

5-2017

# Mi Bolivia está Cambiando: the effect of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia

Tessa Holtzman

*Bates College*, [tholtzma@bates.edu](mailto:tholtzma@bates.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scarab.bates.edu/honorsthesis>

---

## Recommended Citation

Holtzman, Tessa, "Mi Bolivia está Cambiando: the effect of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia" (2017). *Honors Theses*. 213.

<http://scarab.bates.edu/honorsthesis/213>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact [batesscarab@bates.edu](mailto:batesscarab@bates.edu).

**Mi Bolivia está Cambiando: the effect of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization in  
Bolivia**

A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Politics  
Bates College

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts

By

Tessa Holtzman  
Lewiston, Maine  
March 24, 2017

## Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank my advisor at Bates College, Professor Jacob Longaker, for his support, encouragement, and comments on all of my drafts. I would also like to thank Professor Cody Eldredge, who guided me through the quantitative portion of my analysis and helped me work through the finicky STATA program. I extended my gratitude to both the entire Bates politics department and to the Bates Student Research Fund for supporting me both emotionally, academically, and financially throughout this project. Without the funding provided to me, the fieldwork that was essential to this project would have been impossible.

Through this research, I was, fortunately, able to connect with the scholarly community both in the United States and in Bolivia. I would like to thank Carew Boulding from the University of Colorado at Boulder for both letting me use her dataset and for participating on my defense committee. I would also like to thank all of the scholars I talked to in Bolivia, whether it was in person, over the phone, or via email. Though I was not able to work with all of them, everyone was incredibly nice and accommodating. I would like to give special thanks to the incredible research organizations in Bolivia who were able to provide me with support and connections, *CESU*, *CEDIB*, and *Ciudadanía*. For all of the people who agreed to do interviews with me, many thanks. Finally, I would like to thank Carlos Carballo, the graduate student at New Mexico State University who worked with me to transcribed my 12 interviews after I returned from Bolivia.

Finally, thank you to my family and friends who provided continuous support and care.

## Abstract

In 1994 Bolivia passed one of the most comprehensive political decentralization reforms in Latin America. It broke down a unitary government into 314 semi-autonomous municipalities. In the wake of this change, indigenous populations increased their political engagement. Did the 1994 decentralization reform affect ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia? Some political decentralization theorists argue that high levels of political decentralization create or increase ethnic political mobilization, while others argue that political decentralization reform decreases ethnic political mobilization. In this paper, I add to the conversation by exploring the effects of decentralization reform on ethno-political mobilization at the local level. I argue that, at the local level, decentralization triggered ethno-political mobilization by lowering barriers to participation and by giving local governments control of resources. Additionally, the level of pre-existing social organization has positive effects on the ability of indigenous groups to politically mobilize after decentralization occurred. To support my argument, I use a sequential exploratory research design. I test my argument through qualitative fieldwork including semi-structured interviews with academics and government officials in Bolivia and quantitative regression analysis to test for the impact of pre-existing levels of organization and rurality on ethno-political mobilization. Overall, I find evidence that decentralization incentivizes ethno-political mobilization, but that the outcome is participation in the formal political arena only when there are strong levels of pre-existing social organization.

## Table of Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Introduction.....</b>  | <b>1</b>   |
| Justification of the study.....   | 5          |
| Why Bolivia?.....   | 6          |
| Roadmap.....  | 7          |
| <b>Literature Review .....</b>  | <b>10</b>  |
| Theories and definitions of ethnic mobilization.....  | 10         |
| Institutional decentralization .....  | 19         |
| Conclusion.....   | 24         |
| <b>Discussion of Methodological Approaches and Reflections .....</b>  | <b>26</b>  |
| Qualitative methods.....  | 26         |
| Quantitative methods.....   | 32         |
| <b>The Path to Decolonization: A Short Political History of Bolivia .....</b>   | <b>33</b>  |
| Ethnic background.....  | 33         |
| A Brief History.....  | 35         |
| Post-independence and the Chaco War.....  | 35         |
| Neoliberalism and decentralization.....   | 40         |
| Outcomes following decentralization .....   | 46         |
| Conclusion.....   | 47         |
| <b>Fighting for a Common Identity: The Effects of Decentralization on Ethno-Political mobilization in Bolivia .....</b> | <b>51</b>  |
| Decentralization Literature in Relation to the LPP .....  | 55         |
| The Effect of Political Mobilization on Movements.....  | 62         |
| Outcomes following the Law of Popular Participation .....   | 67         |
| Pre-existing Levels of Organization and Ethno-Political Mobilization .....  | 72         |
| The Ruralizing of Politics in Relation to Ethno-Political Mobilization.....   | 80         |
| Conclusions .....   | 82         |
| <b>Measuring the Effect of Pre-Existing Levels of Organization and Rurality on Ethno-Political Mobilization.....</b>    | <b>84</b>  |
| Data and Model .....  | 85         |
| Results .....   | 95         |
| Conclusions .....   | 98         |
| <b>Conclusion .....</b>   | <b>100</b> |
| Alternate Explanations for Ethno-Political Mobilization.....  | 105        |
| Contributions and Opportunities for further research .....  | 107        |
| <b>Bibliography .....</b>   | <b>109</b> |
| <b>Appendix A: Methods.....</b>   | <b>114</b> |
| 2.1 .....   | 114        |
| 2.2 .....   | 115        |
| 2.3 .....   | 116        |
| 2.4.....  | 118        |
| 2.5.....  | 118        |
| 2.6.....  | 119        |
| <b>Appendix B: Interview Transcription.....</b>   | <b>120</b> |
| 4.1 .....   | 120        |



## Introduction

*On February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, no one drove and everyone voted in Bolivia. Today marks the day of the national referendum. If it passes, it will allow Evo Morales, the first indigenous president of Latin America, to run for a third consecutive term, staying in power for almost 20 years. Though I went to bed assuming that voting in Bolivia would be similar to voting in the Unites States I could not have been more wrong. When I was growing up, election day only meant that my sister and I had to leave five minutes earlier for school so that my dad could stop at the polling place to cast his vote on our way. In Bolivia, however, voting is an event that takes the entire day.*

*I normally wake up to the shouts of Trufi and Microbus drivers. Today, however, I woke up to the sounds of kids running up and down the streets, throwing small firecrackers at the sidewalk that sounded like gunshots and upset the stray dogs that roam the streets. I spent the morning walking three-fourths of a mile with my host mom to the local polling station (motorized vehicles are banned from the roads today). As we walked along the uneven streets, neighbors smiled and shouted greetings as they sat outside in the warm sun, grilling meat and corn. As we got closer to the primary school, the streets got more crowded with pedestrians, all going to the same place we were. Soon, I smelled the oily, rich scent of salteñas and heard people mixing huge tubes of Mochochinci, a traditional drink from indigenous cultures of the lowlands. I found where the smells and sounds were coming from as we turned the corner and walked into the alley where the gate to the school was open. Hand-constructed stalls littered the area in front of the gate, selling all sorts of treats to voters. As we entered the schoolyard, a collision of smells and sounds overwhelmed me. Never had I seen a voting place as engaged and chaotic as this*

*one. Lines snaked around the school yard, leading in and out of buildings and people stood in clusters talking loudly. Many of them were discussing the referendum. Cholitas in pleated skirts, colorful shawls, and wearing Bowler hats over their long braids (the traditional dress of highland indigenous groups) stood next to men who spoke in Aymara and Quechua. As my host mom and I joined the long line, I felt both uncomfortable, as I was the clear outsider, but also excited to be experiencing an event like voting day.*

*In the afternoon, after walking back from the polling station, I sat down for a long mid-day meal with my host family and our neighbors. Over rice, potatoes, meat, and burn-your-mouth-spicy salsa, we discussed the referendum and its political implications. The tension in the air that enveloped the entire day surprised me. I later asked my host mom if election day always felt like this or if this referendum was different. She told me that, although this referendum was a particularly big deal because voting is always mandatory, election days always feel similar to today.*

- (excerpt from the observation of the author, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016)

Cochabamba, Bolivia sits in the Andean foothills between the *altiplano*<sup>1</sup> plateaus of the Andes and the *tierras bajas*<sup>2</sup> of the Amazon. It is an urban city, with a population of over half a million people who are there for a diversity of reasons. There are professors and students at the University of San Simone, migrants from rural areas who come to work in the colorful fruit and vegetable markets, and people who have lived in Cochabamba for generations. Though Cochabamba on most days is just like any other Latin American city, its history of social protest and political participation sets it, and Bolivia, apart.

---

<sup>1</sup> Highland

<sup>2</sup> Lowlands



I first visited Cochabamba in the Spring of 2016 as part of a semester-long study abroad program that explored the themes of multiculturalism, globalization, and social change. I later returned to Cochabamba to complete fieldwork for this project. This project grew from a series of conversations I had, lectures I heard, and observations I made. I first realized the special and important role political participation played in Bolivia on the day of the referendum. Following the referendum, I had a series of conversations that complicated the idyllic image of voting day I originally had. In particular, conversations with Oscar Oliveras, the leader of the Water War, and Rafael Puente, the ex-vice minister of education for Evo Morales, highlighted the complicated relationship between political participation and the indigenous populations in Bolivia, a relationship that has developed within the past three decades. While drinking quinoa juice with a women's union, I learned about how, as politics became more entangled with indigenous identity, it opened up the ability of women to participate but also enforced a culture of machismo into the political sphere. And, while visiting a rural indigenous community in the lowland department of Santa Cruz, I learned that Evo Morales was an incredibly controversial figure. Why did political participation feel so important in Bolivia? Was the current political sphere a productive one? What role did indigenous groups play? My interest in the complicated concept of popular political participation in Bolivia had been piqued.

This project emerged from these questions, which drove me into the broader field of literature on ethno-political mobilization, especially within Latin America. In Bolivia, ethno-political mobilization emerged in the late 1990s, amid a neoliberal government model. In particular, the emergence of indigenous political participation seemed to correspond with a massive decentralization reform. The Law of Popular Participation (LLP), signed into Bolivian

law in 1994, is often cited as one of the most radical decentralization reforms in Latin America. Before the Law was signed into effect, the Bolivian State was incredibly monolithic. A national government controlled by *mestizo*<sup>3</sup> elites dictated all governmental action, and though regional governments existed, they were ceremonial in nature and their leadership roles were occupied by presidential appointees (Faguet, 2003). The LPP replaced this traditional Latin American hierarchy, creating 198 new municipal districts and a total of 314 districts, gave municipalities a per capita share of national resources through tax revenue, instituted the first-ever nationwide direct municipal elections for mayor (*alcalde*) and councilors (*consejales*), and created oversight committees (Altman 2003).<sup>4</sup> Though the neo-liberal proponents of the LPP hoped that it would improve the quality of democracy, many viewed the measure as a way of consolidating strong union and social movement structures<sup>5</sup> into the government, thus weakening them of their political and societal power (Blanes n.d.; Faguet, 2003).

However, the opposite occurred. Indigenous organizations and individuals began participating directly in municipal elections, quickly obtaining electoral wins throughout the country. By 1997, the indigenous political party Movimiento Al Socialismo (MAS) was formed and began winning at both the local and provincial level. Seven years later, in 2005, Evo Morales, the leader of MAS, was elected president with the support of 57.3% of the population (COHA 2009). His election ended the neoliberal model and symbolized the destruction of the traditional, class-based, elite party structure that had dominated the political system since democratization. Morales remains the first and only indigenous President in Latin America.

---

<sup>3</sup> The term *mestizo* refers to a person of mixed race, usually descending from the Spanish conquistadors.

<sup>4</sup> Oversight committees were established to provide “an alternate channel for representation popular demand in the policy making process” (Faguet, 2003 pg. 5). These committees were formed to help ‘involve’ indigenous and peasant communities and neighborhood organizations in the government.

<sup>5</sup> These groups had a lot of societal power that put powerful checks on government power.

This project aims to answer the following question: *What are the effects of decentralization on ethno-political electoral outcomes, specifically at the local level?* I answer this question through a case study of Bolivia in which I compare electoral outcomes across municipalities. Analysis is drawn from both qualitative fieldwork and quantitative regression analysis of election results.

### **Justification of the study**

Decentralization reform has become increasingly popular in both developed and developing countries, as a component of both neo-liberal and developmental reforms. However, the effects of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization are widely disputed, some scholars find that decentralization is linked to increased levels of ethno-political mobilization while others find that it is linked to reduced levels. There is a strong need for clarity in the current scholarly debate.

A better understanding of the effects of decentralization is critically important for governments considering decentralization reforms of their own, especially because decentralization has the potential to exacerbate ethnic difference. Additionally, it is important to understand what triggers the transition of social movements from participation outside the political arena to inside the political arena.

A more thorough understanding of the relationship between decentralization and ethno-political mobilization also adds to the scholarly conversation by looking more closely at the process of decentralization and identifying the specific parts of decentralization that impact ethno-political mobilization. Most contemporary studies on decentralization and ethno-political mobilization are comparative across multiple countries at the national level. This project builds on the existing literature by studying the effects of decentralization on ethno-political

mobilization at the municipal level in one country. This allows for a more in-depth understanding of the aspects of decentralization that impact ethnic mobilization and the variables that effect variance in this mobilization.

### **Why Bolivia?**

In Latin America, ethnic identity has played an increasingly important role in political and civil society as indigenous movements have become relevant actors. This has dramatically altered the political landscape and disrupted the hold that non-indigenous elites have had on political power since independence from colonial powers. Indigenous political movements are a central aspect of modern Latin American politics.

The LPP triggered a dramatic change in the way citizenship was defined in Bolivia by incorporating rural and indigenous communities that had been historically excluded into the Bolivian State at the local level. This incorporation opened opportunity structures for direct participation within these communities by giving citizens the ability to vote and run as candidates in elections. This had two effects: (1) it increased the legitimacy of the Bolivian political system and (2) it also raised the expectations citizens had of the government, especially for populations that were historically discriminated against by the government (Hiskey 2003). Bolivia provides a compelling window to study the intersection of the politicization of ethnic cleavages and decentralization for three reasons.

First, Bolivia has one of the largest indigenous population in Latin America. In the 2001 census, 66.2% of the population self-identified as on the 37 indigenous groups that have communities in Bolivia (Political Database of the Americas 2006). Despite this, ethnic cleavages have only recently become politically salient, and thus, indigenous political involvement has

only recently spiked. Further, ethnic politicization in Bolivia is not consistent across all of the indigenous groups. This variance provides a controlled space for comparison.

Second, as mentioned above, the decentralization reform in Bolivia marked a dramatic shift in government structure. This shift resulted in the recognition of most local movements, which were primarily indigenous. This meant that after the LPP thousands of indigenous organization that had previously been outside the governmental structure were political actors with access to resources and positions of authority within local governance structures.

Third, Bolivia is one of the most unequal and underdeveloped countries in Latin America. This, in conjunction with governmental and societal discrimination, resulted in some of the lowest rates of political participation in Latin America for the first half of the twentieth century. However, following the LPP in the late 1990s, political participation sharply increased. This makes Bolivia an ideal test case to identify the effects of decentralization reform.

## **Roadmap**

The remainder of this thesis unfolds in five parts. First, it explores relevant literature on ethno-political mobilization both generally and within Bolivia. It then discusses relevant decentralization literature. A brief discussion of the methods follows the review of the literature. It then provides a chronological overview of the political and social history of Bolivia to situate the literature in the Bolivian context and familiarize the reader with the political context in which decentralization occurred. The subsequent two chapters provide the bulk of the original analysis. First, the qualitative data is analyzed in relation to the literature. Then, quantitative data unpacks specific findings of the qualitative data to draw clearer conclusions. Finally, it concludes by exploring the implications of the conclusions on future decentralization policy.

Chapter One examines two bodies of literature. The first set of literature discusses theories and definitions on ethnic mobilization. Four theories on ethnic mobilization, institutional theory, culturalist theory, reactive ethnicity theory, and resource competition theory are examined in the context of Latin America. The second set of literature discusses recent scholarship on the effects of intuitional decentralization. The end of this chapter bridges these two subsets of literature, compiling several hypotheses that guide the rest of the thesis.

The second chapter outlines the methodology used to collect data. This thesis uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative fieldwork was done during a two-week trip to Bolivia during which a dozen semi-structured interviews were completed and coded per reoccurring themes identified in the literature and throughout the interviews. The qualitative findings informed the quantitative analysis. A regression analysis of data collected from the 1999 and 2004 municipal elections provide further clarity to the arguments and explores further the conclusions of the qualitative analysis.

Chapter Three provides a descriptive understanding of political development across time in Bolivia from independence onwards and introduces the reader to the major events that shape contemporary politics in Bolivia: The Revolution of 1952, the Neoliberal Era, the Law of Popular Participation, the rise of the indigenous party MAS. The chapter begins with an overview of ethnicity in Bolivia, highlighting the divide between the lowland indigenous groups and the highland indigenous groups. It then transitions into discussing the way democracy was promoted, first along class lines and later along ethnic lines. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the specifics of decentralization in Bolivia and the effect it had on indigenous movements.

Chapter Four analyzes the qualitative data collected, discussing how it was impacted by decentralization. It begins by outlining the two most influential components of the four-part

decentralization reform. It then discusses the success of MAS in relation to other ethnic parties that emerged after decentralization, finding that MAS was successful because of two causal mechanisms: pre-existing levels of organization and because MAS was based in rural municipalities. The subsequent parts of this chapter unpack these two variables in more depth, explaining how they functioned in conjunction with decentralization in Bolivia to mobilize certain indigenous identities.

Chapter Five analyses the results of two different regression models. In these models, my dependent variable is the vote-share MAS received in the 1999 and 2004 municipal elections. I have two independent variables. One is the altitude of municipalities in Bolivia, which is used as a proxy for the type of pre-existing organizational structure in the municipality. The other is the percentage of the population in each municipality that was rural as collected by the Bolivian census. The results of these regressions show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between altitude and ethno-political mobilization. The results also show that there is a non-significant negative relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization. From this, I conclude that more research needs to be done into the relationship between ethno-political mobilization and rurality.

## Literature Review

The answer to the question “*what are the effects of decentralization on ethno-political electoral outcomes, specifically at the local level*” builds on two bodies of existing literature that discuss the effects of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization at the municipal level. In this section, I define and apply theory to the concepts of ethnic mobilization and political decentralization in order to show their inter-relation and significates for participation and ethno-political mobilization. I conclude with several hypotheses built around the theory.

### Theories and definitions of ethnic mobilization

Review of ethnic mobilization literature reveals some preliminary answers as to why ethnicity becomes a mobilizing force. I discuss briefly the definitions of ethnicity and political mobilization before focusing on the way theory applies these definitions to the mobilization of ethnicity through political institutions.

Though there is little agreement on how ethnicity and political mobilization are defined, which makes a comparison of theories difficult, there are two underlying assumptions in all contemporary theory. The first is that ethnicity is, in varying ways, important to people, for various reasons. The second is the universal characterization of political mobilization as a process or set of processes by which political actors encourage participation through political



action. In most theory, there is the assumption that ethnic identity is constructed either before or through mobilization.

Ethnicity is often defined as the composition of groups based on ascriptive difference such as appearance, language, religion, culture or some other indicator of common origin (Horowitz 1985). Early ethnic studies tend to define ethnicity as ‘primordial.’ These scholars (Van Evera 2001, Shills 1957, Van der Berghe 1998) argue that ethnic identities are fixed at birth and have age-old origins. More recently, several differing conceptions of ethnic identity creation have emerged; though they disagree on how specifically ethnicity is created, all center around the idea that ethnicity is constructed. Known as constructivism, this perspective argues that ethnicity can change over time as factors such as divergent histories, religion, availability of resources, colonial narratives, institutions, and political rhetoric exacerbate ethnic cleavages in society, creating or shifting identities and/or starting conflicts (Hale 2008; Chandra 2008; Anderson 1991).

Several different understandings of constructivism subdivide the constructivist category. Broadly speaking, three theories exist. Some scholars emphasize Marxist assumptions about the nature of class and class conflict, arguing that shared class positions, particularly lower class positions, create and reinforce cultural boundaries and ethnic identity (Hechter 1975; Barth 1969). The most recent scholarship on ethnicity bases the creation of ethnicity on socially, or politically constructed boundaries (Chandra 2008; Feron 2003; Brubaker 2006). Chandra (2008) narrows the definition of constructivism even further to argue that constructed ethnicity means that people claim multiple and shifting identities. Others suggest that ethnicity is instrumental (i.e. based on historic’ and ‘symbolic’ memory that is created and exploited by leaders in pragmatic pursuit of interests) (Feron 2003).

Building on this literature, I approach the concept of ethnicity through a constructivist framework. Ethnicity has not always formed cleavages in Bolivia; indeed, the formation of ethnic societal cleavages was not observable until the Chaco War and before was loosely based on class identity (see chapter two). Before the Chaco War, during the post-colonial period, the most prevalent societal cleavage was class (Yashar 1999). The emphasis on class was in part due to two factors, entrenched economic discrimination and relatively fluid ethnic categorizations in much of Andean Latin America. Many people choose to (or choose not to) be ‘indigenous’ or ‘mestizo’ simply by modifying their behavior through language and dress (Yashar 1999). Though it is not clear that ethnicity became any more salient during the 1990s, there was a marked shift in people choosing to use it politically by running as and voting for openly indigenous candidates. In line with contemporary viewpoints, I explore an institutional framework as a skeleton explanation for this, which hypothesizes that ethnic identity was formed (or at least capitalized on) during the 1990s because of institutional changes.

In Bolivia, the most common indicator of identity origin is identification with an indigenous group or community. The Bolivian population is incredibly diverse; there are 37 distinct ethnic groups, with the largest groups being the Aymara, Quechua, Guarani, Chiquitano, and Moxeno (VAIPO 1998). I define a person/community as indigenous if they self-identify as such.<sup>6</sup> Though ethnic cleavages and ethnic identity can be at times categorized strongly by researchers in order to form clear definitions, this is impossible to do when discussing Latin American because ethnic identity is often blurred because of a complicated, colonial past.

---

<sup>6</sup> I call attention to the use of this definition in the following chapters on methodology and analysis.

Though most contemporary literature assumes that ethnicity is constructed, theory less clearly defines when and how ethnicity becomes political. Some scholars argue that ethnic cleavages are formed during politicization while others argue that ethnic cleavages presuppose politicization. Before diving into the literature, a clear definition is important.

Some scholars argue that ethnic political mobilization encompasses more than the field of electoral politics, however, most ethno-political mobilization theory limits the definitions to state-centered mobilization. This is done to clarify the difference between theories on social movements and civil society from theories on ethno-political mobilization.<sup>7</sup> Weber, Hiers, and Flesken (2016) have a particularly clear definition of ethno-political mobilization. They define ethno-political mobilization as broadly state-centered, specifying that “ethnicity must enter the formal state/political arena to count as politicized” (Weber 2016, 3). They condition their definition by stating that while “civil society groups and individuals (i.e. social movements, nongovernmental organizations, media figures) may attempt to politicize ethnicity, their efforts register as politicization...only when they gain attention in the formal political arena” (Weber 2016, 3).

Similar to Weber, I also focus on the formal arena, through representation and participation in formal political action like voting. Though non-traditional political actions like protest and social movements that occurred before the late 1990s in Bolivia certainly had political implications, I do not count these actions as evidence of ethno-political mobilization because they occurred outside the formal political arena. These protests and social movements

---

<sup>7</sup> Since unconventional mobilization methods outside of the electoral arena, such as peaceful protest, violent revolutions, lobbying, strategic litigation, and press conferences can have strong implications for policy, some scholars have included these aspects in definitions of ethno-political mobilization (Vermeersch 2011). Other scholars have focused specifically on the aspects of mass protest and social movements as mobilization processes (Edelman 2001). Though this research is interesting, it is not germane to my research. New measures of participation through the formal political process were created with the enactment of the LPP in 1995, my research looks specifically at the effect this had on mobilization.

are distinct from the emergence of political candidates and parties that emerged in the late 1990s and were very visible in the formal political arena.

I specifically define interaction in the formal political arena as ethnic mobilization behind an (ethnic) political party or individual that seeks political *representation* within governance structures. I focus specifically on mobilization through local governance structures for two reasons. First, I expect that ethno-political mobilization will be most visible at the municipal level because this is the lowest level of government in Bolivia and therefore has the lowest barriers to entry. Second, the creation of local governance structures was a key part of the decentralization reform in 1994.

Ethno-political mobilization requires the satisfaction of two conditions: (1) the social cleavage that separates “the minority group from the majority must be salient and accepted by putative members of the former as dividing the polity into separate groups” (Miodownik 2009). That is to say that there must be group consciousness. (2) Ethno-political mobilization “requires that the members of the minority group accept the linkage between the existence of the social cleavage and the right to some degree of political accommodation derived from that group’s distinctiveness” (Miodownik 2009). This second condition implies that in order for something to become politicized the state must be involved and be a target of action. Implicitly, formal political institutions must play an important role in the creation (or not) of ethnicity.

The only ethno-political mobilization theory in which the role of formal political institutions is explicit is institutional theory which argues that institutions “help determine which ethnic cleavages become politically salient” (Posner 2005, 3). I use this theory to provide justification for my hypotheses, articulated at the end of this chapter.

Institutions determine which ethnic cleavages are salient in three ways. First, by shaping the “repertoires of potentially mobilized ethnic identities that individuals possess,” second by shaping peoples’ incentives for selecting one potentially salient ethnic identity rather than another, and third, by coordinating individuals or individual choice across society so as to produce outcomes at the societal level (Posner 2005, 3). These institutions have the potential to change the decision-making calculus of ethnic populations, shifting group interest away from uncertainty reduction to a fulfillment of self-interest (Hale, 2008; Posner 2005).

Institutional theory assumes that people are purely rational in their decision to associate and identify with ethnic groups.<sup>8</sup> There are both short-term and long-term institutional incentives to maintain ethnic cleavages. In the short-term, access to resources drives action and in the long-term, it is maintaining access to these resources in order to protect and stabilize a societal position that drives action.<sup>9</sup> Institutions do not necessarily create ethnic cleavages, but they incentivize these cleavages to become political.

Some scholars extend institutional theory and argue that political parties both ‘presuppose’ and ‘produce’ ethnic cleavages in society (Horowitz 1985). Political institutions rationally incentivize people to form groups to obtain access to certain rights and resources in order to protect their interests. These groups are often formed easily around a collective identity (ethnicity). Once societal (or ethnic) cleavages have formed in society and ethnicity becomes a coalescing force, a feedback loop is created because obtaining resources or rights is tied to being part of the group. This entrenches these cleavages in society. Particularly in developing democracies, the political parties that are best able to deliver resources and benefits to supporters

---

<sup>8</sup> It may be the case that people have emotional ties to ethnic identity, but in the expressly political context of this work, this level of analysis is not necessary (Posner, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Institutional theory thusly provides a temporally coherent model for the expression of behaviors described by competition theory (a competing theory of ethno-political mobilization).

will profit (K. Chandra 2004). Voters cast their votes for the politicians they believe will be able to deliver the most resources/goods to them. Though I do not limit my definition of ethno-political mobilization to the formation of ethnic political parties, these theories suggest that institutional structure has the capacity to change the incentives of individuals.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, even if ethnic cleavages existed before institutions, these theories warrant that institutions can and do shape the incentives of people.

When looking specifically at Latin America, scholarship suggests that institutions incentivize ethno-political mobilization through electoral changes, like decentralization, facilitated ballot access, and inclusive political structure, that grant legislative representation to small parties.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, new parties are likely to form when there are few institutional barriers (low costs, low threshold requirements) because this allows small parties to gain access to important local and regional offices (Van Cott 2005, Madrid 2012). The general consensus among scholars is that it is highly unlikely that the creation of ethnic parties is traceable to one singular event (Van Cott 2005; Madrid 2012). However, it is important not to treat this finding as inconclusive or as proving an institutional theory incorrect. Other theories are not sufficient in proving why ethnic parties mobilized in the 1990s. Though literature concludes that institutional

---

<sup>10</sup> When discussing ethnic political parties, it is important to note that ethnic parties in Latin America often act differently than ethnic political party scholars expect. Traditional ethnic mobilization scholars argue that ethnic parties must serve the interests of a particular ethnic group only because ethnic parties derive support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups) (Horowitz 1985). Ethnic parties are therefore distinct from ideological parties because they are exclusive and reflective only of the interests of a singular group (K. Chandra 2004). In Latin America however, because of widespread historic disenfranchisement, indigenous voters are a minority of the registered voters. Because of this, many ethnic parties have not appealed to only ethnic individuals. Much support for the MAS party in Bolivia (and other ethnic parties in Latin America) comes from non-Indian individuals who view the ethnic parties as an ‘outsider’ alternative to corrupt, unresponsive politics (Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics* 2005). This is all to say that ethnic political parties in Bolivia might be non-exclusive, but they are still a representative of ethno-political mobilization and are therefore still an ethnic political party.

<sup>11</sup> Scholars have linked the rise of the political parties such as the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC) and the Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik (MUPP) in Ecuador to institutional changes (Van Cott D., 2003).

change is not the only variable that affected the creation of ethnic parties in Bolivia, without new electoral incentives created by institutional restructuring, it would be hard to imagine a similarly high-level of ethno-political mobilization.

In addition to institutional theory, three other theories explain ethno-political mobilization through a constructivist framework: culturalist theory, reactive ethnicity theory, and resource competition theory. Though these theories carry a great deal of weight in the literature, they predominantly do not fit the case of Bolivia. I briefly explain these theories for theoretical context.

The culturalist theory argues that ethnic groups are naturally politically mobilized based on a set of factors, historical, cultural or biological, that make ethnicity a ‘given’ of political or social life (Fearon 2004). The primordial assumptions inherent in this theory is problematic since the presence of many different groups and identities shows that ethnicity is not primordial in Bolivia. Though more recent culturalist literature has taken a less primordial stance and argued that ethnic identity and mobilization is created based on an overpowering and non-rational drive, it is also problematic in the case of Bolivia. This recent literature is basically saying that cultural attributes have such profound impacts on groups that it “becomes relatively easy to engage them in a process of political action or even conflict on the basis of these attributes” (Vermeersch 2011, 3). Even this theory regards socialization processes as the most important aspect of ethnic mobilization, which closely resembles primordialism.

Several general critiques of culturalist theory exist. Namely, scholars have found that culturalist theorists assume that ethnicity is defined by a shared culture, that the culturalist explanation tends to be tautological, and that individuals have more agency than the approach gives them credit for (Vermeersch 2011). In Bolivia, several facts present problems for a

culturalist approach to explaining ethnic mobilization. First, ethnicity has not always been a coalition building force in Bolivia. For much of the colonial and post-colonial period, the coalescing force was class (Yashar 1999). The idea that class has historically been the coalition-building force seems sufficient in proving that the indigenous culture was not inherently a non-rational mobilizing force. Second, it is especially true in Andean countries that ethnicity is somewhat flexible and that individuals have the agency to choose whether or not they will self-identify as indigenous. Culturalism strips them of this agency and therefore is not a good explanation for ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia.

The reactive ethnicity theory argues that ethnic mobilization is a “process prompted by the unequal division of resources along ethnic lines (Vermeersch 2011, 5). Though this theory has been used to describe various regional conflicts, such as the Celtic fringe (Hechter 1975), it does not work in a Latin American context. Historically, there was very little politicization of ethnicity in the form of political parties and movements even though “political and economic benefits have long been allocated along ethnic lines in many countries of the region” (Fearon 2004, 3). Ethnicity did not become politicized, at least in the sense of the formal political arena, in Bolivia until the late 1990s so this explanation does little to explain why this time period would have prompted ethnic mobilization when historically resources were divided along ethnic and class lines and no mobilization occurred. The theory that resource inequality drove ethnic mobilization in Bolivia is further brought into question because the during the late 1990s when ethnicity became politically mobilized, resource distribution became more equitable.

Ethnic competition theory is consistent with general resource mobilization theories in that it argues that mobilization occurs as groups compete for access to resources. It is important to note that this theory is distinct from the theory of reactive ethnicity because it is based on



economic advancement instead of economic deprivation; in other words, the “economic advancement of previously disadvantaged groups can result in an escalation of inter-group conflict” (Vermeersch 2011, 3). The challenge of this approach, however, is that it does not explain “why mobilization takes place along ethnic rather than class, kinship, occupational, or other lines of cleavage” (Olzak 1983, 362). Though this theory could provide a variable that factored into the political mobilization of ethnicity in Bolivia in the late 1990s, it is not sufficient alone in proving it.

In preliminary conclusions, culturalist theory, reactive ethnicity theory, and resource competition theory do not seem to fit the case of Bolivia and do not appear impactful in Bolivia in the late 1990s. Institutional theory appears as the necessary condition to explain ethno-political mobilization. In the next section, I discuss the next set of literature, political decentralization.

### **Institutional decentralization**

Given that institutional theory provides a temporally coherent model for the rise of ethnic politicization in the 1990s in Bolivia, a correlation between this politicization and the massive decentralization reform that occurred in 1994 is plausible. Decentralization theory operates both as a sub-set of institutional theory and as a concept widely studied independently. For the purposes of clarity and brevity, I focus on decentralization theory only as a subset of institutional theory. The key feature of decentralization theory is that it focuses on the local effects of decentralization rather than on the national effects. Decentralization theory has a variety of definitions that depend both on the construction and implementation of the process. I briefly discuss definitional issues.

Decentralization is a broad term that includes a variety of variables. Decentralization reform in some countries is very extensive, while quite limited in other countries. This makes it difficult to define, however it can be broken down into four different variables: deconcentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization (Rondinelli D. 1968). Deconcentration refers to the transfer of power from federal systems to local systems. Delegation refers to the transfer of managerial responsibility for specific functions to groups or organizations that are outside of a traditional bureaucratic structure. Devolution refers to a governmental strengthening of sub-national units of government that are outside of the control of the national government. Finally, privatization is the privatization of state-owned enterprises. Scholars have found that some reforms encompass all four variables, while others only use a combination of two or three.

The LPP can be defined using Rondinelli's four variables. (1) Deconcentration: the LPP transfers spending power from the national government to municipal governments by doubling funding to municipalities, giving them up to 20% of all national tax revenue. Additionally, municipalities were given ownership and responsibility for administration and maintenance of infrastructure. (2) Delegation: the LPP created two non-traditional governing bodies within the municipal system, Grassroots Territorial Organizations (OTBs) and Vigilance Committees (VC). (3) Devolution: the LPP creates 311 municipalities that hold direct elections for a number of local positions that are independent from the national government. (4) Privatization: the LPP did not have direct privatization provisions, however, privatization was a core component of the neoliberal agenda of the 1990s and thus could have impacted ethno-political mobilization.

Two central bodies of theory on decentralization exist: economic outcomes and political outcomes. Conclusions and outcomes have been mixed in both categories; some studies find that

decentralization does increase economic wellbeing or political representation, while others find that decentralization hurts economic wellbeing and makes the political system less representative and efficient. This variation is most likely attributed to definitional problems. Essentially, decentralization is about “the quality of relationships between different tiers of government, something that is difficult to examine and measure over time, particularly when observing state institutions from the ‘outside’” (White 2011, 3). The implication of this is that theories on decentralization are generally *a priori* rationalizations based on plausibility and likelihood. Additionally, variation may be because decentralization varies so widely from country to country that it is difficult to complete accurate intra-country comparative studies.<sup>12</sup>

Decentralization is often justified as a way of promoting economic development. Many political leaders in developing countries also see it as a way of reducing or diminishing inefficiencies in administration and communication, mobilizing support for national development policies at the local level, collecting legitimate information about local and/or regional conditions, or planning and responding to local needs more rapidly (Rondinelli D. 1968). These outcomes have all been theorized to affect ethno-political mobilization.

There is a lot of theory that connects decentralization to increased (or decreased) ethnic mobilization. Some scholars (Treisman 1997; Hale 2000; Horowitz 1985; Gurr 2000; Handgrave 1994) argue that high levels of decentralization create ethnic mobilization because it lowers the entrance barriers to the political arena and gives groups control over their own political, social and economic affairs. It also allows local politicians to demand larger shares of power and reinforces regionally-based ethnic identity.

---

<sup>12</sup> Focusing on one country (as is the case of my research), minimizes definitional problems by avoiding “problems of data comparability and controls for external shocks, political regime, institutions, and other exogenous factors” (Faguet, Decentralization and Local Governance in Bolivia: An overview from the bottom up 2003, 2).

However, other scholars (Tesbelis 1999, Stepan 1990, Kaufman 1996) find that decentralization decreases ethnic political mobilization because groups feel like their voices are already being heard when there are local-level elected officials. This assumes that political institutions can (1) hear and address needs and (2) can articulate effective and immediate solutions to community problems. The ability to fulfill these assumptions increases the likelihood of individual satisfaction with the state and thusly presents little need to form a separate party or political faction, or incentive to create a new societal cleavage.

Most recently, two different studies have found that the effect of decentralization reform on ethnic political mobilization is more nuanced. One study finds that decentralization increases the strength of regional parties because it provides more opportunities to win elections, representation, and influence (Brancati 2006). However, the degree to which it increases the strength of regional parties varies on the specific characteristics of the country in which the decentralization occurs (Brancati 2006). Countries that have strong regional party systems in place and majority and plurality systems are more likely to devolve into ethnic conflict post-decentralization.

Experimental models have shown that high levels of decentralization decrease ethnic mobilization and that low to moderate levels of decentralization increase ethnic mobilization (Miodownik 2009). This correlation is explained by the relationship between ethnic frustration and political institutions; “minority control of political institutions affects the dynamic of minority identity ascription and the realization or frustration of seeking more complete dominance of the regional ideational space” (Miodownik 2009, 743). Therefore, it may be the case that decentralization positively affects ethno-political mobilization based on conditions and variables that vary depending on the context of the country the reform is implemented in.

These theories allow me to hypothesize the following:

*H<sub>0</sub>: Decentralization reform has no effect on ethno-political mobilization.*

*H<sub>1</sub>: Decentralization reform has positive effects on ethno-political mobilization.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Decentralization reform has negative effects on ethno-political mobilization*

If decentralization did trigger ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia, I expect that in Bolivian municipalities with higher percentages of self-identifying indigenous peoples there will be higher rates of ethno-political mobilization (indigenous representation) because ethnicity is a strong coalition building force and barriers to entry for political parties are lower. This would result in more indigenous candidates, elected officials, political parties, and/ or policy catering to indigenous interests. It should be noted though, that it is unlikely that these effects would be seen immediately. Even with lowered barriers, political representation takes time.

If decentralization had a negative effect on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia, I expect that even in heavily indigenous areas, regional, geographic, and/or class interests will align with the needs and wants of the indigenous community. I also expect that if decentralization had a negative effect on ethno-political mobilization there would be fewer indigenous social movements and protests after 1994.

To draw my final hypothesis, I analyze a broader set of decentralization literature. I outline this literature briefly. Decentralization has been linked to a number of positive outcomes. Some studies have found that decentralization reduces corruption, responds to citizen's interests better, and results in a more efficient delivery of public services (White 2011, 4). Studies that typically conclude these outcomes generally study decentralization reforms that have all four variables that comprise decentralization.

Other studies have found that decentralization is related to negative outcomes such as consistent levels of corruption, destabilization (specifically when lower levels of government are expected to respond to the needs of ethnically or culturally heterogeneous populations), inefficiencies within government, slower economic growth, and unimproved public service delivery (White 2011, 4). These conclusions are usually drawn from specific case studies of decentralization reforms and are not argued to be generalizable.

Decentralization scholars have also looked at the effect of political decentralization on political parties, including ethnic parties. Some scholars find that the strength of political parties is a causal mechanism that affects the impact decentralization has on ethno-political mobilization and broader outcomes. Hopkins provides a preliminary study in which he concludes that decentralization opens up space for new parties that often form around social cleavages (Hopkin 2003).

This theory allows me to hypothesize the following:

*H3: Decentralization reform leads to increased political representation of indigenous peoples in local elected offices through indigenous political parties.*

If decentralization makes it easier to form political parties, I expect to see the integration of indigenous social movements into the formal political system through the creation of indigenous political parties.

## **Conclusion**

Literature that discusses the relationship between ethno-political mobilization and decentralization disagrees; some scholars think that there is a positive relationship between increased decentralization and increased ethno-political mobilization. Others think that decentralization has a negative relationship with ethno-political mobilization. A third group of

scholars concludes that a relationship between decentralization and ethno-political mobilization exists, but only when certain causal mechanisms are present. Though these divergent findings suggest that more needs to be done to explore this relationship, all of these theories assume that ethnicity was constructed and that it can be shaped by political institutions and reform. In the remainder of this thesis, I use these theories as a framework to test the effect of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia.

If ethno-political mobilization occurred in Bolivia after decentralization, I expect to see increased participation in the formal political arena based on self-identifying indigeneity after the LPP in 1994. If there is no political mobilization, or if mobilization is based on class cleavages instead of ethnic cleavages, I expect to conclude that decentralization did not impact (or had a negative impact on) ethno-political mobilization. Additionally, I use qualitative data, described in chapter four, to identify causal mechanisms that may impact the relationship between ethno-political mobilization and decentralization.

## 2

### **Discussion of Methodological Approaches and Reflections**

There is a schism in the political science discipline between those scholars who employ quantitative approaches and those who employ qualitative approaches. However, it has been increasingly recognized that there are benefits to using both approaches in conjunction to solve for the limitations that relying on only one approach causes (Ayoub 2014; Collier 2004). As such, I employ a multi-method research design to understand the way decentralization affects ethno-political mobilization and participation. Using a sequential exploratory research design, I start “by qualitatively exploring a topic before building to a second, quantitative phase” (Creswell 2011, 86). The goal is to “generalize qualitative findings based on... the first phase to a larger sample gathered during the second [quantitative] phase” (Creswell 2011, 86). I began my research process by conducting fieldwork in Bolivia and then tested two causal mechanisms that emerged from my fieldwork through quantitative regression analyses that compare data from all 314 Bolivian municipalities. I explain the data collection and analysis process for each of these methods below.

#### **Qualitative methods**

Data for this project was collected during two weeks of fieldwork in Bolivia from December 10<sup>th</sup> to December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016. The field research was multi-sited and included three municipalities in two different districts. Within the district of Cochabamba, I visited the municipalities of Cochabamba and Cliza. Within the district of Santa Cruz, I visited the municipality of Santa Cruz.



These sites were selected for variation based on the majority ethnic groups that resided in each, Cochabamba is home to primarily highland indigenous groups while Santa Cruz has primarily lowland indigenous groups. Additional consideration was given to the connections I had and the availability of researchers at each site due to the brevity of the field work trip.

While collecting data in Bolivia, I followed the guidelines outlined by Grant McCracken (1998) in the book *The Long Interview* and by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) in their book *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. I detail my field note process below:

Throughout my fieldwork process I maintained connected, immersed, and organized as I gathered data through both observations and interviews. I kept daily handwritten, detailed field notes on general trends and reoccurring themes I identified throughout my interviews and visual descriptions of the communities I visited. I produced digital copies of these notes every night and organized my observations by topic. This helped me identify codes for interview analysis and help me when I was writing up my results. In addition to daily field notes, I maintained a field log which contained the following logistical information: date, location, people I interviewed, and a personal reflection/ summary of the day's events.

After every interview, I typed up a brief based on the handwritten notes I took during the interview and my memory of the conversation. Though I attempted to do this immediately after each interview at times this was difficult; however, I did type up a brief of each interview within 24 hours of the interview occurring. In addition to my notes, an audio recording of each interview was taken and later transcribed.<sup>13</sup> I stored all interview notes, interviewee names and contact information in a password protected document in an unmarked folder on my computer.

---

<sup>13</sup> I only recorded the interview if the interviewee consented into being recorded.

I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with academics, individuals involved (currently or previously) at the national government level, and individuals involved (currently or previously) at the municipal governmental level. A full list of respondents and interview dates are given in Appendix A 2.1.<sup>14</sup> I began my fieldwork by selecting and interviewing academics who I had connections to. I set up these interviews before I left for Bolivia by using connections I had with SIT<sup>15</sup> and with other scholars in the U.S. I furthered my fieldwork by using snowball sampling techniques (Thompson 2002). During my fieldwork trip, I was able to identify a number of individuals who had either direct involvement in the Bolivian government or had a strong academic connection to the decentralization process in Bolivia. I approached these individuals and requested interviews while I was in Bolivia. I discuss the interview process below.

At the start of each interview, I provided respondents with an IRB-approved consent form that outlined the purpose of the interview, my contact information, and asked if the participant wanted their name to be kept confidential. Additional questions asked if the participant minded if the interview was recorded and if the researcher could take notes. The signed original copy was kept with my fieldwork notes. In addition to the consent form, I also gave participants a Bates College pen as a token of appreciation. During the interview, I took notes as well as recorded the interviews with an audio recording device. After the interview, I typed up my brief; as discussed above.

In addition, I asked interviewees to complete a short demographic survey. The survey collected information on the following variables: age, education level, ethnic identity, and

---

<sup>14</sup> The real names of the interviewees are used because every participant gave IRB approved consent for their name to be used in the written research.

<sup>15</sup> SIT is a study abroad program that I participated in the Spring of 2016.

political party affiliation. The response for political party affiliation was self-reported. The other questions provided answer choices. The majority of my interviewees were between the ages of forty and sixty. All of them identified ethnically as either Quechua or as no ethnic group (most often they mentioned they identified as mestizo). Interestingly, most of them chose not to self-identify with a political party, even those who had been intimately involved in politics at the national level. This is probably attributable to a societal hesitance to disclose this type of information. The survey is shown in Appendix A 2.2. and the full results are displayed in Appendix A 2.3.

The interview questions (available in English in Appendix A 2.4 and in Spanish in Appendix A 2.5) were written based on major themes identified in the literature surrounding ethnic mobilization and decentralization. Though there was a set of interview questions, interviews were semi-structured to allow for natural response (Ayoub 2014). Though the initial interviews followed the interview questionnaire closely, later interviews deviated quite significantly based on natural conversation and newly identified trends and themes based on previous interviews.

The recorded audio time of interviews totals over 700 minutes. A Spanish language graduate student from New Mexico State University who is a native Spanish speaker and is trained in transcription transcribed the audio. In my analysis of the interviews, I referenced both the audio files and the transcribed text.

I coded interview responses by hand. I used a two-step process of deductive and inductive coding techniques. A set of deductive codes were established based on the analytic constructs pulled from the literature review in chapter one. These codes mostly focus on the four types of decentralization defined by Rondinelli (1968) and their role in political society, as well

as the role of institutions in shaping identity according to institutional theory. The interview questions also resemble these analytic constructs and therefore informed my list of deductive coding terms. A set of inductive codes were established based on reoccurring themes in field work briefs, interview notes and a preliminary coding of the interviews. These codes mostly focus on pre-existing organizations, rurality, and formal political outcomes. The final codebook is available in Appendix A 2.6.

As a researcher, my status as an insider/outsider was dependent on several factors. In the Spring of 2016, I lived in the city of Cochabamba from February through May as a participant of the study abroad program SIT Bolivia. During these months, I met several of the people I later interviewed when I returned for my fieldwork trip in December of 2016. This program helped me form connections with the community that later affected my relationship with the community during my field work. However, even though I was familiar with Bolivian culture and the local culture of Cochabamba, my position as an outsider during my field work trip is important to note. Since I did not observe or participate in any meetings or political or social events, I remained a removed researcher from the political situation.<sup>16</sup>

It is possible that my position as an outsider to the community affected the interview responses that I received. This may have made some individuals less likely to open up to me about the details of intra-community relationships. Further, there was an observable difference between the interviews I had with academics and the interviews I had with community members involved in government at the municipal level. The community members I interviewed were less accustomed to being interviewed and thus less willing to open up about problems and challenges

---

<sup>16</sup> Though observing community and organizational meetings and events would have benefited my research, because my fieldwork trip was close to Christmas, there was not much happening. Unfortunately, this was the only time I could visit Bolivia on a field work trip.

the community was facing to outsiders. For example, one official was concerned that I would think the municipality he was associated with was corrupt and spent time in each of his responses to my questions explaining how transparent and accountable the municipal government was. I do not believe that this negatively affected the responses I collected, however, it did change the way the interviewees interacted with me during the interview

Further, my identity as a white, female student from a well-connected College in the United States certainly marked my interactions with the respondents. The connections I gained from being affiliated with Bates College and the SIT study abroad program provided me a level of access that otherwise may not have been available to me. I found that people were generally very willing and excited to talk to me and learn more about my institution and my project.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that an integral part of my project is a range of identities, cultures, and communities, none of which I am part. It is easy as a white citizen of the United States to be privileged enough to not recognize the important role these identities play in everyday life. In Bolivia, though indigenous identity has historically been potent, it has not always been something celebrated. Historically, members of indigenous communities faced societal discrimination. Even now, with Evo Morales in power, some indigenous cultures are not respected. This is most evident in the lowlands fight for protection of the TPNIS, an indigenous territory that is threatened by the construction of a highway. As a researcher, it can be easy to forget that the research you are collecting is everyday life for the people living in the communities. The Law of Popular Participation is just one event in a long political struggle for indigenous representation and respect. This struggle was highlighted in several interview responses I collected. Importantly, the struggle of indigenous groups to gain respect from the government is not over. In fact, several interview responses talked about how some indigenous

municipalities are now seeking full autonomy from the national government. In reflection, I would like to thank the people who I interviewed for talking to me about these events and sharing their personal opinions.

### **Quantitative methods**

In line with a sequential exploratory research design, I use my qualitative analysis as an opportunity for theory building. In my qualitative analysis, I identify two causal mechanisms that seem to suggest ethno-political mobilization occurred to a greater extent after decentralization when these mechanisms were present. I then use statistical analysis to test these two mechanisms. I use OLS to measure the impact of altitude, rurality, and control variables on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia after the LPP was enacted. I pull on a dataset that contains data collected between 1997 and 2006, which include variables that describe levels of political participation, demographic data, and socio-economic data for all 314 municipalities in Bolivia. I use this data to understand (by focusing on the 1999 and 2004 municipal elections) the relationship between pre-existing levels of organization and ethno-political mobilization, and the relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization. The majority of this dataset was compiled by Carew Boulding, from Bolivian census data that is no longer available (Boulding 2015). A few variables, such as altitude and population from 2001, were compiled by the author using publicly available information. I detail my qualitative process further in chapter five.

# 3

## **The Path to Decolonization: A Short Political History of Bolivia**

*The 500 years of Indian resistance have not been in vain. From 500 years of resistance we pass to another 500 years in power.*

- Evo Morales, at his inaugural speech at Congress in La Paz, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006. <sup>17</sup>

Bolivia has always been one of the most diverse countries in the Americas. Its vast cultural, geographic, and ethnic diversity has often resulted in social strife that has resulted in historical trends of extreme levels of poverty, high economic and social inequality, and political instability. In this chapter, I analyze Bolivia's historical context in order to make two central arguments. First, I argue that though ethnic cleavages have not always been salient in Bolivia, class cleavages were insufficient in fighting for the interests and needs of the indigenous populations which eventually led to the creation of ethnic schisms. Second, I argue that the historic relationship between indigenous groups and the centralized system of government was one of disenfranchisement. This relationship changed after decentralization. Before delving into the history that provides the evidence for these arguments, I briefly outline the ethnic context of Bolivia.

### **Ethnic background**

At the time of independence from Spain in 1825, Bolivia was the most predominantly indigenous of the American countries with seventy-three percent of the population categorized as

---

<sup>17</sup> Cited in BBC (BBC).

indigenous and the most socially and ethnically stratified (Van Cott 1998). Today, indigenous peoples comprise forty-one percent of the total population and make up significant majorities in many departmental electoral districts (Censo National de Poblacion y Vivienda 2013). In the highland departments of La Paz, Oruro, Potosi, as well as in the tropical departments of Cochabamba and Chuquisaca (see Map 3.1), indigenous identifying individuals make up a majority of the population (Van Cott, Constitution-Making and Democratic Transformation 1998). Though these populations were once primarily rural, today a majority of Indians live in Urban areas and migrant neighborhoods, primarily in the areas of El Alto, La Paz, and Cochabamba.

The indigenous population is not a monolithic group. Within the indigenous categorization, there are thirty-seven distinct ethnic groups in Bolivia, as classified by the government. The largest of these groups are the Quechua and Aymara. Both groups are predominantly concentrated in the western highland districts of La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosi, and Oruro. The remaining groups live primarily in the eastern lowland departments of Santa Cruz and Beni. The largest of these lowland groups are the Guarani, Chiquitano, and Moxeno (VAIPO 1998).

Cultural and linguistic cleavages exist between many of the indigenous groups. Internal fragmentation and conflict within the indigenous population have marked Bolivian history, and several cleavages have resurfaced repeatedly. Among the highland indigenous groups, there is a small rivalry between the Aymara and Quechua because the Aymara have “led the *campesino* movement, sometimes espousing an exclusionary Aymara ethno-nationalism, while the Quechua are more numerous but less politically organized and ethno-nationalist” (Van Cott 1998, 52).<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> The *campesino* movement refers to subsistence peasant farmers.



Among the lowlands groups, divisions between the less dominant and smaller indigenous groups, and the larger, dominant Guarani and Chiquitano groups are also prominent (Van Cott 1998).<sup>19</sup>

However, one of the most notable divides is the geographic lines between the highland and lowland Indians. Van Cott finds that “markedly different modes of economic and social organization and distinct histories of relations with political parties and the state” between the two geographically distinct groups has discouraged collaboration and resulted in evolution along separate tracks (Van Cott 1998, 52).

### **A Brief History**

This section breaks Bolivian history into three chronological sections: sixteenth century to the 1980s, 1982 to 1994, and 1994 to the contemporary era. In the first section, I highlight the important role of the Chaco War, which helped mobilize the citizens of Bolivia and led to the Revolution of 1952 and the creation of strong class and ethnicity-based organizations including unions. In the second section, I explain the political climate immediately preceding the passage of the LPP in 1994 and unpack the details of the reform. In the final section, I discuss broad outcomes that occurred after the LPP was implemented. These outcomes will be discussed in more nuance and detail in chapters four and five.

### *Post-independence and the Chaco War*

Starting with the colonization of Bolivian territory in the mid-sixteenth century, a strong history of indigenous exclusion from political representation has defined the political system.

---

<sup>19</sup> Smaller lowland indigenous groups include the: Araona, Ayoreo, Baure, Canichana, Cavineno, Cayubaba, Chacobo, Chiman, Chiriguano, Ese Ejja, Guarasugwe, Guarayo, Itonama, Joaquiniano, Lecos, Machineri, Maropa, More, Mosete, Movima, Moxeno, Nahua, Pacahuara, Siriono, Tacana, Toromona, Yaminahua, Yuqui, Yuracere.

The arrival of Spanish conquistadores brought a new elitist social, economic and political order known as the *encomienda* system, which explicitly enslaved indigenous peoples through a labor system that granted colonizers a number of indigenous peoples to use for labor/wealth. The *encomienda* system was created to put into place control and regulation of native populations

Though Bolivia gained independence after the War for Independence (1809-1825), exclusion and disenfranchisement continued to limit indigenous rights. The first constitution of Bolivia, signed into effect in 1825 contained a qualified vote clause that limited access to citizenship to those who were literate and property owning men (Shoaei 2012). Playing on a massively unequal economic society and using institutional rules to their favor, the white and *mestizo*<sup>20</sup> classes quickly took political power.

Political instability marked the post-independence era as rival *caudillos* (military and/or political leaders and elites) vied for political power, resulting in numerous coups and countercoups (Klein 2003). One result of this instability was a limited economy that drew heavily on taxes paid by the indigenous population to the government (Klein 2003). The War of the Pacific (1879-1883) marked the first major turning point in Bolivian political history after independence. Bolivia became landlocked, losing its access to the sea to Chile. Additionally, as Klein finds, the war “destroyed the power of the army and gave the civilian politicians the justification they needed for finally and effectively bringing the national political structure into some kind of coherent relationship with the changing nature of the export and urban economies” (Klein 2003, 143). This changed the political structure, ending *caudillo* rule and initiating a modern parliamentary structure that was dominated by civilians (though this civilian control was still limited based on class and indigeneity) (Klein 2003, 143).

---

<sup>20</sup> Mestizo refers to those of mixed race, specifically the offspring of Spanish colonizers with members of the native population.

Following were fifty years of relative political stability, during which the Bolivian economy began to rise, predominantly through the production and mining of tin and silver. Since these industries were controlled by elites within Bolivian society, the political parties (the Conservative Party, Liberal Party, and Republican Party) represented the views of these elites and primarily represented their interests of resource extraction at the expense of the indigenous population and their land.

In the early 1900s, geopolitical tensions flared again, this time over the Chaco region, the border area between Paraguay and Bolivia which had been contested since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, both countries militarized the border and eventually, the Chaco War (1932-1953) ensued (Morales 2003). Bolivia suffered a devastating military defeat, which was widely attributed to the desertion of the Bolivian military. The Bolivian military at the time operated under a draft, meaning it was predominantly untrained highland Indians who were forced to fight. The Indians were not used to the harsh climate and terrain of the Chaco and were not equipped to deal with it. The indigenous veterans who survived and returned from war were mobilized around a shared hardship—the war had, as Morales finds, “exposed the injustices of the old system and the corruption of the ruling class” (Morales 2003, 108).

Following the Chaco War, Bolivia changed from being one of the “least mobilized societies in Latin America in terms of radical ideology and union organizing to one of the most advanced” (Klein 2003, 176). Following the war, several new political parties formed around class divisions, including the centrist, middle-class dominated Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MRN), the leftist, Marxista Partido de la Izquierda (PIR), and the working-class, radical leftist Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) (Morales 1992). Additionally, a climate for the development of radical, powerful, and independent labor unions was created (Klein 2003).

Though one might expect that in this intense era of mobilization around ethnicity would emerge as a coalition-building force and as a schism, instead divisions were primarily based on class and only secondarily based on ethnicity. There was very little ethnic mobilization at this point in Bolivian history.

Out of the newly formed parties, the MRN became the most powerful, attracting support from many popular sectors and gaining power as older parties lost the support of the upper and the middle classes. As indigenous communities and individuals became more involved and organized (along class lines), they allied with other classes of society, expressing discontent with the current corrupt political order. This mass discontent weakened the state structure and after President General Urriolagoitia refused to step down during the election of 1951, the Revolution of 1952 occurred, led by President Paz Estenssoro (who had won 51% of the vote in the 1951 election), and Hernan Siles Suazo. Estenssoro won on a mandate to change the political structure to increase inclusivity of the civilian population and to fulfill this mandate President Paz Estenssoro changed the constitution in four important ways after he gained power following the Revolution. First, he passed universal suffrage which required every citizen to vote, extending this requirement to indigenous populations.<sup>21</sup> Second, he nationalized the mining industry. Third, he implemented education reforms which made primary school mandatory and accessible, and fourth, he implemented land redistribution reforms (Shoaei 2012, 18).

Despite gaining the right to vote and land from the Revolution, indigenous populations did not have an improved relationship with the *mestizo* and Spanish citizens of Bolivia. Ethnic discrimination was perpetuated by many sectors and classes of society, including the government, and the suffering of populations based on indigeneity was widespread. This may be

---

<sup>21</sup> Since much of Bolivian society was illiterate, the President assigned each political party a color and ballots were cast based on color instead of written name.

one explanation for why many ethnic cleavages formed in the 1980s and 1990s. Though the Revolution of 1952 did not result in the creation of ethnic political participation, it is important insofar as it shows that organization around class divisions was insufficient in fighting for the interests and needs of the indigenous populations.

The sentiment of the Revolution of 1952 only lasted for a short period, and an era of military rule defined the subsequent period until democratization in the early 1980s. During this time, indigenous communities, peasants, students and political parties were continuously repressed in order to maintain the welfare of the ruling military dictator (Morales, *A Brief History of Bolivia* 2003). Mass protests based ethnic and class schisms became a way of fighting back against the ruling military, and radical parties were formed including the Katarista party. The Katarista party was an extreme Aymara nationalist party that advocated for violence against white citizens of Bolivia. However, although this party was an Aymara-based ethnic party, it did not gain traction even within the Aymara population. Madrid attributes this to the “intense Aymara nationalism that alienated not only whites and *mestizos* but also Quechuas and even many Aymaras” (Madrid, *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America* 2012, 160). Though at first glance the Kararista party seems to suggest that ethnicity was, in fact, a politically mobilizing force (at this point in Bolivian history), its lack of successes even within the ethnic group it was appealing to shows that there was little incentive for voters to align with ethnic identity. Instead, even though there was social mobilization around ethnicity, voters still chose to vote along class lines.

Interestingly, and perhaps correlated to the non-emergence of politicized ethnic cleavages, government structure during this era was incredibly monolithic. Though there was a political impetus to open up the political sphere, local governance was never even a considered reform. Instead of relying on the government, miners, laborers, indigenous peasants, public servants, and

professionals formed powerful hierarchical unions. These unions were promoted by successive governments throughout the 1950s and coupled with trends of Import Substitutional Industrialization and Developmentalism, and repeated government overthrows by the military the establishment of legal and political instruments of local governance was discouraged (Faguet, 2003). As a result, local government in Bolivia was an honorary and ceremonial institution that lacked administrative capacity, if it even existed at all.

By the early 1980s, Bolivia had become incredibly socially organized along class lines, specifically through powerful unions that dominated the local cities and towns. These unions played an important role in communities as advocates with a connection to the monolithic national government. However, as the era of neoliberalism began, many indigenous communities, in particular, were affected by the privatization and pro-capitalism policies that were promoted by the government. This, along with decentralization reform shaped the political context in which political participation began to shift to include ethnic identity.

### *Neoliberalism and decentralization*

In 1982, a military junta handed power to the elected Hernan Siles Zuazo, a civilian president from the MNR party. However, one year before his term was to end, he was forced to resign because of intense hyperinflation, economic collapse, and problems of political legitimacy. His successors, beginning with Paz Estenssoro, mark the start of the neoliberal era, known for globalization, deregulation, free-market principals, and privatization.

Jamie Paz Zamora, governing from 1989 to 1993, from the center party MIR (*Movimineto De Izquierda Revolucionaria*) was the first president during this era to attempt to decentralize the highly centralized governmental system. Echoing previous decades, when decentralization was

never considered as a political reform because of a strong national government and unions, Zamora's attempt at decentralization was unsuccessful since it was blocked by both unions and appointed departmental authorities who felt their power was threatened by the idea of decentralized governmental (Lalander 2003, 67). Even though Zamora failed, the idea of decentralization had been planted and it did not disappear from political discourse. Eventually, the MRN began to campaign for decentralization, forming a coalition with several political parties and the Bolivian Confederation of Private Entrepreneurs, and writing a constitutional reform to decentralize the government (Lalander 2003, 68).

The MRN party won the 1993 election and Gonzalo Sanchez Lozada assumed the presidency. His electoral platform was called *Plan de Todos* (Plan for Everyone) and included several pillars: attracting investment, creating jobs, ensuring economic stability, improving health and education, encouraging popular participation, decentralizing the government, and combating corruption (Gamarra 1997, 385). This platform, along with the appointment of Victor Hugo Vardenas (from the feeble MRTKL-Katarista movement) as Vice President was an appeal to the indigenous communities, who had voiced dissatisfaction with the neoliberal governance structure during a massive demonstration from the lowlands to La Paz, known as the "March for Territory and Dignity." This demonstration marks a change in cleavages within Bolivia from predominantly class based cleavages to ethnic cleavages and is a particularly strong example of the growing power of lowland indigenous social movements within the country during the 1980s and 1990s.

Leading up to the "March for Territory and Dignity," the ethnic population became increasingly mobilized in response to neoliberal policies. Though indigenous discontent with social and governmental treatment and discrimination had been present since the beginning of

colonization and throughout the *encomienda* system, ethnic strains became full schisms during the neoliberal era. The Bolivian indigenous movement constituted itself mostly against neoliberal policies that were connected to the extreme racist discrimination that indigenous peoples faced. Indigenous communities, particularly in the lowlands, viewed the neoliberal policy promoted by the government as support for the historic exploitation of indigenous land and condemnation of a traditional, communitarian way of life. Protest and resistance, such as the March for Territory and Dignity, mark the rejection of neoliberal policies by these communities based on their adverse effects on indigenous culture and economic wellbeing (Shoaei 2012, 29).

It was in this climate of societal discontent and division that the Lozada administration enacted the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) and the Law of Administrative Decentralization (LDA), creating a decentralized State. Though scholars generally agreed that decentralization benefits the poor and disenfranchised, in Bolivia these populations had no influence on the formulation of decentralization reforms. Why then was a massive decentralization reform passed?

Different theories on why the Lozada government implemented decentralization reform attempt to answer this question. Some scholars argue that decentralization reform was enacted to improve the quality of democracy in Bolivia and to assert the presence of the Bolivian state through new means. The goals of political or fiscal administrative efficiency were secondary (Grey-Molina 2001). Other scholars, however, believe that decentralization was a way of consolidating reforms and power in the early 1990s by transferring responsibility from the federal government to the local government, thus weakening (or even breaking) the powerful unions that were linked with popular mobilization against the State around both ethnic and class lines (Khol 2002). More in line with these latter theories is the idea that the national government



hoped that the creation of local government would pass the social discontent with infrastructure to actors beyond the national government, like the local government.

Before delving into the nuances of the decentralization reform, it is helpful to understand the structure of the Bolivian government. Bolivia has four separate and independent branches: the executive, legislative, judicial, and electoral. On the national level, a universally elected President (Chief of State) and Vice-President serve five-year terms for up to two consecutive terms.<sup>22</sup> The President presides over a large bureaucracy, including a Presidential Cabinet that is directly appointed by the President. The Vice-President presides over the Plurinational Legislative Assembly that has both a lower and upper chamber and is responsible for approving and sanctioning laws. The Upper House, the Chamber of Senators, has 36 members (4 per district) that are all elected directly. The Lower House, the Chamber of Deputies, has 130 members, half of whom are elected by direct vote and half of whom are elected by a system that resembles a proportional representation system.<sup>23</sup> Each of Bolivia's nine departments has an autonomous departmental government. Governors are elected directly by mandatory vote and work with Department Assemblies that have deliberative, administrative, and legislative powers. Many of these governmental structures and practices are contemporary and evolved during the 1990s and 2000s.

Though Bolivia currently has autonomous municipal districts, prior to 1994 most areas outside of big urban centers had no form of local governance. This lack of governmental representation was compounded by departmental governments that mostly ignored rural areas.

---

<sup>22</sup> Evo Morales (currently serving his second term which will end in 2019), proposed a Constitutional Amendment in 2016 to allow him to run for a third term. Though it did not pass in referendum, President Morales has stated that he plans to try to hold another referendum. If this referendum passes, the constitution will be changed, allowing him to run for a third consecutive term.

<sup>23</sup> The 2009 Constitution creates special deputies for indigenous settlements.

However, the Law of Popular Participation shifted the rule from nationalized governance to decentralized governance. The Bolivian government thinks of the LPP, passed on April 21, 1994, as economic, political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization. It divides Bolivian territory along municipal lines, placing locally-elected governments in control of infrastructure and development. Governmental funds are given to municipalities to fulfill new budgetary needs. Within each municipal government, there is a mayor (*alcalde*) and a municipal council (*Consejo Municipal*) which is made up of between five and eleven community members, dependent on the population (Altman 2003).

In each municipality, a mayor and a municipal council are elected directly by the citizens of the municipality.<sup>24</sup> Local elections function on concepts of proportional representation and voters choose between party lists. In order to become mayor, you must be the selected candidate for your party, and your party must receive a majority of the total votes in the municipality (Altman 2003, 75).<sup>25</sup> If this is not attained, as is usually the case, the municipal council elects a mayor from among its members (Altman 2003). To be nominated as a candidate for the municipal council, candidates must also run as part of a political party; seats for the council are distributed based on the proportion of votes a party receives (Altman 2003, 75).<sup>26</sup>

Within the municipality, there are cantons where Grassroots Territorial Organizations (*Organizaciones Territoriales de Base*, OTBs) and Vigilance Committees (*Comité de Vigilancia*, CVs) are based. Each canton nominates one person to the CV, which acts as a check on the municipal council and mayor. VCs oversee “municipal expenditures and budgets, and also

---

<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed understanding of municipal governments and their role, see pages 8 and 9.

<sup>25</sup> The requirement that candidates be part of a national political party was later changed by a reform in the 2000s. Candidates can now be part of a citizen group instead of a nationally registered party.

<sup>26</sup> Similar to mayors, councilors also no longer must belong to a political party to run and can now be part of a citizen group.

review and approve the local budget and annual action plan, and proposes new projects” (Altman 2003). OTBs include neighborhood organizations (both urban *barrios* and rural communities), indigenous organizations, and campesino unions. Between 1994 and 1997, the government registered almost 15,000 OTBs, which were given the responsibility of “creating community development plans, ensuring local oversight of projects, and organizing community labor for the construction and maintenance of public works” (Kohl 2003, 156). Given the potential positions of power that OTBs can occupy in communities, there can only be one OTB per canton, and the OTB can only elect one member to the municipal council (Altman 2003).

The exact size and level of involvement of OTBs vary widely: rural OTBs can be very small, with a few as 60 members, while urban OTBs can have as many as three thousand members (Kohl 2003). It should not be assumed, however, that the bigger the OTB, the larger the impact. While large OTBs can organize demonstrations or protests, smaller OTBs advocate for the everyday needs rural community members, who participate actively in accordance with social pressure to comply with the obligations of membership (Kohl 2003).<sup>27</sup>

The structure of the LPP is broken down into four major components (see table 3.1). The contrast in local governance before the pre-LPP era and after the post-LPP era is immense. Before the passage of the LPP, one of the most centralized governments in South America was in place. After reform, local governments were not only created but also elected and held accountable. As a result, “local voters sprang into being throughout the land” (Faguet, Decentralization and Local Government in Bolivia, 2003). The Laws of Decentralized Administration (1995) and of Municipalities (1999) followed soon after. Though less

---

<sup>27</sup> This dynamic between OTBs and the organization of demonstration and mass protests is interesting. It is evidence of the connection between the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic social movements. Through OTBs, formal political action can supplant movement activity.

comprehensive than the LPP, these laws further “defined the municipal mandate and located it in a broader governmental architecture” (Faguet 2012, 18).

### *Outcomes following decentralization*

Following the passage of decentralization reforms in the mid-1990s, indigenous movements that were mobilized during the Chaco War and neoliberal era became politicized and entered the formal political arena.<sup>28</sup> The *cocalero* movement quickly became the most prominent and in the late 1990s formed a political party. Formed initially in response to neoliberal policies that advocated for the elimination of the coca plant, the *cocalero* movement soon began to advocate for indigenous interests that were tangential to coca production, such as labor equality and ethnic recognition, building off of the powerful unions.<sup>29</sup>

Though the *cocalero* movement began as protests, it soon began to carry over into the political system. By the end of the 1990s, the ASP/MAS (Asamblea de la Soberanía de los Pueblos) political party was entering and winning local and national elections.<sup>30</sup> The movements started to gain widespread momentum as the only viable alternative to the neoliberal government. MAS became “an attractive option to the rest of the indigenous movement and also the urban middle classes affected by the same [neoliberal] policies (Shoaei 2012, 37). Within this movement, Evo Morales quickly rose as a key organizer of both the social movement and as a politician within the political party. In 1997, he was elected to the national lower house of the

---

<sup>28</sup> Though political parties entered the formal political arena, this did not limit or reduce their presence as a social movement. Even currently, indigenous social movements are strong advocates for reform and equality in society through mass mobilization through marches, strikes, and other tools of protest.

<sup>29</sup> Coca is a plant that plays an important cultural, social, and economic role in medium-altitude (*Chapare*) Andean indigenous culture (primarily Quechua and Aymara). However, because coca is an ingredient in the production of cocaine, its predominance in Bolivia has been constantly challenged by both the Bolivian government (in the neoliberal era) and the United States.

<sup>30</sup> The ASP eventually chose to adopt the name of a leftist party, Movimiento al Socialismo, or MAS.

legislature. He later ran for president in 2002, losing only narrowly to Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. In 2005, Morales ran for president again, easily winning with over 50% of the popular vote.

Interestingly, the relationship between indigenous social movements that were created in response to newly formed ethnic cleavages in the late 1980s, and indigenous involvement in politics following decentralization remains intertwined. Indigenous protests, including the Water War, Gas War, and roadblocks by the *Cocalero* movement, supplemented the more formal political advocacy of MAS and caused several presidents who were proponents of neoliberal policy to resign, further destabilizing the neoliberal political system. This destabilization laid the groundwork for the election of President Morales.

Since Morales assumed the presidency, Bolivia has undergone massive social and economic reform. Most importantly, in 2009, Morales and his government pushed for a new constitution, that recognized indigenous culture, language, customs, and autonomy. Additionally, the constitution dealt with issues of land reform and distribution, natural resources, education, and health care (Shoaei 2012). Since the election of Morales, the relationship between the State and indigenous populations has changed drastically. However, indigenous social movements are still active both outside and inside of the political sphere.

## **Conclusion**

Over 500 years of discrimination, exclusion, and suppression of indigenous populations characterizes Bolivian history. As a result, Indigenous populations have historically been the poorest and most excluded within Bolivian society. Despite this, class cleavages predominantly mobilized Bolivian society until the 1980s and 1990s during the neoliberal era. During the

neoliberal era, indigenous social movements organized mass protests of neoliberal policy that were thought to target indigenous individuals specifically. These movements soon gained popular support and currently play an important role in both social and political society.

In the late 1990s, indigenous movements entered the political sphere, running for both national office and newly created municipal office. Prior to 1994, local government was almost non-existent in Bolivia. Though there were district governments and a few municipal governments in the big cities, these bodies were puppets of the national government and were not elected, but instead appointed. The passage of the LPP in 1994 marks a huge change in the political structure of Bolivia and represents a massive organizational shift from an incredibly centralized system to an incredibly decentralization system. Did the political mobilization of indigenous groups in the late 1990s occur because of the decentralization of the government? The following chapters will analyze qualitative and quantitative data to determine the cause of this ethno-political mobilization and the role decentralization played.

**Map 3.1 Map of Bolivia with the nine districts labeled**



Base 803227AI (G00397) 4-06

(From CIA Maps, downloaded at [<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/>])

**Table 3.1 The four major components of the LPP in comparison to the previous system**

|                                    | Before the LPP  | After the LPP   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Resource allocation                | The small % of tax revenue that went to localities was primarily divided between the three largest cities (Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz). | Funding to municipalities doubled to 20% of all national tax revenue on a per capita basis.   |
| Responsibility for Public Services | Ownership of infrastructure was centered in the national government.  | Ownership and responsibility for administration and maintenance of infrastructure, including but not limited to, education, health, irrigation, sports, and culture was given to the municipalities.  |
| Oversight Committees               | Did not exist before the LPP.   | Created an “alternate channel for representing popular demand in the policy-making process [by...] propos[ing] projects and oversee[ing] municipal expenditure” (Faguet, Decentralization and Local Government in Bolivia: An Overview from the Bottom Up 2003). Composed of local, grass-roots representatives, the power of these committees lays in their power to suspend funds if they believe they are being misused or stolen. |
| Municipalization:                  | 113 municipalities technically existed, but they were only ceremonial in nature and held no power.  | A total of 311 municipalities are recognized (198 new ones) and hold direct elections.  |

Based off analysis in (Faguet, Decentralization and Local Government in Bolivia: An Overview from the Bottom Up 2003, 5)



## 4

### **Fighting for a Common Identity: The Effects of Decentralization on Ethno-Political mobilization in Bolivia**

*In 1978, the Banzer dictatorship, one of the most serious and terrible dictatorships Bolivia had ever seen, ended. Banzer called for the election of a new president and residents of Bolivian cities, in general, participated in these elections thinking that Bolivia would return to the old model of nationalism, which was originally established during the Bolivian Revolution of 1952, 26 years ago. However, after years of dictatorships that degenerated the nationalist system, the rural campesino population realized that this system did not work.*

*It was not that the campesinos did not enjoy the benefits of the nationalist system after the Revolution. It was the opposite, the Revolution had four important measures: nationalization of the mines, agrarian reform that ended the feudal system of the haciendas, educational reform, and electoral reform. Of these four measures, three profoundly affected the lives of the campesinos. The feudal system was gone, there was compulsory, universal, and free school for all, and there was the universal vote.*

*The campesinos felt recognized and heard by the government after the Revolution, and at first, they believed that even through military dictatorships, the nationalist model of government would protect them. However, Banzer, the last dictator, massacred campesinos in here in Cochabamba, provoking a profound reaction and realization that the nationalist model was not protecting them. For the campesinos, the nationalist model had included a partnership between the armed forces and the campesino forces and the idea that the campesinos were allied with the*

*armed forces was important. But, this partnership was broken when the armed forces betrayed the campesinos and massacred them.*

*After this, in 1974, the campesinos began to mature politically, without saying anything, and in the 1978 elections when Banzer endorsed a candidate for president, that candidate won in the cities but lost in the indigenous, rural countryside.*

*It was never known how this happened, but it was incredible because here in Bolivia, we vote by colors, which was part of the electoral reform of the Revolution. Since most the population was illiterate and they could not vote for letters or names of political parties, each party assumed a color and the people knew that that color was their party. In the 1978 elections, the candidate that was endorsed by Banzer was green, and the seven other parties were seven other colors.*

*That year, I was president of a rural electoral district outside of Santa Cruz, and I was angry because I saw that on the voting table there were only green ballots. I complained to the director of the voting table and he told me that each party must bring their own ballots and if they do not there is nothing he can do.*

*Two parties, the Christian Democrats, and the MRN, arrive with their brown and pink ballots, and time passed. Once I return to the voting table, the pink and brown ballots that had been brought had disappeared and there were only green ballots. Election day ended and the incredible thing is that the pink ballots won. No one knows where the people got their ballots because they were not on the table. So, it was the incredibly organized and secret work of the campesinos, who spread the word that the campesinos must vote against Banzer and his candidate. - Rafael Puente in discussion with the author, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016<sup>31</sup>*

---

<sup>31</sup> For the untranslated text, see Appendix 4.1.

\*\*\*

In Chapter Three, I discussed the historical discrimination, suppression, and exclusion of the indigenous population. Because of this, indigenous groups were not represented politically or protected socially and were forced to turn to other methods of self-advocacy including strong labor organizations, social networks, and community groups. The intense and potent levels of organization that emerged after the Revolution of 1952 continued to grow and develop throughout the neoliberal era as illustrated by Rafael Puente's story. During the neoliberal era, the government continued to be prejudice against indigenous communities, harming their economic wellbeing and forcing upon them a more westernized culture, yet these groups did not become directly involved in the formal political sphere until the late 1990s (Shoaei 2012). Chapter Two ends with the question: did the political mobilization of these groups in the late 1990s occur because of the governmental decentralization that was enacted in 1994?

In this chapter, I discuss how the Law of Popular Participation (LPP) affected the prevalence of ethno-political mobilization in the formal political arena, focusing on the specifics of the law that incentivized politicization. As introduced in chapter one, participation in the formal arena is defined as mobilization behind an (ethnic) political party or individual who seeks political *representation* within governance structures (Weber 2016). Ethno-political mobilization in the formal political arena is distinct from interactions between indigenous social movements and traditional political parties such as the MRN or the Christian Democrats.

In addition to analyzing the specifics of the LPP that triggered ethno-political mobilization, I also discuss two causal mechanisms that impact the relationship between ethno-political mobilization and decentralization. As observed in data collected through interviews with academics, organizations, and governmental leaders in Bolivia, ethno-political mobilization

was greater after decentralization in municipalities that had high levels of pre-established social organizations. This is because decentralization lowers the entrance barriers to the political arena and gives groups control over their own political, social and economic affairs (Treisman 1997; Hale 2000; Horowitz 1985; Gurr 2000; Handgrave 1994). Once these barriers are lowered, indigenous organizations that already have support bases and resources can mobilize capital and people quickly and effectively. Conversely, indigenous groups who are not already organized, or are newly organized, must build up political capital from scratch and are not able to mobilize as successfully.

Ethno-political mobilization is greater in the highlands of Bolivia than in the lowlands. The highland indigenous groups such as the Aymara and Quechua, have historically had high levels of pre-existing indigenous labor organizations. The indigenous *campesino* unions, formed after the Chaco War, took root in these communities, building up immense social power. On the contrary, lowland indigenous groups historically have fewer networks or newer networks, since these networks did not begin forming until the neoliberal era in response to insufficient government protection.

Further, the unions fit within the western, capitalist state structure of the Bolivian government. This facilitated their transition into the formal political arena. Conversely, indigenous networks in the lowlands were often formed around communitarian values and traditional cultures. This advocacy did not fit into the State model as well as the advocacy of the unions which was centered on private property.

Furthermore, it appears that rural municipalities experienced greater ethno-political mobilization than urban municipalities. This is likely because rural municipalities have less dense populations concentrations and therefore political organizations have fewer barriers to

overcome to connect with and mobilize their target group. Further, before the LPP, rural areas had no access to local government or local control of resources while urban areas had had access to the political structure since democratization in 1825.

In the first part of this chapter, I discuss the qualitative data in relation to the literature on mobilization. I argue that the deconcentration and devolution components of the LPP were essential in lowering the barriers to participation and incentivizing involvement within the formal political arena. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss the impact of the LPP on mobilization and the success of MAS in relation to other indigenous movements that emerged after the LPP. In this section, I argue that through the LPP did create an environment that encouraged ethno-political mobilization, participation was not always beneficial for the ethnic groups and decentralization alone was not enough to grantee the success of the indigenous parties. The variation we see in the success of ethno-political movements, as well as the varied success of MAS across municipalities, suggests that there are additional causal mechanisms. That is to say, though decentralization positively impacts ethno-political mobilization, it only does so successfully when there are other conditions present. These two causal mechanisms, drawn from my qualitative data, are: levels of pre-existing social organization and the population density of the municipality. The third and fourth section of this chapter discusses these two mechanisms. Concluding this chapter, I argue that institutional decentralization was the necessary condition for ethno-political mobilization, even if other factors did contribute.

### **Decentralization Literature in Relation to the LPP**

In the Bolivian elections of 1997, four local deputies were elected from the *cocalero* movement, a movement started by the indigenous farmers of the coca leaf and formed around the

campesino (peasant) union. One of the four deputies was Evo Morales, who quickly took leadership of the group and formed a political party which eventually assumed the name MAS. After their initial success at the local level, MAS candidates soon began participating in national elections and winning at the provincial level because of the immense political power they had built at the municipal level. Their success continued and their support-base soon expanded beyond the Chapare region to all the highlands, guaranteeing the widespread support of MAS.

In my interviews, the success of MAS<sup>32</sup> was often attributed to the LPP and decentralization. Specifically, my interview data reinforced that decentralization as a concept is a bundle of multiple variables that each have different effects of ethno-political mobilization. As discussed in chapter one, the four concepts that define decentralization are deconcentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization (Rondinelli, 1968). Though all four of these components were mentioned during my interviews, deconcentration, and devolution were recurrent themes. The interview data collected suggests that these two concepts played the most important roles in the politicization of ethnicity.

Though it is currently twenty-two years after the LPP was enacted and the Bolivian political structure has continued to shift, traditions of deconcentration and delegation that were introduced by the LPP have not disappeared from political society. Per George Komandina, an academic and member of the Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios, an organization that uses multidisciplinary approaches to study the development of Bolivia: “what has remained is

---

<sup>32</sup> There was some tension during my interviews about whether MAS was an indigenous party. Several interviewees expressed their opinions, arguing that MAS was not an indigenous party because it was pro-capitalism and has not been acting in the interest of many ethnic groups within Bolivia recently. However, I continue to claim that MAS is an indigenous party because (1) I do not believe that indigeneity must be anti-capitalist (in Chapter One I define a person’s indigeneity as based on self-identification, not a series of characteristics or beliefs), and (2) in Chapter Three I discuss the diversity of indigenous movements within Bolivia. It would be an unattainable for an ethnic party to cover all of the interests of every ethnic group. It is certainly true that MAS only represents a sub-set of the indigenous population, but this does not disqualify it as an indigenous party.

the redistribution of resources that cannot be retracted, and the Electoral Law that says that mayors of the municipalities should be elected by vote.”<sup>33</sup>

Deconcentration in Bolivia is marked by the transfer of power from the national government to local municipalities through capital resources. The LPP established that each municipality received resources per their population, through a system called tax cooperation. This dramatically impacted many communities, especially poor, rural, indigenous communities that had previously never had any resources given to them at all; the redistribution of resources became a redistribution of income from the wealthy cities to the poorer areas, which because of historic State sponsored discrimination were often predominantly indigenous. George Komandina gives the examples of the coca-growing region of the Chapare to illustrate how few resources existed in rural communities before the LPP:

in the case of the Chapare, for example, they had no resources, they were an abandoned region that did not have a paved road, services, or anything. Everything [the resources] stayed here in Cercado, in the city of Cochabamba, in the city of La Paz, in the city of Santa Cruz, and the provincial towns had no resources at all.<sup>34</sup>

The fair distribution of resources at the municipal level had several effects on ethno-political mobilization. Resources made the residents of small, rural municipalities “desirable as objects of political struggle because they were an institution with resources; this made them

---

<sup>33</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Pero lo que ha quedado es la redistribución de los recursos que ya no puede retroceder y tampoco puede retroceder la Ley Electoral que dice que los alcaldes de los municipios deben ser elegidos por el voto*”

<sup>34</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*en el caso del Chapare, por ejemplo, no tenían ningún recurso, eran unos pueblos abandonados que no tenían ni una calle asfaltada, no tenían servicios, nada. Todo se quedaba aquí en el Cercado, en la ciudad de Cochabamba, en la ciudad de la Paz, en la ciudad de Santa Cruz y los pueblos de provincia no tenían ningún tipo de recursos*”

interesting from a political point of view in a way they had not been before.”<sup>35</sup> This encouraged local community members to run for political office and social organizations to become involved in local governance. It also encouraged national political parties, organizations, and NGOs to become more involved at the local level.

Though national political parties and organization increased their involvement at the local level, the majority of the political action came from the communities themselves. According to Carlos Molina, the LPP triggered “an empowerment of the people, to carry out their future, to decide how to spend the capital, and to supervise the projects that were being done.”<sup>36</sup>

As the mayor of Cliza, a medium sized municipality about 45 minutes outside of the city of Cochabamba, said:

this co-participation has benefited the people here because the resources arrive and we, the municipal government, are free to allocate the resources as we want. It is a law that permits an equitable distribution [of resources] to all municipalities, now it is not only the central government that handles the money, but also the municipal governments who have their own resources.<sup>37</sup>

It was this empowerment and ability to control how resources were spent that incentivized ethno-political mobilization.

The distribution of resources to municipalities also triggered resource competition. As discussed in Chapter One, the ethnic competition theory argues that ethnic mobilization occurs as

---

<sup>35</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*apetecibles como objeto de las luchas políticas porque hay alguna institución que tiene recursos, entonces se vuelve interesante desde este punto de vista de la política y antes no lo era*”

<sup>36</sup> Carlos Molina, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “*un empoderamiento por parte de la gente de cómo llevar adelante su futuro, de decidir en qué gastarlo y de fiscalizar las obras que se estaban haciendo*”

<sup>37</sup> Mayor Walter Illanes, in discussion with the author, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Esto de la coparticipación ha beneficiado bastante a la gente porque llegan los recursos y nosotros los gobiernos municipales somos libres de destinar el recurso. Es una ley que permite una distribución equitativa a todos los municipios, ahora no solamente es el gobierno central el que maneja dinero, sino que ahora sí los gobiernos municipales disponemos de nuestros recursos*”



groups compete for access to resources. According to Daniel Morano Morales, the director of the organization *Ciudadanía* which studies democracy at the local level in Bolivia, the “arrival of resources to the municipal level gave meaning to participation, which became a competitive interest for political competition.”<sup>38</sup> Though resource competition did not create ethnic cleavages (as discussed in chapter three, ethnic cleavages had been forming since the 1950s and visibly present since the 1980s) it did persuade the most powerful of the ethnic groups to compete with the traditional, *mestizo*, government for control over resources and power.

The second important variable of decentralization was devolution. Devolution is the strengthening of sub-national units of government that are outside of the control of the national government. In the case of the LPP, this was done by creating direct elections for mayors and councilors in 311 municipalities.<sup>39</sup> The direct election of mayors and councilors was an incredibly new phenomenon in most of the country. It had two major impacts. First, prior to the LPP, elections for national level government officials only occurred in the capitals of the providences and the few municipal districts that existed. This meant that there were many indigenous and peasant communities that did not participate in elections. The creation of elections accessible to everyone after the LPP had a huge mobilizing impact simply because it significantly lowered barriers to participation by giving people the opportunity to vote. Second, prior to the LPP, all regional government officials were appointed by the national government and because of this appointment had neither power nor autonomy to separate themselves from the national government. The LPP

---

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Morano Morales, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*llegada de recursos a nivel municipal da sentido a esa participación que se vuelve competitivamente interesante para la competición política*”

<sup>39</sup> The number of municipalities in Bolivia is now larger now since the creation of municipalities occurs as populations change.

democratized these political positions through direct elections, creating a new political scenario that was no longer national but small, rural, and local.<sup>40</sup>

The creation of elected local governmental positions in Bolivia lowered the entrance barriers to the formal political arena and increased ethno-political mobilization. This falls into line with H<sub>1</sub> and theory that argues that decentralization causes ethno-political mobilization (Treisman 1997; Hale 2000; Horowitz 1985; Gurr 2000; Handgrave 1994). As Carlos Crespo, Bolivian scholar at the Universidad de San Simone in Cochabamba describes it, indigenous communities and organizations

saw it [the LPP] as an opportunity; they saw they could have their candidates win local elections, effectively because the peasants were a majority of the residents of urban areas; [the indigenous peasants] realized this was possible.<sup>41</sup>

The opening of this opportunity structure played an important role in the political ethno-mobilization of Bolivia. The power of direct elections of mayors and councilors is explained by George Komandina:

the great power of MAS is now realized through this law; though it was a law [constructed] by the opponents of MAS, now because of it MAS has territorial control of Bolivia, in more than 90% of the municipalities of the providence [of Cochabamba] MAS always wins, this is the consequence of the Law of Popular Participation.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

<sup>41</sup> Carlos Crespo, in discussion with the author, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*vieron de que era una oportunidad, vieron de que podían tener sus gobiernos locales, ganar efectivamente elecciones principalmente porque los campesinos eran mayoría frente a los pueblerinos, se dieron cuenta de que esto era posible*”

<sup>42</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*es el gran poder del MAS actualmente porque esa es una ley de los enemigos del MAS, pero ahora el MAS tiene el control territorial de Bolivia, tiene más del 90% de los municipios de provincia, el MAS gana ahí y esa es la consecuencia de la Ley de Participación*”

The two remaining variables of decentralization, delegation, and privatization, were less prevalent themes in the data collected through my interviews. Delegation appears to have played a negative role in ethno-political mobilization. Instead of incentivizing ethnic groups to exert power and autonomy by running for local office and voting for indigenous candidates, delegation fully incorporated organizations into the bureaucratic governmental structure through the creation of OTBs and Vigilance Committees. This took away the autonomy of these groups and their ability to question the government. Further, several interviewees mentioned that corruption often diminished the ability of these groups to be meaningful actors within the local government. Maria Claire Zegada said that: “cases of corruption resulted, where they [the OTBs and Vigilance Committees] were paid to approve [policy] or not say anything.”<sup>43</sup> Importantly, it seems like this was the first time this level of corruption was visible across society in Bolivia.

Though privatization was not part of the LPP, it did occur simultaneously as part of other neoliberal reforms. Ironically, though the LPP decentralized most aspects of the government, the economy remained centralized. During the neoliberal era, it was the national government that decided to privatize and controlled contracts with big business, ‘experts,’ and multinational corporations. Since the end of the neoliberal era, the economy has remained incredibly centralization.<sup>44</sup> Privatization was not a trigger of ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia.

In Chapter One, I discussed institutional theory, which argues that ethnic cleavages become politically salient when institutions incentivize them to. According to this theory, institutions shape the “repertoires of potentially mobilized ethnic identities that individuals possess” and “peoples’ incentives for selecting one of these potentially salient ethnic identities

---

<sup>43</sup> Maria Claire Zegada, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*casos de corrupción a raíz de eso, que les pagaban para que aprueben lo más o para que no digan nada*”

<sup>44</sup> Carlos Crespo, in discussion with the author, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

rather than another” by coordinating individuals or individual choice across society so as to produce outcomes at the societal level (Posner 2005, 3). Deconcentration shaped the incentives of ethnic communities to participate in the formal political sphere based on resource competition and empowerment to use the resources to benefit their community and interests. Though before decentralization ethnicity had been a cleavage in society, there had been no incentive to politicize that cleavage because there was nothing to be gained. This is why class remained the politicized cleavage until the late 1990s and the enactment of the LPP. However, the distribution of resources to municipalities changed incentives and encouraged ethnic groups to politicize. Of course, the ability to participate in the control of the resources was reliant on devolution, or the creation of directly and locally elected municipal government roles. The process of devolution opened up the repertoire of cleavages an indigenous person could choose to act politically along, adding ethnic cleavages as an option to a list that had previously been dominated by traditional class based schisms. The process of opening the political system was dependent on lower barriers to entry for indigenous political candidates. In conclusion, the decentralization variables, devolution, and deconcentration provide explanations in line with institutional theory for why ethnicity was politicized after decentralization in Bolivia.

### **The Effect of Political Mobilization on Movements**

*En general es una política de dominación de las reformas de segunda generación del neoliberalismo, pero abre también la posibilidad como espacio de encuentro, como espacio de lucha como relación de fuerzas, abrió la posibilidad que el movimiento indígena y campesino en Bolivia tomé el poder local.*

In general, [the LPP] is a policy of domination originating from the second generation of the neoliberal reforms, however it also opened up the municipality to the possibility of being a meeting space, a space of struggle between powers; it opened up the possibility that the indigenous and peasant movement in Bolivia could take power.

- Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Neoliberal reforms can be generally sorted into two categories: first generation and second generation reforms. First generation reforms were structural reforms guided by the Washington Consensus in response to the crisis of the nation-state in Latin America, the crisis of the welfare state in Europe, and the crisis of communism in the Soviet Union (Martinez 1996). Second generation reforms were the political reforms in Latin America, and in the case of Bolivia, the LPP. These reforms had the goal of reaffirming relations between the state and civil society and were often ‘progressive’ measures (Martinez 1996). This was paradoxical since these progressive measures that dealt with high social content were often accompanied by conservative policies of privatization of state enterprises; the neoliberal was a balancing of right policies with left policies.<sup>45</sup>

The LPP, which was enacted in March of 1994, was promoted by the Bolivian government as a way to establish new relationships between the national government and local economies and communities. Though the government had, since the 1960s, remained mostly inaccessible to Bolivians, citizens continually sought to participate in government and demanded governmental participation at all levels of society. The LPP was the reaction of the government to these broad pressures and three specific pressures.<sup>46</sup> One of the specific pressures the government was responding to was a coalition of citizens across Latin America who were organized and protesting against the inability of neoliberal governments to fulfill the social needs of populations including housing needs and social services, which had been cut in accordance with neoliberal economic policy. The second specific pressure the government was responding to was

---

<sup>45</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

<sup>46</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

the rise of women's movements, which began in the 1980s to claim a right to greater political participation and incorporation into society. The third specific pressure the government was responding to were rural movements, from primarily indigenous communities, that began claiming indigenous rights, participation, and State attention.

The political mobilization that happened because of the LPP had both positive and negative impacts on the socially mobilized society. Though all 12 of the academics and government officials I interviewed emphasized how the LPP opened up the political sphere to widespread political participation, most also mentioned that political participation is mostly controlled by the State. In other words, while community members and organizations had the opportunity to participate directly in the government and even become incorporated into the government, in doing so they forfeited some of their autonomy to set their own goals and critique the State.

According to José Martínez, an academic at the Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno in Santa Cruz, the government purposefully constructed the LPP so that social movements would lose some of their autonomy and strength, and it worked. He says the LPP

forced the social movements to solve the problems they were creating for the government, which then caused the movements to lose their strength because they were too busy trying to solve the problems of the streets, water, pavement, and light.<sup>47</sup>

The LPP was not the government trying to work with social movements, rather it was the government trying to dominate from the top down and establish governance and reach in places where there had previously been no government at all.

---

<sup>47</sup> José Martínez, in discussion with the author, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016: "*Obligando a los movimientos sociales a que resuelvan los problemas que ellos han creado, entonces, los movimientos pierden su fuerza y están mucho más ocupados tratando de resolverlos problemas de las calles, del agua, del pavimento, de la luz.*"

The LPP shifted the discourse of resistance (previously championed by the social movements) from against the government to with the government. As Carlos Hugo Molina, the ‘author’ of the LPP articulates: “the law became the authority. It was no longer a fight against the government, but instead a defense of rights by local governments in relation to other governments.”<sup>48</sup> This shift in discourse had both negative and positive effects. As mentioned above and present in 5 of my 12 interviews, the largest cost to social and indigenous movements and organizations was a loss of control over their goals.<sup>49</sup> In addition to forcing now politicized movements to solve the severe and difficult issues that plagued municipalities, like no access to clean water and lacking infrastructure, the LPP also brought intense government bureaucracy to local municipalities which bogged movements down in mundane government processes of accountability and thoroughness. These bureaucratic mechanisms limited the ability of the municipal governments to define their own priorities. As Adolfo Mendoza, an ex-senator from MAS said, the goal of “the neoliberal government of Sánchez de Lozada, was to transfer investment resources to the local level, but above all was to guarantee the domination of the local municipality.”<sup>50</sup>

Despite the rhetoric of the national government that the LPP was a fully decentralized system, the national government retained substantial control of the government. The power that municipal governments were given did not take power away from the national government but

---

<sup>48</sup> Carlos Hugo Molina, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “*la ley se convirtieron en autoridades, ya no era una pelea contra el gobierno, era una defensa de derechos administrada por un gobierno local con relación a otros gobiernos*”

<sup>49</sup> Maria Claire Zegada, George Komandina, Rafael Puentes, Adolfo Mendoza, and Jose Martinez, in discussions with the author, December 2016

<sup>50</sup> Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*el gobierno neoliberal de Sánchez de Lozada, fue para trasladar recursos de inversión al ámbito local, pero sobre todo para garantizar el dominio de lo local*”

instead took power away from the departmental governments. Rafael Puente, vice-minister of education under Evo Morales' first administration, said that,

the central State did not give up a single Boliviano [the currency] to benefit the municipalities. Instead, it sacrificed the departments in favor of the municipalities but in exchange give the municipalities a series of responsibilities that were previously the responsibility of the central State. For example, all of the health and education infrastructures became the responsibility of the mayor.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the government's perverse incentives for enacting the LPP, the Law and the process of politicization had many positive effects on social movements. Incorporation of social movements into the government was not fully successful; the most powerful movements were able to retain their autonomy and fight against the neoliberal government from both within government structures and outside of government structures. The municipal government still functions as a good space for pre-existing indigenous organizations to politicize. Rafael Puente said: "What was the positive part of popular participation? It was the recognition that the municipalities of the country received for the first time."<sup>52</sup> This recognition had two impacts. First, it allowed the State to reach all of the rural areas that had previously not been governed by any local governance structures. Second, it distributed resources which established a framework of recognition that did not previously exist. As Maria Claire Zegada, a sociologist and political scientist at the Universidad de San Simone in Cochabamba noted, even if the resources that were distributed were "*migajas*" (crumbs), this resource distribution recognized small towns and

---

<sup>51</sup> Rafael Puente, in discussion with the author, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016: "*el Estado central no se desprende de un solo boliviano en beneficio de los municipios sino que hace sacrificar a los departamentos a favor de los municipios pero a cambio de eso les entrega a los municipios una serie de responsabilidades que antes eran del Estado central por ejemplo toda la infraestructura de salud y toda la infraestructura de educación ahora es responsabilidad de la alcaldía.*"

<sup>52</sup> Rafael Puente, in discussion with the author, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016: "*¿Cuál era el tema positivo de la participación popular? Era el reconocer o darles por primera vez importancia a los municipios del país.*"



communities that before the law were totally unknown.<sup>53</sup> The impact of these parts of decentralization was the political empowerment of rural and indigenous communities that had previously not even had their basic right to political participation recognized. After the LPP these communities not only had the right to vote, but also the right and ability to hold political office and control resources within their community.

### **Outcomes following the Law of Popular Participation**

*Hay una identidad común, hay una identificación entre candidato y elector, ahí está la fuerza de Evo Morales, o sea, la mayoría, campesinos e indígenas se identifican con el líder porque tienen identidad común y obviamente eso hace, no solamente que se sientan felices, sino que eran capaces de luchar y dar su vida por el proyecto del MAS, es más, emocionalmente es mucho más intensa la identificación en el caso de los campesinos indígenas y el MAS.*

There is a common identity, an identification between candidate and voter, that is the strength of Evo Morales; that is, peasants and indigenous peoples identify with the leader because they have a common identity and obviously this is not the only thing that makes them happy, but also that they were able to fight and give their lives for the project of MAS. [Their connection] is more, emotionally it is much more of an intense identification in the case of the indigenous peasants with MAS.

- Fernando Mayorga, in discussion with the author, December 12th, 2016

As discussed above, because the process of politicization was a potentially difficult and harmful process for indigenous groups. However, powerful indigenous movements and organizations were able to use the process of politicization to empower their movements and further their goals. Though it is clear that deconcentration and devolution are the variables of decentralization that contributed to ethno-political mobilization, the variation in the successful politicization of movements across municipalities suggests that other mechanisms were

---

<sup>53</sup> Maria Claire Zegada in discussion with author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

necessary in order for successful politicization to occur. The following section summarizes and analyzes the responses of the 12 interviewees when asked questions about the formation of MAS and the prevalence of other ethnic candidates and parties. Following the LPP in 1994, three new political movements appeared: Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)<sup>54</sup>, Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR), and Movimiento indígena de Pachacuti. MAS grew from the indigenous coca growers' union and the peasant unions, the NFR was organized around the mayor of Cochabamba (though offered indigenous peasant activists leadership positions), and the Movimiento indígena de Pachacuti (MP) was an ethno-nationalist Aymara party led by Felipe Quispe, who had played a leadership role in the Karatista movements of the 1980s. Only MAS continues to play a role in Bolivian politics.

Though these three parties did emerge after the LPP, the literature suggests that if decentralization did trigger ethno-political mobilization we should see the emergence of many more ethnic parties (Hopkin 2003). However, in Bolivia following the LPP, candidates for political positions within municipalities were required to be part of an established party. This restricted the formation of many small, municipal-level parties and it restricted many indigenous persons from running. Further, it restricted the autonomy of the leaders who were elected because established political parties following the LPP went into all of the newly created municipalities looking for the best leaders to prop-up as their candidate, giving them guidelines and instructions on how to rule in favor of the party.<sup>55</sup> This changed in 2004 with the passage of the Law on Citizen Groups. This law allowed citizens and organizations to form their own local

---

<sup>54</sup> That Evo Morales and the cocaleros assumed the name el Movimiento al Socialismo was an accident. The MAS party was an established party in Bolivia long before the 1990s, though it no longer had any candidates or supporters. Evo Morales was offered the name, so though MAS stands for the socialist movement, the platform of the current MAS party is not based in a socialist ideology.

<sup>55</sup> Maria Claire Zegada, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

parties. When it became easier to form political parties, thousands of small neighborhood groups and organizations formed political parties that currently number in the thousands.

Though only three political parties initially formed after the LPP, the ethno-political mobilization around these parties was notable. At first, individual ethnic candidates ran as candidates under the names of pre-established political parties, however soon these parties realized that this was restricting their ability to fully represent indigenous interests. Soon, MAS and the other ethnic parties formed as the indigenous movements grew tired of being part of the traditional party structure and decided to create their own parties so that they would no longer be beholden to the interests of the traditional class-based parties. Once again, class cleavages were insufficient in representing indigenous political interests and indigenous individuals were forced to turn to the now politicized ethnic cleavages.

It is useful to analyze the success of MAS in relation to the other indigenous parties that emerged following the LPP since MAS was the only successful party. My interview data points to two causal mechanisms in addition to decentralization that allowed MAS to politicize along ethnic schisms. The first causal mechanism is the level of pre-existing organization that MAS built its power off of. The second causal mechanism is the focus MAS put on rural communities. However, before explaining these two causal mechanisms in more detail, it is important to discuss the broad discourse of MAS and the populist appeal of Evo Morales, the leader of MAS. Though these two characteristics did not cause the successful ethno-politicization of MAS, they did help contribute to its success as a political party.

On the most basic level, MAS differed from the Movimiento indígena de Pachacuti because MAS promoted a general, national discourse that included many sectors and populations. Though MAS originated from the Aymara and Quechua communities of the highlands and

advocated for the interests of these communities, the policies and rhetoric of MAS were not exclusive or ethno-nationalist. The non-exclusive nature of the discourse of MAS is interesting not because it is the causal mechanism that allowed the party to success (Nueva Fuerza Republicana also had a national discourse), but because it marks a significant departure from ethnic political party literature that argues that ethnic parties are defined by their exclusive policy which only serves the interests of the ethnic group they represent. This departure from the theory provides evidence to the claim that ethno-political participation is different in Latin American than in other regions of the world. In Latin America, because of widespread historic disenfranchisement, indigenous voters are a minority of registered voters and reside primarily in the rural areas (though this is changing quickly as many indigenous communities migrate to the urban areas), which means that in order to succeed, ethnic parties must appeal to the broad populations in order to succeed, especially at the national level. Though ethnic political parties in Bolivia broadcast a non-exclusive rhetoric, they are still a representative of ethno-political interests and are therefore still ethnic political parties.

In fact, without a discourse that appealed to the entire nation, it is unlikely that MAS would have been successful. The MP (Movimiento indígena de Pachacuti) party limited its discourse and only appealed to the Aymara groups who lived on the highland plateaus of the La Paz providence. Consequently, this party never saw success outside of a few municipal districts on the highland plateaus. Since the MP was seen as an extremely radical party that only catered to the interests of a small population, it was never able to achieve the reform for indigenous peoples that it advocated for.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with Tessa Holtzman, 12/15/2016

In addition to a national discourse, MAS also benefited from a charismatic leader, Evo Morales. Rafael Puente described Evo to me: “Evo is a leader of the tropics who arrived in parliament with a powerful personality, his capacity, and his training.”<sup>57</sup> As a populist leader, who strategically portrayed himself as a fighter against the neoliberal government rather than a fighter for indigenous interests, Evo Morales was able to appeal to the entire country in a way many leaders would not have been able to.

Nonetheless, these two factors alone were not enough to guarantee the success of MAS. Other ethnic parties that had national discourses and charismatic leaders failed as MAS succeeded. MAS depended on two key variables: an ability to build off high levels of pre-existing social organization, and the support of rural municipalities. In addition to explaining how MAS was able to build up such immense national power and support, these two mechanisms also explain why candidates of MAS saw more electoral success in certain municipalities than in others. MAS used the powerful and organized indigenous peasant unions, which were constructed along the intersections of class and ethnic lines, to appeal to large swaths of people and build on pre-existing networks to grow their support base quickly. These unions had pre-existing leadership structures, support bases, and capital. This meant that MAS quickly built massive support in many rural municipalities where these unions played essential and powerful community roles. Once MAS had power in municipalities

a power to decide the public policies, to decide where to invest, a power to construct a school, a factory, a soccer field, this is what interested the people and this is why they voted for MAS, it did not matter if the policies were necessary or if there was corruption, the people voted because they saw construction and thought a priori that it was good.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Rafael Puente, in discussion with the author, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Evo, un dirigente del trópico y cuando llega al parlamento llega como dirigente cocalero pero con su personalidad, su capacidad, y su formación poderoso*”

<sup>58</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with Tessa Holtzman, 12/15/2016: “*el poder de decidir las políticas públicas, de decidir la inversión, de poder construir una escuela, una fábrica, una cancha de fútbol y eso es lo que te interesa*”

The ability of MAS to build support based on pre-existing organizational structures in rural municipalities where these organizations were essential to everyday life created a powerful base of supporters that allowed MAS to win at the national level and sustain power. The relationship between pre-existing levels of organization, rurality, and ethno-political mobilization is unpacked further in the next two sections of this chapter.

### **Pre-existing Levels of Organization and Ethno-Political Mobilization**

*es una articulación discursiva, lograron ellos definir: ‘ya, ya, no nos peleemos, indígenas, originarios, campesinos, todos somos pueblos y naciones indígena-originario-campesino’.*

it is a discursive articulation, they began to say: ‘yeah, yeah, let’s not fight, indigenous, natives, peasants, we are all pueblos and nations, indigenous-native-peasants.

- Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The role social organizations have played in Bolivian society have been fundamental to the formation of the Bolivian political state and continue to be today. The role that these social organizations have was highlighted to me during an interview with the Mayor of Cliza, a municipality 45 minutes outside of the city of Cochabamba. On the day that I visited Cliza, a protest was planned for midday. Mayor Walter Illanes explained to me:

today, around mid-day, a group of indigenous peasants is thinking of coming to the mayor’s office to make a claim about their intention to close the mayor’s office. This is their comment and if you stay until noon, you’re sure to see it. There are strong organizations in Bolivia, in Cliza, there are strong organizations.<sup>59</sup>

---

*a la gente por eso la gente vota por el MAS, no importa si la obra es necesaria o no, si es una cancha de futbol, si hay corrupción o no, la gente vota porque mira que hay una construcción, creen que eso está bien a priori”*

<sup>59</sup> Mayor Walter Illanes, in discussion with the author, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*El día de hoy, cerca mediodía, un grupo de campesinos están pensando venir a la alcaldía a hacer un reclamo con la intención de cerrar la alcaldía,*

A fundamental characteristic of social organization in Bolivia is the divide between highland and lowland organizations. This divide stems from historic divisions and differing development and cultural trends. In the process of ethno-politicization, these divides became important; the highly organized unions of the highlands were able to politicize to a much greater extent than the indigenous movements of the lowlands. Reoccurring in my interview data are two reasons that explain the differing levels of ethno-political success between the two geographic regions. First, the indigenous peasant unions in the highlands emerged during the 1950s whereas the indigenous organizations of the lowlands emerged in the 1980s.<sup>60</sup> Second, the indigenous peasant unions in the highlands were based on both ethnic and class cleavages whereas lowland groups were based on only ethnic cleavages.<sup>61</sup> The intersection of ethnic identity with class identity fundamentally changed the advocacies of these groups, centering many of their concerns around notions of individual private property and allowing them to develop within the capitalist model of the State rather than in constant opposition to it. The success of MAS following the LPP was intimately tied to the strength of the unions it emerged from. Since similar levels of success were not seen in the lowlands, where unions were not present and indigenous organizations not as established, I argue that ethno-political mobilization following decentralization relies on high levels of pre-established social organization that operates within pre-existing State structure.

The agrarian reforms that occurred in 1953 after the Revolution of 1952 transferred agricultural property from wealthy landowners who lived in the cities to peasants, who were

---

*ese es el comentario que se maneja, si te quedas hasta mediodía seguro lo vas a ver, son organizaciones fuertes en Bolivia, en Cliza son organizaciones fuertes”*

<sup>60</sup> Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

<sup>61</sup> Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

mostly indigenous and lived in rural areas. Upon receiving land, the peasant farmers and producers mobilized into unions, which quickly gained social force by pulling on two collective identities, indigeneity and identification as the peasant class. As Fernando Mayorga, a political scientist at the University in Cochabamba who studies the history of unions in Bolivia said,

“unionism in Bolivia is obligatory and unitary, it is a pyramid; you have the union here, the unions form a sub-central [organization], the sub-central forms the central, which form the department federations, which form the national confederations.”<sup>62</sup>

In the Bolivian highlands, participation in the unions is mandatory and unions structure every aspect of civil and social society.

Though Quechua and Aymara (highland indigenous groups) indigenous identity was historically centered around a strong connection with mother earth (*mama pacha*) and the communal form (*Ayllu*) the class based nature of unions redefined highland indigeneity as less collective and more individualistic and profit driven. Maria Claire Zegada explains that the unions defined indigeneity “not as a collective identity but as an individual identity, resembling a capitalist logic.”<sup>63</sup> Private property was a requirement for membership in the union.

The power of the unions was all encompassing as George Komandina explains. He said,

to start, they [the unions] distribute the land, if you want to be part of the union you had to have land and the land is distributed by the union, the union decides who is going to be mayor, who is going to be councilor, the union controlled the territory, the resources, and imposes fines, sanctions or rewards.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Fernando Mayorga, in discussion with the author, December 12th, 2016: “*el sindicalismo en Bolivia es obligatorio y es unitario, es una pirámide; tienes aquí el sindicato, los sindicatos forman subcentral, la subcentral forma el central, éstas forman federación departamental y las federaciones hacen la confederación nacional*”

<sup>63</sup> Maria Claire Zegada, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*pero no como una entidad colectiva sino como una entidad individual, entonces, son muy afines a la lógica capitalista*”

<sup>64</sup> George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*para empezar distribuye la tierra, si tú quieres ser parte del sindicato tienes que tener la tierra y la tierra la distribuye el sindicato, el sindicato decide*”



The unions became the spokesmen of society and quickly began traditions of electoral participation.<sup>65</sup> As was noted in many of my interviews, this electoral participation both introduced political ideology into communities and is symbolic of the connection between the union organizations and the State; within the Unions “there is much more political experience and a relationship with the State, and even participation in State apparatus” than within lowland indigenous organizations and communities.<sup>66</sup> The connection between the capitalist unions and the capitalist State as well as the strong organizational structure of the unions made politicization after decentralization easier for the unions than for other forms of indigenous groups.

Following politicization after the LPP, the intersection between the capitalist State structure and indigenous identity in the highlands has only grown stronger. Questions of whether this politicization has hurt indigenous movements and destroyed cooperation between highlands indigenous groups and lowland indigenous groups arose during my interviews. Many see the indigenous movements of the highlands, as Daniel Morano Morales explains, as “not indigenous, properly speaking; original indigenous communities in the area have been expelled, they [the people] remained but have lost their territory.”<sup>67</sup> Several other of my interviews emphasized that corruption and fighting between political parties have destroyed the power of the unions as advocates for indigeneity and turned them into organizations with no message or goal except

---

*quién va a ser el alcalde, quien va a ser el concejal, el sindicato controla el territorio, el sindicato controla los recursos, impone multas o sanciones y recompensas*

<sup>65</sup> Electoral participation does not fall under my definition of participation and mobilization in the formal arena because the unions did not have their own party or candidates, rather they just encouraged their members to vote for certain candidates that were part of the traditional, class-based structure.

<sup>66</sup> Carlos Crespo, in discussion with the author, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Hay una experiencia política mucho mayor y de relacionamiento con el Estado y hasta de participar en el aparato estatal*”

<sup>67</sup> Daniel Morano Morales, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*pero no es propia indígena, propiamente dicha, sino que las comunidades indígenas originarias del lugar han sido expulsadas y han quedado siendo una minoría y han perdido sus territorios*”

power. Rafael Puente, who wrote several books on popular participation said: “I defended popular participation in the early years, but I have written in my history books a very hard criticism of popular participation because its negative consequences were terrible.”<sup>68</sup> The negative consequences he was referring to were the fighting between community members because of the politicization and the corruption of the indigenous unions.

However, for the highland unions in Bolivia, not all of the effects of politicization were negative. As unions politicized, they shifted away from excluding women, the elderly, and the disables and became more include organizations. Because these historically excluded populations had voting power, the unions could no longer afford to ignore them, their needs, and their interests. The idea of popular participation implicit within the LPP triggered wider discussions about the role of all citizens within the political sphere. Zaida Escobar, an ex-councilor for Cliza and member of the women’s organization reflected on her experience following the LPP during her interview with me. She first reflected on the political situation before the LPP, saying:

“look, we thought that women would never be able to reach the political scene, I remember when I was a girl only men went to the meetings, only men, women were in the house but now with the law it is men and women side by side, no the women behind and the man in front, but side by side.”<sup>69</sup>

She believes the LPP opened up political participation. She told me,

---

<sup>68</sup>Rafael Puente in discussion with the author, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Yo he defendido la participación popular en los primeros años, pero he escrito en mi libro de historia una crítica muy dura sobre la participación popular porque sus consecuencias negativas fueron terribles.*”

<sup>69</sup>Zaida Escobar, in discussion with Tessa Holtzman, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Mire que a veces nosotros, nunca pensé que una mujer podía llegar a un escenario político, jamás porque antes yo recuerdo de niña solamente los hombres iban o salían a las reuniones, solamente hombres, mujeres en la casa nomás pero ahora con la nueva ley que tiene que ir el hombre y la mujer lado a lado, no la mujer por delante y el hombre por detrás, sino lado a lado.*”

“we talked a little about popular participation and now the people, we have been opening our eyes, [seeing] that there should be the participation of women, men, the elderly because before there was no such thing when there was no such participation...”<sup>70</sup>

Politicization created space for previously socially disadvantaged groups to advocate for themselves because it meant that historically exclusive organizations, like the unions, had to become inclusive.

In contrast to highland unions, lowland indigenous unions remained deeply rooted in traditional indigenous ideologies and identities. Though unions that represented the dairy producers and agricultural producers emerged in the lowlands, they were never as powerful as the peasant unions of the highlands nor did they build their bases on indigenous identity. Instead, they were only based along class cleavages.

In the 1970s in response to State violence against indigenous communities and in the 1980s in response to neoliberal policy, lowland indigenous communities formed their own movements, distinct from the unions, that took the forms of assemblies and neighborhood groups. These organizations differed from the highland unions because they were created not along class cleavages that intersected with ethnic cleavages, but instead on ethnic cleavages alone. Instead of advocating for labor policies that would help them success within the capitalist State system, these groups advocated to protect and preserve traditional communal forms of living. As explained by Maria Claire Zegada, they organized themselves

“to defend their communities, to defend collective lands that belong to all; to defend their traditions, worldviews, poly-cultural forms, this was the meaning of their division [from society],

---

<sup>70</sup>Zaida Escobar, in discussion with Tessa Holtzman, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016: *Un poco hablamos de la participación popular donde, ahí la gente un poquito hemos ido abriendo los ojos, que debería existir la participación tanto de las mujeres, hombres, personas de la tercera edad porque antes no había eso, cuando no hubo esa participación...*

to return to the past, to reconstruct what was violated during the Spanish conquest through historical processes that still persisted, they wanted to recover their ancestry.”<sup>71</sup>

As relatively newly formed organizations, the indigenous organizations of the lowland were not in a position to politicize successfully against a State model that was counter to their own goals.

One of the biggest issues that prevented the lowland indigenous organizations from politicizing was an inability to obtain the resources necessary for successful politicization. This inability originally stemmed from communitarian ways of living that did not mesh well with the economic model of the State, however, they were perpetuated by State discrimination. Because of this, lowland organizations have always struggled with accessing resources. Unfortunately, the ability of these groups to access resources has only gotten harder as MAS and the indigenous unions of the highlands have taken power. The advocacy of MAS is built around a strong critique of western culture and the organizations that are aligned with the west. The implication of this critique has been the expulsion of NGOs that originally assisted lowland indigenous organizations access resources. According to Maria Claire Zegada, now,

these organizations do not have economic support, do not have external advice as before, do not have any benefits because the government has taken everything to other sectors and it costs them to even meet because they have no resources to do it, to travel at all, it is very difficult<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Maria Claire Zegada in discussion with author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*organizado para defender comunidades, para defender tierras colectivas, o sea que pertenecen a todos. Para defender sus tradiciones, cosmovisiones, formas poli culturales ese es el sentido de su división, son poco una suerte de vuelta al pasado, de reconstruir aquello que fue vulnerado con la conquista española y con procesos históricos que todavía persisten, entonces quieren recuperar toda ese ancestral.*”

<sup>72</sup> (Maria Claire Zegada in discussion with author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*Entonces, son organizaciones que no tienen apoyo económico, no tienen asesoramiento externo como tenían antes, no tienen ningún beneficio porque el gobierno se ha llevado todo al otros sector digamos y les cuesta incluso reunirse porque no tienen recursos para hacerlo, para viajar todos, pensar en algo, pues es difícil*”

Though MAS is an indigenous party, they continue to align with the interests of the highland indigenous groups.

In sum, the LPP “recognized the personality of the [unions], gave them visibility and opened the space in which they could be developed.”<sup>73</sup> Additionally, two indigenous groups with closely aligned interests made up a majority of the highland population. However, for the lowland indigenous groups, the LPP did not lower barriers enough to allow them to participate widely especially because the lowland population is divided into many ethnic groups with differing interests and have historically been very oppressed by the mestizo elite. In many lowland districts, indigenous peoples do not make up the majority of the population, presenting an additional barrier to indigenous politicization.<sup>74</sup> According to Carlos Crespo, the difference between the highland and lowland is “not only ethnic, it is cultural, it is very different to live in the altiplano at four thousand meters than to live in the jungle, in the Amazon, that is the difference and it is not discriminatory, it is simply [to ways] of understanding life.”<sup>75</sup> The lowland ‘conceptualization of life’ put these groups at odds with State goals and made politicization difficult.

Of course, there were lowland municipalities that were able to politicize and function as outliers. In the lowlands, Charagua, a primarily Guaraní municipality, has been governed by the Asamblea Pueblo Guaraní since the municipality was first created by the LPP. However, the Guaraní are both the largest and most concentrated indigenous group in the lowlands. This

---

<sup>73</sup> Carlos Hugo Molina, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “*reconocer la personalidad de estas organizaciones, darles visibilidad y abrirles el espacio en el cual podían desarrollarse*”

<sup>74</sup> Jose Martinez, in discussion with the author, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016: “*en algunos periodos ha sido alcalde indigena pero la mayoría de los periodos ha sido un ganadero. Y así por el estilo en varios municipios indigenas, no se puede tener dirigentes o autoridades indigenas*”

<sup>75</sup> Carlos Crespo, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “*no es solamente étnica, es cultural, es muy distinto vivir en el altiplano a cuatro mil metros que vivir en la selva, en el Amazonas que es distinto y eso no es discriminatorio, es simplemente que es otra forma distinta de entender la vida.*”

explains why they were able to achieve ethnic political mobilization. In the highlands, Rajai Pampa, a municipality in the Cochabamba district, has recently acquired the status of indigenous autonomy (a new status that the Morales government enacted). Though at the organizational nucleus of Rajai Pampa, is a union, the union is working to convert the community into shared land.<sup>76</sup> Though most indigenous unions still emphasize private property and individualism, they are not totally decoupled from indigenous ways of life. Nonetheless, strong divides between the highland and the lowland groups have resulted in the ethno-political mobilization of certain groups over others and affected the ease at which groups are able to achieve this mobilization.

### **The Ruralizing of Politics in Relation to Ethno-Political Mobilization**

*la gente está más interesada en participar porque los asuntos son del pueblo, cuando el pueblo es pequeño le interesa mucho a sus habitantes una cosa de vida o muerte.*

the people are more interested in participating because the issues are everyone's when the village is small everything is important to its inhabitants they are a thing of life or death.

- (George Komandina, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Prior to the LPP, Bolivia's political system was only visible in urban areas. However, many of my interviewees mentioned that they attributed the LPP to the ruralization of politics. Most interviewees noted two reasons for why they thought rural municipalities likely experienced higher levels of ethno-political mobilization and thus contributed to the power and success of MAS.

According to Daniel Moreno Morales, and mentioned in several other interviews, popular participation after the LPP was much stronger in rural areas because

---

<sup>76</sup> Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

the municipality had always existed in the urban areas as an entity of the State, [and] State development management; there has always been the municipality, which invested, received money, and collected tax money. In the rural areas, the municipalities did not exist, all the rural areas did not have a State management body at the local level, so the real change is precisely in the rural areas.<sup>77</sup>

Decentralization recognized rural areas physically and included an estimated 42% of the population who was previously excluded.<sup>78</sup> This not only made participation accessible but also incentivized rural participation in greater numbers because the idea of being able to control resources was new to rural communities. Because MAS and highland unions were strong in rural communities (because this is where peasant land was), MAS was able to build up their power locally by winning local governance positions.

Additionally, the citizens of rural municipalities were more invested in participation because through participation “[they] became a citizen, they were not only a number but became an actor who had rights and obligations and could exercise them.”<sup>79</sup> The implication of this was twofold. First, citizens who lived in rural areas were more invested in participating because they were directly impacted by the actions of the government and second, organizations and the local governments had fewer barriers to overcome in order to involve the community. Additionally, rural communities often were composed of indigenous communities who shared similar beliefs about the State. When MAS emerged as a leader from the rural Chapare region, their vision was one that the majority of peasants in Bolivia shared.

---

<sup>77</sup> Daniel Morano Morales, in discussion with the author, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*El municipio siempre existió en las áreas urbanas como entidad de gestión estatal, de gestión estatal del desarrollo, siempre ha habido el municipio, que invertía, que recibía plata y que cobraba plata de impuestos. En las zonas rurales los municipios no existían, no había, entonces, todas esas áreas rurales estaban, no tenían un órgano de gestión estatal a nivel local, entonces donde hay el cambio verdadero es precisamente en estas áreas rurales.*”

<sup>78</sup> Carlos Hugo Molina, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

<sup>79</sup> Carlos Hugo Molina, in discussion with the author, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016: “*popular yo me convertí en ciudadano, ya no solo en un número, me convertí en un actor que tenía derechos y obligaciones y podía ejercerlos, ese es uno.*”

## **Conclusions**

In chapter one, I advanced several hypotheses. After an analysis of my qualitative data, I conclude that H<sub>1</sub> is correct, decentralization reform has positive effects on ethno-political mobilization. As defined in chapter one, decentralization is a bundle of four variables. Based on the interview data collected, specifically, devolution and deconcentration are linked to increasing ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia. Deconcentration lowered the barriers that prevented indigenous organizations from politically mobilizing before decentralization by creating many accessible local governance positions. Devolution incentivized indigenous organizations to politicize by distributing resources to the local governments for local control.

H<sub>3</sub> hypothesized that decentralization reform leads to increased political representation of indigenous peoples in local elected offices through the creation of indigenous political parties. Though decentralization did open up the space for ethno-political mobilization, it did not allow for the easy creation of new, non-traditional, political parties. This meant that only the most organized indigenous groups were able to successfully politicize. As a result, only one party, MAS, emerged as a successful indigenous political party.

Two causal mechanisms are identified that further explain the success of MAS. These mechanisms suggest that though ethno-political mobilization was caused by decentralization, in order for the ethno-political mobilization to be successful there had to be high levels of pre-existing organization. The highlands experienced greater mobilization than the lowland because peasant unions have been entrenched in society since the 1950s and align with the State's capitalist framework. Since the lowlands did not experience high levels of social organization until the 1980s and because indigenous organizations have historically fought against the



individualized and capitalist model of the State, fewer indigenous groups were able to mobilize successfully and none were able to achieve the widespread support of MAS. Qualitative interview data further suggests that indigenous movements in rural areas were the most successful in mobilizing politically because lower population densities meant that politics became a matter of life or death.

In conclusion, decentralization impacts ethno-political mobilization positively. In the next chapter, I use quantitative regression analysis to test for a statistical relationship between pre-existing levels of organization on ethno-political mobilization, and rurality on ethno-political mobilization.

## **Measuring the Effect of Pre-Existing Levels of Organization and Rurality on Ethno-Political Mobilization**

In chapter four, I discussed how levels of pre-existing organization and rurality may have impacted the prevalence of ethno-political mobilization in the formal political arena following massive decentralization through the LPP. Using trends that emerged through coding of interviews collected during fieldwork, I drew two preliminary conclusions. First, it appeared that high levels of pre-existing organizational structure resulted in higher levels of ethno-political mobilization. Pre-existing indigenous organizations were present throughout much of Bolivia, however, they were the most established in the highlands where they took the form of peasant unions. Second, it appeared that rural municipalities were more likely than urban municipalities to experience greater levels of ethno-political mobilization. This was because smaller populations were easier to organize and because these communities had no access to local government before the LPP.

In this chapter, I use OLS to measure the impact of elevation, rurality, and control variables on ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia after the LPP was enacted. I pull on a dataset that contains data collected between 1997 and 2006, which include variables that describe levels of political participation, demographic data, and socio-economic data for all 314 municipalities in Bolivia. I use this data to understand (by focusing on the 1999 and 2004 municipal elections) the relationship between pre-existing levels of organization and ethno-political mobilization, and the relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization. The majority of this dataset

was compiled by Carew Boulding, from Bolivian census data that is no longer available (Boulding 2015). A few variables, such as altitude and population from 2001, were compiled by the author using publicly available information.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. First, I discuss the variables and model I use. Second, I discuss the results of my analysis in terms of statistically significant regression coefficients. Finally, I conclude with ways that these results can be expanded on through future study.

## **Data and Model**

The data necessary for this project was difficult to obtain. Data in general from Bolivia, especially at the local level, is difficult to access if it even exists. This was compounded because the data I needed to run the regression analyses was from over 20 years ago. Though I was able to identify proxy variables for the concepts I wanted to measure from the dataset that Carew Boulding compiled, data limitations restricted parts of my qualitative analysis.

I chose to operationalize the concept of ethno-political mobilization by using the percent of the vote-share that MAS received per municipality as my dependent variable. The most widely used measure on ethno-political mobilization is the number of seats an ethnic party wins (Brancati 2006, Gurr 2000). This measure, however, was not ideal for my analysis for two reasons. First, because of data limitations, I only had information on the party identification of the mayor and not on the party identification of Municipal Council members. This is potentially problematic because municipal elections in Bolivia closely resemble parliamentary elections. Voters vote for parties, not for individual candidates, seats on the Council are allocated proportionally, and then the mayor is appointed by the party with the majority of votes (Boulding

2015). This means that ethno-political mobilization is only visible if MAS won a majority of the votes, which is an incredibly high bar to meet. This also implicitly equates ethno-political mobilization with electoral success. As discussed in chapter one, ethno-political mobilization is triggered when two conditions are satisfied. First, the social cleavage that separates “the minority group from the majority must be salient and accepted by putative members of the former as dividing the polity into separate groups,” and second, “the members of the minority group [must] accept the linkage between the existence of the social cleavage and the right to some degree of political accommodation derived from that group’s distinctiveness” (Miodownik 2009). Neither of these two conditions predicates ethnic mobilization on the electoral success of the movement and to do so would be to detract from my results. Second, because it was so difficult to get a majority of the votes necessary to become mayor, in 1999 there were only 11 MAS mayors. This narrow sample made it difficult to justify using MAS mayors as a dependent variable.

Percent of the vote-share MAS received was a fairly ideal measure for my dependent variable because it essentially measures how many people voted for MAS in each municipality based on the ballots they submitted. This overcomes the problems discussed above because it does not artificially enforce a high barrier for ethnic mobilization. Additionally, I had data on the vote-share for MAS from all 314 municipalities. As can be observed in Table 1.5, MAS received a higher percentage of the vote across municipalities in 2004 than in 1999 (the mean in 1999 was 4.3% compared to 18.6% in 2004). There is considerable variation in the vote-share MAS received across municipalities. In 1999, MAS received 70.3% of the vote in the highland municipality of Aroma and in Villa Tunari, a municipality in the Chapare region of the Cochabamba district. However, in 77 of the municipalities, MAS received 0% of the vote in 1999. In 2004, the municipality with the highest vote-share for MAS (87.1%) was located in the

highland district of Potosí, in the municipality Arampampa. The second highest vote-share for MAS (83.86%) was also located in Potosí, in the municipality Caripuyo. Thirty-one municipalities did not have any votes for MAS. It is unclear, however, if these municipalities had such low values because there was no candidate from MAS present. Having this information would have been helpful for understanding why so many municipalities had such low turnout rates for MAS.

In my model, I have two independent variables, one that is a proxy measure for pre-existing levels of organization and one that is a measure of how rural the municipality is. The Bolivian Census has historically measured the percent of the population that is rural in each municipality. Although this information is no longer part of the publically available data for the years of 1999 or 2001, it was in Carew Boulding's dataset. The percent of the population that is rural in each municipality provided a simple and uncontroversial measure for rurality. The mean level of rurality in Bolivia is 81.066%, which is incredibly high. The most urban municipality in Bolivia is the city of Cochabamba, and there are 185 municipalities that are coded as 100% rural. This suggests that this variable is not capturing variation within very rural Bolivian municipalities and only captures meaningful variation between urban and peri-urban municipalities. This is shown visibly in Figure 5.3. Although this does not make the variable inoperable, it should be noted as it could potentially impact my results. I hypothesized that the regression coefficient relating ethno-political mobilization and rurality would be positive.

The level of pre-existing organization was a more difficult concept to capture as an independent variable. However, the relationship between altitude and the history of organizational development made altitude an attractive proxy variable. As discussed in chapters three and four, following the agrarian reform that occurred after the Revolution 1952, the

highland indigenous groups received land through redistribution programs. This resulted in a large highland indigenous peasant class who mobilized around their shared class and indigenous identity to form unions. These unions became incredibly powerful over the next fifty years and gained immense social power and capital in the highlands. Conversely, in the lowlands, indigenous organizations did not emerge until the 1980s in response to discrimination from the era of dictators and neoliberal policy that threatened their traditional communitarian lifestyle. Thus, looking historically, altitude has been a strong driver for the level of organization of indigenous communities and can be used as an appropriate proxy. I used publically available Google Maps data to measure the altitude of each municipality. I hypothesized that the regression coefficient relating ethno-political mobilization and altitude would be positive.

Altitude differences in Bolivia are huge. The mean altitude in Bolivia is 2343.5 meters above sea-level, however (see figure 5.4) the distribution is bi-modal with most municipalities clustered around the two extremes. The highest municipality in Bolivia, San Antonio de Esmoruco in Potosí, is 5,679 meters above sea-level. Puerto Suarez, in the Santa Cruz district, is the lowest municipality in Bolivia at 112 meters above sea-level.

Control variables are important because they ensure that the variation in my dependent variable (vote-share that MAS receives) is in fact due to my target independent variables (rurality and altitude) and that no explanatory power is being falsely assigned to rurality and altitude. Although the independent variables are present in the literature, they are most prominent in my qualitative data, so it is important to make sure that these are not spurious relationships that people are observing and that there are, in fact, significant relationships between them.

It is well established in the mobilization literature that a number of socio-economic variables affect voter mobilization. These factors are education, development levels, and wealth

(Blais 2000) (W. R. Rosenstone 1980) (S. Rosenstone 1982) (Kernell 1977). To control for education, I include a literacy measure in my model. This variable, taken from Carew Boulding's dataset, is measured by the percentage of the population above 15 years of age that is literate. While the literature suggests that mobilization is higher when the population is more educated, there is no research indicating that literacy might affect ethno-political mobilization specifically. Because of this, I expected that there would not be a significant correlation between ethno-political mobilization and education. This relates, in part, to the measure of ethno-political mobilization I am using. Since my measure focuses on the percentage of votes that go to MAS, rather than the percentage of indigenous people that voted (since this data doesn't exist) it means that my dependent variable wouldn't be impacted by increased levels mobilization overall. It would only be impacted by increased mobilization driven by education if the effect on the indigenous community was meaningfully different than the impact on the community writ-large. Further research on how education affects indigenous communities (with the appropriate datasets) is warranted. To control for development, I include several variables to measure different concepts within development. I use the percent of the population that is unemployed to measure economic development and the percent of houses with electricity to measure infrastructural development. Although the literature is split on the impact of development on mobilization, I would expect to see a negative correlation between development controls and ethno-political mobilization because indigenous groups generally lived in less developed communities based on historic discrimination (Shoaei 2012).

Wealth is the final variable that is often linked to mobilization (Rosenstone 1982, W. R. Rosenstone 1980, Kernell 1977). However, I ended up not being able to use wealth as a control because the variable that measured wealth (income per capita) only had 248 observations. Had I

included this variable in my model I would have greatly reduced the number of observations included in the regression. Since I only have 314 observations, to begin with, I decided not to include income per capita in order to preserve the size of my sample. Additionally, I expect that the percentage of houses with electricity also functions as a measure of wealth, since wealthier people are more likely to have electricity. In addition to the controls already mentioned, I also used population as a control because the size of a population can often have an impact on how mobilized indigenous groups are.

It is important to note that my control variables and independent variable measuring rurality are not from the exact same year as my dependent variable. For example, the population controls I use were taken a year or two after the dependent variable was measured. I am forced to use data from differing years because of limited data availability. While this is suboptimal, I do not expect that this had a meaningful impact on my results. There is no reason to believe from the literature nor from my qualitative data that there would be any significant variations between the years my data is measured in. Therefore, this should not affect my results in any substantial way.

The basic regression I ran is as follows:

$$\text{Vote Share} = a + b_1(\text{Altitude}) + b_2(\text{RuralPopulation}) + b_3(\text{Unemployment}) + b_4(\text{Electricity}) + b_5(\text{Population}) + b_6(\text{Literacy}) + b_7(\text{Birthplace}) + e$$

My unit of analysis is the municipal district in Bolivia. Though my sample contains data on all 314 municipalities in Bolivia, gaps in some of the variables meant that my final regressions had 312 observations (1999) and 308 observations (2004). Nonetheless, I do not expect that this greatly impacted my results. Further, because I wanted to look at two different election years (1999 and 2004) I ran two separate regressions, one for each year. The models



were the same for both regressions, though I updated the population data because I had access to updated information for this control variable (i.e. the population data for the 1999 regression is from 2001 and for the 2004 regression it is from 2005). Since I only had data for two years, I did not have enough data to do a complete time-series analysis. Additionally, I ran my regressions robustly to account for the heteroscedasticity in my data. I did this to ensure that the standard errors in my data were not causing biased results.

When working with a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative work), it is not unusual for researchers to both identify cases that demand special attention and then to account for them in their model using a dummy variable instead of dropping them from their sample (Brown 1999, 688). In my model, I introduce a dummy variable (Birthplace) to account for three anomalous municipalities which all saw high levels of ethno-political mobilization even though they sit at middle altitudes.

These three municipalities are Chimore in the Carrasco region in Cochabamba, Puerto Villarroel in the Carrasco region in Cochabamba, and Villa Tunai in the Chapare region in Cochabamba. Both my qualitative data and the literature explain why these three municipalities are systematically different from others. These three municipalities are all made up of the geographic area called the Chapare, which is the coca-growing region and the region where Evo Morales, the leader of MAS, was born and raised. (Rafael Puente, Adolfo Mendoza, and George Komandina in discussion with the author, December 2016). The Chapare region has become an important region for a lot of reasons. Most importantly, the farming of the coca leaf in the region has triggered seasonal indigenous-peasant migration and general occupation of the region by small indigenous farmers from highlands who resettled the area in search of better economic opportunities (Healy 1988). Because of the economic and cultural significance of the coca leaf,

the highland Aymara and Quechua indigenous cultures now dominate the region. This means that the indigenous peasant union organizational structures dominated these regions instead of the indigenous organizations that are usually present in the lower altitudes.

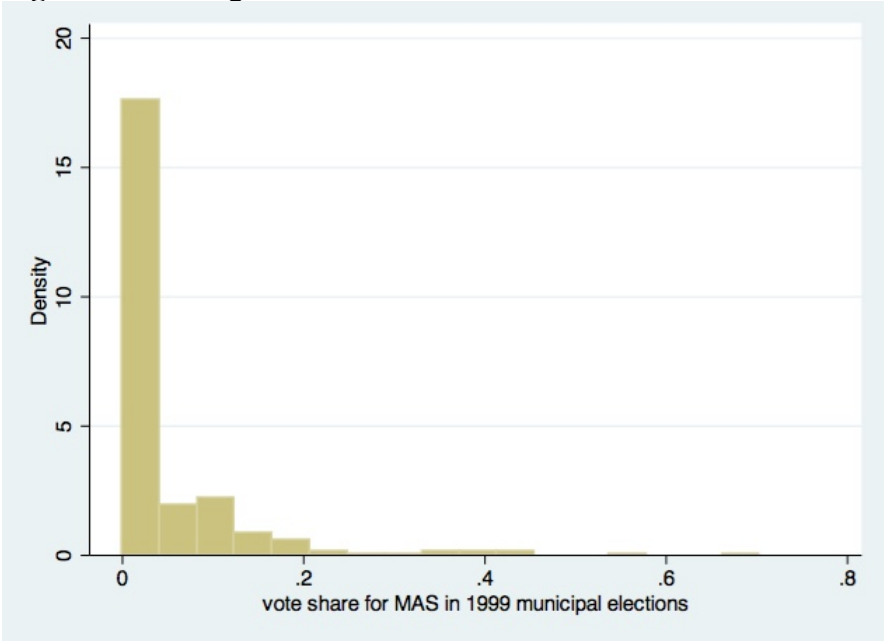
Thus, the introduction of the Birthplace dummy variable was useful to control for these explained outliers. Explaining these outliers and controlling for them is especially important when using OLS because OLS is sensitive to outliers when the sample size is relatively small.

**Table 5.1** Descriptive statistics for Bolivia.

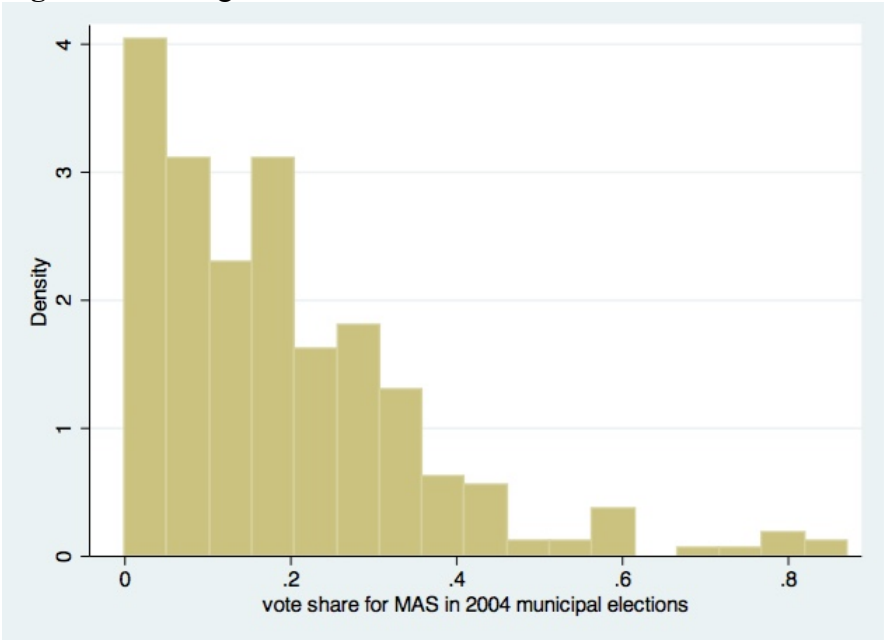
| Variable                                | Mean     | SD       | Min   | Max     |
|---|----------|----------|-------|---------|
| MAS Vote Share 1999                     | 0.043    | 0.085    | 0     | 0.703   |
| MAS Vote Share 2004                     | 0.186    | 0.163    | 0     | 0.871   |
| Rural Population (% of population)      | 81.066   | 28.402   | 0.1   | 100     |
| Altitude                                | 2343.532 | 1462.487 | 112   | 5679    |
| Income per capita (in USD)              | 665.339  | 190.089  | 245   | 999     |
| Literacy (% of pop. above 15)           | 79.159   | 12.208   | 40.6  | 96.8    |
| Unemployment (% unemployed)             | 0.084    | 0.059    | 0.005 | 0.48    |
| Electric (% of houses with electricity) | 0.272    | 0.22     | 0     | 0.879   |
| Population (2001)                       | 25838.06 | 91990.76 | 221   | 1131778 |
| Population (2005)                       | 33518.54 | 115244.6 | 318   | 1372356 |

Source: Carew Boulding; n=314 except for rural population (n=313), Income per Capita (n=248), 2005 Population (n=311)

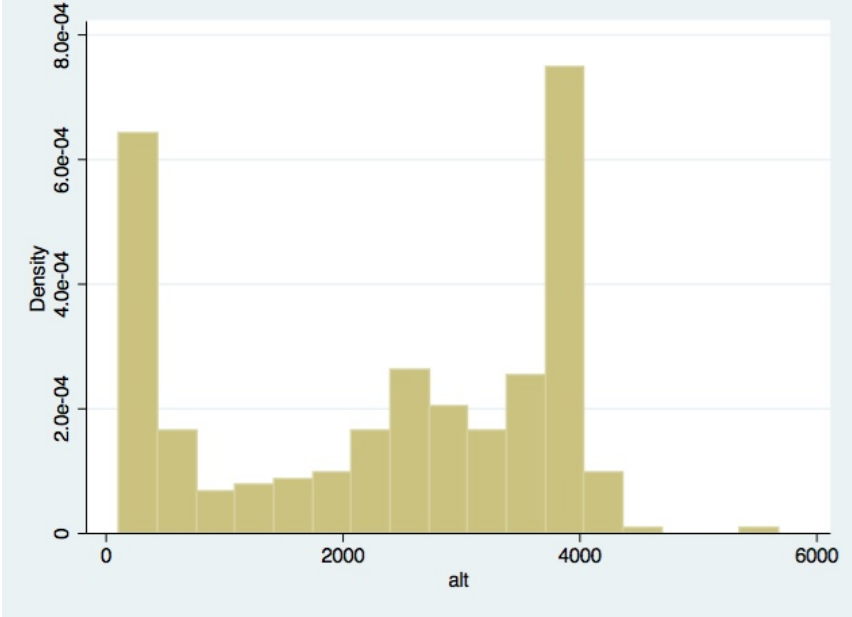
**Figure 5.1:** Histogram for the vote-share of MAS in 1999



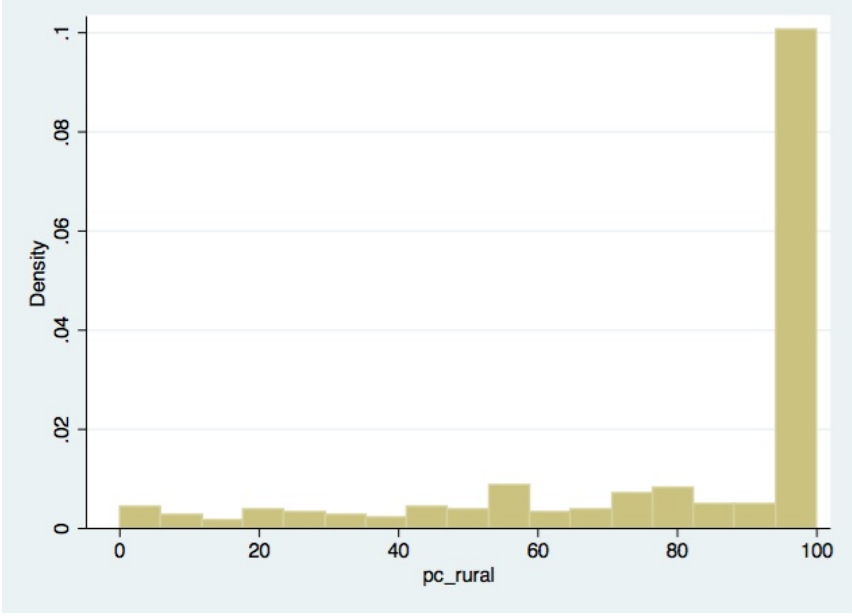
**Figure 5.2** Histogram for the vote-share of MAS in 2004



**Figure 5.3** Histogram for the altitude of municipalities in Bolivia



**Figure 5.4** Histogram for the percent of the population that is rural



## Results

The results of the final regressions can be found in Table 5.2. Though the coefficients on my second independent variable (altitude) were what I expected, the coefficients between ethno-political mobilization (vote-share) and rurality were not what I expected. I found that there was a positive and significant coefficient relating altitude and ethno-political mobilization, but a negative and non-significant coefficient for rurality. Interestingly, for the 2004 election, there was a significant negative correlation between ethnic mobilization (vote-share) and education (literacy).

For both election years, 1999 and 2004, the coefficient on altitude is positive and significant meaning that as altitude increased so did the vote-share that MAS received. For the regression on the 1999 election data, the coefficient for altitude is  $7.78e-06$ , which tells us that for every 1,000 meters of altitude you get (approximately) an extra 1% of votes for MAS. For the regression on the 2004 election data, the coefficient for altitude is  $.0000365$ , which tells us that for every 1,000 meters of altitude you get (approximately) an extra 3.7% of votes for MAS.

These findings are in line with both the qualitative data discussed in chapter four and the literature discussed in chapter one. My interview data suggested that ethno-political mobilization was higher in areas where social organizations were well-established and in-line with capitalist models. Thus, the organizations you would expect to see experiencing high levels of ethnic mobilization would be the highland unions as opposed to the lowland indigenous organizations. Literature supports this as well; many scholars argue that access to resources and lowered barriers to direct participation (running candidates and forming parties) are the aspects of decentralization that trigger ethno-political mobilization (Yusoff 2016) (Treisman 1997, Hale 2000, Horowitz 1985, Gurr 2000, Handgrave 1994). If this is true, then it makes sense that ethnic

groups that already had access to resources (both monetary and human) would be able to mobilize quickly and easily once the barriers to participation were lowered and they gained additional resources. Groups that did not have access to resources prior to decentralization would presumably have had more difficulty mobilizing.

The relationship between the percentage of the population that was rural and the vote-share that MAS received has a negative correlation, but it is not significant. It is worth noting that this result differs substantially from the conclusions I derived from the qualitative data I collected. On reflection, however, is not surprising given the literature on rurality and mobilization. Though scholars generally agree that mobilization and turnout for national elections are higher in rural areas, it is less clear what the relationship is between rural districts and local participation (Blais 2000, (Oliver 2000). This result falls in line with this, suggesting that more work needs to be done before any conclusions can be drawn. The literature on ethno-political mobilization and decentralization offers a plausible explanation for why the relationship is negative. Scholars that find a negative link between decentralization and ethno-political mobilization argue that decentralization decreases ethno-political mobilization because groups feel like their voices are already being heard when there are local-level elected officials and therefore see no reason or benefit to organizing around identity (Tesbelis 1999, Stepan 1990, Kaufman 1996). This argument is most persuasive in rural areas where politicians and political institutions can hear and respond to constituent needs more effectively. However, though the coefficients are negative for both the 1999 and the 2004 election, they are incredibly small negative correlations and do not have significance, meaning no conclusions can be reliably drawn based on my regression results.

Although there was no statistically significant relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization, it is interesting and important to compare this conclusion with the conclusion at the end of chapter four, which argued that ethno-political mobilization was more likely to occur in rural areas because the population was directly involved in the policies and politics of the community. That conclusion was drawn based on the interview data collected, in which ten of my twelve interviewees mentioned how important the LPP was because it brought resources to rural areas that before lacked them. Although I do not have strong enough conclusions to confidently say that this was not the case, there is reason to doubt that this is necessarily the case, even though it seemed to be conveyed by my interviewees. It may be the case that political participation is more visible in smaller communities, which skews peoples' perceptions.

Literacy has a statistically significant negative correlation with ethno-political mobilization in the 2004 election, which is surprising because I expected literacy and ethno-political mobilization to have a positive correlation given the literature on voter turnout and participation. However, this has potentially interesting and important implications for the study of ethno-political mobilization because it suggests that when people are mobilizing based on identity they are not as affected by the variables that usually drive voter turnout and participation. Nonetheless, because the correlation between literacy and ethno-political mobilization is not significant for the 1999 election, more study needs to be done before any major conclusions can be drawn.

One additional important caveat should be noted. This caveat is that the  $R^2$  values for my regressions are .2965 for 1999 and .2569 for 2004. These values tell us that the variation in my independent variables can explain about 30% and 26% of the variation in my dependent variable.

Although there is no cutoff for ‘acceptable’  $R^2$  values, these are on the low side, which means that my regressions may capture all of the factors that go into determining variation in ethno-political mobilization. Additional variables to consider include a better way to control for the impact of wealth on ethno-political mobilization, a variable to capture how many parties participated in the election along with MAS, and a variable that measured if MAS was the incumbent or if MAS was running against an incumbent party/mayor.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, there is enough data to support the argument that pre-existing levels of organization did positively impact ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia positively. There is not enough data to conclude either way the impact that rurality had on ethno-political mobilization. Nonetheless, despite some data limitations, my quantitative analysis is an important framework for future analyses that address the relationship between variables that are associated with mobilization and ethno-political mobilization itself. In the future, my model could be improved by creating a combined measure for mobilization that includes the number of people registered for the party, if the party fielded candidates in each municipality, vote-share, and if the party was an incumbent.



**Table 5.2** Vote-Share for MAS in 1999 and 2004 elections, regressed on altitude, rurality, and socio-economic variables.

|  | <b>1999 election<br/>(1)</b> | <b>2004 election<br/>(2)</b> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Altitude   | 7.78e-06**<br>(3.28e-06)     | .0000365**<br>( 8.28e-06)    |
| Percent of the population in rural areas           | -6.29E-05<br>(.000289)       | -0.0002766<br>(.0004226)     |
| Percent of the population over 15 that is literate | -0.000425<br>(.0004323)      | -.0028493**<br>(.0008625)    |
| Percent of the population that is unemployed       | 0.2110747<br>(.1786804)      | -0.380965<br>(.235753)       |
| Percent of houses with electricity                 | -0.0018245<br>(.0385485)     | -0.0439693<br>(.0611163)     |
| Population 2001                                    | -1.12E-08<br>(1.72e-08)      | .                            |
| Population 2005                                    | .                            | 2.40E-08<br>(4.46e-08)       |
| Birthplace   | .4473761**<br>(.0416721)     | .5839769**<br>(.0612005)     |
| Constant   | 0.0429032<br>(.0375001)      | .3835163**<br>(.0881283)     |
| No. of observations                                | 312                          | 308                          |
| R squared  | 0.2965                       | 0.2569                       |

Cell entries are coefficients with standard errors in parentheses; statistical significance: \*  $p \leq .10$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .05$ .

## Conclusion

In September of 1990, lowland indigenous groups marched 650 kilometers from the Amazonian department of Beni to La Paz, the highest administrative capital in the world at approximately 3,630 meters in the Andes. Though the march was initially 300 participants, it quickly grew as they made their way through various villages and indigenous communities; by the time the marchers reached La Paz the march had swelled to some 800 participants. The participants called the march *La marcha por el territorio y la dignidad* (the March for Territory and Dignity) and demanded that the neoliberal national government respect the traditional territory, culture, and community of lowland indigenous groups.

Over 500 years of discrimination, exclusion, and suppression of indigenous populations characterizes Bolivian history. Though ethnic cleavages did begin to emerge as early as the 1950s, after the Chaco War, they did not politicize until the late 1990s, and instead, political participation in the *formal* political arena remained based on class identification. However, in 1997 the highland indigenous party, *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) won four deputy positions in municipal governments and in 2005 their candidate, Evo Morales, won the presidency.

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to understand whether this success was caused in part by the Law of Popular Participation, a massive decentralization reform passed in 1994. To do this, I used a mixed-method approach, combining theory building qualitative work with quantitative work that statistically tests two of the emerging theories that explain the variation in ethno-political participation across local municipalities in Bolivia. In doing this research, I have attempted to formulate some useful and enlightening conclusions both about the impact of decentralization on ethno-political mobilization and about the other factors that facilitated this

mobilization in conjunction with decentralization. These are some of the major findings that emerge.

*1. Ethnic identity was constructed in Bolivia by social and political institutions.* Although ethnic cleavages were present in Bolivia before the decentralization reform in 1994, they were not primordial. As discussed in chapter two, class cleavages shaped much of Bolivian society until the 1900s. In the 1950s, following the Chaco War, ethnicity first became a documented collective identity. Throughout the latter half of the 1900s, it developed across the over thirty ethnic groups in Bolivia. Generally, two dominant ethnic identities were formed: highland identity and lowland identity. These highland and lowland identities had both ethnic and class components, which suggests that ethnic identity emerged from class and class conflict. This has similarities to arguments from scholars who emphasize the Marxist argument that shared class positions, particularly lower class positions, create and reinforce cultural boundaries and ethnic identity.

Though the conclusion that ethnicity is constructed is in line with ethno-political mobilization theory, the finding that these ethnic cleavages were salient before politicization occurred differs from theory on ethnic political parties which argues that political parties both presuppose and produce ethnic cleavages. In Bolivia, ethnic cleavages existed before the late 1990s when ethnicity became a politically mobilizing force. The implication of this is that MAS developed differently than the literature on ethnic party development would suggest; instead of creating ethnic cleavages, MAS used pre-existing cleavages to succeed. Further, instead of appealing to voters based on ethnic exclusionary rhetoric, MAS used a broad cleavage-cutting discourse. This is in line with the findings of other ethno-political mobilization scholars who study Latin America.

*2. Decentralization reform is the sum of many parts. Though the literature disagrees over what decentralization is responsible for, I find that specifically, two of the four component parts of decentralization, devolution and deconcentration, triggered ethno-political mobilization.* In chapter one, I discuss a body of literature that has drawn divergent conclusions on the relationship between ethno-political mobilization and decentralization. The majority of these studies conclude that varying strengths of ethnic identity, the political system, and the strength of regional parties impacts the level to which decentralization reform causes ethno-political mobilization. Though these studies are important because they draw conclusions from cross-country comparisons, few look specifically at the components of decentralization (deconcentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization). Instead, they assume that decentralization has the effect of lowering barriers to participation and acting as a successful medium between communities and the national government.

In chapter four, I used fieldwork to unpack the impact of the specific parts of decentralization that influenced ethno-political mobilization. I found that deconcentration and devolution were recurrent themes in interviews. Upon further analysis, it became clear that these two components of decentralization caused ethno-political mobilization by lowering the barriers to participation for ethnically identifying candidates and by redistributing resources. This incentivized groups to compete for governmental control of the resources. Further, it is clear that these two components of decentralization not only incentivized participation at the local level but also over the course of time allowed ethnic political parties and candidates to participate and eventually control national level politics. This is demonstrated by the rise of MAS as discussed in chapter four.

3. *Though devolution and deconcentration did cause ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia, their effectiveness was dependent on a causal mechanism: high levels of pre-existing social organization. This explains the emergence of ethno-political mobilization in highland communities and the relative non-emergence of ethno-political mobilization in lowland communities.* Although political institutions such as decentralization have an important effect on ethno-political mobilization, the mechanism by which ethno-political mobilization is successful is the level of pre-existing organization. This additional mechanism explains the variation observed in levels of ethno-political mobilization across municipalities in Bolivia (i.e. some municipalities saw a lot of ethno-political mobilization while others saw none). This causal mechanism emerges from the qualitative data as discussed in chapter four. Many of the interviews I conducted discussed the important role that indigenous social movements have played in the development of politically mobilized identity.

In the highlands, indigenous peasants formed powerful unions based on private land ownership after the land redistribution reforms that were a result of the 1952 Revolution. These unions soon controlled most aspects of civil society, which meant they had access to capital in the form of both monetary and human capital. The resources of these unions and their alignment with class cleavages that the government was historically based on facilitated their ability to quickly and effectively move from social participation to political involvement in the formal arena once barriers to participation were lowered by decentralization. Conversely, in the lowlands, indigenous social organizations did not develop until the 1980s and were centered around collective land and the preservation of traditional ways of life, issues that did not intersect with the State. Therefore, municipalities that had the social organization of the highlands, they

were able to ethically mobilize more successfully. This conclusion is in line with mobilization literature.

The relationship between ethno-political mobilization and levels of pre-existing organization following decentralization was measured statistically in chapter five in two election years. For both election years, the relationship between altitude (the measure for pre-existing levels of organization) and ethno-political mobilization was positive and significant. Though this suggests that decentralization may have reduced ethnic conflict (i.e. fewer protests and marches) by incorporating ethnic organizations into the political sphere, this is not the case for either the highland or lowland indigenous groups. Decentralization did not quell social uprisings in Bolivia, in fact, in some cases, they have gotten more severe in the post-decentralized society. This reinforces the conclusion of this thesis that decentralization did not mediate conflict between societal cleavages and may have exacerbated them.

*4. Rurality played an important, but statistically insignificant, role in ethno-political mobilization after decentralization. This means it is unlikely that rurality is a second causal mechanism.* In the interview data I collected, a second causal mechanism was suggested. More rural municipalities were theorized by the interviewees to have a stronger emergence of ethno-political mobilization. However, in chapter five this was tested and the relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization was found to be both negative and statistically insignificant. The literature discussed in chapter five gives a theoretical explanation for this finding, ethno-political mobilization is less likely after decentralization when groups feel like their voices are being heard by local-level officials. In small, rural communities, it is more likely that the community would be heard and represented by the officials. Nonetheless, it is interesting that many of my interviews referred to the importance of rurality when discussing ethno-political

mobilization in Bolivia. Rurality has close ties with class and so the importance of rurality in the qualitative data suggests that class issues are very intertwined with ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia. More work should be done to further understand the relationship between rurality and ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia.

### **Alternate Explanations for Ethno-Political Mobilization**

While conducting interviews with academics in Bolivia, several alternative theories for why ethno-political mobilization occurred in Bolivia were discussed. Though these explanations may have contributed to ethno-political mobilization, none provide a sufficient reason for why indigenous groups were uniquely able to mobilize in the years between 1995 and 1997 absent of the lower barriers to participation in the formal arena because of decentralization. In this section, I discuss these theories in conversation with my conclusions.

The first alternate explanation was present in a conversation I had with Alejandra Ramirez, a sociologist at the University of San Simone in Cochabamba. She traces some of the ethno-political mobilization back to the development of the idea of citizenship and governmental participation. She argues that the concept of citizenship started to really grow in the 1980s as access to the media grew and there were booms in access to college and university. However, though Bolivian society was modernizing during this time, many of the indigenous, rural communities that experienced ethno-political mobilization were not able to access things like higher education. So, though it may be the case that this expanding conception of citizenship due to the increased accessibility of ideas and viewpoints may have contributed to the ethno-political decentralization and certainly played a role in the argument for why the State should

decentralize, it does not seem sufficient to explain the emergence of ethno-political mobilization alone.

The second theory that emerged from my interviews with academics related the emergence of ethno-political mobilization with the economic crisis of the State during neoliberalism. Though the neoliberal model was initially accepted by the Bolivian population, especially in the urban cities, there was a State crisis in response to neoliberal economic policy based on privatization and foreign investment following the second-generation political reforms of the neoliberal era including the LPP. Adolfo Mendoza, a sociologist at the University of San Simone, explained the breakdown of the neoliberal and State structure:

almost immediately after the approval of the second generation of neoliberal political reforms, the party system entered into crisis, and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the crisis become unsustainable and it passes from a crisis into the collapse of the party system.<sup>80</sup>

The collapse of the traditional party structure, based on the frustrations of the citizens (both indigenous and not indigenous) opened space in the political system for indigenous movements to politicize. Additionally, since non-indigenous voters were also frustrated with the traditional parties who were unable to govern effectively, they were willing to vote for an outsider, non-traditional party who offered a policy platform opposed to neoliberal ideas and foreign investment.

While this theory explains why we might see ethnic parties having electoral success, it does not give much of an explanation for why they arose in the first place. Why did ethnic

---

<sup>80</sup>Adolfo Mendoza, in discussion with the author, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016: “*inmediatamente después de aprobarse las reformas políticas o las reformas de segunda generación del neoliberalismo entra en crisis el sistema de partidos, pero luego a principios del siglo XX esta crisis es insostenible y de la crisis se pasa al colapso del sistema de partidos*”



candidates not try to work within established systems and reform the left-leaning parties?

Therefore, while this theory may be related to the rise ethnic political participation in the late 1990s, it is not a sufficient explanation on its own. Though the alternate explanations that emerged during my interviews with academics may have impacted ethno-political mobilization in Bolivia, my conclusion that political institutions (through decentralization) provided the necessary variables to cause ethno-political mobilization is the only theory that provides a clear answer for why ethnic political mobilization occurred specifically in the late 1990s in the way that it did.

### **Contributions and Opportunities for further research**

I hope that this thesis contributes to the global community in three ways. First, I hope that it offers conceptual clarity to scholarly debate on the effects of decentralization. Additionally, I hope that the causal mechanisms I identify are useful for future studies on the effects of decentralization. Second, I hope that my conclusions about the importance of social movements are useful as scholars continue to think about the role that these movements play in formal political systems. It is clear from my conclusions that while these movements may not always play a role in the formal political arena, their presence in the informal arena is really important. Finally, decentralization has played (and continues to play) a large role in the political-institutional structure of Bolivia; I hope that my findings will be helpful to local Bolivian communities and governments as they continue to think about the role that indigenous organizations play in the political sphere.

Since the LPP was passed in 1994, Bolivia has continued to decentralize. In 2009, Bolivia under the leadership of Morales ratified a new constitution that recognizes Bolivia as a

“plurinational state” with “autonomies.” This language acknowledges that there are multiple indigenous nations within the Bolivian State and grants these nations the ability to self-govern according to their own cultures, traditions, and customs. Over the past several years, Bolivia has struggled to understand what this autonomy means in practical terms, however, this symbolic change has the potential to radically change the relationship between the State and indigenous groups in both the highlands and the lowlands. As the idea of autonomy for indigenous groups within the Bolivian State continues to develop, decentralization will likely take on a new meaning for Bolivia.

In the future, it will be important to continue to study the effect of decentralization and autonomy on indigenous groups in Bolivia. Though this thesis attempts to introduce these topics there is much more that can be studied. Further research should be done to understand if the conclusions made in this thesis are generalizable to countries beyond Bolivia. Additionally, within Bolivia, more research should be done to unpack the relationship between ethno-political mobilization, decentralization, and rurality. This work could be done by building on my statistical model, adding in better data that does not have as many limitations.

Reflecting on the process of this thesis, a major area of challenge and growth came from trying to understand the complexity of indigenous identity in Bolivia. Throughout this project, I had discovered that while the intersection of indigenous identity and political representation is an incredibly important topic that ought to be researched and understood, it is also impossibly complex and convoluted. Though Bolivia has made important steps towards the inclusion of indigenous identity within the political system, more can always be done. One hopes that future progress in Bolivia will continue to strengthen the relationship between the government and indigenous identity so that the two can fully co-exist.

## Bibliography

- Altman, David and Rick Lalander. 2003. "Bolivia's Popular Participation Law: An Undemocratic Democratization Process?" *Decentralization and Democratic Governance: Experiences from India, Bolivia and South Africa*.
- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*. New York: Verso.
- Ayoub, Phillip, Sphia Wallace, and Chris Zepeda-Millán. 2014. "Triangulation in Social Movement Research." In *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, by Donatella della Porta. Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Barth, F. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Blais, A. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote? The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Blanes, J. n.d. "Decentralization y participation popular en las comunidades aymaras de Bolivia: Reflexiones sobre el future de la modernizacion del Estado." *CEBEM* 1999.
- Boulding, Carew and David Brown. 2015. "Do Political Parties Matter for Turnout? Number of parties, electoral rules and local elections in Brazil and Bolivia." 21 (3): 404-416.
- Brancati, D. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?" *International Organization Int. Org.* 60 (3).
- Brown, David S. 1999. "Reading, Writing, and Regime Type: Democracy's Impact on Primary School Enrollment." *Research Quarterly* 52 (4): 681-707.
- Brubaker, R. 2006. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge University Press.
2013. *Censo Nacional de Poblacion y Vivienda*. <http://censosbolivia.ine.gob.bo/>.
- Chandra, K. and S. Wilkinson. 2008. "Measuring the Effects of Ethnicity." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (45): 515-563.
- Chandra, K. 2004. "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (2).
- COHA. 2009. *A Brief History of Bolivia and the Rise of President Morales*. January 2009. <<http://www.coha.org/a-brief-recent-history-of-bolivia-and-the-rise-of-president-morales/>>.
- Collier, Henry Brady and David C. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Shared Standards*. Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Creswell, John W. and Clark, Vicki Plano. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. n.d. "Evo Morales." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Evo-Morales>.
- Enikolopov, R., and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. n.d. "Decentralization and Political Institutions ." *Journal of Public Economics* 91.
- Faguet, J. 2003. "Decentralization and Local Governance in Bolivia: An overview from the bottom up." *Development Research Center*.
- Faguet, J. 2003. "Decentralization and Local Government in Bolivia: An Overview from the Bottom Up." *Working Paper for the Development Research Center* .
- . 2012. *Decentralization and Popular Democracy*. University of Michigan.
- Fearon, J. 2004. "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence." *Oxford Handbooks Online*.
- Feron, J. and D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnic Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 75-90.
- Gamarra, E.A. 1997. "Hybrid Presidentialism and Democratization: The Case of Bolivia." In *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Mainwaring S. & M. Shugart. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .
- Grey-Molina, G. 2001. "Exclusion, Participation and Democratic State-building." In *Towards Democracy Viability: The Bolivian Experience*, edited by L. & J. Crabtree Whitehead. Palgrave: Hampshire.
- Gurr, R.R. 2000. *People versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington: Institute of Peace Press.
- Hale, H.E. 2008. *Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hale, H.E. 2000. "The Parade of Sovereignties: Testing theories of secession in the Soviet setting." *British Journal of Political Science* 30: 31-56.
- Handgrave, R. 1994. "India: The Dilemmas of Diversity." *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* 71-85.
- Healy, Kevin. 1988. "Coca, the State, and the Peasantry in Bolivia, 1982-1988." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30 (2/3): 105-126.
- Hechter, M. 1975. *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966*. Berkeley: University of California Press .

- Hiskey, Jonathan T. and Mitchell A. Seligson. 2003. "Pitfalls of power to the people: Decentralization, local government performance, and system support in Bolivia." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37 (4): 64-88.
- Hopkin, J. 2003. "Political Decentralization, Electoral Change, and Party Organizational Adaptation." *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10 (3): 227-237.
- Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. London: University of California Press.
- Kaufman, C. 1996. "Possible and Impossible Solutions of Ethnic Civil Wars." *International Security* 20 (4): 133-175.
- Kernell, Samuel. 1977. "Presidential popularity and negative voting: an alternative explanation of the mid-term congressional decline of the president's party." *American Political Science Review* 71: 44-66.
- Khol, B. 2002. "Stabalizing Neoliberalism in Bolivia: Popular Participation and Privitization." *Political Geography* 21 (4): 449-472.
- Klein, H. 2003. *A Concise History of Bolivia*. Second. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kohl, B. 2003. "Democratizing Decentralization in Bolivia: The Law of Popular Participation." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 23: 153-164.
- Lalander, Altman D. & R. 2003. "Bolivia's Popular Participation Law: An Undemocratic Democratisation Process?" In *Decentralization and Democratic Governance: Experiences from India, Bolivia and South Africa*. Expert Group on Development Issues (EGDI), Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- Madrid, R. 2012. *The Rise of Ethnic Parties in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2012. *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America* . Translated by 160. New York: Cambirdge Univeristy Press.
- Martinez, Jose. 1996. *Municipios y Participacion Popular en América Latina: Un Modelo de Desarrollo*. La Paz: CIBIAE.
- McCracken, Grant. 1988. *The Long Interview* . Sage University Paper.
- Miodownik, D. and B. Cartrite. 2009. "Does Political Decentralization Exacerbate or Ameliorate Ethnopolitical Mobilization? A Test of Contesting Propositions." *Political Research Quarterly* 63 (4): 731-746.
- Morales, W. 2003. *A Brief History of Bolivia*. New York: Lexington Associates.
- . 1992. *Bolivia Land of Struggle* . Boulder: Westview Press Inc. .

- Oliver, J.Eric. 2000. "City Size and Civic Involvement in Metropolitan America." *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 361-373.
- Olzak, S. 1983. "Contemporary Ethnic Mobilization." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9: 355-374.
- Political Database of the Americas. 2006. "Indigenous Peoples, Democracy and Political Participation."
- Posner, D. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press .
- Rondinelli D., and John R. Nellis. 1968. "Assessing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: The Case for Cautious Optimism." *Development Policy Review* 4: 3-23.
- Rosenstone, S.J. 1982. "American Journal of Political Science." *Economic Adversity and Voter Turnout* 26 (1): 25-46.
- Rosenstone, Wolfinger RE and S.J. 1980. *Who Votes*. London: Yale University Press.
- Skills, E. 1957. "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civilities." *British Journal of Sociology* 8.
- Shoaei, M. 2012. "MAS and the Indigenous People of Bolivia ." *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* (University of South Florida ).
- Stepan, A. 1990. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model ." *Journal of Democracy* 10 (4): 19-34.
- Tesbelis, G. 1999. "Elite Interaction and Constitutional Building in Consociational Societies." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2 (1): 5-29.
- Thompson, Steven K. 2002. *Sampling*. Second edition. Wiley.
- Treisman, D.S. 1997. "Russia's Ethnic Revival: The Separatist Activism of Regional Leaders in a Postcommunist Order." *World Politics* 49 (2): 212-249.
- VAIPO. 1998. *Desarrollo Con Identidad: Politica Nacional Indigena y Originaria, Republica de Bolivia*.
- Van Cott, D. 1998. *Constitution-Making and Democratic Transformation* . Washington , D.C.: Georgetown University.
- . 2005. *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van der Berghe, P.L. 1998. *The Ethnic Phenomonon*. New York : Elsevier.
- Van Evera, S. 2001. "Primordinalism Lives!" *APSA-CP* 12.

- Vermeersch, P. 2011. "Theories of ethnic mobilization: over and recent trends." *Center for Research on Peace and Development* .
- Weber, A., W. Hiers, and A. Flesken. 2016. *Politicized Ethnicity: A Comparative Perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan .
- White, S. 2011. "Government Decentralization in the 21st Century." *Center for Strategic and International Studies* .
- Yashar, D. 1999. "Democracy, Indigenous Movements, and the Postliberal Challenge in Latin America." *World Politics* 52 (1): 76-104.
- Yusoff, Mohammad Agus, Athambawa Sarjoon, and Mat Ali Hassan. 2016. "Decentralization as a Tool for Ethnic Diversity Accommodation: A Conceptual Analysis." *Journal of Politics and Law* 9 (1): 55-64.

## Appendix A: Methods

### 2.1

#### Interview Log:

---

| Date     | Person(s) Interviewed                       | Affiliations             |
|----------|---|--------------------------|
| 12/12/16 | Fernando Mayorga                            | Universidad De San Simón |
| 12/13/16 | Rafael Puentes                              |                          |
| 12/14/16 | Daniel Moreno Morales                       | Ciudadanía               |
| 12/15/16 | George Komandina                            | SERES                    |
| 12/16/16 | Maria Claire Zegada                         | CESU-UMASS               |
| 12/16/16 | Adolfo Mendoza                              | Universidad De San Simón |
| 12/19/16 | Mayor Walter Illanes                        |                          |
| 12/19/16 | Administrative Secretary Abdias Luis Robles |                          |
| 12/19/16 | Zaida Escobar                               |                          |
| 12/20/16 | Carlos Crespo                               | CEDIB                    |
| 12/22/16 | Jose Martinez                               | UAGRM                    |
| 12/23/16 | Carlos Hugo Molina                          |                          |



## 2.2

### Demographic Information Survey:

Please complete the following demographic information by marking the most appropriate response. Some questions ask for a written response. If you do not want to respond to a question, leave it blank.

Age:

- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or more

Education Level:

- Primary incomplete
- Primary complete
- Secondary incomplete
- Secondary complete
- University, degree obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic identity:

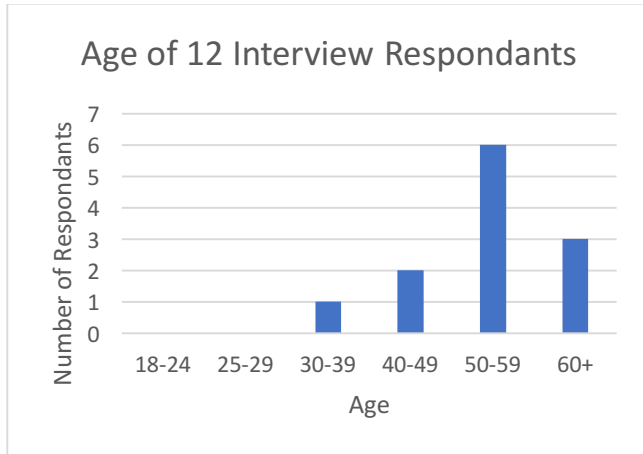
- Quechua
- Aymara
- Guarani
- Chiquitano
- Mojeno
- Other native
- None

Political party affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

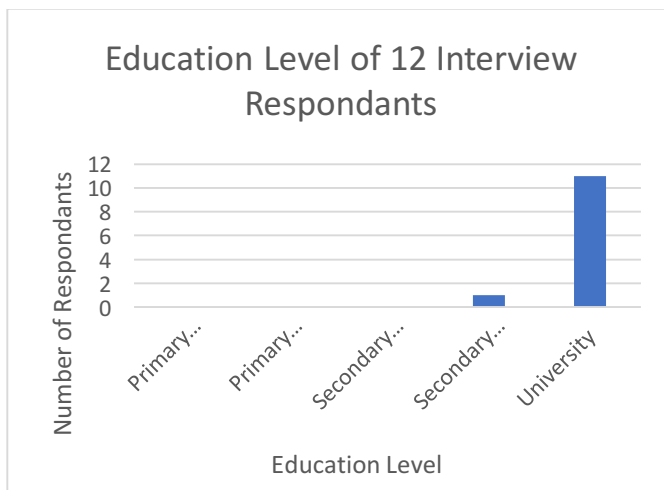
## 2.3

### Results of the Demographic Survey:

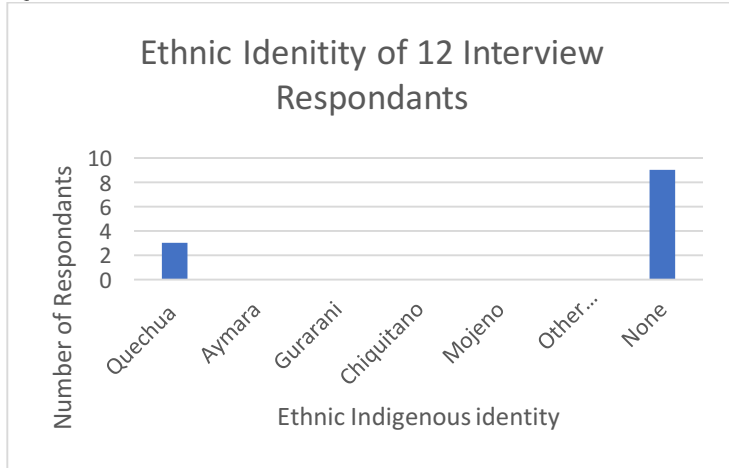
Question 1:



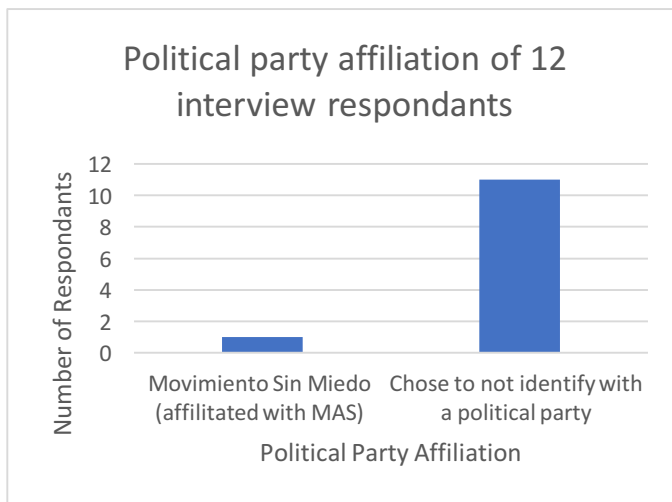
Question 2:



Question 3:



Question 4:



## 2.4

### Interview Questions in English:

1. Have you ever held a government position? If so, what was the position and when did you hold it?
2. Do you consider yourself of indigenous or part of an indigenous community?
3. Do you consider yourself part of a political party?
4. What was your experience like while you were in office?
5. Are you aware of the 1994 decentralization reforms? Do you think that these reforms changed the political sphere? If so, how?
6. Did popular participation change in your municipality after the 1994 reforms? If so, why do you think it changed? Was it attributed to the reforms or something else?
7. What do you think the rise of MAS is attributed to?

## 2.5

### Interview Questions in Spanish:

1. ¿Alguna vez ha ocupado un cargo gubernamental? Si es así, ¿cuál fue la posición?
2. ¿Se considera indígena o parte de una comunidad indígena?
3. ¿Se considera parte de un partido político?
4. ¿Cómo fue su experiencia mientras estaba trabajando con el gobierno?
5. ¿Conoce las reformas de descentralización de 1994? ¿Cree que estas reformas cambiaron la esfera política? Si es así, ¿cómo?
6. ¿Cambió la participación popular en su municipio después de las reformas de 1994? Si es así, ¿por qué cree que cambió? ¿Se atribuyó a las reformas o algo más?
7. ¿A qué cree que se atribuye el aumento del MAS?

## 2.6

### Code Book:

---

| Code   | Description   |
|--|---|
| Decentralization   |   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Deconcentration (↑resources (\$))</li><li>2. Delegation</li><li>3. Devolution</li><li>4. Privatization</li></ol>          | Any response that discusses the role that decentralization had in the political development of Bolivia. (Note: the first three measures are contained in the LPP, the fourth was present during the 1990s as part of Neoliberalism) |
| Neoliberalism  | Any response that discusses the role that Neoliberalism had in the political development of Bolivia.  |
| Pre-existing Networks  | Any response that discusses the societal and political role of networks within Bolivia that existed <i>before</i> the LPP.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neighborhood associations</li><li>• Indigenous movements</li><li>• Highland / Lowland</li><li>• Rural / Urban</li></ul>    |   |
| Pre-existing Organizations   | Any response that discusses the societal and political role of organizations within Bolivia that existed <i>before</i> the LPP.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class-based/ traditional parties</li><li>• Unions</li></ul>  |   |
| Political Party  | Any response that discusses the emergence of political <i>after</i> the LPP. This also includes the way these political parties acted within the political sphere and who they included.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MAS</li><li>• Other parties</li><li>• Open participation<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ gender</li></ul></li></ul> |   |
| Independent candidates   | Any response that discusses the emergence of independent political candidates <i>after</i> the LPP.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ethnicity</li></ul>  |   |

## Appendix B: Interview Transcription

### 4.1

#### Portion of transcribed interview with Rafael Puente, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

ENTREVISTADO: Mira te puedo dar una anécdota, en 1978 se acaban la dictadura de Banzer, la dictadura más seria y terrible que hemos tenido y con Banzer convoca a elecciones y ahí la población citadina en general participa en esas elecciones pensando que el viejo modelo nacionalista que se había instaurado en el país en 1952, fue una revolución muy importante en el 52 solo comparable con la Revolución Mexicana o la Cubana pero que muy pronto se degeneró y cuando llega 1978 habían pasado 26 años, se acaba la dictadura y la reacción espontánea de la población urbana es volvemos al nacionalismo y los campesinos se habían dado cuenta de que eso ya no funcionaba.

ENTREVISTADORA: ¿Y eso es porque la revolución fue buena para mucha gente, pero no fue buena para la gente campesino o la gente indígena?

ENTREVISTADO: Al revés. Los campesinos la vivieron con terrible convicción porque esa revolución tuvo cuatro medidas iniciales muy importantes: nacionalización de las minas, la reforma agraria que acabó con el sistema feudal de las haciendas, la reforma educativa y la reforma electoral. De estas cuatro, las tres de las cuatro afectaban profundamente la vida de los campesinos, se acaba el sistema feudal, hay escuela obligatoria y universal y gratuita para todos, que había sido una reivindicación campesina desde el siglo anterior y hay voto universal.

Como campesinos se sintieron profundamente reconocidos y satisfechos con esa revolución y apostaron por ella y se mantuvieron apostando con ella aunque fuera con dictadores militares, no importa pero Banzer, el último dictador, masacró a los campesinos aquí en Cochabamba y eso provocó una reacción profunda porque para ellos el modelo nacionalista incluía la participación activa de las fuerzas armadas y cuando las fuerzas armadas que venían tiempo hablando del pacto militar campesino y que ellos eran los aliados de los campesinos cuando las fuerzas armadas traicionan ese pacto y masacran a los campesinos.

El año 74 el campesinado empieza a madurar políticamente sin decir nada y cuando llegan las elecciones del 78 en que Banzer propone un candidato suyo, ese candidato gana en las ciudades y pierde en el campo en todo el país.

ENTREVISTADORA: Interesante.

ENTREVISTADO: En todo el país y nunca hemos sabido cómo fue, fue increíble porque además aquí en Bolivia votamos por colores que fue parte de la reforma electoral del voto universal. Como la mayoría de la población era analfabeta no podía votar por letras o nombres, cada partido asumió un color entonces la gente sabía este es mi color Y cuando el año 78 en esta elección que te digo el color de Banzer era verde y había otros siete colores, otras siete candidaturas, yo estaba presente en una de un distrito electoral en Santa Cruz en el campo, en el área rural y me indignaba porque veía en la mesa de voto que está en un

cuartito encerrado y secreto, cuando entras a votar solo había papeletas verdes, y me quejo al presidente de la mesa y me dice cada partido trae las papeletas si los demás no traen qué vamos a hacer.

Dos partidos, el partido demócrata cristiano y el MNR llegaron con sus papeletas café y rosada, algo es algo y me vuelvo a asomar y las papeletas que habían traído las hicieron desaparecer y durante todo el día solo hubo papeletas verdes, llega el final del día se hace el escrutinio y ganaron las rosadas, nadie sabe donde la gente llevaba las papeletas porque en la mesa no estaban. Por tanto, ahí hubo un trabajo organizado y secreto increíble de los campesinos, que hicieron correr la voz, hay que votar en contra de Banzer y de su candidato.

