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MAS and the Indigenous People of Bolivia

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MAS and the Indigenous People of Bolivia

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

In the past several decades, social movements have spread all across Latin America, sparking hope for change. This thesis analyzes the well-organized mobilizations of the indigenous people of Bolivia and how they have been able to incorporate themselves in state apparatuses, including the election of its first indigenous president, Evo Morales of the Movement towards Socialism (MAS) party. The case studied here provides insight into the processes of how political representation was achieved by Bolivia's indigenous people who were for centuries excluded from the political, social and economic arena. It also analyzes the outcomes of Morales' policy changes from 2006 to 2009 as a way to examine how they have impacted the marginalized status of the indigenous people. Ultimately this thesis will trace the use of social movements, especially MAS, and how they transformed the Bolivian society from below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Bolivia is a country of vast geographical, ethnic and cultural diversity with being one of three countries in Latin America whose population is significantly compromised by indigenous people, with over 60 percent of the population being considered of indigenous origins. Its society reflects the numerous native groups that have inhabited the country for thousands of years and the historical relationship with descendants of other regions. There are over thirty major ethnic groups that contain their own language, culture, religion and individual way of life.

For centuries, since the Spanish colonization in the 1500s, the indigenous people of Bolivia have been marginalized from their country's political and social decision-making spheres. In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This declaration sought to give protection to the collective rights of individuals who have been marginalized and discriminated against throughout history. Many indigenous people within Bolivia open-handedly accepted this new declaration as they sought to renew their way of life and erase the years of oppression that they continued to experience.

This study seeks to show that within the past several decades, Bolivia has experienced the emergence of indigenous mobilizations which have played a critical role in political changes in Bolivia. Through consolidation and alignment with other social groups, the indigenous people have gained political and social inclusion. Social movements in Latin America have been able to incorporate themselves within state

apparatuses and have become one of the main aspects of modern politics. According to Harry Vanden (2008), the issue today of social movements acting against the government elite is a continuation of the struggles that have characterized Latin America since colonization. They have brought indigenous people into existing structures by changing the state in regard to vast inequalities. As stated by Sholk, Kuecker and Vanden (2008), the creation and implementation of an enhanced political imagination is a success for social movements. Although there are numerous social movements in Bolivia, the emergence of the Movement al Socialismo (Movement Towards Socialism- MAS) has brought about the most prominent and influential changes to the Bolivian indigenous people community. Growing out of the cocaleros movement, it began as a social movement, which gradually transformed into the political party since the late 1990s that is at the head of the Bolivian government.

This study also demonstrates that in recent years, after numerous years of oppression, the indigenous people of Bolivia have become active within their country due to the rise of MAS and the election of Evo Morales to the presidency. This victory provides insight into the processes of how political representation can be accessed and obtained by excluded people. Recently available data also suggests that the political participation of the indigenous people of Bolivia has further increased and are more likely to participate in elections, which has helped the country to become more democratic.

Running under the MAS party and promising to improve the status of the marginalized status of the indigenous people, Juan Evo Morales Ayma was elected president in 2005. Morales ran under the platform of working as an ally to coca

producers, reducing land to poor farmers, rejecting U.S. free trade and re-writing the Bolivian Constitution. While embodying the “typical” Bolivian citizen, Morales became extremely popular within Bolivian politics and was re-elected in the 2009 elections. Since his election into office, there have been considerable changes within the Bolivian indigenous society with the most prominent being the new Constitution of 2009, which enacted significant human rights to the indigenous people. In addition, Morales’ victory has contributed to the strengthening of civil society and the establishment of a more democratic society that speaks to the needs of the country’s long suffering majority (Prevost, Vanden, Campos 2012).

I will examine how the mobilizations in Bolivia came from miners, peasants, workers and the poor, most of whom have an indigenous background. This study takes into consideration the colonial period, the Republican period, Bolivia’s Revolution of 1952, Dictator regimes of the 1960s, the return to democracy in the 1980s, and present times. It will also analyze major examples of mobilizations, such as the Water War in 2000, the Gas War in 2003, and the Popular Participation Law in 1998. Furthermore, contemporary landmark events, such as the creation of the MAS party, the election of Evo Morales and the enactment of the Constitution of 2009 will be discussed and used in the analysis of showing the diversification achieved by social movements and the indigenous people.

Methodology

The principle method for conducting this research consisted of a qualitative case study that involved analyzing and surveying primary and secondary sources. This method was best suited for the purpose of this study as it allowed for comparison and analysis of the

history and policy changes that have recently been implemented in regards to indigenous rights.

The relevant factors in this study will be the difference of the status of the indigenous before and after the emergence of MAS as well as the new constitution in 2009. The history of the indigenous people and the history of how MAS emerged are critical factors in understanding why they have had such impact and why they continue to be pivotal aspects in said issue. To prove my hypothesis that MAS has had a significant impact on the indigenous people's rights, this research will explain the differences in ideology and policy that have occurred and how they have resulted in positive change. I will also present evidence from the current population stating whether they do/do not feel that there have been significant positive changes and if so, what these changes consist of in regards to political and social aspects.

This qualitative study is important and necessary as indigenous people have been severely marginalized for many decades and there is an immediate need to understand why this has been the case and what measures have been taken to either promote this marginalization or reduce it. It is also imperative to understand the changes that have occurred as a result of MAS in power and possible future changes that can potentially occur. In addition this thesis will provide information for future researchers who wish to study the importance of MAS and the status of the indigenous people within the political, economic and social realm in Bolivian society.

For comparison and accuracy purposes the data for analysis will be derived from a variety of sources. One main source will be the new Bolivian Constitution, which was set into place by the MAS government in 2009. This thesis will compare the new

constitution to the previous constitutional amendments and other legal documents that limited the fundamental rights of the indigenous groups. The analysis of the constitution will try to reveal any attempts at change in process. It will also examine other social policies that have been implemented since the 2005 elections and examine what actions the MAS have actually taken to change the status of the indigenous people.

Other types of data that this research will use are Latin American Public Opinion Projects (LAPOP) surveys and Latinobarometro surveys that have been conducted throughout different years that show the increased support and satisfaction with Bolivian democracy. These surveys provide a number of indicators that suggest that support for democracy has risen in recent years and how indigenous people appear to be more supportive of the principle of democracy. Additional data sets examined will include data reported by the United Nations Human Development Index and other agencies of the UN, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

In addition to the data sets, this thesis will include several interviews with Bolivian-indigenous citizens that currently live in the United States. Out of the six interviewees, three of them are currently in the legal profession and have worked in the United Nations on behalf of the promotion of Bolivian human rights. The remaining interviewees have spent the majority of their adult life in Bolivia and have participated in the MAS movement or the election of Morales in 2005. Each of these interviews is used as a way to determine from a first-hand experience if changes in Bolivia have been made and if so, due to what factors in society.

Overview of the Thesis

The thesis will be presented in the following manner “Chapter One is the Introduction.” “Chapter Two: History of the Indigenous People in Bolivia,” presents a brief historical review of politics in Bolivia. This chapter focuses on significant events such as the Spanish Colonization in the 1500s, the Chaco War (1932-1935), the 1953 National Revolution, Military Rule of the 1960s and the return to Democracy in the 1980s and how each of these events impacted the indigenous people and their communities. It will also discuss the changes in the political construction of ethnicity and identities and the discourses surrounding them throughout history.

After describing and analyzing the historical context, “Chapter Three: Mobilizing Indigenous Identity and the Formation of MAS,” will focus on the rise of social movements and the rise of indigenous politics in Bolivia through numerous indigenous mobilizations. Key events analyzed will include the Popular Participation Law (PPL), Water War of 2000, The Cocalero Movement, Gas War of 2003 and the rise of Evo Morales and MAS. It also discusses the history of social movements in Bolivia as it aims to provide the reader with knowledge about the Bolivian context. This chapter ultimately argues that through different mobilization acts, the indigenous people of Bolivia were able to push their demands to the political forefront and elect Bolivia’s first indigenous president.

“Chapter four: Impact of Morales and MAS on Bolivian Society,” will discuss the incorporation of indigenous rights in the 2009 Constitution as well as additional political and social reforms introduced by Morales after the 2005 election as a way to change the status of indigenous peoples. It analyzes policies regarding land reform, natural resources, education and health care that are aimed at improving human development

indicators that have been persistent problems for the indigenous people. The second section will also look at the quality of democracy under the Morales administration.

Chapter five will contain some concluding remarks based on the evidence provided in the previous chapters. It will assess the contribution of social movements have made to political representation and participation in Latin America as well as how indigenous rights have changed throughout Bolivia's history.

Chapter 2: History of the Indigenous People in Bolivia

Introduction

At the core of the Southern Andean Mountains, Bolivia has been a nation accented with a particularly tumultuous past. Colonial rule, in addition to over eighty presidents from 1825 to the present day and even more military coups have interrupted this country's political history. Amerindians in Bolivia have been involved in a constant struggle since the colonial period as political authorities and subsequent political, economic and social systems have been notorious for indigenous persecution and exploitation. Through different modes of protest and empowerment, the indigenous peoples of Bolivia have endeavored to regain their hereditary rights such as citizenship, communal lands, and autonomy.

Bolivia is a nation that contains a population of indigenous people that amount to over 60 percent of its over 9 million national population (Rivero 2003). The majority of the indigenous populations are considered to be "Indians" in the provinces of La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, and the lowlands and valleys of Cochabamba and Tarija. The Aymara and Quechua people who live in the Andean highlands and central valleys form the majority of the Indigenous population of approximately 56 percent of the Bolivian total population. The other indigenous groups inhabit the eastern lowland and Chaco regions and make up to 6.1 percent of the country's total population. However, all are extremely

rich in cultural diversity and are distributed among 32 distinct ethnic groups (Gigler 2007).

In regards to what the term “Indian” means in this study, Maria Lagos defines it as an “ethnic idiom for social closure- a close that delineates and reflects interclass antagonisms between town and village elites.” (1994:139). Ultimately it was a term reserved for those who lived in rural areas, paid tribute, were uneducated and provided labor to landowners. (Postero 2007). In order to understand the current social and political dynamics in Bolivia, one must first analyze and understand the history of the indigenous people and their pervasive inequality and power struggles that continue up to the election of 2005. The indigenous population is the central factor of the narrative of this country’s history that has been characterized by social, economic and political conflict.

Throughout history, Bolivia’s indigenous communities have undergone centuries of marginalization and discrimination in the incorporation of neoliberal policies, including privatization, macroeconomic stability and trade openness. There have been ongoing uprisings in response to these policies that have not changed drastically over time. They have undergone numerous centuries of prejudice and discrimination that have forced them to surrender their lands and work for the benefit of others as well as degraded to the status of “second-class” citizens (Hensley 2011).

The indigenous political struggle of current times is the culmination of oppression, exploitation and injustice experienced by Bolivia’s indigenous population since colonial rule. This chapter tries to provide an overview of the historical background that pertains to the transformation of the Bolivian state throughout the centuries

beginning with Spanish colonial rule, followed by the early history of the new Republic and the dynamics of the late 20th century up to the election of 2005. This chapter thus demonstrates that each time period has impacted the role of the indigenous people in Bolivian society and continuously put them lower in class standing than other members of society.

Early History (1500s to mid-1800s)

With the Spanish conquest of the indigenous territory of Bolivia in the mid-16th century, came a period of battles and struggles. Their arrival brought forth a new elitist system of social, economic and political thoughts that introduced a virtual enslavement of the Aymara and Quechua peoples. In this new system, it positioned the indigenous people at the bottom of the structure as they were forced to provide free labor (*mita*) for the rapidly growing mining industry (Gigler 2007).

In colonial times, the *mita* was a revolving system of obligatory labor established in 1573, in which indigenous men were required to work for the crown, often on low or no wages. The *mita* required over 200 indigenous communities to send one seventh of their adult male population to work the Potosi silver mines. Over time the workers were abused and treated as slaves. The *mita* was hard on both the *ayllus*, traditional community units, that hosted the men who came to do work and on the communities and families who lost men for months out of the year (Hensley 2011). *Mita* contracts were often extended and the Indians were forced to purchase their wares and foodstuffs from the Spanish, thereby further exacerbating tensions among them.

In addition it forced indigenous people between the ages of 18 and 20 who fulfilled the role of primary producers to pay a tax. This tax system caused a demographic

collapse of the indigenous population causing a decrease in mining production due to lack of labor. This was a crucial system for the Crown, as in 1574 the city of Potosi became a major mining center for the exploitation of silver mines of the Cerro Rico de Potosi region. As Arnade (1984) mentions, the indigenous people were exploited, some as force labor in the mines while others fell into peonage.

This system continued to make the indigenous people suffer from unequal treatment as they were looked down upon as an isolated and repressed mass of a lower rank than the poorest and most illiterate conquerors (Hensley 2011). The system was ranked with the European descendants known as “criollos” at the top, followed by the light-skinned European descendants known as “mestizos,” followed by the urban indigenous known as “cholos,” then the dark skinned African-indigenous population known as “indio” (Dunkerley 1984). In addition to this new system, the passage of the Law of Burgos in 1512 by the Spanish declared that the indigenous people of South America were “uncivilized” and thus “inferior” in society (Sanchez, 1942).

The indigenous communities contained a strong attitude toward their tradition of cooperation and unity. They continuously identified themselves by their rituals, music, language and religions. Throughout the Spanish conquest, as well as those to come in the future, the indigenous people repeatedly struggled to live in harmony with the conquerors and their descendants. A major aspect of conflict between the indigenous population and the Spaniards was the “encomienda” system that created an inferior relation of power and control over the indigenous.

The creation of the quasi-feudal system, known as the “encomienda” system, assigned the legal rights over Indian and Indian lands in the Spanish colonies of the

Americas to designated Spanish explorers and conquerors, along with the creation of a colonial society that was an unequal and unfair treatment of its indigenous inhabitants. The landed estates or *haciendas* of said system were likewise established under a system of servitude (Mariscal 2011). As historian, Brooke Larson articulates, “Haciendas secluded peasants from the extractive institutions of colonial society” (Larson 1988: 171). Thus, alienating the indigenous people even more.

According to Morales, the *encomienda* system was conceived as a “humane reform of repartimiento (from the Spanish verb repartir, ‘to divide up’) under which the Spanish conquerors and colonists had brutally seized and enslaved native peoples and appropriated their communal lands” (Morales 2003, 26). This system deteriorated the civilization of the indigenous people as the *encomenderos* became the feudal landlords, exploiting their labor and expropriating their lands. Ultimately, it reinforced the harsh system of colonial exploitation as it operated to extract surplus from the indigenous population in forms of taxes, silver, forced sale of imported goods and their labor (Morales 2000).

As a result of the colonial economic and political system, the indigenous not only suffered unequal treatment that consisted of isolation and repression but it also fragmented their communities and had destructive effects on their livelihood. During the last decades of the 16th century lands held in “*encomienda*” could be transformed into private property. Thus, the estates were turned into “*latifundios*” and the indigenous cultivators were transformed into property-less agricultural laborers that were dependent upon the owners for their physical survival as their labor on the estate were compensated for by a right to land tenancy.

During this period of time, Bolivia economically relied on export products that were dependent on global demand. As a result, Bolivia experienced fluctuations of prosperity and deep recession that shifted centers of political authority. With the decline of silver supply in existing mines, and increasingly exploited labor population and the increase of Spanish immigrants brought about the recession of the 17th century.

Social change was largely influenced by population and mining. Mining production was seen as a method of exploitation of the indigenous. This systematic exploitation of indigenous labor had severe consequences for indigenous communities due to the very difficult living conditions and the extremely dangerous and labor-intensive work in the mines. In addition, it made the miners completely dependent on the state for their livelihoods (Sanabria 2000). Furthermore, with the recession in the 17th century came a new economic development that created a new class called the “hacendados,” known as landowners, which continued to exploit the rural population (Morales 2010). Consequently, the Spanish crown imposed policies of homogenization on indigenous peoples, exploited indigenous labor and made indigenous communities the subject of colonial tributes.

Since the Spanish colonization, the indigenous people were made to believe that their cultures were uncivilized, primitive, barbaric and also a significant hindrance to the development of Bolivia (Garcia 2001). As Ruth Lozada indicates, the marginalization of indigenous peoples has been directly related to the misinterpretation of their cultures as inferior (ABI). After several more years of repression by the Spanish Crown and the ongoing struggles for independence in nearby Latin American countries, Bolivia, led by

Simon Bolivar and Jose de Sucre, gained its independence in 1825 to become the Republic of Bolivia.

This revolution was the product of disenchantment with the liberal reforms imposed upon Spain by Napoleon, who invaded and conquered the Spanish peninsula in 1807. It was led by white elites and which consequently the indigenous people had no real say in this struggle for independence as they were tricked into military service as cannon fodder (Morales 2000).

The New Republic

At the time of independence, Bolivia came to be known as the Republic of Bolivia. It was marked by political instability and constant external threats to its sovereignty and independence. The original intent of the Republic period was to create a new political system that would abolish the colonial economic system and grant indigenous peoples the same rights as the rest of society (Gigler 2007).

One of the articles of the new Constitution of 1825, known as the “qualified vote” clause, declared that only literate men with property had access to citizenship. As Robert Alexander states, “not only was the Indian landless, he was deprived citizenship in the Republic, Suffrage was the monopoly of those who were literate, which excluded the great mass of the indigenous population” (Alexander1958:18). Hence, since the majority of the indigenous people were illiterate, they were denied equal status of full citizenship. As a result of the implementation of said law, the Creole white took control of the state and just as the colonizing Spaniards had done previously, they tried to “civilize” the indigenous population, which ultimately means that they could not become full citizens and have political rights until they stopped being “indio” (Bueno 2011).

In the 1860s the growth of the mining industry began to turn the economy around and began to draw the attention of foreign investors. These investors and the Creole elites aimed to control the land and natural resources and thus turned on the Amerindians who had supported the new republic. The republican state abolished the “ayullu” (indigenous, political and social units established before the Spanish arrival) in 1874 with the “Law of Expropriation” and established a property tax which hindered the status of the indigenous to a greater extent as they were now subject to new tax laws that made them work within the system in an attempt to regain their land through legal loopholes (Gigler 2007, Ibid: 219). According to Alexander, “the Bolivian Indian was thus reduced to a sharecropping tenant on the landholding of a white master. He was granted a small portion of land upon which to build a miserable adobe hut and on which to grow a small amount of wheat and maintain a few animals for the sustenance of family” (Alexander 1958:14).

As a result of this new process, a new revival elite was created that forced the indigenous into a new type of serve labor called “Ponguaje,” through which they had to provide cheap or unpaid labor in exchange for access to subsistence parcels (Bueno 2011:4, Plant 1998). As the indigenous remained a source of free or cheap labor, they became increasingly excluded from participation in the market exchange. These processes of market exclusion were compounded by a “continued encroachment of indigenous lands leading to a concentration of property within the hands of a few which resulted in increasingly impoverished indigenous communities (Gigler 2007:11). Consequently, the indigenous people went from being considered inferior to the political system to being thought of as ignorant. This notion became deeply embedded in the

social consciousness of the communities as well as the indigenous themselves who continued to live without any rights.

Economic growth during the late 1800s to early 1900s in Bolivia had an adverse impact on exports and brought about threats of violence in the mining center of Potosi. It started to define the Conservative and Liberal governments and began to affect the mestizo and Indian industries. It sparked grassroots movement by enacting liberal laws that encouraged the now landless Aymara peasants to seek the lands taken by the colonials which replaced their communal lands indispensable and in turn deepening the division between the Creoles and the indigenous people. (Ibid: 227-228).

Bolivia's experience of independence has been seen as an elitist confrontation where indigenous people are looked at with a "detached gaze," as the republican elites argued that the cause of backwardness in their civilization was the indigeneous race being unresponsive to innovation and progress. (Thomson 2003: 119, Van den Dool 2010). The indigenous peoples were excluded from matters of politics and were given unequal and discriminatory nationality. As Herbert Klein (2003) stated, "Bolivia is and has been since the 16th century a Spanish conquest... in which Indians were for many years were an exploited class of workers (Klein: 2003, xxi).

Therefore, due to being differentiated internally and remaining repressed in society, new policies began to persuade the indigenous to "shed their Indian ways" and assimilate into the mestizo (mixed) culture (Yashar 2007:63). Consequently, the indigenous people had to abandon their culture and identity to be considered a Bolivian citizen. However, by the turn of the 20th century, they were still far from being integrated into the nation. In a sense, the lives of the indigenous peoples became gradually worse as

a result of their loss of communal land due to the various land reforms and deep cultural division as they became subjects of law and bureaucratic regimes controlled by the whites and mestizos of the past century (Larson 2004). As these communities were broken apart, the autonomy that they had cultivated and ensured for centuries disappeared and led to the upcoming state-altering rebellions.

The Chaco War and National Revolution

During the 1900s, indigenous rebellions had become more common due to the loss of land and resources, internal economic factors and the Wall Street crash of 1929. The combination of these events led to the fall of the republican government in 1952. Furthermore, as a result of unpopular policies and uprisings the republican political system began its downfall with the start of the Chaco War. The Chaco War began on July 18, 1932 and lasted approximately three years due to clashes over oil field installed by Paraguay and a territorial dispute over the river Chaco Boreal with Paraguay, in which Paraguay eventually won. Although the Bolivians were defeated, the war marked a turning point in economic and social history in Bolivia (Morales 2010).

The Chaco War increased the government's debt, both internal and external, and led to inflation and an increase in government deficits (Alexander, 1958). The war "shattered the traditional belief system and led to a fundamental rethinking of nature of the Bolivian society" (Klein 2003:177). It also brought about questions regarding land, economics, labor and Indian civilization to the national arena. In addition, it led to the formation of new political parties, including the middle-class dominated Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement, MNR), the Marxist Partido

de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left, PIR), and the radical Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party, POR) (Morales 1992).

While military intervention became more frequent, class conflict and political struggle continued to weaken the political coalition, traditional parties increasingly lost the middle- and upper-class support while the MNR widened its appeal among the popular sectors. (Morales1992). Furthermore, as people of indigenous background became involved and more organized, they allied with the upper members of society so that they might gain more political, economic and social rights. Out of these alliances and the weakened status of the state came the revolution of 1952 (Hensley 2011).

The Bolivian Revolution of 1952 was a multiclass war that fought against the years of government control of land and resources. The MNR replaced the oligarchy with widespread popular participation and support from the indigenous labor unions. In addition, the MNR, led by middle-class men: President Paz Estenssoro and Hernan Siles Suazo, eliminated the “qualified vote” and the “ponguaje” and sought to restructure the state-society relationship, nationalize the mining industry and educational reforms and the passage of universal suffrage (Klein 1992).

Although the MNR was working diligently to placate the peasants and proletariats, it realized that the army, labor movements and peasants all needed to be incorporated into the new system to reduce the chances of another uprising. (Klein 1992). Therefore, the Revolutionary government, which came into power for twelve years from 1952-1964, reorganized the three previously mentioned sectors so that military power was also decentralized to worker and peasant militias in addition to forming the Central Obrero Boliviana (Bolivian Worker’s Confederation, COB) and Confederacion Nacional

de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (National Confederation of Peasant Workers in Bolivia, CNTCB) to give “general voice to the workers and peasants” (Morales 1992,82). In particular, these organizations were created to pass on the political demands of the cholo (urban indigenous) and campesino (rural peasant) populations (Dunkerely 1984).

Unfortunately, despite the political significance of the National Revolution, it failed to empower the indigenous people. The 1952 revolution caused the “disappearance of the indigenous people” with the Agrarian Reform of 1953, which replaced the stigmatizing term “Indian” with “campesinos” (Molina 2009). A centralized state structure, where power was distributed to departments and provinces through presidential appointees, rather than elected local representatives, remained in place (Abercombie, 1998). The long-standing notion that the indigenous people were ignorant changed to the notion that they were destined to be poor. Therefore, although they were included into the universal suffrage actions than before, the indigenous people continued to suffer from ethnic discrimination and political manipulation from the government (Tikona and Albro 1995).

Military Rule

In 1964, President Paz Estenssoro was overthrown by a coup led by his Vice President, Barrientos. The next twenty years in Bolivian history came to be defined by a succession of militaristic dictators, discontent and massacres of miners and their families. Also during this time came continuous economic fluctuations that had an adverse affect on the indigenous people’s way of life. The military government sought to stabilize the political environment by attracting foreign investment and capital and undertook severe “modernization” efforts to depoliticize mass politics (Klein 1992, 152).

Between 1971 and 1979, the military continued to try to reduce the demands from the indigenous people and *campesinos* through force under the rule of Colonel Hugo Suarez Banzar. Colonel Banzar continuously repressed labor, peasants, students and political parties in order to promote his own welfare. (Morales 2009). Consequently, with the ongoing suppression of class-based conditions and the downward cycling economy, old forms of ethnic identity remerged and eventually led to general mass protests.

In addition, all of the above-mentioned factors led to the formation of the Katarista (named for the historical Aymaran leader, Tupaj Katari) and Indian movements of the 1970s and the 1980s (Van Cott 2000). These movements sought to return the government to a democracy and one based on civilian rule and an active civil society. The Katarista movement had a significant impact on the role of the indigenous community, particularly on the women within society. These movements sought to increase ethnic consciousness, restore indigenous community traditions and eliminate economic and social discrimination of the indigenous population. (Madrid 2012).

Democracy in Bolivia

Democratic transition in Bolivia was built upon the struggle between state and society (Dunkerley 1984). With this new ideology came an atmosphere of rising expectations and optimism amongst Bolivians. Unfortunately, the newly elected president in 1982, Hernan Siles Zuazo of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), was quickly removed from office due to Bolivia's economic, political and social instability and his inability to control the labor movements that had been established before him.

With the elections of 1985, the MNR party came to the forefront of Bolivian government as its nominee Victor Paz Estenssoro assumed the role of the presidency.

This party aimed to represent the rights of Indians within all sectors of society and to find a way to stabilize the rapid economy.

Estenssoro, with the implementation of Zuazo's, "New Economic Policy" (NEP), tried to reduce the size of the central government and its influence in economics. However this neoliberal austerity program devalued the national currency, eliminated wage and price controls and the dismantling of the mining workers' union (Corporacion Minera de Bolivia, COMIBOL) (Klein 1992). In the years to come, Estenssoro brought about privatization and the attempt to eliminate the production and sale of coca and cocaine. However, these measures were highly unpopular amongst the indigenous people as it was for many of them a symbol of their culture, a source of income to sustain their families as well as their perception that it was their given right to grow coca.

In 1988, a new law called Law on Coca Regulation and Controlled Substances sought to punish coca leaf cultivators. As a result of such distress, revolts and strikes broke out amongst various indigenous groups and led to the displacement of several political actors and the awakening of the "cocalero movement." As Klein mentions, the indigenous people's demands later ensued to include civil, social and political rights that had been denied to them over the years by the state. Some of these demands included "agricultural prices, provisions of credit, education and health (2003:213).

It is important to emphasize that there continued to be persistent correlation between being poor and "indigenous." A World Bank study (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 1994), demonstrated that indigenous peoples were systematically impoverished within the national economy. The incidence of poverty was 15 percentage points higher than for the non-indigenous population. 73.5 percent of the indigenous population lived under the

poverty line and 37 percent were categorized as extremely poor, while non-indigenous people in the urban areas only 26 percent experienced extreme poverty (Ibid 1992).

The next several years brought about power mobilization and the revival of the Bolivian labor and indigenous movements that sought to question and challenge state politics. The election of president Jaime Perez Zamora in 1989 deepened the New Economic Policy (NPE) and the “Bolivian Drug War.” Throughout his short presidency, he largely ignored the demands of the indigenous people social movements and as a result continued the ongoing inequality.

The presidency of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada in 1993 enacted a variety of laws and reforms that initially had a positive impact on the status of indigenous people. He implemented pension reform of law of popular participations, education reforms that recognized the right of indigenous people to be educated in their mother tongue and the passage of the administrative decentralization law as a way to promote the inclusion of the indigenous people in the country’s development process and the passage of the Agricultural Reform Law of 1996 which introduced a mechanism for communal land titling (Bueno 2011:8).

Furthermore, the revised Constitution in 1994 defined Bolivia as a “free, independent, sovereign country that was also ‘multiethnic and pluri-cultural’” (Klein 2003:261). This new revision recognized the indigenous people’s rights and entitlements and promoted the legal status of the people in the “Popular Participation Law” (PPL). It was designed to create a newly empowered local level of government that included provisions designed to increase the accountability of local government officials to citizens and led to the emergence of 314 municipalities incorporating the entire national

territory (Seligson 2002). Thus, finally 120 years after the destruction of *ayllus* and indigenous community life, local communities were able to exercise a level of autonomy and self-control that was stripped from them. Not surprisingly, the emergence of these municipalities had an important role in the indigenous communities as it cleared the way for indigenous people to play a critical role in the democratization process (Van Cott 1994). This process began a new chapter in Bolivia's history and the role of upcoming leaders and movements that have undone some of the disastrous policies that destroyed the indigenous communities.

Conclusion

Over 500 years of exclusion, instability, and suppression of the indigenous people within Bolivian society significantly characterizes Bolivia's history. Indigenous peoples have historically been among the poorest and most excluded within Bolivian society. Not only have they faced discrimination in terms of their basic rights to their ancestral property, languages and cultures, but also in terms of access to education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation and the essential material conditions for a satisfying life (Gigler 2007 Plant 1998).

They were continuously treated as "poor peasants" or "ignorant" people by the government and other areas of society. Indigenous people have worked within and outside of the political system through cycles of political promises and persecution since the Spanish colonial period. With the passage of numerous laws and reforms by ruling leaders, the indigenous communities were deprived of their hereditary rights such as their lands, natural resources and citizenship statuses.

As this chapter has shown, indigenous people have suffered acts of discrimination, undergone continuous struggle for political participation, and have repeatedly endeavored to regain their hereditary rights and legitimacy through different modes of protest and empowerment. All in all, the indigenous people of Bolivia have had a turbulent history marked by marginalization and inequality that was dramatically altered by reforms of the 1990s. The following chapter will take a closer look at the mobilization of the indigenous people as well as the formation of social movements, particularly the MAS, and how it has evolved and integrated itself within Bolivian society.

Chapter 3: Mobilizing Indigenous Identity and the Formation of MAS

“In the last two decades, Bolivia has seen great changes in the way the Bolivian society organizes, particularly with regards to the economic structures and political institutions that govern” (Hoffman 2006:11).

Introduction

Social movements in Latin America have continued to gain a strong presence within all sectors of society. According to Katherine Ibester (2010:18), social movements can emerge in different ways. The first way they can emerge is when “democratic representations do not adequately express or engage with new civil society organizations, such as the women’s movement. Second, social movements can emerge among the poor because they have no stake in the existing system, so they do not consider using political parties or democratic mechanisms. Third, social movements can be seen as a form of organizing parallel to democratic institutions, both of which are necessary to ensure citizen’s voices are being heard.”

The Latin American social movements have been characterized for handling specific issues and their actions directed to finding solutions to problems that achieved human rights, ethnicity, social inclusion and indigenous identities recognition and gender equality (Ponce de Leon 2010). Bolivia is not an exception to the social movements ‘phenomenon’ as they have and continue to play an active role in its history. Since 1982, the presence of a new demographic context, civil society and indigenous groups have played a key role in achieving universal rights for all Bolivians; rights as universal vote, universal and mandatory education and land redistribution reform, among other

(Toussaint 2008). The groups that put forward these demands were part of larger movements of ethnic identity that was directed against years of white domination. As Henry Veltmeyer (2007: 124) states, “In the 1990s, these new social movements in their turn gave way to a third wave of socio-political movements that were both peasant-based and peasant-led and in some contexts, were rooted in the struggle of indigenous communities for land, territorial autonomy and freedom and democracy if not social justice.” As a result of these movements, indigenous mobilization has characterized Bolivian life for the last several decades.

According to Harry Vanden, “these new movements do not employ or advocate the radical, revolutionary restructuring of the state through violent resolution. Rather, their approach is to work within civil society and push government and society to their limits to achieve necessary change” (Vanden 2007:21). These movements not only led to the development of new parties and pressure groups, but also to an ever increasing political mobilization in Bolivia.

Political opportunities are critical to social movements and their mobilization. Tarrow argues that movements are “triggered by the incentives created by political opportunities,” and that one of the main political opportunities can include the following factors: the degree of closure of the party, the stability and instability of alignments, divisions within the elite or its tolerance for protest; and the policy making capacity of the government. (Tarrow 1994, 24). He ultimately stresses that the relationship between these political opportunities and social mobilization involves strategic interactions between social movement organization, the state and other collective factors. This chapter will explain some of the political opportunities created by state reform, economic

crises and external pressures that together led to the strengthening and growth of indigenous social movements in Bolivia during the 1980s through the early 2000s.

Bolivia is a country with an extremely high number of indigenous populations within Latin America. The indigenous population consists of over 30 different ethnicities which have undergone centuries of systematic exclusion, discrimination and marginalization. They have continued to live in the margins of political life, with political power concentrated in the hands of mostly white elites. Through organization and strategic alignments, the indigenous people have been able to increasingly gain political and social inclusion. From the 1980s and 1990s onwards, various indigenous peoples started to organize and work together, which resulted in periods of massive indigenous mobilization. The indigenous rights movements turned local knowledge to global power. It was able to act globally because it worked as a new social movement based on a shared “indio” identity and consciousness rather than objective material position (Brysk 1996).

The dynamics of identity-based organizing have been better understood since the works of Sonia Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar (1998). According to these authors, cultural politics can be defined as:

The process enacted within sets of social actors shaped by, and embodying, different cultural meanings and practices come into conflict with each other. This definition of cultural politics assumes that meanings and practices- particularly those theorized as marginal, opposition, minority, residual, emergent, alternative, dissident, and the like, all of them connived in relation to a given dominant cultural order- can be the source of processes that must be accepted as political (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998, 5-6).

This definition of cultural politics ultimately implies that culture is political because meanings consist of processes that seek to redefine social power, thus social movements enact cultural politics when they challenge the dominant cultural meanings by putting

forward alternative conceptions of race and citizenship (Salt 1985). Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar claim that all movement enact cultural politics as popular acts are mobilized “collectively on the grounds of very different sets of meaning and stakes, however the collective identities and strategies of these movements are inevitably bound up by culture (1998, 6). This is crucial to the understanding of the indigenous movement mobilization, who starting in the 1980s used their share identity as a way to mobilize and overcome internal division.

This chapter begins by analyzing the mobilization process of the indigenous communities through the lens of different political opportunities (Tarrow 1994) as well as by paying attention to identity politics, as defined by Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar (1998). It is then followed by a detailed examination of how the *Movimiento al Socialismo- MAS*, gradually developed with its leader, Evo Morales, to become the leading social movement in Bolivia with the presidential elections of 2005. The growing importance of indigenous issues in Bolivia and the protests against neoliberal policies are parallel processes which build on the strong tradition in Bolivia for organization and social protest, and can not always be held apart. Ultimately, this chapter argues that through different mobilization and municipalization processes that brought about political opportunities to indigenous people, as well as the formation of shared identities, the indigenous peoples were able to gain a strong presence within Bolivia, especially with the culmination in the rise of MAS and the election of Evo Morales as Latin America's first indigenous President. As Arostegui (2005) states, “the long-marginalized Indians are tasting political influence for the first time since the Spanish conquest and begun to wrest power from South America's white elites.”

Popular Protest

The Bolivian indigenous movement is largely characterized by its capacity for mobilization as it used marches, strikes and other forms of protests as tools to pressure the government (Yashar 2005). The indigenous movement constituted itself mostly against neoliberal policies that were perceived to be the actual causes of racial discrimination and social misery. They saw the political actors supporting neoliberalism only the current fashion of an old mode of exploitation that has been going on for centuries, more specifically since the Spanish colonization (Borodo de Sa 2010). They have rejected neoliberalism policies on the basis that it has had distributional consequences that have adverse effect on their culture such as the hardline antidrug and economic policies of the Sanchez de Lozada and Hugo Banzer administration. In addition, Bolivia's indigenous majority rejected the privatization of coca and the globalization agenda of the country's technocratic and westernized political class, which seemed to benefit themselves rather than the popular classes (Morales, T 2012). Also the "bold moves of the government elites representing the interests of the U.S.- and European-based corporations, created a reaction and a unity among key elements of society that ended in a "perfect storm" for revolution in Bolivia" (Webber 2005). It was in this context that emerged a series of social movements that aimed to contest and resist the wave of liberalization that produced deleterious implications of oppression first emerged (Arceo, 2006, Sader, 2006). Resistance to neoliberalism radicalized and unified peasants and indigenous groups as a way to undermine and topple civilian governments (Morales, T 2012).

Although the indigenous movement was not homogenous and did not participate in every protest, it did foster a sense of identity unity among the indigenous people and thus further contributing to the mobilization process (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998). As John Crabtree (2008) stated, “the movement was united by the new tide of indigenous politics (even though this meant different things to different groups) and by the conviction that the country’s raw materials should be developed in ways that would benefit all Bolivians- especially the poorest, most indigenous sectors (Crabtree 2008:2). Different reforms and monumental events allowed for the movement to gain momentum within all areas of Bolivian life. These efforts worked as a way to reconstitute the meaning of citizenship.

Mobilization of Identity

After the *March for Territory and Dignity (Marcha por Territorio y Dignidad)* in Bolivia in 1990, which set out from the town of Trinidad por La Paz and which indigenous groups overcame their differences and united to articulate publicly their demand for territory. The main demands of the March focused on the need of the indigenous peoples to defend and control their own land from increasing settlement in lowland areas (Postero 2007). The march was very famous not only due to its scale which consisted of “700 men and women from lowland tribal groups that walked 400 miles from the Amazon rain forest through the snow-capped Andes en route to La Paz” (Larson 1988, 336), but also because it changed the face of Bolivia forever as indigenous people and their demands for territory caused immediate government response. The march ended with the government negotiating with the indigenous peoples demands; the result was the creation of seven indigenous territories by presidential decree (Postero 2007). The march was an

impressive demonstration of the mobilizing force of the indigenous population. As a result, new political parties, such as the MNR, arose that appealed to the poorer and indigenous Bolivians.

The elections in 1993 yielded a MNR government headed by Sanchez de Lozada with Aymara leader, Victor Hugo Cardenas as his vice-president. This alliance was able to achieve widespread acceptance of ideas of multiculturalism among the Bolivian population. Under pressure from the growing indigenous influence, the Lozada administration amended the Bolivian constitution to declare Bolivia a multiethnic state. Postero describes this declaration as a “state led multiculturalism caused by a push from below” (Postero 2007:125).

One of the main reforms of the Lozada administration was the introduction of the Popular Participation Law (PPL) which brought about an extensive decentralization of the country’s administrative structure by upgrading the municipal level of government that had until then been insignificant and creating channels in which traditionally excluded groups could participate (Van Cott 2003). Under the PPL, neighborhood groups and indigenous and campesinos organization were granted legal status within 314 constituencies. In a study conducted by the Democratic Development, Citizen Participation (DDPC) in 1998, a sample of the 314 individual municipalities were selected to examine the impact of citizen participation in local governments.

The study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in municipal meeting participations encountered between the national sample and the DDPC sample (Seligson 2002). This study also revealed that political decentralization had provided indigenous and rural peoples with new opportunities for socio-cultural organizing,

political participation and the ability to increase social capital (Albo 2002 and Seligson 2002). Furthermore, the PPL led to an increased presence of campesinos and indigenous people in formal politics. A group that was able to use this new reform to its advantage was the cocalero (coca growers) federation that was formed as a result of the government's efforts to eradicate coca in the 1980s (Van Cott 2003).

Ultimately, the PPL decentralized the administration and brought about indigenous participation in local government and making them more prominent in Bolivian polity than before. In addition, the number of indigenous mayors and municipal actors grew steadily and gained significant experience in public administration (Medeiros 2001). However, the concrete effects of recognizing the multicultural state were limited and brought little benefit to large sectors of the population. For example, many indigenous communities were without access to local government elections. It was also clear that indigenous communities wanted more than simply participation in policy-making; they wanted both rights of self-determination and an acknowledgement of sovereignty within Bolivia. Recognition of their sovereignty over their land and resources was essential to the indigenous people if they were to develop and manage a substantive economic base (Bueno 2011).

In addition, the Agriculture Reform Law of 1996 represented important political opportunities through a new legislation for indigenous peoples as it introduced a mechanism for communal land titling. However, the new legal framework suffered from poor implementation and as such poverty and widespread discrimination continued at the local and national level (Patrinós and Hall 2006). An important example of the continuous political exclusion of the indigenous people is the lack of documentation

among almost 20 percent of the population according to reports from the National Direction of Personal Identification. People without documentation encounter a number of obstacles as they are unable to exercise basic citizen rights such as political participation, or unable to access government services such as healthcare and education and are limited in their interaction with the market as they are unable to receive credit (Goulden 2003).

As a result, these grievances forced popular feelings and demands to be expressed in anti-institutional ways that marked the year 2000 as a turning point for Bolivia as protests became more broad and violent and ultimately carried over into the political system (Assies and Salman 2005). Taken together, new political opportunities created by a new constitution, which for the first time in Bolivian history recognized indigenous groups: the decentralization of the state, which shifted power and resources to local municipalities; and the 1996 Agricultural Reform Act provided important political opportunities for indigenous groups to overcome internal divisions, unite, and mobilize, thus forging a politically important shared cultural identity.

However, these opportunities alone cannot explain the tremendous momentum that indigenous movements gained in the 1990s. Frustration and existential fear provided the additional ingredients that brought indigenous movements to a boil. This frustration and fear first arose when the government sought to privatize Bolivia's water so that it would be sold for profit to its citizens.

Water War

One of the leading events in recent years that mobilized the indigenous community on a national level was the "Water War" in 2000 in the city of Cochabamba. This popular

mobilization was in response to the increase in rates for water by the private company, Bechtel, after buying the contract from the government to privatize Cochabamba's water system. After the people realized that they could not pay for this essential resource, they began to protest on a large scale. A successful alliance between urban workers, rural peasant irrigators, students and ordinary citizens formed. As Benjamin Dangl states, "citizens were defiant. Instead of paying their increased water bills, they burned them in the Plaza" (Dangl 2007:64). The Cochabamba people eventually took control of the city and established their own authority in which civilians became police officers and government representatives of the assemblies in parliament.

According to Veltmayer (2007:132), "In Bolivia, mobilizations against the government's attempt to extend this privatization to the commercialization of water cleared conditions that not only led to the overthrow of the two governments but to the installation of the first president with solid roots in both the indigenous community and popular movement." In addition, the movement eventually became a political force against the INRA Law of 1996 which was a compromise between the government projects to amend the agrarian reform law intended to introduce free market mechanisms in agriculture and Indigenous demands in defense of property of their ancestral rights. Water was seen by the indigenous as a natural resource that was being used to practice a discriminatory acts of power.

The uprising represented the awakening of their indigenous identity and restoration of dignity that had continuously been stripped from them throughout the centuries. It also represents victory of indigenous ways over foreign ways; as to the indigenous people the earth is considered sacred and often worshiped as a mother

(“Pacha Mama”). The commercialization and sale of territory and natural resources ran against deep-seeded indigenous beliefs. After numerous negotiations, the government finally approved the replacement of the INRA Law and the annulment of the “Water Law.” It is widely heralded as a victory by “the people” against corporate globalization in Latin America and as the first victory of popular movements after 15 years of defeats in the face of neoliberal policies (Assies 2005). As a result, the “Water War” was able to unite different indigenous groups from around the country against one common enemy: the state, as stressed by Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar through the concept of shared identity.

A central component of the Cochabamba struggle was the defense of cultural heritage and collective indigenous rights to water. Although this war was not solely led by indigenous organizations, the language focused increasingly on the protection of traditional custom and usages (*usos y costumbres*), which were used in dealings with the indigenous people through preexistent “customary” procedures rather than traditional “Spanish” legal proceedings, and the “inherent paradox between Andean spirituality and neoliberal nations” (Van Dool 2010:27). It was not only a strategic use of the discourse of indigenous rights, but also a new form of coalitional politics. According to Postero, “instead of organizing around class or ethnicity, the protestors came together around a shared notion of exploitation based on both culture and poverty” (Postero 2007: 195). The success of the Water War inspired a number of movements, such as the indigenous and peasant movements to continue protests directed at government policies that disregarded citizens’ concerns.

However, it should be stressed that the government agreements and changes were not only enacted because of the Water War confrontation, but also because of a wave of indigenous roadblocks that erupted at the same time. One of these roadblocks was initiated by the *cocaleros* (coca growers) protesting against forced coca eradication and militarization. Therefore, the wake of the Water War became an opportunity for a number of indigenous groups to come to the forefront of politics and press their demands.

The Cocaleros- Roots of MAS

The region of Chapare was the center stage for the protests of the *cocaleros* in 2000. The conflict intensified when numerous police officers were attacked and killed, and the government accused Evo Morales, a parliamentarian and one of the main leaders of the *cocaleros*, of being behind the crimes and called for the elimination of his parliamentary immunity. Eventually in 2001, Morales was expelled from Congress and as a result many indigenous people felt offended and humiliated, as they believed this happened because he was Indian.

Coca is a crop utilized by traditional indigenous people for a number of purposes. When the state attempted to eradicate coca production in the 1980s, its policies “helped to feed the cocalero militancy, galvanizing the internal unity of their unions” (Albro 2005:438). As a result, the cocalero union was able to resist state efforts and international pressures aimed at weakening their mobilization by denying any responsibility for drug-trafficking and exalting the coca leaf as a part of the Indian culture. It eventually became the most powerful political force in the country as it was seen as a milestone in the quest for political representation. In addition, similar to the issue of land and territory, deemed sacred and noncommercial by indigenous people, coca represents indigenous people’s

traditional ways that were not respected by previous governments. Coca leaf consumption in Bolivia is not only very wide spread, but also embedded in religious practice rituals. By seeking to eradicate coca production, the government, under pressure from such important cocaine consuming countries such as the United States, was thus attacking yet another core element of indigenous culture and religious practice. Indigenous groups responded vehemently against such attempts.

In the early to mid-1990s, the cocaleros began to proclaim their rights as peasants of indigenous heritage to grow coca. During this time, Evo Morales became the leader of the coca grower movement after joining it in the 1980s. The majority of the cocaleros were “Quechua or Aymara migrants who had retained ties to their communities and therefore shared an indigenous heritage in which the growing of coca was a long-standing and religious practice” (Van Cott 2003:762). This cultural-defense strategy allowed them to gain support from important social and political groups, including human rights organization, anthropologists and journalists. In addition, it results in other groups following suit and highlighting the lack of legitimacy of the government.

By the end of the 1990s, the cocalero mobilization continued to gain momentum by resisting the government’s neoliberal economic policies which devalued the peso, held the line on wages and privatized the few remaining mines (Morales, T 2012). It seized control of the peasant confederation, the Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CCSUTCB) and later founding its own political party, the Assembly for the Sovereignty of Peoples- ASP (Asamblea de la Soberania de los Pueblos). The ASP was clear in advocating a commitment to disregard the “artificial division between the worker and Bolivia’s original inhabitants” (Albro 2005: 438). After

a few years of parliamentary success, the ASP chose to adopt the name of a leftist party, Movement to Socialism –MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo).

Initially it was only another expression of the sectors that were discontent with the neoliberal governments. However, the deepening of the neoliberal reforms made the MAS an attractive option for the rest of the indigenous movement and also to the urban middle classes affected by the same policies. The nationalist discourse against foreign looting and the developmental projects for industrializing the country made the MAS the only political alternative for the disenchanted middle-income sectors. According to Arostegui (2005), “the party (MAS) harnessed historical ethnic hostilities together with an extremist anti-American agenda, fed in part by resistance to U.S.-backed programs to destroy coca leaf productions.” As a result, a great alliance was forged with other indigenous groups in order to advance a common project, or at least, fight the same enemy (Borba de Sa 2009).

In the ‘Water War’ period, MAS started to combine a discourse focused on the defense of coca with anti-imperialism, an indigenous right-focus and socialist programme, that enabled it to draw on electoral support among various sectors of the Bolivian population (Van Dool 2010). The appeal of Morales’ identity was not limited to the indigenous population anymore; Bolivia’s poor were also beginning to identify with him as he was born in a poor farmer’s family, and regarded him as their “own.” MAS declared itself as a party for all the popular and indigenous people of Bolivia that had suffered discrimination and oppression by the white elite. However, MAS and Morales still put a significant amount of emphasis on the indigenous basis of the movement/party: “We, the original people, have organized ourselves into a political institution for the

people's sovereignty" (Morales quoted in Albro 2005:440). What began as a movement to resist the eradication plans of coca had by this time become a movement that also resisted the government's neoliberal policies and began a new chapter in Bolivian politics.

Gas War

In the mid-year elections of 2002, Morales ran as MAS' presidential candidate and MAS became the second largest party after the presidential elections. However, the MNR party headed by Lozada, won this election by a margin of 3 percent of the votes and started his second presidential term in 2002. However, these elections marked a turning point in Bolivia's political development as there was a spectacular power transition from traditional establishment parties to newcomer, socialist and pro indigenous parties (Morales, T 2012). During President Lozada's second term, a new massive mobilization took place, called the "Gas War." This conflict arose over the control of natural gas in the regions of La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, Cochabamba and Chuquisaca. This movement included diverse social networks against the proposed plans to export Bolivia's natural gas across Chile to the United States. To many, this signified the loss of their national sovereignty of the natural resource. In addition, there was general discontent with the selling of this natural resource, as the majority of the people would remain excluded from its revenues. Different types of demonstrations throughout the nation, consisting of hunger strikes, general strikes, and use of dynamite were used as strategic tactics. In all regions of the country, popular sectors became involved in defending the gas and as a result people were killed in the process of protecting their national sovereignty and rights of the natural resource.

The nation had become unstable as people of different classes and ethnic backgrounds had continued to mobilize. As stated by Jose Lazante (2005), “the social movements had lost their confidence in the president and as a result continued their mobilizations.” The popular uprisings led to the resignation of president Sanchez de Lozada in October 17, 2003 who had continued to place the needs of multinational corporations and the goals of the United States by over-cooperating with the DEA rather than meeting the needs of the Bolivian people. This continued to threaten the Bolivian’s people way of life especially in regards to natural resources such as coca and gas that they saw as pivotal substances in their everyday lives. As a result, Lozada's successor, Carlos Mesa Gisbert assumed the presidency and held a referendum on the gas reserves. 80 percent of the voters favored the nationalization of the energy resource, but the government continued to ignore the people’s mandate. Mesa was unable to reverse the Bolivian’s distrust of the government and “by the beginning of 2005 there was a growing popular perception that the essential rights of the people were not being honored by the successor government of Carlos Mesa and that the natural gas reserves were once again being looted by foreign interests” (Vanden 2004, 24). As a result of Mesa’s inability to meet the people’s demands, he resigned as president after approximately 18 months in office (Hensley 2011).

Also during this time frame, a National Secretariat for Indigenous Affairs was established in 1997 and was followed by a National Dialogue in 2001, which sought to enable the voice of the indigenous-led social movements. Thereafter, attention for indigenous rights was sought again in a Second Decade of Indigenous Peoples (2005-2015). A transnational indigenous movement was born that espoused a discourse linking

indigenous identity, human rights and democracy (Postero 2007:50).

After almost five years of constant mobilization, the Bolivian people had a chance to decide who their new leader would be. Ultimately, these popular mobilizations highlighted the problems in direction of the popular movements and demonstrated how well organized they were. Indigenous advocacy in Bolivia, articulated by the MAS, took the form of “broader and more plural civil society coalitions rather than pursuing a marginal, if more exclusively autonomous, identity politics of its own” (Albro 2005:436). What began as a protest against plans to export gas, evolved into a protest against the government itself. The failure of the government to deliver social goods to the Bolivian people brought about the further mobilization of social movements. This brought about new political opportunities that “combined conventional and challenging forms of action and building on social networks and cultural frames” (Tarrow 1994, 1).

The reforms that had been implemented to date had unfortunately failed to address the demands of the movement and it was clear that indigenous communities wanted more than simple participation in policymaking. They wanted both the rights of self-determination and sovereignty within Bolivia. Land ownership was seen as crucial to their survival and essential to secure and develop an economic base (Bueno 2011). These demands were soon to be met with the elections of 2005, as traditional political parties were no longer seen to be representative of these demands. In deed, support for traditional parties fell to 38 percent in 2005 from 70 percent in 1991 (Bueno 2011).

Morales: The First Indigenous President

The “Water War” and “Gas War” paved the way for MAS and Morales’ victory in the 2005 presidential elections. These two confrontations confirmed his role as a

“spokesperson for the discontented and frustrated Bolivians, while his part challenged not only specific but also the whole system of politics in Bolivia (Salman 2007:123). MAS and Morales were able to convert fragmented anger into a politically sophisticated organization. MAS was able to draw its strengths from the struggles of the indigenous peoples and defend their identity. As a result, MAS emerged as an alternative to traditional political parties that had once dominated.

MAS continued to rely on its strategic alliances as a means of opposing states policies. It began to actively pursue alliances to gain national political representation. This focus was particularly evident when MAS sought to obtain broad-based support for the 2005 elections. While social movements came together to support Morales’ campaign, MAS had evolved from a rural social movement to a national political force that appealed to both indigenous and non-indigenous people from a variety of class backgrounds (Lehoucq 2008). However, this strategy was not without its challenges as Morales struggled to maintain a balance between his traditional support and other actors of society.

Running a strong executed and well-organized campaign, Morales under MAS, won the December 2005 elections with 53.74 percent of the popular vote by gaining the support of labor unions, the poor, the landless and the indigenous organizations (Gustafson 2009 and Postero 2007). This was a grand victory as it meant that for the first time in republican history, a president was elected who defined himself as an indigenous person. It was also the first time a president was elected with an outright majority vote since the country’s return to democracy in 1952. In addition, it represented a shift in the rigid political representation in Bolivia just how Vanden (2008, 49) indicates “they had

initiated a form of participatory governance that would radically alter decision making practices in their Andean nation and that suggested that government must indeed serve the people if it was to endure.” Although at the beginning MAS was formed by leaders of the el Chapare Coca Producer’s Confederation, it came to represent many social movements from across the country and ultimately become the strongest political party in Bolivia and became the way for the indigenous people to retain national sovereignty which was stripped away from them 500 years ago. On numerous occasions, it has been referred to as the “government of social movements” (Zegado 2007).

Conclusion

Social Movements in Bolivia have been instrumental in ousting old political elites and establishing themselves as viable actors in Bolivia’s social and political arena. Repressive state policies have played a significant role in fuelling their rise in power. The indigenous movement emerged to protest the neoliberal policies that “destroyed the means of survival for many of Bolivia’s poor people in exchange for meager amounts of aid and unrealized promises of development” (Hertzler 2005:45). A combination of the expansion of self-governing municipalities in the 1994 Popular Participation Law (PPL); the water and gas wars of 2000-2002 which led to an increasing mobilization of indigenous communities and the establishment of political opportunities that allowed indigenous people to overcome their internal divisions and gain momentum; and the collapse of traditional parties, set the stage for the emergence of indigenous movements, particularly MAS, and Evo Morales as a new major political movement to change the nation’s political life.

As seen in this chapter, the PPL made it easier for indigenous groups such as the cocaleros to participate in local government elections that ultimately channeled the way for MAS to gain power. In addition, the protests over gas and water crystallized into broader demands that called for an end to the exclusionary process of neoliberal state restructuring policies (O'Brien 2009). The success of the water was also inspired the Cocaleros to start their own protests against the government's coca eradication policies. The use of repression by successive governments displayed a complete disregard for the citizens and as a result continued to delegitimize the Bolivian government. It was in this context that MAS was established and quickly rose to power as people no longer trusted traditional parties.

Ultimately, the mobilization of social movements brought Bolivia to its knees by a series of protests beginning in 2000 and culminating in the resignation of President Lozada and the eventual election of Evo Morales, under the MAS, as the country's first indigenous president by being particularly effective in his strategic alliances. The overwhelming success of MAS and Morales is indicative of the Bolivian electorate dissatisfaction with politics and their demand to be part of the decision making process after centuries of exclusion and in line with the protests against neoliberalism since Morales has consistently contested the neoliberal policies and the privatization deals with foreign companies. Chapter 4 will discuss the actions Morales has taken to improve the quality of democracy in Bolivia since coming into power in 2006.

Chapter 4: Impact of MAS and Morales on Bolivian Society

Introduction

In 2005, Bolivia elected its first indigenous president, Evo Morales of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party after centuries of marginalization and discrimination suffered by the indigenous people. Morales ran on a promise to alter the lives of the indigenous people by redistributing wealth among all sectors of society. According to Nancy Postero (2010, 62), “Since his election in 2005, Morales and the MAS party have used liberal electoral politics to push forward a two-pronged agenda. First, through executive decrees and laws passed by the MAS-controlled congress, they have substantially reworked the relation between the state and market, making the state once again a primary actor in economic development.”

Morales’ first term in office marked historical achievements for the indigenous movement by sparking social change in Bolivia. The administration also enacted monumental changes through the re-writing of the Bolivian Constitution in 2009, which acknowledged the country’s multi-ethnic character and redefined the concepts of citizenship and power. This chapter analyzes the outcomes of Morales’ policy changes since coming into power in order to examine how it has affected the marginalized status of indigenous people as well as its impact on the quality of democracy within Bolivia. As stated by Luis Baldomar (2005), “Morales has succeeded in extending his movement throughout Bolivia and beyond.” The data for this analysis will be provided by multiple

Latinobarometro surveys, UN ECLAC data sets, personal interviews conducted with Bolivian nations and other international organizations for comparison.

Social Reforms

During his 2005 presidential campaign, Morales promised to restore the authority of the state in decision-making, challenge the traditional class and empower the poor (Gamara 2007). He committed to eliminating corruption and reversing the policies that had been implemented by previous government of the last several decades (Madrid 2007). His election brought optimism for the indigenous people as they hoped he would reverse the social, political and economic policies that had marginalized them since the Spanish colonization. With the implementation of numerous reforms and the establishment of a new Constitution in 2009, many changes came about.

Land and Resources

Since the Spanish colonization in the 1500s, indigenous people have seen very little ownership of Bolivia's land. Although there have been numerous land reforms prior to MAS and election of MAS, many of them only implemented temporary and minor changes. For example, the 1953 Land Reform decree redistributed land to indigenous farmers but was taken back in the 1970s due to severe corruption and as a result the lands were once again centralized in possession of the smaller elite groups (Medina 2010). In addition, the Popular Participation Law (PPL) in 1996 aimed to diminish the prevalence of large portions of land owned by individual families, however, it failed to establish adequate criteria to regulate this process. Consequently, land distribution was ultimately unsuccessful (Hertzler 2007).

Overall, land reform represents an important issue for all of Bolivia's population, and especially for the Indigenous people. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), poverty between 1997 and 2007 rose from 78 percent to 83 percent in rural areas so that the great majority of peasants were considered to experience "extreme poverty." "Extreme poverty" is measured by the following: the level of unmet basic needs of citizens in regards to unemployment, food insecurity, deficient infrastructure, poorly performing markets and economic and social exclusion (IFAD 2005).

Indigenous community development highly depends on access to land and resources, but due to the high concentration of lands, development has been almost non-existent. In the 1980s, over 66 percent of land was controlled by 0.22 percent of landowners with an average of more than 16,000 hectares per owner (Sandoval 2008). Therefore, redistribution of land was a key issue in Morales' election as he promised to redistribute land to poor farmers and to redistribute the profits of Bolivia's natural resources to the poorer sectors of society. These reforms were necessary as they are seen to: allow access to land for the impoverished population and a way to gain control of natural resource production as a way to allow adequate social program funding.

In September 2006, shortly after his election in to office, Morales addressed these issues in a land reform act that began distributing land to the poor and indigenous people. The reform created a new council consisting of members of different groups, such as the Bolivian Confederation of Agriculture (CONFAGRO) and numerous other government agencies and indigenous groups. The regulations of the new reform are shown Table 1 and their eventual incorporation in Articles 393-409 of the 2009 Constitution:

Table 1: 2006 Land Reform

Land can be reverted due to:

- Eminent domain (for public use)
- Land deemed to no longer serve its economic or social purpose
- Land that has been illegally obtained
- Land that is being used for un-constitutional purposes (without compensation)

*Land cannot be reverted from small groups or communal lands.

* All reverted land will be given to native communities that currently have insufficient land.

*Land is prohibited from being given to government officials or families.

Land owners must:

- Have on-site inspections every two years to make sure the land is being used productively (for land owners of properties larger than 120 acres).
- Pay an additional .25% surcharge for their tax base.

*Municipalities must use additional taxes to provide improvements in basic infrastructure.

*Small and indigenous communities are exempt from paying taxes.

Source: (Andean Information Network, 2006)

Ultimately, the new law reforms intended to reverse the centuries of marginalization and discrimination that the indigenous people had experienced. The reform gained control of over 200,000 sq. km. (77,000 miles) of land and redistributed it to the poor (Carroll 2006). The results of this reform that was first established in 2006 and then later incorporated into the 2009 Constitution are highlighted in Chart 1, which shows that throughout three years, Morales' land reform redistributed approximately 23 million hectares of land.

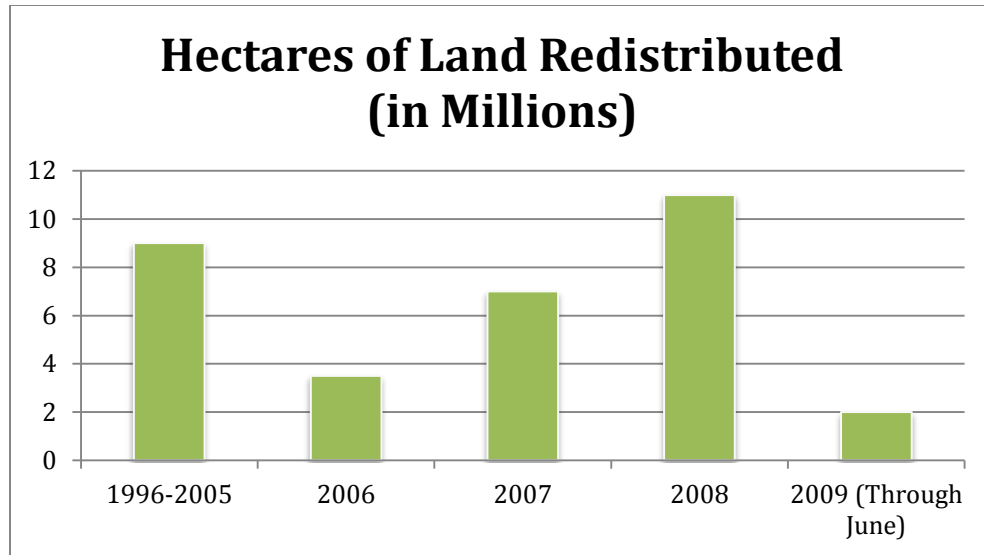


Figure 1: Land Distributed through 2006 Land Reform

As mentioned before, in 2006 Morales' implemented a change over the nationalization of hydrocarbon and the control of natural resources. The Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), Bolivia's state energy company, was made the only organization which could control claims and made the official Bolivian state owned oil company. Furthermore, the reform no longer entitled transnational companies to a greater share of profits and recognized the reserves as belonging to Bolivia. From 2006 to 2008, the profits from the mining and hydrocarbon industries grew from \$250 million to over \$2 billion and were used to finance social welfare programs and the development of rural areas where most indigenous people reside (Rochlin 2007). This new natural resource reform was also included in the 2009 Constitution as it granted all revenues to the state. In addition, the Constitution states that the profits from the natural resources will and must be used to the development of the state and for the collective good.

These two issues mark the beginning of change for the indigenous population. As a result of these reforms, indigenous people were provided resources and land that were

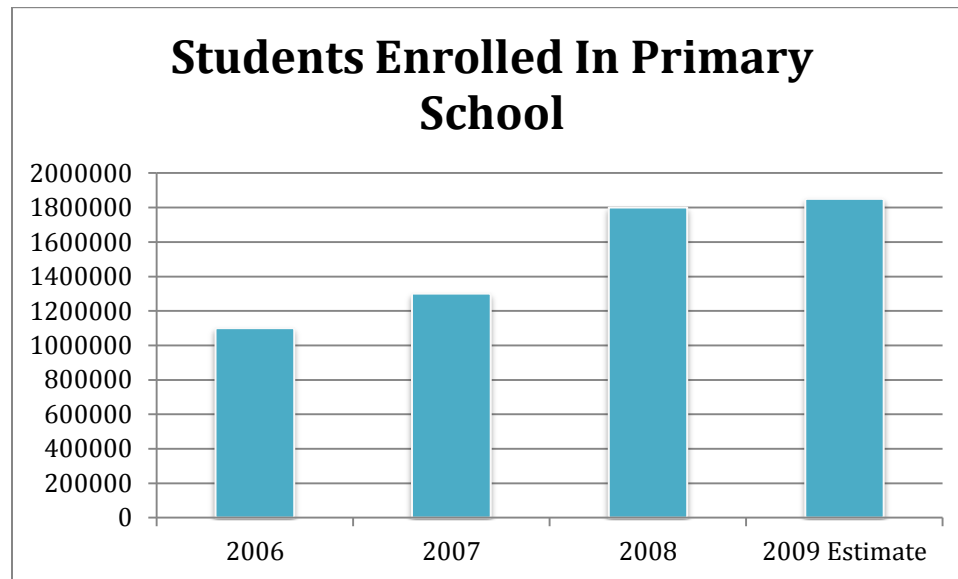
previously denied to them. The indigenous communities gained access to land in order to develop their communities through farming and other forms of land cultivation. In addition, the profits from the natural resources brought about social programs such as education and healthcare that had a significant impact on the indigenous people's status in Bolivian society.

Education

Education is crucial to the social structure of any community and growth of society. A reform initiated by MAS and Morales of primary school education as a way to alleviate social problems that were experienced by a majority of Bolivia's poor population was the "Bono Juancito Pinto" program implemented in October 2006. This program aimed at increasing primary school enrollment. As of 2002, 69.2 percent of indigenous people had completed their primary school education, compared to almost 100 percent of those of European descent (UN, UDAPE, OIT, 2006). There have been several previous reforms that have changed the education system, such as the 1955 Education Law that aimed to provide indigenous people with an education as a way to integrate them into the Bolivian national culture and the Bilingual Intercultural Education (PEIB) project, which produced textbooks in Aymara and Quechua. Although these reforms were major stepping stones for indigenous education, the literacy rates remained below average and overall enrollment remained low.

The "Bono Juancito Pinto" program gave approximately \$29.00 to families as an incentive to keep their children in school through the sixth grade. According to the Bolivian Ministry of Education, from 2006 to 2008, the number of primary school enrollments increased from approximately 1.1 million students to approximately 1.8

million. The following chart highlights school enrollment in said years as conducted by the Ministry of Education:



Source: Bolivian Ministry of Education

Figure 2: Enrollment Rates

The 2009 Constitution also acknowledges the struggles of providing education to the indigenous communities. In several articles, as shown below, it also expresses the country's multi-ethnic objectives and the importance of inter-cultural education.

Article 78

II. Education is intercultural and pluri-lingual in the entire educational system.

Article 80

II. Education will contribute to strengthening the unity and identity of every citizen as part of the Plurinational State; along with the identity and cultural development of the members of each community or indigenous village; contributing to intercultural enrichment and understanding within the state.

Article 84 50

The state and society have the power to eradicate illiteracy through programs in accordance with the cultural and linguistic reality of the population

However, it should be noted that the data from the Ministry of Education in regards to student enrollment differs than those taken from the World Bank.¹ In addition, due to the lack of data for 2005 and only estimates for 2004, it is difficult to grasp a

comparable data on MAS' direct influence after the reform was implemented. Nonetheless, the reform in 2006 and its installment into the 2009 Constitution altered the number of indigenous children in school and higher literacy rates that resulted from the National Program for Literacy which increased rates from 86.7 percent in 2001 to almost 90 percent in 2007. In addition to education, health care remained an obstacle for MAS and Morales.

Health Care

Health care represents another significant issue that needed to be addressed or the rural populations as many indigenous people live in rural, remote areas that have little or no access to hospitals and clinics. As of 2003, approximately 52 percent of indigenous, pregnant females were seen by doctors, compares to 83 percent of non-indigenous pregnant women (UN, UDAPE, OIT, 2006). There are several different factors associated with the low access to health care. One factor is that although Bolivia produces a number of medical professionals, many move to other countries regions of the worlds to practice their expertise (Forsyth 2008). Even though this might not be seen as a significant factor, it is crucial to the availability of doctors in the different regions of Bolivia.

As previously stated health care poses great troubles for the government not only because indigenous communities have little access to health care due to distance issues, but also obstacles that must be overcome due to environmental factors. Many times, they are forced to cross natural barriers, such as steep mountains, rapid rivers, and dangerous jungles to locate medical assistance (Medina 2010). In addition to these factors, a general distrust of general medicine is a contributing factor to the health of indigenous people. Many non-indigenous people regard this as an unacceptable excuse, however many

indigenous people refuse to be treated under the care of “modern doctors” and instead seek help from travelling “medicine women” (kallawayas), who use healing knowledge passed down through generations within their families (Chelala 2007). These “medicine women” are regarded as true healers and are a significant part of their intricate cultural lifestyle. Thus, the most successful way of providing health care to indigenous people is to mix traditional and non-traditional medical practices that are accessible and easy acceptable to all of Bolivia’s population.

Morales and MAS have attempted to support alternate practices in order to increase access to health care in numerous ways. The government has reported an increase in health care salaries for medical professionals as an incentive to keep medical professional within Bolivia and distributed “mobile clinics” throughout the country as way to reduce travelling issues, which is a favorable alternative to the indigenous people (National Institute of Statistics 2010). In a program called “Bono Juana Azurduy,” mothers were given approximately \$250 in scheduled stipends that were broken up to be distributed from pregnancy to 12 months after pregnancy. This program aimed to reduce malnutrition amongst newborns and infants as mothers had the monetary capability to purchase the necessary foods and medicines to keep themselves and their children healthy (Moloney 2009). According to the Bolivian Ministry of Health and Sports in 2009, over 100,000 mothers and children have gained better health skills and results from this program. However, although infant mortality did decrease, there can be other factors associated with this such as international aid provided by the UN.

In regards to traditional versus non-traditional medicine, a program was started in 2010 that invested approximately \$10 million to construct pharmacies that included both

types of medicine. The goal of this reform was to offer indigenous people controlled access to medicine produced by “modern doctors” and the traditional “medicine women” as a way to decrease uncontrolled use to medicine and a way for indigenous people to have access to health care in a comfortable manner (Kearns 2010). Although these programs produced clear improvements in the health care status of indigenous people, there is work left. Nonetheless, MAS and Morales have positively impacted indigenous communities and their access to health care compared to previous generations. However, health care and education are not the only monumental reforms introduced by MAS and Morales. The remainder of this chapter analyzes the effects of MAS and Morales on the concept of citizenship and democracy within Bolivia using Latino Barometer and LAPOP surveys and datasets.

Citizenship and Democracy

The new Constitution that was approved by the people in a referendum in January 2009, “enacts fundamental changes in the state; grants autonomies to indigenous nations; recognizes Indigenous cultures, languages and customs, and institutionalizes a far-reaching new land-reform program” (Postero 2010, 62). As previously argued in this chapter, constitutional amendments have had a significant impact on land distribution, natural resources, education, and the health care system of the indigenous people. Other crucial amendment reforms have been implemented in regards to citizenship status of indigenous people. Bolivia was the first country to approve the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and to incorporate it into the new constitution as it gave the right for indigenous peoples to govern themselves (Barie 2007).

The first article of the 2009 Constitution, establishes that “Bolivia becomes a Unitary State Law, social, pluri-national communication, free, independent, sovereign, democratic, inter-cultural, decentralized and autonomous. Bolivia is based on the plurality and political, economic, legal, cultural, and linguistic integration process within country.” This article is drastically different than the previous Constitution of 1967 that did not contain the concept of “pluri-national” nor recognized the variety of nations within Bolivia.

The Constitution of 2009 also contains nearly 100 articles that recognize the equality of men and women and especially the indigenous populations. Among these articles include the rights to basic services such as water and electricity. In addition, in Article 5, over 35 languages are recognized along with Castilian. Article 5.I. of the 2009 Constitution states, “the multinational government and department governments must use at least two official languages. One must be Castilian; the other will be decided taking into account the use, convenience, circumstances, needs and preferences of the population as a whole or territory in question. Other autonomous governments must use the languages of their territory and one of them must be Castilian.” Ultimately, MAS, Morales through the implementation of the 2009 Constitution brought about significant, positive reforms in the aspects of indigenous citizenship, their individuality, their autonomy and furthermore, deepening the role and support for a democratic form of government.

Since his inauguration, Morales has enacted policies in accordance with his electoral mandates to address the issue of illegitimacy and restore support and satisfaction amongst the Bolivian people. The social basis of Bolivian democracy lies in the ability of

MAS and Morales to restructure it around the ideals of social and economic justice for all of the country's people. Accordingly, the rise of MAS and Morales has coincided with a strong impact on several facets of Bolivian democracy as noted in numerous LAPOP surveys. These include increased satisfaction with democracy and democratic governance of the administration. Although it is impossible to be certain that the increased support for democracy is because of MAS, the timing certainly suggests a strong relationship. For example, in regards to satisfaction of political institutions, a LAPOP survey demonstrated that the percentage of people who have respect and support for Bolivia's democratic institutions have increased from 36.9 percent in 1998 to 44.8 percent in 2002 and to 48.5 percent in 2006 (LAPOP 2006). Moreover, according to the same survey, the percentage of people who had pride in Bolivia's political system grew from 30.1 percent in 1998 to 37 percent in 2002 and to 44.9 percent in 2006.

Aside from institutional satisfaction, Bolivian citizens, including indigenous peoples, have reported increased satisfaction with and support for Bolivian democracy as a whole. Pursuant to a Latino Barometer Survey (Latinobarometro) in 2006, the level of satisfaction for democracy rose from 24 percent in 2005 to 39 percent in 2006, making it the highest recorded level since 1996, then the Latino Barometer began taking polls (Seligson 2006 and Latinobarometro 2006). In addition, the percentage of indigenous people who believed that Bolivia is democratic rose from 58.7 percent in 2004 to 68.5 percent in 2006 (LAPOP 2006). Likewise, 70.6 percent of indigenous people preferred democracy in 2006 to any other form of government compared to 65.2 percent of whites in the 2006 LAPOP survey. As stated by scholar, Noam Chomsky, in 2006, Bolivia is "probably the most democratic country in the world" (Democracy Now). The chart below

shows the increased satisfaction with democracy amongst the Bolivian people from 2004 to 2006:

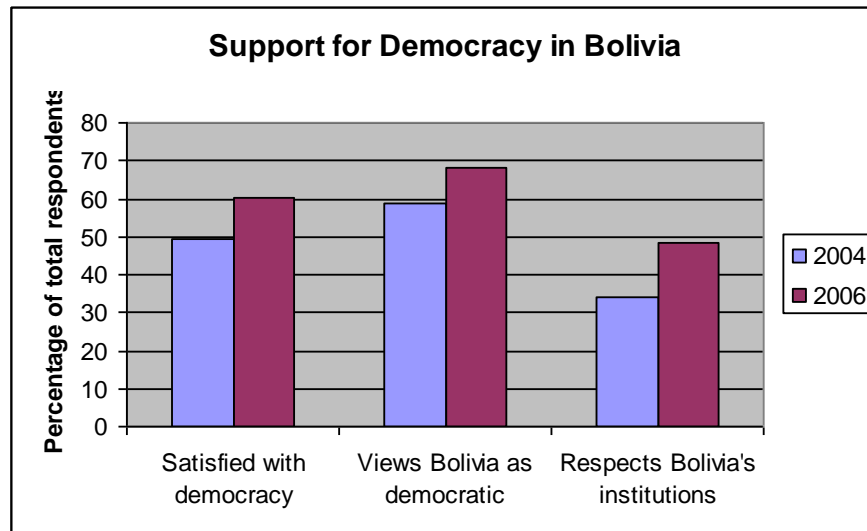


Figure 3: Support for Democracy in Bolivia

Thus, support for democracy and democratic political institutions have been characterized by an upward swing among the Bolivian population since the election of MAS and Morales. Therefore, it has made it an interesting case for studying the “reinvention of democracy” (Salman 2008, 88). As seen earlier in this chapter, MAS has largely respected the civil liberties and human rights among the indigenous population. Moreover, the Morales administration has expanded the political influence of the indigenous population by their appointment to a variety of government positions. Each of these noteworthy efforts has increased Morales’ legitimacy among the Bolivian people.

Conclusion

With a history characterized by exclusion and inequality, there is no question that Bolivia’s indigenous people have overcome numerous obstacles since the Spanish colonization in the 1500s. The election of an indigenous president and the election of numerous indigenous people into the legislative body, indigenous issues came to the

forefront of Bolivian political, economic, and social life that were once never touched upon. Through the implementation of several social and economic reforms, the government made the redistribution of wealth and land a top priority and by doing so it radically improved the status of its oppressed peoples.

As analyzed in this chapter, the re-writing of the 2009 Bolivian Constitution significantly altered Bolivia in the areas of land distribution, nationalization of natural resources, education system, health care systems and the overall citizenship status of the indigenous people. In addition, the increased support of democratic institutions and form of government changed Bolivia's makeup for the first time. Although a democratic government first came into existence in Bolivia with the Lozada administration in the 1980s, the post-election of Morales and MAS in 2005 came to be the highest accepted government amongst the people and points to the fact that Morales and MAS have provided the people the representation that they demanded in their pre-2005 election movements and protests.

However, although Bolivia has been characterized by a major ideological shift, the results have not been so significant in some areas. For example, while MAS has implemented new policies in regards to poverty, poverty rates remain high and collectively unchanged since Morales' election. Ultimately, future research will be necessary to examine the issue of underdevelopment to explain why certain changes have not occurred. Nonetheless, it is more than safe to argue that MAS and Morales have had a significant impact on the indigenous people way of life in Bolivia since the monumental election in 2005 and has done much to improve the political, economic and social situation of all Bolivia.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis has been to analyze and explain the emergence of a powerful, Bolivian, indigenous movement that has been able to broaden its political support after centuries of marginalization and discrimination experienced by the indigenous peoples. Bolivia has undergone radical social, economic and political changes in recent decades after experiencing an abundant upsurge of indigenous movements and the politicization of indigenous identities. With a history marked by exclusion, the indigenous people of Bolivia have significantly progressed within society in recent years compared to the centuries after the Spanish colonization in the 1500s all the way to the late 20th century which was characterized by military and dictator rule up to the 1980s. The indigenous majority has been able to overcome such inequality by successfully placing their needs and rights at the political forefront, which was once impossible.

The election of the MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) party and an indigenous leader, Evo Morales Ayma, as president in 2005 altered indigenous rights and issues in ways that had never been addressed in the reign of the old Bolivian political elites. Morales' election represents a shift of paradigms in Bolivian society that those who consider themselves as "indigenous" can now participate in the social, economic and social arena. Institutions are no longer representative of the political elites, but rather the population as a whole, and thus making Bolivia a truly democratic and inclusive state.

The struggles and achievements conquered by the social movements throughout Bolivia's history represent the hardships faced by the indigenous people in regards to

their identity and cultural way of life, especially including the cultivation of coca which symbolizes a strong aspect of the indigenous people's history, including aspects of religion and culture. As seen in the previous chapters, the identities of the indigenous people have changed over time to meet the social goals of both "Indian" and "non-Indian."

Bolivia ignored the identity of the indigenous majority for many centuries and considered them to be lower people in society than the "white" elite. A prime example is the 1952 Revolution, which viewed the indigenous people as unimportant participants in the national life and ultimately did not include them in sociocultural and political life. Nonetheless, the combativeness of the social movements in defense of land, water, gas, coca, and natural resources show that mobilization can occur in different situations while maintaining a common goal at hand, the rights of all Bolivian people.

According to the research previously presented, Morales and MAS have taken extreme measures to alter Bolivia's political and social landscape through the installment of various land, water, education, and healthcare reforms. In addition, the government has made significant changes to the status of its most oppressed population through the re-writing of the 2009 Constitution. Although the Constitution has not been implemented for a very long period of time, it has significantly altered Bolivia's structure. The Constitution has acknowledged the numerous languages spoken by the various indigenous cultures as well as recognizing that Bolivia is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation and, as a result, acknowledging the citizenship status of the indigenous people, which was once denied. While there remain many obstacles at hand, such as the continued high rate of poverty and low levels of health compared to other countries in

Latin America, Bolivia represents an extraordinary example of success in a region where indigenous political representation remains limited.

In conclusion, the MAS party and Morales have had a significant impact on the current status of indigenous people in Bolivia. As seen, more than half of the population is now included in the political sphere. In addition, the Bolivian government has altered the political framework to a more representative and participatory democracy, which has concurrently led to greater equality and social justice for all Bolivian people. Ultimately, indigenous people of Bolivia have come a long way since colonization and its politics have been redefined.

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