Ethnicity, Class, and Party System Change in Bolivia[1]

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of a research project on social cleavage and political parties in countries in the process of democratization, the author pauses over the case of Bolivia to show how one can measure the changes of emphasis in class to the ethnicity in the party system and, at the same time, to make an outline of a hypothesis to explain the changes in the party system.

How social cleavages are represented in a party system can affect important political outcomes. Recent work in political science and economics, for instance, highlights that ethnic party systems, in particular, may have implications for everything from economic policy and growth, to the quality of governance, to democratic stability and intrastate conflict.[3] Understanding the relationship between social cleavages and political parties – how it develops, how it changes, and what it means for policy – is thus important not only for those seeking to explain and predict political outcomes, but also for those working to improve them. This paper focuses on party system change through an exploration of the Bolivian case.

In Bolivia in the 1970s, the Katarista movement, led by a group of primarily Aymara intellectuals, proposed the theory of "both eyes" as a new way of understanding Bolivian society. It should be viewed, they argued, not only in terms of the oppression of classes – as the leftists had long viewed it – but also in terms of the oppression of indigenous nations. Since then, ethnic social movements and political parties, many direct descendants of the Katarista movement, have emerged and gained increasing prominence in Bolivian national politics. In the 2002 general elections, an indigenous party, the Movement toward Socialism (*Movimiento al Socialismo*—MAS), placed second, and in 2003, indigenous social movements and parties were instrumental in organizing protests that led to the resignation of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. An increasing awareness of ethnic issues has also given rise to clear institutional changes, including the revision of the Bolivian Constitution in 1994 to declare Bolivia a "pluri-ethnic" nation.

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[3] On economic policy, see Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly (1999); Easterly and Levine (1997). On governance and patronage, see Chandra (2004); Fearon (1999); Wantchekon (2003), Young (1976). On democratic stability and conflict, see, e.g., Bates (1999); Dahl (1971); Horowitz (1985); Lijphart (1977); Rabushka and Shepsle (1972); see also Birnir (2004).

This paper asks: When and why exactly did this shift toward the salience of ethnic identification[4] in the national party system occur? In addressing this question, I build on a considerable body of work, by both Bolivian and international scholars, focusing on the rise of indigenous parties and leaders in Bolivian politics. This work can be loosely separated into two groups. The first, drawn mainly from work in political science, focuses on the formation and rise of indigenous social movements and parties, since the mid 1990s, and especially since 2000, highlighting the role of municipal decentralization and other institutional reforms, the effect of international changes, and regional demonstration effects tied to indigenous mobilization elsewhere in Latin America. The second, generally more sociological and anthropological, traces the rise of indigenous social movements since the late 1960s and before, suggesting that the birth and success of indigenous parties has been a natural outcome of the development of these movements.

Although both of these groups of work shed light on the development and rise of indigenous parties, I argue that neither fully answers the question posed. On the one hand, work highlighting institutional and international changes in the 1990s does not fully explain the shift towards ethnic identification in Bolivian politics because this shift in fact began in the late 1980s, not the 1990s – i.e., *before* these institutional and international changes – as I show in this paper. On the other hand, sociological and anthropological work on indigenous social movements, which does highlight their national emergence in the 1970s and 1980s, does not fully explain the shift because it assumes a fluid relationship between social identities and partisan identification, supporting the incorrect prediction that the shift towards indigenous identification in partisan politics should have begun in the late 1970s, when the indigenous movement was flourishing. Although there are ample studies[5] that show that social cleavages do not translate naturally and directly into partisan cleavages, much of this work simply fails to problematize the relationship.

In this paper, I try to pick up where this work has left off. Part of a cross-national project on social cleavages and political parties in democratizing countries, this paper uses the case of Bolivia to show how the changing salience of ethnicity versus class in party systems might be measured and to sketch out a working hypothesis to explain party system changes – in Bolivia, towards more ethnic identification.

One of the key differences between this project and other work on social cleavages and parties is that it approaches ethnicity from within an explicitly "constructivist"[6] framework, an approach that highlights the flexibility of ethnic boundaries in certain circumstances. This paper first discusses that framework and how it is relevant to the study of social cleavages and political parties. Working within that framework, it then presents an overview of Bolivia's social cleavages, focusing on its ethnic divisions. Next, it develops a new method of measuring changes in the political salience of ethnic versus class identities in the national party system and discusses general trends in the

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[4] I adopt the term "identification" from Calla Ortega (1993; 2003), who adopts it from Bell (1975).

[5] E.g., this is one of the key points of the classic work on social cleavages and parties, Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

[6] Constructivist work in ethnic politics argues that ethnic identities are "constructed," rather than "primordial." For a summary of the constructivist literature on ethnic politics, see Chandra (2001). See also Bates (forthcoming). Bates and some other scholars use the term "instrumentalist" to refer to work emphasizing the role of elites in constructing identities and/or to work that suggests that individuals adopt and change their ethnic identities based on instrumental calculations. I treat this work as one branch of constructivism. For examples of constructivist work, see Barth (1974); Bates (1974); Comaroff and Comaroff (1969); Hardin (1995); Hechter (1975); Hardin (1995); Banton (1983); Levi and Hechter (1985); Fearon and Laitin (1996). For examples of the opposing view, primordialism, see Geertz (1973) and Van Evera (2001).

Bolivian case. Finally, it presents a working hypothesis to explain the observed changes and explores the plausibility of this hypothesis for Bolivia.

Recent work on social cleavages and political parties has focused on the causal role of elite manipulation of social cleavages following authoritarian transition (Torcal and Mainwaring 2003; Chhibber and Torcal 1997). Although focusing on elite action, this work also suggests that structure and institutions are important, but gives us little guidance as to how. Torcal and Mainwaring, for instance, note that "The demand side, i.e., the ways in which societal interests shape party systems from below, is important, but an analysis of cleavages from a sociological approach does not satisfactorily explain Latin American party systems. We must also turn our attention to the ways in which political agency and politics shape party systems from above" (2003: 84).

I argue that without incorporating the "demand side" – specifically, the structure of social cleavages – the causal story here is incomplete.[7] My hypothesis is that, during periods of regime transition, when traditional parties are discredited, elites are presented with opportunities to "re-construct" the salient lines of social cleavage in the party system to their advantage, but that these opportunities are limited. I hypothesize that the two key elements that constrain their arena of action are the messages and social bases of the traditional parties and the structure of existing, mobilized social groups, especially how they overlap and intersect. Thus, in contrast to work in the pluralist tradition which that suggests that in systems where cleavages overlap (i.e., reinforce each other, such as in ranked ethnic systems), we should see complete stasis over time, my hypothesis is that this overlap should provide political leaders and would-be leaders with the political space to switch between dimensions of social cleavage, for instance, from class to ethnicity.

In Bolivia, in more specific terms, the argument is that the increasing salience of ethnicity can be explained by the discrediting of traditional leftist parties and policies during the economic crisis of the 1980s; the overlap between the groups that had been "represented" by these parties (i.e., peasants and the working class) and "the indigenous" population; and the objectives and ideologies of the new leaders that emerged during this period. The first two of these factors created the space within which elites could act. The last helps to explain the particular character of the parties that emerged.

A Constructivist Approach to Social Cleavages and Political Parties

Social scientists often treat ethnic groups as if they are primordial and unchanging, self-evident categories that can be read straightforwardly from physical characteristics, family history, language, etc. Work in ethnic politics over the past thirty years, however, shows that ethnic groups are not fixed. Rather they are "constructed." Ethnic boundaries may shift, groups may combine or divide, and the same individuals may identify themselves or be identified by others in different ways depending on the context of their interactions.[8] A simple example of this from the U.S. is the category "Asian American," which combines a number of ethnic categories[9] – "Chinese American," "Japanese American," "Vietnamese American," etc. And, the same individual who in one context might identify in ethnic terms as "Japanese American," might in others be "*Nisei*" (or second-generation Japanese American), or "Asian American," or simply "American."

While there is general agreement that ethnic groups are constructed in some way, what this insight means for the study of social cleavages and political parties, and for other political outcomes, has not yet been explored for the most part. This is clear in the literature on social cleavages and political parties, in which one standard way of studying their relationship is to define the groups in society based on various socioeconomic measures and then to analyze how well these measures

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[7] This hypothesis also draws on the sociological institutionalist literature (see Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

[8] For examples, see fn. 5.

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explain support for particular parties or other political outcomes (Torcal and Mainwairing 2003; Chhibber and Torcal 1997; see also Cho 1999; Arvizu 1994; Lawson and Gisselquist 2004). In this type of analysis, the researcher accepts as "objective facts" responses to questions in the census or survey data and uses this data to define membership in various social identity groups. The "social cleavages" that are most salient to the party system then are those defined by the variables that are statistically significant in regressions and explain the most variation in party membership, voting, or political behavior.

Constructivist findings in ethnic politics suggest several problems with this approach. The first stems from its reliance on "official" data which may reflect official agendas more than social realities. Projects to enumerate and measure the groups in society, especially ethnic groups, are highly political. As Nobles (2000) and Cohn (1987) have shown, censuses do not so much capture the social cleavages that "exist" in society as name, create, and officially sanction certain ones that the state (or survey-taking agency) has an interest in. This is true even for cleavages like race, which might seem at first glance to be clear cut.

As Nobles's study of the U.S. and Brazilian censuses illustrates, driven by political debates and interests, both have defined "black" and "white" differently from each other and both have each defined these terms differently over time. Some censuses have instructed individuals to classify themselves as "white" only if they have no "black" ancestors. In other censuses, someone is "white" if at least three of his grandparents are "white." And so on. Using such data to study the voting behavior or party membership of "racial groups" then may in fact capture very little of how socially-salient racial groups behave, but more of how officially-sanctioned groups behave.

A related issue is the leaving off of certain socially-relevant categories from the census for political reasons. From 1951 until the present, for instance, the Indian census has not reported data on caste (except for the "Scheduled Caste" category), yet studies of Indian politics suggest that caste has been salient in Indian politics. Another example is the Belgian census, which since 1947 has not collected data on language, also a highly salient division. If data from the Indian or Belgian censuses were used straightforwardly to analyze how well social groups – as measured in the census – predicted party membership, key variables would have been omitted, likely skewing results.

A second set of problems raised by constructivist work on ethnic politics has to do with the concept of "identity repertoires" (Lustick 2000; Waters 1990; Laitin 1992). That is, the finding that individuals may identify or be identified with any number of social identity groups (or social cleavages), based on their ancestry, skin color, cultural practices, language, income, occupation, wealth, education, gender, sexual preference, and so on. Which identification comes to the fore often depends on the institutional or social context (e.g., Posner 1998; Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich 2003; Brubaker 2003). In other words, it is incorrect to assume that that an individual who *can* identify as "indigenous" because of her family background, physical characteristics, or maternal language will, and will in all circumstances. Although "indigenous" is in this person's identity repertoire, this identity will not necessarily "trump" the rest.[10] For instance, work by Nash (1993) on miners in Bolivia shows that many individuals who could identify as "indigenous" instead identified and organized as "miners." This work suggests that their occupational or class identity "trumps" their ethnic and other options. In other words, it is problematic to identify individuals as members of social groups based on whether they have various socioeconomic, cultural, or physical attributes and to attribute causality to their *supposed* membership in these groups.

Both of these problems suggest that further work problematizing and identifying social cleavages is needed in studies of their relationship with political parties. Thus, rather focusing on

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[10] It might, but if this is the claim, a further argument needs to be made about why ethnic identity (or a certain type of ethnic identity, like "indigenousness" rather than language) is weightier than other types of identities.

how well various socioeconomic indicators predict party membership and voting behavior, this paper adopts an alternate approach to social cleavages and parties, focusing on how parties define and appeal to groups in society. Focus on the other side of the question –
how these groups define themselves and how and why they respond to these appeals by voting for or joining particular parties – is left for future work.

Social Cleavages in Bolivia

This paper focuses on two types of cleavages, those based on ethnicity and those based on class. In particular, this section highlights ethnic cleavages drawing on a constructivist approach. Drawing on constructivist work, I define an *ethnic group* as a group that identifies by an ascriptive category generally inherited at birth, including language, tribe, race, religion, and culture. This definition builds on Chandra (2004) and is also consistent with definitions used in classic work, including Horowitz (1985) and Laitin (1986).

Because most work on "ethnic politics" in Bolivia focuses exclusively on "indigenous" politics, it is useful to be clear here about why my definition differs. Understanding indigenous political participation in Bolivia is of obvious importance because the subjugation and political exclusion of indigenous communities has been part and parcel of the Bolivian state. I employ a broader definition of ethnicity for three reasons. First, as I illustrate below, there are many other ethnic cleavages in Bolivia beyond the indigenous – non-indigenous divide. Second, there are a number of hypotheses in the literature about the behavior of ethnic groups in general. If we exclude non-indigenous populations from study at the outset, we may be mistakenly attributing causal significance to indigenous group membership when it is in fact ethnic identification more generally that is key. Related, third, although not inherent in the definition of indigenous, many of our theories about indigenous populations assume them to be small minorities, such as in Brazil, Canada, or the U.S. This is clearly not the case in Bolivia, making the application of theories about indigenous minorities problematic. The fact that the majority of Bolivia's population is indigenous suggests that general models of *ethnic* politics are much more relevant than theories of indigenous *minority* politics.

That said, certainly one of the most salient ethnic divisions in Bolivia is between the indigenous and whites (or those who are "Europeanized" or "*mestizo-criollos*" or "*q'aras*"). According to the 2001 census, 62.05 percent of Bolivia's population self-identifies as indigenous, and most of the remainder as "non-indigenous."

Although not measured in the census, more disaggregated ethno-racial divisions, based on the degree of racial and cultural intermixing, are also highly salient. A distinction is sometimes made, for instance, in terms of "indigenous," "*mestizo*," and "white."[11] Another distinction is made in terms of "indigenous," "*cholo*," "*mestizo*," and "white"; while both "*cholo*" and "*mestizo*" are terms used to describe those of mixed race and cultural practice, "*cholos*" would be more "indigenous," while "*mestizos*" more "Western" in their practices (see Sanjínes C. 2004). "*Cholo/a*," which can sometimes have a pejorative connotation, also is used, more specifically, to refer to indigenous individuals in urban areas and, especially, to women wearing traditional dress and to market women (see Paredes Candia 1992). One's degree of assimilation into western culture also defines even more refined categorizations in everyday use in some areas, such as "*chota*" or "*birlocha*" (see Guaygua, Riveros, and Quisbert 2003; see also Rivera C. 1996; Archondo 2003).

The indigenous category also can be further disaggregated. One key division is between "Highland indigenous" and "Lowland indigenous." Highland indigenous constitute the majority of the indigenous population in Bolivia, and include the two largest ethno-linguistic groups, the Quechua

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[11] There are also small minorities of Afro-Bolivians and Asian Bolivians that do not fit these categories well.

(30.71 percent) and the Aymara (25.23 percent).[12] Lowland indigenous groups make up about 6.9 percent of the total indigenous population and are a much more diverse group.[13] The largest Lowland indigenous group is the Guaraní, who make up about 26 percent of the lowland Indian population, followed by the Chiquitano at about 22 percent, and the Moxeno at 13 percent. In Bolivian national party politics today, it is the voices of highland Indians, especially the Aymara, that have been the loudest, although lowland Indian groups such the *Confederación de Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano* (CIDOB) have also been active. Although indigenous organizations based in the Highlands, such the *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB), claim to work on behalf of all indigenous in Bolivia, some observers see their objectives as more attuned to, and in the interests of, highland communities (Strobele-Gregor 1994; Hahn 1996). In general, therefore, even if many studies treat the "indigenous" as a single unified group, even a quick sketch of the diversity of the indigenous population highlights that there are many varied groups that make up the broad category "indigenous," and thus that identifying politically as "indigenous" (rather than as "Highland indigenous," "Quechua," "Guaraní," etc.) is, at least at some level, a political choice, not an obvious reflection of social identities in the political arena.

Other salient ethnic divisions can also be described along regional lines, such as between *kollas* of the altiplano and *cambas* of the lowlands. Indeed, especially over the past several years, the ethno-regional identity expressed by the *Nación Camba* has been increasingly vocal, even including a calls for secession (see Forero 2004; Sandoval 2001; International Crisis Group 2004; Talavera 2003).[14] Finally, divisions between residents of different cities and departments form another line of ethno-regional cleavage (between Paceños from La Paz, Cruceños from Santa Cruz, Cochabambinos from Cochabamba, and so on). Evidence of the salience of ethno-regional divisions can be seen in various calls for regional autonomy.

In terms of economic difference, a number of cleavages also can be traced – between the rich and the poor; as well as among different classes, occupational groups, sectors, and so on. This paper focuses on *class* cleavages, defined loosely here in the Marxist sense in terms of the relationship to the means of production. I adopt this definition because it is the one that is closest to that employed by leftist parties, many of which draw explicitly on Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, because the language of class is also used to imply income differences more generally, I also use this distinction, especially when data is not available on class defined more strictly.

In Bolivia, the overlap between class and ethnicity (along indigenous versus white lines) can be seen both in hard numbers, and in popular perception. In terms of popular perception, the fact that "indigenous" and "*campesino*" have been and are often used interchangeably is telling. Looking at hard numbers, there is a clear correlation between indigenous status and education levels, income, and employment. The following tables, for instance, highlight the differences in types of employment for those classified as indigenous and non-indigenous in the 2001 census.

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[12] 2001 census, based on self-identification.

[13] Figures in this section are from the 1998 Bolivian Census as reported in Rosengren (2002), 25.

[14] The identity "camba" is an interesting case of quite recent ethnic identity construction. Some scholars object to calling it an ethnic group for precisely this reason. It has also been associated with a racist conception of its identity as white and non-indigenous, a conception exemplified by the comments made by Bolivia's representative in the Miss Universe pageant, Gabriela Oviedo, a Santa Cruz native who in 2004 told pageant judges that not all Bolivians are "poor people and very short people and Indian people," that in the east "we're tall, and we are white and can speak English" (Forero 2004).

Occupational Group (Population > 10 yrs old)			
(selected occupational groups)			
	Total Population	*Non-indigenous*	*Indigenous*
Workers in agriculture and fishing	40.53%	6.75%	74.04%
Technicians and service professionals	5.92%	8.61%	3.26%
Professionals, scientists, and intellectuals	1.35%	2.53%	0.18%
Public administration and enterprise management	0.83%	1.37%	0.28%
Source: INE Nov. 2003: 191.			

Type of Employment of Employed Population (%)			
	Total Population	*Non-Indigenous*	*Indigenous*
Self-employed worker	50.07%	33.79%	60.28%
Worker/employee	42.01%	57.01%	32.6%
Family worker or apprentice without remuneration	4.45%	4.35%	4.51%
Executive, partner, or employer	3.10%	4.64%	2.13%
Member of cooperative	0.38%	0.2%	0.48%
Source: INE Nov. 2003: 138.			

Finally, although class differences between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations are especially pronounced, class differences can also be identified within the indigenous category, among indigenous groups. As Hahn, for instance, explains, the Quechua and Aymara have traditionally been "'peasantry' in the sense that they are small-plot subsistence agriculturalists," while non-Andean indigenous populations "have been artisans, hunters, and gatherers for the most part" (1996: 97). In addition, Quechua communities of the Cochabamba valley have historically been more integrated into the mining economy than the Aymara communities of the altiplano (Albó 1994).

Measuring the Salience of Particular Identities

At its heart, this is a study of political identities. Scholars of ethnic politics have proposed several ways to measure the salience of identities and changes in identities (see Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott 2003; Laitin 1999). Here, the method I use is to focus on one context, national party politics, measuring salient political identities through political discourse, specifically, the national platforms and messages of political parties.[15] I define an identity as salient to a party if

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[15] Of course, there are drawbacks to this method as to any other. While this approach tells us about national party politics, it does not tell us about social movements active at the national level, unless they are reflected in the party system. On social movements and political parties, see Van Cott (2003a; forthcoming). It also misses ethnic appeals that might be made at the local level, but not nationally.

the party makes an appeal based on that identity central to its platform. I focus here on parties that make ethnicity and class central to their platforms, that is, on "ethnic-mobilizing parties" and "class-mobilizing parties." An *ethnic-mobilizing party* represents itself to voters as the champion of the interests of one or several ethnic groups and makes that representation central to its mobilizing strategy.[16] A *class-mobilizing party* represents itself to voters as the champion of the interests of one class or set of classes to the exclusion of others, and makes such a representation central to its mobilizing strategy. In classifying parties, I first drew on several key, general secondary sources on parties (Rolon Anaya 1999; Lora 1987) and histories. I then supplemented this information with data from secondary studies on specific parties, party documents, interviews, writings by party leaders, records of pre-election debates, and news articles.

A clear example of an ethnic-mobilizing party in Bolivia is the *Movimiento Indigena Pachakuti* (MIP), which appeals openly and explicitly to the indigenous, as evident, for one, in its name. An example of a class-mobilizing party is the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR). Although the MIR is firmly towards the center-left in terms of policy, it is classified here as "class-mobilizing" based on its explicit platform.

In general, my classifications are consistent with other work. The key exception, which is important because it explains much of the rise in the ethnic-mobilizing vote from 1989, is the *Conciencia de Patria* (Condepa). Although many scholars object to the classification of Condepa as an "ethnic party" because it does not fit well into the category of an indigenous party and because its leader Carlos Palenque was not indigenous, I classify Condepa as an ethnic-mobilizing party because of its appeal to the indigenous and to "*cholos.*" As Rivera notes, Palenque described his party as "an expression of a 'new Bolivia of *indios* and *cholos*'" (1993: section 3.5; see also Albó 1994). Most work highlights its "populist" appeal, which of course is also key (Alenda 2002; Lazar 2002; Paz Ballivián 2000).

Another point to highlight is that the classifications used here are not mutually exclusive; a party can make, for instance, *both ethnicity and class* salient to its platform, i.e., be an *ethnic-mobilizing and class-mobilizing party* which represents itself to voters as the champion of the interests of *both* an ethnic group and a class. One important example of a party that appeals to voters both on an ethnic and class basis is the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), which makes appeals to the "the indigenous" and to "the poor" and working class central to its message.

Likewise, a party can make neither ethnicity nor class salient in its platform. For instance, a party might focus on the environment, gender, foreign policy, or "good government," or appeal to voters purely on the basis of its leader's personality and reputation. Finally, a party that makes ethnicity or class central to its platform can also appeal on other bases. Condepa, for instance, also has appealed to voters along gender lines, especially to *chola* women in El Alto (Alenda 2002; Lazar 2002).

The dependent variable (DV) to be explained in this paper is changes in the political salience of ethnicity and class in the Bolivian party system. I operationalize this DV by looking at how successful the different types of parties I have classified have been in general elections, mapping out the percentage of the vote that has gone to parties that appeal to voters in ethnic terms as compared to those that stress class.[17] The following chart summarizes the results of this analysis:

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[16] This definition builds on Chandra (2004). See also Chandra and Metz (2002).

[17] Note that the combined total of these values can be greater than one because votes to parties that appeal on both ethnic and class lines are included both in the ethnic and class totals.

Vote for Ethnic- and Economic-Mobilizing Parties, General Elections, 1980-2002
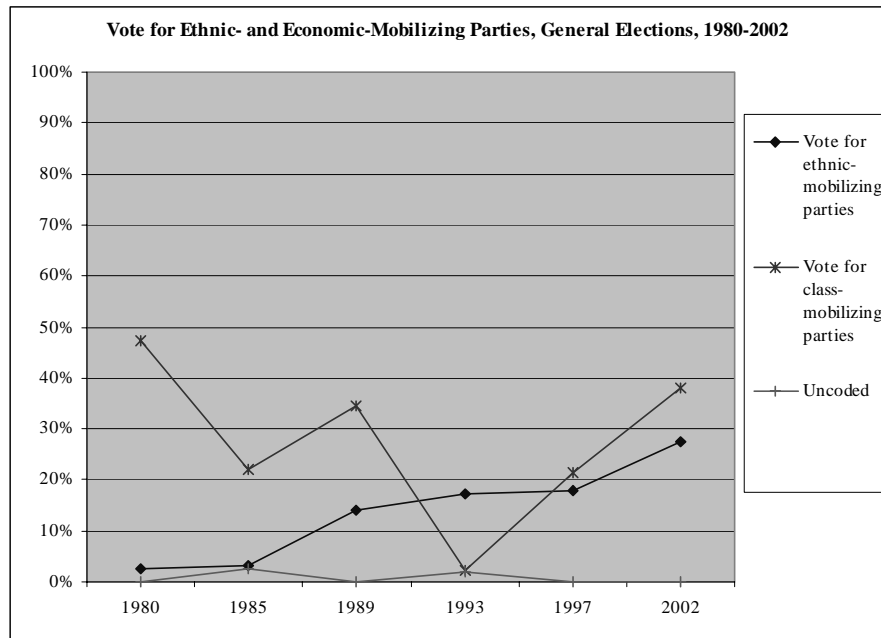
These measures are obviously blunt. Especially in the case of parties that appeal both on ethnic and class lines, they cannot show which aspect of the party message resonated most with voters. Nor do they necessarily get at the "sincerity" or "underlying interests" of parties. Nevertheless, they illustrate in broad brushstrokes the variation in politically-salient identities at the national party level in Bolivia over time. The claim here is simple: Although there is, of course, more to politics than what party leaders say, what party leaders say and how they explicitly identify their target constituencies is important. A great deal of the information that voters receive about parties is through their platforms and explicit statements, and thus, looking at these statements systematically provides valuable data. Whether or not one believes (as I do) that these data on party discourse should to be supplemented with "deeper" analysis, this method at least provides clear comparative data over time, that can be used to study broad changes and that can be evaluated by other scholars.

Trends in Bolivia

The first and most important trend illustrated by these data is that ethnicity has become increasingly salient in the Bolivian national party system since the democratic transition in 1982, and especially after 1985. This trend can be seen by comparing the vote shares won by parties with ethnic and class appeals in the chart. The data suggest that between 1980 and 1993, class became less politically salient overall while ethnicity became more salient. Although recent attention has focused on the showing of indigenous parties in the 2002 elections, these data remind us that ethnic appeals were also quite successful in 1989, 1993, and 1997. Thus, rather than reflecting a sudden increase in the salience of ethnic identification, the results of the 2002 elections seem tied to a longer, gradually increasing trend of increasing ethnic salience that began in 1989, or before.

A second point suggested by the data is that, although support for ethnic parties increased from 1993 to 1997 to 2002, it would be misleading to read these trend lines as clear evidence of gradually increasing party mobilization of the "indigenous" per se. While it was messages appealing primarily to "the indigenous" that were most successful in 2002, populist messages appealing particularly to "*cholo*" voters were especially successful from 1989 to 1997. Furthermore, in 2002, although generally not an explicit part of party message, party leadership and members of the parties that won were primarily Highland indigenous. The *Movimiento Indigena Pachacuti* (MIP) also does make explicitly pro-Aymara appeals, in addition to broader appeals to the indigenous.

This change in target ethnic groups between 1997 and 2002 is explained in the numbers primarily by a drop in Condepa's support, from 17.20 percent to 0.40 percent, and the emergence of the MAS and its mass appeal in 2002. In terms of Condepa, a specific explanation for its demise was the death of its charismatic leader, Carlos Palenque, who died of a heart attack in 1997, just before the general elections. Although Remedios Loza filled the slot and the party received a record vote, after the elections it was unable to find a suitable permanent successor for Palenque and its prospects dropped (see Alenda 2002). What is puzzling in some ways about this change is that despite Condepa's previous electoral successes running on a pro-*cholo* and indigenous message, no other urban indigenous ethnic party arose to take its place. The MAS and MIP, the ethnic parties that won influence in 2002, adopted a different ethnic rhetoric, MAS's being more focused on economic benefits for indigenous and rural communities and MIP's on indigenous social and economic rights and on Aymara nationhood.

Finally, these data show that, despite the increasing political salience of ethnicity at the national level, class continues to be salient. Although an ethnic message has resonated with about 19 percent of voters since 1989, there is some evidence of a resurgence in leftist voting: in 2002, a class message resonated with about 38 percent of voters. Over half of this vote (20.94 percent of the total) can be attributed to the MAS alone, which raises both ethnic and class issues. Thus, unlike previously, in 2002, we find that the class message that resonated especially with voters was that championed by a new brand of "indigenous leftists" – that is, leftists who explicitly mingled a class message with an ethnic one.

Explaining These Trends

I have argued that these trends are neither a "natural," obvious outcome of the historical development of indigenous social movements, nor a result of institutional and international changes. Rather, they have come about as a result of the "opportunity" for change created by party system crises, the constraints of social structure, and the instrumental actions of political elites operating within these structural constraints to manipulate these social cleavages and their relationships with parties. Building on work by Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) and Chhibber and Torcal (1997), I hypothesize that during periods of transition, when traditional parties are discredited, elites are presented with constrained opportunities to re-construct the salient lines of social cleavage in the party system to their advantage. These opportunities are constrained specifically by the messages and social bases of the traditional parties *and* by how potentially-salient social groups overlap and intersect. These latter two factors create the space within which elites can act. It is then the ideologies and objectives of elites that explain the particular character of the parties that emerge. In this section, I explore this hypothesis through the Bolivian case.

Broadly, the sequence of events in Bolivia that I detail below suggests that the discrediting and weakening of traditional leftist parties and the party system's move towards the right in terms of economic policy from the mid 1980s, left many of those who had been at least nominally represented by the traditional left and populist nationalist parties – i.e., the working class, *campesinos*, and the poor – without any explicit representation in the party system. New urban migrants were also voiceless. Generally both "working class" or "poor" and "indigenous" and/or "*cholo*," this unrepresented population could be appealed to either in class or ethnic terms. The fact that leftist policy was discredited by national events, as well as international ones (e.g., the fall of the Berlin wall), made ethnic appeals more credible. Condepa, the first major ethnic-mobilizing party to emerge, appealed precisely to urban migrant "*cholos*." As Condepa and indigenous social movements gained strength, traditional parties began to take note of indigenous and other groups, implementing several institutional reforms in the mid-1990s that were consistent with their demands, and that improved the electoral prospects of regionally-based parties. By the 2002 elections, two ethnic parties representing the indigenous emerged, both led by highland indigenous leaders with union backgrounds and appealing to the indigenous poor and working class. The larger, the MAS, which began as a municipal party, benefited directly from these institutional reforms (see Van Cott 2003).

In short, the Bolivian case follows the broad mechanism described. Several other factors which seem specific to the case also are important: One is the economic crisis of the 1980s, which discredited leftist economy policy. A second is internal migration, largely sparked by the economic crisis, which created new social groups that were not well represented by the traditional parties. And a third is the specific institutional reforms undertaken by the Bolivian government in the 1990s, which primarily affected the "second stage" of ethnic-mobilizing parties after Condepa.

The focus of this paper is the period since Bolivia's democratic transition in 1982, but the country's multiparty system extends well before that. Bolivia gained independence in 1825, and from about the end of the War of the Pacific in 1880, began to develop a modern multiparty system (Klein 1969; Hofmeister and Bamberger 1993). For nearly half a century, this system was dominated by the conservative and liberal parties. Under the liberal oligarchy, the indigenous were seen as an innately inferior race and were excluded from political participation. The key event that changed this system was the Chaco War with Paraguay from 1932 to 1935. During the war, close contact between indigenous and *mestizo-criollo* soldiers had a nationalizing effect. Returning home, a new generation of soldiers entered politics, bringing with them a new populist spirit and dedication to *mestizaje* and the incorporation of the indigenous population into the national project. This is not to say that their goals were enlightened by the standards of today – the objective was the "whitening" of the Indian population through racial intermixing – but they did favor broader political participation in general (Sanjínes 2004). At the same time, the country's defeat contributed to the decline of the Liberal oligarchy and the traditional parties. During this period, several new populist and leftist parties arose. The four most important of these were the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (POR), a Trotskyite party; the *Partido Izquierda Revolucionario* (PIR), a Marxist party; and the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) and the *Falange Socialista Boliviana* (FSB), both nationalist parties.

The MNR, in particular, became a force in the opposition. It built its base among Chaco war veterans associations, peasant unions of Quechua farmers in the Cochabamba valley, and the *mestizo-criollo* middle class. It also gained the support of the mining unions, with particular ties to the powerful *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia* (FSTMB). In ethnic terms, the MNR's indigenous support was based in the highlands and was more Quechua than Aymara. The Aymara were less part of the system of peasant unions and were less integrated into the market economy. In addition, less Hispanicized and *mestizo* than the Quechua, they did not fit well into the MNR's project of *mestizaje* (Sanjínes 2004: 20). Although not often emphasized, the MNR's base among mining unions also suggests a "*cholo*" aspect to its support base. As Nash's discussion of *cholo* culture among Bolivian tin miners suggests, miners identified more as "*cholo*" than as Quechua or Aymara, or as "campesino" (Nash 1993: 312). This is not, of course, to say that the MNR appealed explicitly to "*cholos*" in these terms.

Preaching a populist ideology of "revolutionary nationalism," and with the support of labor and peasant unions and of Chaco war veterans, the MNR led Bolivia's National Revolution in April 1952. The revolution had far-reaching effects, including the establishment of universal suffrage, nationalization of the mines, agrarian reform, and education reform (see Dunkerley 2003 [1987]; Grindle and Domingo 2003). The newly founded workers' union, the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB), worked directly with the MNR government. In 1964, however, a coup brought the military to power, and it stayed in power almost uninterrupted until 1982. During the presidency of General René Barrientos (1964-1965, 1966-1969), the state consolidated its power in part through the *Pacto Militar-Campesino* (PMC). As with the MNR, state relations were strongest with the Quechua of Cochabamba. However, after Barrientos's death, and especially during the dictatorships of General Hugo Banzer (1971-1978) and Luis García Meza (1980-1981), and their repression of indigenous/*campesino* communities, the military-peasant pact dissolved. It was during this period, Albó (1994) notes, that the Aymara of La Paz and Oruro became more politically active, displacing the Quechua who had been co-opted and then disillusioned by the dissolution of the PMC (see also Sanjínes 2004). It was during this period that the Katarista movement emerged and we see the formation of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupaj Katari* (MRTK) and MRTKL, as well as the Indianist *Movimiento Indio Tupaj Katari* (MITKA). None of these parties, however, ever won more

than 2.1 percent of the vote in general elections. Several leftist parties also were founded, including the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR) and the *Partido Socialista* (PS) in 1971. And, in 1979, the rightist *Acción Democrática Nacionalista* (ADN), founded by General Banzer.

In 1980, elections were held and won (38 percent) by the *Unidad Democrática y Popular* (UDP), a leftist coalition. This government was overthrown in July of the same year in a military coup led by García Meza. During a general strike in September 1982, however, the military decided to step down and to convene the 1980 Congress and accept its presidential choice. This marked the country's transition to democracy and brought Hernán Siles Zuazo of the UDP to the presidency in October. The UDP government included the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda* (MNRI), the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR), *Partido Comunista de Bolivia* (PCB), and the *Partido Democrata Cristiano* (PDC) (although eventually all parties except the MNRI withdrew) (see Laserna 1985).

Despite high hopes for the new democratic administration, the UDP suffered from the start from internal disagreements, as well as from strong legislative opposition by the MNR and ADN. In terms of its economic program, the UDP sought to consolidate the nationalist revolutionary model of 1952, based in a mixed economy and economic gradualism (see Mesa Gisbert 2003: 739-40). This program, compounded by political opposition and internal disunity, backfired completely and the years of the UDP government are remembered as the period in which Bolivia suffered its worst period of hyperinflation ever, with indices rising from 123 percent in 1982 to 8,757 percent in 1985 (INE and Banco Central in Mesa Gisbert 2003: 740). The crisis discredited the UDP and its economy policy, as well as exacerbating internal divisions within the government.

As a result, in the 1985 elections, the country swung noticeably to the right (see Torranzo 1989; Estellano 1994). These elections were won by the ADN (32.8 percent), which took a strong neo-liberal stance, followed closely by the MNR (30.40 percent), and brought Victor Paz Estenssoro (MNR) to the presidency. The MIR won just 10.2 percent and MNRI 5.5 percent, less than half of the UDP's total in 1982. The discrediting of the leftist program was so complete that that it was Paz Estenssoro and the MNR -- which had built the Bolivian state of 1952 – that oversaw its dismantling through a program of neo-liberal reform and stabilization.

The country's swing to the right meant that the interests of many of those who had been spoken for by the traditional left and populist nationalist parties[18] – i.e., the working class, *campesinos*, and the poor – were subsumed by the project of economic stabilization.[19] At the same time, the effect of the economic situation and the government's austerity measures on the poor and working class – i.e., especially on the non-white population – were becoming obvious. And, the collapse of the price of tin, combined with privatization of the mines, threw thousands of miners out of work. The closures of the mines and poverty in the countryside, brought thousands into the cities, noticeably in the area around the country's administrative capital, La Paz. Between 1976 and 2001, the population of La Paz's satellite city, El Alto, multiplied almost six times.[20] No longer peasants nor miners, these migrants also did not fit well into traditional channels for interest incorporation through unions or parties. With the incidence of poverty at about 70 percent nationwide,[21] all of the major parties remained most focused on macroeconomic stabilization.

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[18] I do not mean to imply that these parties were ideal representatives for these groups, but simply that they at least purported to be channels for the representation of their interests.

[19] The project of economic stabilization was successful in terms of bringing inflation under control. It dropped from 8,767 percent in 1985 to 16 percent in 1989 (INE and Banco Central in Mesa Gisbert 2003: 746).

[20] From 95,455 in 1976 to 647,350 in 2001, according to the 2001 census (in Mesa Gisbert 2003: 752).

[21] Based on 1992 census (from Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano 1993, Table 1.7).

It is during this period that we begin to see increasing ethnic claims in the national political arena, calling for economic changes and relief from the effects of the austerity program, as well as for political equality and cultural recognition. In the 1980s, for instance, we see the emergence of indigenous organizations in the lowlands of eastern Bolivia, and in 1991, the *Confederación Indígena del Oriente, Chaco y Amazonía de Bolivia* (CIDOB) led the March for Territory and Dignity to La Paz. In terms of parties, the key event was the 1988 founding of Condepa, which appealed to exactly the latter group mentioned above, i.e., especially to "urban indigenous" and "*cholo*" migrants in El Alto, as well as more generally to the indigenous. In 1989, party leader Remedios Loza became the first woman *de pollera* to be elected to the Bolivian Congress.

In the 1989 elections, the vote for parties making ethnic claims jumped from less than 4 percent in 1985 to 13.90 percent. Support for leftist parties also increased, but not to the level of 1980. Although not reflected in vote shares, we also begin to see discussion of ethnic issues by the leaders of the traditional parties, reflecting the increasing salience of ethnic identity. For instance, President Jaime Paz Zamora (MIR) promised to use the *wiphala* as an alternate national symbol, although he did not carry this out (Albó 1994: 65).

In the 1993 elections, the salience of ethnicity was reflected in MNR's choice of alliance partner – the MRTKL. The MNR-MRTKL alliance won these elections with 35.60 percent of the vote. Ethnic parties won 14.30 percent of the vote, a figure which does not take into account support for the MRTKL as votes for the MNR and MRTKL were not counted separately. The MRTKL message appealed explicitly to the indigenous. Indeed, significant attention was paid to the fact that Victor Hugo Cárdenas (MRTKL) was Bolivia's first indigenous vice-president. In his inaugural address, Cárdenas, wearing indigenous dress, highlighted indigenous issues and spoke in Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní. There was also a clear class component to this message. Although the MNR did not use leftist terminology, the coalition appealed explicitly to the poor, the rural population/*campesinos*, and workers.[22] The MNR's 1993 government program, the *Plan de Todos*, highlighted a number of social programs to dampen the effects of the neo-liberal program on these groups.

The *Plan de Todos* further outlined several key institutional reforms. One of the most significant had to do with popular participation and decentralization, which led to the passage of the *Ley de Participación Popular* in April 1994, which led in turn to the first municipal elections in 1995, which facilitated the emergence of regionally-based ethnic parties (see Ayo Saucedo 2004). As Van Cott (2003a) notes: "In the first-ever nationwide direct municipal elections in 1995, candidates identifying themselves as peasant or indigenous won 28.6 per cent of municipal council seats, constituting a majority in 73 of 311 municipalities. … [T]he indigenous party Asamblea de la Soberanía de los Pueblos (ASP) was formed in 1995 and established a foothold in these municipal elections that it would use to expand representation to the national level" (756). The ASP was a predecessor of Evo Morales's MAS, which placed second in the 2002 elections, with 20.94 percent of the vote. Another key ingredient of the success of the MAS in 2002 was its ability, as a party based in coca-growing regions, to capitalize on opposition to U.S. coca eradication policy and imperialism in the region. These issues, at least as much as indigenous rights, have been key to Morales's message throughout his political career as a coca union leader.

In contrast to the MAS, the other key ethnic party in the 2002 elections, the MIP, which won 6.10 percent of the vote, adopted a much clearer and hard-line Aymara and indigenous nationalist message, reflecting the Indianist background of its leader, Felipe Quispe.

Alternative Hypotheses

As noted above, several hypotheses are offered by the literature to explain the central question

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[22] See coding for the 1993 election in the Chandra Dataset on Ethnic Political Parties.

of this project and the Bolivian case in particular. This section turns to arguments about two broad factors often emphasized in the literature in political science, institutions and modernization.

The role of institutional reform in contributing especially to the "second wave" of ethnic-mobilizing parties in the 2002 elections has been touched on above. Institutional arguments build on a large body of work about how institutional changes create new electoral incentives and/or facilitate the participation of ethnic groups (e.g., see Horowitz 1991; Reilly and Reynolds 1999; Lardeyret 1993; Horowitz 1985; Cox 1997; Lijphart 1977). With regard to Bolivia, for instance, one key institutional argument has been developed by Van Cott (2003a): she argues that "institutional changes that opened the system" were one of the five interacting factors that explain the emergence and success of indigenous parties in Bolivia's 2002 elections. Her argument highlights the effects of the municipal decentralization of 1995 and the creation in 1994-95 of uninomial electoral districts (755).

The analysis here has not disputed this argument with regard to the 2002 elections. Indeed, as Van Cott argues, these changes seem to have been especially significant in explaining the MAS's electoral success. However, institutional changes in 1994 and 1995 cannot explain the earlier rise in the salience of ethnicity that I have shown in Bolivia. Rather, these institutional reforms seem to have been undertaken partly to respond to increasingly vocal demands by politicized ethnic groups. Furthermore, the institutional hypothesis does not explain why it was *ethnic* participation that increased as a result of these changes, rather than participation by other types of regionally-concentrated groups, such as local unions. An especially interesting area for future work thus might be to look more at how and why these *particular* reforms were undertaken, at who were the relevant actors and what were their positions, etc.

Another key body of work that speaks directly to the central question of this project comes from modernization theory (e.g., Lipset 1960; Lerner 1958; Deutsch 1971; Parsons 1964; Pye 1966).[23] According to modernization theory, the process of modernization involves a shift from identification on the basis of traditional status groups to identification on the basis of class within a modern economy. Changes at the individual level from ethnic to class identification should be reflected in national politics, including in the party system (Lipset 1960).[24]

The contemporary emergence of ethnic parties in Bolivia – and indeed in Latin America in general – offers an obvious challenge to this hypothesis. We see here precisely the opposite process from what modernization theory would predict: over the long term as the Bolivian economy has

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[23] For a summary and critique of modernization theory, see Huntington (1971). Note also the bases of some of this work in Weber (1946), as well as Marx and Tönnies 1957 [1887]. The reader might object that modernization theory has been largely discredited by recent academic research (in particular, see Przeworski et al. 2000). I think it remains important to address this hypothesis head on because looking cross-nationally, one of the most common explanations for why ethnicity is politically salient in some countries, and class – or something else – in others, highlights, either explicitly or implicitly, the effect of modernization. Ask many observers why there are more tribal wars and ethnic parties in sub-Saharan Africa than in Western Europe or Latin America, and they will draw a distinction between "underdeveloped" or "primitive" societies, in which individuals have fixed, primordial tribal, clan, ancestral or some other type of ethnic attachments, and "modern" societies, in which individuals have more fluid interactions in the context of the marketplace.

[24] More specifically, Lipset (1960) argues that we should be able to determine party support bases by social demographic characteristics: manual workers and rural laborers should support parties on the left; owners of large industry and farms, managers, and those with strong ties to traditional institutions like the Church should support parties on the right; and the middle classes should support centrist, democratic parties.

grown, ethnic identities have become more, rather than less, salient in party politics. At the individual level, among those who have migrated to urban centers we also find little support for this hypothesis. Modernization theory predicts that individuals who are more incorporated into the modern economy should identify more along class lines than ethnic lines. On the one hand, Quechua and Aymara miners did develop a class consciousness (Nash 1993). On the other, migrants to the cities in the 1980s and 1990s (some of them from these mining centers) have developed an alternative "indigenous" and in some cases "*cholo*" ethnic identification in the political sphere. These data show no clear progress from ethnic to class identification over time.

Another testable prediction that can be drawn from modernization theory is that, across regions, richer regions should show stronger support for class-based parties, while poorer regions should support ethnic parties. This too does not seem to be supported by the facts of the case. For instance, support for ethnic Katarista parties has been based in the department of La Paz (Romero Ballivián 1998: 203-227). But La Paz has the third highest human development index of all nine Bolivian departments (PNUD 2004: 27).[25]

In short, the predictions offered by modernization theory do not hold in the Bolivian case. But this does not mean we should throw out modernization as a causal factor altogether. There is in fact some support for an alternative hypothesis that could be termed "modernization backlash." This hypothesis, developed especially by Melson and Wolpe (1970), is that modernization threatens the values of traditional society, thus prompting a reaction among traditionalists seeking to maintain their influence and way of life. This reaction should be particularly strong among those with the most contact with other groups – for example, among urban migrants (see also Varshney 2002). There does seem to be some support for this hypothesis in that Condepa's base was among urban migrants in El Alto and the Katarist parties have roots among urban Aymara intellectuals. In addition, in the case of the MIP, Felipe Quispe holds the traditional position of "*El Mallku*" and the party's platform focuses on traditional cultural practices, among other issues. On the other hand, the leaderships of Condepa and the MAS do not fit well the prediction that "traditionalists" should lead and dominate the process of ethnification.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that adopting a constructivist approach to ethnic groups can help us to better understand the relationship between social cleavages and political parties. Working within this framework, I have proposed a simple method of measuring the political salience of ethnic and class identity groups in party politics and illustrated this method using data on legislative elections in Bolivia from 1980 to 2002. One of the key insights of this constructivist approach is that individuals have multiple identities that can be mobilized. Along these lines, I have argued that in order to understand changes in the social groups salient in a party system, we need to better understand, in particular, the underlying structure of ethnic and other groups and how they overlap and intersect. I have proposed that during periods of transition, this factor, along with the social bases of the traditional parties, and the actions of political elites, explains how the social bases of party systems shift. I have explored the plausibility of this hypothesis using the Bolivian case, along with several key alternative factors highlighted in the literature.

There are several implications that can be drawn from this analysis. One is that the success of "indigenous parties" may in fact be part of a broader trend of party system "ethnification." That is, it is not so much that individuals are participating more as "indigenous," but that they are increasingly defining themselves in the national political arena in ethnic terms, rather than as members of classes or other social groups. Because there are a number of ethnic cleavages in Bolivia that are not currently spoken for by existing parties (e.g., lowland Indian, *camba, cholo*), one prediction that

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[25] These rankings of course may have changed over time, but La Paz has certainly not been the poorest department.

emerges from this argument is that we should see such parties forming in the future. Given the recent divisiveness of regional issues in the county, the possibility of the formation of parties organized along ethno-regional lines, in particular, is worrisome.

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