inkas or their predecessors is not the point and is not seen to be the point by anyone in Pocobaya. What is much more important is a sense of kinship with people who lived before them and who, in their view, shared an understanding of how to relate to people and the spirits who animate the landscape. This historicized consciousness of who they are appears then indeed to be an indigenous one: one that is neither genealogical or essentializing; and one fundamentally based on contemporary social relations rather than a romanticized attachment to the mythical past.

There is, consequently, an indigenous pluralism in Bolivia that shatters many of the assumptions on both sides of the "indigenous peoples" debate: indigenous identity in Bolivia is not about hunter-gatherers; for most people it is also not about an attachment to land<sup>22</sup>; and for fewer still is it about a genealogical descent from pre-Conquest ancestors. Indigeneity, self-identified or otherwise, in Bolivia is a claim to difference, a claim to rights, perhaps even a claim to moral authority in the face of encroaching globalisation. It is only rarely, essentializing and racialized; it is much more often fluid, contextual, inclusive, and relative.

Indigeneity may certainly seem controversial when discussing Southern African hunter-gatherers but one cannot assume that the concept can be applied uncritically in Bolivia any more than it can in Botswana.

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### NOTES

- 1 See CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY 45 (2) 2004 and 47 (1), 2006; Kenrick and Lewis's 2004 ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY article; and Barnard's 2006 paper in SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY.
- 2 See Fabian 1983 for a compelling critique of the history of rendering contemporary people as "living in the stone age," etc.
- 3 Alcida Ramos (2003: 397-8), one of the few Latin Americanists to comment on Kuper's paper, directs her discussion to Amazonian examples.
- 4 That is, sedenterization was developing in the Andean about a thousand years before it was in Britain. Victorian evolutionists had a much more recent hunter-gather ancestry than native Andeans.
- 5 See, for example de la Cadena (2000); Canessa (2006); Harris et al. (1995); Martínez Novo 2006.
- 6 This is, for example, particularly the case in and around Cochabamba where Quechua maintains a relatively high prestige and large numbers of *mestizos* (notionally mixed race people) and creoles (whites) speak it. In Aymara-speaking areas it was also the case that the hacienda-owning class spoke fluent Aymara and there are still considerable numbers of older people who are fluent in Aymara but who would nevertheless never identify or be identified as indigenous or Indian.
- 7 "*Mestizo*" notionally refers to mixed race but, in fact, indexes people who are neither Indian or creole (white) through cultural attributes such as residence, fluency in Spanish and cultural aspirations.
- 8 According to the recent census 50.3% of the indigenous population is Quechua and 39.8% is Aymara. Both Quechuas and Aymaras typically live in highland areas although recent migrations to cities such as Santa Cruz in the eastern lowlands have changed this pattern. The remaining 10% of the indigenous population is predominantly comprised of a relatively large number of lowland groups.
- 9 *Katarista* politics of the 1970s and 1980s had a profound effect on contemporary indigenous politics. Most obviously Felipe Quispe was part of an armed *katarista* movement of this period and Victor Hugo Cárdenas' vice-Presidency, although compromised

and ultimately discredited in the eyes of many other *kataristas*, nevertheless demonstrated that there was a national and international space for expressing indigenous ideas.

- 10 The full text reads: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."
- 11 In fact, Bolivian negotiators were actively and disproportionately involved in its development (Rob Albro, personal communication).
- 12 An important element here is that of scale: indigenous people live in countries and are defined by those borders. Native Papuans may be considered indigenous if they live in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya but not if they live in the state of Papua New Guinea across the border since Papua New Guinea is an independent state with a majority Papuan population. One could consequently argue, although to my knowledge no one has yet, that there are no indigenous people in Bolivia since the majority population and the one most clearly represented in the government is composed of those descendents of the pre-Conquest population.
- 13 Alcida Ramos (1995: 268) gives the example of the Portuguese-speaking Pataxo of northeastern Brazil who have been learning the language of their distant relatives, the Maxacali of Minas Gerais in central Brazil. No longer speaking a native language they have concluded that when their indigenous identity is better secured they will be able to argue and negotiate more effectively with the Brazilian government and other agencies.
- 14 These criteria would seem to have a broad appeal but throw up important anomalies. I will be dealing with the one of self-ascription below but if we consider that the majority of Bolivia's population is indigenous and the government is led by indigenous people then who, if anyone, is indigenous in Bolivia gets thrown into even greater confusion.
- 15 The international language of indigenous rights has become a powerful one for many groups to articulate their concerns, especially in the failure of more traditional class-based politics

to deliver for many people. In Asia and Africa this has caused some apparent anomalies. The Dalits in India, for example, are increasingly adopting the rhetoric of indigenism, that they are the indigenous people of India who were invaded by Aryans, to further their political agenda. There is, however, no evidence that Dalits in north India are related historically to their southern counterparts and considerable evidence to the contrary. There are many "tribal" groups in India who are redesignating themselves as indigenous even though their migration into India is a matter of historical record. In Botswana, home to half the Bushmen/San peoples of Southern Africa, the government refused to attend the 1993 International Conference on Indigenous Peoples because, it declared, everyone in Botswana is indigenous (Lee 2003: 84). In neighboring South Africa the Bushmen/San are widely recognized as being indigenous even by the related Khoi groups (Lee 2003: 84).

- 16 There are similar examples from Brazil where people identifying as indigenous have increased by up to a factor of five in certain cases (Cecilia McCallum *personal communication*).
- 17 Felipe Quispe's party is an important exception and he campaigned under the banner of the Partido Indígena Pachakuti which can be glossed as the "Revolutionary Indigenous Party.
- 18 As indeed Kenrick and Lewis (2004) do themselves in their discussion of Central African hunter-gathers.
- 19 Evo Morales is not, however, the first President to use Tiwanaku as a legitimating device. In the past two decades successive presidents have felt the need to travel to Tiwanaku to invoke the country's indigenous heritage.
- 20 Current archaeological evidence suggests that Khonkho was a ceremonial site which shared pottery and monumental styles with Tiwanaku of the same period (John Janucek, *personal communication*).
- 21 The word "*chullpa*" also refers to pre-Conquest tombs, often large towers, with windows to the east where the dead were mummified, resembling a corpse that has been burned.
- 22 Of course for some people, especially in the lowlands it most certainly is. But they, and the highland ayllu movement, are in the minority.

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