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**BOLIVIA UNDER THE LEFT-WING PRESIDENCY  
OF EVO MORALES—INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE END  
OF POSTCOLONIALISM? \*\***

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the development in Bolivia under president Evo Morales, through a critical postcolonial approach. From a traditional liberal perspective, this article concludes that the liberal democratic system under Morales has not been deepening, though certain new participatory aspects of democracy, including socio-economic reforms have been carried out. In contrast, this article analyses to what extent the presidency of Evo Morales may be seen as the end of the postcolonialism, and the beginning of a new era in which Bolivia's indigenous people finally have been incorporated into the forward development of a multi-ethnic society. By analysing issues such as time, nation, land, space, globalization and language, the conclusion is that the new constitution marks a fresh beginning, one beyond the colonial and postcolonial eras, for indigenous groups, but it will not bring back the old indigenous societies as was dominating the territory of today's modern state.

**KEY WORDS:** Bolivia, postcolonialism, indigenous people, democracy, socio-economic development.

### **Introduction**

By 2009, as many as fourteen presidencies in Latin America were held by the political left. In Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Chile, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, and El

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Salvador, the reformist and social-democratic presidents have attempted to enact liberal democracy, with modest social and economic reforms. However, in other Latin American countries, such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Bolivia, the presidents have been far more radical, challenging or trying to challenge the existing political, social, and global economic order (Katz; Walker; Moreno-Brid and Paunovic). These governments are considered radical for several reasons: one is the promotion of radical socioeconomic agendas and how democracy is understood as a concept; in reality, it is the ambition to deepen democracy through peoples' participation in the political and socio-economic spheres. This stands in sharp contrast to the liberal representative democratic tradition and its focus on elections, political rights, and vertical and horizontal accountability (see Dahl).

Bolivia's political development differs somewhat, mainly because the Bolivian left remains strongly supportive of its indigenous people's claims to restore their legacy after several hundred years of colonization and postcolonisation. After independence in the early nineteenth century, the legacy of the former Spanish colonial political and socio-cultural order was taken over by white or *mestizo* landlords, capitalists and the military, and this postcolonial approach endured until the 2000s. In late 2005 this finally changed, when Evo Morales, a former coca-peasant from one of the major indigenous groups, won the presidency. Morales represented the former social movement, *Movimiento Al Socialismo* (MAS, Movement for Socialism), which quickly became the country's most important political party. Morales and MAS secured victory by forming a coalition of supporters, including indigenous peasants, miners, landless peasants, and indigenous movements, and by promoting cultural, civil and social rights. These supporters shared a common hostile view of western globalization, capitalism, and neoliberalism, but lacked any larger representation before the emergence of MAS (Postero, Anria). After Morales took office, a call for a socio-cultural and democratic revolution was made, demanding the nationalization of gas and oil, sweeping agrarian and land reforms, and the creation of a constitutional assembly that could create a more equitable constitution for all citizens in Bolivia—particularly its indigenous people. Morales' objectives could be seen as attempts to bring land, resources, and national identity back to the state enjoyed prior to the colonial and postcolonial periods.

A great amount of previous research on the Latin American and Bolivian political left has focused on issues such as the definition and classifications of the leftist governments: populist, participatory, radical, social-democratic, or the nationalist left (e.g. Castañeda; Walker; Katz; Moreno-Brid, and Paunovic), the left wave as a phenomenon (Castañeda, and Morales), the leadership related to populism, different topics and cases related to the left (e.g. Cameron and Sharpe), and the outcome of leftist policies, their relation to democracy, and a few about the role played by indigenous people (e.g. Lupien; Valdivia; Kohl and Bresnahan). But analysis of the left's ambition to restore the legacy of the indigenous people role in Bolivian society and the outcome of this process remains so far relatively underexplored. In order to be able to conduct this, a postcolonial critical approach will be used. Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse to what extent to the presidency of Evo Morales may be seen as the end of the postcolonial period, and the beginning of a new era in which the voice and socio-cultural demands of Bolivia's indigenous people finally have been incorporated into the forward development of a multi-ethnic society.

### **Background: Deepening Democracy under Morales—from a Traditional Liberal View**

The second most radical and controversial case of the left in Latin America, after Chávez' Venezuela, has so far been Bolivia (Walker; Maxwell and Sharpe). In late 2005, Evo Morales won the presidency, and the *Movimiento Al Socialismo* (MAS) became the most important political actor. The background of Morales and MAS's victory is that they managed to form a coalition of supporters, including indigenous peasants, miners, landless peasants, and indigenous movements, claiming cultural and civil rights. They all share a common hostile view of globalization and neoliberalism, and lack any larger representation before MAS began to succeed (Postero; Anria). After Morales took office, a call for a socio-cultural and democratic revolution was made proclaiming nationalization of gas and oil, agrarian and land reforms, and that a constitutional assembly would create a more equal constitution.

As in the case of Venezuela, Morales initiated reforms of the political system through the game of the liberal institutional

setting when a new constitution was introduced. After the landslide victory in 2005, an election to a constitutional assembly to rewrite the constitution was held. However, since MAS lacked the required two-third majority to vote for the outcome, the majority of MAS decided that each article would pass with a simple majority, but that the draft of the entire constitution still needed two-thirds majority. In December 2007, the elected constitutional assembly, with the majority of the MAS, voted for major changes to the constitution: The changes would establish both direct and indirect democratic institutions, and Bolivia was about to become an official multi-ethnic country, in which social reforms was supposed to be financed by the national mineral resources. According to Postero ("The Struggle to Create a Radical Democracy in Bolivia" 67), however, some critical voices, mainly from the political right and its allies such as landlords, entrepreneurs and other rich people, were raised on how the constitutional process was run (see also Anria, De la Fuente Jeria, Valdivia, Rocabado). As a consequence, some of the richer regions held referendums that resulted in proclaiming autonomous regional status.

However, these referendums were not recognized by the central government or by the judicial system; this was followed by demonstrations and uprising against the Morales administration. The problem was now how to succeed with the constitutional work, since a new constitution by the law needed two-thirds majority pass. A majority of the opposition was against most parts of the constitution meanwhile the regional prefects, in addition, demanded to move the capital from La Paz to the historical capital of Sucre. For a while, it looked like that the constitutional process would end. But after several months of death lock, Morales used a constitutional weapon when he launched recall referendums about his presidency and the regional prefects. Morales won the referendum and several opposition leaders lost. According to Cameron and Sharpe (72) this changed the balance of power in Bolivia; from now on, the leaders of the opposition in Congress, and the regions were more or less forced to negotiate a new draft of the constitution. Finally, on January 2009 the constitution was approved in a referendum by over a sixty percentage margin (Postero, "The Struggle to Create a Radical Democracy in Bolivia" 67).

As a contrast to for example Venezuela where the liberal democratic institutions have eroded in the 2000s, the leftist government under Morales has so far not contributed to

decreasing civil and political rights in Bolivia, nor have any major military coups taken place against the democratically elected government. Though there had been periods of social unrest since Morales took office, such as during the constitutional debate in 2008, and in 2010-11 when some subsidies of gas were decreased, there has been no real attempt of coups, or similar uncivil actions (Anria, Valdivia, Kohl and Bresnahan, Kohl). Nor has there been any decline of liberal democratic institutions, such as civil and political rights.

The key question is, however, to what extent the Morales administration has deepened democracy, and to what extent one could criticize the democratic path. In accordance with the liberal democratic tradition, the voters have continued to vote for Morales and MAS in the completely free fair elections in the constitutional assembly 2006, the recall referendum in 2008, and in the referendum for a new constitution in 2009, and in the presidential-, and Congress elections in 2009. Regard to Freedom House's (2005-2012) index of liberal institutions—civil and political rights, Bolivia is considered as a young democracy, but the recent reports shows that civil and political rights have been stable around 3 (on the scale: 1-7) during the Morales administration. It is the same when Morales assumed office. Regard the horizontal accountability, according to Anria, the congress has weakened its position, but this has to do with the crisis of the party system and the weak and unorganized opposition, rather than as a result of illegal actions taken by the Evo Morales's presidency.

Though the old liberal democratic institutions remain relatively intact in Bolivia, but as we will see the new constitution has broadened and widening the scope of the democratic system, including more opportunities for participation as well as other radical socio-economic initiatives (Montambeault, Lupien, Kohl, Regalsky). In the new constitution, democracy is defined as a combination of direct participatory democracy and indirect representative liberal democracy. Participation takes place through actions such as referenda, citizens' initiatives and prior consultations, while representative democracy is practiced through the regular elections. The new constitution also recognizes departmental autonomy as well as municipal, provincial, and indigenous autonomy. When it comes to economic issues it is stated that Bolivia will have a mixed economy with both

ownership of the state, communes, and private people. It means for example also that natural resources such as gas, oil and water will be administrated in the collective interest through the state. Finally, in addition, the constitution gives the people several social rights to water, food, education, health care and other basic socio-economic conditions.

To summarize, as a result, in accordance with the western liberal tradition, the constitution includes the possibility to deepen democracy, both directly through institutions, but it also gives the possibility for radical reform policies, in accordance with the core content of the new constitution. Though the liberal democratic system has not been developed during the Morales administration, the new constitution and other policies taken have created several mechanisms to increase participation as parallel to the existing democratic system. But the question is how this all relates to the issue about the indigenous people's demand to restore their historical legacy.

### **Postcolonialism and the Question about Indigenous People**

According to Young (2003), a postcolonial status was reached when the former colonial territories received independence in Africa, Asia and Latin America. However, the world did not change very much as a result, and in most cases the same former colonial powers or elites continued to dominate the former colonies after independence. The new, autonomous countries continued to be highly connected to Europe and North America, particularly in regards to capitalism and liberal democracy. This postcolonial approach criticizes the western way of thinking in which developing countries are viewed as being composed of homogeneous people and cultures (Said, Chakrabarty). Quite often this insular view has reduced all countries outside the western powers into a collective third world, or developing world, sharing the same characteristics and facing the same obstacles. In the postcolonial approach, it is recognized that countries outside the western world have heterogeneous peoples and cultures, and that the impact of the colonial heritage and western imperialism vary from case to case. That's why the postcolonial approach includes a reorientation of the way in which knowledge and development are seen, and in particular of the methods by

which people's lives can be analysed. The postcolonial approach challenges the hegemony and biases of western thought.

In this article, instead of discussing Bolivia's development related to western liberal democracy and other socio-economic models, as it was described in the previous background section, this article will use another perspective, the more critical postcolonial perspective. Though, postcolonial thinking raises several concerns (McClintock, Young, McLeod, Krishna, Chakrabarty), which is beyond the scope of this article to further discuss, it is nevertheless, useful to analyse countries such as Bolivia under Evo Morales with a postcolonial approach. It is important to provide a more critical perspective, or another view of the established development and challenge the existing stories or analyses that are founded in the western models, related to for example democratic or socio-economic development (see McLeod). Whereas this article first in the background briefly discussed the deepening of democracy in Bolivia under Morales in the 2000s from a western democratic model, the postcolonial approach is employed to highlight and explore certain additional angles of the Morales presidency, according to the following guidelines.

First, it is essential not to view events as simply occurring after the colonial period ended or to understand the development of these events as representative of a new historical era. This postcolonial approach must be understood, in accordance with John McLeod and other views, as a concept that recognizes both change and continuity (see also Clifford). For instance, the former Spanish colonialists largely evolved into the new Spanish elite, and these elites maintained power in Latin America even after countries received their formal independence from Spain. In the postcolonial setting the rule of this elite class largely maintained the political and social structures that were established during the colonial time, but in the nineteenth century the western world's political and economic structures of liberal democracy and capitalism were also incorporated, including the role of the United States after the Monroe-doctrine as established. This entire development has all affected the possibility for each country such as Bolivia to develop its own destiny in accordance with older traditions, as represented by indigenous people.

Second, the concept of nation is important. For most indigenous people, nation has always been important as a concept in the establishment of cultural identity, language, and history.

Most indigenous groups identify their nation in a way that does not relate to the western view of formal territorial boundaries or neatly defined states. This creates problems, because a modern western state could then be seen as a mosaic of amorphous, disparate nations; rather the modern state needs to be seen as having been formed by all these nations.

Third, land and space is important, and it implies the same problem as with the concept of nation. The concept of landless people, according to Young (2003) implies, however, that the landless must have owned land in the past. The problem is that most of the current “landless” indigenous people never owned the land now possessed by the colonialists and other people, at least not according to traditional western definitions of legal property rights. Before rich landlords and big *haciendos* came to prominence in colonial Latin America, no one owned land according to the western concept of legal ownership. In fact, nomads and other indigenous people viewed land as something that could not be owned or possessed; rather land could be used and that use was sacred.

Fourth, authors such as Sankaran Krishna (2009) stand strongly against neoliberal globalization. This paradigm rejects the notion that individuals play such important roles in a competitive society; instead its focus is upon the consumption and production of goods on a global market. In addition, globalization is seen as a western phenomenon, as a part of modernization and colonisation, and so postcolonial countries must transcend beyond those limits. Finally, translation—or the use of language—is a key to performing proper analyses (Young). But how can proper translation be assured? For example, Bolivia’s new constitution introduces a concept in Spanish—*Constitución Política del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia*—which originated from indigenous ideas and languages. If any nuance of meaning is lost or misunderstood in the translation from the indigenous language to Spanish—and then to English and other languages—the result could be a lack of congruence with original intentions. But what if certain key components are altered or forgotten altogether? To summarize, what happens if we analyse Bolivia under the rule of the radical left and Morales from this critical perspective?



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**The Colonial Heritage and the Indigenous Peoples' Demands  
for a New Socio-economic Order—the End of Postcolonialism  
under Morales?**

On January 21, 2006, after Evo Morales had won the presidential election and before he was officially sworn in as president of Bolivia, he was crowned as Apu Mallku, and accepted the *bastón de mando* from one of the largest indigenous groups, Aymara. The ceremony was held upon holy land in the centre of Tiwanku. According to Kohl (2010) this marked the end of the Apartheid-system that had existed in Bolivia since colonial times, and it represented the end of domination of the white elite (Kohl 107). At his formal inauguration ceremony the following day in the capital of La Paz, Morales eschewed a black tie and wore indigenous dress instead. The political message in his first speech was clear: Bolivia must end the five hundred years of colonialism and begin a new era for the country and its indigenous people. European, university-educated people were relieved of duty when the new government took office. Morales vowed to decolonize Bolivia, remove the western model of democracy and political culture, and replace it with a new Andean policy (Kohl). This cultural revolution relied upon existing political institutions, such as the congress. The question, however, is to what extent the presidency of Morales marked the end of the colonial or postcolonial period and heralded the beginning of a new era in which indigenous people were finally incorporated into a greater multi-ethnic society. In this part, the case of Morales's rule will be analysed through postcolonial dimensions such as time, nation, land and space and the issue of globalization.

First, the understanding of this question relies upon a careful study of Bolivia's historical development, about change and continuity, both during the colonial period and the period from independence up until today. Before the territory today referred to as Bolivia was conquered by the Spanish in the 1520s, the Inca Empire was in control of large parts of the country (see Keen, Klein). After the conquest, Bolivia, or Upper Peru as it was known by the Spanish, became an important source of revenue for the Spanish empire, largely owing to silver mining. Indigenous labourers were pressed into service under slave conditions in the mines. Existing cultural traditions, represented by several major and minor indigenous groups, were completely marginalized. At the end of the colonial period, in the late eighteenth century,

Bolivia was a part of the Vice-royalty of the Río de la Plata, but local political and economic colonial elites held real power in the country. When Bolivia, after some years of struggle for independence, received judicial independence from Spain in 1825, a western-style constitution was drafted (Keen; Klein). A new nation was created within the state of Bolivia, in which Simón Bolívar was glorified as a hero. The elite maintained the colonial culture, including Spanish and other cultural values and customs, such as the Catholicism, but now with the influence of western political institutions. The masses were excluded, since an ability to speak Spanish and economic wealth was required for participation. Most of its main characters remained until Bolivia was democratized in the 1980s (Klein). In the nineteenth century, several caudillos that emerged after the collapse of the Spanish Empire ruled the country. Meanwhile the indigenous people were still forced to work under slave conditions in the mines and at the larger feudal estates, and they were denied access to education and other social privilege.

In the 1940s, the MNR (*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*) gained influence and looked towards the civil-military government as a route to improving socio-economic prosperity within Bolivia. After being denied victory in the 1951 election, the MNR seized power in 1952. As a part of this “1952 Revolution,” the MNR introduced universal adult suffrage, land reforms, access to education for all citizens, and nationalization of the country’s largest mines (Keen, Klein). For the first time since the country was colonised, Bolivia had an ambition to attempt the integration of indigenous groups. But these reforms were short lived, and by the 1960s the military was able to reclaim power and maintain elitist order until the first free and fair elections were finally held in Bolivia in 1982.

In reality, therefore, it was not until MAS, the political party supporting Evo Morales, gained power in the 1990s that the hope for a better future for indigenous groups became a reality (Postero, Kohl and Bresnahan). MAS’s roots are in the 1980s, when mines were closed and the former miners were forced to switch to coca farming. Most of these countryside miners belonged to various indigenous groups. In the early 1990s, several peasant unions, including indigenous movements, joined together on Columbus Day to honour the “Five hundred years of resistance of the indigenous people.” Years of discussion indicated the need for a political voice and so MAS was founded as a political party in

1998. MAS gradually strengthened its political power until, in 2006, it was able to seize control of the country. From its earliest days, MAS promoted a different vision for Bolivia, one which focused on national sovereignty, a clear anti-neoliberal philosophy, and hostility towards the political and economic elites' close connection with the United States. But above all, MAS criticized the modern Bolivia as a failed construction of postcolonialism (Postero, Kohl and Bresnahan). The ruling elite, the oligarchy, was considered anti-national, while MAS promoted the view of a plurinational state; a state in which the culture and identity of indigenous people, as it existed before colonisation, would prevail. This idea stems from the 1970s *katarista* tradition, which argues that the colonial legacy in Bolivia—from its independence in the early nineteenth century up and until modern times—contributed to the suffering of indigenous people both as a class and as individual ethnic groups.

While a historical description is necessary to understand what happens right now, a second important postcolonial issue is the concept of nation. In the new constitution, Constitución Política del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia (2009), there are several indications of a new state that is far more accommodating to indigenous people. The preamble directly states that Bolivia has left colonialism behind (Lupien). The first article establishes Bolivia as a plural and unitary state: "Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Plurinational, Community-Based Law, free, independent, sovereign, democratic, intercultural, decentralized, and with autonomies. Bolivia is founded in plurality and political, economic, juridical, cultural, and linguistic pluralism within the integrating process of the country" (Art. 1). There are several other signs of a new nation as well. In Bolivia, the main languages are Spanish, Guarani, Aymara and Quechua, but Spanish has always been the only official state language. The new constitution gives indigenous people more opportunities, since thirty-seven languages are now recognized as official. In practice, this means that the official authorities across Bolivia are required to use at least two of the official languages in the course of daily work. Another important sign of the changes in Bolivia is religion. Since the Spanish conquest, Catholicism was the official state religion. In the new constitution, however, Bolivia is a secularized state, with no state religion. Though the majority of its people adhere to Catholic beliefs and practice, Protestantism and traditional indigenous beliefs are on the rise. The new constitution states:

“The state respects and guarantees the freedom of religion and of spiritual beliefs, in concordance with their world view. The state is independent of the religion” (Art. 4). To summarize, the new constitution guarantees indigenous people certain collective rights, which in the long run both will have an effect on the nation-building in the state of Bolivia, as well as related to the different nations of each of the indigenous groups.

A third important question the understanding of issues related to land. This involves different parts of the constitution. In Bolivia, the most important one is actually that the new constitution states that indigenous people have the right to their original land territories (Art. 30) and grants the political right of self-government for these territories (Art. 290), including a consulting role to the state in regards to non-renewable natural resources on these lands. The constitution further states that natural resources belong to the people of the country, and establishes that the state shall administer the resources for the best sake of Bolivia’s people (Art. 311, 349). Symbolically, though, this means that several important natural resources belong to indigenous people, rather than to multinational companies. Another important land issue, which also has to do with tradition and culture, is the growth of Coca. Coca is recognized as an indigenous tradition with medical use. Article 384 about coca states: “The State shall protect native and ancestral coca as cultural patrimony, a renewable natural resource of Bolivia’s biodiversity, and as a factor of social cohesion; in its natural state it is not a narcotic. Its revaluing, production, commercialization, and industrialization shall be regulated by law” (Art. 384). A final important symbolic land issue is that the old town of Sucre was assigned as the national capital (Art. 6), though in practice La Paz, the site of the presidential palace and the home of Congress, remained the true seat of the government. Sucre is the historical capital, and the symbol of the old ruling colonial white elite that drafted the constitution of 1825. With the left in power and enjoying the support of most of the country’s indigenous groups, and with a strong anti-colonial agenda, the selection of Sucre stands as a message that the modern Bolivia will be autonomous and integrated, in defiance of its colonial and postcolonial past (Postero). The constitutional assembly began its work in Sucre marking a fresh start for Bolivia. As a summary, the new constitution secures the rights of indigenous people to live on and utilize mother Earth as in the old times, before the country was

colonized, and this is a major difference to how it has been during the last centuries.

Finally, the entire constitution could be seen as rejection against economic globalization, modernization, neoliberalism and the role that individuals play in a Western competitive society and on the global market. The constitution gives for example indigenous people, as collective rights, a special status regard to its historical heritage and culture, including language, use of land and minerals and ownership. It prevents privatization of common land and international companies to own and earn money on minerals in the country. According to Lupien (790), the new constitution declaring the pluri-national state guarantees indigenous people strong cultural rights, including the right to live in accordance with traditional norms. Further, Lupien argues, Bolivia supports the indigenous participation in democracy in connection with issues such as natural resources. The key question is whether the new constitution will lead to real, more inclusive policies. It is still too early to judge, since the Morales government has only run the country for a few years with the new constitution in place. But there are several positive signs and the constitution offers many practical implications for future policies.

At least, it is clear, that the voice of indigenous groups, long ignored, has been incorporated into the new constitution. The postcolonial period, in which the colonial elite ran the country with a western constitution and according to their own elitist self-interests, has ended. Still, this has been accomplished through the postcolonial system of western-styled political institutions such as a constitution and political parties. However, a new nation or nations in today's Bolivia will not bring society back to a pre-colonial society, but to some extent it gives indigenous a role to participate in the future destiny of the modern state of Bolivia, as one of the most important collective actor.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Since Evo Morales began his presidency in Bolivia, the constitution has resulted in new participatory dimensions that have deepened democracy in the country and included far more people (i.e. indigenous people) in the reform process. Meanwhile, the liberal representative democratic institutions still remain relatively intact. In 2005, before Morales took office, Bolivia

scored 3 in Freedom House's ranking of freedom; in 2012 it still scores 3 (Freedom House—Bolivia, 2005-2012). One could argue therefore that the democratic liberal institutions have created possibilities for indigenous people to seize power through a political party (MAS), and to make additional policies supportive of future opportunities to establish socio-economic reforms. This is one understanding of the Bolivian development, from a more traditional view.

Another more critical understanding is that Morales has pushed for policies—through the constitution—intended to overcome the colonial legacy as it applies to socio-cultural dimensions and the incorporation of indigenous people into the nation. Still, this has been done through the western liberal democratic institutions, established by postcolonialist with inspiration from the western world (see also Postero). While it is relevant to analyse the entire colonial and postcolonial time periods, a problem exists in determining which period of time Bolivia and its new constitution should be compared against. It is nearly impossible, for example, to view the new plurination of Bolivia in context of pre-colonial times. The problem is that the entire concept of state, land, constitution, and its relation to the concept of nation or nation state, is largely a western construction. For indigenous people, those who lived in the territories now occupied by the modern state of Bolivia, it is impossible to turn the clock back culturally to how life existed before the colonial and postcolonial eras. But if time is understood to result in change, the rule of Morales could be viewed as a new era, one that offers indigenous people a more fair political and socio-economic order, even if it is within the framework of a modern version of western democracy. Bolivia's new constitution takes a more neutral stance on land rights and minerals, one in which these natural resources are owned by all of the people within the plurination. This means that natural resources are considered to be the property of the state of Bolivia—in accordance with the western liberal institutions—but it is not supposed to be owned by private enterprises, nor any international companies, as has been the case historically. In comparison to the past, where private and international companies exploited Bolivian land to make money, the new constitution and policies enacted by president Morales are more in accordance with the indigenous traditions of land use. The name of the constitution—*Constitución Política del Estado*

*Plurinacional de Bolivia* (2009)—is reflective of Bolivia's desire to recall its historical roots within the framework of its modern historical destiny. However, it is beyond the scope of this article to analyse if this creates difficulties in understanding when translating into the different indigenous languages.

To conclude, democracy has been deepening to some extent in Bolivia under the presidency of Morales. Liberal democratic institutions have created more participatory dimensions, giving particular indigenous people more possibilities for inclusion in the democratic process of the country. The new constitution also includes several possibilities for expanded self-government at a local level, particularly for indigenous people. As such the new constitution marks a fresh beginning, one beyond the colonial and postcolonial eras, for indigenous groups, but from a postcolonial perspective regards to concept such as nation, land, space and time; it will not bring back the old indigenous societies as was dominating the territory of today's modern state of Bolivia.

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