

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON BOLIVIAN POPULISM

by

LINDSAY CHERITH RAMIREZ

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Dr. Craig Parsons, Chair of the Examining Committee

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Date

Committee in Charge: Craig Parsons, Chair
 Anna Gruben
 Cas Mudde
 Derrick Hindery

Accepted by:

Dean of the Graduate School

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Lindsay Cherith Ramirez

PLACE OF BIRTH: Ojai, California

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
Willamette University, Salem, Oregon

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Political Science, June 2009, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Politics and Spanish, June 2003, Willamette University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Latin America
Security

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Senior Political Analyst, TranSecur Incorporated, 2006-2009
Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2007-2009

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Despite decades of scholarly effort to define and understand populism, the concept remains ripe for investigation. Given that conflicting theories concerning populism's definition, causal origins, and manifestations remain far from resolved, more effort is needed to make these topics intelligible. Modern investigations of populism can provide conceptual clarity and also contribute something of value to social science, especially since comparatively little has been published on populism's most recent manifestations. As author David Leaman has stated, "we need further analysis of the last fifteen years' neopopulism" (Leaman, 323-324).

A study of populism with an emphasis on Latin America seems particularly warranted given the phenomenon's remarkably long existence in the region. Although many scholars don't establish the advent of populist politics until the 1920s or 1930s (Seligson, 82), others have hinted that elements of populist ideology existed in Latin America before the emergence of so-called 'populist' political policies. At least some of these theories have been normatively critical: Michael Derham, for example, has labeled populism "Latin America's most enduring political disease" (Derham), and Ernesto Laclau has stated that "from the very beginning... [p]opulism has not only

been demoted: it has also been denigrated" (Laclau, 19). Still, populism has gained something of a cult following over the past decade.

In more recent years, Bolivian President Evo Morales has been classified as a populist by media (Bast) as well as academic sources (Seligson). These attributions are particularly interesting given that some theorists have indicated that populism, defined in various ways, is incompatible with holding office and Morales assumed the presidency in 2006. Perhaps Alistair Hennessy states the challenge to populism best when he says, "[o]nly when populists are in opposition and are not compromised by the support of a governmental apparatus can they retain the essence of their beliefs" (Hennessy, 52-53). This idea has been seconded by Von Beyme, who states that populists can only "'keep clean' the purity of their basic creeds" (Von Beyme) when in opposition.

In the literature on populism, this dilution of populism is typically referred to as routinization or institutionalization, and it appears loosely related to other theories of government transitions, primarily those that discuss charismatic leaders¹ and civil society. The basic premise of all these theories is that a successful transition into power changes the political environment in a way that threatens the independent variable that (arguably) made the transition possible in the first place. Here, it should be stressed that the terms 'routinization' and 'institutionalization' are used very differently among authors depending on the definition of populism being utilized. For

¹ See *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* by Turner, J. H., L. Beeghly, et al.

example, some scholars merely imply that populism is less effective once in office (Conniff, 234) or that it becomes institutionalized (Knight, 231-232) and (Wear). However, both Hennessy and Von Byme make it clear that being in power challenges populist beliefs.

Which is it, then? Can populism survive in office, or is it doomed to weaken? This thesis utilizes a case study of Morales' presidency to test hypotheses of populist routinization. After establishing a working definition of populism, it compares a baseline sample of Morales' pre-presidency discourse to a second sample taken after his transition to power to determine whether the "essence" of populism has indeed been compromised. Ultimately, this thesis argues that theories of routinization are incorrect: although the characteristics of Morales' populism change after assuming the presidency, his appeals to, and identification with, common sense and ordinary values actually grow stronger in office.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

The following section will briefly address the methodological issues that arose during the conceptual and research phases of this project.

ESTABLISHING A DEFINITION

In order to study populism, one must first define what it is. Ironically, for all the agreement about the importance of the concept, a myriad of competing definitions exist. This study will utilize an abstract, middle-range definition of populism that has been culled from academic writings. Such a definition has been chosen because it enables scholars to gain conceptual leverage over the topic of populism while still allowing for regional variations in its manifestations. There is at least some logical support for this move; as author Alan Knight says, "even a loose label can sometime prove useful" (Knight, 248). This type of mid-range definition has also been chosen in an effort to avoid constructing a tautological argument in which a definition of populism is drawn from a comparison of supposed populist cases in Latin America and then subsequently reapplied to that region.

At this point, it seems important to distinguish between definitions of populism, theories of populism, and manifestations of populism, because these are

often conflated in academic writings. For the purposes of this essay, *definitions of populism* attempt to convey the fundamental character of the concept; *theories of populism* attempt to explain why populism occurs (they make assertions about causality); and *manifestations of populism* serve as concrete case studies. Because of the narrow focus of this thesis, only the first of these categories will be directly addressed.

Historically, there is a precedent for defining populism as a body of ideas or beliefs. As early as 1969, social scientists acknowledged that "to make sense of populism we must treat it as though not only as, an ideology" (MacRae, 154). Still, the seemingly paradoxical nature of populism makes it necessary to qualify the 'populism as an ideology' premise in some way. The primary difficulty in speaking of populism as an ideology arises from the conceptual dissonance of its many manifestations. As Taggart explains, "[p]opulism has been a tool of progressives, of reactionaries, of democrats, of autocrats, of the left and of the right" (Taggart, 4). The juxtaposition of fascist populist manifestations and socialist populist manifestations has perplexed numerous authors (Wiles, 176) and *The Economist* (2006) and forced some to abandon the 'populism as an ideology' definition altogether.

This thesis proposes to use a version of definitions provided by Cas Mudde and Paul Taggart, which allow for variations in regional manifestations of populism by defining the concept as a "thin-centered" ideology (Mudde, 544) or an ideology possessing an "empty heart" (Taggart, 4). As Taggart explains:

Populism lacks a commitment to key values. While other ideologies contain, either implicitly or explicitly, a focus on one or more values such as equality, liberty, and social justice, populism has no such core to it. This explains...why populism is very often appended to other ideologies. Populism's natural position is an adjective attached to other ideas that fill the space at the empty heart of populism. (Taggart, 4)

While populism appears to be best defined as an ideology, its tendency to overlap with other ideologies must be acknowledged. Defining populism as a thin-centered ideology gives the concept the greatest use value,² allowing political scientists and other academic investigators the opportunity to gain conceptual leverage of the term by identifying greater thematic patterns. For the purpose of this study, then, populism will be defined as *a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be dichotomously separated into idealized antagonistic groups of the 'people' versus 'the elites', whose proponents demonstrate their support for the general will of 'the people' using moral arguments.*

It is important to note the concerns of dissenting authors, who deny that a universal definition of populism can be established. Conceptually, some authors prefer contextual definitions built off a single case study, which involve so much detail that they practically exclude all other cases. Others champion variegated definitions, which deny the existence of overarching universal themes and instead opt to classify populism according to different typologies (Taggart, 10-22).

² For a more comprehensive discussion of use-value see Knight, in particular page 225.

Some authors, for example, have narrowed the definition of populism to signify a certain kind of economic policy: one based on state interventionism, significant spending, Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI), and redistribution (Dornbusch and Edwards). However, not all governments who pursue such policies are populist, and not all populist governments (in particular, governments typically referred to as 'neopopulist') make these economic policies the backbone of their administration. As Alan Knight summarizes, "it seems misleading – and again reductionist – to equate populism with generic packages which combine Keynesian policies of macro-economic fine-tuning with measures to reform and regulate labour relations" (Knight, 243). Others have identified populism as a political style (Knight), a political strategy (Weyland), or a political movement. Carlos de Torre offers a helpful example of a definition belonging to the latter category, characterizing populism as a "powerful semidemocratic and semiauthoritarian *means of mobilization of common people*" (de la Torre, 154) (emphasis added).

These dissents, however, suffer from the same conceptual weakness: authors have reversed the definitional order of operations, relegating the 'populism' part of the definition to a secondary position. Scholars that describe populism as a movement ultimately imply that the 'movement' part of the definition is more important than the 'populism.' Conversely, this thesis maintains that a person can be a populist without having a movement to support them. Ultimately, the definitions that have been briefly reviewed above are unnecessarily exclusionary of other potential cases, obscuring

universal patterns of populism that may exist.³ In the battle for the definitional soul of populism it seems preferable to first focus on the universal essence of the term before amending it with constraining descriptors.

RESEARCH METHODS

The empirical section of this thesis involves a qualitative investigation of the discourse of Bolivian President Evo Morales from 2002 to 2009. Rather than performing a content analysis, which generally involves a great deal of ‘counting’ and ‘coding’ that can obscure the context of discourse, the results and conclusions of this investigation are drawn from an interpretative analysis of the patterns that characterize Morales’ discourse during each time period, focusing on the similarities and differences that exist between these periods. Ultimately, the methods’ portion of this thesis involves a great deal of intelligent reading.

This investigation will examine a single case study of Bolivia, specifically the discourse of its current president, to test hypotheses of routinization. Such an approach could be understood as what Steven Van Evera identifies as an "observational" test of theory, in which a scientist observes empirical data “without imposing an external stimulus ...and asks if observations are congruent with predictions" (Van Evera, 28). Since this particular investigation is generally unconcerned with causality, it has forgone medium-N or large-N studies. While such

³ Admittedly, there is a tradeoff between universal and contextual definitions: one offers more nuance, the other more leverage. The point here is not to say that universal definitions are better, but that such authors may have been unable to identify more comprehensive, universal definitions because of conceptual barriers that were spuriously erected.

a decision may be controversial within certain subdisciplines of the field, it is not unsound or unreasonable: as Alexander George and Andrew Bennet stated in their book *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, "several kinds of no-variance research designs can be quite useful in theory development and testing using multiple observations from a single case. These include the deviant, crucial, most-likely, and least-likely research designs" (George and Bennett, 33).

The Morales case was chosen as a basis of investigation because it arguably functions as a 'crucial' case, which "must closely fit a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory's validity" (Eckstein, 118)⁴. That is, the case naturally possesses the characteristics that allow hypotheses of routinization to be tested: Morales' humble origins signify that his populism is less likely to be falsified, the President has been in office for three years (arguably long enough for routinization to occur, as most presidential appointments last four years), and contrary to theories of routinization, most people with some knowledge of the region appear to consider Morales a populist.

SAMPLING

Every qualitative researcher must think carefully about how to obtain the most accurate sample possible; given that relatively few cases are being observed, there is always the chance that the particular set of data chosen for any project will not be

⁴ This is an arguable assertion. At the very least, however, the Morales case would qualify as a "most likely" or "least likely" case.

representative of the larger reality. In this particular thesis, inaccurate sampling would likely originate from one of two sources: (1) the interviews and speeches that are attainable are not representative of Morales' actual discourse or (2) the attainable discourse is representative of the larger sample, but the researcher has accidentally chosen cases that are not congruent with the larger sample of information.

It must be said that the first of these two scenarios is plausible: although it appears that most of Morales' major speeches and many of his interviews are available on the internet, one must acknowledge the possibility that certain outlets (especially news sources) are disseminating and retaining information that generates public interest, advertising sales, and revenue. That is, newspapers and databases may make available more of Morales' "populist interviews" than his "non-populist interviews" because the former contains content and phrasing that are comparatively more profitable. Still, given the sheer number of statements, interviews, and speeches from Morales that are available, at least some concerns of sampling bias should be ameliorated.

The author has also made an effort to minimize research-related sampling bias. In order to obtain the most precise sample of discourse possible, the data set includes a majority of Morales' major speeches from 2002 to 2009 (regardless of the presence or absence of populism). Samples were drawn from forty-one different dates throughout the seven-year period, and data was culled from national and international sources that included interviews, speeches and biographies. In addition,

data was evaluated in video, radio, and written form. Although a significant effort was made to ‘cast a wide net’ during the collection of information, there remains some chance that non-randomized data could detract from the accuracy of the conclusions.

PROCESS

To safeguard the integrity of the data, the majority of the empirical data in this paper was gathered from primary sources such as presidential statements, foreign and national interviews, and documentaries. However, a handful of direct quotes from Morales were drawn from secondary sources such as biographies. Nearly all of the primary research was conducted in Spanish, signifying that a large majority of the quotations were translated into English by the author. In instances where direct translations may have been unclear, or had dual significance, words were left in Spanish immediately after the English translation. In cases where Morales used an indigenous language, those words were left in the original and then translated into English in parentheses immediately following. By seeking out primary sources and personally translating a large majority of the data, this study has attempted to minimize inaccuracies and inconsistent translations that could jeopardize the precision of the conclusions.

Given the definition of populism delineated in the second section of this thesis, Morales’ statements were evaluated based on the presence or absence of the following three elements of the populist ideology: (1) an antiestablishment argument

directed against some construction of 'the elite,' (2) an identification with some construction of 'the people', and (3) an appeal to common (signifying ordinary) sense and values. As the first two elements are commonly found in non-populist political discourse, this analysis considers the third element to be comparatively more important in determining populism.

Within Latin America, the chasm between common sense and academic knowledge is especially profound. First, the region's history of colonialism and neocolonialism imported a new (and some would say predatory) intellectual tradition to the region that was largely exclusive of the general population. 'Enlightened' colonial agents introduced new systems of power (often through discourse) that "dominat[ed], restructure[ed] and [gave them] authority over the Orient," interpreted loosely to mean Latin America (Said, 3)⁵. Whether this 'scientific' and technocratic knowledge was used to manage silver mining operations or privatize natural gas and water resources, academic knowledge has historically been the purview of Western agents and only a very small, privileged subset of the local population. Conversely, common sense and values are rooted in the (often indigenous) traditions of ordinary people. Consequently, many ordinary people feel like their different styles of knowledge have been (and continue to be) unappreciated.

After analyzing Morales' major speeches, key word searches were performed in local and international news sources for the following terms: 'ricos' (the rich) 'la

⁵ Said is not addressing Latin America directly, but he makes it clear throughout the book that his critiques of 'Orientalism' are applicable to former colonies, in general.

oligarchia' (the oligarchy), 'el pueblo' (the people'), 'mis companeros' (my friends – also used colloquially to establish oneself as part of the people), 'sabiduria' (wisdom), 'sensato' (sensible), 'valores' (values) and sencillez (simply, with modesty).

Here, three points concerning Spanish-to-English translation may be of interest. First, it seems important to note that the word “elite” hardly ever features (verbatim) in Morales’ discourse. This is likely due to the singular nature of the Bolivian context, and should not be used to preclude Morales from being a populist; Morales uses other terms such as ‘the oligarchy’ and ‘the rich’ to signify the elite.

Second, it is important to recognize the difficulty of translating ‘el pueblo’ into English. Although ‘the people’ in English is superficially similar to ‘el pueblo’ in that both refer to groupings of individuals, it fails to capture the sense of community and belonging that characterizes the word in Spanish. There are a number of terms that can be used to describe groupings of people in Spanish: ‘la gente’ is typically used to refer to people in the abstract, and ‘las personas’ (which literally translates to ‘the persons’) is another non-normative way of addressing various groups of people. ‘El pueblo,’ on the other hand, could be said to invoke a populist intention in a manner that ‘the people’ ‘la gente’ and ‘las personas’ do not. The term ‘el pueblo’ is not only used to describe small villages, but also to signify ‘citizen’ or ‘nation’. The idea of ‘belonging’ both to a community and to the territory is inherent in ‘el pueblo,’ and as such, this term could be said to function as a double indicator of populism.

Finally, on a more general level it must be acknowledged that not every instance of populist discourse indicates that an individual is a populist; sporadic and unsustained populist references are likely indicative of something else. Conversely, not every person possessing a populist ideology can be expected to utilize populist discourse every time that he or she speaks, as individuals often talk about a broad variety of topics. Ultimately, the data in this thesis has been broadly interpreted to arrive at a ‘big picture’ understanding of populism in Morales’ discourse.

DEFENDING LANGUAGE RESEARCH

There are numerous ways that a scholar could choose to compare manifestations of populism, none of them perfect. This study has chosen to investigate populist discourse, because language appears to be one of the best available proxies to gauge populist ideology.

On a conceptual level, language is both communicative and constructive: not only can it express ideas and beliefs, but it can also challenge established practices, patterns of discourse, and belief systems.

Language, by nature is symbolic: it is generally intended as a means of intentional communication that infuses sounds with socially-recognizable meaning. The idea that language is symbolic can be traced most easily to Ferdinand de Saussure, who has been referred to as one of the “fathers of 20th-century linguistics” (Wintle, 467). As Saussure stated in his *Course of General Linguistics*, “[a] linguistic system is a series of differences of sounds combined with a series of differences of

ideas” (Saussure, 121). The dyadic relationship between the signifier and the signified that Saussure goes on to discuss undoubtedly implies a meaningful relationship between sound and concept.

Author James Paul Gee has hypothesized that the process of uniting concept with word is a natural part of the human condition, a byproduct of human efforts to situate ourselves in the world. As Gee states:

None of us can see or deal with reality without words or other symbols. To discuss and debate – even to think about – reality, we have to attach words to it. These words are, as we have seen, always connected to negotiable, changeable, and sometimes contested stories, histories, knowledge, beliefs, and values encapsulated into cultural models (theories) about the world. (Gee, 23)

Gee not only agrees that language is symbolic, but he connects the formation of words to underlying beliefs and values. This connection between words and beliefs is also discussed by author Stuart Price in his book *Discourse Power Address*, in which he acknowledges that value and belief systems are an inherent part of discourse. Although Price cautions that ideology in language is only discernable if the context of discourse is considered, he ultimately agrees that “ideology is ever-present in...the symbolic” (Price, 50).

Numerous authors have also underscored the idea that language is powerful. Although this understanding of ‘discourse as power’ is most often associated with Michel Foucault, it has been adopted and reworked by a myriad of other authors. The

idea of discourse as a constructive (or destructive, depending on one's opinion) factor is still widely theorized to this day; it was recently the focus of a Qualitative Social Research Forum subcommittee, a gathering that produced the conclusion that "discursive practices are productive... [they] produce a perception and representation of social reality. This representation forms part of hegemonic strategies of establishing dominant interpretations of "reality" (Diaz-Bone et al.). While academic discussion of 'dominant interpretations' and 'hegemonic strategies' are abstract enough to leave the common person uncertain as to implications of these statements, others make stakes explicitly clear. As Van Dijk unequivocally states, "communications help define, characterize, and decide the course of life, the fate of people, and the nature of society in a symbolic world" (Van Dijk, 41 and 20).

Perhaps because so much is at risk, many theories that embrace the 'discourse as power' idea have focused on the negative ramifications of the hypothesis. Discourse is often seen as a conquering force, a power that has been used to stymie, repress, and control. However, feminist theorists, in particular, have acknowledged that power-laden discourse can also be understood in a positive light. As Clare Walsh states, "public identities are discursively produced by [the] clash of competing norms and expectations...linguistic choices often have ideological effects...in particular ...[on] the unequal distribution of power relations in society" (Walsh, 29). Powerful discourse can not only challenge unequal distributions of power, but serve as a liberating agent. As Jean Bethke Elshtain states:

One must move beyond a view of language as simply or in-exorably "power over," discourse as domination, or discourse as un-avoidably masked, and toward speech as part of an emancipatory effort, a movement toward social clarity and self-comprehension. (Elshtain, 605)

Ironically, the 'self-comprehension' statement takes us full circle back to Gee.

Ultimately, this study has chosen to analyze discourse in order to gauge populism for two reasons: (1) numerous scholars have asserted that discourse reflects people's beliefs, ideas, and ideology, and (2) if discourse is able to challenge the status quo as authors claim, there is a significant chance that populism will emerge in language, given its inherent critique of 'the establishment.'

Admittedly, linguistic investigation and analysis must be pursued with caution. Populist rhetoric may not always indicate a true populist ideology, especially in modern regimes where leaders are often called on to defend their legitimacy. Still, where as most leaders can be expected to employ some populist rhetoric, populism should be a central force in the discourse of individuals that possess a true populist ideology.

There is a natural inclination to want to connect populism directly to human action. Much of this stems from the concern that language may not accurately reflect the beliefs of an individual. However, while some populist discourse likely functions as propaganda rather than indicating populist beliefs, an investigation of allegedly populist actions would be difficult to do well. This is especially true given that an individual often possesses overlapping ideologies, which makes it challenging to

deem an action 'populist' and not attribute it to socialism, nationalism, or some other coexisting ideology. Second, even if a proposed action could clearly be identified as 'populist,' it is not clear that populism would necessarily end with the completion of this action; there are hundreds of intervening variables that could effectively thwart even the most stalwart populist from carrying out his 'populist' plans. Ultimately, this thesis maintains that the ideology-discourse link is far stronger than the ideology-action link, which makes for a better (if still limited) analysis. Although this essay will briefly address Morales' alleged populist actions in the concluding section, this will not be a focal point of the research.

CHAPTER III

MORALES: A STUDY OF POPULISM IN POWER

For the purposes of this investigation the populism of President Evo Morales will serve as a proxy for the populism of the administration as a whole. Although it would be interesting, and likely revealing, to investigate the discourse of other individuals within the administration, the financial and temporal constraints associated with a Masters thesis make it necessary to narrow the focus of the investigation. By looking only at Morales' discourse, this thesis attempts to offer a more accurate and comprehensive sampling of populist discourse.

In order to determine whether the populism of Evo Morales has undergone routinization, the empirical portion of this thesis will investigate both the centrality of populism in Morales' discourse and its characteristics. Regarding the latter, we benefit from a typology established by author Margaret Canovan, who identifies three ideal types of 'the people' to which populism typically appeals: the united people (rather than one divided by factions), our people (typically based on ethnicity or kinship), and the ordinary people (the non-elite) (Canovan, 5). In a sense, then, Canovan's three versions of 'the people' actually refer to a socialist 'the people,' a nationalist 'the people,' and 'the people' as constructed in pure populism.

The first part of this empirical study will establish a 'baseline' of Evo Morales' populist ideology using samples of his discourse drawn from 22 different speeches during a four-year period ending with his inaugural address on 26 January 2006. This will later be compared to a second set of discourse samples during his tenure as president, a time period that is roughly equivalent. The results from this study are drawn primarily from a cross sectional analysis of discourse during this time period; however, every effort has been made to indicate relevant temporal patterns that emerged. In addition, an effort has been made to reveal outliers.

PERIOD ONE: ESTABLISHING A BASELINE

A number of interesting patterns are revealed by Morales' Period One discourse: first, Morales' populism is far less explicit than one might expect; second, it is generally 'colored' by other underlying ideologies; and third, Morales tends to construct 'the people' to mean the 'indigenous' and 'the elite' to mean traditional political parties and their representatives in government.

The Centrality of Populism

Before any analysis concerning the importance of populism in Morales' discourse can be conducted, it seems important to note that there is a significant overlap between populism and other ideologies in the data drawn from this time period. Two of the most prominent ideologies are nationalism and socialism⁶.

⁶ This thesis will not attempt to untangle socialist ideology from communist ideology. They are considered here to appear roughly similar in discourse.

Conceptually, this overlap is not altogether surprising: given the "empty heart" definition of populism adopted for the purposes of this investigation, populism can theoretically overlap with any number of ideologies, especially those that are community oriented⁷. What is particularly interesting about these overlapping ideologies, however, is that they appear to influence the types of moral arguments that Morales makes and the way in which he constructs the crucial categories of "the people" and 'the elite.'

Socialism

The socialist ideology is readily apparent in much of Morales' rhetoric, most notably in his seemingly endless references to imperialism. Although Morales' critiques of 'imperialism' and the 'Empire' are political on the surface, this analysis maintains that the majority are also economic. This categorization is based partly on the context of the quotes, and partly because Morales chooses to forgo the use of the comparatively more political discourse of 'neo-colonialism.'⁸ The Empire-economy connection is especially clear in an interview that Morales gave following a failed presidential bid in 2002. He stated in response to a reporter's question concerning the United States, "[the US] does not like democracies that are not servicing the Empire...the Bolivian people are tired of this savage capitalism, I remain convinced that capitalism is the greatest enemy of humanity and of the environment" (Gaete).

⁷ Admittedly, sometimes it is the exclusion of such individuals that makes possible the political identification of the community.

⁸ References to colonialism do occasionally appear in Morales' rhetoric, but far less frequently than references to imperialism.

Although Empire can be understood in many different ways, Morales appears to interpret it in at least partly economic terms.

As the same statement demonstrates, Morales often moves beyond references to imperialism to establish himself in opposition to neoliberalism and capitalism, and in favor of a more equal distribution of revenues, land, and wealth. Although some analysts have accused Morales of parroting the socialist language of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Morales' own experience as an anti-privatization activist in issues of water and hydrocarbons, as a union leader, and his affiliation with local coca-growing unions at least make it plausible that he actually possesses these views.

In many cases, Morales' socialist arguments are directed against the international economic community, particularly against states and institutions that are perceived to have a strong affiliation with the West. For example, he states on November 2003 that "[t]he day must come when the IMF and the World Bank pay for all that they have robbed from our people" (Mirian Elizalde). He again critiques these organizations by name in June 2005, stating:

The poor people of this country are ...risking our lives and blocking highways in order to open pathways of hope. We are not responsible for destabilization because those who attack Bolivian security are international organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank... [we can] no longer be dependent like beggars to Imperialist leftovers. (Contreras Baspineiro)

While international actors bear the brunt of Morales' socialist ire, the ties between 'Western Imperialists' and (various groups of) privileged local

residents are nearly always implied, and sometimes stated outright. The proximate underpinnings of Morales' socialism are especially apparent in an interview that he gave to journalist Yvonne Zimmerman in La Paz in February 2003. Defending his Movement towards Socialism (MAS) political party, Morales stated:

We have a (governing) program based on the propositions of the people, from an anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist position... [w]e are talking about ending the political mafia. Now that the neoliberal model has failed, it's time for the poor to impose their own model.
(Zimmerman)

His sometimes implicit critique of local power brokers again becomes explicit in an interview conducted later that year. As he stated, "Bolivia is very rich, but the majority of us are poor because there is a bad distribution of riches in few hands...[we must] change the family oligarchy that controls politics" (Cabrera).

Ultimately, Morales' socialist ideology is quite apparent during this period and it affects the way he constructs populist arguments.

Nationalism

Nationalism also plays an important role in Morales' discourse, given not only his identification with the poor, but his heritage as an indigenous Aymara.⁹ Andreas

⁹ For the purposes of this study, nationalism will signify the construction of nationhood along ethnic lines, a definition akin to ethnic variants of nationalism that appear in the work of Anthony D. Smith and Andreas Wimmer.

Wimmer would likely characterize the state-building history of Bolivia as an instance of the "ethnification of bureaucracy": a situation in which "ethnic ties [were] reinforced and politicized given that distribution struggles [were] waged via ethnic clientelist networks"(Wimmer, 66). In most instances, Bolivia's indigenous population was on the losing side of such distribution struggles. Comprising anywhere between 60 and 70 percent of the total population, they fared far worse than their *mestizo* (European mixed descent) counterparts: even after independence, indigenous groups were legally denied access to education and political participation. As one journalist wrote, the past 500 years of indigenous history in Bolivia involved "massacre, genocide, rape, slavery, torture, and exploitation" (Appleton). Or, as Roberto Navia & Darwin Pinto, two people intimately familiar with the country's history, stated:

People...throughout history have treated indigenous people... like animals. It's worth remembering that until the 1950s, indigenous people were not allowed to walk through Plaza Murillo in the centre of La Paz, home to the presidential palace and the city cathedral, because it was reserved for whites, oligarchs and politicians. (Cabrera)

According to co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington DC, Mark Weisbrot, many of these disparities have not improved significantly in modern times. Although indigenous Bolivians have won mostly-equal legal rights over the past 70 years and made significant political advances with the approval of the new constitution in January 2009, indigenous Bolivians still receive 40 percent less schooling than their non-indigenous counterparts, and approximately

one percent of Bolivia's population, mostly *mestizos*, still control two thirds of the country's agrarian land (Weisbrot).

Past and present inequalities continue to affect the daily lives of many indigenous citizens, which makes it understandable why Morales' indigenous heritage plays such a prominent role in his ideas and discourse. Although his progressive message regarding the potential of the indigenous community has been commended by human rights and indigenous rights activists, opponents have accused him of engaging in reverse racism against the non-indigenous minority (Newman).¹⁰

Partly in an effort to reclaim public acknowledgement of indigenous dignity, Morales frequently references to indigenous groups as the 'original' and 'absolute' owners of Bolivia. As he stated during a national interview conducted in October 2002:

The indigenous peoples are achieving the recuperation of their land, their territory that was snatched from them more than 500 years ago...now we possess awareness and its impossible for them to do away with us because we are daring to recuperate the political power that belongs to us, as it should be, we are the absolute owners of this noble earth. (Carrion)

It is also interesting to note that in many instances, Morales appears to identify first as an indigenous resident, second as a member of the poor, and only then as a Bolivian; even when he attempts to be more inclusive in his ideas and language, an undercurrent of ethnicity typically remains. During a speech given shortly before

¹⁰ This thesis will sidestep the normative issue altogether, focusing only on Morales' discourse.

taking office, he stated, "[w]e are seeking the unity of all sectors, respecting diversity, respecting how different we are, we all have the right to life. But if we're speaking of Bolivia, the Aymara, Quechua, Mojeno, Chapaco, Valluno, Chiquitano, Yuracares, Chipayas, and Murato people are the absolute owners of this large land" (Morales "Speech Given at Indigenous Investiture").

In conclusion, Morales' nationalism, much like his socialism, influences the way that he sees the world, and in turn, his populist discourse.

The Characteristics of Populism

The second notable characteristic of Morales' discourse during this early period is that populism appears far more subtly than one might expect. Although his discourse can be deemed populist when interpreted as a whole, Morales very rarely offers succinct populist arguments. Instead, much of his populism is implicit, and only apparent when considered in context. Clearly, Morales makes anti-elite arguments and identifies with 'the people,' but the 'common values' component of populism, which is arguably the most important, rarely appears explicitly.

The only time that populism can be characterized as explicit is during the two-month period before Morales assumed office, a time frame that includes speeches surrounding the presidential election and his inaugural address. One of the most well-rounded examples of populist discourse occurs in an interview that Morales gave shortly before the elections on 18 December 2005. As he stated:

"We will continue to campaign. We have confidence in the dignified and honest vote of the Bolivian people, who are betting on change because they are tired of the corruption associated with the neoliberal economic model and the political mafia...we want to demonstrate how one can govern through the principles of *ama sua* (not thieving) *ama llula* (not lying) and *ama quella* (being active)... the indigenous plight is going to be advanced once we demonstrate how a government can truly function in favor of the people and the homeland. (Robles Sosa)

Even though there are obvious nationalist undercurrents to this statement, it contains an explicit reference to the people, the elite, and a moral argument based on the values of the people (in this case indigenous). Specifically, the 'political mafia' has governed unwisely, but 'the people' (and Morales as their representative) would govern in a morally-just manner for the benefit of the homeland.

The only other clear example of populist discourse in the early period occurs in Morales' inaugural address on 22 January 2006. As that speech states:

Thankfully, the people are wise. One must recognize the wisdom of the Bolivian people, it must be respected, and it must be applied. It doesn't have anything to do with importing economic politics or economic recipes from above or from outside...wanting to import politics to Bolivia is an error. Social organizations, *amauta* councils which I greatly esteem in the high plains near La Paz, unions from the countryside and from the city, the organizations called *capitanias* [literally captaincies] in eastern Bolivia, they are a reservoir of scientific knowledge to defend life [and] to save humanity. It involves using these organizations to implement politics and not imposing politics that service powerful groups in Bolivia or in the exterior. (Morales Inauguration Speech)

In this passage, the "wisdom" of the Bolivian people is explicit; however, the identity of the elite must be deduced. While it remains fairly evident that Morales is critiquing the government, which allegedly has imported alien policies from the international community, the argument is not as concisely populist as one might expect.

Still, even though Morales does not typically offer concise populist arguments, he identifies with populist principles in other ways. Although the 'common values' element of populism is mostly implicit in his speeches that discuss 'the elite' and 'the people', Morales makes it clear that he values common sense over technocratic or academic knowledge. He frequently discusses the importance of honesty and hard work, and as stated in a March 2005 interview, guides himself by "respect [for] the people, forgiveness...sovereignty against imperialism...only fighting to defend our identity...honesty, sincerity, and consequence," all values that he attributes to his father (Bruschtein). However, his stand for common values is perhaps best represented in a conversation that took place in March 2005, when a reporter asked him if he was a Marxist. Morales responded as follows:

What is Marxism? I come from peasant communities, from the people, not from universities or other educational centers. I can speak of Marxism, but what importance does it have? It doesn't involve importing policies, ideologies, or programs. The people know this. Our organizations are wise enough to solve their problems, in fact they are the reservoir of knowledge until scientists came to power [hasta científicos] in defense of life and of humanity. Don't talk to me about Marxism, Leninism, Trotskyism, we're just wasting time. (González)

Here, Morales questions the value of academic concepts like Marxism, contrasting it with the wisdom of commoners. Ultimately, 'common values' appear to be quite important to Morales, even if he does not make references to this exact term.

The People

By far, the most noticeable of the three populist elements in Morales' rhetoric is his identification with, and appeal to, the people. This self-identification can be found in both direct references to his fellow Bolivians and indirect story telling. Although this conclusion has been drawn only from the data analyzed in this project, other authors appear to agree with this supposition. As author Muñoz-Pogossian reported when discussing the time period in question:

The Aymara and coca leaf leader Evo Morales became the main leader of the opposition in Congress. Building on an appeal at the local level, the majority of MAS deputies were uninominal. Morales built his image around the opposition to coca eradication measures in the country and used the indigenous identity to appeal to people in the struggle. (Muñoz-Pogossian, 152)

If one were to evaluate Morales' discourse based on Canovan's three ideal types, it could be said that Morales most often refers to 'our people' (based on ethnicity or kinship), occasionally appeals to 'the ordinary people' (the non-elite and more specifically, the poor), and only rarely petitions 'the united people' (a comparatively more inclusive category) during this time period. Even when Morales makes an effort to construct 'the people' less restrictively, there is often an underlying ideological current that the 'authentic' people are either indigenous or poor. The only exception to

this rule is taken from a speech following the ouster of former President Sanchez de Lozada in December 2005, in which Morales stated:

I believe only in the power of the people...with all that has happened in Bolivia, I have seen the importance of the power of a whole people, of a whole nation. For those of us who believe it important to defend humanity, the best contribution we can make is to help create that popular power. This happens when we check our personal interests with those of the group. (Morales "I Believe Only in the Power of the People")

Apart from this statement, however, Morales typically appears to be referencing the poor or the indigenous when he speaks of 'the people'. The latter makes for a particularly interesting case study: either consciously or subconsciously, Morales repeatedly begins statements, interviews, and speeches during this time period by referencing the indigenous people, then substituting in the larger category of 'Bolivian people' into discourse by the end of the discussion. This is readily apparent in a February 2003 interview, in which he stated:

We, the original people, organized ourselves into a political instrument for the sovereignty of the people...we have decided to recuperate land and power for ourselves, the Quechuas, Aymaras, Tupi-Guaranies together with the working middle class, our enemies tremble...we are constructing committees for the defense of sovereignty, and with that we are going to defend the fight of the Bolivian people. (Zimmerman)

Although Morales first identifies as indigenous, he makes some effort to make the category more inclusive by the end of the interview. Whether this is a subconscious tendency or a maneuver to gain political currency remains unclear.

In truth, Morales' explicit appeals on behalf of the people are so frequent that it begs the question whether some analysts within academia and the news media may be identifying Morales as a populist solely based on the sheer number of these appeals. It is very possible that Morales' appeals to 'the people' are automatically being categorized as being populist regardless of the presence or absence of a common values argument.

Apart from explicit references to 'the people,' it is interesting to note how Morales identifies with various constructions of 'the people' through stories that often precede or follow critiques of some allegedly corrupt elite group. Most of these stories are aimed at establishing Morales as part of 'the common people,' by shedding light on his humble origins¹¹. Two stories in particular, were circulated widely during this time. The first, which will be referred to as 'the Orange Story,' involves Morales' upbringing as a llama herder in the Chapare department. The story appears in its full entirety during an interview given to Argentine journalist Luis Bruschtein in March 2005:

I worked as an animal herder, I walked kilometers to carry a heard of llamas from one place to another. At times I would be going on the road with llamas and a bus would pass...the passengers would be eating oranges and throwing the peels through the window. And there I went...eating the orange peels that I would pick up. I dreamed of one day traveling in the bus and eating oranges. It seems like a lie [parece mentira] that now I do a similar journey in an airplane. (Bruschtein)

¹¹ Morales also occasionally brings up a story of how his mother, an indigenous Aymara, was forbidden from walking through the plazas of La Paz fifty years ago.

What is interesting to note is that this particular exchange establishes Morales as part of 'the common people' twice over: not only does it highlight that he was a poor llama herder (an unassuming position that requires hard work and constant attention), but it makes it clear that he feels uncomfortable, like an outsider, in his new life where he travels that same route in an airplane.

The second story that appears frequently in newspaper articles involves an interaction that Morales had with a wealthy city dweller during his presidential campaign. Again, the most complete version of this story was given to Bruschtein, but snippets of it were re-circulated in a number of other media outlets. As Morales tells the story:

One day when I was walking through the streets with my friends during the political campaign, a very put-together city woman said to me, 'I'm going to tell you Evo, you're not prepared to govern.' She said it very aggressively and I didn't want to be aggressive back, so I just said 'thank you'. Then the woman told me 'you keep going Evo, I am going to vote for you because you are honest.' I see that the middle class, intellectuals, even healthy, honest businessmen are becoming part of the (MAS) movement. (Bruschtein)

Like the former story, this anecdote establishes Morales as an individual who is different than city dwellers and who shares the values (in this case honesty) of the good people.

The Elite

During this early period, Morales constructs the category of the 'the elite' to be more diverse than 'the people.' Depending on which of the underlying ideologies is

dominant, 'the elite' can mean anything from international institutions (primarily US-based), the oligarchy (typically referring to wealthy land owners), or the current administration (and ruling-party politicians more generally).

When Morales' socialist leanings come to the forefront, 'the elite' is often constructed to mean 'the West'. This is true for a December 2003 interview in which Morales stated, "We are convinced that capitalism is the enemy of the earth, of humanity and of culture. The US government does not understand our way of life and our philosophy. But we will defend our proposals, our way of life and our demands with the participation of the Bolivian people" (Morales "Legalizing the Colonization of the Americas"). Two years later, Morales made it clear that his focus had not changed significantly. As he stated:

The will of the people was imposed this September and October and has begun to overcome the empire's cannons. We have lived for so many years through the confrontation of two cultures: the culture of life represented by the indigenous people, and the culture of death represented by the West. (Morales "I Believe Only in the Power of the People")

On occasion, Morales also constructs 'the elite' to mean 'the oligarchy,' by which he generally refers to wealthy landowners (and indirectly the politicians who represent their interests). Commenting on the trajectory of the Bolivian people over the past few decades, Morales stated, "[w]hat happened during all these years of profound revolt, the dismissal of presidents and election advances, is a test of force

between the people, which each time has won additional land, and the oligarchic tradition, which each time loses more space" (Febbro).

However, during most of the early period, Morales portrays 'the elite' as the traditional political parties. He accuses these agents of being inept, corrupt, mired in bureaucracy, and overly swayed by international interests; given these parties' history of giving out fraudulent land titles to wealthy foreign and local investors among other questionable actions, many of his critiques are understandable. His portrayal of 'the elite' as the 'old guard government' is evident throughout his discourse during the time period. It begins in January 2005, when he stated:

I am very sorry that the Bolivian government commits monumental errors that punish the Bolivian people. The Bolivian people, with good reason, are rising up, are organizing, and are mobilizing to end those decrees.... [t]his government isn't excited (*no se anima*) to be with people unless they are loyal servants to multinational corporations. (Entrevista Al Líder Campesino Cocalero Y Diputado Evo Morales Del Mas Y Candidato a La Presidencia De Bolivia.)

This again becomes apparent in July 2005, when Morales stated "[w]ith courage and defiance, we brought down Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, the symbol of neoliberalism in our country on October 17, the Bolivians' day of dignity and identity. We began to bring down the symbol of corruption and the political mafia" (Padilla and Stefanoni). However, the 'good people' and 'bad government' dichotomy is best expressed in Morales' inaugural address in 2006:

Maneuvers, more maneuvers...the ways of how to deceive the people and the way to auction off the

people... they left us a "loteado" country, an auctioned country. I am almost convinced: if the state administrators had been intelligent, if they had loved this country and didn't just want to loot this country and make themselves rich, if there had truly been responsible people who would lovingly guide this country and its people Bolivia would be better than Switzerland...a country that developed without natural resources. Politics means the science of serving the people. You must serve the people and not live off the people...brothers and sisters, our original authorities knew that when one becomes an authority, it is to serve the people. (Morales Inauguration Speech)

This quote is revealing in many respects; it not only demonstrates a nationalist reference to the integrity of the original authorities but it offers a populist appeal to the non-elite 'brothers and sisters.'

In conclusion, while Morales occasionally constructs 'the elite' to signify international agents and the oligarchy, most of his populist ire appears to be directed against the government during this early period of discourse.

PERIOD TWO: MORALES' DISCOURSE IN OFFICE

The following section will address Morales' later period of populism, beginning after his inaugural address on 26 January 2006 and ending in April 2009. In total, 20 different sources were consulted during this time frame in order to establish the most comprehensive sample of his discourse during this period.

The Centrality of Populism:

In this latter period of discourse, Morales generally refrains from making succinct populist statements. One of the only compact arguments he makes occurs at

a roundtable discussion with Randy Alonso Falcon earlier this year, following the approval of the country's new constitution. Although the constitution was approved by nearly 60 percent of citizens, it was rejected by local residents in the (opposition) eastern departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, and Tarija. As Morales describes the event:

I want to acknowledge the Bolivian people for their participation and for their awareness of a profound transformation in our country...[which] has permitted for Bolivia to be refounded... in search of ...equality, dignity, and the unity of the Bolivian people, still respecting our diversity...despite deceitful campaigns [by the opposition], a dirty campaign, despite the fear that oligarchic groups tried to arouse in the population... we are happy, very happy about this, the sovereign election of the Bolivian people ...I believe only in the conscience of the Bolivian people. (Alonso Falcon)

While this may not qualify to some as a picture perfect populist quote, it certainly established 'the people' against 'the oligarchy' and implies that only 'the people' are concerned with the values of equality, dignity, and unity.

Although no other concise examples of populism exist during this time period, all three populist components can be found in his discourse. It seems especially important to note that appeals to common values feature prominently throughout the period.

On many occasions, Morales portrays the people as the bastion of honesty and integrity, juxtaposing them to the comparative evil or deceitful 'elite'. This still occasionally occurs implicitly, as author Francisco Pineda identifies in his book, *Evo*

Morales: El Cambio Comenzó en Bolivia. As Pineda quotes Morales, "I am ...convinced that sincerity and honesty are the most important things concerning Bolivia, to ...love our homeland. It's not possible that there are authorities who ignore the national majorities, without thinking and without loving this homeland" (Pineda, 82-83).

In addition to using 'the good people' as a platform to critique local political elites, Morales occasionally uses this category to critique (alleged) US intervention in Bolivia. As he states, "just because we're underdeveloped ...does not mean that we're going to submit ourselves to this type of humiliation...we are dignified, honest, healthy" (Pineda, 108). At times, the defense of the people's honesty becomes more explicit. As Morales stated in an interview in September 2000:

The indigenous people are a culture of dialogue and we are fundamentally a culture of life.... [i]n Bolivia we are gathering and drawing from our experiences using a program called the good life. In order to live 'better' sometimes you have to exploit ...to steal....to discriminate....to plunder, but to live the good life is to live communally, to live collectively. (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly)

Although 'the people' here specifically references the indigenous community, they are shown to be more honest and less discriminatory than others, who are overly concerned with living the 'good life' (implying the importance of wealth and material possessions). The integrity of 'the people' is also apparent in an interview that Morales gave in March 2009, when he stated, "I am serving the people based on the

rules that our ancestors left us...no lying, no robbing, be active...the [presidential] palace...used to be only for groups, now it is for the people" (Zepeda Varas).

During this time period, Morales also appeals to the wisdom of 'the people', in addition to their honesty; typically alleging that the people's judgment has been unacknowledged by others with a more secular academic background. This tension between common wisdom and academic knowledge is most apparent in a statement that Morales issued following US President Barack Obama's election in November 2008. As Morales stated, "In the past, like here, the African American movement suffered great discrimination...I say that because I have gone through that same experience...in Bolivia there are some groups which think that indigenous people cannot govern, they cannot be presidents. They think that they are the only ones who went to school and that are prepared to rule, to dominate" (Morales, 2008).

Identifying with common ideas of knowledge and wisdom is something Morales does repeatedly during this second period. As he states in an interview in June 2006, "I am not yet an expert on financial or economic matters...[f]or me, education comes day by day. Before, it was the union, the amplifications (*los ampliados*), the marches, the gatherings...it's one thing to have a diploma and another thing to have knowledge" (Sivak). The idea again becomes apparent in an interview given on April 2007, in which he stated to a group of 100 Senators in the lower house of Congress, "I wasn't able to study economy or law, but I'm not sorry about it...I

have learned here...[w]hen I was young, my parents taught me to be respectful and humble” (Sivak, 169).

Finally, Morales' understanding of 'the people' as both honest and wise is sometimes presented as a single thought:

I come from a very humble family, from a family of the Aymara nation that historically has been excluded...[t]he absence of the State in our indigenous and peasant communities has left much to be desired...I want you to know, I didn't have the opportunity to go to the university, to study...the best resource (*capital*) that our movement and I have is honesty. (Morales Intervencion De Evo Morales Ante El Pleno Del Parlamento Europeo, 155)

Regardless of whether Morales is emphasizing the honesty or wisdom of the people (or both), his appeals to common values permeate his discourse during the second period.

Nationalism

As a number of the quotations mentioned above indicate, there is some presence of nationalism during Morales' Period Two Discourse, especially during Morales' first two years in office.

On at least two separate occasions during 2006, Morales speaks of his ancestors not being permitted to walk through public spaces. As he states in May 2006, "[s]ome 50 or 60 years ago, our grandparents and our parents didn't have the right to enter into Plaza Murillo, my mother told me that they didn't have the right to walk on the sidewalks." This story emerges again in December, when Morales links

the tale to “fascist and racist sectors in Santa Cruz, who don’t want [the indigenous] people to enter into the fairgrounds today” (Morales "Interview "). There is also a fair amount of populism in this statement: Morales’ use of the word “our” rather than “my” underscores his self-identification as part of ‘the people.’

Morales’ nationalism also becomes apparent when he preferences the indigenous community as the rightful owners of Bolivian territory. As he stated in an interview in May 2006, shortly after assuming office, "If we're talking about Bolivia...natural resources belong to the native indigenous people, the absolute owners of the noble earth are the native indigenous people...there are still some people who don't understand this” (Morales " Palabras Del Presidente De La Republica, Evo Morales Ayma, En La Firma De Los Acuerdos De Cooperacion Y Solidaridad").

Land is again at the heart of the Morales’ contrast between the indigenous people and (allegedly) possessive landowners, when he states in 2007 that "[w]e are talking about ...landholders that only hoard land to negotiate, to sell, and not to work. These lands must return to the hands of the state to be redistributed. Some people from eastern Bolivia are threatening... they can threaten, but they should know that we are a people, Aymara and Quechua, the absolute owners of this noble earth. If before they always abused us, now they can never abuse us because we are one people" (Pineda).

Although the beginning of this second period of discourse is filled with nationalist references, Morales' nationalist language noticeably diminishes in the samples of discourse drawn from 2008 and 2009. Although the element of ethnicity is still present in Morales' discourse, it does not appear to be as central.

Socialism

Most of the socialism that appears in Morales' discourse during this latter period is constrained in some way: although some form of socialism is present in his discourse, the language and ideas that surface in his speeches and interviews are more measured than one would expect from a stalwart socialist.

To be fair, Morales still occasionally engages in full socialist critiques of the status quo, generally against the topics of privatization and capitalism. As he stated in November 2007, "I don't agree (no comparto) with capitalism...it's not possible that some families, some transnationals continue to allow capital to accumulate in only a few hands, plundering natural resources, exploiting human beings... they create instruments of subjugation, of domination and recolonization" (Morales "Opening Speech"). In addition to demonstrating hints of nationalism, this quotation demonizes capitalism and multinational corporations, or at least their allegedly predatory actions against the citizens of Bolivia.

However, most of the socialist arguments that he presents during this time are noticeably tempered. For example, during his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, Morales offered a very controlled critique of capitalism. As he

stated, “I understand perfectly that companies have the right to recover their investments and they have the right to profit...but not so much as before, which amounted to the outright plunder of our natural resources” (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly). While Morales accuses market forces of propagating the plunder of Bolivia’s natural resources in the past, he recognizes profit as a legitimate end of capitalist enterprise (and tacitly accepts capitalism itself), a truly revolutionary (pun intended) idea for any socialist to countenance.

The socialist-lite ideology is also present in his discussions of the future and of the tenets of his own ideology. During this time period, Morales highlights what can only be described as a defeatist socialist program. As he states, “I feel as though there will never be [true] equality, but to make these economic differences less pronounced would finally permit persons who today have a lot to maybe help us convince other families that only think of themselves and not in the people” (Morales "Opening Speech"). Here, equality is presented as unattainable and the (assumedly wealthy or landowning) families must be reasoned with rather than overthrown.

Finally, Morales also appears to problemmatize his own commitment to socialist principles during this period, accusing the opposition of exaggerating the socialist nature of his intentions by using “false arguments” that he wanted to “end private property in Bolivia” (Morales, 2008). As the abolition of private property is generally considered central to most strands of socialist thought, this is a very interesting assertion for Morales to make.

Ultimately, although a few instances of pure socialism appear in Morales' discourse during this latter period, the majority of Morales' socialist language (according to the 20 samples considered here) is noticeably deflated during this time.

The Characteristics of Populism

The People

Towards the end of Period Two one can identify a subtle shift from Canovan's 'our people' to the 'united people,' although admittedly, the transition is not clear cut.

Shortly after taking office, Morales' indigenous heritage still features prominently in his construction of 'the people.' As he stated in an interview on 15 May 2006, "I want to say in the name of the Bolivian people, especially in the name of the native indigenous movement: we want to have allies to defend life, we want to end the hate [of Bolivia's history], to close that chapter" (Morales Intervencion De Evo Morales Ante El Pleno Del Parlamento Europeo, 164). Ethnically-oriented constructions of the people again surface at the end of 2006, when he states, "[i]t's an enormous satisfaction to be here representing my people, my homeland, and especially the indigenous movement" (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly, 165).

However, towards the end of his four-year term in office it begins to become apparent that Morales is slowly expanding the category of 'the people' to become more inclusive. Although he still gives the indigenous and poor communities a

special place of distinction, his number of references to “all” Bolivian people jumps dramatically.

As Morales states in 2007, “I govern for all of Bolivia...just because my government focuses on bettering the situation of sectors that have been passed over, doesn’t mean that I don't take care of all Bolivians. There is only one Bolivia” (2007). This concept of the nation united is again apparent in a speech given by Morales following the approval of the country’s new constitution in January 2009. As he stated then, “[t]his constitution is for all Bolivians, not just one group. I heard them [the opposition] say that they want a new pact, but this pact is the new Constitution that was approved by the Bolivian people” (Morales "Morales Asegura Que La Nueva Cpe Es El Pacto Nacional Refrendado Por El Pueblo Boliviano").

Still, although there is some opening of the people category, it is not completely inclusive. As Morales states in April 2009, “this is another unforgettable day that has been made possible by the awareness of the Bolivian people and the participation of distinct sectors, workers, farmers, original citizens, university students, and professionals” (“Morales Logra La Aprobación De La Ley Del Régimen Electoral Transitorio”). While he takes care to acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of the coalition, he still excludes the opposition, landowners, and commercial farmers.

His nationalism, although waning, also makes for a strange bedfellow with his newfound need to unite the country. Ultimately, this produces a sort of double speak that is often perplexing:

The new constitution seeks equality for all Bolivians. We are such a diverse society. There are people with blue eyes, green eyes, black eyes, dark skin, mestizo... I always say that we are Bolivians, but there are Bolivians that have been here for centuries and Bolivians that are more contemporary. Those that have been here the longest, the indigenous, are the majority and the poorest. And the others, who are the minority, are the richest. Our constitution seeks to equalize these two groups because we are all Bolivians. (Newman)

A second trend that deserves mention is the construction of ‘the people’ as being aligned with the government, and vice versa. First, Morales takes great care to show that his administration is working on behalf of the people with their best interests at heart. As he stated in his reflection on his first year in office, “We gained...a lot of experience that will allow us to continue governing for the Bolivian people, and within this first year of government we complied with the demands of the people, the clamorous requests of the people concerning the nationalization of hydrocarbons and of natural gas... this has given the popular movement new value” (“Mesa Redonda: Entrevista a Evo Morales, a Un Año De Asumir La Presidencia: “Bolivia Se Dignifica””). Not only is the government working for the benefit of the people, but it has (allegedly) helped reinvigorate popular movements. Morales reinforces this connection multiple times throughout 2007, stating that “[p]olitics is

serving the people; if we become involved in politics, it is to serve the people” (Morales "Opening Speech") and that he had “listened to the needs” of the people for the past 20 months in office (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly).

Nor does Morales present the people-government relationship as being one-sided. Rather, he implies that it is recognized and supported by the people themselves. As he states, “As democrats, we are not afraid of the people...my power has a very legitimate origin...I have the support of millions of Bolivians” (2007).

Ultimately, two tendencies are notable in Morales’ construction of the people during this latter period: first, the category of ‘the people’ generally appears to become more inclusive towards the end of the period, although this transition does not occur clearly and often results in doublespeak. Second, Morales often constructs ‘the people’ as being effectively integrated into the government.

The Elite

In Period Two, Morales tends to construct the category of ‘the elite’ as the opposition or the oligarchy. This is not always the case, of course; occasionally he also opposes ‘the people’ against previous governments (Morales Intervencion De Evo Morales Ante El Pleno Del Parlamento Europeo, 161) and imperialism (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly, 172). However, the majority of Morales’ references to ‘the elite’ fall into one of these two categories.

During his first few years in office, Morales typically places ‘the people’ in opposition to the traditional oligarchy, referencing the antagonism between these two groups in both a historical and modern perspectives. His discourse very clearly establishes the oligarchy as the historical enemy of the people. As he stated in September 2007:

We have begun to de-colonize Bolivia internally and externally. I say internally because in the past masters ruled our country. If we review our history we find that viceroy masters, religious groups, and the oligarchy have ruled. The people have never had any power....[n]ow we are establishing the people's power, so that sovereignty belongs to the people instead of to a group of families. (Morales Speech to the United Nations General Assembly)

This also functions as a nice example of populist discourse contrasting the “masters, religious groups, and the oligarchy” against the sovereignty of the people.

Morales also indicates that powerful families continue to oppose the interests of the people. In many cases, statements with this content coincided with autonomy movements in Bolivia’s (opposition) Media Luna departments. As the President stated in March 2008, when the autonomy movements were gaining momentum:

It is not a matter of 'East' versus 'West,' it is a matter of groups: the oligarchy from the east against the policies that we are implementing...[b]efore, those who were demanding autonomy were in the government... now...they don't know how to keep sucking the blood of the Bolivian people so they want autonomy for the provinces. (Newman)

Later during his tenure as president, however, Morales begins to construct ‘the elite’ less as the oligarchy (with presumed ties to power, wealth, and land) and more as the political opposition. As Morales states in the opening speech at the Second Annual Latin American Humanist Forum “I want to say that it's in vain that some politicians, some civic leaders are hitting barracks (golpeando cuarteles) it's in vain to try and boycott economically...they are not going to be able to do it, I am convinced, because we are with the people fighting to liberate our country” (Morales "Opening Speech").

Although Morales denigrates the opposition frequently, calling them “rats” among other names ("Evo Inicia Campaña Para Concentrar El Poder Del Congreso"), he stresses that people are united with him against a common enemy. As he stated in October 2008:

I have to negotiate, dialogue with terrorists, with people who commit genocide, with subversives...and that's not what I call them, that's what the people call them...and everything that occurred last September [and political deaths of 16 individuals in the Pando department, among other things] is tyrannical, a savage attitude of the opposition that in the end was conquered by the people. (Rojas)

Ultimately, Morales constructs ‘the elite’ during this time to mean the opposition or the oligarchy.

Analysis

A number of interesting conclusions can be drawn from a side-by-side comparison of the two periods.

First, Morales' appeals to, and identification with, common values and wisdom appear become stronger after he assumes office, which would indicate that routinization has not taken place. Whereas in previous occasions Morales had established 'the people's' values to be good implicitly, he now makes that claim more explicit, identifying with, and appealing to, the people's values (namely honesty) and wisdom more frequently.

Second, the data analyzed in this thesis indicates that both of the overlapping ideologies identified in Morales' Period One discourse weaken after Morales assumes office. This is particularly notable with socialism: whereas Morales' was prone to fiery socialist rhetoric (and arguably ideas) before assuming office, he begins to demonstrate a much more nuanced ideology as President. In addition, he often engages in a type of double speak that seriously calls into question the integrity of both underlying ideologies.

Third, it seems important to note that Morales' construction of the people begins with an emphasis on Canovan's 'our people' (a nationalist construction) and moves towards the more inclusive 'united people' (a socialist construction) during the later period. His identification with 'the common people' is present in both periods but dominates neither.

Finally, Morales' construction of 'the elite' changes from signifying 'established political parties' in Period One to becoming more focused against the oligarchy and a subset of opposition politicians in Period Two. Whereas pre-

presidency Morales constructed the government to be a corrupt and antagonistic force that worked against 'the people,' in Period Two the government is basically shown to function as 'the people' incarnate.

In the end, although the superficial characteristics of populism change from Period One to Period Two, it becomes more central to Morales' discourse in office.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis argues that populism has not undergone routinization in office. Instead, the common values element of Morales' populist ideology, which is arguably the most important aspect, actually became stronger after Morales assumed the presidency. Although the superficial characteristics of Morales' populism are different during the two periods, populism still appears to drive his thoughts and dictate, to a certain extent, the manner in which he constructs the political environment in Bolivia during his tenure as President.

In addition, this study has inadvertently revealed that greater care should be taken in determining populism and classifying leaders as populist, both within academia and the media. Although this thesis has deemed Morales to be a populist, this determination was only possible after a careful and detailed study. During Morales' early discourse, in particular, populism is only apparent when his rhetoric is considered as a whole and in context. Care should be taken to avoid calling Morales, or any other individual, a populist based only on his or her appeals to 'the people.' Such references are particularly prominent in Morales' discourse, but they cannot be considered the defining feature of populism: many non-populist leaders also make appeals to 'the people' in an effort to establish political credibility. While the people-elite dichotomy functions as a framework of populist belief, ultimately, populism

(especially in discourse) must be identified by the moral argument that accompanies it.

OVERLAPPING IDEOLOGIES

The presence of overlapping ideologies in Morales' rhetoric is significant for a number of reasons. First, it is counterintuitive that so few instances of pure populism exist in Morales' rhetoric during the seven-year period being studied, especially given his reputation as a stalwart populist. In most of the discourse samples, Morales' populism goes hand in hand with what are referred to here as nationalism and socialism: rather than 'cleanly' establishing the people-elite dichotomy, and making an argument about the values of some (homogenous) common people, the categories of the people, the elite, and the nature of the moral argument are often influenced by Morales' underlying socialist and nationalist leanings. However, rather than crowding out populism, the presence of other ideologies appears to be complementary (the presence of one does not signal the demise of another). This, in turn, appears to support 'thin-centered' definitions of populism.

The presence overlapping ideologies also offers a secondary opportunity to gauge routinization. If routinization is interpreted at a highly abstract level to signify the loss of an ideology's 'essence,' which is very much in line with the interpretation utilized in this thesis, the available data indicates that populism actually underwent less routinization than socialism and nationalism after Morales took office. Therefore,

not only has the common values element of populism increased after Morales assumed the Presidency, but the populist ideology has routinized comparatively less than others that were also present (at least according to the data gathered for this thesis). In this way, theories of routinization have been disproved twice over.

LOOKING AT POPULIST POLICY

As this thesis has noted previously, the existence of overlapping ideologies in Morales' discourse has distinct methodological implications: given the overlap of at least three ideologies in Morales' discourse, it becomes difficult to attribute any of the President's actions purely to populism. However, while it would be nearly impossible to classify actions as 'populist' or 'non-populist' without linking it to prior discourse, it might be possible to follow up on specific promises that Morales (or any other populist) made when his (or her) populist ideology featured particularly strongly in discourse. At the very least, investigating the outcome of Morales' so-called 'populist promises' could shed light on the sincerity of his populism (and the ability of language to reflect it), should these be called into question. The following section will briefly address the policies and actions of Morales' administration to determine whether the President followed through on promises to improve the status quo. More specifically, it addresses his pledges (or intimations) to lessen foreign influence in the country, rule for the benefit of the people (rather than to enrich himself), make the distribution of land more equal, and rectify the historical exclusion of indigenous groups.

Most would agree that Morales has made an effort to lessen foreign influence in the country after assuming office; not only has he sought to minimize the presence of foreign agents in the region, but he has nationalized the country's oil and gas industry in an effort to divert more revenues towards the Bolivian government. Shortly after assuming office, Morales nationalized twelve oil and natural gas companies, increasing the country's state-run oil company's (Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos) stake in such businesses to anywhere between 51 to 99 percent of all shares. After the initial wave of nationalizations in 2006, he continued to nationalize the remaining oil companies in a more piecemeal fashion from 2007 to 2009, accusing foreign companies of failing to respect Bolivian standards and stating that he was reclaiming the country's natural resources. Ultimately, Morales effectively increased the total amount of revenue being collected by Bolivia to some 2.5 billion in 2008 (1/21/2009), a significant sum of revenue that has translated into political currency. Morales has also made an effort to minimize foreign influence within Bolivian territory, particularly in matters involving the United States: he supported leaders from the Chapare region and the Chuquisaca department in their efforts to expel the US Agency for International Development (USAID) after calling the organization an extension of American imperialism, and barred the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from performing operations within Bolivia after accusing the entity's agents of engaging in political espionage.

Morales also appears to have made good on promises to set his administration apart from the corruption and excess that is generally understood to have characterized past governments, cutting his salary by more than 50 percent immediately after taking office and mandating that no other Cabinet Minister could collect a higher salary than his own. Morales linked the pay cut directly to the country's dire need for teachers, stating that the money generated by the salary reduction would be used to hire 3,800 new teachers (1/27/2006). In other actions that might be interpreted to demonstrate his will to serve the people's interest, Morales subjected himself and the country's nine governors to a national recall referendum that theoretically put his own tenure at risk. (However, he won 67 percent of the vote and six of the country's nine departments.) He also brought to fruition the first constitution to ever be voted on in a national referendum, which was approved on 25 January 2009. The constitution, in turn, has reinforced the power of the common person, endowing the Bolivian people with control of the country's natural resources and enabling any Bolivian, regardless of ethnicity or education, the ability to begin legal proceedings in defense of the environment.

More recently, Morales has begun to take steps to rectify what he previously referred to as an unjust distribution of territory. The country's 2009 Constitution has also played a large role in this issue, limiting the size of future land sales to 12,355 acres and establishing that private property rights will only be upheld if the land "meets a social function and does not damage the collective interest" (Machicado).

Morales has already acted on the new constitution to seize what his administration deemed underutilized property, confiscating just under 99,000 acres from five ‘oligarchic’ families located in the Santa Cruz department in February 2009, which he redistributed one month later to the indigenous Guarani tribe.

Finally, Morales appears to have made good on promises to rectify the historical exclusion of indigenous peoples, pushing through the creation of a constitution that created a separate legal system for Bolivia’s indigenous population and quota for indigenous representation in government. Following the approval of the new constitution, Morales restructured his Cabinet to give it a more "plurinational" character, replacing at least five of his former Ministers with mostly indigenous representatives and created a Ministry of Culture, partly to preserve indigenous heritage.

While the above policies and actions indicate that Morales has made good on many of the ‘populist promises’ that feature heavily in his discourse, it should be noted that not all of these achievements were attained democratically. Take, for example, the new constitution. Despite its socially-progressive content, the document was created without the involvement of opposition senators, approved despite being rejected in four of the country’s nine departments, and forced through the Senate by Morales, who embarked on a widely-publicized hunger strike in order to pressure opposition politicians into approving his terms for new elections in December 2009. Morales has also engaged in some actions as President that could be said to directly

challenge democratic principals, declaring a state of martial law in the Pando department in September 2008 and placing its (opposition) governor under indefinite arrest following fatal clashes between mostly indigenous pro-government supporters and opposition protestors.

Ultimately, Morales has followed through on many of the implicit and explicit promises that characterized his populist rhetoric during the two periods analyzed for this thesis. Whether his occasionally undemocratic actions serve to undercut his populist ideology is a decision that will be left to the reader.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A second analysis of another (allegedly) populist leader would greatly strengthen the conclusions of this thesis by lessening the chances that Bolivia somehow functions as an errant case. The inclusion of another detailed case study would not only appease positivist scholars of political science, who maintain that “a single observation is not a useful technique for testing hypotheses or theories” (King, Keohane and Verba, 211)¹² but also some interpretivists. As Eckstein states:

Conceivably, the most powerful study of all for theory building is neither the presently common form of comparative study (of cases studied randomly, or intuitively selected, or studied because they seem readily available or accessible) nor the study of single crucial cases, but, so to speak, “comparative crucial case studies. (Eckstein, 127)

¹² Though admittedly, these authors tend to be addressing theories of causality.

The presence of two crucial case studies might also generate new hypotheses concerning ideological overlap and help determine whether references to 'the people' are being over determined as populism, as this author suspects. Given the limited nature of this study, an exact replica of the above study could also be repeated using a more comprehensive sample of Morales' discourse to bolster the accuracy of its conclusions.

Finally, this author wishes to stress the importance of future scholarship studying populism from the ground up. If populism is defined as an ideology, it can logically be adopted by state leaders, so-called 'peasants', social groups, and political movements: populism can be both top-down (government) and bottom-up (common people). Conniff, in particular, discusses the importance of studying populist perspectives of everyday people. As he states, "[r]esearch from the bottom up might be especially fruitful, surveying popular culture ... and anchoring it with oral history" (Conniff, 243). Given that populism is constructed in favor of 'the people,' more studies should attempt to incorporate an investigation of populism at the mass level; such an investigation would undoubtedly prove rewarding.

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