Changing Ethnic Boundaries:

Politics and Identity in Bolivia, 2000–2010

Submitted by Anaïd Flesken to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Ethno–Political Studies
in October 2012

This thesis is available for library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that
no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no
material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any
other university.

Signature: ……………………………………………………………...
Abstract

The politicization of ethnic diversity has long been regarded as perilous to ethnic peace and national unity, its detrimental impact memorably illustrated in Northern Ireland, former Yugoslavia or Rwanda. The process of indigenous mobilization followed by regional mobilizations in Bolivia over the past decade has hence been seen with some concern by observers in policy and academia alike. Yet these assessments are based on assumptions as to the nature of the causal mechanisms between politicization and ethnic tensions; few studies have examined them directly. This thesis systematically analyzes the impact of ethnic mobilizations in Bolivia: to what extent did they affect ethnic identification, ethnic relations, and national unity? I answer this question through a time-series analysis of indigenous and regional identification in political discourse and citizens’ attitudes in Bolivia and its department of Santa Cruz from 2000 to 2010. Bringing together literature on ethnicity from across the social sciences, my thesis first develops a framework for the analysis of ethnic change, arguing that changes in the attributes, meanings, and actions associated with an ethnic category need to be analyzed separately, as do changes in dynamics within an in-group and towards an out-group and supra-group, the nation. Based on this framework, it examines the development of the two discourses through a qualitative analysis of anthropological accounts, news reports, and expert interviews. In both discourses, the unity of the respective in-group is increasingly stressed, before diverging conceptions become ever more prominent. Finally, my thesis quantitatively examines changes in in-group identification, out-group perception, and national unity, using survey data collected by the Latin American Public Opinion Project over the decade. It finds changes in identification that can be clearly linked to political mobilization. More citizens identify as indigenous and Cruceño, respectively, and do so more strongly than before. Yet identification then decreases again, concomitant with the growing divisions in discourse. Moreover, the rise in identification is not associated with a rise in out-group antagonism or a drop in national unity. On the contrary, the latter has increased steadily among all Bolivians. Besides shedding light on ethnic relations in Bolivia, this analysis thus also contributes to the wider debate on the effects of ethnic politics. It shows that identifications do indeed change in response to mobilizations, that they do so more quickly than expected and not necessarily in the manner as expected, demonstrating that it is necessary to carefully distinguish different elements of ethnicity.
List of Contents

Abstract ...................................................................................................................................................... 2
List of Tables .............................................................................................................................................. 5
List of Figures ............................................................................................................................................ 7
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. 10

1. Introduction: From Ethnic Mobilization to Political Polarization? ............................... 11
   1.1 Research design: Bolivia as case study of changing ethnic relations ........................... 13
   1.2 Gaps in the literature on Bolivia and Santa Cruz ......................................................... 17
   1.3 Research questions and methods ............................................................................... 23
   1.4 Thesis structure and contributions ............................................................................ 27

2. Analyzing Ethnic Change: Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology ............................... 33
   2.1 Theory: Towards a framework for the analysis of ethnic change ............................... 34
   2.2 An analytical framework ............................................................................................ 42
   2.3 Conclusions ................................................................................................................ 58

3. The Rise and Decline of Indigenousness in Bolivia .......................................................... 61
   3.1 Before 2000: From divided society to mestizaje to pluriculturality ............................. 62
   3.2 2000–2005: The emergence of a people ..................................................................... 68
   3.3 2006–2010: Refounding Bolivia ............................................................................... 76
   3.4 Discussion and conclusions ....................................................................................... 87

4. Indigenous Identification and Groupness ........................................................................ 93
   4.1 Changes in indigenous identification ........................................................................ 95
   4.2 Changes in indigenous cohesion ............................................................................... 108
   4.3 Conclusions ............................................................................................................. 114

5. Consequences of Identification for Groupness, Otherness, and Nationness ................. 119
   5.1 Indigenous mobilization: Action based on identification ......................................... 121
   5.2 Otherness: Prejudice, discrimination, and their political relevance ......................... 129
   5.3 Nationness: Bolivian political and social community ............................................... 139
List of Tables

Main text

Table 1.1: Overview of LAPOP surveys in Bolivia, 1998–2010 ......................................................... 26
Table 4.1: Overview of major events and survey rounds in Bolivia, 1998–2010 .......................... 100
Table 5.1: Mean approval for language rights according to indigenous assertiveness $^{ab}$ ............. 125
Table 7.1: Results of binary logistic regressions for high levels of feeling/belonging .................. 177
Table 7.2: Feeling Cruceño in 2001, 2009, and 2011 ........................................................................ 178
Table 7.3: Overview of major events and survey rounds in Santa Cruz, 1998–2010 ................... 181
Table 7.4: Approval for indigenous rights according to department and regional identification ................................................................................................................................................................. 191

Appendix

Table A1: List of survey items used .................................................................................................... 211
Table A2: Categorical measure of ethnic self-categorization, 1998–2010 $^{a}$ ............................... 215
Table A3: Self-categorization (indigenous) with year and control variables: Significance of change (Figure 4.1a) ................................................................................................................................................................. 216
Table A4: Belonging (indigenous) with year and control variables: Significance of change (Figure 4.1b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 216
Table A5: Assertiveness with year and control variables: Significance of change (Figure 4.2a) 217
Table A6: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua culture according to assertiveness: Significance of change (Figure 4.5 a–b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 218
Table A7: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua culture according to location: Significance of change (Figure 4.7a–b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 218
Table A8: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua culture according to belonging (disaggr.): Significance of change (Figure 4.9 a–b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 219
Table A9: Confidence in traditional indigenous institutions according to identification: Significance of change (Figure 5.1 a–b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 220
Table A10: Pride in and support for the political system according to self-categorization: Significance of change (Figure 5.10a–b) ................................................................................................................................................................. 220
Table A11: Feeling as and pride in being Bolivian as well as approval for unity despite diversity according to self-categorization: Significance of change (Figure 5.11a–c) ................................. 221
Table A12: Indigenous right towards territory, with control variables ......................................... 221
Table A13: Identification as Cruceño and with Camba culture and the media luna according to department: Significance of change (Figure 7.1a–c) ................................................................................................................................................................. 222
Table A14: Identification as Cruceño and with Camba culture and the media luna according to indigenous belonging: Significance of change (Figure 7.2a–c) ................................................................. 222
Table A15: Camba as the most trustworthy ethnic category, with control variables ............. 223
Table A16: Distrust of Aymaras and Quechuas according to regional identification, with control variables .................................................................................................................................................. 223
Table A17: ‘Some few’ contributors to Bolivian development according to regional identification, with control variables .................................................................................................................................................. 224
Table A18: Pride in and support for the political system according to department: Significance of change (Figure 7.10a–b) .................................................................................................................................................. 224
List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Framework for the analysis of ethnic change ......................................................... 43
Figure 2.2: Analytical framework for nationness........................................................................ 56
Figure 4.1: Ethnic identification according to self-categorization and belonging .................. 98
Figure 4.2: Indigenous assertiveness and dress according to self-categorization and belonging 103
Figure 4.3: Indigenous self-categorization and belonging according to language category ...... 105
Figure 4.4: Indigenous assertiveness according to skin tone, 2010 ........................................... 107
Figure 4.5: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua cultures according to indigenous assertiveness ........................................................................................................................................ 109
Figure 4.6: Indigenous self-categorization and belonging in the highlands and lowlands ....... 110
Figure 4.7: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua culture according to location ................. 112
Figure 4.8: Indigenous self-categorization according to belonging (disaggregated) ............ 113
Figure 4.9: Attachment to Aymara and Quechua culture according to belonging (disaggregated) ........................................................................................................................................ 113
Figure 5.1: Confidence in traditional indigenous institutions .................................................. 123
Figure 5.2: Positive perception of indigenous autonomy according to indigenous assertiveness ........................................................................................................................................ 126
Figure 5.3: Perceived influence of indigenous groups according to indigenous assertiveness .. 127
Figure 5.4: Attitudes towards indigenous Bolivians according to indigenous assertiveness, 2004 and 2010 ......................................................................................................................... 131
Figure 5.5: Trust in and acceptance of an ethnic category by the respective other ............... 132
Figure 5.6: Perception of indigenous discrimination and racism according to self-categorization ........................................................................................................................................ 133
Figure 5.7: Perceived discrimination according to indigenous assertiveness ...................... 134
Figure 5.8: Perceived discrimination on the basis of skin colour, economic situation, and manner of speech according to self-categorization, 2010: often or sometimes in the previous five years ............................................................. 135
Figure 5.9: Perceived treatment of whites according to self-categorization as white ............ 138
Figure 5.10: Pride in and support for the Bolivian political system according to self-categorization ........................................................................................................................................ 141
Figure 5.11: Individual- and group-level identification with the Bolivian social community according to self-categorization ........................................................................................................................................ 143
Figure 6.1: Map of the Camba Nation as proposed by the MNC–L (2001c) ......................... 156
Figure 7.1: Identification as Cruceño and with Camba culture and the media luna ................ 175
Figure 7.2: Identification as Cruceño and with Camba culture and the media luna according to belonging ........................................................................................................................................ 179
Figure 7.3: Association between political ideology and identification: Linear trendlines........... 180
Figure 7.4: Trust in Cambas among Santa Cruceños, 2006............................................................. 183
Figure 7.5: Support for greater departmental self-determination according to department..... 185
Figure 7.6: Support for departmental autonomy according to regional identification in Santa Cruz ........................................................................................................................................................ 186
Figure 7.7: Character traits and trustworthiness of Santa Cruceño out-groups....................... 188
Figure 7.8: Reasons for uneven development according to department, 2004......................... 190
Figure 7.9: Attitudes towards indigenous Bolivians in politics, 2004 and 2010 ....................... 192
Figure 7.10: Pride in and support for political system according to department and regional identification........................................................................................................................................ 194
Figure 7.11: Political unity of Bolivia according to department and regional identification..... 195
Figure 7.12: Attachment to the social national community according to department.......... 197
Figure 7.13: National attachment among strong regional identifiers in Santa Cruz .............. 197