

## Intellectual tendencies in the debate for autonomies<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The authors of this article collect the most widespread intellectual reflections in Bolivia of the last years about the theme of autonomies and, from those, establish tendencies that influence directly or indirectly the construction the actual proposals of the social movements and politicians to the Constituent Assembly.

The issue of autonomies is one of the axes of the most important discussions on State reform in Bolivia and securely will be the object of confrontation for distinct positions in the Constituent Assembly scene. The results of the referendum on autonomies held in July, 2006, far from showing a country divided in two halves – east and west – has basically expressed two things: in the first place, the theme of autonomy has installed itself in the Bolivian political debate as one of the central points for a future reform of the State, and secondly, the electoral results have been in a majority close to autonomy in four departments and rejected in the other five, showing important voting for the option against the majority in these departments, with a few exceptions.

Beyond the results of consulting the citizens, discursively linked to regional demand, autonomy cannot be conceived as only one voice. Autonomy acquires different significances and senses depending of those that pronounce on them, and their connection to different ideological and political positions. Thus a wide range of acceptance tied to the concept exists, from those referring to administrative, political or managerial autonomy, to indigenous autonomies as the basis of self-determination. This debate, until a few years ago restricted to the academic-intellectual area, has actually been transferred to the proposals of the social and political movement for the Constituent. Without doubt one may verify an important influence of intellectual thought on the collective proposals.

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The article collects the most widespread intellectual reflections of the last few years on autonomy and from them, sets out the most important tendencies which have directly or indirectly influenced the construction of proposals for the Constituent Assembly.

### **The State crisis and the autonomist discussion.**

The actual State crisis is the result of the exhaustion of determined forms of discussion which over the last decades have basically appeared as the neo-liberal model in the economics and in the representative political democracy. This loss of hegemonic efficiency has generated a vacuum and allowed the creation, expression and circulation of diverse debates and demands.

The crisis of State pronouncements – the crisis of the regime of truth as Michel Foucault would say - and the process of debate and deliberation opened by the Constituent Assembly, have created possible conditions for the rise of alternative demands and pronouncements. It has loosened the link around the meta-narratives of the State and produced a diminishing of the sense of unity of the “national”, and the interruption of new cultural identities, carriers of new messages and possibilities for national links.

The discursive debate around the creation of a (new) hegemonic principle is reflected in the debate on autonomy, that comes from a series of questions of the actual state structure, demanding political, cultural and juridical fundamentals, such as “original/indigenous nations” which refute their mono-cultural and homogenized character to propose a new politico-administrative organization and optional forms of constructing and imagining the nation.

Lately, the issue of autonomy has been on the increase as well as placing it in the center of socio/political debate. Extreme discussions have broken out from this debate, for example that of the “Camba nation” and/or the “Aymara nation” assuming mutually exclusive forms, and even so the radicalism of these discourses presupposes their marginality of the autonomy debate. But beyond intellectual reflections and the debates, that one can perceive are multiple and diverse, there are two tendencies synthesizing the confrontational discourse of the two predominant matrices: the “civic-regional perspective and the vision linked to the “ethno-cultural”.

In this sense, the discursive *construct* over autonomies supposes a theoretical/epistemological position which marks the *locus* of pronouncements from which a cosmo-vision profile emerges respecting the State/society horizon that it requires. This debate over autonomies is crossed by a tension between the social and political of a liberal stamp that appeals to individual rights, to the modern State and delivers a “techno-juridical” aspect to the proposal that other thinking of ethno-cultural collective stamp which recovers the ancestral community vision, proposing visions of alternative nations. Despite other views of autonomy existing, such as a municipal one, the two present matrices of thought articulate the debate agenda on the issue and the reflection of Bolivian social and political science.

Even so, one cannot conceive autonomy in a single way, but in the mark of the diversity and plurality of debating positions and theory/epistemology around two matrices of central thought. The challenge is to unwind the complex net of the arrangements that form part of the theoretical/epistemological field and urge the State as the basis of transformation territorial, political and socio-culture ordering.

## **The different foci**

The intellectual/ academic forces round the autonomies theme as an object of study is shown in a wide gamut of reflections. With the proposal of establishing the reach and limits of the state of the research on autonomy and its theoretical visions in what follows the approximate principles are displayed to localize theoretically the horizons – the frontiers – of the debate where different perspectives can be identified and further on, central tendencies.

## **The ethnic/cultural perspective**

The debate on the demands for autonomy from the ethno/cultural point has a long history in Bolivian thought particularly in the Andean zone. From the colonial matrix, the bibliography of Condarco Morales, Xavier Albó, Silvia Rivera, Simón Yampara, Javier Hurtado, Diego Pacheco and other intellectuals linked to Andean Oral History Workshop, inspired by the thought of Aymara intellectual Fausto Reinaga, reflect the indigenous reality arguing that the same ran through the colonial horizon. The reconstruction of the ayllu marked in indigenous autonomy is converted into the possibility of decolonizing the Bolivian State. Even authors such as Pablo Mamani propose the constitution of a Greater Indigenous State, with its own specifications such as territorial federations.

On the same line, emphasizing criticism of racial mixing and constructing the nation on this cultural horizon are the recent proposals of Gonzalo Colque, Felix Patzi or Alvaro García Linera, who characterize our society as predominantly “premodern, multicivilized and pluricultural”, and propose the creation of a new multinational and multicultural State which implies differentiated and asymmetrical of national and ethnic identities, through the granting of regional autonomies for linguistic communities with distinct grades of self-government.

For his part, Javier Sanjinés starts by questioning of the “national imagination” of Benedict Anderson, and with the proposition of decolonizing the State, and suggests retaking the concepts of nation, national identity, citizenship and democracy in the perspective of building a new epistemological focus based on subordinate studies.

Equally in the debate of the indigenous peoples and original nations, as much from the highlands as the lower lands of eastern Bolivia, the issue of autonomy gets ever stronger and focuses the points of interest on the self-determination of its territories.

**The juridical/institutional perspective:** the criticism of a centralist state constitutes one of the fundamental causes for the demand for autonomy in the country. In this context, the majority of the proposals emphasize the need to deepen the decentralization process by the politico-administrative route.

The reflections of José Blanes and Joan Prats focus the demand for autonomy and federation in the context of the process of decentralization in Latin America and connect it to the context of globalization. Also, they announce the end of the era of the centralized State owing to the entry of local governments.

Rolando Bass Werner, alluding to the theory of social complexity of Niklas Luhmann, affirms that the process of autonomy will make possible the creation of a local system to confront efficiently the

tasks of regional development. Carlos Soruco, for his part, states that the autonomic process will deepen the ability to adopt decisions and the aid the arrival of authentic autonomy.

For his part, Carlos Borth, starts from a retrospective view of the reforms carried out of the political system and through a conceptual discussion on the “national question” unites the new debating positions (in organizations such as MAS, MIP, and Camba Nation Movement). From a juridical/institutional perspective, he concludes it is necessary to introduce profound changes by constitutional reform to create a unitary State on the basis of autonomic units.

From an administrative and fiscal perspective, Mario Galindo makes an evaluation and analysis of the functioning of public management and emphasizes the awaited impact as a result of the entry of the country’s different regions as a consequence of the autonomic process. Galindo argues that with the disappearance of centralism, the provincial sub governments will become the main actors in public investment. In this technical/financial line, one places the contributions of Rodrigo Cisneros, which based on statistic data of national income since 2003, calculates that local and departmental finances could increase significantly thanks to the application of the autonomic proposal of the pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee.

The autonomic process in Spain is a reference point for the ideas arising in Santa Cruz. Juan Carlos Urenda plans the autonomic control of resources to forge the destiny of the regions, pointing out that the autonomic models have served as a viable alternative for almost all European countries. The proposal of Urenda, conceived in the ‘80s is the basis of recent autonomic planning of the regional movement in Santa Cruz.

These proposals have provoked critical visions like those of Carlos Romero y Miguel de Urioste who from the specific view of the problem of land and territory sustain that the Santa Cruz tries to halt the process of cleaning land titles already begun. Gonzalo Rojas for his part, analyzed the Santa Cruz autonomic proposal, comparing it with the Spanish and from a historical, economic and financial perspective.. questions the main arguments put in relation to the said experience, as compensation to the poorer regions, which according to his criteria could be applied in Bolivia. For that he proposes a new design of autonomy at “mid” level which takes as a territorial unit the municipal ambit and includes an intercultural variable as the linking axis. So too, Franz Barrios Suvelza has studied the autonomic proposal in Santa Cruz in the mark of the territorial structure of the State, outlining strengths and weaknesses, proposing a territorial State as the adequate model for Bolivia. Finally, Raúl Prada, from a radically critical position, unmasks the interests woven around the departmental autonomies by business elites and landowners tied to pro-Santa Cruz Civic Committee.

**In the municipal perspective**, the Law of Administrative Decentralization and, fundamentally, the Law of Popular Participation are unsustainable for the design and reflections of autonomic proposals. In the last years various studies and proposals have emerged tied to the processes of administrative decentralization, but above all municipal in range. So, for example, the studies of José Blanes, George Gray Molina, Gabriel Gaité, Roberto Barbery and Carlos Hugo Molina mention the municipal experience, particularly the municipal commonwealths as decentralizing mechanisms that strengthen local spaces. In this same line, Franz Barrios Suvelza evaluates the Bolivian municipal reforms as a transcendental step but much debated step, identifying a group of weaknesses related to the process. This author stresses the evolution of the organizational forms of the State and of the historical pattern of territorial organization, concluding that is characterized by

anti-state municipal autonomy and indigenous districtism, prisoner of hard-line conservatism (in the sub-municipalities), concentrating their attention on the points of meeting and variance between local and departmental autonomies and seeing possible conflicts, but also exploring perspectives that open up from community and territorial proposals for autonomy.

**From the historical perspective;** Gustavo Rodríguez has looked retrospectively at the process of regional struggles or administrative decentralization towards the end of the XIX century, particularly at the cases of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Likewise Rossana Barragán situates the autonomy struggle in Santa Cruz today in its historical perspective, the historical debate being recurrent, the unitary debate playing those regions with scarcity. Walter Chávez focuses on the regional struggle in Santa Cruz over a “long history” – specifically over a hundred years – more than circumstances of the moment.

**Other points of view.** In these we group the reflection of the Program for Investigation and Strategy of Bolivia(PIEB), compiler of a group of research, essays and articles on the issue of autonomy, which were the basis for a debate between Gustavo Pedrazas, Adela Lea Plaza, Leonardo Buitendijk, Jaime Iturri and Gregorio Iriarte in an attempt to condense various tendencies that have arisen, fundamentally two: the territorial and the ethno/cultural - concluding that they are not contradictory and can be mutually arranged.

The Centro Cuarto Intermedio (CCI) reflected on the advantages and risks which accompany autonomies in their different dimensions and alternative proposals in the context of deepening the decentralization process. For their part, the Latin American Social Research Institute(ILDIS), The Center for the Investigation and Promotion of Peasantry (CIPCA), and CARITAS, from specific, institutional areas, took up and published reflections and above systematized existing proposals about autonomy. Finally the PRISMA Institute and other authors have made private proposals on autonomies in the framework of reflections for the Constituent Assembly.

This revision of different proposals on the issue shows the preoccupation and concern to resolve the problem in the mark of integral reform of the State.

### **Constituent elements in the matrices in thinking about autonomies.**

Within the growing demand for autonomy and concern for the constituent debate, in the following, the main elements making up intellectual/academic reflection from the ethnic/cultural matrix and also the juridical/institutional one stressing the historical, socio/political arguments and/or ideologies of questioning the State and the visions and proposals related to territorial ordering and the institutional design for the politico/institutional administration of resources.

### **State and autonomy in ethno-cultural thinking.**

In the first argument stated by the thinkers who ascribe to the ethno-cultural line turns around the colonial and exclusive character of the State. So, Simón Yampara sustains that “Bolivia appears as the product of the colonial invasion of 1532, constructing a republican State, unconscious of and outside the ancestral cosmo-vision, superimposing/imposing another system of structures of limitation/division a European model of departments, provinces, sections and cantons which in good measure are reductions of the colonial view from Toledo, founded on characteristics of exclusion and victimization of the original population, generically termed indigenous” (2006: 41).

Colonization was imposed also in the social and intellectual imagination of the era “the persistence of exclusion, colonialism and the paternalistic role of politicians, ideologists and ‘pro- indigenous’ intellectuals to the point of making efforts to colonize indigenous intellectuals, the result of the poor circulation of ideas, knowledge and ideological positions, abilities and proposals for the identity of original/indigenous people and pre-active and decolonized intellectuals” (Yampara 2006:38).

For his part, Alvaro García Linera (2006:15) emphasizes on the unsustainable cultural and identity elements, from his point of view, on the State and Bolivian nation, given that “one of the great problems is the incomplete structure of the formation of the Bolivian State, its jelly-like institutions and its permanent inability to encounter the society, its mono-ethnicity and culturality which has given rise to, since its birth as a republic, exclusive political structures, racial systems of social recognition and continuous processes of internal disintegration”. Thus, he sustains “the Bolivian republic was founded leaving extant the colonial mechanisms which blessed prestige, property and power based on the color of skin, surname, language and lineage” (:15). For this reason, he proposes “breaking the schizophrenia of the elites who for centuries have dreamed of being modern and white copying institutions and modern laws to apply to a society where the indigenous are in a majority and mercantile and organizational modernity are inexistent:”

As one can see, these authors reflect the thinking of the ethno-cultural matrix questioning the historical construction of the State and the persistence of mechanisms of colonial domination and social and cultural exclusion of the communities and indigenous peoples of Bolivia which during centuries have maintained their community structures practically intact and through which they propose the building of a new multi-ethnic. Multi-national Bolivian State. This criticism of the State is based among other points on its monocultural and monolingistic nature.

In respect of the territorial ordering proposing the destructuring of the actual administrative units because according to Simón Yampara, “ the present territorial structure for its political divisions does not accord with the cosmovision and logic of the territorial administration of the original peoples; it divides, parcels and even imprisons territorially, juridically and legally these peoples” (2006: 47). So it is necessary to confront a process of mental reterritorialization and decolonization and search not only for territorial harmony an inter-ecological complementarities, but also socially and politically in the country. Further on the same author (2001: 52), establishes the elements that should be taken into account for an indigenous proposal of decentralization. Respecting the territorial issue and natural resources he sketches the reterritorialization of the present political division and structure, complementing ecologies and ecosystems of production, taking advantage of naturally shared resources and in harmony with the Pachamama. The cosmology and system of life proposes the harmony and welfare of all, indigenous and non-indigenous, oriented towards *the Sumaj Qamaña*. In the economy he plans an allotropical model of reciprocity in the political and complementation values in the institution of the family and human couples. And in the political, he posits a unitary diarchic government with the interaction of feminine and feminine and masculine values in the institution of the family and human couples.

Gonzalo Colque, in his proposal for autonomy reflects on the problem by placing emphasis of the nation emerging from below, where he signals that “it deals with recognizing the indigenous base as a nation with intermediate and national political structures which need to be connected with their territorial base components. This signifies restructuring political

power from the communities, ayllus or neighborhoods up, from their people and everyday lives. It implies the acceptance of community logic of grass-roots organizations, unions and confederations, so that they can sustain the power of territorial politics” (Colque 2006: 7).

The author also sketches the reach of grass-roots autonomy proposing that “as a nation we administer natural resources according to the principles of indigenous societies, that is the control and regulation of land and territory be subordinate to the principles of equality and sustainability (...) Indigenous autonomy challenges us to draw over all the map of Bolivia according to ethnic reference points and reconstructions approximating to ancestral domains (...) The idea is thus that recognition of communal autonomy exists, which connects above through a commonwealth of communities to municipal level and so to establish local government or a communal municipal base. The commonwealth will be the synthesis and maximum representation of the communities together in front of municipal government. In this structure the cantons no longer have any sense because they have not managed to constitute themselves in genuine institutions” (Colque 2006: 6).

Relating to this theme, García Linera proposes “to empower projects of national, indigenous autonomy that could give place to the formation of new states of majority indigenous composition. This is the case, for example, of Aymara speakers who in the cultural community have most worked to politicize ethnically in the last decades, giving rise to a nationalistic political body, as well as presenting a potential demographic density to make this proposal of political self-determination feasible” (2005: 15). This proposal arises from the conceptual differentiation between ethnic group and nation, which signals “that the latter have undertaken a process of structuring an institutional political community in a State regime. When an ethnic group become autonomous in a system of domination, they become a nation, and the combination of struggles and indigenous demands undertaken in the last decades by the Aymara people puts them in a position to constitute a national State (García Linera 2005:16). Within this mark, respecting the construction of citizenry he concludes that “in multiethnic or multinational societies, the political community can only be constructed through mechanisms that, without eliminating the *cultural particularity* of people, making them have the same opportunities and rights to constitute part of the political institutionalism. To allow this, some authors have proposed the exercise of a “*differentiated citizenry*” (2005:20).

In change, Pablo Mamani contrasts these proposals with a different matrix when he signals that it has no sense to talk of indigenous autonomies, even when they are thinking within a multinational State “even if it is striking to talk of autonomies, this only would serve in the specific case of the indigenous to fragment their territory into small States, when it would be better to form a Grand Indigenous with its own specifications, as are the territorial confederations” (2005: 36). Mamani’s proposal for an Indigenous State makes a substantial difference from earlier ones.

It is interesting to incorporate into this perspective, the vision of two intellectuals directly linked to the assembly of the Guarani People as are Enrique Camargo and Guido Chumiray, who add new components. Camargo stresses the importance of revising the relation that exists between the administrative political map and the ethnic map, starting with the question, “What is the relationship that exists between the Bolivian State and the Communal State which we can call the State itself? (2005: 25); given that “the arbitrary allotment that the territory of the indigenous people were

subjected to, is a big problem requiring the force and disinterest of the Bolivian State to resolve and restore these territories to ensure a dignified life to the indigenous population” (Camargo 2005: 26).

The way to understand the life of the community, its relations and rules that order implicitly the behavior of the families in a community context, is that which Guido Chumira terms “the small country”, which essentially has two components: territory and self-determination. These elements are inseparable and form the conditions for exercising rights for full, communal life. Which is to say, without territory and self-determination, it is difficult to think of personal dignity, the quality of family life and the community they belong to for whichever indigenous community. (Camargo 2005: 26).

Camargo agrees somewhat with the regional movements when he includes a criticism of the centralist State: “The other big problem which the State structures present, from the indigenous point of view is the excessive concentration in the management of the administration of public natural resources, whether these be on a national or departmental scale” (2005: 27). His vision is certainly inclusive when he signals that “the sense of ethnic belonging should not be confused with self-exclusion; belonging is the basis for indigenous strength which allows for interacting with other groups or States in better conditions” (2005: 27). In consequence from this perspective, the indigenous vision in respect to decentralization transcends community practice to a greater territorial political space, recovering the so-called TCO’s (Tierras Comunitarias de Origen / Indigenous Original Territories) and ending in practices of high cultural value exercised within the TCO’s that achieve influencing other non-indigenous spaces (2005: 32).

As one can see, with this line of thought, some authors recover existing territorial units as municipalities or TCO’s to make concrete the proposal of indigenous autonomy, in other cases sketch the total restructuring of the territory. In general, the type of autonomies proposed for regions such as Santa Cruz with the base in departmental structure are deliberately distanced. The planning of autonomies – which come from proposals for self-determination – are linked to the concept of territory which transcend the mere geographic limits to be confused with cultural, historic, ecological, linguistic and “a private system of life”, claimed in future State conformation.

### **State and autonomies in regional thinking**

The most representative intellectuals of the vision who base their thought in the construction of the autonomous proposal of the civic movement of Santa Cruz are Juan Carlos Urenda, from a juridical perspective and Mario Galindo from a technical-financial perspective. To these can be added, amongst others, the goods provided by authors such as Carlos Dabdoub and Sergio Antelo, as linked to the thinking of the so-called “Camba nation” .

The questioning of the State, from this perspective, is directed at its centralist character, and its historical marginalizing role respecting the regions of Eastern Bolivia, of “Andean centralism” and of the bureaucratic-administrative inefficiency that hinders the integrated development of marginal regions.

Juan Carlos Urenda argues against the centralist discourse starting from a supposed history with relation to the constitution of the State, signaling that Bolivia “adopted a completely unitary and concentrated form of State (that later changed to a centralist obsession) since the conditions of the



regions that formed it were given to establish a State of much greater regional self-government”(1987: 47).

Carlos Dabdoub adds a national content to the reflection of Urenda that “the nation state of Bolivia is no more than a simple juridical fiction, the case of Bolivia is not nationalistic in its reality, instead an imposed State nationalism, in which the Bolivian State is figured a sole power which is said to be sole nation, convinced that it represents all the nations, domineering all our regions” (2002: 30).

From this comes the construction of an ideology and identity of its own “When one constructs a nation, a country, the circumstances in which people live means that they go creating their own ideology in that territory. In the case of those from Santa Cruz, they have been creating an ideology which possibly arose from the time of the founding o Santa Cruz by Ñuflo de Chávez in 1561”. (Dabdoub 2002:24 ), and continues “ before the accelerated processes of integration of Latin America and the globalizing dynamic which tends to homogenize the world, today more then ever it is necessary to count on an ideological instrument which ratifies our self-esteem as a collectivity and publicly replants our identity as people and nation” (Dabdoub 2002: 27).

The ideas from the Tarija region introduce several important differences relating to the discourse from those of Santa Cruz. Rolando Ruiz Bass Werner says that “the present centralist State, discriminatory, exclusive, inefficient and corrupt, not corresponding to the real development of social democracy for which the heroic and suffering Bolivian people fought and struggled without rest” (Ruiz 2002:13);as one can see it introduces a national, integrated vision to the regional problem, combined with the Bolivian people’s struggle for democracy. This proposal is, in consequence, founded on four basic principles; the device of voluntarism, national unity, autonomy as such and solidarity. (Ruíz, 2006).

Even then yielding rapidly to the position of Santa Cruz when it expresses “that in the political field, the challenge is for those leaders or parties who can articulate feasible proposals that effectively integrate the Orient with the South of the country and guarantee the consolidation of a new axis of development for the next 50 years. If, too, one can achieve the successful resolution of the national question within this block and the aspirations of departmental autonomy, accepting the truth of the pluricultural multicultural character of the country, then we can say that the doors are open to the constitution, in the democracy of a free state of association of nationalities and autonomous regions” (Ruiz 2002: 20).

In relation of the proposal of autonomies, the intellectuals of the East, differently from the previous line of thinking, place their plan in an application both concrete, political-institutional and technical-financial. the model consists basically in three distinct types: territorial decentralization, administrative, political-normative in a limited form and economic. “ Once administrative decentralization is achieved, by a natural liberating process of the regions, the people will fight to achieve the political territorial (normative) decentralization, in what already practically is equivalent to departmental autonomy (Urenda 1987:169).

The reach of this proposal involves a new type of relationship of the autonomous region with the State. “This autonomic procedure corresponds to the characterization of a self-declared “pact” between the State(represented by Parliament) and the proposing department. Which is to say this is not a concession by Parliament to the departments, because these are anterior to the Bolivian State (except Oruro, Beni and Pando), as we have already proved, and have *rights ius naturalistas* prior to the State and Bolivian legislation, which inclusively – as already shown – were established by the *Order of the Intendents* of 28<sup>th</sup> January 1782, before the creation of the Republic” (Urenda: 171-172).

In consequence a possible strategy to consolidate a real economic decentralization is planned on the following elements: a) constitutional reform including the political decentralization already mentioned and the framework of own income of the departments to autonomize themselves. b) a classificatory law of rents; laws that establish mechanisms of interregional financial collaboration; the coordination of the Planning and Finance Ministry with the autonomous departments and the mechanisms for revising the system. c) Statutes of autonomy that constitute the basic political administrative and economic law of the autonomous department, which should respect not only the Constitution but also a mark fixed for the interpretive laws of that and of its accessories (Urenda 1987: 174).

Perhaps the most conflictive theme and that which has awoken the most controversy at national level is the proposal related to the administration of natural resources. Respecting which Dabdoub sustains, “In the economic and social order, we repeat that natural resources are in the original control of departments and those who decide are the departmental governments. In the second place, we reaffirm that the earth and our territory are indivisible and whatever program of colonization should be evaluated, approved or rejected by a government department democratically elected where the governor, prefect or however they are named, together with a council of elected persons, called departmental deputies or assembly who should take the decisions ” (Dabdoub 2002: 29) .

The proposal from Santa Cruz was made concrete in the financial autonomy of incomes and expenditures for development and the exercise of competences and resources of the autonomous departments. Galindo planned at relationship of 33.33% of the national taxes collected for central government and 66.67% for sub-national levels of which 10% will be destined for a compensation fund for departmental autonomies, 5% for universities and 20% for municipalities (2005: 24) .

In relation to the concrete theme, the position of the intellectuals of Tarija is more flexible. Ruiz Bass Werner indicates that “the competences that are gradually transferred to the different departments, form the scenario of marked asymmetries in terms of economic development or of institutional consensus when assuming them locally. Some departments are going to demand, more speedily than others the competences that today are concentrated in the central power. We believe that Tarija and Santa Cruz particularly, have conditions of power to enter rapidly in this process (2006: 1).

Reflection of this spring of thought leads to more concrete positions and proposals to advance the autonomous process. Evidently the axes of this discourse concentrate on economic development, efficiency and a distinct relationship with the State or central government, that implies a clear separation of competences and inclusively, a “new social contract”. Some reflections incorporate the worry for the problem of the “nation”, which is converted into an argument for supporting the afore-mentioned position, that is to say, not acquiring its own weight as in the case of the ethnic-cultural reflection.

## **A manner of conclusions**

One should not forget that analyzing intellectual reflections have influenced in an important way the linking of proposals for the political and social movements for the Constituent, which can clearly be verified from discourses and ideological and cultural links.

In this critical set-up of social availability, the discourses over the autonomies have allowed a sighting of a series of social and political contradictions. As Joan Prats indicates about the word autonomies, “lines of power, development projects, cultural aspirations and identities, State models and diverse other contradictory matters cross here” (2006: 49) that cannot be ignored.

The different perspectives show not only diverse interests but also different allegiances and strategies to achieve their objectives. In relation to the two main tendencies, the ethnic-cultural movements conceive of autonomies as the social, political and cultural safeguard mechanism against a “submissive” State and from here as forming new socio-political and cultural configurations. The civic-regional proposals in contrast fix their proposals on the management and administration of resources, in the face of regional development, without giving overmuch attention to cultural or identity issues that make up these territories.

In all cases, assuming that each matrix of thought has its own discursive stock that has an echo in the intellectual debate, it is possible to think that each production responds to a determined order of discourse. In addition, in the strictly intellectual/academic ambit, the discussion over autonomies counts on various “resonating boxes” for one side, legitimizing the political and ideological visions and, for the other, de-legitimizing the “other” autonomical discourses. In this way, a scene opens up of intellectual confrontation for the (re)appropriation of the hegemonic regime of order in chaos and facing the reconfiguration of the State that is occurring. These reflections give the autonomy debate not only socio-historic density but also an intellectual legitimacy. As a result, one sees once more the intellectual task is not far from the political/symbolic struggle in appropriating the “discursive field” and delivering sense.

These visions, at least, reflect the social and political structural contradictions with different positions respecting the State and the resolution of the crisis. Thus, if the autonomies link in fact a cluster of structural themes of the country that have to do with restructuring territory, the political-institutional organization and the management of resources, one cannot tackle it on the margin of the permanent debate on the State and nation, which is its historical background and at the same time, the framework of the proposal for autonomy.

It is evidently difficult to find points of encounter between the two main perspectives; nevertheless because it responds to the two matrices of different thoughts and not to two radical positions respecting whether or not to be autonomist, one may consider the possibility of building an institutional design linked and sharing a new State. In this direction, as one can see in the first part of this article, there exist other reflections and intellectual and political positions on the theme as those proposals which stem from the municipal perspective, which in a determined moment could serve as articulators in the debate, as long as they count on the political will to build a State which represents the diversity and heterogeneity of a State which represents the diversity and heterogeneity of the country within the framework of a politically common proposal or community. One hopes that the Constituent Assembly as a scene of democratic deliberation will find ways to express will prove a backdrop for democratic deliberation that provides a space for coming together

and negotiations which reflect, in the best way possible, the complexity and diversity of Bolivian society.

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