

Rethinking Revolution in Evo Morales's Bolivia

Jeffery M. Paige

University of Michigan

May 1, 2009

DRAFT

Not for citation or quotation without the permission of the author

Shortly before Evo Morales's unexpected landslide victory in the Bolivian presidential elections of December 2005, Forrest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson (2005:41), two leading North American authorities on Bolivia, wrote, "If Latin America has been the site of the most radical opposition to neo-liberal restructuring in the last five years [2000-2005] Bolivia has been its insurrectionary frontline." Beginning with the "Water War" in Cochabamba in February and April 2000 and exploding into nation-wide protests in October 2003 and again in June 2005 Bolivian social movements brought down two presidents, vetoed the succession of a third and forced the elections in which Morales became the first indigenous president in Bolivia's five-hundred year history. Once in power Morales initiated what he called, in his inaugural address, "a democratic and cultural revolution" to take control of Bolivia's natural resources, redistribute its land and decentralize power in favor of the poverty-stricken indigenous majority. At this writing he has recently survived violent opposition protests that threatened civil war (September 2008) and succeeded in winning approval for a referendum on his new constitution (now scheduled for January 25th 2009) that he is most likely to win.

These extraordinary changes raise fundamental questions not only for Bolivian and other policymakers but also for social scientists concerned with the sociology of social movements and revolution. Are these changes a new form of "democratic and cultural" revolution? Are they indeed a revolution at all? Certainly members of the Morales administration, many Bolivian citizens and some distinguished authorities seem to think so. Santos Ramírez, president of the national hydrocarbons company YPFB (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos), and Antonio Peredo, head of the governing MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) party in the Senate, in interviews with Marta Harnecker and Federico Fuentes (2008:136), argue that the changes

constitute a new type of revolution — “. . . on the basis of our principles . . . it is a revolution, but this time it is a revolution in democracy” [Ramírez]; “cultural, because it concerns a country in which the majority cultures have always been outside the context of politics” [Peredo].

Dunkerley (2007:25) notes that “a revolution is widely felt to be underway. Many . . . want it to succeed.” Both Dunkerley (2007) and Hylton and Thomson (2007) view the insurrectionary events from 2000 to the election of Evo Morales as a “Third Bolivian Revolution,” after the 1952 and Republican Revolutions (Dunkerley) and 1952 and the indigenous revolt of 1780-81 (Hylton and Thomson), respectively. The distinguished authority on the Mexican Revolution, Adolfo Gilly (2005:41), regards the Bolivian insurrection of 2003 as “the first revolution of the twenty-first century.” The Mexican political scientist and philosopher Enrique Dussel (2007) regards the Bolivian experience as the climax of the evolution of a peculiarly Latin American form of revolution combining humanism, human rights, democracy, liberation theology, indigenous autonomy, and the transformation of basic institutions.

The categorization of the Bolivian events of 2000 to the present as a “revolution” depends on the definition of revolution used. Certainly, as the comments of Ramírez and Peredo and the official language of Morales himself indicate, it does not resemble other revolutions in significant respects. In fact Gilly (2005:51) asks of the 2003 insurrection, “What kind of revolution is this if it did not destroy the state apparatus and its repressive force, if a revolutionary workers party did not take power, if it had no leader, if it issued no proclamations . . .” Gilly (2005) and Hylton and Thomson (2007) draw on the Marxist-Leninist tradition of the Russian revolution to frame a definition to fit Bolivian events. Gilly quotes Lenin; Hylton and Thomson, Trotsky:

. . . the mass of people, the majority of them, the lowest strata, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and marked the whole course of the revolution with

the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempts to build in their own way, the new society, in place of the old society which needs to be destroyed. Lenin quoted in Gilly (2005:52).

The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events . . . at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime. Trotsky quoted in Hylton and Thomson (2007: 24).

Both of these statements better fit what the late sociologist Charles Tilly (1993:10) called a “revolutionary situation” or Bolivian Vice President Álvaro García (2006:81) calls (after Marx) a “revolutionary epoch”—the protests and mass mobilizations that may or may not lead to a seizure of power and a fundamental transformation of society. When such a seizure of power occurs and a fundamental transformation of society begins to take place Tilly refers to a “revolutionary outcome” Revolution is defined by Tilly as the combination of revolutionary situations and outcomes.

Both Lenin and Trotsky, of course, have elaborate theories of “revolutionary outcomes” as well as theories of the “revolutionary situation.” For the Lenin of What is to be Done the “mass of the people” cannot themselves build the new society without the aid of a disciplined vanguard of “professional revolutionaries” who impose socialist consciousness from the outside. In State and Revolution socialism can be the creation of the masses but nevertheless “the proletariat needs state power the centralized organization of force, the organization of violence, . . . for the purpose of guiding the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the petite bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organizing socialist economy. Marxist-Leninist theory and practice became the framework for twentieth century socialist revolutionaries across Latin America after the Cuban revolution of 1959.

Trotsky’s theories of “permanent revolution, “combined and uneven development: and “dual

the entire revolutionary process from mass mobilization to the seizure of state power.

In order to realize the Soviet State, there was required together a drawing together and mutual penetration of two factors belonging to completely different historic species: a peasant war—that is a movement characteristic of the dawn of bourgeois development—and a proletarian insurrection, the movement signaling its decline.

The peasant revolt and the proletarian insurrection would together bring down the absolutist and anachronistic Czarist regime. The “proletarian insurrection” would carry out the absent bourgeois revolution in Russia but then must advance toward socialism in a “permanent revolution” aided by revolutions in the West. The final seizure of power was preceded by the erosion of government legitimacy and the growth of revolutionary institutions—a situation of dual power.

The entire sequence of events depends on a society that combines “factors belonging to different historical specie—the situation of combined and uneven development. Trotsky’s theories of revolution have had great theoretical and practical influence in Bolivia, particularly in the revolution of 1952.

In the social sciences the most widely influential theorists of revolution are not Lenin and Trotsky but Theda Skocpol and Charles Tilly. The most widely referenced definition of revolution of (quoted, for example, in Dunkerley 2007:23) is Skocpol’s (1979:4)

Social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society’s state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below. Social revolutions are set apart from other sorts of conflicts and transformative processes by two coincidences: the coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval; and the coincidence of political with social transformation.

Skocpol’s student Jeff Goodwin (2001:9) completes her definition by adding “cultural change” to political and social transformation. Charles Tilly’s own definition (1993:8) is much broader than Skocpol’s:

. . . a forcible transfer of power over a state in the course of which at least two distinct blocs of contenders make incompatible claims to control the state, and some significant portion of population subject to the state's jurisdiction acquiesces in the claims of each bloc.

The definitions of Lenin and Trotsky, on the one hand, and Skocpol and Tilly on the other, reflect the two dominant theoretical traditions in the interpretation of revolution—Marxism and structural sociology (Burawoy 1989). The two traditions are closely intertwined. In her concluding chapter approvingly quotes Lenin, “the basic question of every revolution is that of state power.” Tilly’s “two distinct blocs of contenders mak [ing] incompatible claims to control the state,” draws an obvious (but unacknowledged) parallel with Trotsky’s “dual power.” Indeed the emphasis in recent sociological theory on state power parallels Bolshevik thinking on the seizure of the state. The difference lies in the absence of the working class as a decisive actor—Leninism without Marx.

The Bolivian revolution of 1952 closely resembles the portrait of revolution drawn in both Marxist-Leninist, Trotskyist and Structural sociological theories of revolution. A “class-based revolt from below by the mining proletariat initiates a “peasant war” in a society dominated by combined and uneven dependent development and an autocratic neo-colonial state. A “forcible seizure of power” by workers and their middle class and military allies initiates a rapid and fundamental transformation of the society’s class and political structure. The mining industry is nationalized, peasant seize the land and a liberal regime of universal rights is declared. Only the weakness of the vanguard parties of the proletariat prevents the bourgeois revolution of 1952 from growing over into a socialist revolution.

The Bolivian mobilizations and transformations of the twenty-first century, on the other hand pose a fundamental challenge to traditional understandings of revolution.

First, there was no “class-based revolt” from below, much less a “proletarian insurrection” in Bolivia. As Tapia and Garcia Linera have demonstrated one the most militant proletariats in Latin America, the unionized mine workers ideologically influenced by Trotskyism, were largely destroyed by the neo-liberal reforms in the mining industry initiated in 1985. The peasant union The Sole National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia, and especially Evo Morales’s coca growers were key actors in the insurrections, but they were unified by a strong indigenous identity deriving from the Katarists movements of the 1970s (Rivera 1984). Indigenous identity and traditional indigenous communal organization were decisively important in the insurrection of 2003 and 2005. The organizing principle of this revolution was indigeneity not class.

There was no “forcible transfer of power” by a vanguard of “professional revolutionaries” or anyone else, nor did such a vanguard head the mobilizations. The impetus for organization came from below and not from above. In 2003 and 2005 insurrections in the Aymara highlands were paralleled by a massive revolt in the overwhelmingly Aymara city of El Alto on the plain directly above the Bolivian capital La Paz. From its roots as a settlement of a few thousand inhabitants in the 1950s el Alto has grown to become a parallel indigenous city approaching the size of La Paz itself. Careful research on the social base of the rebellion and on the social structure of El Alto itself has indicated that a dense network of cross-cutting organizations existed throughout the city.

The most important were the Federation of Neighborhood Associations, FEJUVE, and the Regional Labor Confederation, COR el Alto. The constituent elements of FEJUVE were the neighborhood associations themselves. Modeled after the traditional assemblies of highland aymara communities the neighborhood associations acted collectively to organize municipal services not provide by the city or state. Participation in association meetings and collective

actions was compulsory for members. In the mass mobilization of 2003 and 2005 FEJUVE organized the entire city for acts of extraordinary collective mobilization and resistance. COR el Alto was a more of a guild organization of small merchants and craftsmen than a conventional labor union. COR El Alto controlled markets and other public commercial spaces in El Alto so membership was more or less obligatory for small merchants and crafts workers. Like FEJUVE COR el Alto was a major force in the mobilization of 2003 and 2005. In both city and country a dense network of organizations modeled after traditional indigenous institutions provided the organizational basis for the revolt.

Even today the Movement toward Socialism (MAS) party does not have a vanguard structure and refers to itself officially as Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the people. At its foundation the party represented a coalition of four social movements the CSTCB, FNMCB-Bartolina Sisa, FCNB, and the Coalition of Indigenous People of Eastern Bolivia (CIDOB) and was also strongly influenced by the Federation of Coca Growers Unions of the Tropics of Chocabamba. Careful studies of the party structure by Herve Do Alto and Pablo Stefanoni have indicated that although the CIDOB has drifted away the other three organizations remain Morales' principal constituency and power base (until recently he remained president of the coca growers federation). Intellectuals from the traditional and new left have become influential in the government and in congress but at Evo's invitation. Ultimately he remains dependent on the social movement not a leftist vanguard.

Although Evo Morales and MAS were the ultimate beneficiaries of the insurrections Morales himself distanced himself from the rebellion and was cautious in supporting its demands. The "masses" may have entered history through insurrection but regime transition took place through constitutional and democratic elections. The security forces remained intact and

under the constitutional control of an elected government. There was remarkably little lethal violence by historical standards and what there was came largely from the security forces of the old regime. Although the state assumed expanded powers over natural resources, including the partial nationalization of the natural gas industry, the domestic economy remains in private hands and there are no plans to change this state of affairs. In order to understand the Bolivian transformation it may be necessary to revise or even abandon the idea of revolution as it is understood in both the Marxist and traditional sociological traditions. The nature of the Bolivian transformation has been as challenging for its participants and intellectual leaders as it has been for outsiders.

In the remainder of my talk I want to report on some preliminary and but suggestive findings of my developing project on the thinking of Bolivian critical public intellectuals on the nature of the Bolivian social transformation or revolution. These findings are based on formal and informal interviews and conversations conducted with public intellectuals in La Paz in March and July of last year and an analysis of their published writings where they exists. The idea of critical public intellectual has been influenced by Burawoy's (2005) category of "public sociologist" extended to include other academic disciplines and intellectual leaders of the traditional and revived left. For Burawoy (2005:7) "public sociology" is a type of sociology that "works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counter public" and takes a reflexive or critical view of society and societal values. In Gramscian terms public intellectuals will be understood to include both "traditional" (academics, clergy, journalists, etc.) and "organic" intellectuals (sub-altern party and social movement activists).

The population of public intellectuals has been defined through nominations by key informants and others that I interviewed; by citations in secondary sources (Do Alto 2007;

Dunkerley 2007; Harnecker and Fuentes 2008; Hylton and Thomson 2007; Stefanoni and Do Alto 2006); and in the press, particularly in La Paz' leading daily La Razón. The social movement organizations most closely associated with MAS (the Bolivian Peasant Union Confederation CSUTCB; the Confederation of Bolivian Colonizers, CSCB; the FNMCB-Bartolina Sisa; and the coca growers' unions of the Six Federations of the Tropics of Cochabamba) have web-sites or easily available lists of organizational leaders. I have thus far identified approximately 40 individuals who might be candidates for formal interviews and my goal would be approximately 50 interviews. The goal of the study is to interrogate the concept of revolution through the views of those who have been actively involved in rethinking and implementing the idea in the Bolivian context.

Today I want to concentrate on the ideas of two key members of two distinct groups of public intellectuals that I have identified in my preliminary research, Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera, whose voluminous and complex writings I am endeavoring to master, and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, who also has published widely and was one of those I interviewed this summer. Silvia Rivera is a Professor Emerita in the Department of Sociology of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz and Vice President García is a former member of the same department. Indeed the sociology department at San Andrés and has an influence in public affairs that would be unheard of for a sociology department in the United States. Distinguished member of the San Andrés department with important positions and or influence in the MAS government and include not only García and Rivera but former Minister of Education Felix Patzi, and The President's Chief of Staff Juan Ramon Quintana. Many students from the department have moved into administrative positions in ministries in the Morales administration, especially in the Office of the Vice President. The Department's Chair Eduardo Paz is a former congressional

deputy who worked with Evo in the legislature and they remain friends. Carlos Villegas former head of the University's development program now holds the Hydrocarbons Ministry and formerly chaired the Planning Ministry. Luis Tapia who currently Chair's the development program is a frequent collaborator and close intellectual colleague of Vice President García.

Vice President García is the center of the group *la comuna* (named after both the Paris Commune and the traditional Bolivian community) that includes his former social partner Raquel Gutiérrez, Tapia, and Raul Prada. They have written extensively on the transformation are at the center of the large number of old left Marxist, and new left post Marxist intellectuals who have been influential in the MAS government. He as at the center of one of the principal axis of the Morales administration—Marxism and post-Marxism. Silvia Rivera is a central member of a group of intellectuals representing a second current in the MAS party and to a lesser extent the administration. This group is might be called the indigenous scholars who take an indianist perspective on the social transformation of Bolivia. These two groups are representative of the two most important currents in what Pablo Stefanoni and Herve do Alto call the inscrutable ideology of MAS and what Alvaro Garcia calls the two great traditions in the interpretation of Bolivian History—Marxism and Indianism.

García and Rivera have proposed two contrasting but not necessarily mutually exclusive definitions of revolution that are representative of the thinking in each of these traditions. Both definitions and the theoretical structure that lies behind them represent fundamental challenges to reigning understandings of revolution be they Leninist, Trotskyist or sociological.

Intellectuals in Revolution: Álvaro García Linera and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Álvaro García Linera is not only Bolivia's Vice President but perhaps its leading critical public intellectual. He was born in a middle-class creole family in Cochabamba in 1962 and was

first radicalized by indigenous protests against the Banzer dictatorship in 1979. In order to understand this experience he began to read extensively in philosophy and the social sciences. Believing he could learn the social sciences on his own he enrolled in a formal mathematics program at the UNAM from 1981- 1985. In Mexico he was further radicalized by solidarity work with Central American guerrilla movements and was exposed to debates over multiculturalism for the first time in Guatemala. After completing his studies he returned to Bolivia where he became active in organizing groups of radical miners and also began an extended debate with the well entrenched Stalinist and Trotskyist positions in Bolivian intellectual life. It is from this period that he dates his ten year “obsession” with tracking down Marx’s text on pre-capitalist economic formations even going to Amsterdam to consult Marx’s unpublished writings on Latin America.

His work with radical miners eventually led to an alliance with similarly radical highland peasant groups and ultimately to his involvement in the radical Indianist Felipe Quispe’s Tupak Katari Geurrilla Army (EGTK). Under Quispe’s leadership the EGTK which takes its name from the eighteenth century indigenous rebel leader, Tupac Katari, advocated an armed “rising of the clans” and engaged in sporadic and largely ineffective guerrilla activity. Arrested in 1991 García spent the next five years in Chonchocoro prison where he occupied himself by reading Capital and assimilating his work on pre-capitalist economic formations. The result was a dense almost unreadable work Value From and Community Form that builds a contrast between a culture based on abstract labor and the commodity form with one based on the intersubjective and organizational solidarity of the traditional kin based community organization the ayllu. This fundamental fault line between what he would later call (after Norbert Elias) two different civilizations runs throughout Garcia’s work and forms the basis for his understanding of

revolution as short term crisis of neo-liberalism but a long term crisis of both the export dependent development model and the contemporary liberal state. Underlying both is a crisis of a neo-colonial capitalist civilization imposed on an agrarian pre-capitalist communal civilization.

In a 2005 interview just before his election as Evo Morales's Vice President he counted among his greatest intellectual influences not only Marx, but Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu, and among Bolivian authors, the influential Indianists Fausto Reinaga and distinguished social scientist Rene Zavaleta Mercado. These influences as well as that of Antonio Gramsci show up in his definition of revolution written about the same time as the 2005 interview and published in New Left Review in January-February 2006:81.

Three factors define the functioning, stability and representative capacity of a state. The first is the overall framework of social forces; the correlation between the different coalitions, both dominant and subordinate, contesting the reconfiguration of what Bourdieu called "state capital"—the ability to influence decisions on matters of common import. Secondly, there is the system of political institutions and rules that mediate the coexistence of hierarchical social forces Thirdly, every state depends upon a structure of common categories of perception, a series of mobilizing beliefs that generates a degree of social and moral conformity among both ruling and ruled, and which takes material form in the state's cultural repertoire and rituals.

When one or all of these factors is suspended or ruptured, we are presented with a crisis of the state . . . *The successive uprisings and popular upheavals that have rocked the country may best be understood as symptoms of a profound state crisis* (italics added).

Underlying this "revolutionary epoch" as he calls it are the failure of the neo-liberal economic model and, at a deeper level, two distinct and fundamental crises. First, the crisis of an export economy that has failed to incorporate the majority of the population into capitalism as abstract labor and the crisis of a mono-ethnic, monocultural but nominally liberal state that has failed to incorporate Bolivia's indigenous majority as citizens. In a recent interview (June 2008) he suggests that this revolutionary crisis (which he calls "a point of bifurcation") will be resolved not through armed insurrection and a violent seizure of power but "will have to be determined

through electoral action” consolidating a “national, indigenous popular, revolutionary state.”

Although García uses the language of state and even class (abstract labor) his definition of the revolutionary situation and the revolutionary outcome is in fact very different than the Marxist tradition he has criticized or the structural sociological tradition that it may resemble.

His analysis and definitions of both state and class are very different than these two traditions. In one of the comuna group’s edited volumes, Garcia spells out his understanding of class in general and the proletariat in particular through a reflection on the Communist Manifesto on the 150th anniversary of its publication. His definition of class is strikingly original and breaks sharply with class as it is understood in Marxism and Marxist influenced social science. First he rejects class as defined by objective relations to the means of production. For Garcia’s class is an economic, political and social struggle over labor and its extraction and alienation by capitalism as a social system. Property ownership is the outcome of this struggle not its cause.

The way in which surplus labor is extracted and commodified by capitalism varies in different historical periods. The merchant capitalist of the Spanish colonial empire extracted the silver that became the foundation of capital in Europe through a system of forced labor dues and extracted goods and labor through tribute on the indigenous population. The liberal Republican state maintained tribute, enforced serfdom and began to pay wages to a tiny mining proletariat. After the revolution of 1952 a liberal state with legal equality for all abolished serfdom, gave citizenship rights to the indigenous population but still depended on that population for cheap labor and commodities just as they had done in early colonial times. The only constant in these various forms of labor extraction and alienation is a profound racism that persists to the present moment. In the contemporary liberal state a dense web of apartheid like formal and informal restrictions still reduce the indigenous population to a supplier of cheap labor and low cost

commodities. In Marxian terms not only the real subsumption of labor by capital in capitalist wage relations but also the formal subsumption of labor by capital through colonial and neo-colonial extractive economies are equally constitutive of class.

In Bolivia class is the outcome of a centuries of struggle between an indigenous civilization based on communal principles and an extractive colonial and neo-colonial state organized in support of capital. The latest version of this struggle was the domination of creole-mestizo elite over both a fictive, or in Zavaleta's terms, "apparent" liberal state and an extractive capitalist agro-export and hydro-carbon economy. A largely white class of old families and recent immigrant dominates the agro-export economy and controls 90 per cent of Bolivia's land. Foreign corporations and few creole mining entrepreneurs control the sub-soil mineral riches, including hydrocarbons that have always been the basis of the Bolivian economy. A small creole class of whites and mestizos and their foreign allies does in fact control the "the means of production" in the traditional Marxist sense of the term. But the basis for the domination of this capitalist elite over the rest of the population lie as much institutionalized racism as property ownership. For Garcia the axis of class cleavage has always been between the creole and foreign elite incorporated into the circuits of global capitalism and the indigenous dominated not so much by wage labor as by institutionalized racism and legal race based bondage.

In this analysis the proletariat and proletarian class struggle take on a very different meanings. Indeed in other writings Garcia uses the term "multitude" to describe the collective action of these groups. This "proletariat" or multitude would include the traditional Aymara agrarian communities of the Bolivian highlands, the Quechua speaking coca growing communities of the intermontane valleys and the indigenous tribal groups of the Amazon. All of these groups are now locked in a struggle with foreign business and the creole elite over water,

land, hydrocarbons, iron ore, silver and tin, coca and coca products, forests and biological diversity, over human collective labor and its proceeds, and over their very right to exist as separate cultures in charge of their own lives and resources. It is this economic and cultural “class” cleavage not the struggle between wage workers and capitalist or peasants and land owners which is at the heart of the Bolivian rebellions of the twenty-first century.

Furthermore García argues that the mining proletariat of formal wage laborers has been liquidated by neo-liberalism to be replaced by a variegated mass of informal sector workers who are no less subordinated to the objectives of capitalism but lack the direct wage connection that defined Marxist class relations. This new working class as Susan Sprok has called it, includes a successful indigenous street or market vender who deposits her profits in a creole owned bank, the legions of micro-buses drivers and conductors that bring workers of all kinds into la Paz each day, the artisans who supply inputs to formally capitalist enterprises from their tiny shops and those who vend used clothes produced in capitalist factories in the North on the streets of Bolivian cities. All of these workers, in Garcia’s terms, serve capital but none are formal wage laborers. In great urban aggregates, especially in El Alto they constitute the vast majority of the population and are a key component of Garcia’s multitude. Together the Aymara highland communities, the Quechua coca growers, the Amazonian tribal groups and the vast urban indigenous informal sector constitute the popular base of the MAS party and the heart of Garcia’s revolutionary multitude. In theoretical terms the components of Garcia’s multitude, the rural and urban indigenous population are like the multitude of Hart and Negri—all those who labor under the sign of capital.

García also sees a very different liberal state than the idealized version presented in political theory since Locke. Bolivia has had a liberal Republican constitution since 1825. The

constitution has guaranteed legal equality and voting rights to all citizens since the Revolution of 1952. Nevertheless, García could write in 2004 that “. . . it could be said that the Republican state is mono-ethnic and mono-cultural and, in that sense, exclusive and racists and that “mono-ethnicity or mono-nationality of the state in a multiethnic or plurinational society is therefore the primary fracture in an efficient and democratic relationship between state and society.” The “apparent” liberal democratic state is a fiction denied not only by the institutionalized racism of everyday political and social life but by the seigneurial behavior of the creole-mestizo elite that dominates it. Racism based on language, behavior, appearance, dress and cultural difference permeates every aspect of Bolivian society including in particular the state. García’s discussion of state and nation closely resemble the ideas of Anthony Smith and seem to deny the idea of civic as opposed to ethnic based nationalism. García’s definition of ethnicity is similar to Smith’s emphasizing collective identity, common descent, language, religion, history and putative territory and his definition of a nation state –“an ethnicity successfully identified with a territory through the formation of a state regime” would seem echo Smith’s view that all states have an ethnic core.

The ethnic core of the Bolivian state is formed by the creole-mestizo elite that García himself is a part. Not only does this monethnic elite excluded the various indigenous nations that make up Bolivia it also denies its distinct civilizations that have been incorporate into the dominant capitalist civilization. “Bolivia is a country where various civilizations coexist, but where the state structure only recognizes the organizational logic of one of these civilizations, modern commercial capitalism.” Here García returns to the distinction he originally made in Value Form and Community form to differentiate four different “civilizations” in Bolivia. In addition to the capitalist value form these are the communal agrarian, the Amazonian, and the artisan, peasant

and informal economy. The crisis of the Bolivian state is a crisis of the state that recognizes no other civilizational logic other than that of neo-liberal capitalism and no other nations or cultures than that of the creole elite. There are then two fault lines contributing to the revolutionary crisis in Bolivian society. First there is the crisis of a capitalist export economy extracting labor and commodities from a racially stigmatized indigenous population on behalf of the creole-foreign capitalist elite. Second there is the crisis of the liberal state that recognizes no civilizational logics other than those of liberal capitalism and no other nations, cultures and languages other than those of the Westernized state elite.

García's solution to this crisis of the capitalist export economy is to recognize diverse cultural logics of accumulation through something he calls Andean-Amazonian capitalism, to undermine the power of the creole foreign elite by extending the state role as a directory of the export economy and to weaken the cultural logic of the capitalist commodity form by increasing the role of the state as a supplier of public welfare. His solution to the crisis of the nominally liberal but actually monoethnic state is to create a new plurinational multicultural state by devolving state power to indigenous communities, territories and regions. His idea of a Bolivian "democratic and cultural revolution" is that a radical solution to the dual crisis of the Bolivian society can be found in profound institutional reform carried out by constitutional means. That these ideas have come to dominate MAS policies may be more a cause than a consequence of García's selection as Vice President but he remains the principal intellectual interpreter and analysts of the Morales government. Underlying García's ideas is a radical transformation in the idea of revolution itself. Instead of a forcible seizure of power, a class based revolt from below a proletarian insurrection of a vanguard party we have an indigenous popular mass movement

expressing a fundamental rejection of the political and cultural logics of capitalist society itself. García's idea of revolution is even more radical than the ideas of revolution that preceded it.

Silvia Rivera

Vice President García's former colleague Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui is, like Garcia, one of Bolivia's leading public intellectuals, but unlike García has indigenous origins and speaks fluent Aymara. Born in La Paz in 1949 she is a sub-altern theorists who has been influenced by ideas of internal colonialism, anarchism, post-colonial theory and Quechua and Aymara cosmologies. A long time social activist she was a founding members of the Andean Oral History Workshop which was itself in part responsible for reviving traditional Aymara and Quechua forms of community organization and mobilization. According to Deborah Yashar the Oral History Workshops contributed significantly to the rise of the Confederation of Ayllus and Markas de Kollasuyo (CONAMAQ) an influential social movements of traditional indigenous leaders. In her contemporary work she has focused on coca as both spiritual symbol and as a commodity moving through traditional circuits of exchange. She is an advisor to the Morales government on issues of coca and an activist on issues of coca policy.

Her approach to the study of revolution is very different from García's as well as from traditional revolutionary theorizing. Since I have had the opportunity to ask her directly about "revolution" I quote her directly when possible and also rely on her published writings particularly her classic work *Oprimidos pero no Vencidos*, Oppressed but not conquered on the rise of the now influential CSUTCB peasant union—the most influential social movement in the MAS party and government. Rivera, unlike Garcia, rejects the idea of revolution in its entirety. as an Occidental concept based on Western notions of linear progress and an equally Western idea of class and exploitation that presents a notion of history that simply leaves out the

indigenous population of Bolivia. Instead she proposes the indigenous concept of Pachakuti in its place. This word has achieved a certain currency in indigenous circles and in fact appears in the names of indigenous political parties in both Ecuador and Bolivia. According to Rivera

Pachakuti is a word that can mean either “crisis” or “renovation” or “revolt.” It may be a revolt in time-space because the notion of Pacha is simultaneously time and space, the idea of time and space are not separated, they are together, so that the retaking . . . of their own indigenous history is at the same time a recovery of control over territory and that is what occurred in road blockades of 2000 in April, in September and October 2003, and also the revolt of the cocaleros, [and] 2005 . . .

Pachakuti, in contrast to the idea of revolution, is not a moment but a long process and it may be . . . that this process has begun, but it has not ended, it is a process of profound interior change that touches consciousness, the imagination, but also politics and the economy. (emphasis added).

As explained by Rivera the concept of Pachakuti has a number of dimensions. First as the quotation makes clear refers Pachakuti to time and space and the two concepts are interchangeable. The regaining of indigenous history and territory are one and the same. In addition Pachakuti refers to a crisis or renovation of the spiritual and natural, as well as the social world. The transformation of Pachakuti involves a change in the relationship between humans and nature and a transformation in spiritual and religious sentiments as well as a change in social relations and social structure. Furthermore the transformation is not limited to class relations. It could involve changes in the relations between men and woman, between markets and society, between the individual and community, and most importantly between racialized groups. Pachakuti could represent an overturning of the entire cultural and social structure inherited from the conquest. Since this overturning would involve a radical change in the relationship between humans and nature and men and women it has significant continuities with feminist and ecological currents in the global North.

The notion of Pachakuti also rejects Western notions of linear time and substitutes a notion of cycles or a spiral of history in which the past become a guide for future actions. Thus old demands some dating from the sixteenth century return in modern form and form the basis for current action. Some concepts of Pachakuti involve a cycle of 500 years which as Hylton and Thompson observe gave the year 1992 a particular significance. For Rivera Pachakuti is a cycle, “a cycle of popular ascent that could unfold in a catastrophe or in a massacre, a civil war, but also could lead to a democratic triumph . . . Based on her interviews with participants of the uprising of the present decade, particularly in the mass uprising in El Alto, she found that these event were based on fundamental ideas of indigenous identity and a reclaiming of sovereignty that had roots in earlier indigenous rebellions. The election of Evo Morales, as Bolivia’s president represented the culmination the rising sense of identity and imagined possibility of change. Pachakuti captures these connection between past and present in the overturning of the present world much better than does the Western notion of revolution.

Unlike the Western notion of revolution, particularly as it was embedded in Marxist thought, there is no sense of an inevitable triumph of the proletariat or any other group or the inevitability of revolution itself. No revolutionary moment no revolutionary seizure of power defines Pachakuti. Instead according to Rivera it is a long process and when she has talked to popular communal leaders they say that the process has only begun but it has not ended and it is a process of profound change. There is no linear unfolding of the revolutionary process as in Western theory but instead. According to Riviera “what is happening is a moment of great uncertainty where every action in the present is a bet on the future. . . We live with a sense of a grand emergency” This state of emergency could unfold in catastrophe or renovation. The emergent, contingent, path dependent quality of actual revolutions is well captured by the

concept of Pachakuti. There is also room for human intervention and agency that may affect the outcome of the process although not on the same heroic scale as Leninist or, in Latin America, Guevarist thought.

Finally Pachakuti is a revolution in consciousness and imagination as well as in political, economic and social life. This dimension of popular consciousness and imagination is largely ignored in both the Marxist and the structural sociological traditions. When asked directly about possible changes in the categories of social life, Rivera said, “. . . I think there is a change in mentality, a change in categories, a growing consciousness of cultural difference, not as “folklore,” but rather forms of knowledge, different epistemologies.” She argues in a 2007 interview with Linda Farthing that this change in categories consciousness and imagination began with the Katarist movement of the 1970s, the subject of her now classic work *Oprimidos pero no Vencidos*. The Katarists put forth “the first proposal from the indigenous world that articulated its own voice, prioritized overcoming colonial oppression, the negation of Indian selves, and political servitude and promoted autonomy.”

The Katarists who took their name from the leader of the eighteenth century indigenous insurrection to Spanish colonial rule began among Aymara intellectuals in La Paz who felt more acutely the contradiction between the equality guaranteed by the revolution of 1952 and the discrimination they felt in urban Bolivia. The Katarists emphasized indigenous culture and indigenous heroes like Tupac Katari. It was they who first introduced the multi-colored checkered flag, the wiphala, so prominent in the protests of the first decade of this century. The Katarist movement spread to the countryside where an new generation of post 1952 peasant leaders was receptive to their message. In 1979 the Katarists were instrumental in organizing the Sole Union Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB). In the early 1990s the

movement was taken over by the militant and tightly organized coca growers unions one of whose leaders was Evo Morales. In 1997 the radical indianist Felipe Quispe became secretary general of the organization and led the road blockades that began the revolutionary decade in the countryside. Today, the CSUTCB one again dominated by the cocaleros is the core social movement organization in the countryside and Evo Morales prime basis of support.

Evo Morales and his cocaleros were also the epicenter of the explosion of protest of the last decade and the coca leaf has become a symbol of both indigenous autonomy and national identity. A huge portrait of Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara made entirely of coca leaves hangs in Evo Morales office in the Presidential palace. For Rivera who has devoted much of her more recent work to the study of coca and the coca trade, through the MAS party the coca leaf has “become the nexus between popular anti-capitalism, peasant and class analysis, and indigenous anti-colonialism.” It is at the center of what she calls an “indigenous interpretive frame,” that claims sovereignty over natural resources like coca, water, and the land itself as gifts from the goddess of the earth the Pachamama. In her interviews with protest participants Rivera finds that this frame has even been extended to national gas since the grandparents of many indigenous people died in the Chaco war fought in part over hydrocarbon resources.

The coca leaf is central to Rivera’s notions of the permitted Indian, modern indigeneity and indigenous hegemony. According to Rivera the permitted Indian is the Indian favored by the official multiculturalism of pre-Morales governments and backed by multilateral lending agencies and NGO’s. The permitted Indian is an idealized representative of traditional images of indigenous culture who participates in the circuits of capitalist modernity only as a supplier of commodified artifacts or as an ethnological curiosity valued by the tourist industry. Modern indigeneity is represented by the coca grower who has adopted Western dress, produces an

unacceptable and internationally banned product yet still speaks Quechua, participates in traditional assemblies and sells his product in circuits of commerce that pre-date the conquest. It was this struggle between modern indigeneity and United States anti-narcotics policy that provided the dynamite that destroyed both the policy and the Bolivian governments that enforced it. The result, according to Rivera, is a hegemonic indigeneity which united not only indigenous people but many mestizos in the pursuit of an independent national identity based on the symbols and culture of indigenous society. Coca is not only defiantly chewed by MAS members of congress but is served in tea at La Paz's most expensive hotels.

According to Rivera, this alternative "indigenous modernity" exploded in the protests of 2000-2005 and became hegemonic in the landslide election of Evo Morales as President. But this revolution was not a revolution at all—not a search for perfect ending to the Western narrative of progress and modernity but a rejection of that narrative and the substitution of an alternative, indigenous modernity, what Rivera calls after Partha Chatterjee "our modernity," which draws on the symbols, culture and autonomy of the indigenous communities and assemblies that led the transformation. At the heart of the transformation or Pachakuti, is a transformation of imagination, consciousness and epistemology, of the basic categories of social thought, of the frame in which life is interpreted, of habitus through the substitution of our modernity for theirs, not the replacement of modernity with tradition.

Even though indigenous modernity may have influenced protest participants and MAS ideology and policy the indigenous themselves are scarce in the Morales administration where the old and new mestizo left represented by Vice President Garcia tend to dominate. His concept of revolution is clearly framed in the language of classical and contemporary European social

theory. Rivera definition is adopted from her understanding of the categories of traditional indigenous thought but indigenous thought in continuing dialogue with Western social theory. Although Garcia's notion of revolution with its emphasis on the value form, capitalist alienation, the new working class, the crisis of the liberal but monoethnic state and his unilinear notion of the revolutionary process may seem at first to be very different from Rivera's notion of Pachakuti based on a fusion of time, space, natural, spiritual and cultural change, cyclical time and contingent action, and change in imagination, consciousness and interpretive frame. But they do converge at one critical point. Both theories point to a much more radical form of revolution than is expressed in either the Marxist or the statist traditions or revolutionary theorizing. These are not class based revolts against the state or power seizures initiating a process of structural change; they are revolts against Western notions of class, state, and power themselves.

As the Indianist Fausto Reinaga, whose writings inspired the Katarists and other indigenous movements throughout Latin America and influenced both Garcia and Rivera, wrote of the role of western ideas in Bolivia:

“What part of the west can we imitate? What does westernized indigeneity have that is worth being copied . . . What can be imitated? Its nationalism without a nation? Its class struggle without classes, its hypocritical anti-imperialism sustained by the Yankee dollar, Its utopian communist revolution?”

The definitions of both Garcia and Rivera transform the idea of class, class struggle, anti-imperialism and most of all “utopian communist revolution in a new way. Garcia emphasizes the revolt of indigenous communities and the new indigenous working class against the abstract commodified subject of capitalist exchange relations and the abstract citizen subject of the liberal nation state. Rivera too rejects the class and political categories and ideas of revolution of Western liberal capitalist modernity but goes further than Garcia and emphasize the rise of a new consciousness, a new set of epistemological categories and new habitus of indigenous modernity.

Although the definitions converge on this point that each represent a proposed understanding of the process of revolutionary transformation that breaks radically with the received scholarship and received understandings in the West.

In a 2003 article, written long before the Bolivian October or the election of Evo Morales I proposed a new definition of revolution to fit my own experience of revolution in Central America and emerging scholarship on the classical revolutions. It read:

A revolution is a rapid and fundamental transformation in the categories of social life and consciousness, the metaphysical assumptions on which these categories are based, and the power relations in which they are expressed as a result of widespread popular acceptance of a utopian alternative to the current order.

This revolution, perhaps with the deletion of the word “utopia,” most closely resembles Silvia Rivera’s idea of Pachakuti—a change in interpretive frame, a change in consciousness and imagination, a change in habitus, a change in categories. It lacks the contingency or agency of Rivera’s definition but it includes changes in spiritual as well as social categories, nature as well as culture. This definition also converges with Garcia’s notion of the Bolivian Revolution as a rejection of the basic categories of capitalism and the liberalism. My definition, and of course those of Garcia and Rivera, are much closer to the actual events in Bolivia than the traditional definitions. They require no class struggle, no classed based revolts, no violent seizure of power no vanguard party, although they do point to political and economic as well as cultural change. Perhaps a dialogue between emerging conceptions of revolution in the North, like my own, and those emerging from the experience of 21st century revolution in Latin America may give us a deeper understanding of not only the Bolivian Democratic and Cultural Revolution but also of earlier revolutions.

Let me conclude then with the observations of a distinguished scholar of Cuban revolutionary history Louis Andrez Perez describing events of early 1959:

The dominant paradigm of “civilization” was in transition. The power of the revolution was in its capacity to rearrange in usable form the standards by which to measure civilization and in the process summon a vision of an alternative moral order. The proposition of patria [fatherland] took on new meaning as an all-inclusive community through which to find a sense of purpose and a sense of identity. The notion of patria, free and sovereign, was reinvented around instrumental functions in which an egalitarian project served as the necessary condition of civilization.

“Civilization” for Pérez means the same thing as it did for Garcia and Rivera—Western civilization represented in its most grotesque forms by upper class Cuban emulation of the conspicuous material consumption of the capitalist modernity of the United States. For this materialism there was substituted a new civilizational logic and new interpretive frame--that of an egalitarian community united against poverty and inequality, and against Western cultural, political and economic domination. To be sure thereafter came communism, class struggle, seizure of state power, political and economic transformation but at its origins Perez’s Cuban revolution was about none of these things. Now that the star of socialism has set and its Cuban representative is fading from the scene perhaps a new more Cuban interpretation of the revolution will emerge. Just such an interpretation seems to be remembered by the old revolutionaries interviewed in Julia Zweig’s recent revisionist history Inside the Cuban Revolution.

The larger question emerging from Evo Morale’s Bolivia is not so much that this is an unusual perhaps atypical case of social transformation requiring new and innovative conceptions of revolution such as those of Garcia, Rivera, and Pérez. It may be that the concept of revolution as it was understood by Marxist and Non-Marxist alike was deeply flawed and failed to identify the real transformative power they purported to explain. If theorists like Rivera, Garcia and Perez are right the revolutions of the late twentieth and early twenty first century Latin America may be understood as both rejection and deepening of the categories of capitalism and liberalism that

emerged from the great revolutions of the eighteenth century. Whether the concept is a new notion of civilization, a rejection of the civilizational logics of capitalism or the rise of indigenous hegemony each portrays a revolt against the fundamental categories of thought of Western capitalism and liberalism. Among those categories is revolution itself. Rethinking revolution in Bolivia then may show the way to new understandings of the process that go far beyond the categories of either Marxist or sociological theories.

REFERENCES

- Burawoy, Michael. 1989 "Skocpol versus Trotsky," Theory and Society 18(6):759-805.
- Do Alto, Hervé. 2007. "El MAS-IPSP boliviano, entre la protesta callejera y la política institucional," pp. 71-110 in Reinventando la nación en Bolivia, edited by Monasterios, Karin, Pablo Stefanoni and Hervé Do Alto. La Paz: Plural Editores.
- Dunkerley, James. 2007. "Evo Morales, Álvaro García Linera and the Third Bolivian Revolution," pp. 1-56 in Bolivia: Revolution and the Power of History in the Present, by James Dunkerley. London: Institute for the Study of the Americas.
- Dussel, Enrique. 2007. "Politics, Power and Institutions," lecture delivered at the University of Michigan Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program, January 22.
- García Linera, Álvaro. 1995. Forma valor y forma comunidad. Chonchocoro.
- _____. 1996. "3 retos al marxismo para encarar el nuevo milenio," Pp.77-109 in Las Armas de la Utopía. Marxismo: provocaciones heréticas, edited by Álvaro García Linera, et al. La Paz: Punto Cerro Editorial.
- _____. 1999. "El Manifiesto comunista y nuestra tiempo," pp. 77-178 in El fantasma insomne: pensando el presente desde el manifiesto comunista, edited by Raquel Gutiérrez, Álvaro García, Raúl Prada and Luis Tapia. La Paz: Muela del Diablo Editores.
- _____. 2001a. "Sindicato, multitud y comunidad. Movimientos sociales y formas de autonomía política en Bolivia." P\pp. 9-79 in Tiempos de rebelión, edited by Álvaro García Linera, Raquel Gutiérrez, Raúl Prada, Felipe Quispe and Luis Tapia. La Paz: Muela del Diablo Editores.
- _____. 2001b. "Qué es la democracia? Apuntes sobre discurso y política," pp. 80-107 in Pluriverso: Teoría política Boliviana, edited by Álvaro García, Raquel Gutiérrez, Raúl Prada and Luis Tapia. La Paz: Muela del Diablo Editores.
- _____. 2006. "State Crisis and Popular Power," New Left Review 37(Jan-Feb):73-85.
- _____. 2007. "Estado plurinacional." pp. 19-88 in La transformación pluralista del Estado, edited by Álvaro García Linera, Luis Tapia Maella, and Raúl Prada Alcoreza. La Paz: Muela del Diablo Editores.
- Gilly, Adolfo. 2005. "Bolivia: A Twenty-First Century Revolution," Socialism and Democracy 19(3):41-54.
- Goodwin, Jeff. 2001. No Other Way Out. States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harnecker, Marta and Federico Fuentes. 2008. MAS-IPSP de Bolivia: Instrumento político que surge de los movimientos sociales. Retrieved May 23, 2000 (<http://www.rebelión.org/docs/67155.pdf>).
- Hylton, Forrest and Sinclair Thomson. 2005. "The Chequered Rainbow," New Left Review 35(Sept-Oct):41-64.
- _____. 2007. Revolutionary Horizons: Past and Present in Bolivian Politics. London: Verso.
- Paige Jeffery. 1975. Agrarian Revolution. New York: Free Press.
- _____. 1997. Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 2003. "Finding the Revolutionary in the Revolution: Social Science Concepts and the Future of Revolution," pp. 19-29 in The Future of Revolutions, edited by John Foran. London: Zed Books.

- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia 1991. Pachakuti: los aymaras de Bolivia frente a medio milenio de colonialismo. Chukiyawu: Ediciones Aruwiwiri.
- _____. 2003a [1984]. “Opimidos pero no vencidos.” La Paz: Aruwiwiri - Editorial de Taller de Historia Oral Andino.
- _____. 2003b. Fronteras de la coca: epistemologías coloniales y circuitos de la hoja de coca: el caso de la frontera boliviano-argentina. La Paz: Ediciones Aruwiwiri.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. States and Social Revolutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stefanoni, Pablo and Hervé Do Alto. 2006. Evo Morales: de la coca al palacio. La Paz: Imprenta Cervantes.
- Tilly, Charles. 1993. European Revolutions 1492-1992. Oxford: Blackwell.