

Globalization and the Reinvention of Andean Tradition: The Politics of Community and Ethnicity in Highland Bolivia

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INTRODUCTION

Travelling and working beyond the boundaries of their traditional communities, rural populations in the Andean Highlands have never really fitted with earlier categorizations of peasants as easily definable, harmonious and isolated communities wholly reliant on gaining subsistence from working their land. In an age of increasing globalization, in which the distances travelled and the nature of work are changing worldwide, this has never been more true than it is now. Back in 1967, historical events led Eric Wolf [2001: 232] to write that 'peasants are often merely spectators of political struggles, or they may fantasize the sudden advent of millenium, without specifying for themselves and their neighbours the many rungs on the staircase of heaven.' It is argued below that present realities contradict this statement: as a result of recent local government reforms, peasant inhabitants of the community of Santuario de Quillacas in Highland Bolivia have become locked into a negotiation over their identities as individuals and development aspirations as a community with both the national state and the international policy system. The analysis which follows suggests that, although globalization is responsible for an increase in the spread and economic diversification of rural Andean communities, local people continue to ground their different identities in a sense of tradition and past. Described below are the complex ways in which the inhabitants of Santuario de Quillacas mediate present political conditions through an internal discourse,

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involving conflicting interpretations of personal and historical memories. Of particular significance, and the central focus of the article, is the way in which an apparently arcane dispute over municipal status and boundaries is used by local people as a means to understand and devise contrasting strategies for dealing with the new economic and political interests created by government reform.

I

In 1994 Bolivia placed itself at the forefront of contemporary institutional reform in Latin America with the announcement to National Congress of the Laws of Popular Participation (*Ley de Participación Popular*) and of Administrative Decentralization (*Ley de Decentralización Administrativa*).¹ By introducing these laws, and making a conscious break with a political past identified with the over-centralization of government and the marginalization of the vast majority of the rural population, the Sánchez de Lozada administration was considered by many commentators to be embarking on the most challenging exercise in social reform seen in the country since the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 [Blackburn and Holland, 1998; Booth, Clisby and Widmark, 1995, 1997; Albó 1996].

GLOBALIZATION, DECENTRALIZATION AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION

Described as a programme for 'municipalization plus popular vigilance', the popular participation legislation had the combined effect of decentralizing a significant percentage of government expenditure to local government budgets, the creation of new opportunities for rural communities to partake in the planning and regulation of local government, and formal recognition of indigenous and popular organizations as political entities with rights. Under the administrative decentralization law, non-payroll responsibilities of central government ministries – including health and education – were devolved to the departmental level, and for the first time prefectural governments at those levels were advised by and made accountable to elected councils representing the municipalities of their area. Although introduced a year later than the popular participation legislation, the administrative decentralization law had in fact been conceived as the functional basis for governmental reform, but had taken longer to pass through Congress as a result of conservative political opposition. Taken in tandem, the two pieces of legislation were claimed by the Sánchez de Lozada administration to provide a comprehensive plan for the creation of a less top-heavy and more integrated and democratic state, in which there

would be greater opportunity for formerly disenfranchised groups of non-Hispanic ethnicities to find representation.

Bolivian legislation about popular participation and administrative decentralization has largely been portrayed by government, media and social commentators alike as the radical and original response by the Sanchez de Lozada administration to social pressures within the country.² Although the legislation was clearly a response to civil society, this interpretation neglects the way in which it built upon relatively long-established currents in Bolivian politics. It also glosses over the fact that it was both broad public and narrow private sectors of civil society that pushed for change. Importantly for this article, it also ignores the direct and indirect pressure imposed on the country and national government by international economic and political forces.

Peasant and Nation in Bolivia

Over the last 20 years or so, Bolivian politics has undergone great transformation, almost as great as that brought about by the National Revolution in 1952 which ended the conservative rule of large landlords and mine-owners, and resulted in the introduction of universal suffrage as well as widespread agrarian reform [Kohl, 1978; Klein, 1992]. In 1982, following a break of more than a decade of military rule, Bolivia returned to a representative democratic governmental structure. This return to democracy is largely recognized as the result of pressure by international and national business for the country to restructure and gain control of its corrupt and ailing economy [Lee Van Cott, 2000: 131]. However, just as in 1952, there is also some recognition of the centrality of the peasant majority in Bolivia in pushing through political change. Many observers consider the relentless militant mobilization of the country's politicized and well-organized peasant union to be the key to the final destabilization of the military government [Rivera Cusicanqui, 1987; Albó, 1994].³ Indeed, it can be argued that despite the radical transformation of politics in Bolivia, the sustainability of political trends and governments remains to a great extent reliant on the goodwill and support of the country's rural population [Ríos Reinaga, 1967; Léons, 1970].

The necessity of a pact between government and peasantry in Bolivia has resulted in a long-established practice of political bargaining in which 'sweeteners', in the form of favourable legislation and rural development projects, are created by successive governments so as to reproduce a situation in which power is centralized in the hands of the country's urban *criollo* (creoles) and *mestizo* population [Platt, 1982, 1984].⁴ In this light, the current legislation about popular participation and decentralization can be understood in the same way as the agrarian reform programme of 1953

[Carter, 1964, 1971; Menjivar, 1969; Pearse, 1975; Hahn, 1991]. In short, although legislation was formed in response to national and international business interests for greater liberalization of government and economy [Laserna, 1994; Urioste and Baldomar, 1996], it is evident from the political history and literature written in the country over the last 20 years that its introduction was a pragmatic attempt to respond to growing demands by peasants and the indigenous population for increased political representation, and to secure their acceptance for the wider actions of government [McNeish, 2001; Untoja, 1992; Rojas Ortuste, 1994; Cárdenas, 1988; CIPCA, 1991; Medina, 1992, Cuadros, 1991; Ticona, Rodríguez and Albó, 1995].

Popular participation and decentralization are now widely celebrated in the development literature as institutional responses to the challenges of economic regionalism, development planning and the distribution and balance of power. In Latin America, schemes for administrative decentralization of the state and participatory development were, with few exceptions, introduced by most governments – including advocates of neo-liberal economic policy – during the 1980s. In Africa, state-run programmes for participatory development and decentralization have been nearly as widespread as in Latin America: for example, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Botswana and South Africa to name but a few [Shou, 2000; Crook and Manor, 1998; Good, 1996; Mohan, 1996; Steifel and Wolfe, 1994; Erikson, Naustalstid and Shou, 1999]. In Asia various experiments with state-sponsored programmes for popular participation in development and decentralization have also been undertaken, in India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Nepal and China [Crook and Manor, 1998; Webster, 1992, 1999; Zuo, 1997; White, 1999]. Programmes for democratic local governance have also been introduced as part of the package of reform in a number of European and former Soviet Union countries [Blair, 2000].

Governments and supporters of the programmes in NGO circles back administrative decentralization as a way to improve both the efficiency and the responsiveness of governmental institutions. Although claiming the home-grown nature of their respective reforms, national governments appear to learn from each other in including popular participation as the necessary responsive ingredient in their decentralization process [Martinez, 1996]. Whilst this learning process appears to originate at home in most countries, the influence both of economics and of international organizations such as the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank on those countries which have continued with programmes of popular participation and decentralization is unmistakable [Palma Caravajal, 1995; Montano, 1996; Ospina, 1997]. In Bolivia the World Bank was a key player in

pushing through legislation for local government reform, the financing of the implementation of reform, and the blueprint for participation in planning. In Latin America popular participation and decentralization programmes were not only the result of a regional political mood-swing, but by and large carried out as a part of the structural adjustment process at the behest and with the support of the international community represented by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and the World Bank [Tendler, 1999; Palma Caravajal, 1995; Martinez, 1996; Stiefel and Pearce, 1982]. The municipality, a legacy of the centralized Napoleonic state structure shared by many countries in the region, was to be recast and granted a key role in most new programmes for administrative decentralization [Nickson, 1997].

THE CONTEXT: SANTUARIO DE QUILLACAS

Santuario de Quillacas is a municipality of principally Aymara-speaking subsistence farmers and pastoralists located on the Southern Bolivian altiplano at an altitude of 3,800 metres (12,500 feet) in the Southern Bolivian Department of Oruro. As is evident from the name itself, the community of Santuario de Quillacas is known to Bolivians not only as a small municipality but also as a major religious sanctuary. Each year on 14 September, people from all over the Bolivian Highlands and from as far away as northern Argentina and Chile descend on the municipal capital of Quillacas, on pilgrimage to celebrate the feast of Señor de la Exaltación. The local image of Christ Crucified, known as *Tata Quillacas*, is held to be a miraculous *suma miriku*, or a doctor with exceptional curative powers.

Despite its current small population of around 2,265 inhabitants, the community of Santuario de Quillacas has had its own municipal government since 1962. Together with environmental change and the reduction of the railway services over the last 30 years, the crash in tin prices and privatization of the mining industry have also been responsible for forcing many Quillacans to leave the area in search of seasonal employment. However, men still seek employment in the nearby mines of Totorani, Collovara and Huanuni.⁵ In addition to seasonal work in the mines, short periods of work are also carried out in the cities or richer agricultural areas in the eastern lowlands (Chapare, Santa Cruz). One or two individuals in the town of Quillacas have also managed to make enough money to buy themselves trucks, which they use to tender for haulage work between the major Highland and Lowland cities. On their way they carry local produce from one ecological area to sell or exchange in the next.

Unlike other municipalities in the Highlands of Bolivia, in Quillacas there are no large landowners and no visible remains of a hacienda system.

Modern cantonal divisions within the municipality correspond more or less to the boundaries of pre-existing *ayllu* subdivisions. While there are clearly some common features in this widespread organizational and structural feature of Andean society – the common ownership of land, the Chinese box subdivision of the community, the importance of kinship and ancestors, and connected system of rotating local leadership – the truth is that there exists considerable variance in the form and meaning of the *ayllu*.⁶ In Quillacas it is the *ayllu mayor* (main *ayllu*) which is considered to be the maximal body of people and land that is their community. Within this maximal body the community is segmented into four sections or *ayllus menores* (minor *ayllus*), which are groups based on kinship and virilocality. It is these *ayllus menores* which correspond with municipal cantonal subdivisions. Within each of the five *ayllu menores* that make up the *ayllu mayor* land is again subdivided. The landscape surrounding each of the villages and settlements is divided, often quite roughly, and people can only work the land, keep animals, or build their *estancias* or *ranchos* (farms or ranches) on parcels belonging to the *ayllu* or sub-*ayllu* into which they are born or marry.

In common with other colonial towns – for example, Yura [*Rasnake*, 1988] or K'ulta [*Abercrombie*, 1998] – this division of territory according to the five *ayllus* is repeated even in the town and villages of Santuario de Quillacas. Neighbourhoods and streets are again divided according to *ayllu*, and people reside side by side with their fellow *ayllu* members. Separately the central square and churchyard are also divided according to *ayllu*. During festivals, religious parades and rituals, *ayllu* members and their musicians take up positions, lead off from and carry out libations, divinations and sacrifices in these areas where – like them – their ancestors are held to reside. In simple terms, then, what the *ayllu* consists of is a classificatory system which locates its subject within a predefined Andean society, and thus a space which, albeit imperfect and frequently broken, emanates out from the church and square of the central *marka*, through the streets, out into the landscape, between different communities to the common borders of their greater community, the *ayllu mayor*.

The Sevaruyo-Soraga Conflict

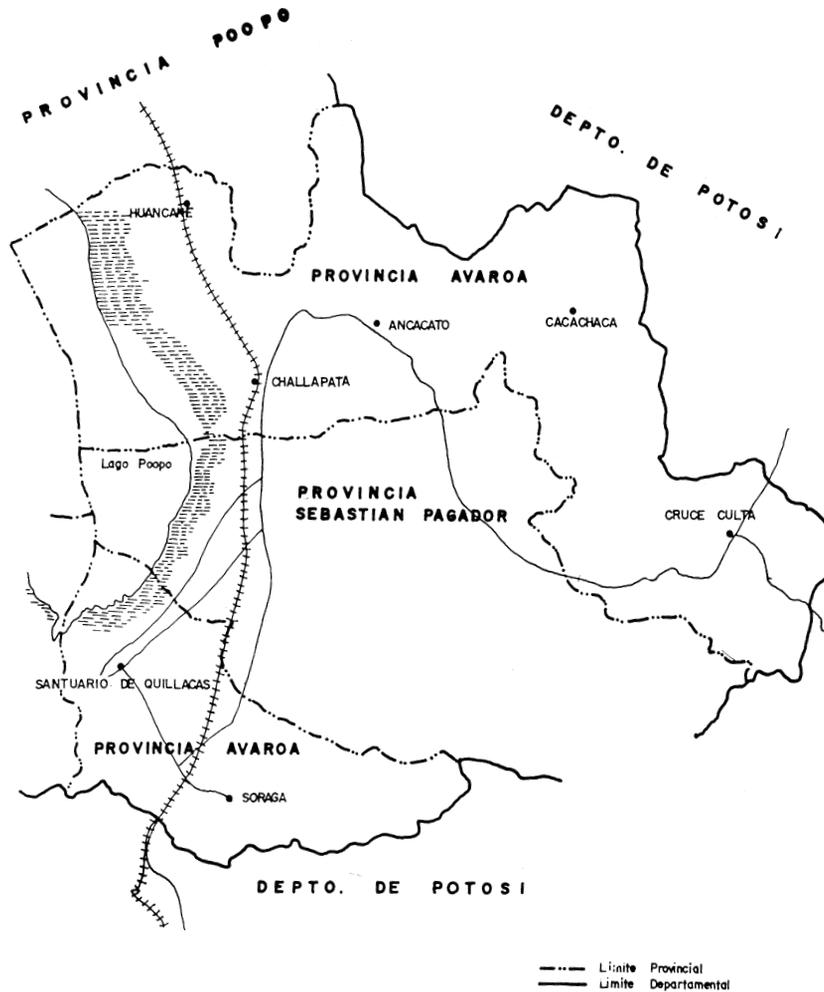
In April 1998 Don Eleuterio, the Mayor of Santuario de Quillacas, was handed a letter by a town inhabitant returning from market in Oruro.⁷ That night the contents were read out at a meeting of the municipal council. The letter announced the holding of an extraordinary meeting of the Civic Committee (*Comité Cívico*), a migrant residents' organization, in Oruro, to which all interested residents were invited. There was a rumour amongst officials of the Departmental Prefecture that the Bolivian National Senate

was in the process of discussing the ending of Santuario de Quillacas's status as a municipality, and the annexation of its political jurisdiction by a neighbouring municipality and province. The meeting in Oruro was aimed at fielding and finding solutions that could address the threat posed to the continued existence of Quillacas' government. The municipality was asked to prepare a report of its accounts, development plan and status in relation to the implementation of the popular participation and decentralization laws; information which the Civic Committee considered important indicators of their chances in government debates about their future.

The reason behind the National Senate's review of Santuario de Quillacas's municipal status lay with the history of conflict between the municipal authorities based in the town of Quillacas and the inhabitants of an outlying canton. In 1996 the municipal government in Quillacas received notification that in carrying out its duty under the popular participation legislation – that is, redrawing territorial and judicial boundaries – the National Boundary Commission (CONLIT) had accepted an application by the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga, to the southwest of Quillacas, to shift its political and judicial affiliation to the municipality of Huari in the province of Sebastian Pagador (see Map 1). For the municipal government of Santuario de Quillacas, the decision by CONLIT came as shocking news. Although there had been tensions between the government and the canton for some time, cantonal leaders had not received an invitation to the meeting in Pazna where the decision had been taken. Since being returned from Huari to Quillacan administrative jurisdiction in 1994 following the introduction of popular participation, there had been some grumbling amongst cantonal leaders about being forced to join a poorer municipality. However, nothing had been said about a complete change in political affiliation. Although it had been a part of Sebastian Pagador for 12 years, in historical and cultural terms Sevaruyo-Soraga had always been considered an integral member of the greater community of Quillacas. Besides the loss of territory, losing the canton's population of around 700 people [*National Institute of Statistics*, 1992] meant that the per capita resources received by the municipality through provision of popular participation – that is, the *co-participación tributaria* – would now be greatly reduced.

The municipality of Santuario de Quillacas felt cheated by the actions of Sevaruyo-Soraga and Sebastian Pagador. Quillacas had supported the creation of the province of Sebastian Pagador and the municipality of Huari in 1982, even though this had physically separated Quillacas from the rest of the province of Avaroa of which it remained part politically. With this redrawing of the boundaries, Santuario de Quillacas changed from being the third to the second section of the province of Avaroa. Although this improved its administrative status, and the members of the municipal

MAP 1
 AVAROA PROVINCE, DEPARTMENT OF URURO, BOLIVIA



Source: Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano, Secretaria de Participación Popular, Bolivia.

government of Santuario de Quillacas feared that physical separation from Avaroa might harm communication with the provincial government in Challapata, they nonetheless agreed to the creation of Sebastian Pagador. It appeared that the administrative entity Quillacas had helped create had turned against it by agreeing to the annexation of Sevaruyo-Soraga. Envoys

from Quillacas travelled to the canton and to the neighbouring municipality to see if they could stop the proceedings. However, in view of the economic value of their decisions, the public representatives of the administrations of Huari and Sevaruyo-Soraga remained unmoved by Quillacan objections.

Since popular participation funding to the municipalities is calculated on a per capita basis, Huari was keen to obtain the financial advantage of raising its overall population. Sevaruyo-Soraga, disappointed at the slow pace of development in the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas, stated that it had been considering such a shift in political affiliation for some time. Indeed, its application to become a canton had been inspired by a desire to secure autonomy from Santuario de Quillacas and redefine its administrative position in relation to the state through permanent administrative union with the wealthier province of Sebastian Pagador. Quillacas knew this. Now with the legal re-demarcation of municipal boundaries carried out under the popular participation law, the opportunity to join the richer municipality of Huari had arisen. The leaders hoped that the shift in political affiliation would see investment in their area rise.

According to municipal authorities in Quillacas they had been powerless to stop this situation from arising. The municipality of Santuario de Quillacas had been severely slowed down in its use of popular participation financing due to a serious error made during the original drafting of the law. In 1994, the Bolivian state issued Supreme Decree No. 23943, which listed the 311 municipalities recognized under Law 1551 as recipients of per capita funding; the list itself was published.⁸ It did not include the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas. Without the official recognition conferred by this document, the first year of financing bypassed Santuario de Quillacas, and was transferred entirely to Huari. The following year the municipality's complaints and proof of its right to be recognized under this law stopped the flow of money away from its community. However its municipal accounts were frozen until legislative recognition in May 1996 made its existence official in the eyes of national government.⁹ As a result of these problems, the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas experienced severe delay in its efforts to introduce and finance development initiatives throughout its territory. The leaders of the communities within the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga refused, however, to accept this as a suitable excuse for what they considered to be the poor administration of their area.

Unable to change the decisions of its neighbours, the municipal government of Santuario de Quillacas looked for an alternative way out of the crisis. Together with the Civic Committee in Oruro, it put together a case against the official decision made by CONLIT. The National Senate, the Sub-Secretary of Popular Participation, the National Directorate of Territorial Boundaries and the Military Geographical Institute were each

sent a series of documents. These documents not only demonstrated the lawful constitution of the municipality by President Paz Estensorro in 1961, but the historical connection of the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga to Quillacas. Letters sent with these documents also argued that CONLIT's decision had been unlawful. Contrary to legal procedure, none of the Quillacan officials had been invited to attend the meeting in Pazna. It was pointed out that without the signature of the President of the Republic the document approving the canton's annexation was invalid. Notarized reports that officials of CONLIT had accepted bribes from the municipality of Huari were also included.

Although the case remained unresolved throughout 1996, 1997 and 1998, the submission of a legal case to the correct authorities meant that CONLIT and the province of Sebastian Pagador were temporarily unable to proceed with the annexation of the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga. Santuario de Quillacas's boundaries remained intact, and with the passing of the 'Law of the Creation of each municipality' the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas began to receive *co-participacion* funds. According to the law of popular participation, they were free for the time being to look for other external sponsors for local development projects. Municipal structures were more or less in place, and Quillacas's annual plan (POA) and municipal development plan (PDM) had received official ratification. To try and demonstrate goodwill to Sevaruyo-Soraga, the canton was earmarked within these plans for a considerable rise in investment and development. However, despite the efforts made by the mayor and the Centre for Training and Socio-Economic Development (CCEDSE) to discuss possible projects with the canton, its leaders and inhabitants refused to negotiate.¹⁰

As opposition continued and escalated throughout 1997 and into 1998, the conflict began to create such tensions that Don Eleuterio and some of his colleagues were verbally abused and threatened by people in Sevaruyo-Soraga.¹¹ The road leading from the town of Quillacas to Sevaruyo was blockaded with large boulders, and visiting officials' vehicles were stoned. A few weeks prior to the arrival of the letter, the departmental Prefect and police officers had been called in to try and calm down the situation, and to guarantee both sides that a final decision on their case would be made shortly by the national government.

RURAL GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

Given the precious time away from their fields and the long journey they had made to get there, the turnout for the Civic Committee meeting held in the draughty 'Market-Traders' Union Hall' in Oruro was quite impressive. As the numbers rose in the meeting hall the leader of the Civic Committee

started proceedings by offering formal greetings to all who had arrived, before going on to describe the subject and direction of the meeting. The meeting first considered the report from the *Alcaldía* before proceeding to the question of how to deal with the current problem. As formal greetings were made, in addition to *vecino* residents the names of outlying village and hamlet representatives were warmly repeated. Given the main topic of the meeting there was a notable exception. Despite the great turnout for the meeting, nobody from the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga was present.

The Conflict Addressed

In his account of the municipality's current situation, Don Eleuterio began by recounting the problems they had experienced as a result of the conflict with Sevaruyo-Soraga. He explained that although they had received the development funds promised by popular participation legislation, the municipal administrative budget was still struggling to cover the cost of certain functionaries. According to Don Eleuterio, the *Alcaldía* in Quillacas was experiencing problems making the 15 per cent of *co-participación tributaria* funds allocated to the running of the municipal government stretch to cover some of their costs, including the wages of two of its staff (the *Contador*, or accountant, and the *Oficial Mayor*, the general administrator). An inspection made by the Vice-Ministry of Popular Participation of the municipal government the previous month had given their adoption of the new administrative structures the official all-clear. So far they had not been able to produce many visible signs of 'public works' (*obras públicas*), but the municipal accounts had received *co-participación tributaria* financing, as well as further funds, from the Social Investment Fund (FIS) and the Departmental Prefecture for the planned electrification of the towns of Quillacas and Sevaruyo. To this funding a number of international and national NGOs had added considerable sums of money to finance a range of local development projects.¹² However, the conflict with the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga, and the long drawn out process of change-over in government following the last election, had considerably slowed down the implementation of these projects. Without the cooperation of all the inhabitants of the municipality he feared that any attempts to speed up these works could mean the freezing of their accounts for another year.

Following the *Alcalde's* account of the current situation, a number of comments made by authorities and individuals in the audience began to reveal hitherto undisclosed opinions and information.¹³ First, Don Crecencio Huaylla, President of the Vigilance Committee, stood up and announced that, in adjusting to his new position, he had struggled greatly to understand the complexities and meaning of the reforms for the community and its government. In the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas, grassroots

organizations (OTBs) representing the four cantons and a Vigilance Committee had been registered successfully soon after the introduction of reform. Although he had taken over the role of Vigilance Committee president without any previous experience of public office, Don Crecencio complained had been expected to come to terms with the demands of his new job without formal training or a wage. Together with the grassroots organizations, he observed, he had successfully conducted workshops in order to gain an understanding of people's interests and opinions, and what they wanted by way of development planning and investment. In the course of these activities he had encountered other individuals and groups who were similarly confused and struggling to understand the complex legal requirements of the new laws: 'The people of the *rinconada* don't understand why money can't be handed directly to them', he said, 'why does the government need to oversee and control local decisions in this way?'

Building on the Spanish word for corner (*rincón*), the term *rinconada* is used by people in the town of Quillacas to refer to the outlying settlements that belong to their municipal and *Ayllu* area. Although the word is often used in a neutral sense, conversations with inhabitants of Quillacas revealed that the term was often used in a negative context. It conveyed the sense of non-*vecinos* as peripheral, and therefore less aware of or connected to the loci of administrative power and decision-making. Although its critical use is significant in terms of an 'us/them' differentiating mechanism, here Don Crecencio uses it in a way that sets up another 'us/them' distinction. Specifically, he appeals to the mainly *vecino* audience to understand that cantonal views of recent local government reform differed little from those of people living in the town: in his words, 'They had paid the taxes required under governmental decentralization, but under the new system of popular participation was this not meant to be their money, to be directed by them, to address local needs and development? Why did this money have to pass through the state system at all?'

From the sounds of obvious approval and the nodding of heads, these sentiments appeared to find widespread support among those present at the meeting. According to Article 5 of the *Decreto Reglamentario de los aspectos economicos y patrimoniales de la Ley de Participacion Popular*, (*Decreto Supremo, No. 23813, June 1994*), citizens of a municipality are expected to pay tax for their ownership of all urban and rural property and goods, and vehicles. Although older members of the community remembered pre-revolutionary payments of a *tasa*, or poll tax, to the Oruro *Prefectura*, for most Quillacans this was the first time in recent memory they had had to pay any tax other than a small annual fee to the ancestral leaders for community land use.

In response to Don Crecencio, Don Cirilio said that he for one was happy that people in the municipality were complying with new tax requirements. People should recognize that although the system was not as clear as it should be, their taxes were beginning to feed back into the development funds available to the municipality. In reading out the figures from the past three years, Don Eleuterio demonstrated that their account had grown from B\$245,000 in 1996 to B\$395,000 in 1998.¹⁴ There followed some prolonged discussion before a member from the Civic Committee in Cochabamba rose to his feet. His comment was that the municipal government of Santuario de Quillacas was in need of some constructive criticism; that it appeared to have a problem with communication. For the last two years it had not told the residents what was happening with the money it was receiving. More regular 'economic reports' (*informes económicos*) and more information about the legislation and how it worked were needed before any faith in their possibilities could be created. To this the *Alcalde* openly apologized, adding that 'in an ideal world ... we would make more effort to communicate with people.'

However, he went on to say that officially the role of introducing the system of participatory planning, whereby community members could actively participate in municipal development planning sessions, was to have been taken care of by CCEDSE. He now admitted that this was problematic. This was the first time that CCEDSE had dealt with this kind of work. Not only were CCEDSE new to this kind of socio-political facilitation in general, but they also admitted to lacking experience of dealing with the interests of an ethnic rural community such as theirs. This initiated a discussion about political and legal communication. Members of the community in the audience voiced their concern, both about their own vulnerability and about the lack of knowledge (*escaso conocimiento*) regarding the new legislation and its meaning. These concerns were expressed in the following manner:

The laws express respect for our norms and customs, and promise a positive change in local development, but still they appear to take little account of our lands, customs and culture. When other laws, such as the agrarian reform of 1953, changed our government and rights to land, they too were advertised and initially accepted as positive advances. However, these laws nearly resulted in the destruction of the *ayllus*. What will stop these laws from having the same effect on our communities now? ... The reforms of the last government state that they will not disrupt our organizations, but they still do. Popular participation, decentralization and INRA have all divided us more than ever before. Do we not have natural rights to

land and identity not given by national law? This is what we have to remember!...We can adjust to the new system of government and perhaps receive some benefit from it, but we need to think about our future. At two in the morning another decree can be passed and what will we do? Still hope that the law benefits us?

As well as expressing present difficulties with the Bolivian state, the audience's reactions to what had been said appeared to favour the avoidance of future difficulties of the kind they now faced, through getting hold of more information and improving the community's understanding of national legislation. One member of the audience proposed that perhaps the best source of this knowledge lay with the community's young people. Either the latter, educated as they were in the urban ways of the city, could together with the Bolivian government communicate their knowledge to the Civic Committees, or young people in the secondary school in Quillacas might receive special tuition from CCEDSE explaining the intricacies of political and legislative structures. Don Eleuterio responded that he thought this a good idea. However when he had tried in the past year to interest students in the popular participation legislation, they had shown no interest in coming along to meet the development specialists setting things up in the *Alcaldía*. He had even toyed with the idea of having the specialists run computer classes for a few teenagers on the new computer installed there. However, the simple fact that young Quillacans saw their future linked to the city made these initiatives unworkable. All he could think of doing in the meantime was to ask the Federation of Southern Orureño *Ayllus* (FASOR), a local ethnic political organization based in nearby Challapata, to come and give them another public workshop about the working of the laws.¹⁵ Two months before, on the day of the arrival of a representative of Oxfam America, FASOR had organized a workshop in Quillacas to demonstrate their work in community education about rights, law and identity. A number of other workshops of this kind had been held in the area during the previous year.

Impatient to get on and address the problems at hand, Don Eleuterio now urged the audience to think of what they were going to do in relation to the Sevaruyo-Soraga problem. He repeated his fears that resistance to the government's plans might compound difficulties generated by lack of communication with the state, adding that: 'Central government always seems to have a different perspective from ours. They often seem to have problems integrating our ideas with the Departmental Development Plan.' Nonetheless, he reminded them that what was at stake was not only the possibility of losing their current right to manage their own development projects, but also a complete loss of local self-government. Given this

danger, he believed it important to continue trying to win their case with the government and offering the hand of friendship to the canton. Only in this way would they secure the continued existence of the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas. What were their opinions?

The Voice of the Rural Grassroots?

Don Julian, one of the ancestral authorities in the community, stood up for the first time in the meeting. He stated that he for one was opposed to the opinion of some residents that the exercise of physical pressure on the canton was the way to stop their intended separation. He wanted the *alcaldía* to continue down the path they had started. That was, to use existing laws to solve their predicament. Obviously stung by his comment, the *Alcalde* responded that he personally was not satisfied with this response, that he was tired and lacked time to continue dealing with these problems on his own. Now he wanted the ancestral leaders and the entire community to join him in taking on responsibility for the conflict.

One of the municipal council members urged the community to continue down the diplomatic path, but to work through some kind of independent mediator: someone who could not be 'bought', perhaps someone from the Catholic church who was not tempted by money might intervene on their behalf. At this point, criticism was made concerning the loyalties of Don Cirilio Villalobos, the Director of the Civic Committee: 'Why should we listen to the thoughts of Señor Villalobos ... he is not going to suffer the consequences, is he? We are the ones who will suffer, aren't we? And if the municipality disappears, we are the ones who will be guilty.' Two men from the audience expressed their opinion that the diplomatic path taken by the *alcaldía* was a waste of time. It was clear to them that to enter a dialogue with the people of Sevaruyo was impossible. Such people should be forced to understand and accept the justice of the municipal government's location in the town of Quillacas: 'They refuse to accept or discuss anything other than their aspiration to join Sebastian Pagador. With this kind of people it is impossible to progress.'

Don René Jallaza, President of the Civic Committee in La Paz, who was clearly bothered by the direction of the preceding discussion, managed to attract the meeting's attention by standing up and waving his hat. A businessman by profession, Don René clearly had learnt some skills in presentation: having received permission to speak, he walked to the front of the audience with a flip-chart and felt-pens. Turning to the audience he commented: 'It's clear that someone has to lose this conflict and, considering all the facts, it looks like it will be Quillacas.' Perhaps by not complying with the letter of the law, he said, CONLIT and Sevaruyo-Soraga had indeed exposed a great weakness in their case. Quillacans, however, should

TABLE 1
COMMUNITIES FOR AND AGAINST ADMINISTRATION BY THE
MUNICIPALITY OF SANTUARIO DE QUILLACAS

Community	For administration	Against administration
Quillacas	All for	
Soraga		All against
Villcani	70% for	30% against
Rivera	80% for	20% against
Antatata		All against
Ichocata		All against
Lucumpaya		All against
Torco	50% for	50% against
Totorani	All for	
Ricotani		All against
Thicomayu	All for	
Antaraqu		All against
Pacollani	All for	

recognize that there were too many factors that would swing the situation in favour of their rivals in Huari. Their municipality's lack of territorial continuity with the rest of the province of Avaroa and insufficient population size – fewer than 5,000 inhabitants – meant that they did not even meet the basic legal requirements for the constitution of a municipality required by the Law of Popular Participation and the will of central government.¹⁶ Sooner or later, these deficiencies would be addressed by the Bolivian State. He reminded his audience that Quillacans should also recognize that, however unfair it might be, Huari had much more money to play with than the Santuario de Quillacas; money which they could not only use to bribe government officials at national and departmental levels, but which also made their claim to exist and expand appear all the more plausible.

Don René continued by saying that it appeared that the leaders and residents refused to accept, or were unaware of the fact that, the majority of communities in the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas were in favour of annexation by another province. To show this, he wrote down the names of all the settlements belonging to the community of Quillacas, and asked the members of the municipal council to report in turn which communities were to their certain knowledge presently for and against its control of local government (see Table 1). The diagram he produced clearly showed that, despite municipal leaders' and townspeople's protestations, the majority of settlements in the municipality were in favour of joining the richer neighbouring province. He said that other settlement leaders were tired of waiting for the municipality to deliver them support. With this, Don René concluded that Quillacans should accept their fate. It would better for their

community if they find themselves the best possible deal within the coming annexation. This would reduce the effect on the population and boundaries of their community. After all Santuario de Quillacas was a religious sanctuary and *ayllu* before it was ever a municipality.

A later show of hands would show that the majority of people at the meeting considered this to be defeatist talk. As the meeting drew to a close it became clear that the majority of town residents and municipal representatives were in favour of continuing negotiations with the government and Sevaruyo-Soraga. If a neighbouring province annexed them, they would have to accept a reduction in their political status, from a section to a canton. From this diminution would stem a loss both of their right to self-government and a significant proportion of their population.

Discussion then turned to how they could strengthen their current position as an ethnically distinct people – that is to say, as an Aymara-speaking community – with an independent local government. Surprisingly, although some of the municipal authorities and town residents were aware of this alternative – looking to form a *mancomunidad* with an adjoining municipality (Pampa Aullagas, Ladislao Cabrera) – this option did not enter their discussions.¹⁷ In later interviews with municipal authorities, it was made clear that despite the fact that such an arrangement would have strengthened their numbers and their finances, they were frightened that such a move would mean a reduction in their overall administrative control. It was quite obvious that – where local leaders and the leading families were concerned – there was also a considerable amount of pride involved in choosing to continue to remain independent. Instead, the meeting proposed that in addition to the legal actions already taken by the municipality, some attempt must be made to study the possibility of having the state recognize their status as an indigenous municipality.

It was suggested that perhaps the government might grant their community more secure status if, as in the case of the nearby communities of Coroma and Santa Ana de Chipaya, the special nature of their history as a distinct political and cultural centre was formally recognized. Under the special conditions set by the law of popular participation, ethnic communities can apply for legal recognition as indigenous municipal sections. Within existing municipal structures, this gives them a legal right to have their leaders occupy the local positions of cantonal municipal agents. It also gives them legal right to apply for funding specially allocated by government and other organizations to indigenous peoples and their interests. However, that these communities were recognized legally as dependent indigenous municipal sections, and not as autonomous municipalities in their own right, was a consideration that municipal leaders in Quillacas failed to take into account.

It was with these ideas in mind that the meeting in Oruro finally came to a close. Different opinions, ideas and disagreements had all been voiced, but the municipal government had somehow managed to come out with its existing strategy intact. The idea of becoming an indigenous municipality would be looked into, but the municipal government would continue to rely on the legal case it had submitted.

The Conflict Unresolved

In the weeks and months that followed the meeting in Oruro, the conflict between Quillacas and the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga remained a major preoccupation of all the inhabitants in the town. The latter discussed the most recent developments in the situation on a daily basis, however small they might be. In conversations about the conflict and legal case it became obvious that opinions in the town were becoming increasingly divided over what was happening, and what should be done to resolve the conflict. As the situation worsened and their efforts appeared to be getting nowhere, a growing number of people were in favour of changing the strategy employed by the municipal government. The Prefectura in Oruro and the National Senate appeared to have forgotten their case. Except for building a block of public toilets and showers in the main square and improvements to the local schools, all other development projects appeared to have been suspended until the end of the conflict. As more town residents aligned themselves with the view that 'perhaps annexation by a neighbouring province wouldn't be so bad', the verbal battle lines for those implacably opposed to compromise became more and more forcefully drawn. For *vecinos* allied with the *alcaldia*, talk of annexation was cowardly. These weren't real Quillacans speaking. Real Quillacans would keep on fighting for their political rights. After all, they had always been the centre of government in the area. They couldn't just give that up now. For other *vecinos* lacking political influence or ties to local government an administrative shift increasingly seemed logical and necessary. Their municipality was too small and too poor to continue on its own. At Don Vicente's home there were regular discussions and occasional arguments between the extended family members and neighbours who met to talk and eat together in the evenings.

As relations between individuals and settlements worsened, Don Vicente was asked as one of the *ayllu's* ancestral leaders to come and conduct *wilanchas*, or sacrifices, for the local ancestors and spirits of the town, the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga and other neighbouring hamlets. People hoped that by asking for the ancestors' help, the hostility in the community might be dispelled and peace return to their land. During the procession celebrating the festival of *Santa Vera Cruz*,¹⁸ the priest stopped at each

shrine in the churchyard to offer prayers about the conflict with Sevaruyo-Soraga, and asked for peace in the *ayllu* which tended the shrine concerned. In response to calls from local people, the priest held a special mass in the church of Quillacas at the start of July, calling for reconciliation through prayer and blessing. When reports and stories of similar, but much more violent, inter- and intra-community conflicts in nearby rural locations such as Qaqachaka or K'ulta were told or read about in *La Patria*, the main newspaper in Oruro, people in Quillaca made comparisons with their own situation. What could be done, they asked one another, to stop things getting so out of hand?¹⁹ During 1997 and 1998 some 14 people had died as a result of the conflict between Qaqachaka and their Laymi and Jucumani neighbours. A riot in Challapata between opposing K'ulta cantons vying for position as the site of a new municipal capital had put two people in hospital with severe injuries. Aware of such episodes in these neighbouring communities, *vecinos* and *rinconada* alike in the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas were concerned that their own dispute might end in bloodshed. By August 1998, when I departed from the community, these concerns were still apparent. After two years of arguments, blockades, insults, and finally state intervention, the conflict with Sevaruyo-Soraga remained unresolved.²⁰

II

As is evident from the above account, the inhabitants of Santuario de Quillacas are not passive onlookers where the recent process of local government reform in Bolivia is concerned. Through their meetings and conflicts with one another and the state, they struggle over the meaning of and form taken by the international development policies they consider to have been imposed on them. This process is not without its problems, and highlights the fact that peasants in this context approach the question of change from different political and economic perspectives. Although it is not possible to address all of these perspectives, the second part of this article will focus on the way in which the antinomic conditions of antagonism and solidarity are formed and reproduced. This is a complex process which, it is argued here, lies at the heart of the different ways in which the government reforms (popular participation, administrative decentralization) have been experienced by and impacted upon the rural population in the locality. Without examining these contradictory processes, neither the significance of local power relations nor the dynamics of linkages with the state and development policies would be evident. A central claim is that in Santuario de Quillacas the past – or rather the way in which the past is understood and (re-) interpreted in the present – is a key ideological and political resource in the course of current decision-making

by those at the rural grassroots. In short, peasants with different material and class interests mobilize specific images of the past as part of a specific strategy that is supportive of their own particular interests. To a considerable extent, therefore, these ideological constructions and understandings of the past explain why different segments of the rural population act in the way they do.

LEARNING TO SEE THE PRESENT THROUGH THE PAST

Quillacans draw upon different sources in their efforts to form an understanding of their own past. If they have gone to school to any level they will have received some kind of instruction about the defining moments of the country's history. However, in learning these dates of formation, battles and retreat, no official mention is made of their own community's history and past. The latter has no place in Bolivian children's battered jotters and notebooks. For most Quillacans, therefore, the story about their own particular municipality, *ayllu*, and religious sanctuary, is something they absorb on a quotidian basis, by living in the community and participating in its organization and routines. It is a story that is built cumulatively: a form of knowledge that never arrives all at once, but is rather acquired in fragments throughout their lifetimes. Some families in the village have stores of old documents they try to preserve: papers which their grandparents or ancestors either wrote or received, a record of their past lives. These are occasionally searched for and pulled out, but more commonly they are talked about, as material proof of experience and memory. Rarely are they read. More often it is a process whereby the contents of a particular document are relayed orally, from one individual to another by word of mouth. As in other areas of the Andean region, written histories are not the source of rural grassroots knowledge about the past. Indeed, the process of learning about the past is often more subtle than the spoken word [Abercrombie, 1998: 130].

Like most Andean peoples, the past is a lived experience for Quillacans. The longer residents participate in life of the community, the more knowledge they acquire about its formation and constitution. Instead of a narrative punctuated by dates and events like the formal history of Bolivia itself, what they gain on a quotidian basis is an implicit understanding of why things are the way they are.²¹ However, what is quite distinct in Andean society is the context in which this process of tacit learning takes place. In the community of Santuario de Quillacas members of the community are said to travel along a 'pathway of life' known as *thakhi* (= 'road/path' in aymara). Although not every inhabitant of the rural community does this, the *thakhi* consists of a series of interconnected positions of service,

responsibility and authority through which all residents are encouraged to pass (and most do) during their lifetimes. According to the leaders of Santuario de Quillacas, it is in the course both of the journey through and the carrying out of each of the positions that go to form *thakhi*, that people gain knowledge and understanding of their community's past and reasons for its present organization. It is in essence a system of learning by doing/being, or rather by living.²²

Given the way that *thakhi* functions as a process of learning, the accounts given by Quillacans of their past are frequently more moral than historical.²³ Constructing the basis of a civil/religious moral order in the community, the understanding of the past embedded in *thakhi* is not as concerned with the accurate depiction of time as Western histories are. Through the activities and responsibilities that *thakhi* entails, the past is bent into the present to construct a singular series of lessons about life and how it should be lived as a member of the community. These lessons are practised through participation in communal work parties (*faena*, *mink'a*), and regularly acted out in the dances and rituals associated with festivals. The costumes worn during these events aim to exaggerate and therefore highlight the moral personality of the mythical and historical characters involved. At the festival of *Señor de la Exaltación*, for example, the practical jokes and general rudeness of dancers wearing a bear costume emphasize the need for propriety amongst people. The long noses, red cheeks, drunkenness, and sword waving of others dressed as Spanish soldiers hint not only at the strangeness and erratic behaviour of their earlier conquerors, but also at the dangerousness and lack of morality of all *gringos* (= white people) or *q'ara* (= non-people).

In common with other Amerindian narratives about the past, the accounts of the past lived out and described in the course of *thakhi* are not chronological [Rappaport, 1990]. In the course of re-enacting past events during festivals and rituals, time frames are juxtaposed, causal explanations left out, and narrations of the events themselves are not given in linear form. It is only in conjunction with a whole range of activities – including ritual, pilgrimage, dance and daily work – that an elaborate key to the understanding of these non-sequential narratives can be obtained [Abercrombie, 1998]. Indeed, much of this history is encoded in the physical environment in which the people themselves live.²⁴ Around Quillacas, the mountains, hills, large boulders, wild/domestic animals, changes in weather and season, were all named, and – through their believed connection with one another – seen by local people as active elements with which they interact in daily and ritual life, as had their ancestors before them.

If through *thakhi* Quillacans' knowledge of their past is embodied in a non-chronological expression of time rooted in physical space, ritual and

community practice, this is not to say that peasants have no sense of the flow of time in a European sense, that they are unable to distinguish fact from fiction, or that they prefer to confront universal and logical problems as opposed to the specific [Rappaport, 1990]. Its prime aim is to initiate individuals into the moral order of a shared community, but this whole system of learning about the rural community and its past does not stand apart from the serious practical questions encountered in everyday life. Indeed, it is deeply engaged with it. Fictitious and fantastic images are employed, but such images are frequently used to reflect on and say something about the real, to comment on present conditions and play out a stock of tried and tested solutions.

Not as remote from daily existence as one would suppose, therefore, the complex and interrelated method both for understanding the past and describing the social and moral order of the local community that is *thakhi* has been subject to change and external influence. The system of ancestral authorities and beliefs, visible in both the daily and ritual life of the present-day community of Quillacas, is – contrary to immediate appearances – the contingent product of long and difficult negotiations with the outside world, or (more pointedly) with the changing and often contradictory demands and projects of the Bolivian state. To stress the changing and contingent historical character of *thakhi* is important, not least because the circumstances that result in change help explain the contrasting forms of ideology and agency in the present.

It is a commonplace that Andean society has been almost completely transformed in the course of history. However, in the form of the ancestral spirits (*achachilas*) to whom rituals and sacrifices are made, a powerful memory of how things were remains in the present. Indeed much of the power of this memory remains embodied in the person, actions and judgements of the *jilaqatas* and *alcalde cobradores*, community authorities who act as intermediaries between ancestors and community, and community and state. Although these positions have not remained untouched by external pressures of political change, their offices have retained a highly influential role in both the spiritual and temporal aspects of community life, even when ancestral authorities have been officially sidelined by state policy and organization. Currently, therefore, the ancestral authorities continue to be active leaders in every area of community decision-making. It is quite clear that, at the same time as the ancestral authority system of *thakhi* has had to adapt to efforts by the national state at local government reform, to a significant degree the local community and leadership of Quillacas have managed successfully to negotiate their own understanding and working of the new systems. The latter have, in short, been adapted so as to defend the importance both of

the ancestral authorities and the moral system they represent within community life.

THE REINVENTION OF ANDEAN TRADITION

Up to this point, the picture presented has been one of Quillacan understandings of the past being formed through individuals who embody a commitment to a local system of organization and practice. Broadly speaking, this is an accurate method of depicting what happens in Santuario de Quillacas. It would be wrong, however, to claim that this represents the sum total of knowledge possessed by peasants concerning the past. Personal experience and the experience of a modern education also determine knowledge about what has gone before. Indeed, making a survey of possible sources tells us little more than what kind of 'historical material' is available to people, and from which narratives about the past are constructed. The actual act of remembering is much more complicated and less easily quantifiable as individuals draw on different sources at different times. Rather obviously, the process of remembering is contextually and experientially selective: accordingly, at one conjuncture a specific kind of knowledge is privileged, whereas at another a different set of details are invoked. Most importantly, in the course of conflict at the rural grassroots, memories and/or details about the past become the subject of negotiation and serious disagreement, and are transformed thereby into ideological and political weapons.

To underscore the complexity of remembering is thus of considerable importance, not only because it allows description/explanation of how peasants in Quillaca interpret their past, but also because it permits an insight into the way community members deploy conflicting narratives and discourses about this past in order to justify actions in the present. Much as the structure and functions of local government are the product of negotiation between state and community through history, therefore, they are also the product of ongoing discussions within the community, which are firmly grounded in contrasting visions/versions of the past. Although the discourse of *thakhi* (outlined above) aims to provide a uniform account of the past to which all Quillacans subscribe, it is nevertheless a loosely shared vision, and one which individuals in the community frequently knock down. In recent years the context framing knowledge about the past appears to have changed in Santuario de Quillacas.

Although historical documents kept in a few family homes and a number of cardboard boxes stacked in the corner of the *Cabildo* office are given considerable importance – as symbols of family and community past, and as vital deeds to land and property – until recently few people paid much

attention to the actual historical details such records contained. The Quillacans' connection to the past was generally mediated through personal memory or *thakhi*. Over the last decade, however, a number of influential residents in the town of Quillacas have begun to deploy a more detailed kind of historical knowledge in their debates with the rest of the community discourse about leadership and the direction in which the community should go, resulting in a renewed interest in the past of Santuario de Quillacas. The reasons for this are twofold: first, the availability of new external sources of information about the history of the rural community; and second, the appearance of new commentators on the community's history. Since the mid-1980s, Santuario de Quillacas has become a site of interest to a number of academics interested in the previously little studied history and culture of the Bolivian Southern Altiplano area. However, as much as this interest in the past can be explained by the availability of new information and commentators, it is argued here that the heightened interest in it of key figures within the community itself can be explained by the value that these historical interpretations have in supporting or defending ideological positions in current struggles.

Anthropologists Make History

In the late 1980s the Bolivian anthropologist, Ramiro Molina Rivero began conducting research in the Quillacas/Pampa Aullagas area.²⁵ In so doing it appears that he became an authoritative source and interpreter of local history and culture. Indeed, it was he who helped the ancestral leadership in Santuario de Quillacas to organize and find funding for the setting up of two organizations responsible for giving an impetus to local cultural rejuvenation. The first of these organizations, the Jatun Quillacas Development Cooperation (CODEJQ, *Cooperación de Desarrollo de Jatun Quillacas*) was created to organize and coordinate local development projects, but also to look for ways to strengthen local autonomy and cultural pride. It was CODEJQ which, through its financial support and encouragement, brought about the 'First Regional Assembly of Indigenous Authorities of the *Ayllus Mayores* of Southern Oruro'. Held in Santuario de Quillacas, this assembly brought together ancestral leaders from communities throughout the region to discuss their common cultural heritage and seek solutions to shared problems.

On the back of this assembly another organization was created: namely, the Federation of Southern Orureño Ayllus (FASOR), which defined itself as having both a developmental and cultural aim. Ethnic leaders and authorities committed themselves to search for solutions to the problems and needs of Southern Oruro, which they publicly ascribed to the government having abandoned them. Together with other indigenous

organizations in the country, FASOR subscribed to the idea of defending the rights of *ayllus* to local self-government (*auto-determinación*). In 1990 this organization managed to gain sufficient financial support from Oxfam America to build a small centre in Challapata, the provincial capital. Two fulltime members of staff were hired to teach and hold workshops throughout Southern Oruro, covering a series of issues connected to local development and ethnic identity.

In 1991 a history graduate by the name of Ramon Conde, connected to and partially funded by the Andean Oral History Workshop (*Taller Historial Oral Andina* or THOA), a centre for Aymaran cultural activism in La Paz, became attached to FASOR's office in Challapata. As an historian and ex-militant of the Aymara ethnic political *Katarista* movement, Ramon Conde acted as a major contributor of historical knowledge and political direction to FASOR and to the local leaders of Santuario de Quillacas. Under his influence local *ayllu* leaders in the Southern Oruro area were invited to attend workshops on local history, Aymara language and culture in the town of Quillacas and Challapata.²⁶ During that first meeting a number of speakers were invited to speak on a range of topics, including history, indigenous rights, education, and the Laws of Popular Participation and Administrative Decentralization.

Through FASOR and CODEJQ, the ancestral and municipal authorities in the town of Quillacas became extremely interested in the picture of the past that historical sources furnished them with. As a result of the growing interest in historical sources among townspeople in Quillacas, papers and articles given to the community by the Peruvian historian Espinoza Soriano were dusted off and invested with new value. Historical documents stacked in the corner of the *Corregimiento* office were also looked through and re-evaluated. When I returned to Quillacas with a copy of an article by Espinoza Soriano [1969] publicizing a key sixteenth-century source on the history of the region, this too became an object of intense interest. Now they could read for themselves the contents of documents such as *La Información*, *La Probanza de Servicio y Meritos* presented by the Quillacan *mallku*, Don Juan Colque Guarachi, to the colonial authorities to describe his family lineage's contribution to government in the area. They could also read about the *senorio* (lordship) of Killaka-Asanaqi, which in the early sixteenth century stretched across the area and secured the allegiance of a great swathe of communities throughout the southern altiplano and southern Asanaqi mountains. Reading about the Killaka-Asanaqi federation's integration into the Inca Empire as a *reino provincial* (= sovereign provincial authority), they learnt additionally of their ancestor's role as a powerful ally of the *zapainca* Tupac Inca Yupanqui.²⁷ To get an idea of the scale of Killaka-Asanaqi federation at that time, it is sufficient to note one

of the titles attributed to Inca Colque: that of *Huno Mallku*.²⁸ *Huno* signifies 'ten thousand': that is, the number of tributary heads of households subject to his power and over whom he ruled.²⁹ This suggests that a total population in excess of 50,000 may have been subject to his rule.

Although now based on authoritative and scholarly studies/documents, it becomes clear if what Quillacans say about this history is compared with the works themselves, that the reading FASOR and the ancestral authorities of the town of Quillacas make of the past is somewhat partial. Together with the actions of the ancestors which are less than palatable, therefore, portions of their history are conveniently left out of the picture they portray. That members of the Colque Guarache lineage were more interested in protecting their own positions of power and wealth than in defending their subjects' cultural and political autonomy is never mentioned in the oral versions of history the local leadership and FASOR have put together from documented sources. As in the Inca Empire, during the colonial period the Guarache lineage were able to keep hold of their *cacicazgo* (leadership) privileges through the continued rendering of services to the imperial power. Their access to beasts of burden and herders (which would become extensively used in the moving of minerals and ores from the mines such as Potosi, as well as for the supply of the city), and strategic location of Aullagas (the last *tambo* and substantial settlement of 'peaceful Indians' on the road South) and Puna (a primarily herding settlement conveniently positioned to the Southeast of the Killakas-Asanaqi territory) made them vital allies in the early colonial project.³⁰ The *mallku* Guarache also demonstrated his new loyalty by directing the Spanish exploitation of the Incan silver mines in Porco [*Espinoza Soriano*, 1969: 15]. However, this history of political pragmatism is not the image of Quillacas presented today.

The image of Quillacas currently projected by the local authorities is of an ethnically integrated and historically fully autonomous community which – in the course of its defence of autonomy – had been divided and cumulatively weakened by the Bolivian state. Neither they, nor the ancestral authorities before them, are responsible for the reductions that have been made to their community's territory or political jurisdiction. Today, as in the past, it is their responsibility, through negotiation with the ancestors and with the state, to ensure the continuation of Quillacan local sovereign autonomy. Based on an interpretation of historical documents, therefore, even comparatively recent events are re-interpreted, repackaged and broadcast as a new foundation story. Now the image of local organization and authority presented to the representatives of the Bolivian state is of a community where *ayllu* and ancestral authority have always been an integral aspect of socio-economic existence. The ancestral authorities informed me that there was an unbroken chain of tradition linking them to

their ancestors. However, dig a little deeper and a different story is told. In this story the tradition of ancestral authority is not unbroken. Indeed, following the introduction of peasant union structures after the revolution of 1952, both *ayllu* and ancestral authority disappeared for a time [Dunkerley, 1984]. Cultural regeneration took place only in the 1980s, and then because of the confluence of a number of factors either well beyond the control of local people themselves, or dependent on the actions and influence of individual external agents.

A Different History, a History of Difference

In the mid-1980s a changing political and economic climate in Bolivia combined with serious environmental changes to create a situation which undermined both the state policies and syndicalist traditions of the previous 30 years, which had been inspired by the 1952 revolution.³¹ In the early 1980s a major fall in the price of tin, and oil prices, led Bolivia into a serious economic crisis, to which the then left-wing coalition government was unable to find a solution. The country was paralysed by hyperinflation and mass demonstrations led by the main workers' union, the *Central Obrera Boliviana* (COB). Hoping that under his direction some stability might return to the country, Bolivian voters in 1985 re-elected for a third time Victor Paz Estensorro as President. Reacting to the situation he found, Paz Estensorro's new administration broke with the tenets of the 1952 revolution in order to try and re-establish favour with foreign governments and international business investors.³² A neo-liberal structural adjustment programme was introduced at the behest of the World Bank and the international financial community. Although it succeeded in reining in the economy and streamlining government, the social cost of the programme was extremely high [Crabtree, 1987; Nash, 1993]. Nationalized industries – such as COMIBOL, the National Bolivian Mining Company – were to be sold off. Unable to stop privatization, the Bolivian trade union movement lost much of its membership and, therefore, its political influence and power. Thousands of tin miners were made redundant, as were other public sector employees: left without employment or access to land, some 500,000 people migrated from the highlands to the lowlands in search of alternative sources of income. Often there was no employment to be found other than in illegal coca production. This enforced migration was compounded further by a serious drought that hit the country in 1984, as a result of which numerous rural family farms in the altiplano were unable to reproduce themselves economically. Many peasant households were compelled to abandon their holdings and attempt to find alternative employment, either in urban areas or in lowlands.

This harsh economic climate formed the context in which the ancestral authorities of the Southern altiplano area managed to make a political

comeback. In Quillacas, for example, the drought and loss of seasonal employment brought about by the closure of nearby mines forced many families to move out in search of work or land elsewhere. Some moved away permanently, others moved away on a more temporary basis, continuing to return to Quillacas to plant, harvest and take part in the community's ritual and festival life. As the number of peasant households in the community dwindled, those who remained lost faith in the representative power of their peasant unions. It seemed to them as if local leaders and the national union movement were completely ineffectual. In many highlands areas the decline of trade unionism, caused in part by a widespread perception of the failure of left-wing politics, produced a resurgence of interest in an indigenous politics of difference [Ströbele-Gregor, 1994; Ticona, Rodríguez and Albó, 1995]. Ethnic political paradigms, such as *Katarismo*, began to make a comeback, and not only surfaced in trade union discussions, but also found their way into more mainstream political debates, such as those taking place in Congress or reported in the national media.

By the late 1980s, therefore, political discourse appeared to have changed its view on the subject of the national indigenous population and its various forms of 'traditional leadership'. One way in which this manifested itself was through changes to rural development policy and practice. A programme known as CORDEOR-EU had been set up by the Bolivian government and co-funded by the European Union to encourage rural development in the provinces of the country. In the Department of Oruro, for example, the local representative body of this programme – called 'The Program for Peasant Self-Development' (CONPAC) – had been running a 'consolidatory phase' since 1986.³³ In addition to starting a series of agricultural and infrastructural development projects, therefore, another major task undertaken by CONPAC was to encourage a re-evaluation of local culture and indigenous community organizational structures [Izko, 1992; Ayllu Sartañani, 1992]. Both these elements (development, culture) informing the strategic approach of CONPAC were designed to solve the serious and continuing problem of out-migration from the area. To this end, CONPAC started an active campaign to re-insert the local ancestral leadership positions within the local government structure. Although now forgotten, it was actually under the auspices of this programme that CODEJQ was established. The anthropologist Ramiro Molina had only brokered the deal between the community and the state's development corporation.

The Modernity of Tradition

For the ancestral authorities in Quillacas, and indeed for many of the people elected to positions within the municipal government who agreed with

them, the idea of their town being at the helm of a distinct 'historically recorded' sovereign territory was particularly appealing, if not convenient, as it appeared to support their claim to be the authentic – and hence legitimate – administrative centre of the municipality. For town elites this was an important consideration, as both their social and economic positions relied on this proximity to political power. Currently, therefore, they assert authoritatively that it was their ancestors – not those of Huari, of Sevaruyo-Soraga, or those of the hamlets and villages of the *rinconada* – who had safely steered the community through its history and sustained its cultural integrity. Why change what had always been successful? This was the line of reasoning taken by them in discussions with the rest of the community and, backed up by historical documents, invoked as proof of their municipal jurisdiction at the level of national government.

Although there were some personal tensions between municipal staff and the ancestral authorities as regards the day-to-day running of local government, there was no disagreement between them on the interpretation of reform. Indeed, throughout my stay in the municipality it was quite clear that – in their view – no such opposition between modernity and tradition could be applied in that context. Their role as representatives of a new government regime notwithstanding, most municipal leaders were traditionalists at heart, a situation which can be explained largely by reference to the intertwining of local government and *thakhi* positions.³⁴ By adopting this 'revised' historical account of their past, much of the leadership in Quillacas, the ancestral authorities and most of the municipal officials, formed a radically conservative position with regard to their shared strategy for the future. They would defend the position of Quillacas as the municipal capital, while simultaneously opposing any moves to reduce the autonomy of the territory under their administrative control. Significantly, this radically conservative approach to the distribution of power in the community did entail opposition to local government reform (represented by popular participation and administrative decentralization). The reforms were interpreted by the conservative section of the community of Santuario de Quillacas as the means not only of defending their local sovereignty, but also of extending it even further (that is, by securing the return of Sevaruyo-Soraga to their political jurisdiction). Popular participation and decentralization appeared to provide the very means whereby Quillaca would become the distributive hub of a system of local development financing.

Whilst it was unsurprising that most municipal government staff were supporters of recent reforms to local government, since their positions depended upon the successful functioning of these structures, rather more surprising was the active support for the reform on the part of the ancestral

authorities, the *jilaqata* and *alcalde cobrador*, and the people concerned with the ritual and religious importance of Quillacas. One way of resolving this apparent contradiction is by reference to the 'invention of tradition' framework associated with the work of Hobsbawm and Ranger [1983], who point out how rituals, traditions and/or identities – although often accepted as ancient – are often of a more recent vintage: in short, inventions that have been reintroduced/introduced 'from above' in order to legitimize a specific political objective. This is precisely what seems to have happened in the case of Quillacas, where the concern expressed by the highly influential rural elite for the upkeep of religious practices, and their role as a blueprint for how the community should be run, was in fact a method of defending both the status quo and their own political power within the existing structure. Although the ancestral authorities often voiced their distrust of the local state apparatus, and bemoaned its lack of sensitivity to their cultural interests, they nevertheless conferred legitimacy on government reform by participating in meetings both of the municipal government and the Vigilance Committee. For this small, politically conservative section of the community, popular participation and administrative decentralization were tools to uphold their *vecino*-centred beliefs about the how the community should be organized morally and politically. These are beliefs which, as has been argued above, are tailored to a specific interpretation of past moral and political organization.

Such attempts at the 'reinvention of Andean tradition' did not, however, pass unchallenged. Although the interpretation of Quillacas's 'glorious past' provided *vecino* elites with arguments supportive of claims for their continued rule, other sections of the rural community outside the central canton lacking the same access to, or need for, historical information were less than convinced of its veracity and rationale.³⁵ For people from the other cantons, the vision of the past shared by the ancestral authorities, municipal government and most *vecinos* of Quillacas served to disguise the reality of recent events. It conveniently covered over the fact that canton Sevaruyo-Soraga had not always been a part of the municipality of Santuario de Quillacas. Between 1982 and 1994 the canton had been under the administrative jurisdiction of the province of Sebastian Pagador, a period which people remembered as being more prosperous than the present. It was this economically advantageous linkage that had overturned as a result of the re-assessment of municipal boundaries following the introduction of popular participation. As a result of this experience, the leaders of the canton had learned to make a distinction between (anti-Quillacas) municipal affiliation and their (pro-Quillacas) *ayllu* allegiances. In short, their interest in changing their political affiliation to ensure local development had in their eyes nothing to do with their continued allegiance to Quillacas as a

cultural and spiritual centre. That such a distinction could be made at all was an ideological transformation of which the Quillacan authorities and elites seemed quite unaware.³⁶

For the leaders of Sevaruyo-Soraga and people from other rural settlements in the *rinconada* their transfer of provincial and municipal identity was pragmatic. Although involved in municipal decision-making and development planning sessions in Quillacas, they nevertheless felt that over the last few years their economic needs and aspirations had been ignored by the elites in the canton of Quillacas. Although NGOs such as CARITAS and UNICEF had inaugurated useful projects, the municipal government in Quillacas had been unable or unwilling to deliver any concrete programme of change until the canton's petition to move administrative affiliation had been made public. It was, to put it bluntly, a political battle for access to and control over economic resources. Sevaruyo-Soraga had long wanted its own primary school, and had been petitioning the municipal authorities for help with an irrigation project. Recent favourable changes in government and development, however, all appeared to benefit Quillacas. For this reason, Sevaruyo-Soragans' opinions of FASOR were very low. In their view this organization did not understand that, by pressing for the reconstitution and cultural survival of *ayllu* structures such as Santuario de Quillacas, it was sentencing smaller rural communities such as Sevaruyo-Soraga to economic stagnation. They agreed with the organization's politics, but said that its leaders did little for them, and were rarely seen in Challapata except on market days. Another complaint was that, although the leaders from the *rinconada* were invited to FASOR's workshops, they were not offered support for their travel or accommodation. When interviewed, a number of peasants from outlying rural settlements dismissed the validity of FASOR altogether. For them, the self-appointed leaders of FASOR were more interested in lining their pockets and extending their personal political influence than really pushing for political transformation in the area. Even in Quillacas itself there were those who held strongly critical opinions of FASOR, noting that 'they talk about representing us, but really they have no support at the local level'.³⁷

Having been passed from one municipal jurisdiction to another, there simply was not the same sense of pride at stake for some of the rural communities in the *rinconada*. It is this receptiveness to change which largely explains the decisions made by the canton of Sevaruyo-Soraga immediately following the introduction of legislation about popular participation and administrative decentralization. Rather than see the reforms as a means to protect the integrity of Santuario de Quillacas as an 'historical community', therefore, Sevaruyo-Soraga chose instead to see them as an opportunity to shake off what, on the basis of their own earlier

experience of Quillacas, they saw as inept government.³⁸ The drawing of municipal boundaries carried out as a preparation for the structural adjustments made by the new legislation provided the rural hamlets of the canton with a window of opportunity: namely, to announce their intention to move their local government allegiance to the neighbouring municipality of Huari. Given the wealth of the neighbouring province, this was a move which for obvious economic reasons offered them better opportunities of development and future viability as a rural community.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Although the combination of rural grassroots antagonism and solidarity outlined above with regard to the community of Santuario de Quillacas in the Bolivian Highlands may appear contradictory, such politico-ideological harmony/conflict is common throughout Andean village communities. Similar kinds of situation have been noted, both by Barbara Bradby [1982] in the case of the inter-relationship between the Peruvian communities of Huayllay and Carhuapata in the Department of Huancavelica, and by Thomas Abercrombie [1998] in the case of the nearby Orureño community of K'ulta. Set along side the case of Santuario de Quillacas, the contexts described by Bradby and Abercrombie are revealing, in that they indicate that the harmony/conflict pattern of Santuario de Quillacas is a typical aspect of rural community relationships in Andean history and society. While the details differ (in Quillacas religious loyalties remain intact), the same kind of struggle generated by economic changes taking place in other rural communities gives rise to a similar dynamic informed by a process of politico-ideological action and reaction. Action takes the initial form of changes involving external political and economic forces (emanating mainly – but not only – from the nation state), which push, encourage or require groups or individuals previously on the periphery to question and break with historical or customary linkages and local structures of political power. By contrast, reaction takes the form of what is in effect a conservative political response: the reassertion of historical authority and cultural tradition on the part of those whose local power and 'right to rule' is threatened by this process of participation/decentralization. As has been shown above, this is exactly what has happened in Santuario de Quillacas.

The delimitation of municipal boundaries carried out by CONLIT in compliance with popular participation legislation opened up the opportunity for Sevaruyo-Soraga to establish within the province of Sebastian Pagador conditions (political, financial and developmental) that were to its own advantage. For the municipal government in Quillacas, these efforts to seek separation from their jurisdiction were seen not only as an attempt to

subvert their historical right to act as the political centre for the area, but also – by endangering the amount and delivery of their finances – as a threat to their future local government operations. Rather than accept change or entertain the idea of a radical legal solution, such as forming a *mancomunidad* with a neighbouring municipality, the inhabitants of Quillacas pushed instead for a conservative re-emphasis on their historical traditions and pride in their cultural authenticity. This picture suggests that – as has long been argued by many observers of rural Latin America – external pressures are responsible for breaking down the traditional fabric of rural community life, driving a wedge between those who exhibit a continued loyalty to culturally traditional forms of social organization and political allegiance, and those who are willing to forego these traditional forms in order to secure for themselves an economically more advantageous situation within the wider (local or national) socio-economic context. As Bradby [1982: 108] writes about Carhuapata, ‘all nostalgia for the past had been rejected and a new ideology of progress and development substituted’.

However, this picture may be incomplete. As Abercombie [1998: 314] notes about the situation in K’ulta, ‘[w]hile the cantonisation process underlined the seceding groups’ lack of commitment to the previous manifestation of the ritual political order, its re-inscription into a more circumscribed social space with the same kind of cultural features characteristic of the old, larger ones proves to be a reaffirmation, rather than a rejection of its commitment to values that motivated participation in their ritual-political synthesis in the first place.’ What this suggests is that although a peripheral group or town may separate off from the body of its historic community out of self-interest, this does not mean that it intends to separate itself from the cultural ideas and beliefs it shared with the larger community in the past. The same structure of organization and perceptions of political rights and involvement may be reconstituted within the reduced context. This is an important feature of the situation in Santuario de Quillacas: as much as the community has become divided over different methods of dealing with change, a common perception of cultural identity and organization has been retained.

Just as the political situation in Santuario de Quillacas is comparable with the situations described in Carhuapata and K’ulta, it can also be argued that this conflict/harmony pattern is itself symptomatic of Aymara society generally. It casts doubt on the assumption, still made by some writers [Apfel-Marglin, 1998], that there exists an overwhelming grassroots commitment to community within Andean rural society. What is being played out here on the scale of local development politics is reminiscent of what Xavier Albó [1975] has called the ‘Aymaran Paradox’. The latter consists, according to Albó [1975: 7], of the fact that although ‘the Aymara

have a strong sense of group identity ... at the same time a typical element of their cultural structure is an internal factionalism, which shows itself at the level of family, politics, religion etc.'. Albó builds the case for the paradox being responsible both for occasional fragmentation of rural communities as well as the articulation of a discourse of solidarity which has enabled Aymara-speaking rural society to adapt to and resist transformations imposed from outside – that is, by the wider Bolivian society. The work of Albó is complemented and amplified by research carried out by Gary Urton [1992] in Pacariqtambo in Peru. Urton demonstrates that the antinomic situation of conflict/harmony, or 'communalism and differentiation', is not specific only to Aymara society, but found to occur throughout Andean rural society in general. Like Albó, he shows that to a great extent the continuing life of Andean communities is dependent on the persistence of forces which pressure peasants both to assert their individual personal identities and to bend their wills to support their life and work of their community. More than this, he suggests that conflict/harmony – or 'communalism and differentiation' – are forces and attributes which actually make Andean social organization dynamic.

To some extent, these observations about the dynamic created by the grassroots rural coexistence of conflict and harmony are representative of an epistemological transformation in the way that agrarian 'communities' are studied by anthropologists. Assumptions about a 'folk mentality' [Redfield, 1947] have been replaced by an acceptance that peasants are not locked into a uniformly static 'corporate' [Wolf, 1957] acceptance of their world, but often refashion their social structures and institutions to meet their current needs.³⁹ While it is important to highlight 'difference' as a dynamic in the creation and continuance of rural community, therefore, it is also important to point out that this 'difference' is not necessarily something that has to be resolved. As Urton [1992] suggests, the antinomic process of 'communalism and differentiation' is an ongoing dynamic – there is an unending negotiation between both of these forces, an idea which connects well with Andrew Cannessa's [1998: 244] 'processual and performative' understanding of Andean identity. As well as the symbols for community boundaries [Cohen, 1985; 1986], negotiation provides the 'dialectical' tension through which the potentiality for change and transformation of social organization over time is both enabled and made sense of [Urton, 1992]. It has often been assumed by social scientists that the outcome of disputes, whatever their content, is a process which leads to reconciliation and the restoration of harmony, itself considered to be the social ideal. Conflict, by contrast, is regarded as the enemy of rural community, a teleology which Urton and other anthropologists [Caplan, 1995; Colson, 1995; Gulliver, 1979] have shown to be false.

The picture presented above with regard to Santuario de Quillacas in the Bolivian Highlands during the 1990s underlines the fact that, in an era of expanding globalization, just as peasants themselves are changing so our notions of peasants have themselves to change [Kearney, 1996]. Whilst still linked to land, labour, and a common sense of the past linked to rural community, Bolivian peasants are not restricted by such categories, but are much rather active agents negotiating the very meaning and significance of these conceptual boundaries. Although in recent years Scott [1985; 1990] and members of the Latin American post-colonial school [Rivera Cusicanqui, 1998] have highlighted the existence, effects and political importance of peasant agency, there have been few detailed ethnographic examples from Latin America of the way in which local rural communities 'think through' the manifestation of the global in the local (or the 'them' in the 'us'). In this process of thinking through, local notions of history, community and politics are recycled, re-invented and given new meanings. In contrast to Scott [1985], the argument outlined here demonstrates that Quillacan peasants are not restricted to small everyday political deeds within the local arena. Although palpably not on an equal footing with the political elites at the national level, peasants are by necessity frequently engaged in – and have an influence on – the political arena of the nation. Indeed, the argument made here not only describes the way that the local is deeply embedded in both the national and the international, but highlights that this involvement is not necessarily oppositional.⁴⁰

ACRONYMS

CARITAS	The Catholic Agency for Overseas Aid and Development
CCEDSE	<i>Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Socio Economico</i> , Centre for Training and Socio-Economic Development
COB	<i>Central Obrera Boliviana</i> , Bolivian Workers Central
CODEJQ	<i>Cooperación de Desarrollo de Jatun Quillacas</i> , Jatun Quillacas Development Corporation
CONPAC	<i>Programa de Auto-desarrollo Campesino</i> , Programme for Peasant Self-Development
CORDEOR	<i>Coordinación Rural de Desarrollo, Oruro</i> , Rural Development Agency, Oruro
CSUTCB	<i>Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia</i> , Rural Workers' Union Confederation of Bolivia
FASOR	<i>Federación de Ayllus de Sur Oruro</i> , Federation of Southern Oruro Ayllus
FIS	Social Investment Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INRA	National Agrarian Reform Law
MBL	<i>Movimiento Bolivia Libre</i> , Free Bolivia Movement
MIR	<i>Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria</i> , Movement of the Revolutionary Left

MNR	<i>Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario</i> , National Revolutionary Movement.
MRTKL	<i>Movimiento Revolucionario Tupak Katari de Liberación</i> , Tupak Katari Revolutionary Liberation Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OTB	<i>Organización Territorial de Base</i> , Grassroots Organization
PDM	<i>Plan de Desarrollo Municipal</i> , municipal development plan.
POA	<i>Plan Operativa Annual</i> , Annual Plan
SNAEGG	<i>Secretaría Nacional de Asuntos Etnicos, de Genero y Generacional</i> , National Secretariat for Ethnic, Gender and Generational Affairs
SNPP	<i>Secretaría Nacional de Participación Popular</i> , National Secretariat for Popular Participation
THOA	<i>Taller Historial Oral Andina</i> , Andean Oral History Workshop
UCS	<i>Unidad Cívica Solidaridad</i> , United Civic Solidarity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

GLOSSARY (SPANISH/AYMARA)

<i>Achachilas</i>	(Ay.) mountain and ancestral spirits
<i>alcalde</i>	(Sp. From Arabic) Mayor, central position of municipal government
<i>alcalde cobrador</i>	(Sp.) High-level ancestral authority of a major <i>ayllu</i>
<i>altiplano</i>	(Sp.) High plateau
<i>ayllu</i>	(Ay) Polity self-formulated through ritual
<i>cabildo</i>	(Sp.) Office of the ancestral authorities in Quillacas
<i>capacitación</i>	(Sp.) Education and training
<i>canton</i>	(Sp.) Smallest administrative division of territory in Bolivia
<i>ch'uspa</i>	(Ay.) Bag for carrying coca
<i>comité cívico</i>	(Sp) Representative organization of residents who have migrated to the city or to another area of the country
<i>comuneros</i>	(Sp.) General term used for community members in Santuario de Quillacas
<i>Contador</i>	(Sp.) accountant
<i>co-participación tributaria</i>	(Sp.) The financing of local government from a share of central taxation
<i>faena</i>	(Sp.) <i>Faena</i> is an <i>ayllu</i> -level agreement in which all heads of families, or their delegated representatives, participate in a communal work project: for example, building works, infrastructural preparations for festivals, development projects, etc.
<i>jilaqata</i>	(Ay.) High-level authority of a major <i>ayllu</i>
<i>malku</i>	(Ay.) Mountain peak, mountain spirit, condor, hereditary authority
<i>marka</i>	(Ay.) Central or capital of a major <i>ayllu</i>
<i>mink'a</i>	(Ay.) Involving the exchange of labour between family groups, <i>mink'a</i> is a smaller affair than <i>faena</i> . It refers to the pooling of labour in order to make production more efficient, but it is also crucial for the preparation of weddings and other festivities.
<i>municipalidad indígena</i>	(Sp.) Indigenous municipality
<i>oficial mayor administrativo</i>	(Sp.) Municipal secretary
<i>pasäru</i>	(Ay.) Community elders who have passed through all the steps of <i>thakhi</i>
<i>pollera</i>	(Ay.) The colourful layered skirt commonly worn by women in the Bolivian Highlands
<i>planificación</i>	(Sp.) The system of municipal participative planning introduced by the

<i>participative</i>	Law of Popular Participation
<i>q'ara</i>	(Ay.) Naked, incompletely dressed; figuratively, 'culturally peeled', an insulting reference to nonindians (mestizos, criollos, Europeans)
<i>quinoa</i>	(Ay.) A high-energy value cereal crop grown in the Southern Andes
<i>Rancho</i>	(Sp.) Agricultural holding
<i>Reuniones</i>	(Sp.) Public meetings
<i>Rinconada</i>	(Sp.) Building on the Spanish word for corner (<i>rincón</i>), the term <i>rinconada</i> is used by people in the town of Quillacas to refer to the outlying rural settlements that belong to their municipal and <i>Ayllu</i> area
<i>sumu miruku</i>	(Ay.) Doctor, healer
<i>talleres</i>	(Sp.) Workshops
<i>thakhi</i>	(Ay.) Term with a gamut of meanings linking chronological sequence and landscape. Most prosaically, 'path', 'trail', but modified in a variety of compound terms. Linked here to local organization and moral order.
<i>Vecino</i>	(Sp.) Townsman with fully vested rights (colonial); town resident sometimes non-indian (modern)
<i>Vigilancia</i>	(Sp.) Vigilance
<i>Wilancha</i>	(Ay.) Sacrifice, live offering to the land and ancestors

NOTES

1. Respectively, Ley No. 1551 of the 20th April 1994, and Ley 1654 of 20 July 1995.
2. See Molina and Arias [1996]; also Arrieto and Pinedo [1995].
3. The peasant union is the *Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos Boliviano*, CSUTCB.
4. Creoles are the descendants of the Spanish colonizers who, through their appropriation of land, wealth, and power exercised through the legislature, have managed to retain control of the country and government. In simple terms, the Bolivian mestizo population are understood to be people of mixed Spanish and indigenous blood. However, this simple definition often fails to take account of the frequently fluid nature of race and ethnicity in Bolivia. It is not uncommon for a person of one ethnic classification to change to another by transforming cultural habits and costume. In this way people of ethnically indigenous background become mestizo by casting aside their traditional dress (for example, the *pollera*) and adopting urban lifestyles and professions.
5. Usually from June to July, when their plots are lying fallow.
6. On these points, see Ayllu Sartañani [1992], Skar [1982], Rasnake [1988], Godoy [1984], Bastien [1978], Platt [1982], Murra, Wachtel and Revel [1986], Harris [1985], and Mayer [1985].
7. *Don* (men) and *Doña* (women) are local terms used to show respect for adult members of the community.
8. That is, '*Reglamento y Distribución de Coparticipación Tributaria para los Gobiernos municipales*'.
9. That is, *Ley de Creaciones de cada Municipio, Acta Apocrifa*.
10. *Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Socio Economico* – one of the many private companies formed since the introduction of the popular participation law to fulfil the tasks of local *capacitación* in relation to the new procedures of development planning and governmental administration. Based in Oruro, CCEDSE had won a government contract funded by the World Bank to introduce and supervise the new system of *planificación participativa* in four municipalities of the department.
11. In October 1997 an article in Oruro's newspaper *La Patria* reported the conflict as *Delimitación de territorio provoca problemas vecinales* (Territorial Redrawing Causes Problems Between Neighbours).
12. For example, CARITAS signed an agreement to fund a drinking water project. USAID had agreed to fund local Health projects. UNICEF had agreed to fund a mother and daughter

health and education programme.

13. It was apparent that local people had been careful to hide their differences from me.
14. That is, from \$US47,115 to \$US75,982.
15. FASOR stands for *Federación de Ayllus de Sur Oruro*. See below for more on this organization.
16. Article 22 of the Law of Population states that 'those municipalities that don't possess a minimum of 5,000 inhabitants, must form *mancomunidades* [i.e. a federation with another such community]' in order to form a sufficient size of population amongst which *coparticipacion* funds can be shared.
17. That is, an administrative alliance between municipalities.
18. That is, 'the Holy Cross'. A festival held on 3 May which not only marks the death and celebrates the resurrection of Christ but also has a pre-Christian significance: namely, crosses as symbols of fertility. At this particular festival, crosses are paraded and venerated throughout the community.
19. See for example the article 'Conflicto de Límites provoca dos muertes' in *La Razón*, 26/1/1998.
20. At the end of 1999 a decision was finally made by the National Senate, with the result that the municipality has been reduced from four to three cantons.
21. Perhaps this is not so different from the way we ourselves understand our own past.
22. For a full description of this process, see McNeish [2001] and Ticona and Albó [1997].
23. 'Adam and Eve and the Red-Trousered Ant' re-told by Denise Arnold [1993] and Fidencia's story in McNeish [2001] are examples of powerful foundation stories that are both mythical and moral in character, which by stressing the values of solidarity, trust, faith and reward, form a narrative about the present and about continuity.
24. Hence the view that: 'Geography does more than carry important historical referents: it also organises the manner in which these facts are conceptualised, remembered and organised into a temporal framework' [*Rappaport*, 1990: 11; *Rosaldo*, 1980; *Harwood*, 1976].
25. See Molina Rivero and Portugal Loayza [1995] and Molino Rivero [1987].
26. It is to one of these meetings that I was invited to on my first trip to the area at the start of my fieldwork period.
27. On this point, see Espinoza Soriano [1969: 199] and Cieza de Leon [1986/1553: 447].
28. See Espinoza Soriano [1969].
29. On this point, see Espinoza Soriano [1969: 196].
30. An Incaic staging post cum storage facility.
31. Although the National Revolution had tolerated 'traditional' leadership forms, subsequent efforts were made to transform and 'modernize' local political structures. Teams of MNR militants, or revolutionary 'brigades' as they were known, were sent out by the government to instruct peasants about the National Revolution and to create a network of *sindicatos agrarios* (rural unions) to replace pre-existing forms of community organization [*Izko*, 1992; *Arganaras*, 1992].
32. A caveat is in order, since evidence suggests that even in 1952 the populist MNR government of Paz Estensorro was keen to maintain good relations with its powerful northern neighbour, the United States.
33. The *Programa de Auto-desarrollo Campesino*.
34. Although playing the game of party politics required by the government system, authority figures such as Don Eleuterio certainly regarded their positions as part of *thakhi* – that is, as a moral duty.
35. As participants in the everyday life and ritual of *thakhi*, people in the *rinconada* continued to see Quillacas as an important centre. Although at loggerheads with the municipal leadership over their administration, to the surprise of many *vecinos* they continued to play a part in *thaki* and community obligations. As participants in the community festivals, including *Señor de Exaltación*, which are located in Quillacas, they allocate the town a focal position in their relationships with the larger *ayllu mayor*, their ancestors, and the local area. By coming to Quillacas in order to take part in festivals, and showing a continued willingness to meet and take part in communal work parties (*faena*) to look after the church and their *ayllu*'s chapel, therefore, individuals from the *rinconada* demonstrate as much concern with the upkeep of *ayllu* relations as the residents of the town. Through their

- participation in these events they not only subscribe to a common ideological discourse (based on shared spiritual and cultural values) with the town but also evince a mutual pride in community history and membership. However, in their decisions both about the present and the future, the vision of the Quillacan leadership ruling over a political and physical territory that encompasses their own land is neither attractive nor useful to those occupying the *rinconada*.
36. However, it is probably what Don René Jallaza was getting at in his comments reported earlier (see above).
 37. Although unfair to make sweeping generalizations, it is pertinent to note that the disjuncture between indigenous organizations and the grassroots is a common phenomenon in Latin America. Such a disjuncture has been reported for Bolivia by Ticona, Rodriguez and Albó [1995] and for Guatemalan Mayan movements by Warren [1998].
 38. The phrase 'historical community' was one that Don Julian, the Jilaqata in 1998, frequently and proudly used to describe his community, Santuario de Quillacas.
 39. As Levine [1993: 2] has noted, 'the objects of any study of culture and power cannot be understood as objects alone: they are created by people, active subjects with lives, interests, and dynamics of their own.' Rural communities are generally understood as being formed out of the complex interlinkage of internal and external discourses over identity and place. Trying to get inside and understand these discourses, it has been suggested, means that we need to 'appreciate the subjective self-understanding of the ethnic group – how the group views its own present situation – as well as its objective circumstances understood in terms of interests, resources and competition' [*Urban and Sherzer*, 1991: 5]. The way outsiders attempt to understand the way rural inhabitants symbolically construct (or perhaps deconstruct) their community is of course – as Cohen [1985] suggested a long time ago – effected by the participant/observation approach to the study of locality and membership.
 40. On this latter point, see also Abu-Lughod [1990].

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