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How to Decolonize Democracy:

Indigenous Governance Innovation in Bolivia and Nunavut, Canada

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the successes, failures, and lessons learned from the innovative experiments in decolonization that are currently underway in Bolivia and Nunavut, Canada. Bolivia and Nunavut are the first large-scale tests of Indigenous governance in the Americas. In both cases, Indigenous peoples are a marginalized majority who have recently assumed power by way of democratic mechanisms. In Bolivia, the inclusion of direct, participatory, and communitarian elements into the democratic system, has dramatically improved representation for Indigenous peoples. In Nunavut, the Inuit have also opted to pursue self-determination through a public government system rather than through an Inuit-specific self-government arrangement. The Nunavut government seeks to incorporate Inuit values, beliefs, and worldviews into a Canadian system of government. In both cases, the conditions for success are far from ideal. Significant social, economic, and institutional problems continue to plague the new governments of Bolivia and Nunavut. Based on original research in Bolivia and Nunavut, the paper finds that important democratic gains have been made. I argue that the emergence of new mechanisms for Indigenous and popular participation has the potential to strengthen democracy by enhancing or stretching liberal democratic conceptions and expectations.

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Keywords
decolonizing experiments in Bolivia and Nunavut, diversifying democracy, Inuit indigenous movement, participatory governance, resource governance

Resumen

Este artículo analiza los éxitos, fracasos y lecciones aprendidas de los innovadores experimentos de descolonización que se están llevando a cabo actualmente en Bolivia y Nunavut, Canadá. Bolivia y Nunavut son los primeros experimentos de gobernanza indígena a gran escala en las Américas. En ambos casos, los pueblos indígenas son mayorías marginadas que recientemente han asumido el poder por medio de mecanismos democráticos. En Bolivia, la inclusión de elementos directos, participativos y comunitarios en el sistema democrático ha mejorado dramáticamente la representación de los pueblos indígenas. En Nunavut, los inuit también han optado por gestionar la autodeterminación a través de un sistema de gobierno público en lugar de un acuerdo de autogobierno específicamente inuit. El gobierno de Nunavut intenta incorporar valores, creencias y visiones del mundo inuit en el sistema de gobierno canadiense. En ambos casos, las condiciones para el éxito están lejos de ser ideales. Considerables problemas sociales, económicos e institucionales siguen afectando a los nuevos gobiernos de Bolivia y Nunavut. Pese a ello, y en base a investigaciones realizadas en Bolivia y Nunavut, el artículo da cuenta de importantes ganancias democráticas y propone que el surgimiento de nuevos mecanismos para la participación indígena y popular tiene el potencial de fortalecer la democracia al ampliar las concepciones y expectativas democráticas liberales.

Palabras claves
democracia diversificadora, experimentos descolonizadores en Bolivia y Nunavut, gobernanza de recursos, gobernanza participativa, movimiento indígena inuit

Introduction

Bolivia and Nunavut, Canada, are the first large-scale tests of Indigenous governance in the Americas. In both cases, Indigenous peoples are a marginalized majority who have recently assumed power by way of democratic mechanisms. They represent the region's best efforts at advancing Indigenous rights. In Bolivia, the inclusion of direct, participatory, and communitarian

elements into the democratic system under the administration of president Evo Morales (2006-present), has dramatically improved representation for Indigenous peoples (Exeni Rodríguez, Lucero, Madrid). In Nunavut, the Inuit have also opted to pursue self-determination through a public government system (established in 1999) rather than through an Inuit-specific self-governing arrangement. In a broadly similar dynamic to Bolivia, the Nunavut government seeks to incorporate Indigenous values, perspectives, and experiences into a liberal democratic order (Henderson, Timpson, White 2006). The conditions for success are far from ideal in either case. Significant social, economic, and institutional problems continue to plague the new governments of Bolivia and Nunavut. Nevertheless, important democratic gains have been made.

What are the successes, failures, and lessons learned from the innovative experiments in decolonization that are currently underway in Bolivia and Nunavut? Indigenous movements have played a decisive role in determining the extent and nature of democratic inclusion in the two cases. Yet, the case of Nunavut provides an interesting contrast to the decolonization process in Bolivia. In Nunavut, we see an emphasis on land claims with sub-surface mineral, oil, and gas rights accompanied by strong co-management boards dealing with land, wildlife, and environmental issues within the context of a broadly decentralized political system. Notwithstanding, the Government of Nunavut does not have the bold innovations in democratic participation that characterizes the Government of Bolivia, including gender parity, guaranteed proportional representation for Indigenous peoples, and self-rule. As such, the case of Bolivia is characterized as one of participatory governance, while that of Nunavut is considered to be one of resource governance. The case studies are presented not with the intention of using one as a yardstick with which to measure the other, but rather in the spirit of advancing the project of decolonization in both. The paper argues that the emergence of new mechanisms for Indigenous and popular inclusion have the potential to strengthen democracy by enhancing or stretching liberal democratic conceptions and expectations.

The paper begins with an overview of the concept of decolonization as it relates to democratic functioning. Special attention is paid to the distinction between government and governance and how Indigenous participation promotes new forms of society-centered governance (Levi-Faur). The second section of the paper examines participatory governance innovation in the case of Bolivia. It suggests that the inclusion of civil society actors in the structures

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of the state has improved state-society relations in the country. The next section explores the case of resource governance innovation in Nunavut. Although Nunavut is a sub-national government within Canada (as opposed to a nation-state), it is struggling with many of same issues faced by the Bolivian government, especially in terms of how to rebuild Indigenous-state relations on a more just footing. In both cases, Indigenous leaders and politicians are seeking ways of doing democracy differently. The paper concludes with an analysis of the lessons learned from the new governance arrangements for advancing Indigenous peoples' rights and demands.

Diversifying Democracy

The governments of Bolivia and Nunavut have embarked on ambitious projects of decolonization. Decolonization refers to the revalorization, recognition, and re-establishment of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and values within the institutions, rules, and arrangements that govern society. According to Bolivia's Vice Minister of Decolonization (2013), the Bolivian state has not only historically excluded Indigenous peoples; it was founded in opposition to or against them. The same can, and should, be said of the Canadian state. The project of decolonization entails re-imagining the nation-state as Indigenous. This means not only infusing the state with Indigenous principles, but an attempt to create a national Indigenous culture with new political subjects and forms of citizenship (Canessa, García Linera). Previous attempts at linking Indigenous populations to the state, whether it was state-sponsored corporatism or multiculturalism, sought to reshape society along the lines desired by governing elites. Such approaches tended to target Indigenous peoples as the problem in need of change. Decolonization, in contrast, allows for the meaningful incorporation of Indigenous peoples into democratic nation-states by focusing on transforming the state to better serve and reflect the needs and interests of society (see Table below for an overview of comparative socio-economic data on Bolivia and Nunavut).

Selected Social and Economic Indicators
Bolivia and Nunavut (most recent year available)

Item	Bolivia	Nunavut
Total Population Size	10,844,438	37,174
Total Land Area (million km2)	1.088	2.093
Indigenous Population (%)	62	84
Per capita GDP (USD)	2,868	62,375
Infant Mortality Rate (/1000)	32	21
Human Development Index	0.662	0.820

Sources: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics (http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca); Statistics Canada (http://www.statcan.gc.ca); United Nations Development Programme (http://hdr.undp.org/); World Bank (http://data.worldbank.org/)

Decolonization is intertwined with the concept of governance. Governance can be understood as "…the structures and processes that enable governmental and nongovernmental actors to coordinate their interdependent needs and interests through the making and implementation of policies in the absence of a unifying political authority" (Krahmann 331). Whereas government centralizes power in the state, governance disperses political authority amongst governmental and nongovernmental actors (e.g. Indigenous communities) in potentially democratizing ways (Swyngedouw). It is the process through which governments, civil society organizations, private sector associations and other sectors of society interact and make decisions on matters of public concern (Graham, Amos, and Plumptre). To promote the growth of society-centered governance, governments must be willing to work in partnership with civil society at each stage of the policy design and implementation process. The practice of public dialogue and deliberation is both a means and an opportunity to bridge the gap that exists between formal democratic institutions and excluded Indigenous communities and their public authorities (Retolaza Eguren). New institutional arrangements to promote Indigenous participation and representation in northern Canada and the central Andes are challenging conventional state-centric forms of

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policy making by linking formerly marginalized groups to the state on their own terms.

Decolonization also places new demands on democracy. Liberal or representative democracy—with its reliance on elections and parties as the only available channels of communication between representatives and citizens—does not require citizen deliberation on policy matters or collective action. According to Cameron "[w]ithout a voice in deliberations over the decisions that may affect them directly, many citizens become disengaged. This malaise may be especially acute in [I]ndigenous communities with strong traditions of collective decision making" (2014, 5). Institutional innovation is crucial to making democracy work for all sectors of society. Comprehensive land claims with self-governing powers in the North and the introduction of elements of communitarian democracy in the constitutions of the South have provided important measures of self-determination for Indigenous peoples in the Americas. Self-determination challenges an institutional context that shapes and constrains Indigenous participation (Eversole). The new democratic mechanisms of inclusion may also foster inclusive development processes by reorienting public policy toward society's most vulnerable members and expanding the nature of public debates (Peruzzotti and Selee). Decolonization can enhance democratic representation by bringing Indigenous voices into the political process. As the case studies that follow illustrate, the broadening of democracy provides a wider range of political options for Indigenous activists who no longer face the strategic dilemma of whether or not to push for change from within the institutions of the state. This dynamic has had profoundly democratizing effects on the respective political systems of Bolivia and Nunavut.

Bolivia: A Framework for Participatory Governance

The 2005 presidential win by Evo Morales and his Movement Toward Socialism (Movimiento al Socialismo, MAS) party marked a fundamental shift in state-society relations and in the composition and political orientation of the state.[2] President Morales has made Indigenous rights the cornerstone of his

[2] The MAS won the 2005 election with 53.7% of the vote, the only party to win an absolute majority since the country's transition to democracy. In 2009, Morales was re-elected with 63.9% of the vote. In 2014, he was elected to a third term (technically a second term under the rules of the new constitution) with 61.4% of the vote.

administration in the bid to promote a more inclusive polity. The 2009 Constitution is central to the advancement of this agenda. According to the constitution's preamble, Bolivia has left behind the colonial, republican, and neoliberal state of the past.[3] In its place is a plurinational state that seeks to recognize the multi-ethnic nature of the country, where indigenous peoples are a majority. The new constitution goes further than any previous legislation in the country, indeed in Latin America, in securing representation and participation for the nation's Indigenous peoples including, for example, the recognition of all thirty-six Indigenous languages of Bolivia as official languages of the state (art. 5) and the guaranteed right to proportional representation of Indigenous peoples in the national legislature (art. 147).[4] It also redefined Bolivian democracy as "intercultural." Intercultural democracy is a hybrid form of democracy that is direct and participatory, representative, and communitarian. Some of the new mechanisms for direct citizen participation include recall referendums, town councils, citizen-led legislative initiatives and the legal-political recognition of citizen's associations and Indigenous groups to contest elections (Exeni Rodríguez). The new spaces of citizen engagement are not construed as an alternative to democracy, but are part of an effort to overcome the basic problems associated with representative democracy. (Peruzzotti and Selee, Wampler)

To advance the restructuring of the state, the Morales administration has created new institutional interfaces between the state and society. The introduction of a number of bold and innovative vice ministries has been the first step in generating strategic projects, programs, and policies to promote decolonization within the governing apparatus. Chief among them are the Vice Ministry of Indigenous Justice, Vice Ministry of Traditional Health, Vice Ministry of Intercultural Education, Vice Ministry of Decolonization, Vice Ministry of Indigenous Autonomy, and the Vice Ministry of Coordination with Social Movements and Civil Society. The MAS has cast itself as a "government of social movements" by incorporating social movement leaders into government posts as part of its effort to "lead by obeying" (Quispe et al. 243). Currently, more than two-thirds of the deputies in the national legislature come from social

[3] The 2009 Bolivian Constitution is available for download at: http://pdba.georgetown.edu/constitutions/bolivia/bolivia.html

[4] Indigenous peoples constitute a slight majority of Bolivia's total population. The Aymara and Quechua are the principal Indigenous peoples in the highlands. The Bolivian lowlands are home to over thirty ethnic groups, including the Guaraní, Chiquitano, and Moxeño peoples.

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movement backgrounds (García Linera 51). Since the passage of the constitution, the MAS has also made gender parity a priority for its government. Following the 2009 presidential election, Morales assigned women to 50% of his cabinet positions, a vast improvement over the 6.7% of female cabinet ministers under the government that preceded Morales (Viceministerio de Descolonización 2014, 142). The Vice Ministry of Decolonization is currently drafting a Law of Decolonization and Depatriarchalization that would require gender parity at all levels and in all departments of the government.[5]

The Morales administration has identified government bureaucracy as the main impediment to the implementation of its policies and programs. According to the Vice Minister of Decolonization "much of our effort will be wasted if there are entities and public authorities within our system that are producing neo-colonization by way of the rules and norms of previous administrations, and so we must remedy this by issuing new standards that give life to the plurinational state" (2014, 116). The government has passed a number of laws to enhance civil and political rights in the country. For example, the 2010 Antiracism and Antidiscrimination Law authorizes criminal sanctions against public and private sector institutions, including those of the media, which disseminate racist and biased ideas (Farthing and Kohl 65). In 2012, a Language Rights Law was passed requiring all public and private institutions serving the public to have their staff trained in the official Indigenous languages of use in the region in which they are located (Ley N° 269: Ley General de Derechos y Políticas Lingüísticas). A recent empirical study of the extent of bureaucratic decolonization in Bolivia compared the profiles of civil servants from 2001 and 2013 and found the public administrative body of today to be younger, have a greater presence of women, and a record number of Indigenous peoples. An impressive 48% of public employees now self-identify as Indigenous (Soruco et al. 14). These findings suggest that broad based changes are occurring within the government.

The MAS' radical attempt at decentralization has also left an indelible imprint on the country's governing structures. In many ways, the Morales government is deepening the decentralization process that began with the passage of the 1994 Law of Popular Participation (LPP). The LPP created over 300 municipal governments with widespread administrative powers, direct citizen oversight, and dedicated resources as a means to bring government closer to increasingly mobilized rural and Indigenous communities (Arce and

[5] Author interview with Félix Cárdenas, Vice Minister of Decolonization. La Paz, August 22, 2014.

Rice, Postero). The reforms opened the door to the electoral participation of a new generation of Indigenous leaders and activists, including Evo Morales. Now that the MAS is the governing party, it has instituted additional reforms that grant a substantial degree of autonomy to departmental, regional, municipal and Indigenous governments (Centellas, Faguet). The 2010 Framework Law of Autonomy and Decentralization regulates the new territorial organization of the state as defined in the 2009 Constitution. In addition to the recognition of the three hierarchical levels of government in Bolivia (e.g. departmental, regional, and municipal), the constitution also identified Indigenous autonomies as a separate and distinct order of government, one that is not directly subordinate to the other levels (CIPCA 2009). Under current provisions, existing Indigenous territories as well as municipalities and regions with a substantial Indigenous presence may convert themselves into self-governing entities based on cultural norms, customs, institutions, and authorities, in keeping with the rights and guarantees in the new constitution (Faguet 2013, 6). Bolivia's latest experiment with decentralization aims to improve citizen engagement and government accountability, and ultimately to make Bolivian democracy more meaningful.

The governance innovations of the MAS have brought about important changes to the structure of the state, the practice of democracy, and the national identity of Bolivia. Yet, tensions and contradictions within the new constitution itself have limited the construction of the plurinational state in practice. According to constitutional scholar Roberto Gargarella, a highly centralized organization of power tends to work against the application of Indigenous rights. Bolivia's new constitution concentrates state power while expanding Indigenous rights. Stated differently, it pits governance against government. For instance, the Morales government's commitment to Indigenous autonomy is at odds with its resource-dependent, state-led model of development. The constitutional provision that all non-renewable resources remain under state control places firm limits on the right to self-government and self-determination (Tockman and Cameron). Bolivia's Constitution (article 30.15) establishes the right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consultation, not consent, concerning planned measures affecting them, such as mining and oil or gas exploration. The constitution does stipulate that the prior consultation process by the state must be conducted in good faith and in a concerted fashion, and that it should respect local Indigenous norms and procedures. Nevertheless, Indigenous groups cannot veto state-sponsored development and resource extraction projects in their territories (Schilling-

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Vacaflor and Kuppe 2012; Wolff 2012). As it stands, the new constitution does not fully change power relations between the state and Indigenous peoples.

The practice of communitarian democracy is also heavily circumscribed, despite its equal standing in the new constitution. Communitarian democracy is based on Indigenous customs and traditions. The constitutional recognition of communitarian democracy holds considerable promise as a means to strengthen democratic governance by constructively linking formal and "non-formal" institutions (Retolaza Eguren).[6] In other words, it institutionalizes Indigenous forms of governance as part of the state. The creation of self-governing Indigenous bodies is the key to fostering communitarian democracy. According to Cameron and Sharpe "[t]he cumulative effect of these innovations is to use direct institutionalized voice to transform and democratize the state as a whole—not by scaling up but by devolving more democratic power to small-scale self-governing communities everywhere" (2012, 246). Under the current constitutional configuration, communitarian democracy is relegated to lower level governments. Communitarian democracy is to be exercised within Indigenous communities through the election or selection of governing authorities using traditional methods. However, as Quispe et al. point out, the election methods and governance structures at the local level do not inform practices at the national level. Mamani Ramírez has suggested that while Bolivia may be undergoing a process of decolonization at the societal level, it has yet to affect the structures of the state. Nonetheless, Indigenous organizations view these constitutional gains as the first step to building an authentic intercultural democracy.

Nunavut: A Framework for Resource Governance

The 1993 comprehensive land claims settlement, the largest in Canadian history, between the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN),[7] the federal government of Canada, and the territorial government of the Northwest Territories brought about substantive change in the governance of the Eastern Artic. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) provided the Inuit with title to more than 350,000 km^2 of land (equivalent to 18% of Nunavut), subsurface

[6] Non-formal institutions refer to Indigenous values and beliefs, customary laws and practices, and traditional authority and governance structures. They are neither informal institutions nor formally recognized by the state.

[7] The Tungavik Federation of Nunavut was the organization established by Inuit leaders to negotiate the land claim. The Federation was reconstituted as Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated (NTI) once the claim was settled.

mineral rights to approximately 36,000 km² of that land, and over $1 billion in federal compensation money (DIAND, Henderson). Inuit beneficiaries of the claim are also entitled to a share of the royalties from oil and gas extraction on public lands, additional hunting and fishing rights, and the guaranteed right to participate in decisions over land and resource management. In exchange, the Inuit had to surrender all existing and possibly existing surface and subsurface land rights in the area covered by the claim. The NLCA also committed Ottawa to introduce a government measure to create a new territory called Nunavut (or "our land" in Inuktitut). Nunavut is home to just over 37,000 residents, almost 85% of whom are Inuit (Timpson 2009; White 2006). The creation of the new territory brought with it the task of establishing the Government of Nunavut. Given the disproportionate size and relative homogeneity of their population, as well as the greater likelihood of federal government support, the Inuit decided on a public government system (one that serves Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples) instead of a more direct form of Inuit self-government.

The Inuit-led Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) was tasked with the design and structure of the new government. The Government of Nunavut is modeled largely after the Euro-Canadian parliamentary form of government with a few key innovations. For instance, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly operates by consensus decision-making. There are no political parties in Nunavut. Instead, candidates run in elections as independents. Most members of the assembly are Inuit and much of the debate is carried out in Inuktitut (with simultaneous translation available for English-only speakers). Legislative assembly members tend to wear traditional clothing and are seated in a circle, rather than in opposing rows of benches as they are in the rest of Canada (White 2006). From the outset, the implementation commission sought to emphasize the distinctiveness of Nunavut. Early goals included incorporating Inuit values and perspectives into the political system, achieving 85% Inuit employment in the new bureaucracy, and having Inuktitut as the working language of the government by the year 2020 (NIC, Timpson 2009). In addition, the commission hoped to address the under-participation of women in formal politics. During the run-up to the establishment of the new government, a gender parity proposal was put forward to guarantee the equal representation of men and women in the legislative assembly. The issue proved contentious. The proposal was eventually put to a public referendum where it was rejected by 57% of voters, with a turnout rate of just 39% (Henderson, Wilson). In the first three elections following the creation of Nunavut, women made up only

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7% of the members of the legislative assembly (White 2013, 233). Clearly, the government has made important strides in securing Indigenous representation, but it has yet to do the same for women.

The guiding principle of the Government of Nunavut is Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (or "that which is long known by the Inuit"). "IQ" (as it is commonly referred to in the shorthand) is the key mechanism for incorporating Inuit cultural values into a Canadian system of government. The implementation commission recommended the creation of departments that would translate IQ into public policy. Two departments of particular note were the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) and the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY). Although both departments were central to the creation of Inuit-sensitive institutions of governance, they have since been dismantled. In 2004, the Department of Sustainable Development was split to form the Department of the Environment and the Department of Economic Development and Transportation (Timpson 2009, 202). In 2012, the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth was restructured into the more conventional Department of Culture and Heritage (Hicks and White 245). According to Nunavut's Director of IQ, the restructuring process essentially left her office solely responsible for "Inuitizing" government policy and programs.[8] As White (2001, 93) cautions, "how governments do things can be as important as what they do." In many ways, IQ can be seen as a benchmark against which to judge the success of the new territory in doing government differently.

The most unique organizational feature of the Government of Nunavut is its high degree of decentralization. A central goal of the creation of the new territory was to overcome the decades of political alienation experienced by the Inuit of the Eastern Artic under the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) specifically, and the Canadian federation more broadly, by bringing government closer to the people (Hicks and White, Weber). Decentralization has proven to be an important means of bringing about political and economic development. As opposed to administrative decentralization, which is based on the dispersal of policy-making powers (as in the case of Bolivia), decentralization in Nunavut aimed to geographically disperse government headquarters throughout the territory. Within three years of the establishment of the Government of Nunavut, over 400 well-paid public sector jobs were either created or transferred to ten small communities

[8] Author interview with Shuvinai Mike, Director of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. Iqaluit, June 11, 2013.

outside of the capital city of Iqaluit (Légaré 361).[9] The result of this "made in Nunavut" solution to the centralization of government operations has been a more even distribution of economic benefits across the population through the provision of training and employment opportunities (Hicks and White). This dynamic has ensured a more representative level of Inuit employment within the new government by providing Nunavummiut (residents of Nunavut) with the option to remain in their home communities.

The Government of Nunavut has seen a dramatic increase in the number of Inuit employees within its ranks as a result of targeted employment strategies and progressive language policies. In 2008, the Official Languages Act was adopted by the territorial legislative assembly to place the Inuktitut language on equal footing with English and French. Fluency in the Inuit language has become a de facto requirement for senior public officials at the highest levels of government, though few non-Inuit bureaucrats have more than a rudimentary knowledge of Inuktitut (Timpson 2009). While the level of Inuit employment within the government now exceeds that of the non-Inuit or Qallunaat population, much of Inuit employment remains concentrated at the lowest rungs of the territorial public service, in paraprofessional and administrative support positions. According to Timpson (2009, 206), low levels of educational attainment among the Inuit, lack of mentoring, and the predominance of English in the workplace are systemic barriers to Inuit employment at representative levels within the new government. Notwithstanding, the government has met its initial target of 50% Inuit employment across all government posts.[10] Nunavut has become the first jurisdiction in Canada to build a public service staffed predominantly by Indigenous peoples.

Unquestionably, the most significant governance innovation to date in terms of restructuring Indigenous-state relations has been Nunavut's co-management and regulatory system. The co-management boards on land, wildlife, and environmental issues were mandated by the comprehensive land claims agreement (White 2001, 2006, 2008). The boards are institutions of public government (IPGs) that ensure Indigenous participation in key policy decisions while maintaining federal government control over the use and

[9] Only 10 of Nunavut's 25 communities were considered large enough to accommodate government headquarter jobs. The remaining 15 communities have populations well under 1000 residents (Weber 2014, 179).

[10] Data on Inuit employment statistics are available through the Department of Finance at: http://www.gov.nu.ca/publications-resources/publications

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management of public lands. The jurisdiction of the boards extends to the entirety of Nunavut (not just to Inuit title lands), though their powers are limited to making recommendations to the government on such matters ranging from wildlife management to decisions on major economic development projects, including new mines and pipelines (White 2008). While the boards may only have advisory powers, their decisions are rarely overturned by the government. For instance, as White reports (2001, 92), the 1996 decision of Nunavut's Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) to issue a permit for the legal harvest of a bowhead whale (a species of concern) was put to a stark test when the government came under strong domestic and international pressure to refuse approval of the hunt. Nevertheless, the decision of the board stood. Clearly, the claims-mandated boards can, at times, exercise substantial governing authority. Although there is considerable debate over the extent to which the boards incorporate traditional knowledge into their decision-making processes (Nadasdy, Stevenson), the co-management system represents an important gain for the Inuit by providing them with a say on policies that are central to their culture and livelihoods. These and other such innovations have been an important catalyst in the transformation of democracy.

Nunavut: A Framework for Resource Governance

The governments of Bolivia and Nunavut aim to decolonize democracy by incorporating Indigenous presence and values into their respective political systems (De Sousa Santos). In so doing, they offer important instructional lessons in how to institutionalize Indigenous rights, worldviews, and governing principles. First, the cases highlight the gains for Indigenous peoples of working within the system to push for positive change, as opposed to relying solely on extra-systemic tactics and strategies. Second, the cases suggest that a significant political institutional space or opening is needed for bold experiments in Indigenous governance to occur. Third, their experiences reveal the importance of consensus-based decision-making for decolonizing democracy—a move that has been facilitated by the absence of or a greatly reduced role for political parties in the two cases. Perhaps most important of all, the examples of social change in Bolivia and Nunavut indicate the centrality of both economic and political rights for advancing Indigenous agendas.

A central dilemma faced by Indigenous movements is whether to retain an oppositional stance to their respective political systems or to try to bring

about change by way of the democratic mechanisms already in place. A participatory strategy is conventionally assumed to risk the loss of movement legitimacy and autonomy as Indigenous groups submit themselves to the rules and regulations of the largely alien political system that has long served as an instrument of their domination and oppression (Ladner, Massal and Bonilla). In Bolivia, Indigenous peoples have successfully overcome this tension by forming their own political parties and contesting elections on their own terms. The election of the country's first Indigenous president has resulted in new forms of political participation that are, at least in part, inspired by Indigenous traditions. A principal consequence of the broadening of the democratic process is that Indigenous activists are no longer forced to choose between party politics and social movements (Exeni Rodríguez, Wampler). In Canada, Indigenous peoples have used the courts and the language of rights to assert their claims. According to Scholtz, the combination of political mobilization alongside landmark court rulings shifted Canada's policy terrain toward negotiation. Most notably, the 1973 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, known as the *Calder decision*, forced the government to reconceptualise its political relationship with Indigenous peoples as sovereign and self-determining peoples or nations. The ruling ultimately opened the door to the comprehensive land claims process (Alcantara). The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is Canada's largest settlement to date. For the Inuit, the comprehensive land claims agreement is an important mechanism to affirm and protect their traditional territories and provide them with a stake in the political system.

Prior to the assumption of power of President Morales in Bolivia in 2006 and the establishment of the Government of Nunavut in Canada in 1999, both polities suffered from a crisis of legitimacy. In Bolivia, the national rise of the MAS took place within the context of a severe crisis of democratic representation. The victorious Water War of Cochabamba in 2000 against the privatization of that city's water supply marked the first in a series of massive civil uprisings that led to a rupture in the national political system and the search for an alternative political and economic project (Kohl and Farthing, Olivera and Lewis). The crisis highlighted the complete disconnect between the state and society and led to the presidential election of Morales. As Levitsky and Roberts (408) note, not only was Morales a political outsider, he was also a regime outsider who won on a pledge to abolish the established political order and re-found the country along more inclusive lines. In a somewhat similar vein, the Inuit of Canada's Eastern Arctic felt increasingly alienated from

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the culturally and geographically distant Government of the Northwest Territories (Henderson, Hicks and White). The Inuit people have long dreamed of their own homeland. The comprehensive land claims agreement and accompanying political accord marked the accomplishment of this dream by establishing a political regime in which the Inuit could control their own affairs (White 2006). In both Bolivia and Nunavut, Indigenous peoples were presented with the opportunity to build a new government, practically from the ground up. This particular confluence of factors has allowed governance innovations to flourish, but also challenges to reverse colonial orders.

The emphasis on communitarian democracy and consensus-based decision making in Bolivia and Nunavut is also noteworthy. The democratic experiments being conducted in the two cases are occurring in the absence of traditional partisan politics. Bolivia's 2004 Law of Indigenous and Citizen Groups (instituted prior to the assumption of power of Morales) enables civil society groups to obtain legal personality and directly contest elections. Ironically, some observers have suggested that the law was originally designed to slow the growth of the MAS.[11] Nonetheless, the MAS continues to be the dominant party in Bolivia. It holds a substantial majority of seats in both the senate and the chamber of deputies. The National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) was the only traditional party to survive (just barely) the sweeping party system changes that have taken place in Bolivia. As a result, an unprecedented window of opportunity has been opened to develop a new participatory institutional architecture that increases connections between Indigenous groups and government officials, without serious interference from opposition parties (Author 2011; Wampler). In the case of Nunavut, its distinctive consensus-style government operates entirely without political parties. This governing feature is widely considered to be consistent with Inuit decision-making processes which value consensus over confrontation (White 2006). Consensus government ensures a highly participatory process, one that resembles a deliberative form of democracy, which may lead to a substantial degree of support behind new policy directions. In short, democratic innovations in Bolivia and Nunavut presuppose that representation and participation occur beyond, and at times outside, conventional channels of representative democracy. (Exeni Rodríguez)

This paper has endeavored to explore Bolivia's and Nunavut's democratic works in progress. Their new governance arrangements have rearticulated

[11] Author interview with José Omar Méndez, Consultant on Indigenous Municipal Districts, Ministerio de Participación Popular. La Paz, March 12, 2004.

Indigenous-state relations, redefined the meaning of citizenship, and consequently transformed and deepened the nature of democracy itself. In both cases, governance innovations emerged in response to a growing gap between citizens and the political system and served to enhance governmental legitimacy and effectiveness by meaningfully rooting the central institutions of governance in their respective societies. Bolivia's process of institutional change shows us the importance of political will and a civil society capable of defending the political spaces they have won (Peruzzotti and Selee). Whereas the case of Nunavut teaches us the centrality of control over natural resources and economic development to Indigenous political development (Henderson). Together, they demonstrate that alternatives to the status quo exist for national as well as sub-national governments (White 2001). Indigenous governance arrangements of the variety explored here hold great potential to foster inclusive democratic processes in Canada, Latin America, and beyond. There is much to celebrate in the two cases, just as there is much work left to do to bring their visions of a more just society to fruition.

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