The Democratic Dream in a Multicultural Society

A minor field study about democracy and indigenous political participation in Bolivia
Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate if the political participation has increased in practice for the former excluded indigenous people in Bolivia during the Morales administration and with the establishment of a new constitution, in order to see whether democracy has been deepened in the country or not. The thesis is carried out with a case study design and material consists mainly of qualitative interviews with different indigenous organizations and NGOs, as well as previous research on the area.

The theoretical framework is based on dimensions on participation in where the three areas of inclusion, spaces for participation and influence are examined in order to investigate the purpose. The thesis argues that the political participation has not increased for all of the different indigenous groups, but for some; the smaller indigenous groups in the lowland have not experienced an increased political participation, whilst the three biggest indigenous groups, Aymara and Quechua in the highland, and Guaraní in the lowland, feel that their political participation has increased. Since some indigenous groups have experienced change and an increased political participation it is argued that the democracy has been deepened to a small degree.

**Key words:** Bolivia, indigenous, political participation, inclusion, influence, democracy
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1. Introduction

Minority groups have always been more vulnerable to lack of access, discrimination or lack of resources to establish informal forms of public participation (Baclija, Hacek 2012:2). It is a challenge to balance individual civil rights with collective rights, which becomes even harder when a state includes a wide range of cultural minorities. Even though around two thirds of all states today are considered to be democratic; in the sense of representative democracies with regular elections and political parties (Held 1997:13), there are still groups that are excluded and discriminated within these countries. These minority groups most often include ethnic, class, racial or religious groups. It has so been argued that liberal democratic states are limited in securing adequate representation of minority groups (Baclija, Hacek 2012:2). Democracy can then instead develop into a battle for wealth and power in which constitutions have at times been subverted, laws broken and public opinion manipulated (Philip 2003:3). In these cases democracy has been used to justify the existing inequalities in a country. Many countries of Latin America have seen this troubling aspects of democracy, where even though many transformed into democratic states in the 1980s there are still many unsolved policy problems (Philip 2003:1). A central challenge in several of these countries is how to balance the will of the many indigenous-, minority-, groups with the rest of the population.

In Bolivia the indigenous people, who consist of over 60% of the Bolivian population, have been excluded and marginalized both socially, economically and politically during centuries (Webber 2011:1). This continued even after the country became a liberal democracy in 1982, in where the inequalities between the mestizo-culture in power and the unrecognized indigenous population continued (Artaraz 2012:7). During the 1990s an uprising activism started where indigenous people demanded change and an end to centuries of discrimination and inequalities. This truly affected the politics in the country, and led to that the first indigenous president, Evo Morales, was elected in December 2005. Later in 2009, 27 years after the entrance of liberal democracy, the 36 indigenous groups became recognized for the very first time with the establishment of the new constitution. This is a historical moment for Bolivia and a considered opening for transformative change in the country. Today, the groups which before have been at the very lowest hierarchy in the society are now the protagonists in the changes that have started.
The events in Bolivia can be seen as a try to overcome the limitations of liberalism by deepening the promises of participatory democracy (Postero 2010:75), since liberal democracy clearly has not been sufficient to provide an equal, democratic society for all citizens in Bolivia. A democratic state requires that some form of political equality prevail among people (Held 1997:17), which have not been the case in Bolivia. A deepening democracy then requires moving beyond regular elections to take further steps toward strengthening citizenship and democratizing the state (Goldfrank 2011:13).

To include the former excluded indigenous people and make them more accessible to participate are core elements for the Morales administration and stated throughout the new constitution. The liberal democratic elements are still present, but now parallel to new participatory dimensions in order to increase the indigenous political participation and so forth deepen democracy in the country. As previous research suggests these efforts to transform liberalism through interactions with indigenous cultures and demands are done with a goal to deepen democracy (Postero 2010:63). With this background the overall question of this paper is to examine: “If democracy has deepened in Bolivia by looking at if the indigenous political participation has increased?”

1.1 Purpose

The indigenous people are defined as: “those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies … [who] consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them” (Davis 2009:4). In Bolivia this applies to 62% of the population (Webber 2011:1). However, even though Bolivia has been a democratic state since 1982, the country’s huge indigenous population did not become recognized until almost 30 years later when the new constitution got approved in 2009. The Morales administration aims to end the former exclusion of the indigenous groups by introducing new forms of participation dimensions in order to deepen the democracy in the country. The purpose of this paper is so forth to investigate if the political participation has increased in practice for the former excluded indigenous people during the Morales administration and with the establishment of a new constitution, in order to see whether democracy has been deepened in the country or not.
1.2 Specified questions

To investigate the purpose and answer the overall question - *if democracy has deepened in Bolivia by looking at if the indigenous political participation has increased* – there are three factors that are shown highly relevant when looking at the matter of participation (further explained in theory chapter 2). These are *Inclusion, Spaces for participation* and *Influence*. *Inclusion* refers to who is included to participate; if the different indigenous groups have the possibility to participate in the politics. This is closely linked to people’s socio-economic conditions which is argued affecting peoples opportunities to political activity, as well as indigenous representation in parliament, and level of recognition and decreased discrimination of the different indigenous groups. *Spaces for participation* refers to what new areas that have emerged in order to increase the indigenous political participation. In the new constitution indigenous autonomy and prior consultation are stated as ways to increase the indigenous political participation; to make decisions come closer to the local level and to the indigenous people. *Influence* refers to whether the indigenous people can affect the outcome of political decisions; if they are listened to by the government, if they get their questions up on the political agenda and if they feel represented by the government. This is also linked to if people feel safe to offer oppositional opinions and if there are political alternatives to the MAS.

The specified questions are based on these three factors of what promotes participation and are as follows:

1. *Are the indigenous groups included to participate?*
2. *Do the spaces for participation concerning the two main areas of indigenous autonomy and prior consultation function in practice?*
3. *Can the indigenous groups affect the outcome of political decisions?*
2. Previous Research & Theory

2.1 Previous Research

Previous research regarding the indigenous people in Bolivia has in recent years been focusing on the uprising activism of social movements and the contemporary process of change since the election of Evo Morales (see Sándor 2009, Webber 2011 etc). There is moreover a common understanding of these events to be unique and in need of further analysis and other measures than what have been used previously. Sándor John claims that Bolivia symbolizes new shifts in Latin America that do not fit into readymade patterns of the Latin American left (Sándor John 2009:1). It is a society split by class, ethnicity and region, and the inequality in the country is spectacular even by Latin American standards (Sándor John 2009:4).

Likewise, Artaraz argues that in Bolivia the process of change have a number of unique features, creating radical new forms of political commitment (Artaraz 2012:5). The Bolivian process of change challenges earlier knowledge in conceptual areas that are necessary to understand the world around us, including the concepts of power and democracy (Artaraz 2012:179).

Researchers such as Goldfrank, Kohl, Montambeault and Postero all agree on the importance to include other dimensions than the more limited definitions of democracy when looking at a case like Bolivia, which is the factor of participation (Goldfrank 2011, Kohl 2010, Montambeault 2008, Postero 2010). Postero sees the increased promises of democratic participation by the Morales administration as an attempt to make liberalism overcome its limitations; practices that expand and challenge previous definitions of democracy (Postero 2010:75). Therefore to see the events going on in Bolivia only from a liberal democratic perspective would not give a truthful picture.

However, there is a common misunderstanding among previous research of the countries of Latin America where there is a tendency of simplifications and Eurocentric reasoning (Schclarek 2011:11). Hart claims that this is a common mistake in previous research where researchers miss important factors when they get blinded by Eurocentric point of view. In a unique case like Bolivia, where participation and inclusion has come to focus in order to deepen the democracy in the country, it is essential to take into account other dimension of importance and to act outside the dominant worldview (Hart 2010:1-4).
Moreover there has been criticism towards previous research about the event going on in Bolivia as being too distant from the reality and so forth not give a truthful picture. Webber sees the discussion of the Bolivian process as being too torpor as many analysts uncritically celebrate Evo Morales and miss to examine the empirical reality (Webber 2011:2-4). He emphasizes the necessity to analyze the events going on in Bolivia from inside the country, with the exploited and oppressed themselves, and not, as has been more common, from outside the country by listening to leaders in the government speaking in their name (Webber 2011:234-235). Webber argues that not everything is as new in Bolivia as claimed and first when investigating the empirical reality one can condemn the gap between rhetoric and reality (Webber 2011:235).

With starting point in previous research it is so forth a lack of, and a necessity to, investigate the empirical reality, as well as to include other dimensions of participation, in order to approach a truthful picture of the contemporary events in Bolivia. In this context it is interesting to investigate the empirical reality of the indigenous political participation in order to give an answer to whether the democracy in the country has deepened or not.

2.2 Theory – Participation as a complement to liberal democracy

With starting point in previous research the necessity of alternative forms of democracy is essential when investigating a case like Bolivia. I will first explain why liberal democracy is not enough in the case of Bolivia and why the concept of participation can be used to draw a conclusion about a deepened democracy. I will then explain what participation democracy includes and then how it will be measured in this essay; present the core elements that have been used when investigating the indigenous political participation in Bolivia.

2.2.1 Liberal democracy is not always enough

Bolivia has been a representative liberal democratic state since 1982. Representative, or liberal, democracy is defined as to have leaders elected by popular vote, regular elections and a party based system (Held 1997:154). Nevertheless, the political system in Bolivia has been excluding certain categories of the population, mainly the many indigenous groups in the country, which has clearly been a limit to the quality of the democratic system (Montambeault 2008:7). With the
latest years of uprising movements, and the indigenous people’s demand for change and increased inclusion and participation, a new set of practices have appeared which expands and challenge previous definitions of democracy (Postero 2010:17). This is the effect of the poorly consolidated democracy Bolivia has seen since the entrance of representative democracy in 1982 and there is clearly an urge for something more where new forms of participation needs to complement the traditional representative democracy (Goldfrank 2011). The Bolivian government is trying to deepen democracy by transforming liberalism through interactions with indigenous cultures and demands (Postero 2010:63). Liberal democratic factors - regular elections, party based system and leaders elected by popular vote - have been kept parallel to new dimensions of participation in order to include the former excluded indigenous people and deepen the democracy in the country. Central in these new dimensions for participation is that individuals and institutions cannot be regarded separate from each other, but that all citizens in at least some aspects of self-government at least some of the time should be able to participate and so the limitations of liberal democracy can be transcended (Barber 1984:152). Since the majority of the population in Bolivia was excluded even during the years of liberal democracy, it is now essential to see how these new participation dimensions have impacted the former excluded indigenous population in order to see if there has been a deepened democracy in the country or not. Therefore the level of democracy in Bolivia will be measured by looking at these new dimensions of participation democracy explained below.

2.2.2 Dimensions of participation

The term participation means to be involved in decision-making and other activities in the area of social life (Baclija, Hacek 2012:54). Though participation democracy does not imply the impractical idea that all citizens participate in all public decisions at all levels of government, and it does not mean replacing representative democracy; it merely implies creating mechanisms of more direct forms of participation to complement the occasional elections and to compensate the ways the elites make their voices louder and more convincing (Goldfrank 2011:14). Whereas representative democracy makes a small number of citizens the mediators between central government and the rest of the population, participation democracy has mediating institutions in which all citizens can participate, at least at some point, and thereby strengthening both lateral and vertical ties (Barber 1984:249). Theories of participation democracy includes the central
assumption that individuals and institutions cannot be regarded separate from each other, and that institutions on a national level is not always enough for a complete democracy (Pateman 1971:26-27). Bolivia is a clear example of this where the majority of the population has been excluded from the political life during the 27 years of liberal democracy. Though there is necessarily not a contradiction between a participation society and a representative, liberal democratic governance, which means that they can co-exists where the participation factors can promote the qualities that are needed (Pateman 1971:24-27). This also seems to be the opinion of the Morales administration in Bolivia, where liberal democratic factors have been kept while introducing new participation factors in order to increase the indigenous political participation and deepen the democracy in the country. The Morales administration is trying to deepen democracy in Bolivia by making the former excluded indigenous population more accessible to participate. This is seen in the new constitution where new dimensions of participation are written in parallel to the former liberal democratic dimensions. Central dimensions of participation in the new constitution are the inclusion of all, spaces for participation as indigenous autonomy and prior consultation, and more influence over political decisions.

The first participation dimension concerns inclusion and who is included to participate. In a participation democracy everyone should have the possibility to be included on equal grounds (Barber 1984:249), and so all the different indigenous groups should be able to participate in the politics. People’s socio-economic conditions are closely linked to this, where it is argued that people’s resources, work and education affect the opportunities for political activity (Held 1997:327). Moreover, the level of recognition and decreased discrimination of the different indigenous groups are important for the inclusion, since inequalities between classes, gender and races highly limit participation, and to what degree people can be considered “free and equal” (Held 1999:327). The new constitution recognizes the 36 different indigenous groups, and so no one should be discriminated or excluded. This applies both for the indigenous political inclusion on the local level, in the municipalities, as well as indigenous representation in parliament.

The second participation dimension concerns spaces for participation and refers to the new areas that have emerged with the Morales administration and with the new constitution in order to increase the indigenous political participation. In the new constitution indigenous autonomy and
prior consultation are stated as the crucial ways to increase the indigenous political participation; to make decisions come closer to the local level and so to the indigenous people. These efforts to decentralize the state - move power from central to lower levels of government in order to make citizens more participative - is important for social construction of citizenship rights and for the deepening of democracy (Montambeault 2008:3). Since indigenous autonomy and prior consultation are stated in the new constitution as ways of moving decision-making closer to local levels of government in order to increase the indigenous political participation, these are the two areas that will be examined when looking at spaces for participation.

The third participation dimension concerns influence which implies to if the indigenous people can affect the outcome of political decisions; whether the different indigenous groups are listened to by the government, if they get their questions up on the political agenda and if they feel represented by the government. This is also related to if there are political alternatives to the MAS and if people feel safe to offer their political opinions (Morrell 1999:294).

3. Method & Material

In this section I will present an overview of the choices of methods I made in order to find answers to my research questions. To investigate if the indigenous political participation has resulted in a deepened democracy in Bolivia I chose to use a case study method combined with a short period of field work in Bolivia from beginning of November to end of December 2012. The fieldwork was made possible through the financing of SIDA’s scholarship for Minor Field Studies, MFS.

3.1 Choice of study object

The indigenous people in Bolivia have been marginalized, disadvantaged and oppressed ever since the colonial times. Even though the indigenous people consist of a majority in the country they have been treated as an inferior and exposed minority during history. The unique in the case of Bolivia is that the indigenous people have rose through social movements and demanded change, first when it comes to ethnicity and recognition, and later to focus on citizenship, rights
and democracy. Few countries have so strong, conscious and determined social movements as in Bolivia, where these have actually affected the society and the politics with their actions (Schclared Mulíñari 2011:128). The country now has a president with indigenous roots and a new constitution where the indigenous people are recognized for the very first time and where the indigenous people should now be able to participate more in order to deepen the democracy in the country.

A comparative study between Bolivia and another country in Latin America with a similar history, or another country with a high degree of indigenous, or minority, groups would have been of interest, but due to lack of time and space this was not an option. Since the interest of the study is to examine democracy in a multicultural society and Bolivia is the country in Latin America with the highest degree of indigenous people, it was chosen as the case of study. Furthermore a comparative study requires cases which are similar in almost every aspect (Lijphart 1971:687), and since the changes that are going on in Bolivia are unique it is another reason for not choosing a comparative study.

3.2 Delimitations
Since I had less than two month to conduct the fieldwork in Bolivia some limitations had to be done for the study to be viable. I chose to study organizations in both the high-, and lowlands since I early understood that the political environment is divided between these two parts of the country. Since I did not have time to find organizations from all of the countries nine departments, interviews were done with organizations from the regions of La Paz and Pando in the highlands, and Santa Cruz and Beni in the lowlands. This limitation can give a partly and polarized description of the phenomenon, but this was confronted by complement with interviews with other national organizations, NGOs and organizations which are not indigenous to also get a more general and objective view of the indigenous situation in the country at a national level.

3.3 Operationalization
To measure democracy in Bolivia, it was in the theory chapter argued the need to take into account the central participation dimensions *Inclusion, Spaces for participation* and *Influence*, which also constitute the three specified questions. These are the operational indicators that are used to examine the indigenous political participation in Bolivia.
The first specified question “Are the indigenous groups included to participate?”, was measured by looking at socio-economic conditions, indigenous representation in the parliament, as well as women participation, and in general if the different indigenous groups felt included to participate in decision-making.

The second specified question “Do the spaces for participation concerning the two main areas of indigenous autonomy and prior consultation function in practice?”, was measured by looking at how indigenous autonomy and the right to prior consultation has been functioning in practice.

The third specified question “Can the indigenous people affect the outcome of political decisions?”, was measured by looking at how and if all indigenous groups feel that they can influence political decisions, if people feel safe to offer oppositional opinions and if there are political alternatives to MAS.

All together these three specified questions will give an answer to whether the indigenous political participation has increased and so forth answer the overall question if democracy has deepened in Bolivia.

3.4 Research design

Since the research aims to investigate if democracy has deepened in the country by looking at if the indigenous political participation has increased it is a descriptive, as well as an analytic research, since the study aims to answer different why-questions and assumptions about correlations (Esaiasson et al 2012:36). So forth, how what is happening currently in Bolivia has affected the indigenous political participation and so forth the democracy in the country. Since it is the case of Bolivia which is in particular interest for the study, to answer a more general question about how democracy can be deepened with increased political participation in a multicultural society, it is a theory-consuming investigation where theories are chosen to understand and/or explain a case (Esaiasson et al 2012:41).

Since this study aims to examine the level of democracy in Bolivia by taking into account the participation dimensions in the society an empirical research was necessary to investigate how the indigenous groups are experiencing their possibilities to participate in the politics. For this purpose qualitative interviews were most appropriate since the aim is to find out how people themselves apprehend their world (Esaiasson et al 2012:253). Since indigenous groups are the ones which have been excluded historically and the ones who first became recognized in 2009,
focus will lay on examining if the indigenous people now are able to participate to a higher extent than before.

An interview guide with a clear connection to the core problem of the investigation was made, and the questions were formed to be short and easy to understand with the aim to get long and descriptive answers (Esaiasson et al 2012:264). There were first some beginning questions generally about the new constitution, if changes had been experienced and opinions about Morales and the politics of MAS. Thereafter followed questions more specifically about their possibilities to participate in politics, if they feel included, different spaces for participation and if they can influence the politics, with the aim of together give a picture of the overall core problem. Interviews were made until there was a theoretical saturation; that is until it did not emerge any new relevant aspects of the phenomenon central for the investigation (Esaiasson et al 2012:259). The interviews were further analyzed in relation to the new constitution through a participation democratic theory explained above.

3.5 Selection of organizations and respondents

Bolivia has a deeply rooted division among its population since the colonial times; between the colonized, indigenous, poor, and the colonial, rich in the lowlands (Schclarek 2011:10). The small elite in the lowlands has had the political power until Evo Morales became the first indigenous president in the country in 2006. Since it is the indigenous people that have been historically marginalized and excluded from the politics until they became recognized for the first time in the new constitution in 2009, the core to investigate how the new constitution have contributed to a deepened democracy in the country lies in how the situation has improved for the indigenous people. In Bolivia over 60 % of the population identifies themselves as indigenous (Webber 2011:1) and within these there are 36 different indigenous groups. The biggest indigenous groups are Aymara, Quechua and Guaranís, and the rest are very small, minority-, indigenous groups. The remaining 30 % are mestizos which is the only group that in general has not been discriminated or left out from the politics as the rest of the population has been. In the selection of organizations and respondents consideration was taken to the historical division between highland and lowland in the country. Therefore interviews were made with indigenous groups on the high lands and on the low lands, as well as with large indigenous groups and smaller indigenous groups, complemented with interviews with national, non-
indigenous organizations, NGOs and authorities in the government. The selection of respondents was made due to different groups of indigenous people, in different parts of the country, with different political directions and positions. With a good selection of respondents it could be sufficient with around ten interviews to do interesting analyzes (Esaiasson et al 2012:259). In this study nineteen interviews were done, eleven interviews with indigenous organizations and eight with other organizations, NGOs and authorities in the minister of La Paz.

3.6 Material and Qualitative interviews
Main source of information have been interviews with respondents from different organizations and written material of previous researches about the research field. Nineteen qualitative research interviews were carried out; eleven interviews with different indigenous organizations, and eight interviews with other organizations, NGOs and authorities from the Minister in La Paz. The reason why NGOs were interviewed is for the fact that many have played an important role in the indigenous struggle in working with indigenous rights and supporting the interests of the landless peasants (Webber 2011:96). They are therefore highly relevant when investigating the indigenous political participation in today’s Bolivia. Interviewed NGOs were Defensoria del Pueblo, an organization that works for the human rights of the indigenous people, Territorial Foundation, that works with territorial rights of the indigenous people, LIDEMA, that works with the defense of the Bolivian environment, and another respondent from an anonymous NGO. Also respondents from the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Population Fund, a politician from the Green Party, and the Minister of Justice in La Paz were interviewed. All involved with indigenous issues and so relevant for my study. Added to this were 11 interviews with indigenous organizations; both in the high-, and lowlands, as well as with big indigenous groups, as Aymara, Quechua and Guaraní, as for smaller indigenous groups.

I chose to not do group interviews with the risk that this could affect the respondents’ answers since I noted quite early that the theme of my research could be a sensitive area and many of the respondents were afraid that someone would hear their answers. Therefore I used only single-person interviews that were realized in a calm and separate environment where the respondents could feel comfortable and assured that no one was listening. Every respondent got information about what the study was for and the chance to be anonymous.
The interviews took from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the length of the respondent’s answers. All interviews had the same themes about participation and the indigenous situation and were open where the respondents had the chance to give her, or his, personal opinion within the theme or question asked. The interviews were all conducted in Spanish. Although many indigenous groups in Bolivia also have their own indigenous language there was no problem since all of the respondents also talked Spanish, and so forth none of the interviews required an interpreter. To not risk to miss anything of the interviews they were all recorded and then transcribed so that I could work with them as a qualitative analysis. Afterwards the unit of meaning was codified, to identify the important themes related to my research questions.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Since the aim of this paper is to examine if democracy has deepened by looking at if the indigenous political participation has increased, and this is done by investigating the indigenous possibilities to participation in matter of inclusion, spaces for participation and influence according to the theoretical framework, it has a good validity. There is accordance between the theoretical definitions and the operationalized indicators and the paper measure what is meant to measure (Esaiasson et al 2012:56). Analyzing qualitative interviews is based on interpretation which makes that reliability problems might occur. Different researchers can make different judgments of which alternative in the dimensions different expressions belong to. To minimize the risk of interpret the answers wrongfully they were all recorder, transcribed and translated from Spanish to English and then the core meaning of each theme was summarized. There is also a risk that the researchers pre-understanding might affect the result. To minimize this risk research were done about Bolivia and the theme for my study so that I was informed about the situation and had insight about different perspectives of the problem before going to the country and conduct the interviews.
4. Background

This section will give some necessary background to the political history and contextualization to Bolivia. This functions as background to the empirical findings discussed in the following chapter.

4.1 Historical background

Ever since the Spaniards conquered Bolivia over 500 years ago the people that were there before their arrival, that is the indigenous people, have been marginalized and excluded socially, economically and politically. Bolivia got independence from Spain in 1825, though the independence was followed by turmoil, civil wars, loss of seacoast and many military takeovers (Sánders 2009:2).

Over a century later, in 1982 Bolivia became a democracy, but the hopes that freedom and participation would account for all in a new era of well-being in Bolivia turned out to be false (Artaraz 2012:7). The neoliberal politics introduced shortly after did not bring with it the promised economic and social effects and so a period of crisis followed the return to democracy in Bolivia. The model of neoliberal economic development, with free-market and privatization, generated large profit for transnational cooperation's (TNCs) and for a small national elite, and left the majority of Bolivians without (Artaraz 2012:43). This generated in wider social implications for the majority of Bolivians, mainly the indigenous population. During the two decades following the transition to democratization, the Bolivian party-political system failed to deliver and adapt to popular demand, and so a national frustration followed the return to democracy (Artaraz 2012:40-41). As a consequence social movements started organizing during the 1990s. The political crisis in the country explains the emergence of popular rebellion, a bottom-up mobilization of citizens through the channels of organized civil society, which would deliver the socialist movement (Artaraz 2012:44).

In 1995 a political instrument was formed between the different social movements in Bolivia where the five biggest movements that organizes indigenous people and/or farmers were part
The leader of the *cocalero* movement, Evo Morales, became vice president for this newly formed political instrument, which later became the political party “Movement towards Socialism” (*Movimiento al Socialismo*, MAS). The indigenous population was now able to challenge the failed political system that had grown with the return to democracy and the economic model of development that supported it, at least discursively (Artaraz 2012:43). In 2002 MAS became the second strongest power in the Bolivian parliament and three years later Evo Morales was elected president (Schclarek 2011:36), and so became the first indigenous president in South American history (Sándor 2009:1).

### 4.2 Bolivia under Morales

The presidency of Evo Morales has a great symbolic impact for the huge indigenous population in the Bolivian society, which constitutes of around two-thirds of the population. When Evo Morales got elected in December 2005 he said in his first speech as president that this was “the end of the colonial and neoliberal era” (Artaraz 2012:13). One of the first things Morales did was to gather a constituent assembly, whose members were chosen by Bolivians in a referendum, to write a new constitution (Artaraz 2012:55). This was easier said than done and the following years were followed by increased political violence when trying to reach consensus about what the new constitution would include (Artaraz 2012:11). Shortly after Morales got president in 2006 he also followed through on his promise to nationalize Bolivia’s natural gas. Morales renegotiated the contracts with the oil and gas companies, that before received 82% profit which left Bolivian state with only a small portion, to now instead give the Bolivian state about 54% of profits (Postero 2010:62). This has produced enormous revenues, much of which has been returned to the people in the form of state-welfare programs, donations of tractors to peasant unions, a popular retirement account for senior citizens, a national subsidy to schoolchildren and their families, a national literacy program, and a zero-malnutrition program to eliminate childhood malnutrition (Postero 2010:62). However, it is argued that even though this means more revenue for the Bolivian state it still leaves ultimate control of the industry in the hands of petroleum transnationals, and so the MAS government’s policy has in many ways continued the

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1 *Cocaleros* are the coca-leaf farmers that rose as a political power with Evo Morales as their leader. The coca-leaf has been used for centuries by the indigenous people for high-sickness, hunger and tiredness, though it is also the main ingredient in cocaine (Schlarek 2011:14).
neoliberal trajectory (Webber 2011:99). Therefore critics have called the renegotiation of gas contracts with multinationals as an ostensible nationalization (Sándor John 2009:240). Moreover, Morales promised a land reform in where land have been given to poor peasants, though this has been criticized as still being favoring the largest owners (Sándor John 2009:240). This due to the resistance that was followed by the large land owners, and so the land reform had to change into limit land-owner only when concerning new acquisition, so the majority of the land is still in the hands of a minority of the population.

After years of discussions and political violence the final vote in 2009, to either approve or reject the new constitutional text, received 61 % of the votes (Artaraz 2012:55). In the new Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia from 2009 the 36 different indigenous groups in the country are recognized for the first time, which means that the former excluded indigenous groups now should have the same rights as the mestizos, as well as certain indigenous rights and protection. With the new constitution began the process of implementation of the new constitutional text to end centuries of oppression and exclusion of the indigenous majority (Artaraz 2012:55). This is seen as the MAS government experiment in direct democracy, in where the indigenous people should now be able to participate more in order to deepen democracy in the country (Postero 2010:62).
5. Result/Analysis

This chapter will account for the findings I received through my data collection in Bolivia. The three specified questions, which are based on the theoretical framework of Inclusion, Space and Influence, will constitute one section each in the chapter, with some sub-chapter after what was discovered in the field. Interviews have been intertwined with literature and other research on the area, and give a deeper analysis of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework. These three sections will later together give an answer about the indigenous political participation and so forth answer the overall question whether democracy has been deepened in Bolivia or not.

5.1 Inclusion

The first specified question concerns the matter of inclusion and of who participates, and aims to answer the question *if the indigenous groups are included to participate?* The section is divided into four sub-categories after what was discovered in the field concerning the indigenous political inclusion.

5.1.1 Socio-economic conditions

It is argued that people that are marginalized and have low socio-economic conditions in a society also participate in the politics to a low degree (Held 2011:330). So forth socio-economic factors are related to the degree in which people participate and are included in the politics and are therefore relevant when looking at inclusion and of who participates. In Bolivia the indigenous people have during history had the lowest socio-economic status among the population, been the poorest and most marginalized in the society, and also been the ones participating least in politics and decision making. Hence this correlation is to be found also in the Bolivia case.

In Bolivia poverty and indigenous people go hand in hand; two-thirds of the Bolivian population is poor and two thirds (or 62 %) indigenous, and these two groups largely overlap (Artaraz 2012:101). Today the Bolivian state puts a big emphasis to improve the socio-economic conditions for the indigenous population in terms of tackling poverty, poor health, education, and access to basic services like water and sanitation, and their plan is to eradicate extreme poverty
by 2015 under the “living well” banner (Artaraz 2012:113-114). Though, Paulino Guarachi from Territorial Foundation is skeptical to the governments’ promises:

“People support Evo for these things to change. Though the politics in general has not changed, but the neoliberal politics continue. In the discourse it has changed, but in the deeds the country is going with the same politics as before. Bolivia is still one of the countries with the highest poverty and lack of alimentation. It is worrying where “living well” is heading, who is living well?” (Territorial Foundation).

Many indigenous organizations had the same impression. Evelyn Prieto Miro from the lowland organization CMIZAP believes that the governments’ promises about better socio-economic conditions for the indigenous people resulted in that many voted for Morales in the first place. People thought that since Morales is indigenous he would see what the indigenous people needed and give it to them (CMIZAP). Though, as Prieto Miro claims, instead the government goes out to the indigenous communities and the organizations and offer presents, when what they should do is to give the indigenous communities schools, health center and hospitals, which is their obligation to do and what the government promised the people (CMIZAP). Ramira Chiqueno Nurumine, from the lowland organization CPESC, has the similar impression. She believes that the government is using their power by giving presents in the countryside where there are no phones or cars:

“Evo knows how to buy the poor people, because they need things. So Evo promises things and gives to the poor people to get their approval or to silence their discontent. It can be anything from a new car, to water.” (CPESC)

However, Eugenio Mullucundo, from Defensoria del Pueblo, claims that poverty has decreased a little, and that the socio-economic conditions has gotten better at least for some. There are people that still feel left out and unprotected, those who despair and feels that nothing has improved, as we saw above, while others think that better days will come. These people feel that they have to continue supporting, that little time has passed still and they have to continue hoping (Defensoria del Pueblo). One of those is Reinaldo Artega from the lowland organization CMIB:

“The support still has not reached to all communities and villages, but Evo has shown by being in communication of support and bringing development. We talk with him about the needs we have, he sees our needs and is in accordance with how to solve it” (CMIB).
Rosa Cama from the highland organization FEDECOMIN also believes that things have changed. She explains that before they suffered in her community but that since the approval of the new constitution it has changed. Before the indigenous people were discriminated, they did not have any rights, but now they do (FEDECOMIN).

As we see people have different experiences concerning the socio-economic conditions. Some feel that changes have reached their communities and that their socio-economic conditions have improved, some believes that it has not, and some believes that it will come if one just gives it time. Though, what Edgar Sumami from Partido Verde does claim is that whether or not the indigenous development has reached some communities or not, he believes that the political situation for the indigenous people has improved (Partido Verde). Below follows the indigenous political situation more specifically, first when it comes to representation in parliament.

5.1.2 Indigenous representation in parliament
At the moment there are indigenous people in the parliament. Though, as a respondent from the United Nations Population Fund, that works with indigenous groups in Bolivia, states, there are only 7 indigenous delegates; 7 out of 166 that correspond to indigenous (UNFPA). Even though there were no indigenous people in the parliament at all before the Morales administration there is still a very low percentage of indigenous people. The politician Edgar Sumami further explains that these indigenous people in the parliament are only part of the government and do not have political power (Partido Verde). Another respondent from an anonymous organization that works with defense of the environment in Bolivia admits that there are more indigenous people in the parliament than before, but that these people do not have influence over the decisions since they cannot decide, not object or oppose (Alvarado). He states that a parliament can have indigenous people, but if they do not have any influence it is not a real indigenous parliament (Alvarado).

Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena, from Defensoria del Pueblo, calls this “a quantitative representation, but not qualitative”. He explains that the few indigenous people that are in the parliament are part of the MAS party and so they cannot oppose even if they are not in accordance (Defensoria del Pueblo). He explains further that among the ministers there are Aymara and Guaranís, but the other indigenous groups are few, the majority is not represented
(Defensoria del Pueblo). This is confirmed by the Minister of Justice, Izabel Ortega, who says that there are Aymara and Guaraní represented in the parliament, but not from all of the other indigenous groups (Minister of Justice). So even if there is more indigenous representation in the parliament now than before it is still a very low percentage of indigenous people. Though what has improved when it comes to representation in parliament is the increased percentage of women, as follows below.

### 5.1.3 Women representation

Something that has improved in the parliament since the MAS administration took office is the increased amount of women. In the new constitution it is stated that in political representation there will be a “guarantee of equal participation among men and women” (2009). Izabel Ortega from the Minister of Justice explains that the participation of women has increased after the new constitution. Before there were more men than women in the parliament, but now there are 50/50 men and women (Minister of Justice). Nellie Arrista, from the United Nations Development Program, explains that the increase of women represented have made that the women have more confidence in Morales (UNDP). This turned out to be true in some cases. Mamani Choque, a respondent with Aymara origin from a highland organization, explains that before the indigenous women were discriminated, but now it has changed (CCM). Likewise, Rosa Cama, a respondent with Quechua-Aymara origin from a highland organization, also believes that the women situation has changed;

> “The state guarantees the equality of rights for both women and men. In the communities this has changed now. Before we were discriminated, the men decided everything, but now it has changed, even if it is not a 100 % advance” (FEDECOMIN).

Evelyn Prieto, with Moseteng origin from a lowland organization, has a different opinion. She believes that the indigenous women are still isolated from the social and political environment (CMIZAP). This may be due to, as Eugenio Mullucundo explains, that in political participation there is an important *quantitative*, but not *qualitative* part of women. By that he means that women take part nowadays in the parliament, but they do not have the important posts; the leader posts are still occupied by men and so the women do not have significant influence (Defensoria del Pueblo).
Though also worth mentioning is the fact of the gender inequalities among the indigenous people. In the indigenous organizations there are still almost no women in the leader levels, there is some more consciousness, but it is still missing in practice (Defensoría del Pueblo). The men cannot let the women participate; the indigenous in power do not let the women advance (Partido Verde). So even if there is a bigger representation of women in the parliament today, it does not mean that it is more equal in the society or among the indigenous groups themselves. Though what became clear during the fieldwork is that the indigenous women have taken up the struggle towards a more equal society between men and women, which is slowly giving results.

Below follows the indigenous feeling more specifically of their political situation when it comes to inclusion to participate in the politics.

5.1.4 Inclusion of indigenous groups

The inclusion of everyone, with emphasis on the former unrecognized indigenous population, is clear in almost every page of the new constitution and something claimed high on the agenda of the Morales administration. During the conducted fieldwork it was though clear that the inclusion of all stated in the new constitution was not as evident for everyone in practice.

Most respondents of Aymara and Quechua origin in the highlands were positive about their inclusion nowadays compared to before. A respondent with Quechua origin, Rosa Cama, from the indigenous highland mine organization FEDECOMIN, explains that before the indigenous people were discriminated and did not enter the government, but now it has changed; indigenous people and the mestizos nowadays have the same rights, it is equal, according to her, thanks to Morales and the MAS administration (FEDECOMIN). Mamani Choque, a respondent with Aymara origin from the highland organization CCM, also has the impression that the indigenous people are included to participate more than before;

“Before the government did not care about the indigenous people, now with the MAS government we are included for the first time” (CCM).

Marta Pinoza, a respondent with Aymara origin from the highland indigenous organization focused on women, Foro de Mujeres, also said that things have changed. She has the impression that the government has given the indigenous, as well as for the indigenous women, a lot of
changes, and that they are participating more (Foro de Mujeres). Similar answers were given by all respondents of Aymara and Quechua origin in the highlands.

On the contrary most of the interviewed organizations on the lowlands, which are mainly smaller indigenous groups, were more pessimistic about their inclusivity and chances to participate. Yaniele Añez, a respondent with Chicitana origin from the lowland organization CIBAPA, part of the big lowland organization OICH, said:

“At the end the government did their pacts to create in a clean way the assembly. But for the indigenous people it is not as we wanted it but something just put together […]. This was not what we asked for, we wanted change for Bolivia but not the way the government is doing it. We wanted participation for all Bolivians, that no one would be left out, be white, choco, indigenous, productive sectors, companies, whoever, because we all live in Bolivia.” (CIBAPA-OICH)

Evelyn Prieto Miro, a respondent with Moseteng origin from the organization CMIZAP, part of the biggest lowland umbrella organization CIDOB, says that:

“Now in the constitution we, the indigenous people, are counted in, but unfortunately it is not carried out […]. People around the government are not complying the functions of the new constitution, it is like a book which is written, but not read” (CMIZAP).

It was clear that the indigenous groups in the lowlands did not feel included to participate in decision making, since most of them still felt discriminated. The only exception of respondents in the lowlands that did feel included to participate was respondents with Guaraní origin, which is also the thirds biggest indigenous group in the country. Cachari Pachinda, a respondent with Guaraní origin, from the organization APH, part of the lowland organization CIDOB, feels that the indigenous people are included:

“The new constitution has had an effect for the indigenous people. All is not yet complied, but the government is complying it, it goes forward.” (APH)

With the exception from the Guaraní group, the interviewed indigenous groups in the lowland did not feel included, in contrast to the highland groups, namely Aymara and Quechua, who did feel more included to participate now compared to before.
Even a respondent with Aymara origin from the highland organization Hakisa, part of the biggest highland umbrella organization CONAMAQ, also had the impression that the lowlands are discriminated:

“People in the lowlands are feeling very discriminated, we also felt that before but now with this government we are changing, they are supporting us on the high lands.” (CONAMAQ, Hakisa)

Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena, a coordinator of the program of human rights for the indigenous people in the organization Defensoria del Pueblo, explains these differences between high- and lowlands by pointing to the fact that the indigenous groups in the highland have adopted to the dominant culture more easily and so forth have been more involved in the processes, whilst in the lowland the process has been more slow (Defensoria del Pueblo).

Other analysts claim that it has to do with the “Aymara-centric” character in the new constitution and that Morales and the MAS are not governing for all Bolivians (Albro 2010:1-3). Since Evo Morales himself is Aymara this could then explain why the Aymara people in the highland feel more included. What can also explain these differences is the fact the Andean highlands has a large population of indigenous people, mainly with Aymara- and Quechua origin, while in the Orient, the eastern lowlands, there is much less indigenous presence and smaller indigenous groups (Postero 2010:64).

5.2 Spaces for participation

The second specified question concerns spaces for participation; *if the spaces for participation concerning the two main areas of indigenous autonomy and prior consultation function in practice?* There are two main areas that have been shown important. First the matter of indigenous autonomy which is argued to be one of the main pillars of the new constitution and essential in the new vision of the country as a plurinational state (Defensoria del Pueblo). Second, the matter of right to prior consultation, which has appeared essential and stated as one of the most important matter in the new constitution for the construction of the plurinational state (Partido Verde). So forth these two areas are essential when examining spaces for participation.
5.2.1 Right to indigenous autonomy

One area that is stated in the new constitution and argued essential for a more participating society is the matter of autonomy. Power from central to lower levels of government makes local politicians more accountable and citizens more participative which is essential for social construction of citizenship rights and for the deepening of democracy (Montambeault 2008:3).

Direct political activity begins with mediate and local forms of government (Barber 1987:249). In order for this to reach the indigenous people it is now stated in the new Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in Article 2, that the indigenous people should have the “right to autonomy and self-government” (2009). It is further elaborated in Article 272 what this right to autonomy contains; “Autonomy implies the direct election of the authorities by the male and female citizens, the administration of its economic resources, and the exercise of legislative, regulatory, fiscal and executive authority by the organs of the autonomous government in the area of its jurisdiction, competence and attributions” (2009).

Paulino Guarachi, responsible for indigenous autonomy in the Territorial Foundation, explains that when Evo Morales got voted for the second time in 2009 there was a strong demand for department autonomy, to advance towards federalism. With the call for the constituent assembly there was also the call for referendum for autonomy for the departments (Territorial Foundation). This strong demand for indigenous autonomy was established in the new constitution later that year. However, when it comes to implementing the matter of indigenous autonomy it has been proven to be more complicated. During election time referendums were done to see which of the municipalities in the country that wanted indigenous autonomy, in which 11 voted in favor. Though in order to achieve complete autonomy as stated in the constitution Article 272 (see above) these 11 municipalities have to comply some conditional steps which have turned out to be complicated to achieve. William Michell, from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), that works closely with different indigenous organizations, points to the difficulty of complying these demands and achieve complete indigenous autonomy:

“According to the autonomy law the 11 indigenous autonomies that are in the process in the country have to follow some steps to be really autonomous. Even though the legislation says that they have 11 month, still, after three years no one have complete autonomy because they have not reached the last phase of approbation of the statue referendum.” (UNFPA)
Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena, from the organization Defensoria del Pueblo, that works with indigenous autonomy believes that the reason why the process is going so slow is because of the unwillingness of the government to implement complete indigenous autonomy. He explains it further:

“The alcaldes of these municipalities are elected by the MAS and are so forth part of the governmental party. If MAS implements complete autonomy the municipality will choose alcaldes according to indigenous customs which is not in accordance with the government, and so the government will lose power in these areas.” (Defensoria del Pueblo)

Since complete indigenous autonomy has not been achieved the 11 municipalities that are in the process still have the same antique structure where the alcalde is elected by the political party in power and not by the people in the municipality, as is now stated in the new constitution, and they have the same laws as before (Defensoria del Pueblo).

Paulino Guarachi emphasizes that there are also new laws that makes the implementation of the indigenous autonomy more difficult, laws that are putting padlocks to the implementation of indigenous autonomy (Territorial Foundation). He sees further all the demands that have to be achieved before reaching complete autonomy as another sign that the government does not want complete indigenous autonomy at all (Territorial Foundation).

Nellie Arrista, from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Bolivia, states that the matter of autonomy has always been complicated:

“There has never been a previous government that voluntary wanted to apply the indigenous autonomies, to approve the consulting right or to really declare a plurinational state. Now these things are stated in the new constitution, but still many work against the indigenous autonomy in the political administration.” (PNUD)

She also mention the unwillingness for previous governments to apply the consulting right which is closely related to indigenous autonomy, and the second important area following below.

5.2.2 Right to Prior Consultation

The new constitution of the plurinational state of Bolivia states in Article 30:15 that the indigenous originary farmer nations and people have the right to: “be consulted by means of the appropriate procedures [...] every time legislative or administrative measures susceptible of
affecting them are anticipated. Within this framework the right to an obligatory prior consultation will be respected and guaranteed.” (2009)

Edgar Sumami, a politician with Chicitana, origin sees the right to consultation as one of the most important matters in the new constitution for the construction of the plurinational state, which unfortunately, he believes, the government is not complying (Partido Verde). He gives the example of TIPNIS where in September 2011 a march by indigenous people began to La Paz from the Isiboro-Sércure National Park and Indigenous Territory (known as TIPNIS). The protest was against a planned road through their territory that had been approved without their consent, something that was against both the constitution and international law in its denial of indigenous rights (Artaraz 2012:185). This has been seen as the most serious political crisis of the MAS to date and resulted in a wide discontent among the indigenous people. Before starting to construct the TIPNIS road the government should have implemented the consulting right, in accordance with the new constitution, when this did not happen a resistance was created among the indigenous villages both in the orient and in the occident (UNDP).

A respondent from LIDEMA, an organization that works with the defense of the environment in Bolivia, also points to the matter of TIPNIS when stating that the right to prior consultation is not being implemented (LIDEMA). He underlines that the analysis of what is going on in Bolivia today changes when focusing on what is happening in the practice;

“The political process that is going on in Bolivia has a double discourse; one thing what says the discourse (the constitution) and another thing what happens in practice.” (LIDEMA)

The matter of consultation is an example of this, which is seen in the events of TIPNIS. Paulino Guarachi, responsible for the indigenous autonomy in the Territorial Foundation, believes that it is uncomfortable for the government all that the new constitution incorporates with respect to the rights for the indigenous villages, the collective rights, to land and territory, autonomy and prior consulting. When Evo wants to develop any extractive activity he has to do the consulting and now it seems like this is a matter that he will not allow (Territorial Foundation). For the MAS to go against the consulting right in some matters means going against the constitution and the indigenous rights. MAS cannot pretend to be at the forefront of
indigenous demands while breaking the terms of its own constitution on indigenous rights (Artaraz 2012:186).

5.3 Influence
The third specified question concerns the matter of influence and questions if the indigenous groups can affect the outcome of political decisions?

5.3.1 “All are heard, but some more and some less”
The highland organizations, mainly Aymara and Quechua groups of origin, and Guaraní respondents, were mostly positive about their possibilities to influence the politics. A respondent with Aymara origin from the organization Hakisa, part of CONAMAQ, had the impression that the indigenous people can influence to a higher degree in the politics now than before. One way of doing it is to gather in meetings with other indigenous organizations and through that they can reach out politically (Hakisa, CONAMAQ).
Another respondent, with Quechua origin from the highland states that in matter of influence in politics for the indigenous people it has improved:

“It has changed, but it is not a 100 %. We are equal now, we are in the process, but now it has changed” (FEDECOMIN).

Cachari Pachinda, a respondent with Guaraní origin from the lowland organization APH, part of CIDOB, see positive to the indigenous possibilities to influence the politics. She claims that the indigenous people can influence more in the politics today, as long as it is in accordance with what the indigenous rights say (APH, CIDOB).

In contrast most lowland organizations did not feel that they had more influence or power over politics and decision-making. One respondent from a lowland organization explains that after Evo got elected the first time in 2005 they felt that he was struggling for the indigenous people, with the approval of the new constitution that recognized the 36 indigenous nationalities and their languages, but then in the second gest the lowlands have been marginalized and the highlands have been improving (CMIZAP). Another respondent from a lowland organization say that the
highland have more support for project which makes it easier for them to participate, whilst there are little opportunities in the lowlands (CMIB).

However, against what was discovered when talking directly to the indigenous organizations, the Minister of Justice in La Paz claims that:

“All indigenous groups are heard by the government”.

But then she adds;

“it is just that some are heard more and some less.” (Minister of Justice)

It was clear that the indigenous groups in the lowlands felt that they had less opportunity to influence the decision-making and that they felt less supported by the government than the indigenous organizations in the highlands. A respondent from a lowland organization explains that the only way for them to influence the politics is to march and protest;

“The marches are a strategy for us to get up on the agenda. A march is how to succeed, without this and the movements we cannot succeed anything, not respect the rights, not our territories, nothing” (CMIB).

These words are proven to be right when looking at the TIPNIS matter where neither the indigenous rights nor their territory were respected even though it is stated in the new constitution. So once again the indigenous people had to protest and march in order to make their voices heard. As another lowland respondent say:

“What the government is doing, which we have to see, is that it is not only the question of the road, but the fact that they are violating our rights, rights that are stated in the new constitution. If we allow this they will start violating all rights. If we don’t defend TIPNIS they will take us a step back again.” (CMIZAP)

There was moreover a widespread impression that there is not any indigenous group that has more influence or have more support from the government, but that the MAS instead is in favor of different sectors, as follows below.

5.3.2 In favor of who?

Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena has the impression, as most other respondents, that the different indigenous groups do not have equal support from the government, nor equal influence. But he believes that the government, instead of supporting any specific indigenous groups, is more in
favor of different sectors, mainly the farmers, that they are directly allied with the government and the privileged actor (Defensoria del Pueblo).

Paulino Guarachi, from Territorial Foundation, also has the impression that the farmers have more support from the government than any indigenous group nowadays, which seemed to be a widespread impression from many respondents (Territorial Foundation). Edgar Sumami states that the TIPNIS road was planned to favor the coca farmers since Evo is from a cocalero movement and so forth only fighting for his movement and not the indigenous groups (Partido Verde). Therefore Sumami calls Bolivia a “cocalero democracy” in where the coca farmers have the power, since they now have a president that is a former leader of the coca movement. A respondent from a lowland organization draws a parallel to TIPNIS and to the coca and claims that “to accept TIPNIS is to accept the coca, Evo only wants the road to grow the coca-leaf” (CEMIG).

It is true that Evo rose as leader of the cocalero movement, and when MAS was formed in 1999 it was a coalition of indigenous and rural/peasant social movements that fell under the leadership of the coca-leaf growers (Artaraz 2012:48). Though in spite of the claim that MAS is a party of the social movements, there is a lack of connection between the masses and the current government nowadays (Artaraz 2012:189). As we have seen many indigenous groups are dissatisfied and feel the inequality among high-and lowlands, as well as those who claim, as one respondent from a lowland organization do: “The MAS is not looking for all the Bolivians equally, they are neither in favor of any indigenous group, but are favoring sectors, sectors who supports them” (CIBAPA-OICH).

5.3.3 Oppositional opinions & alternatives to MAS

In order to increase citizens’ positive perceptions of decision-making process Morrell argues that participation must be structured so that citizens feel safe to offer their political opinions without fear of being attacked as persons (Morrell 1999:294). This is no less essential in an indigenous democratic state:

“It is important that people in an indigenous democratic state can object some official development proposals without being considered as enemies or being left out. At the moment this is not occurring, instead the indigenous are stigmatized as enemies of change, like oppositions. When the indigenous protest peacefully, they are seen as right wing or opposition.” (Alvarado)
Evelyn Prieto Miro, a respondent with Moseteng origin from the lowland organization CMIZAP, part of CIDOB, claims that if someone is against the opinion of the MAS government they do not listen, people that are not in accordance with the government are replaced (CMIZAP). She gives the example of what happened with the leaders that participated in the last march;

“The people that went out now for the ninth march, all these leaders that were there until the last moment, fighting, defending our rights, they now do not have space anymore. Instead they are persecuted by the government for not being in accordance.” (CMIZAP)

Paulino Guarachi, who works close to different indigenous groups daily, explains that if someone opinions something contrary to the government in general they are seen as enemies and taken away. He explains that there are no new expressions in the politics and in the government the people have to have a low profile, otherwise they are quickly replaced if opinion something different (Territorial Foundation).

It was obvious during the conducting research work that many of the respondents felt uncomfortable when talking about the government, especially respondents with higher positions or from a group or organization that were “supposed to be in favor of the government”, that is being Aymara, or have some other bond to Evo. If these respondents accidently said something that was clearly oppositional to the government they became very nervous, started questioning the research, wanted to be anonymous or made sure that no one else could hear what they were saying. This confirms what Edgar Sumami, a politician from Partido Verde said:

“A lot of people are afraid of expressing oppositional opinions. Talk against this government and they can accuse you of things and put you in prison.” (Partido Verde)

Another respondent confirms people’s reason for being afraid of expressing oppositional opinions by claiming that the government persecutes the people that are against, or cut food access to their communities (Alvarado). Some of the respondents had experienced it themselves.

What moreover came up during the research of influence were the widespread impressions of the government intentions to divide the indigenous umbrella organizations. The last years the indigenous movements have been fragmentized in an unthinkable way (Alvarado). It was during the ninth march that the government started to fragmentize the indigenous villages and they are
now fragmentized and divided (Partido Verde). It was because CIDOB (the biggest indigenous, umbrella-organization in the lowlands) was not in accordance with the government, and so they started to divide and making a CIDOB that responded better to the government (Defensoria del Pueblo). This succeeded and now there is one CIDOB that supports the government and another that is more or less secret (the old/original one), with very little support. Within CONAMAQ (the biggest indigenous umbrella-organization in the highlands) the government has also put their influence to create inside groups to divide (Defensoria del Pueblo). So today there are two CONAMAQ and two CIDOB, with two leaders in each, the original one and one put there by the government, and the government listens and gives more support to the leaders put there by the government, they give them projects and development support (Partido Verde).

Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena believes it hard to replace the MAS party since they have all the powers captured at the moment, the legislative, judicial and the executive, and there is no other alternative.

“There are a lot of dissatisfied people but there is only the alternative of the new or the old, so one have to reconsider it closely. Not many want to go back to how it was before” (Defensoria del Pueblo).

The government might have been using unfair tactics, but there is also another view of the matter, as discussed below.

5.3.4. Where does the division starts?

As we have seen the indigenous influence is limited for various reasons stated above. Though, Nellie Arrista, from the United Nations Development Program, gives another view:

“People always ask us if the government is failing, we give the government the blame, but we do not ask ourselves where we are failing. Where do the indigenous village fail, to not be part? Because they are not part, why do they not have power? (UNDP).

An explanation to this is given by Artaraz as he emphasize the clear difference of interests that exist within the social movement themselves (Artaraz 2012:184). The politician Edgar Sumani explains it further:
“There are powers, or internal power groups of the indigenous organization that only see the personal interests, they do not see the development of the villages. When every person see the personal interests it is much easier to divide it. We cannot develop whilst we are not united, not together.” (Partido Verde)

He means that the reason why the government entered to divide the indigenous organizations in the first place was because they could, because the indigenous themselves were already divided within the organizations. There are no common agenda for all the indigenous people in the country. A common mistake is to see the indigenous people as one group, with one goal, which then makes it difficult to understand why they do not have more power since they are in majority. But in reality they are not one, but 36 different indigenous groups which makes the problem so complex.

6. Conclusion

In order to see if democracy has been deepened in Bolivia the indigenous political participation has been examined. This has been done by investigating the three areas of inclusion, spaces for participation and influence, according to the theoretical framework.

The first specified question – *Are the indigenous groups included to participate?* – was examined by first looking at socio-economic conditions, in where some indigenous groups had noticed a change to the better, whilst others felt that their situation continued the same. In matter of indigenous representation in parliament there are more than before, but 7 indigenous people in a parliament with 166 delegates is a low percentage taking into account that the indigenous population is in majority in the country. The representation of women in the parliament has increased to almost 50 %, although many claimed that men still occupy all of the leader positions. The different indigenous groups do not feel that they are included to an equal degree. Respondents with Aymara and Quechua origin from the highland, as well as those with Guaraní origin from the lowlands, were positive to their possibilities to be included in the politics. To the contrary the smaller indigenous groups from the lowland still felt discriminated and excluded from the political life to a high degree. As an answer to the first specified question it can so forth
be stated that not all of the indigenous groups are included to participate; the three biggest indigenous groups in Bolivia - Aymara, Quechua and Guaraní – are also the ones that feel most included, whilst the smaller groups do not.

The second specified question – *Have the spaces for participation been implemented in practice?* – was examined by looking at the two main areas indigenous autonomy and prior consultation. Concerning indigenous autonomy it was stated that 11 municipalities are in the process of becoming autonomous, but there is still no complete indigenous autonomy. In matter of consultation the TIPNIS conflict was brought up as evidence that the right to prior consultation is not always being carried out as it should when affecting the indigenous people, as is stated in the new constitution. As an answer to the second specified question it is clear that the two main areas of spaces for participation still lack to be implemented in practice.

The third specified question - *Can the indigenous groups affect the outcome of political decisions?* – concerned the matter of influence. As was the case in the matter of inclusion, also when it came to the possibility to influence the politics the three biggest indigenous groups, Aymara and Quechua in the highland, and Guaraní in the lowland, felt that they could influence the outcome of political decisions to some degree. On the contrary the smaller indigenous groups in the lowland did not feel that they could influence the politics. Though, there were also opinions about the fact that the MAS administration is not in favor of any indigenous groups, but in favor of sectors, in where the most privileged actor is the farmers. It is moreover argued that to have influence people must feel safe to offer oppositional opinions. This was shown not always being the case as some feel afraid to offer opinions that goes against the government, and the fact that the two biggest indigenous umbrella organizations has been divided and fragmentized by the government. There is much that speaks against that the indigenous groups can affect the outcome of political decisions, at least through the government. The ways in which the indigenous people can influence are through marches and protests and not by being able to influence through political institutions to a high degree. Although, some claimed that they can influence this way. As an answer to the third specified question it has been proved that the majority of the indigenous groups cannot influence the political decisions to a high degree, whilst few others feel that they can.
In theory, the new constitution opens up for a more equal and accessible society, in order to give the indigenous people more opportunities to participate in the political life, though in practice it is still not fully implemented and there are still many indigenous groups that feel excluded. However, some have experienced change, and some areas seem to be on the way of implementing. These small steps should not be overlooked in a country where the majority of the population has been excluded for over 500 years. The indigenous political participation has increased for some, in some areas, and so it means that the democracy has been deepened in some degree, even if just in small scale.

In more general aspects, the Bolivian case shows the difficulties of democracy in multicultural societies, and that there is sometimes a need for something more than a representative democratic system. The results demonstrate that participation dimensions, as a combination to representative democracy, can be a way of making different nationalities within a country more included in order to deepen democracy.

The changes and the political development in Bolivia will be interesting to follow years to come. If and how the indigenous peoples situation will change, if Morales will continue being president after the election next year and what will happen if he does? What will happen if he does not, who will take over and what impacts will it have for the indigenous people? How will the indigenous people and the social movements react if the changes do not come fast enough? How will the rest of the population react if the changes come too fast? There are a lot of interesting questions for further research about the indigenous people and the changes that are occurring in Bolivia.
7. References

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Appendix

Interviews with Indigenous Organizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Place of organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natividad Gonzales</td>
<td>Mestiza</td>
<td>FENAPDOP, Federación Nacional de Pequeños Deudores Prestatarios</td>
<td>Highland/National, indigenous and mestizos</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Aymara</td>
<td>Hakisa, CONAMAQ, Consejo Nacional de Marquas del Qullasuyo</td>
<td>Highland, department of Oruro</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosa Cama</td>
<td>Quechua-Aymara</td>
<td>FEDECOMIN, Coperativas Mineras,</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marta Pinoza</td>
<td>Aymara</td>
<td>Foro de mujeres, women organization</td>
<td>Highland, department of La Paz</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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<td>Mamani Choque</td>
<td>Aymara</td>
<td>Central de Coperativas Mineras</td>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yaniele Añez</td>
<td>Chichitana</td>
<td>OICH, CIBAPA</td>
<td>Lowland organization</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evelyn Prieto Miro</td>
<td>Moseteng</td>
<td>CMIZAP, CIDOB</td>
<td>Lowland, south of La Paz</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Magdalena Cachari Pachinda</td>
<td>Guaraní</td>
<td>APH, CIDOB</td>
<td>Lowland, zona Hekaca, Mirapina community</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalia Vaca, president</td>
<td>Said origin is “indigenous”</td>
<td>CEMIG de COPNAC</td>
<td>Lowland, association of the Guaraya</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramira Chiqueno Nurumine</td>
<td>Said origin is “indigenous”</td>
<td>CPESC</td>
<td>Lowland, province of Mambo</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María Víctoria Reinaldo Artega</td>
<td>Said origin is “indigenous”</td>
<td>CMIB, Central de Mujeres Indigenas del Beni</td>
<td>Lowland, department of Beni</td>
<td>12-12-05</td>
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Interviews, others:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Working tasks</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eugenio Mullucundo Cadena</td>
<td>Coordinator of the program human rights for the indigenous people (DDHH). Work with consulting, indigenous autonomy, struggle against racism and discrimination.</td>
<td>Defensoria del Pueblo</td>
<td>12-11-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nellie Arrista</td>
<td>United Nations worker in La Paz.</td>
<td>UNDP, United Nations Development Program</td>
<td>12-11-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin Alvarado</td>
<td>Work for an organization that protects the environment in Bolivia, did not want his answers to be connected to the organization he works for.</td>
<td>Anonymous organization</td>
<td>12-11-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Michell</td>
<td>Works with indigenous organizations.</td>
<td>UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund</td>
<td>12-11-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulino Guarachi</td>
<td>Responsible for the indigenous autonomy in the organization of territorial rights.</td>
<td>Fundación Tierra</td>
<td>12-11-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izabel Ortega</td>
<td>Aymara-Quechua origin, work in the government, responsible for the minister of justice in La Paz, from Oruro in the highlands.</td>
<td>Ministerio de Justicia</td>
<td>12-11-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Organization that works with the defense of the environment in Bolivia.</td>
<td>LIDEMA, Liga de Defensa del Medio Ambiente</td>
<td>12-11-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Sumami</td>
<td>Politician from the “Green Party”, located in Santa Cruz in the lowland, Chichitana origin.</td>
<td>Partido Verde (Green Party)</td>
<td>12-11-29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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