Young Indigenous People's Perspectives on Culture and Development:
Building Autonomy in Indigenous Communities in Bolivia

By

Tonianne Mynen

A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts in International Development Studies

November, 2012, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Approved: Dr. John Cameron
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Date: November 28, 2012

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Abstract

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Abstract: In their fight for self-determination, indigenous people often project themselves as a cohesive collective; yet not everyone has the same development aspirations. In Bolivia, indigenous communities are discussing what relevance 'traditional' and 'modern' ideologies ought to have in the community's autonomous governance institutions. This thesis examines the role of young people in shaping their community's governance institutions. Young people from the municipalities of Mojocoya and Tarabuco participated in interviews, youth meetings and a writing contest. I argue that young people are looking for institutions and a cultural identity that incorporates both indigenous and 'modern' values. For these young people the way to achieve *bienestar* (material well-being) is through the adoption of modern knowledge; yet equally important is that they achieve *vivir bien* (living well) and pass their culture on to future generations. This thesis advances the position that young people are valuable contributors as members of their communities today.

     Keywords: Bolivia; indigenous autonomy; young people; cultural identity; community governance institutions

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A most heartfelt and sincere thank you

To my parents, grandparents, sister, family and friends who believed in me, encouraged me and supported me.

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Un agradecimiento más sentido y sincero

A mi nueva familia boliviana que me dio la bienvenida, me cuidaron y me apoyaron.

A mis colegas bolivianos que me acogieron y promovido mi proyecto.

Thank you, Gracias

Research Considerations

I conducted my research in indigenous communities in Bolivia with young indigenous people with whom I do not share culture. Transcending or setting aside cultural biases would be impossible, as culture is fundamental to how one understands the world. Being from a different culture, my research is susceptible to distortion, to exaggeration and to drawing conclusions based on "assumptions, hidden value judgments, and often downright misunderstandings" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 176) However, I attempted to be as objective as possible by limiting value judgments and by learning as much as possible about the indigenous culture and history in Mojocoya, Tarabuco and Bolivia as a whole.

Without a doubt, my very presence and the questions I posed to the young people may have heightened awareness and potentially even altered ideologies about youth participation in the community. The interest in understanding the role of young people in the establishment of indigenous autonomy was, however, also shared by a local non-governmental organization, Fundación TIERRA, active in the municipalities and education authorities in both municipalities. In my thesis, I support ideas of youth participation with the scholarly work of academics and organizations working with youth and include research conducted in Bolivia on youth and young people. The ideas presented in my thesis about youth participation in Tarabuco and Mojocoya come from the young people themselves and leaders of the community. While I share the opinion that the young people in these two municipalities are able members of their communities who can contribute to future development, I recognize that any effort to increase youth participation must be mindful of, if not abide by cultural traditions accepted by their community.

Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction

Development is envisioned differently by different people: culture, ethnicity, gender, age, class and religion all influence the values and ideas that shape people's development aspirations. In this thesis, I examine the role of young indigenous people in Bolivia in the shaping of their community's governance institutions which are the context in which developmental aspirations are rationalized and realized. My central argument is that young indigenous people are looking for institutions and a cultural identity that incorporates both indigenous and 'modern' values but that their ideas and opinions are not always taken into consideration by leadership in their community. My argument rests on two key assumptions that will be explored throughout this thesis. Firstly, that indigenous peoples[1] recognized as a 'people' have a right to use their culture and values to determine their own development aspirations and the institutions and practices that will

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[1] The term 'indigenous peoples' is a term recognized internationally although the definition varies depending on the local historical and political context. There are two important characteristics that serve as distinctive features. First, indigenous people have a distinct culture that most often includes community-rooted social relations, a sense of place and connection to nature (Lee, 2006). Second, indigenous people have a history of being invaded, settled and colonized (Lee, 2006). In reference to Bolivia, indigenous peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the territory colonized by the conquistadors which later became the Republic of Bolivia.

enable them to meet those goals. Secondly, that young people[2] are rights holders within indigenous communities who possess different aspirations, skills, different levels of education and knowledge, opportunities and limitations than adults all of which need to be recognized and accounted for.

Internationally at the United Nations, there is recognition both of indigenous peoples' rights to their culture and self-determination and of young people's involvement as members of their community. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples secures the rights of indigenous people. Further, the importance of youth and young people's involvement has been championed by the United Nations: a World Program of Action for Youth was created in 1995, and a resolution was passed in the General Assembly in 2003 reaffirming a commitment to youth and the importance of youth participation (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2011).

Bolivia is an interesting country in which to explore young people's involvement and indigenous peoples' rights: here, indigenous peoples are identifying their developmental aspirations as well as the social, political, and economic institutions that will govern their communities into the future. The right to indigenous autonomy or self-

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[2] The term 'youth' is often used interchangeably with 'young people' and has a diverse array of theoretical conceptualizations (see Jones, 2009). For the purpose of this thesis, the conceptualization advanced by Bühler (1933) is used: the period between 'physiological maturity' and 'social maturity' and a period for experimentation with ways to be adult (Jones, 2009, p. 10). Pintos (2000) adds value to the understanding: youth is understood as being an age cohort sharing a common age range one that can be exactly defined (Lara, García, & Villca, 2009). Typically in Bolivian indigenous culture, social maturity is considered achieved when one gets married or completes military training. My thesis uses the age range of 18 to 28 to categorize young people.

governance has been recognized by the *2009 Constitution of Bolivia*, giving indigenous communities the formal legal opportunity to design institutions of local governance in line with their cultural values, needs and aspirations. Considered an integral part of culture, the institutions and structures of governance set the ways in which individuals and communities make decisions related to all aspects of life in their communities. In establishing indigenous autonomy, community members are engaged in conversations about which practices and institutions will guide future development. It is within these conversations that the relevance and value of modern and traditional ideas are debated. In this thesis, I attempt to understand the role young people are playing in these important debates.

A key finding from my research is that young people value the traditions of their culture *and* want progress and advancement. There is a desire for both the *vivir bien* (living well[3]) of their community, achieved through the valorization and understanding of the culture and traditions of their ancestors and the *bienestar* (wellbeing[4]) of their community, achieved through material improvements in health, education, infrastructure and social and political institutions. Young people personified this amalgamation of ideologies in many ways, one of which being the clothing they wore, wearing western-

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[3] *Vivir Bien* (living well) is a new interpretation and expression of traditional indigenous culture in the Andean region of Latin America; in many cases it represents a desire to 'go back to our roots' and re-valorize elements of their indigenous culture.

[4] *Bienestar* literally translates to 'wellbeing'; however, in Bolivia it often is understood to stand in opposition to *vivir bien* and represent a modern way of life, with individualist and consumerist ideologies.

styled clothing on a daily basis and dressing in traditional clothing for community *fiestas* and celebrations, another way being their use of social media to both share information and demonstrate pride in indigenous culture. However, despite young people's interests in their culture and their communities, there was a perception that their opinions and participation were not valued by older generations in their communities. These findings highlight the fact that even within communities that are perceived from the outside to be a cohesive collective there are often individuals with different opinions and ideas.

Bolivia is seen internationally as an important experiment in indigenous self-determination and many scholars are closely following its progress. Increasingly, scholars are pointing out that the internal dynamics of indigenous communities have important implications for the overall success of the experiment. However, as of yet, there has been little focus on generational divisions or the perceptions of young people. This thesis begins to fill the gap.

Young people are an important demographic; young people aged 18 to 28 represent 20% of the Bolivian population, which is relatively substantial when considered in comparison to those under 18 years who represent 45% and those over 28 years who represent 35% of the Bolivian population (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2001). Furthermore, young people hold the potential to be powerful change agents in society. Young people are forming new identities; they move between many different cultures, borrowing ideas and values that will become reference points for rationalizing and

making decisions in the future. Young people's identity formation also impacts their communities: as young people move between cultures they may diminish the importance of certain ideas, see value in others, and bring in new outside ideas. In some cases, young people are seen as inexperienced in the practices and traditions of indigenous culture and in other cases, young people, with their new ideas brought with them from school or urban life experiences, are seen as a threat to traditional culture, though recently their education is being valued. It remains true that young people are members of their community, and in most cases, are able and willing participants wanting for the development of their community.[5]

The thesis is a case study of young indigenous people's participation in indigenous autonomy processes, and research methods were chosen that would create learning opportunities for the young people and that would increase my own understanding of the process of establishing indigenous self-determination and young people's participation. Youth meetings brought young people together to discuss the significance of indigenous autonomy and the importance of and challenges associated with participating in the decisions that affect the future of their communities. A writing contest further encouraged young people to think and write about the issues in their own thoughts and words.

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[5] The terms 'community' and 'municipality' created confusion throughout the research: 'community', especially in Spanish, tended to refer to the group of people who lived in a specific location and identified with the local culture; 'municipality' being the official state-recognized title of the community. As these municipalities complete their conversion to indigenous autonomy they will no longer be 'municipalities' officially becoming an '*Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina*' (Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Autonomy). For the purpose of my thesis I use the term 'community' to refer to a group of people who share a history and culture, there being an implied shared territory; I use the term 'municipality' to refer to the community in specific relation to a defined territory.

The central questions that guided my research were: How do young indigenous people relate to their community? How do they understand the traditions and practices of their ancestors, and what value do they put on them? What do young people envision for the future of their community? What agency do young indigenous people have in setting the development aspirations of their communities? At the heart of it, my thesis questions the stereotype of apathetic and disinterested young people and it advances the argument that young indigenous people are valuable contributors to their communities not only as 'leaders of tomorrow' but as community members today.

Field research was conducted in two municipalities in the Bolivian department of Chuquisaca, the municipality of Tarabuco and the municipality of Mojocoya. The populations of both municipalities predominantly self-identify as indigenous (93.4% of Tarabuqueños, and 94.6% of Mojocoyanos) and have a culture that pre-dates Spanish arrival that has since been shaped by interactions with Spanish and *mestizo*[6] cultures. Both municipalities overwhelmingly chose to establish their community as an *Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina* (Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Autonomy[7]) by referendum in 2009 and community members elected autonomy assemblies[8] that today

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[6] The '*mestizo* culture' refers to the culture of the descendants of Spanish colonizers, it is generally a mix of culture, traditions and practices of the Spanish and indigenous people.

[7] *Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina* (Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Autonomy) is the legal mechanism for recognition and implementation of indigenous self-determination in Bolivia. The terms 'Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Autonomy', 'AIOC' and 'indigenous autonomy' are used interchangeably.

[8] Each municipality elected an autonomy assembly responsible for drafting and circulating for consultation of an autonomy statute. The name of the autonomy assembly in Mojocoya is *Asamblea Autonómico Indígena Originaria*

are in the process of writing 'autonomy statutes'. The indigenous community's autonomy statute formally establishes the institutions and practices that will guide their community's future governance and development. It is an important document that requires an extensive process of discussion and deliberation inclusive of all members of the community, as everyone will be affected by the outcome.

The thesis builds from a central idea that in order to understand how young indigenous people and their communities are creating institutions of self-governance relevant to their culture, needs and aspirations, it is important to understand how culture has been shaped by external and internal forces of change. Chapter two, the literature review, explores how the concept of culture has been viewed in politics and development. The chapter explores the state's role in recognizing, valorizing or marginalizing culture through state citizenship policies and the indigenous peoples' movement for self-determination which has revalorized and used their culture to fight for rights and recognition. The chapter also discusses young people, how they can be included or excluded from community decision making and how young people's participation can benefit the individual and their community. The discussion focuses on how young people have knowledge and a willingness to participate that can alter the dynamics and culture of their communities.

Campesino de Mojocoya (shortened in this thesis to the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya). The name of the autonomy assembly in Tarabuco is *Asamblea Autonómico de Tarabuco* (the Autonomy Assembly of Tarabuco).

The third chapter brings these discussions into the context of Bolivia. The chapter presents a short critical review of the relationship between the *mestizo* state and indigenous people in Bolivia since the country's 1952 Revolution and the factors that eventually led to the constitutional recognition of plurinationalism and the rights of indigenous people in the early twenty-first century. This chapter also concludes with a discussion of young people's involvement in their communities. The discussion builds an understanding of how young people move between cultures, more 'modern' Western-based culture in the city and more 'traditional' indigenous-based culture in their communities, and how this impacts young peoples' perspectives on their identity and culture, the governance institutions of their communities' indigenous autonomy and ultimately the future development of their communities.

The fourth chapter discusses the methodology used to conduct this research. In designing the research there was careful consideration in selecting methods that would promote the development of capacity and knowledge of young people. It was an important overall objective of my research that the young people involved could benefit from their participation in my research. The chapter discusses the objectives, rationale, benefits and limitations of the multiple methods used in the research. The chapter also discusses the mutually supportive relationship developed with a local non-governmental organization, Fundación TIERRA.

The fifth chapter presents the results and analysis of the research using an analytical framework built from 'development with identity' and youth participation. The chapter explores the way in which the young people in each municipality related to their community and the ability to affect community decision-making. Also discussed are the values that the young people put on the traditions and practices of their ancestors and the relative importance of modern knowledge and values in how they envision the future.

The sixth chapter concludes the thesis, drawing conclusions about how young people participated in the important discussions and conversations about indigenous self-determination and the future of their communities.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

> Culture has always been in development thinking and practice, but *how* it is conceptualized and *when* and *where* [it is] put in to operation reflects complex historical and geographical patterns of institutional, social, and political action (Radcliffe, 2006, p. 1)

The importance of culture is often downplayed or ignored in development thinking; however, culture is fundamental to how societies, communities and individuals make decisions. The intent of this literature review is to explore the ideas, practices and actions

that influence and shape culture and the way that culture is used by individuals, communities and societies to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Of importance to the discussion are three key elements. First, external influences are explored focusing on the role of the state and citizenship policies that have either promoted and privileged or marginalized and suppressed specific expressions of culture. Second, the self-driven influences of indigenous peoples' movements are presented focusing on how indigenous peoples use their cultures to secure collective rights. And third, the influences of young people are discussed focusing on the ways in which participation or involvement in their communities can create belonging and strengthen culture as well as change it.

These explorations will build an important foundation for understanding how young people and the indigenous communities in Bolivia are engaging in a process of change that has important - and hopefully, positive - implications for their future.

Culture and Development

Before beginning a discussion about culture, an understanding of what is meant by the term culture is needed. Culture is the principled and valued points of reference in which decisions are made and rationalized; it directs the way individuals and communities interact (Sánchez Serrano, 2010). Culture is dynamic; it is changed, shaped and interpreted by communities and individuals over time. There may be different types

of cultures formed around group affiliation, for example among women or youth (Kymlicka, 1995). However, it is the culture, the social values, institutions and practices passed from generation to generation of a group of people that are important in this thesis and Kymlicka's definition of a 'societal culture' is most appropriate:

> A culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language (1995, p. 76 quoted in Valadez, 2001, p. 159)

Given this understanding of culture, it is clear that all peoples have a culture and despite cross-cultural influences, the dynamic nature of culture and differing individual expression of culture, it is possible to identify characteristics that distinguish between different groups of people within a country. There may be 'ethnic immigrant groups' who voluntarily left home countries but retain some of their culture in their new home countries or 'national minorities' who, often forcefully, were incorporated into a large state but have retained a distinct culture (Valadez, 2001).[9] Given indigenous peoples' history of being invaded, colonized and settled and the ability to maintain a distinct culture, they most often fit in the category of national minorities (although in some cases such as Bolivia and Guatemala they constitute demographic majorities). There is also the

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[9] In the term 'national minorities', minority refers to the political agency of a cultural group and is understood in comparison to the political power of the national cultural group. In reality, the national minority or ethnic immigrant group may constitute a majority of the population but remain politically marginalized. Both ethnic immigrant group and national minorities are referred to as 'minority cultures' throughout the thesis.

'national cultural group' who controls the state, setting the political, social, economic and cultural institutions of the country (Valadez, 2011).[10] Each of these cultural groups is impacted and influenced by the other cultural groups in the country; however they retain elements of their culture that make them different. Culture is an important distinguishing feature because it is the frame of reference in which individuals and communities rationalize and make decisions on issues such as governance structures and community development aspirations.

There are some scholars (see specifically Barry, 2001) who caution against using culture as a distinctive attribution of groups. The worry is that by focusing on culture, the structural political-economic and individual causes of disadvantage are not appreciated (Barry, 2001). The 'culturalization' of a group can reduce discussions about marginalization and discrimination to a discussion about culture and the right to have one's culture recognized (Barry, 2001). However, it is precisely a discussion about the right to have culture recognized and to redress the marginalization of indigenous culture that indigenous scholars (see for example Biermann, 2011; Sefa Dei, 2011) argue is fundamental. Biermann (2011) argues that the systems of governance, laws and education that exist today in post-colonial countries continue to reflect the structures and ideologies of colonialism. Further, central to colonialism is culture and the presumed superiority of the colonizer culture and the perception of 'backwardness' of colonized cultures

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[10] The term 'national cultural group' is used interchangeable with 'dominant culture' or 'mainstream culture' as it makes reference to the cultural group that establishes a national identity.

(Biermann, 2011). Other scholars assert that it is through processes such as 'politics of recognition' that indigenous people are using culture and an identity of indigeneity as a tool to fight for changes in areas that marginalize and discriminate against them (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Escárcega, 2010).

From the basis that culture is fundamental, the rest of this section looks at how culture is viewed in different ideologies and practices. The liberal ideology emphasizes the right of the individual; diversity of culture is not given any particular importance. A single culture is created where every individual is equal with the right to be protected from each other, from social groups and from the state (Smits, 2009). Liberals argue that to have a culture is a right of the individual, and if the individual were free, then they are able to be a part of and preserve a culture if they wish, but there is no collective right to culture. Ultimately, liberal political theorists do not see a need for state intervention in the protection of culture (Smits, 2009).

Communitarian ideology also recognizes the individual, but not in isolation from its social context and stresses the importance of social relations and institutions (Smits, 2009). Communitarianism sees membership in a cultural group and individual self-respect and self-realization as linked, and the ability to live a satisfying life being bound by the ability to be a member of a cultural community (Tamir, 1993; Taylor, 1994). Furthermore, communitarians sees culture not as something an individual aspires to but is born into; culture has great influence on identity and decision-making (Valadez, 2001).

Therefore when culture is not respected or recognized an individual's dignity suffers (Taylor, 1994). Communitarians also argue that an individual loses freedoms and rights when one culture marginalizes another: there being economic, social or political disadvantages to membership in the marginalized culture (Smits, 2009). Ultimately, communitarians see a need for state recognition and accommodation of cultures of ethnic immigrant groups or national minorities.

Various development theories have also valued and recognized culture in different ways. Modernization theory was an approach to development theory that emerged in the 1950s that centered on the idea that progress was achieved through economic growth, which in turn required the adoption of 'modern' cultural values (Parpart & Veltmeyer, 2010). It was thought that given the right set of conditions and actions, countries could progress from 'traditional societies' into a society in an 'age of high mass consumption' (Rostow, 1959). Traditional societies were not thought to have a "systematic understanding" of their environment which limited invention and the tools and outlook required for progress (Rostow, 1959, p. 4). One way in which modernization would be achieved was by reorienting values and institutions to be supportive of economic growth (Parpart & Veltmeyer, 2010). Culture was seen both as a necessity and an obstacle to development: modern (i.e. 'western') culture was seen as important tool for creating motivation and fostering economic development, whereas so-called 'traditional' cultures were seen as unchanging, economically backward and a barrier to development (Bernstein, 1971; Radcliffe & Laurie, 2006).

Human Development is another approach to development, championed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The approach begins from the assumption that economic growth does not automatically lead to human well-being, and proposes that through actions that expand human capabilities, enlarge choices and enhance freedoms progress in human wellbeing can be achieved (Tharamangalam & Reed, 2010). In the UNDP's 2004 Human Development Report, the importance of culture is acknowledged and cultural recognition was added to the definition of Human Development:

> Human development requires more than health, education, a decent standard of living and political freedom. People's cultural identities must be recognized and accommodated by the state, and people must be able to express these identities without being discriminated against in other aspects of their lives (UNDP, 2004, p. 6).

Practices that are human in scale, environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, equitable and participatory are central to the 'Another Development' approach (Veltmeyer, 2010). Specifically, Ethnodevelopment builds on these practices recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and community-control (Chartock, 2011). As envisioned by the World Bank, Ethnodevelopment "builds on the positive qualities of indigenous cultures and societies to promote local empowerment and growth" (Van Nieuwkoop & Uquillas, 2000, p. 1). Central to the approach is cultural pluralism, which is, acknowledging and respecting that there are different cultures within a nation (Hettne, 1993).

Each of these aforementioned ideologies, theories, approaches or strategies have had a powerful impact on the value that individuals and communities place on culture. As will be explored, indigenous people have mobilized using culture as a justification and a tool to fight for collective rights. Specifically in Latin America, indigenous peoples' movements have sought to redefine the state system to secure both collective and individual rights (Yashar, 1998; Yashar, 1999; Jackson & Warren, 2005). In response to these demands, states must find a way to balance "universal claims to citizenship and differentiated claims to difference" (Yashar, 1998, p. 39). It is in the type of citizenship created that states and indigenous people can find a way for the multiple cultures within their countries to co-exist.

State Citizenship Policies

Citizenship controls three elements of culture: who is a member; what membership entails (entitlements and responsibilities); and how members participate in the process of shaping the future and setting development goals (Yeğen, 2008). Citizenship establishes the rights of their citizens, rights held by an individual and embedded in a formal relationship between the individual and the state (Yeğen, 2008). Alternatively, a relationship between the state and a cultural minority might be created through the creation of collective rights to their culture. Collective rights might be granted to the whole of a cultural group but exercised individually, or they might be held and exercised collectively, it is the later of the two that develops a relationship between the state and the

collective (Parekh, 2000). It is in the type of citizenship granted that the state is able to recognize and accommodate different cultures.

Following a liberal ideology, as discussed above, citizenship gives primacy to the individual. According to Yuval-Davis (1997) liberal citizenship treats all individuals as basically the same; individual differences such as class, ethnicity, or gender are theoretically considered to be irrelevant (in Yeğen, 2008). Modern liberal citizenship transcends particularity and difference between cultures seeking only the commonalities in its citizenry and applying the same laws and rules for everyone (Young, 1989). Liberal citizenship has created, theoretically, legal equality between individuals, but in so doing has reinforced existing forms of inequalities between national culture and minority cultures (Yeğen, 2008).

The alternative is therefore to recognize the particularity of and differences between cultures and the important influence that culture has on individuals, as communitarians might. A particular regime of citizenship might recognize a collective right to one's culture and grant citizens group rights, cultural rights and/or special representation rights (Yeğen, 2008). Two citizenship models that recognize and grant rights to different cultures are Differentiated Citizenship, advanced in the work of Young (1989; 1999), and Multicultural Citizenship advanced most prominently in the work of Kymlicka (1995; 2001). In Latin America, a new citizenship model is pushing past differentiated or multicultural concepts of citizenship: plurinationalism challenges the state structure and

previous conceptions of citizenship. In line with Yashar's (1998; 1999) post-liberal assessment of citizenship in Latin America, plurinationalism strives to establish a new citizenship model that recognizes both collective and individual rights. Each of these citizenship models expands formalized relationships that traditionally existed between the state and individuals to include cultural groups.

Differentiated citizenship as advanced by Young (1989), gives group rights to social groups who share a sense of identity and are marginalized by the dominant national culture. A social group may include national minorities, but Young (1989) also extends the definition to include other groups of people such as women, poor people, old people, or disabled people who have been marginalized. Group rights and representation might be established by providing resources to enable self-organization and solidarity building, by creating institutional spaces for the group to voice opinions, or by granting veto powers over policies that affect the group (Young, 1989).

While multicultural citizenship, advanced by Kymlicka (1995; 2001), can be used to recognize the rights of various types of groups, it is most often used to recognize and grant rights to ethnic immigrant groups and national minorities. Within multicultural citizenship models, collective rights are institutionalized in three different ways. A first possible set of rights is special representation rights which are political rights that share power between the national culture and minority cultures (Kymlicka, 1995). These special representation rights might guarantee minority seats in the legislature or provide

veto authority over policies that affect a minority culture (Valadez, 2001). A second possible set of rights is 'polyethnic' rights which formally recognize culture without limiting the integration of minority cultures into the social, political or economic institutions of the national culture (Valadez, 2001). Polyethnic rights may be granted through the introduction of policies that provide services to accommodate integration such as mother-tongue services, and ensure the protection of cultural norms and practices such as exemptions to wear religious attire, or funding for the arts (Kymlicka, 2001).

A third possible set of rights in a multicultural citizenship model is self-government rights which involve devolution of political power to a minority culture (Valadez, 2001). For Kymlicka (1995) self-governance might include one or all of the following: political autonomy, control of immigration policies, justice institutions and land and natural resource management (Valadez, 2001). Hannum (1996) adds to this understanding of self-government by further arguing that self-governance should include regulatory control of over language, education, government civil service and security forces, employment, control of land and natural resources, and representative local government structures (Valadez, 2001).

The right to self-governance, used interchangeably with or contained within self-determination, at its most fundamental level might be understood as the "right to ensure the continued existence and development of [a] distinct culture" (Tamir, 1993 quoted in Kymlicka, 2001, p. 251). Self-determination is therefore a collective right held by a

cultural minority to create institutions which reflect their distinctive culture (Tamir, 1993 referenced in Valadez, 2001, p. 152). Tamir (1993) makes a distinction between collectively held cultural self-determination and a political self-determination which is an individually-held right that protects the freedom of individuals to participate in a culture of their choice (Valadez, 2001).

Among the methods of organizing a multicultural relationship between the minority cultures and the state are decentralization and plurinationalism. Decentralization could involve decentralized federalism granting more power to sub-national levels of government (Kymlicka, 2001). Another option for decentralization is through the democratization of local community governments or establishing community control both of which give more local decision-making control over a larger number of issues (Kymlicka, 2001). Decentralization transfers power from the state to cultural groups enabling them to make decisions about issues that affect the group (the range of issues having been negotiated between the state and leaders or members of the cultural minorities.)

Plurinationalism, an alternative being experimented with in Latin America, mainly in Ecuador and Bolivia, challenges the devolution of power from the state to minority cultures, aiming for a reconstruction of the state in order to facilitate the coexistence of diverse cultures (Gustafson, 2009). Plurinationalism requires the recognition of plurality of cultures and a dynamic and transformative relationship between cultures (Gustafson,

2009). In both Ecuador and Bolivia, plurinationalism involved constitutional reform that recognized the state was composed of many different nations (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010). In theory, plurinationalism creates a relationship between the state and empowered self-governing minority cultures.

The current context and historical relationships between the national culture and minority cultures influences the appropriateness of the different types of rights instituted in a multicultural country. Special representation rights and polyethnic rights may be used by cultural minorities that are seeking greater political representation (Kymlicka, 2001). The right to self-government may be more appropriate for minority cultures that are seeking autonomous self-determination while remaining a part of the country they live in (Valadez, 2001). Alternatively, there may also be a minority culture that is seeking secession from the country they live in (Valadez, 2001). Within Latin America, most indigenous struggles for self-government do not involve a quest for secession (Warren, 1998; Kymlicka, 2001; Jackson & Warren, 2005). Justification for autonomous self-determination is twofold: one, the involuntary loss of historically held sovereign autonomy and two, the hostile environment (political marginalization, systematic discrimination and/or endangered physical security) which denies minority cultures their culture (Valadez, 2001).

The ideas behind multicultural citizenship are criticized and resisted by those who feel that efforts to recognize the rights of cultural minorities will minimize the strength of

the state and fragment its population (see for example Gitlin, 1995; Schlesinger, 1998; Barry, 2001; Huntington, 2004, Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy, 2005) For scholars such as Gritlin (1995), Barry (2001), Koopmans et al. (2005) recognizing and accommodating cultural groups may intensify divisions between race and ethnicity and create economic inequalities (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008). Barry (2001) and Gritlin (1995) further argue that multicultural policies undermine the ability of the state to engage in policies of redistribution (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2008).

In contrast, multicultural or plurinational citizenship models and the recognition of culture, are supported because they strengthen the cultural diversity of a country. The benefit of multiple cultures coexisting is that members from different cultures can engage in mutually beneficial dialogue, interrogating, challenging and probing each other and in so doing engage in self-knowledge, self-transcendence and self-criticism (Parekh, 2000). Further, cultural autonomy can protect minority cultures from domination by national cultures and can give confidence and space to minority cultures to interact and develop a relationship with the national culture (Parekh, 2000). The recognition of minority cultures simultaneously validates and questions the collective knowledge, needs and aspirations of their members.

Another critique of multicultural citizenship is that by recognizing the rights of a cultural group, the rights of individuals within those groups are put at risk (Yuval-Davis, 1997; Moller Okin, 1999; Sachar, 2000). Particularly vulnerable groups (such as women)

within a cultural group may become even more isolated if the state cannot intervene when their state-recognized or internationally-recognized rights are violated (Sachar, 2000). Sachar (2000) argues that in order to protect the vulnerable individuals, they must be considered both a member of their cultural group and of the state.

The type of citizenship model created by the state defines the relationship between the national culture and national minorities. Liberal citizenship fosters a theoretically homogenous culture minimizing the prominence of national minorities. Whereas differentiated or multicultural citizenship models search for ways to acknowledge the differences between cultural groups and give more prominence to national minorities. Plurinational citizenship redefines relationship between the state, individuals and cultural groups addressing a post-liberal challenge of recognizing collective *and* individual rights. Collective rights held by a national minority and specifically self-determination or self-governance enables a national minority to maintain and develop the ideologies, institutions and practices of their culture. The following section examines how indigenous peoples have fought for international recognition of their rights as indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Movements for Self-Determination

The mobilization of indigenous peoples from around the world in defense of their culture and right to develop in accordance with their values and practices has a long history. As this section will explore, indigenous peoples have mobilized around culture and used their culture to fight for collective rights. Since the 1970s, indigenous peoples

have fought for international recognition of their collective rights and at the heart of the

movement has been the right to self-determination (Berman, Lyons & Falk, 1993;

Muehlebach, 2003; Escárcega, 2010). After nearly 20 years in development, the *United*

Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the

United Nations General Assembly in 2007. The UNDRIP affirms the right to self-

determination:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of
> that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue
> their economic, social and cultural development. (United Nations
> General Assembly, 2007, article 3).

The right to self-determination was one of the most contentious issues in drafting

the UNDRIP (Gilbert, 2007). One of the main concerns regarding indigenous self-

determination was the perceived threat to political unity, territorial integrity and the

stability of current states (Gilbert, 2007). However, as noted above, most indigenous

demands for self-determination have not involved state sovereignty but rather economic,

political and cultural autonomy within the boundaries of already-existing states (Warren,

1998). Some scholars advocate that self-determination means more than autonomy;

autonomy being something "gifted by the state" (Thornberry, 2000 in Muehlebach, 2003,

p. 252). Indigenous peoples who claim *sui generis* rights, meaning that their rights exist

prior to and outside the state system because indigenous peoples' societies pre-date the

state, argue that the right to self-determination cannot be granted by the state, only

recognized by it (Muehlebach, 2003; Gilbert, 2007). Indigenous peoples are not simply

asking for inclusion into pre-existing state system, they want to redefine the political and rethink what their rights vis-à-vis the state are (Postero, 2007). Self-determination must create and strengthen a partnership, based on equality, between indigenous peoples and the state (Berman, Lyons & Falk, 1993). According to Escárcega (2010, p.12) self-determination is an "achievement of equal status as peoples and treatment with equal respect."

Indigenous peoples have sought recognition as 'peoples' to justify their demands for self-determination; using as evidence their cultural distinctiveness and loss of historically held sovereignty. The United Nations' definition of 'peoples' is: "a body of persons who are united by a common culture, tradition, ethnic background, and sense of common kinship that often constitutes a distinct, politically organized group" (Escárcega, 2010, p.9). Indigenous peoples have argued that while other groups of peoples have achieved self-determination, especially those in Eastern Europe who gained independence after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires or those in Africa who gained independence after World War 2, indigenous peoples have been left out of decolonizing strategies (Muehlebach, 2003). Indigenous peoples from around the world have used identities linked to maintaining a sense of place to land and territory, having spiritual connections to nature, or having deeply traditional cultures as a key element of and justification for peoplehood (Escárcega, 2010).

Critics of the indigenous movement in Latin America question the validity of cultural distinctiveness arguing that it is nearly impossible to see differences between *mestizo* and indigenous peoples (see the critiques in Warren, 1998). In response, establishing distinctiveness between the national cultural group and the national minority(s) has become an important tool of indigenous peoples movements. Indigenous peoples argue that the distinctiveness of their culture comes from its historical continuity with the practices of their ancestors that has survived in spite of external pressures and processes (for example: colonization, internal colonization, modernization, marginalization, neoliberalism, globalization) (Escárcega, 2010). While indigenous cultures have been maintained, although altered by these processes, scholars argue that the understanding of 'indigenousness' and to whom indigenous rights apply to is an "outcome of policies imposed from above and outside" (Stavenhagen, 1994, quoted in Muehlebach, 2003, p. 243). The role of the state is acknowledged and discussed in the section above. The role of indigenous peoples themselves in determining indigeneity and defining their own culture is also strong and important.

Indigenous peoples have been challenging the power of external actors to name, define and establish the boundaries of indigenous authenticity (Escárcega, 2010). Many scholars point out that the defining features of indigenous culture are being (re)contextualized, (re)invented, (re)constructed, (re)produced, recovered, nurtured and protected by indigenous peoples for political, social, cultural and economic purposes (Ströbele-Gregor, 1996; Lee, 2006; Escárcega, 2010). In some cases, indigenous peoples

essentialize their culture, "claiming fixed, shared and enduring identities that may differ significantly from people's daily experiences and beliefs" (Rubin, 2004, pg. 125). These essentialized identities are used strategically to justify and legitimize political demands in what scholars refer to as 'strategic essentialism' (Rubin, 2004; Jackson & Warren, 2005, Lee, 2006, Escárcega, 2010). Additionally, in certain cases, cultural (re)awakening and strategic essentialism are enabling indigenous peoples to heal the social dysfunction within their communities (for example family violence, alcoholism and despair) and/or engage in income-generating activities such as ecotourism, wildlife management projects and indigenous arts and crafts (Lee, 2006).

These positive elements should not be disregarded, but there are also risks to essentialism. Indigenous peoples may find themselves locked into stereotyped 'traditional' culture, unable to project the non-traditional elements of their cultures for fear of being labeled 'unauthentic' and losing political credibility (Jackson & Warren, 2005; Lee, 2006; Escárcega, 2010). Indigenous culture maintains some 'traditional' characteristics, however, as is true for any culture, change and adaption of modern or 'mainstream' characteristics are also continuous (Escárcega, 2010). Many indigenous peoples assert that the goal of (re)valorizing their culture is not an effort to revert to the past, but to rearticulate the past to be used in creating a current or 'present' identity that will be a guide for future action (Stephenson, 2005). The right to "maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures" has been affirmed in

the UNDRIP thereby allowing indigenous peoples to create an identity and an expression of their culture that they choose (United Nations General Assembly, 2007, article 11).

Thus far the discussion about indigenous rights and indigenous peoples' use of culture has referred to indigenous peoples as a collective, without mention of the role that individuals play in defining and shaping indigeneity and collective rights. However, indigenous peoples are also diverse groups of individuals who have different ideas and expectations on their culture, debating whether and how to modernize or remain/return to traditions (Lee, 2006). Cameron (2012) argues that individuals within indigenous communities interpret and use their history and culture in different ways and for different purposes (see also Canessa 2008; McNeish 2010). In the struggle for the recognition of their indigenous rights, these internal differences, which can create tension and conflict, are frequently silenced by the efforts of indigenous leaders to project a shared, communal and collective identity (Cameron, 2012).

The different ways that individuals value culture and envision the future of their communities has an important impact on how self-determining indigenous communities make decisions about development aspirations and institutions of governance. The inclusion or exclusion of certain groups of people in the decision making processes of the community shapes culture. The following section discusses how young people's involvement and participation in their communities can influence both the individual and the community, and can strengthen and/or challenge culture.

Young People, Participation and Identity Formation

From birth individuals belong to a cultural group. The understanding and acceptance of one's culture may change throughout life as individuals learn about other cultures and encounter reasons to think skeptically or critically reflect on their own culture (Parekh, 2001). Young people are engaged in a process of change and identity formation, transitioning from childhood to adulthood; they have different interactions with their culture and community than children and adults do. During this transition young people are shaped and acquire the skills and values needed for integration into the adult world (Lara, García & Villca, 2009).

In many societies, it is the political determinant of becoming of age to vote that heralds the entry into adulthood and full-fledged citizenship. However, there are also social determinants that mark the entry into adulthood: in many cultures young people are considered to enter adulthood when they assume responsibilities for their own lives, when they have their own children and their own home (Méndez & Pérez, 2007). In some societies and situations the entry into adulthood is being delayed because of social or economic conditions limiting young people's ability to work, own a home or get married (DFID–CSO Youth Working Group, 2010). Alternatively, in other situations young people have to take on adult responsibilities at an earlier age (DFID–CSO Youth Working Group, 2010). Influenced by these circumstances, young people see and experience the world they live in differently than adults (Harody, et al., 2010).

Young people are often underrepresented in the political process of their communities and have only limited ways of participating in decisions that affect their lives. In societies where there is low voter turnout among young people, politicians and public policy do not often take the perspectives of young people into consideration, thereby leaving young people feeling disillusioned (Sloam, 2012). If young people are invited to participate, the opportunities are often ritualized political or administrative occasions and young people are often treated as guests and not full members of their communities (Cockburn, 2007). And in these cases, their voices are not always heard or are met with patronization and promises made are not always kept creating a level of mistrust and skepticism (Cockburn, 2007; Harody et al., 2010).

Throughout the world young people are often viewed as being dangerous and a threat to society, vulnerable and in need of protection, or apathetic and disengaged from society (Cockburn, 2007). These perceptions are perpetuated and sensationalized in the media (Cockburn, 2007; "Latin America Youth", 1998). These mentalities negatively affect both the young people who internalize these negative projections and their communities, which enact programs and policies *for* youth rather than *with* them weakening young people's capacity to participate (Checkoway, 2011). Effective participation can create a positive identity: young people are actors and can take part in the construction of structures that shape their lives (Cockburn, 2007).

There are adults, organizations, governments and scholars who see value in young people participating, seeing it as building skills in tomorrow's leaders. As the DFID-CSO Youth Working Group (2010, p. vi) asserts, "young people are the future of their [communities'] and countries' development." These perceptions build the idea that young people can *become* good citizens. There are others who see the value of young people as leaders today, cautioning that when young people are only seen as leaders of tomorrow their voice is limited today (MacNeil, 2006). Scholars point out that participation in day-to-day activities enables young people not only to learn about citizenship and their community, but to exercise their rights as members (Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Checkoway, 2011).

Youth participation can take many different forms, young people can mobilize, organize and advocate for issues, develop social and service groups, volunteer socially, and even join in student council, sports teams and cultural groups in schools (Checkoway, 2011). Participation in the community benefits young people in that it helps to build knowledge and skills (such as critical thinking, public speaking), self-confidence, and social connectedness (Checkoway, 2011). Furthermore, Yohalem and Martin (2007, p.809) argue that participation enhances a sense of social responsibility and hopefulness and builds "experiences of belonging, stimulation, efficacy and integrity which contributes to positive identity development over time." Positive skill development through community involvement and participation reinforces the idea that young people have the capacity to contribute as social and political actors.

While many scholars (Yohalem & Martin, 2007; Checkoway, 2011) point to the fact that it is difficult to measure the impact of youth participation in their communities, there is a general agreement that young people can be positive contributors. Young people contribute knowledge, capacity, opinions, passion and energy to their communities (Lansdown, 2002; Finlay, 2010). Furthermore, young people raise different questions and see positive action that often escapes adult observation (Wierenga, 2003; Haroday et. al. 2010). These different perspectives enable young people to contribute to innovative, creative and constructive resolutions within their communities (DFID–CSO Youth Working Group, 2010). The involvement of young people in their communities not only builds skills in the young people, but allows their communities to benefit from their capacity.

Participation also builds greater connection between young people and their communities. The connection is strengthened when young people are not simply members of a community or a culture but when they take the deliberative and voluntary action to participate as a member of their communities (Mercado Herdia, 2007). When a community engages young people they help young people develop a sense of connection and belonging to that community and a greater understanding of the rights and responsibilities of membership and citizenship (Wierenga, 2003; Finlay, 2010). Young people connecting to and belonging to their communities will inevitably change the culture and identity, because it is understood that as individuals and society interact the social structures of a community and culture itself may change (Méndez & Pérez, 2007).

Young people's visions for their communities and perceptions of development may differ from those held by adults, and this potential for change can be viewed with particular skepticism by those adults who placer higher value on traditions of the past (Quisbert, Callisaya, & Velasco, 2006). Traditionally-minded adults view community practices as important tools for development and feel that young people must learn their culture and traditions (Quisbert, Callisaya, & Velasco, 2006). On the other hand young people who are exposed to tantalizing promises of modernity are caught between innovation and tradition creating resentment and at times defiant behavior (Bucholtz, 2002). The difference between the ideas and perspectives of young people and adults may create conflict within community. However, as Bucholtz (2002) points out, the division between young people and adults and ideas of modernity or traditions are often ambiguous and blurry.

The difference of ideas that young people and adults have may create tension within the community; however, it may also be harnessed to strengthen the community. Young people can contribute their energy, innovation and creative ideas which, if received positively by their communities, can build and to foster a sense of social responsibility and connection to their communities and culture. However, where actions of governments, organizations or the media, or culture and traditions, limit young people's contribution to their communities, as some cultures in Bolivia do, the ability of young people to participate and be an active member of their communities is reduced. Young

people are recognized as important for the future of their communities, but the voices and ideas of young people as contributing members today are often times lost.

Summary

The literature review looked at the ways that a state's citizenship policies, indigenous peoples' actions and young people's involvement in their communities can influence and change culture. The literature presented in the first three sections focused on the way that culture has been viewed in political ideologies and development practices, how these ideologies and practices shaped the value of culture in citizenship policies and the way that culture was mobilized to fight for rights.

The final section discussed some of the literature around youth participation; it argues that there is value in youth participation in community decision-making. However, there is not a lot of research on young people's impact on the culture of their communities. Ideas about young people tend to focus on sensationalized media portrayals of youth violence or youth victimization and government and youth-organization programming responses focus on addressing these negative 'youth' behaviours (Cockburn, 2007; Weaver & Maddaleno, 1999; "Latin America Youth", 1998). Increasingly, youth participation is being used to encourage youth engagement and build skills in young people; however, these efforts tend to see youth as leaders of tomorrow (Checkoway, 2011; DFID-CSO Youth Working Group, 2010; Yohalem & Martin, 2007). The contributions of young people as social actors in their communities today and the

potential for mutually beneficial influences are generally overlooked. Furthermore, the desire of young people to be actors in their communities, to actively participate in decision-making is not well studied. My thesis looks at the role of young people as potential actors, their desire to participate and the barriers to participation.

Indigenous culture has been revalorized and re-established in self-governance institutions and community traditions and practices to enable indigenous communities to develop according to their own needs and aspirations. However, a discussion about how young people can participate and how young people perceive and think about culture, community needs and future aspirations is missing. Young people are citizens and members of their communities. And whether they are viewed as social or political actors today or leaders of tomorrow they are impacted by the decisions made in their communities.

Chapter 3 Critical Review of the Context

The discussions presented in the literature review about citizenship policies, the indigenous peoples' movement for self-determination and young people's influence are relevant to the historical and current relationship between the colonizer (later the *mestizo* culture) and indigenous cultures of Bolivia. The indigenous population in Bolivia holds the demographic majority, representing over half of the population; however, up until

2005 when the indigenous president Evo Morales was elected, the indigenous people were not the cultural group controlling the political, social, economic or cultural institutions of the country. The colonizers and later the *mestizo* cultural-group have historically controlled state institutions despite the fact they have always been a minority. It is an observable fact that the state has been "run for and by the 'white' Spanish-speaking and Western-orientated elite" leaving the indigenous peoples marginalized (Fabricant, 2010, p. 92). However, the relationship between indigenous peoples and the national culture group has evolved and consequently recognition of indigenous rights in Bolivia has changed. These changes and their impacts on indigenous culture in Bolivia will be presented in the first section of this chapter.

The brief review of the historical interactions between the state and indigenous peoples sets the context in which the current relationship can be studied. The relationship has been most profoundly changed with the approval of the *2009 Constitution* recognizing indigenous peoples' rights to culture, autonomy and self-determination. The recognition of the right to indigenous self-determination has been studied closely by academics around the world as an important advancement in the debates and discussions of indigenous rights. The second section gives a very brief overview of the framework created to establish indigenous self-determination: the intent is not to assess the framework, but to provide a basic understanding of the terms and processes underway in indigenous communities.

The final section will discuss how the interplay between modern and indigenous notions of development continues to play out as indigenous communities establish the institutions and practices of self-determination. Young people are at the forefront of this interaction. Young people are envisioning and practicing new configurations of culture which may not be 'modern' or traditionally 'indigenous' or even a hybrid of *mestizo*-indigenous. The ways in which social structures and community practices shift in response to individuals moving between cultures is explored.

Indigenous-*Mestizo* Relations in Bolivia

Universal citizenship rights were not established in Bolivia until the 1952 Revolution, previous to which citizenship rights were held only by the literate (Kohl, 2003). The 1952 Revolution ushered in vast changes, some of which were state-based efforts to foster national unity based on *mestizo* identities, the redistribution of agricultural land, nationalization of mines, increased access to education, and the establishment of *sindicatos agrícolas* (agrarian unions or peasant unions) (Yashar, 2005; Healey, 2009). The result was a new form of citizenship for all Bolivians based on modern ideologies and practices.

The effort to build national unity required reshaping the national culture so that previously community-based indigenous peoples became a mass of individual agricultural producers-consumers without ties to their culture and ethnic backgrounds (Tellez, 1993). In order to downplay the significance of indigenous peoples' culture, the state replaced

the word '*indio*' (indigenous or indian) with '*campesino*' (peasant) (Healey, 2009, p. 88-89). The term *indio* became a racist word used to discriminate and marginalize indigenous peoples. The expression of indigenous culture was sacrificed for the theoretical privileges of liberal citizenship, which while technically universal and liberal, was granted on the premise of private landownership, obligatory Spanish and dismissal of indigenous identity (Canessa, 2000; 2005). For all Bolivians, including rural indigenous peoples, citizenship protected a national culture of a modern Bolivian *campesino*.

Two of the other key changes ushered in by the 1952 Revolution, the land reform and the creation of *sindicatos agrícolas*, also helped to reinforce the national identity and culture based on individual landownership and western-based technology and systems of social organization. The 1952 Revolution is credited for both positive and negative changes in the relationship between indigenous people and the *mestizo* culture. For instance, it is argued that the land reform changed the relationship for the better because it was able to redistribute one third of agricultural land in the country to poor *campesinos* and free them from their semi-feudal responsibilities to *mestizo* landlords (Yashar, 2005). Similarly, while the intent of *sindicatos agrícolas* were to create organizations through which the state could manage rural affairs and control *campesinos*, the state's "uneven reach" meant that not all rural areas were subjected to the control of the state (Yashar, 2005, p.152). So, while the state's goals were to create *sindicatos agrícolas* that would fortify the national identity and culture, indigenous groups were often able to create trade-union/traditional indigenous organization hybrids in which the *sindicatos agrícolas*

looked like unions from the outside but internally functioned according to indigenous principles, values and practices (Albó, 1984; Yashar, 2005; Healey, 2009).

The 1952 Revolution was driven by ideologies of progress and modernization. Indigenous peoples, their culture and practices, were seen as an obstacle to development (Tellez, 1993). Indigenous culture was thought to be 'backward' and progress was to be achieved through the adoption of western or modern technology and values and the construction of nationalism based on a cohesive *mestizo* identity (Zoomers, 2006). While indigenous cultures were cast aside in the drive for the industrialization of agricultural and extractive industries, other modernization processes, such as the proliferation of wage labour, urbanization and migration, have also been detrimental to indigenous cultures in Bolivia (Ströbele-Gregor, 1996; Zommers, 2006). Indeed, some authors argue that modernization had a negative impact not only on the validity of and space for indigenous cultures to exist but also on the standards of living of indigenous peoples (Tellez, 1993).[11]

Adaptation to the state policies and process of modernization was common in Bolivia. Both individuals and communities made efforts to appear 'modern': among other things communities established *sindicatos agrícolas* to become eligible for state resources and individuals learned Spanish to better engage in labour-markets and trading. For many

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[11] Being indigenous is not synonymous with being poor; however, in Bolivia poverty levels among indigenous people are higher (64.3%) than non-indigenous people (48.1%) (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 1994 in Patrinos, 2000). Scholars argue that class (especially after the 1952 Revolution), ethnicity and labour-market discrimination and specifically educational attainment are explanatory factors in these poverty levels (Kelley, 1988; Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 1993; Psacharopoulos, 1993; Patrinos 2000; Liberato, Pomeroy & Fennell, 2006)

parents, sending their children to school to learn the ways and the language of the 'other' was a way to empower their children to manage in a Spanish-speaking 'modern' world (Regalsky & Laurie, 2007). Indeed in many communities in Bolivia, the *sindicatos agrícolas* established after the 1952 Revolution remain powerful organizations that have influenced the indigenous practices of the community (see for example Cameron, 2012).

However, the imposition of the ideologies of modernization at the sacrifice of indigenous ideologies was also resisted and this resistance took many forms from uprisings to every-day forms of defiance. The maintenance of indigenous practices and institutions mixed with newly imposed structures and ideologies was common among *campesinos* but also tin miners. The well documented form of resistance by indigenous tin miners involved intermixing their indigenous traditions and rituals, (for example, offering alcohol, coca, and sacrifices to *Tio,* the spirit of the mine) with new ideologies incorporated from the Spanish and *mestizo* cultures (for example, worshiping and praying in the Catholic church) (see the much sited works of Nash, 1979; 2001). This and other cases of resistance to the state have been important in shaping indigenous identity (Jackson & Warren, 2005).

Another form of resistance has been a revalorization of indigenous culture which began in the 1960s and gained significant momentum in the 1990s. The revalorization of indigenous cultures and traditions in resistance and contestation to the on-going and long history of domination, oppression and discrimination created an 'ethnic consciousness'

(Canessa, 2000; Healey, 2009, p. 89). The Kataristas, initially a group of student activists, indigenous leaders and intellectuals named after indigenous rebel Tupaq Katari, built on the increasing frustrations of indigenous peoples after it became apparent that the 1952 Revolution failed to alleviate the marginalization and discrimination of indigenous peoples (Canessa, 2000). At the heart of the Kataristas movement was the idea of 'Aymara nationalism' using a return to 'traditional' Aymara culture to empower Aymara groups on their own terms (Canessa, 2000).[12] The ethnic identity that was reestablished in the 1960s continued to build strength and was visible in later social movements and demands for indigenous rights in Bolivia.

One of two important elements of indigenous culture that have been revalorized since the 1960s is the indigenous *cosmovisión* (roughly translated as worldview). A *cosmovisión* is a way of seeing, feeling, perceiving and projecting the world that is part of every culture (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010). Similar to indigenous peoples around the world, indigenous *cosmovisiónes* in Bolivia are built on the idea that everyone and everything (including especially nature and the environment) is connected and interrelated (Kipuri, n.d.; Lee, 2006; Huanacuni Mamani, 2010). Important to indigenous *cosmovisiónes* is connection with and recognition of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth): "*todos*

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[12] The Aymaran people are one of 36 recognized indigenous peoples in Bolivia. They constitute roughly 1 million indigenous people and are located in the northern highlands of Bolivia. Much of the Katarista movement was initiated by Aymaran indigenous people, however indigenous peoples throughout Bolivia support and have engaged in the revalorization of their indigenous cultures.

somos hijos de la Madre Tierra" (we are all sons and daughters of Mother Earth) (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010, p.71).

The other important element of indigenous culture that has been revalorized is the way in which communities are organized and make collective decisions. At the centre of this process of community restructuring is the *ayllu.* The *ayllu* is territorially-based, consists of social, economic and political institutions shared by a group of people who are linked by residence and descent (Albo, 2006; Weismantel, 2006). Political and economic institutions of the *ayllu* dictated community governance and organization as well as land management. In traditional *ayllus* there was a "requirement of [community] service, a rotating leadership, extensive consultation, with the goals of communal consensus and equitable distribution of resources" (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1990, p. 102-103 in Albro, 2006, p. 395). There has been an asserted effort to promote and reestablish the *ayllu* among indigenous peoples not only as an alternative to the western-based *mestizo* culture but to increase and build self-esteem and identity (Albro, 2006).

The ethnic consciousness continued to grow, for the most part, outside the formal political arena but in the mid-1990s government policy responded in a major way. Coinciding with advancements of indigenous cultural rights at the international level, the adoption of the International Labour Organization's *Convention 169*, Bolivia acknowledged the claims of indigenous peoples constitutionally redefining the state as 'multiethnic and pluricultural' (Albro, 2006, p. 392). The constitutional reform that

occurred in 1993 was one of seven reforms that made up the *El Plan de Todos* (the Plan for All). The three reforms most relevant to this discussion are: 1) the *Law of Capitalization* whereby up to 50 percent of businesses in five key industries were privatized; 2) the *Law of Popular Participation* and the *Law of Decentralization* which granted legal recognition to traditional and popular organizational practices and transferred political decision-making and financial resources to hundreds of newly created municipalities as well as local communities; 3) the Education Reform which created bilingual and intercultural[13] educational programs (Kohl, 2003; Albro, 2006).

El Plan de Todos began to create a citizenship policy that recognized the diversity of culture in Bolivia. The state created space within the national culture for expressions of indigenous culture by decentralizing decision-making to municipal levels and enabling territorially-based indigenous organizations to play a formal role in municipal decision-making, as well as incorporating indigenous languages and cultures in school curriculums (Kohl, 2003). In addition to the changes that recognized culture were reforms that opened Bolivia's economy to neoliberal economic policies. Some scholars have termed the coupling of socio-cultural and neoliberal economic reforms as 'neoliberal multiculturalism' (see Fisk, 2005). It is argued that multiculturalism is tolerated and supported by the state so long as it does not interfere with neoliberal economic reforms (Fisk, 2005). Furthermore, multilateral institutions promoting neoliberalism, such as the

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[13] In Latin America, multicultural (or multiculturalism) is termed intercultural (or interculturalism), although in some cases distinction between the terms is made, in this thesis the two terms are used interchangeably.

World Bank, are argued to have supported recognition of culture for the reason that it distracted people from the effects of economic reforms thereby reducing potential for poverty-related conflict (Fisk, 2005).

Most scholars agree that the Bolivian attempt at multicultural neoliberalism failed because privatization and attempts at market liberalization did not result in economic growth, leaving many Bolivians without work and dealing with increased costs of privatized basic services such as water (Kohl, 2002; 2003). On the political and social side, Gustafson (2009, p. 993) points out that neoliberal multiculturalism failed because it "did not *significantly* rearrange political, institutional, or territorial configurations linked to the state's colonial legacies" (emphasis in original). Even with the recognition of indigenous cultures, the neoliberal policies and continued discrimination and racism in other social policies left indigenous peoples marginalized by the national *mestizo* and now also neoliberal culture of Bolivia.

The intercultural and bilingual education instituted by the Education Reform held the potential to affect real change in the lives of indigenous peoples who, in theory, could learn their culture and language in school (Garcia, 2005). The curriculum took as a starting point the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. However, it also might have had an impact on indigenous peoples' position within the country, by teaching what citizenship entails and also giving indigenous peoples the means and skills to challenge current citizenship and demand an intercultural or ethnically differentiated citizenship

(Garcia, 2005; Lopéz, 2010). Further, these skills could be used to question their own identity, reconstruct their history and fight for self-determination (Lopéz, 2010).

Other scholars, however, point out that even this flagship Education Reform failed in its attempt to respect, recognize and value cultural diversity (Howard, 2009). The curriculum continued to portray indigenous culture as folklore and indigenous knowledge as being backwards (Canessa, 2004; Regalsky & Laurie, 2007). While indigenous language programs were initiated in some schools, Spanish remained the dominant language and the indigenous language taught was a standardized form foreign to many students who were then berated for not even knowing their own language (Canessa, 2004). Furthermore, teachers were not compelled to teach a cultural curriculum as many of them had adopted *mestizo* culture during their teacher training and were now concerned with promoting and maintaining the national Spanish and modern culture (Canessa, 2004; Howard, 2009; Lopéz, 2010). The Education Reform and other reforms of *El Plan de Todos* were attempts made at altering the strength and value of indigenous cultures; however the discrimination and marginalization inherent in long-establish institutions and practices continued to prevail.

The neoliberal economic reforms were resisted. In 2000, in response to the privatization of water in the city of Cochabamba, the Coalition in Defense of Water and Life organized non-violent street protests, strikes and blockades with the support of indigenous peoples, urbanites and rural famers, factory workers, progressive members of

Congress, environmental groups and grassroots organizations (Juhasz, 2006; York, 2006). Later, in 2003, when the state proposed to export oil and gas with only a small share of the profits remaining in Bolivia, indigenous people once again protested (York, 2006). At the center of the protests in the early-2000s was a demand for political recognition of indigenous culture, territory, resources and dignity (York, 2006). However, also linked are demands for development and distribution of natural resources to Bolivian people who have been left out of past development models (Postero, 2007). The resistance continued to draw on culture, especially the connection to *Pachamama* and the importance of the environment, as justification and rationale for recognition and rights of indigenous peoples.

Over the course of half a decade of protests, the protestors were successful in reversing the privatization of water in Cochabamba, renegotiating oil and gas exportation royalties and forcing the resignation of two presidents (York, 2006). Bolivian peasant coca growers were important allies of the indigenous peoples' protests and movement, protesting the USA-backed crackdown on coca production and arguing the importance of coca in indigenous cultures for medicinal and ceremonial uses (York, 2006). The leader of the coca growers union, Evo Morales gained recognition and validity as an indigenous leader ready to "refound the nation" and "decolonize" Bolivian society (Postero, 2010, p. 19). In 2005, Evo Morales was elected, in a land-slide victory, as the first indigenous president of Bolivia and soon began efforts to empower indigenous peoples, re-configuring the relationship between the state and indigenous peoples.

The new *2009 Constitución del Estado Plurinational de Bolivia* (*2009 Constitution*) takes Bolivia past the nationalist and multicultural attempts at citizenship to a 'plurinational' state and citizenship regime. The *2009 Constitution* was debated and drafted by a popularly elected *Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia* (Constituent Assembly) and supported by Bolivians in a national referendum (Cameron, 2010). The first article of the *2009 Constitution* speaks to the Bolivian interpretation of plurinationalism:

> Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Plurinational Communitarian Law that is free, independent, sovereign, democratic, inter-cultural, decentralized and with autonomies. Bolivia is founded on plurality and on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism in the integration process of the country (Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia, 2009, p. 3 translated by author).

Plurinational citizenship creates a theoretical relationship where the national culture and indigenous cultures coexist as equals within the state. At its very base plurinationalism is an attempt to "articulate local ideas of peoplehood … with regional [and] nationwide ideas about citizenship" (Bowen, 2000, p. 14 quoted in Gustafson, 2009, p. 989). An indigenous leader aptly describes plurinational autonomy as "having the possibility of influencing other cultures" (quoted in Gustafson, 2009, p. 999). Plurinationalism recognizes that there are multiple cultures within a country and creates national institutions and local spaces in which the different cultures can coexist, establishing a permanent yet dynamic relationship. Implementing plurinationalism is a process of change that, ideally, both national and indigenous cultures engage in together.

While plurinationalism is recognized as a potentially transformative process, many scholars are pointing out that thus far the state structure has not changed significantly and plurinationalism remains more discourse than practice. As Regalsky (2010) argues, Morales has been less revolutionary than anticipated, given at least in part to the need to balance demands from the dominant and powerful *mestizo* landholders/elites. There are other scholars who argue that plurinational citizenship as it is being implemented by Morales' government is Aymara-centric and legitimizes some indigenous peoples over others; for example, the cultural distinctiveness, practices and aspirations of urban indigenous migrants or lowland indigenous cultures are not being included (Albro, 2010; Canessa, 2012). Other scholars are tracking the resurgence of the right and those seeking 'regional autonomy' or the recognition of a regional, and not indigenous, culture (Eaton, 2007; Gustafson 2008; 2010; Centellas, 2010). These debates highlight the challenges in implementing such profound changes and may call into question the very possibility of national cultural and indigenous cultures coexisting under a plurinational citizenship.

As with any process of change, there will be critiques and drawbacks, but in the very least they all serve as important lessons for the on-going relationship between indigenous peoples and the nation state. Bolivia is one of the first countries in the world to formally establish a plurinational state, including the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination. It is a country in the process of implementing indigenous autonomy and formally recognizing indigenous forms of justice as well as creating other new national institutions that guide the interactions between indigenous peoples and the state

such as, for example, a Decolonization Unit in the *Tribunal Constitucional* (Supreme Court). Indigenous autonomy is central to the success of plurinationalism; a common sentiment through Bolivia is that "without indigenous autonomy there is no plurinational state" (Tockman & Cameron, 2012, p. 1). It is within the newly created indigenous autonomy that this study of young people and the influences of both modern and traditional ideologies are situated. However, before these interactions and influences are further explored it is valuable to have a general understanding of the process establishing indigenous autonomy.

The Framework for Indigenous Autonomy in Bolivia

State recognition of the right to indigenous self-determination in Bolivia has taken the form of *Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina* (Indigenous First Peoples Peasant Autonomy or AIOC). The legal framework for establishing indigenous autonomy is detailed in the *2009 Constitution* and in the specific law, the *Ley Marco de Autonomía y Decentralization* (*Autonomy and Decentralization Framework Law*, referred to as the *Autonomy Framework Law*). There are two particularly important elements of indigenous autonomy relevant for this thesis: the requirements to establish an AIOC and the creation of autonomy statutes.

Establishing an AIOC can be done in one of three ways, either through the conversion of *Tierras Comunitarias de Origen* (First Peoples Collective Lands), the conversion of municipalities or the conversion of a group of municipalities into an

indigenous region (Albó & Romero, 2009). To date, however, the government has only opened the municipal route in indigenous autonomy. In order to convert a municipality into an AIOC the local population must first approve the conversion in a referendum. Prior to the referendum, communities must demonstrate pre-colonial existence, secure municipal government support, and collect the signatures of ten percent of the adult population on a petition to indicate that there is support for conversion (Cameron, 2010). A first round of referendums, and thus far the only round, was held in December 2009. Of the twelve municipalities that met all the requirements, eleven voted to convert and are now in the process of establishing indigenous autonomy (Tockman & Cameron, 2012).

The key component in establishing indigenous autonomy is the drafting and approval of the autonomy statute. The autonomy statute is the "highest legal expression of the competency[14] of self-determination of each indigenous community" (Albó & Romero, 2009, p.80). The *Autonomy Framework Law* details the content and purpose of the autonomy statute:

> The autonomy statute [...] expresses the will of its inhabitants, defines
> their rights and responsibilities, establishes the political institutions of
> the territory, their competencies, the financing of their competencies
> and the procedures through which the organs of the autonomy will

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[14] Competencies are the transferred or delegated powers of government. There are four different categories of competencies the state holds 'private' competencies which are not transferable and the other three competencies may be held by any of the four autonomies (state, department, region, AIOC): 'exclusive' competencies which are transferred from the state; 'concurrent' competencies which are held by two autonomous entities simultaneously; or 'shared' competencies which may be legislated by and applicable to two different autonomous entities (Albó & Romero, 2009)

conduct their activities, and the relations with the state (Estado de Bolivia, 2010, Article 60-1, translated by author).

An assembly or council of community members exercises the responsibility of drafting the autonomy statute (Colque, 2009). It is a complex process, one without precedents to follow, that requires designing "precise, reliable and adequate" procedures of self-governance that must also comply with the constitutions and specific requirements in the *Autonomy Framework Law* (Colque, 2009, p. 108). Once the autonomy statute is drafted, it must be approved by a two thirds majority of the autonomy assembly, then approved by Bolivia's Supreme Court to ensure that it complies with the *2009 Constitution* and finally, approved by the community through a second referendum (Albó & Romero, 2009). Albó and Romero (2009, p.81) point out that if drafted in a collective way, the process can become a "powerful conscience-raising and educational tool that fortifies their identity and institutions."

Some scholars following the process are highlighting challenges in the implementation of autonomy that stem from remnant policies and ideologies of old state institutions (see for example Cameron, 2010; 2012; Tockman & Cameron, 2012). While these challenges may be serious limitations to the success of indigenous autonomy, the establishment of AIOC is simply the context for the central discussion in this thesis: of role of young indigenous people in shaping their communities' governance institutions. The decisions about the content of autonomy statutes and the future of their community that are being made by community members, leadership and assembly are influenced by

the intermixing of different cultures. Young people, given their 'in transition' position between childhood and adulthood are exposed to different cultures and affect the intermixing of cultures. The ability for young people to contribute their knowledge, to express their goals for the future and to influence the autonomy statutes, key documents for the future of their communities depends on the extent to which their communities values their input.

Young People and the Interplay Between Different Cultures

As has been explored above, Bolivian culture and especially the differences between indigenous and 'modern' *mestizo* ideologies have been pitted against each other for generations. The contemporary result is frequently a generational division in how indigenous culture(s) are viewed and valued. The oldest generation was born *indio* and turned into *campesino*, the adult generation was born *campesino* and participated in a revalorization and reconstruction of indigenous culture, and the youngest generation was born *indígena* (Zoomers, 2006). The generation of young people born as *indígena* is continuing the revalorization of indigenous culture but in new ways, looking for self-dignity through the creation and interpretation of new indigenous identities (Goodale, 2006). The interpretation of new identities and new development aspirations has occurred through increased exposure to other cultures, values, ideas and beliefs as a result of increased access to secondary and post-secondary education, urban migration and

increased access to other western and non-western cultures and ideas, especially via the internet (Sánchez Serrano, 2010).

Even through periods where indigenous cultures and identities were revalorized and reinterpreted, modern ideologies and practices proliferated and infiltrated the daily lives of indigenous peoples, especially as a result of increased urban migration. Specifically, the spread of individualism into rural indigenous communities has meant significant changes in the communal traditions and institutions of communities. Throughout rural Bolivia individual responses to poverty have proliferated, putting family needs ahead of community needs and fostering consumerist or market-based practices in place of communal practices (Zoomers, 2006; Fabricant, 2010). Where agricultural practices were previously communal with strong values of collective work and reciprocity, the need to lease or purchase land, seed, clothing etc. has resulted in market-based producer-consumer relationships (Zoomers, 2006). Indigenous people and communities have also diversified livelihood activities in order to meet or keep up with changing consumption patterns (Zoomers, 2006). Selling traditional weavings and art as well as engaging in ecotourism are ways in which some indigenous communities earn incomes and participate in western-style market economies (see the works of Korovkin, 1997; 1998).

Labour migration offers communities and families other ways of diversifying livelihood. In Bolivia, migration between rural communities and urban centers is often cyclical or even fluid: members of a community may live in the city for a portion of the

year but continue to maintain membership in and return to the rural community to fulfill community service obligations (Cameron & Colque, 2010). However, while individuals gain skills and knowledge from their time spent in the city, community values suffer; decreasing respect for traditions coincides with an increase in individualism. The devaluation of traditions is seen especially in young people who are financially contributing to their family and desire more control over decisions (Punch, 2007; Zantkuijl, 2010).

Another important factor exposing indigenous peoples to new ideologies is education which impacts primarily young indigenous people but does also have residual impacts on the community. As discussed above, despite bilingual and intercultural education reforms, the curriculum that young indigenous people are exposed to in primary schools still generally does not engage them with the language, traditions and structures of their community (Canessa, 2004; Regalsky & Laurie, 2007). There is also the impact of increased enrolment in universities. The increased rate of acceptance of indigenous people into universities, the creation of indigenous degree programs, inclusion of indigenous knowledge in relevant degree programs, and changes to language requirements have all contributed to making university education more accessible in Bolivia (Bollag, 2006). Exposure to higher education offers young people a broader base of western knowledge that influences their worldview. The consequential impacts on the indigenous communities are that young people are inevitably influenced by modern science and knowledge in ways that previous generations were denied (Quisbert,

Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). Although in recent years, universities have begun to offer programs aimed at indigenous communities and young people can now learn indigenous history and anthropology (Bollag, 2006). However, pursuing a formal education often requires migrating, at least temporarily, to urban centers.

The exposure to other cultures is one half of the 'dual socialization' process of young indigenous people; they are also brought up in and learn their own indigenous culture (Merkle, 2003). However, exposure to their own indigenous cultures may be limited; young people gradually become more included and involved in their communities. In traditional indigenous culture youth are thought to be situated in an ambiguous position, not yet completely socialized and "yet socially, politically and economically able to act for themselves" (Van Vleet 2005, p. 114). Young people are often left out of ritual activities central to indigenous culture because the activities are symbolic, sacred and deemed to be reserved exclusively for adults (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). Although Quisbert, Callisay and Velasco (2006) also point out that adults may exclude young people to protect them and discourage them from drinking, smoking or chewing coca which are all important elements in the rituals. Another reason that young people are excluded is because they are judged and deemed inexperienced (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). Young people are encouraged to participate but not taken into account when opinions are shared (Merkle, 2003).

Within indigenous cultures there are practices and processes that guide the process of entering into adulthood and taking on more responsibilities within their communities; the commencement age and specifics of the processes differ between indigenous cultures. In Aymara communities in highland Bolivia, the *thakhi* (path of life) system is the way in which individuals take on greater responsibilities and leadership roles in their communities in order to become full members of their communities (Cameron & Colque, 2010). *Thakhi* is understood in indigenous communities as "a school of life in which people learn in order to serve the community" (Plata, Colque & Calle, 2003, p. 36). Young people begin *thakhi* and take on increasingly more important responsibilities when they marry. Marriage is generally considered in Aymara and Quechua communities to mark the beginning of adulthood and also when young people typically gain access to their own land, typically through inheritance (Van Vleet, 2005; Cameron & Colque, 2010).[15] Fulfillment of community responsibilities, including positions of community leadership, is considered to be an obligatory condition for community membership, which also determines access to community owned agricultural and pasture land and natural resources meaning that there are also powerful material as well as cultural incentives to take on assigned roles in the community (Cameron & Colque, 2010).

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[15] Land is not abundantly available in the communities. In some cases, land owned by a father is too small to sub-divide any further amongst children. Further, there is little land available to buy, due to laws and *normas y procedimientos propios* that allow a community member to maintain land and affiliation even if they have migrated to the city or another department. Where there is land to buy, most young people cannot afford to buy land meaning they first must migrate out of the community to earn an income to be able to save and purchase land.

Entering into *thakhi* is often delayed or not possible if young indigenous people attend university or migrate long-distances for work. Further complicating the issue is that, until relatively recently, the opinions of young indigenous people only gained real legitimacy when they followed indigenous traditions and practices meaning some young people were unable to meaningfully participate in their communities (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). As young people spend increasingly more time in school, university and urban centres, the knowledge and experience that they bring back to their communities is often primarily formal and urban; in some communities this knowledge is seen as a valuable addition, but in others it is perceived as irrelevant to the fulfillment of *thakhi* and an insufficient basis for community leadership, especially by those who feel that these new ideas and skills will displace indigenous ideologies and practices.

In communities where the *sindicatos agrícolas* maintain dominance, young people face other barriers to community involvement. In order to become a voting member of the community, one must be 'affiliated' to the community. Affiliation holds privileges, namely landownership, as well as responsibilities that may include attendance at meetings, community service (such as helping with road or school construction) and positions of leadership (communication with Fundación TIERRA staff, 2012). Landownership is a prerequisite for affiliation: meaning that in order to be affiliated to the community an individual must own land. Affiliation is often held by the male head of the household: young people do not become affiliated until they own land and are head of their household (by getting married), for young females they may never become

affiliated, but may attend meetings in place of a migrant or absent husband (communication with Fundación TIERRA staff, 2012). Furthermore, in order to become a leader of a municipal or regional *sindicato agrícola*, young people must first assume leadership responsibilities at community-level *sindicatos* (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). The ability for young people to become involved in their municipality is progressively attained after becoming affiliated and gaining the confidence of their community.

Increasingly, young people are demonstrating interest in participating in decisions affecting their communities (Silva & Souto, 2009). Young people see themselves not as "a problem to be solved, but problem solvers themselves" (Rudolph, 2000, p. 9 quoted in Merkle, 2003, p. 205). Researchers who study young people in El Alto (see especially Merkle, 2003; Goodale, 2006; Sánchez Serrano, 2010; Calestani, 2012) have seen the proliferation of youth organizations that focus on social, economic and political aspects of young people's lives as well as the revalorization of indigenous culture including dance and music.[16] Young people are optimistic about the future but this optimism comes with different ideas about future development that at times can conflict with ideas in indigenous communities (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). Young people are committed to participating in the processes determining development aspirations even it

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[16] El Alto is located adjacent to the capital of La Paz with a predominantly young population (over 75% of the population is under the age of 40) of rural-urban migrants most commonly from Aymara communities (Calestani, 2012). While El Alto is poor, especially in comparison to neighboring La Paz, the people of El Alto are known for their entrepreneurialism, political activism and cultural expression including reinterpreting traditional Aymara dances and Aymara rap music (Goodale, 2006; Calestani, 2012).

requires social change; as one El Alto youth noted: "If we do not act, [Bolivian] society will never change. This is our vision of a better society" (Merkle, 2003, p. 205).

Visions for the future are changed by their exposure to other cultures and their distance from the realities and necessities of rural community life. Young indigenous people who live in the urban centers who only complete community responsibilities out of obligation have more of a material than spiritual connection to the land (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). Migrant young people also tend to see issues such as lack of water, electricity or run-down community plazas and roads as indications of lack of development, in contrast to residents who tend to prioritize resources for farming and other livelihood generating activities (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006). When young indigenous people return to their communities, they also frequently bring with them a desire for liberal democratic institutions such as universal secret voting, which can collide with community-based systems of consensus decision-making, public voting and decisions-taken only by designated community leaders (Quisbert, Callisaya & Velasco, 2006; Cameron & Colque 2010; Nijenhuis, 2010).

While it seems to be apparent that young people are appropriating practices and ideas of other cultures, and sometimes rejecting, denying or forgetting the traditional practices of their indigenous roots, scholars are also finding that there are still some practices that young indigenous people continue to value and follow (Méndez & Pérez, 2007). Young people are engaging in organizations that support demands for

employment, participation and involvement in community decision making but these organizations also have a strong cultural components (Méndez & Pérez, 2007). Increasingly visible are youth groups composed of young people born and raised in urban centers that are dancing the traditional dances from their parents' communities as well as hip-hop groups that are signing in Aymara about contemporary indigenous political, cultural and economic issues (Goodale 2006; Calestani, 2012) These groups of youth see value in remembering their indigenous roots and culture, even if they have become removed from it, and in so doing are adapting it to their new urban lifestyles. However, the expression of indigenous culture is not simply associated with urban group activities as young indigenous people are also expressing their indigenous culture through social media and returning home and actively participating in their community's *fiestas* such as Carnival or *Pujllay* (Van Vleet, 2005; Sánchez Serrano, 2011).

Young indigenous people now self-identify and declare themselves 'indigenous' and are going "back to the roots" (Merkle, 2003, p. 213; Van Vleet, 2005). Increasingly, young indigenous people are seeing Bolivia as inextricably rooted in the rituals and customs inherited from their ancestors and believing the cultural traditions should be preserved (Sánchez Serrano, 2010). A fact that is seen in numbers: in the 2001 census, of 1.08 million Bolivians aged 19 to 25, 58% self-identified as belonging to an indigenous group; whereas of the 2.86 million Bolivians aged 26-64, 64% self-identified as belonging to an indigenous group (calculations based on data presented in Colque, 2009). These numbers dispel a perceived stark division between stereotyped traditionally-

minded adults and modernity-inspired young people. The division between the positions and ideologies of the two groups may be blurring; young people are self-identifying as indigenous and are appropriating traditional indigenous culture – albeit by blending it with influences of their formal education and modern urban work and lifestyles.

Summary

The ways in which culture is experienced in Bolivia have changed due to changes in both state policy and indigenous peoples' resistance to marginalization and discrimination. Ideologically, the value placed on indigenous culture has been strengthened, but in the practical context of urban labour migration, increased access to education and exposure to western and global media, other elements of indigenous community practices have gone into decline. The cultures of indigenous people and the *mestizo* nation are not isolated, they are intermixed. Today, in Bolivia, young people play an important role in the interaction and exchange between cultures and the particular ways in which they are mixed together.

The final section highlighted that there are structures (some with inherent barriers) for young people's participation in their communities. The scholarly research conducted on young people in Bolivia demonstrates attitude and practices that limit young people's voices but also increasingly an acceptance and respect for young people's contributions especially when they have high levels of formal education. Recent literature indicates that

young people are coming together and that they do have an interest in the political, social and economic structures affecting their lives.

This thesis highlights this interest in the political, social and economic structures and traditions that remain or have become revalorized and reconstructed in rural indigenous communities. Where this thesis provides new research is in setting these discussions in the context of indigenous autonomy and indigenous communities that are discussing the content of autonomy statutes and the institutions affecting governance, social and economic development. Indigenous autonomy is important step-forward for indigenous peoples enabling them to determine the development aspirations in line with their *cosmovisión* and to create governance institutions that they hope will help them to achieve their development aspirations.

Chapter 4 Methodology

As previously noted, the purpose of my thesis is to examine the role of young indigenous people in shaping their community's institutions of self-governance. The case study approach was used to conduct the research. A case study investigates the complexity of a single 'case' which is a contemporary and complex functional unit studied in its natural context using a variety of methods (Johansson, 2003). The 'case' that is studied in my thesis is young indigenous people's participation in indigenous

autonomy processes. Two case studies were conducted; one in the municipality of Tarabuco and one in the municipality of Mojocoya, both located in the department of Chuquisaca. The municipalities were purposefully chosen because both municipalities are in the process of establishing indigenous autonomy, but they each also have unique factors that have affected the process.

Support and Approval for the Research

Research in the two municipalities was conducted between February and April 2012. The field research was funded by a Michael Smith Foreign Studies Supplement, part of the Social Research and Humanities Council's Canadian Graduate Studies scholarships. The funding enabled me to spend significant amounts of time in each of the municipalities, attending assembly meetings and conducting my focus groups, interviews and discussions with young people.

At Saint Mary's University, all graduate research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board (REB). The REB follows the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. My research proposal received REB approval in December 2011 prior to my field research trip. All project documentation was translated in Bolivia with the assistance of a local-Bolivian.

The research was also supported by the Fundación TIERRA, a Bolivian non-governmental organization.[17] Fundación TIERRA is providing technical support for the indigenous autonomy processes in Tarabuco and Mojocoya, as well as two other municipalities in different departments of Bolivia. The Fundación TIERRA staff members who worked in Tarabuco and Mojocoya were lawyers from indigenous backgrounds and all fluently spoke Quechua, the predominant indigenous language in the region. In addition to the technical support, the foundation is also in an on-going process of research and analytical reflection on indigenous autonomy in Bolivia; areas of interest and research have included the leaders of the autonomy assemblies and the participation of women in the indigenous autonomy process. An expressed area of interest that had not yet been researched was youth participation in indigenous autonomy. The timing of my field research was thus fortuitous and Fundación TIERRA offered very helpful institutional support (which included staff time, office-space, transportation and events funding) and I was able to dedicate time, knowledge and support relating to research and facilitation of youth meetings which enabled the research to move forward. The outcomes of the research assisted both my thesis research and Fundación TIERRA's on-going research on the topic.

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[17] Fundación TIERRA has worked for 20 years in Bolivia on issues relating to rural development with indigenous peoples. The foundation has a strong commitment to action research; seeking and reflecting on new ideas and knowledge in order to influence Bolivian public policy affecting rural areas and people (Fundación TIERRA, 2009).

An important step in the research project was to seek support and approval for the project from the local leaders. In both municipalities, both I and my project were introduced to the leaders of the autonomy assembly, other relevant community leaders and school officials. My connection with Fundación TIERRA increased the respectability of my research project, and I was welcomed.

Research Methods Used

Several research methods were used to conduct the case studies and collect data. The use of different methods allows for the triangulation of the data, meaning that the validity of the information collected is verified by checking it against data collected in other ways (Johansson, 2003). The methods used were: document review (specific to each community), observation, participant observation, interviews, youth meetings with focus groups and a writing contest. Each of the methods were chosen specifically in order to gain a more in depth understanding of each case and to enable me to answer the key questions of my thesis: how young indigenous people relate to their community; how they understand the traditions and practices of their ancestors, and what value they put on them; what young people envision for the future of their community; and what agency young indigenous people have in setting the development aspirations of their communities.

Document review. The document review is considered separate from the literature review conducted, the latter exploring the theories and concepts related to the

key elements of my thesis: development and culture, state-indigenous relations and youth participation. The document review focused specifically on the two municipalities in focus in this thesis. The documents collected helped to set the historical and current context of each municipality, relevant documents were sourced from: scholars studying the communities; NGOs working in the municipality; newspapers; national-based NGOs and government ministries reporting local data on areas of governance, participation, economic and health indicators; as well as Fundación TIERRA internal documents on the history and progress of the indigenous autonomy processes.

Observation and participant observation. Participant observation is a method useful to understand interactions viewed from an insider's point of view (Jorgensen, 1989). The method requires that the researcher becomes involved as a participant in people's daily lives, enabling them to make unobtrusive observations (Jorgensen, 1989). Unstructured observation or 'observer-as-participant' observation requires only minimal involvement on the part of the researcher and is appropriate in cases where genuine participation is limited (Rubin & Runbin, 2005). Both observation and participant observation were used over the course of my research depending on the situation and event.

In some cases it was either inappropriate or I was unable to become a participant in the event, however, I was still able to make observations. For example, I attended the *Pujllay* celebrations in Tarabuco, the municipality's largest display of dance, music and

tradition, as a tourist along with thousands of other Bolivian and foreign tourists. At autonomy assembly meetings or even the youth meetings, it would have been inappropriate for me to attempt to participate as a member of the assembly or a young member of the community. However in both situations, I was able to observe in relatively unobtrusive ways and make important observations.

A combination of observation and participant observation was used during the autonomy assembly meetings: at two meetings of the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya (February 10-12, 2012 and March 30-31, 2012) and at one meeting of the Autonomy Assembly of Tarabuco (March 22-24, 2012). Because of my partnership with Fundación TIERRA, I participated in these three autonomy assembly meetings as a member of the *equipo técnico* (technical team).[18] As a member of the *equipo técnico*, I was accepted as a typical, albeit external to the community, part of the meeting. Having access as a member of the *equipo técnico* enabled me to make observations on the normal functioning of the two autonomy assemblies, and observe how many young people were in attendance, and to observe their willingness and ability to participate in the assembly proceedings.

During the course of the three autonomy assembly meetings I took field notes on the proceedings of the meetings, as well as the content of the autonomy statutes, noting the topics that created the most heated debates between assembly members. One

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[18] Each of the autonomy assemblies also had a 'technical team' composed of representatives of different NGOs that either work in the community or were brought into the community specifically to help with the AIOC. The technical teams are unique to each indigenous autonomy process, as is the level of input and influence held by the NGOs (see Tockman and Cameron, 2012 for a discussion on the influence of the technical teams).

limitation of participation (and observation) in the meetings was the use of Quechua, the indigenous language spoken in both municipalities. A mix of Spanish, Quechua and Spanish intermixed with Quechua was spoken during the meetings which limited the information that I was able to record. Staff members of Fundación TIERRA are fluent in both Quechua and Spanish and after the meetings helped me to understand the parts of the discussions that I missed, although my understanding of the discussions was obviously still not complete.

A second limitation of my participation in the autonomy assembly meetings was the pre-existent separation between the *equipo técnico* and assembly members. Although many members of the *equipo técnico* came from indigenous and rural backgrounds, most of them live either in Sucre (the capital of the department and located 1 and 3 hours from the communities) or La Paz (the administrative capital of Bolivia accessible by 12 plus-hour bus ride or by airplane). There were observable divisions between community members and members of the *equipo técnico,* who typically arrive the day before the meeting and leave immediately afterwards. Being a member of the *equipo técnico* and being white, I automatically became associated with those external to the community, which sometimes made casual conversations and informal relationship building more difficult.

Interviews. Interviews were an important method used in my research. A qualitative interview allows the researcher to "explore the experiences, motives and

opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own"
(Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Both unstructured and semi-structured interviews were
conducted. A semi-structured interview uses an interview guide to guide the interviewee
through a series of topics, allowing the interviewer to rearrange the question order,
follow-up or probe deeper on answers given (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). The
unstructured interview does not make use of an interview guide; the interview is closer to
an in-depth conversation centering on a few certain topics (Bryman, Teevan & Bell,
2009). As the research progressed, and as I gained a greater appreciation of the issues
relating to indigenous autonomy processes, it was important to alter the interview
questions. Additionally, while the majority of the interviews were conducted with young
people, there were interview opportunities with key adult informants that required
different questions, and were conducted like conversations.

Despite the different types of interviews conducted, they were all guided by five
core themes: 1) Culture and identity in your community - with the objective of
understanding how young people see the culture of their community and their own
identity; 2) The role of young people - with the objective of understanding how young
people see their role in their community; 3) Culture and the future of their community -
with the objective of understanding if young people feel that culture has a role to play in
the future development of their community, and how their community should develop; 4)
Indigenous autonomy - with the objective of understanding what young people know
about indigenous autonomy, the process in their community and the content of the

autonomy statute; 5) The participation of young people - with the objective of understanding what young people's role in the process of establishing indigenous autonomy, and what young people feel they need to be encouraged to participate in the future.

In total, ten interviews were conducted, seven were conducted with young people, who were members of their autonomy assembly, two were conducted with community leaders (one was a former leader), and one was conducted with staff members of Fundación TIERRA (which complemented many informal conversations). The young people chosen for an interview were in attendance at the autonomy assembly meetings and introductions were facilitated by Fundación TIERRA staff. Both young men and young women ranging in age from 19 to 26 were interviewed. The interviews (as well as the youth meetings and writing competition essays) were given a randomly generated four digit number to protect the identity of the individuals.

A limitation in conducting the interviews was the language barrier.[19] The interview questions were first drafted in English, then with the assistance of my Bolivian Spanish teacher translated into Spanish. After the first couple of interviews, questions were re-worked, with the help of Fundación TIERRA staff, to compose questions that more effectively explored the key issues. Further, in a couple of cases, my accent and slightly

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[19] I spoke very basic Spanish prior to starting my graduate degree, but knowing I would need fluent Spanish in order to conduct research in Bolivia I undertook a 5 week intensive Spanish study in La Paz in June-July 2011. I also spent 2 weeks taking refresher courses upon arrival in January 2012. My Spanish also improved over the course of 3 months of research.

differently spoken Spanish (given the Quechua influence) complicated the interactions in the interviews.

The young people selected for an interview were all members of either the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya or Tarabuco. Given their active engagement in the process, these interviews alone may have skewed the results of my research. Conducting interviews with young people not actively involved would have allowed me to delve deeper in a one-on-one setting into the reasons behind their inactive participation. While it is a potential limitation of my research, the youth meetings and the writing contest allowed me to gather the ideas and opinions of young people not actively involved in the process. The use of various research methods allowed me to gather data from many young people engaging in their communities in different ways.

Youth meetings with focus groups / breakout groups. As a research methodology focus groups allow the researcher to speak to multiple people about a topic of interest and allow them to interact and collectively develop ideas and answers (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). One of the benefits is that the researcher can learn from the interactions between focus group members understanding how or why individuals feel the way they do (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). Recognizing an opportunity for greater sharing and learning, I envisioned using focus groups as a way to give young people the opportunity to learn from each other, to allow young people to exchange ideas and perspectives. A similar interest was identified by Fundación TIERRA. The foundation

was interested in giving young people a greater understanding of the processes of indigenous autonomy underway in their communities as well as giving young people an opportunity to discuss the significance of indigenous autonomy and what, as young people, they wanted and needed in their communities (conversation with Fundación TIERRA staff February 8, 2012). From these discussions, the decision to hold youth meetings was made.

Three youth meetings were held, one in the municipality of Mojocoya (in the town of Redención Pampa on March 9-10, 2012) and two in the municipality of Tarabuco (one in the town of Cororo on March 20, 2012 and one in the town of Tarabuco on March 27, 2012). Fundación TIERRA took primary responsibility for organizing the youth meetings. The foundation covered the expenses of the meetings which included, food, transportation and in one case, accommodation. The foundation also dedicated extra staff to support the facilitation and day-of logistics of the youth meetings. The organization was done in close partnership with school officials in both communities, including education district directors, school principals, and school teachers. The school officials took care of the communication, logistics and support, including parental support. I contributed to the organization of the youth meetings by planning the agendas for the meetings, including suitable facilitation methods and by writing reports on each of the youth meetings.

The youth meeting in the municipality of Mojocoya brought together high school students from the four towns/villages in the municipality with public schools and students

from the *Centro Educativo Alternativo "Gregoria Apaza"* (the center for alternative education). The youth meeting in the town of Cororo (in the municipality of Tarabuco) brought together students from the high school and the *Escuela Superior de Formación de Maestros "Simón Bolívar"* (the teacher-training college). The youth meeting in the town of Tarabuco brought together students from the high school and the *Instituto Superior Tecnológico Agroindustrial "Carrillo Calizaya"* (the agro-industrial technical institute).

Students from the high schools were in their last year of courses and in the coming year will likely be working in their communities or migrating for post-secondary education or work. Most of the young people participating in the focus groups were not actively participating in the processes of establishing indigenous autonomy. There were two exceptions where young assembly members were students at one of the post-secondary institutions and participated in the youth meeting.

My role in the organization of the youth meetings was in working with Fundación TIERRA staff to develop the agenda, identify the most suitable facilitation methods, and create materials for the youth meetings. Each of the youth meetings followed the same general methodology, although due to different time restraints they ran slightly differently. The meetings opened with formal introductions from school representatives, and when available, autonomy assembly leaders or members. Young people filled out a before-section of a 2-part questionnaire. Fundación TIERRA gave an introduction to

indigenous autonomy at the national level and the process underway in their community (giving everyone an important general understanding of the topic enabling them to discuss the issues).

The young people were then divided into smaller focus groups or 'breakout groups'. The focus groups functioned differently than textbook research methodology dictates, but nonetheless resulted in positive experiences for young people and valuable data collection. Due to the number of participants, there were a large number of groups (at minimum there were 4 groups per meeting and at maximum 6 groups) and each group had a large number of people (group size ranged from 9 to 15 young people). The large number of groups meant that each group was generally self-facilitated, with support being provided by myself and Fundación TIERRA staff members who circulated between groups. Each group was given two topics to discuss. In total, three topics were discussed by the groups: 1) participation of young people, 2) indigenous autonomy, 3) culture and the future of their community. The groups were encouraged to discuss the topics at length and were given a few questions and suggested topics for analysis and reflection.

To conclude the youth meetings, each of the groups then presented their discussions to the full audience of their peers who were encouraged to ask questions. At the end, the young people filled out the after-section of the questionnaire and the youth meetings were drawn to a close with words of thanks from me, participants, Fundación TIERRA staff and school representatives. The presentations of the discussions had in break-out groups,

the questionnaire responses as well as observations made at each youth meeting served as the main sources of data collected from the youth meetings.

The breakout section of the meetings was generally very successful. The focus groups gave young people the opportunity to develop skills, build competencies, acquire confidence and form aspirations. By having greater confidence in their own ability and knowledge young people are more likely to actively participate in other opportunities (Lansdown, 2002 in Wierenga, 2003). The youth meetings gave young people a formal opportunity to engage in discussions with their peers about the important changes underway in their communities. The focus groups provided a safe place for youth to raise issues, uncertainties, ideas and dreams without the perceived judgement of adults or leaders in their community. Further, working in self-facilitated breakout groups enabled youth leaders to self-identity and lead group discussions, and it also required group effort and delegation of tasks to members of the group, all of which are important skills needed for community participation. The presentation of the group work also built public speaking skills and self-confidence in the young people.

However, there were also several factors that limited the successfulness of the focus groups. First, the breakout group size was large, which limited the active participation of all group members. Second, the lack of a facilitator in each group limited the depth of the discussion. This was noted especially during the presentations of the group work done during the youth meeting held in the town of Tarabuco: a teacher from the institute

voluntarily sat in with each focus group and directed parts of the conversation resulting in presentations that addressed the issues at a deeper level than many of the other presentations given at other youth meetings. And finally, from a researcher's perspective, the lack of a facilitator in each group limited the in-depth understanding of how the groups arrived at the answers and discussion points presented to the full audience. In circulating between groups, I was able to listen to group discussion, but in some cases, the groups viewed me as an intruder into their conversations and discussions quieted.

While a strong element of the youth meetings and focus groups was the formation of ideas and perspectives of the young population in the communities, there was very little participation by leaders in the municipalities (either leaders of the autonomy assemblies or other municipal and school leaders).[20] Another support role that I played was in preparing post-event documentation of the youth meetings. Three reports were prepared, in Spanish, summarizing each of the youth meetings, providing results in the words of the youth and analysis and reflections. It is intended that the summary reports will be shared with the participating schools, the autonomy assemblies and community leaders as well as within Fundación TIERRA. A fourth report was prepared specifically at

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[20] Leaders of the Autonomy Assembly, the *sindicato*, and the schools were invited. In Mojocoya, the *sindicato* leader and one principal and the teachers attended the inauguration of the meeting but none stayed or returned for the youth presentations, despite being informed when they would take place. In Cororo, in the municipality of Tarabuco, only the head of the teacher training college and the teacher from the high school attended the inauguration, likewise they did not stay or return. In Tarabuco, the head of the institute was present at the inauguration, and teachers from the institute participated throughout the day. There was no representation from the community leaders, the autonomy assembly leaders or the school district at either of the youth meetings held in the municipality of Tarabuco despite their being invited.

the request of and for Fundación TIERRA, summarizing the facilitation successes and limitations of the three youth meetings.

Writing contest. A writing contest was the final method that was used in my research. It allowed me to gather information from a large number of people without needing to meet and interview them (Warkentin, 2002). The writing contest method does require extra time to advertise, find sponsors or prizes, collect and judge the entries (Warkentin, 2002). One of the benefits of the writing contest method is that because they tend to be more open-ended allowing participants to write about what is meaningful to them, ideas that the researcher had not considered may be brought up (Warkentin, 2002). The rationale for the writing contest was to give young people an opportunity to further discuss indigenous autonomy without the influences of set questions. The writing contest not only pushed young people to learn more about indigenous autonomy, but it encouraged them to reflect on the topic using their own words to describe AIOC's significance.

The writing contest was also organized in conjunction with school officials and Fundación TIERRA. The contest was announced during the youth meetings and was open to all young people who had participated. The contest required that young people form groups of 3 to 5 people (although in one case this was overlooked) and submit a 5-7 page document on the topic of indigenous autonomy, written in their own words. The contest was open for roughly three weeks, at which point Fundación TIERRA and I returned to

collect the entries and present the prizes. Prizes were awarded to all participants of the writing contest in order to provide the most incentive for young people to participate in the writing contest and to avoid concerns about judging one group's opinions as being superior to another's.

In total, five essays were collected: two essays each written by a group of five young people from the high school in the town of Redención Pampa (in the municipality of Mojocoya), two essays each written by a group of five people from the high school in the town of Tarabuco, and one essay written by a group of 10 young people from the *Instituto Superior Tecnológico Agroindustrial "Carrillo Calizaya"* in the town of Tarabuco. The essays collected demonstrated that young people had taken the time to think about indigenous autonomy. However, given the openness of the question posed each of the essays was very different: some essays provided insight into the areas young people found important, other essays explicitly provided their ideas and opinions. Relevant information from these essays is used as data in my research.

The number of entries was less than expected based on the interest shown during the youth meetings. One of the factors that limited the number of entries was transportation; while transportation was provided for youth from rural villages to attend the youth meetings it was not provided to attend the writing contest submission and prize awarding event making it difficult for young people to submit essays. Although, after

making some phone calls to school officials, it was determined that some essays had not been finished ahead of the submission deadline.

Summary

The time that I spent conducting field research allowed me to interact with the young people in the communities in a number of different ways. Multiple trips to the communities, staying overnight, sharing lunch and dinners as well as coca (at the autonomy assembly meetings, but not the youth meetings) allowed me to become somewhat more known and accepted in the communities and opened up opportunities for informal conversations.

The methods used to conduct the research were strategically chosen to enable me to collect the relevant data and to build the knowledge and capacity of the young people that participated. Building capacity and knowledge was only made possible through the close working relationship developed with Fundación TIERRA as they brought valuable contacts and an in-depth knowledge of AIOC to the research. I was able to contribute to the relationship my time, an interest in the youth perspective and knowledge and skills in the planning of research, facilitation of meetings and post-event reporting. In the end the physical outcomes of the working relationship and the research are the written essays, the youth meeting reports and my thesis. Though perhaps the most successful outcomes are the opportunities created for young people to discuss amongst themselves these important

processes underway and the awareness at Fundación TIERRA and in the communities that young people may have something valuable to contribute.

Chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion

Indigenous autonomy opens opportunities for indigenous communities to create institutions of self-governance at least partly according to their own *cosmovisión* and culture. As has been discussed above in the literature review and Bolivian context chapters, the right to self-determination has been a long struggle and the recent success marks an important, although far from complete, change in the relationship between the state and indigenous peoples in Bolivia. The AIOCs being established in indigenous communities in Bolivia hold potential for these indigenous communities to realize their aspirations and a way of life they choose. However, thoughts and ideas about culture, governance and the future are not the same for every member of the community. In a field of research that focuses predominantly on the cohesiveness of indigenous communities (see Cameron 2012; Canessa 2008), the following chapter presents and analyzes my research on the divergent perspectives of young people in Tarabuco and Mojocoya.

The first section of the chapter presents the socio-economic, cultural and political context of the municipalities of Tarabuco and Mojocoya and briefly discusses their process establishing AIOC as both have progressed differently. While the processes

underway are different, the perspectives of the young people in the municipalities, even those participating as members of the autonomy assemblies, are remarkably similar and will be presented together, except in cases were distinction is warranted.

The second section of the chapter analyzes and discusses the data collected during the field research. The analysis of the data builds on the bodies of literature presented above and roughly forms four areas of discussions. First, young people's hopes and desires for the future: what young people envision for their communities speaks to how they see development and the future of their autonomous communities. It raises and explores the importance of indigenous culture moving forward, the systems of community organization and politics, and the involvement of youth.

Second, young people's understanding of culture: this thesis argues that the right to indigenous autonomy has been won based on arguments of the continuity of shared community-based traditions and the distinctiveness of indigenous cultures. Here the discussion on culture looks at the ways in which indigenous culture is being appropriated and advanced by young people, a generation that is often accused by older members of their communities of not appreciating or respecting community traditions.

Third, young people's perspectives on governance: in this thesis, governance institutions are considered a part of culture, and recognized as critical in the ways in which individuals and communities make decisions for the future of their community.

Here the discussion looks at how young people feel about leadership and the political organization of their communities and their role in decision-making.

Finally, young people's perspectives on participation and opportunities to become involved in their communities: specifically how they feel they are participating and what their roles ought to be. Here the discussion also looks at what can be done to support youth efforts to participate. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the key points and discussions.

Mojocoya and Tarabuco: Political, Cultural and Socio-economic Context.

In order to understand the processes of establishing indigenous autonomy and writing the autonomy statute in each municipality, the following section presents a brief socio-economic, political and historical context of each municipality. Each municipality's history and culture have influenced the current day situation and shape ideas about how the community should develop in the future.

The municipality of Mojocoya. The municipality of Mojocoya is located 175 km (a three hour drive on mostly dirt roads) from the city of Sucre. The population of Mojocoya in 2001 was 7,926 (INE, 2001). In the 2001 census, 94.58% of the population self-identified as indigenous, with 93.82% identifying as Quechua (Colque, 2009). The vast majority of the population speaks Quechua (88%) and more than half (55%) are bilingual speaking Spanish and Quechua (INE assembled by Federación de Asociaciones

Municipales de Bolivia [FAM-Bolivia], 2011a). Roughly a third of the population is monolingual, speaking only Quechua. There are 30 towns and villages in the municipality of Mojocoya, the town of Redención Pampa being the most populated with 1,363 inhabitants (Vedia Vela, 2009).

In 2007, Redención Pampa became the municipal seat of power, stripping the nearby town of Mojocoya of its power as the seat of local government. There is a long history of tensions between the two towns and these tensions came to a head in 2007 in a violent standoff (including hostage taking and physical verbal threatening and issuing of death threats) between residents of the town of Mojocoya and Redención Pampa over the appropriate use of municipal road building equipment. The result of the standoff was the relocation of the municipal seat of power (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011). Until stripped of its power, the town of Mojocoya had always enjoyed relative prosperity as it was predominantly inhabited by the descendants of *hacienda* (semi-feudal estate) owners. Today, though the town of Mojocoya remains predominantly inhabited by descendants of *hacienda* owners, the town of Redención Pampa, that was and is almost completely populated by indigenous and *campesino* labourers and small-landholders, has become the political and economic center of the municipality (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011).

Tensions between the two towns remain high and many community members perceive the primary value of indigenous autonomy as a strategy for Redención Pampa to secure its power as the municipality's capital (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011). Redención

Pampa is also home to the offices of the *Sub-Centralía Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Mojcoya* (the municipal level federation of peasant agrarian unions) to which each of the 30 community-based organizations belong. The *Sub-Centralía* is the most powerful indigenous-campesino organization in the municipality, with most heads of family being affiliated to the organization (all members of the autonomy assembly are required to be affiliated).

Agriculture, livestock, hunting, forestry and simple manufacturing are the economic base in Mojocoya and the municipality's agricultural products include wheat, barley, corn, peaches, walnuts, and potatoes (Vedia Vela, 2009; FAM-Bolivia, 2011a). There is heavy transportation as well as public transportation that take people and products from Redención Pampa to Sucre and external markets. However the quality of roads connecting smaller communities and Redención Pampa is poor, making transportation within the municipality difficult and time-consuming especially during the rainy season (Vedia Vela, 2009).

The municipality of Mojocoya lacks many basic services and ranks low in the Human Development ranking of Bolivian municipalities: of 327 municipalities, Mojocoya ranks 250th (FAM-Bolivia, 2011a). There is a very high percentage (87.6%) of the population living in material poverty, measured as a percentage of the population unable to afford a basic food basket (Ministerio de Autonomía, 2009). Also a vast majority of the municipality lacks basic services: only 18% of homes are connected to a

potable water system, and only 20% have electricity (INE 2001, assembled by FAM-Bolivia, 2011a). Although, it should be noted that some young people indicated that there were projects underway in their communities to bring water and electricity to their homes.

Despite the low socio-economic rankings and evident poverty, residents of Mojocoya generally consider themselves to be happy and welcoming; a "characteristic of a good Mojocoyano" (Vedia Vela, 2009; personal communication, February 11, 2012). According to historians, the Mojocoya culture dates back thousands of years, facts evident in the pottery and rock paintings found in the area (Vedia Vela, 2009). In contemporary Mojocoya not much is known about the historic Mojocoya culture, although there is significant published research in academic journals on ceramics discovered in archeological research (see for example Siferd, 2007; Tapia Matamala, 2012).

Much of the history and culture that has shaped life in Mojocoya today stems from the arrival of the Spanish, the 1952 Revolution and subsequent 1953 Agrarian Reform. Mojocoya was an important area for the Spaniards as a result of its agricultural fertility and strategic location in fighting off the advances of lowland indigenous groups (Vedia Vela, 2009). It also featured during battles for independence as an important military theater in the fight between royalists and natives (Vedia Vela, 2009). After independence, citizens (i.e. non-indigenous people) who had supported the Republic were endowed immense tracts of land. The *hacienda* system "following a semi-feudal regime, obligated

the *campesino* to consider himself as an instrument of production of benefit almost exclusively to the landowner" (Vedia Vela, 2009, p. 148). The 1953 *Agrarian Reform Law* dispersed land to indigenous peoples and technically ended the *hacienda* system. However, the memories of exploitation and humiliation remain strong and continue to fuel tensions within the municipality (Vedia Vela, 2009; Cordero Rodríguez, 2011). Indeed, descendants of former *hacienda* owners continued to control municipal political power in Mojocoya until the late 1990s.

The 1953 *Agrarian Reform Law* implemented after the 1952 Revolution ushered in the *sindicato* system, which has remained strong in Mojocoya. Despite its initial imposition by the state, the *sindicato* system of community organization plays a dominant role in the 30 communities and is now an intrinsic and fiercely defended part of their culture. In discussions about the structure of their future government, the position of president of the *sub-centralía* (the highest level of *sindicato* organization in Mojocoya) was also given key responsibility within the municipality for *control social* (a body with formal responsibility for oversight and holding elected leaders accountable) (interview 0933). Despite the insistence on the part of a government-based *técnico* that the dual responsibility violated the *2009 Constitution* and a draft law on *control social*, assembly members maintained this dual responsibility was very appropriate and desirable for unity within the community (observations, March 31, 2011).

It was by way of an open-meeting that the community decided to pursue conversion to indigenous autonomy and began the process to ratify the decision by referendum in 2009 (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011). The referendum held on December 6, 2009 passed with 88.3% support and Mojocoya began the process of becoming an indigenous autonomy (Organo Electoral Plurinacional [OEP], 2009). As required by law, an autonomy assembly was created, and each member was chosen according to the *normas y procedimientos propios* (translated roughly as the norms and procedures or customary practices) of the community or organization; two members from each village (one male, one female) as well as representatives from public organizations working in the municipality (in areas such as health and education) and representatives from the mayor's office and *sub-centralía* make up the *Asamblea Autonómica Indígena Originario Campesino de Mojocoya* (the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya), which totals 106 members (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011).

As the process of converting to indigenous autonomy unfolded in Mojocoya, uncertainty and doubts about how AIOC will improve the quality of life have risen, and it became clear that ideas about how indigenous autonomy should be structured in the future were by no means unanimous (Cordero Rodríguez, 2011). However, the strength, prevalence and singularity of the *sindicato* system and the *sub-centralía* in how the communities organize as *campesinos* have helped to create a relatively smooth process establishing the autonomy statute. After more than three years of deliberations, the *Estatuto Autonómico Indígena Originario Campesino de Mojocoya* (the Autonomy

Statute of Mojocoya) was approved on February 12, 2012 unanimously by all assembly members present (which represented a two third majority; the vote was recorded in the official resolution sent to the President of Bolivia as being passed with a two third majority of the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya). At the time of writing, the process of indigenous autonomy conversion was still ongoing; following its approval by the autonomy assembly, the Autonomy Statute of Mojocoya still requires legal approval from Bolivia's Constitutional Tribunal and then subsequent ratification by municipality-wide referendum.

The municipality of Tarabuco. The municipality of Tarabuco is located 63km (less than 1 hour on paved roads) from the city of Sucre, and this proximity to the official capital of Bolivia has played an important role in the culture and livelihoods of community members for several generations, especially since good roads were first constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. In 2001, the population was 19,554 (INE, 2001). The population of Tarabuco also overwhelmingly self-identifies as indigenous (93.40%) with Quechua being the most common at 92.88% (Colque, 2009). A large percentage of the population speaks Quechua (91%) and 29% are bilingual, speaking Quechua and Spanish (INE assembled by FAM-Bolivia, 2011b). A large percentage of the municipality, concentrated almost entirely in its rural communities, is monolingual, speaking Quechua only.

The municipality of Tarabuco is composed of 72 towns and villages, most of which are organized as *sindicatos*. The most densely populated community, and center of commerce and local government is the town of Tarabuco, which has a population of 2,442 people (Vedia Vela, 2009). The residents of the town of Tarabuco are members of *juntas vecinals* (neighborhood councils) and are represented by the *Centro Poblado* which is one of three representative organizations within the municipality of Tarabuco. There are seven communities the municipality, representing roughly 10% of the population, which have re-organized themselves as *ayllus* choosing to reaffirm connections to pre-colonial forms of community organization. The other 67 communities are organized as *sindicatos* which belong to 10 *sub-centralías* or federations of communities, which represent roughly 80% of the municipality's population (Albo, forthcoming). The existence of three organizations in the municipality speaks to the interwoven Spanish-indigenous history of the area which has complicated the process of establishing indigenous autonomy immensely.

It was the *sindicato* leaders who initiated discussions to convert to indigenous autonomy (Albo, forthcoming). In the 2009 referendum community members ratified the decision voting 90.8% in favour of indigenous autonomy (OEP, 2009). However, the creation of an autonomy assembly proved to be a complicated struggle for legitimacy between the three organizations, specifically between the *sindicatos* and *ayllus*. Claiming greater legitimacy because their system of organization was more ancestral, the *ayllus* wanted to equally share representation in the autonomy assembly, despite their minority

population (Cameron, 2012; Albo, forthcoming). In the end, census population figures determined representation and the three organizations selected their representatives ("Tarabuco instala comisiones").

The *Asamblea Autonómico de Tarabuco* (the Autonomy Assembly of Tarabuco[21]) is composed of 95 members who have since worked in six commissions to draft the autonomy statute: 1, foundation and vision for autonomy; 2, structure of self-government and territorial organization; 3, judicial system; 4, competencies, finance and administration; 5, economic productivity and development; 6, human, social and cultural development. At the time of my research, the Autonomy Assembly of Tarabuco was working to compile a first draft of the autonomy statute, with discussions about the structure of self-government being slowed by deep and fundamental debates about naming, government structure and representation between members of the *sindicato* and *ayllu*-based organizations (observations, March 24, 2012).

In the seven communities where organizations follow the reconstructed *ayllu* system, community members are creating an alternative system of organization, based on traditions of their ancestors. According to one leader of the *ayllu* movement in Tarabuco, changes to the model of governance were needed and in so doing the communities feel

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[21] The name of the autonomy assembly in Tarabuco also demonstrates the challenges the municipality has faced in establishing indigenous autonomy. All other autonomy assemblies in Bolivia opted for the name *Asamblea Indígena Originaria Campesina Autonómica* of whichever community. However, in Tarabuco, the name was hotly debated; the representatives from the *sindicatos* insisted on the term *campesina* and the representatives from the *ayllus* insisted on the term *originaria* (Cameron, 2012). In the end, the representatives agreed to omit all identifiers from the name of the assembly and settled on *Asamblea Autonómico de Tarabuco* (Autonomy Assembly of Tarabuco).

better able to create a new model of development, one that respects and lives in harmony with *Pachamama* (mother earth) (interview 1534). The decision to re-convert their *sindicato* organizations into *ayllus* was made in 2002, previous to which all community organizations had followed the *sindicato* system established after the 1952 Revolution (Albo, forthcoming). The *haciendas* with indigenous labour dominated rural community organization since the 1880s, and while some elements of *ayllu* organization may have continued the *haciendas* had effectively destroyed the *ayllu* system (Albo, forthcoming). Even with the *1953 Agrarian Reform Law*, there was not a return to the *ayllu* system instead indigenous people became small landholders and members of the *sindicato* system (Albo, forthcoming).

The Yampara culture, the broader cultural group to which the municipality of Tarabuco belongs dates to times before the arrival of the Spanish, but the strong Tarabuqueño identity was consolidated during the colonial period.[22] It was an identity that was heavily rooted in the traditions of pre-colonial ancestors but also incorporated many elements of their colonial status (Albo, forthcoming). Similar to the Mojocoya culture what is known about the pre-Hispanic Yampara culture comes predominantly from archeological studies of ceramics and textiles. The Yampara culture is thought to be

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[22] It should be noted that young people self-identified as a Tarabuqueñan and at times simply as Quechua rather than as belonging to the Yampara culture. Although there is a public campaign effort to have Tarabuqueños self-identify as belonging to the Yampara nation (culture) in the 2012 census.

more recent than the Mojocoya culture and influenced by the Incas (for more information see Del Río & Presta, 1984; Barragán, 1994; Albo, forthcoming).

Today, one of the most important festivities in the region, the *Pujllay*, combines celebration of an important battle won against the Spaniards in 1816 and gratitude of the abundance of the *Pachamama*. A large wooden tower, a *pukara*, is erected, adorned with agricultural products such as potatoes, onions, peaches, apples, bread as well as beer and plastic bottles of soft drinks. The festivities, that include music and dancing around the *pukara,* celebrate the fertility of the land (Vedia Vela, 2009). The other half of the celebration pays homage to a battle fought against the Spaniards on March 12, 1816 in which Tarabuqueñas driven by hatred and revenge took the heart from the chest of the Spaniards and ate it; a battle commemorated by a statue in the main plaza in Tarabuco (Vedia Vela, 2009). The *Pujllay* is one of the most recognizable elements of culture in Tarabuco and is instrumental in the recuperation of local identity and pride, as well as the local tourism industry.

The *Pujllay*, specifically, but also a weekly Sunday market draws tourists interested in Yampara culture and textiles to Tarabuco. Tourism along with agriculture, livestock, hunting and forestry form the base of the economy in Tarabuco (Vedia Vela, 2009). However, material poverty remains very high in the municipality with 86.5% of the population unable to afford a basic food basket (Ministerio de Autonomía, 2009). Further, the municipality lacks many basic services: only 17% of homes are connected to a potable

water system, 6% to a sewer system, and only 41% of the homes have electricity (INE 2001, assembled by FAM-Bolivia, 2011b). The municipality of Tarabuco ranks low in the Human Development ranking of Bolivian municipalities, placing 296th out of 327 municipalities (FAM-Bolivia, 2011b).

Both Tarabuco and Mojocoya rank low in human development rankings, face high levels of poverty and are lacking in basic services and infrastructure. Each community has a long history of living in harmony with and on the land prior to the arrival of the Spanish, however the interactions between the Spanish colonizers and the indigenous peoples of the area has had an important impact on the culture. The more recent history of struggle against and forced labour for the Spanish, as well as the *1953 Agrarian Reform* and the revalorization of ancestral traditions all shape the lived culture of these two municipalities. It is through the creation of norms and legal institutions according to their own needs, in respect of community organization practices and long-standing (or recently revalorized) traditions that the communities hope to create a better future. The following section looks at the young people's perspective on development, culture, government, and participation within this process of institutional and cultural (re)construction.

Youth Perspectives on Indigenous Autonomy

The future aspirations of young people. Ideas about "progress" and "development" featured strongly in the answers given by young people when asked about

their desires for the future of their community. Many young people felt that progress would be achieved through increasing productivity (commercialization and diversification of agricultural production), making road access more reliable (pave roads to communities), the creation of economic opportunities (through irrigation projects, agricultural projects), and the generation of income (through museums and increased tourism). Their answers indicated an economically-oriented view of development and progress; through increased economic activity their community will be better off.

Young people felt that in order to increase economic opportunities, effort was needed in the agricultural and tourism sectors (tourism will be discussed below). Many young people acknowledged the importance of agriculture and indicated pride in the fact that their communities remained agriculturally productive communities:

> Here we are Mojocoyanos, we are identified by our experiences and our culture, we are workers, we are productive, our economy is based on production (interview 1117).

> Our economic base is agricultural production. If we don't have agricultural production then they will start to migrate to search for work, for sources of income to support the family to support their kids (interview 1534).

> For the future of my municipality, I desire that there are productive [agricultural] projects in every community (interview 0436).

The post-secondary institution in the municipality of Tarabuco has two programs *agropecuario* (livestock and farming) and *agroindustria* (agroindustry). These students' ideas for the future were on the commercialization and industrialization of agriculture and

exploration of new products such as dairy. Further in their essay, the students discussed how the municipality should improve in the area of the environment, which included ideas such as water conservation, avoidance of chemical pesticides and the promotion of organic farming as well as overall environmental awareness. The institute supports an agriculturally productive community by building new agricultural knowledge and skills in young people. Both Tarabuco and Mojocoya are agriculturally-based economies and agricultural knowledge is valued by adults in the community. In Mojocoya, one former community leader felt that young people who were pursuing education and professions in veterinary or agriculture would be better able to serve the community than those pursuing education and professions in medicine or law.

Young people saw their education, even in the fields of medicine or law, as a means for supporting their communities. In one interview, a young person said that as a lawyer he could help with land titling issues and securing personal documentation (e.g. identity cards). Young people were of the opinion that they had a responsibility to help their community; and further, that with their education they would be able to provide assistance in their community by having knowledge and skills that their parents did not have.

> I participate in meetings, taking minutes because our parents cannot read nor write correctly, also [I participate] in all the activities that take place (youth meeting 7580).

> The students are not affiliated [to their communities], their fathers, their mothers, their brothers [are] but [the] children are professionals … they

have to assume positions … they have to support the organizations (interview 0933).

These ideas about responsibility to their community were frequent among young people who generally also indicated they participate in their communities. However, community-minded ideas and desires were also prominent in many young people's answers about the future of their communities. Many of the youth indicated that they wanted more opportunities to participate and engage in their communities, more learning opportunities and stronger organizations for their communities. There was an expressed desire for youth and adults to participate together, for there to be unity in their community and that the AIOC benefit the entire community. These answers suggest that even in the younger generation there is still a strong sense of community, of responsibility to their community and an interest in the community's success.

Another theme in young people's answers about the future of their communities was education. In Mojocoya, education featured most prominently, young people hoping for better *colegios* (secondary schools) and for a university. In Tarabuco, where there is a post-secondary institution, young people felt that in the future, as an AIOC, schools should be built where needed and "elementary and secondary schools should be improved so students feel safe and have their needs met" (essay 0409). Further, they asserted that schools need more and better materials and supplies, internet access, and courses to support new technology. In the village of Cororo (in the municipality of Tarabuco), where there is a teacher-training school, improvements in school infrastructure were raised for

primary and secondary schools, but more prominently was the *capacitación* (training) of young people through meetings, workshops and other events (which will be discussed below). In most cases, young people were discussing formal channels of education, the state-built and run schools teaching, currently, the bilingual and intercultural curriculum.

The 'formal' or state-run education system, while bilingual and intercultural, still often privileges western ideologies, science and technology. This modern education has typically conflicted with and discriminated against traditional knowledge and understandings of the world. Yet, with the creation of more institutions of formal education young people are even further exposed to such ideologies and knowledges and bring them into their communities.

One young assembly member highlighted that the education system doesn't value traditions and culture: "[culture] is not something they teach at the university" (interview 1534). They commented further that formal education and participation in the community are complementary, as a way to learn both about their culture and traditions and modern ideology. However, not everyone feels that young people have knowledge and ideas that can be valuable contributions to their communities; one leader commented that young people are judged as being "inexperienced" (interview 1141 - leader). While formal education and further post-secondary schooling is generally supported by older members of the community, knowing and understanding the cultural practices and the governance institutions is also required and deemed important.

Young people's perspectives on culture. Culture, as a term discussed in this thesis, is understood to comprise many aspects of daily life: "social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life" (Kymlicka, 1995). The young people were asked to talk about their culture and its importance to them; it was also a topic that came up freely in response to other questions. Every young person referred to culture in slightly different ways: customs, history, language, food, songs, music, clothing, textiles, art, dance, cosmovision, *usos y costumbres*[23], governance, identity, values, traditions, experiences, medicine, stories, legends, land, *pachamama*.

There were comments from the young people that culture is disappearing. Many adults and leaders also expressed the sentiment that young people do not respect culture.

> Young people leave the community, leave the municipality and [when] they come back they cannot speak Quechua. … Almost the majority of young people do not respect our origin, our culture (interview 0735 - leader).

> Today, the young people are no longer using culture, traditional clothing, and therefore little by little it will disappear. There are very few people who use culture (youth meeting 7580).

> Many are losing, many are denying the culture we belong to, this is a bad thing. To say what culture we are, where we are from is to tell the truth. Many here are losing the culture and it is not good (youth speaking on Radio Mojocoya, March 9, 2012).

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[23] *Usos y costumbres* roughly translates as customs and traditions. It is commonly used in Bolivia though *normas y procedimientos propios* translated as norms and procedures or customary practices is the politically correct term. Given the tendency for young people to express customs and traditions as *usos y costumbres* I use the term more readily in my thesis, unless making reference to an official document or process.

Clothing and dress represent a very visual form of cultural expression, albeit one that is perhaps superficial to understanding if a person really respects and follows the values of their culture. However it is worth discussing a few observations about clothing in Tarabuco and Mojocoya. For the most part, young people who participated in the youth meetings wore jeans, t-shirts and other western clothing. Some young women wore the *pollera* skirt and fedora hat, common place to *campesinas* in the rural areas of Chuquisaca, although they represent only a minority of the young people who participated. At the assembly meeting in Tarabuco, most young people wore modern clothing whereas at the assembly meeting in Mojocoya, the women, young and old, wore the *pollera* skirt and the men either fedora or no headwear.

Many of the young people who participated in Tarabuco's *Pujllay* celebration, which is one of the most important celebrations in the region and attracts tourists from around Bolivia and the world, wore either for the women a *pollera* skirt, and the men, fedora hats. Others wore traditional Tarabuqueña clothing, which includes white calf-length pants, intricately woven ponchos and hats for the men, and similarly intricate ponchos and shawls for the women. Nevertheless, more than a few young men coupled their traditional ponchos with a baseball cap (observations, February 25, 2012). The different clothing worn at the *Pujllay* celebration highlights an important division in the cultural-political dynamics of Tarabuco; some community members displayed more traditional indigenous clothing, while others displayed their *campesino* identity. It is not possible to assume that those who dressed more in indigenous styled clothing were

members of the *ayllus*: at autonomy assembly meetings, some of the most outspoken members of the *sindicatos* who fiercely defend the post-1953 *sindicato* organizational system wore traditional clothing (observations March 22-24, 2012; see also Cameron, 2012).

At the *Pujllay* celebration, a large percentage of young people dressed according to culture and tradition (whether traditionally indigenous or more commonly *campesino*). It was a public display of culture and tradition aimed to both celebrate their culture but also to showcase their culture to the thousands of Bolivian and foreign tourists that descended on the celebration to watch the colourful dancing, listen to the traditional music and to see the president of Bolivia. Using culture to promote tourism and generate income was a strategy raised by many young people when they discussed their hopes for the future as a way that their community could develop. Young people in Tarabuco felt that culture was a key attraction of each community and wanted tourist attractions and museums dedicated to the Yampara Culture to be built and wanted cultural nights to be hosted that showcased culture of each community. In one essay submitted, young people gave their reason for culturally-based tourism:

> So that everyone knows where culture comes from, what important things [our] culture has, what significance [culture] has for the inhabitants (essay 1944).

While the value of culture for tourism was predominantly expressed in Tarabuco, in both Tarabuco and Mojocoya young people also expressed that they were proud of their

culture quite separately from its usefulness in attracting tourists. They felt that their culture would be passed forward and not lost.

> Always we value past customs, *usos y costumbres*, we value them too … we will not lose this culture. … There are celebrations, … traditions, songs, food … these past customs we always remember, we do not forget, not even the children, grandchildren, these [customs] we must, they must value [them] (interview 0933).

> Culture is important not to forget. Our culture will go forward so that we do not lose more in the future. We cannot forget or stop or we might lose [our culture] (interview 0436).

In these quotes, young people discuss culture as traditions, ideologies and values that have been passed on from their grandparents and ancestors. Young people discussed the continuity of culture: "our values have been maintained and still exist" (interview 1117); "we are not inventing [culture], we had it" (interview 1534). But equally strong to the continuity of culture was the idea that culture had to be revalorized: "[we have to] revalorize and strengthen the *usos y costumbres* of the region" (youth meeting 8471). Young people see value in the culture passed on from their ancestors and discussed learning more about their culture, recuperating stories. It is an expression of interest in culture that is not paired with a desire to always dress in traditional clothing.

The idea that culture is relevant and important in identity was raised in various discussions. Culture as a way to be identified, recognized, and valued and to be unique was raised by many young people. The need for an identity and to know where you came from was an important theme.

> The Mojocoya culture has always been highly [valued] and we as young people must not lose our culture, we must not lose our music, because that's what makes us proud of us (youth speaking on Radio Mojocoya, March 9, 2012).

> [A cultural identity] is important; to know who I am. Who am I and to know who were our ancestors and to have a historical memory. A person without culture, I think is like not having a soul because you don't know where you are from, who you are (interview 1534).

> Culture has a lot of importance because through culture we are recognized, valued and identified, furthermore it is the root of our origin (youth meeting 7580).

Folkloric understandings of culture as expressed through clothing, music, food and celebrations were first of mind in discussions and interviews, but the young people in both communities clearly also understood their culture to mean more: for many they saw culture to be inclusive of the traditions and customs of their ancestors. Young people saw their culture as something that identified them, gave them a sense of belonging, and pride. In both communities culture was being used in ways that could generate benefits for the community: whether through the continuance of *usos y costumbres* in community governance structures as part justification for indigenous autonomy or through the public displays of clothing, dance, food and music for, at least in part, tourism purposes.

Several young people noted the importance of culture in their indigenous autonomy allowing them to value and recuperate their culture and self-govern according to their traditions and practices. They pointed out that their culture would be protected in the future. Young assembly members commented that their culture was recorded in the

autonomy statute. The approved Autonomy Statute of Mojocoya begins with a section listing culture, identity (clothing, food, drinks, music, celebrations, and *cosmovisión*), symbols, language and religion; a section similar to this is common in most autonomy statutes drafted thus far. Furthermore, the autonomy statutes also speak to governance structures, development, and health, education which all include/combine elements of indigenous culture and in some cases modern ideology (as will be discussed below).

Recuperating culture was important for young people. When the topic of migration, one of the key challenges facing the communities, was raised many people identified social and cultural impacts of young people leaving the communities: "in some communities there are no young people … this affects the [community] organizations and their family too" (interview 0735). However, as the discussions continued, the action needed to address migration centered on economic and productivity-based solutions rather than cultural ones.

> The big impact is economic; [it] is not culture. It's an economic factor, young people start to dress better, want better things … there is almost no cultural factor (interview 1117).

> The youth that want to stay, stay. … There are lots of people who leave, but if there were political, social, economic activities for the youth, I think they would stay. … If here they generate economy then why do they have to go elsewhere? (interview 1141 - leader).

> So that they do not go to other places to search for [a better] life, so that they do not leave their family, we are thinking that they [need] work so that the young people stay … Also some young people left to study and

came back […] to his municipality, to these [people] we are giving opportunities to work in their municipality (interview 0735 - leader).

When asked directly about culture, it featured prominently in young people's answers, and culture was seen as something that was needed for the future. However, in relation to challenges facing the community, such as high levels of migration, culture took a back seat. While the impacts of migration are social and cultural, the solutions suggested were mainly economically based. One area where culture, understood as *usos y costumbres*, was important was in discussions about governance.

Young people's perspectives on community governance. One of the key elements of autonomy and indigenous self-determination is self-governance. Self-governance gives the community jurisdiction over certain elements (for example education, health, land and resources); however, it is the structure of the future self-governments and modes of representation that will establish how and who makes the community's decisions. One young assembly member noted that "at the base of our *cosmovisión* is our system of governance" (interview 1534). The autonomy statute being written in each of the municipalities has a large section on the structure of government of the new autonomies, which proved to be hotly debated and contentious issues in both autonomy assemblies.

In Mojocoya, one of the final debates before approving the autonomy statute was the structure of government. With the help of the *equipo técnico*, the assembly members designed a two-level system of representation in which at the first stage, one candidate for

mayor and two candidates for assembly members would be chosen through *normas y procedimentos propios* in each of the four zones in the municipality. The twelve candidates would then advance to the second stage where one mayor and five assembly members would be elected through democratic secret-ballot voting (observations February 10-11, 2012). The debates were lengthy and included multiple votes and explanations of various draft proposals to ensure the assembly members understood the process being approved. While some young people did attend the meeting, not many voiced opinions on the topic, although most everyone voted on the key proposals (observations February 10-11, 2012).

In Tarabuco, the commission tasked with determining the structure of government was also full of debate and differing proposals. Complicating the process in Tarabuco (as discussed above) is the existence of three organizations with very different ideas about governance structures. Two young assembly members were members of the governance commission in Tarabuco. Their activeness in the proceedings was dramatically different.[24] One young assembly member is vice-president of the commission, and was vocal in the debates about the governance structure; the other young assembly member

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[24] Worth noting is that one of the young assembly members was female and the other male which may have contributed to their confidence and willingness to contribute. Gender differences were observed during the autonomy assembly meetings in both Tarabuco and Mojocoya: while elected observing traditions of gender parity, more men actually attended the assembly meetings and men generally spoke more often than women. However, a near-majority of the assembly members did not actively participate at all. The characteristic of being young woman did not seem to drastically alter the likelihood of participation differently than being a young man. Further than these brief observations, a gendered analysis of the processes underway in Tarabuco and Mojocoya is beyond the scope of my thesis and research.

did not participate at all in the debates, but did vote and thus contributed to the decisions taken in the commission. Another of the young assembly members in Tarabuco noted that "I have learned things but I don't participate. But I vote, yes, I support [the process], yes" (interview 0746).

Worth noting is that in Tarabuco, when young assembly members were approached to participate in the research and to conduct an interview, a few were very shy and initially reluctant to discuss the process fearing that they would not be able to speak accurately about the indigenous autonomy process. After being reassured that the research was more concerned about their opinions and perspectives on the autonomy process, they consented to participate. During the interview, when asked about what AIOC meant to them, one young assembly member simply read a quote from a published pamphlet on indigenous autonomy circulated by one of the assisting non-governmental organizations rather than express her own ideas.

With the exception of a few young assembly members, the lack of knowledge or confidence in their understanding of the autonomy process was common amongst almost all the young people who participated in the research. During the youth meetings, most young people acknowledged that they had heard of the term *Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina* or AIOC but did not understand its significance. The few people who did know about AIOC and its significance explained that it meant a form of self-government and being able to write laws. Generally, there was very little understanding

of what indigenous autonomy meant amongst the young people in both communities, young people commented that this was because "none of the [community leaders] have explained it to us" (youth meeting 3508).

Young people and community leaders highlighted the fact that there were not many opportunities for young people and community leaders to interact and discuss issues affecting their community. The opportunities for young people and community leaders to interact is primarily at sporting events, but "they do not discuss what [youth] want, what the municipality is planning, development or problems" (interview 1141 - leader). Young people acknowledged that apart from being consulted on issues relating to education, the youth meeting, conducted for this research, was the first time that their ideas as young people had been solicited.

The fact that young people and community leaders are not interacting is resulting in a lack of information which may have important consequences. On the one hand, young people as future leaders are not included in important decisions about AIOC that has the potential to change how they interact, participate and lead their community in the future. Further, the lack of interaction also is creating, at minimum, disillusion amongst the younger generation about the capacity of leadership, and worse, in some cases the potential for disengagement and apathy in the younger generation.

Asking young people their opinions, perspectives and ideas on governance structures was important both for my research but also for Fundación TIERRA's research.

Governance structures are important as ultimately they impact on the success of the community to meet its aspirations and goals. In Mojocoya, where the governance structure was formally approved by the assembly in February 2012, young people were asked to discuss what they thought about the new structure. They showed support for the new structure highlighting that they approved of the requirement for gender parity, and that all communities seemed to be represented in the new structure without discrimination.

In Tarabuco, where no decision had yet been approved on the structure, young people were asked to talk about what they would like to see in the new structure. Young people discussed the topic in focus groups and presented their ideas to their peers. There was little unity in the suggestions made; some groups substantiated their suggestions with a clear rationale while other groups lacked any clear reasoning and real conviction in their suggestions. Two groups suggested that the structure need not change but also that the mayor and five counselors should increase their level of work (implying that these positions should remain part of the system of self-governance). Three groups suggested that each *sub-centralía* should have a representative in the new legislative body (meaning potentially 10 representatives); another said that there should be representation from all organizations in the community (including health, education, mothers and young people); and yet another said that the government should be made up of four people, one indigenous governor and three assembly members.

Competency, efficiency and ability to complete projects and promises were identified by almost all of the youth as important features of leadership. Many young people were disillusioned by current leadership in the municipality of Tarabuco for not paying attention to the community or not completing projects.[25] These ideas came up when young people described the current reality in their community: "in my community, [we] are very neglected by the leaders of the municipality" (youth meeting 3508), "[we] are not well informed about the organizations or what they mayor's office does, but from [our] point of view [the] community has problems, for example the majority of the people do not understand [indigenous] autonomies" (youth meeting 8417). Therefore, young people suggested that by having a representative per *sub-centralía*, the needs and desires of the smaller towns and villages in the municipality of Tarabuco (in many cases the communities where young people, who have come to municipal centers to attend school, were born) could be more effectively addressed.

Another point that was discussed by young people in Tarabuco was what the requirements for holding an elected position ought to be, which could either encourage or put limitations on young people's participation. Being knowledgeable about community issues was the top criteria in all answers. Further, the leaders should be from the community, have minimum 5 years residency (meaning that they must live in the community for 5 years prior to being elected), be chosen by the community, and generally

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[25] There was also disillusionment in the municipality of Mojocoya, especially from the smaller villages further from the municipal capital of Redención Pampa.

knowledgeable about the community's needs and aspirations by attending meetings, assemblies and events. All groups suggested that the leader (man or woman) had to be affiliated to the community, meaning that landownership was a prerequisite for leadership. Some young people felt that 17 was an appropriate minimum age, while others felt that an individual would not be experienced enough until the age of 20. Requiring five years residency and affiliation to the community does not stray far from the current practices in the community. These requirements also continue to place young people at a disadvantage as being affiliated means they must own land in their community which can be difficult for young people.

Formal education also featured in the criteria for being a leader, which does mark a distinction from current practices. Of the groups who mentioned the need for education, two groups suggested leaders should have secondary schooling. One group suggested that a bachelor's degree was needed. Attaining a bachelor's degree limits older generations, and even young people who must work or help support their families, from ever becoming leader of the municipality and privileges formal education over practical experience. Young people explained that should an individual not have formal education, it would be up to the community to ascertain they had enough knowledge and capacity to be leader. The education, residency and affiliation requirements proposed by young people create a difficult set of criteria which may be difficult for anyone to fully meet.

The suggestions about the structure of government and requirements for leadership put forward encouraged a strong connection to the communities, responsibility, and knowledge and experience. These are criteria that neither emphasize indigenous *usos y costumbres* or modern knowledge and practices but are a mix of the two. While young people tended to place blame on the community leaders for their limited knowledge about AIOC, apart from one suggestion to include representation from a (currently non-existent) youth organization there were no significant suggestions for changes to the governance structures that might give young people more prominent roles in decision-making. Young people did not discount themselves all together; when discussing youth participation they had strong ideas about what they could offer and what was lacking in the communities to encourage participation, but they did not articulate ideas for self-governance that would specifically give them greater representation.

Young people on youth participation in their communities.

Participating in the community also meant different things to different people. The young people who participated in the research fell generally into four categories: 1) those who I saw actively participating in the autonomy assemblies as elected representatives from their communities or chosen representatives from their organizations, 2) those who attended the youth meetings and said they participated in their communities, 3) those who admitted not being able to participate yet wanted to, and 4) those who didn't express any interest in participating. In some cases young people felt they participated when they

played sports, others when they provided labour for infrastructure projects or events in their community, others when they participated in meetings and helped their parents.

The experiences with participation of those who were elected or chosen as representatives were the most positive. These young people felt that they were able to participate actively in the assembly meetings and that their opinions or ideas were or would be heard and taken into consideration. While it was a common sentiment, it was clear that not all young assembly members participated with equal confidence. In Mojocoya, one young assembly member hardly spoke at all in the assembly meeting although she did speak softly to people next to her, but never addressed the assembly. The lack of active participation was also raised by a leader and even some young assembly members.

> Until this moment, young people hardly participate at all. […] it seems they are still fearful, they listen only, they do not propose what they want, their proposals, their suggestions are not given. They listen, they do not participate (interview 0735 - leader).

> For some [young people] participation is less because at times they are young people who have recently come to this situation, to this space, therefore it is not easy for them … (interview 1534).

When asked what the leaders of their community could do to encourage participation of young people, one leader noted that young people should be respected and valued but instead at times are laughed at for being wrong: "wrong or right, what is suggested should be respected, in this way [we] can improve the participation of young people" (interview 0735).

Young assembly members had the support of their communities, having been elected to represent their community at the meetings with the responsibility to bring information and proposals back and forth from the assembly meeting to their community. However, the confidence to speak in front of assemblies of 80 to 120 people was lacking as was the confidence to raise opinions and suggestions that might be perceived as wrong.

The lack of confidence was also raised amongst the young people who attended the youth meetings. Some of them identified their fear of speaking in front of people as a reason for not participating, and others appreciated the chance to speak in front of their peers as way to get practice or lose their shyness. However, also common in the answers given at the youth meeting was that when they do speak, young people are not taken into account by the leaders or older people in their communities. One group identified that "they do not take us into account because we do not have experience" (youth meeting 3508). Other groups felt ignored by leaders, but did not give reasons for it. Some young people acknowledged that they were not taken into account, but that it was the fault of the youth: "If we had more interest to know more about [our] community, to know about whatever, they would take [us] into account" (interview 0746).

Another common reason given for young people not participating was that it was their fathers or parents who participated, because they were affiliated. Young people not being affiliated was an excuse for not needing to participate, but also a reason for not being taken seriously, because young people were not affiliated they were often perceived

by both themselves and adults as superfluous or too inexperienced to participate. When

asked if young people could participate without being affiliated, a leader replied:

> Community meetings are open, they do not preclude the participation of
> young people. As long as you are the right age, 18 or when you have a
> partner and then the partner affiliates. Although those under 18 or
> without partner, only the [head] of the family affiliate, but when they
> have their own [land] they have to affiliate (interview 1141 - leader).

The requirement to be affiliated which in turn requires land ownership, clearly

limits young people's participation; with very few exceptions, it is a criterion to be met

before a young person can be taken seriously in their community. However, rather than

see this as a negative limitation to their participation, young people overwhelmingly

indicated that they thought it was an important element needed for leadership. Being

affiliated was associated with being knowledgeable about the needs and desires of the

community, it was linked with being responsible and apart of the community in which

they are a leader.

Another element raised by a vast majority of young people was the desire for more

training workshops and discussions. Many young people expressed interest in learning

more about indigenous autonomy, the local benefits and how it fits into the national

changes underway; however, others expressed interest in participating in the workshops

and training opportunities that already take place in their communities feeling that it

would enable them to help and to contribute in their communities.[26] Young people felt that they could learn more, gain more experience, develop the confidence of the older people and be effective participants in their communities if they could jointly participate in workshops, training or information sessions. These sessions would also help diffuse knowledge between young people and older people, responding to a suggestion from a focus group that "raising the awareness of parents towards youth and vice versa" was important (youth meeting 3508).

Many young people felt that a youth organization would help create meaningful dialogue and an understanding between older and younger generations. The youth organization was envisioned to operate similarly as other organizations with a president and a secretary who would be invited to other community events, meetings and training or workshops and would help solidify a youth voice in the community. In Mojocoya, a youth organization once existed and several educational organizations and a *comité municipal de la defensoria de la niñez y adolencia* (the municipal committee for the advocacy of children and youth) were named as organizations that should be represented in the Autonomy Assembly of Mojocoya, although it is not clear if these organizations had youth members or attended regularly. However, at the time of research a youth

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[26] These meetings, workshops or discussions are at times held with the support of external organizations, however, there was an implication that community meetings, workshops and discussions would be places that young people could learn more about traditions, culture and their community.

organization no longer existed, a leader commented that "they do not permanently live as young people, they are studying, and some have left" (interview 0735).

Young people, both those who were and were not participating, were asked what value youth can bring to their community or what contributions young people can make in their community. There were a lot of positive responses; young people saw themselves as important actors with skills and knowledge to contribute.

> We are valuable in writing minutes and soliciting help; we can contribute by soliciting for projects and proposals that benefit our community; we can make our ideas, thoughts, proposals, suggestions known in meetings, assemblies, workshops; we are living in the reality of our communities, through us we can continue to advance our community (youth meeting 7580).

> [We] can help with problems [the community] has, to solve economic problems, and with our professional training we can develop projects and manage them … (interview 1534).

> Youth don't have experience but they have strength, they have willingness (interview 1141 - leader).

The idea that youth have a strength and willingness was also raised by staff at Fundación TIERRA who noted that "in organizations where there are young people participating, the organizations are more dynamic, more active, there is more enthusiasm and more work gets done" (interview with Fundación TIERRA April 2, 2012). While the desire to participate is not universal in young people, those who want to participate and be active in their community might have a positive influence if their participation were

fostered and encouraged. There was a lot of optimism in the responses of young people, and a desire to participate and advance the indigenous autonomy process.

> I participate sometimes, I always like when they talk about our customs (youth meeting 7580).

> That young people that have the confidence of their communities, that they are active, that they are capacitated, that they are young representatives of their communities (interview 1117).

> [The Autonomy] Statute that we are writing, now in draft, will serve for the coming years, for the children, for the grandchildren. This statute, it will not change [us] now, or even tomorrow, but [this statute is] for the future … (interview 0933).

> I participate in the [*sindicato*] organizations because I want development (youth meeting 3508).

> We, as youth, are in this process, continuing what our fathers, our grandfathers, our ancestors [started]. We still continue this process, as youth, we continue this work the cultural, ideological, political, social reconstruction (interview 1534).

Those young people who want to participate and who are participating are doing it for the betterment of their communities. They are proud of their culture and the traditions of their ancestors. Young assembly members and the young people who had only just learned about indigenous autonomy were hopeful that AIOC would help them achieve a better future for their community. One group, in particular, said that: "[AIOC] seeks *vivir bien* (living well), development y *bienestar* (well-being) of the community members" (youth meeting 8417).

The young assembly members, with the support of their community or organization that elected them, are participating in their community and the process of change. There are also other young people in the community who are participating in some aspects of their community and who want to become more involved in developing their community. These young people acknowledge that they need more skills and knowledge but also point out that their community needs to have more confidence in them. Young people are optimistic and hopeful for a better future for their community, an idea shared by older generations writing autonomy statutes and establishing indigenous autonomy.

Summary

The chapter presented the data collected during field research and using the literature discussed above analyzed young people's perspectives on culture, governance and their community's future. Both Mojocoya and Tarabuco have low development indicators and both young people and community members alike hold hope that the AIOC will bring development, *vivir bien* (living well) and result in their communities' overall social and economic wellbeing. Young people shared their ideas about what the future would look like and their answers while economically-driven also spoke of a connection to their community and a strong desire for their community to succeed.

The culture in each of these two communities has been shaped by influences of colonization, specifically the *hacienda* system which forced indigenous people to work as slave labour resulting in a subordinate mentality that in places remains today. However,

the effects of the 1952 Revolution and subsequent Agrarian Reform remain visible: small indigenous landowners belonging to a *sindicato* that influences and regulates community organization and decision-making. While elements of traditional *cosmovisión* and culture continue to be present, and in some cases are replacing the *sindicato* system, the *sindicato* has undeniably shaped local cultural perspectives, particularly on self-governance.

Rather than turning away from these customs and traditions, young people are claiming their culture and seeing it as an important way to self-identify, to be unique and recognized. This appropriation of their indigenous culture is visible both in their public displays of culture aimed at boosting tourism as well as in their desires for structures of governance that ensure affiliation and residency in the community. Young people see that they can contribute knowledge and skills that they have learned in school and university, but they also see a need to continue to revalorize culture and to learn about and strengthen *usos y costumbres* and lessons from the past.

Many young people have internalized the mentality that they are not knowledgeable and are inexperienced as the reason for not being taken into account by leaders of their communities. Young people's desire for learning opportunities with older generations in their communities would build their skills and confidence, but it needs to be coupled with acceptance and support on the part of adults and current leaders in their communities. In cases where young people do have the support of their communities, the elected or chosen young assembly members, show more confidence and speak positively about the change

underway in their communities. Most young people have a willingness and enthusiasm, not to mention skills and knowledge, to participate in their communities to bring about development and a better future.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Central to my thesis have been the following two positions: that indigenous people have the right to use their culture to determine their own development aspirations including how to govern themselves and that young people are valuable contributors as rights holding members of their communities. Some traditions, practices and customs of indigenous culture, such as affiliation, limit the ability of young people to become actively involved in their community, though in many communities, young people's opinions and university education are increasingly being valued. The context for exploring these ideas was two Bolivian municipalities, Mojocoya and Tarabuco which are establishing indigenous autonomy. My research focused specifically on how young people in each municipality are participating in their community and how they envision the future of their community. It is through the process of establishing indigenous autonomy and their own governance institutions that these indigenous communities are making decisions about what values, ideologies and practices will guide their development in the future.

Culture is an important part of development; it is the framework in which a community reaches, rationalizes and realizes decisions. Furthermore, culture is linked to self-respect and dignity. The revalorization of a positive indigenous identity in Bolivia developed over decades of resistance and protests in defense of culture and resources. A connection to territory and land and the continuity of traditions and practices that existed prior to the arrival of the Spanish has been an important argument in the justification for self-determination. Connections to pre-Colonial practices continue to be visible in structures of community organizations and many contemporary indigenous organizations have strengthened, revalorized and readopted these traditions and practices. However, indigenous culture and even contemporary structures of community organization have undeniably taken on some elements of Spanish and later national-*mestizo* cultures.

In the context of community governance, the appropriation of the *sindicato* system imposed by the state after the 1952 Revolution is particularly strong in many indigenous communities. These adaptations to their colonial and republican status are not denied, but rather are embodied and celebrated by indigenous peoples today. The prevalence of the *sindicato* system and celebrations such as the *Pujllay* are clearly influenced by Spanish and *mestizo* cultures. Importantly, resistance to Spanish and *mestizo* ideologies and cultural practices is also an important source of identity and pride in many indigenous communities.

Young people are an important demographic in Bolivia, representing 20% of the population and 58% self-identify as belonging to an indigenous group. Furthermore, they are current and future change agents in the culture of their communities: as young people move between cultures they may diminish the importance of certain ideas, see value in others, and bring in new outside ideas. Young people are looking for institutions and a cultural identity that incorporates both indigenous and 'modern' values. Young people are in a process of transition, change and identity formation; they are exploring ways in which elements of *mestizo*, modern or even foreign cultures can mix and blend with elements of traditional indigenous culture, creating new interpretations of culture that are neither truly 'traditional' or 'modern.' Though indigenous Bolivians of all ages are searching for ways to reconcile traditional indigenous and 'modern' values, young people's exploration is shaped by their educational experience, their increasingly fluid urban-community migration and access to technology. Young people are dressing in more modern and western-styled clothing, they are using new technologies to share and gather ideas and information. They also place value on their education and see it as an important requirement in order for them to help their communities develop.

The ability of young people, however, to play active roles in their community is often limited by traditional practices of community participation, such as the *thakhi* system and requirement of formal affiliation in order to vote in *sindicato* meetings. Due to their perceived inexperience and partial completion of community service responsibilities and requirements, young people are often not given a voice in community

decision making. Moreover, heads of families involved in community governance often are expected to represent the voices of the youth. Migration to the cities for work or education also limits the ability of young people to become involved, as there are only a few young people available to participate in youth organizations meaning that positions often stand vacant and their ability to express the opinions and suggestions of young people are limited.

Despite these limitations, in each of the two municipalities young people participated in the processes establishing indigenous autonomy as assembly members either elected by their community or chosen by their organization. These young people spoke positively about their ability to contribute to the indigenous autonomy process that they felt would bring development, *vivir bien* (living well) and *bienestar* (material well-being) to every member of their community. Through the youth meetings conducted jointly with Fundación TIERRA, we were also able to reach out to young people not actively participating in the indigenous autonomy process. Even the young people not actively participating shared a desire for the betterment of their communities; though they felt they lacked a voice in their community, lacked the confidence and skills needed to communicate and the trust of their communities. The young people in these two municipalities were not, however, apathetic nor disinterested in the future of their respective communities.

From my discussions with young people in both municipalities, it became clear that they saw development primarily in terms of progress and the achievement of material improvements. Young people wanted an economically viable community to be achieved through commercialization and diversification of agricultural production, and through water projects and agricultural projects. In Tarabuco, the young people felt that they could use their history and culture to booster their tourism, thereby making their communities economically more viable. In both municipalities, young people felt that in order to help their communities (a responsibility they acknowledged) they needed formal education. Young people wanted better high schools with access to the internet and they wanted more post-secondary education opportunities. For many young people, the way to progress and achieve *bienestar* for their community was through the adoption of modern ideas and knowledge.

Young people's desire for formal education and economic development was, however, also coupled with a desire to know more about their culture. They expressed an interest in participating in workshops or community meetings with older generations in order to learn more about their community and culture. Some young people acknowledged that some youth were losing their culture, but many saw their culture as an important feature of their communities that gave them an identity, a sense of belonging and pride. Young people in the municipality of Mojocoya spoke of culture as important for the sense of community; not as a way to boost economic activity, but to strengthen community identity and social cohesion. Further, all young people felt that their culture

had knowledge, ideologies, customs and values passed on from their ancestors that should continue to be revalorized. Young people saw value in wearing the traditional clothing, celebrating traditional *fiestas*, playing traditional music and following their traditional community governance practices as a way in which they could achieve *vivir bien* for their community and pass their culture on to future generations.

Young people understood that indigenous autonomy would allow them increased freedom to self-govern and make decisions in accordance with their culture. In both communities the intermixing of 'traditional' and 'modern' community organization structures is evident. For example, in Mojocoya, the autonomy assembly approved a two-staged election system that included both indigenous customary norms and procedures and secret ballot voting, which would allow young people to participate in the election of local authorities. Young people in Mojocoya supported the continued prevalence of the *sindicato* system that requires affiliation and therein landownership and graduated community involvement. In Tarabuco, the *sindicato* and traditional-*ayllu* assembly members were debating traditional versus more 'modern' forms of community governance. Young people were equally divided: those from *ayllu* communities generally supported the traditional forms of community governance while those from *sindicato* communities generally supported the *sindicato* system.

In both municipalities, young people desired some 'modern' elements, seeing value in finding spaces for young people to meaningfully participate, allowing women to

become leaders and requiring formal education. However, young people supported governance systems that promoted a requirement for deep understanding and knowledge of the community, long-term residency and affiliation to the community, the more traditional elements of community organization. Significantly, these traditional practices and values supported by young people may simultaneously place limits on their ability to actively participate in their community's governance, as those traditional practices often exclude young people from full participation in community decision-making.

Though there is an apparent tension between young people's ability to participate and their willingness to become actively involved, young people didn't dwell on the challenge. Young people supported traditional practices of community governance, seeing the value of these traditions in ensuring well-informed and community-based governing. Young people acknowledged that they had more to learn, and looked for opportunities to learn from others in the community about the traditions and practices of their culture, as well as advancing their formal education. Young people remained positive that though they were not often taken into consideration in the decision-making processes in their community that they could contribute and participate in other ways.

Young people saw themselves as valuable contributors to their communities. Although, many young people have internalized adult perceptions that young people are inexperienced and admitted to lacking confidence to speak publicly to share ideas or opinions (a fact that was observable at some of the autonomy assembly meetings and

youth meetings). Nonetheless, young people felt that they had the skills and knowledge to help their communities; they pointed to cases where they participated in capacities that their illiterate parents could not fill. Young people did acknowledge that they had more to learn and expressed a desire for more opportunities to participate in workshops and discussions with older members in hopes that awareness between adults and youth would be developed.

The young people in Mojocoya and Tarabuco are exposed to modern ideas and knowledge through secondary and post-secondary schooling, through working and living in urban centers, and not least through the internet. However, they are also aware of the traditional elements of their culture and the values and knowledge of their ancestors that remains vibrant in their communities. As members of their community, some young people in Mojocoya and Tarabuco are actively involved in establishing indigenous autonomy and others are participating in different aspects of their community. Though while the communities are not homogenous and young people are at times seen as inexperienced in the ways of their culture and influenced by modern ideas for the future, young people are proposing a future that based on a new interpretation of indigenous culture would ensure both the *vivir bien* and the *bienestar* of every member of the community.

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