REVIEW ESSAYS

CYCLES OF REFORM: PLACING EVO MORALES'S BOLIVIA IN CONTEXT

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Decentralization and Popular Democracy: Governance from Below in Bolivia. By Jean-Paul Faguet. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 358. $35.00 paper. ISBN: 9780472035441.

Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia: The First Term in Context, 2005–2009. Edited by Adrian Pearce. Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2011. Pp. xxv + 239. $20.95 paper. ISBN: 9781900039994.

The Reform of the Bolivian State: Domestic Politics in the Context of Globalization. By Andreas Tsolakis. Boulder, CO: FirstForum Press, 2011. Pp. xiv + 393. $79.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781935049272.

In October 2003, a wave of popular protests forced the resignation of Bolivian president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Suddenly, Bolivia became illustrative of the limits of neoliberalism and the rise of new social movements. The rise of Evo Morales and his Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party and his 2005 election as the country's first self-described indigenous president confirmed this view and triggered an explosion of scholarly interest in Bolivian politics. Studying the political, economic, and social transformations unfolding in the country, many cited Bolivia as an example of the "left turn" in Latin American politics, while others saw in Bolivia an illustration of the transformative potential of social movements when coupled with indigenous politics.

Although anthropologists and cultural studies specialists had long shown interest in Bolivia, this burst of scholarly attention from political scientists was a

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welcome change. With the exception of the late Donna Lee Van Cott and a handful of others, few paid much attention to Bolivia's political developments after the flurry of excitement around the transition to democracy in the 1980s.[1] The new generation of research is beginning to bear fruit in the publication of two single-authored books on political economy, Andreas Tsolakis's *Reform of the Bolivian State* and Jean-Paul Faguet's *Decentralization and Popular Democracy*, and a collection edited by Adrian Pearce, *Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia*. Together, the three volumes place Bolivia's political transformation in context by examining the historical processes that preceded the rise of Morales and the political and economic environment within which his government continues to operate, as well as the broader implications and consequences of the new MAS government. They situate Bolivia within a "historical institutional" perspective (though many authors would not describe their own work this way) that sees the state as a central arena and/or unit of analysis.

In contrast to the triumphalism that frequently accompanied works with a focus on social movements, these books underscore two important realities: First, even prior to the election of Evo Morales the Bolivian state had undergone significant socioeconomic and political reforms that had significant tangible and beneficial results. Second, Morales and his MAS party have had to maneuver within domestic and international contexts that not only created new opportunities but also imposed constraints that help explain why Bolivian policies remain generally consistent with those of previous governments. All three books also emphasize that the election of Morales and the coming to power of his MAS party is a critical juncture in Bolivian politics with significant implications for domestic development and international relations.

A good place to start is the country's political economy. After all, despite dramatic changes in Bolivia's domestic politics and foreign relations, the underlying realities of the country's economy remain unchanged. The extraction of mineral resources—particularly natural gas, but also traditional mineral resources, which saw a recent resurgence—continue to define the country's economy. Moreover, unlike Argentina, Brazil, or even Chile, Bolivia lacks the economy of scale necessary to sustain industrial production. As one Bolivian economist pointed out, the basic extractivist economic model remained little changed from 1952 through 2009, despite significant ideological differences in governments.[2] The reality is that so long as the country continues to depend on mining exports as the primary engine of development, any Bolivian government—including the MAS government led by Morales—remains trapped in the structures of dependent development.

Both Tsolakis's *Reform of the Bolivian State* and Faguet's *Decentralization and Popular Democracy* address Bolivia's political economy, but they do so in very different

1. Donna Lee Van Cott, *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past: The Politics of Diversity in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000); Leslie Gill, *Teetering on the Rim: Global Restructuring, Daily Life, and the Armed Retreat of the Bolivian State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); James Dunkerley, *Political Transition and Economic Stabilization: Bolivia 1982–1989* (London: University of London Institute of Latin American Studies, 1990).

2. Flavio Machicado Saravia, *Historia económica de la República de Bolivia (1952–2009)* (La Paz: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung / Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales, 2010).

ways. While Faguet narrowly focuses on an analysis of the country's 1994 Ley de Participación Popular (LPP), Tsolakis offers a much more sweeping view of the country's political economy. Reading them together offers important insights into how Bolivia's political economy functions, both at the elite level of decision making (which Tsolakis emphasizes) and at the micro level (which Faguet carefully investigates), and also indicates how studies of Bolivia fit within and contribute to the goal of theory building. Faguet bridges the gap between the expectations and the reality of fiscal decentralization by bringing in political and structural variables at the micro (municipal) level. Tsolakis studies how transnational capital—both private and public sources of capital—operates *within* the state by looking at the individual actors within the state apparatus. Both show us that neither states nor aid organizations are singular actors that can be analyzed with simple rational-choice models. Nor are their interests entirely consistent with some of the assumptions made by knee-jerk criticisms of neoliberal policies. Tsolakis shows us that Bolivian and international technocrats crafting economic development policies did so trying to pursue the best interests of Bolivia—based on their understanding of economic theory, the constraints of political realities, and shaped by their understanding of the country's history. Faguet reminds us that Bolivian bureaucrats can act independently—and even surprise aid agencies—and that the outcomes of policies can be equally surprising.

Although readers unfamiliar with the nuances of the Open Marxist and neo-Gramscian theories upon which Tsolakis builds his argument may struggle at times to grasp his more subtle implications, the general argument in *The Reform of the Bolivian State* fits well within the "new institutionalism" approaches that emerged in political science in the 1990s. For example, reading Tsolakis's book in the context of Stephan Haggard's *Pathways from the Periphery* helps underscore the importance of looking more carefully at how the domestic environments in which states operate affect the ways countries can maneuver within the structures of dependent development.[3] Specifically, such works emphasize that the state is not a monolithic actor helpless against the onslaught of global economic forces but rather an arena of contestation in which political (and ideological) rivals challenge each other within the constraints and opportunities afforded by ever-changing political and economic landscapes. As Tsolakis points out, "the state is neither an instrument of the capitalist ruling class, nor is it an entity ontologically separated and relatively autonomous from the market" (316).

Tsolakis, a postdoctoral fellow at Warwick University, shares many of the Marxist criticisms that numerous scholars critical of the neoliberal reforms adopted during the 1980s and 1990s have voiced before. Thus his call for study of how structural adjustment policies merely "graft polyarchy, neoliberal hegemony, and the business perspective onto a corrupt, nepotistic, and statist social organism" (6) is not particularly new. It is now conventional wisdom that neoliberal reforms failed in large part because the political dimensions of neoliberalism (the scaling back of the size of state) undermined the state's ability to enforce the rule

3. Stephan Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

of law and project the political authority necessary for economic reforms to succeed (the paradox that efficient markets require strong, not weak, states). But Tsolakis is also dissatisfied with what he calls "critical analyses of neoliberalism" for a reductivist position that "systematically adopted an instrumentalist approach to the state" and assumed it to be merely a repressive criollo institution (10). Instead, he argues, it is more useful to analyze how particular sectors of the Bolivian elite exploited the economic crisis of the early 1980s to pursue their own strategic interests by seeking allies within the International Monetary Fund and other lending institutions (320). In other words, unlike other critics of Bolivia's neoliberal project, Tsolakis does not paint Bolivian technocrats as either naive pawns or villains complicit with transnational capital interests.

Overall, Tsolakis emphasizes that Bolivian elites were neither helpless in the face of international capital (the way some crude caricatures of dependency theory might suggest) nor merely complicit lackeys of global imperialism. Rather, elites had agency but were divided in their strategic objectives and political goals. These differences, Tsolakis argues, reflect the growing "internationalization" of Bolivia's elites and global capitalism more generally—part of the *longue durée* of social relations in a constantly evolving international capitalism (46). In this, Tsolakis's narrative fits neatly within the framework set by Fernando Cardoso and Enzo Falleto's classic *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.[4] While Tsolakis's conclusions are not as groundbreaking as he argues, his conclusions confirm Cardoso and Falleto's theory in a comparatively "small" state like Bolivia.

Perhaps Tsolakis's greatest contribution is his careful recounting of Bolivia's political and economic history across the twentieth century. Most recent books have provided only brief, even superficial overviews of Bolivian history prior to the recent political rupture. Tsolakis's comparatively careful overview of Bolivia's economic development under the MNR's postrevolutionary government and closer examination of electoral politics in the 1980s and 1990s will be appreciated by readers who want to better understand Bolivian history, and it brings to bear fresh sources. Although Herbert Klein's similar overview in his chapter in *Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia* is somewhat more elegant, Tsolakis's presentation is more expansive. Additionally, Tsolakis's interviews with Bolivian political and economic elites, and the internal International Monetary Fund and World Bank documents that form a significant part of the primary sources upon which his analysis is based, suggest new angles on the complex dynamics of "transnationalized" domestic economic policies.

Faguet's *Decentralization and Popular Democracy* is a very different kind of book, although it too analyzes the intersection of domestic politics and political economy. Like Tsolakis, Faguet, a professor of political economy at the London School of Economics, relies heavily on personal interviews—although in this case primarily with local, grassroots political actors. However, Faguet's interviews are combined with the kind of highly sophisticated statistical analyses not often combined with ethnographic approaches. The result is an eclectic methodological

4. Fernando H. Cardoso and Enzo Falleto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

tour de force that models how to successfully bridge the qualitative and quantitative divide. Faguet's study focuses on the 1994 Ley de Participación Popular (LPP), a landmark reform that radically decentralized what had previously been one of Latin America's most centralized polities. In the 1990s, Bolivia was a pioneer in political decentralization and such reforms became widely recommended by international aid and development agencies, including the World Bank. Today, the World Bank and other international aid organizations work closely with Bolivia's municipal governments, participating in a host of local development projects. Yet the LPP was an entirely domestic project. As Faguet, himself a World Bank officer in Bolivia at the time, points out, "Not only did the World Bank and rest of the aid community not oblige Bolivia to decentralize, it did not realize decentralization was imminent, and even failed to recognize it when it was announced" (6).

Why did Bolivian political elites embark on such an ambitious and sincere (as Faguet describes it) decentralization reform? The answer lies in domestic political calculations. Ironically, it was the same Sánchez de Lozada who was ousted from the presidency in 2003 who pushed through municipal decentralization after convincing his party that decentralization would promote economic growth and development and win back rural voters to his party, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR). After winning the 1993 general elections, Sánchez de Lozada and a small circle of reformers rushed headlong to decentralize. Within eight months, the LPP was passed; the country's first nationwide municipal elections came only a year later. Needless to say—unlike the land reforms that accompanied the 1952 Revolution—the LPP did not secure another decade of MNR hegemony in Bolivia's rural countryside. Instead, as Van Cott and others tell the story, the "decentralization shock" profoundly altered Bolivia's political landscape, encouraging new rural and indigenous movements such as MAS.[5]

Faguet, however, is more interested in measuring and explaining differences in the socioeconomic effects of municipal decentralization, not the political effects, such as the creation of new municipal electoral arenas and their consequences for party systems. The LPP involved fiscal decentralization, with 20 percent of the national budget specifically earmarked for municipal governments and disbursed on a per capita basis. Moreover, municipal governments (two-thirds of which were newly created) had autonomy to decide on spending priorities. This was a dramatic redistribution of capital placed in the hands of mostly inexperienced local officials. Overall, the reforms were positive, with "broad shifts in public investment from production to human capital formation and primary social services" (46). In keeping with conventional wisdom surrounding decentralization, "local governments proved consistently more responsive than central government to local needs" (46).

These conclusions were arrived at by using a meticulously assembled new data set of municipal-level indicators drawn from a variety of Bolivian government sources, all carefully described in chapter 4 (133–158). By itself, this data set is an important contribution. The data span twenty-one years and include spending

5. Donna Lee Van Cott, *Radical Democracy in the Andes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

and performance indicators for education, water management, industry and tourism, health, agriculture, and water and sanitation at the municipal level. Merging these data with census data from before and after decentralization, Faguet is able to compare spending across more than three hundred municipalities, controlling for differences in socioeconomic conditions.

Compiling the data enabled Faguet to use simple but powerful econometric tools to tease out key differences in spending priorities across municipalities and across time. The first priority for many municipalities was not health or infrastructure investment but small, often "aesthetic" projects like town squares—and also simple projects like new school or community center buildings. Faguet sees "a pattern of organizational learning in which local governments cut their teeth on comparatively simple, highly visible projects that enjoy broad support. . . . In the process they build capacity in budgeting, bidding, technical oversight, and other skills important to public management. This then allowed them to progress to projects that are more complicated, expensive, and intensive in technical and capital skills" (273). Of course, the early projects not only improved technical capacity, they also strengthened incumbent legitimacy. Although Faguet does not explore this issue, it would be interesting to use his data set to see whether certain kinds of projects improved incumbency advantages. Overall, however, municipal governments tended to spend funds in areas of most need: investments in education, health, and sanitation were positively correlated with deficiencies in those policy areas. In the years after decentralization, spending on human capital formation (education, health care, etc.) increased across Bolivia. But the municipal-level data show that this "shift in investment priorities was disproportionately driven by Bolivia's smaller, poorer districts" (24). Local government spending also yielded immediate results: Faguet notes "evidence of large improvements in literacy and sewerage connection rates, with the former falling by more than half" (47).

Faguet's analysis is strengthened by the inclusion of case studies of two municipalities: Viacha (a midsized, peripheral industrial city) and Charagua (a small rural community). While not as detailed as recent stand-alone case studies of municipal politics, such as Robert Albro's excellent account of Quillacollo, another peripheral industrial town similar to Viacha, they are a welcome example of how traditional case studies can be integrated with and enrich sophisticated econometric analysis.[6] Based on fieldwork involving interviews with local leaders, activists, and community members, the case studies illustrate the complex ways decentralization affected local communities. Charagua is the more interesting example, because it reflects the complexities of Bolivia's now-disparaged system of "pacted" democracy. There, the Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní was able to insert itself into the political process. The ruralization of municipal elections allowed the center-left Movimiento Bolivia Libre (MBL) to win over Guaraní voters. A political alliance between the center-right Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN) and MBL squeezed out the MNR—even though the MNR and MBL

6. Robert Albro, *Roosters at Midnight: Indigenous Signs and Stigma in Local Bolivian Politics* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2010).

were allies at the national level. The details of Charagua's local politics may seem trivial, but they are critical for understanding why Charagua gained a reputation for responsive, efficient local government, while Viacha retained its reputation for corruption and inefficiency. As Faguet argues, we should not look at decentralization "as if reform were a policy level yielding discrete, well-defined outputs" (275). Instead, Faguet shows that local economic and political realities conditioned the decentralization reforms' reception and impact. Decentralized politics seem to work best when local politics are highly competitive. In other words: policy reforms are important, but politics still matter.

One clear difference between Faguet and Tsolakis is over the question of policy makers' intentions. Tsolakis is clearly interested in understanding what made Bolivia's neoliberal reformers "tick." Faguet, in contrast, is interested in the effects of policy. This means that Faguet does not directly address some common themes in discussions of Bolivia's decentralization. Unlike Van Cott, he does not explore decentralization's effects on the party system. Unlike Merilee Grindle, he does not analyze clientelism's role in the new municipal arena.[7] Instead, Faguet zeroes in on a simple question: Did decentralization improve socioeconomic conditions and (more specifically) social capital formation in Bolivia's municipalities? The "governance" that Faguet discusses is not necessarily synonymous with "transparency" but rather simply policy outcomes—and in this case measurable improvements in health, education, and other indicators of social capital. This allows Faguet to sidestep thorny issues, such as the inherent problem of distinguishing clientelism from "constituency service" or other forms of "pork" politics. It also means Faguet is not drawn into the culturalist debate about whether poor, rural, or indigenous communities are less or more prone to clientelism. Of course, this means that Faguet's analysis will be unsatisfying for those interested in how decentralization affected party competition (or how parties adapted to decentralization) or the cultural differences between Bolivia's municipalities. Such factors are treated as independent or control variables in Faguet's models.

Readers looking for more compact analyses of contemporary Bolivian politics will appreciate *Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia: The First Term in Context, 2005–2009*, edited by Adrian Pearce. Although lacking the expansive historical scope of Tsolakis or the empirical detail of Faguet, the essays in Pearce's volume offer important insights useful for anyone with a working familiarity of Bolivian political history. Despite the volume's subtitle, none of the essays actually offer an explicit assessment of Morales's first term of office. Nor, thankfully, is the volume merely a celebration of the new MAS government. Rather, the common thread binding the volume's essays together is a unified endeavor to understand the causes and consequences of the political ascent of Evo Morales and his MAS party.

After a brief introduction by Pearce, the volume continues with an overview of the historical background by Herbert Klein. Like Tsolakis, Klein offers a review of much of Bolivia's twentieth century. The difference, however, is that Klein focuses

7. Merilee S. Grindle, *Going Local: Decentralization, Democratization, and the Promise of Good Governance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

on the social dimension of the country's economic trajectory—especially since 1952. Although the general structure of Bolivia's political economy remained little changed throughout the twentieth century, with extractive mining as the main economic activity, Klein contends that the 1952 National Revolution and the policies put in place by the MNR fundamentally transformed the country's socioeconomic reality, setting in motion changes that made the rise of Morales increasingly likely.

After 1952, the MNR governments pursued a rapid modernization strategy that sought to transform Bolivia from a poor, rural, mostly indigenous society to a wealthier, urban, mestizo one. Bolivia's modernization, however, was uneven. Education increased, but poverty persisted. The country urbanized rapidly, but rural support was still the backbone of government. By the 1980s, however, politics had become predominantly an urban, mestizo affair—even as poverty and inequality remained high, particularly in increasingly peripheral rural areas. Decentralization changed that and led to an "increased presence of *campesinos* and indigenous peoples in formal politics since the late 1990s" (59). Klein finds that "increasing urbanization, education, and persistent poverty of even the urban populations" created "an explosive mix of factors which helps to explain the emergence of pro-indigenous radical movements demanding state control over basic public services and natural resources" (60). This explanation fits well with elements of classical modernization theory and the problem of uneven development. But it also can be integrated into Faguet's analysis of decentralization's effects on social capital formation—and the implicit argument that "good governance" is measured by tangible improvements in socioeconomic conditions. One of the remarkable things about contemporary Bolivian politics is that much of what drives electoral competition today are local *policy* demands. Whereas traditional parties could offer grand ideas, today's parties must offer tangible projects, like local health clinics, schools, or even airports and soccer stadiums.

The chapters by Sven Harten and John Crabtree are important for understanding MAS as a political party. Harten's chapter analyzes the organizational evolution of MAS as it has transitioned from emerging social movement to governing party in a relatively short time. The result is an unromantic view of a party that seeks to define itself as a broad-based, popular social movement, even as it has had to make strategic calculations based on electoral considerations. In particular, the rapid electoral rise of MAS (it was a fringe political party just prior to its surprise second-place showing in the 2002 election) meant that many members, activists, and voters had vague and even conflicting notions about the party's core ideology. For most, MAS was simply a standard-bearer for the anti–status quo position in Bolivian politics. As Harten writes, "MAS is . . . the product of the accumulation of social forces around which even today commands scant consensus and remains poorly defined with regard to its precise political and ideological aims" (64–65).

But the MAS Harten describes also rose because of its leaders' savvy political decisions. Based on interviews with several current and former MAS activists, Harten learned that the "decision to open up the MAS was motivated primarily by strategic and electoral considerations aimed at maximizing the possibility of

winning the 2005 elections" (79). This included recruiting candidates who were not party members (and in some instances were members of traditional parties) or making alliances with other social movements or political organizations and giving them space on electoral lists, though Harten argues that "the chief organizational logic is not opportunism—at least not yet" (72). Not surprisingly, Harten describes a party still sorting itself out and internally divided. The problem is accentuated by the decision made in anticipation of the 2005 election to "unlock the doors of the party so as to attract the maximum number of allies" (77). Many of those new members probably joined hoping to share in the spoils of a MAS victory. Shortly thereafter, however, they began to rewrite party membership rules to keep latecomers out, which had the perverse effect of excluding longtime activists who were not formal party members. Increasingly, the unifying factor was the person of Evo Morales. Ostensibly, MAS has a decentralized and democratic organizational structure, yet for many decisions "it is Evo Morales' word that counts in the end" (81).

The description Harten provides of MAS is not inconsistent with both "systemic" and "neopopulist" Bolivian parties of the 1980s and 1990s.[8] Acción Democrática Nacionalista (ADN) was long dominated by Hugo Banzer, a former military dictator. After the systemic parties converged on a common neoliberal agenda, ADN became little more than a political clique. The same was true for Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario (MIR), which revolved around Jaime Paz Zamora, and the MNR, which revolved around Sánchez de Lozada. The pattern was repeated among the populist parties like Unidad Cívica Solidaridad (UCS), a creation of beer magnate Max Fernández, and Conciencia de Patria (CONDEPA), the political vehicle of popular media personality Carlos Palenque. It is telling that most of the parties did not survive the death or (in the case of MIR) political retirement of the party's caudillo. Part of the appeal of "antisystemic" parties like MAS was their fierce criticism of cartel parties composed of barely distinguishable clientelistic networks led by individual personalities, lacking clear ideological or policy differences. By accommodating themselves to the "systemic" parties (both UCS and CONDEPA eagerly joined in coalition governments), Bolivian voters unhappy with the status quo began supporting what René Antonio Mayorga termed "antisystemic" parties, which promised a new form of politics. However, both Harten and Crabtree describe a MAS that seems to suffer from the same institutional weakness. This is underscored by the dominant role played by Evo Morales, who has been the undisputed party leader since 1999. Crabtree's review of the electoral trajectory of Morales and MAS stresses the importance of Morales within MAS. He writes: "There can be no denying that the question of leadership, particularly that of Evo Morales, has been a key explanation of the MAS's success. The electoral data show quite clearly that Evo's popularity is not necessarily transferrable to others within the MAS" (130). Although MAS is unquestionably the largest single party in Bolivia since 2005, the party clearly does better in presidential elections than municipal ones. In the 2010 municipal elections, MAS

8. René Antonio Mayorga, *Antipolítica y neopopulismo* (La Paz: Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios, 1995).

won more votes than any other party and increased its vote share relative to the 2004 municipal elections, but the party's vote share was significantly lower than that won by Evo Morales in the 2005 presidential election. And although Morales achieved a rare majority victory in the 2005 presidential race, his coattails did not extend to his party's prefectural candidates; in the department of Cochabamba, the party's oldest stronghold, the MAS prefecture candidate lost to Manfred Reyes Villa, a key figure in the anti-Morales opposition.

What, then, is MAS? Like Harten, Crabtree is ultimately unwilling to define MAS as merely a personalist vehicle for Morales. In contrast to Harten, Crabtree argues that the growth of MAS is "the result of the success of an ideological project" (132), though it is somewhat unclear what that project is, beyond nationalist rhetoric and a vague opposition to neoliberal policies. Moreover, Crabtree also makes clear that MAS is not primarily an ethnic or indigenous party: "Although the *cocaleros* adopted some symbols that were arguably indigenous, their agenda was not one of ethnic affiliation. The coca leaf was more a symbol of national sovereignty than an ethnic rallying cry. . . . The discourse of the MAS came to focus on ethnicity as a claim, but a plurinational and multicultural discourse reflecting the range of different ethnicities to be found in Bolivia" (136). What both Crabtree and Harten seem to be describing is the kind of "ethnopopulist" party identified by Raúl Madrid.[9] That is, in a society defined by widespread *mestizaje*, the divisive ethnic appeals typical of ethnic parties are not likely to succeed. Thus Madrid is able to explain why MAS was successful in Bolivia while other pro-indigenous parties, like the more Aymara-centric Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti were not. Despite the negative connotation often associated with the term "populist," the term remains analytically useful. Perhaps MAS is a new variation of the "populist party" model identified by Torcuato DiTella that once included Peru's APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana), Venezuela's Acción Democrática, and Bolivia's MNR.[10]

Little serious attention has been paid to Bolivia's bilateral relations, making Martín Sivak's chapter on the "Bolivianization" of US-Bolivian international relations particularly welcome. Sivak's careful discussion is interesting in part because it questions the dominant narrative about the role that the United States played in the 2002 presidential election, in which the US ambassador infamously warned Bolivian voters about repercussions if Morales were elected, and seemingly in response Morales' popularity shot up. The story is often told to illustrate Washington's meddling in Bolivian affairs and animosity toward Morales, sometimes as a cautionary tale about how such meddling can backfire, and occasionally as evidence that regional relations have entered a post-hegemonic era. By contrast, as Sivak recounts it (based on an interview with Carlos Mesa, Sánchez de Lozada's vice presidential running mate in that election), the remark was a

9. Raúl L. Madrid, *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

10. Torcuato S. Di Tella, *History of Political Parties in Twentieth Century Latin America* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

strategic ploy by the US embassy and the MNR campaign to derail the candidacy of Manfred Reyes Villa, a conservative populist who was running a very close second to Sánchez de Lozada and potentially could have put together a governing coalition.

Prior to the new 2009 Bolivian Constitution, if no presidential candidate won an outright majority, the legislature selected the new president. This was done through interparty negotiations that resulted in coalition governments not unlike those in parliamentary systems. A 1994 electoral reform limited the legislature to a choice between the two front-runners. Reyes Villa's party was a member of the incumbent governing coalition, which included all of the major parties except for Sánchez de Lozada's MNR. Thus, according to Sivak, the decision was made to gamble and risk driving voters to Morales in the hopes that the traditional parties would rally behind Sánchez de Lozada against the "antisystemic" outsider. In the end, Sánchez de Lozada won a plurality with 22.5 percent of the vote and Morales squeezed past Reyes Villa by 721 votes. Facing a choice between Sánchez de Lozada and Morales—who refused to negotiate a coalition with any other parties—the legislature voted for the MNR leader.

Sivak's account should be taken with a grain of salt, however. Although his account is not inconsistent with the facts, it is based on an interview with Carlos Mesa long after he broke with Sánchez de Lozada (the two are openly hostile). If the account is correct, it suggests a wrinkle in the infamous story of the US ambassador's "meddling" in the 2002 election. Most importantly, it suggests that the US did not view Morales as a credible threat (else why deliberately try to increase his vote share?). But it also raises doubts about the relationship between Reyes Villa and the United States during the 2005 campaign, when Reyes Villa again ran against Morales and many assumed Washington favored him. After all, Sivak points out that the United States played a minor role in the 2005 election campaign and "decided to avoid any public comment" (161).

Importantly, Sivak's chapter also highlights the factors limiting improvement in US-Bolivia relations. Despite real changes in the bilateral relationship, "the shift apparent since 2005 was the result not of any new doctrine in foreign relations devised by the Morales administration, but of a deeper historical process which resulted in the empowering of domestic actors formerly excluded from both State management and foreign policy" (146). Little changed in the national interests of the United States or Bolivia relative to each other, but the local realities changed in ways that fundamentally altered the relationship. As Sivak points out, for decades US-Bolivian relations were understood through the prism of an American discourse (the Cold War, the drug war, etc.). Bilateral relations are now "Bolivianized" because the terms of the relationship are based on Bolivian political realities, not American grand geopolitical strategies. Of course, this does not mean that La Paz has achieved parity with Washington. Despite Morales's animosity toward it, the United States still has significantly more leverage in Bolivia than Bolivia does in the United States—particularly in terms of trade negotiations. Rather, what Sivak emphasizes is a change in "tone" and agenda. One clear example is the rise of the regionalist autonomy movement in Santa Cruz. The

movement was not a US creation; it had authentic historical roots and its agenda was driven by local political conflicts of little intrinsic interest to Washington. Nonetheless, because of the importance to Bolivia of these conflicts, the United States found itself being drawn into them in minor ways, called upon to form positions and make statements rather than attending strictly to its traditional bilateral policy agenda (counternarcotics, trade). Ironically, then, the consequence of Bolivianized relations has been that Washington is increasingly drawn into Bolivia's internal political disputes.

Together, these three books offer important insights into significant changes still under way in Bolivia. All three represent a significant shift toward more careful, nuanced analysis of Bolivia's internal political dynamics. The celebratory narratives of the rise of Evo Morales and the possibility of a new social revolution have, after nearly a decade, given way to scholarly skepticism. The contributors to *Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia* provide a sober, balanced analysis of the accomplishments and limitations of the first five years of MAS government. Missing, however, is an explicit comparison with other cases. There remains a tendency to study Bolivia in isolation. But it would be helpful to evaluate MAS with reference to other "leftist" governments in the region. Harten's and Crabtree's discussions of MAS would benefit from direct comparisons with Brazil's Partido dos Trabalhadores or Venezuela's Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela. Faguet's detailed analysis of social capital investment in Bolivia's municipalities would benefit from an explicit comparison with other cases, perhaps drawing from the growing literatures on municipal-level fiscal policies in Brazil and Mexico. Tsolakis's claims about transnationalized Bolivian elites and their location within globalized capital would be strengthened by showing how Bolivia fits the pattern found earlier in Argentina and Brazil.

Reading these three books together also highlights how little we know about Bolivia's contemporary political economy or broader economic policies. After reading the books by Tsolakis and Faguet, the absence of a chapter on economic policy in Pearce's volume was glaring. Certainly any thorough analysis of a government's years in power would include its (micro and macro) economic performance. Has social spending increased under Morales? How effective are the government's socioeconomic development policies? In particular, it would be useful to know whether social capital investment patterns have continued since Morales took office. Readers might also wonder whether Bolivia's current economic policy technocrats are transnationalized in the same way (though perhaps with different transnational ideas) as those in the 1980s and 1990s.

Still, all three books illustrate the importance of taking a historical approach to the study of Bolivia's evolving political institutions. In particular, both Tsolakis and Faguet fill in significant gaps in our understanding of Bolivian politics shortly after the transition to democracy and before the rise of Morales. Faguet, in particular, demonstrates that this was a period of important reforms that produced tangible results. His book focuses on municipal decentralization. But the 1990s included sweeping reforms in other areas, including education, pensions, and health care. This period also included numerous institutional reforms—including the adoption of a mixed-member electoral system. Such reforms established

the institutional framework—and raised aspirations—for contemporary reforms. If Evo Morales is a product of broad historical forces of modernization and recent reforms (notably decentralization), then it is important to understand that earlier period. This is especially true since the underlying structures of Bolivia's political economy remain fundamentally unchanged and continue to constrain the policy options available to the Bolivian state—regardless of who is at the helm.