Liberal thought and Bolivian political culture (1899–1934)

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SUMMARY

This paper studies political culture during the Liberal period of Bolivian political history, in terms of collective imagery and processes of structural formation, such as the production and reproduction of social practices. Political culture is also a process of structural formation based on the project-process interaction: the projects of the actors, and processes that obey regularities (structures). Hence, their study requires a double hermeneutic to understand how actors create the political field, and at the same time are created by it. Political culture *lato sensu* encompasses an epoch's common sense, social identities and their respective practices; though this does not exclude the possibility of thinking of culture as the crystalization of a concrete thought, which may become hegemonic and articulate, institutionally or socially, a social formation. Old-style liberalism in our America adopted specific forms, such as clientelism and *caudillismo*. Since political transformations do not operate in a vacuum, we must study the continuity that exists between thought and discursive practices during the 19th century, in order to better understand those which correspond to our own time.

Introduction

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Political culture *lato sensu* encompasses an epoch's common sense, social identities and their respective practices; though this does not exclude the possibility of thinking of culture as the crystalization of a concrete thought, which may become hegemonic and articulate, institutionally or socially, a social formation (Patiño, 1998).

To understand the interactions between the Nation-State and its context in today's globalized world, and the transformations that derive therefrom, requires—among other things—the study of ideologies and political practices during the early phase of nation-building; to the extent that

collective memory is, in some manner, a reconstruction of the past as dictated by the needs of the present.

Liberalism in our America adopted specific forms, such as clientelism and *caudillismo*. Since political transformations do not operate in a vacuum, we must study the continuity that exists between thought and discursive practices during the 19th century, in order to better understand those which correspond to our own time. This paper is intended as a first step within the framework of a much larger research project.

A large part of recent historiographical debate in Latin America has been limited to airing value judgments, but—as Romero (1977; 54) states—perhaps it is more important to understand than to judge.

1. Peripheral Modernity

The term "modernity" alludes to the ideals of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the American Constitution, that is, individual freedom, human equality, and belief in progress and historical development. Also included within this concept's meaning are the Industrial Revolution and the mechanization of production.

According to Wallerstein (2000; 102), in Euro-centric conceptions of culture "modernity" is almost equivalent to "civilization," although the latter also used to mean "non-brutal behavior in daily life." In the past, Europe regarded itself as the only civilized region or at least *the most civilized*. In this second semantic vein, civilized is associated with "civil society," as something which leaves behind primitive and natural society. Hence the choice between *civilization or barbarism*: the transformation of a primitive society into a civilized and modern society capable of sustaining a modern State.

The national-liberal project derives its legitimacy, on the one hand, by appealing to the universal right of peoples to advancement, following an idea of progress that must be "realized" in the name of humanity. On the other hand, it seeks legitimacy in what the "people" is today; and this cannot help but create tensions between *what is* and *what ought to be*.

In the 19th century the Latin American elites took it upon themselves to create fully modern nations inserted into the international capitalist world. This was a difficult undertaking owing to the colonial heritage, characterized by a traditional corporativist *ethos*, and a hierarchical, racist and centralizing social order. Other important obstacles were the disarticulation of colonial institutions and the geographic and cultural isolation of large segments of the population.

In the early post-independence years, the "people" in Latin America were not viewed as a collection of autonomous, free and equal citizens. Rather, they were seen as groups linked by ancient ties (corporative, familiar, military, etc.). The social imagery of the dominant culture was corporative.

> "*Premodern* citizenry is linked to a corporative or communitarian conception of the social. The city is one of the communal entities that constitute society. Man is defined by his belonging to a group, whether this be estamental, territorial o corporative. Not to belong to one of these groups is to be, in practice, outside of society: vagrants, beggars, outcasts of every sort" (Guerra, 1999; 42).

However, the processes by which our societies accede to modernity operate mainly in the cities. Ledgard (1991; 230), reviewing the concept of "modernity," thinks that the *modern condition* in Latin America must be regarded as an *urban condition*, leaving aside industrialization and development. Modernity is not about tractors but about *rational discourse*: a productive and social transformation inspired by reason.

> "With modernity comes the glorification of individualism and creativity, the cult of subjectivity, a passion for novelty" (Urbano, 1991; x).

The cities in Andean countries relate to their peasant *hinterland* through the capture of surplus in the form of rents and tribute. They were administrative centers of political and religious power, dwelling-places of landowners, spaces where artisans grouped together, crossroads for trade networks, etc. (Golte, 2001; 108-109).

The understanding of the modern condition as an urban condition is a theme which is linked to migrations. In the early decades of the 20th century, the emigration of peasants to the cities increased as a result of the expansion of the *haciendas*, and this meant a larger proportion of *mestizo* artisans with the right to vote. Emigration to the cities was the only route to upward social mobility for the Indians. There, in addition to learning the Spanish language, they acquired skills for trade and crafts. These reeducated Indians engrossed the lower ranks of the army, became artisans and laborers, and participated in civil disorders at the behest of the elite's several political factions (Irurozqui, 1999b; 313 / Klein, 1968; 17). At around this time, a plan of public works was implemented that brought to the country's main cities 20th century norms of urbanization and public sanitation and, at the same time, an efficient system of primary education was established in the cities (Klein, 1968; 64).

Political modernization required the existence of a national *bourgeoisie* and a sufficiently "modernized" popular sector; that is, a sector weighty enough to accompany the *criollo* elites (landowners) and deny possibilities to other sectors, particularly the military. These conditions begin to develop in Bolivia towards the early 20th century.

During most of the 19th century, Bolivia was predominantly rural and governed by *caudillos*. "During this period politics was controlled by regional alliances between landowners; alliances which, in turn, were led by powerful individuals usually referred to as caudillos" (Malloy, 1989; 31). By the turn of the century, the elite concluded that it was necessary to establish organizations under a "party format," in order to allow the formation of civilian governments, according to a constitution.

The *criollo* elite faced a dilemma: On the one hand, they wanted Bolivia to be recognized as a modern nation by foreign elites, and this required transforming the country taking as models the nations of Europe; on the other hand, they could not afford any alteration in the structures which provided for the economic surplus, and ultimately, their privileges (Irurozqui, 1995; 359-61).

After the War of the Pacific, the *criollo* elite, faced with the need to articulate a national policy, decided to abandon the politics of *factions*, founding political parties capable of translating their ideas into programs. Gramsci notes that factions are characterized by seeking the elimination of the opponent, rather than an organic equilibrium of parties under the hegemony of the strongest[1]

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[1]According to Gramsci, parties and personalist factions tend to be based "on the protection of inferiors by a *powerful man*" (Gramsci, 1995; 125 - 127).

(Gramsci, 1995; 189). Some countries in South America began this process early on in the 19th century.[2]

2. Liberalism and Positivism

The Liberal Party proclaimed the need for peace and order in a framework of respect for the law, even though it acceded to power via a bloody revolution.

With the victory of the Liberal Party, positivism prevailed in official circles.[3] Positivists came to occupy most important posts, in academic life as well as in government. Important characteristics of Bolivian positivism were a critique of metaphysics, and veneration for science and technological progress. The wide diffusion of these ideas might be due—as Guadarrama suggests—to their easy comprehension; and, in spite of a certain Comtean influence, the Bolivian strand[4] differed greatly from Brazil's religious positivism (Guadarrama, s/f).

The Positivists complained about the imperfections of inter-breeding (*mestizaje*) and attributed Bolivian poverty to purely ethnic and geographic factors. They wanted to create a political regime modeled on the great nations of the West.

Europe was the model to imitate, politically, in literature and art, and even in dress. The elite's sensibilities were more attuned to those of Europe's cosmopolitan circles than to those of the great majority of the country's inhabitants.

> "The Europe they imitated was fundamentally literary and aristocratic, rather than entrepreneurial. Typically, the children of 'upper class' families were educated abroad and spent most of their lives in foreign capitals. To almost all of them, Bolivia was merely a place where they had financial interests and personal relations that had to be taken care of once in a while [...] borrowed styles became the

[2]"In all of Latin America, in the years following the disruptions of Emancipation, we detect this concern to establish a solid political order, committed more to pragmatism that to legal orthodoxy. Such is the case of José Antonio Páez, erstwhile lowland *caudillo* transformed into statesman and defender of large landholdings. Such is also the case of the Ecuadorean Juan José Flores, who started out as one of Bolívar's most brilliant generals, only to end by calling upon the Spanish Crown itself to reestablish in his country the order that had been shattered by endless factional fighting. It is also, and even more pathetically, the case of Mexican historian and statesman Lucas Alemán, who failed repeatedly in his search for someone who might establish a strong government in his homeland. It is, above all, the case of Chile, much admired by Argentine exiles ... " (Romero, 1977; 52-53).

[3]However, bear in mind that an important thinker like Mamerto Oyola called himself a liberal in the tradition of Cartesian spritualism, but rejected positivism, which he regarded as a new version of the School of the Senses (Francovich, 1985; 21). Ignacio Prudencio Bustillo, in turn, favored positivism, but criticized liberal principles and vaguely sympathized with the Russian Revolution.

[4]"In the University of Chuquisaca there took place, at that time, an interesting movement of renewal initiated by Professor Benjamín Fernández. An important group of teachers was drawn to Fernández's positivist teaching, and they actively promoted the new ideas, both through journalism and in books" (Kempff Mercado, 1986; 29).

Bolivian style nationwide, where the authentically Bolivian within the 'national' culture was quite rare" (Malloy, 1989; 59).

The intellectuals were a fluctuating layer between the interests of the ruling class, and the schools and styles coming from Europe, all of which was conducive to imitation.[5] The approximation to national reality was undertaken, therefore, on the basis of alien principles: "European customs, behavior and values are the measure by which the native is evaluated" (Gómez-Martínez, 1987; 75).

According to Llobet Tabolara (1990; 329), "the oligarchy saw only mine-shafts and country estates, but they did not see a country" and "the oligarchic mentality is a plantation and parochial mentality." Nonetheless, the research conducted by Qayum (1993; 109-19) has shown that the Liberal political project, supported by important segments of the elite, tried to control the population and its territory within the limits of the nation they imagined. The main indicators to support this statement were the great hopes they invested in the railroad, as a means to end regional conflicts and reinforce the national identity; the use of censuses within the framework of an imagined geography; and plans to settle colonists and immigrants in supposedly virgin territories, where "wild" nature reigned supreme (Qayum, 1993; 113-17).

Racism was a basic component in the oligarchic Latin American republics, because it served to legitimate exclusion, consecrating an immutable social order seemingly based on nature.

> "The racism of *whites* against *blacks*, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, assumes it is possible to 'objectify' the subject of discrimination. When inter-breeding is the exception, the discriminating 'white' sees the discriminated 'black' as something alien and foreign to himself; an *object* upon which to unload discrimination, hate and contempt. In Peru such 'objectivation' is impossible, since the discriminator cannot separate himself from the '*object*' which he discriminates. For most Peruvians the use of the term 'Indian' as an insult, when one has Indian blood in one's own veins, supposes a negation of part of one's own identity: to discriminate, hate and despise elements of one's own self. This is radical alienation. It becomes impossible to recognize one's own face in the mirror. Thus, racism becomes something quite complicated and hard to approach" (Manrique, 1999).

Individuals are classified by race according to stereotypes loaded with positive and negative characteristics. Sabino Pinilla[6] in his book *La creación de Bolivia* (1917; 20) says the following about the Indians:

> "Insufficient brain mass, five to ten ounces below that of the Caucasian race, weakened brain cells and imperfections in the bloodstream, in which globules are subject to a pernicious lymph, clearly establish the limitations of their psychic faculties, and, therefore, their ineptitude for civilization."

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[5]José Luis Gómez-Martínez talks of "imitation as a form of life," and quotes Arguedas, who stated that in Bolivia there is no "genuinely national art or literature. This [production] is limited and has not achieved any development whatsoever" (Gómez-Martínez, 1987; 96).

[6]*La creación de Bolivia* was edited and published by Alcides Arguedas in 1917, who attributes its authorship to Sabino Pinilla, who died in 1909. Other historians, for instance Valentín Abecia Baldivieso, believe that the true author was José Rosendo Gutiérrez (1840-1883), Pinilla's father-in-law.

Some historians claim that doctrines such as these, which were hardly scientific, overshadowed the legacy of the Colonial worldview, "whose central trait had been the coexistence of the republic of Spaniards and natives" (Halperin Donghi, 1997). At about the same time, José Martí declared:

> "Man has no special rights because he belongs to one race or another: call him a man, and he can claim every right"[7] (Martí, 1986; 9).

Racism is a mixture of prejudice and power. It legitimates the relations of power between ethnic communities, and constitutes the mechanism by which this relationship is perpetuated (Guibernau, 1996; 101).

The racial classification of individuals was associated, structurally, to the division of labor, configuring a new global pattern of power. In short, "a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a situation of natural inferiority relative to others," legitimated relations of dominance (Quijano, 1993; 202).

Some proposed a zootechnical solution to overcome the biological conditions attributed to the Indian, via the management of a policy of cross-breeding. Felipe Guzmán in *El problema pedagógico en Bolivia* (1910; 85) stated:

> "The Indian, if he is not cross-bred with superior elements, will not advance beyond his moral level; that is, [even] if he achieves the highest degree of intellectual culture, he will always be Indian in his affective sentiments" (cited by Gómez-Martínez, 1988; 78).

Others, however, opposed inter-breeding. Arguedas, for instance, thought that Bolivia's backwardness was determined by its geographic and racial heterogeneity. Following Moreno and Saavedra, who were also influenced by Le Bon and Gobineau, he held that racial mixture was the main form of degeneracy. Selective and intelligent immigration, though it could not replace the Indian, should act like a sort of "graft." The Indian could only be useful as a farmer, soldier or laborer (Paz Soldán, 2003; 93). In this sense, the Comtean tutelary State should play a key role by instilling civil and social values (Larson, 2001; 39).

In the novels of Arguedas, the wild Indian is exploited by the *mestizo* "trinity" of overseers, priests and authorities (Paz Soldán, 2003). It should be noted that he admired the indigenous civilizations, such as that of Tiawanaku, that were destroyed by the brutality and ignorance of the colonizers. This vision, based on the contradictory image of the Indian as both victim and criminal, shared by many prominent figures of the time, explains the attempts to avoid "the conversion of Indians into *mestizos* and, secondly, the way in which it was attempted to control the former's electoral capacity through the invalidation of Indianness" (Irurozqui, 1995; 358).

For liberal thought, the right to vote was the axial element in democracy, but it had to be the *conscious, deliberate and popular suffrage* of the educated citizens, a condition that was related to

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[7]Martí said the following about the situation of the Indian in the United States: "They force him to cede his lands through onerous treaties; they remove him from his birthplace, which is like uprooting a tree, taking away the greatest object in life; they force him to cultivate and to purchase animals to work land that is not his own; they force him to go to school, to learn a foreign language, the hated language of his masters ..." (Martí, 1986; 19).

tangible aspects such as economic independence and property, and therefore excluded "the unfortunate Indian race, degraded by serfdom, as well as criminals, vagrants and idle folk."

> "The Bolivian Constitution reflected the prevailing schizophrenia [...] it declared that anyone born within its territory was Bolivian, which did not necessarily mean a Bolivian citizen, since, among other things, to be a citizen it was necessary to 'be able to read and write, possess real estate or an income above 200 bolivianos, [with the additional proviso that] said income should not be obtained from domestic service'."

> "According to the Constitution, then, over 75 % of the population did not qualify for citizenship of the Republic of Bolivia; the entire rural Indian population was excluded, in addition to the floating urban population and a significant number of laborers" (Malloy, 1989; 52).

International recognition of Bolivia as a democracy required extending citizenship to the Indians, because citizenship is characterized by universality, equality and individuality. It was expected that the Indian's accession to citizenship would result from economic progress, education and military service; in the meantime, the government should remain in the hands of a select minority of notables.

Some thought that education would limit the potentialities of the Indian, reinforcing however their capacity for labor; others, however, feared that education, rather than forming useful and hardworking laborers, would instead leave the Indian at the mercy of demagogues bent on promoting uprisings against the established order.

Some landowners were opposed to militarization of the Indian, since knowledge of weaponry might induce them to rebellion, while others argued that it was worthwhile to incorporate them into the white *criollo* community, even though this might imply the loss of their cultural identity (Quintana, 1999). They were to be redeemed through education, understood as "de-indigenization," that is, the elimination of their condition as Indians.

After the Zárate Willka uprising (1899), political modernization was limited due to fear that the white race might be wiped out by the Indians (Mayorga, 1999; 334). In this regard, Sergio Almaraz writes:

> "It is true that the landowners kept the land, but the '*lettered and Christian*'[8] class, as Mariano Baptista priggishly liked to say, were never able to comfortably enjoy their spoils. 'A vague shuddering,' fear or guilt, troubled their pious Christian hearts. Baptista recalled the possibility of 'the manor burnt, the owner slain, his family slaughtered' ... Then came the Federal revolution ... " (Almaraz, 1980; 74).

The liberal principles of *nation* and *progress* had no application because a large share of the population lived outside the national system (Malloy, 1989; 85). Thus, a supposedly national project excluded the majority of the people from the political system, keeping them as a reserve, sometimes attempting their assimilation, but without allowing them to participate in decision-making.

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[8]Italics added.

The social articulation imposed by this feudal logic implied human inequality. The universalization of citizenship, that is, acceptance of equality, would have undermined the elite's privileges; and the main arguments used to justify this inequality were based upon race and racial degeneracy.

Discrimination was not limited to the elite. Subordinate ranks also internalized the feudal logic, and opposed the idea of racial homogeneity, insofar as they thought this might jeopardize their own position. Discrimination was a mechanism to ensure conformity, since the existence of a hierarchy produced the gratification of finding someone on an even lower rung (Zavaleta, 1986; 133).

To be sure, the elite disapproved of social mobility. Consider what Mariano Baptista had to say:

> "Let each accept the position that Providence has allotted him, … , neither despising those below, nor envying those above, each to his own work, his own time, his own moment, all equally dignified by their chores" (Albarracín, 1981; 80).

In Arguedas we find even more overwhelming statements. He admits that the *cholo* has certain virtues when he stays in his "place," but as soon as he acquires some culture, his instinct for domination becomes aroused, as well as his taste for vulgarity, and he becomes incapable of making ethical decisions. In *Pueblo enfermo* there is a speech which lists the "vices" of the *mestizos* and their negative effects upon national life (Paz Soldán, 2003, 84-85).

3. Parties, Classes and *Estamentos*

The power of the white *criollo* elite was based on the linkage between the semi-feudal *haciendas* and modern mining. To be able to compete in the world market this elite needed to modernize institutions in defense of order. This would, it was thought, attract investment, increase mining output, and maintain the *status quo* in rural activities (Contreras *et al*., 1999).

Another important aspect was the need to establish ground-rules for the distribution of privileges within the elite, and thus its members formed distinct groups based on ideological distinctions that were more apparent than real (Irurozqui, 1997; 679-80).

The liberal ideology, under that banner or in conservative, radical or republic clothing, predominated in Bolivia until 1952. All these parties shared in common a liberalism based on the concepts of liberty, law and order. An editorial in *El Diario* (Nov 18, 1920) recognized the similarity of the different parties' programs:

> " ... Thus political men think it is the same thing to belong to the Liberal Party, or to the Republicans or the Radicals" (Klein, 1968; 75).

The Conservative Party defended Catholicism against the attacks of positivism, freemasonry and freethinkers. Mariano Baptista—its founder—declared that these tendencies formed part of a dangerous "Jacobin" enterprise (Irurozqui, 2003ª). Nonetheless, the Conservatives later joined Aniceto Arce's Partido Constitucional, even though the latter stated that his party had no "religious flag, and is liberal in ideas and procedures, *even more so than Eliodoro Camacho's liberals*" (Sandóval Rodríguez, 1993; 80).

Baptista rejected the liberals' Social Darwinism, which he considered cruel and unfair, in the name of the equality of all men before God. According to Fellmann Velarde, Baptista adopted Krausist

ideas on political morality and the sanctity of the ballot, simply because Catholic traditionalism had no phraseology that might be useful in a democracy (Fellmann Velarde, 1976; 203-04).

Baptista was aware that the mining industry needed technology and capital. Albarracín (1981; 82-83) notes that "no social thinker of the time reveals more dramatically the internal conflict between the divine rights of man and the material requirements of industry. These were two polar forces of a reality that could not be reconciled, since he viewed scientism as the gateway to atheism, opposed to Christianity as a means to divine perfection."

According to its founder, Eliodoro Camacho, the Liberal Party did not seek to break with tradition nor abruptly introduce violent reforms, neither did it wish to "flaunt religious indifference or disbelief, or scorn the faith" [Camacho (1885), cited by Francovich (1985; 13)].[9]

Both parties, liberals and conservatives, subsidized transportation, supported mining and the development of urban centers, and sought to expand the *hacienda* system at the expense of the Indian communities (Klein, 1982; 205). Liberal governments, however, departed in certain fundamental ways from the conservative regime.

The Liberals instituted civil matrimony and legalized absolute divorce, established secular education, expropriated convents, abolished the Church's *fueros* (jurisdictions and exemptions), secularized the cemeteries, and declared religious freedom (Córdova, 2002; 202).

One of the main concerns of liberal governments was the establishment of a national educational system, and the unification of schooling by means of a set of legal norms, under State control. The first objective could be set in motion because by the turn of the century economic conditions made an expansion of educational spending feasible (Contreras, 2001; 474). The second gave rise to conflicts with the Church, although—according to Martínez (2001)—the government sought mainly to reinforce the paramountcy of the Ministry of Education (and hence of the State) over and above any other institution, rather than giving free rein to its anticlericalism.[10] One of the main points of friction was the issue of the seminary-schools, "who had a choice: either they imparted a 'secular and ecclesiastical education' in secondary school, submitting to legislation just like any other school; or they could decide to restrict themselves to 'purely theological teaching,' in which case they could operate freely [...] although with no State subsidy whatsoever" (Martínez, 2001; 454).

The liberals tried to institutionally restrict the Church, but at the same time they needed her as a legitimator of the *latifundista* regime in the rural areas.

> " ... It was as if the two sides of the same brain thought differently. Spencerian liberalism was applied in urban Bolivia, but not in rural Bolivia" (Fellmann Velarde, 1976; 299-300).

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[9]General Eliodoro Camacho gave a speech on Dec 2, 1885, which served as the platform for the Liberal Party, since it was later published in Cochabamba as "Programa del Partido Liberal" in l887, and again in 1916 (Martínez, 2001).

[10]According to Françoise Martínez (2001; 452), "it was not about keeping the priests or the congregations from fulfilling their teaching vocation, but, on the contrary, about letting them participate in the liberal project and contribute to its success, accepting however the sought for educational unification."

Just as in other countries of Our America, we can talk, then, of a *peripheral modernity* with "modern towns" in opposition to "non-modern countryside."

> "The country is divided (schematically) in two parts: 'central' areas in which a certain process of modernization has taken place, with the formation of one or several cities, where the middle classes have settled [...] and the rest, consisting of 'peripheral' regions that include the vast majority of the population" (Germani, 1962; 343).

As a result of these tensions, a conservative liberalism arose which, influenced by Social Darwinism, restricted universal rights to the white *criollo* minority, excluding women, Indians, and a large share of *mestizos*, configuring "a modernity made to measure" (Córdova, 2002; 203).

The conservative silver miners held power directly. The owners of the largest firms (Arce and Pacheco) ruled the country in person, moving from their boardrooms to the presidential palace.

The tin magnates, in contrast, had no desire to intervene in politics directly.[11] Politics then had, as visible protagonists, an elite conformed by middle-class professionals and landowners of good social position but of modest economic means. Most of them were lawyers who adhered to the prevailing positivist liberalism, and thus felt attracted to the symbols of democracy, though at the same time, and in contrast to the liberal ideals, they accepted the class system and oligarchic rule (Klein, 1968; 83).

Politics was seen as the only option for ambitious young men, to the point that losing an official post "was a disaster for an individual's career and for his family" (Malloy, 1989; 88). Members of the elite that were in government tried by every means to stay there, and those who were out of government tried by every means to dislodge them.

According to Valencia Vega, "the increase in economic activity derived from mining, determined the appearance of sectors of intellectuals, journalists and professionals, and employees and workers. These were not wealthy people, though relatively well off, and were known in the country generically as 'middle classes,' which were characterized by their immediate participation in national politics. This 'middle class,' situated between the landowners and mining potentates and the *mestizo* artisans, provided the bulk of the membership of the Liberal Party. The Conservative Party, in contrast, consisted of local political bosses, wealthy artisans, mine owners and their managers, overseers and dependents" (Valencia Vega, 1984; 186). As opposed to Valencia Vega, Fellmann and other historians, M. Irurozqui argues that the individuals who competed in Bolivian electoral contests were of "equal economic, political and cultural characteristics." Which leads us to think that party differences were, mostly, an expression of elite control over the political system, and responded, not so much to distinct ideological, social or professional positions, but to "the need to legitimate the owners of economic power through the recognition of their political presence" (Irurozqui, 1997; 681-83).

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[11]This behavior is a characteristic of modern capitalism: " ... Under capitalism members of the ruling class normally do not have the time or the energy to make contributions to the development of culture, and, secondly, the ruling class must give to others real, direct control of the means for violence and coercion [...] As soon as a structurally differentiated economy develops, a differentiation is produced in other social structures within the bourgeois society: military, judicial, police and penal institutions [...] and [the capitalist] also distances himself from day-to-day intervention in politics, the *routine* mobilization of power, and mundane decision-making. This too becomes the specialized activity of a distinct *political* class" (Gouldner, 1976; 287).

Towards the end of the 19th century the ideology of middle class professionals associated with the Liberal Party was Positivism. This philosophical position was not abandoned after some conservatives joined it and it became the party of the ruling class.

> "Spencerian positivism, therefore, became, at the same time, the thought of the middle classes and that of the ruling class, and, naturally, also that of the different factions representing both groups: liberals of every stripe, genuine and republicans" (Fellmann Velarde, 1976; 298).

For some historians, liberal positivism was a European paradigm that was forcibly transplanted into Bolivian culture. However, Miró Quesada (1993; 136) thinks that, in Latin America, different groups deduced from this ideology whatever conclusions they needed to justify their political actions, stressing that positivism was "generally the ideology of a ruling class, though it has often also served as an ideology of liberation."

It seems reasonable to assume that the subordinate, urban middle class groups placed greater stress on the liberal and progressive aspects of Spencerism (secularization, tolerance and development of individuality) than on the mixture of social evolutionism and racial determinism that served to justify dominance based on racial differences.

In this sense, the liberals upheld civil liberties for whites and *mestizos*, which allowed for a vigorous intellectual life for the elite (Klein, 1982; 205). However, legal equality only existed for the male elite,[12] the rest of the population was treated according to estamental criteria. Though castes were not officially recognized, they existed implicitly (see Barragán, 1999).

The Radical Party,[13] from the point of view of principles, was a reaffirmation of liberalism, though it was also close to European socialism, which allowed it to pull away part of the working class from the liberal ranks. Nonetheless, it was short-lived:

> "In [just] one year of parliamentary activity almost all its elements were absorbed by the official [liberal] party, and it ended with a core of four congressmen. The radicals were intellectuals without many followers, and they themselves returned to the mainstream of liberalism or its republican offshoots" (Lora, 1987; 114).

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[12]"In 1905, ten women were sent to Chile with scholarships. Between 1910 and 1912, most of them returned to teach and apply the knowledge they had acquired. At about the same time, the educational reform directed by the Belgian pedagogue George Rouma began to show results. The newly established normal schools became co-educational, the first secondary schools for girls were founded, and in 1912 the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (La Paz) began admitting women. Teaching had a great impact on the closed, pre-Chaco war society. From the normal schools emerged women who pushed for civil, political and labor rights, and opposed the inherited prejudices and dogmas that had been used to legitimate the subordination of women. These activities led many of them to journalism and politics, and a fundamental reshaping of consciousness and debate about the country's problems" (Capra, 2003; 164).

[13]According to Francovich, Daniel Sánchez Bustamante was one of the founders of the Radical Party (1985; 39). G. Lora mentions the following members: Franz Tamayo, V. Mendoza, Luis E. Espinoza, Gustavo C. Otero, V. Fernández and V. Zaconeta (Lora, 1987; 113).

Recall that the party divisions did not follow social or professional differences, "nor was it an ideological [issue] in any strict sense" (Irurozqui, 1997; 682).

> "Underlying the variable and substantive differences between conservatives, liberals and republicans there was a common culture, a set of practices and conceptions that conformed the collective imagery of the privileged class, and that, after an electoral contest, required a policy of conciliation to ensure the elite's cohesion as a group" (Irurozqui, 1999; 297).

Although they all shared a common political, religious and social language, "doctrinal differences served as pretexts to further the political interests of each party, but were far from constituting fundamental grounds for controversy" (Irurozqui, 2003ª, 35).

The program of the Unión Republicana, for instance, did not arise from within the framework of liberalism. However, the party splintered as a result of its leaders' personalism and the adoption of different ideological profiles: one of the most important wings was led by Bautista Saavedra, who had the support of middle class urban sectors, and another was led by Daniel Salamanca, who was more conservative.

Bautista Saavedra, leader of workers and artisans, who dictated the first social legislation and broadened the clientelistic bases of the oligarchic democracy, is the author of an extremely violent racist attack which went so far as to declare that if the Indian, fed up by his sufferings, ever rebelled against his oppressors, he should be squashed like a dangerous animal.[14]

4. Political Discourse and Political Practice

According to G. Francovich (1984; 15), the liberals strived fruitfully and constructively (and unprecedentedly) to establish republican and democratic principles in the country; but the high degree of generality with which liberal principles were presented, and conceptual confusions between *constitutionalism, liberalism* and *republicanism*, gave rise to contradictory and conflicting positions, each claiming for itself the new ideology (Irurozqui, 2003b; 17).

The terms *caudillismo* and *militarismo* became referents and rallying points for a re-foundation of the Republic by appeals to national unity, and as an explanation of why the nation had not progressed to the same extent as neighboring countries (Irurozqui, 2003ª; 2).

However, the new political practices did not change things radically. *Caudillismo* (albeit civilian), clientelism and patrimonialism survived. During the *conservative-liberal-republican* period violence continued, as well as repression and exile of opponents.

> "Change of government was no longer by *coup d'etat*, but the electoral process was dominated by coercion of voters, fraud, and manipulation of results" (Mayorga, 1999; 331).

The oligarchic State maintained its control by keeping the Indians fragmented and cut off from other subordinate sectors. Lack of schools and communications kept the economic system, based on serfdom, static and inefficient.

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[14]Cited by R. Zavaleta (1986; 185).

"The Indians, whether landowning or landless, were completely cut off from national political life, due to the total lack of facilities for education, lack of economic opportunities, and lack of fluency in Spanish. These Aymaras and Quechuas [...] knew nothing of Western norms, and had little or no conception or participation in non-Indian ways of life" (Klein, 1968; 16).

The landlords' clientelistic apparatus controlled the Indians' linkages with the rest of society. The Indian was instructed, from very early on, about his permissible roles, and even if he happened to aspire to citizenship, he had no way to achieve it. Therefore, he had to resort to the *patron*'s tutelage in the framework of numerous social contexts and practices[15]: relations of production, ritual obligations and exchanges (Moore, 1979; 8-10). But in addition to *patronal* mediation, there were other *mestizo* agents that represented the Indians and allowed for their insertion into the system of domination, such as *curacas*, merchants and traders, policemen, moneylenders and small-time lawyers, each with their respective spheres of activity (Moore, 1979; 12). This full range of intermediaries transmitted the elements of the ruling ideology[16] (Mayorga, 1993; 87).

The economic system, and the special position of the landowner (*hacendado*) in that system, discouraged the use of modern methods in agricultural production. The tenants provided free labor, seeds, tools and transportation, receiving in exchange the right to use the land where they produced grain for their own subsistence. His own production cost the *hacendado* nothing, and the profits he obtained were for his own personal consumption (Klein, 1968; 191). Productivity was no concern; the land was a source of income and social prestige. The propensity for high-end, luxury consumption is characteristic trait of aristocracies. Political life, legal life, and above all, daily life, did not resemble the capitalist paradigms at all (Zavaleta, 1986; 111).

Party denominations ("conservative" and "liberal") responded, not so much to programmatic differences, as to the desire to obtain international acceptance (and hence legitimacy) by parties in other nations carrying the same labels (Irurozqui, 1999b; 299).

Each party presented itself as the true torchbearer for liberal ideals. Every new party, usually founded by disaffected members of the elite, accused the ruling party of immorality and betrayal of the principles of liberalism.

Opposition parties made speeches filled with radical slogans decrying corruption and backwardness. However, they all practiced corruption and coercion to win elections, and only the loser declared elections fraudulent as a first step toward negotiating with the winners (Irurozqui, 1999b; 310).

The elites thought that young people and artisans were key sectors for their political project. Youths and artisans should unite with the "active classes" to form an alliance capable of reorienting the nation towards progress. Positivism, everywhere in Latin America, exalted the role of youth. In

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[15]The institution of "*compadrazgo*" merits some comment. It was a reciprocity relationship with asymmetric obligations. The Indians adopted the role of "*ahijados*" (godchildren) and the godfathers were in a better socio-economic class. *Compadrazgo* was a form of symbolic kinship, and also a control mechanism (see V. Giordano, 1996).

[16]According to María Isabel Remy, these bilingual elements both complement and complicate the ethnic scenario, and work as mediators or, in a broader sense, as translators. They allow for communication between cultural groups, but they also interpenetrate them (Remy, 1991; 149).

Bolivia, students participated more and more in the management of the universities, and also in national politics (Francovich, 1985; 25).

Bolivia in the 1880's was a technologically advanced country, but all of its machinery and its technicians came from abroad. The universities were devoted to the study of law and theology. Courses related to the exact sciences lacked laboratories and fulltime professors, and the very few Bolivian engineers made no important contributions to technology (Klein, 1982; 198).

The educational system prepared students for top-level positions within the elite, though society was in no condition to satisfy the aspirations of all of them. On the other hand, according to traditional values, family lineage was more important than business activity. Top management positions in the mining firms were held by foreigners, and the growth of State bureaucracy bore no relation to the needs and objectives of public administration. Medinaceli said that the universities prepared students for the "golden peonage of bureaucratism," instead of orienting them towards independent activities that might allow for the full development of their personality (Medinaceli, 1969; 379). In this culture, the production of goods and services was regarded as something to be done by people from ethnically subordinate social strata.[17]

Probably the elite really did want to create citizens, thus legitimating a democratic and liberal rule of law; which might have avoided the republic being stigmatized as "a country of Indians"; but these reforms would have come with associated costs, in terms of loss of power, which the ruling class was not willing to bear (Irurozqui, 1999b; 314).

With regard to the artisan class, the elite's discourse distinguished between the working artisan (a progressive element) and the "*populacho*" (the unemployed rabble).

Corruption allowed those excluded from the political system to vote and actively participate. Illegal balloting created awareness of the importance of voting among the popular sectors. In this manner, the ideas of "social equality, political citizenship and national identity [became ingrained] in the collective imagery, expanding the rhetoric of democracy as synonymous with civilization" (Irurozqui, 1999b; 309).

All of the popular sectors participated in elections, especially the urban *mestizos*. Workers and artisans voted, attended meetings and rallies, acted as thugs, and proclaimed candidates. In every

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[17]Already in the 19th century the French educator, Amadeo Jacques, harshly criticized the educational models inherited from colonial times: "I admit that they [the humanities] are indispensable for both professions, the law and the sacred ministry, and I know they are, in every walk of life, a most beautiful adornment to understanding. But with the exception of these two professions, one must confess that letters, especially in Latin or [other] ancient languages, are a luxury. And before attending to luxury we must attend to what is needed" (A. JACQUES (1858), in *El Eco del Norte,* cited by Vigna, 1977; 74). "This is, in effect, my current thinking as to the direction in which Argentine youth should be guided: that of useful science, sciences that deal with material life, in business, in agriculture and husbandry, in all that refers to the development and growth of public and private wealth, in day to day application" "[Nor] is this about, as some think, taking a child fresh from elementary school, and teaching him a trade, or launching him upon some special profession, of making this one a merchant, that other a doctor or lawyer, or a surveyor? [...] Above and beyond special skills a civilized nation needs a general instruction that cultivates the whole understanding, fortifying and taming all its natural faculties" (A. JACQUES, "Memoria de 1865," cited by Vigna, 1977; 75-76).

contemporary account, those who cheered, and got drunk, beat up and jailed, were workers, artisans and farm hands (Irurozqui, 1999b; 311).

For the excluded, one of the routes to citizenship was to establish a relationship with some notable with sufficient influence to bend the interpretation of the rules regulating suffrage. The dividing line between "what is correct and what is possible" was always ambiguous, leading to different practices (Irurozqui, 2003a). This facilitated the diffusion of clientelistic relationships:

> "Clientelism is a special form of dual exchange between agents having unequal power and status, based on the retribution which both parties expect to obtain through the mutual offering of goods and services, and which ceases the moment in which the expected benefit materializes" (Irurozqui, 2003b).

This practice has two aspects: on the one hand, it is an instrument of social control that alleviates social unrest; on the other hand, it allows parties to "legitimately" assume government office and expresses the clients' individual rights to enjoy the benefits of citizenship.

In this light, the clientistic relationship is seen as a process whose meaning is in continuous re-elaboration, which is not always understood by contemporary authors (Irurozqui, 1999b; 297). That is, as a stage in the process of citizenship formation, the means by which the modern State is built through increasing integration of diverse sectors of society "into the sphere of political recognition through the law" (Tapia, 2001; 113).

The *mestizos* demanded education as a means for social mobility, the Indians demanded it in order to obtain citizenship and defend their property rights over their lands.[18] These demands were directed to rulers in whose discourse "education" was regarded as one of the most powerful ingredients for progress.

Spokesmen for the popular sectors did not press for enlarging the scope of citizenship, as they assumed the criteria for exclusion that were built into census-based democracy; though this did not mean that they were indifferent to the condition of citizenship. On the contrary, since they realized that illiteracy limited their political capacity, and accepting education as a symbol of progress and civilization, popular leaders tried to satisfy the requirements and tried to oblige the State to facilitate the fulfillment of these formalities, in the belief that this would make them fully equal to the rest of the population, overcoming ethnic and class differences.

Researchers who have studied documents from that time found that Indian leaders were fully aware of the political value of education; although the available sources do not support the same statement for the rest of the Indian population. On the other hand, much is unknown about the actions of members of the popular sectors that do not fall into the general category of "heroics" (Irurozqui, 1999).

Indian leaders sought to establish relationships and alliances with persons and institutions in the urban world (politicians, lawyers, parties, workers' movement, priests and intellectuals) giving rise to corresponding clientelistic networks. These relationships and forms of mediation served as a nexus between the modernizing urban center and the traditional periphery (Irurozqui, 1999).

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[18]"The *caciques* [Indian leaders] from 1912 to 1918 requested the establishment of indigenous schools whether supported by the government or by themselves" (Choque Canqui, 1986; 478).

Legal disputes (court proceedings and administrative paperwork) were carried out with the help of small-town lawyers (pejoratively referred to as "*tinterillos*"). Oral argumentation was in terms that the parties could understand; in this manner the *criollo* ethos became internalized, taking advantage of contradictions in the elite's discourse (Rivera, 1986).

In addition to legal forms, Andean bases for legitimation arose, such as the myths of *Inca Ri* based on the quartering of Tupac Katari, who, according to the oral tradition that inspired the leaders of the Caquiaviri rebellion, "will return as thousands and thousands"; and the messianic movement of Fernando Wanacu which, among other things, originated the creation of a fair where, every Thursday, two thousand peasants congregated at the fringes of the landowners' trade monopoly[19] (Rivera, 1986; 49).

After the defeat of the Zárate Willka movement the rebellions ceased, and forms of Indian resistance showed up only as isolated acts: cattle rustling, sabotage, anonymous acts of arson; though there were some local uprisings in Pacajes (1914), Caquiaviri (1918) and intermittent mobilizations (Rivera, 1986; 36-37).

5. Analysis and Conclusions

From the discussion in the preceding sections, we find at least four opposing pairs of characteristics in the discourse of the *criollo* elites.

Citizenship/individual/Mestizo or White	Originary people/community/Indian
Civilization	Barbarism
Notable citizen, lettered, honored and famous	Indians and Mestizos (*cholos*)
Conscientious artisan	*Populacho*

In Colonial times, society was divided in two "republics," that of the Spaniards and that of the Indians, each one regulated by a specific legislation. The Europeans settled in cities, and the Andean population in rural areas, both groups linked by tributary obligations. Significant researches[20] have shown that both jurisdictions, from the Indians' point of view, provided for self-government. The two polarized identities (White/Indian) developed a shared notion of "Indianness" that transcended the fissures of privilege, ethnicity and gender (Stephenson, 2003; 156).

Some authors argue that "beneath the questionable scientific doctrines of Latin American positivism there is an underlying Colonial legacy, whose central trait was precisely the coexistence of the republic of Spaniards and natives" (Halperin Donghi, 1997); as Zavaleta puts it, Social Darwinism was "an *ex post* rationalization of something that had already occurred" (Zavaleta, 1986; 232).

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[19]According to Zavaleta, the social function of the *hacendados* was to capture the surplus, preventing peasants' access to the market. The market, and the world at large, should exist *through* the landowner (Zavaleta, 1986; 113).

[20]See Irene Silverblat (1995), "Becoming Indian in the Central Andes of Seventeenth-Century Peru," in *After Colonialism* (Gyang Prakash); Silvia Rivera (1993), "La raíz: Colonizadores y colonizados," in S. Rivera and R. Barrios, *Violencias encubiertas en Bolivia* (La Paz: CIPCA-Aruwiyiri); and Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1991), *Pensar nuestra cultura* (México: Alianza), cited by Stephenson (2003).

The continuity between traditional and modern thought is undeniable. The assertion that Latin American elites slavishly imitated the philosophical and political ideas of modern Europe, disregarding the specifics of our own reality, is only partially true. The elite's reading of the classics of modernity could not have occurred in a cultural vacuum, since every reading involves an interpretation and recreation of the text within the reader's own context.

The elites assumed, as the only valid paradigm for constructing a State and acceding to *civilization*, that the indigenous peoples were wild and savage, and thus formed part of *barbarism*.

> "These racist theories were soon discredited in Bolivia in their direct manifestations, though for a long time they retained their vigor in sub-conscious evaluations of the Indian and in solutions in which success was premised on a possible European immigration" (Gómez-Martínez, 1987; 78).

From this we may infer, besides a *theorized racism*, the existence of *racism in practice*, rooted in daily experience, which was manifested in common sense and in non-rationalized attitudes.[21]

Civilization was to be achieved through education and coercion; that is, through both educational and military institutions. Halperin Donghi notes that forms of racism such as these were not entirely coherent, insofar as it was thought that, through the wonderful instrument of assimilation, the Indian race might overcome the fatalities proclaimed by racism (Halperin Donghi, 1997).

The Indian peasantry's resistance, and their attempts to rupture the colonial estamental order, were addressed in double-speak:

- "Outward-looking" demands, expressed in terms that the *criollos* could understand (property, education), using the dominant political rhetoric and accompanied by practices that might lead to apprehension of the rights of citizens and the duties of the State (Irurozqui, 1999).

- "Inward-looking" demands, reinterpreting the traditions of colonial struggle (Rivera, 1986; 51).

Using Zavaleta's terminology (1986; 185), we can recognize in this double-speak a "public ideology" (*ideología de emisión*) and an "internal ideology." That is, the difference between a legitimated project that seeks the other's support; and the concrete image of what is desired and sought, that can only be shared and communicated to those who decode it, because they have shared experiences.[22]

On the other hand, the ruling class, as revealed by the transparency of its Darwinist discourse, did not elaborate a truly hegemonic public ideology, either "because it does not intend to seduce the Indians but rather to exterminates them," as Zavaleta asserts (1986; 139); or because it wanted to "perfect their nature" through evolutionary actions such as education (Martínez, 2001; 448).

Ultimately, the elite based its dominance over the Indian masses on force rather than consent. The relations between this elite and the *mestizos*, and, in general, with the small share of the population that participated in politics, was based on a relatively elaborate form of consent (Klein, 1982; 282), whose main manifestation was the clientelistic pact.

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[21]N. Manrique (1999) locates it somewhere between *imagery* and *ideology*.
[22]Gouldner (1978; 275-79) denotes these phenomena as "paradigm" and "ideology."

The *mestizos* played an important role as mediators in the broader sense, as a sort of "translators," communicating and interpenetrating the other social segments. On the other hand, their electoral participation legitimated the political regime somewhat.

The elite discourse opposed the "honest artisan" to the *populacho*:

Honest artisan	Populacho
Hardworking individual, unconcerned with partisan disputes; a progressive element.	Unemployed, unruly mobs from the urban slums; prime elements of "thuggery."

Source: See Irurozqui, 1997; 690

The elite's discourse oscillated between regarding the *mestizos* as a mixture of Indian and white shortcomings and/or as persons that needed to be kept away from unscrupulous politicians that bought votes and mobilized masses against national progress and social stability.

However, recent research shows that illegal practices (corruption and violence) converted some of the excluded into *de facto* citizens, originating, as an unintended consequence, a process of apprenticeship in the importance of citizenship (Irurozqui, 1999; 297).

The articulation based on landlordship was the cement that kept Bolivian society together. The logic of the landlord becomes the logic of his subordinates, and legitimates the conceptual scale that breaks down horizontal solidarities and reinforces vertical ones. As Zavaleta puts it, there is a logic to the dissolution of popular identity based on loyalty to the landlord, "loyalty that spreads throughout society by degrees" and the slave sees himself through the eyes of the master (Zavaleta, 2002; 132-33).

Almaraz (1980; 101) detects in the mining magnates a contradiction between the advanced industrial and technological organization of their enterprises and the backwardness of their 19th century mentalities. This can be perceived in Patiño's behavior and social outlook, which combines the modern *spirit of capitalism* with acceptance of the *señorial* logic, which led to a lack of correspondence between the degree of modernization of industry and the nation's institutional framework. Technical advance in mining was not accompanied a modern mentality. It is quite possible to replace traditional procedures with machines, and still not fully assume the *spirit* which made the machine possible.

Nonetheless, some important modernizing effects are due to Patiño:

> "... The organization of a complex system of production and commercialization in a very hostile geographic environment, the creation of the International Tin Council (which, by assigning output quotas to different countries, helped compensate Bolivia's later disadvantage due to its higher production costs) and the expulsion of foreign capital (mostly of Chilean-British provenance) in large-scale mining, which, paradoxically, facilitated the nationalization of the great mining concerns in 1952" (Mansilla, 1984; 56).

The big mining companies used their surplus to invest in their own reproduction, with no concern for the country's economic development. By not having to confront, for a long time, strong pressures from opposing groups, they felt no obligation to adopt a policy that, by serving their own interests, might address the claims of subordinate groups as well; whereby their political project was limited to furthering their own narrow objectives (Zemelman, 1989; 166). If elections were

allowed, it was because this was a practice that characterized more developed countries, and allowed for competition in government between rival elite factions.

Nonetheless, the power structure in mining operated as a factor for national integration. It subordinated other local power structures and implemented institutional reforms (constitution, parties, educational system) and important public works (railroads, telephones and telegraphs, roads). Thus, the necessary preconditions were created for the economic and social transformations that resulted from the national revolution.

The political project of the Bolivian liberals was an attempt to place Bolivia on a par with the so-called modern nations. Paraphrasing Octavio Paz,[23] we might say that they traded the masks of Danton and Jefferson for those of Comte and Spencer, placing railroads and communications on the altar of science and progress. Here we have a combination of liberalism and positivism whose clearest exponents, well aware of the dangers posed by the existence of a white and educated elite side-by-side with a majority of Indians bereft of any form of instruction or welfare, feared that a rebellion on the part of the exploited masses might entail the collapse of the republic; and to avoid this they proposed a gradual social transformation by means of education and immigration.

Liberal ideas, disconnected from their "natural soil" (industrialization) and forced to adapt to the structures of the *latifundio* and the mining enclave, could not yield the same fruits as in the United States or Europe. The attempt to implement a liberal project subject to these constraints contributed to the formation of a sort of peripheral modernity characterized by the presence of *islands of modernity* (some cities and mining centers) surrounded by a traditional agrarian world.

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[23]Octavio Paz, *Los hijos del Limo* (Barcelona, 1980).

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