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# To Build a Nation: An Assessment of Post-Development Thought and the Example of Bolivia

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# To Build a Nation

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An assessment of post-development thought and  
the example of Bolivia

University at Albany

The Honors College at the University at Albany

How has the world come to be today, specifically, how has the 'Third World' find itself in such abysmal conditions? Post-development thought argues that it was the fault of western development. Post-development is a reaction to the tragedies of development. It criticizes the idea of development and development as means to relieving people of the 'Third World' of their suffering. What sets post-development apart from other reactions to development is the overall understanding that development should be stopped. Post-development thinkers have come to understand development as the cause behind the insufferable conditions found in the 'Third World.' While post-development provides a useful way of critiquing development it fails to shed light on alternatives to it. What is the 'Third World' nations to do about this detriment that is development of the west? An assessment of post-development thought highlights the limitations of this utopian ideal. Further, an examination of Bolivia during Evo Morales's rise to power attempts to show the lack of feasibility of a post-development world. In the end, post-development is seen an intangible thought that does little to implement progress in the condition of 'Third World' nations.

To understand the limitations and flaws of post-development thought a synopsis on the reasons behind the emergence of post-development is necessary. The idea of development is largely a reaction to modernization in the west. Post World War II the world saw dramatic efforts to solving world problems. This was an objective of the Truman Doctrine in 1949; the doctrine addressed the inequalities and poor living conditions of 'Third World' peoples and emphasized the necessary forces of modern scientific knowledge and free global market to promote peace and prosperity<sup>1</sup>. The process would entail a complete restructuring of 'Third World' societies that were seen as underdeveloped and backwards; more modern countries like the US strive to

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 1 Escobar 1995

replicate their highly industrialized ways which included ‘technilization’ of agriculture and high levels of material production in the underdeveloped world. The modernized nations thus generalized the conditions of the Third World and overall globalized poverty. It was in 1945 in which suddenly two thirds of the world were seen as poor. What came afterwards was a series of different development strategies to create the underdeveloped to the developed; in the decades to follow the poor and rich countries saw dramatic transformations in their relationship.

What often is overlooked are the historical conditions in which development strategies came about. Acknowledging these conditions with which development came about is crucial to addressing post-development thought and perhaps assessing “solutions”. This is so because the very condition of the ‘Third World’ is a direct result of the historic foundation with which development is built on. During an incredible time of economic prosperity post-World War II in the west, the west could not afford to lose profit and was searching for new ways to expand its market. The west was in a stage of reestablishing itself in the world; this explains the new language and conceptualizing of the developing world, seen as ‘Third World’ or ‘underdeveloped’. Suddenly new policies and new agencies like the IMF and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development emerged<sup>2</sup>. These agencies helped more firmly ground US hegemony in the global capitalist system. Another critical factor was the Cold War. The conflicts between the west and Soviet Union was taken to the Third World where

“...development became the grand strategy for advancing such rivalry and at the same time, the designs of industrial civilization. The confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union thus lent legitimacy to the enterprise of modernization and development; to extend the sphere of political and cultural influence became an end in itself”

(Escobar 34).

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<sup>2</sup> Escobar 1995

A growing fear of communism further justified implementing development; the US accepted that if poor countries were not developed then they would fall to communism. With this mindset economic development took on even more significance.

To develop these countries an enormous supply of capital was necessary. The capital would build infrastructure and encourage a transformation of mostly agrarian based capital to industrial capital. To accomplish this required heavy dependence on foreign aid and international organizations. Nothing in the developing world went untouched. Technology, resources, trade, even cultural values were drastically transformed to fit the model of the west. Development became a discourse; it became a truth, a reality, a space of knowledge and power. Most importantly the system of relations established allowed the systematic creation of development strategies. Arguably, this is one of Escobar's most critical assessments of development. This was not development merely for developments sake rather it was a complete revision of these countries. This reality will be crucial to understanding the misconceptions of post-development thinkers especially in respect to the Bolivia example.

Development theory and ideas of development are dead in the water. The delusion and fantasy of development ultimately led to abstract poverty, violence, and environmental degradation and so on – development did not work. With the destitute conditions found in the 'Third World' an eruption of theories, critiques, and thoughts against development began to emerge. These authors ranged in their reasoning why development was a disaster. They preached and labeled their interpretations as 'anti-development', 'post-modernism', and 'post-development'. For the sake of simplicity I will refer to criticisms of development as post-development. Post-development can be understood as many things. It shares similarities in regard to western critiques of modernity as well as alternative development; it strives to uncover

the premises and motives of development. Mainstream post-development thinkers address key insights they believe are a result of western development. Pieterse recognizes some of these insights to be problematization of poverty, portrayal of development as westernization, and the critique of modernism and science (Pieterse 2000). Sachs, another post-development thinker, analyzes the problematization of poverty in Pieterse's article, he sees poverty as destitution; destitution as subsistence economies that are weakened through the implementation of growth strategies which leads to scarcity, scarcity as being commodity-centered production that overrides a logic of growth and accumulation. Overall, poverty cannot simply be understood as deficit, rather, and post-development thinkers argue, that poverty is also a resource.

Developmentalists, politicians, government leaders, are criticized for living off global poverty which manipulates public perception of how the impoverished live their daily lives; what it presents to the public is the impoverished are unintelligent people whom lack the means to save themselves.

Post-development thinkers want the world to understand development as westernization, that such terminology of development and westernization can be used interchangeably. We saw this in Escobar's argument, this idea that development is an external model based on industrialization. Within this anti-western stance is a motion against modernism. Post-modernism is loosely defined as an opposition towards ideologies of modernity found in modern science.

Anti-modernists consider the ways in which powerful actors such as those found in social hierarchies conceptualize and go into the understandings of knowledge. Another realization of post-development thought is the unrealistic fantasy of a universal middle-class world. Post-development encompasses acts of resistance opposed to liberation; "it is premised on an awareness of endings on the end of modernity" (Pieterse 2000: 361). A number of thinkers have

been categorized as post-development thinkers; of the names discussed, Sachs whom will be assessed further, Latouche, and Esteva too are worthy of deeper analysis.

Sachs<sup>3</sup> perspective of development primarily focused on the crisis of nature; this crisis stems from the world capitalist system and the manic drive to produce and consume. He points out that there is an increasingly global and national divide between the poor and rich, what this does is create an enormous consumer hungry middle class, creating a disproportion between those whom benefit from world economic prosperity and those who are excluded. In other words, development has constructed consumer hungry peoples, a majority being in the North and a small number of elites found in the South. These people concentrated at the top of the wealthy hierarchy are only becoming richer as the marginalized become poorer. Sachs most pressing concern is the environmental crisis that has and will continue to pillage the earth. This is significant because it points to the crisis of development as twofold: there is a crisis of nature and a crisis of justice and the two have an inverse relationship. This means that relieving a crisis of justice could threaten the crisis of nature, and the attempt to relieve the crisis of nature can impede upon the crisis of justice. Clearly alternative models to development are needed. Stemming from the crisis of justice and nature is the notion of 'sustainable development'. Sustainable development in this context seems like a picture perfect solution given addresses ecological sustainability and international justice. Beyond the definition however, is the compromise. How can the North and the South come to a mutual agreement? What about the notion of time in the efforts for sustainable development? Most importantly, what are the needs? Is sustainable development for the purpose of protecting water, land, and economic security? Also, whose needs would be addressed? Is it the needs of global consumers or for the destitute?

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<sup>3</sup> Sachs 1996 in *The Post-Development Reader*: 1997.

These questions keep development finite. In conclusion Sachs proposes a radical idea of self-limitation and creating a society that does not demand nor consume that which it can.

One of development theories main arguments was economic growth as a saving grace for the underdeveloped. Indicators of development like GNP and HDI have been used to measure standard of living and well-being of populations. Since the invention of GNP it has been a race to the top for human society. Modern nations have established self-correction growth strategies that in hindsight would create a trickle-down effect of industrial growth- this is recognized as economic growth. The trickle-down effect was understood as being limited and not everyone would benefit. Latouche tackles the idea of economic growth as the salvation to ending human misery and instead promotes the opposite – a motion towards non-growth. Latouche sees economic growth as a perpetuator of scarcity that “...the experience of poverty constitutes a condition of growth” (Latouche 1997 cited in *The Post-Development Reader*: 140). Further, Latouche advises of the paradox growth has on the underdeveloped. Growth is formulated to have a loser. Expanding upon the impediments of growth we refer back to GNP and its failure to acknowledge within GNP the ecologically harmful production part of it. Of Latouche’s points, most insightful is his view on society being trapped in this hegemonic growth economics and the hindrances this has on reinventing the wheel. An emphasis on ‘degrowth’ in the South is critical to prevent the tragedy that is growth economics. Latouche suggests that the South disentangles – that is, remove the barriers that are oppressing them from living out development as fit for these countries. To transition to a non-growth South, Southern countries must re-localize and abandon their dependence on the North.

As gathered from the proposals of the post-development writers, development is seen as a particular way of thinking about the world, a specific form of knowledge. This discourse is in



alliance with power relations, namely, the west; thus even alternatives are categorized as part of the same discourse. Post-development has its strengths. What it presents is an understanding that the west has hidden motives towards development, i.e., world dominance. Further, it convincingly points out that ‘developmentalism’ is never a neutral action, rather it is has social and political interests. It is a useful explanation to critique the world’s economic system and the power relations between countries.

However, post-development is guilty of undermining the very people post-development thought is defending and exaggerates the neoliberal hegemonic presence of the west. Post-development is criticized for idealizing the premodern times and foreshadowing a predestined doom with ‘alternatives of development’. Ultimately, we must ask, what is the solution? Can something of such grand nature be given a homogenized solution? The absolute rejection of modernity and development denies the many positives associated with it. It is ignorant to conceive development as ‘foreign bad’ and promote a ‘local good’ strategy. If development truly is a motive of the west and the ‘Third World’ is a product of its creation, then what is ‘local’? With hardcore development strategies restructuring the ‘Third World’ since 1949, with what resources and strategies can a people unfit rescue themselves? Therefore, post-development thinkers must re-asses their arguments and provide statistical evidence that development indeed has caused irrefutable damage. Ziai<sup>4</sup> makes an effort to highlight the many positives development has brought e.g., modern medicine and lower child mortality rates. Post-development thinkers also place much emphasis on anti-essentialism and go against universalism but then must accept the oppression that comes with celebrating cultural difference. In other words, post-development thought promotes cultural difference as a means of resisting

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<sup>4</sup> Ziai 2004.

domination of the west but as Kiely<sup>5</sup> points out this puts a divide between an ‘evil west’ and ‘noble south’. It is a radical calling for a reverse and anti-western society. Post-development fails to appreciate that ‘Third World’ societies aspire some of the western ideals like having a good standard of living, and that these ideals will not necessarily lead to an inevitable doom that is the west. Post-development while useful in its critique of development theory does an unfulfilling job of constructing alternative methods to changing society. Indeed post-development calls for an end to all means of development but these societies cannot simply cut themselves off from all the world and un-do history.

Critiques of post-development often generalize post-development themselves where post-development as school of thought becomes homogenized. Ziai challenges this by including post-development as a form of neo-populism. This is essential to acknowledge in order to fully critique post-development and make progress for improving the condition of ‘Third World’ nations. Ziai explains the differences among post-development writers and the two conflicting discourses found within post-development. Some post-development writers romanticize traditional cultures and view them as static thus promoting a shift to a premodern era. On the flip side of that there is discourse that does not uphold the idealized image of local communities and instead takes a more conscious approach towards critiquing modernity. The post-development writers and their critics find themselves in a stalemate. Critics accuse post-development writers of failing to fully define ‘development’ and that the attempt to essentialize development as means to refute it is necessary because without it post-development loses its foundation (Pieterse 2000: 183). However, Pieterse is too quick to generalize and thus post-development maintains its

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<sup>5</sup> Kiely 1999.

integrity; some post-development writers reject development as a concept but do not reject all the benefits development has brought.

Post-development often finds itself in trouble when addressing the role of the state. This is highly contentious for one of two reasons, that is, the role of the state has adapted and changed to fit the appropriate context, and second, the phenomenon of globalization. To address the former, often the existence of the state is defined as having a single purpose; this is problematic in the sense of the extent to which the state has power is dependent upon internal rifts and divisions, as Kambhampati<sup>6</sup> presents. This especially is the case in developing countries, where building of the state takes precedent over nation building. As is the case in respect to development, as countries progress in development it requires a definition of democracy, a concept post-development writers and their critics have failed to discuss. For post-development, an understanding of where these countries stand politically and the various forms of government they initiate to self-develop cannot be ignored. Democracy and development are intrinsically linked. The definition of democracy has been debated with cultural changes over time and this is something post-development writers have to take into account. Democracy may at one extreme be seen as a political concept but within that view are many complications: "...there may be countries where the press is more or less free; there may be *de facto* single-party rule, transgressions of human rights, or the regime may change from being democratic in one period to being dictatorial in the next" (Kambhampati 2004: 147). For the purpose of development, democracy is understood as a long-term foundation that respectfully manages ethnic, religious, and cultural interests as to avoid potential internal conflict. Establishing a relationship between development and democracy is problematic given the loose definitions of development and

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<sup>6</sup> Kambhampati 2004

democracy. Post-development aims to have ‘Third World’ countries be autonomous and self-develop as means to living a good life but conflict that has risen and will continue to occur within these nation-states cannot be ignored.

With that said, Ziai dares to compare post-development with radical democracy. Laclau and Mouffe<sup>7</sup> describe radical democracy as a prolonged struggle towards obtaining equality and liberty in various social contexts. Post-development can be interpreted too as the prolonged effort of self-determination in the South “...to seemingly benign efforts aiming at ‘development’ and in general to various structures of modern societies (state, market, science)” (Ziai 2004: 1056). Hence, representative democracy can be understood mostly serving the interests of the elites. Further, some post-development writers argue that while power may alter between parties and social movements struggle for autonomy, it is better than struggling for autonomy under a dictatorship (Esetva 1987: 139; Esetva & Prakash 1998: 153 cited in Ziai 2004). As a result of these power struggles, power can no longer be centralized but decentralized and concentrated at the local level. This is radical democracy; it is self-defining, it is the people having the power. Radical democracy is the people being in solidarity with each other; it is democracy as its purest form, at the root. Post-development thought believes this form of democracy is best and that all social movements should struggle to install radical democracy in their nation-states. Post-development writers want the purest form of democracy to be pronounced given the current democratic form does not have the people as the source of all political power and more often than not political structures are built to concentrate the power in the hands of the few.

A discussion on the role of the state would not be complete without introducing the increasingly known phenomenon of globalization. Globalization and the movements against it

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<sup>7</sup> As cited in Ziai 2004

hint at a new historical period where the nation-state's economic, political, and cultural importance is decreasing. Politically, the present dominant agents of power is found in international political organizations which invade certain states for political or military purposes. The nation-state is also changing from the ground-up with recent emphasis placed on the role of local government, which some post-development writers praise as the best way to govern. Moving forward, the role of the state is also changing economically with more deregulation, privatization, and growing importance of the global financial markets. These changes and phenomenon when considering post-development are complex and critical; globalization is this force that will inevitably and has affected all nation-states in some capacity. Globalization too is utilized as a means of protesting development, it cannot be summed up as a western creation that only the west benefits from. Such implications call for post-development writers to expand their understanding of the complexities that is development, the west, and the condition and agency of 'Third World' nation-states.

This leads to the next inquiry, imaging a post-development era. Development has been understood as a certain creation of the west, an invasion of capital, technology, and knowledge into the 'Third World'. Post-development has acknowledged the devastation development has brought but little is discussed in regards to the resistance to it. Resistance and revolution should be more affiliated with post-development thought than it is currently. Revolution is the result of the "crisis" of development and speaks to the new social actors and social movements associated with it. These movements, although new, can be interpreted as the reality of a post-development era, part of that reality being the unfortunate limits to what these post-development writers were aiming for. Nevertheless, the relationship between development, the emergence of resistance, and the insight of post-development thought are worth exploring. Escobar argues that

“alternatives to development” requires a practical but transformative change to development, modernity, and the economy. He suggests that the best means of building these transformations is engaging in social movements and understanding these movements as the key to creating alternatives to democracy, the economy, and society. Not only can observing these movements provide insight on the transformative effects they have on aspects of society but it beckons for a re-evaluation of post-development and the demands of post-development.

Presently, communities are seeing transformations in development and experimenting with other methods to organizing societies and economies. The ‘developees’ have become more aware of the dead ends of development and instead of depending on experts and other international institutions have turned to themselves as experts. More Third World scholars (some whom are also post-development writers like Esteva and Sachs) are speaking of “alternatives to development” as a means to reject the entire paradigm. This transformation is seen as a historical possibility present in grassroots movements; included in these movements is a push towards local autonomy, culture, and knowledge. It is the devastation and fantasy of ‘catching up’ to the First World that is opening up new and innovative ways to survive. These grassroots movements are limiting and problematic, in these sense of moving completely away from the state and rejecting the benefits of being associated with the state. With that said though, these grassroots movements are the reaction to post-development and provide an alternative to development ‘Third World’ countries are striving towards. Esteva has suggested for change to begin in discourse and institutions, this would occur with autonomy of what he calls cultural nuclei. The idea is to “co-move” and urge the direction towards direct democracy. This movement is not geared to the greater society but rather is a concern for the local and regional communities. What Esteva is saying can be interpreted as a critique of political, economic, and institutional

structures that have been accepted as truth; now such institutions must be met with new strategies, openness to forms of knowledge, culture, and so on.

These efforts put forth in these movements will speak of the potential to transform overall. Recognizing the significance of social movements can be found in Latin America; the call for radical transformation inquires thoughts of democracy, the state, the political regime, and development. Bolivia is a fascinating example. The history of Bolivia and its political legacy up to the present are the epitome of a desire to live in a post-development era; Bolivia's story also speaks to the realistic implications this takes and the limitations within it. Before addressing Bolivia in the present it is helpful to walk through its political development. Since independence from Spain Bolivian politics has been influenced by constitutionalism which dates back to its institutional assembly; Bolivia's constitution has gone through a series of revisions to conform to social and political realities of the time(s). Bolivia too has a history of popular mobilization within a state that historically has had little authority and ability to control such movements (Crabtree 2006 cited in Lievesley & Ludlam 2009:93). History of rebellion, protests, and revolutions were very much a reality and part of the political structure. Of most significance (in regards to the current political regime's goal of improving indigenous lives) was the emergence of indigenous politics in the 1970s. Here a call for peasant politics and rights took hold as unions embraced ethnicity as means of identity politics; such movements hinted at new historical periods to come.

In the 1980s and 1990s Bolivia saw an influx in neoliberal economic policies come into effect. An economic stabilization program was launched in the hopes of freeing the economy; an effort that was rather audacious attempted to reform the economy to favor a market-based economy as well as strengthen the private sector. Of the privatization efforts 'capitalization' opened the way

to foreign investors and hence Bolivia became the stellar example of the benefits of ‘structural adjustment’. Yet the excitement did not last long; economic growth as means to development yielded the opposite of which it promised, employment and improved living of standards were replaced with increase in social and geographic inequality (Crabtree 2006 cited in Lievesley & Ludlam 2009: 94). Another indication combating neoliberal and western ideologies was Cochabamba’s ‘water war’. When the US corporation Bechtel spiked its water prices Bolivia witnessed a magnificent outrage that ultimately forced the Banzer government to terminate its contract with the corporation; this protest was another precursor to mobilizations by social movements and the inability of the state to resist these mobilization efforts. The Bolivian people began to ask themselves if they were the main beneficiaries to privatization or was it the foreign transnationals? Further, peasants and farmers questioned the sensibility in trading nature’s gifts such as water to foreign corporations. Overtime, ethnic politics became more pronounced, more movements and marches paralyzed the political regime and eventually these movements led to a new political party, Movement al Socialism (MAS). The social movements had reached an incredible milestone; the overcoming of government power created a sense of hope for a better and fairer Bolivia.

1999 saw the rise of Eva Morales as the deputy of MAS; MAS was rooted in civil society and connected the importance of social activism to political governance. Morales began to expand the political power of MAS and soon enough took it from a regional force to a national movement. This political fervor ignited in 2005 with the election of Eva Morales as the President of Bolivia. A new form of politics was dawning where grassroots ideology would take hold of the state. Morales’s indigenous-socialist discourse called for a decolonization of Bolivia and a move towards a post-neoliberal state. The anticipation for change and new direction filled the air



but behind the excitement lies the uncertainty of the movement's ability to fully conceptualize the intricacies of the state and if MAS could encompass the needs of the people beyond the social movement rhetoric. Here we see traces of post-development thought; the attempt to move away from neoliberal ideology, privatization, and environmental degradation. The very essence of post-development thought, restructuring society and all but creating a utopian society was the very hope and anticipation of MAS; even more so because post-development authors whom advocate for local grassroots politics witnessed an attempt to reassert the primacy of the state and thus expand a regional ideology into a national reality. Escobar's interpretation of the exteriority of the social movements in relation to the state is contested in this regard<sup>8</sup>. While he acknowledges the connection of state to social movements he claims that there is often two different dynamics at play, that is, the state may run a hierarchal regime and the new social movements be more flexible and diverse in form, these movements than become structured and fixed. This is identified strongly in Latin America social movements whereas the movements are igniting new power networking strategies in effort to disassociate from the state; these new types of popular knowledge are concentrated mostly in peasant communities. Bolivia's example challenges the sustainability of this exteriority from the state and if a complete disassociation from the state is at all feasible. Again, post-development demands to turn back in time and live in a premodern world; this is what Bolivia is doing. Bolivia's population is 62 percent indigenous, a portion of whom try to live autonomously, nevertheless though, were adversely effected by the state, particularly the almighty dominance of the market. With a history of heterogeneity in regards to premodern and modern attitudes and an ambiguous state of tradition and modernity both accounted for this cultural hybridization that upheld tradition and modernity (Escobar 1995: 215). The landmark election of an indigenous president carried the promise of a transformed

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<sup>8</sup> Escobar "Imagining a Post-Development Era?"

Bolivia of which market capitalism would not be forthright but sectors of society and the needs of the people. Here, a movement that supposedly was an exteriority to the state was going to *become* the state. In practice, however, the implementation of such discourses began to lose steam as the vision of a socialist-indigenous way of life competed with a neoliberal development model; this is demonstrated with the case of hydrocarbons, the constitution, and pressure for autonomy.

A new concept of the state was launched in 2006 in order to better represent an indigenous epistemology and to reverse the social structures in place that suppressed a majority of the Bolivian people. Of the many transitions MAS planned to implement, rewriting the country's constitution was a priority. The new constitution targeted the institutional structures of Bolivia and aimed to embrace a 'plurinational' and 'communitarian' nature of the state which would replace the Congress and set up a direct system for decision-making (Crabtree 2006). A move towards decentralization (autonomy) was introduced too in order to avoid power-hungry oppositional groups. Re-writing the constitution was in the direction of establishing a direct democracy which would transform the lives of indigenous peoples. In this respect, Morales has made extraordinary leaps. Economically, he has transformed foreign investment which improved government revenue, the nation's income was better distributed to support social programs, and change in foreign relations distanced Bolivia from US policy as a way to counter any US ambitions to corrupt his party. In practice, however, attempts towards enacting a more socialist-indigenous based state fell short of its promises. Instead, it was more of a leftist government finding new ways to hold onto capitalist surplus and distribute it adequately to the state (Kennemore & Weeks 2011: 271). This strategy is labeled 'roll-out' "...where new forms of institution-building and governmental intervention have been licensed within the (broadly

defined) neoliberal project” (Peck & Tickell 2002:389 referenced in Kennemore & Weeks). Continuing, this surplus, a portion of it being hydrocarbons, was/is transferred in hopes of establishing self-management organizations; doing so negates national policies by giving oil and gas companies more freedom to carry out exploration and exploitation. The MAS also had to come to terms with balancing economic and political policies within the global economy; internal polarization and unpredictable regulation has caused many doubts as to how much surplus the government can control and redistribute. In addition to economic uncertainty Bolivia must reevaluate its failure to uphold the constitution. A section of the constitution is devoted to communal land rights and biologically protected areas. However, the government has failed to abide to the basic elements of the Title section in interest of political and economic gains. By “granting land titles in the lowlands to indigenous supporters in the highlands...has not only violated the constitution land titles of lowland communities...” (Kennemore & Weeks: 272) but it has also harmed biologically protected areas.

The issue of regional polarization presented Morales another significant challenge. The eastern and northern sections of the country are resource-rich and are responsible for half of Bolivia’s GDP. There has been a continuous demand for greater autonomy and reevaluation of the constitution in order to have a greater share of taxes (Lehoucq 2008: 121 cited in Kennemore and Weeks 2011: 273); this continuous demand speaks of the inability of these political institutions to reach an agreement and on a separate level exemplifies the ethnic and economic divide in the country. On a broader scale, this might lead to what is known as the ‘rentier’ trap. Before Morales’ election, the Bolivian government was desperate to use the rent from natural resources to industrialize the economy (Laserna 2011: 37). To accomplish this the government invested in manufacturing companies, many of which were located in fragile environments,

however, investments with these companies never worked out. Laserna uses this failure to explain the rentier trap.

In a country such as Bolivia where there is an abundance of natural resources, the problem(s) lie in revenues obtained from these natural resources and the social conditions of the country. The rentier trap concerns the rent concentration, weak institutions, and social inequality. Investing money from natural resources in Bolivia, a country that has a history of abstract poverty and weak democracy will inevitably cause conflict on multiple levels (Laserna 38). Bolivia's government is notorious for being weak and corrupt; the revenue from natural resource exports will cause more corruption rendering the poor helpless to petition over these natural resources. Under Morales' leadership democracy is even weaker with reforming the constitution and causing uncertainty over rules and agents of power. Simultaneously, investment in companies are not only failing to generate a substantial amount of revenue but many of these companies disregard economic and environmental sensitivities. Regardless of these conditions, the government continues to focus on obtaining power as well as organize financial gains, thus denouncing the history of financial failures and ignoring the present ones.

A promising insight that revolves around post-development ideology is an alternative economic model Felix Paco introduces that is neither capitalist nor socialist. The communitarian economy does not originate from private or state property but instead places the worker as the direct owner of production. This model already exists in Bolivia on a small scale and is limited to rural areas and agricultural production. A communitarian model would establish collectives of a few to thousand workers; the collective produces whichever goods, whether material, cultural, or service, at their own discretion with the use of technology and other services the group of workers depend upon. By being the owners of production the workers keep a majority of the

profit and do not have to report to a third party. Another benefit include the workers being together in community to financially support one another's needs i.e. technology. Two communal enterprises are at play then; the first being a collection of producers who produce individually and share technology. The second type includes the workers as a collected entity and whom share the same space with technical division of work (Paco 2011: 46). Both enterprises are appropriate for specialized professionals and the enterprises are built to adapt to changes of technology. In respect to peasant and indigenous families Paco explains that given that these groups are already organized into communities, then in regards to agriculture, technology can be added to their forces of production in order to be competitive and produce a sustainable amount. Paco's proposal is most critical with the inclusion of the state. Of the many suggestions to alternatives to neoliberalism, few, if any, attempt to have a local operation work in closeness with the state and to engage with the state. The position of the state in this example would to help create these enterprises, to establish a market for these worker's goods, and to have a foundation of energy sources of which these communal enterprises could grow. Further, the state would be the enforcer in supporting the communal enterprises in a way that is equal and sustainable. Paco's alternative is solid in the sense that the workers are not completely disengaged from the state, which arguably, could help ease tension between the state and the workers, and perhaps even stabilize the state politically. By granting workers the freedom to produce to his or her respectable needs, keep a substantial amount of the revenue generated from their productions, a more sustainable economy can develop.

How can we conceptualize the condition of the world, namely, the 'Third World' and how it came to be that way? Post-development ideology takes on the ambitious role to explain the tragedy that is the 'Third World'. A majority of the authors concluded that the fault lie with

the west and various development projects littered with hidden motives. While post-development provided insight into analyzing development strategies, few alternatives were given in place of development. Moreover, post-development all but denounced the very people they were representing, that is the 'Third World' people themselves. Ironically, what post-development authors claimed to be one of developments most fundamental flaws, that being development projects did not center on the people directly, turned out to be one of post-developments most fundamental flaws. Of the authors mentioned in this essay none, with the exception of Escobar, and only in vague terms, presented analysis on specific community sufferings as a result of western development projects. It limits the full understanding and explanation behind the destitute conditions of 'Third World' nations and discredits the positives and even essential needs of development aid to these nations. A unique perspective that bordered on the post-development school of thought was the attempt to achieve radical democracy, a more sensible reaction and alternative to development. At the core of democracy are the people, the people have the power and control their own destinies. Radical democracy was present in Morales's rise to power. Concluding remarks in the Bolivia example will sum up the limitations and lack of practicality of post-development. Bolivia stands out as a stellar example of post-development in action; in the respect to the MAS's courageous endeavors towards engaging in alternatives to development by returning to indigenous –local ways. Bolivia found itself gutted by structural adjustment programs, and policies of the World Bank and IMF and through a series of movements and protests the country finally put a leader in charge who promised to disengage with neoliberalism and embrace a indigenous-socialist base regime. Although this development alternative held new hopes it fell short of the realistic implications that come with building a nation. Morales, indigenous himself and the antithesis of Bolivia's status quo entered naïve to the

structural components embedded in Bolivian politics. The MAS too lacked the administrative experience and bureaucratic means in order to enact their policies. Moreover, the MAS's agenda itself was too verbose to conceptualize and apply overall to the corrupt state Bolivia was in. So here, a movement that upholds a return to pre-modern times and celebrates grassroots politics and all the affiliates with it, falls short of incorporating these beliefs into an active and functioning state. Although the future of Bolivia is uncertain, one can conclude the impractical idea of becoming an indigenous nation, and by that I mean a return to the local. Currently, the indigenous do not live outside modernity but coexist, with an indigenous modernity in formation. In the end, we should ask ourselves, is post-development thought dead or could its existence be truly acknowledged given its intangibility? Furthermore, Bolivia's example questions the capacity to which post-development, in the sense of pure democracy, can be carried out in this hegemonic capitalist world.

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