

Decolonizing the state? (Seminar)

Indigenous local politics and the Bolivian Movement for
Socialism

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The Movement for Socialism government has promised to transform the Bolivian state and wider society in favour of its indigenous majority population. This talk describes the unique political institutions of an indigenous community in the Bolivian highlands and how reforms of the national government have paradoxically helped provoke conflict among its local authorities. It reflects upon what this says more broadly about the limits of projects of decolonisation and attempts to redress historical injustices and bestow rights on marginalised social groups through state reforms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mM0jhzrsRrg>

Welcome everybody to rag this evening. And we're really very happy to have Matthew Doyle with us to talk about his work on indigenous local politics and the Bolivian movement was socialism. He was currently associate election on next year at UCL, which we're very glad to hear about. Okay Matthew, please that's go on. Okay, that's great. Thanks very much Camilla. And so just to introduce myself to those of you who don't already know me. My name is Matthew Doyle. I work as a lecture in the department UCL my social Anthropologist, but I'm also a sort of long-term occasional participants in Rag and I sort of Gone Long over the years sort of rag talks and I think I gave a talk about five six years ago when I was just back from my field work doing my PhD at the University of Sussex and this is a talk, which is based really on the fieldworks. I did during my PhD and it's the argument for a book that I'm writing at the moment, which I hope will be coming out. Probably not next year, but the following year and so it's still a sort of work in progress.

But hopefully maybe if you felt you'd like to get in touch with me to give many feedback, or we can have a chat. Of course after the talk, please please feel free. I've included my email address here and so we're going to be talking today about decolonizing the state indigenous local politics and the Bolivian movements for socialism.

So just a very briefly introduced my research as I said, I'm a social Anthropologist, but very much a kind of political Anthropologist. So my my research focuses on processes of State reform local politics and local politics and legal anthropology associate legal studies.

I studied in indigenous community in Bolivia, and it's interaction with the new reformist States under the movement for Socialism or mass party and this community known as Kirito Kiara we is distinguished by having multiple overlapping forms of local political Authority and also by double residents. So while families within the community may live some of the time or predominantly in nearby cities of aurora on contrabandha in Harry Urban neighborhoods, they maintain ties of kinship and economic economic reciprocity with their home villages and I carried out 18 months of multi-sighted field worker spent time in this region in this area of kirki. Are we

I got to know people. I attended local political meetings. I was my cycle of different local political meetings. I interviewed local political leaders, and I also followed them to meetings in rural in sukrey in the past in culture Bamba meetings of the Constitutional courts ngos indigenous rights groups and so on they all spent time in nearby cities in very Urban neighborhoods amongst rural urban migrants and would sometimes travel back between the city of kotra Banda and this community are we So just to put this talk into some sort of overall context as I'm sure many of you already know the national governments currently empowering Bolivia is the movement for socialism party or maths and this is considered amongst the more radical end of the pink tide of democratic. The elected left reformist Latin American Administrations.

So for those who are not familiar with this concept of the pink tide, this has to be understood in the context of at least the last 50 or 60 years of politics in Latin America. So the kind of traditional mid-20th Century Latin American left was very influenced by Marxist ideas kind of revolutionary ideas of Marxism and maoism influenced by things like the Cuban Revolution.

Jacob are Fidel Castro and a lot of the Latin American left was extra parliamentary operated outside of formal political structures and work towards Revolution. They were kind of various revolutionary Guerrilla movements throughout Latin America.

Now during the 1970s there was a period of repression of the left in Latin America and many Latin American countries underwent periods of military dictatorship, very repressive military dictatorships, which were often tacitly or even overtly supported by the United States government and the CIA and then after the end of 1970s and in the early 1980s, you saw this historic return of democracy this new wave of democratization as political scientists.

Sometimes refer to it throughout Latin America and yet the governments that were in power throughout the 1980s and 1990s were very much Centrist or Center rights political parties that carried out so-called neoliberal economic restructuring. So following the recommendations of the international monetary fund and the World Bank these governments massively cut public spending. They they would they they reduced social spending particularly on particularly on things like education Healthcare and so on and this was a period of historic defeat for the left in Latin America as it was in fact for I would say the left in pretty much most of the world in the 1980s 1990s. It's a sort of high point of neoliberal kind of foremplism in the 1980s and 1990s and the left kind of went into Retreat during this period but starting in the late 1990s and early naughties you had this emergence of the pink tide. So this new Latin American left probably starting in the late 1990s the election of Google Chavez in in Venezuela, but then you have people at caracal correa's in Argentina and so on these These these these political parties and social movements which pursued pursued change and which adopted a lot of the discourse and the kind of rhetoric of the traditional Latin American letter kind of revolutionary Latin American Girl that but they pursued a policy of Reform and they pursued power through the Democratic process through forming political parties often political parties that the claim to represent wider social movements and carried

out left reforms often constitutional reforms, which redefine citizenship and so in this context ever Morales and the movement for socialists were elected in 2006 and a thing to understand important thing to understand about Bolivia is it's a country where the majority population is of indigenous ancestry and at least According to some set some historic censuses the overwhelming majority of the population self-identity itself identify as indigenous and yet the country has throughout its entire Colonial and postcolonial history really been dominated by a small Urban westernized Elite who are predominantly of European decent or mixed race. What's called mestizo in Latin America? And so the election of ever Morales who was a social movement leader. He came from this area called the chapari and is of imara indigenous ancestry was was marked as this big important event in Bolivian history particularly by the international press. He was hailed as the country's first indigenous president and the movement for socialism and moral is promised to carry out a sort of revolutionary transformation of Bolivian Society something they refer to as the process of change. They promised a decolonize the Bolivian State to fundamentally change the colonial character of the Bolivian State the white Oblivion society and to recognize and represent the formerly marginalized indigenous majority population of Bolivia.

However in line with a lot of these other pink tide administrations in Latin America, it did this primarily through a process of constitutional and legal reform and attempts to redefine citizenship alongside relatively limited redistribution of wealth through so-called conditional cash transfer programs through introducing things like a minimal State Pension, which is called rented that increasing the minimum wage and renegotiating the terms under which International companies are granted permits to my gas and petrochemicals in in Bolivia.

The Bolivia government was able to extract a greater proportion of this rent from petrochemicals and use this for infrastructure spending particularly informally under-represented rural areas where you had rural indigenous peasantry and so this process of change it's sometimes refer to this attempt to decolonize the Bolivian State and Society is sometimes referred to as a democratic cultural revolution.

The idea is that these formally marginalized peoples who didn't really have a place in National Life and not be recognized as part of the Bolivian Nation despite being the majority population of the country should be formally recognized within a new fluorine national state is Constitution recognizes the existence of multiple ethnic groups multiple indigenous cultures and which also is a very radical set of Constitution and legal reforms which which defaults power to indigenous community. So allows local indigenous communities to exercise their own forms of government semi autonomous governments allows them to deal with matters according to their own customary law. So it exercise it affects what sometimes called legal pluralism or de facto legal pluralism.

Allowing conditions people to exercise their own forms of Law and has a lot of very radical seeming promises made in the Constitution. So article 9 of the Bolivian Constitution claims that the aim of the Bolivian blurry national state is the decolonization of Bolivian society and there are also things like the The inclusion of indigenous prin-

principles within the Constitution and in addition to this in addition to this. It's quite sort of quite quite well known the patron Mama the Earth itself of the living environment is recognized legally as a person with human rights within the Bolivian Constitution. So this process of decolonization and the arrival of the movement.

So movement for socialism to power is sometimes referred to popular in african-america as its second Independence. So the first independence of Bolivia in the in the early 19th century meant that it was formally independent from the Spanish colony, but of course was run by a relatively tiny European culturally European Elites and the majority population in Bolivia as is the case in other Latin American countries have indigenous or mixed race ancestry the Working Class People African descendants as well in other Latin America were locked out of power and participation in National life. So with the arrival of the map of the movement for socialism you have this coming of the second Independence in this revolutionary transformation of Bolivian Society.

However, as I'm sure some of you may already be aware since the original election of everyone Morales and the and the mass governments, it is a suffered internal division, but among some of the social constituencies and some of the social movement organizations which brought it to power and following contested elections in 2019. There was essentially a military coup ever Morales was ousted from how he had to leave the country and there was a right wing interim Administration under a relatively minor right-wing political figure called Jenny Daniels. Although this was kind of a disastrous Administration. It happens.

It was in Howard during the height of the covid pandemic and only about a year later. The mass were re-elected in fresh elections, and now the math are in power again, but under new president Lewis Odyssey.

but what I'd like to consider in this talk through my particular case study is Why is it that this revolutionary project of social transformation has appeared to stall in Bolivia? Why has there been this internal Division and what's the same will generally about any attempt to decolonize the state or to decolonize wider society and the potential limitations of this sort of project. And of course, this is important because Many countries in many parts of the world not just in Latin America have attempted to carry out similar forms of constitutional and legal reform that recognized diverse ethnic and cultural groups that make up their societies and this involves devolving power to communities recognizing indigenous principles in law of the Constitutional constitution in the plurality of law. But the question I'd like to think through in this talk is to what extent can States and legal systems be decolonized and what is the best way of achieving this? What do we mean by decolonization? How should the legacy of colonialism be addressed? And is this something which can be Can be addressed primarily through a project of State reform of legal reforms or is it something which requires a greater transformation of society Beyond just the states and also conversation at the level of Civil Society by the legacies of colonialism and how to address them.

So just to talk about the place where I did my field work, this is known as I look at. Kyari.

But it's also recognized politically as a province within the contrabamber department in Bolivia. And it's in fact the smallest and most remote Province within contrabandha. It's an area for about 150 square meters and it's inhabited by approximately 60 small villages and the people that live in these Villages, they are subsistence farmers and they live from the cultivation tubers Judo cereals and from the pastor of animals such as a cameloid animals like llamas and sheep.

However, historically this community was considered to be an island. It's still referred to in these terms today people still call it.

I look at Chiari and their historic documents dating back to the 16th century referring to as ilu kirkyawi.

Now the concept of the ilu is a rather rather complicated and I probably can't really do justice in this short talk. It's been debated by politicians and DNS Scholars and anthropologists, but very briefly. It refers to a pre-colonial indigenous community and territorial organization that exists in the Ian region of the Americas in places like Western Bolivia and Southern Peru and Southern Ecuador and it's this it has a number of distinguishing features.

One of these is communal ownership of land.

So was while families have access to areas of land which they can inherit. This is a form of user-fruct right? There is no commodity private ownership of land. It's all contained in these communally managed Fields known as bio knocker and also there is a non-market economy. So the economic life within the iluence is mainly carried out three forms of everyday reciprocity and also reciprocal exchange particularly forms of Labor exchange when it comes to periods of intense agricultural labor During certain parts of the year.

Another distinguishing feature of the eye Loop is the existence of forms of local Civic political Authority which are responsible for the management of these communal lands in which people live the resolution of conflicts between different members of villages or communities and who are also ritual Specialists. So they're responsible for carrying out rituals to the land mediating the relationships between people and the environment that they have it.

However, this community are we has a hybrid Territorial and Authority structure. So along with the eye Loop and the traditional ilu authorities the island leaders. They're also exist The Peasant Union and a municipal government and I'll go on to describe this in some more detail shortly.

But just to locate my field type for you in Latin America here is Bolivia and within Bolivia, you can see the department of Amber in the center of Bolivia. It's the central of the nine Departments of Bolivia and you can see Bolivar Province or cured. Kiari is this little little area in the corner. So it's about 150 square miles. It's populated by about 7,000 people who live in about 60 of these Villages known as Community. That's So the structure of local governments is outlined here in this organogram and

I don't mean to confuse you with this organogram. But basically what this shows is that there are three different overlapping forms of local governments in kirkyawi and that these exist in parallel at different levels or different scales. So in the local Village or community that you have both an ILO Authority known as a hilanka and they did a hentier hasn't Union Leader so you shouldn't be confused by the use of the term Union peasant Union or sindicato campesino is something which exists throughout the Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world. It's a form of local Civic government. Basically, which in Bolivia has existed since at least the early 1950s.

So in local villages in Turkey are with their exist this sort of form of direct democracy. I think you could you could call it. Sometimes referred to as assemblyic democracy.

There's a sort of communal meeting Space Ace Indica in the village and at least on a monthly basis every member of the community will meet in this community meeting space and discuss matters which pertain to the community. So whether people want to to use land for certain purposes conflicts, which may exist between people local development projects, for example, all of these things will be discussed and they'll be discussed until there is collective assets reach so you don't have formal voting in a balance people will just go to this communal Assembly Hall and they'll go their typically in the morning. They'll stay there for lunch and they might stay till late in the evening for 12 or 13 hours people take their children people take their animals with them and they will just argue over these points until everybody has reached an agreement.

So this is a sort of form of quite kind of radical direct democracy, which is characteristic of rural communities in the Andes so the hilan crew and the dear handy they work alongside each other.

They're kind of each other's counterparts and yet they are responsible for slightly different things for the land who is typically responsible.

Overseeing the communal management of this community-owned land within the highly communities and the dairy Gente may have similar functions and will consult with the hilankan but more typically is a sort of external mediator with ngos government agencies the local and National governments and so on.

So they are perceived as having slightly different roles. And then as you go up through these different levels within within the community, are we We have constellations of villages larger areas. You have higher levels of authority all the way up to the whole ilu with the leader is called the Malcolm the traditional Authority and then you have the Tata provincial or or the level of the lead of the central the provincial level peasant Union Leader now since the 1990s in in this region as it has happened throughout Olivia, there is a local municipal government and this government has an elected as five elected counselors and a mayor and it's responsible for managing the local budgets for development projects, which are carried out within the community within the 60 different Villages of the community. Are we and there is also a general assembly of the different social organizations of the ilu in The Peasant Union and other social organizations within the whole of the province the whole of year meets

son of by monthly basis and so within the five-person municipal Council, there are Representatives both of the peasant Union and of the island. So the peasant Union is represented by local councilors who stand under the movement for socialism the members of the movement for socialism party. Whereas the eye who has its own. What's what's referred to as a political instrument, which is called hogwey, this is a word in quechua in the local ketual language, which means flourishing.

So for the last 20 years, there's always been I've always been represented as both the ilu and the peasant Union and the local government. So these different forms of local political orthony. Although some of them are pre-colonial. Some of them are post-colonial. They have different histories. They overlap and are seen to kind of integrate into one more or less coherent whole within this community and again, I don't want to confuse people too much with these Maps, but you can see here that there are also as well as different Authority political Authority structures, there are different understandings of territory or space. So this is the area of of kirkyawi or Boulevard of Province divided up into Canton. So cantones are a colonial division of territory and you can see these red dots these are the places where you have the Union sub Central. So these are these are higher level Union of authorities which are in charge of constellation of different villages and so you can see here the same territory as it is conceived according to the logic of the ilu so it's not divided up into the same White and the same way and it's divided up into these 10 areas which are called Happy's and it's not actually shown on the map. Each happy is actually the area which surrounds a mountain and mountain peak because each of these constellations of villages is seemed to be within the happy The Reach of this mountain and the traditional Authority that is in charge of this area of the island of the of the happy is in fact, he's given the name of the mountain peak of that area. And so it's referred to by that name when people hold meetings of the island they speak with each other.

So as you can see, although there is a kind of overlapping integration between these different forms of authority. They also have different understandings of the division of of space and territory as well.

So I'd like to sort of consider talk now about how is it historically that this? This particular hybrid form of local Civic politics has come about within this community and this owes is owed to the long relationship between this community and the colonial and post-colonial states of the last 500 years and of course in the kind of Western imagination indigenous peoples have always been conceived as being outside of or on the frontiers of the state. So those of you who are familiar with classic political thoughts, with the ideas of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke or John shackles, so will know that they often make reference to this sort of imagined indigenous person who's conceived of as existing outside over on the frontiers of the states, which is the sort of counterparts of the modern political subjects that exists within a state and so it's kind of necessary actually for this kind of Enlightenment modernity sort of Self-conception that the people had for there to be this imagined indigenous person whether it's the sort of imagined indigenous Community described by Thomas Hobbes where people

live in this kind of barbaric state of nature or it's the noble savage described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

However, anybody that's actually worked with indigenous communities particularly in that in America will know that this is actually a load of nonsense that indigenous peoples have always been engaged with the state and that they have a long history with European Colonial and postcolonial states and that they have actually shaped the nature of these states and also they have been shaped by this interaction with the state as well. And so this is what has happened with this community.

So the sake of brevity we can divide the history of Bolivian indigenous State relations into these discrete periods. So the kind of pre Conquest period the period of the Spanish colony the period of the Bolivian Republic then the period which came after a national revolution in the 1950s, then this sort of neoliberal period which I alluded to briefly earlier and finally the present period which is sometimes referred to as the post neoliberal period. So as I'm sure some of you are already aware, the territory of Bolivia has been inhabited for many Millennia. We're not sure for how long these 12 or 15,000 years and also the Western half of Bolivia and as with other parts of Andes and Mesoamerica and other parts of Latin America was inhabited by these complex kingdoms or state like political formations notably in Western Bolivia, the Inca kingdoms and Inca States and it's understood by archaeologists and ethnic historians that the Inca form of local political organization, which still exists in some form today was a constituent part the sort of a basic kind of unit that made up the Inca kingdoms and the Inca States this local form of territory based on particular understandings of the communal ownership of land particular relationships between people and nature and particular forms of local political Authority now the Spanish when they came to places like Peru or Bolivia, they simply kind of inherited the kind of mantle of the previous States or kingdoms which they conquered they exploited the existing indigenous population and they basically carried out a form of indirect rule where they would tax local populations and they would also use forms of Corvée labor.

So they would make use of native labor whilst leaving the local some local forms of territory and political structures intact. And so this is the case with communities like here are we which remained internally organized as I lose and they had their own internal customs and these are referred to as also see cross stumbrees the traditional forms of internal customer which existed Within These local indigenous societies throughout the period of the Spanish conquest and the Spanish colony.

However, when you with Colonial Independence in the 19th century the new post-colonial Elite who were themselves westernized very often European educated and of Spanish or European ancestry or mixed race.

But it difficult to come to terms with the fact that they wanted to be to be a considered a Modern Nation, but they wanted to believe some sort of modern liberal nation states and yet the reality of Bolivia and as was the case with many other Latin American nations was the overwhelming majority of the population were would not

modern Western European political subjects. They were indigenous and the whole kind of order of the colonial and postcolonial economy kind of depended to an extent on their labor and the taxation of these indigenous communities.

Yet starting in the late 19th century liberal reformers in Bolivia.

Tried to carry out a series of land reforms which threatened the independence and existence of these sorts of indigenous communities. I've described places in like Kierki are we places in the sort of Western Bolivian Highlands? So these reforms attempted to expropriate indigenous lands and the idea was to create a modern Market a capitalist Market in lands and to create a peasantry more like a European peasantry of just peasant small holders breaking up these kind of large territories with their their own kind of internal systems of ownership and management of land and Indigenous communities like your PRI and their leaders organized to protect their lands and their ways of life through both legal and extra legal means. So by extralegal means I referred to in the 19th and early 20th centuries a series of uprisings by indigenous peoples which which were carried out against these these reforms and attempts to appropriate their lands, but all so legal means included the use of documents and legal proceedings in order to defend their rights to occupy these lands and to defend their traditional custom. They're also see customers So it was often the case that indigenous leaders.

The leaders of these sorts of ilu communities would have 16th century colonial documents which would be on sheepskin which showed that they they owned land or part of the language. They occupied and even though some of these individuals were just monoling. They were monolingual catchers speakers who can actually read in Spanish. They would carry out complicated legal proceedings to try to defend by legal means their their right to inhabit these territories And so this this period of the kind of 19th and early 20th century in Bolivia. So the movement of the center of the economy and Bolivia away from the mining of the silver towards the mining of tin, but it was still very much an extractive mining based economy. And this is something which has been part of the history of Bolivia from the time of the colonization of Bolivia right through the post Colony the 20th century that it has been historically very poor, but incredibly resource Rich so believer is sometimes referred to as a beggar on a throne of gold and given that it is this historically kind of exploited resource rich, but for impoverished country and during this period there was a very small Elite centered around the mining economy referred to as the rosca and partly as a result of kind of disillusionment by the with the urban middle classes with this this mining Elite and a disastrous war in the Chaco.

Paraguay the urban middle classes were radicalized in the 1940s and this contributed to a momentous Revolution which took place in Bolivia in 1952 and so this revolution in 1952 was protagonized by the miners. So Bolivia is famous for having incredibly militants and sort of marxist inspired so minus movement and also by the peasantry so people in communities like here we were at which I studied I spent time but also who were in these landed Estates known as haciendas who are people also have indigenous ancestry, but who had had they didn't have ownership of their own lands. They lived

in these haciendas in a sort of state of semi feudal kind of Quasi feudal serve them this system in Bolivia that's referred to as pongwai and so this popular revolution protagonized by the minas and the peasantry over through the government and led to the installation of the MNR the mobian for naturalista revolucionario, the national revolutionary movement governments, but the leadership relieves enough Revolution was taken over by Whiting the Ste. So Urban middle class intellectuals, but it represents a really fundamental shift in the nature of Bolivian Society. Let's the nationalization of the minds agrarian reform. So these big landed Estates were broken up.

it's a created the first time in believe you're sort of hesitants small holder class, and there was also this idea really of including the Formerly completely excluded marginalized indigenous peasantry into the Modern Nation. So both through Land Reform, so creating peasants small holders and a kind of small markets for land but also through getting rid of the literacy requirements in the franchise effectively creating a universal franchise in Bolivia voting rights for the first time for the majority of the population and mass education. And so part of the idea of this message education was that everybody should learn to speak Spanish and this would create a messy so Nation so it would create a culturally and ethnically mixed nation. And this was the way that Bolivia would become gradually more modern through this process of nestle ization and importantly it was during the national Revolution these peasant unions as a form of local government were established throughout the countryside in Bolivia and this was because mine workers who were themselves very often catch of capture indigenous ancestry and bilingual catch for speakers. But also who had gained an education were literate with influenced by by kind of marxist ideas left ideas. They they encourage the creation of these peasant unions in the countryside and the national government.

Sore peasant unions as a way of bringing indigenous peoples into the Modern Nation and as a sort of a way of mediating between communities and the government and so they encourage the creation of peasant unions and so in some communities likely are we you would have still have the traditional authorities that ILO authorities, but then they would have gained this counterpart in The Peasant unions.

Now during this period although you had Universal franchise the there was a sort of it was kind of characterized by a kind of political clientelism, which existed between very often the indigenous peasantry and National governments through the 50s and 60s. So the The Peasant Unions would often encourage people tell their members basically to vote all one particular way for a particular political party in exchange for certain sort of favors. For example, small-scale local development projects being granted to the community and so on.

So the Bolivian left was being incredibly militantly this time was led by Miners and urban revolutionaries and the indigenous peasantry was seen really as being kind of out counter-revolutionary essentially a conservative force in Bolivian Society.

Now following a period of dictatorship in the 1970s the return to democracy in in 1982 the Bolivian governments throughout this period carried out these so called structural adjustment policies of the international monetary funds and World Bank. So

this consisted of massive cuts to public funds the liquidation of formally nationalized Industries such as common ball the nationalized mining company in Bolivia. And this was a period of historic defeat for the left in Bolivia as it was in many parts of the world.

But at the same time as you have this neoliberal reform during the 80s and through the 1990s, this was a company by what sometimes referred to as Multicultural. Sorry neoliberal multiculturalism. So governments like the government of Gonzales Sanchez de Lazada in the early to mid 1990s introduced reforms which default power to local communities including indigenous peasant communities and also recognized certain indigenous rights.

now whilst this gave some recognition to indigenous Peaks. It came at the cost of the rollback of the states and the destruction of a lot of a lot of positive social rights and a lot of this was inspired by a kind of attempt to carry out the goals of good governance, which were recommended by the World Bank and other multilateral agencies. So one of these there were basically two important laws which were past during this period he's so called and neoliberal Multicultural reforms and one of them was a popular participation law and this law default local power how to local communities it created these small scale local Municipal governments. So this is how Kirky are we gained? It's local Municipal governments and it gave very small amounts of money to these Municipal governments to carry out development programs. And so this meant that in here Ki are we The Local Peasant Union gained this new role in being the mediator with the local.

School government funds and for carrying out development projects in these rural villages and at the same time you had the so-called inra law which was the law which allowed indigenous communities to gain Collective titling of ancestral lands. And so the traditional ilu authorities within cured Chiari carried out this this project of mapping out their Collective lands collecting documents and proving to INR to this agricultural reform institution that a great performance institution that they had an ancestral land that could be recognized as such and so they gained the titling of the land of the ilu as a what's called a chair community and sort of originally peasants territory and this was a period of time which saw during 2000 and 2005 a series of near revolutionary uprisings against the kind of excesses of this near Liberal government at the time. And so people maybe familiar with the 2000 water War which place in kotram but Bolivia, So this was when the entire water system of the city of culture bamboat was privatized. It was sold off to a multinational conglomerate called Bechtel who then hiked the prices of the water throughout kotshabamber and led to this massive process because it meant that poor people at the time. I think the average wage it the average wage for somebody who lived in a poor neighborhood in South Africa was two US dollars a day and people simply couldn't afford to pay the price of the hike of water that in carried out because this privatization and so the government back down on this privatization and it led to a kind of period of rolling Mass political process and political instability a fuel is yes later. Another big event happened in the city of house

called gas War which was about the decision to export very cheaply the national gas and the Chinese political instab.

See there was no sort of clear way out basically because of political force hadn't emerged to to kind of take take charge of Oblivion government and to sort of establish some degree of political stability. And so into this this void really stepped the movement for socialism and president Eva Morales who represent a diverse array of different social movements and social constituencies that all came together during this period and formed this kind of national Pact.

What sometimes referred to as the pact of unity and it's provided stability investment and quite a high degree of poverty reduction and also as I've said earlier, this very very radical seeming reform of the state in this project of decolonizing Bolivian Society and yet it has also intensified mining activity and foreign ownership and is not fundamentally changed in nature of the belief in economy, which is based on extractive industry nor is it fundamentally challenged the power of local capitalist Elites or multinational capitalist Enterprises? And it passed a new plurally National constitution in 2009, which included some of these very radical claims about decolonization and embodying Indigenous principles and so on and yet conflict and internal division has emerged amongst indigenous groups and the breakdown of the act of unity and it was also during this period when I cared out my fieldwork that division had emerged between the different forms of local political Authority and so much of my research and much of the what I've written so far has examined the interaction between these State reforms and local communities in Bolivia reforms which ostensibly Progressive reforms attempt to represent to include Bolivia's previously marginalized indigenous majority population that which in the case of pure we've actually led to conflict of help to stoke conflict between its different forms of local political Authority and so one of the issues which divided these different authorities the ilu and the peasant Union concerns the issue of indigenous autonomy.

So a new law in Bolivia and in fact the Constitution Grants the rights to indigenous communities to become Indigent autonomous territories with their own traditional forms of government and yet the island peasant Union in Turkey are here we argue over how this should be carried out and they argue over the exact nature of the forms of local government, which should be formalized as part of this new indigenous autonomy and this struggle for power. It's it reflects contested understandings of the nature of governance. So how government should be carried out whether it should be carried out on the basis of these these kind of principles which the Isle of authorities talk about of the rotation of leadership. For example, this this concept that they call you which means that no one person should remain in powerful for any great deal of time that Authority should be distributed amongst different families and within the community or whether it should be On the basis of more kind of formal Western liberal Democratic understandings of governance such as popular votes.

Which which are more embodied really by the forms of democracy of the peasant Union. They also are disagree with each other about understandings of how devel-

opment should be carried out within their community and what development means. So how this increase in in extraction of rent and distribution of money to local communities should actually be invested in development projects and the ilu leaders who have ties to wider indigenous rights organizations in Bolivia national International indigenous rights organizations a much more concerned about the effects of extractive Industry on the environment, but also on other indigenous communities for affected when mining other forms of extractive Industry, including lowland indigenous people.

So people who are in the eastern lowland tropical area of Bolivia.

So another issue which divided these local authorities concerned a land dispute between families which had resulted in grave physical fights Now new laws and the constitution in Bolivia.

permit indigenous communities to to deal with criminal matters to resolve internal conflicts according to their customary law yet in this case the authorities the island The Peasant Union argue with each other over which of them has the right to judge this matter according to the Constitution and the precise meaning of their customer law.

So we have an example here of a law, which was seemingly Progressive which attempts to empower indigenous peoples actually provides the motive for conflict within one indigenous community and this ultimately illustrates the difficulties involved in making the states the accommodate itself to the complex forms of social life of local communities.

Meanwhile, whilst I carried out field work in Harry Urban neighborhoods of the nearby City approachabamber.

I witnessed how very often rural urban migrants catch we speak and I Mara speaking indigenous peoples were marginalized their lives were rendered in formal by various socio-legal processes, which which the government despite being seemingly Progressive didn't really do anything to address. So there's various examples of of this but one very obvious one was that rural urban migrants often lack official title Deeds for their physical dwellings. And so this means that they are not formally recognized as belongings in city. They're not essentially recognized as full citizens. They don't have access to the same rights and social and public services and they have to pass through an arduous legal process in order to gain formal ownership of their dwellings.

So people's relationship. The state is not one of Abandonment. It's rather what I describe as a present absence because the state place is demands on the lives of indigenous rural urban migrants, but it doesn't actually respond to to provide them with positive social rights and this is important as well because I've witnessed during my period of field work how Urban indigenous residents in in places like Whataburger were frequently victims of crime.

Now while new laws in in Bolivia permit indigenous communities in the countryside deal with criminal matters according to customer law.

Attempts to impose what is referred to as communitarian Justice are frequently viewed as barbaric vigilantism and this is something which is compounded by the

racialized othering of urban indigenous residents by the predominantly white and mestizo mixed race inhabitants of the city.

So ultimately this illustrates the ambiguity of the new constitution in providing rights to indigenous people in defining What's Understood by indigeneity? It's important to point out that the majority of indigenous people in Bolivia are don't live in the countryside. They live in the city. So they live in perio Urban neighborhoods in places, like kotra Bamba in places like the past when El Alto which is a enormous Satellite City, which is actually the now the largest city in Bolivia and it's almost entirely populated by imara speaking indigenous peoples and yet the way that these forms of legal recognition and autonomy work is they very much assume that indigenous peoples and Indigenous communities are not Urban they exist in the countryside partly because What's Understood by indigeneity or to be indigenous? It's influenced by Western understanding dictionary which were enshrined in international human rights school. And so this ultimately demonstrates the problems involved in accommodating cultural difference these sorts of projects of State reform and legal recognition so so just to conclude the masked government has attempted to establish a new inclusive plural National States.

It's attempted to.

Formally recognize diverse groups of indigenous peoples that make up the Bolivian Nation and to address the legacies of colonialism through doing this to fundamentally change the nature of the Philippine states to allow it to formally recognize indigenous Peak was to include them to provide how to them through various forms of legal room legal reform recognition and yet this has had paradoxical outcomes and it fails to accommodate the state to the local the complex realities of local social life It ultimately demonstrates the limitations of providing inclusion and recognition through a process of legal reform.

So just in the final 10 minutes, I just like to use this space to kind of reflect on what this says more generally about the nature of the state or what the nature of the state as we can conceive of it says about the limitations of these sorts of projects of reform.

So as people in rag are very wear anthropologists have engaged in into disciplinary debates about the nature of states and state power. So the recent book by the two Davids, which is very controversial. I know in rag talks about this a lot. So what is the status essentially and how is it that states able to effectively governations now, this is an extremely complicated theoretical Topic in social science, but at least since the time of favor, we understood States as forms of centralized bureaucratic governance that monopolize coercive power. So in other words States controller particular territory and they do this through monopolizing the use of force or violence, but they are also a form of bureaucratic governance. So states are able to effectively governations because they collect information about them and they use this information to govern them for a lot of the central functions of states such as collecting taxation.

Managing uprisings establishing public order and so on.

Now an important political scientist and anthropologists will change Scott has argued that in order to do this States create these simplified maps of the populations, which they attempt to govern and much like like Maps these these simplified schema of the societies. They attempt to govern only include the most important kind of schematic information.

About these communities now.

More importantly this what Scott argues and other political scientists have argued is that in doing this local communities are actually made to fit the simplifying schema of State planners. And so not only do they they come up with these kind of these schema these ways of representing societies to govern them. They actually make societies more like the simplified scheme which they use. So what do I mean by this? So a very sort of quick example of this is it I have here is of two maps of a Russian village before and after A land reform which brought about the private ownership of land so you can see that in the left hand side before this land performs established that the areas of arable land which families used to cultivate crops were divided up into these many many tiny little scripts. So it's very difficult to establish who owns what bit of lands and there are also areas of communal land which of the things like collecting fire wood of the pasture animals and so on and on the right hand side after this land reform the area of land of the village has simply been divided up into more or less equal areas for each of the families. Now from the perspective of the centralized state bureaucracy. This is much simpler for the purposes of Taxation for the purposes of of registering property inheritance and so forth, but in in making this change to the nature of ownership to make the community and it's understanding of territory and space it's understanding of ownership more like this simplifying model this map this fundamentally Alters the nature of local social life.

So in this sense, we can see societies as as light complex ecosystems and we can also see the manage the governance of societies by States as like the management of ecosystems with the management of forests. So in these two pictures you have on the left hand side a forest which is with a dense Thicket of undergrowth many different trees close together and so on and the right hand side of forest, which has been managed according to the principles of modern scientific forestry. There is no undergrowth undergrowth has been cleared the trees are placed in neat Rows. And this means that the forest can be more efficiently managed in order to harvest Lumber to harvest wood.

But at the same time the complex ecosystem of the forest has been simplified and it is in fact more vulnerable to soil erosion and to various forms of disease.

So in this same way we can see societies as as complex ecosystems. They are things we can't really understand in all of their complex messy totality and yet nonetheless. They have forms of local custom social life, which allow them to function and also make people's lives meaningful and here we can see in this idea of legibility and the nature the simplifying nature of states that try to render populations that they govern legible the kind of central Paradox of modern States. So we rely on States nowadays

for the guarantee of many of our fundamental rights and freedoms. We see them as responsible for doing things like managing Public Health as we've seen during the pandemic and yet the same time States limit our freedoms and they also limit the expression of local forms of social life and identity through trying to make communities fit within their simplifying schema.

so what does this say about these sorts of projects of decolonization or inclusion of marginalized social groups through three state reforms three state reforms and forms of legal recognition.

Well what this suggests is that these sorts of projects of decolonization like the one carried out.

by the movement for socialism produce legible political subjects So in order to provide rights and recognitions to previously marginalized peoples.

They need to be legible to the states. They need to be recognizable according to Categories of identity they have to be included within a state schema and this is ultimately based on what sometimes referred to as of the politics of recognition. So legal categories are created through liberal states to which to provide rights to marginalized social groups and yet as we've seen in this this case study legal recognitions fail to adequately capture the complexity of local forms of social life and identity. They often lead some individuals or communities out or they make these communities fix their models of how they recognize their identity. So in the case of indigenous peoples and Indigenous rights recognize through legal reforms very often, there is a particular understanding of indigeneity, which is a modernist understanding of indigene A&T. It's a western understanding of indigen AIT, which goes back to sort of ideas of so and the noble savage and so on and the reality of indigenous communities is that they are far more Flex more multivalence and often have various different conflicting understandings of identity different forms of local community different forms of local political Authority and so on and so these legal forms of recognition. Do not adequately capture this but they also can lead to conflict between different local figures within the local community as was the case with Kirk here. We conflict between its different forms of local political Authority and so I think it can be said that the island Union authorities within Kirky. Are we? Although they existed together and a scene in a sense as a counterparts each other's counterparts. They embody somewhat different commonly held aspirations of their community and other indigenous communities.

in Bolivia and in the Americas so the The Peasant Union fundamentally because it's sort of history in the National revolution in the 1950s and the role that it's taken on.

Figures who are involved with the politics of the peasant Union are very much trying to gain inclusion for indigenous peoples within the mainstream of Bolivian Society of national life and inclusion within and control over the liberal State and this is something which which a gold indigenous peoples all kind of share. It's a kind of common aspiration of a very marginalized and poverish social group and on the other hand the ilu leaders because of the projects that they've been involved in because of their

longer history are more concerned with protection of local autonomy and local custom. They're also see customers and there's a much longer history of political activism and advocacy by the leaders of ilu communities to try to protect their territories and try to protect their ways of life against this modernization by the liberal State and whilst these two different aspirations can sometimes go together.

Sometimes they call in different directions and ironically it's been the reforms of the movement for socialism. So these reforms like indigenous autonomy reforms that should allow the formal recognition of indigenous forms of local government or legal tourism pluralism.

That actually brought the different authorities into conflict with each other and this is because they have to in order to be eligible for these rights to be recognized by the states make their local forms of social life and identity legible to the states and in doing that this means that they have to very often make their Community simplified.

They have to make it fit into a more simplified view of the community that has for example, one local form of Civic political Authority and there isn't really anything in any of these laws which assumes that there might be multiple forms of Civic political Authority even though this is the case in indigenous communities. And so it's cheering this period of seemingly very radical reform and Bolivia that this conflict has emerged within this community and so this I'd like to conclude by suggesting that this suggests to kind of limitation of these sorts of projects of Reform these attempts at what sometimes called decolonization. So the attempt to address the legacies of colonialism in post-colonial societies and the demands of marginalized groups and not just about recognition very often by the state, but about the transformation of social structures beyond the state so in Latin American, Bolivia, Social indigenous social movement organizations are often concerned with things like Land Reform things which challenge Local Economic Elites and so on and these are demands which go beyond simply simple formal recognition and kind of democratic constitutional changes and social life and political projects of of groups often more complex and formal identity categories can adequately capture and ultimately any attempt to try to accommodate states to forms of local community to accommodate states to the forms of life. For example of indigenous communities in the country like Livia, which are just based on top down processes of constitutional reform will fail to accommodate the states to the forms of life of local communities. So any real kind of process of decolonization has to be not just a kind of top-down process of Reform. It has to be based on understanding and recognizing the often very complex forms of social life the complex forms of legal Authority and political Authority within local communities so that there can be an accommodation between them and the state so I think I come in in just about an hour and I hope we have some really good questions. So I'll leave it there.

please thank you very much, Matthew and shall we have the screen back so we can let me just stop sharing the again Can we stop just three? I think I've stopped sharing. Yeah, I think.

Yeah, that would be great.

brilliant Have we got we got quite a few? Yeah few interesting comments in the chat particularly from Mark.

I don't know if you'd like to come in on some of that Mark and compare comparing some of his experience in Nicaragua.

Yeah, that was.

Very very interesting expose of the kind of different directions that were being pulled of these different layers of involvement of indigenous people through the history. That was a really excellent and exposed say, oh that And how do we have any comments or questions for for Matthew? And we got some people here who have good knowledge of I think the Nissan review.

mark has a Parsons with Nicaragua as well. Does anybody wanting to step up and awesome some of us more Denise is volunteering I think.

Great. Okay. Well, very interesting talk Matthew and amazing to fit so much into one hour.

I think being fair to ever Morales he was he never had an indigenous.

Ambition, he always saw himself as a union leader and it was the international press that really put him on the pedestal as representing indigenous people.

So there are lots of misunderstandings from that very first period and certainly the mass party had no interest in Um applying the political Constitution which was on the cards from an earlier period when they took government they wanted to undo it as quickly as they could and they did it under our regards years supervision.

um I think one of the very interesting things is that in the 1980s and 1990s a lot of ngos and different world governments the Danish and so on finance the mapping of indigenous communities, and there wasn't enormous nothing of the I use right across the antiploma and it was so detailed that you had the emails and the names and addresses of all the malkus from that it could be applied.

But it was never done. It was just immediately abandoned by the mass party when they came to power and I've never known there's never been a debate about it or I've never read an article. Maybe you of some things about it, but it was very interesting with the only other time I've seen when territory has been an issue during the war of the eye using the year 2000 it was imagining All Bright the American North American Secretary of State who came down and controlled the mapping so it may have been controlled too much higher level.

I think you'll find there are a number of points.

Um tour has has Put a lot of attention into indigenous battles about land and custom in the Republican period onwards but there's an enormous amount in the colonial period of the defense from the director, Indiana and playing with the director in the honor in a very interesting way that it was right back and their podorados the people the manage the Land Titles going right back into that much earlier period so it's not just a republican battle and of course participation on popular participation was never really directed at indigenous populations because it was a head count.

So more money always went to the cities. And so what it did was Unleashed a tremendous process of organization and the emptying of you rural communities and that may have been with the view of citizenship behind it.

But of the kind of Nasty sausage citizenship that you're describing.

Well, they'll stop that.

Okay. Thanks very much for that Denise. Yeah, as you're right to say, of course that morality is sort of more considered in indigenous figure amongst the sort of international left commentaria than in Bolivia where he's seen as a leader of the sort of cochlearial movement and a kind of Union figure.

That's quite right and yeah, it is that I did you did you have any question particularly or um well, I just think that it's not just a matter of, what do you think about the representation of the plurie national state do you think there is an indigenous representation there because when I've tried to analyze it, I've only found like four to seven percent of any kind of indigenous representation in the parliament because it all goes through the political parties, so it can't really be Described as a purely national state. It is just a name and a discourse presentation. It's and that means it's not just a problem at the lower level. It's a problem all the way up and down.

Well, I suppose it's a compromise isn't unless you, very well. I mean the sort of the 2009 Constitution was a sort of compromised document between different members of social organizations. And also there was a sort of great deal of pressure from kind of elite kind of local kind of capitalist Elites particularly in the sort of Eastern kind of tropical lowlands and landowners and in sort of some place that Santa Cruz during that period so that document is really a kind of compromise that was worked out. I mean of people that I knew in Bolivia some people who involved with organizations like on a Mac they had at that time, I think a much more sort of ambitious and revolutionary view of what the Constitution would be and what would be achieved by it and What would be what they understood for example by things like indigenous autonomy. So the way that indigenous or autonomy is carried out in believe.

It's it's not very different from the local municipal.

Authorities that were created under the popular participation law in the 1990s. It's essentially modeled on them. So indigenous autonomies are really just local Municipal governments, which which have some sort of formal recognition of indigenous custom.

Whereas I think some people during that period in the early as I understand it during the early years of the mass had this Vision that indigenous astronomy would mean reconstructing the former Coya suyo and the kind of that I lose of of course you and reconstructing this kind of indigenous policy as through a process of constitutional reform.

But who in Mass put that forward? Well, I just said people I know who are involved in Connor Mac, but I'm not in Mass. But who were members of the constituent assembly during the constituent assembly process? Yes, but I mean, I mean my I mean my understanding of them the mass is that it's a sort of kind of hegemonic political party which stabilize Bolivian politics in the mid-naughties and which has had the effect re-

ally of Actually kind of weakening social movement organizations by kind of co-opting them and says, kind of creating their own kind of official versions and so there are kind of parallel organizations of different social movement organizations such as in economic and see dog that there's an official and an organic version of these organizations and also by by kind of co-opting social movement organizations by making politics a career where you can get a job in the state Administration and so politics and particularly unionism is seen differently because it becomes the matter to some sort of cushy job eventually at the same time I don't want to be too critical of the mass but I think that they are, and the masses of political party and the masses in government has had the effect really of kind of stabilizing political the politics in Bolivia and limiting the ability of social movements to actually affect rad.

change Right a race is very signed up. All right.

Yeah.

Yeah, thanks Matthew. That was really really interesting. Yeah, I do. Have you see you is actually any chance you can see I'm a bit of them. I've just come back from the farm some a bit. Oh, yes. I yes, so I do have an interesting believer in Latin American politics more widely and I wonder if you're being a bit harsh. I mean this this push for autonomy is is not going away. You know, we're gonna see it. I hopefully if if Petro wins in Columbia will see pushes for it in Colombia and we'll we'll, hopefully said also in Chile, Within my puche. I love other, will obviously we're seeing it already in in Mexico other parts of Latin America and it's seen by lots of social theorists as an important step.

um as you save decolonizing moving away from capitalism And so on and creating, more communal.

ecologically grounded Society so I mean as you've talked about one particular.

autonomous community and attentions there is this is this I guess that there are others in Bolivia is this common to all all of them could or possibly be described as more more like teething, teething problems as opposed to like as I think what you're describing is more fundamentally flawed processes that can't be resolved.

So I think that, it depends on the particular indigenous community. So in Bolivia, obviously you have Highland and lowland indigenous communities and then you have, you have people who I mean would would maybe self-identifies indigenous who live in the sort of Kind of in a valley regions for example or people who may be are sometimes called Intercultural colonists who are people who come from the mines or who come from these kind of cash for speaking dishes communities, but they settle in Trump. So it depending on what you mean by indigenous but the Amongst communities that have applied for indigenous autonomy, you have somewhere. They that their local forms of Civic political organization are just peasant unions and so this is to do with the history of of Bolivia the Bolivian colony in postcolony. So some areas of Bolivia.

Retained these local forms of control of understanding of territory and local forms of political Authority.

Some some areas of Libya became part of these kind of landed Estates and then people became sort of peasant small holders after the national Revolution. And so those parts those those communities just have peasant unions.

Some some have peasant unions and traditional Isle of authority side by side and in the lowland regions people have different forms of local political authorities. So in every case where you've had an application to become an indigenous autonomy under these these new constitution, they're sort of different local conditions really the depending on the nature of the community. However, the what I describe is not untypical so there are other anthropologists and political scientists have studied the additional autonomy process and have found similar sorts of conflicts developed between different forms of local political Authority or different communities. So a friend of mine called Jonathan Alderman who he studies this color wire community in Bolivia describes a sort of conflict, which is between the peasant Union the difference with the community that he studies is that some communities clusters of villages.

within this community are represented by The Peasant Union and some are represented by the ilu authority summer recognizes ilu whereas in the community that I studied actually there is an Isle of authority hilankou and there's a deerhente present Union Authority in every village and a different levels of a different scales throughout the community.

So they're sort of perceived to exist in parallel as a sort of counterpart complementary to each other and so the way that the additional autonomy process paid at paid out and the kind of conflicts intentions are different depending on the nature of the local community, but I think that what what's in common with a lot of these communities has been described in by other people have studied. This process is that there is conflict there is tension because you're having to make the community legible to the state in order to be recognized in order to be granted this this formal recognition of autonomy. So you have to have this Drafted document where you decide as a community, what are the forms of local government or Administration and the values and so on of that community and that's a decision which means that something which is often tacit in bodied it's it's not really kind of ever been put into words before necessarily. So you never written down has to be formalized. It has to be put into words and in doing that in making your the nature of your local community forms of social like identity legible to the States this inevitably results in conflicts intentions between different members of the community who might have different interests struggle over power or just different understandings what it means to belong to their community.

right Chris Chris, you want to go? Yes, Matthew. That was a wonderful presentation. Very very very interesting and I agree with Denise this this remarkable how much ground you managed to cover in an hour? I suppose it's Inevitably covering so much it was at the expense of what my traditionally have been considered to be sort of anthropology since you didn't get down to the nitty gritty of any sort of detailed interactions in the area where you're doing you'll feel work. So I might I have a question

which is You were describing. I think I've got it right that the traditional IU authorities at least in terms of their ideals.

It was very much about rotating Authority taking power. Surrendering it making sure that you I didn't get stuck in one particular place. I mean clearly if you do keep rotating Authority and no one quite knows where it was where it might go next.

That would make Authority and the political structure as you put it illegible to the state therefore.

seriously difficult to control But of course for many of us including of course marxists, the ultimate goal is precisely to get rid of the state. I mean without the state isn't an ideal form of organization at all. So I actually just perhaps describe.

how realistic that is in other words, give us some flavor of this rotation and distribution of power.

I think I could I got it right when he said I said that to many in the cities.

What what is an ideal to the ious authorities might be considered very different. I mean for example in terms of Um military one order and stuff.

I mean you were saying that's some of the some of it if you leave crime detection and deterrence and sort of upholding kind of, Civilized Behavior to to those can it perceived as you put it I think communicate communitarian Justice in other words legitimantism.

So and I suppose to you so very challenging very interesting but I suppose what would be the alternative to to mass.

I mean, could it be this? Are you kind of model? Could it be applied to the cities? And I mean it seems to be a certainly in the recent period the alternative has been some right-wing too as you're describing that of course, trip we had this little period rather where it turned out that indeed as the left have always been changed the traditional ethic Trade union left have already maintained. If you really let the mass of collapse what, you're not gonna get anything better.

You're gonna get something a lot worse.

So, but anyway, my main I suppose my main question is can you give us a little bit more can be flesh out a little bit. What what this from your actual local fieldwork what this? What this model of the IU sort of poll of it were politics in terms of rotation of authority how it how it works.

The local hilanka the local community is basically sort of chosen by the community by kind of collective assents each year and one of the ideas of this sort of system of authority.

Is that you are you're kind of chosen by the community? So you you are you're not you don't kind of stands in a kind of formal election in order to be to become hilanka. You're kind of chosen because it seem to be essentially your turn. And also it's a kind of condition of community membership basically to to be involved in this sort of form of local Civic politics.

So as I mentioned, it's very common. And I think as it's very common amongst rural communities in Bolivia that people might actually live some of the time of pre-

dominantly nearby cities, but they retain lands in their the communities of origin and these lands are held in these Collective areas of land called ironaka.

So they they don't have legal ownership of them. They're essentially for use for up. Right and should you leave the community for a period of time then this land can be redistributed based on need to offer other communities other other members of the community. So in order to have access to the land you have to basically go back to participate in forms of local custom. You have to use the lands. You actually have to work you actually have to to predict the productive use, but you also have to participate in this form of local Civic politics. So if you're living in the city and you're asked to be they can ankle and you might still have to return to for these monthly meetings in order to discuss and local issues with the local answer the community in a communal assembly and so it might be issues to do with for example people arguing about the exact boundaries between their areas of land people pastoring their animals and areas of Other programs three particular parts of the Year investments in local forms of development projects and so on and so it's it's not seen to accept to occupy one of these roles in the likes of traditional forms of Civic politics. It's not seen as a something that you aspire to to do.

It's seen as a sort of responsibility but in doing it you are able to develop as a person and you are to kind of develop a great degree of responsibility as a person as you move through the through taking on this role and sort of Cycles through different families in the community. So in that sense, it's it's rotates. So no one person can hold on to the role it simply rotates much different members of the community as a kind of responsibility that has to be carried out.

Tomorrow? Yes, that sounds a lot closer to Communism.

Than all these various State, pink reformist which the kind of communism Marxism and attemptively implement but there's there's a whole sort of tradition in sort of Bolivia and Peru of this sort of romantic kind of Marxism. So there's a guy called Jose Carlos Murray tegui. Who's a matter sticky muriatric is a who's a sort of marxist scholar and that there's a sort of idea that the ilu is a sort of model for for a communist Society and so this is sort of popular kind of kind of sort of romantic romanticization basically of the eyelu amongst people on the left in Latin America, and you're not persuaded by that.

But I think that it's an example of Communism in action.

Well, I mean, you're not persuaded that it's a model.

Well, I mean, I'm not sure. I don't know how how you would scale this up into a model for just Society but it's it's also part of the discourse of contemporary social movements and also of the movement for socialism government. So even everyone else has said, that I lose the great moral resource in which the communitarian socialism will be built.

So because I Lewis as a form of territorial organization as a form of community is based on non-market forms of economic.

Relationships but also people involved in Market forms of activity as well. So it's not as if it's people people and trade as they go to the city people have business but that's very very quick question, which is kind of obvious one for anyone in in rag is some those monthly meetings. I mean presumably if they're traditionally monthly they would be Luna months, .

I I don't know. That's a good question and I must make sense because there's more light in the sky. Yeah.

I mean, I'm just say that just makes it all the more interesting because, the idea is taking classes distributed get on a monthly basis if it's not man-made Colonial months if it's proper months would be yeah fascinating. I mean for all of us in right give that that's we, our model of course is that would be Pretty close to where we where we started where we became human and egalitarian and communistic in the first place. But anyway, Thank you very much. Matthew. It's great.

Yeah, great.

That was great and although we we might have another question from somebody or if Mark has any contribution because he maybe he's too busy with the babysitting Anybody anything? No more.

from any Body, it's not we're gonna probably wind up with nearly eight close anybody else. I seriously I saw Denise disagreeing with something good.

What what a little bit more complicated, I mean in the how she ended communities. I visited Hacienda communities and they have very very good monthly meetings where the women have much more much more say than they do in the IU communities where the men tend to dominate the meetings about land because there are women in animals and so it and the trouble with the mass is that they now change those decisions so that their voted by party and they're no longer voted as, I know number of individuals at all come together in the idea and all work together into a communal decision, which can take days.

To arrive there. It's a very fascinating process as as Matthew has said in the colonial period there was a mixture of both the traditional non-rotating authorities and the rotating authorities and it was the non-rotating authorities who were charged with the land which went through the system still of Nobles and blood Um because it was so important to to control posturing lands and agricultural lands and they let the Ricky daughters and our candidates and so on opt into the rotating system.

But there is a long history to how that those changes came about.

yes, I mean, of course, it's not as if this particular form of local Civic politics and Community is some sort of living fossil, which is As it was during the time of The Encore Empire or anything like that. It's has a long history of the colonial state which explains its present form and absolutely thank you, I think if we've got any more contributions tool, but it's been an absolutely fascinating.

A discussion and very revealing for a lot of us and who really kind of not being perhaps following exactly what's been happening in terms of the indigenous politics. So this is really fascinating and so thank you very much Matthew. That was really

appreciated and thanks very much for the opportunity. I appreciate it and we're gonna look forward to to the book. Absolutely and wish you the very best of luck with the writing for that. But thank you very much Matthew for a great talk.

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Matthew Doyle
Decolonizing the state? (Seminar)
Indigenous local politics and the Bolivian Movement for Socialism
June 14, 2022

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