

The politics of Evo Morales' rise to power in Bolivia

The role of social movements and think tanks

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* Disclaimer: The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI

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This report is one element of a larger piece of work undertaken by RAPID on think tanks around the world, which includes a recently published report on think tanks in East and South East Asia and a forthcoming report on think tank development in Africa. This paper will also inform and contribute to RAPID's broader research on think tanks.

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Acronyms

| | |
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| ADN | Acción Democrática Nacionalista |
| APG | Guaraní People's Assembly of Bolivia |
| CAF | Andean Development Corporation |
| CEDLA | Centre for Labour and Agrarian Development Studies |
| CEFREC | The Cinematography Education and Production Center |
| CEJIS | Centre for Legal Studies and Social Research |
| CENDA | Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino |
| CIDOB | the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia |
| CONAMAQ | The National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu |
| CPEMB | Moxeño Ethnic Peoples of Beni |
| CPESC | Coordinator for Ethnic Peoples from Santa Cruz |
| CSCB | Bolivian Syndicalist Confederation of Colonizers |
| CSUTCB | Unique Confederation of Rural Labourers of Bolivia |
| FMCBBS | Federación de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa |
| IADB | Inter-American Development Bank |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IPSP | Political Instrument of the People's Sovereignty |
| MAS | Movement Toward Socialism |
| MIP | Pachakuti Indigenous Movement |
| MIR | Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria |
| MNR | National Revolution Party |
| MRTKL | Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupaq Katari |
| MST | Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Bolivia |
| SCCIP | Solidarity Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Peoples |
| UDAPE | Unit of Social and Economic Policy Analysis |

Executive Summary

On the surface, the role of knowledge and evidence in Bolivia's political landscape appears to be minimal. However, over the years, international donors have invested plenty of economic resources into developing think tanks that produce both knowledge and evidence. This paper seeks to examine the utilisation and impact of this knowledge in Bolivia's recent political history, as well as any links with political institutions. It explores how Evo Morales came to power through the support of indigenous social movements and their relationship with think tanks.

Bolivia's indigenous people, who comprise nearly two thirds of the country's population, have over the centuries been labelled by the State as inferior, ignorant and poor. Ethnicity continued to be subordinate to class-based struggles even after the national revolution. The decline of the mining industry in the 1960s and 1970s, which many indigenous communities relied on, added to pre-existing levels of poverty, and led to significant rural-urban migration amongst the indigenous population. More frequent and intensive interactions accompanied by economic and political inequalities fostered racial tension and as a result, ethnicity started to take on more prominence in Bolivian politics, especially with the government's implementation of structural adjustment policies in the 1980s in response to economic crisis and the need for loans from the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Economic reforms also included the banning of coca production, an important symbol of indigenous Bolivian culture. The penalisation of coca, along with the perceived selling off of natural resources to foreign interests forged solidarity amongst diverse indigenous groups and huge resentment towards a political system that was seen as increasingly exclusionary. Since the political system did not appear to represent the interests of the indigenous population, between 1991 and 2003, indigenous people resorted to protests and demonstrations. To quell social unrest the government, assuming politics to be class-based, made some changes to promote inclusion of indigenous people in the neoliberal development project. This included decentralisation and electoral reform. However, indigenous groups wanted more than just participation in policy-making; they wanted rights to self-determination and an acknowledgement of sovereignty. Unintentionally, the government's changes to the political system provided some additional space for indigenous movements to further mobilise and form numerous social movements, some of which managed to secure representation (albeit limited) in the legislature. These movements chose to pursue direct action through strikes and blockades including the 'water wars,' which were highly effective in promoting change.

Social movements were not alone in demanding change. Think tanks and NGOs also played a crucial role. Adoption of the Washington Consensus fostered the establishment of a number of think tanks including Fundación Milenio, FUNDEMOS, UDAPE and PRONAGOB (the last two being internal, government think tanks), which helped to broadly legitimise the neoliberal policy agenda, and more specifically provide technical advice. Many of these think tanks had explicit links with traditional political parties. Similarly, the rise of ethnic based politics saw the growth of think tanks in support of indigenous social movements such as CEJIS and CEDLA. They produced and communicated evidence to support their demands, provided them with training and funding, brought diverse social movements together through the development of a coalition (SCCIP) enabling them to speak with one voice and crucially mediated dialogue between them and government. Think tanks in both eras had significant impact in the policy process. Following the removal of two presidents in the early 2000s, in 2005 Evo Morales the head of MAS, who had gradually gained support inside the existing political system (aided by support from outside), formed an interim government. Calling for an early election, Morales won by a large margin as indigenous people clearly voted for him in large numbers. Morales came to power on a ticket of major constitutional reform through the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly.

International actors played a key role in supporting the production of relevant knowledge. Neoliberal think tanks received funding from the World Bank, the IMF, IADB, CAF while think tanks in support of indigenous social movements received funding from several European donors. They also received support from the anti-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum (WSF). And just as Jeffrey Sachs and Joseph Stiglitz provided policy inputs during the neoliberal era, celebrity academics such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt came in support of Evo Morales' political project. Think tanks often provided cadres of policy-makers in both the neoliberal era and once Morales assumed presidency.

Think tanks in Bolivia have thus had influence on politics and policy-making since 1985, but only due to their connections with political parties, social movements and the executive. Therefore think tanks, though often subordinate to political interests, can be classified as principal actors in the Bolivian political process.

1. Introduction

When I was asked to examine the role played by knowledge and evidence in influencing politics in Bolivia, I was initially quite sceptical about the idea that research had any relevant role at all in the country's legislative or policy-making processes. This is mainly owing to Bolivia's political instability and the lack of strong state institutions. On first impression law and policy-making in contemporary Bolivia are driven by intuition and political calculation, rather than research-based evidence. Nevertheless, it is evident that international donors have, over the years, invested plenty of economic resources into developing think tanks that work precisely to produce both knowledge and evidence. Consequently, my research efforts have focused on tracking down where all this production has gone and what links if any exist with political institutions. On further investigation, it became clear that evidence and knowledge are deeply entrenched in many political processes in Bolivia, not merely influencing the legal or policy-making processes, but also the political debate and structure that has changed the political and social paradigms over the past decade. This paper tells this story.

In 2005, Evo Morales, an Aymara Indian, became the first indigenous president of Bolivia and the first indigenous president in South America in modern times. He achieved this with the support of numerous indigenous social movements, organised within his own political party, the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS). This ground-breaking achievement came after centuries of harsh Spanish colonial rule, followed by 'independence' in the early 1800's, which brought Spanish descendent landlords into power, who continued to reinforce the practice of indigenous servitude and exclusion. Although the role of indigenous social movements was undoubtedly fundamental to the rise of Evo Morales, this was not the only factor. The recent international investment of millions of dollars into the development of think tanks, to improve public policy through evidence-based research has also played its part. However, to date there is limited research documenting their experiences. Hence, the aim of this paper is to explore the role of both social movements and think tanks in the rise of Evo Morales and MAS. Consequently, this paper will assess the relationship between the evolving political context, social movements and think tanks.

Just as social movements can be defined simply as groupings of individuals and/or organisations focused on specific political and/or social issues, my definition of think tanks is somewhat more unconventional. Think tanks here are broadly speaking defined as organisations or groups of individuals primarily producing research products with the aim of informing the policy process. As a result, think tanks in this study include a range of different actors who are not necessarily formal organisations. They could be civil society organisations (including NGOs), policy research organisations, corporate research centres, governmental

research institutes, individuals who advise governments such as consultants and foreign experts, university or independent research centres and informal groups of academics/experts. Regarding the methodology, this paper draws on 1) official documents and academic research on Bolivian history and politics and 2) interviews with two members of the Constitutional Assembly and an academic expert who has undertaken research on the Constitutional Assembly. Also I am lecturer in Political Sociology at Universidad Católica Boliviana (UCB) and at Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) in La Paz and I have been researching on Bolivian ethnic movements and political socialization since 2003.

The paper is divided into five sections. To understand the context which may have shaped the supply and/or demand for knowledge in recent times, the opening section describes the relationship between the Bolivian State - colonial, republican and contemporary - and its indigenous population. Section three, defines the struggle indigenous people have had for their rights, post the National Revolution in 1952, as one that is class-based. It describes how this change comes about in response to the government's adoption of neoliberal structural adjustment policies. It also examines think tanks and the general role they have had in politics and policy-making. Section four looks at how neoliberal policies have negatively impacted on indigenous people, and how faced with an unrepresentative and discriminatory political system, indigenous social movements took direct action to effect change and support Evo Morales' rise to power and help him to reshape the Bolivian Constitution. The final section goes on to describe the role that think tanks and knowledge have had in supporting Morales and MAS. Both sections three and four draw on the example of the Constitutional Assembly of 2006-2007. The aim of this is to explore how the process of the Bolivian Constitution demanded an enormous quantity of knowledge, how this demand was satisfied and more importantly, who were the sources and actors that supplied this knowledge. This will allow us to explain the relationship between the 'reasonable demand' of knowledge and the political 'conflict of interest' in the public sphere and, finally, the effectiveness of the knowledge and its contributions to the Constitution. The final section summarises the main issues discussed and assesses the key role of think tanks and social movements in Bolivian politics in recent years.

2. Bolivia: a brief history

Bolivia is currently one of the poorest and least developed countries in Latin America. In 2009, the country had an estimated GDP of \$17.8 billion at official exchange rates (PPP: \$45.1bn) and a per capita GDP of \$1,940 (PPP\$4,710) (EIU, 2009). 58.6% of Bolivians were said to have 'unsatisfied basic needs. With a population of approximately 10 million, 67% of whom are subsistence farmers, it is also Latin America's least populated country.

Bolivia has the largest indigenous population of any country in Latin America. According to the 2001 census 62% of its population were indigenous, and 90% of them live below the poverty line. Inequalities between the indigenous and white population were high. For instance, according to the World Bank, although non-indigenous Bolivians of Spanish origin accounted for 20% of the population they controlled 70% of the national income (De Ferranti et al., 2003). This socio-economic inequality could be argued to be a consequence of three key events in Bolivia's history: 1) the Laws of Burgos during Spanish Colonial era in 1512; 2) the first Bolivian Constitution in 1826; and 3) the National Revolution in 1952. They illustrate how the State – Colonial or Republican - has shaped ethnic and racial divisions amongst its citizens, each time producing and reinforcing social and economic exclusion of indigenous people. These key events are now briefly described below:

2.1 The Laws of Burgos

Through the passing of the Laws of Burgos in 1512, the Spanish Colonial State declared indigenous people of South America to be 'uncivilised' and thus 'inferior' within social hierarchy (Sánchez, 1942). They were forced to work for Spanish landlords (in the agricultural and mining sectors, the main economic activities during Spanish rule) without payment and in exchange for the right to remain known as servitude. This continued for the next 300 years or so, leaving the indigenous under the rule of servitude.

2.2 The First Bolivian Constitution

After the Latin American Wars of Independence (1809-1825), the white Creole elite, took control of the State. Simon Bolivar's libertarian government abolished 'servitude and slavery,' but imposed the so-called 'qualified vote'. One of the articles of the 1826 'Constitución Bolivariana' declared that only those who could read, write and earn an income could vote

(MESA, 2003). As a result, indigenous people were prevented from attaining full citizenship status. Furthermore, just as colonising Spaniards had done, the Creole elite sought to 'civilise' the indigenous population. Their collective forms of land tenure and adherence to a non-accumulative subsistence economy seemed an obstacle to national progress compared with the achievements of richer industrialised nations in Europe. Therefore, the 19th century republican State abolished 'Ayllu' (indigenous, political and social units established before the Spanish arrived in the 15th Century) through a process of land seizures known as 'exvinculación'. At the same time, the Republican State seized land collectively from Spanish landlords, and sold it to the White Creole elite. This process created a new rural elite that forced indigenous people into a new form of forced labour called the 'Ponguaje'. Consequently, the indigenous population went from being considered inferior by the political system, (a status given by the Laws of Burgos), to being considered ignorant, a notion now deeply embedded in society and social consciousness. This perception was shared throughout communities, including the indigenous population themselves who continued to live without any rights.

2.3 The National Revolution

In 1952, miners and a wide collection of left-wing activists took control of the government in the Bolivian National Revolution. The process eliminated the 'qualified vote' and the 'ponguaje' and sought agrarian reform and the nationalisation of the mines. In particular, it established a means by which indigenous communities could recover lands seized by landlords. However, even though 'peasants' were allowed to sow and harvest the land and market its produce, they could neither sell nor mortgage land it to access credit; thus they continued to be trapped within a subsistence economy. As a result of these reforms, the agricultural sector's contribution to national economic output fell substantially and it was then transformed from a semi-industrialized agricultural activity to a 'subsistence economy'. The main economic driver post the National Revolution in Bolivia was state-controlled mining.

The National Revolution, despite its political significance, failed to empower indigenous people. A centralised state structure, where power was distributed to departments and provinces through presidential appointees, rather than elected local representatives, remained in place (Abercrombie, 1998). The long-standing notion that indigenous people were ignorant changed, after the National Revolution, to the notion that they were destined to be poor. This belief was illustrated by the World Bank's assessment that there was a 90% probability that an indigenous person lived below the poverty line in Bolivia (De Ferranti, 2003).

It can be claimed that these three significant moments in Bolivia's history have contributed to the labelling of indigenous people consecutively as inferior, ignorant and then poor, and have resulted in economic poverty, and a perpetuated cultural, political and institutionalised discrimination and dispossession, as well as social exclusion of the indigenous population of Bolivia. As a result, the State had little or no political or institutional presence in most indigenous communities. For instance, 75% of the Aymaran communities resolved their legal issues within customary law rather than through formal judicial institutions (Fernández, 2004).

3. From Class Politics to Ethnicity

In political terms, however, particularly after the National Revolution, the indigenous population's struggle was identified as one based on class rather than ethnicity. Indigenous communities tended to live in rural areas and were documented as peasants, while the Creoles lived in the towns and cities and dominated the ruling classes. This segregation prevented direct interaction and avoided any resulting conflict that may have ensued. Indigenous groups did not however appear to demand representation as they felt political parties, despite being led by white Creole leaders, ultimately represented their class interests. At this stage, ethnicity was merely a component of class, and wages and terms and conditions of employment were a matter of concern to all societal groups, regardless of their ethnicity. Nevertheless, throughout the 1960s and 1970s both chronic poverty among the indigenous population and the decline of the mining industry (which many indigenous communities relied on for income) led to huge migration from rural areas to the towns and cities and Bolivia saw a complete reversal of rural/urban demographics. The rural population declined from 65% to 35% of the population, while the urban population increased from 35% to 65% (Census, 1976, 2001). More frequent and concentrated interaction accompanied by huge inequalities in income and political power fostered ethnic and racial tensions between the two groups. This was not helped by a Constitution which, although recognising Bolivia as a multi-ethnic society, prevented indigenous people from legally owning property, thus directly legislating for inequality within Bolivian society.

In this context, the process of globalisation was responsible for an ethnic revival worldwide and thanks to this internal migration ethnicity started to take on more prominence in Bolivian politics. The government began to implement structural adjustment policies such as The Washington Consensus in the 1980s and 1990s. Triggered by the economic crisis and the need for aid, and inspired by the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)), policy reforms focussed on stabilisation (especially in light of the hyperinflation of 1982), export-oriented growth and the privatisation of natural resource extraction. These politics were adopted and supported by a number of cross party (left to right) coalitions throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These types of coalitions, in which left-wing parties would appear to betray their grass-root support, were characteristic of Bolivian politics during the 1980s. For example, in 1989 the right-wing *Acción Democrática Nacionalista* (ADN), led by the former dictator Hugo Benzer, entered into a surprising coalition with the left-wing *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR).

The adoption of the Washington Consensus created demands for both knowledge and technical advice and knowledge producers included academic institutions and consultancies that had

explicit connections with political parties and tended to produce expert knowledge based on economic modelling. The most significant research centres or 'think tanks' were Fundación Milenio, which had connections to the National Revolution Party (MNR) and received funding from the German political foundation, Konrad Adenauer, the American National Endowment for Democracy and FUNDEMOS, which had connections to ADN and received funds from another German political foundation, Hanns Seidel Stiftung. Both parties, MNR and ADN, were proponents of the Washington Consensus between 1985 and 2002.¹

International and regional institutions - the IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), encouraged the government, both the executive and the legislative branches, to invest their grants and loans into the development of internal think tanks such as the Unit of Social and Economic Policy Analysis (UDAPE) in 1984. UDAPE became the main source of evidence for government during the next twenty years, having significant influence over social and economic policies. For example, UDAPE effectively designed legislation on social security (law no. 1732) and capitalisation (law no. 1544).

In addition, the Harvard educated economist Jeffrey Sachs was flown into Bolivia to provide technical advice to the government and to help resolve the Bolivian crisis. Furthermore, neoliberal think tanks such as FUNDEMOS and Fundación Milenio recruited well known professionals who had studied in the UK, the US, as well as Latin American Universities. Indeed, many think tank researchers and leaders took up key policy-making positions in the Bolivian government. For example, some of UDAPE's and Fundación Milenio's directors went on to become ministers of the economy and finance, while others took up positions in Congress. Some of them moved on to work for regional and international organisations such as the World Bank, IADB and CAF.² In addition, executive directors of FUNDEMOS (Hugo Banzer and Jorge Quiroga) and Fundación Milenio (Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada) even went on to become Bolivian presidents.

Consequently, think tanks such as Fundación Milenio and FUNDEMOS were not just the primary providers of knowledge and evidence linked to the structural adjustment, but the most important source of actors ideologically attached to the neoliberal programme and, hence, political activism. Therefore, it appears that think tanks were not just focused on research, but in spreading the neoliberal thought in political terms.

¹ MNR shaped coalitions in 1985-1989, 1993-1997 and 2002-2003; and ADN in 1989-1993 and 1997-2002.

² Jose Luis Lupo, Ramiro Cavero, Alberto Leyton, Ronald MacLean and Enrique Garcia.

4. Identity Politics

Economic reforms promoted by the Washington Consensus also included the banning the production of coca, which had for centuries been consumed by the Quechuas and Aymaras and was symbolic of indigenous Bolivian culture. However, in a bid to clamp down on drug trafficking, the government labelled coca a controlled substance. This move, coupled with the belief that the State was selling off natural resources to foreign parties, served to create a sense of solidarity across diverse indigenous groups and since the political system did not provide any formal mechanism to represent the interests of indigenous people (and political parties excluded indigenous candidates from their electoral platforms), this inspired a series of protests and demonstrations between 1991 and 2003 by various indigenous groups. Most of the protestors were coca leaf producers known as the 'Cocaleros' and as the majority of their plantations fed the illegal manufacture of cocaine, were now expected to find alternative economic activities and hence demanded government support. Overall, there was much grievance towards a political system that was increasingly seen to be ruling exclusively in the interests of the Creoles or Spanish descendents.

In response to increasing social and political unrest, an IADB report (PRONAGROB, 1998), suggested that public trust in the government had dropped dramatically, and that legislative capacity to respond to people's concerns had been called into question. This led to the creation of PRONAGOB, a think tank established in 1997 with a budget of US\$3, 048,500, which was provided through an IADB loan. Although PRONAGOB's initial mandate was to provide expert support to legislative commissions on a range of issues, it mainly produced knowledge on promoting political stability. At the same time, another 'celebrity' development economist, Joseph Stiglitz was brought in to localise the 'post Washington Consensus' to the Bolivian context.

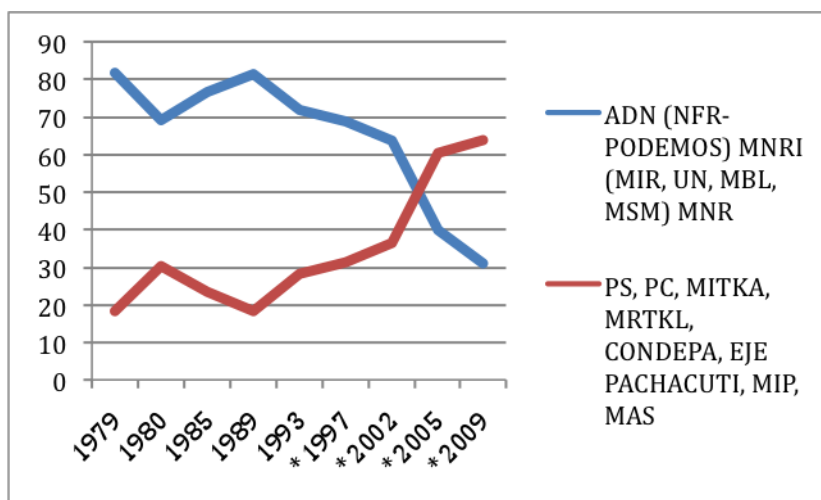
The mid-to-late 1990s saw a number of changes to promote inclusion of indigenous people in the country's development process. The Constitution was revised in 1994 to recognise indigenous people as a group and not just as individuals, as well as to recognise, respect and protect their rights and entitlements. The government promoted greater participation at municipal level (known as 'participation popular'), to give people in the local areas more power. Reforms, albeit minor, were made to the electoral system – including the institutionalisation of the National Electoral Court and a shift from the d'Hondt to the Saint-Lague system of translating votes into seats. This system favoured smaller parties and the election of MPs in territorial constituencies (rather than from a proportional list). Although this was seen as a token gesture, traditional parties started to encourage indigenous politicians to take candidacies. A National Secretariat for Indigenous Affairs was established in 1997,

followed by a National Dialogue in 2001, which was set up to enable the voice of indigenous-led social movements to be heard. The government also passed the educational reform act, which recognised the right of indigenous people to be educated in their mother tongue in 1994 (LEY 1565, 1994). And in addition, efforts were made to promote employment and social welfare support (Whitehead, 2001).

All these measures had significant, unintended consequences. Rather than promoting social inclusion, they enabled indigenous people to mobilise on the basis of their ethnic identity rather than their class. Consequently, the coalition offered a Constitutional reform in 1994 in order to assist a debate about the Bolivian State as exclusionary. Social Movements such as Evo Morales' MAS came to provide political representation for indigenous peoples and were able to win seats on regional councils and in municipalities. The first ever indigenous elected member of Congress was Victor Hugo Cardenas from Revolutionary Liberation Movement Tupaq Katari (MRTKL) in 1989 (Romero Ballivián, 2003). However, until 1997, when Evo Morales was elected to Congress, indigenous representation was no more than 6% of the elected members. Minority opposition and social movements were generally ignored in formal political processes, due to exclusionary practices of coalition governments. For example, support for policy initiatives was mostly gained from legislators through promises of ministerial positions in government and, on occasion, bonuses to Congress members. Finally, the National Dialogue of 2001 proved to be ineffective and disproportionate. Indigenous social movements made up only 15% of the representatives. The rest were elected members of councils and municipalities most of whom were white Creoles.

Together these reforms failed to address the demands of the social movements. It was clear that indigenous communities wanted more than simply participation in policy-making. They wanted both rights to self determination and an acknowledgement of sovereignty, but this required wholesale constitutional reform. Land ownership was seen as crucial to the survival of indigenous people and was a part of their heritage (Loayza, 2010). Recognition of their sovereignty over their land and their resources was also essential if they were to secure, manage and develop a substantive economic base. Therefore, indigenous groups demanded the recovery of land and territories lost during Spanish colonialism. Traditional political parties were no longer seen to be representative of these demands and, indeed, support for traditional political parties fell from 70% in 1991 to 38% in 2005 (Loayza, 2010). Social movements (or alternative parties) were instead seen to represent the voices of indigenous peoples. Chart 1 shows how political preferences of the Bolivian electorate towards social movements and parties with indigenous discourses or candidates, started increasing in 1991 and grew as neoliberal economic reform deepened:

Figure 1: Historical electoral trajectory of traditional and alternative parties



(*Evo Morales is in the ballot)

However, since these social movements and alternative parties had little influence on the formal political system, they took to using more radical approaches to make their voice heard, from strikes and road blocks, to demonstrations and even kidnappings. For instance, in 2001 indigenous movements, desperate to reform the Constitution through an assembly and introduce referenda on key policy issues, kidnapped five members of President Quiroga's cabinet in the Aymara municipality of Ayo Ayo for a period of five hours. In response and to avoid social unrest, government officials quickly drew up a proposal establishing a Constitutional Assembly and Referendum. Although the proposal was included in the congressional agenda for constitutional reform in November 2001, reforms were halted in 2002 when the newly elected Congress, now under the presidency of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (Evo Morales and his MAS party came second and won considerable power), refused to accept agreements made between Quiroga's government and two particular indigenous social movements – the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) and the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ), arguing that proposals would give voice to those who were 'undemocratic'. This, along with a call for the nationalisation of the gas industry³ created deep social unrest that ultimately led to the removal of Sanchez de Lozada as President in 2003.

The removal of Sanchez de Lozada was precipitated by the Cocalero movement, and happened after some of the most violent disturbances Bolivia saw for half a century. With Evo Morales' MAS and Felipe Quispe's Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (MIP) ethnic party collectively holding just 20% of the seats in Congress, they had little chance at this stage to meet the

³ The government's decision to build a gas pipeline through Chile to access US markets was highly unpopular. Bolivia's gas was already under the control of foreign companies and Chile was historically the country's 'enemy'.

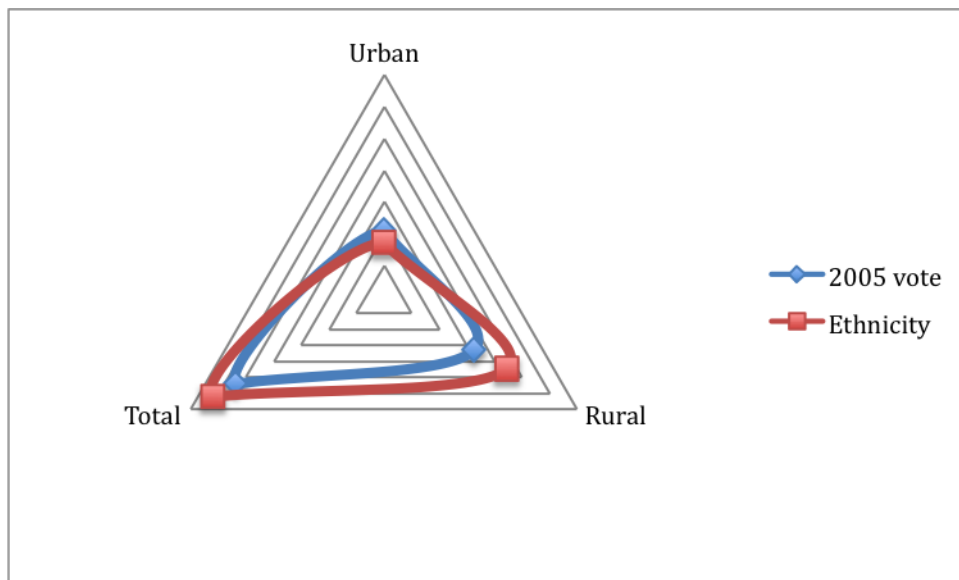
demands of the cocaleros. Subsequently, the cocaleros created a blockade on a strategic road in the region of Chapare connecting the agro-industrial production of Santa Cruz with the export hub in La Paz. After a month long blockade resulting in millions of dollars in loss of export revenue and several civilian deaths, Sanchez de Lozada was removed from power. Carlos Mesa, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada's successor, accepted the demands of the social movements regarding the referenda and Constitutional Assembly. Moreover, Mesa also diffused public demands for nationalisation of the gas industry by calling for a referendum in 2005 to 'listen to the people' (La Presena, 03/06/2005). Eventually, Congress (surrounded by 5000 indigenous people) passed a bill that increased taxation of multinational company revenues.

In January 2005, social movements in the city of El Alto, where around 80% of the population is of indigenous origin, instigated a road block in protest of a contract signed by the government with the local supplier of water services, Aguas del Illimani, owned by the French company Lyonnaise des Eaux. The company had failed to provide water to around 20% of the city's population and the social movements demanded that their contract be rescinded. The Executive and two thirds of the Congress opposed intervening as it contravened international investment, trade and commerce agreements. However, after four days of blockades and in order to preserve peace and order, the President himself agreed to sign a decree expelling the company from the country on 12th of January. This example, part of a series of initiatives known as the 'water wars,' illustrates how a specific demand accompanied by collective action forced the government into an illegal action. The president could no longer ignore the demands of the indigenous people. In 2005, Mesa was removed from power by the indigenous social movements, having tested their strength against the State and realising the significant power and authority that they now possessed. An interim government was formed with just one assignment, to call for an early election in December 2005. Running a strong campaign based on indigenous identity, Morales pursued radical populist and anti-neoliberal measures based on a Marxist foundation, including total constitutional reform, which was at odds with opposition parties that controlled the Eastern regions. Consequently, Evo Morales and his MAS party struck a blow to the Bolivian establishment by winning the country's election with 54% of the vote. The scale of the victory meant that for the first time in Bolivia's modern, electoral history a president was elected in Bolivia with an outright majority of the popular vote.

The link between political preference and ethnic identity is clearly illustrated by comparing the results of the 2001 national census with Evo Morales' 2005 vote. The census identified 62% of the population as belonging to one of the ethnic groups - Aymara, Quechua and Guarani among others. Comparing this with Evo Morales' vote, we have an almost perfect coefficient of

correlation, with an index of 0.96 (see figure below), which is particularly pronounced in rural areas and not surprising as there is a higher proportion of indigenous people:

Figure 2: Radial correlation between electoral preferences and ethnic identification



After only one month as President, Morales called for the social movements to pressure Congress and particularly the Senate, where MAS did not have a majority, to approve his bill for a Constitutional Assembly. The bill called for an election of national representatives to form an assembly (albeit illegal) with responsibilities that overlapped with the functions of the Congress. The social movements surrounded Congress between 22nd February and 4th March that year and showed, once again, that they had the power to pass laws, despite their illegality. The bill was finally approved on 4th March by a frightened Senate, and signed by the Executive on 6th March. The election of national representatives took place in June 2006 and Morales' MAS won 52% of the assembly. The first sitting of the Constitutional Assembly was due to take place on 6th August in the city of Sucre, however, since the nature of the Assembly's proceedings had not previously been discussed, the opposition took advantage of this to delay the Assembly's work. In response, Morales once again called on the social movements (CIDOB and CONAMAQ) to pressure the opposition representatives to approve the assembly proceedings. Evo Morales later said that every time his government was forced to break the law, he had to call up the social movements to 'back it' and his lawyers to 'fix it' (LOS TIEMPOS, 16/05/2006). Despite the introduction of a Constitutional Assembly, ethnicity and race polarised its work and ultimately it was turned into a forum used by representatives to attack one another on racial terms, rather than to reform the Constitution.

As indigenous movements had illustrated the power of collective action, the non-indigenous middle class also began to mobilise through existing civic committees in order to make their

voice heard. Political parties thus lost their legitimacy altogether. Civic committees in the regions of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, Tarija and the city of Sucre – where support for Morales was lower than that of the opposition – came together to outnumber the indigenous who had gathered in Sucre and threatened to storm the building where the Constitutional Assembly was taking place. On 15th December, Santa Cruz mobilised a million people, who called for self-determination, leading to clashes between civic committee demonstrators and the police, resulting in three deaths and exacerbating tensions between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Meanwhile sessions inside the assembly failed and after a year, not a single article had been written (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009).

Although MAS approved the Constitution in its reading stage, social unrest on 23rd November 2007 meant that it was not formally approved. With the backing of indigenous organisations, President Morales finally decided to move the assembly to the city of Oruro where he had substantial support from the social movements, which helped to 'secure' assembly sessions. The assembly finally approved the Constitution on 8th December 2007, surrounded by military forces and a significant number of indigenous people. The establishment of a Constitutional Assembly in 2009, mainly through direct action, clearly illustrated how the ethnic-environment transformed the way legislature was made in Bolivia and how power had shifted from formal institutions such as political parties and the Congress, to informal institutions such as social movements. Knowledge seems absent from this story, but as we will see in the following section knowledge and think tanks played a key role.

5. The Role of Think Tanks and Knowledge

Social movements were not alone in demanding change. Think tanks and NGOs also played a crucial role. Social movements were politically diverse, each one representing a specific set of needs, but they were unable to produce evidence to support their demands in the political sphere due in part to their lack of education and financial resources. Research centres, advocacy organisations and consultancies, with funding from European donors such as Danish, Swedish and Dutch development agencies, played an important role in providing the training and financial support needed by many of the social movements (Loayza, 2010). This included mediating dialogue between social movements and the government, especially in resolving strikes and blockades as well as generating and communicating evidence to support and unite social movements in their demands, particularly around complete constitutional reform. Just as UDAPE and PRONAGOB did for the traditional political parties, organisations such as the Centre for Legal Studies and Social Research (CEJIS) and the Centre for Labour and Agrarian Development Studies (CEDLA) supported indigenous social movements.

CEJIS helped to create a political discourse centred on indigenous identity and pressed social movements to take collective action (Salguero, 2010). Broadly speaking, in line with the anti-globalisation movement, CEJIS aimed to support social movements to recover and integrate indigenous habits, norms and values into the national culture. This included the removal of racist practices, the reintroduction of oral tradition and thought, and the recognition of indigenous languages. From as early as 1978, when indigenous identity started playing a bigger role in Bolivian politics, CEJIS provided training (through seminars, workshops and scholarships) to indigenous social movements to increase their political recognition. The organisation focused particularly on their leaders and on the rights and entitlements of indigenous peoples including political recognition of their existence and culture; the institutional recognition of indigenous peoples' traditional political system; and the recognition of indigenous peoples' dual identity (Bolivian and Indigenous), amongst others. CEJIS also produced evidence and designed proposals for indigenous movements to submit to the government, some of which were passed as legislation. These included two supreme decrees in 1983 and 1984 related to the general labour law, a proposal to amend the Constitution in 1994 so that it recognised, respected and protected the rule of law for indigenous peoples' social, economic, political and cultural rights; and the forestry and the National Institute of Agrarian Reform Laws of 1996. In 2001, CEJIS drafted a law calling for major constitutional change, which was used by two indigenous organisations, CIDOB (a lower land indigenous union) and CONAMAQ to negotiate with Jorge Quiroga's government and suspend a planned march by indigenous people towards the capital, La Paz. Overall, CEJIS focussed on promoting an ethno-

political discourse providing social movements with the tools to challenge the political system, albeit outside the formal system.

At the same time, it is my belief that the research consultancy CEDLA worked to undermine the credibility of neoliberal policies. Created in 1985, CEDLA's work focussed on providing evidence of the negative effects of policies on the indigenous working class and articulating the unfairness of the neoliberal political and economic model. CEDLA also had significant capacity to influence through the editorial lines of the media. CEDLA's research focussed on the economic demands of indigenous movements related to basic needs, employment, social services, micro and macro economics, food sovereignty and access to markets (CEDLA, 2010).

In 1997, CEJIS and CEDLA joined forces to establish the Solidarity Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Peoples (SCCIP), which brought together a broad range of indigenous social movements and enabled them to speak with one voice. The committee later became the Political Instrument of the People's Sovereignty (IPSP), which was used by Evo Morales' MAS to unite the demands of the social movements for total constitutional reform through an Asamblea Nacional Constituyente or National Constituent Assembly. A substantial amount of knowledge was produced by think tanks such as CEJIS, CEDLA, CENDA (Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino), CEPAS-CÁRITAS, CESA, Agua Sustentable, Fondo Indígena, El Programa Nina and CEFREC (The Cinematography Education and Production Center) - members of SCCIP⁴ which was used by the social movements to support their claims and negotiate with right-wing government officials to call off strikes, road blockades and marches (Serhan and Salguero, 2010). After Carlos Mesa was removed from the presidency, the social movements made preparations for the reform of the Constitution. CIDOB had been working on a draft version in 2004 and finally presented it in 2005.

Evo Morales came to power promising major reform and social movements were therefore encouraged to prepare proposals. CEJIS's Solidarity Coordinating Committee of the Indigenous produced 24 papers making up a National Constitution, which CIDOB, APG (Guaraní People's Assembly of Bolivia) and CSUTCB (Unique Confederation of Rural Labourers of Bolivia) presented to the Executive in February 2006 (Gamboa Rocabado, 2009). The 24 papers produced were never considered formally by the Constitutional Assembly or by any of its commissions, but they were the building blocks of the Constitution eventually approved in Oruro. As the work of the Constitutional Assembly did not initially produce the desired results, Evo Morales urgently need a political success. Desperate to pass a new Constitution, the 24

⁴ Research was undertaken on common law constitutionalism, human rights, national state and nationalism, post-colonial studies, ethnic relations, rule of law, systems of justice and customary justice, land regime, political systems, government and governance, decision and lawmaking processes, criminal law, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, education, micro and macro economy, poverty struggle, theories of poverty, social security, services and regimens, policies of health, food sovereignty, access to markets and access to credit.

proposals produced by CEJIS's Solidarity Coordinating Committee were approved in the Constitutional Assembly's final session in Oruro without further scrutiny. A public statement issued in February 2008 by nine indigenous organisations (CIDOB, CONAMAQ, CSUTCB, CSCB (Bolivian Syndicalist Confederation of Colonizers), FMCBBS (Federación de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia Bartolina Sisa), CPESC (Coordinator for Ethnic Peoples from Santa Cruz), CPEMB (Moxeño Ethnic Peoples of Beni), MST (Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Bolivia) and APG) publically thanked the work of the Solidarity Committee and honoured the think tanks (CENDA, CEPAS-CARITAS, CEJIS, CESA, Agua Sustentable, Fondo Indígena, El Programa Nina and CEFREC) that had worked on the Constitution (Los Tiempos,2006).

The indigenous social movements and think tanks were not isolated in their work. Mainly funded by foreign donors from Northern Europe, they also received significant support from the anti-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum. Just as international celebrities such as Stiglitz and Sachs provided input to support the neoliberal paradigm, well known academics were brought in support of Evo Morales' project. They included Antonio Negri, Muchel Hardt and Ernesto Laclau, who came to theorise about Bolivian's socialism of the 21st century in a series of academic events called 'Thinking the world throughout Bolivia'. Moreover, think tanks such as CEDLA and CEJIS recruited professionals who were to become part of Evo Morales' MAS and subsequently prominent members of his government. For instance, Alfredo Rada, Susana Rivero, Carlos Romero and Alejandro Almaraz were executive directors and senior researchers of CEJIS who went on to become Ministers of the Interior, Rural Development, and Vice Minister of Land respectively in Morales' cabinet. Meanwhile Carlos Villegas and Guillermo Loza from CEDLA went on to become Ministers for the economy.

Table 1 below illustrates the impacts that neoliberal and indigenous think tanks have had, often drafting legislation to address social and/or economic problems, which were later adopted by the executive:

Table 1: Four examples illustrating the correlation between social conflict, demands and production of knowledge and its impact on legislation

| Conflict | Demands | Knowledge | Policy |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| 1984's hyperinflation and fiscal deficit | Washington-consensus demands of constraining the State's role on the economy | UDAPE produced evidence on the need to shift the State's capitalism towards the market economy in order to stop the hyperinflation process and cut | The N°21060 decree (1985) |

| | | back the deficit | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1993's fiscal deficit | Washington-consensus demands of constraining the State's role on the economy | UDAPE produced evidence on the need of capitalising the public sector management of the national resources and cutting up the deficit by moving social security to private insurance companies | Law N° 1732 of Social Security Law N° 1544 of Capitalisation |
| 1994 (CIDOB) Indigenous of the lower lands march | Indigenous demands on recognition and protection of the indigenous social, economic, political and cultural rights | CEJIS produced CIDOB's proposal of Constitutional's amendments referred to the recognition and protection of the indigenous social, economic, political and cultural rights. | Constitutional Reform of 1994, article 171. |
| 2003-2005 Indigenous demonstrations, marches and road blockades | Demands of a total amendment to the Bolivian Constitution | CEJIS produces 24 proposals of Constitutions for CIDOB, CONAMAQ, CSUTCB, among others with the Solidarity Coordinating Committee | 2008, the Think tanks constitutional proposal is approved in the City of Oruro |

Thus, the role of think tanks was to act as key intermediaries, bridging the initial gap between social movements and the political system, reconciling the demands of the indigenous movements with the political language of the State, as well as helping to develop, unite and reinforce an ethno-national discourse and providing a cadre of politicians for government.

6. Conclusion

As I discussed at the beginning of this paper, at first sight Bolivian governance and legislature do not seem to have any links with the production of knowledge and research-based evidence. Public policy appears to be formulated through intuition and political calculation – sometimes for the good of the State, sometimes less so since there are no formal links between the policy-making process and the institutions capable of producing such knowledge and research. This is only highlighted further by the difficulties of a complex society with high rates of poverty and fragile state institutions.

Despite these assumptions, my research found that knowledge and evidence are actually entrenched in the Bolivian legislative and governance process and represent a phenomenon that has grown over the past two decades. One has to investigate the links within the country's political culture and values, rather than through formal channels and structures of the Bolivian State. Think tanks, whether they are defined as civil society organisations, policy research organisations, or even individuals who advise the government have been the providers of knowledge and evidence in recent policy making processes. Their influence is not however necessarily included in the formal configuration of the State, but in the ability of researchers and academics to lobby and at times progress to even become politicians. Certainly, the adoption of the Washington Consensus fostered the establishment of a number of think tanks including Fundación Milenio, FUNDEMOS, and two internal government think tanks, UDAPE and PRONAGOB. They helped to broadly legitimise the neoliberal policy agenda, and more specifically provide technical advice. Many of these think tanks had explicit links with traditional political parties. Similarly, the rise of ethnic based politics saw the growth of think tanks in support of indigenous social movements such as CEJIS and CEDLA, a relationship that proved invaluable for the rise of Evo Morales. These think tanks produced and communicated evidence to support their demands, provided them with training and funding, brought diverse social movements together through the development of a coalition (SCCIP) that enable them to speak with one voice and crucially mediated dialogue between them and government.

International actors also played a key role in supporting the production of relevant knowledge. Neoliberal think tanks received funding from the World Bank, the IMF, IADB, CAF and some right wing German political foundations, while think tanks in support of indigenous social movements received funding from several European donors and development agencies. They also received support from the anti-globalisation movement and the World Social Forum (WSF). And just as Jeffrey Sachs and Joseph Stiglitz provided policy inputs during the neoliberal era, celebrity academics such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt came in support of Evo Morales' political project. Think tanks also provided cadres of policy-makers in both the

neoliberal era and once Morales assumed presidency. For example, presidents of right-wing think tanks FUNDEMOS and Fundación Milenio even went on to become Bolivian presidents, while executive directors and senior researchers at CEJIS were appointed to senior ministerial roles in Morales' cabinet.

Therefore, it can be argued that social movements have and continue to play a very important role in utilising the knowledge produced by think tanks in Bolivia and representing public demand, channelling evidence and research production more effectively towards legislation. Think tanks have thus had an influence on Bolivian politics and policy-making since 1985, but this is only due to their close connections to political parties, social movements and the Executive. As a consequence, they can be classified as principal actors in this process. Overall, knowledge and the think tanks that produce it are subordinate to political interests in Bolivia and this is clearly illustrated by history of the Constitutional Assembly.

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