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The Mixed Legacies of Bolivia's 1994 Law of Popular Participation and Implications for the Promotion of Indigenous Agency

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Contents

Introduction	5
The Fragmentation of Traditional Guarani Capitanías in Suburban Santa Cruz	8
Ayllus as TBOs and the Vicissitudes of Participatory Decision-Making in Rural Oruro.....	9
The Aymara Junta Vecinal of Rosas Pampa and Local Development in El Alto	11
Decentralized Conflict in the Provincial District of Choro (Sacaba, Cochabamba).....	12
The LPP and the 1990s Cultural and Political Evolution of the cocaleros in the Chapare.....	14
The 2000 Cochabamba Water War, Popular Participation, and "Usos y Costumbres.....	16
Legacies of a Controversial Law.....	17
Summary of Cases	22
References	23
Notes.....	25

List of Acronyms

ASP-IU: *Asamblea de la Soberanía de los Pueblos-Izquierda Unida (Assembly of the Peoples' Sovereignty-The United Left)*

LPP: *Ley de Participación Popular (Popular Participation Law)*

MNR: *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement Party)*

NGO: *Nongovernmental Organization*

TBO: *Territorial Base Organization*

Introduction

Bolivia's transformational if controversial Law of Popular Participation (hereafter, LPP) was, at the time it was put into force by the administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada and the MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario) party in 1994, the most ambitious reform yet undertaken to decentralize government and address long-standing inequities of resource distribution. The four key features of the law were as follows: 1) The share of national tax revenues going to local municipalities was increased from ten to twenty percent of the total, and apportioned on a strictly per capita basis, in an effort to circumvent a history of political favoritism; 2) the administration of local infrastructure was transferred from national to municipal control, including the authority to undertake new infrastructure projects; 3) new vigilance committees were established, composed of representatives of grassroots and community groups within each municipality, to oversee the administration of resources by mayors' offices and with the power to suspend disbursements of funds in the event of their misuse; 4) the jurisdictions of municipalities were extended to include previously neglected suburban and rural areas, and the total number of municipalities increased nationwide from 186 to 315.

The LPP was offered as a corrective so that historically neglected urban peripheries and rural areas would receive a fairer share of public funds, previously disproportionately funneled to the country's urban centers. As such, the law's most publicized step was the unprecedented increase in municipal budgets. The law's other major innovation was to devolve decision-making about how to spend these resources to the local level, while providing local community representatives a voice in the decision-making process. Consistent with the so-called sandwich strategy, as a top-down mechanism of reform the LPP was intended to expand the role of traditional grassroots organizations and indigenous communities in local governance by giving them greater oversight over local elected officials, budgets, and resource distribution. Criticisms of the law were many and its effects various throughout Bolivia. But, as Kohl (2003, 156) notes, few critics would dispute its popular mandate, which was twofold: "the combination of mandatory participatory planning by neighborhood and indigenous organizations complemented with fiscal oversight by representatives from these same organizations."

Local municipalities would have to prepare annual operating and five-year development plans under the new law, and the law's architects correctly assumed that this would mean jurisdictions would often lean heavily on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for the necessary technical expertise and support. The presence of NGOs in Bolivia had increased significantly throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, and the LPP gave them a critical role to play. They now worked closely with municipal leaders as part of the local political landscape, acquiring more influence and authority to enact their own agendas. As will also be explored further, this could sometimes become problematic in cases where grassroots organizations were not sufficiently capable and had to rely almost entirely and at times in subordinate fashion on the transactional skills of NGO staffers. Many such NGOs were loosely affiliated with political parties, and these new local political arrangements also raised the question of whether the LPP was simply creating the circumstances for new forms of subordination, with indigenous and popular community and neighborhood leaders now as disempowered clients.

The law also sought to reconfigure political relations and forms of governance at the local or municipal level. It “recognized” an array of local grassroots or base organizations, including pre-Hispanic indigenous polities or communities, “*campesino*” (small-scale agriculturalists) agrarian unions, and urban neighborhood committees, giving them legal standing (*personería jurídica*). Despite their different histories and often distinct functions in the local political landscape, under the law these groups were now granted identical status as new “territorial base organizations” (TBOs). What organizations or communities warranted the TBO designation became a source of significant debate and, as we shall see, the consequences of this designation were wide ranging, sometimes beneficial and at other times problematically limiting for popular organizations and indigenous communities.

Whether the LPP was in fact sufficient to recalibrate alignments of power and politics in local municipalities across highly ethnically diverse Bolivia remained an open question during the first several years of the law’s existence. The law’s application led to different outcomes in distinct regional political arenas, in some cases empowering previously marginal and disenfranchised indigenous or popular constituencies, in other cases adding to the complications that such groups already navigated, and in yet other instances becoming an instrument for the consolidation of political control by local elites and newly arrived political parties at the expense of such groups.

Where the question of political control most often came to a head was around the role of the so-called oversight committee (*comité de vigilancia*), stipulated by the LPP as the primary locus of participatory planning. Oversight committees were composed of representatives of local TBOs and charged with approval of the municipal development plan and budget. But, as we will see, the ambitions of TBOs were often frustrated by the machinations (or dysfunction) of oversight committees. Instead of operating as relatively democratic and transparent sites for participatory planning, these committees were frequently coopted by political parties or became arenas for the transactional give-and-take of patronage-clientage relations. In districts with conflicting interests, these forums were not always successful in taking account of specific processes of collective decision-making characteristic of many indigenous and popular base organizations.

For these several reasons, analysts were skeptical of the LPP, viewing it as an instrument for drawing indigenous peoples into the nation-state as hierarchically subordinate “intercultural citizens” (Postero 2000). The extent of recognition offered – and whether it carried real legal, political and economic authority – was a source of particular doubt, with critics tending to view the law, with some justification, as a largely hollow top-down bait and switch to help smooth over simultaneous hard hitting and unpopular “neoliberal” reforms (Medeiros 2001). The law was in this way understood to be one part of a new phase of nation-building from above, but which neglected to come to terms with long-simmering issues of social injustice, inequity, and exclusion. In the words of one well-known proponent of this position in the Latin American context of the 1990s, such state-driven multicultural reform efforts were in fact government attempts to “divide and domesticate Indian movements” (Hale 2004, 17).

The LPP raised critical issues, intensely debated in Bolivia, and not just about what form a reset of the historically contentious relationship between the state and diverse indigenous communities and popular base organizations might take. Debate also encompassed the types and extent of agency or autonomy the law’s provisions actually afforded these groups. But what we might call ‘simplifying’ the neoliberal critique of the LPP represents only part of the story and ignores the various ways that local leaders and grassroots movements, in some cases, were effectively able to harness the law and use it as intended or for purposes not anticipated by its framers to enact agendas of genuine popular and indigenous political enfranchisement. Sometimes this took the

form of successful participation in the new municipal electoral arena to consolidate local power and at other times it led to social movement activism.

As I explore in greater depth below, the law did significantly affect the balance of power between national and local government. While some of this was intentional, one unforeseen development was that it provided new legal tools for popular and indigenous movements to contend with the state by granting grassroots organizations legal standing as TBOs to advance their own claims, often on the basis of “customary law” (*usos y costumbres*), for which the law also provided some justification. In some cases, the LPP effectively expanded the authority provided these organizations in practice, from the relatively narrow terms imagined by the law’s framers as one participant among several overseeing the distribution of municipal resources, to providing them a potentially new legal regime for collective rights and ownership of local resources. Community advocates now possessed legal language which they could enlist to help underwrite claims to local resources such as irrigation wells while also incentivizing a new cultural discourse of local distinctiveness as a means to address long-standing post-colonial inequities.

Over time the law helped enable an unprecedented number of indigenous representatives to enter municipal government by winning local elections, paving the way for the national emergence and coming to power of an indigenous political movement for the first time in Bolivian history. The LPP was a precedent for the 2009 constitutional reform’s more robust articulation of collective indigenous rights. This was not everywhere the case. Where indigenous political structures were intact but operating in parallel to or in tension with local municipalities, or in notably plural districts with competing interests, the LPP was often simply one more instrument utilized by political parties and local elites either to subordinate, marginalize, or undermine the integrity of political and community institutions among already marginal indigenous groups.

The choice of these six cases reflects multiple considerations intended to illustrate the greatest diversity of circumstances and outcomes in evaluating the LPP’s various moving parts, short and longer-term impacts. 1) The cases described here represent significant geographic distribution, spanning four departments – the Bolivian equivalent of states – including highland and lowland examples and six distinct provincial settings throughout the country. 2) The range of cases also reflects different rural, semi-urban and urban circumstances of application of the law. 3) This distribution, furthermore, illustrates the law’s major features and their impacts. These include: the devolution of budgets, the extent of “recognition” of local groups and what this entailed, the enhanced role of civil society under the law, the relative power of new TBOs to carry out their agendas, the operations of oversight committees in determining local political and economic outcomes, and uses of “customary law” enabled by the LPP. 4) Finally, these cases effectively illustrate the law’s mixed legacy. They provide a comparison of outcomes for multiple potential beneficiaries of the LPP, as distinct grassroots organizations or indigenous communities with divergent historical relationships to the state which were affected in different ways by the law.

These cases effectively highlight several broader implications of the law as well, including its relationship to the state’s simultaneous neoliberal project in the early 1990s, the law’s variable impact on the balance of local political power in different corners of the country, how the law affected ethnic and indigenous identity claims, and unanticipated uses of the law by grassroots social movements to contend with the state and extract concession from it. These cases are also among the most thorough treatments of the LPP in the academic literature, the results of long-term ethnographic research conducted while the law was being implemented. Research included participation by ethnographers in provincial-level participatory planning seminars organized by the national government prior to the law’s enactment. The Quillacollo case, for example, draws

on my own ethnographic fieldwork during the period 1993-1995, including my participation in multiple LPP seminars. As such, they afford an appreciation of key differences between how the law's framers conceived and imagined it and how it was understood and implemented by various constituencies throughout Bolivia.

The Fragmentation of Traditional Guarani Capitanías in Suburban Santa Cruz

One way to understand 1994's LPP, which specifically named indigenous peoples as among its main beneficiaries, is as part of a state-based "multicultural regime of citizenship" adopted by the Bolivian state in the mid-1990s (Postero 2007, 124). As such, the law can be understood as an extension of a strategy of governance on the part of the then dominant MNR. In this understanding, the main impact of the LPP was to establish "practices and institutions to define the boundary between those included and those excluded." In this it was consistent with earlier top-down regimes of political incorporation of Bolivia's indigenous peoples, such as their 1952 recognition as "citizens," contingent upon their being renamed "campesinos." Critics of such government-led efforts highlight how they undertake the political incorporation of the country's indigenous majority but in ways designed to erase the social category of "indigenous."

An examination of the implications of the LPP for indigenous Guarani communities (called *capitanías*) on the outskirts of the lowland city of Santa Cruz shows that the price for indigenous political recognition and incorporation by the Bolivian state – for which the LPP was an intended mechanism – includes the threat of erasure of indigenous self-identity and autonomy. The various processes of inclusion and exclusion which the law enacted proved problematic for Guarani self-determinism. There were four overarching reasons the LPP fell short of its promise of reform in the Guarani case: 1) Despite the law's seemingly progressive intentions, colonial legacies of racism continued to operate and so undermine it; 2) To make effective use of the law required fluency with "technologies of knowledge management" (Postero 2007, 144), which indigenous groups often struggled to negotiate; 3) The law was limited in both scope and funding; and 4) importantly, it intentionally or unintentionally accelerated the fragmentation of indigenous Guarani forms of corporate decision-making.

Despite inclusion in the LPP of historically important language of the cultural recognition of indigenous peoples, the Guaranis largely viewed the law in practical terms, as a new mechanism to access state resources. Operating under the framework of the LPP, however, when Guarani community leaders brought their priorities to the oversight committee for consideration, these priorities were frequently disregarded, particularly when community leaders were relatively inexperienced and where local political parties were not predisposed to help. A large part of the problem was the influence of "underlying hierarchies of power" (Postero 2007, 147), which continued to enforce long-functioning and "naturalized forms of domination based on perceived inequalities" and "cultural biases" that privileged the dominance of local elites in political party structures. Success in requests for public works from local government representatives required

the social capital that flows from the kinds of patron-client ties that Guarani community representatives, new to such negotiations, tended to lack.

The LPP, therefore, often promoted competition among communities in rural zones over the distribution of funds for public works, which added to dynamics of fragmentation in often impoverished indigenous areas. Traditional organizational or community structures often did not square with the representational requirements for a territorial base organization as specified in the new law, which had the additional effect of undermining the Guarani's own forms of political organization. Guarani *capitanías* also often shared peripheral neighborhoods with other non-Guarani immigrants to Santa Cruz, and the LPP provoked conflicts, given the different interests of these groups. Implementation also changed local conditions of leadership, where traditional criteria for leadership and moral standing in the community mattered less than possession of the patronage ties and technocratic abilities to effectively navigate the municipal administration, including budgetary processes – all often unintelligible to inexperienced leaders. As Guarani communities were being overtaken by the urban creep of the nearby city of Santa Cruz, these new demands effectively upended more traditional forms of authority and decision-making in Guarani *capitanías*.

The LPP was understood as a key piece of the then Sanchez de Lozada administration's challenge to the traditional corporate system of politics, where the state negotiated directly with base organizations such as trade unions and indigenous communities. In the absence, however, of the political will to carry through on the agenda to support a vibrant local civil society, in some corners of Bolivia the law's implementation actually reinforced "underlying racist exclusions that had kept indigenous people from participating in the state" (Postero 2007, 138). While the law did offer indigenous groups new ways to take part in municipal elections, in the Guarani case it did not democratize local decision-making so much as increase the local power of political parties and, typically, the elites controlling them, while also fragmenting Guarani communities and weakening their traditional corporate institutions.

Ayllus as TBOs and the Vicissitudes of Participatory Decision-Making in Rural Oruro

If the LPP helped to accelerate the fragmentation of lowland Guarani *capitanías*, the story was somewhat different for rural highland *ayllus*. The term – ayllu – broadly refers to a type of far-flung and federated ethnic polity characteristic of the Andes, with pre-colonial roots. Still mostly intact in parts of Bolivia's Aymara and Quechua-speaking highlands, ayllu typically combine largely decentralized territorial units with highly ritualized social organizational and political forms of structural opposition (sometimes labeled *moieties*), rotating leadership, and collective decision-making. In their study of the LPP's effects on ayllu in the rural province of Carangas, in the department of Oruro, Booth, Clisby and Widmark (1997) and their research team describe the law's multiple and often countervailing effects upon the ayllu, which overlapped the small town of Corque, at once the first section of Carangas province and the ayllu's recognized *tayka marka*, that is, its "paramount ritual and economic centre" (1997, 75).

Of particular concern was the extent to which the LPP, as another in a succession of administrative reforms over decades, either supported the ayllu's political and social organizational structures or undermined them. The results are mixed. At least since the 1953 Agrarian Reform, this part of rural Oruro has seen a "progressive disarticulation and de-structuring of traditional institutions and territorial units" (Booth et al. 1997, 76), a disarticulation which has over time undermined the integrity and unity of the ayllu. The main historical drivers of this process include the emergence of agrarian unions as competing parallel decision-making structures, gradual socio-economic class stratification,

and what the researchers refer to as “cantonization,” which refers to the Bolivian state’s efforts to standardize local political jurisdictions throughout the country. In Corque, the LPP interacted with all of these historical trends in sometimes unanticipated and contradictory ways.

Prior to the LPP, the ayllu associated with Corque was already much transformed. Rather than a set of inclusive sociopolitical units stretching across provinces and ecological zones, as is found in other parts of Bolivia, Corque’s ayllu was a compact collection of nearby villages and smaller settlements. Multiple commentators on the effects of the LPP have concluded, “In most cases, the municipalization process has had negative consequences for indigenous territories” (Orellana Halkyer 2000, 182), because the 315 municipalities designated by the law either divided up indigenous territories into different districts or made them a minority part of a single district, as we saw for the Guarani case. But in Corque, the LPP helped to freeze the process of cantonization by empowering the ayllu as a TBO with its own legal standing, thus providing “traditional communities a renewed sense of belonging to a *marka*” (Booth et al. 1997, 78) – the series of ritual obligations associated with the ayllu’s unity and performed in Corque itself. At the same time, as the LPP sought to merge the representative democracy of the municipal electoral system with the traditional participatory democracy of community organizations like ayllus, the selection of senior authorities in the province and town of Corque took more account of the traditional system of rotating leadership operating at the level of the ayllu because there was now a potential political advantage in doing so.

The LPP helped to extend a “liberal-democratic approach to the election of municipal authorities” (Booth et al. 1997, 78) to rural corners of the country previously without such authorities, in the process administratively transforming electoral posts into paid positions. While ayllus could collectively put forward their own planks for municipal electoral office, an approach that would allow the coca grower unions of the Chapare to use the LPP to help them consolidate political power (see below), more often than not in Corque the LPP effectively disrupted the ayllu’s system of rotating cargos by incentivizing a competing form of electoral leadership lacking in communal moral authority. A traditional leader – typically called a *jilacata* – is understood to be someone who has worked their way up through the hierarchy of successive cargos, views the fulfillment of cargo obligations as a “duty,” undertakes the ritual responsibility of socially reproducing the ayllu, and presides over community-wide assemblies where ayllu decisions are made. Ayllu representatives also elected to local office, however, were subsequently perceived as prioritizing political party or personal interests over those of the ayllu.

Members of Corque’s ayllu understood the law as encouraging individuals to seek public office for political or material gain. Newly elected officials, if also ayllu members, were typically younger and had not, over years of service, worked their way up from minor to major community cargos and responsibility. They were, therefore, not necessarily trusted nor viewed as legitimate ayllu representatives by ayllu members. On the one hand, with application of the LPP, Corque’s subprefect – the state’s local representative – instituted a process of active consultation with ayllu leaders, given the ayllu’s new legal standing. On the other hand, the LPP was viewed by ayllu members as having helped to engineer a take-over of key decision-making roles by the newly empowered local political party apparatus, thus sidelining the ayllu’s community-wide assembly. The law was perceived as an imposition from without and the TBO itself was not seen by ayllu members as “coterminous with their ayllu or community” (Booth et al. 1997, 81).

The complications the LPP ushered in for the ayllu’s traditional leadership hierarchy help to explain a notable institutional failure of the law in Corque: the oversight committee – the body designated by the LPP to provide representatives of TBOs the opportunity to weigh in on municipal priorities

and to approve municipal budgets – did not function well, if at all. Since the local subprefect was already meeting regularly, if informally, with the *jilacatas*, the oversight committee was viewed as duplicative. For the case of Corque, the committee was inoperative and did not serve as a site for participatory decision-making because its function was ill-defined, not enough emphasis was placed on the need for it to articulate community demands, traditional mechanisms of decision-making were not given consideration, and, in sum, it was competitive with, and did not build on, the “traditional customs and practices” of the *ayllu* (Booth et al. 1997, 80-81). If for the Corque case the LPP effectively enhanced the importance of *ayllu* participation in the local political arena, it simultaneously created dissensus among *ayllu* members about the terms of community leadership and decision-making..

The Aymara Junta Vecinal of Rosas Pampa and Local Development in El Alto

As earlier noted, the LPP formally recognized a diversity of existing rural and urban grassroots organizations, including agrarian unions, indigenous communities, and urban neighborhood committees, now all designated “territorial base organizations” (TBOs) with recognized legal standing (*personería jurídica*). In the peripheral zone of Rosas Pampa, in the primarily Aymara city of El Alto, it was typically neighborhood committees (or *juntas vecinales*) which became TBOs. And these *juntas* frequently exhibited a proactive and collective political unity. The Rosas Pampa junta vecinal was founded decades earlier as an agrarian union that corresponded to land partitioned from a former hacienda during the 1953 Agrarian Reform – a not uncommon state-of-affairs in El Alto and throughout Bolivia. As such, El Alto’s neighborhood committees inherited a political admixture brought by rural in-migrants that combined traditional Aymara community with collective union politics. And the common front the junta maintained in its engagement with the city’s authorities reaped benefits for its zone – often slowly and over decades – in the form of infrastructure investments.

From the point of view of Rosas Pampa’s residents, historically the function of the junta vecinal was to obtain development resources for their zone. Residents held local leaders accountable for their successes or failures delivering such development. Leaders of the junta vecinal were acutely aware of these expectations and understood that the failure to produce concrete “works,” local infrastructure, or other benefits for the community, meant they would quickly lose the support of residents. If a junta failed to provide works, then it “failed in the eyes of the *vecinos* (community members)” (Lazar 2008, 88). In contrast to Guarani *capitanías* or Corque’s *ayllu*, the LPP did enhance the ability of Rosas Pampa’s junta to generate community benefits by providing it with a framework to request development in their zone and with new financial resources to pay for it. The law consolidated the oversight committee’s role as the main broker, interface, or “hinge” (Lazar 2008, 61) between the Bolivian state and local residents, and as the means through which the government channeled development money to the zone. And the Rosas Pampa junta vecinal was able to operate effectively through this committee to identify and advance their goals.

But it is important to distinguish between a largely pre-LPP phase of development concerned with “works” and a post-LPP phase characterized by “service provision.” At the neighborhood level, *juntas*

became “nodal points for the coordination of the service providers to the zone of Rosas Pampa” (Lazar 2008, 61), with international NGOs now encouraged to coordinate directly with the juntas to provide electricity, water, sewage systems, health services, and more. While the junta could successfully organize collectively to construct local infrastructure – the history of the origin and growth of the zone as a community included regular reference to such collectively engineered projects – now in a phase where regular service provision in the zone was privatized, the junta’s leaders had few ways of compelling typically unaccountable international NGOs operating in the zone to improve their often poor or indifferent service.

The law impacted Rosas Pampa on several fronts. In ways comparable to the Corque case, LPP legislation became the subject of regular corruption rumors in the zone, with local leaders routinely accused of financial mismanagement and worse, with corruption used to explain the zone’s persistent underdevelopment. Despite the law’s potential, at least in El Alto effective implementation was “severely retarded” as a result of widespread “inefficiency, corruption, and politicization of local government” (Lazar 2008, 73). And, as officials in El Alto’s municipal government were hired, fired, and moved around, the constant turnover of leadership at the municipal level undermined efforts of representatives from Rosas Pampa’s junta to lobby for works for the zone. This, along with other informal expectations such as bribery, combined to make the entire process “very opaque” (Lazar 2008, 74) to both community leaders and members.

As these effects of the LPP in Rosas Pampa make clear, the administration of development in El Alto can place community leaders “in the position of supplicants, consumers of development services in a highly unequal power relationship where they need to appeal to a mixture of state and private bodies for assistance” (Lazar 2008, 72). Such hierarchical alignments, where junta leaders must extract concessions from city, state, and NGO officials, tend to create subservient clientelistic relationships. As such, the struggle for development in Rosas Pampa illustrates a complex process whereby the municipal government and international NGOs play important roles in “constructing the community as a bureaucratic entity” (Lazar 2008, 75), and community leaders find themselves in a subordinate position. These alignments of clientelism, and the extent to which community agency might be limited by these extra-communal actors, also make such communities vulnerable to cooptation by political parties. Local leaders felt obligated to make themselves clients of political parties in hopes of receiving the party’s patronage, and to insert the priorities of political parties into the calculus of the zone’s priorities – a state-of-affairs that created tension with community expectations to generate collective benefits.

Decentralized Conflict in the Provincial District of Choro (Sacaba, Cochabamba)

Despite evidence that in many cases the LPP exacerbated the problem of clientelism for previously disempowered political actors, a detailed study of the community of Choro in the semi-urban provincial seat of Sacaba emphasizes that at least in theory the LPP was motivated by a goal of “anticlientelism.” The law sought to promote the notion “that rural Bolivian civil society could avoid the political conflicts and self-interest of earlier patronage politics” (Shakow 2014, 11). The law’s

framers understood long-standing clientelistic politics to be an “obstacle to democracy” (Shakow 2014, 122), and they undertook to combat the problem through political decentralization. But, as we have seen, the law frequently encouraged new forms of patronage and clientage, even if some TBOs were more successful in extracting resources than others. For the case of Sacaba, such an understanding of the law as a tool to combat clientelism fed into a local “romantic vision” of community in tension with the expectations and political practices of the town’s heterogeneous social classes.

The Sacaba case highlights the mismatch between frequently idealized definitions of rural community offered by the technocrats charged with explaining and promoting the LPP to local jurisdictions on the one hand, and the contending often contradictory accounts of community among the town’s emerging middle class on the other. The law’s promoters tended to depict rural communities as “rigidly bounded geographically, and governed by indigenous communal institutions of solidarity”, unaltered over centuries. Adhering to such a conception, Sacaba’s municipal officials and development workers regularly derided what they described as a “lack of strong collective action” (Shakow 2014, 16) in the municipality. Such essentialized conceptions of community, however, ignore the province’s “middling identities” (Shakow 2014, 117). These include a majority of the local population, with their goals of self-advancement and middle-class aspirations – pervasive among Choro’s inhabitants – goals routinely articulated and negotiated through patron-client relationships.

LPP reformers had hoped the law would help to lessen tension, mutual suspicion, and political and economic inequality between rural and urban districts within regions. But at least in Sacaba, the law instead sparked new tensions because it “gave residents of formally rural areas the right for the first time to vote in municipal elections” (Shakow 2014, 113), which led to competition within districts. Whereas prior to the LPP, development monies were managed by a state-run regional development corporation, now budgetary control had passed directly into the hands of local municipalities, to be distributed on a per capita basis. But the specific mechanism for doing so was left for municipalities themselves to work out.

This incentivized intra-jurisdictional competition. Sacaba is divided into ten districts, with five of them rural and five, urban. Representatives of the rural districts argued that LPP resources should be distributed according to need, and that rural zones had more needs, given a long history of neglect of infrastructure in these areas. Urban leaders argued, instead, that these resources should be distributed proportionally according to population. And since there were significantly more urban voters, these districts typically won any debate. By encouraging local competition over control of the resources provided by the LPP, in practice the law “sparked the proliferation of clientelism and political conflicts” (Shakow 2014, 125) among community representatives and local leaders in Sacaba, with accompanying accusations of self-interest and corruption. The combination of local contests over control of resources, resultant political conflict, and charges of corruption directed at local officials, has characterized the law’s reception in multiple cases reviewed here.

Ongoing conflict over the disbursement of LPP funds served to aggravate a perceived opposition between, and efforts to define membership in, “categories of elite urban and subaltern rural folk” (Shakow 2014, 114), and aggravated discussion in Choro about the meaning and authenticity of peoples’ class and racial background. Who could credibly claim to be “subaltern” was a frequent subject of debate, with identical actions taken in the political arena potentially interpreted as either “community-mindedness” or “selfish clientelism” (Shakow 2014, 140), depending on whether someone was a rival or an ally. Accusations of clientelism engendered by the LPP fed local conflicts and were typically sharply posed in racial and class terms, in turn, rooted in the unresolved

contradictions between “aspirations for grassroots democracy and middle-class upward mobility” (Shakow 2014, 152), “individual or collective interests” (Shakow 2014, 154). The constant presence of conflict undermined the goal of the LPP’s architects for “organized civil society” (Shakow 2014, 183) in places like Sacaba, a vision modeled on geographically discrete and unified communities capable of effectively catalyzing local development, but which did not jibe with the social and political realities on the ground.

The ways in which the LPP became a part of local conflicts in Choro highlight how the law, as an expression of “neoliberal multiculturalism” (Hale 2005), was not only instrumental in determining new relationships among local base organizations and government but reshaped the terms of local political relations and distribution of development resources. It also helped to foreground ethnicity as a dimension of these transactions. As was the case in Corque – if under very different circumstances – the class and ethnic conflict in Sacaba and the law’s incentivizing of ethnic claim-making as a dimension of local struggles for control of political capital and the scarce resources made available through the law, make clear that at least in some circumstances the LPP had the potential to politicize, promote, and even transform, ethnicity and indigenous heritage as important transactional currency.

The LPP and the 1990s Cultural and Political Evolution of the *cocaleros* in the Chapare

The LPP created 315 new municipalities for which local elections were held for the first time. Critics maintained that the law would inevitably undercut and weaken the power of local base organizations like agrarian unions. In many cases, however, it instead offered a chance for indigenous authorities to run for office. In the municipal elections in 1995, the first to be held after the law’s passage, over five hundred indigenous and campesino candidates were elected as local councilmen or, in some cases, as mayors. In the next round in 2000, this number rose to over a thousand, an astounding sixty-five percent of the total number of seats and an enormous increase in indigenous political participation at the local level (Albó and Quispe 2004, 35). Previously marginal indigenous and grassroots leaders, historically denied access to the formal political arena and forced to operate in parallel community and union structures, were now elected officials with access to budgets and in a position to control the direction of municipal politics and development.

This was particularly true for the highly organized *cocalero* (coca grower) movement based in the Chapare region, which would eventually become the core of the coalition responsible for propelling Evo Morales’s fortunes as a national political figure to be reckoned with in the early 2000s. With the Chapare becoming a major front of the US War on Drugs in the mid-1980s, the *cocaleros* had become militant, with their agrarian unions the organizational basis of sustained resistance. In the 1990s Morales was executive director of the federated *cocalero* unions of the Chapare, and he recognized in the LPP an opportunity for the *cocaleros* to construct a political instrument, if at this stage still at the local level. 1995 saw the emergence of a new political party based in the Chapare, the *Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos* (or ASP-IU), which would soon

evolve into the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party would carry Morales to the presidency a decade later.

As a political party, the ASP-IU was regionally specific, described as a “Quechua peasant party” fielding candidates “almost exclusively in Cochabamba” (Albó 2002, 84). While it was a non-factor in the rest of the country, in Cochabamba this party garnered a significant proportion of the vote, and in the Chapare it did better still, serving as a vehicle for cocalero union leaders to move into elected office. In provinces like the Chapare, where unions were organized, unified, and represented the majority of the population, they were effectively able to stand candidates for local office and overcome political opposition. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the LPP, therefore, proved to be an important factor in the consolidation of the power of the cocalero movement in the Chapare, since it provided an avenue for an already highly-organized and locally dominant political movement to successfully compete in provincial elections, and in so doing, consolidate control over the machinery of local municipal government.

But to understand the full impact of the LPP in the Chapare, we need to back up several decades. The majority of Chapare residents were in-migrants from other parts of Bolivia. Beginning in the 1950s the state offered incentives for people to colonize what were largely uninhabited lowlands, a process that accelerated with the arrival of laid off ex-miners in the 1980s. In the absence of the Bolivian state, agrarian unions quickly became the primary collective form of local governance, responsible for distributing land grants, establishing boundaries, undertaking public works, and managing local markets. In the context of their struggle against the Bolivian state and US allies, increasingly militant coca grower unions presented themselves almost exclusively in class terms, as poor subsistence farmers or smallholding agriculturalists.

The LPP, however, offered a path to political recognition in the terms of cultural rights. And by the mid-1990s, representatives of cocalero unions were not just winning local elections in the Chapare but also – breaking from their class-focused self-presentation as agricultural laborers – self-consciously framing their opposition to the state in terms of radical Andean cultural alterity by emphasizing their indigenous heritage (Albro 2005a, 438). While the LPP both foregrounded and exacerbated ethnic strife for the case of Sacaba, in the Chapare it encouraged ethnic over class accounts of social movement activism. The law, in other words, helped the cocaleros to consolidate political control over their territory of operation, while it helped to legitimize new kinds of ethnic demands upon the state from below and to catalyze indigenous voices pushing for more radical forms of autonomy and state reform.

The LPP proved a useful tool for the cocaleros to consolidate their political control over their municipalities in the Chapare, and as such, increased the cocaleros’ ability to present a united front in opposition to the ongoing War on Drugs, as the cocaleros evolved from a regionally localized set of federated unions to the core of a national indigenous-popular movement that became the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party. However, the LPP did not benefit everyone equally in the Chapare. Under the LPP the Yuracaré people saw their primary socio-political and organizational unit – which they call a *corregimiento* – fragmented across two municipalities (Halkyer 2000, 186). This effectively made the Yuracaré a minority in both municipalities, which in turn made it very difficult for their representatives to effectively assert priorities in either oversight committee, dominated as they were by cocalero union interests. This is a case of one set of indigenous priorities marginalizing another competing set of indigenous priorities.

The 2000 Cochabamba Water War, Popular Participation, and "Usos y Costumbres"

The legal term “usos y costumbres” (loosely translated: customary law) has been around since at least the Spanish colonial era, but it became newly relevant in Bolivia as enshrined in the LPP, which granted legal recognition of traditional indigenous and popular forms of political organization according to a group’s “uses, customs, and statutory dispositions,” as a basis for their identification as a TBO. In the early-to-mid-1990s, grassroots mobilizations in provincial Cochabamba seized on the legal language of customary law in the LPP to advance, in this case, their ancestral claims to water against the interests of the state. These claims derived most immediately from colonial hacienda-era systems of water rights and management, redistributed, and adapted to new forms of land use and tenancy as a result of the 1953 Agrarian Reform, and now under the control of free-holding communities of campesinos. The LPP provided the legal basis for communities to claim local water wells as their ancestral and collective cultural rights, and to mount their opposition to the state’s effort to sell the wells as part of the nearby city’s water works.

By the early 1990s irrigators in the valleys surrounding the city were arranged into small-scale organizations, often at the community or canal level and under the authority of agrarian unions. With the support of German and Dutch NGOs, these irrigator groups seized on the opening provided by the LPP and began to organize among themselves – a process they understood as consistent with the promotion of a more coordinated civil society approach to locally based resource management (Perreault 2008, 842). By 1999, this federated group of irrigators had already clashed with the city’s municipal water service, which had planned to drill new wells in areas where campesino irrigators already had wells. Confrontations in 1994 and 1995 in defense of the livelihoods of irrigators, labeled the “war of the wells”, then led to the more formal creation of a provincial federation of irrigators, with the primary objective of promoting a new water law to safeguard their “usos y costumbres.”

The period of 2000 to 2005 in Bolivia was particularly turbulent, characterized by almost constant large-scale protest mobilizations, leading to the historical watershed of the election of Evo Morales, and the broad-based enfranchisement of Bolivia’s majority indigenous population. This period of sustained social ferment was kicked off by the first so-called Water War, which dramatically unfolded in the central city of Cochabamba and surrounding provinces during late 1999 and into the spring of 2000. At issue was the Bolivian government’s prerogative to sell the city’s water works to an international consortium – the firm Aguas de Tunari, a subsidiary of US-based Bechtel – in a non-transparent process, and where the concession included wells paid for, built, and maintained by peripheral urban zones and rural campesino irrigators. These wells had previously not been subject to state regulation, and with the sale irrigators feared they would lose control over their wells, while ordinary cochabambinos began to receive inflationary water bills from the now privatized concession provider.

Cochabamba’s Water War rapidly became a multi-class coalitional movement, led by a labor union leader and backed by a well-organized federation of irrigators from the urban hinterland of Cochabamba, that successfully forced Bolivia’s government to cancel the contract with Aguas de Tunari and to abandon efforts to privatize the city’s water works. Critical to the success of this

protest struggle was the coalition's framing of its grievances in terms of the defense of irrigators' and, eventually, of ordinary cochabambinos' "usos y costumbres." Tom Perreault (2008, 835) usefully defines "usos y costumbres" in this context as the mutually agreed upon norms of water rights and management practices governing communal irrigation systems. And, during the Water War the rallying cry of "usos y costumbres" became critical articulatory language for broader rights-based claims advanced by protesters about the inalienability of water as a resource and local autonomy, in the process providing momentum for a then emerging indigenous-popular post-colonial critique and realignment of citizenship in Bolivia as at once cultural and collective.

A central claim of protesters in the Water War was that water is a sacred and inalienable public resource that is "not for sale," vital to life, and managed through reciprocal, and typically ritualized, obligations of local communities to cosmological sources of vitality. Reinforced by the LPP's recognition of collective indigenous identity, this enculturated concept of water composed the specific content of the "usos y costumbres" advanced and defended as a shared patrimony and collective right by protesting irrigators and their allies. In protest rallies, this conception was regularly polemically contrasted with the commodification of water as a valuable economic resource, to be managed by the state or to be privatized, regulated, and sold to individual consumers (see Albro 2005b).

The 2000 Water War, and years of sustained social movement activism that followed, anticipated the sea change of national policy priorities that accompanied the administration of Evo Morales (from 2006 to 2019), with its decolonizing focus on indigenous enfranchisement. The 1994 LPP was an important transitional bridge from the post-authoritarian period of "pacted democracy," dominated by political parties and their largely non-indigenous elite operators, to the reimagining of Bolivia as a "multiethnic and pluricultural" state. Local jurisdictions and popular protesters exploited the potential of the LPP in ways often unanticipated or unintended by the law's framers to advance rights-based cultural claims eliding conceptions of patrimony, property, and heritage. For Cochabamba's water warriors, this meant that penny capitalist agriculturalists who had at least since the early-mid-twentieth century largely defined themselves in class and not cultural terms were now framing their claims upon the state by proactively linking regular calls for legal recognition to an identity politics of collective cultural and indigenous heritage.

Legacies of a Controversial Law

Along with Faguet (2012), this analysis of Bolivia's Law of Popular Participation has prioritized a "bottom-up" approach to understanding the impacts of decentralization. One virtue of doing so is that it better captures subnational variations of the consequences of national reform efforts and avoids the trap of drawing one-size-fits-all conclusions about diverse local political and economic arenas. As Faguet also does, this analysis treats decentralization as a process that dynamically engages diverse preexisting local political relationships, which have to be accounted for in new participatory planning processes. As the six case studies reviewed here make clear, effects of the LPP varied considerably across different Bolivian municipalities. While the LPP represents an example of the sandwich strategy's virtual circle of top-down reform to increase bottom-up accountability, this should be qualified in at least two ways: 1. In some cases, the law effectively

reinforced local elite control while in other cases it helped to dismantle it, 2. The law was also used in a variety of ways not anticipated by its framers, in some cases to consolidate relations of clientage and in others to promote grassroots social movement and indigenous activism.

In contrast to Faguet, this analysis does not seek a unifying theory for understanding the conditions under which accountable and responsive local government develops. Instead it explores the reasons for the LPP's varied impacts. More fundamentally, the present analysis is less focused on evaluating the success or failure of decentralization as a question of whether it effectively strengthens the state by promoting its legitimacy through more responsive service provision. Instead, and consistent with the sandwich strategy, it understands decentralization as a top-down maneuver to address Bolivia's long-standing and still unresolved post-colonial legacies of inequity and lack of representation, with significant bottom-up consequences. How the LPP might be a mechanism for alleviating ethnic tensions, therefore, is less of a focus in this analysis than is charting new possibilities for local political participation and enfranchisement of Bolivia's historically marginalized popular and indigenous groups.

The LPP did not have a uniform impact upon indigenous and popular communities and base organizations throughout Bolivia. But we can offer several observations about what groups were better equipped to make effective use of the law. As we have seen the law was problematic for lowland Guarani groups, especially those located in what have become suburbs of the city of Santa Cruz. Guarani *capitanías* were ill-equipped to adapt for several reasons. First, they had a much shorter history of regular engagement with the state than did many highland Aymara and Quechua communities, with the 1990 March for Territory and Dignity really the first time that lowland indigenous groups presented a unified front to demand major rights and concessions. *Capitanías* were the traditional representative organization of ethnically homogeneous Guarani communities, but had largely been left to their own devices, and so both their organization and politics were not shaped in the same ways by an extended period of struggle and negotiation with state officials and priorities. *Capitanía* leaders, therefore, were not well positioned to activate existing relationships with local and state operators to exploit the law's potential.

The Guarani case highlights in particular the paradoxical conception and implementation of the law, which promoted the participation of civil society as part of the state, but through a process and regulatory framework promulgated from above without the participation of those for whom it was ostensibly intended to benefit. In this account the LPP is at best a progressive-seeming part of an ambitious political, economic, and social strategy of neoliberal governance, offered as a "socially palliative" (Postero 2007, 132) to ameliorate the draconian effects of a then-ongoing economic structural adjustment. The law was, in this sense, viewed as a public gesture intended to provide "cultural" recognition but little meaningful political or economic empowerment for Guarani or other indigenous groups.

The case of ayllu in rural Oruro, as represented by Corque, is comparable, if with some distinct characteristics. As with the Guarani example, the LPP proved disruptive to the rotating system of cargos traditionally identified with ayllu leadership. And, with respect to the ayllu's model of participatory and communal decision-making, it introduced new morally problematic incentives associated with political parties and leaders' personal ambitions. While the LPP reinvigorated the ayllu by granting it new legal standing and moving it more to the center of municipal politics, it also created conditions of uncertainty around how ayllu processes and priorities might figure as part of the new structure of municipal deliberations.

A consistent point of contention around the effects of the LPP has been whether it worked to empower or disempower indigenous communities, local and grassroots groups, in the process helping to dismantle a long-standing exclusionary and hierarchical political patronage system, itself a legacy of Bolivia's colonial history. This discussion has focused on whether the law worked to counteract the prevalence of relations of clientage for indigenous and campesino representatives, as ties of subordination to elite patrons who, in turn, controlled key channels of resource allocation. The results of the law are, in this sense, decidedly mixed.

Guarani representatives, as we have seen, were not able to mobilize necessary patron-client relations. While Aymara junta leaders were able to do so, this in turn created difficulties on several fronts: community agency was aligned with the effective exploitation of ties of clientage on the part of the zone's leaders, and these leaders were made more vulnerable to the distrust and charges of self-interest and corruption that often accompany such patron-client transactional politics. The case of the small provincial city of Sacaba corroborates these conclusions. While its political landscape was much more heterogeneous and TBOs were much less unified in purpose than for El Alto, the LPP promoted competition over scarce resources in ways that exacerbated already well-established clientelistic behaviors and accusations of self-interest.

This set of cases, in other words, offer a first conclusion about challenge to the success of the LPP. Far from making clientage obsolete, it instead often provided a new local venue through which clientage could operate. This proved advantageous for highly organized and relatively unified TBOs, which typically had prior experience dealing with state officials and local authorities, and were already adept at manipulating relations of clientage to extract resources. But the law could also be a disempowering barrier to entry for indigenous representatives lacking such social and political capital.

When assessing the extent to which local TBOs in different urban, semi-urban and rural corners of Bolivia were able constructively to participate in processes of municipal decision-making in ways to their benefit, the progressive legacies of the LPP come into sharpest focus around the functioning, or lack thereof, of oversight committees. Local authorities, for example, typically ignored Guarani requests for public works because Guarani representatives were usually in the minority on the oversight committee and lacked the necessary political experience and leverage. While it was the traditional Guarani political unit, the *capitanía* was also not easily shoehorned into the status of TBO. The increasingly suburban zones in which Guaranis lived were ethnically mixed, with Guaranis typically a minority, and *capitanías* did not represent the interests of all the zone's residents. Guarani leaders, less adept at negotiating with state representatives to extract resources, were often unable to cooperate effectively with non-Guarani residents over setting priorities for the zone. Guarani interests, therefore, often lost out to leaders more seasoned at this game in the neighborhoods where they lived. The LPP helped to marginalize Guarani *capitanías* and proved a disruptive setback for Guarani political autonomy.

For the case of Corque, the oversight committee – where *ayllu* representatives might have been able to assert collective *ayllu* interests – was viewed as illegitimate by *ayllu* members. While the *ayllu* gained in political importance as a result of the LPP, its decision-making structure was undermined by the new municipal political power dynamic. In and around Sacaba, oversight committees exacerbated individual-collective, class and racial tensions, while promoting urban-rural competition, with more rural, poorer, and ethnically indigenous interests usually losing out. Even in the case of El Alto, the oversight committee became a setting that helped to consolidate subservient and clientelistic political relations and to facilitate political party penetration into the zone. A second conclusion is that the transactional politics required to operate effectively on the

oversight committee at times contributed to the deterioration of traditional leadership and modes of collective decision-making among indigenous communities, with leaders becoming vulnerable to charges of clientelism as well as accusations of self-interest and corruption.

Nevertheless, the lowland Guarani and highland ayllu cases contrast with that of the largely Aymara neighborhood committees in El Alto. Residents of a given zone were all normally members of their junta vecinal and relied on it to negotiate delivery of resources to their neighborhoods. These committees were typically well-organized, building on traditions of rotating leadership and collective decision-making derived from Aymara communities of origin and decades of union advocacy. Not crosscut by competing interests, these juntas, therefore, were more unified and functioned effectively as TBOs. The additional resources resulting from the LPP provided neighborhood committees more agency as legally recognized local and representative bodies. Among the coccaleros of the Chapare, an even more militant unity among local unions gave them the leverage to capitalize on the LPP in order to dominate new local elections, consolidate their control, and eventually become more prominent on the national political stage. In both cases, the ability to present a unified front meant that representatives of the TBO – whether neighborhood committee or agrarian union – were able to effectively operate in the municipal context to build the needed political leverage to successfully lobby for their priorities.

Were oversight committees a valuable means of further democratizing decision-making about resources at the local level and for the enfranchisement of previously marginal indigenous and popular groups in Bolivia? Sometimes, indeed, they were. A third set of conclusions about the LPP concern the functionality of oversight committees as tools of political enfranchisement. For committees to operate as sites of participatory decision-making, TBOs on the committee needed to be able to: present a unified front, participate in or command a majority, reinforce and amplify the aspirational goals of the base organizations corresponding to the TBO, and enhance community decision-making and traditional forms of leadership.

The law raised the question of autonomy and empowerment in another way, through its embrace of so-called “self-help,” and a more proactively local role for NGOs. In a general sense, it is with this issue that the potential virtues and vulnerabilities introduced by privatization, as a pervasive neoliberal orthodoxy hovering in the background of the LPP’s implementation, are most evident. The case of El Alto’s urban neighborhood is particularly useful, as it shows how local residents are not able to hold NGO service providers, who are outside of the law’s checks and balances, accountable for their poor service. In this scenario NGOs benefit politically and economically, while intended local beneficiaries are powerless to make improvements. However, the case of Cochabamba’s federation of irrigators offers a partial counterexample. In that case, international NGOs were instrumental in helping irrigators build their federation, which quickly became an effective advocacy instrument for campesino farmers in provincial Cochabamba. The irrigator federation itself functioned much like an NGO, but with more organic ties to the population it served.

Decentralization, when described as self-help, is often understood as a ruse perpetrated by national governments seeking to downsize the public sector and defray costs by finding ways not to invest resources to address local needs. But even in this orthodox neoliberal mode, where local municipalities are left to manage their own development, the LPP, together with similar and contemporaneous laws intended to devolve greater autonomy to local municipal governments, has incentivized some unexpected outcomes. The 1990s, for example, saw the explosive growth of annual festivals through Cochabamba’s provinces – a response by local municipalities looking for ways to capitalize on their new budgetary autonomy and to raise revenue. This increasingly

took the form of cultural festivals, sponsored by regional and national businesses, and typically marketed as heritage events where local municipalities promoted characteristically local products as distinctive “patrimony,” as a collective cultural inheritance and property. Though not foreseen by its architects, the LPP helped to further consolidate the category of “patrimony” as a basis for local political and economic goals, and the 1990s “festival boom” helped to create a consumer market for local cultural products (Albro 2009).

But the example of municipal festival booms contrasts with a dynamic at work in the Rosas Pampa case, which highlights how the law is also consistent with a particular neoliberal strand of then current development orthodoxy. This approach sought to minimize the state’s role while privatizing public service functions, often transferring them to NGOs while at the same time using the language of self-help to suggest that local communities are more in charge of their own development. If a more optimistic scenario than in the Guarani case, the Rosas Pampa example demonstrates how the LPP became a means for the re-structuring of relations between TBOs, a newly *laissez faire* state, and more empowered NGOs in control of service provision to the zone.

A fourth conclusion concerns the need for further differentiation of the specific circumstances of local autonomy produced by decentralizing legislation such as the LPP. This is, again, in part a matter of the relative preparation of TBO representatives to effectively exploit the new law, and the scale at which we understand autonomy to operate: either at the TBO or municipal levels. As we have seen, the goal of self-help might result in greater dependency on international NGOs. In other circumstances, it could mean the transformation of base organizations into often confederated and powerful civil society actors. And in yet other cases, increased autonomy might be reflected in greater local electoral control over the apparatus of municipal development. Undeniably, the LPP facilitated the entrance of an unprecedented number of new indigenous candidates into electoral politics. But it also raised the local profile of other actors as well.

Finally, and fifth, we have seen significant and creative repurposing of the LPP. This has been most evident in the unanticipated ways the law has promoted ethnic and cultural identity. For the rural case of Colque, the law restored the relevance of the *ayllu* in key respects. In urban Sacaba local competition and conflict generated by the law led to heightened attention to ethnicity, if in largely negative ways. For both the Chapare’s *cocaleros* and Cochabamba’s water warriors, the LPP was a spur for well-organized social movements with defined objectives to advance claims upon the state in collective cultural terms.

The LPP’s recognition of “*usos y costumbres*” provided a legal and rights-based framework for social movement grievances. Moving well beyond the relatively toothless language of cultural recognition envisioned by the state when promulgating the law, activists appropriated the state’s own multicultural discourse to extend the law’s terms of recognition, energizing a period of grassroots organizing and protest. In so doing, they both interrogated and reformulated the grounds of citizenship, contrasting a pervasive distrust of government, political parties, and an elite-controlled democracy with what they identified as the more participatory possibilities of collective cultural rights. Beginning in the late 1990s, such social movements laid the foundation for the decade of national transformation that followed. Despite its retirement in 2010, the LPP provided the legislative framework used by the Morales government to continue incentivizing municipal autonomy (Méndez 2019), alongside indigenous enfranchisement, at the expense of departmental power and in ways that have significantly remade Bolivia.

Summary of Cases

Organization	Location	Outcome
Guarani Capitanías	Suburban Santa Cruz	Increased political marginalization and promoted the fragmentation of traditional institutions of leadership, representation, and decision-making
Ayllu	Rural Oruro	Increased ayllu's political relevance but helped to sideline traditional decision-making structures and raise fears of co-option and corruption
Aymara Junta Vecinal	The city of El Alto	Increased community access to resources and services, but also the local influence of external actors: NGOs and political parties
Choro community	Semi-urban Sacaba	Increased local competition for resources between urban and rural districts and promoted ethnic conflict and corruption concerns
Cocalero agricultural unions (sindicatos)	Rural Chapare	Provided a lexicon of cultural recognition and path for the electoral consolidation of political power for the cocalero movement
Local irrigators and urban worker's union	Rural and Urban Cochabamba	Provided a lexicon of cultural recognition and legal basis to resist water privatization

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Notes

1 Bolivia's Law 1551, otherwise known as the Law of Popular Participation, was put into force in April of 1994 by the administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. It remained in force for sixteen years until it was formally superseded in 2010 by new legislation during the Evo Morales administration. The law's complete text can be found here: <https://www.lexivox.org/norms/BO-L-1551.html>.

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