

**The Politics of Envy:
Progress, Corruption, and Ethical Kinship among Bolivian Immigrants in Escobar,
Argentina**

by

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The <i>Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar</i> (CBE).....	
The Natural History of Envy.....	
Politico-Juridical Structuring of the CBE and its ‘Usurpation’.....	
Chapter Outline.....	
On Names and Identifications.....	
Chapter 1: The <i>Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar</i>: Mission, Crisis, and Proceedings	19
Locations and Orientations.....	
The CBE’s Mission and Crisis.....	
<i>The CBE’s Statutes</i>	
<i>The CBE’s Moral Code</i>	
<i>The CBE’s Crisis: Legal and Ethnographic Lines of Evidence</i>	
The CBE’s Crisis in Legal Perspective.....	
<i>Setting the Scene: The CBE’s Election of December 2001</i>	
<i>Ceferino González Files Formal Complaint</i> (1 March 2002).....	
<i>Teodoro Cahuana Files Formal Response</i> (5 April 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Resolution 0628</i> (22 July 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (1 November 2002).....	
<i>Cahuana Contests 1 November 2002 Dictamen</i> (7 November 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (11 November 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (22 November 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Resolution 1183</i> (5 December 2002).....	
<i>Cahuana Attempts to Re-lodge Appeal and Block Election Proceedings</i> (10 December 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (17 December 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (23 December 2002).....	
<i>González Contests Cahuana’s Candidacy</i> (13 December 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (18 December 2002).....	
<i>Cahuana Calls to Suspend Election</i> (17 December 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (23 December 2002).....	
<i>IGJ Resolution 1264</i> (26 December 2002).....	
<i>Cahuana Applies for Constitutional Protection</i> (26 December 2002).....	
<i>Koprivec and Huari Hold CBE Elections in Defiance of Court Order</i> (27 Dec. 2003, 2004).....	
<i>Cahuana Alleges Wrongful IGJ Issuance of CBE Administrative Books</i> (12 Feb. 2004).....	
<i>IGJ Initiates Internal Review</i> (1 March 2004).....	
<i>IGJ Dictamen</i> (8 March 2004).....	
<i>Cipriano González Responds to IGJ’s Request for Books</i> (15 March 2004).....	
<i>IGJ Reconciles Its Internal Practices</i> (12 May 2004).....	
<i>IGJ Resolution 0837</i> (13 July 2004).....	
Conclusion.....	

Chapter 2: Bolivian Economy of Otherness..... 121

Introduction.....
Ethnic Banter.....
 The Exchange.....
 Analysis.....
Ethnic Bullying.....
 The Exchange.....
 Analysis.....
Conclusion.....

Chapter 3: Argentine Economy of Otherness..... 161

Introduction.....
The Regime of Blackness in Argentina.....
 Cabecitas Negras.....
 Villeros.....
 Negros.....
Reconciling Bolivian-ness and Blackness.....
 The Bolita is Just another Negro.....
 The Bolita is Different from the Negro.....
 Displacing Discrimination.....
How *Negros* Make *Bolitas* in Escobar.....
 The Beating of Braulio Perca.....
 The Killing of Norberta Quispe and Ernesto Yanaje.....
How Bolivians Make *Bolitas* in Escobar.....
 Bolita as Ignorante.....
 Bolita as Idiosincrático.....
 Bolita for Vergonzoso and Aparentar.....
 Bolita for Burro and Vivo.....
Conclusion.....

Chapter 4: Progress..... 203

Introduction.....
Walking like a *Caporal*: Stomping, Leaping, Forgetting.....
 The Caporales: Popular Forms and Popular Meanings.....
 The Aesthetics of Power and Prestige.....
 Performance in Context.....
 “*Being on top of and overwhelming the rest*”.....
Progress.....
 Progress as Overcoming Hunger, Suffering, and Lack.....
 Progress as Overcoming Cultural ‘Backwardness’.....
Progressing through Capitalizations.....
 “*The more you have, the more you are*”.....
 Betty and Pastor Unveil Their New Truck.....
 Elvio Aggrieves Teófilo with His Truck.....
Conclusion.....

Chapter 5: Envy 243

Introduction
What is Envy?
How is Envy?
The Consequences of Envy
 Envy and the Cutting of Fellowship
 Cutting Off Another’s Water
 Witchcraft
 Envy and the Cultivation of Otherness
 Moral Debasing: Accusations of Exploiting Relatives
 Moral Debasing: Accusations of Drug Dealing
 Ethno-racial Debasing: The Reproduction of Indian-ness
 Envy and the Organization of Production and Consumption
 Emulation in Production and Consumption
 Concealment and Revelation
Conclusion: The Origins of Envy.....

Chapter 6: Making a Living: Migration and the CBE’s Market 291

Introduction.....
Reasons for Immigrating to Argentina
Bolivians’ Insertion into Horticultural Sector of Buenos Aires
Bolivian Horticultural Ladder
Violence
 Fidencio Choque
Argentina’s Economic Crisis
The CBE’s Market
 Types of Operations in the CBE’s Market
 Type 1: Local Producers
 Type 2: Non-local Producers
 Type 3: Sellers for Local Producers
 Type 4: Re-Sellers that Engage the Central Market
 Type 5: Re-Sellers that Access Sources or Importers Directly
 Type 6: Re-sellers Who Intercept Non-Local Producers En Route to the Central Market...
 Type 7: Concessionaires
Conclusion

Chapter 7: Changes in Relations, Rationales, and Contexts of Production341

Introduction
Bolivian Highlands of Potosí
From Potosí to Escobar: Changes and Continuities
Role of the CBE and its Market in Mediating and Constituting these Changes
Consequences and Conclusions

Chapter 8: Envy, Usurpation, and the ‘Failure’ of the CBE370

Introduction
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

CBE and the ‘Culture’ of Envy.....	
Envy and the Original ‘Coup’.....	
“Projects are works of love and good reasons to trust the directors”	
“Everything is for money”	
“ <i>The Poorer They Were, The Harder They Stomp</i> ”	
Orchestrating and Consolidating the ‘Usurpation’: The Cultivation of Envy and Rivalry.....	
“ <i>Between a rock and a hard place</i> ”	
“ <i>There is a great deal of envy between the pueblos</i> ”	
“ <i>Before they used to tear at each other’s hide</i> ”	
“ <i>They brought the fight from home</i> ”	
<i>Cultivating Envy and Rivalry vis-à-vis the Ethics of Proportionality and Rotationality</i>	
What the Usurped CBE Looked Like Compared to its Founding Mission.....	
“ <i>They’ve holed up!</i> ”	
“ <i>They’ve worked it out: a year for you, a year for me</i> ”	
“ <i>It’s a group of thieves!</i> ”	
<i>Exprimir y Pisar: The Individualist Ethos of the ‘Usurped’ CBE</i>	
“ <i>This is not a ‘Colectividad Bo-li-vi-an-a’</i> ”	
Conclusion: The Project that Never Was	

Chapter 9: When Everything Else Fails: A Return to Humility..... 417

Introduction.....	
Co-opting and Resisting the IGJ’s Intervention.....	
<i>Ceferino González Appeals Resolution 0857 and Argues CBE is ‘Regular’</i> (5 August 2004)	
<i>Cipriano González Petitions the IGJ to Hold Elections</i> (17 September 2004)	
<i>Secretariat’s Resolution 035</i> (27 October 2004)	
<i>Cahuana Contests the Intervention and Impugns Popovich’s First Report</i> (March 2005).....	
<i>IGJ Resolution 0456</i> (21 April 2005)	
<i>Secretariat’s Resolution 083</i> (27 June 2005)	
<i>IGJ Resolution 0768</i> (16 August 2005)	
<i>Mendoza’s Intervention and the ‘Usurpers’ Appeal of Resolution 083</i> (12 July 2005)	
<i>The Usurpers Refuse to Comply with Mendoza’s Intervention</i>	
<i>Ceferino González’s Open Letter to Inspector General Impugning Mendoza</i> (12 August 2005).....	
<i>Leaked Minutes of a Closed Meeting of the ‘Usurped’ CBE</i> (20 August 2005)	
<i>Mendoza Petitions the Minister of the Interior to Restore the Rule of Law</i> (12 January 2006)	
A Return to Humility.....	
“ <i>We’re going to turn the Colectividad right-side up</i> ”	
<i>A Return to Our Humility</i>	
<i>Can Humility Recruit?</i>	
<i>Ethical Kinship</i>	
<i>Is Ethical Kinship Enough to ‘Heal’ the CBE?</i>	

Appendix: Saropalkeño-Pancocheño Rivalry in Ethno-Historical Perspective..... 479

Bibliography..... 494

Abstract

This dissertation charts the rise, corruption, and attempted restoration of the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* (CBE) as a way to examine ethics of solidarity and terms of human recognition among Bolivian immigrants in Escobar, Argentina. While founded to cultivate Bolivian community, and indeed standing in for it, the revenue-generating CBE shaped a socially divisive complex of envy that frustrated its mission, undergirded an internal ‘usurpation’, and led to the reflexive critique that Bolivians in Escobar have lost their humanity. Against this corruption, and through this moral crisis, I chart an emergent ethics of humility that recruits ethical kinship among immigrants who are otherwise ethnically and socio-economically polarized. Through these discussions I reveal the generative matrix of envy and track its ‘explosion’ in Escobar by illuminating a zero-sum politics of progress. I show how ideas and pursuits of progress depend upon esteem configured through Bolivian and Argentine regimes of otherness, and reproduce the latter. I also show how achieving progress is a function of changes in cultures of production wrought through the immigration and shaped by the CBE and its Horticultural Market. Through analyses of face-to-face engagements I show how envy is an inter-event dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition that is politically and ethically consequential. By tracking envy’s effects across different contexts of interaction, including the ways it figures into the mechanisms of corruption and gets objectified in moral discourse, I illuminate orders of practice off of which one may model processes of world-building. At the same time, I show how Bolivian ethical dynamics and imaginaries play out on terrain established by the Argentine state. This includes the terms through which the CBE was founded and subsequently regulated by the Argentine Ministry of Justice. These discussions, had through an analysis of the legal proceedings over the ‘usurped’ CBE, do more than cast Bolivian framings of community, and efforts to exploit it, in critical relief. They reveal that, while created through the regime of rights, and despite both shortcomings and manipulations of this regime, the CBE has become a space for the cultivation of virtue.

Introduction

On April 4, 2007 a shot rang out and echoed across the barrio. This one, however, did not come from the barrel of a .22 caliber pistol—the weapon Argentine thieves use to extract savings, and sometimes life, from the Bolivians that live there. Rather, it came from the Bolivian radio program that chronicled the ‘usurpation’ of the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* (CBE), the largest Bolivian Civil Association in Argentina. This shot was not loud; it left no-one dead. But the voice carried a message that pierced the hide and nicked the bone, if only to leave its targets living and everyone else knowing. “We have to go back to the beginning,” the voice said. “We have to return to our humility.”

While *humility* seemed to capture everything that had been lost, there was something else that stuck in the ribs of the public—i.e. those who were implicated in the turmoil of the CBE and the ways it spilled over into the barrio’s dusty streets. It wasn’t so much the idea of a return. For idealizing the homeland was not uncommon among this diaspora, even as they stated their reasons for leaving it. Rather, it was the idea of a ‘we’. Where the Bolivians in Escobar were diverse and rivaling—*Qollas*, *Qochalos*, and *Chapacos* among them—this was a new ‘we’. It was a horizontal, ethical we, sought in the absence of any primordial solidarity. It was a proposal for rivals thrust in a common crucible that asked: How ought we be toward one another? What do we owe one another—as fellow immigrants, as Bolivians, and as human beings?

Set in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, this dissertation is about the relationships that provoked this call for humility among Escobar’s Bolivians, and why moral community among them remains frustrated. It is organized around the idea that world-building initiatives respond to a ‘problem’ in the world. What I illuminate through the following chapters is a set of interlinked problems that grounds this powerful, yet hamstrung, call for mutual recognition. While the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE is the central issue for all—not least because it threatens or enhances their livelihoods—the problem to which this call for humility responds is, more

fundamentally, a socially-divisive problem of envy. Envy is what undergirds the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE and the loss of humanity it has been said to engender. Envy, and the ‘progress’ over which it is wrought, is what frustrates the horizontal identifications needed to sustain the CBE and the ‘community’ it was meant to foster.

At its most basic level, this dissertation looks at how the ‘usurpation’ of the communal CBE stems from envy, with a view toward understanding the nature of relations between diverse and often antagonized Bolivians in Escobar, Argentina. It explores the possibility that an “ethical kinship” capable of transcending ethnic rivalries and socio-economic hierarchies may emerge through the very corruption of the CBE.

The Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar (CBE)

The CBE has always provided the frame for thinking about Bolivians’ groupness and solidarity, even as—if not ultimately because—it became a space for discrimination, exclusion, and exploitation among them. Located in Escobar, some 50 km north of Buenos Aires, the CBE is a not-for-profit, though revenue-generating, “entity of the public good”. It is authorized and regulated by the Argentine Ministry of Justice. The entity was originally formed in 1990 to stem the xenophobic violence that commonly targeted the *Qolla*, *Qochalo*, and *Chapaco* immigrants that labored the fields throughout the district. After providing for pan-Bolivian security in the form of a specialized police patrol, the CBE came to serve its members with a wholesale horticultural market. Indeed, if there is anything that has defined Bolivian-ness in Gran Buenos Aires, it has been their increasing dominance of the horticultural sector.

Completed in 1995, this horticultural market has been one of the CBE’s most significant achievements. Beyond enabling hundreds of families to ‘progress’ economically, the rents paid by those operating in it financed CBE projects benefitting the public good. By law, this redistributive, communal work is the CBE’s *raison d’être*—*not* the private horticultural sales that enable it. The successes stemming from this collective work ranged from developing the barrio’s infrastructure to educational, health, and social programs. Because of the market’s ability to meet an increasing, regional demand for produce, the CBE’s revenues, which were augmented by a similarly-run textile fair, reached USD \$1.5M by the year 2000. This was a

tremendous sum for humble immigrants, most of whom had faced great challenges meeting basic subsistence needs in Bolivia. By December of 2001, these revenues, and the parent CBE that managed them, became the object of what critics have called the entity's 'usurpation' at the hands of an internal mafia.

This 'usurpation', which has generated complicity and opposition in equal measure, has reduced the CBE to an entity of the *private* good, in violation of its state-sanctioned mission. As the founding and incumbent leaders pursued 'justice' through a mediation by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ)—i.e. the arm of the Ministry of Justice charged with regulating entities of the public good—the usurping mafia deployed a politics of patronage to shore up its hold over the CBE and its revenues. Where the IGJ's mediation failed, owing to the bad faith of the 'usurpers', the Ministry of Justice later authorized a formal Regulatory Intervention of the CBE. This consisted of an appointed Interventor assuming all administrative control over the CBE in order to make the entity conform to its state-sanctioned statutes. Such institutional 'regularity', however, was not to pass. By 2006, the 'usurpers' had succeeded in co-opting the Ministry's first Interventor, who as a result came to face charges of corruption. By 2007, a second Interventor was forced to petition the Ministry of the Interior to deploy the National Guard to dislodge the mafia. By the end of my fieldwork in August 2007, the CBE had yet to be retaken on behalf of the public good.

As I show throughout this dissertation, the story of Bolivian relationships in Escobar is inseparable from this story of the rise, 'usurpation', and attempted restoration of the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar*. Indeed, the CBE has played a singular role in bringing the *Qollas*, *Qochalos*, and *Chapacos* together under one roof—a roof that is both economic and civic. I thus examine Bolivian sociality and institutionality together, and show the ways that they shape one another. As I note in the Chapter Outline that follows, I analyze this conjunction from two perspectives, one legal and one ethnographic. Where the former relies on documentary evidence culled from the IGJ's mediation of the CBE's crisis, the latter relies on ethnography conducted among Bolivian interlocutors in Escobar.

The Natural History of Envy

While my ethnographic work does many things, much of it is bent on tracing the natural history of envy from the Bolivian highlands to Escobar, Argentina. I investigate envy's conditions of possibility, and show how changes to them result in an 'explosion' of envy in Escobar that has great consequences. Among the latter are the corruption of the CBE and the view that envy has become a social "sickness" that requires a collectivist cure.

In tracing the emergent 'problem' of envy, one finds that it concerns "progress". Indeed, many in Escobar define envy as a situation in which one does not want another to progress (from the Spanish *progresar*). This of course begs the question of what progress is. As I show throughout the following chapters, progress is itself complex. It is an ideology shaping, and a set of practices comprising, both individual and collective pursuits of capitalization, economic independence, and codes associated with 'civilization'. The latter can be variously linguistic, technological, religious, and/or aesthetic. As suggested by the term itself, progress has much to do with modernity. The idea, or logic, of progress is that someone having roots in 'backwardness' can separate himself from—or otherwise overcome—them and attain the attributes of 'civilization'. In this way, progress is about aspirations and movement toward modernity. Yet progress is also a status, and is thus relational. When seen in social extension, one finds a configuration in which movements and negotiations are zero-sum: one's progress means another has been left behind. The 'gaps' created by progress are those over which envy is felt, expressed, and consequential. As I argue, these gaps most often result from the acquisition of exclusively held capitalizations—e.g. new pickup trucks. Moreover, such 'things' of progress frequently afford performances of pride and status differences—themselves often ethnically tinged—that exacerbate envy and further cultivate rivalries.

In tracing the natural history of envy, I argue that while envy existed up in the Bolivian highlands, it 'exploded' in Argentina as a function of changes to the culture and contexts of production. Beginning with the Bolivian highlands, envy there was always somewhat checked. That is, the terms of the local ecology and those of the "ethnic economy" (Harris 2000) kept it within limits. Indeed, individual, exclusive accumulation—to the extent this was even ecologically possible—often had to be reconciled with cosmologically-oriented rationales of production that privileged redistribution and the reproduction of social units. With the

emigration to Escobar, the checks on accumulation and differentiation were removed at the same time that the logic of progress supplanted other logics of production. In Escobar, a family could accumulate a surplus, market it, climb the ‘horticultural ladder’, and attain socio-economic—and thus often ethnic—esteem that was not possible in Potosí. In this way, the emigration created a series of changes, not just in the ‘physical’ circumstances of production, but in the ‘cultural’ modalities, purposes, and contexts of production. These changes allowed Bolivians, and specifically Potosinos, to work on socio-economic and ethno-racial statuses in ways that were not possible at home.

Yet the ‘explosion’ of envy in Escobar has not been without mediation. The second part of my argument is that the CBE, by shaping the economic and social changes wrought through the emigration, has helped produce and structure this proliferation of envy, both across and within ethnic groups. I argue that by creating the horticultural market, the CBE has played a crucial role in enabling and facilitating the accumulation, and thus the progress, over which envy is experienced and expressed. Indeed, the market has shaped economic differentiation among those who operate within it as growers and commercial resellers navigate the dynamics in the regional horticultural economy. At the same time, the differentiation they achieve plays out upon, and in some cases reworks, historical differences in occupation, wealth, and culture that obtained between groups and individuals in Potosí. By bringing former ethnic and class rivals together under one roof, and making their current differentiation visible, the CBE has intensified competition. At the same time, it has helped solidify progress as the principal logic of production. Indeed, progress has become the *lingua franca* between all Bolivians who, as former outsider-others, come to negotiate status and relatedness in Escobar for the first time.

By creating this market, and in this way exacerbating envy, the CBE ultimately frustrated its own work as an entity of the public good. As I argue, envy and its entailments directly motivated the ‘usurpation.’ At the same time, the ‘usurpers’ depended upon envious rivalries to orchestrate their take-over. Indeed, they cultivated these sentiments to generate both misrecognition of, and complicity in, their malfeasance. Yet the ‘explosion’ of envy that undergirded the ‘usurpation’ was *itself* exacerbated by its dynamics. To wit: the ‘usurpation’ changed the mechanisms of accumulation, and thus the degrees to which players could progress at one another’s expense. Where the CBE had initially shaped the political economy of horticultural production, and thus envy’s conditions of possibility, the ‘usurpation’ only

sharpened access, competition, and success. Thus the envy that the CBE helped create, and that the usurpation exacerbated, frustrated the horizontal identifications the CBE was designed to foster and that it needed to pursue projects on behalf of the public good.

What this natural history of envy shows is that envy is much more than a ‘conceptual apparatus’ or ‘language’ through which people make sense of the world. That is, while envy among Escobar’s Bolivians can be apprehended as a ‘discourse’ or a form of knowing (see Taussig 1987), it is far more than this. Envy is also a set of concrete practices and embodied experiences that have consequences of their own. What I illuminate through the course of this dissertation is an inter-event, practical ecology of envy that shows how *acts* of envy and the ways they are signified shape Bolivians’ social and institutional worlds. Indeed, I show how the corruption of the CBE, the largest Bolivian Civil Association in Argentina, is a function of envy. At the same time, by illuminating envy’s conditions of possibility, which includes detailed examinations of the economies of otherness—both Bolivian and Argentine—that give pursuits of progress ethnic and racial valences, I am able to show that this envy-based corruption is ultimately traceable to an ethno-racial politics of esteem.

Politico-Juridical Structuring of the CBE and its Usurpation

While the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE and its effects on identifications owes much to the ‘explosion’ of envy, itself set within the changes wrought through the emigration, none of this happens outside the political field established by the Argentine state. Indeed, both the founding and usurpation of the CBE are carried out on terms supplied by the state. Telling the story of the intersection between Bolivian sociality and institutionality thus also means telling it from a politico-juridical perspective.

As mentioned above, the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* is a particular kind of entity. It is a not-for-profit, though revenue-generating, “entity of the public good” that must be authorized by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). While such entities enjoy *private* juridical personhood, their mission, as stipulated by Argentine law, is to serve the *public* good. As Argentine jurists have argued, the *raison d’être* of such entities is to cultivate solidarity within the overarching political community; some have even argued that these entities are direct

manifestations of such community. Because they are not-for-profit service entities, the virtue that undergirds them must be altruism on behalf of the community they also constitute. This virtue and purpose must be clearly articulated in the entity's founding statutes for it to acquire juridical personhood—i.e. its authorization to function as such—from the IGJ. Where this original purpose is referred to as the *affectio societatis*, the overarching attachments that link members in their communal work are known as *afectos superadores*.

Where the impetus for the founding of the CBE was to provide for collective security against xenophobic depredations, the “entity of the public good” was the institutional frame deemed most apt to achieve this. While the violence helped pose the question of Bolivian ‘community’ among diverse interlocutors, being that it begged a conjoint response from them, the terms of Argentine Civil Code through which the CBE was created provided a language to pursue ‘community’ in an institutional way. While the CBE's statutes reflect the jurisprudential ideology undergirding the provisions for such entities—i.e. that the objective of the CBE is to “promote solidarity” among all Bolivians in Escobar—the founders also ‘indigenized’ these terms through their own Andean idioms. As I show in Chapters 1 and 8, the *affectio societatis* and *afectos superadores* proposed for the CBE, both in its founding and throughout its usurpation, center on ideologies of reciprocity, proportionality, and the rotation of political authority. Were it not for the legal being and tribulations of the CBE, such explicit framings of Bolivian community—and indeed Bolivian-ness in Argentina—would not have arisen in the same ways, nor have had the consequences they had for cultivating public life.

Yet conceptualizations and pursuits of Bolivian ‘community’ were not the only things hewn upon the politico-juridical field established by the Argentine state. The mafia's usurpation was in great part orchestrated through an exploitation of the legal regime through which entities of the public good are regulated. That is, to secure their hold over the CBE and its revenues, the usurpers had to do more than just manage the relations *inside* the CBE, which they did through inciting rivalries, signifying them through the envy complex, and deploying a politics of patronage. The usurpers also had to manage their position *before the IGJ* in the legal contest brought by the incumbents they had ousted. In engaging this opposition, the usurpers took advantage of the IGJ's ‘limited’ regulatory powers. To wit: given that entities of the public good are *private* entities under Argentina's Civil Code, the IGJ cannot find in favor of either side in a dispute, or directly sanction transgressors. This, as per Argentina's political liberalism, would be

state overreach into private affairs, if not also a burden on government itself. Thus the IGJ, as an *administrative* regulator belonging to the Executive—not the Judicial—Branch, can only require that an entity (as a whole) follow the law and its statutes. This means that the CBE, despite IGJ oversight, must settle its own disputes *internally*, despite its internal strife. Indeed the law is clear that such entities must self-regulate, and that one and all enjoy “functional autonomy” before the state. This is not to say that entities lack the institutional capacities to do so. A precondition for an entity’s authorization is to possess its own internal government, the organs and procedures of which are to be enumerated in its statutes. Where the IGJ cannot punish a transgressor within an entity—being that it is not a judge, and that it cannot replace an entity’s own punitive body—its regulatory capacity stems from its power to declare administrative acts taken by an entity “irregular and without effect”. These declarations place the entity in a state of jeopardy before the IGJ that demands proper self-regulation vis-à-vis its statutes and the law. This demand is binding given the IGJ’s ultimate authority to revoke an entity’s authorization if it fails to conform to code. Revoking such authorization, however, is a rare event and an undesirable one if, as in the case of the CBE, there is a history of service to the larger community. Moreover, such revocation can only happen if all other avenues, including a formal Intervention by an appointed Interventor (one who replaces the entity’s own Executive Commission in order to normalize the entity, a process that often includes holding elections to determine a new Commission), have been exhausted.

As I show, the CBE’s usurpers have been adept at exploiting this juridical regime, long before they co-opted the first Interventor, and resisted the work of the second. I argue that they exploited the gap created by the requirement that entities self-govern, which includes the IGJ’s inability to sanction transgressors directly, and the expectation that entities’ members will govern or work virtuously. Indeed, the ‘usurpers’, who have the counsel of an Argentine lawyer known for his ‘expertise’ in civil-associational law, work in and around this gap, knowing that ‘success’ can come in multiple forms. Through their politics of misrepresentation they may, on the one hand, succeed in getting the IGJ to recognize *their* Executive Commission as the rightful rulers of the CBE. On the other hand, if their pretensions are laid bare by the founders they have ousted, they can continue to maneuver under the guise of good faith, knowing that because the IGJ cannot ‘take sides’ in a private matter, it cannot remove them. In both cases, the usurpers remain entrenched to control the CBE’s revenues. So long as they do not provoke the IGJ into

its ultimate sanction of revoking the CBE's juridical personhood, they may play upon the IGJ's assumption that virtue yet obtains in the entity, and that it can be harnessed to 'heal' it. Indeed, the IGJ's stated approach to the antagonized factions in the CBE is that they must appeal to the over-arching attachments (*afectos superadores*) that link them in their associational effort. These over-arching attachments, which the IGJ claims must have obtained in the founding of the CBE as a service organization, must also ground a common effort to overcome their differences and allow them to heal the CBE.

Yet this is precisely the rub: one of the key arguments of this thesis is that such horizontal identifications among Bolivians in Escobar never obtained to the degree the IGJ—and many founders of the CBE—imagined they did or would. In fact, such *afectos superadores*, as well as more abstract identifications with the public good, have been frustrated at every turn. This is not just because the heterogeneous groups that comprise the CBE have ethnic rivalries and mistrust—or because many of them, as immigrants coming from great poverty are focused on their own economic survival. As I stated above, over-arching attachments are, beyond these factors, frustrated by the 'explosion' of envy—an intensification that, while already shaped by the CBE's market and the changes it mediated, became exacerbated by the entrenchment of the 'usurpers' because of their ability to manipulate this politico-juridical regime.

In the end, I argue that solidarity and moral community among Bolivians *across* the CBE, and Escobar generally, must be understood as a project begging realization, rather than as an existing condition. The 'ethical kinship' I explore at the end of the thesis responds to this question, and raises another: that community may be recruited through a problem, in this case, the envy-based corruption of the CBE.

Chapter Outline

In this dissertation I tell the related stories of the CBE and the Bolivian 'community' through two kinds of evidence. The first is legal evidence obtained through the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). The second is ethnographic evidence obtained through fieldwork in Escobar and the CBE. The chapters that follow constitute a narrative that works between the two and from which the above theoretical discussions may be pursued. The chapter lay out is as follows.

In Chapter 1, “The *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar*: Mission, Crisis, and Proceedings,” I introduce the over-arching problem of horizontal and collective identifications among Bolivians in Escobar. I do this first by presenting the CBE’s state-sanctioned founding mission and moral code. Through these I show how the CBE was designed to cultivate solidarity and mutual aid among its members and within the larger Bolivian ‘community’. I then provide a detailed account of the ‘usurpation’ and the subsequent conflict over the CBE to show how these ideals have not obtained. This discussion relies on an exegesis of the complaints and petitions presented by antagonized litigants in the legal proceedings over the CBE. These proceedings are both maintained and mediated by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ) in its efforts to regulate the ‘irregular’ CBE.

This exegesis provides a number of foundational discussions upon which the subsequent chapters rely. In the most immediate sense, the exegesis provides a chronological account of the events of the CBE’s ‘usurpation’ and the ensuing fight to control it and its revenues. By presenting the litigants’ own voices before the IGJ, it reveals, despite rhetoric to the contrary, which parties seek to pursue the inclusive, public good, and which pursue their own good at the latter’s expense. Through respective petitions and arguments, it shows how the ‘usurpers’ manipulate the state in its regulation of the CBE to secure their de facto hold over the entity. Finally, it reveals the nature of the regime of right (and the ways this regime assumes virtuous conduct among those it comprehends) through which the IGJ draws its competence and operates with respect to the CBE. Indeed, the exegesis reveals how the ‘usurpers’ exploit the IGJ’s assumption that the CBE’s members are united by ‘overarching attachments’ (*afectos superadores*) as well as the IGJ’s inability to make the CBE ‘regular’ other than through declarations that administrative acts taken by the CBE are ‘irregular’. As we’ll see, while the IGJ has the ultimate power to revoke the CBE’s authorization to function as an entity of the public good, its regulatory work up until that point requires that the CBE self-regulate as a totality, despite the ‘usurpation’ and antagonized factions. I show how this requirement of self-governance, which stems from a liberal respect for the private, opens the door for abuse cloaked in good faith.

These various discussions are necessary for my ultimate project of illuminating an emergent ethics of humility among Bolivians in Escobar. For the terrain upon which this ethics plays out—as well as the ‘problems’ to which it responds—are structured either directly or

indirectly by the state, whether as a body of laws or as a regulator. Indeed, the complex of envy that I argue both motivates and undergirds the ‘usurpation’ is itself exacerbated by the ‘usurpation’, whose entrenchment and effects hinge on engagements with the state. Certainly, the intractableness of the ‘usurpation’, which I reveal through the legal battle over the CBE, is necessary for understanding ethical practice and imaginaries among Bolivians in Escobar.

With the problem of horizontal and collective identifications between Bolivians posed, and the crisis of the CBE introduced, I turn the analysis toward an elaboration of the envy complex that motivates and shapes the ‘usurpation’ and results in the common critique that Bolivians in Escobar have lost their humanity. In Chapters 2 and 3 I provide necessary foundations for this discussion by illuminating the politics of everyday interaction in the Bolivian barrio of Escobar. In “The Bolivian Economy of Otherness” I show how not all Bolivians are the same and that the ideals of Bolivian solidarity with which the CBE was founded, and the ‘overarching attachments’ that the IGJ imagines obtain in its regulatory efforts, are compromised by a politics of ethnic and racial difference brought from Bolivia. I analyze an instance of ethnic banter to illuminate the diversity among Bolivians and the ways that ethnic-national identifications (i.e. as *Qollas*, *Qochalos*, *Chapacos*, etc.) are powerful and hierarchical. I argue that differences between these groups are constructed through the language of ‘civilization’ and ‘backwardness’, and that what is deemed ‘backward’, and thus ‘other’, is what is Indian (*indio*). I show how Indian-ness, which is associated with the *Qollas* in particular, is a source of shame and a set of markings over which one may be discriminated and humiliated. Following this discussion of banter, I focus on an instance of ethnic bullying that involves lower level denominations of *Qollas*. While this further illuminates the range of Bolivian diversity, it more importantly reveals the way that this same politics of ‘civilization’ and ‘backwardness’ may be harnessed to cultivate shame over Indian-ness and specifically humiliate someone. Together with the discussion of ethnic banter, this case of ethnic bullying reveals the Bolivian terms that shape the ‘deep pains’ (*dolores profundos*) that I argue motivate the pursuits and expressions of progress that in turn undergird the envy complex.

In Chapter 3, “The Argentine Economy of Otherness”, I show how Bolivians in Argentina are conceived of and engaged through the Argentine category of *negro* (black), but which are not reducible to it. I first provide a genealogy of this category to show how blackness in Argentina, like Indian-ness in Bolivia, lies at the intersection of race, culture, and class, and is

similarly a function of the discourse of ‘civilization’ and ‘backwardness’. I then show how Bolivian-ness, while coterminous with blackness on some levels, also escapes it, giving rise to the category of *bolita*. As the prejudicial designation for Bolivians in Argentina, I show how *bolita* takes its impletion from what is regarded as Indian. On the basis of this semiotic framework, I present my own ethnographic data on violence (i.e. beatings and homicides) to show how Bolivians (and specifically *Qollas*) are made into *bolitas* in Argentina, most often by Argentine *negros*. I show how these objectifications are humiliating for *Qollas*, and Bolivians generally. Finally, through more face-to-face interactions, I show how Bolivians indigenize and deploy the epithet of *bolita* to create otherness and discriminate between themselves. I argue that Bolivians further implete this category with the image of Indian-ness, such that the *Qollas* are disproportionately discriminated as *bolitas* and the Bolivian economy of otherness is reproduced within the Argentine one. Being made into a *bolita* adds an Argentine-inspired, and often Bolivian-rendered, dimension to the ‘deep pains’ that undergird pursuits and expressions of progress.

Having illuminated the regimes of otherness through which Bolivian ethno-racial esteem is configured in Escobar, I then focus on the logic and pursuits of progress. Indeed, as I argue in Chapter 4, “Progress”, pursuits and displays of progress respond to the pains of being ‘othered’, whether as *indios* or as *bolitas*. This includes the desires to overcome the hunger, suffering, and material lack that characterize the lives of most in Bolivia, and the Indian *Qollas* in particular. I begin the discussion with an individual’s critique of another’s pride over having progressed—a critique the former makes through the idiom of a popular Bolivian dance called the *caporales*—to set up a series of arguments. The first is that progress is conceived as achieving distance or separation from the conditions of material lack and cultural ‘backwardness’ that mark one as ‘other’, and through which one may experience shame or be humiliated. The second is that progress is most often achieved through capitalizations. I argue that the purchase of a truck or acreage to farm can ‘trump’ ascribed statuses (as *indios* or *bolitas*) and attenuate the ‘deep pains’ that happen through them. A final argument is that progress is both relative and competitive; that achievements of progress create a zero-sum politics of esteem in which one’s mobility means another is ‘left behind’. These arguments are made through observations of interactions involving the objects of progress—namely trucks. They further reveal that pursuits and displays

of progress not only rely on terms of otherness, they reproduce them in the process. Indeed, one who has progressed may actively cultivate or reinscribe Indian-ness in a rival.

In Chapter 5, “Envy”, I examine instances of envy and pride as practical expressions of the logic and pursuit of progress. I argue that Bolivians conceptualize envy as a relation in which one does not want another to progress, and as a concomitant desire to not be left behind. Envy frequently amounts to a desire to rectify an emergent differential in progress. I argue that when viewed in extension, inter-event experiences and expressions of envy, being so rooted in a zero-sum politics of progress, amount to a social dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition. This dialectics reveals an ethnic structuring, and my investigation of it further illuminates the ecologies of otherness illuminated in previous chapters. I analyze a number of ethnographic examples that highlight both the nature and consequences of envy. These range from the cutting of social fellowship, to the ways that otherness is cultivated, and to the ways that production and consumption are regimented. Through them, I not only show how practices emerge through envy, but also reproduce envy and the politics of otherness upon which it is based. In the end, I argue that the envy complex is socially divisive and agonistic, and that it frustrates the kinds of horizontal identifications and solidarities the CBE was in part designed to create. The chapter closes with a discussion of the origins of envy, and the extent to which those caught up in its coils hold the CBE and its Market responsible for this ‘social sickness’.

Having illuminated the envy complex and the meanings and politics that shape it, I then focus on its political-economic conditions of possibility. In Chapters 6 and 7 I examine the demographic and economic changes wrought through the immigration to Escobar, and the CBE’s mediation of these changes. My argument is that while envy and the logic of progress existed up in Bolivia, the complex and its entailments have ‘exploded’ as a function of these changes and the CBE’s role in shaping them. In this way, the CBE sharpens the divisive sentiments and practices that compromise its mission and come to undergird both its ‘usurpation’ and complicity in it.

In Chapter 6, “Making a Living: Migration and the CBE’s Market”, I begin the discussion with an analysis of the push and pull factors that led to the exodus from the Bolivian highlands of Potosí to the horticultural belt of Buenos Aires, and to Escobar in particular. I chart the Bolivians’ insertion into the horticultural sector and their economic trajectories through the famed ‘horticultural ladder.’ This includes a discussion of the ways the Argentine economic

crisis and waves of violence against Bolivian horticulturists shaped economic trajectories and achievements of progress. With regard to the CBE's wholesale produce Market, I document the range of types of operations to show how the CBE has shaped the economic differentiation of those it serves, and separates operators from other Bolivians in the barrio. This discussion grounds the later argument that, in enabling differential progress, the CBE contributes to the intensification of envy and rivalry. With specific regard to the operations, I illuminate those that are based on production, those that buy and resell goods secured at other regional markets, and those that sell shipments received directly from producers across the Argentine Republic. I show how the various types have different sizes, profit margins, and interlocutors, and the ways they are ethnically structured. I stress how these Market dynamics must be understood within the context of the juridical and not-for-profit nature of the CBE—i.e. how rents paid by operators are to be collected by the CBE such that they finance projects benefitting the public good.

In Chapter 7, “Changes in Relations, Rationales, and Contexts of Production”, I pan back out to contextualize these economic trajectories and differentials within a comparison of the cultures of productivity that obtain between the highlands of Potosí and Escobar. This includes their analysis in historical perspective. I begin the discussion by dispelling assumptions frequently made about the Andean highlands. I then explore how the immigration has entailed a range of changes. These include: changes in the logics and modalities of production, changes in the ability to accumulate and deploy a surplus, changes in the social units of production (and in socio-economic interlocutors generally), and changes in the ‘checks’ on differentiation. The discussions then hone in on the socio-economics of the CBE's Market to show how it shaped, mediated, and in some cases, constituted these changes. In the process, I show how the Market concentrated production, accelerated differentiation, and solidified ‘progress’ as the principal rationale of production. I finally show how, as a function of these, it intensified competition and exacerbated envy.

Having illuminated the ethno-racial and political-economic matrices through which the envy complex has emerged, I then explore the ways it has shaped the CBE's ‘usurpation’ and widespread complicity in it. Where in Chapter 1 I provided a legal history of the ‘usurpation’, in Chapter 8 “Envy, Usurpation, and the ‘Failure’ of the CBE”, I provide an ethnographic portrait of it. After reflecting on how the CBE contributed to the culture and ‘explosion’ of envy, I begin by recounting the events of the original coup from December 2001. I explore the extent to which

histories of envious rivalry between ethnic factions of *Qollas* (e.g. Saropalkeños and Pancocheños) were a necessary set of conditions for the ‘usurpers’ to effectuate the permanent ouster of the founding and incumbent President, as well as to consolidate their hold over the institution. Within this, I examine the extent to which the alleged architects of the ‘usurpation’ directly *incited* these historical rivalries to achieve their take-over. Indeed, I argue the ‘usurpers’ were keen to the power and potential of envy, and manipulated the complex to their own benefit. This includes a discussion of the ways they engaged a highland Bolivian ethics of proportionality and rotationality in collective governance. In the final section, I discuss what the ‘usurped’ CBE looked like and how the envy complex underwrote the forms and modalities of the new politico-economic order. Discussions here range from the dynamics of patronage to strong-arm tactics, and the ways these generated both complicity among those in the Market and critiques from those excluded from its ‘racket’. Finally, I discuss how the relations and identifications that have obtained within the ‘usurped’ CBE are at odds with what the CBE was designed to accomplish. By illuminating the ‘failure’ of the CBE, I present an ‘is’ that can be contrasted with an ‘ought’ that critics believe should obtain. This is the ethical gap that comes to be addressed through a critical rhetoric of humility.

In Chapter 9, “When Everything Else Fails, A Return to Humility” I explore different solutions to the CBE’s crisis and, by extension, that of the larger Bolivian ‘community’. I do this given popular laments of a lost humanity given the social sickness of envy. I begin by returning to the legal proceedings of the crisis with which I began the thesis. I focus on what becomes the last resort of the Argentine state to regulate the CBE: a formal Intervention by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). I show how it too ‘fails’ given the ‘usurper’s’ co-optation, and later resistance, of the IGJ’s appointed officials. Where the state and the system of right are seen to be part of the problem, I then turn to more indigenous solutions. The first is a plot among some of the displaced to remove the ‘usurpers’ by a violent, vigilante justice. Framed as a ‘turning of the CBE right (side up)’ I discuss what was to be a leg-breaking vis-à-vis the native Andean concept of *pachacutek*. The second involves an emergent ethics of humility, one whose framing is reminiscent of the *pachacutek*. I explore this through calls to return to common roots of humility. In light of the excesses of envy and pride, I illuminate what humility is and can mean for these diverse Bolivians in the context of the CBE and the challenges their immigration has posed for them. I explore the extent to which a discourse of humility can recruit “ethical

kinship” among diverse Bolivians where other rhetorics of inclusiveness (e.g. Bolivian brotherhood) cannot. Vis-à-vis the socially divisive complex of envy, I conclude by asking whether the virtue of humility can generate the ‘overarching attachments’ (*afectos superadores*) that the CBE was designed to foster, and that are needed to restore it in service of the public good. For in the end, an investigation of the world-building potential of humility given this broader politics of otherness can help answer the question posed for all Bolivians in Escobar, and perhaps other immigrants elsewhere: “What was, what is, and what ought to be—and for whom?”

On Names and Identifications

As any reader will know, ethnographic writing is a complex affair. For any representation is a political and ethical matter. This is especially true when handling accusations—and even evidence—of wrongdoing. How is an ethnographer to portray malfeasance and abuse when there is no ‘official’ pronouncement on such practices—noting that even Court decisions, were they to apply, also lack an Archimedean perspective? What responsibility does an anthropologist have to those he represents if some of them, given a preponderance of the evidence, break the law and exploit their fellows, sometimes violently? These are questions for which professional codes of ethics are insufficient, and for which one must provide his own answers. The discussions that follow are *my* answers. This dissertation is therefore not ‘the official story’ of the social, political, and ethical life in Escobar, but rather my assessment of it. At the same time, my view is not plucked from thin air; it is based on how those in Escobar present themselves—not just to me, but to each other and to the Argentine state.

While mediated by my own editorial hand, the discussions that follow are an attempt to assemble these presentations to shed light on the human condition in Escobar, viewed from Escobar. While my voice is present on every page, so are the voices of others. And while some individuals here stand thoroughly implicated in abuse, both legal and moral, I invite the reader to consider how many around them, as well as I, have come to implicate them. Indeed, I have supplied—verbatim—their own presentations to let the reader make her or his own judgments. Moreover, I have illuminated the conditions that make people everywhere fallible; that make

collective life and political organization messy and risky. While this work may be fraught with complications, as any ethnography is, I believe it is worth writing. How will we know ourselves unless we tackle our humanity in the most challenging of circumstances? How can we foster understanding across cultures if we only write about ourselves? The history of humanity has always been that of engagement, both at home and abroad. I do not intend to stem its tide, but rather to add to it.

Capturing human challenges cannot be done in the macro alone, or otherwise through ‘structural’ analysis. One must apprehend the interaction all the way down. This means illuminating social phenomena through the actions of the actors themselves. And here I confront a key problem: these actors have names. To be exact, they have *nombres y apellidos*, as the critics in Escobar are keen to note. Am I to include personal names in this analysis? What are the stakes of doing so? Escobar is a place where people get their arms broken and their teeth kicked in. Is the story I want to tell worth risking that? What about the ‘bad’ guys? If the Argentine state can be co-opted, as it seems, why not name those who have done so at everyone’s else’s expense? Shouldn’t people, in Escobar and beyond, know the extent of their abuse? In my heart I believe they should. And in Escobar, those that feel the brunt of their violent work believe they should. Yet if we have learned anything in anthropology, it is that making sense in and of the world is a path laden with hazards; that there can be a gap between practice and the representations of practice. As thorough as we may be, as preponderant as the evidence is, and as critically as we parse one mediation from another, our truth may not be *the* truth. Evidence may someday surface that sheds new light on old certainties.

Because what follows is my truth, my argument—and because I defer to future history—I have decided to change the names of those who appear below. Critics of the ‘usurpation’ in Escobar may not forgive me this transgression. For they seek *nombres y apellidos*, especially as so many have already failed them. But I ask them to consider that the lessons they teach—and that are woven through these discussions—can still be had; that their dignity before the public is not tied to my decision for prudence at this stage of my discovery. The creation of meaning, which here means linking people to actions to consequences, is a business that is never finished, even as we are sure we have gotten the story right. What thus follows is an analysis whose protagonists are known by pseudonyms. The only exceptions are Don Fidencio, whose torture

and extortion made the national press in 2000, and Doña Norberta and Don Ernesto, whose tragic murder in 2007 became the subject of protests in Escobar.

Chapter 1:

The *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar*: Mission, Crisis, and Proceedings

Locations and Orientations

I began my fieldwork in early August 2005, just in time for the CBE's celebration of Bolivian Independence Day—"el 6 de Agosto", as everyone refers to it. I had written research grants proposing to connect structures of authority 'indigenous' to the Bolivian highlands to those found in the CBE, which being born through Argentine Civil code would surely have 'European' features. In constructing the project, I had not known of the extent to which the CBE had been mired in conflict, which dated to December 2001, nor was I prepared to meet in 2005 a CBE that would be undergoing a formal Intervention by the Argentine Ministry of Justice. As I would come to find out, the authorities inside the CBE had been officially disbanded by the Ministry, and replaced by the sole figure of the appointed *Interventor*. Dr. Mendoza was the second of his kind who had been charged with making the entity 'regular'.

Not knowing what to expect, I went to the CBE's Administration, which sat atop its wholesale Horticultural Market, and looked to introduce myself. Noting that the *Interventor* Mendoza was not present, I found those in charge. These figures, some of whose long-distance trucks I would come to unload as a *changarín* (freight-handler), immediately parried me to the long-standing Secretary of Culture, Señor Jorgito. Indeed, if I were an anthropologist, I must be interested in Bolivia's folkloric traditions, and no better person to 'orient' me than Jorgito. Certainly all newcomers, even their fellow immigrants, needed orientation. This was one of the very things the CBE had been designed to do.

When I found Jorgito I learned that he had worked for years with those dedicated to celebrating Bolivian 'culture' in Argentina—to keeping Bolivian traditions strong, especially among the youth. One of the ways they did this was to promote the diffusion of Bolivian dances

and music. For the 6 de Agosto celebrations, Jorgito had prepared and coordinated the *entrada* of the various Collectives' troupes and bands. I had already known that the CBE had been the biggest and most widely known of its kind in Argentina, and that its name rang throughout Bolivia. Thus it was no surprise that the CBE hosted the 6 de Agosto Celebrations on behalf of many smaller Collectives, and drew thousands from the area, including Buenos Aires itself. Jorgito certainly had his hands full, but he was happy to volunteer his energies. Indeed, he was known by many as the most dedicated to serving the *Comunidad* (community).

Where Jorgito had given me a program of events and welcomed discussion as to how I might collaborate in offering some tutoring in the barrio, I was fortunate to spend the day with some of the other *changarines* I had met a few days earlier. As we toured the celebrations, moving from the *entradas*, where they danced *caporales* and *tinkus*, to a friend's food stand, I learned many things: that Bolivians don't salute each other with the *beso* as Argentines do (for that was effeminate); that *ch'uñu*¹ accompanies all *picantes de pollo* in Argentina (as it rightfully should); and that 6 de Agosto was the day that Potosinos were not Potosinos, and that Tarijeños were not Tarijeños. The 6 de Agosto was the day that all were *Bolivians*.

While I would eventually come to understand the complex ways that Bolivians were Bolivians in Escobar, and the ways that such claims of horizontality were in fact claims—i.e. that they were not based on deeper fellowship—nothing drove home the latter more than what happened to Secretary Jorgito that dawn. I had gone looking for him the next day such that we might continue our conversations, and was met brusquely with the message: “*no está*”. It would be another day until I learned that Jorgito had been brutally beaten, and was slated to undergo medical procedures. Eventually I caught up with him and a mutual friend, who eyed me squarely and said: “Just look what they have done to him!—his *own people* for fuck's sake.” Indeed, Jorgito's face had been pummeled, he was in a sling; when he moved he winced, and badly. Though Jorgito would never confirm or deny it, everyone surmised that he had been attacked—or rather “*ubicado*” (i.e. put in his place, literally “located”)—by those at the helm of the CBE and its revenue-generating Market. It was believed that these individuals, whom their opponents called the ‘usurpers’, attacked him because, as a public figure, he had shown public support for

¹ Freeze-dried potatoes. Like Bolivians themselves, It too makes the long haul from the Highlands to Escobar—and beyond.

the Ministry's Intervention. This was an Intervention that the 'usurpers' blocked and thwarted, often with similar tactics.

While this dissertation charts the conditions and processes through which ethical deliberations among Bolivians in Escobar emerge and become consequential, there is perhaps no better place to begin than with the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* (CBE). For the CBE is that institution which not only created the proposal for Bolivian "solidarity" in Escobar, it is that institution whose crisis paradoxically produced the seeds of its realization. In this first chapter, I introduce the *ideals* of Bolivian community as seen through the founding mission of the CBE, and detail the crisis of the entity as manifest in the legal proceedings maintained by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). The IGJ is the arm of the Argentine Ministry of Justice charged with authorizing and regulating entities of the public good. As will become apparent, detailing this legal crisis is important for understanding the terrain upon which ethical deliberations, and even certain conditions of their possibility, emerge.

This 'orientation' begins with a discussion of the CBE's founding mission, as seen first through its IGJ-authorized Statutes, and as subsequently elaborated through a moral code. The discussion then moves to address the question of *afectos superadores* (over-arching attachments), as presented by the IGJ, and a brief treatment of the division of labor between the Argentine State and any entity of the public good as regards their (auto)regulation. Following a brief discussion enumerating the reasons why the legal proceedings over the CBE must be explored, I provide a detailed exegesis of those proceedings. I then conclude the chapter by introducing the rest of the dissertation with a question: Where the CBE is caught in an intractable conflict, what would it take to restore it in service of the public good? Following the IGJ that *afectos superadores* must undergird any such effort, I provide through the body chapters linked ethno-racial and economic arguments for why such over-arching attachments are frustrated at almost every turn. As I hope will become apparent, while the legal dimensions to the CBE's conflict are crucial to understanding ethics among Bolivians in Escobar generally, there are other stories that must be told as well.

The CBE's Mission and Crisis

As many Bolivians in Escobar were keen to point out, the CBE had once been the pride of the Bolivian 'community', and the envy of all others. Despite its many successes, however, it had come to be known for its infighting and extra-judicial acts, such as the attack on Secretary Jorgito. Indeed, where the one who most represented and cultivated community had been so brutally "located" by what some called the "mafia" in the CBE, what did it say about the entity itself? What had it become? Many stated that the CBE had lost all purchase on community; that it was all about greed and money. "They want everything for themselves", was a common refrain. "They don't do anything for the community", was another. For the many critics, the CBE had lost its way. And they weren't wrong. Indeed, while the CBE had stood for Bolivian solidarity (or at least its possibility) in the past, it was, in August 2005, the most divisive presence in the Barrio. It would be just a few months later that the IGJ's Interventor petitioned the Ministry of the Interior to dispatch the National Guard to dislodge the 'usurpers'.

Yet things weren't always this way. Like any *asociación civil* (civil association), the CBE had been granted juridical personhood by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ) to exist as such. This meant that the CBE had been designed to serve the public good, and that it must do so to maintain its charter. Revenues can be generated toward this end, but *only* toward this end. Indeed, entities of the public good must never be sites for personal enrichment; rather, they must evince an ethos of altruism and service, themselves known through redistributive works. Writing on the nature of these "entities of the public good", as *asociaciones civiles* are also known, the Argentine jurist Santiago states that they are conceived as being structured by a "proposal for life in common" (2002: 38). This proposal is the project the entity must bring to fruition—what he calls its "*proyecto a realizar*". Such a project, he argues, is what 'calls' its members to participation and to action; it is what, ultimately, provides social cohesion, not just within the entity, but within the larger political community the entity is meant to serve (*ibid.*).

In the exegesis of the legal proceedings that follows, I show how this vision of civil associations is expressed through the IGJ's language in regulating the CBE—specifically in the terms of *affectio societatis* (i.e. an entity's founding rationale or institutional purpose) and *affectos superadores* (i.e. the over-arching identifications needed to bring such a project about). One of the main arguments of this dissertation is that those who become the CBE's members

(*socios*) do not identify with the CBE's mission to serve the public good (i.e. its *affectio societatis*), nor do they have the horizontal identifications (*affectos superadores*) necessary to realize the CBE's goals. While the subsequent chapters show how the CBE's 'proposal for life in common' is frustrated by a number of factors, including the CBE's own accomplishments (specifically its creation of the revenue-generating Horticultural Market), this chapter delves into the legal file to introduce the CBE and what ails it from the perspective of both the litigants and the IGJ. First however, it serves to present what the CBE's mission was conceived to be at the time of its founding.

The CBE's Statutes

While the CBE was founded in Escobar in 1990, it was not formerly recognized as an entity of the public good until 27 August 1991. The IGJ's recognition, and the provision of juridical personhood that came with it, depended upon their approval of the CBE's Statutes. In addition to providing the necessary terms for the CBE's internal government and the rights and duties of its members, the Statutes were also required to state the CBE's institutional mission—i.e. its *proyecto a realizar*. That purpose was various. As contained in Article 2 of the Statutes, the CBE would promote the cultural and intellectual development of its members. This would include the celebration of popular festivals and the practicing of sports, as well as do so according to the values of the dominant religion. To facilitate these ends, the CBE would acquire the necessary means, including property and facilities. Yet perhaps the most significant dimensions of its mission were to “welcome and serve all Bolivian brothers” residing in the area, and to “cultivate cordiality and solidarity” among them.

There are two important things to note about this mission as it was conceived upon the founding of the entity. First, the CBE was predicated upon an inclusivity that was framed in terms of Bolivian national brotherhood. The CBE was precisely this: the *Bolivian* Collectivity in Escobar. While all potential members shared membership in the Bolivian national and political community (certain discriminations notwithstanding), this was a status that also corporatized—and tended to homogenize—them in Argentina. Indeed, they were Bolivian nationals who were ‘other’ in Argentina, as waves of xenophobic depredations would attest.

Certainly, the very acquisition of juridical personhood for the CBE was motivated by a need to stave off attacks against Bolivians in Escobar—a fact I return repeatedly throughout the dissertation. For the moment, what must be stressed is that the CBE’s Statutes never mention the diversity of these Bolivian brethren. Certainly, they were not a homogenous population. There were “ethno-national” differences between the Potosinos (as *Qollas*), the Cochabambinos (as *Qochalos*), and the Tarijeños (as *Chapacos*)—to name just the principal groups. And there were differences within the *Qollas* that might rightly be called “ethnic”. For example, despite their racial homogeneity, cultural and religious markers between Potosino *comunidades* of Saropalkeños and Pancocheños make them, as many are wont to point out, as different as ‘black and white’. As far as the CBE’s Statutes are concerned, this rich social ecology is unremarkable. In this way, one can read “Bolivian brotherhood” as *itself* part of the “proposal for life in common”, rather than any kind of relationship (*afecto superador*) that obtained in the flesh.

The second aspect to note is that the CBE, like all entities of the public good, was founded with an eminently “social mission”—what its Statutes call an *objeto social*. As seen above, this meant the promotion of intellectual and cultural development in which festive and religious practices figured heavily, as did sport. What the original mission of the CBE was specifically *not*, was economic. Indeed, while the vast majority of Bolivians in Escobar worked in the horticultural sector, their economic well-being was not yet an object of interest. It would be five years before the CBE grew enough to coordinate the construction of its wholesale Horticultural Market, which was finished in 1995. While this was a project that benefitted many of the CBE’s members in an economic-developmental sense, the revenues of this Market (acquired through individual leases to operate there) were envisioned to finance further reaching projects as per the entity’s original *social* mission. Indeed, they had to by law, lest the CBE cease to be an entity of the public good (*asociación civil*) and approximate a corporation (*sociedad anónima*). As will become clear both below and throughout the dissertation, the CBE saw its mission frustrated as the Horticultural Market and its commercial logic came to dominate the interests of the members (or at least those operating in the Market). Not only did this logic tear at the founding mission (*affectio societatis*) of the CBE; it tore at the very attachments (*afectos superadores*) needed to sustain the entity itself.

The CBE's Moral Code

It was perhaps for this reason that, a few years into the Market's success, those founders bent on preserving the original *social* mission of the CBE saw it necessary to stress the entity's founding purpose, and to do so in a publically symbolic way. Where the Market and the exclusive pursuits of 'progress' it facilitated came to dominate the institutional ethos, and where nefarious interests in the entity's booming revenues began to surface, the CBE's founding President, Teodoro Cahuana, had a moral code painted on the wall of the CBE's Assembly Hall. It was written in Quechua, reflecting a bias towards the Potosinos, for whom Quechua was their first language, and who comprised the bulk of the CBE's members and its Market's operators. It was thus unintelligible to the Tarijeños, who speak only Spanish, and who comprise the largest minority of Bolivians in Escobar. Despite the fact that the CBE had by the late 1990s become something of a 'Colectividad Potosina', the message of the moral code nevertheless stressed inclusivity and an ethos of solidarity and cooperation, if through highland idioms. It reads:

Yanapacunapac

In order to help ourselves

Churanacunapac

In order to keep for one another / contribute equally toward our collective maintenance

Mink'anacunapac

In order to host one another / collaborate festively in work

Ayninacunapac

In order to owe one another in kind / enter into obligations with one another

Jaiwanacunapac

In order to provide for / offer food to one another

Mañanacunapac

In order to borrow from / lend to one another

Tantanacusun.

Let us join one another / unite ourselves.

While the bias toward a Potosino 'we' is clear, Cahuana's commissioning of the moral code as a public banner shows that identifications with the CBE's founding mission (*affectio societatis*)

and among the members themselves (*afectos superadores*) were weak. I argue that the code must be read as an attempt to pedagogically cultivate the “solidarity” mentioned in the entity’s ‘proposal for life in common’, and at a time when such identifications were crucial for the entity’s survival.² Indeed, given the evolving ethos of the entity toward private gain, it would be just a few short years until the CBE and its pursuit of the public good would grind to a halt before an internal coup. The only institutions that would survive the coup, which happened through the December 2001 election, and through the ‘usurpation’ that followed were its

² While the sense of the message is semantically clear—mutual aid, inclusivity, and unity—it is also encoded in the grammatical constructions themselves. To begin with, the moral code is to be read as a singular sentence that concludes with the main verb clause “let us unite ourselves.” As seen through this clause, the subject of the entire construction is *noqanchis*, i.e. the inclusive ‘we’ (first-person plural). The dependent, relative clauses that precede it bear a number of markings that reveal the ethos its authors desire.

To begin with, the relative clauses terminate with the verbal affix *-na*, which is an instrumental (future) nominalizer, and the verbal suffix *-paq*, which is a benefactive suffix (Adelaar and Muysken 2007; see also Calvo Pérez 1993). Adelaar and Muysken note that forms resulting from instrumental nominalization (*-na*) are everything but subject-centered, in that they refer to events not yet realized. Such forms may variously denote a means (or place or time) in the future, an object to be affected, the necessity of an event, or plainly that an event is to occur. And while *-na* usually marks an obligation with a future orientation, it is frequently combined with the benefactive suffix *-paq*, as here, to indicate a goal or purpose (Adelaar and Muysken 2007: 227-228, 247). Indeed, the benefactive *-paq* in these cases indicates that there is an advantage which results from the action of the verb (Calvo Pérez 1993: 333). For these relative clauses, one therefore reads the composition *-na + -paq* as semantically foregrounding the (future) realization of the verbs to which they attach, suggesting that this realization is purposive or goal oriented. Indeed, the relative nature of the clauses constructs the practices of these verbs as goals or ends in and of themselves.

What also marks all of these relative clauses but the first is the construction *-naku*, which helps us understand just how this inclusive ‘we’ parses the moral action itself. Some scholars treat *-naku* as a singular suffix and undifferentiated gloss for reciprocity. While on some level this is true, Faller (2007) argues that reciprocity is an inherently complex operation that encompasses more basic aspects of plurality, distinctness of co-arguments, reflexivity, and universal quantification (2007: 256). To understand these constituent aspects and how they combine to derive reciprocity, one must disaggregate *-naku* and examine its components *-na* and *-ku*. In *-naku*, the verbal affix *-na* is not the instrumental, future nominalizer described above, but rather a *pluractional* marker (Faller 2007). Pluractionality means that the action of the verb is plural, either because several agents perform it, because it is performed on several objects, or because it is performed several times. Faller argues that the defining condition of pluractionality is that the overall action consists of multiple, separate *events*.

Where these multiple events are indicated by *-na*, *-ku* indicates that the participants in them are drawn from the same group. There is certain debate over which *-ku* in such context functions as a ‘reflexive’ or a ‘mediopassive’—that is, whether *-ku* co-indexes the Agent and the Theme (i.e. the entity that undergoes the action) or whether it co-indexes the Agent and the Beneficiary (i.e. the entity that benefits from it [see van de Kerke 1991: 80]). In a general sense, however, Faller argues that while the combination of *-na* and *-ku* does not by itself constitute reciprocity, when it co-occurs—as it does here—with plural predication and the notion of plural agents and themes, the necessary conditions for reciprocity naturally obtain (Faller 2007: 265-266). These include the distinctness of co-arguments (i.e. the idea that there are distinct but mutually entailing entities participating in the relation established by the predicate), and universal quantification (i.e. the notion that a particular relation holds for all arguments—that is, for everything or everyone involved).

For all of these reasons, this moral code should be read as attempting to instantiate an ethos of mutual engagement and regard. It not only specifies *what* the members of the CBE should be aspiring toward (in the sense of an *afectio societatis*), it simultaneously specifies *how* they should relate to one another in such a project (that is, their over-arching attachments, or *afectos superadores*).

revenue-generating Markets—i.e. its wholesale Horticultural Market and its weekly textile Fair³. As we saw above with the attack on Secretary Jorgito, the ‘usurpation’ was as strong as ever in 2005. And despite efforts of the IGJ to dislodge its proponents (which some argue had only become entrenched because of the IGJ), it was still the *de facto* rule as I finished my fieldwork in August 2007.

The CBE’s Crisis: Legal and Ethnographic Lines of Evidence

One of the main arguments of this dissertation is that the ethics of the *Comunidad Boliviana de Escobar* are the ethics of the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar*. That is, that the CBE has not only presented the *proposal* for community among the Bolivians of Escobar, but that, through its growth and evolution, it has created the very conditions of possibility for its *realization*—if only, and paradoxically, through its own corruption. In this way, telling the story of how and on what terms Bolivians (come to) relate to other Bolivians as fellows (*prójimos*) means telling the story the CBE and its crisis.

The story of the CBE and its crisis can be told from two vantage points; or rather, using two different kinds of evidence. A first account, which I begin below and return to toward the end of the dissertation, relies on legal evidence. This evidence is that compendium of complaints, briefs, Resolutions, statutes and code that comprises the IGJ’s file (*expediente*) on the CBE. Because the CBE is an entity of the public good, any legal proceedings over it are

³ The “Feria”, as it is known to all, is a major source of revenue for the CBE, and happens only on Sundays. The operators (*puesteros*) that sell finished textiles there are, in contrast to those that sell in the wholesale Horticultural Market, both Bolivians and Argentines. Much of what they sell are black market knock-offs acquired through a much larger Feria in Buenos Aires called “La Salada”. While because of its size the Sunday Feria’s revenues exceed what the Horticultural Market takes in all week (indeed, it has a few hundred more *puestos* for rent), it is nevertheless secondary in importance to the Market. This is not just because it happens once a week, or because competition between Bolivians is more diffuse given that one’s neighbors are often Argentines or other Bolivians who are not from the area. Rather, it is for two other reasons. First, while the Feria’s revenues are large in aggregate, no single operator can make the amount of money that can be made through the Horticultural Market (see Chapter 6). Indeed, commerce in wholesale produce has exploited supply and involved capital investments in ways that black-market textiles—at least among Bolivians in Escobar—has not. All the big players in the CBE’s crisis are individuals who have become magnates in the Horticultural Market—and subsequently used their occupation of the CBE to further grow their business. Second, the Feria takes place a few streets away in a separate facility that is structurally unrelated to the CBE’s headquarters. Indeed, the CBE’s Administrative Offices and its Assembly Hall sit above and adjacent to the Horticultural Market. These sites, in addition to the Market floor, are where the ‘usurpation’ has played out. For these social, economic, and political reasons, the Feria is far less significant than the Market, and so appears here only intermittently.

generally also public. While some documents (e.g. IGJ Resolutions) are published, other documents (e.g. litigants' complaints [*denuncias*] and IGJ briefs [*dictámenes*]), require authorization. Authorization can be obtained with the consent of any of the principal litigants.

A second account of the CBE and its crisis relies on ethnographic evidence collected among those in the CBE and in Escobar's Barrio generally. This data is more varied, and ranges from documented interactions to personal accounts of events and processes, to indicators of structures and patterns of migration, production, and consumption—and perhaps even to my own somatic registrations, as I was taught to fear, desire, and experience pain and frustration in ways common among Bolivians in Escobar. As indicated previously, the story of the CBE and its crisis I tell through these lines of evidence, which might be characterized variously as racial, ethnic, economic, etc., is that of the envy complex. Chapters 2 through 7 are dedicated to illuminating the emergence, contours, intensification, and consequences of this complex. As also indicated previously, one of my main contributions in this thesis is to show how the CBE mediated the changes wrought through the immigration that intensified this envy complex, and how this 'explosion' of envy came to compromise the very mission of the CBE—creating in the process certain conditions of possibility for an emergent, world-building ethics.

Both of these accounts provide different dimensions to the story of the CBE and its crisis. They are in fact complementary. Both are needed to properly understand the crisis and how it has provided much of the terrain upon which this world-building ethics has emerged and become consequential.

The CBE's Crisis in Legal Perspective

What follows is the legal story of the CBE's crisis as seen through an exegesis of its IGJ-mediated regulatory proceedings. Yet before engaging the documents themselves, it fits to mention what such a detailed account provides and reveals, and how it relates both to the subsequent ethnographic account and within the overall framework of the dissertation.

There are many challenges in presenting a case of corruption for anthropological analysis. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to address the difference between the acts that might qualify as corruption and discursive representations of them. One might argue that what little

anthropology exists on corruption centers on the *discourse* of corruption, without an illumination of the acts that ground and afford such discourse. This of course has many causes: not all anthropologists arrive in time to capture the acts; others will lack access to them; and yet others will refuse to make the sacrifices necessary to apprehend them. In many instances, lives can and will be threatened. And as those embroiled in the events can attest, costs can be great. Despite these challenges, I contend that while discourse is crucial for any *social* analysis of corruption and its effects (indeed, corruption is an eminently social phenomenon), an appreciation for the acts ‘beneath’ such discourse is nevertheless necessary. How else are we to understand the content of the discourse and the ways it becomes pragmatic? Certainly, without understanding certain acts, one cannot appreciate the ways they can be purposefully *misrepresented* for nefarious ends—misrepresentation of course being a key dimension to corruption and its perpetuation.

This is precisely one of the issues those embroiled in the corruption of the CBE and its effects face. Chatting about the events of the CBE one night while unloading trucks in its Market, a friend put it to me squarely: “The challenge,” he said, “is to separate the *dichos* from the *hechos*.” That is, to separate what is *said* from what is *done*. While anyone conversant in the social analyses of language will note, language is itself social action. In this light, the separation of *dichos* from *hechos* is perhaps a false one. But this misses the point. Those often caught up in the coils of corruption struggle to know which end is up; they struggle to know who is telling the truth. Where the truth is elusive, and shrouded in mystery, one lacks the rudder to navigate the ethical seas. The court of public opinion becomes a kangaroo court. Scholars from Dewey to Habermas to Chomsky have all lamented this in one way or another.

The exegesis of the CBE’s regulatory proceedings I provide below is thus dedicated to illuminating certain acts of corruption in an attempt to separate the *dichos* from the *hechos*, and explore the relation between them. The acts that make it into the legal file are of course only a portion of the larger set that I make known over the course of the dissertation and through the use of other lines of evidence. Yet the acts illuminated here are necessary for understanding those acts I detail ethnographically. Indeed, I am convinced that, because of the politics of misinformation swirling about the crisis of the CBE, one who merely does ethnography in and around the CBE will never fully understand what happened, as the vast majority of the CBE’s members (and even critics) do not. And while the acts contained in this file are *represented*, one

can, through triangulation with other documents and ethnographic evidence, see the ways these representations are motivated, and in some crucial cases, contrived. What precipitates through a detailed reading of the file is thus an appreciation for the motivations and interests of the litigants and protagonists themselves.

What does the exegesis of the regulatory proceedings look like? There are perhaps different ways to communicate the legal story of the CBE and its crisis. In working through the file, I have selected for analysis and partial reproduction only those documents that crystallize the key events, maneuvers, dispositions and pronouncements of both the antagonized litigants and the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). In this way I have reduced the entire file, whose separate but linked proceedings (*expedientes*) approximate two thousand pages, into a single and manageable account. The presentation is itself bimodal: on the one hand, there are partial reproductions of key Spanish-language documents; on the other, these reproductions are embedded within my own English-language analysis. This analysis not only narrativizes the content of the documents, it contextualizes it within the proper juridical and ethnographic frameworks. The English-language narrative can be read seamlessly from top to bottom, and does not itself depend upon the entextualized Spanish-language reproductions. To preserve flow, the narrative may not always attend to what immediately precedes it or follows it. Nevertheless, the narrative and the reproductions it references are reconciled by the end of each section, such that they keep pace throughout the exegesis. As for the selected documents themselves, I have arranged, abridged, and in certain cases annotated them, as an historian might present documents from an archive. While this might add a level of complexity to the relationship between the *dichos* and the *hechos*, my reproductions let the litigants speak for themselves and in their native language.

In addition to letting the litigants speak for themselves, a process that lets *them* render their own manipulations, character, and interests visible to us (i.e. instead of having the anthropologist impute these things to them), there are a number of other advantages that accrue in providing a detailed exegesis of the file. To begin with, the file is the best source for understanding the events surrounding the CBE's Election of December 2001 and thus the means through which the 'usurpers' (as they are called by their critics) came to power. Understanding the crisis of the CBE is impossible without understanding these initial events. Indeed, they

structured years of subsequent legal action that had its own structuring force on practices within the CBE and among members and non-members.

Second, a detailed illumination of the proceedings allows us to see the role of the Argentine State in this Bolivian affair. The documents (particularly the IGJ's Resolutions) not only allow us to see the legal regime that supports entities of the public good, including the State's ideology of this good, they allow us to see how such entities are required to self-govern and self-regulate. Indeed, they show that the IGJ, being of the Executive and not the Judicial Branch, cannot decide matters *between* the litigants. Rather, they can only *mediate* them by pronouncing CBE-internal acts "irregular and inoperative" (*irregular y ineficaz*). Working through the proceedings not only allows us to see how those fighting to recuperate the CBE repeatedly misunderstand this and expect the IGJ to "mete out justice" where by law it cannot; it also allows us to see what kinds of expectations the IGJ has of entities of the public good—namely, that they are unified (through *afectos superadores*) around a common and virtuous project (*affectio societatis*). Moreover, the documents allow us to see what kinds of consequences this division of labor between the IGJ and the CBE's internal government—and between right and virtue—can have. One such consequence, as presentations by both litigants reveal, is that those with nefarious interests (i.e. the 'usurpers') can tie things up such that the CBE as a whole can never agree upon a single course of restorative action. The ensuing limbo, in which the 'usurpers' manipulate the State through claims of virtuous effort (and manipulate the CBE's Market's operators in the process), enables them to continue to (mis)manage the entity and its revenues. As I show in the ethnographic chapters that follow, their 'usurpation' changes the configuration of capital that allows for a further intensification of the envy complex (including its racial and ethnic dimensions), and thus further prepares the terrain upon which an ethics of humility emerges. In this way, the action (and inaction) of the Argentine State creates certain conditions of possibility for ethical practice among Bolivians in Escobar. Paradoxically, State requirements that entities of the public good auto-regulate and settle their own problems helps *force* the conflict through which world-building projects emerge.

While other insights will emerge through the course of the analysis, including the ways the State is neither impersonal nor monolithic, there is a final advantage to illuminating the proceedings as I have done. As seen through the various documents, the litigants and the IGJ comment on a range of motivations and relationships. But one thing they fail to capture are the

politics of ethnicity and kinship. In fact, the conflict is never verbalized or accounted for in these terms. Were this file the only account of the conflict (as one might find it in an archive hundreds of years from now), one might think that events and processes in the CBE were simply about money and power, without understanding how these are signified and pursued through the politics of progress. Moreover, one would imagine that these struggles obtained between *Bolivians* as such—and not between, variously, Potosinos (as *Qollas*), Cochabambinos (as *Qochalos*), and Tarijeños (as *Chapacos*), or lower-level groups within them, e.g. the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños as communities of Potosinos. And one would not understand how these various groups of Bolivians can be, here again variously, *truchos* (fake Bolivians), *indios* (Indians), *burros* (donkeys), *salvajes* (savages), *bolitas* (Bolivian racial and cultural inferiors), *elegantes* (the elegant), *despiertos* (the enlightened), etc. The point to reiterate is that while the file tells a crucial part of the story of the CBE and its crisis, it is not “what happened”, but only part of what happened. As mentioned above, it is meant to complement and be complemented by the chapters that follow. Those chapters, I have found, are best set up through a presentation of the proceedings.

Setting the Scene: The CBE’s Election of December 2001

The crisis of the CBE erupted in 2001 with the yearly election for the entity’s Executive Commission (*Comisión Directiva*). That year—the CBE’s eleventh—the election was scheduled for December 22. It pitted the Red Ticket (*Lista Roja*), led by the incumbent and founding President Teodoro Cahuana, against the Green Ticket (*Lista Verde*), led by challenger Raimundo Huanquiri. In the weeks prior, there had been serious disagreement between Cahuana’s acting Commission and the Internal Regulator (*Fiscalizador*), Ceferino González, over just who was eligible to vote. With an Election Commission caught in the middle, there were accusations of rigging by both sides. Certainly, much was at stake. Not only was the CBE the most renowned Bolivian entity in Argentina—if not outside of Bolivia—it was also its richest, with annual revenues exceeding USD \$1.5M.

The CBE’s Statutes required that the roll of eligible voters (*padrón*) be both vetted and publicized weeks before the election, guaranteeing a period of time for the formulation of any

objections and their resolution. As per the Statutes, only registered and active members (*socios*) who had paid their dues were eligible to vote. This, however, had not been enforced from year to year. Dues were nominal, elections were not always hotly contested, and leeway regarding member activity had always been granted. Certainly, where many of the CBE's members lived (and often precariously so) in the fields they worked, they were not always able to get to Escobar to participate in CBE events and meetings. Moreover, others would be absent for times of the year, traveling either to Bolivia for personal reasons, or elsewhere for economic reasons. While the roll of eligible voters had not traditionally been a subject of debate, it had become so as the CBE grew in wealth and influence.

By Election Day, an agreement between Cahuana's Executive Commission and González, the Internal Regulator, had not been met. The result was the existence of *two* rolls of registered voters. These separate rolls reflected a deeper issue. The Register listing all of the CBE's members (from which eligible voters would be drawn) was itself divided between two separate books. The first, called the *Registro de Asociados N°1*, was granted to the CBE following its authorization by the IGJ. In it were the registrations for the CBE's founding members and all others associated through at least 1999 (i.e. members 1-559). The second, *Registro de Asociados N°2*, was granted to the CBE midway through the year 2000, and documented the registrations of members numbering 560-796. As we'll see shortly, it appears that this second book, while rightfully obtained by Cahuana's Commission, was kept quiet—or at least inaccessible—by them because of their fears of a plot by some of the powerful operators in the Market (*comerciantes*) to take over the CBE. Indeed, they believed that monied interests had co-opted the Internal Regulator (who had been elected for a term of 3 years), as well as others who could be 'placed' in influential positions. Where those close to Cahuana would claim that these powerful operators first attempted to remove Cahuana through tampering with the roll of eligible voters in 2000, it makes sense that they would keep the contents of this second book quiet moving into the Election of 2001. While such a move was within their competence as the Executive Commission, being that they—and only they—controlled new associations, it would prove to work against them and their effort to maintain the CBE in service of the public good.

The two electoral rolls that were present on Election Day, December 22, 2001, were thus drawn from these separate *Registros de Asociados*. Electoral Roll Number One (*Padrón N° 1*) was drawn from the first, while Electoral Roll Number Two (*Padrón N° 2*) was drawn from the

second. While *Padrón N° 1* had been vetted by the Internal Regulator and the Election Commission, *Padrón N° 2*, being withheld, had not. Despite this, on Election Day, Cahuana insisted that those listed on *Padrón N° 2* be allowed to vote. He argued that they were members of the CBE and had rights like any other. González and the powerful operators protested, but ultimately consented to let them vote. The condition, however, was that the members listed on the two rolls had to vote *separately*. Separate ballot boxes were created to ensure this. Those on *Padrón N° 1* would vote in Ballot Box Number One (*Urna N°1*), while those on *Padrón N° 2* would vote in Ballot Box Number Two (*Urna N°2*).

When the results from both ballot boxes were tallied, Cahuana and his incumbent Commission had the majority. While they lost *Urna N°1*, they won *Urna N°2* by such a margin that they carried the overall election. Their victory, however, was immediately impugned by González and those powerful operators aligned with him. Events that day soon turned violent, and the CBE was thrust into tumult. Cahuana and his Commission were physically ousted, and a series of emergency meetings followed. In them, an *ad hoc* Interim Commission was elected. Yet it was soon contested for siding with the powerful operators, who kept the Market running, and thus generating revenue, both for the operators not also ousted and the entity itself.

Cahuana was unable to regain power, and soon González, with Normán Koprivec⁴ as legal counsel, began a push to ‘legalize’ a new regime within the CBE. Their complaint, filed with the IGJ on March 1, 2002 contested the validity of *Urna N°2*. Their argument was that the votes contained therein were emitted by members who should not have been eligible to vote based on CBE protocol, and that Cahuana had lost the election based on the tally from *Urna N°1* alone.

Having introduced the form that the CBE’s conflict originally took, let us move to the exegesis of the proceedings themselves. As mentioned above, it is only through a detailed treatment that

⁴ Koprivec is an Argentine lawyer versed in civil associational law, and for many years represented the Federation of Bolivian Collectives in Argentina (FACBOL). As critics point out, he had already been in consultation with González and the Market’s powerful magnates a year before the election of December 22, 2001, and allegedly helped them plan their take-over. For this he has been labeled ‘predatory’. IGJ agents would ultimately agree, though unfortunately for the CBE and the public good, this realization would take time. Critics also point out that while those who became known as the ‘usurpers’ worked with Koprivec, an *Argentine* lawyer, Cahuana, around whom those who sought to recuperate the CBE in service of the public good, worked with a *Bolivian* lawyer. Indeed, one of the common refrains heard vis-à-vis the ‘usurpers’ is that they have become ‘Argentine’: “*se han argentinizados*”.

we can allow the litigants to speak for themselves, and thus reveal their motivations and character.

Ceferino González Files Formal Complaint (1 March 2002)

Sr. Inspector General de Justicia, Dr. Francisco Andriacchi:

Ceferino González, en mi carácter de miembro titular de la Comisión Fiscalizadora de la ‘Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil’, con el patrocinio letrado del Dr. Norman Koprivec, Abogado... me presento al Inspector General de Justicia y respetuosamente Digo:

Que vengo a solicitar la impugnación de la urna N°2 perteneciente a la elección del 22 de Diciembre de 2002, por haberse realizado en base a un padrón que no cumplía con las formalidades mínimas requeridas por los estatutos sociales de la Entidad, contra la Comisión Directiva gestión 2001 presidida por Teodoro Cahuana...

In his complaint before the IGJ, González argued that as Internal Regulator it was his duty to verify that the Statutes of the CBE were followed and that the rights and duties of all members, including the Executive Commission, were neither compromised nor transgressed. González based his impugnation of *Urna N°2* on Article 29 of the CBE’s Statutes, which states that the roll of eligible voters must be publically exhibited 50 days prior to the celebration of elections:

Cuando se convoquen comicios, o asambleas en las que deban realizarse elecciones de autoridades, se confeccionará un padrón de los socios en condiciones de intervenir, en el que será puesto a la exhibición de los asociados con 50 días de antelación a la fecha fijada para el acto, pudiendo formularse oposiciones hasta 15 días del mismo.

González argued that the first roll (i.e. *Padrón N°1*) was not only ready for publication and exhibition on December 3, 2001, that is, just 19 days before the election on December 22, 2001, but that the second roll (*Padrón N°2*), insisted upon by Cahuana, was submitted just 48 hours prior to the election. This second roll, he argued, was composed of “new members” and that their inclusion in the election effectively duplicated the total number of voters.

Previamente, la Comisión Directiva, comete una irregularidad al incorporar socios al padrón electoral, duplicando la cantidad de votantes habilitados y empadronados a 48

horas de la elección (el año anterior votaron solo 204 personas de un padrón de 214—el padrón nuevo incorpora 237 socios nuevos).

Moreover, González claimed that such a roll was itself impossible because it was based on associations for which there was no record. That is, according to González, there was only *one* official registry of members from which electoral rolls could be drawn—i.e. the *Registro de Asociados N°1*, which was issued by the IGJ on February 6, 1992, and whose last member was numbered 559.

Que existe un solo libro de Registro de Asociados vigente y utilizable y que el último socio registrado en dicho ‘Libro de Asociados N°1’ rubricado el 6 de febrero de 1992 por la Inspección General de Justicia bajo el N° 00046...[es] el N° 559... ..No había ninguna constancia de la existencia de las incorporaciones de los nuevos socios que en el mismo acto quería hacer valer la Comisión Directiva.

Vale decir que la Comisión Directiva pretendió oficializar un listado de ‘Socios Aptos para Votar’ numerados desde el N°560 hasta el N°796, es decir incorporaba compulsivamente a 237 nuevos socios sin haber respetado el Estatuto Social, ni los registros, ni en los plazos, ni en los tiempos ni en la forma.

That is, González argued that Cahuana intended to associate 237 new members, numbered 560 – 796, on the eve of the election so as to pull off a victory.

On Election Day itself, González describes a situation of intense discussion regarding the legitimacy of these “new members”, and whether or not they should be allowed to vote. He claimed that after hours of discussion, all members, both “new” and “old”, were allowed to vote, but that a second ballot box (*Urna N°2*) was created for the votes from those composing the second roll. This, he argued, was to keep the “real” election intact from what were Cahuana’s fraudulent machinations.

Ese mismo día 22 de diciembre de 2001, día de la elección, luego de horas de discusión sobre el nuevo padrón y con la seguridad de que dicho fraude no prosperaría más allá de la anécdota, y ante la dolosa insistencia de la Comisión Directiva, se les permitió votar a los presuntos nuevos socios incorporados del padrón cuestionado, en una urna aparte numerado con el N°2, para garantizar que la misma no influyera en el resultado real de la elección y manteniendo la fiscalía la impugnación de la misma durante todo el acto.

Given such machinations, González argued, the results were just as expected: *Urna N°1*, whose votes were cast by those listed on the properly vetted and published *Padrón N°1*, elected Raimundo Huanquiri and the Green List. The tally was 132 to 69, with 6 abstaining. *Urna N°2*,

whose votes were cast by those “new *socios*” associated by Cahuana’s Commission on the eve of the election, elected him and the Red List by a margin of 98 to 5, with 3 abstentions. González claimed that upon observing this, the members present protested and insisted that *Urna N°2* not be counted in the final tally, and that a formal complaint be brought against Cahuana.

Al observar esto los socios presentes insisten en que se impugne la urna y no se tome en cuenta el cómputo de esos votos en la decisión final de la elección. Es allí donde se solicitó a los socios que protestaron, que formalizaran su denuncia por escrito, la cual es motivo de las presentes actuaciones.

González then recounts the events of an Emergency Assembly called on January 2, 2002 to resolve the matter, and for which he as Internal Regulator called in monitors (*veedores*) from the Federation of Bolivian Collective Associations in Argentina (FACBOL)⁵ to observe the proceedings. After a full day of discussion, González states that the Assembly resolved to elect an Interim Commission composed of six members, none of whom could have been on the Red or the Green Lists. One should note that this Commission was headed by Freddy Galán, as President, and none other than Julio González (his own relative) as Vice President. One should also note that, as Internal Regulator, González would be supervising them in their task of calling new elections for February 9, 2002. This task included the preparation of a new roll of eligible voters.

Luego de una reunión que duró casi todo el día se resolvió elegir a una Comisión ‘Ad Hoc’ transitoria, donde no participaran ninguna de las listas en litigio, sino una compuesta por seis socios elegidos de la Asamblea, que supervisados por los fiscalizadores, que debían convocar a nuevas elecciones para el día sábado 9 de febrero de 2002 previa depuración y confección de los padrones.

Moreover, González states that at this Emergency Assembly, Cahuana surrendered his keys to the exterior door to the Administrative section of the CBE. This was an act that González claims signified Cahuana’s resignation.

En dicha Asamblea, la Comisión Directiva entregó las llaves a la nueva Comisión Directiva electa firmando esta acta el presidente saliente Teodoro Cahuana, lo que significaría la aceptación de la impugnación planteada, la renuncia de [su] Comisión Directiva y la aceptación de lo resuelto por la Asamblea, lisa y llanamente no

⁵ *Federación de Asociaciones Civiles Bolivianas*

presentando ningún tipo de oposición. Lo mismo hace la Lista Verde que era la oposición a la Lista Roja oficialista, los veedores, y luego firman todos los presentes.

According to González, the Interim Commission, with the consent of both the Red and Green Lists, then proceeded to lock this exterior door housing the Administrative Section so that during the following days (January 3-4, 2002) the offices could be given over, and their contents and all administrative effects inventoried by a notary public.

La nueva Comisión electa procede conjuntamente con la saliente y la lista opositora en presencia de los fiscalizadores a fajar las puertas de entrada a las oficinas, para que el día siguiente 3 de enero de 2002, se entregara por inventario la [Administración].

On January 3, 2002, González states that the office of the Secretary was handed over, with the outgoing Secretary participating in the work of notarizing the contents. This, he claims, was when the first “irregularities” arose concerning the CBE’s official books—a point he would subsequently elaborate.

González then claims that on January 4, 2002, when Cahuana was supposed to turn in his keys to the President’s and Treasurer’s offices, he feigned illness and instead filed a police report that locks had been changed.

El día 4 de enero de 2002, cuando se debería entregar la presidencia y la tesorería, el Señor Cahuana, por la mañana alega que está enfermo y por la tarde realiza una denuncia por el cambio de las cerraduras cuando el mismo había entregado las llaves con anterioridad en la Asamblea.

Con un grupo de gente ajena a la institución, fuerza las puertas y cambia nuevamente las cerraduras, previa amenazas y maltrato a los presentes. En actitud provocativa parte de la documentación es sacada de la sede a la vista de varios socios, se rompen candados y se le quita la administración, que había sido entregada por actas y se realizan una serie de amenazas, actos de provocación y denuncias falsas contra varios miembros de la sociedad.

González further claims that later that day, Cahuana, with a group of people from outside the Institution, forced open the exterior door housing the Administrative offices, and changed the locks himself—all amidst a series of threats, provocations, and false charges against CBE members.

According to González, the members of the CBE were in a state of permanent assembly and that they continually denied Cahuana's legitimacy, rather giving their support to Freddy Galán and the Interim Commission. One should note here that by CBE 'members' González is referencing who were in reality the Market's operators—who were just a fraction of the overall CBE membership. One should also note that the Market's operators were being aligned to opposed Cahuana.

La sociedad se moviliza y permanece día y noche en la sede social, los socios se niegan a hacer los aportes a la Comisión Directiva anterior y comienzan a hacer estos a la Comisión que se eligiera en la Asamblea presidida por Freddy Galán.

As a result of what amounted to a stalemate, González then recounts that the parties involved turned to the local Judicial apparatus (i.e. the *Unidad Fiscal de Investigación N°9* of the nearby City of Campana) to mediate the conflict. González states that after complaints from both sides were heard, it was decided that another Assembly should be called to decide the future of the CBE's governing body. This assembly was scheduled for January 12, 2002.

El clima institucional se tensa y se solicita la participación de la Justicia, las denuncias habían recaído en la UFI N°9 de Campana, la cual toma intervención primero constatando hechos y luego citando a las partes en donde se acuerda mediante una mediación voluntaria el convocar a una nueva Asamblea Extraordinaria vinculante para el día sábado 12 de enero de 2002.

In that assembly, González stated that those present resolved to uphold the decision from the assembly held earlier on January 2, 2002 in which Freddy Galán was designated the President of the Interim Commission.

En dicha asamblea la sociedad resolvió con mayoría absoluta de 99% de los votos, confirmar la validez de la Asamblea del 2 de Enero de 2002 en todas las resoluciones, designando al Sr. Freddy Galán como presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar. Esta votación 'in voce' fue ratificada por escrito posteriormente con la firma de los presentes en el Libro de Actas y en un acta notarial ante Escribano Público. Manifestando una vez más la voluntad cada uno de los socios.

González recounts that, after what became a failed mediation at the IGJ on January 18, 2002, Cahuana's Vice President agreed to surrender keys to the Presidency and Treasury to Freddy Galán's Interim Commission, and these Administrative offices were finally inventoried.

To substantiate his formal complaint, González included a number of documents he argued supported his claims that Cahuana committed electoral fraud and illegally clung to power. With his formal complaint thus composed, González solicited the IGJ to formally annul *Padrón N°2*, and by extension the vote comprising *Urna N°2*, in the election of December 22, 2001. Additionally, he asked the IGJ to require Cahuana to respect the will of the CBE's membership (a curious request given that Cahuana had won the original election) and abstain from interfering in the institutional transition.

Por todo lo expuesto solicito a la Inspección General de Justicia que:
Se resuelva anular y rechazar 'in limine' el padrón utilizado en la Urna N°2 por ser la misma...de nulidad absoluta, en subsidio impugnar el resultado y el contenido de la misma, por estar la misma viciada desde todo ángulo de apreciación;

Se condene a la parte denunciada a respetar la voluntad de la Asamblea, con promesa de abstención de interferir negativamente;

Ratifique todo lo actuado hasta el momento.

Teodoro Cahuana Files Formal Response (5 April 2002)

On April 5, 2002, Cahuana filed a pointed response with the IGJ to refute González's claims that *Padrón N°2*, and by extension *Urna N°2*, were anything but legitimate. He insisted that he was the rightful President of the CBE, and argued that González and his supporters had taken the entity by force. The CBE, he reminded the IGJ, was a not-for-profit entity of the public good, and must not be used for private, commercial ends.

Sr. Inspector General de Justicia,

Teodoro Cahuana, Presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, con domicilio legal en la calle Beauchef 1370, Capital Federal...al Sr. Inspector General de Justicia, en el expediente N° 32.160/ 1.520.370, me presento y digo:

Que en tiempo y forma vengo a contestar el traslado conferido, y a solicitar, desde ya, se rechace la impugnación impetrada por antijurídica y falaz. En efecto, el sólo hecho de que se nos haya corrido el traslado como Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar a nuestro

domicilio legal, nos exime de mayores comentarios acerca de quién es la autoridad actual y legítima de esta entidad civil sin fines de lucro.

Cahuana argued that the very fact that he and his supporters were relegated to operating from the CBE's legal domicile in Buenos Aires, instead of from their Administrative offices in Escobar, was proof enough that they had been violently ousted by González and his followers.

El grupo minoritario...ha procedido a tomar la sede de la localidad de Escobar por la fuerza y pretende, con ésta y otras maniobras pseudo-legales, legitimar su delito y quedarse con la Institución...

Lo cierto es que, mediante amenazas de muerte y acciones de fuerza en contra de las autoridades legítimamente elegidas, en la primera quincena de enero de este año han procedido a copar, mediante el uso de la violencia física, el importante predio de cinco hectáreas, que incluye dos pabellones de 2.400m², con oficinas, laboratorios, restaurante con equipamiento industrial para 150 comensales, un salón de actos con todo el confort para reuniones, asambleas y espectáculos de 200m² de superficie, y demás instalaciones.

Cahuana argued that the hostile takeover, in itself violent and including death threats, was far from insignificant. For the CBE was an entity whose capital comprised multiple administrative buildings, a 4,800m² market structure, an assembly hall, a restaurant, a sports complex, and a fairgrounds—all on a property of 5 hectares. One should note here that Cahuana refrains from specifying the CBE's yearly revenues.

Those who had taken over the CBE, he claimed, were nothing more than a faction of operators (*puesteros*) who used the entity—or rather its Market—to sell produce from their own fields or resell that from other markets. That is, they merely used the entity without contributing anything to it or its mission. One should note that the Market, while not being part of the original plan or design of the CBE, was nevertheless one of its greatest achievements. Indeed, it generated much of the revenue from which the entity's programs on behalf of the public good were funded. The usurping *puesteros*, Cahuana argued, had no interest in these social and cultural projects of the CBE, and had plotted to co-opt the entity to use it as a front for developing their own commercial activity. That is, they had hijacked the juridical form of the CBE, as an *asociación civil*, to develop their own commercial activities.

Se trata de un grupo de 'puesteros' del mercado que forma parte de una de las actividades de la Colectividad, pero que tienen fines de lucro en forma personal, pues allí tienen

permitido comercializar los productos de huerta que producen en sus fincas y otros que reciben en consignación de grandes productores del interior. Esa es una de las muchas actividades de nuestra Institución, pero sus beneficiarios, lejos de pagar el canon obligatorio a la Colectividad para poder usar las instalaciones, decidieron tomar por la fuerza todo el predio y usar a la Institución como ‘pantalla’ de sus actividades comerciales. Han desbaratado todas las actividades sociales, propias de una asociación civil, tales como las de carácter cultural, deportivo, educativo, etc. para abocarse exclusivamente a lo que les da rédito monetario, pretendiendo utilizar la forma jurídica de nuestra asociación civil para generar un negocio, si bien lícito en sí mismo, no apto para llevarse adelante con la pantalla de nuestra Institución.

As if their coup were not bold enough, Cahuana argued that the usurpers were attempting to deceive the very IGJ with completely fabricated evidence. Moreover, they were actually asking, via their own request (*petitorio*), that the IGJ ratify this illegal move. The IGJ, he argued, must not be fooled.

Presentan una serie de hechos y actos perfectamente dibujados como legítimos y luego tratan de que Ud. los avale ... han venido tratando de engañar a las mismísimas autoridades de la I.G.J. a fin de lograr la convalidación de sus negocios comerciales, a través de presentación de asambleas absolutamente ilegítimas y anti-estatutarias, realizadas a puertas cerradas y exclusivamente entre ellos, para tratar de lograr el borrado literal de la legítima comisión electa el 22 de diciembre y la instalación de nuevas personas al mando de nuestra Colectividad.

As for the supporting documents that accompanied González’s impugnation, Cahuana warned the IGJ that these materials pretended two things: first, they aimed to recast what was the ‘usurpers’ own wrongdoing as a *defense* of the CBE before what they made out to be an incumbent unwilling to give up power; second, they aimed to *dupe* the IGJ into thinking that the ‘administrative acts’ taken after the election of December 22, 2001 were in fact legitimate. The latter, he argued, were everything but; they were decisions taken by a mere faction, made in meetings behind closed doors, and contrary to the basic requisites of the CBE’s statutes. In no way were González’s claims the “will” of the “membership”. Rather, he states that they reveal González’s and his supporters’ own nefarious deeds.

Por lo expuesto, queda claro que todo el fárrago de papelería inútil que presentan los impugnantes, tiene como objetivo limpiar su delito y generar la idea de que se está ante el hecho consumado de que existen ciertas ‘bases’ que han ‘decidido’ generar otro gobierno para la Institución.

La propia presentación impugnante contiene la prueba de los delitos cometidos.

In his response before the IGJ, Cahuana argued that the heart of the proceedings should concern, not what happened during the ensuing tumult of January of 2002, but rather the specific terms of the election of December 22, 2001. That is, the matter at hand should be nothing more than the legitimacy of *Padrón N°2* and therefore *Urna N°2*. Before addressing that issue, however, Cahuana nevertheless moved to dispute the validity of González's claims regarding those events of January. Broaching the 'assembly' of January 2, 2002, in which Freddy Galán's Interim Commission was elected, Cahuana claims that this assembly and all administrative acts therein were illegitimate. Indeed, he appeals to the statutory requisites, and argues that this Assembly, coming under the rubric of Administrative Act N°36, was signed neither by him nor his Secretary. Moreover, the events of this Assembly were chronicled in González's own book (*Actas de Comisión Fiscalizadora N°1*) and not where they should have been—i.e. in the *Actas de Asambleas N°1*.

El acta N°36 que presentan los impugnantes es falsa y carente de todo valor. No consta en el libro correspondiente y tampoco cuenta con la firma del presidente Teodoro Cahuana ni del Secretario Selmo Uruña. Pero, lo que es más destacable, es que pretende justificar que 'no hay presidente ni comisión electa'... 'ya que, al estar impugnada una mesa de votantes en las elecciones (urna N°2)...'. Es decir que, en lugar de respetar la ley y lo que en su consecuencia dictamine la I.G.J., se pretende generar la falacia de que una impugnación significa la inexistencia de un acto eleccionario y de su resultado. Además, esa pseudo-asamblea, no fue convocada en forma legal e incluye gente ajena a la Institución.

As for allegedly surrendering his keys to the Administration on January 2, 2002, Cahuana states that he surrendered his keys to no-one. On the contrary, he claims that these locks were broken by the 'usurpers', who physically appropriated the entity. This was a transgression for which Cahuana states he has filed criminal charges.

El día 2 de enero de 2002 el presidente Teodoro Cahuana no entregó ninguna llave de las oficinas, sino que los sediciosos violaron las cerraduras, cambiaron las combinaciones y se apropiaron de las instalaciones. Todo por la fuerza, cosa que también está denunciada.

As for the legitimacy of *Padrón/Urna N°2*, Cahuana argues that the members in question were not at all associated 'compulsively' on the eve of the election, as González had claimed, and

rather that they had been admitted six months prior. For this reason, he argued that González's claim that these members lacked the antiquity to vote was simply false.

En los libros Registro de Asociados constan todos los socios que votaron en la urna N°2 y todos ellos tenían más de seis meses de antigüedad.

Cahuana argued that their admittance was legitimate, evinced by the fact that they had been entered into the *Registro de Asociados N°2*, a book that had been issued by the IGJ on June 22, 2000. Moreover, he states that they were documented as Acta N° 59 in the book *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1*, though he provides no date for this entry. Finally, he reminds the IGJ that the competence for admitting new members falls on the Executive Commission.

Tratan los impugnantes, muy hábilmente, de confundir al Sr. Inspector General, al hablar de una auditoría que revisó uno solo de los libros de Registro de Asociados (el N°1) que, efectivamente, tenía los socios registrados hasta el N°559 y se cerró el 13 de enero de 1999. Es que, de hecho, no auditó el Libro N°2. El Libro N°2 fue rubricado debidamente en julio [sic] de 2000 y lleva los socios desde 560 en adelante.

Regarding the Election of December 22, 2001, Cahuana claimed that González's tactic was to limit the number of members allowed to vote by refusing to acknowledge the *Padrón N°2*, itself drawn from the list of members documented in *Registro de Asociados N°2*. However, as I noted above, it is not clear if González and the Election Commission were ever presented with this *Padrón N°2* for vetting, though it appears they both eventually knew of its existence, if at a late date. It also appears that Cahuana and his Commission's rationale for potentially withholding this second *Padrón* was to counter what they believed was González and his supporters' malfeasance with regard to determining voting eligibility in general. Indeed, those close to Cahuana would later argue that González and those behind him had already removed some of the names of Cahuana's supporters on *Padrón N°1*, and had similarly tampered with the *Padrón* of the previous year's election—all in repeated illegal attempts to remove Cahuana through 'official' means. Where this appears to be the case, Cahuana's decision to grow the CBE's membership with people interested in the CBE's founding mission, and so drown out what he and others saw as nefarious, compromising interests, makes perfect sense.

No se pretenderá que la Colectividad tenga un *numerus clausus* de socios y que justamente dicha cantidad coincida con los socios que caben en uno solo de los libros.

Esa idea sería no solamente absurda, sino que no estaría avalada por el Estatuto. Siempre pueden asociarse nuevas personas.

Certainly, as Cahuana claimed before the IGJ, this tactic of limiting who could vote was pragmatic. By restricting the number of eligible voters to those contained on *Padrón N°1* (itself culled from the members listed in *Registro de Asociados N°1*) González planned to sway the election in favor of the Green List. These were the members, Cahuana reiterated, who comprised the bulk of the Market's operators. Among them were those who sought to harness the CBE for their own commercial and pecuniary gain. One should note that while Cahuana does not specify this, the implication is that among this group were also those individuals who both understood the sheer quantities of money that flowed through the entity and had designs on them.

La lista perdedora, que tiene más adherentes entre los socios más antiguos, por el contrario, recluta a los socios con interés comercial en el Mercado de verduras y frutas, que se desarrolla en el predio y que genera enormes sumas de dinero, tanto en la propia comercialización, cuanto en el alquiler de esos puestos. Es decir, los “puesteros”, quienes hoy desean quedarse con la Institución dejando de lado el verdadero fin social de la misma. Así que, lejos de que las coincidencias sean expresivas de algún fraude, son expresivas de las reales intenciones de cada grupo. Gracias a Dios, el grupo mayoritario es el que desea una Institución social y no una institución meramente comercial. Sin embargo, la mayoría no está todo el día en el predio, no maneja dinero ni influencias, no tiene guardianes privados, no es violenta ni amenaza de muerte a sus paisanos.

Given the split between the tallies of the two ballot boxes, Cahuana argued that if there were any relationship between how people voted and their antiquity as members, this was a function of the increasing success and popularity of the CBE under his leadership. That is, his social and cultural programming, which included Bolivian national and provincial celebrations, soccer tournaments, a computer lab—not to mention the earlier successes of the entity he orchestrated (i.e. Quechua-speaking police patrols to protect Bolivian farmers, Quechua-speaking medical staff at the local clinic, regularization of the Market and the Feria, and the infrastructural improvements these entailed)—were the principal reasons why there was an influx of new members who supported him.

Si hubo una importante coincidencia entre el resultado de las urnas y la antigüedad de los socios, eso no es materia de impugnación ni de sospecha. Al contrario, se podría pensar, y es lo que en realidad ha ocurrido, que la buena gestión de Teodoro Cahuana hizo que

muchos integrantes de la Colectividad hayan tenido interés en constituirse en nuevos socios de esta Institución. Eso fue por la obra social, cultural y deportiva de Cahuana.

Cahuana concludes his formal response by claiming that González and his supporters had taken over the CBE through a violent coup that had violated the democratic principles of an *asociación civil* properly understood; that their transgressions have been no different in character than the brutal military dictatorships that had gripped and stifled the Argentine Republic.

No esperan el resultado y toman de facto, cual gobierno militar, la Institución. Nada más reñido con nuestra Democracia, que tanto nos ha costado recuperar a argentinos y bolivianos.

In the end, Cahuana asks the Inspector General to reject the complaint presented by González and to disallow any accusation that did not focus on the heart of the matter—i.e. on the validity of the election of December 22, 2001. He also asks the Inspector General to request the criminal complaints filed by himself in the U.F.I N°9 de Campana to corroborate his own charge of usurpation against González. In support of his own case, he appears to have presented the following administrative registers of the CBE to the IGJ: *Actas de Asambleas N°1, Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1, Registro de Asociados N°1 y N°2*. One should note, however, that he does not formally submit these until April 26, 2002. We will see later that González and those behind him requested duplicate copies under false pretenses in an effort to legitimize their rule, both before the IGJ and before the CBE's membership.

Por lo expuesto solicito:

Que la prueba testimonial no procede para esta instancia, por lo que solicito se la desestime sin más.

Que el resto de las pruebas que presenta la parte impugnante y que no hace a la votación del 22 de diciembre de 2001 es inoperante y fuera de lugar, ya que no es materia de esta litis. Por lo tanto pido se la desestime.

Que presento como prueba las causas penales referidas, las que deberán ser pedidas por V. Autoridad. Asimismo, presento los libros de *Actas de Asambleas N°1, Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1, Registro de Asociados N°1 y N°2*.

Que en su momento se desestime la impugnación.

IGJ Resolution 0628 (22 July 2002)

Before treating the content of the IGJ's Resolution 0628, one should note that it is perhaps the most important document in the proceedings. This is for a number of reasons. First, the Resolution is where the IGJ applies its juridical philosophy of entities of the public good to the CBE. In it, one finds the IGJ's working definition of the public good, which is itself taken from an Argentine Supreme Court case. One also sees how the IGJ imagines the CBE—i.e. as a corporate body unified by over-arching attachments (*afectos superadores*). Second, this Resolution is crucial to the rest of the proceedings; it serves as a kind of 'footing' for subsequent positions and arguments. Indeed, Resolution 0628 is cited in most of the subsequent presentations by the litigants, as well as in most of the subsequent IGJ Resolutions. Its mention of *afectos superadores* is invoked years later as the IGJ ultimately decides to formerly intervene in the CBE.

Finally, this Resolution is important both for when it was issued and for what misunderstandings it inadvertently created. As seen in the formal complaints by González and Cahuana, the CBE was thrust into tumult following the December 22, 2001 election. This led to a series of violent events and closed-door meetings in which the fate of the entity was being decided. Where the IGJ had been consulted to mediate between Cahuana's and González's camps in early January 2002, it had produced an internal brief (*dictamen*) on January 23 that prepared this Resolution 0628. Indeed, this *dictamen*, authored by one of the Inspectors in the IGJ, stated everything that this Resolution, signed by the Inspector General, confirmed not only *verbatim*, but 6 months *later*. It is not clear why this was the case. Perhaps it was because other complaints had been filed in parallel proceedings that needed review⁶. Perhaps it was because the IGJ had a back-log of other problems in other civil associations. One does not have to review the CBE's case, however, to see that these months were crucial for the fate of the entity. It was during this time that the 'usurpers' consolidated their hold over the entity and its revenues, which approximated (ARS) ⁷\$750,000 for the period. That the IGJ delayed in issuing the Resolution when its *dictamen* had been in-hand for months was not lost on Cahuana, who,

⁶ In the present Resolution, the IGJ finds that none of the associated proceedings merited review, being that the present contained the heart of the matter.

⁷ In January 2002, and because of its economic crisis, Argentina abandoned the fixed 1-to-1 ARS peso–US Dollar parity that had been in place through the 1990s.

because of the ‘usurpers’ strong-arm tactics, was never able to engage in the CBE’s politics again.

Yet one also notes that despite the IGJ’s delay, Cahuana and his supporters also seem to have misunderstood the very nature of the IGJ’s role as State-regulator. In subsequent complaints, Cahuana and his counsel claim that the IGJ should have declared in the present Resolution who was the rightful President of the CBE—i.e. who should be calling and running the meetings and the entity itself⁸. Indeed, Cahuana and his counsel repeatedly ask the IGJ to mete out justice (*‘que se haga justicia’*). What can be seen below is what the IGJ’s competence with respect to civil associations truly is. As mentioned in the Introduction and in the foregoing parts of this chapter, the IGJ cannot rule in favor of one or another litigant; nor can it declare who should be President of a civil association. This is because civil associations are *private* entities, and, because of the functional autonomy they enjoy with respect to the State (given State-authorization, that is), they must handle their own internal affairs. The IGJ exists to ensure that they, as their own agents, abide by their State-approved statutes and national law. Indeed, as the Argentine civil court system has ruled regarding the functional autonomy of civil associations:

It is not justified that the State’s regulatory body [the IGJ] replace those bodies granted competence by the entity’s own statutes, or to make itself into a court of appeals for an entity’s disciplinary matters, or otherwise for matters of its own governance in pursuit of its institutional mission. (*Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil*, Sala C 6/5/82, Fallo 32.009 ctd. in Cahián 1998: 198)

Seen from a different point of view, because the IGJ is part of the Ministry of Justice, and thus part of the *Executive* Branch of government, it does not have *Judicial* competence⁹. Rather, given its *arbitrational* competence and function with respect to *administrative* matters, the IGJ can declare acts taken by entities ‘irregular’ (i.e. infelicitous in form given the entities’ own statutes or based on relevant law) and thus ‘inoperative’ (i.e. lacking in administrative effect)—and this only when it is called upon by litigants to mediate.

⁸ For example, Cahuana’s counsel Nuñez in a later petition responding immediately to an IGJ dictamen from February 13, 2003 blames the Inspector General for the entrenchment of the ‘usurpers’ for failing to state in this present Resolution 0628 just who should be at the helm of the CBE: “... V.S. es única y absoluta responsable, ya que omitió intencionalmente en la Resolución 0628 del 22 del Julio de 2002, expedirse sobre a cargo de quien debe estar la administración de la Institución.”

⁹ The IGJ can, however, refer a matter over to the Judiciary when it has evidence and cause to do so.

Crucially, what ‘inoperativity’ means here is that the acts in question will lack effect *with respect to the IGJ*, which is ultimately what counts insofar as the entity’s authorization to function as such is concerned¹⁰. That is, where the IGJ has the ultimate power to revoke an entity’s juridical personhood and reassign its patrimonies to another entity of the public good, the issue of whether the entity is ‘regular’ or ‘irregular’ in the eyes of the IGJ is paramount. By declaring an entity’s administrative acts irregular and inoperative, the IGJ works to *guide* the entity back to institutional regularity, and thus institutional integrity with respect to the mission for which it has been authorized to function.

One should note that when administrative acts taken by an entity are declared ‘inoperative’ (i.e. ‘without effect’), this is not to say that the acts do not have effects within the entity itself. They do, as will be seen throughout the ethnographic portions of this dissertation. Despite these consequences—and in fact attending to them, albeit in an indirect way—, IGJ declarations are *binding* as a correctional measure¹¹. That is, when the IGJ declares an act ‘inoperative’, it changes the world in two ways. First, through such a declaration, the IGJ adopts a *posture* with respect to the entity in question: i.e. it assumes a position of refusing to recognize an entity as ‘regular’ until whatever ‘irregularity’ is remedied. Second, and related to the first, the entity itself is thrust into a kind of juridical *liminality* in which its personhood (authorization to function as such) is in jeopardy. This state of liminality will persist until the irregularity is remedied. What this reveals is that the burden of proper governance and felicitous being (which includes that of ‘meting out justice’) falls on the entity in the immediate sense. That is, the entity must remedy its own irregularities. As mentioned both in the Introduction and earlier in this chapter, this regime stems from a liberal respect for the separation of private from public, and ultimately assumes (and indeed relies upon) the *virtue* of an entity’s members. As will become further evident, this ‘order of things’—i.e. functional autonomy and self-regulation for entities, and arbitrational functions for the State-regulators—can be easily exploited.

¹⁰ See Article 421 of Libro VIII, “Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones” contained in Resolución General IGJ N° 7/05 which states: “La declaración de irregularidad e ineficacia a los efectos administrativos priva a las decisiones asamblearias de efecto respecto a la Inspección General de Justicia.” One should note that this Resolución General is of principal importance in the IGJ’s regulation of civil associations being that there is no single, comprehensive legislation to date that specifically treats them. See Calcagno and Fourcade (1999: 38-39), Cahián (1998: 59-61), Biagosch (2006).

¹¹ As resolved by the IGJ in Resolution 749 (November 1985) in the proceedings of “Club Atlético River Plate”: “La declaración de ineficacia se torna imperativa a tenor de la posición permanente sustentada por la Inspección General de Justicia, siempre en salvaguarda de la absoluta corrección de todos los actos societarios, el cumplimiento de las disposiciones estatutarias y particulares de los principios de respeto derechos individuales de los asociados.”

After beginning with a summary of the complaints submitted by González and Cahuana, Resolution 0628 appeals to the larger juridico-political context. It argues that a resolution to the conflict gripping the CBE is imperative—not just for the sake of compliance, or simply for the sake of its own members—but ultimately because the CBE plays a significant role in the social life of the City of Escobar.

Buenos Aires, 22 de Julio de 2002

VISTO: Los expedientes CN° 32.160, 32,486, 32.502, y 32.667/ 1.520.370, todos correspondientes a la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, del registro de esta Inspección General de Justicia; y

CONSIDERANDO: ...

Que en este estado, teniendo en cuenta los hechos invocados y las constancias obrantes, corresponde resolver la impugnación impetrada en el presente trámite.

Que no puede soslayarse que la importancia de los objetivos que despliega la Entidad y su fuerte inserción social en la ciudad de Escobar, según propias manifestaciones de sus asociados, también es ameritado de modo especial por cuanto la solución que finalmente se propicia, se halla dirigida a solucionar los problemas que acucian a la Entidad y a su pronta regularización institucional.

From the point of view of the Argentine State, the CBE has been authorized, through being granted juridical personhood, to pursue activities whose ‘extension’ contributes to, and helps secure, the good of the Argentine political community. As is true of all civil associations (*asociaciones civiles*), the activities of the CBE, while of immediate benefit to its own members (a good in itself) should be simultaneously oriented to help create the conditions of life through which the public at large is able to flourish and perfect themselves—i.e. to fulfill their natural *telos* as human beings, created ultimately by God. One should note that the juridical philosophy shaping the legal regime for civil associations in Argentina owes much to Aquinas, who is invoked directly in relevant law and Supreme Court decisions. For these reasons, the IGJ sees the resolution of the conflict in the CBE as necessary for the sake of the greater good, and for the generation of ‘community’ itself.

...[P]ara las asociaciones civiles con personalidad jurídica reconocida por el Estado, tal el caso de la Asociación que nos ocupa, constituye un elemento esencial ‘*el cual se exterioriza a través de su objeto y debe tender a lograr una satisfacción de las*

necesidades del grupo primario de la comunidad o bien de la sociedad toda’ (conf. ‘Código Civil, Normas Complementarias y Análisis doctrinario y jurisprudencial’, Dr. Alberto Bueres, T. 1, Depalma, p. 317). (Conf. Expte. CN° 1.702.477, Resolución I.G.J. N° 0541 de fecha 28.06.02)

The IGJ argues that to resolve the issue of the impugned election, and thus fulfill their (dual) mission on behalf of themselves and the public at large, the members of the CBE—here taken as an inclusive, corporate group—must overcome differences that the IGJ regards as ‘factional’. That is, the members must transcend what divides them in a conjoint pursuit of the common good. To concretize this, the IGJ cites a famous Supreme Court case (*Nación Argentina v. Agustina Roca de Schroder*) in which the Justices defined the common good as: “That complex of social conditions that enables not only community, but each one of its members, to achieve most fully and easily their own perfection (Fallos, 295: 157).”

Que también corresponde expresar que solo ello será posible, en tanto los propios asociados, superando intereses que podrían apreciarse sectoriales, orienten sus esfuerzos en procura del cumplimiento de los objetivos de *bien común* de la Institución que los nuclea y que según la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación es el ‘conjunto de condiciones de vida social que hacen posible tanto a la comunidad—como a cada uno de sus miembros—, el logro más fácil de su propia perfección.’ (Fallos, 295: 157)

Yet the IGJ has its role and responsibility as well: it must regulate these entities when irregularities arise such that they can properly function and pursue their institutional missions. That is, the IGJ must make sure that these entities are following their own Statutes, by virtue of which they have been authorized to function as legal persons.

Toward this end, the IGJ sees two matters requiring pronouncement in the case of the CBE. The first concerns the ‘antiquity’ of those members who voted in Ballot Box Number Two (*Urna N°2*); that is, whether they had sufficient seniority to do so. The second concerns whether Cahuana’s Executive Commission complied with the CBE’s Statutes in calling and preparing elections—specifically with regard to the exhibition of the rolls of eligible voters for vetting and any petitioning. One should note that what the IGJ must ensure beyond compliance with the Statutes is that the rights of individual members have not been compromised.

Regarding the alleged lack of antiquity, itself one of the principal arguments upon which González based his impugnation of *Urna N°2*, the IGJ states that the CBE’s Statutes have no provision for such. Only Article 14 of the Statutes requires that a member be ‘active’ and have 6

months of seniority to be able to hold an elected position (e.g. on the Executive Commission, Internal Regulating Commission, etc.).

Que con respecto a la falta de la antigüedad requerida por el Artículo 29 del Estatuto Social, corresponde señalar que dicho cuerpo legal no prevé como requisito para votar en las asambleas, antigüedad alguna. Solo el Artículo 14 del Estatuto requiere pertenecer a la categoría de *socio activo* con una antigüedad de seis meses y contar con la mayoría de edad, para integrar los órganos sociales, pero no hace referencia alguna al derecho a voto de los socios en las asambleas.

As for the particular associations in question (i.e. those comprising *Padrón N°2*), the IGJ states that it has reviewed the CBE's books, *Registro de Asociados N°1* and *Registro de Asociados N°2*. It acknowledges that the first contains members 1-559, with the last entry dating to January 16, 1999, and that the second, which was duly issued by the IGJ on June 23, 2000, contains members 560-796. All of the latter associations were registered on May 26, 2001. The IGJ states that, while it may be somewhat striking that such a large number of members were admitted in just one day, it must nevertheless be noted that these associations were carried out by Cahuana's Executive Commission in an act duly documented in the *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1* (i.e. Acta N°59). It stands to reason that, even where the requirement of 6 months' seniority for filling political positions were applied analogously to the question of voter eligibility, the 6 months would nevertheless have been observed.

Que si bien resulta llamativo el ingreso de tal número de socios en un mismo día, cabe señalar que dicha incorporación fue efectuada por la Comisión Directiva, según acta N°59 de fecha 26 de mayo de 2001 en la que se aprueban las solicitudes N° 560 a N° 796. Por tanto, corresponde concluir que, aún en el supuesto que se pretendiera aplicar por analogía el Artículo 14 del Estatuto en cuanto a la antigüedad para votar, de las constancias del libro Registro de Asociados N°2 surge claramente que el plazo de seis meses exigido estatutariamente, se encontraba cumplido.

On this same point of who should be allowed to vote, the IGJ also attended to González's claim that *Padrón N°1* should be the only one allowed on the grounds that it had been the same one used in the previous year's election. For the IGJ, such an argument should *not* be allowed; for on its estimation, the number of members and/or their statuses in a civil association will fluctuate from year to year. As a result, rolls of eligible voters must change to reflect these fluctuations.

Que no puede considerarse, como se pretende, que sólo deben revestir la calidad de votantes aquellas personas que emitieron sufragio en la elección anterior, pues los padrones se van modificando permanentemente por altas y bajas, por cuya razón éste argumento impugnatorio cabe desestimarlos.

However, with regard to the statutory requirements concerning the exhibition of the rolls, the IGJ affirms that the terms of the articles in question have *not* in fact been followed by Cahuana's Commission. For Article 29 of the CBE's Statutes states that the complete *padrón* must be published 50 days prior to the election. A consideration of the materials submitted by both litigants reveals that this was not the case. Not only was *Padrón N°1* not exhibited until November 24, 2001 (i.e. less than 30 days prior to the election), but *Padrón N°2* was not exhibited until December 19, 2001 (i.e. 3 days prior to the election). Thus the issue is not that the members in question lacked sufficient seniority to vote, but rather that *Padrón N°2* which listed them was not presented in correct statutory form. On this point, the IGJ states that González's impugnation is *valid*, and must be allowed.

Que con referencia a la falta de exhibición del padrón íntegro, en tiempo y forma, se advierte que efectivamente no se ha respetado el plazo establecido en el Artículo 29 del Estatuto Social (cincuenta días de antelación a la celebración de la asamblea). Ello, atento que del acta N°35 obrante en el Libro de Actas de Asambleas N°1 surge que la impugnación al padrón presentado por la Comisión Directiva el 19 de diciembre de 2001 (tres días antes del comicio) se mantiene, sin que ésta última desconozca tal circunstancia, insistiendo solamente en la incorporación del nuevo listado. A mayor abundamiento, del acta de la Comisión Directiva N° 72 del 24 de noviembre de 2001— obrante en el Libro de Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1 (fs. 167)—surge que recién en dicha fecha el Sr. Selmo Uruña se compromete a publicar el padrón.

Moreover, the IGJ affirms that the call for announcing the assembly at which the elections were to be held was also not performed correctly by Cahuana's Commission. Article 26 of the Statutes states that flyers announcing the assembly be delivered to the members' residences 30 days in advance. The IGJ affirms that there was no evidence submitted by the reigning Commission that this ever happened, despite their claim that they had carried out the all the election proceedings in proper form.

Que por otra parte, tampoco consta la realización de la convocatoria de la impugnada Asamblea del 22 de diciembre de 2001 en legal forma, atento que el Artículo 26 del Estatuto Social establece la obligación de remitir circulares de convocatoria a los

domicilios de los socios con treinta días de antelación a la celebración de la Asamblea, no existiendo en estas actuaciones constancias de que ello hubiere sido cumplido. Del legajo de asamblea CN° 19.366 no surge la remisión de las circulares y en cambio obra agregada la publicación efectuada en el diario ‘*La Prensa*’. Asimismo, del Acta de Comisión Directiva N°73 de fecha 17 de diciembre de 2001, al referirse a las elecciones del 22 de diciembre de 2001—punto 5—se expresa que ‘*en cuanto a la convocatoria a elecciones, se aclara que ya se encuentra fehaciente, tanto en la prensa, así como en los murales y el programa de radio de la Institución. Se han cumplimentado todos los trámites inherentes a la realización de la asamblea con elección de autoridades en la Inspección de Justicia*’. De lo expuesto surge que no se ha respetado lo dispuesto por el citado Artículo 26 del Estatuto Social, no siendo idónea la forma de publicidad adoptada, para sustraerse al cumplimiento del precepto estatutario.

Citing juridical precedent, the IGJ states that a failure to follow statutory form in calling an election assembly will have the consequence of affecting the numbers of members who show up to vote. This in turn will affect the election results themselves. With specific regard to the CBE’s election of December 22, 2001, the IGJ notes that of the 796 members listed across both *padrones*, only 313 actually voted.

Que la falta de convocatoria en forma, comporta una irregularidad que afecta la celebración del acto asambleario y que se proyecta decididamente sobre el quórum, las mayorías y la decisión asamblearia finalmente adoptada (conf. Resolución I.G.J. N°358/91, Expte: ‘Club Argentino del Afghano’).

Que a mayor abundamiento, tales irregularidades afectan la participación de los socios y el conocimiento que éstos pudieron tener respecto a la Asamblea de fecha 22 de diciembre de 2001, dado que sobre un total de setecientos noventa y seis (796) empadronados, asistieron al acto menos de la mitad, es decir trescientos trece (313) socios, sumando los votos emitidos en ambas urnas, N°1 y N°2.

The IGJ then moved to cite other irregularities which it believes marred the election of December 22, 2001. The first concerned the existence of an Electoral Commission (*Junta Electoral*) that, while not provided for in the CBE’s Statutes, nevertheless existed and played a role in the election. A second concerned the Statutes’ provision for an Internal Regulatory Commission. The IGJ states that according to Article 16 of the Statutes, this should be a body composed of *multiple* actors, not just a single person, as was the case with González as sole Regulator (*Fiscalizador*). Both of these issues, the IGJ maintains, had an effect on the execution and outcome of the election.

Que deben señalarse además otras irregularidades como la inexistencia en el Estatuto Social de una Junta Electoral, órgano no previsto que actuó en la práctica, así como tampoco existe prevista una Comisión Fiscalizadora—como se menciona y lo cual supone la actuación de un órgano colegiado—sino un órgano de fiscalización unipersonal (Artículo 13 del Estatuto), todos ellos denunciados en las presentes actuaciones. Tales hechos tornan írrito el acto asambleario de fecha 22 de diciembre de 2001.

That the statutes are keenly observed, the IGJ states, is crucial for the social and political integrity of the Association. Moreover, proper performance of the institution's mission hinges on their observance. Citing other proceedings, the IGJ states that the Statutes are nothing short of the entity's 'Constitution'. In joining the entity, members agree to obey the terms of this Constitution, and have a right to expect that they will be fully observed in turn.

Que el acatamiento al Estatuto Social, regla esencial de convivencia social e institucional, constituye una obligación de insoslayable cumplimiento por parte de los asociados y a que representa *'la organización fundamental de la asociación, una suerte de 'Ley fundamental o Constitución' de la asociación, pues, como decía Sánchez Román 'en los estatutos está la entraña de la asociación' (Sofía de Salas Murillo, 'Las Asociaciones Sin Ánimo de Lucro en el Derecho Español', Centro de Estudios Registrales, 1999, pág. 502), quienes ingresan en una asociación, quienes lo pretende, y quienes desean pertenecer en ella, 'tienen derecho a que las reglas del juego en el que aceptan o aceptaron participar se cumplan hasta el final' (Pablo Salvador Coderch, 'Asociaciones, Derechos Fundamentales y Autonomía Privada', Cuadernos Civitas, 1997, pág. 18).'* (Conf. Expte. N° 26921/351190/953—Club Atlético San Lorenzo de Almagro; Resolución I.G.J. N° 1275 del 7.11.2000)

On its estimation, the IGJ states that the existence of antagonistic factions at the heart of the CBE has obstructed the observance of its Statutes and prevented its proper functioning. Indeed, IGJ sees the CBE as lacking proper authorities able to achieve institutional regularity. As a result, and as the arm of the Ministry of Justice charged with faculties of regulation, the IGJ sees its duty as calling a new assembly through which to elect legitimate leaders of the CBE. To this end, the IGJ will also oversee both the preparation of an agreed-upon *padrón* and the proper execution of all pre-election proceedings, as per the CBE's statutes.

Que además y teniendo en cuenta la existencia de grupos de socios antagónicos que impiden a la Entidad desarrollar su normal actividad y, por ende, el cumplimiento de sus objetivos asociacionales, a lo que cabe agregar la inexistencia de autoridades legitimadas que puedan lograr la regularización institucional, se hace necesario que este Organismo, en ejercicio de sus facultades de fiscalización, disponga la convocatoria a una nueva

asamblea al sólo fin de elegir autoridades, con lo consecuente confección del padrón de asociados con derecho a voto y efectuar todos los controles preelectorales necesarios para llevar a cabo el comicio, desde la convocatoria hasta la proclamación de las autoridades que resulten electas.

The IGJ regards the proper election of authorities as the *only* task before it in the present proceedings. Because the lack of legitimate authorities is the root cause of all of the contested acts under consideration, all of the acts occurring within the CBE after the contested election of December 22, 2001—themselves objects of formal complaints in proceedings (*expedientes*) paralleling the present—are not to be the subject of adjudication. This is because the assemblies at which these acts were pronounced themselves lacked the minimum requirements to be legitimate as determined by the CBE’s Statutes. That is, they were called by groups of members unauthorized to do so or were otherwise held without provisions to include all members. As a result, the IGJ states that these acts lack juridical effect and should be declared ‘irregular’ and thus ‘inoperative’.

Que por lo expuesto y en orden a la medida que se adopta, resulta inconducente analizar pormenorizadamente los hechos denunciados respecto de los actos llevados a cabo con posterioridad a la Asamblea celebrada con fecha 22 de diciembre de 2001, esto es, aquellos realizados desde el 2 de enero de 2002 a la fecha. En este sentido y en relación a los actos celebrados con posterioridad al de la Asamblea del mes de diciembre impugnada, se parecía que no se han cumplimentado los requisitos mínimos establecidos estatutariamente para que tales actos tengan virtualidad jurídica; así, han sido auto-convocados por distintos grupos de socios y/o autoridades no legitimadas, carentes de facultades para ello y se ha omitido la participación de las *listas* en conflicto, habiéndose celebrado además una titulada asamblea, cuya autorización para ser realizada en extraña jurisdicción, fuera denegada por esta Inspección General de Justicia (trámite CN° 32.423). Todo lo cual conlleva indefectiblemente, a declarar que tales actos también deban ser declarados irregulares e ineficaces a los efectos administrativos.

This decision to declare as irregular and inoperative the administrative acts of—and following—December 22, 2001 includes those from March 23, 2002. On this date, an exclusive group of members, with the guidance and participation of González’s counsel Koprivec, resolved on their own—and without authorization by the IGJ—to hold an assembly. At this assembly, which they called “Asamblea Extraordinaria para elegir autoridades” (*Acta de Asambleas N°38*), this faction (i.e. those whom Cahuana would call the ‘usurpers’) resolved not just to expel Cahuana and his entire Commission from the CBE, but to elect by a show of hands their own authorities for the

CBE. They named Freddy Galán President (once again), but this time with J. González (Ceferino González's relative) as Vice-President. The occurrence of this assembly and the actions it took in defiance of the IGJ became the object of a linked *expediente* (i.e. N°32.502), with Fulgencio Esparza (Cahuana's Vice President) figuring as one of the principal claimants. Because this *expediente* and others related to similarly unauthorized assemblies/acts all devolve around the fundamental contestation of December 22, 2001, the IGJ states that they are to be settled by the present proceedings (i.e. N°32.160).

Que con respecto a los expedientes de denuncia CN° 32.486, N° 32.502, y N° 32.667 que corren agregados sin acumular, habiendo analizado las presentaciones efectuadas, corresponde resolver conjuntamente con la presente, por plantearse idénticas cuestiones a las aquí analizadas.

Having thus considered the litigants' presentations and taken account of the legitimation crisis gripping the CBE, the IGJ states that although the antagonisms dividing the members are notable, there is a need for a greater, more transcendent, and indeed conjoint effort between them to restore the entity in service of its mission. The IGJ makes this call by appealing to what it imagines are fundamental and overarching attachments (*afectos superadores*) linking the members as Bolivians.

Que finalmente y tal como lo ha sostenido este Organismo en situaciones análogas, las diferencias advertibles entre los socios de la Institución—todos ellos vinculados a la colectividad boliviana en la Argentina y unidos por *afectos superadores*—amerita la necesidad de realizar los mayores esfuerzos para alcanzar su pronta solución y en cuya procura se orientan las medidas que se adoptan por la presente. (Conf. Expte. CN° 1.695.891—Asociación Italiana Rotondense en Argentina, Resolución I.G.J. N° 655/01, Suplemento de la I.G.J. Año II, N°5, Rev. *La Ley*, 06.11.2001, pág. 5)

In the interest of restoring the CBE in service of its mission, and citing the provisions granted him both by the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia* (Ley N° 22.315) and the *Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia* (Resolución I.G.P.J. (G) N° 6/80), the Inspector General makes his resolutions. First, he declares both the General Assembly from December 22, 2001 and its election 'irregular' and without effect (i.e. infelicitous and thus inoperative). He also declares the same for all subsequent assemblies including that of March 23, 2002. Second, he resolves to call elections for the entirety of the Executive Commission and the Internal

Regulating Commission (*Órgano de Fiscalización*) within a period of 70 days, and not without the prior preparation of a singular election roll (*padrón*). Third, he declares to designate two IGJ Inspectors to oversee this process (including the observance of all pre-election controls as per the CBE's statutes) and until legitimate authorities have been named.

Por ello, lo dispuesto por los Arts. 6° inc. f) y 10° inc. j) de la Ley N° 22.315; los Artículos 99, 117, y sigtes. de la Resolución I.G.P.J. (G) N° 6/80—*Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia*—y lo dictaminado por la Señora Coordinadora de Area del Departamento de Asociaciones Civiles a fs. 372/376, por la Señora Jefa de dicho Departamento a fs. 377/384 y por la Señora Sub Inspectora General a fs. 384 vta.,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE:

Artículo N°1: Declarar irregular y ineficaz a los efectos administrativos la Asamblea General Extraordinaria de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil de fecha 22 de diciembre de 2001, así como todas las asambleas celebradas con posterioridad hasta la efectuada el 23 de marzo de 2002, inclusive.

Artículo N°2: Convocar a elección de autoridades en la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar Asociación Civil, a efectos de cubrir la totalidad de cargos de la Comisión Directiva y el Órgano de Fiscalización, a celebrarse en la sede de esta Inspección General de Justicia, en el plazo de setenta (70) días, contados a partir de la notificación de la presente y de conformidad con lo dispuesto por el Estatuto Social, previa confección y regularización del padrón de asociados.

Artículo N°3: Designar a los inspectores, Dres. Carola Durand y Adrián Covelli, a efectos de dar cumplimiento a lo dispuesto en el Artículo 2° de la presente, debiendo asimismo llevar a cabo los controles pre-electorales necesarios para la concreción del acto comicial y hasta la proclamación de las autoridades electas.

Dr. Francisco Andriacchi
Inspector General de Justicia

Curiously, these Articles do not reflect the heart of the matter, which was the following: that while the members contained in *Registro de Asociados N°1* y *N°2* were valid, and thus able to vote in the election of December 22, 2001, the IGJ declared the *form* in which the election was prepared 'irregular' and thus 'inoperative'. Specifically, it stated that the rolls of eligible voters had not been exhibited 50 days in advance of the election—as the CBE's Statutes demanded—and that a new election would have to be called. Toward this end, a single roll of eligible voters

would have to be both configured and vetted by both sides, with the coordination of IGJ Inspectors. As mentioned above, the fact that this Resolution came 6 months after the *dictamen* that had prepared it was in-hand allowed those that had physically taken over the CBE to entrench themselves and consolidate their support among the CBE's Market's operators.

Through my subsequent ethnographic work I learned that this lag allowed the 'usurpers' to claim that the IGJ's Resolution 0628 had ruled 'in their favor', which was not the case. Indeed, in the presence of who were, at this point, just the CBE's Market's operators¹², they claimed that the IGJ had declared the election 'invalid'—which in a way it had. What the 'usurpers' argued, however, was that the IGJ had done so because Cahuana had committed fraud, which he had not. That is, what the 'usurpers' did not communicate to the operators was that the IGJ had ratified the members contained in *both* registries, and that *all* should have enjoyed the right to vote, but that because the manner in which the election was prepared did not conform to statutory form, it was declared 'inoperative'. What they did not communicate to the operators was that, if the election had been 'felicitous' in form, Cahuana—not them—would be at the helm.

While the politics of misrecognition had begun well before December 22, 2001 (as Chapter 8 demonstrates further), Resolution 0628 gave the 'usurpers' ample fodder to claim *state-sanctioned* legitimacy. Indeed, while the IGJ did not—because by law it could not—proclaim any victor in the election or any person to head up the CBE afterward, the 'usurpers' could claim they had been left in place by the State. Essentially, given the State's respect for entities' functional autonomy, they had been. We'll see below that this was a point that Cahuana would raise, only to learn that precedent would declare that those who 'perform the duties' of an Executive Commission in the absence of a standing mandate should be allowed to do so, in favor of the rights of the entity's members. Sadly, these were exactly what the 'usurpers' were trampling on as they profited from the entity itself—a far cry from the ethos of altruism and service that an entity of the public good was supposed to evince. As will become clearer, all the 'usurpers' had to do to remain in control of the CBE and its revenues was work the system. And work it they did.

¹² This faction of the CBE membership now also excluded those operators that were allied with Cahuana. Indeed, many of the latter were, like Cahuana, from Comunidad Saropalka in Potosí. This bloc collectively pulled out of the CBE's Market—allegedly under physical intimidation by the 'usurpers' to start their own Market in nearby Morón. This Market, however, would not be part of a *Colectividad*, as in the situation of the CBE and its Market. Rather, it would be a *Cooperativa* (cooperative), meaning any revenues would not be destined for the public good.

IGJ Dictamen (1 November 2002)

As mentioned previously, a *dictamen* is an IGJ-internal document written by one or more of their Inspectors for the purpose of summarizing developments in a case. Most often, this is done with an eye toward illuminating the proper course of regulatory action. For this reason, *dictámenes* often result in Resolutions. One should note, however, that dictámenes do not make declarations that affect the juridical status of an entity's administrative acts. Only Resolutions do this. This does not mean dictámenes are without their own effects; it means, rather, that these effects are confined to IGJ procedure.

The dictamen from November 1, 2002 is important for a number of reasons. First, it illuminates the IGJ's position on just who should be allowed to join a civil association, and under what terms. Let us recall that Resolution 0628 declared that members contained in both *Registro de Asociados N°1* and *N°2* were valid, and that all had the right to vote. Let us also recall that Resolution 0628 declared that a new election would be necessary, and that a new roll of eligible voters would be required. One would imagine that the process of configuring this roll would be simple, particularly given that the IGJ had assigned three of its own Inspectors to coordinate it. It was everything *but* simple. This was because the Interim Commission headed up by Freddy Galán and Julio González—and 'regulated' by Ceferino González—had, in the meantime, admitted new members in an attempt to drown out the numbers of Cahuana's supporters. Thus by the time the IGJ attempted to coordinate the configuration of a new roll of eligible voters, the CBE's membership had changed.

Cahuana would argue that this was under a Commission that the IGJ itself had not recognized, being that it had declared the assembly in which it was chosen 'irregular' and 'without effect'. He would therefore protest the inclusion of these new members on the grounds that they were illegitimate. He would nevertheless lose this battle in that the IGJ will always find in favor of the rights of members, including potential members. They would argue that because the Interim Commission acted 'as' a Commission on behalf of members, its acts were regular, if it was itself not. Nevertheless, the issue would persist, not just because of this issue, but because the IGJ would be duped by the 'usurpers' into failing to include those members contained on the very *Padrón N°2* it had itself declared valid. Thus where the roll of eligible voters had always

been a point of contention, the issue would persist. Certainly, it was not resolved in the 70 days stipulated by Resolution 0628.

One might argue that where this Resolution had been issued in a timely fashion, this paralyzing situation—which became a persistent one—could have been different. But it was not just this. Other acts injurious to the CBE could also have been avoided. Indeed, it was during the lag before Resolution 0628 came out (specifically in February and March, 2002) that the Interim Commission obtained a duplicate set of Administrative books from the IGJ. Not only did the IGJ not realize this, it all happened under false pretenses. By obtaining their own books, the ‘usurpers’ could make their own regime appear official before the IGJ, as well as legitimate before the CBE’s membership. And while the very IGJ mentions doubt about the books with which González and the Interim Commission operated, they never put two and two together. Fortunately for the CBE, this was a situation that Cahuana and his counsel would uncover in 2004. Indeed, what is damning for the IGJ is that the CBE’s rightful books were in its own possession since Cahuana had attached them to the proceedings before the issuance of Resolution 0628.

The Dictamen has been prepared by Inspectors Montet, Vandenbosch, and Covelli, who jointly form the Electoral Committee (*Junta Electoral*) designated by Resolution 0628 to call and carry out the CBE’s elections. The purpose of the present is to meditate (*dictaminar*) on their work of configuring the rolls of eligible voters in preparation for the CBE’s election.

Sra. Sub-Inspectora General de Justicia:

En nuestro carácter de integrantes de la Junta Electoral designada por Resolución 0628, informamos que...

A tales efectos [de configurar los padrones], debe tenerse en cuenta que con fecha 7 de agosto de 2002, se celebró una reunión en la sede de este Organismo a la que comparecieron los Sres. Jenaro Moyano y Teodoro Cahuana por una parte, y Freddy Galán y Ceferino González, por la otra. Estuvieron presentes en la misma el Sr. Inspector General de Justicia, Dr. Francisco Andriacchi, la Sra. del Departamento Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones, Dra. Graciana Palomar y un Inspector del mismo Departamento, Dr. Adrián Covelli.

Toward the end of configuring these rolls, the IGJ had called a meeting between González and Cahuana, and their respective counsels, on 7 August 2002. At this meeting, each side was called upon to submit lists of CBE members they deemed eligible to vote.

En dicha reunión se requirió a las partes, que a efectos de confeccionar el padrón electoral, cada una acompañe la documentación o listados de asociados en condiciones de votar (activos y vitalicios) el que deberá contener nombre y apellido, número de documento, domicilio y categoría de socio.

Además de ello, en la misma reunión las partes acordaron que para poder votar, los socios deberán tener pagas las cuotas del año en curso, que los socios podrán pagar dichas cuotas hasta el día de la celebración del comicio y que los inspectores designados por la Inspección General de Justicia actuarán como Junta Electoral, atento a la falta de disposiciones estatutarias al respecto en la entidad.

Also at this meeting, both sides agreed to have the aforementioned Inspectors continue to serve as the Electoral Committee.

The Dictamen then recalls that each side submitted its list of eligible voters on August 14, 2002. One should note that these submissions are included in the proceedings, and evince marked differences. Despite their discrepancies, the IGJ does not investigate where they converge and diverge—a glaring negligence.

In examining the respective submissions, one sees that González's proposed roll consisted of two parts: "*Padrón de los socios 1*" and "*Padrón de los socios 2*". The first consisted of the entire *Registro de Asociados N°1*, which contained members 1 – 559. The second contained a list of members numbering 560 – 1060, but which specifically excluded those members numbering 560 – 796 in the aforementioned *Registro de Asociados N°2*. The exclusion and replacement of these members is both notable and pragmatic. Certainly, González and those he represented attempted to quietly eliminate Cahuana's support from what they hoped would become the roll sanctioned by the IGJ.

At the same time that González attempted to eliminate Cahuana's support, and replace it with new members sympathetic to the cause he represented, he also attempted to represent this cause as the side championing democratic inclusivity. Indeed, while he had actually excluded them, he claims to have included them. And while claiming to not know them personally, he states that he nevertheless trusts that they have the best interests of the CBE in mind. The following is from a subsequent document in which González pronounces on the configuration of

the new roll (it is not dated, but titled “Sobre Padrón Manifiestan”); it reveals his hypocrisy clearly:

El limitar el padrón a nuestro listado solamente sería un acto de discriminación con respecto a socios que a pesar de no conocerlos, suponemos que tienen interés en el bienestar y progreso de la Institución. Consideramos que no es justo que socios bien intencionados sean dejados de lado por culpa de dirigentes mal asesorados. Si la culpa es del dirigente, no tenemos por qué castigar a los socios. Por otro lado hemos tratado de ser lo más amplios posibles, cuando se confeccionó el padrón acompañado en soporte magnético e impreso, se realizó un análisis minucioso de los libros, en consulta con los directivos que en cada momento habían tenido la responsabilidad de conducir los destinos de la entidad...

Thus, with respect to his original approach in December 2001, González continues to attempt to exclude, but now under the guise of inclusivity (and apparently without concern that the IGJ would note this change in outward posture). Indeed, in his original complaint, González argued that *only* the members listed on *Padrón N°1* (i.e. those drawn from *Registro de Asociados N°1*) should be allowed to vote. This is why he and his supporters insisted that they vote in a ballot box (*Urna N°1*) that was separate from those listed on *Padrón N°2*, and who were accordingly made to vote in *Urna N°2*. Thus where González had previously argued for *exclusivity* (i.e. a *padrón* consisting of only 207 eligible voters) not a year later he argues for overwhelming *inclusivity*, submitting a two-part roll that boasts 1060 eligible voters (noting however that he replaced members numbering 560 – 796 in the officially ratified *Registro de Asociados N°2* with others sympathetic to the ‘usurpation’).

Cahuana’s proposed roll, which was submitted by his advisor, Jenaro Moyano, was far more simple—and transparent. Indeed it was the same one they had submitted for the election of December 2001, and that which was used in it. The first half was that *Padrón N°1* that González had agreed upon and which voted in *Urna N°1* of the election. The second half was that *Padrón N°2* used in the same and which voted in *Urna N°2*. Let us mark as well that Cahuana had always argued for inclusivity in the configuration of the *Padrón*. This was manifest in CBE internal documents (contained in the proceedings) that pre-date the election of December 2001. As one will recall, it was precisely Cahuana’s inclusivity that was the subject of González’s original complaint.

In a subsequent meeting between the IGJ and the two sides on 18 September 2002, the IGJ presented both sides with its roll of eligible voters (“*Padrón Depurado*”) for consideration, with the date of 25 September 2002 set for any impugnations. However, this officially configured roll, which should have been a *reconciliation* of the two submissions (and which most certainly should have included the members rightly numbered 560 – 796 in the CBE’s *Registro de Asociados N°2*, and subsequently recognized by Resolution 0628), was nothing other than González’s submission. One is at a loss to understand how this could be the case. It appears it was simple negligence, and not malfeasance. Nevertheless, with this act, one has the reason why at the meeting of 25 September, González does not impugn the IGJ-authorized roll, while Moyano does, on the grounds that it must contain those members listed in *Registro de Asociados N°1* and *N°2*, and only those members. Indeed, Moyano, here representing Cahuana, argues that only those members belonging to the entity prior to the election of December 22, 2001 should be allowed to vote.

As stated in the dictamen:

A fs. 440 consta el acta labrada por el Inspector de Justicia actuante, Dr. Adrián Covelli de la reunión en la que comparecieron las partes en cuestión en la que una de ellas, representada por el Sr. González, no efectúa impugnación alguna y sí lo hace la parte representada por Jenaro Moyano quien verbalmente señala que el padrón solo debe estar integrado por los socios de acuerdo a los libros N°1 y N°2 del Registro de Asociados.

Corresponde destacar que a fs. 474/475 el Sr. Cahuana, en su calidad de Presidente de la Entidad se presenta a efectos de “*impugnar la confección y regularización del Padrón de asociados efectuada por la Inspección General de Justicia*”. La solicitud efectuada en esta presentación, está dirigida a que se excluya del padrón de votantes a las personas que no figuraban como asociados de la Institución con anterioridad al 22 de diciembre de 2001.

Undergirding Cahuana and Moyano’s argument that only members belonging to the CBE at the time of the December 2001 election should be allowed to vote is the claim that any membership status granted during the CBE’s crisis will have been made under an authority whose legitimacy has not been recognized by the IGJ. That is, since in Resolution 0628 the IGJ declared all administrative acts dating from the election of December 22, 2001 through and including the assembly of 23 March 2002 ‘irregular’ and thus ‘inoperative’, any association made by the

Interim Commission cannot be valid. They argue that only association conducted by a legitimately elected and officially recognized Commission can be valid.

[Cahuana and Moyano] Fundamentan su solicitud en que no correspondería ‘*aceptar en el padrón a una cantidad singular de socios, todos ellos ingresados en un libro por medio de actos declarados como ineficaces y por ende nulos y/o inexistentes*’.

Before addressing the validity of these associations, the Inspectors take issue with Cahuana’s claim that because the aforementioned administrative acts were declared irregular and inoperative they are therefore “null and void”. The Inspectors state that Cahuana and his counsel have confused the legal concepts of *ineficacia* and *nulidad/inexistencia*. Though both *ineficacia* and *nulidad* entail the non-effects of an act because of some kind of original irregularity pertaining to it or its antecedents (see Ghersi 2004: 141), the IGJ, as an arm of the Ministry of Justice (itself belonging to the Executive Branch) is only empowered to declare *ineficacia*. This is a faculty granted by the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia* (Ley 22.315). The declaration of *nulidad* is not a faculty the IGJ, as an administrative arm with jurisdictional faculties, enjoys. Only the Argentine Judiciary can make a declaration of *nulidad*.

Con respecto a esta solicitud, corresponde señalar ante todo que el presentante confunde y equipara erróneamente los conceptos de ineficacia con nulidad y/o inexistencia. La declaración de irregular e ineficaz a los efectos administrativos de un acto sometido a fiscalización de la Inspección General de Justicia, es una facultad de este Organismo expresamente fijada en la Ley N° 22.315, que no implica y por ende no puede ser equiparada a la declaración de nulidad de un acto jurídico. Mientras la citada en primer término es una facultad de un órgano administrativo con funciones jurisdiccionales, la nulidad de un acto jurídico es una sanción legal que se origina en algún vicio de dicho acto y solamente puede ser declarada por un órgano judicial, perteneciente al poder Judicial, es decir nunca podría hacerlo la Inspección General de Justicia, que es un órgano ubicado funcionalmente dentro de la esfera del Ministerio de Justicia, Seguridad Y Derechos Humanos.

Moreover, the IGJ states that it is not clear based on Cahuana’s impugnation just which act he and his counsel are impugning. Even where the IGJ might attempt to read into Cahuana’s submission a formal complaint on his behalf (i.e. under the principle of ‘informalism’—i.e. where the IGJ recognizes that those within its sphere of jurisdiction might not always have the means to properly formulate appeals, and so grants them certain leeway as per proper form), it is still not clear if Cahuana’s impugnation is meant to solicit a review of Resolution 0628 or

formally appeal it. On these grounds, the IGJ, on the opinion of the authors of this dictamen, cannot hear Cahuana's impugnation.

Además de ello, no surge con claridad cuál es el acto administrativo que se impugna. No obstante lo anterior, aún intentando hacer una interpretación “forzada” del principio del informalismo a favor del administrado (incorporado en nuestro ordenamiento jurídico en el artículo 1° de la ley 19.549), tampoco queda claro si la presentación de fs. 474/475 constituye un recurso de reposición (de reconsideración o de revocatoria) de la resolución de la Inspección General de Justicia fechada el 22 de julio de 2002 [0628]. Por ello no corresponde considerar viable ni hacer lugar a dicha presentación.

As for the question concerning the validity of those associations made by Freddy Galán's Interim Commission—i.e. those *socios* which appeared on González's submitted electoral rolls, and eventually on the IGJ's official *Padrón*—the IGJ states that it will follow its own precedent of respecting the will of those seeking to join the entity. That is, the IGJ has historically privileged the will of those seeking to join a civil association, even when the legitimacy of the Executive Commission leading that entity has been impugned. Any potential member to a civil association should not be denied, regardless of the politics of those leading, or aspiring to lead, the entity.

En lo que respecta al tema de fondo a resolver en esta etapa de las actuaciones, corresponde determinar cual debiera ser el padrón de asociados en condiciones de votar en el próximo comicio. A tales efectos debiéramos fijar—en primer término—el criterio a seguir en cuanto a la incorporación de socios aceptada por la comisión directiva cuestionada. Es decir que, corresponde dirimir la cuestión que se plantea con respecto a los actos celebrados por una Comisión Directiva, cuya legitimidad está en discusión o sujeta a interpretaciones encontradas en lo que a aquello se refiere. Para ello, es del caso tener en cuenta, que la Inspección General de Justicia ya ha seguido desde un tiempo a esta parte, un criterio que indicaría que: *El hecho de asociarse a una entidad hace nacer a favor de quien lo hace un verdadero derecho adquirido por parte de los socios ingresados durante la gestión de una Comisión Directiva cuestionada.*

Moreover, the IGJ states that even though Galán's Interim Commission lacks a valid mandate, it is still performing the functions of a valid commission with regard to associating new members. As such, the case merits the application of the rule of “apparent mandate” (*mandato aparente*) as per Article 1967 of the *Código Civil*.

Según este criterio, debe aplicársele en sus relaciones con terceros las reglas del mandato. Con lo cual si este órgano ha actuado dentro de la esfera de sus funciones, aún sin

mandato válido (Art. 36 Código Civil), procede aplicar las reglas de ‘mandato aparente’ (Art. 1967 Código Civil).

Thus, the new memberships granted by Galán’s Interim Commission (and with the oversight of González as Internal Regulator) should be valid for two reasons. First, these members should enjoy their full status as members because they, acting presumably on good faith (*buena fe*), should not be denied their rights to join and benefit from a civil association. And second, because the Commission that associated them was, as per the requirements of *mandato aparente*, performing this role in proper form.

Si adherimos a este criterio del Organismo, debiéramos concluir que los terceros que se incorporaron ‘de buena fe’ como asociados de la entidad ‘Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’ y la comisión directiva los admitió en tal calidad, más allá de la discutida—y aún no resuelta—legitimidad o ilegitimidad de dicha comisión, estaríamos en presencia de verdaderos derechos adquiridos por parte de aquellos asociados, (también puede aplicarse a este hecho la teoría de la apariencia). Es decir—bien podemos señalar—que han adquirido los mismos la calidad de asociados de la entidad básicamente por dos razones fundamentales: En primer lugar por haber actuado de buena fe en la celebración del acto jurídico que les permitió acceder al ‘status’ de socio; y, en segundo lugar—relacionado con lo anterior—por haber adquirido ese derecho, justamente por haber obrado de buena fe y por la aplicación de las reglas del ‘mandato aparente’ a dicha relación contractual.

On this basis, the Inspectors authoring the dictamen conclude that all members who figure into the entity’s books (i.e. the official *Registro de Asociados*)—regardless of when or by whom they were associated—should be incorporated into the official electoral roll for the upcoming election.

Respetando este criterio y adaptándolo para analizar la cuestión que debe resolverse en estas actuaciones, la solución será la de aceptar la posibilidad de que integren el padrón electoral todos los socios que se incorporaron según consta en la totalidad de libros existentes en el seno de la entidad de donde habrá surgir el padrón definitivo a conformarse.

However, as we’ll see later on, the ‘official’ book into which these new members were entered by Galán’s Commission, and by virtue of which they enjoy their status and rights as members, was none other than *Registro de Asociados N°3*. This was a book that González requested of the IGJ—and which was issued to him—under false pretenses. Indeed, he had claimed that its

predecessor, required for the issuance of its sequel, *Libro N°2*, had been lost, when in reality it was in Cahuana's control, and later in the IGJ's control.

For the moment however, the IGJ makes clear that in the spirit of democratic inclusivity, which it calls a *sine qua non* of civil associations, it seeks to grant suffrage to as many members as possible. For being that the fundamental conflict over the CBE concerns just who should be its proper authorities, it fits to have the members themselves decide, with as many as possible participating in the election.

La solución en este sentido, además de respetar el criterio anteriormente citado que ha sido el seguido por este Organismo desde larga data, resultará determinante a los efectos de posibilitar la participación de la mayor cantidad de socios en condiciones de votar, quienes se manifiestan—precisamente—a través de su voto. Ello trae aparejada la posibilidad fáctica de garantizar no solamente el efectivo cumplimiento del derecho político de voto, esencial de toda asociación civil, sino que además permitirá la mayor participación de los asociados traduciéndose ello, en la toma de decisión por los propios interesados. De esta forma, serán ellos mismos quienes determinen en el órgano soberano de la asociación civil (asamblea de socios) quienes estarán a cargo de la administración de la persona jurídica mediante un mecanismo altamente democrático.

Concluding that the official roll should include the greatest number of members who have been admitted to the CBE in good faith, these Inspectors—who once again comprise the Electoral Committee for the election—conclude that this roll is that listed as pages 420-436 of the proceedings. Once again, this is none other than the original two-part roll submitted by González (i.e. his *Padrón de los socios 1* and *Padrón de los socios 2*). It is that which purposefully excludes those members legitimately figuring into *Registro de Asociados N°2* (i.e. members 560-796) and who were officially validated by Resolution 0628.

Por lo expuesto, es decisión de esta Junta Electoral que deberán respetarse los padrones que contemplen la mayor cantidad de asociados que se hubiesen incorporado de buena fe a la entidad 'Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar'. En tal sentido, corresponde estarse al padrón que consta en las presentes actuaciones a fs. 420/436.

Además de ello, en anexo que se acompaña se detalla el cronograma que contempla los diferentes pasos y fechas a efectos de poder efectuar los comicios en la forma más regular y razonable posible.

Thus, in spite of their argument favoring democratic inclusivity, the Inspectors conclude by effectively ratifying González's roll while failing to recognize that it has replaced the members

legitimately numbering 560-796 with new ones bearing the same numbers. As for dealing with Cahuana's impugnation of this roll (and indeed of their own work), let us recall that the Inspectors dismissed it for its *form*, failing to see that its content pointed directly at the legality of González's move. Failing to recognize Cahuana's valid complaint, the Inspectors proceeded by establishing the schedule for the upcoming election—set for 27 December 2002—with the issue of the roll of eligible voters considered settled.

Cahuana Contests 1 November 2002 Dictamen (7 November 2002)

On November 4, 2002, both sides were presented with the dictamen from November 1 and learned of its conclusion to ratify the reigning roll of eligible voters for an election scheduled for December 27, 2002. Three days later, on November 7, Cahuana attempted to lodge an appeal of these decisions and request a formal review of the actions taken by the Inspectors serving as the Electoral Committee. As will become evident in two subsequent dictamens (dating to the 11th and 22th of November 2002), the juridical status of this attempt and request is interpreted differently by different Inspectors. That is, it becomes a subject of debate within the IGJ whether or not Cahuana's appeal constitutes a formal request for '*recurso jerárquico*'. This is a right which when exercised entails the elevation of the matter to at least the Minister of Justice himself, if not its referral from the domain of administrative regulation to the Civil Appellate Court for *judicial* consideration¹³. Before addressing this issue, let us briefly consider the allegations in Cahuana's appeal.

In his submission before the IGJ, Cahuana alleges that the Inspectors comprising the Electoral Committee have not been impartial in their consideration of the matter gripping the CBE. Rather, he charges that the Committee has shown prejudice in favor of González and the 'usurpers' he is said to represent. Indeed, as we saw above, the roll of eligible voters they have sanctioned was none other than González's, and it specifically excluded members the very IGJ had earlier ratified. As such, Cahuana argues that the scheduled election has no value, as it pretends to legitimize an Interim Commission that has been illegitimate all along. As a result, he

¹³ See Agustín Gordillo's (2004) *Tratado de derecho administrativo* (Tomo 4, Capítulo X) for a discussion of the debates concerning what *recurso jerárquico* should entail.

demands the election be suspended. For all this, and on behalf of those who “await justice”, Cahuana requests the replacement of the Electoral Committee with impartial Inspectors.

El Sr. Inspector General deberá revisar lo actuado por la ‘Junta Electoral’, toda vez que las resoluciones emanadas de dicha junta cercenan los derechos de mis compatriotas que tan pacientemente esperan se haga justicia...

Vuelvo a remarcar que con el estudio total del expediente, el Sr. I.G.J. observará que el propósito final buscado por la contraria no es otro que continuar al frente de la institución, no ya en forma ilegal, como hasta ahora, sino con el aval de la repartición a su cargo...Pues bien, con la resolución del 1° de noviembre de 2002 no se hace otra cosa que tomar partido por los usurpadores, dejando de lado el objeto de la convocatoria a elecciones, que no era otro que colocar las cosas en su justo medio para que los socios avalen con su voto a la Comisión Directiva que surja...En concreto, toda la actividad burocrática en el presente expediente, que estamos sobrellevando durante el año 2002, frente a la violencia, usurpación e injurias de la gente que ocupa las instalaciones, se transforma en absolutamente inútil, por obra de los Sres. Inspectores actuales, quienes ya pretenden dar el triunfo a los propios ilegales. En esta forma, las elecciones de diciembre de 2002 carecen de sentido...

Por tal motivo, recuso por parciales a los tres inspectores y solicito que...se desafecten y se nombren otros, imparciales, en su reemplazo.

IGJ Dictamen (11 November 2002)

This dictamen contends with the *nature* of Cahuana’s appeal of the decisions taken by the IGJ’s Electoral Committee in their dictamen from November 1, 2002 (i.e. to ratify what amounted to González’s roll for the scheduled election). Its purpose, according to its author, is to rectify certain of Cahuana’s mistaken assumptions about the jurisdictional process and apparatus.

Sra. Sub-Inspectora General de Justicia:

A los efectos de evitar futuras confusiones y erróneas interpretaciones jurídicas del presentante, corresponde aclarar algunas cuestiones a través del presente dictamen.

As seen above, Cahuana frames his appeal as a request for a formal review of the proceedings (*interposición de recurso jerárquico*). As such, the matter should be elevated to the Ministerial level, or, if constructed as a direct appeal (*apelación directa*), to the relevant *Cámara Nacional*

de Apelaciones en lo Civil. However, as the present clarifies, Cahuana's submission cannot be considered a proper request for *recurso jerárquico* because his appeal concerns decisions that have not been formally issued as an IGJ Resolution. That is, only Resolutions (e.g. Resolution 0628) can become the subject of a formal appeal (i.e. *recurso jerárquico*). Decisions emanating through dictamens cannot be.

El dictamen emitido en un expediente administrativo (como lo constituye el firmado por los integrantes de la Junta Electoral, fechado el 1 de noviembre de 2002) está erróneamente denominado [por Cahuana] como 'Resolución', ya que en realidad el mismo no constituye una resolución administrativa dictada por este Organismo. En todo caso—para una corriente doctrinaria—podría ser considerado como un 'acto preparativo', pero de ninguna manera ser considerado como un acto administrativo definitivo que pueda ser recurrido como se pretende.

However, beyond noting Cahuana's appeal of the decisions communicated through the November 1 dictamen, the present recognizes that he has also called for the designation of a new Electoral Committee based on the allegation that the current Inspectors lack impartiality. Because the designation of this Committee was in fact a product of Resolution 0628 (as per its third Article) it *can* be formally appealed. Indeed, such a right for 'sufficient judicial control' has been recognized in the Argentine Supreme Court's decision "Fernández Arias c/ Poggio" (1960). However, to have the matter of the designation of the Committee come before the relevant *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil*, Cahuana's submission would have to have proper *form*. Because it lacks such form, the author of the present deems it inadmissible as a direct appeal (*apelación directa*).

Dicha resolución [0628], que sí corresponde a lo que en el derecho administrativo argentino y continental europeo se conoce como un 'acto administrativo de alcance particular', al haber sido notificado a las partes... se ha tornado un acto administrativo eficaz, tal como lo establece el artículo 11 de la Ley 19.549. Pero, no obstante ello y a tener las partes garantizado el derecho de presentar el recurso de apelación—lo que implica un 'control judicial suficiente' en los términos expresados por la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación en el fallo 'Fernández Arias c/ Poggio' del año 1960—en el artículo 16 y ss. de la ley 22.315, el Sr. Teodoro Cahuana no ha presentado en estas actuaciones el recurso de 'apelación directa' para que se expida la Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil de la Capital Federal.

In all this, the author of the present reprimands Cahuana for failing to understand the IGJ's proper functions and faculties as per Argentine law (principally Ley 22.315). The author infers that where Cahuana has stated that he and his compatriots "await justice", he has wrongfully attributed *judicial* powers to the IGJ, as if it were a court of law. As we saw above in discussions of 'functional autonomy', the IGJ is rather an *administrative* body with regulatory faculties; its position before civil associations is, through their declarations, to get them to auto-regulate vis-à-vis their own statutes and the law. Being this the case, the IGJ cannot 'dispense justice'.

Al señalar: 'que tan pacientemente esperan se haga justicia', pareciera denotar una manifestación equivocada (o cuanto menos poco clara) de las funciones que por ley le corresponden a la Inspección General de Justicia y las facultades que a efectos del cumplimiento de las mismas, la Ley 22.315 y Decreto 1493/82 expresamente le tiene asignadas a este Organismo administrativo en el ordenamiento jurídico argentino. La Inspección General de Justicia, actúa en este expediente como órgano de fiscalización y control de las asociaciones civiles. Dentro de este contexto y facultades es que debe interpretarse el Dictamen y el cronograma electoral que consta en el dictamen de la Junta Electoral designada e integrada por los Inspectores de Justicia designados por resolución interna del Inspector General de Justicia.

Having thus intimated the rightful functions of the IGJ, and seeing the matter of associations and the concomitant preparation of the official roll already settled by the dictamen from November 1, the present concludes with the following: 1) to reject Cahuana's request for a formal review; 2) to reject Cahuana's request to replace the Electoral Committee, citing a lack of substantive cause¹⁴; 3) to ratify the dictamen from November 1 and its schedule for elections; 4) to inform Cahuana that this election will not be suspended; and 5) to demand that Cahuana refrain from impugning the personal character of public officials, and that his presentations otherwise conform to the standards referenced in the "Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia" (i.e. Res. (G) I.G.J.N°6/80).

¹⁴ The IGJ here mentions Cahuana lacks proof that the Election Committee has shown partiality. Had the IGJ reconciled the proposed lists of eligible voters both González and he supplied, they would have realized that González had replaced the rightful members numbering 560 – 796 (which Resolution 0628 had ratified) with others associated by him and the Interim Commission. They would have realized that using González's proposed roll for the official one based on the premise that González's totaled 1060 members, and was therefore the most 'inclusive', demonstrates—if not partiality—then a failure to perform the work with which they were charged.

IGJ Dictamen (22 November 2002)

Like that above, this Dictamen also deals with the *nature* of Cahuana's presentations and requests. However, it interprets them differently. Rather than reading Cahuana's submission as an attempt—as he himself intended it—to lodge an appeal (*recurso jerárquico*) with the IGJ, and which, as we saw above, was otherwise infelicitous given that one cannot appeal the conclusions of a dictamen, the present allows Cahuana's submission to be read rather as an impugnation of the Electoral Committee's decisions, where this Committee is itself understood differently. That is, the present dictamen states that if the Electoral Committee is seen as an “ad hoc” arm *of the CBE* given that both sides in the conflict consented to accept it (which they did on 7 August 2002), then Cahuana's submission, read as an impugnation of an administrative act *of the CBE itself*, can be heard, rather than dismissed outright for its infelicitous form.

Sr. Inspector General:

Del análisis del presente surge que la Junta Electoral integrada por Inspectores del Organismo actúa como órgano ‘ad hoc’ de la asociación, habiendo sido aceptado por todas las partes que participan en este expediente en la realización de los actos preelectorales... Que siendo así, lo resuelto a fs. 480/482 [el dictamen del 1 de noviembre] constituye un decisorio de dicho órgano y no una actuación interna del Organismo Administrativo... Así la cuestión, entiendo que entiendo que sobre el citado acto resolutorio no puede interponerse recurso alguno ante esta Inspección General de Justicia, sino efectuarse una acción administrativa de impugnación del acto del órgano comicial, lo que así debe considerarse.

As for the *substance* of Cahuana's ‘appeal’ (reconsidered here as an impugnation), the Dictamen states that the matter has already been resolved. Moreover, the author states that the decisions made by the Electoral Committee follow all statutory requirements, violate no rights, and seek to include the greatest number of members possible in the election. One should note, however, that rights have in fact been violated. Specifically, those members numbering 560 – 796 that were rightfully admitted through *Registro de Asociados N°2* are still not contained on the IGJ's officially sanctioned roll of eligible voters. They have been replaced by others González and the Interim Commission admitted during the lag before Resolution 0628 was issued, and registered them in an administrative book (*Registro de Asociados N°3*) that they acquired from the IGJ under false pretenses. As noted, the latter would not be fully realized until 2004.

Entrando ahora al fondo del cuestionamiento cabe analizar la regularidad del acto. Al respecto, corresponde señalar que el mismo ha sido resuelto en tiempo y forma, que no contraría norma estatutaria alguna, ni viola derechos adquiridos; sino por el contrario se admite la posibilidad de participar en el futuro acto eleccionario a todos los asociados sin cercenar derecho alguno.

Por todo lo expuesto considero que—de compartir el criterio—procederá dictar resolución disponiendo: (1) Recalificar al recurso jerárquico interpuesto y a la recusación efectuada como impugnación de acto de la junta electoral, conforme al principio *iura novit curia*; (2) Rechazar la impugnación por carecer ella de sustento jurídico, declarando válido el acto de fecha 1 de noviembre de 2002; (3) Ratificar el cronograma electoral.

Sra. Sub-Inspectora General de Justicia

The Sub-Inspectora concludes that, where the Inspector General shares her view, he issue a formal Resolution declaring the following: (1) that Cahuana's 'appeal' be reconsidered an impugnation, and thus heard; (2) that this impugnation be rejected for lack of substance; that the dictamen from 1 November 2002 be ratified; and (3) that the election schedule as given also be ratified.

IGJ Resolution 1183 (5 December 2002)

Because dictamens do not constitute formal administrative acts bearing *juridical* effects for the entity in question—i.e. acts that have 'operativity' (*eficacia*) and what the *Ley de Procedimientos Administrativos* calls '*fuerza ejecutoria*'¹⁵—Resolution 1183 was issued to settle Cahuana's 'appeal' from November 7, 2002.

Buenos Aires, 5 de diciembre de 2002

¹⁵ Ley 19.549: *Ley de Procedimientos Administrativos*

Eficacia del acto: Notificación y publicación.

Artículo 11: Para que el acto administrativo de alcance particular adquiera eficacia debe ser objeto de notificación al interesado y el de alcance general, de publicación. Los administrados podrán antes, no obstante, pedir el cumplimiento de esos actos si no resultaren perjuicios para el derecho de terceros.

Presunción de legitimidad y fuerza ejecutoria.

Artículo 12: El acto administrativo goza de presunción de legitimidad; su fuerza ejecutoria faculta a la Administración a ponerlo en práctica por sus propios medios—a menos que la ley o la naturaleza del acto exigieren la intervención judicial—e impide que los recursos que interpongan los administrados suspendan su ejecución y efectos, salvo que una norma expresa establezca lo contrario.

VISTO el expediente N° 32.160/1.520.370 de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar

CONSIDERANDO:

Que a Fs. 488/491 se presenta el Sr. Teodoro Cahuana e interpone recurso jerárquico contra la actuación, que denomina *resolución*, efectuada en fecha 1° de noviembre de 2002 por la Junta Electoral integrada por los inspectores Adrián Covelli, Elena Montet, y Fabián Vandebosch, solicitando asimismo la suspensión del procedimiento eleccionario en curso y que ‘*se desafecten a los tres inspectores designados y se nombren otros, imparciales, en su reemplazo...*’ Formula además otros planteos que ya fueron resueltos oportunamente por Resolución I.G.J. N°0628 de fecha 22 de julio de 2002, la que se encuentra en etapa ejecutoria.

After briefly summarizing the events pertinent to Cahuana’s ‘appeal’, the Resolution addresses the issue of the *form* of his submission. Here the Inspector General follows the rationale of the dictamen from 11 November 2002 in stating that Cahuana mistakenly sought to lodge a *recurso jerárquico* when in fact what he was ‘appealing’ was merely a dictamen, and not a Resolution. As such, Cahuana’s request is deemed untimely and inadmissible.

Que lo que el presentante denomina *resolución* no lo es en cuanto no constituye un acto administrativo de alcance particular emanado de esta Inspección General de Justicia y susceptible de ser recurrido.

Que consiguientemente, la presentación de fs. 488/491 resulta extemporánea e improcedente, sin perjuicio de la eventualidad de ulteriores vías recursivas futuras que pudieren quedar habilitadas por lo que aquí se resuelve y por lo que pudiere corresponder que se resuelva en su oportunidad, una vez realizado el acto eleccionario cuya preparación se halla en curso.

However, though Cahuana’s ‘appeal’ is not allowed here, the Resolution affirms that this does not prevent him from appealing future matters where circumstances permit.

As regards Cahuana’s request for the dismissal of the Electoral Committee and their replacement with ‘impartial’ Inspectors, the Resolution states that Cahuana has not provided any legal *proof* of such impartiality. All he has done, the Inspector General states, is express his dissatisfaction with the dictamen of 1 November 2002.

Que con respecto a la pretendida separación de los integrantes de la Junta Electoral cuya actual integración resulta de la Resolución I.G.J. (I) N°29 de fecha 10 de octubre de 2002, el presentante no alega ni prueba causal legal al efecto, advirtiéndose únicamente

su disconformidad con la actuación de fecha 1° de noviembre del corriente año, llevada a cabo por dicha Junta en el cumplimiento de sus funciones.

Moreover, upon reviewing the record, the Inspector General states that the Electoral Committee has worked to allow the greatest participation in the scheduled election. And this, he states, is in consonance with the principles of democracy, themselves essential for the flourishing of entities of the common good.

Que a los fundamentos expuestos, cabe agregar que dicha actuación, sin infringir norma estatutaria ni derecho adquirido alguno, aparece claramente orientada a permitir la más amplia participación de todos los asociados, en consonancia con principios democráticos esenciales para el mejor desenvolvimiento de las entidades de bien común.

Finally, the Inspector General disallows Cahuana's contest on the grounds that it seeks to prevent from participating in a democratic election new members (i.e. those associated by González and the Interim Commission) who have in good faith sought membership in the CBE. In this way, the Inspector General ratifies the precedent mentioned in the dictamen from November 1, 2002—i.e. that of privileging the will of those who seek to join an entity of the common good, even when that entity is governed by a Commission that has been impugned.

Que consiguientemente se advierte que la pretensión articulada resulta también inadmisibile desde este punto de vista, en cuanto viene en pugna con los principios apuntados al dirigirse a impedir la participación en el acto eleccionario convocado para el 27 de diciembre de 2002, de aquellos asociados que de buena fe ingresaron a la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar con posterioridad al 22 de diciembre de 2001.

For all of the above, and according to the faculties and functions granted the IGJ by the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia*, the Inspector General resolves to:

Article 1: Reject Cahuana's appeal and his requests to suspend the election and replace the Electoral Committee;

Article 2: Ratify the election schedule as given;

Article 3: Inform the litigants and have the matter returned to the Department of Civil Associations and Foundations for the implementation of the pre-electoral process.

Por ello y lo dispuesto por los artículos 6°, inciso c) y 10, incisos b) y f), de la Ley N° 22.315,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE:

Artículo 1° - Rechazar el recurso jerárquico y las solicitudes de suspensión del procedimiento eleccionario y separación de los integrantes de la Junta Electoral, planteados a fs. 488/491.

Artículo 2° - Ratificar el cronograma electoral que corre como anexo a fs. 483, vta.

Artículo 3° - Regístrese...Cumplido, vuelva al Departamento de Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones, a fin de que se continúe el proceso preelectoral.

Cahuana Attempts to Re-lodge Appeal and Block Election Proceedings (10 Dec. 2002)

The month of December 2002 was a time of heightened activity in the CBE. As per Resolution 1183, which upheld the election scheduled for December 27, González and Cahuana were required to submit their lists of respective candidates, which they did on 4 and 6 December, respectively. The Red List (*Lista Roja*) was headed by Cahuana for President, and listed Jenaro Moyano as the *apoderado* (authorized representative). The Green List (*Lista Verde*) was led by Bonifacio Corihuanca, and listed Eusebio Huari as the *apoderado*. As we'll see here and in the ethnographic chapters, Huari is one of the largest operators in the CBE's Market and has been called the 'mastermind' of the 'usurpation' by Cahuana's supporters and other critics. One should note as well that on December 8, 2002, Cahuana changed his legal counsel from Dr. Carlos Naveda to Dr. Gerardo Muñoz, a Bolivian-born lawyer then operating from Liniers in the Federal Capital.

Though Resolution 1183 declared Cahuana's attempt to lodge an appeal and suspend the election inadmissible because the matter concerned what had been concluded through a dictamen—and not a Resolution—Muñoz, in his first action as Cahuana's new counsel, attempted to re-lodge the appeal to block the election. This time, the attempt concerned not *specific actions* of the IGJ's Electoral Committee as in the case of those communicated through the dictamen of November 1, 2002, but rather the *overall work* of the Committee—and once again, of the Committee *itself*. In the present attempt, Cahuana and Muñoz argue that the

Election Committee cannot guarantee an impartial election, and that their activities evince clear bias (*enemistad manifiesta*). Though this attempt is, like the prior one, ultimately unsuccessful—though here not because of its form but rather because of its ‘merit’ (see Resolution 1264 below)—it is nevertheless worthy to include because of the insight it provides into how Cahuana and Muñoz view the situation of the CBE (and the performance of the IGJ) a year in to the conflict. As we’ll also see, the accusations they make further strain their relationship with the Election Committee.

Señor Inspector General de Justicia:

Que mediante esta actuación procesal, en legal tiempo y forma vengo a recusar a todo el Comité Electoral, designado por Ud. en forma arbitraria e inconsulta, en razón a los argumentos de hecho y de derecho que a continuación expongo.

Que como es de conocimiento de Ud., Covelli, Montet, y Vandenbosch, durante todo este tiempo, han mostrado una parcialidad evidente con los usurpadores de la institución, situación que ha sido percibida, no sólo por Ud. sino por todos los miembros de la Inspección General de Justicia, una muestra de esto, es la extensión deliberada del proceso electoral, sin causa o motivo que lo justifique, contrariando, incluso los plazos fijados por Ud. para resolver la cuestión planteada (plazo de 70 días para regularizar la situación—Resolución 0628 del 22-07-02), plazo que se encuentra plenamente vencido, esto sólo se dio así para favorecer a los usurpadores, ya que finalmente concluyó el año que dura la gestión, habiendo liquidado prácticamente los usurpadores de la institución todos los bienes y el patrimonio de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, cuestión de la que Ud. también es cómplice y responsable, por avalar a admitir a los usurpadores en largas audiencias el mes de Enero del presente año, en vez de aplicar la ley y finalmente por designar funcionarios inescrupulosos (Covelli, Montet, Vandenbosch), para resolver un conflicto en contra de quienes hemos sido siempre respetuosos de la Ley.

Cahuana argues that throughout the proceedings the Electoral Committee has shown favor to what he calls the ‘usurpers’. He states that the IGJ has been delinquent in calling elections in the 70 days as established by Resolution 0628 (dating from 22 July 2002)—a situation which has only enabled the ‘usurpers’ to entrench themselves and consolidate their *de facto* power. Along with the latter, Cahuana claims that the ‘usurpers’ have liquidated much of the capital of the entity at the expense of the membership—all under the eye of the IGJ who should otherwise be enforcing the law (i.e. “*aplicar la ley*”). Let us note that, here again, Cahuana presumes that the IGJ has powers which are in reality reserved only for the judicial branch. We will recall that the IGJ is rather an administrative body that has jurisdictional faculties; and that as such, its

authority is only regulatory within the confines of the faculties and functions it enjoys as per Ley 22.315. The IGJ is not authorized to dispense justice; this is a burden the entity must itself bear. Nevertheless, one should also note that Cahuana is not without cause, being that the IGJ has ratified a roll of eligible voters that itself violates the rights of a few hundred members.

With regard to the overall work of the Electoral Committee, Cahuana informs the Inspector that he has filed a formal charge in the Federal Courts (case No. 82.837), accusing the IGJ Inspectors of failing to fulfill their duties as public officials.

Manifestamos y ponemos en su conocimiento la enemistad manifiesta de estos personajes con el representante de nuestra lista el Sr. Jenaro Moyano, la causa penal seguida en contra de estas personas en la Justicia Federal, por incumplimiento de los deberes de funcionarios públicos y otros delitos, más actualmente en trámite, causa No. 82.837.

IGJ Dictamen (17 December 2002)

The IGJ responds to Cahuana and Muñoz's attempt to re-lodge an appeal to block the decisions taken by the Committee in two separate dictamens. The first, from 17 December 2002 and treated here, addresses Cahuana's accusation that the Committee has shown partiality to González and the 'usurpers', and that the Inspector General ultimately holds responsibility for their usurpation of the CBE and its capital. The Committee, who has authored this dictamen, warns Cahuana and his counsel that their accusations, crystallized in terms like 'partial', 'unscrupulous', and 'complicit', are grounds to be brought up on charges of calumny against public officials. This, they state, is an offense punishable by the Argentine Penal Code.

Ante las imputaciones de 'favorecer a los usurpadores ya que finalmente concluyó el año que dura la gestión habiendo liquidado prácticamente los usurpadores de la institución todos los bienes y el patrimonio de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar' y de 'cómplice y responsable por avalar y admitir a los usurpadores' que el presentante le efectuara al Sr. Inspector General de Justicia, corresponde señalarle lo siguiente: [Que] El Código Penal Argentino en su Libro Segundo, Título II, 'Delitos contra el honor', artículo 109 tipifica como delito a la calumnia o falsa imputación de un delito que dé lugar a la acción pública... Por lo tanto cuando el Sr. Cahuana se dirige al Sr. Inspector General de Justicia en los términos de: 'cómplice y responsable por avalar y admitir a los usurpadores' antes transcritos, podemos estar en presencia de un desafortunado exabrupto propio de una alteración inimputable al manifestante o—por el contrario—podríamos estar en presencia

de una imputación del delito de usurpación, tipificado en el Código Penal, en calidad de coautor o cómplice...

Se efectúa a través de la presente un severo llamado de atención al Sr. Teodoro Cahuana, haciéndole saber que deberá abstenerse de dirigirse a los integrantes de la Junta Electoral, al Inspector General de Justicia u otro Inspector o funcionario de la Inspección General de Justicia utilizando adjetivos calificativos como ‘inescrupulosos’, ‘parciales’ o imputando acciones delictivas como lo es el ‘incumplimiento de los deberes de funcionario público’, bajo apercibimiento de iniciar las acciones penales a que den lugar tales imputaciones.

As for Cahuana’s charge that the IGJ has deliberately extended the convocation of elections, and thus aided the ‘usurpers’ in the consolidation of their *de facto* hold over the CBE, the Inspectors state that they have worked within the bounds established by Article 2 of Resolution 0628 from 22 July 2002. That is, where this Resolution required the *call* for holding elections to be made within 70 days, this should not be taken to mean that the election must itself be *held* within that period. The Inspectors state that this call for holding elections was made on November 4, 2002 and was thus within this period. As a result, Cahuana’s charge that the IGJ has ‘deliberately extended’ the convocation of elections has no merit.

Que en lo que respecta a los plazos que considera vencidos, corresponde señalar que...el plazo fijado en el artículo [2 de la Resolución 0628] hace referencia en realidad a la convocatoria del acto eleccionario, pero no al de su celebración. Asimismo, bien podemos afirmar que la convocatoria efectivamente fue notificada en forma personal el 4 de noviembre de 2002, es decir dentro de los setenta días hábiles administrativos que son los contemplados en la Resolución dictada por el Organismo (Res. I.G.J. N° 628/02). Por lo tanto mal puede hacerse referencia a ‘*extensión deliberada del proceso electoral.*’

IGJ Dictamen (23 December 2002)

The second dictamen that responds to Cahuana’s attempt to re-lodge an appeal comes from December 23, 2002. Here, the Electoral Committee takes issue with Cahuana’s charge of *enemistad manifiesta*—i.e. his claim that the Committee has let personal prejudice color its engagement with his representative, Jenaro Moyano, and unlawfully affected the proceedings.

[Cahuana and Muñoz] indican la que consideran causal específica de la recusación: la enemistad manifiesta del Sr. Jenaro Moyano con los inspectores Dres. Covelli, Montet, y

Vandenbosch, contra quienes ha iniciado—dice—una causa penal N° 82.837 por incumplimiento de los deberes de funcionario público y otros delitos.

The Inspectors state that while Cahuana and his counsel claim such ‘*enemistad manifiesta*’ toward Moyano, they offer no substantive account of such. Moreover, for such an allegation to even be considered, it must be made by the one who alleges the effects of such prejudice. In this case, that would have to be Moyano, and not Cahuana. The present then supplies ample jurisprudence to substantiate its dismissal of this charge.

[La] enemistad manifiesta se encuentra regulada en el art. 17 inc. 10) del Código Procesal Civil y Comercial que dice ‘Tener contra el recusante enemistad, odio o resentimiento que se manifieste por hechos conocidos’; [Cahuana y Muñoz] no señalan ningún hecho o situación puntual que pudiera encuadrar en la normativa mencionada. Sin perjuicio de ello se aclara que la enemistad debe ser contra quien la alega, no respecto de una tercera persona como es el Sr. Jenaro Moyano.

En cuanto a la oportunidad para interponer la recusación debemos remitirnos a los arts. 14 y 18 del C.P.C.C., resultando—en consecuencia—extemporánea la presentación efectuada.

Finally, because this attempt at re-lodging an appeal is redundant in that the first attempt was already addressed by Resolution 1183, the IGJ is able to consider it ‘malicious’, and thus punishable by the aforementioned Código Procesal Civil y Comercial (C.P.C.C.).

De lo expuesto y teniendo en cuenta que esta es la segunda oportunidad en la que se recusan a los Inspectores, habiendo ya sido desestimada la recusación anterior (Res. I.G.J. N° 1183/02) corresponde considerar a la presente como recusación maliciosa, conforme lo dispuesto por el art. 29 del C.P.C.C.

González Contests Cahuana’s Candidacy (13 December 2002)

During this time of heightened activity, González, his counsel Koprivec, and the authorized representative of the Green List, Eusebio Huari, were far from idle. Emboldened by Resolution 1183, which not only ratified their version of the electoral roll as the official IGJ *Padrón* but which also struck down Cahuana’s request to designate new Inspectors for the Electoral Committee, González formally impugned Cahuana and his Red List (*Lista Roja*) as candidates

for the upcoming election. The grounds upon which he made his argument ranged from the criminal charges Cahuana allegedly had pending against him (and his cabinet) regarding the original events of December 2001 (which had all been filed by González himself), to a host of alleged transgressions pertaining to Cahuana's Presidency in 2001. Electoral fraud, financial malfeasance, usurpation, retention of the entity's political and economic logs, and a failure to submit end-of-term reports and balances figured chiefly among his allegations. All of these, González argued, should prevent Cahuana and his ticket from running for election on December 27, 2002.

Que venimos a impugnar a Teodoro Cahuana, Fulgencio Esparza, Selmo Uruña, Daniel Churata, Bernardo Villamontes, Gerardo Garza, Samuel Paucara, quienes se han presentado como candidatos para las elecciones integrando la Lista Roja cuando los mismos tienen impedimentos legales surgidos de gestiones anteriores, por fraude electoral (denuncia que motivara la apertura del presente expediente), estafa a la sociedad (denuncia radicada en el Juzgado en lo criminal de Instrucción N. 5, expediente N° 41932/02), deudas que mantienen con la entidad, denuncias por usurpación, todos tramitados ante la UFI N°9, falta de rendición de cuentas de su gestión anterior... por retención de la documentación, todo esto tramitando en la justicia. En resumen, el tener causas pendientes en la justicia referidas a su gestión anterior los inhabilita a participar en las nuevas elecciones.

Yet González went much further than alleging administrative malfeasance. His submission directly impugns the character of those on the Red ticket. As the leaders of the CBE, González states that Cahuana's cabinet systematically violated not just the entity's statutes and the law, but also the entity's moral code and ethics, with due repercussions for the public good.

...fueron Dirigentes que han violado sistemáticamente los estatutos, leyes, la moral y la ética han cometido una serie de delitos...de hacer lo que quisieran con la sociedad, la justicia y el orden público....

The portrait of Cahuana that González paints is one of criminality. He even alleges that Cahuana and his supporters had attempted to hold the entity by violence—and backed by hit men—in the days following the impugned election of December 22, 2001.

...el 2 de enero de 2002...para luego entrar por la fuerza a las oficinas con un grupo de matones.

González finishes his diatribe with a rhetorical move. Were the IGJ *not* to sanction Cahuana and his cabinet, and disallow their candidacy, they would be endorsing or otherwise rubber-stamping corruption itself. That is, were the IGJ *not* to sanction Cahuana, they would be encouraging honest members to believe that there were some kind of back-door dealing going on.

Por que se impugnan: porque el no impugnarlos es como avalar la ilegalidad, la corrupción y la falta de justicia, porque el no impugnarlos llevaría a pensar a la sociedad que hay connivencia, ocultación y hasta negociados detrás de esto...

All of this is quite rich, given that those at the helm of the CBE had not been elected, obtained duplicate administrative books under false pretenses, operated in bad faith, and continued to collect the CBE's revenues. Yet where they had the IGJ's Inspectors focused on Cahuana, whom they had successfully made out to be the villain, why wouldn't they go for the throat?

IGJ Dictamen (18 December 2002)

The IGJ addresses González's impugnation of Cahuana and his Red List's candidacies for the upcoming election in a dictamen from December 18, 2002. In this dictamen, the Inspectors comprising the Electoral Committee state that having mere charges filed against one is not sufficient cause to deny him candidacy for a position on the CBE's Executive Commission, especially given that no judicial sentence in those proceedings had been issued.

Con respecto a las impugnaciones para ser candidatos de la Lista Roja a los Sres. Teodoro Cahuana, Fulgencio Esparza, Selmo Uruña, Daniel Churata, Bernardo Villamontes, Gerardo Garza y Samuel Paucara, debe señalarse que el hecho de tener causas pendientes en la Justicia, no es impedimento para que los mismos sean candidatos a integrar la Comisión Directiva, máxime teniendo en cuenta que en las causas a que se hace referencia no ha recaído aún sentencia definitiva...Atento que no ha recaído sentencia definitiva en tales causas penales, no existen para los suscriptos razones por las cuales se pueda impugnar a las personas antes mencionadas.

As for the other allegations González makes concerning the financial reckoning outgoing presidents of the CBE must make, the Committee states that such matters are beyond their purview. Reflecting the overall disposition taken by the IGJ with respect to civil associations—

i.e. that they have functional autonomy and must auto-regulate according to their own statutes—the Inspectors state that such matters are to be resolved *by the entity itself*.

Debe señalarse además, en relación a que dichas personas no presentaron rendición de cuentas de su gestión, que no es facultad de esta Junta Electoral resolver sobre esa cuestión, ya que la misma debe resolverse internamente en la esfera de la propia Asociación, mediante el procedimiento que a tal efecto estableciera el estatuto.

For all of the above, the Committee concludes that González's impugnation be rejected.

Cahuana Calls to Suspend Election (17 December 2002)

On December 10, 2002, both sides in the conflict were again presented with the IGJ's official roll of eligible voters (*Padrón depurado*) containing those members allowed to vote in the election scheduled for 27 December 2002. The sides were given until December 18, 2002 to contest anyone's inclusion on this roll, whose eligibility the IGJ's Electoral Committee would then resolve. Since this IGJ-authorized roll was none other than that submitted by González back on August 14, and subsequently ratified through the dictamen of November 1, 2002, González did not challenge it. Cahuana and his representative Moyano, who had contested its ratification by the November 1, dictamen through multiple submissions, challenged it once again in two separate presentations dating to 17 December 2002.

Moyano filed his appeal in person. Fs. 549 of the proceedings documents his appearance before the IGJ and that he continued to insist that only those members contained in the *Registro de Asociados N°1* and *N°2* should be allowed to vote.

A los 17 días del mes de diciembre de 2002, se hace presente el Sr. Jenaro Moyano en su calidad de apoderado, a los fines de impugnar el padrón de asociados de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar. Asimismo, presenta el listado de asociados correspondiente a los Registros de Asociados N°1 y 2 que según el dicente son los únicos en condiciones de votar conforme las últimas elecciones.

Cahuana, perhaps because he was out on his strawberry farm in the Province, submitted his challenge of the IGJ's roll by certified mail (*Carta Documento*). In this notice, Cahuana called for the suspension of the December 27, 2002 election on the grounds that the roll

authorized by the Committee does not include those members numbering 560 – 796 and which are contained in the properly issued *Registro de Asociados N°2*. Both these members and their eligibility to vote, he reminds the IGJ, were validated by the Resolution 0628 from 22 July 2002.

Uds. deberán suspender el acto eleccionario debido a que el padrón electoral elaborado por Covelli, Montet, y Vandebosch no se encuentran los socios consignados en el Libro N° 2 (Registro de Asociados) que van del número 560 al 796, los cuales fueron admitidos por la comisión directiva que presido y convalidada dicha admisión por la resolución dictada por el Sr. Inspector General de Justicia Dr. Francisco Andriacchi, No. 0628 de fecha 22 de Julio de 2002.

Surprisingly, this is the first time in the proceedings where mention of the exclusion of those rightfully numbering 560 – 796 (versus those illegitimately bearing the same numbers in González’s ratified proposal) is made explicit. Based on the proceedings it is not fully clear when Cahuana and Moyano realized that González had substituted those members properly numbering 560 – 796 for his own. Indeed, their prior challenges of the IGJ-authored roll were based on sole the fact that Galán’s Interim Commission (whose legitimacy they of course challenged), had, under the guidance of González as Internal Regulator, associated new members that the IGJ deemed eligible to vote. As we’ll see shortly, this issue became clearer (and indeed came to a head) when it became known that González and his counsel Koprivec had requested and obtained a duplicate set of administrative books for the CBE under false pretenses.

Yet Cahuana’s call to suspend the election was two-pronged. Not only would the election be illegitimate if an entire Register of members were excluded from the IGJ’s roll (an exclusion that would also directly contradict the IGJ’s finding that all members who had desired to join the CBE in good faith, even under an Interim Commission that had itself been challenged, should be allowed to do so); Cahuana also argued the election would be illegitimate because he had been prevented access to the CBE to properly campaign. In his submission, Cahuana states that in the time leading up to the election he had been verbally and physically aggrieved—a hostility that came to a head on December 14, 2002 when he and his Red List were physically prevented from holding a campaign rally in the CBE’s sports complex. This further evinced, as he had been claiming all along, that the CBE had been completely ‘usurped’.

[Que se] suspenda el proceso electoral para la renovación de la comisión directiva y comisión revisora de cuentas previsto el 27 de diciembre de 2002, en razón de las

agresiones verbales y físicas de la que hemos sido víctimas durante todo este tiempo por parte de los usurpadores de la institución, llegando al extremo que el día sábado 14 de diciembre de 2002 se nos impidió el ingreso al polideportivo de la institución donde teníamos previsto realizar el lanzamiento de la campaña electoral. Dicha intimación se efectúa bajo prevención de accionar por la vía del amparo constitucional.

One should also note that this is the first time in the proceedings where Cahuana raises the issue of seeking protection for his individual rights under “Constitutional Protection” (*amparo constitucional*). This recourse, which is a right provided for in the Argentine Constitution¹⁶, entails a judicial review of one’s case and culminates in a court-issued sentence. As we’ll see, where the IGJ fails to recognize Cahuana’s challenge, he pursues this end, although ultimately without success.

IGJ Dictamen (23 December 2002)

This dictamen from December 23, 2002¹⁷, which is authored by Inspectors Covelli and Vandebosch, addresses the recurrent issue of who should be eligible to vote, and thus figure in the IGJ’s official roll. Let us remember that both sides in the conflict must consent to this roll before any election can be held. What is fascinating about this dictamen is that although both Moyano and Cahuana have challenged the IGJ’s configuration of the roll (Moyano insisting that only members registered in the *Registro de Asociados N°1* and *N°2* be allowed to vote, and Cahuana finally arguing that those members from *Registro de Asociados N°2* have been left off of the roll), the IGJ addresses only Moyano’s side of the challenge. That is, in this dictamen, the IGJ only ever reiterates that the issue of associations that Moyano continues to challenge has already been settled in the dictamen from November 1, 2002—stating once again that the IGJ’s position is to allow anyone interested in joining the CBE in good faith to be granted membership, and thus the right to vote.

¹⁶ Constitución Nacional Argentina, Primera Parte, Capítulo Segundo, Artículo 43: Toda persona puede interponer acción expedita y rápida de amparo, siempre que no exista otro medio judicial más idóneo, contra todo acto u omisión de autoridades públicas o de particulares, que en forma actual o inminente lesione, restrinja, altere o amenace, con arbitrariedad o ilegalidad manifiesta, derechos y garantías reconocidos por esta Constitución, un tratado o una ley. En el caso, el juez podrá declarar la inconstitucionalidad de la norma en que se funde el acto u omisión lesiva.

¹⁷ This is the second Dictamen from this date. The first, as noted above, addressed Cahuana’s allegation that the Junta Electoral’s engagement with his *apoderado* Jenaro Moyano was colored by ‘*enemistad manifiesta*’.

Sra. Inspectora Jefe:

Con fecha 17 de diciembre de 2002 se presenta el Sr. Teodoro Cahuana en su calidad de candidato a Presidente por la Lista Roja de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, a través de su apoderado Jenaro Moyano a efectos de impugnar la inclusión de socios en condiciones de votar en el próximo comicio del día 27 de diciembre. En esta oportunidad se labró un acta de la que surge dicha presentación. Fundamenta las impugnaciones planteadas en que dichos socios en condiciones de votar, *'fueron incorporados por los usurpadores de la asociación en forma arbitraria e ilegal más de 500 socios registrados en el Libro N°3, Registro de Asociados, de dicha entidad'*. A estas impugnaciones planteadas por el presentante, corresponde señalar lo siguiente: ...[Que] debemos tener en cuenta que este organismo ya ha resuelto este tema a través de la Resolución de la Junta Electoral, obrante a fs. 480/482 de fecha 1 de noviembre que fuera notificada a las [partes].

Nowhere is there any engagement with Cahuana's (now) explicit red flag that the IGJ's official roll does not contain the members entered in *Registro de Asociados N°2*—i.e. those members whose status and eligibility to vote were validated by Resolution 0628. Though Cahuana does not bring the heightened attention to this matter that he could have in claiming that González's originally proposed roll (which became the one the IGJ has authorized) slyly substituted those rightfully numbered 560 – 796 with new members similarly numbered, the IGJ should have made this realization by a simple comparison of each side's submissions. One should also note, as mentioned above, that the IGJ actually has the CBE's rightfully issued administrative books in their power, since Cahuana had turned them in to be attached to the proceedings.

IGJ Resolution 1264 (26 December 2002)

Cahuana's red flag from 17 December 2002 was also patently ignored in the IGJ's Resolution 1264, which was issued the day prior to the scheduled election. Even though Cahuana's contest was formulated within the timeframe stipulated by the IGJ for contesting the roll of eligible voters—meaning it should have received attention in the dictamen above and ultimately an official response in the present Resolution—it looks as though the Inspector General was not made aware of it. This casts serious doubt on the conscientiousness of the Electoral Committee, and reflects poorly on the Inspector General, under whose eye the Committee ultimately

operates. Thus, rather than engaging and resolving this crucial matter—one which would completely mar the election, and thus the entire process laid out by Resolution 0628—the present Resolution simply made official the rejection of Cahuana’s earlier attempt (from 10 December 2002) to re-lodge an appeal of the Electoral Committee—a rejection that was already operative in the dictamens from 17 and 23 December 2002.

Que las constancias existentes y la conducta seguida por esta IGJ en la especie, conllevan a rechazar tales imputaciones y reafirmar la decisión que se adopta en este particular. Por ello...

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE:

Artículo 1° - Rechazar la recusación interpuesta por el Sr. Teodoro Cahuana a fs. 528 y vta. por extemporánea.

Moreover, this official rejection of Cahuana’s prior ‘appeal’ (*recusación*) as “inadmissible” not only ignores his recent (and completely valid) challenge of the roll, it tacitly and wrongly ratifies (once again) this same roll as vetted by the Electoral Committee in their original dictamen from November 1, 2002. Thus, as far as the IGJ was concerned, the election scheduled for 27 December 2002 was to happen without the participation of members numbering 560 – 796 as contained in the properly issued *Registro de Asociados N°2*. This would be in violation of their rights as CBE members and in contradiction to what they had already declared in Resolution 0628.

It is ironic that while Cahuana’s red flag was being ignored, the Inspector General continued to defend the Inspectors under his watch. Their work in preparing the election, he states, was in all instances a model of objectivity and consonant with both the CBE’s own statutes and the norms governing civil associations.

Que en efecto, en todo momento e instancia y tal como surge de estos actuados, esta Inspección General de Justicia procuró y realizó los mayores esfuerzos tendientes a superar todas y cada una de las cuestiones que se presentaban conforme a pautas y principios de objetividad y ajustados a las normas legales y reglamentarias de aplicación y ceñidos a un proceso preelectoral, que contó con la conformidad de los representantes de las Listas presentadas.

Whatever the IGJ's shortcomings were on this crucial issue of the exclusion of those comprising *Registro de Asociados N°2* (i.e. whether the issue concerned merely bureaucratic oversight, or indeed some kind of partiality as Cahuana and Moyano alleged), the Inspector General nevertheless defended the Electoral Committee on the premise that the antagonisms between the sides in the conflict, which he believed ultimately reconcilable before more fundamental, collective identifications, justified the approach the Committee had taken throughout the proceedings.

Más aún, en la Resolución I.G.J. N° 0628 de fecha 22 de julio de 2002, expresamente este Organismo señalaba que las '*diferencias advertibles entre los socios de la Institución—todos ellos vinculados a la colectividad boliviana en la Argentina y unidos por afectos superadores—amerita la necesidad de realizar los mayores esfuerzos para alcanzar su pronta solución y en cuya procura se orientan las medidas que se adoptan por la presente*', lo cual ratifica el ideario que primó por parte del Organismo, en la consideración y resolución de las cuestiones que se suscitaron durante esta etapa, previa al comicio.

The implication of the Inspector's reference to the antagonisms and overarching attachments (*afectos superadores*) is that the issues gripping the CBE are fundamentally, thoroughly, and idiosyncratically *Bolivian*. That is, on his tacit estimation, the IGJ's Electoral Committee cannot be expected to resolve such issues without Bolivian cooperation, let alone be considered partial in their attempts to do so. This very sentiment would be echoed years later by the third Ministerially-appointed Interventor for the CBE, who stated in a CBE meeting: "yo no puedo solucionar los amores y odios entre ustedes".

Cahuana Applies for Constitutional Protection (26 December 2002)

Upon receiving Resolution 1264 on December 26, 2002 and seeing that the exclusion of those members comprising *Registro de Asociados N°2* had not been addressed, Cahuana appealed directly to the Judiciary. His appeal, brought before the *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil*—specifically its *Juzgado Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Civil N°45*—was formulated in terms of *amparo*—i.e. protection for his individual rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. For Cahuana alleged that these rights had been compromised by the IGJ's 'partiality' throughout

the proceedings—the same prejudice he had alleged before the IGJ on December 10, 2002. As a ‘cautionary measure’ (*medida cautelar*), Judge Renato Álvarez of the aforementioned tribunal ordered the IGJ to suspend the election scheduled for the following day.

Al Sr. Inspector General de Justicia:

En los autos caratulados ‘Cahuana, Teodoro c/Estado Nacional y Otro s/Amparo’, Expediente N° 116.456/2002...

RESUELVO: 1.- Decretar la suspensión del proceso electoral de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, y de los plazos establecidos en dicho cronograma electoral. A fin de comunicar la medida, librese Oficio, previa caución juratoria que deberá prestar el peticionante.

Fdo. Renato Álvarez —Juez.

Eso dado a los 26 de diciembre de dos mil dos en mi Público despacho.

Unfortunately for Cahuana, his appeal for Constitutional *amparo* would be denied a year and a half later—specifically on May 5, 2004. The Court would rule against him for lack of evidence substantiating his claim that the IGJ had patently violated his rights. However, Cahuana no doubt saw the present suspension of the election (taken as the aforementioned *medida cautelar*) as a temporary victory. It would allow him room to lobby on behalf of those excluded from the IGJ’s roll, and to continue fighting to restore the CBE in service of the public good. With regard to the status of those in *Registro de Asociados N°2*, however, the Court’s stay on the election had the result of causing the IGJ to disband the Electoral Committee it had created and reassign those Inspectors to other cases. Indeed, where no election could take place until Cahuana’s *amparo* had been attended to judicially, there was no need to configure a roll of eligible voters—especially since those at the helm of the CBE could continually change its membership through associating what would amount to new ‘clients’. By the time Cahuana would receive the Court’s decision on his *amparo*, the ‘usurpation’ had progressed so far that any hope of having the matter resolved by “the CBE” as a corporate entity—i.e. in its “*esfera interna*”, as the IGJ would say—had been lost. Indeed, by July 2004, the IGJ would deem the antagonisms in the heart of the CBE “insuperable”, and grounds for a formal Intervention.

What would also justify formal Intervention by the IGJ were transgressions made by those at the helm of the CBE (whom critics have called the ‘usurpers’, and who by now have

earned the moniker). Two of those transgressions were elections held in defiance of the Court's stay, and thus also without IGJ authorization. Let us have a look.

Koprivec and Huari Hold CBE Elections in Defiance of Court Order (27 Dec. 2003, 2004)

A full year later, toward the end of December 2003, Cahuana made a startling discovery, which he communicated to the IGJ shortly thereafter on 4 February 2004.

Teodoro Cahuana, en calidad de Presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, en el Expte. No. 32.160/1.520.370, a V.S. con respeto expongo y digo:

Que vengo a acompañar copia de tres publicaciones efectuadas en *El Diario de Escobar*, Provincia de Buenos Aires, de fecha 23, 24, y 26 de diciembre de 2003, en el que se anuncia la realización de un acto eleccionario, para la renovación de la Comisión Directiva de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, acto que evidentemente, no ha sido autorizado por el Juzgado Civil No. 45 y tampoco por esta Inspección General de Justicia.

Published in the local newspaper *El Diario de Escobar* were articles and other pieces announcing the election for CBE authorities for the upcoming 2004 term. This election was to take place on December 27, 2003, exactly one year after the one scheduled for December 27, 2002 would have taken place, had it not been suspended by Judge Renato Álvarez's *medida cautelar*. The most telling article, dated December 23, 2003 and titled "The Coming 27th of December", quoted the then "current President" of the CBE, Bonifacio Corihuanca, as saying that all the pre-election controls had been carried out in proper form; that is, that the IGJ had been duly notified (which was patently false) and that election monitors from FACBOL¹⁸ and the Bolivian Embassy would be on hand to guarantee a legitimate, transparent, and fair election.

El Diario de Escobar
'El próximo 27 de diciembre'
23 diciembre 2003

¹⁸ FACBOL, or the Federación de Asociaciones Civiles Bolivianas, is a Federation of the major Bolivian Associations in and around Buenos Aires (see Calcagno y Fourcade 1999 for a discussion of the legal regime and political structure of Federations in Argentina).
<http://www.comunidadboliviana.com.ar/shop/otraspaginas.asp?pagina=20>

Finalmente y a pesar de las polémicas suscitadas, el día 27 de diciembre [de 2003] la Colectividad Boliviana procederá a elegir nuevas autoridades para el período 2004.

Consultada la actual Comisión Directiva nos expresaron que: ‘el proceso electoral se ha iniciado normalmente con la publicación de padrones en tiempo y forma y la elección de una junta electoral compuesta por ex directivos’ ...

El presidente de la entidad, Sr. Bonifacio Corihuanca, expresó en el noticiero ... ‘solicitamos que se nombre un veedor por parte del juzgado, con el objeto de evitar posteriores denuncias y garantizar los derechos que se encuentran en los estatutos sociales’, y agregó: ‘Hemos notificado a la Inspección General de Justicia y en la semana...se ingresará el pedido de veedores a la misma y se solicitará lo propio a la Embajada de Bolivia y a las Federaciones de las que somos miembros, a fin de que se garantice la transparencia del proceso electoral.’

There are three things that must have shocked Cahuana upon discovering this article. The first would have been that there was an election scheduled for 27 December 2003, when the electoral proceedings from 27 December 2002 had been suspended by the Court. No Executive Commission could call elections for the 2004 term if there was no legitimate Commission voted into power for 2003.

Second, Cahuana must have been shocked to learn that the then “current President” was Bonifacio Corihuanca, the opponent he would have faced had the election of 27 December 2002 not been suspended. Indeed, what soon became apparent is that González’s counsel Koprivec, while duly notified by the IGJ that the election of December 26, 2002 had been suspended, nevertheless held the election on December 27, 2002 in violation of Judge Álvarez’s stay and without IGJ consent. This was an election that obviously did not include the participation of Cahuana’s Red List or those members properly numbering 560 – 796. It had been a complete sham, and revealed that the CBE’s Market’s operators had simply fallen into line with the ‘usurpers’, who had co-opted the CBE and its revenues.

Third, Cahuana must have been shocked to learn that the election scheduled for December 27, 2003 was to count election monitors from FACBOL, when Koprivec was FACBOL’s own legal advisor for the year of 2003. Where the election was not authorized, the monitors would not be impartial. Thus, not only was the election from 2002 illegitimate and in violation of the Court order, so would be the one from 2003.

As if the violation of the Court's stay and the false claims of IGJ authorization and fairness were not enough, Corihuanca also claimed that Moyano and Cahuana were guilty of fraud—Moyano for falsifying public documents and Cahuana for embezzlement.

Con respecto a la línea opositora oportunamente representada por el Sr. Jenaro Moyano con innumerables denuncias a los medios de prensa, Corihuanca manifestó: '...Es importante que sepan que al Sr. Moyano se lo ha denunciado por usurpación y ha estado privado de su libertad por falsificación de documento público, asimismo se ha iniciado una acción ante la justicia por fraude en los padrones, que se encuentra tramitada en la UFI N°9 de Campana.'

En cuanto al Sr. Teodoro Cahuana las expresiones de Bonifacio Corihuanca fueron aun más categóricas y contundentes: '...a este señor, que se hace pasar como presidente de la colectividad, hay que recordarle que aún debe cumplimentar la rendición de cuentas hasta el día de hoy por USD 500,000.'

Cahuana not only brought this and other pieces from *El Diario de Escobar* to the attention of the IGJ, but another one as well—one which left little doubt about the 'usurpers' transgressions.

Published in early January 2004 was an article from *El Vocero Boliviano* entitled "Cipriano González Wins the Election". This was the aforementioned election, carried out on December 27 2003, that installed the Executive Commission for the 2004 term. It was a contest between a new White List (*Lista Blanca*) and the traditional Green List (*Lista Verde*). Yet the latter was no longer topped by Bonifacio Corihuanca, who had just served a year as the *de facto* President. Rather, it was led by Cipriano González, Ceferino and Teyo González's relative. Ceferino, while still figuring as the principal litigant opposing Cahuana in the IGJ's administrative proceedings, continued to abstain from formal CBE politics (one should note that he did not serve as Internal Regulator under Bonifacio Corihuanca's *de facto* tenure of 2003).

El Vocero Boliviano

'Cipriano González ganó las elecciones'

January 2004

El pasado 27 de diciembre [de 2003] se llevaron a cabo las elecciones en la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar. Los comicios se desarrollaron con toda normalidad, se presentaron dos listas, la Lista Blanca que encabezaba Victoriano Achuta, y la Lista Verde que postulaba como presidente, al señor Cipriano González, que a la postre resultaría ganadora...

Finalizada las elecciones con los resultados en la mano el señor González accedía a una charla y decía, ‘me siento muy orgulloso por el apoyo que me dio la base’, al ser consultado sobre cuáles iban a ser los primeros pasos ‘es trabajar por la unidad de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’.

Yet more important than the Green List’s particular and continual hold on the CBE—and more important than their claim of having a mandate from the ‘base’—is their claim that the election was legitimate. In this article, Koprivec—once again claiming the role of legal advisor to the entire CBE—is quoted as saying that the election of December 27, 2003 was “completely valid”. Indeed, he claimed to have had an exchange with the IGJ in which they told him that to avoid any potential contest, the CBE should follow all statutory form in the election proceedings. Toward this end, Koprivec claimed to have filed all the required pre-electoral documentation to the IGJ on December 3, 2003. Both of these acts suggest that the IGJ had authorized the proceedings, when clearly they had not.

Ante los conflictos que había atrapado a la institución en los últimos dos años se consultó al doctor Koprivec, sobre la validez de estos comicios, el asesor jurídico respondió que las elecciones eran totalmente válidas... También aclaró que ante la disyuntiva, consultaron a la Inspección General de Justicia (IGJ) y, ‘ellos mismos nos informaron que debíamos respetar los estatutos, entonces para evitar inconvenientes presentamos toda la documentación el día 3 de diciembre para que no nos tome por sorpresa’.

All of these claims would prove to be false, for the IGJ later affirmed that it had no knowledge of any election. Moreover, even if it had, it could not authorize one given that the Court had issued a stay in all such proceedings (see Resolution 0837 from 13 July 2004 below).

Cahuana Alleges Wrongful IGJ Issuance of CBE Administrative Books (12 Feb. 2004)

Yet elections held in violation of the Court’s stay and lacking IGJ authorization were not the only transgressions committed by those holding *de facto* power in the CBE. At the same time that Cahuana was discovering the existence of the unauthorized elections, he and his advisors were putting together their case that the ‘usurpers’ had been operating in the CBE with a set of books that was both requested illegitimately by them and issued wrongfully by the IGJ.

On February 12, 2004, Cahuana approached the IGJ with an official receipt from its own *Área de Intervención y Rúbrica de Libros* listing all the books the IGJ had issued to the CBE over the course of its lifetime. The receipt began with the first set of books issued to the CBE shortly after its authorization in 1991:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Issued to the CBE on:</u>
Actas de Asambleas N°1	5 February 1992
Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1	5 February 1992
Registro de Asociados N°1	5 February 1992

When through the course of an entity's political life, books become filled 75% of the way, the ruling Executive Commission is permitted to ask the IGJ for the second book in each series. For this request to be granted, the IGJ requires that the Executive Commission present the reigning book for verification.

In 2000, Cahuana, who was serving his fifth term as President, requested the second book of the *Registro de Asociados* in precisely this way. It was duly issued to him on behalf of the CBE.

<u>Book</u>	<u>Issued to the CBE on:</u>
Registro de Asociados N°2	22 June 2000

(Note that this second book of the *Registro de Asociados* was that in which members 560 – 796 were officially documented. As noted above, these were those members whose status and eligibility to vote were challenged by González in his initial impugnation of the election of 22 December 2001, confirmed by Resolution 0628, and then subsequently excluded from the IGJ's official roll.)

In 2002, specifically during February and March, when the CBE was in acute crisis following the impugnation of the December 22, 2001 election, the IGJ issued the next in line for all of the aforementioned books:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Issued to the CBE on:</u>
Actas de Asambleas N°2	26 February 2002
Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2	26 February 2002
Registro de Asociados N°3	20 March 2002

Yet to whom were these books issued if the CBE was in full crisis and without an officially recognized Executive Commission to carry out the task? Moreover, how could the IGJ issue any books when its own internal briefings noted this condition of acephaly?¹⁹ Did not such a request for new books during such a crisis raise any red flags concerning its propriety? Did the officials in the *Área de Intervención y Rúbrica de Libros* even know that the CBE was in a crisis? In other words, why were they—and the Inspectors handling the CBE’s case—not aware of each other’s actions in the proceedings? As we’ll see, these questions were just the tip of the iceberg.

With the above information (and *Área* printout) in hand, Cahuana brought his formal charge before the IGJ. He argued that the three most recently issued books (i.e. the *Actas de Asambleas N°2*, *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2*, and the *Registro de Asociados N°3*) were not only requested illegitimately by the ‘usurpers’, but also issued wrongfully by the IGJ.

12 Febrero 2004

Sres. Inspección General de Justicia:

Teodoro Cahuana por la Colectividad Boliviana De Escobar, Asociación Civil, a V.S. con respeto expongo y digo:

Que atento al estado de autos, vengo a acompañar a V.S. certificación expedida por Área Intervención y Rúbrica de Libros de la Inspección General de Justicia por la irregular rúbrica de los libros *Actas de Asambleas N°2*, Rúbrica 805202, *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2*, Rúbrica 805502, ambos rubricados en fecha 26-Feb-02 y el *Registro de Asociados N°3*, Rúbrica 1178102, de fecha 20-Mar-02.

Knowing from his own prior request of *Registro de Asociados N°2* in 2000 that to receive a subsequent book in any series, one needs to present the IGJ with the reigning book filled 75% of the way, Cahuana states that whoever made the request for the aforementioned three books did so under false pretenses. For he reminds the IGJ that *he* had the reigning books in his sole possession as the outgoing President until 26 April 2002—the date upon which he submitted them to the IGJ in defense of his claims and in favor of righting the entity (fs. 418 of *Cuerpo N°2* of the proceedings). This means that whoever requested the succeeding books on 26 February 2002 and 20 March 2002 could not have presented the reigning books before the IGJ, or otherwise have a Notary Public witness them to make a proper request. Finally, he states that

¹⁹ See for example the Dictamen from 23 January 2002 in which the Inspectors handling the CBE’s case stated that because the *form* of the 22 December 2001 election was infelicitous there would be no legitimate Executive Commission until a new election was held.

because only he had the entity's statutes and registration of juridical personhood—documentation controlled only by the elected President of the institution—no one else could have legitimately made such a request in the first place.

Sr. Inspector, la Certificación acompañada, acredita fehacientemente, que las rúbricas de los libros mencionados precedentemente, como la inscripción de los asociados a los mismos, es absolutamente irregular e ilegal, y tiene responsabilidad directa en dichas maniobras dolosas, no sólo quien se presentó como apoderado o representante de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, sino también la Escribana que habilitó con su firma dicha presentación en base a documentación apócrifa, ya que el suscrito y el Secretario General de la Institución, teníamos toda la documentación de la Institución en nuestro poder, de modo que jamás pudo haberse presentado, quién haya sido, con el Estatuto original de la institución, la Resolución que acredita la personería, el acta de convocatoria a elecciones, acta de asamblea y acta de posesión de la comisión directiva, toda esta documentación original se encontraba en posesión de la comisión directiva que presido, y después fue presentada la I.G.J., obrando en autos dicha presentación, con carácter previo a la Resolución que dictó este Organismo del Estado en fecha 22-Jul-02.

Having faulted whoever made the wrongful request in the first place, Cahuana moved to fault the IGJ. Though not yet arguing that the IGJ was in error for failing to realize that its own *Área* was issuing new books while its Inspectors were preparing to declare a vacancy in the Presidency (as he would in a submission later on 17 May 2004), Cahuana charged that it was in one of these illegitimately requested and wrongfully issued books—i.e. the *Registro de Asociados N°3*—that listed members who the IGJ was willing to allow to vote through invocations of ‘*mandato aparente*’ and ‘*buena fe*’, neither of which, he suggested, could be sustained in these circumstances.

Pero lo más grave V.S., que tanto [Inspector General] Francisco Andriacchi, y los otros funcionarios designados por él para instruir el expediente, sabiendo la situación de irregularidad total que se vivía en la Institución porque ésta había sido literalmente tomada, y siendo la Comisión Directiva que presido la única legitimada y reconocida legalmente, haya admitido la inscripción irregular e ilegal de más de 500 asociados, invocando ciertos criterios jurisprudenciales, absolutamente insostenibles para el caso en cuestión o que al menos dichos criterios son muy minoritarios y en modo alguno aplicable al caso que estamos analizando.

Cahuana states (rhetorically) that not only could the Inspector General be unaware of such circumstances—especially throughout the process of configuring a rightful roll of eligible voters

(a process Cahuana continually contested)—but that such perpetual failure by the IGJ has forced him to seek Constitutional protection (*amparo*).

V.S. esta parte sostiene y por este motivo ha promovido el amparo constitucional, actualmente en trámite, que la inscripción de los 500 asociados registrados por los usurpadores es absolutamente irregular, y esta irregularidad jamás pudo haber sido desconocida por el Inspector General De Justicia de esa época (el Dr. Andriacchi), ya que tuvo en su poder los libros que acompañe en su momento, según constancias de autos y porque tuvo también los libros rubricados y presentados por los usurpadores, que no los eligió nadie y que por dicho motivo no podían en absoluto registrar o asociar a ninguna persona.

For all of this, Cahuana petitions the Inspector General to declare the recently issued books null and void, and to require that they be surrendered to the IGJ by those holding the CBE.

En razón a lo señalado, solicito a V.S. decrete la nulidad de las rubricas de los libros rubricados en fecha 26 de febrero de 2002, y 20 de marzo de 2002, tal como se acredita con la certificación acompañada, debiendo además intimar a los usurpadores a hacer entrega de dicha documental a la autoridad de aplicación hasta la regularización de la Institución.

Proveer de Conformidad
SERA JUSTICIA-

IGJ Initiates Internal Review (1 March 2004)

After Cahuana's joint allegations of elections held in violation of the Court's stay and of wrongfully requested and issued books, the IGJ was forced to launch an official inquiry into these matters (*visita de inspección*). A dictamen from February 23, 2004 set up that inquiry, which began on March 1, 2004 and which was directed by Inspector Silvio Bagnara. Indeed, the IGJ had much to find out: Who had the books in question (i.e. the *Actas de Asambleas N°2*, *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2*, and the *Registro de Asociados N°3*)? Under what circumstances and pretenses had they been issued? And did these books document unsanctioned actions such as holding elections in violation of Court orders?

IGJ Dictamen (8 March 2004)

As per this inquiry, Cipriano González and other members of his recently installed cabinet were summoned by the IGJ to present these books. Silvio Bagnara transcribed the contents of this meeting into a dictamen dating to March 8, 2004. In it, he recounts that Cipriano González appeared only with the book *Actas de Asambleas N°2*, whose last documented administrative act was the election of December 27, 2003. This was evidence from the “CBE” itself that the election had in fact taken place in violation of the Court’s orders.

En la Ciudad de Bs.As. a los 08 días del mes de marzo de 2004 se presentan los Sres. González, Ceferino, en su carácter de Presidente de la entidad, el Sr. Copani, Evaristo, en su carácter de Secretario, y el Sr. Barrillos, Fabián en su carácter de contador-auditor, de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar... quienes se presentan en cumplimiento a la requisitoria realizada oportunamente por el Organismo. A esos efectos exhiben Libro de Actas de Asambleas N°2, rubricado el 26 de febrero de 2002, bajo el N° 8052-02, de 200 páginas, utilizado hasta la página 51, última acta de fecha 27 de diciembre de 2003, obrante a fs. 28/51. El señor González, Cipriano manifiesta que en esta última asamblea se procedió a elegir a los actuales miembros de Comisión Directiva siendo él, designado Presidente.

This same book also documented the election assembly from the previous year (December 27, 2002) in which Bonifacio Corihuanca was elected President. This entry was proof that the prior year’s election had also been held in violation of the Court’s order.

Asimismo, manifiesta que la anterior Comisión Directiva, presidida por el señor Bonifacio Corihuanca fue elegida en los comicios realizados el 27 de diciembre de 2002, acta obrante a fs. 34/37 del libro que acompañan.

When asked about the other books, which the dictamen generically names *Actas de Comisión Directiva* and *Registro de Asociados* without specifying any number in either series, González states that these were not given to him by the preceding Commission led by Corihuanca (who was none other than a fellow collaborator). This is hard to believe, given that all those in power since Cahuana’s ousting (i.e. Freddy Galán, Ceferino González, Bonifacio Corihuanca and finally Cipriano González) were all consistently advised by the same counsel—Koprivec—and always operated as a singular political bloc, i.e. the “Green List”. That Cipriano González did

not appear with the other books (specifically *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2* and *Registro de Asociados N°3*) is thus suggestive of stalling and/or maneuvering.

Informa que el único libro que poseen y recibido de la Comisión Directiva anterior, es el que presentan en este acto. Los restantes libros de la sociedad: Actas de Comisión Directiva, Registro de Asociados, Inventario y Balances y Diario no le fueron entregados por las autoridades que le precedieron.

Yet what is perhaps equally damning, though here for the IGJ, is Silvio Bagnara's request that the "CBE" (which can here only mean Cipriano González) produce the following books—*Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1*, *Actas de Asambleas N°1*, and *Registro de Asociados N°2* and *N°3*. How could Cipriano González be asked to produce these books when the IGJ has had the first three of these (in addition to *Registro de Asociados N°1*) in its power since Cahuana submitted them on April 26, 2002?

Cipriano González Responds to IGJ's Request for Books (15 March 2004)

González, in a formal response dated March 15, 2004, informs the IGJ that these very books—*Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1*, *Actas de Asambleas N°1*, and *Registro de Asociados N°2* and *N°3*—were in fact in the possession of the IGJ. One should note that there is no record in the proceedings of the IGJ having ever received *Registro de Asociados N°3*.

De mi mayor consideración:

Tengo el agrado de dirigirme a Ud. en mi carácter de Presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, a los expresos fines de dar cumplimiento con lo requerido en fecha 8 de marzo de 2004. A tales fines, manifiesto que nos hemos constituido en autoridades...

Según lo requerido nos han informado las autoridades de la anterior gestión 2003, que el Libro de Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1, Libro de Actas de Asambleas N°1 y N°2 se encuentran en poder de la I.G.J., y de igual modo el Libro Registro de Asociados N°2 y N°3.

As for the book *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2*, González claims that he has solicited it from the Commission that preceded him (i.e. Corihuanca's), but that it is currently undergoing a

process of transcription. For that reason, he asks the IGJ to grant him a 30-day extension to submit it.

Manifiesto expresamente que hemos requerido a las autoridades de la gestión de 2003 se nos entregue el Libro Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2, habiéndonos informado que el citado libro se encuentra en etapa de transcripción, razón por la cual solicitamos se conceda un plazo de 30 días para efectuar la debida presentación, y de igual modo se proceda para cualquier otro tipo de documental que se requiera por este organismo.

On the surface, Cipriano González's statements appear to construct a separation between his and his predecessor's (Bonifacio Corihuanca's) regimes—painting them as separate political bodies when in fact, as mentioned above, they were simply different incarnations of the same political bloc. One is only left to wonder if such a subtle construction was not a tactic employed to delay having to submit a book containing incriminating evidence—or otherwise an effort to buy time so as to effect a 'transcription' that would be to the Green List's advantage as other events came to light. For indeed, it is not clear at this point whether Cipriano González and his counsel Koprivec knew of Cahuana's allegations about the unsanctioned elections or the wrongfully obtained books. One can imagine that they wanted to tread carefully.

Though Cipriano González eventually turned in the book *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2* on April 1, 2004, he was nevertheless forced to admit in the present submission that elections did in fact happen, and that he bore the title President of the CBE. However, his statement, “manifiesto que nos hemos constituido en autoridades”, should not be read as a confession of guilt for having violated the Court's orders. Rather, it should be read as a confession—sent on behalf of all the CBE's *socios*—of having had no other choice but to govern themselves given a situation of political acephaly. On this reading, González's suggestion was that no entity could exist long without proper leadership; and because this was the very situation forced upon them by Cahuana's continual appeals and the Court's stay, they had no other choice but to elect their own authorities.

As we have seen, this was certainly not the case. And as will become apparent, the IGJ did not see things this way. However, before getting to the dictamens and Resolutions that condemned these elections and acts, let us first address the issue of the books. Not surprisingly, Silvio Bagnara's request for a *visita* led to an IGJ-internal inquiry that revealed that the *Actas de*

Asambleas N°2, Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2, and the Registro de Asociados N°3 were in fact requested under false pretenses. Below, I show what these pretenses were.

IGJ Reconciles Its Internal Practices (12 May 2004)

Silvio Bagnara's official inquiry had prompted the head of the *Departamento de Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones* to have those at the *Área Intervención y Rúbrica de Libros* report on the issuance of the questioned books, which were once again the following:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Issued to the CBE on:</u>
Actas de Asambleas N°2	26 February 2002
Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2	26 February 2002
Registro de Asociados N°3	20 March 2002

On 12 May 2004, the *Área's* Ana María Bomparola sent her report back to the Head of the Department. It included the original request for the books (itself an IGJ form), which was submitted by Freddy Galán and which bore the signature of the Notary Public María Cristina Aristizabal de Doldán. Galán was of course the head of the CBE's Interim Commission that was supervised by Ceferino González and advised by Koprivec—the same Interim Commission that Cahuana had contested and which the IGJ eventually ruled as lacking regular authority in its Resolution 0628.

There are a number of things to note in Galán's submission. First, Galán requested the *second* book in each of the following series: *Actas de Asambleas, Actas de Comisión Directiva, and Registro de Asociados*. For each, and not having the reigning books in his possession, he filed Code 001 to make and justify the request. Code 001 is used to request a subsequent book in any series on the grounds that the reigning book has been filled 75% and witnessed by a Notary Public. This is where the Notary Aristizabal de Doldán came in. With her signature on the form, she had sworn that she had witnessed the reigning *Actas de Asambleas N°1, Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1, and Registro de Asociados N°1*. We know that this was impossible because Cahuana had these books (as well as *Registro de Asociados N°2*) in his possession until 26 April 2002, the date upon which he submitted them to the IGJ to become part of the proceedings. All of this is dutifully explained in Bomparola's official report.

La Sra. Escribana interviniente al solicitar en primera instancia la rúbrica de los libros mencionados anteriormente, pide los N°2 de cada uno de ellos, consignando en la foja, código 001, en la Ref. Código de Informe sobre libros antecedentes, apartado C, lo cual corresponde según lo establece la Resolución General 7/95, Anexo V, a libro antecedente utilizado al 75% exhibido ante el escribano solicitante.

The Área, not knowing otherwise, went ahead and issued *Actas de Asambleas N°2* and *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2* on 26 February 2002 under what were thus false pretenses.

Se emiten en primera instancia los libros Actas de Asambleas N°2 y Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2.

As regards Galán's request for *Registro de Asociados N°2*, we must first remember that the entire conflict gripping the CBE was initially one of who had the right to vote, itself a function of just who enjoyed membership in the first place. Indeed, the conflict was none other than a war over the membership. This war revealed the great extent to which everything hinged upon what the *Registro de Asociados* (in all its books) officially contained. Second, we must remember that the proceedings contains evidence that Ceferino González, his counsel Koprivec, and by extension the Interim Commission under their watch knew that *Registro de Asociados N°2* already existed²⁰. Indeed, these were the members that the Green List reluctantly allowed to vote in *Urna N°2* and which became the object of their original impugnation. One can thus conclude that, in this war of members, Galán's attempt to ask the IGJ for a 'new' *Registro de Asociados N°2* was likely an attempt to replace this very book. Certainly, we saw this tactic of 'replacing' members was employed later that year by González and Koprivec in their submission of their roll of eligible voters which the IGJ wrongly ratified.

Yet the tactic failed: the IGJ informed Galán that *Registro de Asociados N°2* already existed. Nearly a month later, on March 20, 2002, Galán and the Notary Aristizabal de Doldán returned to the IGJ and changed the code of their request from 001 to 002. Code 002 is used to request a subsequent book (i.e. what is essentially a replacement book) when it has been confirmed that the reigning book has been lost (*extraviado*). To substantiate this request, whoever makes it must provide an official police report affirming that he who seeks it claims—

²⁰ See "Nota de la Comisión Directiva a la Junta Electoral" from December 20, 2001, in which it states: "deberá utilizarse el padrón completo asociados, es decir, el libro N°1 que incluye a los asociados del número 1 – 559 y su continuador, el libro N°2 que incluye los asociados del número 560 al 796 inclusive".

under oath—that this is in fact the case. Galán and the Notary conveniently produced a police report to this effect, and were issued *Registro de Asociados N°3*.

Dado que la asociación poseía rubricado el Registro de Asociados N°2, 22 de junio de 2000, rúbrica 48647-00, se le observa el pedido de dicho libro indicándole esta situación.

La Escribana, en contestación de vista el 20 de marzo de 2002, menciona que el libro N°2 se encuentra extraviado, modifica el Código de Informe de Libro Antecedente, consignando 02, el cual corresponde a denuncia policial/judicial por extravío, según Res. Gral. 7/95, anteriormente mencionada.

Como consecuencia de esta vista se emite la oblea correspondiente al libro Registro de Asociados N°3, rúbrica 11781-02 de fecha 20 de marzo de 2002.

However, based on the police report they submitted, things do not add up—either for the pretenses under which the first two books were issued, or for the pretense under which this third book was requested.

First of all, the police report, which dates to February 7, 2002, was filed the day before Ceferino González sent certified requests to Cahuana for the same books (which happened on February 8, 2002, and which is evidence that the ‘usurpers’ knew Cahuana had them all along). This casts original doubt on the veracity of the claim that the books were lost, and on which the police report was secured.

Second, the police report claims the loss of *three* books, which one takes to be the originals: *Actas de Asambleas N°1*, *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°1*, and *Registro de Asociados N°1*.

Buenos Aires, 7 Febrero 2002
Certificado de Denuncia de Extravío

La Comisaría de la seccional 10ª certifica que en el día de la fecha se ha presentado Koprivec, Normán, que para acreditar su identidad exhibió DNI... con domicilio en Uruguay 385 Capital Federal denunciando el extravío de un libro de Comisión Directiva, un libro de Actas de Asambleas, y un libro Registro de Asociados, todos estos pertenecientes a la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, Reg. I.G.J. 1.520.370.

That this submission claims the loss of all three books retroactively undermines the credibility of the pretenses under which the second books in each series were originally issued. In other

words, how, if all the books had been verified lost by the early date of February 7, 2002, so the report goes, could the Notary have witnessed each filled 75% of the way and initially claim Code 001 for their respective successors? Certainly one cannot witness a book that is not there to be witnessed²¹. Did this police report not raise any red flags within the IGJ's *Área* about its prior issuances?

Third, we must ask how, if this police report claimed the loss of “*Registro de Asociados*” (which we must take to be *Registro de Asociados N°1*), can this same report be used to claim the loss of *Registro de Asociados N°2*? Certainly, for the IGJ's *Área* to issue *Registro de Asociados N°3*, it should have required a police report that *specified* the loss of its direct predecessor, *Registro de Asociados N°2*. Of course, all of this is moot, given that Cahuana had the books in his power and any claim of having witnessed them or their loss was patently fabricated.

In all this the IGJ must bear its share of the guilt. Although the IGJ cannot be expected to see through fraudulent claims made by Galán and the Notary Public (e.g. of having witnessed all three books filled 75% of the way), those at the IGJ's *Área* should have realized what was at work when Galán and the Notary changed their Code from 001 to 002 and submitted a police report that did not square with the facts. Moreover, as Cahuana claimed in his *denuncia* above, the IGJ should never have issued the CBE—which was in complete crisis—new books in the first place. The Inspectors handling the case (i.e. those who were already filing as early as 23 January 2002 that the IGJ would not recognize any official President given the irregularities marring the election December 22, 2001) should have been in touch with those at the *Área*, and vice versa. Indeed, as Cahuana and his counsel Muñoz would argue shortly thereafter on May 17, 2004, the IGJ must be functionally integrated. Their complaint, which they ground in the State's own code, is that the State is a singular entity with a singular teleology.

Señor Inspector General de Justicia,

²¹ One is wont to ask why, if Koprivec had a police report in hand affirming *all three* books had been lost, did Galán not simply request replacements for *all three* under the premise of ‘*extravío*’ (Code 002)? In other words, why complicate the proceedings with a Notary's fabrications? To this question, one can imagine that if Galán and Koprivec had claimed that *all three* books had been lost, the IGJ—by then already intervening in the case—would have likely been given to launch an inquiry. In such an inquiry, one can imagine that Cahuana would have been the first person they asked—an event that would have produced the original books and therefore frustrated any request for new ones. This is likely the reason why Galán and Koprivec sought to obtain their own books through the normal, default channel of filing Code 001. Indeed, such a ‘normal’ request would not raise any eyebrows. And indeed, as we just saw, it did not.

Teodoro Cahuana, en calidad de presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar ... a V.S. con respeto expongo y digo:

... pareciera ser que [los inspectores] desconocen totalmente que la I.G.J. es un *todo* y que si bien está dividida o subdividida, en tanto es un organismo del Estado Nacional, debe responder y resolver coherentemente los cuestiones que se plantean, *el estado nacional y la IGJ en particular, 'constituye una unidad jurídica teleológica y ética'* según dictámenes 190: 103, 193, 56, entre muchos otros, esto no debería ser necesario que el suscrito se lo recuerde a [los inspectores]...

Finally, the IGJ, and in particular the Election Committee it designated, must also be faulted for letting the CBE's legal proceedings carry on with what were essentially two sets of books for two full years. Let us remember that Cahuana turned in his original, legitimate set of books to the IGJ on 26 April 2002. The discovery of this second, illegitimate set of books (which happened not by the IGJ's hand, but by Cahuana's) did not come about until *after* the IGJ allowed new memberships based on their 'good faith', and the virtue of the Interim Commission that admitted them. This discovery also did not happen until *after* the IGJ had ratified a roll of eligible voters based on these admittances. And the discovery did not happen until *after* two elections had been held in violation of the Court's stay and without the IGJ's authorization.

Nevertheless, as we'll see below, the IGJ interpreted these failures, not as evidence of its own shortcomings, but rather as the product of "irreconcilable antagonisms in the CBE". On the IGJ's reckoning, because the CBE had been given every chance to rectify itself and failed—that is, because all attempts to get the CBE's own parties to re-establish their own institutional integrity had failed—there was only one recourse left: formal Intervention.

IGJ Resolution 0837 (13 July 2004)

In Resolution 0837, the Inspector General formally petitions the Minister of Justice to grant a formal Intervention of the CBE. His rationale is that all other measures taken by the IGJ to engender cooperation between the sides have failed. Despite the fact that the burden of good governance has always fallen on the CBE, itself taken as a corporate entity that enjoys functional autonomy as a private juridical person, Argentine administrative law states that where 'antagonized factions' in its heart cannot be reconciled, and where this conflict jeopardizes the

entity's mission, the State reserves the right to formally intervene. State-Intervention in a private entity given a liberal regime should thus be understood as a last resort made on behalf of the members of the entity and on behalf of the public good generally. Indeed, it is conceived as an *última ratio* by the Argentine State. Yet where the State understands its own mission as ensuring and promoting the public good (i.e. that set of conditions that enables not only community but citizens the ability to achieve their own perfection²²), it will fight to salvage any entity it has authorized to pursue this good.

Where Intervention is granted by the Minister, such a measure would entail the appointment of a third-party Regulator (*Interventor Normalizador*) to 'normalize' the CBE's institutional practices²³. Such a charge would entail that the Interventor physically replace any and all leadership within the entity, and thus work directly on-site in Escobar. His ultimate task would be to coordinate and oversee legitimate elections through which the CBE's members could choose rightful leaders. This, however, would depend upon the normalization of more immediate institutional practices, a task for which any Interventor is granted wide-ranging powers.

While this request for formal Intervention is ultimately granted, and while neither the first Interventor, nor his successor, accomplished their task given the work of the 'usurpers', it is nevertheless important here to illuminate the IGJ's justification for the measure. For not only do we see the IGJ formally pronounce on the issues surrounding the unsanctioned elections of 2002 and 2003 and the wrongfully issued books, we also find a summary of the CBE's proceedings since the beginning of the conflict. This summary is helpful for further fleshing out the expectations the IGJ had of the CBE, as well as those the CBE's founders had of the IGJ.

Resolution 0837 begins by recounting the original complaint (*denuncia*) submitted by Ceferino González in which he impugned the election of December 22, 2001. Without mentioning the presentation by Cahuana that countered this, the Resolution moves directly to cite the various

²² This is that definition of the public good supplied by the Argentine Supreme Court (Fallos, 295: 157) mentioned earlier on.

²³ As seen later in the dissertation, the fact that this third-party is chosen by the public state to regulate a private entity is itself curious, and raises debate even within the IGJ itself as to what his status is. Indeed, where the CBE's first Interventor is corrupted by the 'usurpers', the Inspectors must themselves ask whether, in referring him to the Judiciary for penal proceedings, he should be treated as a public official or a private citizen that has been given charge of a private entity. Certainly, the Courts would resolve this matter and apply the relevant code in deciding his innocence or guilt.

Articles of Resolution 0628 from July 22, 2002: that Article (1) declared the election assembly of December 22, 2001 irregular and inoperative (this decision, as we'll recall, had nothing to do with the legality of members voting in *Urna N° 2*, which was upheld, but rather with the fact that the electoral roll was not exhibited 50 days prior to the election as required by the CBE's Statutes); that Article (2) resolved to call a new election for the entire slate of CBE authorities within 70 days; and that Article (3) resolved to designate two Inspectors from the IGJ to ensure that all pre-election requirements were carried out as per the entity's Statutes.

Next, the Resolution recounts how on August 7, 2002 the Inspectors called a meeting between the two sides, represented by Teodoro Cahuana and Jenaro Moyano on the one hand, and Ceferino González and Freddy Galán on the other, to request that each submit their own list of members deemed eligible to vote in order to configure an official roll. The Resolution recounts how each side agreed to have the Inspectors serve as an Electoral Committee for the proceedings.

Que a partir de lo resuelto por el Organismo, a efectos de dar cumplimiento con lo establecido en el artículo 2° de la resolución indicada, en cuanto a ‘...llevar a cabo los controles preelectorales necesarios para la concreción del acto comicial y hasta la proclamación de las autoridades electas’, los Inspectores de Justicia designados a dichos efectos, emitieron dictamen ad hoc, en el que—entre otras cosas—señalaron que ‘...debe tenerse en cuenta para poder llevar a cabo el control preelectoral oportunamente indicado que con fecha 7 de agosto de 2002 se celebró una reunión en la sede de este Organismo a la que comparecieron los Sres. Jenaro Moyano, Teodoro Cahuana por una parte, y Freddy Galán y Ceferino González por la otra, en la que estuvieron presentes el entonces Inspector General de Justicia, Dr. Francisco Andriacchi, la entonces Jefe del Departamento de Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones, y el Inspector del mismo Departamento Dr. Adrián Covelli. En dicha reunión se requirió a las partes que, a efectos de confeccionar el padrón electoral, cada una acompañase la documentación o listados de asociados en condiciones de votar (activos y vitalicios) el que debería contener nombre y apellido, número de documento, domicilio y categoría de socio. Además de ello, en la misma reunión las partes acordaron que para poder votar, los socios deberían pagar dichas cuotas hasta el día de la celebración del comicio y que los funcionarios, inspectores designados por la Inspección General de Justicia actuarían como Junta Electoral, atento a la falta de disposiciones estatutarias al respecto en la entidad.’

The Resolution then states that as the Electoral Committee was configuring the official roll and setting the schedule for elections, ‘one side’ began to impede the proceedings with excessive appeals (some which it states were ‘unfounded’) that required the IGJ to formerly respond. There

is no question that the Resolution here is referring to the ‘appeals’ made by Cahuana in response to the dictamens from November 1 and 11, 2002.

Que no obstante este acuerdo inicial entre ambas partes de conformidad con las autoridades de este Organismo, una de ellas—a medida que los funcionarios designados comenzaron a conformar el cronograma electoral para el cual se los designara—comenzó a trabar con sus presentaciones sucesivas—e infundadas en algunos casos—las distintas etapas que debían ir cumpliéndose a los fines de normalizar el funcionamiento de la entidad, lo que implicó que dichas presentaciones debieran ser respondidas por la Inspección General de Justicia con el dictado de dos actos administrativos de alcance particular, que es la forma como este Organismo administrativo con funciones jurisdiccionales se debe manifestar en tales casos.

However, it is interesting to note that the Resolution fails to mention *why* Cahuana made these appeals, even if he made some of them relatively late and/or less clearly than his case merited. That is, the Resolution fails to state that Cahuana contested the IGJ’s official roll on the grounds that it was none other than the list submitted by Ceferino González—one which contained members admitted by an Interim Commission whose ‘*mandato aparente*’ should have been reconsidered given its nefarious acquisition of a duplicate set of books into which these members were registered. Moreover, even though his specification came relatively late, Cahuana also discovered that the IGJ’s official roll (because it *was* González’s version) excluded members legitimately numbered 560 – 796. These were of course those members whose membership and right to vote were validated by Resolution 0628. Such an exclusion should never have happened, even less so given that these were also those members rightfully documented in *Registro de Asociados N°2*, a book which had been in the hands of the IGJ while the official roll was being configured. Thus it does not seem either accurate—or just—to claim, as this Resolution does, that “one side” began to *impede* the proceedings with “excessive” appeals, when the ‘other side’ was committing acts that either lacked good faith or were patently fraudulent—acts which were not only unheeded by the IGJ but which shaped their own Resolutions on behalf of the entity.

Despite this, the Resolution 0837 reviews the terms under which the IGJ issued its Resolutions numbering 1183 (dating to December 5, 2002), and 0379 (dating to April 9, 2003), in which Cahuana’s attempts to lodge appeals of the IGJ’s conduct (*recurso jerárquico*) were rejected.

Que en tal sentido se dictaron la Resolución I.G.J. N° 1183, el 5 de diciembre de 2002, que resolvió rechazar el recurso jerárquico y las solicitudes de suspensión del procedimiento eleccionario y separación de los integrantes de la Junta Electoral planteados a fs. 488/491 y la Resolución I.G.J. N° 0379, el 9 de abril de 2003 en la que esta Inspección General de Justicia resolvió rechazar por improcedente otro recurso jerárquico planteado por el Sr. Teodoro Cahuana contra el dictamen suscripto el 13 de febrero de 2003 por los Sres. Inspectores de este Organismo, los Dres. Elena Montet, Adrián Covelli, Silvio Bagnara y Fabián Vandebosch, obrante a fs. 588/591 en su artículo 1°, mediante el cual se hizo saber al Sr. Teodoro Cahuana que es principio general del derecho argentino que la ley se reputa conocida por todos desde el día de su publicación, siendo este el principio al cual deberá atenerse el Sr. Cahuana para fundar en una norma jurídica sus pretensiones como interponer recursos en un trámite ante un Organismo de la Administración Pública Nacional.

With regard to the Resolution 0379, the present recounts how Cahuana was reminded that the way to properly effectuate *recurso jerárquico* is by appealing directly to the *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil*. Indeed, it states that Cahuana's attempts at such appeals were not made according to form. As we'll remember, Cahuana had always directed his appeals to the IGJ. The parameters for the appeal process, the IGJ states, are clearly laid out in Article 16 of Ley 22.315, itself a function of the Supreme Court decision from 1960 '*Fernández Arias c/Poggio*' (*Fallos* 247: 646). Indeed, it was this case that established the principle of '*control judicial suficiente*': i.e. that any administrative act (e.g. a Resolution made by the IGJ, being itself part of the Executive Branch) may be appealed before the appropriate court in the Judicial Branch (in this case the aforementioned *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones*).

Que corresponde aclarar que estas resoluciones administrativas no fueron apeladas mediante la interposición del recurso de apelación contemplando en el artículo 16 de la Ley 22.315 '*Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General De Justicia*', recurso este que—tal como tiene dicho este Organismo—llamado de '*apelación directa*', refleja y recepta el criterio adoptado por la Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación, básicamente en el precedente '*Fernández Arias c/Poggio*' dictado en el año 1960 en el que se destaca el voto del por entonces magistrado del más alto Tribunal, el Dr. Julio Oyhanarte.

Although Cahuana has the right to appeal any Resolution made by the IGJ before the *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones*, the IGJ, as an administrative entity, nevertheless enjoys jurisdictional faculties. That is, *Fernández Arias v. Poggio* set the precedent that an Administrative apparatus endowed with jurisdictional competence will be able to respond better—and in a more timely fashion—to issues concerning the public interest. Indeed, given the proliferation of entities of

civil society, the Judicial apparatus would soon be overrun with inquiries and appeals were not bodies of the Executive Branch endowed with the capacity to decide matters of the public good both swiftly and deftly (noting, however, that such decisions—i.e. ‘Resolutions’—are always subject to formal ‘judicial control’ in the final instance).

En este verdadero ‘leading case’ (Ver Vanossi, Jorge R.: *Los llamados tribunales administrativos ante el derecho constitucional argentino*, ED, 103-841) la Corte destacó que el reconocimiento de facultades jurisdiccionales a órganos administrativos es uno de los aspectos que en mayor grado atribuye fisonomía relativamente nueva al principio atinente a la división de poderes. Constituye la amplia idea de que una administración ágil, eficaz y dotada de extensa competencia, es instrumento apto para resguardar en determinados aspectos fundamentales intereses colectivos de contenido económico y social. (Ver Resolución I.G.J. N° 18/2000 dictada en el Expediente ‘Alfredo Nieto c/ Asociación Argentina de Squash Rackets s/Denuncia’, citada en Biagosch, Facundo Alberto *Asociaciones Civiles*. Ed. Ad Hoc. Bs. As. 2000 en ‘Apéndice Normativo’ págs. 458/462.

Yet the Resolution states that Cahuana, who was at an impasse with the IGJ’s Electoral Committee, did not appeal any specific IGJ Resolution before the Courts—thereby leaving them all in effect as per Article 11 of Ley 19.549 (*Ley de Procedimientos Administrativos*).

Que tampoco se presentó otro recurso administrativo, a lo que si agregamos el lapso de tiempo transcurrido desde las notificaciones de las resoluciones antes citadas—efectuadas a los recurrentes en los domicilios constituidos—lo que les valió adquirir la ‘eficacia’ a la que hace referencia el artículo 11 de la Ley de Procedimientos Administrativos—las mismas han quedado firmes.

Instead, Cahuana alleged IGJ prejudice (*arbitrariedad, enemistad manifiesta*) and sought Constitutional Protection (*amparo*) for his individual rights. On December 26, 2002 he brought this appeal (116.456/2002) before the Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil, specifically to its Juzgado Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Civil N°45. That tribunal ruled to suspend the election of December 27, 2002 as a cautionary measure (*medida cautelar*) until the question of this *amparo* could be resolved.

Que con anterioridad a que pudiera celebrarse el acto asambleario ordenado por este Organismo, el Juzgado Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Civil N°45, a cargo del Sr. Juez Renato Álvarez, con Secretaría Única a cargo de la Dra. Maria Suarez, con fecha 26 de diciembre de 2002 resolvió ‘...*Decretar la suspensión del proceso electoral de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, y de los plazos establecidos en*

dicho cronograma electoral...?'. Con otras palabras, en sede judicial se suspendió el acto asambleario de elección de autoridades al que había convocado esta Inspección General de Justicia.

The case of Cahuana's *amparo*, however, was not decided until May 5, 2004. The Cámara's Tribunal N°45 ruled against Cahuana's request for *amparo*.

Que a fs. 695/700 de estas actuaciones consta la copia de la resolución judicial dictada en autos caratulados: 'Cahuana, Teodoro c/ Estado Nacional y otro s/amparo', que tramita ante el Juzgado Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Civil N°45 bajo el número de expediente 116.456/2002 en el cual—con fecha 5 de mayo de 2004—se resolvió '*...Desestimar la presente acción de amparo, en razón de los fundamentos expuestos en los considerandos. Con costas a la accionante...*'

In that sentence, the Tribunal stated that the 'arbitrariness' that Cahuana alleged against the IGJ was neither patent nor unequivocal—nor was it clear which of Cahuana's individual rights had been compromised by the proceedings. Moreover, the Court stated that *amparo* cannot be granted with relation to administrative proceedings unless the latter are patently and clearly illegal.

El amparo no procede respecto a la actividad administrativa sino cuando ésta es inequívoca y manifiestamente ilegal, porque la razón de la institución de aquél, no es someter a la supervisión judicial el desempeño de los funcionarios y organismos administrativos, sino proveer de remedio inmediato contra la arbitraria invasión palmaria de derechos reconocidos por la Constitución Nacional. Ni el control del acierto con que la administración desempeña las funciones que la ley le encomienda válidamente, ni la moderación racional del ejercicio de las atribuciones propias de la administración son vía de amparo...

Sentada la jurisprudencia que antecede ha de señalarse que de las constancias acompañadas a la causa, especialmente de la documental en copia anexada por la demandada en relación al expediente administrativo pertinente, cuanto a través de los argumentos que se exponen en el inicio, no se advierte en forma inmediata, clara, precisa y contundente que exista arbitrariedad o ilegalidad manifiestas. Es más, no sólo ello no surge de forma clara e inequívoca sino que el suscripto advierte asimismo, que en definitiva, la cuestión que ha sido introducida a través de la presente acción de amparo se ha tornado abstracta.

In the next set of *considerandos*, Resolution 0837 holds the CBE up against certain ideals for the purposes of justifying the ultimate call for a formal, 'normalizing' intervention. Its

rationale for the latter is that the CBE (taken as a corporate body) has failed to resolve its own conflicts—i.e. that the entity is marred by irreconcilable differences that have compromised its ability to pursue the mission for which it was authorized. In laying the foundation for this call, the Inspector General begins by citing that key part of Resolution 0628 that states that the CBE must, by appealing to their own fundamental collective identifications—that is, *afectos superadores*—transcend whatever differences are producing the conflict. That is, though the IGJ is there to guide the entity through proceedings designed to re-establish its institutional regularity (issuing declarations with which the CBE must comply, lest it lose its charter), the burden of setting things right is to be borne by the CBE’s member’s themselves.

Que resuelta del todo conducente a la resolución de estas actuaciones, atender y considerar que—tal como el Organismo señaló en uno de los considerandos de la Resolución I.G.J. N° 0628 de fecha 22 de julio de 2002, ‘*las diferencias advertibles entre los socios de la Institución—todos ellos vinculados a la Colectividad Boliviana en la Argentina y unidos por afectos superadores—amerita la necesidad de realizar los mayores esfuerzos para alcanzar su pronta solución y en cuya procura se orientan las medidas que se adoptan por la presente, lo cual ratifica el ideario que primó por parte del Organismo en la consideración y resolución de las cuestiones que se suscitaron durante la etapa previa al comicio...*’

Resolution 0837 then states that however much the CBE was implored to overcome the antagonisms that gripped it, the parties to the conflict failed to reconcile their differences. The “internal sphere” of the CBE—which should ideally be a site of peaceable relations and conjoint activities vis-à-vis the public good—only revealed perpetual conflict²⁴.

Que no obstante ello, bien puede afirmarse que aquellas cuestiones suscitadas antes del comicio no pudieron ser resueltas en la esfera interna de la entidad Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, el cual debiera ser ámbito propio de convivencia pacífica entre personas que—a partir del ejercicio efectivo del derecho de ‘asociarse con fines útiles’ contemplado en el artículo 14 de la Constitución de la Nación Argentina ‘*para todos los hombres del mundo que quieran habitar el suelo argentino*’, tal como establece el Preámbulo de nuestra Constitución—deciden asociarse y constituir una asociación civil que, en este caso particular, cuenta además con autorización otorgada por el Estado para funcionar con el carácter de persona jurídica por lo que debe tener y desarrollar durante toda su vida un objeto de bien común, tal como surge de los

²⁴ Regarding the ‘internal sphere’: In a Dictamen from June 4, 2004—i.e. that which sets up Resolution 0837, the author (Fabián Vandebosch) states: “en el entendimiento de que es en la esfera interna y con la participación y voluntad de los propios socios expresada en asamblea, lo que habría de posibilitar una resolución de las controversias planteadas.”

elementos y requisitos esenciales de este tipo de personas jurídicas, establecidos en el artículo 33, 1º inciso de la segunda parte del Código Civil.

Delving deeper, the Resolution states that the pursuits benefitting the public good for which any civil association is granted juridical personhood depend both on an ‘objective’ element and a ‘subjective’ one. That is, on the Inspector General’s view, what must obtain ‘objectively’ for the functioning of a civil association is a structural conjunction of human capital: members must be articulated in a way that allows proposals and projects benefitting the public good to be brought to fruition. Yet a ‘subjective’ element must obtain as well. Suffusing this objective alignment of human capital must be a will (*voluntad*). That is, there must be a fundamental and shared sense of purpose that continually reproduces the cohesion of the entity’s members and orients their actions toward a common end. In other words, there must be an *affectio societatis*.

Pero tal objetivo solamente puede lograrse a partir de una equilibrada articulación y combinación de dos aspectos de esta cuestión a resolver: a) En primer término se requiere de un elemento de tipo objetivo que estará dado por la efectiva interrelación común de los socios en procura de la realización de finalidades comunes que tengan por principal objeto el bien común y b) En segundo término, requiere de un elemento ubicado en el plano subjetivo que estará dado por la voluntad de hacerlo en forma duradera con continuidad y sentido de perdurabilidad, respetando y haciendo respetar entre los consocios las normas estatutarias de las que surgirán sus derechos y obligaciones, tal como establece el artículo 40 del Código Civil, de modo que se manifieste un verdadero e indudable estado de *affectio societatis* general permanente.

Upon reviewing the CBE’s proceedings, the Inspector General concludes that the conflict over the roll of eligible voters and the appeal before the Tribunal demonstrate the total *inexistence* of any commonly shared will to conjointly pursue work on behalf of the public good. These political conflicts, he states, exceed the bounds of what could be considered institutionally normal.

Todo lo expuesto constituye, sin el menor margen de dudas, una clara manifestación de inexistencia del necesario ánimo de convivencia pacífica dirigida hacia una finalidad en común. Es desde todo punto de vista evidente que las constancias obrantes en las actuaciones que demuestran que los desacuerdos con respecto al padrón de socios en condiciones de votar en la elección que culminaron con las resoluciones dictadas por este organismo señaladas *supra* y la solicitud en sede judicial de una medida cautelar para suspender dicho acto, trascienden largamente lo que puede considerarse el natural disenso político institucional.

Indeed, the Inspector General states that where the IGJ had hoped to find a willingness among the parties to resolve the conflict, it found no evidence of reciprocity or mutuality. Rather, the IGJ found one side acting unilaterally—not to mention in violation of the Court’s stay—to elect (its own) authorities for the whole of the CBE. Curiously, the Resolution does not name who this is.

Del mismo modo, surge claramente de lo actuado que las intenciones y finalidad buscadas en todo momento por esta Inspección General de Justicia no encontró reciprocidad ni coincidencia en el ámbito interno de la entidad Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil; es más, triste recordar que incluso una de las partes, desobedeciendo el mandato judicial cautelar antes indicado, resolvió por su exclusiva cuenta—mucho antes que se resolviera el amparo y con la gravedad que esta desobediencia implica en nuestro sistema jurídico—seguir adelante con la convocatoria a elecciones en el seno de la entidad.

Evidence of all of this (i.e. of the unauthorized elections and the intractable antagonism they reflect) is found in entries in the entity’s administrative books.

Que así también dicho acto electoral surge del libro de actas que corre con las presentes. Su tratamiento ha sido consignado a partir del acta 110 y siguientes del mencionado libro—fundamentalmente la 111—donde se determinó la fecha y el cronograma electoral. Dicho registro refleja la celebración de actuaciones societarias en franca desobediencia de la medida cautelar dictada en sede judicial y sin conocimiento ni autorización de este Organismo, de desde luego, obvio es recordarlo, jamás podría convalidarlo.

As we have seen, the situation of the entity’s books was itself irregular. The Inspector General states that the irreconcilable differences at the heart of the CBE had resulted in two sets of books among the litigants, with the duplicate set being acquired through false pretenses. (Note however that the Inspector General states that this second set was acquired through the notarized claim that the first set had been lost. Let us remember that only *Registro de Asociados N°3* had been requested on this premise; the other two books were requested through the claim that the Notary had witnessed their predecessors filled 75% of the way).

Que dicho antagonismo, según surge de los presentes actuados, ha llevado a que cada grupo tuviera su propio juego de libros rubricados por este Organismo, obtenida la duplicación mediante la falsa denuncia de extravío, lo que amerita el dictado de otra Resolución en el día de la fecha, declarando la irregularidad e ineficacia a efectos

administrativos de tal acto de duplicidad de rúbricas correspondientes a los libros de la entidad.

That this second set of books was acquired through false pretenses required the IGJ to issue a separate Resolution addressing the issue. To this effect, Resolution 0857 was issued shortly after the present on July 19, 2004. In it, Article 1° duly declared ‘irregular and inoperative’ three books: *Actas de Asambleas N°2*, *Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2* and *Registro de Asociados N°3*. One should note that while these books have been declared ‘inoperative’, the IGJ never (as far as one can see) pronounces on the validity of the members registered in them. Having reviewed above the IGJ’s precedent on the matter (i.e. its finding in favor of those who seek to join a civil association in good faith) one can suspect that the IGJ would not disallow them.

For the Inspector General, all of this—i.e. the disputes concerning the configuration of the roll of eligible voters, the appeal for Constitutional Protection, the elections held without IGJ authorization, and the duplicate set of books (not to mention the lack of reciprocity and mutuality motivating them)—reveals the extent to which the CBE has been paralyzed by its internal conflict. This paralysis, on the Inspector General estimation, has made the CBE unable to pursue the mission for which it was granted juridical personhood.

Que de todo ello bien puede interpretarse como corolario manifiesto e inequívoco, el irreconcilable enfrentamiento interno que paraliza la Institución, el cual imposibilita el cumplimiento de las finalidades que el Estado tuvo en cuenta al momento de autorizar su funcionamiento como persona jurídica.

The Inspector General then states that the existence of protracted, irreconcilable differences in the heart of a civil association constitutes grounds for the revocation of its juridical personhood—i.e. its authorization to function as such. This, he states, is specified in Article 99 of the *Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia*.

Que no puede soslayarse, en consecuencia, la probada existencia de irreconcilables núcleos antagónicos que comprometen la unidad de la agrupación, situación ésta expresamente contemplada como causal de denegatoria de la autorización para funcionar con el carácter de persona jurídica a las asociaciones civiles, en el artículo 99 inc. a) de las Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia Resolución (G) I.G. P.J. N° 6/80.

A revocation of authorization, however, is performed only when all other options have been exhausted. Before that might happen, the IGJ is endowed with the capacity to formally intervene in an entity in the hopes of resolving the issues producing the conflict. This faculty is granted by Article 10 of the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia*, and is admissible upon verifying any of the following: that acts have been performed in violation of the law or the entity's statutes, that an entity is plagued by irremediable antagonisms, that the entity cannot perform the mission for which it was authorized, and/or that the public interest merits it.

Que en consecuencia, y para resolver las cuestiones de fondo que se han dado en estas actuaciones no puede dejarse de señalar que la ley 22.315 contempla en el artículo 10, inc. j) la atribución a este Organismo de solicitar al Ministerio de Justicia de la Nación la intervención de las asociaciones civiles si verifica la existencia de actos graves que importan violación de la ley, del estatuto o del reglamento; si la medida resulta necesaria en resguardo del interés público, si existen irregularidades no subsanables o si la entidad no puede cumplir su objeto.

Upon analyzing the CBE's proceedings vis-à-vis the legal regime supporting it, the Inspector General concludes that all efforts made by the IGJ to get the litigants to resolve the conflict in the CBE's 'internal sphere' have failed. Indeed, he concludes that there *are* in fact irreconcilable antagonisms, that violations of court decisions *have* occurred, and that the entity is no longer able to pursue its mission. There is thus sufficient cause to petition the Minister of Justice for a 'normalizing intervention'.

Realizada esta sistematización y análisis 'normativo-finalista', se concluye que asiste razón objetiva para solicitar la intervención de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, toda vez que, a pesar del esfuerzo realizado en procura de encontrar vías internas societarias para lograr la finalización del estado de conflicto en dicha entidad, se ha verificado la imposibilidad de conciliar a los grupos enfrentados, hasta tal punto que se ha desobedecido una decisión judicial, todo lo cual conlleva a una situación actual que impide el desarrollo institucional; antes bien, lo paraliza.

For the Inspector General, such a normalizing intervention is not only in the interest of the public good, it is a duty of the IGJ. Indeed, the IGJ, as part of the State, authorizes and regulates civil associations because these entities perform work that the State sees as comparable to its own. In other words, the State has an interest in preserving these entities because they, like the State itself, pursue the good of the political community.

La Inspección General de Justicia debe fiscalizar permanentemente el funcionamiento de las entidades a las que autoriza para funcionar como persona jurídica, velando por su perdurabilidad por tratarse de instituciones cuya existencia interesa al Estado, como responsable del bienestar de la comunidad que rige. En consecuencia debe, en situaciones como la descrita en la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, solicitar al Sr. Ministro de Justicia la intervención.

For all of the above, and as per Articles 6 and 10 of the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia* and Articles 99 and 117 of the *Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia*, the Inspector General resolves to:

Article 1: Request that the Minister of Justice declare a formal intervention and designate an Interventor for the Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar for a period of 180 days.

Article 2: Elevate the present to the Minister for the purpose of carrying out the former.

Por todo ello, lo establecido en los Arts. 6° inc. f) y 10° inc. f) de la ley N° 22.315; los artículos 99, 117 y siguientes de las *Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia* y lo dictaminado por el Departamento de Asociaciones Civiles y Fundaciones a fs. 703/709,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA DE LA NACIÓN
RESUELVE:

Artículo 1° - Solicitar al Sr. Ministro de Justicia, Seguridad y Derechos Humanos la intervención y designación de interventor normalizador de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar por un plazo de ciento ochenta (180) días.

Artículo 2° - Elevar las presentes actuaciones mediante nota de estilo al Sr. Ministro, a los fines indicados en el artículo anterior.

Conclusion

There are a number of things to conclude from exploring the legal dimensions of the CBE. As seen through the exegesis above, one can see how the legal regime surrounding civil associations has allowed the CBE's 'usurpers' to become entrenched. The proceedings reveal that the respect

the liberal Argentine State has for the functional autonomy of civil associations (themselves authorized to operate as private juridical persons), coupled with the expectation that overarching attachments (*afectos superadores*) will unite the members therein, create a kind of conjuncture that can be exploited by nefarious interests. Indeed, the very means by which the IGJ's regulatory pronouncements are binding reflects this. Because the IGJ, as part of the Executive Branch, can only declare CBE administrative acts 'irregular' and 'inoperative', all it really does is change the CBE's *juridical* status. That is, while maintaining a position of not recognizing the CBE as juridically felicitous (i.e. a status that could ultimately lead to the revocation of its authorization to function as such) is meant to 'force' the CBE back in line in accordance with its own Statutes and national law, the burden of restoring institutional regularity falls immediately upon the CBE itself. As just mentioned, this is a tall order when the entity is only ever addressed juridically as a corporate body, and when nefarious interests manipulate "CBE" efforts under the guise of good faith. As seen over the two years of proceedings analyzed above, exploitations of this conjuncture can endure so long as the IGJ is not pushed to revoke the entity's charter and reassign its patrimonies. One should note that this is all at the expense of the public good, which the Argentine State sees itself as ensuring and cultivating. As I suggest in the Introduction to this dissertation, the entrenchment of the CBE's 'usurpation' can be read as a structural issue caused by the uneasy relationship between right and virtue in liberal polities. Where the system of right is meant to ensure individual freedoms, it must ultimately be suffused with a communitarian virtue. As critics of liberalism have pointed out, right is simply not enough for a just political community. As defenders of liberalism have countered, virtue was always part of the original formulation. What this balance, or more precisely, configuration, looks like given variation in liberal polities warrants investigation.

This is certainly a question about ethics. But it is not the only one, and one that I cannot attend to fully in this dissertation. What I hope this chapter has also accomplished, beyond letting the litigants present themselves and their interests in their own words, is to raise a set of questions about ethics regarding the Bolivians of Escobar that can be attended to ethnographically. Working through the legal proceedings on the CBE's crisis we have seen that the IGJ has concluded two things about the Bolivians, both of which are gleaned through this last Resolution. The first is that it believes the CBE's members to be united by overarching attachments (*afectos*

superadores). The second is that, despite this, there are irreconcilable differences between antagonized factions in the heart of the CBE. With the CBE poised for a formal Intervention—a process I illuminate in a return to the proceedings in Chapter 9—we are in a position to ask the following questions. First, are the Bolivians of Escobar actually united by such overarching attachments? Can this be presumed? Certainly, in looking at the CBE’s dossier, the Inspector General sees the entity’s Statutes stating that ‘solidarity between Bolivian brothers’ is one of its principal objectives. But what does it mean to be a Bolivian? And what does it mean to be a Bolivian in Escobar, Argentina? As suggested in the Introduction to the foregoing exegesis, there are many *kinds* of Bolivians that complicate such questions. Second, and related to the first, where Cahuana has argued that the ‘usurpers’ desire to control the CBE and its patrimony in order to expand their own revenue-generating enterprises in the CBE’s Market, we must ask whether this is *all* they’re doing. That is, we must ask: Is the crisis over the CBE simply about money and greed? Or is there a deeper story—one that might be traced back through the immigration to the highlands of Potosí? What might we find on this journey? Finally, if we assent to the Inspector General’s belief that *afectos superadores* are required to make the CBE as an entity of the public good function as such, we are in a position to ask whether such identifications are possible. Indeed, where we see that they currently do not obtain, we might ask whether the crisis of the CBE might paradoxically produce them.

All of these questions are the subjects treated in the ethnographic chapters that follow.

Chapter 2:

Bolivian Economy of Otherness

Introduction

In the last chapter I presented a ‘legal’ picture of the crisis of the CBE. Taking the proceedings as a line of evidence, one sees both the machinations by the ‘usurpers’ and a limited—and often ineffective—regulatory apparatus playing the major roles. While many critics of the ‘usurpation’ have in fact blamed those behind it and the Argentine State for the failure of the CBE to serve the public good, many with whom I worked read the matter in more complex ways. While they grant that the ‘usurpation’ and the co-optation of the State (a matter I explore in Chapter 9) are very much about money and greed, they argue that the crisis of the CBE sits on a deeper ‘human’ crisis—one stemming from the excesses of envy and pride.

Thus, to tell the story of the CBE’s crisis from the point of view of those caught in its wake—i.e. ‘ethnographically’—one must tell the story of envy. Indeed, envy is implicated in the motivations behind the ‘usurpation’, in the manner in which it was orchestrated, and in the manner in which it became productive as a regime of the ‘private’ good. Given this, one of the central questions I ask in this dissertation is: If envy caused the take-over of the CBE, likely the largest organization of Bolivians outside of Bolivia, how did it become such a force? From where did it come? I argue that while envy was significant in the highlands of Potosí, i.e. the home of most of the CBE’s members, it ‘exploded’ as a function of the social and economic changes wrought through their emigration to Argentina, and to Escobar specifically. I also argue that because the CBE shaped and in some instances created these changes, particularly through its creation of the Market, it contributed to this explosion. Where the Market concentrated economic relations, accelerated differentiation, and put this differentiation on public display,

envy undergirded the very ‘usurpation’ of the CBE. Because the latter changed access to capital, envy also undergirded widespread complicity in it.

Telling the story of envy, and through it the CBE’s crisis, means much more than charting its emergence through the structural changes entailed through the emigration to in Escobar. One must also illuminate the dynamics of envy—or, as mentioned in the Introduction, the envy ‘complex’. By ‘complex’ I mean the multiple ways that envy is expressed, referenced, and engaged. Envy can be read through pride, just as it can be read through stinginess. It can be felt both as a desire and an anxiety. It has a ‘discourse’, but it is also about the ‘events’ that both give rise to and become recursively shaped by this discourse. No matter what, envy is always about relationships, and the ways that people—and groups (most often ethnic groups)—understand themselves in relational perspective.

What one finds in illuminating this complex is that envy happens over ‘progress’, from the Spanish *progresar*. Many in Escobar define envy as a situation in which one does not want another to progress. This of course begs the question of what progress is, a question that comprises one of the main objectives in this dissertation. As will become evident in the following chapters, progress for the Bolivians in Escobar is itself complex. It is an ideology shaping, and a set of practices comprising, both individual and collective pursuits of capitalization, economic independence, and codes that are considered ‘modern’. The latter can be linguistic, technological, religious, or aesthetic. As suggested by the term itself, progress has much to do with modernity. Ethnographically, one finds that progress is understood and expressed through terms of backwardness and civilization. Backwardness is most often communicated through ascriptions like ‘*atrasado*’ (backward) and ‘*ignorante*’ (ignorant), while civilization is often heard through others like ‘*despierto*’ (awake) and ‘*evolucionado*’ (evolved). The idea, or logic, of progress is that someone having roots in backwardness can separate himself from (or otherwise overcome) them and attain the attributes of civilization. In this way, progress is about movement. As we’ll see in Chapter 4, progress is also a status, and is thus relational. When seen in extension, one finds a social configuration in which movements and negotiations are zero-sum: one’s progress means another’s being left behind (*quedarse atrás*). The ‘gaps’ created by progress are those over which envy is felt, expressed, and consequential.

This is not to say that achievements and negotiations of progress are mechanical or simple, or that the master binary of backwardness and civilization that informs them is always

stable—even if it is somewhat hegemonic. Achievements and inherited traits undergo constant re-signification as people claim progress or deny it in another, often playing with dominant discourses in the process. The ‘things’ of progress range from one’s place of origin to the language he speaks, from the way one makes his living to the truck he drives, and from one’s physical characteristics to the sports team he supports. That is, they span race, class, geography, and culture.

Thus we come upon the purpose of this chapter and the next. By exploring face to face interactions, I work inductively to illuminate this master trope of civilization and backwardness and the ways that race, class, culture, and geography are signified through it. In this way I illuminate the nature and dimensions of the semiotic field through which otherness is configured. I do this for two reasons. The first concerns laying the groundwork for understanding what ultimately becomes known as envy. By illuminating the terms through which otherness is configured, I can show how markers of backwardness are things of shame, and how they can be fingered by others to provoke humiliation. Indeed, much of the social interaction in Escobar is agonistic. Illuminating this agonism is crucial for understanding motivations to progress, i.e. to shed those things over which one feels shame or is humiliated. It is also crucial for understanding the *ways* one desires and chooses to progress. Indeed, one of the principal arguments of this dissertation is that many in Escobar seek to negotiate their racial, ethnic, or class status by capitalizing. To wit, the purchase of a new or bigger truck, or the acquisition of a greenhouse on one’s farm, gives an individual or a family new material with which to ‘work on’ their ascribed status. Wealth and economic independence allow one to escape the pain (*dolor*) of ethnic and economic discrimination. As we will see, what often happens through capitalizations and the status they afford is that those who have ‘progressed’ come to discriminate others through the very ethnic and class terms through which they experienced shame or humiliation. Lording one’s progress over another in this way is experienced and known as ‘pride’ (*orgullo*)—a cultural construction which is frequently rendered as envy. Thus, where I am ultimately interested in illuminating the dynamics of envy and their socio-political consequences—and specifically the ways they have compromised the CBE as an entity of the public good—, it is first necessary to illuminate the motivations and means of progress. As I hope to demonstrate in this chapter and the next, these motivations cannot themselves be understood without exploring

the ways that otherness is not only constructed, but is itself a source of pain that is culturally constructive.

Beyond tracing out the beginnings of what amounts to a visceral economy, there is a second need for illuminating the nature and dimensions of the semiotic field through which otherness is configured. This has to do with corporate identifications, and specifically with *kinds* of Bolivians. Seeing how race, class, culture and geography are signified with respect to the master binary of civilization and backwardness is necessary for understanding the identities of—and relationships between—the ethnic nationalities and lower level groups that are indexed by such markers. Indeed, what it means to be a *Qolla* (from Potosí), a *Chapaco* (from Cochabamba), or a *Chapaco* (from Tarija) often hinges on indexical and iconic relationships with racial, class-based, cultural and geographical characteristics. For example, one knows a “*potoco*” (someone from Potosí) by the way he looks and speaks, and by the way he does politics and works. The Potosino, relative to other Bolivians, thus has a set of defining characteristics. These characteristics not only define the Potosino as such, they also shape his relationship with other Bolivians. For example, because the Potosino is known for his rural birth and monolingualism in Quechua, and because these are less esteemed (and often index backwardness) given the dominant discursive formation, the Potosino stands behind the Cochabambino, who is more urban and who speaks ‘better’ Spanish. For this reason, Potosinos sometimes publically conceal or deny competence in Quechua and rural birth, though they may recognize them privately depending on the context. Thus, illuminating which racial, class, cultural or geographic characteristics are esteemed and which ones are sources of shame is important for understanding not only what Potosinos, Cochabambinos, and Tarijeños are relative to each other, but also for understanding how they regard and engage one another.

While this is an important dimension to the politics of progress, so much so that envy and pride become thoroughly ethnic and racial phenomena, it is also important for horizontal and inclusive constructions of Bolivian-ness. Indeed, understanding the terms through which Bolivians construct difference between themselves is crucial to understanding the fate of a political entity—i.e. the CBE—that is not only based on the premise of “Bolivian brotherhood”, but is meant to cultivate “Bolivian solidarity”. Where the CBE has failed to pursue its mission on behalf of the public good (which many conceptualize as the Bolivian ‘community’), illuminating the social ecology of Bolivian-ness—and the ways that it is agonistic—is thus a

necessary step. Where we see the extent to which Bolivians are not always already Bolivians, and where *afectos superadores* cannot be presumed but must rather be seen as a project begging realization, we see how the IGJ's demands on the 'usurped' CBE cannot be met, and how, if *afectos superadores* must to be attained such that the CBE can be healed (and simultaneously become the 'community' it is meant to represent), we see what must be overcome.

Ethnic Banter

The best way to illuminate the regime of meaning through which otherness is both configured and made consequential is to begin with actual practice. Indeed, it is through face to face interactions that we can see how semiotic assemblages, mappings, and projections made by individuals in specific contexts draw upon, negotiate, and reproduce macro-planar categories to perform their work in (and on) the world. While perhaps all kinds of face to face interaction reveal such engagements, and thus provide purchase on macro-planar categories and valuations, ethnic banter is particularly productive for this. For not only is ethnic banter precisely about groups and what they (are made to) stand for, banter is itself play with these constructs and associations. Indeed, because banter in many cases amounts to a kind of performance in which some proposition about these constructs or associations is ratified or contested, it becomes good site through which to apprehend the 'traditional' or default ways that groups are indexed by, or viewed as coterminous with, some attribute or practice. Because of the propositional nature of banter, which begs the evaluation of the valuations themselves, the larger regime of value through which this work is performed drawn into the fray. Whether the humor succeeds or fails, noting that results hinge on the immediate context, will thus have implications for whether this larger regime of value is reproduced or reformulated, if even momentarily. None of this is to discount that the propositions about groups and the ways they are said to be known are themselves patterned, such that we might see such propositions as tokens of a type. Nor should we overlook the fact that ethnic banter, being itself a popular form of engagement, is itself telling as a practice. Indeed, where much of the social interaction in the barrio is agonistic, such banter, which often requires certain degrees of social intimacy, might be said to be a means of managing this between diverse Bolivians who are on good terms.

The Exchange

The following instance of ethnic banter occurred one night in 2006 at the CBE's Market's grill (*parrilla*). The *parrilla* is usually a place where *changarines* (freight-handlers), *fleteros* (truck drivers), and those involved in the buying and selling of produce go for a quick *choripan* (chorizo and bread sandwich) and a beer in the middle of their work. It is sometimes a raucous spot and is often a place for getting drunk, especially late at night. Indeed, as the night wears on, it becomes increasingly tough, and if anything is going to go down, it goes down then.

On this occasion, it was early, and being a Wednesday (the slow night of the CBE's Market) I was not working. I had spent the afternoon with my friends Orlín, Fermina, and Charly, and we decided to go for an *asado* and a few beers before it got too late. This was a rare occasion for me, being that it was one of the few times I had gone to the CBE's Market not ready for a shift of unloading freight that would take me into the dawn. The exchange below is still one of my favorite moments of fieldwork. Yet I have not chosen to illuminate it for that reason only. Rather, it is one of the best examples by which we might know what I have called the Bolivian economy of otherness. Indeed, it involves individuals from the two ethnic nationalities that dominate the barrio and the CBE—i.e. the *Qollas* (Potosinos) and *Chapacos* (Tarijeños). This is not to say that the *Qochalos* (Cochabambinos)—an important group, not for their numbers, but for what they represent, i.e. urban living, good Spanish, and commercial acumen (all the attributes of 'civilization')—were not present, even if none was there physically. They are invoked as well, which is not rare given that any instance of ethnic banter usually draws on former events, such that it forms part of an on-going inter-event semiosis that links people and ideas about them in ever-changing configurations. I have also chosen this exchange because it involves a range of things and practices that index the ethnic nationalities involved, as well as play over the dominant regime of value through which such linkages themselves are taken as evidence of backwardness or civilization. Finally, I have chosen this particular exchange because the propositions made (e.g. alleging discrimination, concealing one's roots, and claiming Argentine birth) are all common practices in the barrio, so much so that they are themselves alleged against interlocutors, as in this case.

The exchange begins when the concessionaire, Vicente, who is from Tarija, puts on one of his popular folkloric videos celebrating *Chapaco* culture. Set to *Chapaco* music, the video featured the *cueca* dance and horsemanship. Such videos exist for all of the regional ‘cultures’ in the Andes, and are a fixture on tour buses and in little bars throughout the region. Along with Steven Seagal and Sylvester Stallone action movies, they populate the screens of Bolivian bars in Escobar’s barrio as well. Seeing Vicente’s choice of video as a reflection of his pride in *Chapaco* ethnic nationality, Orlín alleged discrimination, and the exchange took on a life of its own:

- Orlín (Qolla):** **Che, Vicente, ¡basta con la discriminación! ¿Por qué no pones algo lindo?**
Hey, Vicente, enough with the *discrimination*! Why don’t you put something beautiful on?
- Charly (Chapaco):** **Pero si es éste el verdadero boliviano...**
But if this is the true Bolivian...
- Fermina (Qolla):** **Dale, no te hagas el tarijeño. ¡Dejate de negar tu sangre!**
C’mon, don’t try to pass as a Tarijeño. Stop denying your blood!
- Charly (Chapaco):** **¿Cómo cómo?**
What?
- Fermina (Qolla):** **...abuelita potosina quien te enseñó el Quechua.**
...grandmother from Potosí that taught you Quechua.
- Charly (Chapaco):** **¡Estás loca!**
You’re crazy!
- Orlín (Qolla):** **No pará, es chapaco de verdad...¡toma leche de burra!**
Wait, no, he really is a Chapaco...he drinks donkey’s *milk*!
- Charly (Chapaco):** **Pará, ustedes son los ‘come-ch’uños’!**
But you guys are the ‘*ch’uño-eaters*’!
- Fermina (Qolla):** **¿Y dónde te veo comiendo siempre?**
And where do I always see you eating?
- Charly (Chapaco):** **Pero ustedes son los Mamani.**
But you guys are the *Mamani*.

- Fermina (Qolla):** **¡Decilo con la frente alta!**
Say it with pride!
- Charly (Chapaco):** **¡Eso te enseñaron en Po-to-sí!**
That's what they taught you in *Po-to-sí*!
- Fermina (Qolla):** **¡Callate! Yo nací en Jujuy.**
Shut up! I was born in *Jujuy*.
- Charly (Chapaco):** **Ahaa haa—¡te mintieron!**
Haa haa—they *lied* to you!

Analysis

By working through this banter on a line by line basis, one can see how the participants engage the dominant trope of civilization and backwardness to ‘other’ one another ethnically. This includes the ways they attempt to manage their own otherness.

Beginning with Orlín and his opening remark to Vicente, let us note that Orlín is, like many Bolivians in Escobar, competent in both Bolivian and Argentine cultural codes. He was born in the interior of Potosí but, having emigrated with his parents as a child, has spent many years in Escobar. Because of this, he has grown up as much Bolivian as Argentine. He speaks Quechua well, but seldom does. One should also note that Orlín is on good terms with Vicente. Part of this is because Orlín, being the barrio’s prominent welder, had just installed a metal staircase for Vicente. Because of their familiarity, he could jokingly charge that Vicente’s choice of video was a deliberate expression of ethnic nationalism.

- Orlín (Qolla):** **Che, Vicente, ¡basta con la discriminación! ¿Por qué no pones algo lindo?**
Hey, Vicente, enough with the *discrimination*! Why don’t you put something beautiful on?

With Orlín’s simple use of the word ‘discrimination’ he opens up a world of mappings, imaginaries, and histories of otherness in Bolivia and in the Andes generally. Indeed, it invokes the discourse of civilization and backwardness by which those of Indian descent have historically been treated as racially and culturally inferior by those of European descent. One should note,

however, that the politics of identity in the Andes are far more complex than any binary construction of Indian vs. European can capture. Indeed, in Bolivia, as in the Andes generally, one finds that the social ecology of *criollo* – *mestizo* – *cholo* – *indio* is a complex system informed by racial, class-based, cultural and geographical elements. In Bolivia specifically, these formulations are themselves complicated and informed by ethnic-national sentiments of the kind we illuminate here: i.e., who is *Qolla* (culturally Potosino), *Qochalo* (culturally Cochabambino), and *Chapaco* (culturally Tarijeño)²⁵, who thus also bear the former out. As regards the Bolivians in Escobar specifically, one should also note that while terms like *criollo* and *indio* are sometimes heard (noting that *cholo* and *mestizo* are not), they are used far less than these ethno-national designations. Some of the reasons why this is the case will become clearer as one comes to understand how the Bolivian economy of otherness is reconciled with the Argentine one, and what kind of load the prejudicial category *bolita* takes on, and takes away from more Andean terms like *cholo*.

For the moment, however, let us note that Orlín’s charge of discrimination references this complex world of othering by which *Chapacos* and their culture, because of their roots in the Hispanic tradition (if not in blood) are associated with ideas of civilization, while *Qollas* and their culture, because of their native Andean heritage (if not in blood) are associated with ideas of backwardness. Yet Orlín’s charge does not merely reference this time-worn formulation by which the *Qolla* has been discriminated. His social commentary, made through humor, suggests ‘*basta*’—i.e. ‘enough already’. Yet Orlín is not really claiming victimhood. Rather, his public cry of foul is an invitation—one certainly directed at Vicente, but nevertheless open to all present—to engage in the *negotiation* of ethno-racial hierarchies. That is, it is an invitation to engage in a commonly recognized *frame* in which individuals bring their own subjectivities and talents to bear on each other, and on these social categories and hierarchies in the process.

Does Vicente have what it takes to defend the *Chapaco* claim of superiority? If he takes up Orlín’s challenge, which is a public one, what does he risk? What is at stake for him as a *Chapaco*, as a man, and as the concessionaire? Certainly, Orlín was not one to, as others sometimes do, internalize a lower esteem as a native Potosino (see the section on ethnic bullying

²⁵ Despite their importance in Bolivian identity politics, the *Cambas*, i.e. those who are from Santa Cruz and culturally ‘Cruceño’, do not factor into this dissertation. This is for the simple reason that there are practically none (so far I could discern) in Escobar or in the CBE. This is not to say that there are not some Cruceños involved in the CBE’s politics. Indeed, there are. Cahuana’s lead counsel and advisor are both proud *Cambas*, and both reside in Liniers in the Capital Federal.

below). Indeed, Orlín was often wont to vindicate *Qolla*-ness where others sometimes hid it. Moreover, he was no stranger to ethnic banter, and had been victorious in previous duels. Vicente likely figured that because of this, Orlín already had an arsenal of parries and counter-insults at the ready. And why wouldn't he? One in the barrio grows up tough—having been socialized into a street culture of discriminatory ascriptions that finger one's phenotype, origins, and ethnic baggage. One had to suspect—as Vicente no doubt did—that Orlín was already preparing his own rendering of the dominant narrative, and planned to one-up the *Chapacos* publically.

Yet Vicente chooses not to engage. He merely nods, smiles, and returns to his clients at the bar, leaving Orlín's invitation to duel hanging—and his reprise foreclosed. Vicente's measured response is an intelligent one. Through his nod and grin he suggests that the video speaks for itself—i.e. that *Chapaco* culture is more esteemed—and avoids the risks incurred in a reply. Beyond exposing himself in a high-stakes game of public humiliation, an explicit engagement (or escalation) also poses a risk to his business. With his response calibrated as carefully as a knowing nod, Vicente—here as concessionaire—wisely stays above the fray and preserves his favor with the *Qolla* patrons. Indeed, the *Qollas* are the majority in the barrio and those who control the CBE which has leased him this lucrative *parrilla*. Yet before concluding what Vicente's priorities might have been, Charly, also a *Chapaco*, takes up Orlín's challenge to negotiate ethnic superiority. Referring to the content of the video, Charly retorts:

Charly (*Chapaco*): **Pero si es éste el verdadero boliviano...**
But if this is the true Bolivian...

One familiar with the local banter might suspect that Charly's claim—i.e. that *Chapaco* culture is a correct representation of Bolivian culture—would set up a slam dunk by which Fermina could respond with the popular retort that Charly and the *Chapacos* were merely “fake Bolivians” (*bolivianos truchos*). Such an insult, levied by a *Qolla*, would charge that because the *Chapacos* lacked Inca heritage and the Quechua language, they were not ‘real’ Bolivians. After all, what is Bolivia today was once *Qollasuyu*—the southern quarter of the Inca Empire, *Tawantinsuyu*.

Rather, Fermina, who is Orlín's wife and the daughter of Potosinos, took a more complex tack that questioned, not the authenticity of the *Chapacos*, but rather Charly's very claim to

Chapaco-ness. That is, instead of saying that Charly is a “fake” Bolivian, which would concede that he is a full-fledged *Chapaco*, she questions whether Charly is truly the *Chapaco* he purports to be. By implication, she questions whether he can rightfully wear *Chapaco* pride (legitimate or not) on his sleeve.

Fermina (*Qolla*): ***Dale, no te hagas el tarijeño. ¡Dejate de negar tu sangre!***
C'mon, don't try to pass as a Tarijeño. Stop denying your blood!

Charly (*Chapaco*): ***¿Cómo cómo?***
What?

Fermina (*Qolla*): ***...abuelita potosina quien te enseñó el Quechua.***
...grandmother from Potosí that taught you Quechua.

Specifically, Fermina charged that Charly, who claims Tarijeño birth, was denying what were really *Qolla* roots. Before getting into the valuations of the ethnic groups and individual practices that this charge carries, let us first note that such a charge of denying one's roots (*negar raíces*) is not rare. Indeed, charges that what one *projects* in social interaction is not what one *is* underneath is a commonplace in the barrio. Because ethnic banter hones in on common (if not stereotypical) practices, and is itself an agonistic frame, invocations or accusations of such practice figure heavily in it. Indeed, jocular questioning of whether there is consistency between one's 'exterior' presentation of self (what in many instances amounts to cultural affect) and one's 'interior' truth (which is known through blood and/or place of birth) is a conventional way that Bolivians negotiate commonality and difference, and thus hierarchies in Escobar. As we'll see in the case of ethnic bullying that follows, addressing the question of 'interiors and exteriors' is often purposefully used to invoke shame or provoke humiliation to establish interpersonal and inter-ethnic hierarchy.

As regards the ethnic structuring of such practices in Escobar, the roots that are most often concealed are *Qolla* roots. This is because the rural birth and upbringing, competence in Quechua, highland cultural attributes, and 'Indian' phenotype that comprise *Qolla*-ness are historically devalued and objects of discrimination. Because they are associated with backwardness, they become sources of shame or objects over which one can be humiliated. As such, they are heavily guarded. What they are always managed against are those attributes that,

again on the dominant valuation, index civilization: urban birth and upbringing, competence in Spanish, and European cultural attributes and phenotype. For this reason, one often hears “Don’t try to pass as a Tarijeño” (*no te hagas el tarijeño*) charged against someone from (or with roots in) Potosí, rather than the other way around. Interestingly, while I have heard this charge levied by Cochabambinos, it is more frequently levied by Potosinos themselves. In this way, one can see that within the Potosinos there is an ethic by which they keep each other’s pretensions in check.

What is of note about the exchange at hand is that we have the reverse: Fermina, a Potosina, levies this charge against Charly, who is from Tarija. Indeed, banter is play, and play is propositional. Fermina *proposes* that Charly is really a *Qolla* underneath, and has been concealing this. By assuming the language and tone of reprimand, Fermina jokes that Charly is just another poor, Quechua-speaking *indiocito* who has taken on *Chapaco* affect to conceal a *Qolla* lineage traced to a hidden grandmother (*abuelita*) whom he is ashamed to reveal. In the end, and despite Charly’s protests, Fermina suggests Charly cannot escape his true self; for it’s a question of blood.

Before considering Charly’s further protests, we should note that Fermina has taken the banter, which began with impersonal invocations of historical discrimination between ethnic nations (i.e. what amounted to categorical relations between *Chapacos* and *Qollas*) and channeled it to the level of specific persons. On trial is no longer just a ‘what’, but now also a ‘who’—namely Charly as an individual. Indeed, this is a choice she has made. One of the consequences of this, however, is that she has left intact the macro-regime of value by which ethnic nationalities are othered and hierarchized, and through which *Qollas* are made inferior. In other words, instead of invoking this regime to question its foundations and ‘cultural argument’ (i.e. to contest the legitimacy of the historical discrimination of the *Qollas* at the hands of Bolivian *mestizos*, *Chapacos* included), Fermina instead *relies on* it in order to claim that the ethno-national badge of *Chapaco* pride Charly wears cannot be borne legitimately because he is just another humble *Qolla*.

This of course Charly protests, denying that he is anything other than a real *Chapaco*:

Charly (*Chapaco*): **¡Estás loca!**
You’re crazy!

However, before Charly can muster a solid reply, he is interrupted by Orlín, who is not just the owner of the welding shop in which Charly works, but who is also his friend.

Orlín (*Qolla*): **No pará, es *chapaco* de verdad...¡toma leche de *burra*!**
Wait, no, he really is a Chapaco...he drinks donkey's milk!

It first appears that Orlín, in a change of tack, comes to the aid of who is here a *Chapaco* companion—one who is suffering at the hands of his wife's acerbic wit. Indeed, where in the barrio *machismo* is strong, it is common for men to defend each another when confronted by the wife of one or another in the group. Here, Orlín defends Charly as a true *Chapaco* (i.e. 'puro' in blood and in origin). But he does so, not out of male solidarity, but only to turn the tables on him. Indeed, he feigns solidarity only to proclaim that the *Chapacos* are so rude and uncultured that they drink the milk of donkeys. Such a practice, as one might guess, is said to represent the most impoverished and unsophisticated in the land. It is backwardness *par excellence*. (All of this, however, is still a far cry from how far *Qolla* estimations of *Chapacos* can go. Where exchanges between non-intimates take on a truly antagonistic tone, it is not uncommon to hear epithets like "pigs" (*cochinos*) levied against the *Chapacos* by certain *Qollas*. In this way, relations range from uneventful to uneasy to openly 'racist', as both sides are wont to characterize them).

There are two things to note about Orlín's statement. The first is that where Fermina had earlier harnessed the banter, which had begun on the level of ethno-national ascriptions, and channeled it to the level of individual persons (i.e. to focus on Charly as a construction himself), Orlín does not relinquish his earlier agenda of 'sticking it' to the *Chapacos*—as a *pueblo*—on the most inclusive level. That is, by claiming that Charly is a *Chapaco de verdad*, he does not pursue Fermina's agenda of deconstructing Charly to reveal a hidden, inner truth, but rather re-establishes the earlier footing of treating macro-level categories. In this way he channels the banter 'back up' to the parameters he originally set with Vicente. Orlín uses Charly the individual only to claim that the *Chapacos* are an uncivilized people as a whole, reputedly known to all through their uncivilized consumption of donkey's milk. Nevertheless, this charge levied against the *Chapacos* writ large repercussions all the way down to the individual level such that Charly, as an individual representative (token) of the *Chapacos* (type), must personally bear

the discrimination levied against ‘his’ pueblo. In this way, Charly is made guilty of backwardness by association.

The second thing to note is what is happening with the overarching regime of value. Note that while Fermina above *relied* on the conventional claim that *Chapaco*’s enjoy superiority over the *Qollas* in order to question the validity of Charly’s claim on *Chapaco* heritage, Orlín here *inverts* this same regime of value through a *counter-hegemonic* discourse. What could be interpreted as an *indigenista* rendering vindicates the *Qollas* as having the rightful claim on superiority because they bear the Inca legacy. On this alternative reading, the Hispanic *Chapacos* are inferior because they have a shallow and imported history, lack Inca ancestry and heritage, and are entirely ignorant of the Quechua language. This lack of authenticity as *originarios* not only makes them ‘fake Bolivians’ (*bolivianos truchos*), but entirely uncivilized: they are nothing but a provincial and uncultivated people so rude that they drink the milk of donkeys. The brutishness and ‘ignorance’ often ascribed to the *Qolla* for a presumed lack of modernity is here levied against the *Chapaco* for a lack of original civilization.

Charly (*Chapaco*): **¡Pará, ustedes son los ‘come-ch’uños’!**
But you guys are the ‘*ch’uño-eaters*’!

Charly, however, will not stand for such a charge against ‘his people’ or against him individually, and so responds in kind. ‘You guys’, he states, ‘are the freeze-dried potato eaters’—here referencing the *Qollas*. Thus while Orlín and Fermina are Charly’s immediate target, they are, as he had just been, taken as representatives of the *Qollas* writ large. But what does it mean to be a freeze-dried potato eater? What is Charly suggesting about the *Qollas*? Potatoes are a crop grown only in the higher ranges of the Andean highlands, a zone that is ‘marginal’ from the point of view of ‘civilization’. This is the home of the *Qollas*. As an ecosystem, this ‘floor’ in the vertical economy is an austere and challenging one, such that hunger is not uncommon (see Chapter 6). Because of this, highlanders have developed techniques of preserving potatoes through freeze-drying for times of want. Potato-eating is thus not only associated with *Qollas*, but, in the form of *ch’uño*, associated with bare subsistence and relative poverty—both of which come to mark *Qolla*-ness²⁶. Charly’s suggestion that Orlín and

²⁶ Murra, in his "Rite and Crop in the Inca State," discusses evidence from as far back as the seventeenth-century that indicates that the potato, while an Andean staple for centuries, has in certain registers signaled poverty. Indeed,

Fermina are the *ch'uño*-eaters thus highlights the geographical marginality and relative poverty of the *Qollas* with respect to his *Chapacos*, the latter occupying lower-lying and ideologically 'central' valleys in which sumptuous crops like corn can be grown.

Yet Fermina will not relinquish her agenda of deconstructing Charly as an individual, and takes up where she left off:

Fermina (*Qolla*): **¿Y dónde te veo comiendo siempre?**
 And where do I always see you eating?

Fermina points out, here without having to be explicit because Charly's friends know this well, that Charly's favorite place to have lunch is the *Paceño*, a bar run by one of the few families from La Paz. The *Paceños* do not of course serve the Tarijeño favorites of *saice* or *ranga ranga*, but rather altiplanic dishes that are often accompanied by heaps of *ch'uño*. Though it is true that Charly eats there frequently, it is perhaps not the *ch'uño* that attracts him, but rather the interminable stream of action movies they show. No matter: Fermina sticks to her attempt to get Charly to admit that he is really a *Qolla* underneath; that he is concealing a lineage that would prevent him from claiming superiority as a full-fledged *Chapaco*. Once again, in her attempt to position (*ubicar*) Charly, Fermina leaves intact the conventional regime by which the *Qollas*—as *indios*—occupy the bottom rung of the ethnic hierarchy.

Yet Charly makes a conscious decision not to take up Fermina's specific charge, for he perhaps realizes that she has a point: he *is* in fact known by everyone present to frequent the *Paceño* and to eat *ch'uño*, both of which compromise his purity as a *Chapaco*. For what self-respecting *Chapaco* eats in a *Paceño* establishment? Certainly, Jean Claude Van Damme from the action movies he watches there will not come to his aid. Without any other recourse, Charly holds to his tack, but now follows Fermina in making it personal. Indeed, he realizes he must fight fire with fire:

Charly (*Chapaco*): **Pero ustedes son los Mamani.**
 But you guys are the *Mamani*.

in the legends from Huarochiri collected by Avila, potato-eating was considered evidence of low status; a raggedy beggar was known as *Huatyacuri*, "potato-eater" (Murra 1960: 397).

In response to Orlín's charge of drinking donkey's milk above, Charly had claimed that as *ch'uño*-eaters the *Qollas* were, among other things, uncivilized. Here, Charly follows this same rhetorical strategy of using an index of *Qolla*-ness to invoke and ratify a hierarchical relationship, but now changes the nature of the terms to take up Fermina's tactic of making it personal. In a deft move, Charly makes the term that associates Fermina and Orlín with the *Qollas*, and the *Qollas* with backwardness, not a practice, but rather Fermina's last name: Mamani. To begin with, 'los Mamani' certainly indexes the *Qollas* as a whole because it is a common *Qolla* surname. Yet being Fermina's surname, it obviously (and simultaneously) targets her as an individual. In this way, Charly's '*ustedes*' is thus not principally about Fermina (and Orlín by implication, noting that he has a different surname) as representatives of the *Qollas*—a case in which the *Qollas* are the primary target—but rather about them as *individuals*. Charly's remark is thus effective in the same ways Fermina's former remarks have been because it targets her in the first instance, but does so in a way that also targets the ethnic formation she is part of.

All of this hits Fermina right between the eyes. Why? First, let us note that Mamani is a common indigenous surname of Aymara origin that means falcon. With this genealogy, it indexes Indian-ness, and thus backwardness given the dominant regime of otherness. Calling Fermina a Mamani is thus tantamount to calling her an Indian, which is a heavy pronouncement. Second, it is totalizing. Where Fermina had been trying to get Charly to reveal an alleged *part* of him that was *Qolla* (i.e. a hidden grandmother on his maternal line), and so problematize his *Chapaco* pride, she left other parts of him intact, and thus legitimately *Chapaco*. Indeed, everyone had to grant that Charly *was* born in Tarija; that he *had* a fairer and less Indian phenotype; and that he *had* a Hispanic surname. Fermina had merely been trying to find chinks in what was a complete and otherwise impenetrable *Chapaco* armor. She could only insinuate that he had been concealing some part that was unrecognizable on the surface. In contrast, Charly's calling Fermina a Mamani is all-encompassing. Through his laying bare what everyone already sees, he reaffirms her *entire* being, not just a part of it, as Indian. Fermina is backward no matter what she does because it's literally in her blood, as her surname indicates.

Whether through a stroke of genius or simply luck, Charly struck a victory in calling Fermina a Mamani because it foreclosed nearly all wiggle room. Indeed, the charge of Mamani is not the same as drinking donkey's milk or eating *ch'uño*—practices that can be dropped or

traded for others that mark one as civilized. Rather, one's surname is non-negotiable; it is permanent and inescapable. Because of this Fermina's options are truly limited. Her only recourse is to try to invert the regime of value which equates Mamani (and by implication, *Qolla*-ness) with backwardness. This is the same, dominant regime that Fermina has been *relying* upon in her earlier attempts to deconstruct Charly. With her only move an attempt to vindicate the *Qollas* as an ethnic nationality, she brings the banter back up to the level of corporate groups, and exclaims:

Fermina (*Qolla*): **¡Decilo con la frente alta!**
 Say it with pride!

In her response, Fermina recontextualizes a stock phrase that *Qollas* have used to counter discrimination many times before: "Say it with pride!" The very fact that such a saying is available for recontextualization reveals the extent to which the *Qollas* (and others) have been discriminated against in Bolivia. In this recontextualization, Fermina not only speaks directly to this history of subordination, she does so through a counter-hegemonic discourse that *exalts* the *Qollas*. This is that discourse that claims that the *Qollas*, rather than having much to be ashamed of, should instead be proud given that they are heir to a millennial civilization that has culminated in the Inca Empire. On this reading, what is in the blood is a kind of nobility. This is the same *indigenista* discourse that her husband Orllín had invoked above when he charged against the *Chapacos*.

Yet having been pegged so severely by Charly, Fermina made her last stand only half seriously. Indeed, when she uttered it, she had straightened herself up and saluted, as if she were in the Bolivian military. In this way, her recontextualization was thus also half parody. But it was one that also masked certain resignation. For what would "saying it with pride" really change? Could it overcome the centuries of exploitation and discrimination that the *Qollas* had endured? Could it change the fact that most *Qollas* had historically lacked the things of modernity (e.g. electricity, plumbing, a concrete floor?). In this way, "Say it with pride" was a performative that was doomed to fail because certain material conditions could not be satisfied. Fermina, who had grown up suffering discrimination for her *Qolla*-ness, knew the limitations, and perhaps even the impossibility, of this riposte.

Recognizing that she would fail to vindicate the *Qollas*, Fermina perhaps also realized that she would fail to vindicate herself in the exchange. Seeing that Charly was gaining the upper hand, Fermina's parody was perhaps also one of herself. This is perhaps why she actually *performed* the recontextualization by erecting her body and saluting. That is, in recognizing certain defeat, she engaged in physical humor in an attempt to ingratiate herself with Charly, who would be readying more acerbic charges. In so doing, Fermina had appealed to the very ethic of banter, in which one does not usually go for the throat because the participants are friends on good terms.

Yet where she had formerly enjoyed the upper hand and had been the first to take the banter to a *personal* level, such self-deprecating physical humor did not save her from Charly, whom she had dominated on other occasions. In an instant, Charly seized upon what amounted to her jocular and less than confident proclamation, and fully exploited the opportunity:

Charly (*Chapaco*): ¡Eso te enseñaron en *Po-to-sí!*
That's what they taught you in *Po-to-sí!*

Having already cornered Fermina, leaving her with the only option of attempting to vindicate the *Qollas*, Charly here relativizes that very effort. In a deft move, he provincializes the counter-hegemonic discourse that exalts the *Qollas* by recurring to the dominant regime of value and its geopolitical argument. That argument is that Potosí is a marginal hinterland with respect to civilization. Where that civilization is also defined by Hispanic roots, Potosí is doubly marked—i.e. geographically *and* culturally. By relegating the content of Fermina's message to such provinciality, a move he accomplishes poetically by pronouncing each of 'Potosí's' syllables distinctly, Charly argues that it cannot have universal validity. *Qolla* esteem, on this reading, can thus only ever exist among the *Qollas* themselves in their native territory—i.e. where it doesn't 'count'. Stated otherwise, *Qolla* esteem can never exist in Bolivia proper—a construct his own *Chapaco* heritage, being Hispanic and mestizo, best represents.

However, by relegating Fermina and her message to the margins, Charly nevertheless opens up the door for her. By provincializing Potosí, Fermina now finds herself with a card she hadn't had the opportunity to play.

Fermina (*Qolla*): ¡Callate! Yo nací en *Jujuy*.
Shut up! I was born in *Jujuy*.

Having been pegged as a Mamani and her shot at redemption relegated to provinciality, Fermina tries in a last ditch effort to claim something individual that would counter the markings of Indian-ness she bears, and which Charly has exposed. That is, she claims Argentine birth. Where this claim effectively terminates the contest between dominant and counter-hegemonic regimes of value, Fermina concedes the former as the reigning one and the footing in the exchange. Yet this does not leave her defenseless. She does this only to claim a status that would establish—in no uncertain terms—a distance from the alleged lack of civilization she bears. She appeals to Argentine nationality, which so many Bolivians in Escobar (including Charly) lack, to attenuate—and potentially even trump—the markings of cultural otherness she bears. As an ‘Argentine’ this claim, had it held up, would give her ammunition against Charly, who would now by comparison be ‘just’ a Bolivian. It would also retroactively resignify the extent of her Indian-ness, as communicated by her surname. Yet where the truth is ever elusive, Charly denies her this final appeal at redemption, and delivers the knock-out punch:

Charly (*Chapaco*): **Ahaa haa—¡te mintieron!**
Haa haa—they *lied* to you!

In this final move in which Charly allegedly breaks an uncomfortable truth to her, Charly does a number of things. First, he eliminates her claim on a highly meaningful resource that would allow her to attenuate the cultural markings that make her less worthy in the dominant economy of otherness. What he suggests is that whatever her parents might have told her in the hopes of sparing her the shame of Bolivian birth—not that such birth would ever erase the phenotypic characteristics that mark her, and potentially endanger her, as a *Qolla* in Argentina—, she is really just another *bolita*. And while all Bolivians in Argentina are *bolitas*, she will always be a *Qolla*. As such, and once again by the dominant regime of value, she’ll never have a leg up on Charly. For on this reading, Indians are, by virtue of the Spanish Conquest, subordinate to Hispanic mestizos.

Second, by saying “they lied to you”, Charly sutures up a few threads in the banter that began with Fermina’s charge that Charly was hiding a *Qolla* underneath, and that because of this he lacked a legitimate claim on *Chapaco* pride. Here, it is Fermina who has been the one holding on to a false sense of self. It is Fermina that has been projecting an exterior (in the end

just a façade) of *Argentinidad*. The fool, revealed by this lie (if indeed it is one), is Fermina. In this way, and here again, the fool is the *india*. And so Indian-ness, and the historically dominant regime of value become reified, as Charly beats Fermina at her own game.

The history of racial and ethnic relations in the Andes is a long and complex one. While the Spanish invasion and control of the Andes created two republics in the political sense—the Republic of Indians and the Republic of Spaniards—social realities were far from clear cut. Colonial reorganizations, miscegenation, and internal migrations led to a host of intermediate and often indeterminate categories that lay between Spanish and Indian. What emerged in the Andes was a complex social ecology that came to be shaped by millennial and Independence movements as well as by a host of cultural and economic factors. Despite these complexities, a social and political *ideology* based on dualistic constructions of Andean realities has persisted, and with great consequence. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, this imaginary was itself colonized by racialized ideas of civilization and backwardness. What emerged, among other things, was the “Indian problem”—i.e. an ideology that Indian-ness was holding back the tide of progress. This is an ideology that persists across the Andes today. In Bolivia, as elsewhere in the region, the range of categories, classes, and identifications that exist have all been informed by—and indeed hierarchized through—this racialized antimony between civilization and backwardness. As I hope to have showed through this stretch of ethnic banter, the terms by which Bolivians in Escobar create difference owe much to this master binary.

As we have seen, while this master binary has had a great structuring force on significations, it can cut both ways. The exchange reveals that there are two regimes of value, one historically ‘dominant’ (in which the Indian is disparaged for being backward) and one ‘counter-hegemonic’ (in which the Indian, or rather the image of the Indian, is exalted for bearing the Inca legacy). These valuations have implications for how otherness and hierarchy are configured among the ethnic-nationalities—i.e. who is civilized and who ‘drinks donkey’s milk’. We have also seen how Orlín, Charly, and Fermina have engaged these valuations to establish status differences between them as individuals. In this, we should note that their significations have pragmatic force only because they draw upon or otherwise conjure up real, lived experiences of esteem and subordination. Without these lived and embodied histories in place, there is nothing to invoke or index in attempting to negotiate the terms of social being, or

make new claims with regard to it. We thus see that the banter between them as individuals cannot take place without there already being certain structures of esteem and shame in place—structures which are in many ways shared as an order of things. As we have seen, the banter, in micro, comes to contest—but ultimately (at least in this case) to reaffirm—these structures and histories. The master binary of civilization and backwardness dies hard.

Ethnic Bullying

Having worked through the ethnic banter above, we see that in the first instance, the Bolivian economy of otherness consists of differences made between ethnic nationalities (e.g. *Qollas*, *Qochalos*, *Chapacos*, etc.). These differences, which are made through the racial, ethnic, and geographical attributes that index them, are made hierarchical when signified through the master discourse of civilization and backwardness. Yet there are other dimensions to the Bolivian economy of otherness that need to be illuminated. As mentioned in the Introduction, there are corporate groups on lower levels that engage and are referenced in the production of otherness. While lower level groups likely exist for all of the ethnic nationalities in Bolivia (in one sense or another), in Escobar, such groups exist only for the *Qollas*, who are here limited to the Potosinos. This is because of the nature of the Potosino emigration to Escobar. While this will be taken up in Chapter 6, let us note here that, while whole communities from Potosí have not been transplanted directly to Escobar, large factions of them have been. As will become apparent throughout the dissertation, these communities are themselves made ethnic. Speaking of the differences between the Pancocheños and Saropalkeños, two of the most prominent ethnic groups of Potosinos in the area, many claim that they are as different as ‘black and white’. Indeed, what will become apparent is how otherness constructed on the level of ethnic nationalities fractally recurs (see Irvine and Gal, 2000) on the lower level between ethnic groups. Where the *Qollas* are the most Indian of the ethnic nationalities, the Pancocheños are the most Indian of the *Qollas*. Indeed, I have heard a few Potosinos in the barrio literally rank the *comunidades* from the most enlightened (*despiertos*, *avanzados*) to the most backward

(*ignorantes, salvajes*). That formulation typically lists the Saropalkeños in the enlightened category, and has the Pancocheños rooted in the latter, though not at the very bottom.

Yet the Bolivian economy of otherness is not simply about groups—i.e. ethnic nationalities and any constituent ethnic groups. It is also about the practices through which they act and are made meaningful. Indeed, there are many ways through which otherness can be created, negotiated and reproduced. Where I investigated an exchange of ethnic banter above, here I investigate a case of ethnic bullying. What the latter illuminates about the Bolivian economy of otherness is manifold.

First, it shows how lower-level ethnic groups frequently engage in, and come to be represented in, the creation of otherness. Indeed, where ethnic nationalities are seldom organized as such in the barrio and the CBE, often because of the rivalries that exist between constituent ethnic groups prevents this (e.g. those between individual communities of Potosinos), the creation of others in hierarchical arrangements often happens through exchanges in which numbers of one or another group are present. This is precisely what we see between a handful of powerful Pancocheños and a lone *Chuquisaqueño* (one from Sucre) in the case below. In this case, one can appreciate how solidarities between members of an ethnic group affect a dynamic, and how a lack of support from a group opens one up for abuse.

Second, this case of bullying shows that social relations in the barrio, at least as far as othering is concerned, can range from agonistic (as in the case of banter above) to openly antagonistic (as in the case here). The barrio is a tough place. And while a great deal of interaction happens between friends in which othering is competitive but humorous, and usually held within limits, there are other situations in which rivals seek to settle scores through direct domination. Indeed, where humiliation might be a byproduct of banter, it is often the *purpose* of bullying. In these cases, as with Gualter's pursuit of Naelio below, one often looks to invoke another's shame (e.g. over his Indian-ness) specifically to humiliate him.

Certainly, as will become clear throughout the analysis, there are also many parallels in the ways otherness is constructed between the above case of banter and the present case of bullying. I will not belabor them here, as they are better discussed once the exchange has itself been presented.

The Exchange

The case of ethnic bullying I recount below has two parts that occurred on separate days in 2005—one on a Sunday and one the Wednesday that followed. For each, there was a separate target. The first event, which may stand alone, provides the foundation and context for the second. Indeed, the second amounted to a kind of retribution for injury caused in the first. Where the first was a short-lived scuffle with few words exchanged, I illuminate it through my own narrative. Where the second was more fully linguistically mediated, I reproduce the exchange so as to provide an analysis in the style used with the banter above.

At the Feria one Sunday in Spring of 2005, Gualter was bullied. As mentioned previously, the Feria is the barrio's market for finished textiles, many of which are black market knock-offs. While the Feria grew out of a collection of families who had begun meeting socially on Sundays (this being one of the roots of the CBE itself), it was later incorporated and formalized by the CBE. Indeed, the CBE had financed the building of its market structure, which included a roof and concrete floor, and added an adjacent food court (*patio de comidas*) to honor the social spirit of the original encounter. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the revenues from the Feria's stalls and eateries were significant for the CBE and its projects; in the one day a week it operated they rivaled those taken in by the Horticultural Market in the entire week.

On this particular Sunday it was already late, and many at the *patio* were drunk after a day of revelry. The Feria was one of two options people had for social engagement on Sundays—the only day they were not hunched over in the fields, toiling at a sewing machine, laying bricks or recovering from nights spend handling freight or selling produce in the Horticultural Market. The other option for social engagement Sundays offered was attending one of the Evangelical *Cultos* in the barrio. Where the latter provided a reprieve from the violence, drunkenness, and other kinds of vice that made life in the barrio a struggle, the Feria was the place where these things often found their expression. Like many, I also had a choice as to how I would spend my Sundays. Where one could not do right by the participants in both, I always chose the Feria. Indeed, while Salvation could be a momentous event, the Feria was where things in this world happened. And so, like many, I continued 'tropezando' from Sunday to Sunday—i.e., “stumbling” physically, and perhaps also spiritually.

As on any other Sunday, things would get sticky as the night wore on and the families retreated, leaving the space dominated by single men. Where the Feria did not itself become the site of an altercation, one could trust that some beating or robbery would happen around the corner, as intoxicated Feria-goers would wander into the cross-hairs of the barrio's *vagos* (thugs), who often lay in wait. I had been drinking and conversing with a bunch of Potosinos (*Qollas*) at Jorgito's *parrilla*, when Gualter walked in. Gualter was from Sucre (and was thus a *Chuquisaqueño*). He was looking to continue a bender of his own that had begun elsewhere. Being a friend, I had already known him to disappear for a few days at a time, only to reappear disheveled, and ultimately having lost one or another job in the construction sector.

Upon seeing Gualter enter the adjacent door, those at Jorgito's *parrilla* closed in on him. All I could make out before they grabbed him and shoved him back out was “¿*Sos un boliviano? Sos una mierda.*” (Are you a Bolivian? You piece of shit). The proximate cause of the altercation was not clear, but one of the Potosinos sought to fill me in by mouthing ‘*suwa*’ (thief) in Quechua, and made the well-known hand gesture indicating the same. Whether Gualter had been guilty of some transgression would never be known. Whatever the case, tension between him and these particular Potosinos was already known. Gualter was a proud *Chuquisaqueño*—confident and outspoken, and educated. Before trying his luck in Argentina and falling on hard times, he had spent some years studying law in Sucre. This was itself a lettered city, being the site of the Bolivian Supreme Court and having been the Spanish colonial seat. As for other *Chuquisaqueños* in Escobar, there were few. Most lived enclaved in a few compounds that they rented from the resident Cochabambinos (*Qochalos*) not far from the Feria. Having much in common with them—namely more urban upbringing, higher levels of education, and reputedly better Spanish (said to help them in commercial settings)—they were also on good terms with them, surrounded as both were by the Potosino majority.

As for his rivals, they were not just any Potosinos (*Qollas*). They were from the community of Pancochi and were, moreover, players in the CBE's ‘usurpation’. While Gualter had been publically critical of the ‘take-over’ for the violence and embezzlement that characterized it, his critiques were known to be ethnically shaped as well. Indeed, he referred to the CBE as a “Colectividad Pancocheña” that had, through its greed and “ignorance” (*ignorancia*), ruined the image of the Bolivian in Argentina. Indeed, where the Bolivians in Escobar had been known for their hard work, humble disposition, and respect for the rule of law,

the “Pancocheños” had—as many, both Potosinos and non-Potosinos would say—ruined this through their ‘usurpation’. Moreover, these were ‘those people’ that had lacked formal schooling and were simply not prepared (*capacitados*) to lead and represent the ‘Comunidad Boliviana’ in its entirety.

Thus even while Gualter was economically poor given both his vices and lack of kin with whom to collaborate in pursuits of ‘progress’, he was nevertheless (or at least thought himself) rich given that he was ‘*capacitado*’ (read: ‘civilized’) before these ‘ignorant’ Pancocheños—many of whom had become wealthy through the CBE and its ‘usurpation’. What was at play here was thus only immediately about the allegations of theft (i.e. that Gualter was a *suwaq*) or usurpation (i.e. that the Pancocheños had ruined the CBE and the Bolivian image). This and other altercations were about the cultural politics of civilization and backwardness, and the consequences these had for one or another’s human dignity. Unlike the ethnic banter explored above (which nevertheless bore no uncertain agonism), this exchange was violent and full of open contempt. Nevertheless, what undergirded that banter, this exchange, and the event that I illuminate below is the fundamental question that simmers across the barrio: *¿Quién te crees?* Who do you think *you* are?

On Wednesday, three days later, I ran into Gualter on my way home from visiting a friend. This was the first time that I had seen him since that Sunday night, and both of us wanted to discuss the matter. We decided to buy a few liters of *Quilmes* and take them to his room, which was a humble place: the only piece of furniture other than his bed was a gas canister hooked up to a small two-burner stove. Gualter sensed that I had felt bad about not being able to intervene more in the altercation. While I had, along with Jorgito, attempted to break the scuffle up, the group present was numerous, strong, and connected. It would have been unwise to cross them, and Gualter knew that. As we lit into our first beer I sensed that Gualter wanted to have an opportunity to explain things to me, and to set the record straight.

As we began to get into the particulars, Jorgito’s brother Naelio ambled by. Seeing us talking—with beer in hand—he stumbled in. Like many in the barrio, Naelio and Gualter were regular acquaintances and sometimes got drunk together. But like many, including Naelio’s own brothers, Gualter pitied Naelio. For Naelio was a mess: he was a *borracho* and was always broke. This night was no different. But it was more than this. Because of his drinking—but also

because of his Indian face and small stature—Naelio had been the victim of many assaults. Indeed, his face bore multiple scars that had accumulated from fists, and perhaps also boots, over time. His nose had been flattened and pushed to one side.

Where throwing oneself into hard work might have been a reprieve from the vice and violence of the barrio—noting too that such work just as often funded the *borracheras* that caused one problems—Naelio found no such solace. For some years ago, his arm was almost wrenched off in attempting to repair a piece of jammed machinery. While the trauma left his arm terribly scared, it also rendered his elbow useless. It was locked in place, frustrating efforts at further employment and forcing him to do most things—including drinking—with his left hand. This condition likely exacerbated the beatings. For where one was weak, one was also easily abused. It was for this reason—but also for shame—that Naelio hid his injured arm, so much so that he always wore long sleeves, even during the 100 degree days of summer when the humidity was unbearable.

Naelio's shame, however, was not confined to his exterior—i.e. to his scared, mangled arm. Naelio was ashamed of his insides as well. He continually repressed an internal struggle. Besides being very poor, Naelio was—on his own account—an *indio* from the hinterlands of Caiza, which were not far from Pancochi in Potosí. And he felt the sting of this condition, whether it be from Argentines whose fists reminded him of it; from the 'civilized' Bolivians who pitied him for being rural, poor, and Indian; and even from fellow Potosinos who had escaped the same conditions that defined his existence. Indeed, on many occasions, Naelio hid more than his mangled arm. He hid his insides and his past as well. Yet these were things that he couldn't escape, and sometimes things he didn't want to.

Naelio's internal struggle would manifest itself while he drank, as if the state of inebriation provided a ritual frame through which he negotiated the terms of himself. Not a few weeks prior, I had been to Jorgito's *parrilla* at the Feria and saw the knots in him. That day some of us were joking around in Quechua (I had learned all the dirty words years before up in Cuzco) and Naelio, seeing that I knew some of his native tongue, cornered me. Wavering under the number of Quilmes he had drunk, he pleaded to me in Spanish, not in Quechua: "*Hablame en Quechua*" (Speak to me in Quechua), with tears streaming down his face. Not yet knowing, all I could think to say was "*Wayqey, imarayku llaqisqa kasanki?*" (My brother, why are you sad?).

Perhaps in this moment, in seeing that I could speak Quechua, the terms by which he was so often made to feel ashamed of his Indian-ness were suspended, and he could remember a time, perhaps one at home in rural Potosí, where he could be himself without conflict and pain. Inadvertently, we had up-ended the regime of value by which he had been continually marginalized by publically valorizing Quechua and the world it indexed—undoing the terms of the backwardness he had been made to feel.

On that Sunday, he begged me to continue, in tears. He wanted to remember his past. He wanted to be the person he always was but was never allowed to be with dignity. I saw him struggle to understand that alternate realities were also possible. And so he continued to drink, as if alcohol were the means to find meaning. And he continued to struggle, uttering at one point (again in Spanish): “*Quiero desaparecer de la [sic] mapa*” (I want to disappear from the map).

Yet despite his otherness, and despite the shame he has always been made to feel for it, Valentin was part of the Pancocheño majority in the barrio—the same majority whose numbers dominated the CBE and its ‘usurpation.’ This was the same majority who, at the hands of some of their most connected, had just bullied Gualter out of the Feria, suggesting that he couldn’t claim the superiority he had been known to claim.

As Gualter, Naelio, and I began to drink in Gualter’s room—with Valentin already so drunk that he was hardly able to participate in our conversation—Gualter began to broach what had happened that Sunday at the Feria. For Gualter felt that he had lost face, not just in front of others that were present, but in front of me as well. Indeed, having been overrun in public, Gualter felt he had been humiliated by the Pancocheños—an ‘ignorant’ group whose haughtiness could never be justified. He felt there was a score to settle, and wanted to set things right. And so, casting me in the role of both witness and arbiter of justice (perhaps because I was both an impartial outsider and a social scientist), Gualter embarked on a project to vindicate himself. He sought to re-establish the ‘world’ as he thought it should be. This meant revealing—and revealing to me specifically—what the Pancocheños were ‘really’ made of.

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Tus parientes me discriminan.**
Your relatives discriminate against me.

Naelio (*Qolla*): **Ellos...**
They...

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Es ‘lla’ con *elle* no con *sha*!**
It’s ‘lla’ with *L* not with *sha*!

[turning to me, in an aside]

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Es probable que ni sabe leer.**
It is most likely that [Naelio] doesn’t even know how to read.

[back to Naelio]

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿De dónde sos?**
Where are you [Arg.] from?

Naelio (*Qolla*): **Soy indio...**
I am an Indian...

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿¿De dónde sos Naelio!?**
Where are you [Arg.] from *Naelio*!?

Naelio (*Qolla*): **Soy indio campesino, soy bolita.**
I am an Indian peasant, I am a *bolita*.

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¡Yo soy de Sucre! ¿¿De dónde eres!?**
I am from Sucre! Where are you [Bol.] from?!

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¡Todos tenemos identidad! ¿¿Maymantan kanki carajo?!**
Everyone has an identity! Where the fuck are you from?!

Naelio (*Qolla*): **Caiza.**
Caiza.

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿Ves?**
Do you see?

Analysis

By working through this exchange, one can see how in seeking retribution for his being bullied by the Pancocheños, Gualter engages Naelio through the same master binary of civilization and backwardness. Making Naelio stand for the Pancocheños as an ethnic group (here within the *Qolla* ethnic nation), Gualter specifically looks to humiliate him over his Indian-ness. Through this humiliation he seeks to reveal that the Pancocheños are, underneath the pretensions of their

most powerful, irrevocably ‘backward’. As we’ll see, what is interesting about Gualter’s project is that what is taken as Indian-ness, and hence backwardness, is not necessarily rural upbringing or the Quechua language, but rather *shame over them*. That is, Gualter’s project hinges upon his ability to show that it is shame over one’s origins—not the origins themselves—that marks one as an *indio*. This is the case in great part because as a *Chuquisaqueño*, Gualter also speaks Quechua and can, on counter-hegemonic terms, celebrate the legacy of the Inca. The means by which he ‘others’ and ‘places’ Naelio are thus somewhat different from those he might employ were he a Hispanic Tarijeño (*Chapaco*). Nevertheless, they ultimately depend upon the dominant signification of Indian-ness as backwardness we have seen above; for this is precisely what Naelio has internalized.

With his agenda clear, Gualter spared no time:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Tus parientes me discriminan.**
Your relatives discriminate against me.

Gualter’s charge to Valentin was as much an attempt to recount a reality as it was an invitation to spar on the terms through which the world is constructed and inhabited. That Gualter frames his challenge through the idiom of relatedness (*parentesco*) shows both of these dimensions. In the first instance, it reveals the great extent to which social interaction in the barrio—and specifically antagonisms—are shaped by group-level solidarities and distinctions. Though distinctions made on the ethnic-national level (e.g. between *Qollas*, *Qochalos*, *Chapacos*, and here *Chuquisaqueños*) are frequently explicit, if not always ultimately indexed in any interaction, solidarities and distinctions expressed on lower levels involving individual *Qolla* communities (e.g. Pancocheños, Saropalkeños, and Yureños) are, wherever present, often more meaningful. This is not only because these communities are ethnically differentiated, but because ethnicity for them has historically been underwritten by kinship and endogamy given native Andean modes of social organization. It is therefore no mistake that such communities are referred to as groups of relatives (*parientes*) that are socially ‘closed’ (*cerrados*).

On the estimation of all other groups in the barrio, the Pancocheños are the most vivid example of this. Yet more than this, the Pancocheños are believed to come from a more

‘original’ condition of geographical and social ‘isolation’ in rural Potosí²⁷. This has not only earned them the reputation for being ‘always united’ (*siempre unidos*) but, given the pragmatics of their solidarity, more pejorative designations as a ‘band’ (*banda*) or even a ‘pack of wolves’ (*jaula de lobos*). For all of these reasons, they are believed to figure in antagonisms more than any other community in the barrio. Indeed, one might point to Gualter’s ouster from the Feria as coming at the hand of the Pancocheño’s as pack of wolves.

Gualter’s charge that Naelio’s relatives had discriminated against him was thus meant to highlight the corporate aspect of the aggression; it was meant to reference the Pancocheños’ original ‘closed-ness’—a characteristic that he would mention elsewhere was everything but cosmopolitan and modern. Through this idiom he thus makes it clear that he wants to spar and seek retribution on group-level terms. Yet as a direct challenge to Naelio, i.e. that it was *his* relatives that committed this bullying, Gualter also makes it clear that he wants to engage Naelio personally, as both a member and a representative of the Pancocheños. Indeed, his formulation makes it clear that he wants to engage Naelio on a personal level so as to have purchase on the group level.

In response to this charge, Naelio, who was mumbling drunk and perhaps unaware of what had transpired in the Feria, hedged with something unintelligible about ‘ellos’ (they/them). This was almost certainly an effort to distance himself from them, and an attempt to avoid implication by association. Technically, Naelio (like his brother Jorgito) was from a hamlet near Caiza, which lies just north of Pancochi. Yet where all from that section of the Linares Province are considered to be relatives (*parientes*), and noting that there are many kin relations that span the hamlets near Pancochi and Caiza, Naelio was—here very much inconveniently—a Pancocheño. Indeed, he was most certainly not a Saropalkeño or Yureño, the two other prominent communities (groups of *parientes*) of Potosinos in the barrio.

²⁷ As an example of this ‘isolation’, the Pancocheños are known to have avoided both the mining economy and the compulsory Bolivian military service. Each of these institutions is, on the local reading, thought to be a ‘socializing’ and ‘civilizing’ force. Participation in the mining economy is thought to articulate peasants with more encompassing social imaginaries as a function of nationalist or leftist politico-economic ideology—an articulation typified by *priBety* education in mining settlements and by mining radio. Participation in the military is thought to properly ‘socialize’ one—i.e. that is to teach him to bathe, to speak Spanish, etc. Where the Pancocheños are said to have not needed to engage in the mining sector owing to better lands upon which to secure their subsistence, they are said to have escaped up into the hills when Army officials went looking for conscripts. Evidence of this is the fact that they do not bear the tattoos of the barracks (*cuartel*) that many Saropalkeño and Yureño men bear. Conceived as articulating networks, the mining economy and the military are thought to open and expose people from the *campo*; they are thought to introduce them to Bolivians from other regions and ethnic backgrounds, as well as Bolivian national culture.

Yet Naelio's meager response was inadequate to Gualter's charge. Gualter, who was bent on retribution wherever he might find it, seized upon what Valentin *did* give him: an incongruity between his exterior presentation of self, and what everyone knew to be his inner self. That is, Naelio revealed a chink in what was never a credible armor to begin with. Perhaps abetted by the constant internal conflict he bore over how to manage his own Indian roots and impoverished condition, and over how to mark himself less as a result (as if this were even possible given the bundles of features that belied his origins and condition), Naelio had taken on a specifically Argentine speech. This included the full panoply of Argentine phonological features. To wit, Naelio's pronunciation of 'ellos' in his hedge, was [é-*sho*-s], not [e-llo-s], as it would traditionally be in Bolivia. As a proud Bolivian (perhaps because his *Chuquisaqueño* roots enabled this where others' roots did not), Gualter took this phonological claim as an obvious and inappropriate affect, and laid into him fiercely:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Es 'lla' con *elle* no con *sha*!**
It's 'lla' with *L* not with *sha*!

The suggestion was that Naelio was negating his roots (*negando sus raíces*) while trying to pass for something he was not. Though 'roots' here certainly meant 'Bolivian' roots in a general way (indeed, the phonological shift was to the 'Argentine' [sha], where [lla (con elle)] indexes a 'Bolivian' Spanish) 'roots' is hardly ever (or fully) an issue of nationality. As we saw in the case of ethnic banter above, what is really at stake in the negotiation of roots is one's *ethnic* background and status. Moreover, what is negated more often than not are specifically *Qolla* roots and the world of cultural and material lack (*carencia*) that, on the dominant construal, is said to define them. It was this ethnic aspect that Gualter seized upon. And indeed, fully aware that Naelio might hear him—if not taking full advantage of his inability to defend himself given his inebriation—Gualter turned to me in a not-so-concealed aside and suggested that Naelio was most likely illiterate:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **Es probable que ni sabe leer.**
It is most likely that [Naelio] doesn't even know how to read.

What Gualter suggested through this charge of illiteracy was that the flip side to Naelio's affected phonological exterior was a fundamental, internal ignorance (*ignorancia*). Certainly, on the dominant estimation, illiteracy indexes the lack and backwardness that is said to characterize the *Qolla*, and within the *Qolla*, the Pancocheño, for which Naelio is made to stand. For Gualter, Naelio's [*sha*] was a pathetic and doomed attempt to conceal an internal and undeniable condition of backwardness he was ashamed to own.

Looking not only to expose this incommensurability between Naelio's exterior projection of self and his internal reality, but looking also to exploit the mis-match to make an individual-cum-collective example of him as a 'Pancocheño', Gualter levied the ultimate in challenges against him. Once again with me as the witness:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿De dónde sos?**
Where are you [Arg.] from?

Gualter is an astute man. He knows what Naelio's past is, and he knows what continually eats at him. Not entirely insensitive to his plight, but recently humiliated by those he takes to be his consociates, Gualter knows that in offering Naelio this challenge, he will be unable to respond to it with any degree of pride or self esteem—certainly not with the same self-aggrandizement and haughtiness that characterized the Pancocheño mob that bullied him out of the Feria. On Gualter's assessment, this is for a few different reasons. First, Gualter suspects that Naelio will be unable to 'own' his roots because of the general shame he feels for them and for the culture of lack and backwardness so often imputed to them. Certainly, the prevalence of attempts to escape admitting to being born in rural Potosí by claiming birth in the northern Argentine provinces of Salta or Jujuy are a testament to this. Such attempts are typified in the exchange between Fermina and Charly in the case of ethnic banter above. Second, with this shame as a ground, Gualter suspects that Naelio, who he just effectively 'exposed', will not want to own up to his truthful origins because doing so will contradict the affected self he had just been caught presenting. As if Gualter's invocation of Naelio's original shame were not enough, a direct confession by Naelio would no doubt produce an added level of humiliation for him. And third, Gualter suspects that Naelio will not own his roots because doing so would mean confronting him directly. Certainly, Gualter knows he has the upper hand in the contest he is creating, not just as an urban and educated *Chuquisaqueño*, but as a physically imposing and

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿De dónde sos Naelio!?**
Where are you [Arg.] from *Naelio*!?

Yet Valentin hedges further, denying Gualter his prize:

Naelio (*Qolla*): **Soy indio campesino, soy bolita.**
I am an Indian peasant, I am a *bolita*.

Again, in an attempt to avoid any responsibility to Gualter for what happened at the FERIA, and to avoid being humiliated by him directly, Valentin continues to refuse to confess his origins, hoping that debasing himself further will provide reprieve. Indeed, Naelio's tack of calling himself *indio campesino* and *bolita*²⁸ is as much evasion through humiliation as it is a plea for pathos and mercy.

Yet Gualter, who has yet to swallow his own humiliation from being ousted at the FERIA, is hardly finished with Naelio, however much he might also pity him. Not only intent on showing me, as both witness and jury, what the 'Pancocheños' are really made of (i.e. cowardice on the one hand, and hypocrisy and shame on the other), but also intent on exacting revenge against them by humiliating one of their own, Gualter stands up, beats his chest, and exclaims:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¡Yo soy de Sucre! ¿De dónde eres!?**
I am from Sucre! Where are you [Bol.] from?!

Continuing to press Naelio on own his origins, Gualter ups the ante. In an attempt to force the issue, Gualter switches to a Bolivian conjugation of the verb *ser* (to be): *¿De dónde eres!?* Certainly, to elicit another's origins, one must speak in the idiom of home. '*Eres*' is what is spoken in Bolivia (noting however, that many Tarijeños have adopted the '*vos*' of Argentine Spanish to the chagrin of many). Yet '*eres*' is also what was everyone spoke before migrating to Argentina. Gualter's deployment of Bolivian Spanish thus also evokes a temporality and a history. '*Eres*' is thus a pragmatic move not only to connect Naelio with his home in Potosí (as a

²⁸ Though we will address the meaning of the term *bolita* in the next chapter, let us remark that referentially speaking, Naelio's use of it here has nothing to do with 'Bolivian-ness' as compared to anything Argentine. Rather, it has everything to do with marginality in general (note that Naelio is a poor Bolivian in Argentina) and the humility of Indian-ness in particular. Indeed, it reinforces his denomination of himself as an '*indio campesino*', a phrase common in highland Bolivia to refer to poor Indian peasants (i.e. as an unpoliticized, submissive, pre-modern mass on the margins). Yet the principal function of Naelio's deployment of *bolita* and *indio campesino* here is not the conveyance of referential meaning. Rather, it is pragmatic.

place), but also to connect him with the person he always was underneath (as a function of time). Certainly, where one returns home, one also returns to his youth. For Naelio, that youth was unquestionably Indian.

Naelio, however, is silent before Gualter's challenge to him to confront his home, his past, and himself—a challenge that is becoming increasingly intimate. Perhaps he is silent because the evocation of home and the past only serves to cast his life and trajectory in a more critical—and painful—relief; it may only evoke more forcefully the shame he carries with him on a day to day basis—a shame he feels seeing and wearing the scars on his face.

Frustrated by Naelio's silence, Gualter pushes to reveal—again by his own hand—what Naelio is on the inside, ultimately to show what the Pancocheños are beneath their numbers, newfound wealth, and affected projections of self. Unrelenting, he blasts Naelio, only to then call him out in Quechua:

Gualter (Chuquisaqueño): **¡Todos tenemos identidad! ¿¡Maymantan kanki carajo?!**
Everyone has an identity! Where the fuck are you from?!

Gualter's shift into Quechua is a heightened attempt to connect Naelio with home—to speak in its idiom. Yet more than this, Gualter's employment of Quechua is a direct challenge to Naelio to confront his Indian roots of which he is so ashamed. For the Quechua language represents and indexes these roots in all their manifestations: ethnic, historical, and geographical. Where Gualter challenges Naelio to speak back to him in Quechua, he challenges him to 'own' a language and by extension a culture that, despite being disparaged, is nevertheless his. This is the identity he dis-owns. Gualter's challenge to Naelio is for him to own his past and identity.

Yet this is something that Naelio, despondent, crumbling, and drunk, cannot do. With nowhere else to go, and having already humiliated *himself* through his attempts to avoid committing to his past and its entailments, Naelio can only muster a pathetic, single-word response:

Naelio (Qolla): **Caiza.**
Caiza.

Paralyzed by his internal struggle over what he wishes he might shed (or transcend), and over what he must ultimately embrace, Naelio commits to neither Spanish nor Quechua. Indeed, he attempts to escape all markings by avoiding the declinations “*Soy de Caiza*” (Spanish) and “*Caizamantan kani*” (Quechua). Yet he is still pinned to the mat. With all other options exhausted, he caves in to what Gualter has been seeking all along: an admission—itsself a kind of confession—of where he is from. And Naelio utters this confession in a most defeated way. Certainly, he does not, as Gualter does (because he can), stand and beat his chest to proudly proclaim his origins in Sucre (*Chuquisaca*). Rather, in uttering “Caiza”, Naelio’s head is bowed, hanging nearly between his knees, his voice weak.

To this, Gualter, who is still frustrated by Naelio’s lack of engagement, but now somewhat vindicated and smug, turns to me to say simply:

Gualter (*Chuquisaqueño*): **¿Ves?**
Do you see?

Though Gualter exacts what he has been pressing for all along—confession by Naelio at his own hand—the moment is so pathetic that it is anticlimactic. There is no climax because there is no fight—no fight because there is nothing left to fight with. Naelio, not strong to begin with, is left in a heap.

By pushing for and finally exacting this confession, Gualter has humiliated Naelio in a number of ways. In each instance, the humiliation he effects hinges on an invocation of Naelio’s own shame over his origins. Beginning with the final confession, Gualter achieves this in two related ways. First, Naelio’s admission to being from Caiza reveals that Naelio is from what residents in the barrio call the ‘*campo campo*’ of Potosí (the most interior part of the interior). As previously mentioned, this indexes what is believed to be a world of material and cultural lack (*carencia*). This admission, elicited by an aggrieved Gualter who already knows Naelio’s origins, is itself humiliating for Naelio. Second, and based on this original shame, Naelio’s confession at Gualter’s hand reveals that he was indeed putting on airs to conceal these roots—i.e., by having assumed an Argentine speech. As Gualter was intent on showing, Naelio’s exterior projection of self did not match his internal reality. That this duplicity was ultimately confirmed and laid bare was further humiliating for Naelio. Yet Gualter’s humiliation of Naelio was not just achieved in this final confession of origins. Naelio is also humiliated *during the*

process of this entire exchange. In a first instance, and in an attempt to evade this final confession, Naelio humiliated *himself* by calling himself an *indio campesino* and a *bolita*. By themselves, these identifications are denigrating. Yet such self-denominations were also a strategy to evade confessing his origins. This very process of hedging and evading this confession is humiliating. For only a pathetic (read ‘ignorant’) individual would not own his origins. Thus by asking the key question *¿De dónde sos?*, Gualter knowingly created a Strait of Messina for the hapless Naelio—the Scylla being an evasion of his origins and the Charybdis the confession itself. For Naelio, both would lead to a humiliating reification of his own indianness. All Gualter had to do was push him down this strait. And by continually hammering him, Naelio was made to ratify his own lowly, shameful condition.

Yet let us not forget what Gualter’s interest was in all of this. In the first instance, Gualter was looking to reduce Naelio out of revenge for the humiliation he himself had felt in being ousted from the Feria. Yet Gualter was perhaps more interested in using his ‘exposure’ of Naelio—and Naelio’s own ratification of his indianness—to make a more further reaching comment on what he believed to be the Pancocheños’ underlying truth (*esencia, idiosincracia*). That is, Gualter felt the need, not just to seek retribution for his own personal violation, but to set the record—and the world—straight.

Using Naelio as an example, Gualter makes two implicit arguments about the Pancocheños, both of which hinge on deconstructing and reducing Naelio. The first is that, beneath their numbers, the Pancocheños are individually weak (*sumisos*). That is, when they are not assembled as a ‘pack of wolves’, they are mere *indios* who have paralyzing identity complexes. Indeed, these complexes are believed to be the source of their overcompensation, whether this be in the form of affected speech patterns or in unjustified haughtiness towards others. Gualter’s invocation of Valentin’s shame about his origins, and the humiliation he effects by virtue of it, is thus meant to expose these characteristic truths about the Pancocheños as a *pueblo*.

Building on this exposure of Pancocheño idiosyncrasy (*idiosincracia*), Gualter makes a related and further reaching argument. Having used Naelio as an individual-cum-collective example, Gualter implies that this mob of weak and backward *indios* is not only what bullied him out of the Feria; it is what has usurped the CBE. Indeed, he has been outspoken that the Pancocheños have appropriated what should be an inclusive and cosmopolitan Colectividad

Boliviana, and turned it into a self-serving ‘Colectividad Pancocheña’—one that has ceased to function in service of the community and one that has, through its illegality, tarnished the name of the Bolivian Community writ large. More than this, as Gualter and many others have pointed out, this ‘usurpation’ has resulted in multiple exclusions. Not only have the *Qochalos* and the few *Chuquisaqueños* and *Paceños* been excluded, but key Potosinos such as the Saropalkeños, to whom many attribute the founding of the CBE, have also been over-run and forced out.

Conclusion

The story of how the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* (CBE) became known as a ‘Colectividad Potosina’, and within this, as a ‘Colectividad Pancocheña’, such that it failed in its mission of cultivating solidarity between Bolivian ‘brothers’, is a complex one. As I have stated in the Introduction to this chapter and earlier in the thesis, telling this story means telling the story of envy and pride—i.e. how these practical formations, as part of a larger ‘envy complex’ grew and evolved as a function of the changes wrought through the emigration from Bolivia to Argentina. Yet telling this story requires a prior elucidation of the notion of progress which, in its most fundamental formulation, means escaping or otherwise separating oneself from a condition of ‘backwardness’. This often means shedding, concealing, or otherwise managing those attributes that mark one as ‘backward.’

By exploring face to face engagements between different kinds of Bolivians in Escobar, this chapter has worked inductively to identify what kinds of attributes are marked as ‘backward’, and how these markings both stem from, and are negotiated with respect to, a master binary of civilization and backwardness. This regime of power and signification, while a function of the social and political worlds created through the Spanish invasion, has as much to do with nineteenth-century discourses of race and social evolution. While I lack the space to explore this regime in its fullest dimensions, I have attempted to show that the ‘economy of otherness’ that obtains between Bolivians in Escobar is derived from this larger regime and is, like its local manifestations in the Andes, a complex one in which racial, ethnic, linguistic, and geographic characteristics are signified. As I hope to have showed, this regime provides both bearings and material with which social actors in particular settings negotiate their own statuses

and those of others. In fact, the banter and bullying I have explored here would be impossible in their present forms without this larger regime of signification. At the same time, this larger regime, while dominant, and often hegemonic, is not entirely hegemonic. As seen in both ethnographic cases, it can be inverted and contested; there are counter-hegemonic constructions that look to counter the tide of discrimination and disenfranchisement. In this way, one must see any dominant, default significations as phenomena that are contingent on their being harnessed, deployed, and negotiated in particular instances.

These questions, while interesting, are perhaps abstract with regard to my more immediate task—i.e. that of preparing the foundations for a discussion of progress and ultimately of the envy complex that emerges through it. Toward this end, I have chosen the above cases of banter and bullying because they illuminate a number of important dimensions to the practices of othering. First, group-level significations are crucial. Whether on the level of ethnic nationality (e.g. *Qolla*, *Qochalo*, *Chapaco*, *Chuquisaqueño*) or, within this (e.g. Pancocheño, Saropalkeño, etc. for the *Qollas*), individuals are taken as both members of groups and representations of what they are (e.g. *Qolla*-ness, Pancocheño-ness, etc.). As such, they can be held responsible for the actions of their groups or, because of their resemblance to them (real or imagined), they can become a vehicle through which action and signification have purchase on groups and the larger order of things.

Second, the corporate nature of, or dimension to, practices of othering produces *rivalries* that exist between both ethnic nationalities and lower level ethnic groups, the latter often coterminous with individual communities (e.g. Pancocheños, Saropalkeños). As I argue later in this dissertation, these rivalries, signified through the politics of progress, shape the very coup of the CBE and the ethnic exclusions that followed. For the moment, let us note that these group-level rivalries, informed by the discourse of civilization and backwardness, are often fodder for practices of othering on the individual level. The latter frequently reproduce and perpetuate the former. As seen through both the banter and the bullying, practices of othering, and relations between others generally, range from agonism to antagonism. What emerges when will depend on a range of factors that includes group-membership, kinds of solidarity, kinds of intimacy, and perhaps above all, kinds of desire. Though it perhaps goes without saying, practices of othering do not simply produce relational difference; they do so in ways that depend upon and produce hierarchy and domination.

Finally, as I hope to have suggested through the examples of banter and bullying above, no engagement exists by itself. Rather, the view of social relations I present is one of inter-event semiosis in which ‘otherings’ made in one engagement depend upon and create ‘otherings’ made elsewhere. This process is ongoing precisely because engagements are agonistic, if not antagonistic. Scores are always being settled. What is negotiated from moment to moment is one or another’s human dignity as all are caught in a process of becoming. What emerges through engagements in this politics of recognition is a visceral economy of esteem and shame. Using the analytic ‘economy’ here is not random: where there are winners and losers in banter and bullying, one’s esteem is another’s humiliation. This has consequences as people come to negotiate ‘progress’ which, as we will see in Chapter 4, takes the form of a zero-sum configuration. (As we will see by the end of the thesis, what emerges through the corruption of the CBE is a movement to progress together, versus at one another’s expense).

Before moving on to the discussion of progress, which as I have stated is that attempt to escape or otherwise manage one’s ‘backwardness’, there is yet more to elucidate with regard to how backwardness is figured in Escobar. Let us not forget that while we are interested in relations between Bolivians, given that the ultimate project is to understand the rise, corruption, and attempted restoration of the CBE, these Bolivians are in Argentina. Indeed, many of the Bolivians in Escobar are Argentines. And the situation is truly complex. Many that were born in Bolivia have grown up in Argentina. Some have been nationalized. Others have married Argentines. And this is not to deny that many Argentines (even without any Bolivian blood or relations) are called *bolivianos*. Thus, while I have elucidated the Bolivian economy of otherness, there is yet a need to elucidate the Argentine economy of otherness. The next chapter is dedicated to this endeavor, and specifically to the ways that Bolivian and Argentine terms of otherness are reconciled, and the ways these reconciliations both shape and are shaped by face to face engagements.

Chapter 3:

Argentine Economy of Otherness

Introduction

Through the foregoing analyses of ethnic banter and ethnic bullying, I illuminated particular formulations of otherness that are thoroughly ‘Bolivian’. In both cases, otherness was grounded in Indian-ness. As we saw, Indian-ness is not simply about ethnic markers and what are often taken to be underlying racial attributes. That is, Indian-ness is not simply about indigenous cultural practices, the Quechua language, and the biological differences thought to hang with them. Indian-ness is also a condition of class. Indeed, what marks the Indian in Bolivia, as elsewhere in the Andes²⁹, is a certain material poverty that is often framed as ‘lack’ (*carencia*). Finally, to race, culture, and class one must also add geography: Indians are imagined through rurality and provinciality. As an imaginary, indian-ness is thus a cluster of attributes that co-index and inflect one another. They are opposed to what is whiter, more European, and urban in what amounts to a master binary, itself an imaginary stemming from the Spanish invasion and reorganization. Where the latter cluster of attributes is, on the dominant estimation, imagined as ‘civilized’, the former is regarded as ‘backward’—i.e. as something that should be overcome. In this way, Indian-ness is something that is traditionally disparaged. While this is not to say there are not counter-hegemonic movements to vindicate ‘*lo originario*’, those of indigenous descent are frequently made to feel shame over their origins and are often humiliated for them. In what I have called the ‘Bolivian economy of otherness,’ these are the terms through which Bolivians ‘other’ themselves.

Parsing this economy of otherness is a necessary step in the endeavor to understand whether and how Bolivian immigrants and their Argentine-born children can relate to each other

²⁹ See De la Cadena (2000)

in horizontal ways—i.e. whether they can transcend their differences, both ethnic and socio-economic, and establish a Bolivian ‘community’. For indeed this is what the CBE set out to do. Yet Bolivian community does not hinge on Bolivian terms alone. Let us not forget that these immigrants and their children reside in Escobar, Argentina. Another fundamental step towards understanding Bolivian relations is to parse the ‘Argentine economy of otherness’. Indeed, the ways that Bolivians are ‘othered’ by Argentines plays into Bolivian relations, and in multiple ways.

In this vein, this chapter addresses a number of questions. Principal among them are: How are Bolivians ‘othered’ in Argentina? And how might Bolivians come to ‘other’ each other in ways that stem from their collective treatment in Argentina? Yet these questions depend on others, namely: What are the terms of otherness in Argentina? If in the Bolivian economy of otherness, ‘otherness’ is most frequently ‘Indianness’, what is otherness in Argentina? As we’ll see below, otherness in Argentina is ‘blackness’, and blackness is signified through the same master binary of ‘backwardness’ and ‘civilization’ that has given Indianness its meanings.

The chapter thus begins with a set of discussions that outlines what the regime of blackness is in Argentina, and in historical perspective. Part of this is to illuminate what Argentina’s internal others are (i.e. *cabecitas negras* and *villeros*). Based on this I show how Bolivians are received and treated as ‘*negros*’ (blacks) in Argentina, and yet differentiated from them. Ultimately, I show that the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness intersect in the epithet *bolita*. While this term was created by Argentines to discriminate against Bolivians, it has since been ‘indigenized’ by Bolivians to ‘other’ themselves. I argue that the Bolivian uses of *bolita* reproduce the valuations of the *indio* in the Bolivian economy of otherness. That is, that the regime of value by which *Qolla*-ness is disdained among Bolivian ethnic nationalities gets reproduced, with attendant consequences for *Qolla* esteem. Indeed, *Qollas* come to bear the brunt of discrimination not just through the Bolivian economy of otherness, but the Argentine economy as well.

Where I have shown through both the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness that Bolivians consistently undergo assaults on their human dignity (perpetrated by themselves and by others), I can then illuminate what ‘progress’ is all about. As mentioned earlier on, progress is a number of things: while it is about overcoming the condition of Indianness in a material sense—i.e. leaving the rural hinterland for the urban areas to have better access to work,

electricity, education, health care, and material goods—it is more than this. Progress is about being able to transcend or otherwise manage the markers of Indianness over which one can be humiliated, beaten, or killed. It is about escaping the pain of being called an *indio*, *negro*, and *bolita*. As I will argue, one of the ways Bolivians seek to achieve this is through capitalizing and achieving economic independence. Indeed, one that drives a pickup truck or buys his own farm has placed (or tries to place) distance between himself and that condition of Indianness. Yet as I also show, these wills to power also generate great envy and pride that not only reproduce social divisions, but have political consequences as well.

The Regime of Blackness in Argentina

¿Por qué tenemos que venir acá para poder vivir? Acá tenemos que ser los *negros*, los *bolitas*—tenemos que comer eso todos los días. No nos queda otra.

Why do we have to come here just to be able to live? Here (in Argentina) we have to be the ‘blacks’; the *bolitas*—we have to eat that every single day. We have no other choice.

—Tío Norberto, Potosino

Cabecitas Negras

Perhaps the best point of entrée into the contemporary construction of otherness-as-blackness in Argentina is to begin with the figure of the *cabecita negra*, i.e. the “little black head”. The *cabecitas negras* were the dark-sinned, rural Argentine masses that migrated to Buenos Aires in the 1930s and 1940s, and came to occupy the marginal, make-shift settlements known as *villas de emergencia* (see Ratier 1971a, 1971b). Their migration was the result of two macro-economic phenomena that affected Argentina’s economy—specifically its exportation of raw goods and its importation of finished products. The first was the world agricultural crisis of the early 1930s that stemmed from the Great Depression. Where global demand for agricultural products collapsed, the export-led producers of the Argentine Provinces collapsed as well, creating a surplus of rural labor (see Barsky and Gelman 2001). The second was Argentina’s

industrialization through import substitution and the growth of manufacturing jobs it generated in Buenos Aires. While also tied to the Global downturn of the 1930s and the scarcity it created, Argentine import substitution owed more to scarcity created by World War II. By the 1940s, this model of domestic industrialization featured heavily in Perón's populism and became a mainstay in his rule (see Rock 1985, Chasteen 2001). The combination of these forces thus created one of the most significant demographic shifts in Argentine history: the agricultural crisis produced a 'push' while import substitution created a 'pull' as thousands of *provincianos* migrated to Buenos Aires in search of a better future (see also Germani 1973).

The influx of *cabecitas negras* into the metropole was not just significant economically; it was a major change to the Capital's social and political ecology. In the first instance, one should note that the term itself was a construction of otherness created by those of European origin in the Capital. Indeed, from the perspective of the middle and upper classes in Buenos Aires, the Argentine Republic had by the turn of the century achieved its explicit goal of becoming a predominantly European nation. Despite the erasures this entailed for the Provinces of the interior, the 'Europeanization' of Buenos Aires had in fact occurred. This was achieved through massive immigration from Italy, Spain, Russia, Germany, and Poland—an immigration that was itself sanctioned in the Argentine Constitution, and remains so to this day. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, roughly 60% of Buenos Aires was foreign, and most of these immigrants were of European stock. All were phenotypically white and thought to have been the bearers of 'civilization' (see Ratier 1971a). While there had been some of African descent in the Capital, most appear to have been absorbed by this tide of European immigration, though there is some debate on this (see Andrews 1980, 2004, Frigerio 2006). The fate of many indigenous tribes on the nearby *pampa* is less controversial: many had been eradicated in campaigns of extermination, allowing the metropole to imagine the indigenous 'episode' of Argentina as one that was 'happily overcome' (Ratier 1971a: 9).

In the inter-war period then, while Buenos Aires and its surroundings prided itself as European in origin, the Argentine interior told a different story. In the Northern Provinces bordering Bolivia and Paraguay the *mestizo*—i.e. the darker-skinned and more phenotypically Indian—predominated. These were the rural to urban migrants that would become the 'new workers' (*nuevos obreros*) in the burgeoning factories in the 1930s and 40s. Their arrival to Buenos Aires challenged—and indeed threatened—the *porteño* image of Argentina as a

European nation. Where the *cabecitas negras* were a new economic class, they were also a new social class, one that was racially and culturally undesirable. Their desire to leave their marginal *villas* and experience the city center resulted in racialized epithets such as *aluvión zoológico* (zoological flood). Where ‘flood’ conveyed the sense that the *cabecitas* had intruded upon, if not invaded, the City, ‘zoological’ connoted the bourgeois attitude that these rural migrants were so rude that they bordered on animals.

As Ratier (1971a) argues, the “shock” of the eruption of the *cabecitas* in the Capital was not simply social and cultural, it was ultimately political. Indeed, the conservative liberals and the traditional left came to revile this *aluvión zoológico* because they were politicized and galvanized by Perón in his populist domination of national politics (see also Guber 2002: 361). Perón accomplished this, not by engaging the prevailing political question of the time—i.e. the debate over democracy versus dictatorship—but rather by re-framing the debate to concern the question of social justice or injustice. Indeed, Perón’s nationalism and totalitarianism did not matter to the disenfranchised *cabecitas* as it did to the liberal intellectuals and bourgeois sectors, who sought to lose certain holdings, freedoms, and privileges. What mattered to the *cabecitas*, especially as they began to form the core of the labor movement, was the question of how wealth and participation would be managed in what had always been an oligarchic country. What would the share be between the white ‘European’ elite and the *descamisado*³⁰, who desired rights and a place in this new order? In this way, Peronism and his new masses shook the very political-economic foundations of the Argentine establishment. What threatened the bourgeois *porteño* was not that the provincial and undesirable ‘blacks’ had become a new shanty-dwelling class, but rather that they had become allied with the Peronist revolution. The former engendered racial and cultural disdain; the latter engendered fear.

Nowhere were these attitudes more apparent than in the event that characterized the symbolic birth of Peronism. Certainly, Perón’s rise was a contentious one. Having been jailed in October 1945, the masses of *descamisados/cabecitas* marched on the Plaza de Mayo to demand his release. This event was later characterized by the anti-peronist writer Ezequiel

³⁰ Referring to the same figure, the *descamisado* (‘unshirted’ or ‘shirtless’) was typically a positive denomination—i.e. a “calicativo orgulloso” (Ratier 1971a: 9)—when held against the epithet *cabecita negra*. Often featuring into Perón’s populist discourse, the term *descamisado* alludes to the body of the humble worker from the interior. In Perón’s populism, it was a term through which such rural to urban migrants could be affectively, and revolutionarily, included into a social order that was exclusionary and hostile (Margulis 1998c: 146).

Martínez Estrada, who in his *Habitantes del sótano* (1956)³¹ [*The Inhabitants of the Cellar* (perhaps a euphemism for ‘bottom-dwellers’)], captured the symbolic shock and the effects this had on the dominant construal of the nation:

We have spoken much about our nation. Our National Anthem recognizes it, and yet we do not know it. Perón revealed to us, not the nation, but a part of it that had seemed strange and foreign to us. On October 17th he let into the streets of Buenos Aires a social sediment that no-one would have recognized. It seemed an invasion of people from another country, who spoke another language, who wore exotic dress, but who were, nevertheless, part of the Argentine nation of our Anthem. For it had occurred that, up until that moment, we had been strangers to a part of the family who were this low and miserable people. Even the revolutionaries had displaced or forgotten them, and Perón had not simply the generosity and intelligence, but the ability, to bring them up to the surface and to, without shame, show them, not in the capacity of a people, but in the capacity of a tremendous and aggressive force that shook the very foundations of a society constituted with just one part of humanity... This was a people that we had not taken into account, but who existed... This was living people, one that was on the march... They were our ragged brethren, our miserable brethren ... Those sinister devils of the plains that Sarmiento described in his *Facundo* had not perished. They are alive in this instant and doing the same work [i.e. of butchering cattle] but now under a roof in operations much greater than those of [their nineteenth-century bosses—the meat drying tycoons turned strongmen]. On October 17th they came out to ask for an explanation for their captivity, to demand a place in the sun, and they appeared with their butcher’s blades in their belts—a threat to the affluent neighborhoods of Barrio Norte. We felt chills seeing them parade as a silent horde with signs that threatened to take a terrible revenge. (Martínez 2005 [1956]: 55-56, my translation)

In these ‘black’ Peronist masses, the bourgeois *porteño* saw the incarnation of the unexorcised ghost of barbarism. They were viewed as an historical residue, a kind of inextinguishable substratum that had resurfaced and erupted upon the civilized City, demanding recognition and representation. In the process they exploded the traditional symbolic order that had relegated them to the periphery, both geographically and temporally, as something that should have been superseded in history, either through forced extinction or some progressive dialectic (see Svampa 2006: 322). Martínez’s characterization of this Peronist march reveals the extent to which this internal ‘other’—this lowly, miserable, and dark-skinned figure—had been forgotten, if not written out of, History (see also Margulis 1998c: 145).

³¹ I am familiar with this particular passage through Maristella Svampa’s (2006 [1994]) *¿Civilización o barbarie?*

Villeros

This encounter—and indeed collision—between the ‘two Argentinas’, frequently cast in the idiom of civilization and backwardness, continued with persistent tension through the first decade of Perón’s rule (1945-1955). As the ‘barbaric hordes’ of *cabecitas negras* became the protagonists in a reformist political project, both the radical left (communists and socialists) and the oligarchic liberals formed an anti-Peronist alliance (Guber 2004: 116). Indeed, the latter saw Perón as having vitiated democracy and ushered in a totalitarian rule. The political polarity between the Peronists and the anti-Peronists only sharpened the disdain toward the *cabecitas negras*, who enjoyed not only political but economic mobilization. Indeed, as Ratier states, when the *cabecitas* saw themselves as protagonists in national politics their disposition was not one of confinement to the *villas*, but rather one of open engagement with the City, through which they also enjoyed economic participation (1971a: 110).

Yet while the Peronist masses exercised their might for a time, Perón’s economic policies began to fail toward the mid 1950s, ultimately foreclosing their opportunities for mobility. After the fall of his second government in 1955, the *cabecita*, having become entrenched in poverty and now politically disempowered, came to be known more simply as the *villero*. Indeed, through these political-economic shifts, the *villas de emergencia* had ceased to provide a transitional step on the way to economic progress, and came to be known simply by their poverty—i.e. as *villas miseria*. As the *only* option for hundreds of thousands of people, including new migrants, the *villa* was a condition of life that came to represent the unrealized goals, if not failures, of Peronist modernization. Where the *cabecita* had represented a new social actor on the rise, his disempowered heir, the *villero*, represented one that fell behind. He once again became socially, politically, and economically marginal, and now became confined to the space of the *villa* itself. That the *villas* were believed to be worlds unto themselves was an index of the *cabecita*’s very disempowerment (Guber 2002: 362-364).

What one sees in the bourgeois construction of the *cabecita negra* and the *villero* he became is how a range of traits and attributes co-index each other. Indeed, as an ‘other’, the *cabecita negra* was at once originally rural, economically poor, phenotypically darker, culturally rude, and politically Peronist. Any of these traits, which on their own indexed backwardness, conjured up all the others. What came to define the *villero* as such, however, was a more explicit

moral loading to this co-indexicality. Indeed, the (im)moral imputations to the *villero* are what allowed the bourgeois sectors to have a *causal explanation* for him and his backwardness.

What have—and continue to be—the imputations to the *villero*'s moral being? As Guber has argued, the *villero* in Buenos Aires and its surroundings has been known both for his anomie and his apathy—i.e. he has been known to lack moral conduct and an interest in his own material and spiritual development, including that of his children. Seen as dirty, promiscuous, and indigent, the *villero* is known to embrace idleness and to prefer to engage in delinquency than to look for honest work. Where he does work, this is regarded as an effort to merely satisfy his daily needs, if not satisfy some vice. Indeed, the *villero* is known to abuse alcohol and drugs (Guber 2004: 117). On the dominant estimation by *la gente*—i.e. 'the people'—the *villero* is the object of moral condemnation.

Yet this condemnation has never existed alone. Indeed, it has always been associated with material lack (*carencia*). The *villero* lacks a number of things. In the first instance, he lacks a dignified dwelling, a title to any plot, and stable work. He often lacks running water, a sewer, electricity, and basic sanitary conditions. He further lacks sufficient food, clothing, and medicine. Finally, he often lacks access to a range of services, including health care and education. Basic human security is frequently lacking (Guber 2004: 117-118; Margulis and Lewin 1998: 208-211). As Guber has mentioned, lack in one necessity often produces lack in another, and the entire configuration of need can generate, either recursively or through a multiplying effect, further needs (*ibid*).

Crucial in the formulation of the social category of the *villero* was that class and culture came to *explain* one another. On one reading, the material lack produced the lack of morality in the *villero*: i.e. that the lack of material goods caused him to rob others; the lack of employment caused him to be apathetic, the lack of a decent house caused him to be promiscuous. On an opposite reading, it was the lack of morality—or other inherent qualities—that created the material lack: i.e. a lack of proper education (*incultura, ignorancia*) caused the apathy to work, the propensity toward crime, etc (see also Guber 1991). Certainly, both class (understood as lack) and culture (understood as immorality) have in the popular imagination been taken to reinforce each other in a cycle of material and moral poverty.

All of this is not to say that apathy, anomie, criminality, vice, promiscuity and poor parenting do not exist in the *villa*. Certainly they do. But they also exist everywhere else—i.e.

among the middle and upper classes of *porteños*—if in different forms. The difference is that for those classes, these traits do not define them as such. Interrogating the dominant ideology of the *villero*, one thus sees that there have been significant *erasures* (Irvine and Gal 2000). What has been elided are not simply the socio-economic factors undergirding the formative migrations of the early- to mid-twentieth century (i.e. the push and pull examined above) and the ways these factors have been consequential for shaping the class (caste) system in Argentina. What has also, and perhaps more importantly, been elided are the myriad ways that ‘*villeros*’ are also *human*. Certainly, the discourses that brand *villeros* as ‘animals’ (i.e. an *aluvión zoológico*) have ignored the ways that people in the *villas* cooperate, express affect, create opportunities, adapt to challenging circumstances, develop political representation and fight for their dignity on a daily basis (see Auyero 2001). In this way, the figure of the *villero* in the popular bourgeois imaginary has undergone great reductionism and homogenization in which only certain attributes have been selected (if not also projected upon them) so as to represent ‘those people’, while others have been suppressed. At the same time, and through similar mechanisms, the *villa* is frequently taken as a world unto itself—a world that is seen as impenetrable and inscrutable from the ‘outside’ (i.e. the City). While there are of course cultural codes that are unique to life in the *villas* (see also Alarcón 2003), what are erased are the multiple ways that life there articulates with life in ‘the City’, socially, economically, politically, culturally, etc.

Negros

What one sees in the historical construction of otherness in Buenos Aires is that it is frequently understood through, and cast in the idiom of, ‘blackness’. Indeed, the epithet *cabecita negra* (little black head) captured this well. What happened through that denomination, and what carried over into the characterization of the *villero*, was that a range of attributes and markers came to co-index each other. Indeed, the phenotypic darkness of the rural to urban migrant indexed a set of cultural features and vice versa. These, in turn, became amalgamated with poverty and economic marginality. What has happened over time is that blackness has come to pervade the entire ensemble of associations. In this way, one can speak of the *racialization* of both class and culture (see Margulis and Belvedere 1998, Margulis 1998a). Nowhere is this

more apparent than in the current term *negro* (black), which is used by those in Buenos Aires and its surroundings to reference anyone who is deemed marginal and undesirable. As perhaps the most inclusive epithet, the *negro* includes the *villero*.

Historically then, where the ‘other’ in the metropole *was* often phenotypically darker because he came from the Northern Provinces of Argentina (i.e. those that border Bolivia and Paraguay, who have darker, more indigenous populations), the cultural attributes he bore, and those they gave rise to, have become understood as ‘*negro*’, as has his class position. Where blackness has come to characterize this entire life-world, someone that has European (i.e. white) features, a phenomenon that is increasingly common as neoliberal reforms have eroded the middle class and swollen the *villas*, he may be a ‘*negro*’. This is especially if he is seen to bear the apathy, anomie, vices, and penchant for delinquency the *villas* are known for. In these ways, blackness is an inclusive explanatory idiom that references class, culture, (urban) geography, and still in many instances, phenotype.

What is interesting about this is that the denomination of *negro* has become somewhat unmoored from phenotype in the popular imaginary. Indeed, many in Buenos Aires will affirm that a *negro de mierda* does not *have* to be phenotypically darker. And they are right. However, what this affirmation elides is the fact that many that are called *negros* are phenotypically darker (or descend from these populations), which in turn elides the role that race, as a function of geopolitical phenomena, has played in the construction of blackness throughout history.

Reconciling Bolivian-ness and Blackness

What emerges through an investigation of the construction of otherness as blackness in Buenos Aires is a regime of discrimination that bundles together racial, cultural, economic, and geographic traits in ways similar to the construction of otherness as indian-ness in Bolivia. As I hope to have demonstrated, the precise terms of each regime and the ways that variables are signified through them can ultimately be traced to ideas about civilization and backwardness. Indeed, both the *indio* in Bolivia and the *negro* in Argentina have been cited as unwanted, internal others that must be managed, if not overcome, on the march toward progress. While an interesting project, my task in this chapter is much more modest.

Having illuminated the regime of blackness for Buenos Aires and its surroundings, I can now raise that key question of how the Bolivian immigrant is signified through it, and thus positioned socially and culturally both in the metropole and in its construction of the Argentine nation. Indeed, one must ask: if Buenos Aires has its *negros*, how does it receive and regard the Bolivian immigrant? How are indian-ness and blackness reconciled in practice? And how does Bolivian-ness fit into and help comprise the terms of the Argentine economy of otherness?

In this section, I explore the ways that Bolivians are both regarded as *negros* and as different from them. Doing both means investigating the construction of the *bolita*—the prejudicial term that is both levied against Bolivian immigrants and their Argentine-born descendants. Through the discussions I attempt to illuminate different perspectives both from ‘above’ and ‘outside’—as well as ‘within’—the Argentine class system. I also begin to show how the *bolita* is not simply a discursive construction; that it is also a condition of being that is made through the body of a Bolivian or his Argentine children. Building these discussions is necessary for the third section of the chapter—that which deals with face to face encounters between Bolivians who engage one another as *bolitas*.

The *Bolita* is Just Another *Negro*

Certainly, not all from the Capital city or the Province of Buenos Aires carry prejudice. I know many Argentines who are tolerant and embrace tolerance as a politics. Coming from all social positions, many are reflective on matters of class and culture, and race and creed, and will tell you that the challenges facing their society are complex and merit critical reflection. Many will point to the range of media that are dedicated to deconstructing the Argentine and his habits, both good and bad (see Lanata 2004). Yet like any nation, and here I include my own, there are numbers that do carry prejudice, and for a range of reasons. Unfortunately for Bolivian immigrants and their Argentine-born children, they are frequently made into objects of discrimination, along with other ‘native’ sectors of Argentine society.

One of the common prejudicial stances taken by middle and upper class *porteños*, i.e. those who claim the authority to hold such a position, is that any of the undesirables in Argentina is simply a *negro*. The poor are *negros*. The unemployed are *negros*. Those with a provincial

look are *negros*. Those that live in the *villas* are *negros*. The uneducated are *negros*. Lumped in with them are the Paraguayans and the Bolivians. Thus the *paraguas* and the *bolitas*—their prejudicial denominations, respectively—are *negros*.

Let us look here at how the *bolita* is just another *negro*—i.e. what he and the undifferentiated *negro* have in common as regards their discrimination and social marginalization. In the first instance, and as mentioned above, *negro* is an inclusive and homogenizing social category. As just another *negro*, the *bolita* is not seen to bear any of the native particularities that distinguish him from any other Bolivian—for these do not matter ‘from above’. Indeed, he is discriminated against for other markers.

First among them is class. Beginning with residence patterns, Bolivian immigrants most often reside in the fields they work, or, if in construction, textile production, or some other kind of factory work, in working class or poorer neighborhoods (*barrios humildes*). Many, like their Argentine counterparts, live in *villas*. That is, in both the Capital and in its surroundings (*conurbano*), Bolivians typically inhabit the marginal areas that are said to be populated by *negros*. In Escobar for example, many Bolivians reside in the surrounding fields; others reside in the Barrio Lambertuchi. This Barrio, accessible on one end by the *Avenida de los Inmigrantes*, lays the ‘other’ side of the Panamerican Highway. Indeed, some in the Center of Escobar will refer to ‘that side’ of their city as “Bolivia”, lumping its Argentine residents in with the ‘*bolitas*’. Within the Barrio Lambertuchi, Argentines will typically refer to the side where many Bolivians reside (and where the CBE is located) as “the end” (*al fondo*) of the barrio. While in a sense this is true, being that beyond the CBE the settlement gives way to the fields, and it was from these fields that that side of the barrio was cut, it is a way that those who might be called *negros* by the local bourgeoisie create social distance and separation from the ‘*bolitas*’.

While Bolivians may come to achieve certain economic mobility (progress) through years of hard work and sacrifice, they have always come from a life characterized by material lack (*carencia*). As immigrants in Argentina, they continue to live with such lack for years—often decades—as they attempt to accumulate savings in order to capitalize—i.e. to purchase a truck, build a workshop—with which to make a fit livelihood. As immigrants then, most Bolivians tend to live in unplanned or new settlements, and often in informal or makeshift dwellings. It is not uncommon to find recent immigrants or temporary migrants sharing a few mattresses on the floor of a single room as they work to find economic security and a more

permanent dwelling—both of which often prove elusive. If they live in the fields, it is often in precarious shacks (*chozas*) made of loose boards and metal *chapa*.

The unpredictable nature of the informal economy in which Bolivians and other migrants work often dictates the terms of their transient and precarious residence pattern. Low wages and a need to migrate for seasonal work are among two factors that challenge the attainment of a dignified dwelling in the short term, though a willingness to work through these conditions may translate into progress over time. Even where Bolivians do attain economic progress, changing residence is not always easy, for their marginalization as *bolitas* tends to keep them marginalized in the *barrios humildes*. Indeed, even when economically mobile, their racial and cultural profiles will still mark them as *negros*—i.e. undesirables—from the point of view of the ‘people’ (*la gente*), as I show below.

Tied to residence patterns is another class-based attribute that marks *bolitas* as *negros*. This is the belief that they ‘usurp’ state or privately owned resources without contributing anything in return. To begin with, the *villero*, whether Bolivian or Paraguayan or Argentine, is most often occupying municipal or privately owned lands illegally. As Margulis notes, the *villa* begins in illegality; it is a settlement that emerges through an invasive spatial occupation (1998a: 25). This is most often the case because rural to urban migrants following economic opportunities initially lack the resources to rent or construct a ‘proper’ dwelling in a settled neighborhood—which is not to say that, had they these economic resources, they would be welcomed because of their ‘black’ cultural characteristics. Where their residence pattern is characterized as an invasion, there is the concomitant belief that these *invasores* come to usurp services provided by the City or local municipality at the cost of those who *do* contribute to society. Indeed, the common criticism of the *negros* in general is: “Where are they getting their water from?” “Why am I, as a law-abiding citizen, paying for state hand-outs (like Plan Familiar) when these *negros* won’t work?” “Who is paying the costs to educate these *negros*, and provide them health care?”

Though we’ll see below that within the class of *negros*, the *bolitas* are seen to be usurping ‘Argentine’ resources, the point here is that, seen from outside and above, all *negros* (and specifically the *villeros*) are seen to usurp resources, both public and private. At the same time, the matter is complex. On the one hand, while the *negros* are those employed in the informal economy, and therefore do not pay taxes to fund services and infrastructure, one should

note that more than half of the Argentine workforce is similarly working ‘*en negro*’. This includes a significant portion of the middle class. These are often the very populations that classify the underclass pejoratively as *negros*. Moreover, some of the largest tax evaders are the rich. In this way, those that ‘don’t contribute anything in return’ span the entire class hierarchy, making the claim that only *negros* ‘take advantage of the people’ a problematic one. On the other hand, much of the state’s largess stems from Peronism, a modality in which those controlling national and local politics do so only because they have created and cultivated clienteles, and often conspicuously so. In this way, dependence on the state, to the extent it exists, is as much a creation of the *state* as it is a safety net demanded by the poor. What is often forgotten in this is that the current class system in Buenos Aires and the ills associated with it are very much a function of state-led economic policies, whether those be the policies of import substitution in the 1930s and 40s or the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s. Thus where the dominant view of the *negros* is that they are to blame for what ails Buenos Aires and Argentina, one must not forget that the state has played a major role in the order of things.

Yet the *bolita* is a *negro* for reasons other than those traditionally viewed through the analytic of class. He is just another of the undesired for racial and cultural reasons as well. With regard to the former, what marks a *bolita* as a *negro* in the ‘European’ City, and thus serves as a means for his discrimination, is his darker skin, eyes, and hair, his shorter stature, and his facial features. Certainly, Andean or ‘*norteño*’ features figured heavily into what was originally the *cabecita negra*. Much of that rural to urban migration originated in the Northern Provinces where the border between Argentina and Bolivia is porous. This phenotypic ‘blackness’, which as mentioned above operates in conjunction with a distinctive ‘class’ and ‘cultural’ aspect, certainly serves to exclude all *negros* from certain kinds of jobs and spaces (see Margulis and Urresti 1998). While there may be a particular ecology to this exclusion in the City, in which the *bolita* has an even lesser chance of becoming a bus or taxi driver, kiosk employee, doorman, or any other occupation that mixes with the ‘people’ (*la gente*) because of his phenotypic Bolivian-ness and what this indexes, the *bolita* is nevertheless part of the *negros* in being denied opportunity and access across a range of settings.

Finally, the *bolita* is subsumed into the inclusive category of *negro* for cultural reasons. As we have seen, one of the defining characteristics of the *negro* is that he is defined through lack. In addition to lacking a range of material things, the *negro* also lacks ‘culture’ and

‘education’, the latter understood as socialization itself. What he does not have is thus the culture of the City. The *bolita* is also seen to be lacking; he also lacks competence in cosmopolitan codes. This lack can be seen as a function of rural origins. Indeed, like the *cabecita negra* that gave rise to the *villero*, and to the *negro* generally, the *bolita* is most often from rural areas in Bolivia. Were he from a Bolivian city like Cochabamba, he still wouldn’t enjoy esteem in the bourgeois *porteño* estimation because ‘civilization’ in Bolivia is not the same ‘civilization’ in Argentina—let alone that of ‘European’ Buenos Aires.

Where the lack of culture (*incultura*) is not seen as a function of rural origins, the *bolita* is seen as just another *negro* because he has often adopted the contemporary cultural traits of the ‘native’ Argentine *negros*. Young Bolivian immigrants or the Argentine-born children of Bolivians may, depending on the context, adopt cultural codes that are popular among the Argentine underclass. Styles of speech and dress, tastes in music, and preferences of soccer club are all ways that *bolitas* can be *negros*. Because of rampant discrimination against Bolivians and their children, the adoption of these codes in certain settings can be a way of securing oneself against violence. Such efforts, however, are not always successful, as one’s racial profile may belie Bolivian origins and provide a key means for discrimination.

A final cultural reason that *bolitas* are incorporated into the category of *negros* is because they are, like *negros* generally (and *villeros* specifically), believed to commit crime. However, because of nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes, both among the Argentine citizenry and within the upper echelons of government, Bolivians have been said to commit even *more* crime than Argentines. This attitude differentiates the *bolita* from the *negro* in a negative way. Such beliefs, however, have been shown to be false based on empirical evidence. Argentine sociologists have further deconstructed them to show that they reveal a common practice of blaming the immigrant for the woes of Argentina so as to displace public furor from the underlying issues, namely how economic crises and increasing poverty have been a function of federal policy (see Grimson and Kessler 2005).

To conclude, the *bolita* is seen to be just another *negro* (*un negro más*) from outside and above for reasons that have to do with class, race, and culture. As mentioned above, in the Argentine economy of otherness, all of these markers co-index one another, such that one conjures up all the others. A *negro* is simultaneously poor, dark, and retrograde. Where many Argentines deny that Argentina is a racist country (often citing that there are no phenotypically

black people through which racist attitudes might arise), what one sees living in the humble districts are the contours of a caste system in which class and culture are racialized and where race connotes both poverty and cultural degeneracy. Being a *negro*—i.e. one of the undesired and disdained—the *bolita* suffers the same discrimination.

At the same time, the Bolivian is often differentiated from the *negros* in a number of ways, most of them cultural at root. As I show below, this differentiation can both redeem the ‘*bolita*’ and discriminate him further.

The *Bolita* is Different from the *Negro*

Los bolitas no son negros; son bolitas nomás

The *bolitas* are not *negros*; they are simply *bolitas*.

—Ivana, young working-class woman in Escobar

There are many ways in which Bolivian immigrants and their Argentine-born children are distinguished from the general class of *negros*. These distinctions can be made along a number of lines that include racial features, cultural attributes, and country of origin. All of them focus on their specific ‘Bolivian-ness’. Let us begin with racial features. While Bolivians are often considered *negros* because of their darker phenotype, one sees that there are finer points of distinction made between those that comprise the underclass. Bolivian immigrants often have a greater degree of phenotypic darkness, which is often accompanied by distinctly Andean (i.e. altiplanic) features. Of course, not all Bolivians bear these features. Indeed, where some *Qochalos* (from Cochabamba) and *Chapacos* (from Tarija) may “pass” as just another *negro* because of their lighter skin, taller stature, or blue or green eyes, a *Qolla* (from Potosí) almost never can³². As I argue below, there is an argument to be made that *Qollas* become the targets of xenophobic attacks and robberies—i.e. made *bolitas*—more than any other kind of Bolivian because their altiplanic features are those for which the *bolita* is most known. This is just one of

³² The Bolivian writer from Cochabamba, Edmundo Paz Soldán, recounts his experience in Buenos Aires, noting that when he mentioned he was from Bolivia he was most often met with surprise: “¿Boliviano? ¡Pero si no parecés!”. (Bolivian? But you don’t look it!) Where this surprise was something of a compliment, it shows that altiplanic features are those that most mark the *bolita*, and are something that are viewed as undesirable. <http://www.elboomeran.com/blog-post/117/4976/edmundo-paz-soldan/dejen-de-molestar-bolivianos/>

the ways in which the content of the social category of *bolita* is particularly *Qolla* in nature. As I argue below, the *bolita* is often *Qolla* not just phenotypically, but culturally as well.

Beyond racial characteristics, Bolivian immigrants and their children are distinguished from those that are called *negro* for certain social and cultural attributes. To begin with, there are the popular folkloric displays that differentiate the Bolivian culturally from the rest of the underclass. Where the *negro* is typically thought to listen to *cumbia villera*, Bolivian immigrants and their children often enjoy the music and dances brought from their regions of origin (see Carmona 2008). Some of their festivals dedicated to celebrating Bolivian national culture in Buenos Aires are truly enormous, with the *Fiesta de Charrúa* thought to attract over 40,000 spectators yearly. Tastes in music and food thus mark the *bolita* as different from the *negro*, and often do not engender the same disdain.

Apart from their national culture, there are stereotypic characterizations of Bolivians that differentiate them from Argentines generally. According to dominant estimations that span the class hierarchy, Bolivians are believed to keep unto themselves or otherwise enclave themselves (i.e. to be *cerrados*). Linked to this is the popular belief that Bolivians are naturally untrusting (*desconfiados*). While there is some truth to these beliefs, noting that histories of exploitation in Bolivia have encouraged solidarities based on lines of ethnicity and kinship, one should note that in Argentina, both openness and trust are less a function of their cultural ‘essence’ (*esencia*) and more a function of the fact that Bolivians are frequent targets of xenophobic violence (see Caggiano [2005], Grimson [1999] and Szulik and Valiente [1998]). Such beliefs that the ‘*bolitas*’ are socially withdrawn and untrusting are often used to justify Argentine frustrations at their lack of integration (*integración*), which in turn may undergird more prejudicial beliefs that Bolivians have migrated to ‘usurp’ Argentine jobs (or other national resources) without contributing anything back to ‘society’. In these ways, the *bolita* who takes advantage of the people (*la gente*) is different than the *negro* who does so.

There is one final cultural difference that distinguishes Bolivians from the Argentines known as *negros*. Where the *negro villero* is known to be unemployed and not interested in obtaining a job, allegedly preferring to feed his vice through delinquency, the Bolivian in contrast is famous for his work ethic. Indeed, many Bolivians are often preferred by Argentine bosses, whether in construction, horticulture, or textile manufacture, because they will work long hours and forego days off (see Vargas 2005). In the CBE’s Market, the Bolivian work ethic is

clear: many involved in production will have spent the entire day in the fields; those in the commercialization of its produce will stay up all night. Others, who will have come in with purchased products at Buenos Aires Central Market will have spent hours making the trip down and back up to Escobar, and then work through the night handling the freight. Thus, there is a great deal of truth in the differences between the Bolivian and Argentine work ethic.

While this Bolivian attribute is, from the point of view of employers, something that differentiates them from working class Argentines in a positive way, it also fuels discrimination against the *bolita*. For the Bolivian, as most will affirm—and is in often the case—will not simply work longer hours; he will often work for a lower wage. As many state, he will work for a plate of food. Because of this cultural difference in work ethic, the *bolita* is believed to be immigrating en masse to Argentina to take away Argentine jobs—underselling the local labor force. This has engendered a great deal of nationalistic and xenophobic discourse against the *bolita*. Yet as Grimson and Kessler (2005) have noted, immigration from bordering countries has remained constant over the last century, despite political claims to the contrary. What is thus happening is not that *bolitas* are taking jobs away from Argentines, but rather that Argentines are now having to compete for jobs that they used to disdain (ibid: 128). Indeed, what has changed is the very structure of wealth in Argentina.

For all of these reasons, the Bolivian, as a *bolita*, is distinguished from those that are called *negros*, and often by these ‘*negros*’ themselves. Indeed, one of the ways that the Argentine underclass attenuates their own discrimination by the middle and upper classes is to create both difference and distance between themselves and those who are deemed (and who they also deem) to be the most inferior. On most accounts, these are the Bolivians. In this way, Bolivians are made into *bolitas*. Bolivian-ness, whether it be phenotypic or cultural markers, or simply through their foreign birth, provides a set of tangible features through which to make such distinctions. What often aids this ‘othering’ of the *bolita* both from and by the *negro* is the familiar discourse that the immigrant is the root of the country’s ills. As many have noted, the idiom of the scapegoat (*chivo expiatorio*) is a means through which this often occurs (see Margulis 1998a: 29-31; Szulik and Valiente 1998: 237). Where the immigrant is targeted, whether from above or by the ‘*negros*’ themselves, it is most often the *bolita*—long before the Peruvian, Paraguayan, and Chilean—that bears the brunt of the xenophobia.

Displacing Discrimination

In the foregoing discussions, I have showed how the Bolivian is made an ‘other’ in Argentina. Given the dominant discriminatory logic, I have showed how, in the first instance, the Bolivian is lumped in with the rest of the Argentine underclass, and thus classified as an undesirable *negro*. I have also just showed how the Bolivian, as a function of his Bolivian-ness, is differentiated from the *negro*, and made into a *bolita*. My overall argument has been that one cannot understand the social situation of the Bolivian in Buenos Aires without understanding the historical construction of blackness in Argentina. That is, that one cannot understand the *bolita* as an ‘other’ without understanding what it means to be a *negro* in Argentina.

Yet the discussion has so far been limited to showing how the *bolita* is similar and different from the *negro*. What remains to be illuminated is the semiotic mechanism by which the construction of the *bolita*, and thus the discrimination that flows from this, often *depends* upon that of the *negro*. The semiotic process that both relates the *bolita* to, and differentiates him from, the *negro* is one that Margulis and Urresti (1998) have called ‘*desplazamiento*’ (displacement) and that Irvine and Gal (2000) would term *fractal recursivity*. Stating that this phenomenon is just one of many modalities of social differentiation, Gal and Irvine have defined this phenomenon as “the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level.” Let us explore how this works, at least in the abstract.

As noted above, lower class Argentines who have been called *cabecita negra*, *villero*, and *negro*, and thus endured great injury to their human dignity, often look to attenuate their own discrimination and marginalization from above by creating distance between themselves and an ‘other’ who can be made to occupy the very bottom of the hierarchy (see Margulis and Urresti 1998: 11, Margulis and Lewin 1998: 206). Thus, where one can argue that, as per the logics of relational difference and hierarchization, the bourgeois *porteño* has created the ‘black’ so as to differentiate and exalt himself, this *negro* has in turn created an ‘other’ (one that is also created from above) to do the same. This ‘other’ is most often the immigrant, and within the class of immigrants, most often the Bolivian.

There are specific discourses that are harnessed in this ‘recursive’ work of othering and discrimination. First off, where the *negro villero* is impoverished, one of the ways he discriminates against the *bolita* (who often enjoys greater economic mobility because of his work

ethic and willingness to sacrifice), is to mobilize the bourgeois *porteño* discourse of racial superiority and refocus it on this specifically Bolivian other. That is, while the *negro* may be seen to be racially marked with regard to ‘white’ and ‘European’ Buenos Aires, he can in turn claim racial superiority to the Bolivian, who is often phenotypically darker and with specifically Andean features. In this way, the *negro* not only creates a new bottom dweller through racial means, he simultaneously aligns himself with whiter society, perhaps appealing to common nationality in the process. One should note that there are in fact variants to racial discourse that may be employed to specifically create the *bolita*. Where the bourgeois *porteño* typically views the *negro* (*villero*) as filthy, being that he lives in makeshift settlements, often without adequate water and sewer systems, the *negro* may harness this ‘othering’ and refocus it on the Bolivian. That is, where the *negro* is often called a *villero sucio* (dirty shanty-dweller), the *negro* may in turn harness claims that it is the *bolita* that is responsible for a cholera outbreak, or the *bolita* that doesn’t bathe. Indeed, living in humble districts, one notes the degree to which lower class Argentines use deodorants and perfumes. Such hygienic ‘tastes’ (Bourdieu 1994) are certainly motivated given the nature of the political-economic field.

A final example of this recursive projection of ‘otherness’—and the displacement of discrimination it entails—is the way that lower class Argentines have harnessed historical notions of the ‘new migrant’ as a threat to the political-economic establishment and focused it on the Bolivian as the ‘new immigrant’. This phenomenon of seeing the newcomer (*recién llegado*) as a threat to the ‘nation’ stems from a number of factors. Let us remember that the *cabecita negra* was the original newcomer that, through the Peronist movement, threatened the very foundations of the political economic order. The *negros* that have descended from this former ‘new worker’ (*nuevo obrero*) have become the protagonists in the ‘othering’ of new immigrants (and particularly of the Bolivian) through a similar discourse that now comes from *within* Peronism (here as a specifically nationalistic movement) just as much as it comes from conservative parties who similarly (and wrongly) point to a foreign phenomenon to explain the woes of the Argentine economy. In this way, the *negros*, who were once the ‘usurpers’ of Buenos Aires, have found new ‘usurpers’ in the *bolitas*. By making the *bolitas* the destabilizing force, the *negros* align themselves with the establishment. Certainly, this is a complex phenomenon, given that this xenophobic politics is spawned by the national parties in efforts to

shore up their voting bases, revealing that the recursive projection of the *bolita* as usurper is co-produced by both upper and lower Argentine classes.

In the Argentine economy of otherness, it is the Bolivian who is most frequently made to occupy the most inferior position. Indeed, one of the most forceful insults, either from above or within the lower class, is to call another a *boliviano*. On the dominant, prejudicial estimation, ‘Bolivian’ is *in itself* an epithet that connotes someone undesirable for reasons that comprehend race, class, and culture (see also Szulik and Valiente 1998: 240). Yet in *porteño* politics of discrimination, many do not stop there, and frequently level “*boliviano de mierda*” (shitty Bolivian) or “*bolita*” at another that may be, like him, called *negro* or *villero* by another.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Argentine soccer culture. Indeed, there are few practices that Argentines say define them more than their soccer. Public, national recognition that there is no position more disdained than that of the Bolivian is crystallized in one of the chants (*cánticos*) that the fans (*barra brava*) of River Plate levy against their cross-town rivals in La Boca. Indeed, where the Barrio de la Boca was once paradigmatic of European immigration to the port city of Buenos Aires, it has since been known to have become ‘overrun’ by immigrants from neighboring countries—namely Bolivia. Thus, the greatest insult to levy against this Argentine club is to call them ‘Bolivians’, and by extension, filthy slum-dwellers.

Son la mitad más uno / son de Bolivia y Paraguay / yo a veces me pregunto / che negro sucio / si te bañas. Son todos unos putos bolivianos / que en una villa tienen que vivir / tu hermana rebolea la cartera / tu vieja chupa pijas por ahí. Allá por la ribera viven todos bolivianos / que cagan en la vereda / y se limpian con la mano. El sábado a la bailanta / se van a poner en pedo / y se van de vacaciones / a la playa del Riachuelo (ctd. in Edelstein 1998: 265-266).

To conclude, one might note that where a *negro* makes a Bolivian into a *bolita*, he reproduces the entire regime of blackness that others him as well.

How *Negros* Make *Bolitas* in Escobar

Having illuminated the regime of blackness in Argentina and the ways that Bolivian-ness is signified through it, we may now turn to the ways in which Bolivians and their Argentine-born children are made *bolitas* in Escobar. The following ethnographic examples show how this process of being ‘othered’ as Bolivians—most often at the hands of those that are considered *negros* by the middle and upper classes—is both violent and dehumanizing. Each of the events I discuss below reveals not simply the way Bolivians are made into *bolitas*, but also how this *feels*—i.e. how the violation of one’s basic dignity because of his Bolivian-ness is not simply humiliating and a challenge to one’s self-esteem, but something that engenders anger, sadness, and frustration. As we’ll see, it is the *Qollas* that often bear the brunt of Argentine discrimination, being that *Qolla* characteristics (whether racial, linguistic or cultural) are those that are most emblematic of Bolivian-ness.

The Beating of Braulio Perca

There are many ways that Bolivians are made into *bolitas*. While the most quotidian involve discrimination in institutions like schools and health clinics, in which epithets like “*bolita sucia*” (dirty *bolita*) are levied, one cannot overlook the frequency with which violence is not symbolic but physical. (This is, of course, not to deny that symbolic violence is not registered by the body and spirit). Indeed, in the barrio, Bolivians and their Argentine-born children are frequently robbed and beaten, or simply beaten. Where such assaults are not economically motivated, seeing that the Bolivian is known to always be carrying some kind of money given his work ethic, they are more straightforwardly xenophobic. Bolivians are targeted for beatings just because they are Bolivian—and one of the ways this is discerned is by the color of their skin. Indeed, one of the sayings I heard repeated was “The darker you are, the more they’ll beat you.” (*Cuanto más negro sos, más te pegan.*) While the phenotypically darker are most often the *Qollas*, I know of *Chapacos* that will wear hooded sweatshirts at night to conceal their Bolivian features, lest these tempt the local thugs (*vagos, chorros*) into jumping them. Victims of routine beatings are not always the darker Bolivians, however. The beating I recount here was of an

Argentine-born *Qolla*, whose phenotype was much lighter—similar to the typical *Qochalo* 's. Braulio was said to enjoy better occupational options because he 'didn't look so Bolivian', and indeed had a service job attending to the 'people' in the Center of Escobar. His attack was at the hands of Argentine *negros* that couldn't get such a job, which is not to say that these *vagos* ever tried. They jumped Braulio not just because he had money and a better status through his dignified work, they jumped him because he was a *Bolivian* with money and better social status. To 'locate' him (*ubicarlo*), they made him a *bolita* by knocking his front teeth out³³.

Juan had been seventeen years old³⁴. Coming home one Saturday night, he was attacked by a group of thieves (*chorros*). Orlín said that although they demanded his wallet, meaning the pretense was a robbery, they simply began to beat him. He recalled how they quickly overwhelmed him with their numbers, knocking him to the ground. They began to kick him, yelling out out "dale, ¡bolita de mierda!" One of the *vagos* kicked Braulio in the face, knocking his front teeth out. Braulio went home, showed his parents and went straight into his room. Orlín said that Braulio did not come out for an entire week. He did not want to face the barrio, his friends, or his girlfriend with a face that had been so marked. For he was ashamed of himself (*tenía una vergüenza terrible*). That is, he was ashamed of his face, of his inability to defend himself, of being victimized so severely. Such victimization was no doubt an affront to his masculinity, something I have also endured being jumped, punched, and robbed. Confronting the world again—or even just looking in the mirror—must have been humiliating. Braulio no doubt felt his Bolivian-ness (his phenotype, his background, his associations, his people) in ways that he never had before; indeed, he now *wore* it on his face in ways he never had before. He had been made a *bolita*; his 'otherness' had been inscribed on his face—a face he had to eventually show the barrio.

³³ While today the *negros* beat Bolivians, often because of their economic progress, their forebears had earlier encountered the same treatment by the 'people'. Ratier explains how violence against the economically mobile newcomer has a long history in Buenos Aires, noting that *cabecitas negras* who had progressed economically were often jumped by local 'whites', seeing their positions threatened. This was not just a class war, but a "color war" (Ratier 1971a: 13-14).

³⁴ Juan's beating, which had happened a year before the start of my fieldwork, was told to me by his older brother, Orlín. I never asked Juan about it directly because I knew how painful the memory was for him, and I didn't want to make him re-live it. As I saw it, my Bolivian friends suffered such hurtful depredations so often that direct questioning for the sake of making their situation known to broader audiences was sometimes not worth it (other times I thought it was). For doing so would cause people dear to me to re-live in painful ways how they had been dehumanized. Where I had never been dehumanized in the ways they had been, I often felt that formal anthropological inquiry was at odds with my desire to honor them, which is not to say that such respect could not be had precisely through asking them to share their experiences with me. When violence occurred, it always presented challenges to know how best to 'be' with those caught in its wake.

Orlín had been beaten before by local *vagos* as well, though not as badly. He tells me that he remembers exactly who the three perpetrators were, and that he holds a terrible rage over it, and is waiting for the moment that he'll settle the scores. Indeed, Orlín never forgot this affront to his human dignity. I can only imagine what he felt seeing his younger brother—whom he loved dearly—get his teeth knocked out; the visceral blow he must have felt to see his brother return home with broken ribs, with a swollen face, and with a bloody gap where his front teeth had been. Seeing this would remind him of the racial epithets his mother had received—*bolita sucia*—or those levied against his father—*boliviano de mierda*. Had they not been forced to abandon their home in Potosí because their fields had dried up?

The Killing of Norberta Quispe and Ernesto Yanaje

Early one Saturday morning in January 2007, Norberta Quispe and her husband Ernesto Yanaje left their four children at home to sell fruits and vegetables out of the back of their pickup truck. Like others in the barrio, their truck carried the typical wood-paneled cargo hold over the bed (*cajón de madera*) to increase their payload, and they would have stocked it at the CBE's market that dawn (*al mayor*) to sell to various clients throughout the day (*al menor*). They had worked out a routine of sales in nearby locales in the poor and violent sprawl of Buenos Aires—locales which did not have easy access to the concentrating markets such as the CBE's. For Norberta and Ernesto, the hope was that the sale of their produce would, as on any other day of the *lucha* (struggle), feed their children at home and the one that neighbors said they had on the way. Everyone knew their family as a quiet, hard-working, and respectful one, and it was not uncommon to see their kids playing in the unpaved street in front of their house.

That Saturday Norberta and Ernesto had gone over to Bella Vista, a criss-crossing of streets in Buenos Aires' sprawl (*conurbano*) not far from Merlo and Moreno, two locales heavily populated by Bolivians. By 1pm, they were both dead, having been shot behind their truck. The exact details of their killing were unclear, and would remain so. The *Bonaerense*—the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires—were known to be understaffed for the level of violence in the already impoverished *conurbano*, where Argentina's economic crisis was perhaps felt most acutely. Murders in the urban sprawl, as in the Capital, would thus often go unresolved, leaving

the families of the victims to suffer a further injustice that would never be done. This was believed to be particularly true of the murder of Bolivians, over whom the police are said to be indifferent. As many would ask rhetorically: What did it matter to the Argentines and their police force that another pair of undocumented, unwanted, *bolitas* never made it back home? What did it matter if they bled to death at 1pm on a Saturday afternoon, thinking of their children whom they would never see again? Indeed, it took great courage and often considerable risk for Bolivians to even file police reports for the beatings, robberies, and homicides they endured for fear of incarceration for their illegal residence or, worse yet, some kind of retribution. To this day it is not apparent that there was ever more than a cursory inquiry into the killing of Norberta and Ernesto, as is true of many homicides in the sprawl. Outside of the barrio, Norberta and Ernesto are likely only statistics.

Inside the barrio, however, Norberta and Ernesto were people; they were family. Indeed, they were human beings who were loved and appreciated by friends and neighbors, and for whom the sadness and pain of their loss were terribly raw. As Norberta and Ernesto were Evangelicals (*creyentes*), their church whose *culto* they attended remembered them in their Sunday services with hymns and citations from the Bible. Norberta's and Ernesto's bodies were retrieved from the morgue the next day, and a wake (*velorio*) was held to allow everyone from the community, both *creyentes* and Catholics (*mundanos*), to pay their respects. An event such as this was reason enough for the *creyentes* and *mundanos* to set aside the rifts that often separated them and to mourn the loss of one that belonged to neither, but rather to the whole Bolivian family.

At the wake, people crowded around Norberta's and Ernesto's open caskets in the sweltering heat of mid-day. The lights were off yet the room was half-lit; the strength of the sun outside was more than enough to illuminate the tragedy. There was a prevailing silence unusual for such numbers of people. Norberta's and Ernesto's children were held to one side. They looked down, the eldest still silent from the shock; the younger perhaps trying to understand what it all meant. Indeed, this night, and for some nights to come, they would be fed by others. I looked over at Orlín, whose family lived next to Norberta and Ernesto. Our eyes locked, and I saw a profound sadness in him that I had never seen in anyone before. It was a look of utter loss. As I looked around, others had it too—and it was mixed with rage and frustration. Many knew

that it could just as easily have been them, for who hadn't sold produce out of the back of their truck?

From the church we set out en masse for the Municipal Cemetery of Escobar. We traveled in a motorcade of pickup trucks, each with its own *cajón de madera*, and just like the one Ernesto and Norberta left behind. These vehicles typified the Bolivians. They were a badge of identity for those that worked the fields (*quinteros*); they indexed their struggle (*lucha*), their work ethic, and their 'progress'. On this occasion, however, they would not be a source of envy, or something to be lorded over a neighbor. Rather these meanings would be suspended. Taken together in our motorcade, and organized like box cars in an interminable train, the trucks spoke of a level of solidarity so often muted in the barrio. For here, the cargo was not crates of squash or sacks of carrots that might bring families differential fortunes. Rather, the cargo was the Bolivians themselves: friends, neighbors, and *paisanos* of all ethnic backgrounds, all riding together—all sitting on crates that were empty. This time, the trucks symbolized not difference but commonality. This time, as we wove along the Avenida de Inmigrantes toward the Cemetery, the trucks lined up to make a claim about human dignity. This was a claim that had been made many times before in Argentina. And it needed to be made over and over again; it would be made that day over the bodies of Norberta and Ernesto.

At the cemetery, Norberta's and Ernesto's caskets were lowered into graves that had been dug that morning. People crowded around, standing on top of the mounded dirt to witness the moment. I'll never forget the sound of the clods of earth hitting their wooden caskets. It was like thunder. It was final. And it triggered a wail not just from a number of the old Potosina women who were relatives of the deceased, but from their children, whom I hadn't heard make a single sound until that moment. Their collective wailing reminded me that I was far from home as well, for I had never heard anything of the kind.

After everyone threw bunches of flowers onto the caskets, creating great piles, two of the pastors from the Evangelical church began to speak. They situated death within the Christian universe as they understood it through the Evangelical gospel. They barely even mentioned Norberta, her pregnancy, Ernesto, and their four children. Nor did they mention the way they were shot dead on a Saturday afternoon. Rather, it was an absolutizing and other-worldly rhetoric meant to place human life, suffering, and the pain of death within an encompassing

sleeve of meaning that began and ended with God. They insisted that we don't control what happens on this earth. God does. *He* decides when it is our time. All is ordained by *Him*.

Dios ama el creyente. Dios ama el pecador. Lo que Dios odia es el pecado.
God loves the believer. God loves the sinner. What God hates is sin itself.

I was furious. Norberta and Ernesto had been murdered in cold blood, their children had just been orphaned, and their killers, not only symbolically exonerated here, were likely free to kill again out there. Would their next victims be *bolitas* as well? This seemed not to matter to the pastors, who were hell-bent on other-worldly salvation.

I wondered if I was the only one who thought their rhetoric failed to do justice to Norberta and Ernesto, and to all Bolivians in Argentina. As Norberta and Ernesto lay motionless under shovels of dirt and flowers, a man—a *mundano*—got up and forcefully stitched the moment back into the fabric of *this* world:

Nosotros somos trabajadores. Nosotros somos humildes. Pero no somos animales!!
We are a working people. We are a humble people. But we are *not animals!!*

In three deft and terse moves, the *mundano* hit everyone between the eyes. Poetically paralleling the pastor's attempt to reduce the chaos of human existence into a simple, single truth, the *mundano* challenged him and his other-worldly appeal. The issue before us was not how human beings should behave before God, with an eye toward entrance into His heavenly Kingdom. Rather, the question before us concerned human being itself, on this earth, beyond God. In the Evangelical universe, everyone is a human being—Bolivians and Argentines, *bolitas* and *negros*. All are loved. Yet in this world—in the slums and sprawl of the *conurbano*, not to mention in the *villas* of the Capital—not everyone is allowed to be human. Some, often the Bolivians more than any other, are consistently denied their humanity. These are the ones who are kicked in the teeth, shot dead, and pushed from trains; these are the ones made into *bolitas*. And not only are they treated like animals, they—and by extension, their community—are made to *feel* like animals.

Catalyzing a movement, others began to speak. Another man, in a very distinct *potoco*³⁵ speech reiterated:

No somos animales—un perro tirado allí. ¡Tenemos derechos!

We are not animals—a dog thrown here or there. We have rights!

“We are not animals”—as if this were a point in doubt. Yet the ‘Potoco’ needed to claim it once more—imbuing his words with an almost performative, world-building quality—lest anyone begin to naturalize the condition of dehumanization. Echoing the *mundano* before him, life for Bolivians in Argentina was *not* ordained; their situation was *not* immutable. “We have rights” he demanded, invoking a quotidian discourse of protest and recognition that echoed throughout the Republic, indeed throughout the continent. These were not animal rights, but *human* rights. We are human beings, not animals—not “a dog thrown here or there”. This was a clarification he felt he needed to add. And the imagery he conjured up was intense. For when was a dog—which was by itself both ‘other’ and inferior vis-à-vis humanity—ever simply thrown here or there? Only when that dog was dead, and when that dog was unwanted. Certainly, all in the barrio had seen the corpse of a street dog thrown onto a pile of garbage and begin to rot in the heat, begging a neighbor’s match to would spare it this final indignity. We are not dogs—inferior, unwanted things—to be cast here or there. And yet Norberta and Ernesto had been left dead in a heap just two days before on the dirt streets of Bella Vista.

Before Norberta’s and Ernesto’s funeral rites morphed into a protest march on Escobar’s City Hall, what the rites themselves revealed was a shared experience of dehumanization. In seeing Norberta’s and Ernesto’s corpses at the wake, and in seeing them entombed, all were forced to reflect upon and emotionally manage both their individual and collective histories of dehumanization in Argentina. That is, seeing Norberta and Ernesto made into *bolitas* had to conjure up all the times one had been made a *bolita*—all those times that another had been kicked in the teeth, called a *boliviano de mierda*, pushed from a moving train, or tortured with a hot iron (see Chapter 6). Norberta and Ernesto became part of this web of dehumanizing events through which Bolivians came to recognize each other as such.

³⁵ From Potosí

How Bolivians Make *Bolitas* in Escobar

As mentioned above, there are many ways that Argentines discriminate against the Bolivian and make her into a *bolita*—i.e. dehumanize her. Through the cases of discrimination above, I have argued that even gross forms of violence are as much an everyday occurrence as epithets levied on the street or social marginalization effectuated through schools, government offices, and hospitals. Yet while the Argentine often dehumanizes or humiliates the Bolivian, we have seen in the previous chapter that Bolivians both dehumanize and humiliate each other. In this section I show how this is done, not with the terms of the Bolivian economy of otherness, but rather through the terms of the Argentine economy of otherness. That is, I show how Bolivians ‘other’ Bolivians by making them *bolitas*.

Where Bolivians ‘other’ each other by calling them *bolitas*, they can be said to have ‘indigenized’ this Argentine term of discrimination. Indeed, I will argue that Bolivians mobilize this term to reference in a pejorative way one’s ‘ignorance’ (*ignorancia*) on a first order, and one’s ‘cultural idiosyncrasy’ (*idiosincrasia*) on a second order. Yet before getting to these formulations, which I argue allow one to reproduce the terms of the Bolivian economy of otherness through those of the Argentine economy of otherness, let us first look at how the category of *bolita* already has a semantic load that extends beyond undifferentiated ‘Bolivian-ness’.

Earlier in this chapter I stated that the *bolita* is different from the *negro* because of phenotypic, cultural, and national differences (and perhaps even incipient class differences). On one level, *bolita* as a derogatory term is meant to characterize *all* Bolivians, and in this way, it becomes homogenizing (just as *negro* can be homogenizing when levied from ‘above’). At the same time, I have argued that there is an Argentine tendency to imagine the *bolita* through the idea of the *Qolla*. That is, that the Argentine fills the social category of *bolita* with the notion of *Qolla*-ness. This, I suggest, is because the *Qolla* is most different from the Argentine in terms of phenotypic and cultural characteristics, and makes distinction possible on a basic level. Certainly, the *Qolla*’s darker skin, highland Andean features, and linguistic profile mark him even with respect to other Bolivians—namely the *Qochalos* and *Chapacos*. Where the latter can sometimes ‘pass’ as an Argentine (indeed, the *Chapacos* are said to ‘copy’ Argentine speech and codes, a trait that has helped garner them the reputation of being ‘fake Bolivians’), the *Qolla*—

even his Argentine-born children—often cannot. Where from the ‘outside’, the *bolita* is impleted with the image of *Qolla*-ness, Argentines of all classes, but especially Argentine *negros*, have a more palpable means of creating social distance between themselves and an undesirable ‘other’. Indeed, in an economy of esteem, difference cannot be collapsed or erased.

What I argue here is that the Bolivian use of the term *bolita* also imagines the *bolita* through the idea of the *Qolla*, and that, for this reason, one can see in the *bolita* the intersection between the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness. This means that the *Qolla* bears the brunt of discrimination from both the Argentine *and* the Bolivian. As I mentioned above, Bolivians most frequently use the term *bolita* to pejoratively reference one’s ‘ignorance’ (*ignorancia*) or ‘cultural idiosyncrasy’ (*idiosincrasia*)—precise meanings the term does not typically carry when deployed from ‘outside’ by Argentines. (This is not to say that some Argentines in the barrio will not be familiar with these uses.) Before moving to actual face to face engagements through which to demonstrate these Bolivian impletions of the term, let me argue up front that these two meanings are related, and that they both reference traits that are believed to be emblematic of the *Qollas*.

Where Bolivians in the barrio most often use the term *bolita* to claim that another is, at root, ‘backward’, this can take the two aforementioned forms. On what we might call a first (or at least lower) order, *bolita* is used to convey that another is ‘ignorant’ (*ignorante*). As we’ll see, *ignorancia* can generally be reduced to one or another kind of lack when compared to attributes considered modern, whether these be social, cultural, geographical, or economic. In the example I illuminate below, one calls another *bolita* to reference his lack of competence in a technological code (i.e. auto-mechanical knowledge) that is associated with ‘civilization’. One should note that the one who is called *bolita* in this case is a *Qolla* from the rural hinterland of Potosí; his lack of auto-mechanical savvy is, on this dominant view, taken to be natural, and he is critiqued for it.

Yet *bolita* is used in formulations that extend beyond the meaning of *ignorancia*, but yet rely on and incorporate it. Thus, on what we might take to be a second (or at least higher) order, *bolita* is used to convey that another is ‘culturally idiosyncratic’ (*idiosincrático*). That is, where *bolita* is not used explicitly to mean *ignorante*, it is used to mean that one is culturally different or marked with regard to what is modern and ‘civilized’. As a higher-order rendering, what is viewed as ‘idiosyncratic’ is also taken to be ‘ignorant’ at root. Cultural practices are different

precisely *because* there is some original lack. Moreover, one should note that those cultural practices or attributes that are labeled ‘idiosyncratic’ are most often *Qolla* practices and attributes—a prime example of this being the way that *Qollas* have been said to have run and corrupted the CBE (these specifics are dealt with in Chapter 8). Their ‘idiosyncrasies’—i.e. what is said to be their belief that ‘tribal’ practices can be reconciled with the rule of law—are believed to be a function of a lack of exposure to modern forms of governance.

Thus whether through an explicit labeling of ‘ignorance’ or suggesting it through the label of ‘idiosyncratic’, all uses of the form *bolita* reference backwardness.

Bolita as Ignorante

On one Friday afternoon in 2006, a mixed group had congregated at the mouth of Orlín’s workshop. It sat on the barrio’s most busy street, and it seemed that everything about the barrio could be seen from inside. Passersby were jokingly heckled. If it was a young girl, she was oogled. If it was her brother, he’d be called “*cuñado*” (i.e. brother in law, the implication being obvious). In the afternoons it was not uncommon to end up there for an impromptu beer, purchased through the kiosk next door. Sometimes the drinking went into the night, and if one wasn’t outside when the metal doors came down, he’d be locked in to sleep head-to-toe on a few dirty mattresses that were there for just that purpose. Lying there in a stupor, and smelling the rank odor of feet next to my head, I still remember seeing the remnants of the *ch’alla* we had when it opened—the streamers still swirling.

The workshop was itself split in two, with each side housing a separate business. The first was Orlín’s. Orlín was a welder, and he installed everything from metal staircases, to railings, to the metal frames for the *cajones* that sat atop the horticulturists’ pickups. The second was Chapi’s.³⁶ Chapi ran the barrio’s only body shop. It was where *paisanos* brought their vehicles for a range of work: to get a new alternator, to get a dent hammered out, to get a new paint job. The latter was always done without aerators, such that those doing the work, and anyone else present, would get high off the fumes and blow their nose that color for the

³⁶ Chapi is the short version of *chapista*, who is someone who works with metal paneling (*chapas*) in the automotive sector.

remainder of the day. Chapi was one of the few *Qochalos* in the barrio, and after a few years of lucrative work he returned to the *Chapare* to try his fortunes in *coca*.

This particular Friday had been a busy one. Orlín was finishing up a *cajón* for one truck, and Chapi and Orlín's brother, Luís, were deep into the engine of another. There was always a great amount of curiosity surrounding whose vehicle was having what work done on it. Indeed, where one's vehicle was a reflection of his owner's progress, passersby would drop by to 'say hello'—i.e. to see who would be parading around in a refinished truck.

Luís was putting a couple of finishing touches on the truck he and Chapi had been working on, and needed a hand. With Chapi engaged with the owner and enjoying a beer the latter had invited to celebrate the job well done (and thus his own new look), Luís asked Héctor to grab him a tool. Héctor, another Potosino who had stopped by, was not at all familiar with the material culture of body-work, and gave Luís a blank look. Seeing that it would be easier to go for the tool himself, Luís asked Héctor to take his place under the hood, and to hold some part. Héctor still did not know what to do. This caused Luís no uncertain frustration, and he reprimanded Héctor in front of all who had assembled for the beer. Making an example of him, and making those present into an audience for the performance of his own expertise, he blurted out:

¡Mirá qué bolita! ¡No sabe nada!
Look at this bolita! He doesn't know anything!

One should note that Luís, an Argentine-born son of Potosino parents, had left school at an early age. He chose to pursue a line of work that could afford progress and esteem over the frequent humiliation he would suffer in school. There is no question that he had been called a *bolita* there—for all had. The point here that other than his apprenticeship in body work, there was really little that separated him from Héctor, whom he made into a *bolita*.

As deployed by Luís, *bolita* is meant to make a public example of Héctor as 'ignorant' (*ignorante*)—i.e. as lacking competence in the code of auto-mechanics. This is a domain of knowledge that is traditionally associated with the urban, modern, and whiter world. It is also a domain of knowledge that those from Potosí traditionally do not have, being that the purchase of trucks has most often out of their reach economically speaking. Indeed, where the poorest in Potosí are almost always of indigenous descent, truck owners are typically the local *mestizo*

elites³⁷. However, as those from the interior of Potosí have made new lives in Argentina, and begun to ‘progress’—i.e. achieve economic independence and, through capitalizations like trucks, acquired competence in codes associated with modernity—they have put distance between themselves and their ‘Indian’ roots. This is a distance many try to show off. Competence in auto-mechanics, as in truck-ownership generally, is thus a sign that one has ‘progressed’, and left what is often a humiliating condition of ‘indian-ness’ behind³⁸. Luís’s calling Héctor a *bolita* thus pins him to the rural hinterlands of Potosí, a world of material lack that is, on the dominant estimation, said to be culturally lacking as well. In a word, Luís pins Héctor to what is regarded as backward. In reinscribing Héctor’s indian-ness through the category of *bolita*, one which comes from a center that proclaims itself to be whiter, urban, and modern, he simultaneously aligns himself with these things, and thus puts distance between himself and his own roots.

As we can see through this example, calling another a *bolita* is a way Bolivians—and here specifically those of Qolla descent—create difference between each other. This difference, precisely because it focuses on the undesirable attributes of indian-ness, is often humiliating. Certainly Héctor lost face in this encounter; he was objectified in front of people who, while sharing his roots, have also managed them in ways more successful than him. While I do not have space to address the issue here, one might well argue that this ‘othering’ and the humiliation it produces are gendered. Where in the Andes indigeneity (seen for example through greater competence in Quechua) is often associated with femininity, Héctor is effeminized by essentially being called an ‘*indio*’. Not only is he aligned with that world, this is performed in a highly masculine space in which most of the participants had acquired the things of men, and men in urban, whiter settings: i.e. trucks.

³⁷ Truck ownership and knowledge of auto-mechanics has been traditionally structured by a social ecology whose axes are rural-urban, poor-rich, and Indian-mestizo. Wealth and esteem, however, have always been points of negotiation (see Rasnake 1988), and the dynamics are only becoming more complex (see Frías 2002).

³⁸ The dynamics of this are complex indeed (see De la Cadena 2000 and Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999).

Bolita as Idiosincrático

There are two things to note with this first example that have bearing for higher-order renderings of the term *bolita*. The first is that any deployment of the term does not simply ‘other’ an individual. While it is specifically Héctor who is called *ignorante* and ultimately *indio* through the use of the term *bolita*, we must not forget that Héctor is a token of a *type*; the type here being the *Qolla*. In this way, Luís’s remark makes the *Qollas* (his own forebears) into *bolitas*. Thus, in any leveling of the term *bolita*, there is a commentary that is truly social in which groups in a relational ecology are referenced. Where *bolita* is a discriminatory term, this ecology can be nothing else if not hierarchical; groups are ranked with relation to each other. This groupness is seen more clearly in the higher-order uses of *bolita* that mark cultural idiosyncrasy (*idiosincrasia*).

The second thing to note for such uses is that the charge of *idiosincrasia* indexes (and in a way incorporates) the ‘lack’ that is signified by *ignorancia* on the first-order. Indeed, the way of life (and the people that live it) characterized as ‘ignorant’, whether for lack of competence in Spanish, literacy, auto-mechanical codes, tallying numbers³⁹, or modern forms of government, comes to be viewed as ‘idiosyncratic’ for whatever modality is employed in its absence. To use an example: in the CBE’s meetings, participants are often criticized for not speaking up. They are said to ‘swallow their tongues’ (*se comen la lengua*) or are otherwise labeled as ‘inhibited’ (*cohibido*). These are cultural idiosyncrasies over which those that display them earn the designation ‘*bolita*’. (One might note as well that they are regarded as defining *Qolla* characteristics.) That this is the case is believed to stem from a ‘lack’ of socialization, itself believed to be a function of not participating in the Bolivian military or mining sector. These are two national institutions that are said to ‘open’ one up to ‘the world’. Not participating in them makes one *ignorante* (or keeps him in what is believed to be a more original ‘ignorance’). In this way, one cannot ‘get’ to the *idiosincrasia* without ‘passing through’ *ignorancia*. Stated otherwise: *idiosincrasia* is a meaning that is built up from *ignorancia*.

³⁹ Indeed, one of the skills that Bolivian immigrants confess to acquiring through their immigration to Escobar—which often includes greater inclusion in monetized commerce—is to ‘learn their numbers’ (*aprender los números*). This is true of sales in horticultural produce and textiles. Where someone is not adept at this skill, which often means using a calculator, he may easily be called a *bolita* (*ignorante*).

Bolita for Vergonzoso and Aparentar

An example of how Bolivians use *bolita* to expose a perceived cultural idiosyncrasy and critique it as ‘backward’ is when someone attempts to conceal their roots. As we saw in the Bolivian economy of otherness, the practice of concealing one’s origins most often stems from shame (*vergüenza*) or a history of being humiliated over them. As we also saw, where *Qolla* roots are those most often disdained, they frequently become the object of concealment. Indeed, those who are most often called *bolita* for attempting to pass as something else in Escobar are Potosinos. What is interesting about this is that those who ‘call out’ Potosinos for this practice are most often Potosinos themselves. Below I illuminate this very dynamic—i.e., how one with Potosino roots calls another a *bolita* for attempting to conceal a commonly held competence in Quechua. As we’ll see, what *bolita* highlights is not simply the idiosyncratic shame many *Qolla*’s have over their roots, but the equally idiosyncratic practice of attempting to dissemble or pass as something else (*aparentar*) because of them.

One evening I had gone looking for Don Quico, a Yureño who had not only spent many years in the mines of Potosí, but who had, along with his brother and a few others, formed a band that would play all the *fiestas potosinas*. I was interested in Don Quico’s stories of mining and in the strong musical tradition for which the Yuras were known⁴⁰. But Quico was not to be found that day, and in walking home I ran into Wilber, Rubén, and Isaías. Wilber, with whom I unloaded trucks at the market, and Isaías were both born in Potosí; Rubén a proud *Chapaco*. Everyone in the barrio knew that I was interested in learning more Quechua—and understood why I would have wanted to speak with Don Quelka. Indeed, he was what many would call a *potosino neto* (native Potosino). Using my interest in Quechua, and my failed meeting with Don Quico, as a pretext, Isaías, himself always looking to mess with someone (*cargarle a alguien*), turned to Wilson and asked him how he was in Quechua:

Imayna kasanki

How are you?

⁴⁰ See the work of Michelle Bigenho.

Certainly, Isaías was not interested in how Wilber was doing. Rather, he was interested in getting Wilber to reveal his true origins in Potosí—his inner *Qolla* self. Wilber was a prime target because he had actively taken on foreign cultural tastes, principal among them being his enthusiasm for North American hip-hop and his dressing the part. Through his question, Isaías looked to ‘expose’ Wilber by forcing him to respond in Quechua and thus ‘own’ his *Qolla* roots—suggesting (if not revealing) that his hip-hop persona was not just an affected one, but a motivated one as well. The implication was that Wilber did not want to be associated with the world that both had come from, and over which Isaías did not have the same reservations.

Yet Wilber, through a mix of befuddlement, uneasiness, and dissimulation, looked at Isaías and, pretending to be unsure of what Isaías had actually asked him, put the question back to him *in Spanish* as he had ‘understood’ it.

¿Qué estás haciendo?

What are you doing?

Wilber’s response was not an attempt to answer the question but rather to ask if ‘what are you doing?’ was indeed the question Isaías had put to him. Wilber’s dissimulation and code shift was thus a move to ‘pass’ as lacking competence in Quechua and thereby to escape all the cultural attributes this knowledge would conjure up. It was very likely that my own presence (and what I represented) helped structure Wilber’s uneasiness and response, just as it had been a pretext through which Isaías could openly expose Wilber’s tastes as affected.

Seeing Wilber’s response as a motivated attempt to conceal what everyone knew were his *Qolla* roots, Isaías, openly perturbed, blurted out:

¡Qué bolita!

What a bolita!

We should not imagine that Isaías was critiquing Wilber for not knowing Quechua. Rather, what lay behind Isaías’s charge of *bolita* was a judgment of Wilber’s inability to own up to his *Qolla* origins with pride. By calling him a *bolita*, Isaías was exposing Wilber as one of those *Qollas* who was ashamed to be who he truly was (*vergonzoso*), and who put on airs and pretended to be something else (*aparentar*). These were Bolivian, and specifically *Qolla*,

idiosyncrasies; on Isaías's estimation, they were cultural traits that merited critique. For at root, they were practices that revealed a certain 'backwardness', if not 'ignorance'. On the one hand, only an *indio* would be '*bolita*' enough to think that he could pull the wool over the eyes of someone who knew him so well. Certainly, one who tried to do this was not *despierto* (awake, discerning). Someone that was *despierto* would see the shortcomings of this. On the other hand, only an *indio* would fail to see the constructedness of the discourses that disparaged him. Only a *bolita* would fail to see that he could be honest with his *Qolla* origins—origins that were not by *necessity* 'backward'. What was truly 'backward' was being an unquestioning victim of domination. On this reading, 'backward' is as 'backward' does.

Bolita for Burro and Vivo

Another telling case of how *bolita* is used by Bolivians to critique a perceived cultural idiosyncrasy for its 'backwardness' occurred while I was talking with friends about the crisis of the CBE. The immediate group consisted of a handful of Potosinos and one Tarijeño, who was named Lelio. Most of them, including Lelio, had grown up in Argentina, and saw themselves as different from the generation of their Bolivian-born parents. After discussing how the two groups fighting for control over the CBE had resulted in the entity's failure to serve the larger Bolivian community, and after debating whether the two groups fighting for control over the CBE were really just jockeying for control over the entity's revenues, Lelio, exasperated, and wanting to wash his hands of everything, simply dismissed both sides as *bolitas*.

¡Son todos bolitas!
They're all bolitas!

While seemingly very simple, Lelio's pronouncement spoke volumes. I believe he was drawing on—and stitching together—two distinct, though fundamentally related meanings, each being a familiar critique of the first-generation *Qollas*. With regard to the first, Lelio's calling the CBE's founders and their adversaries '*bolitas*' was another way of referring to both groups as '*burros*' (literally 'donkeys'). This is an epithet that the Potosinos, and within them, the sides in the CBE's conflict, have received with some frequency. This epithet is levied to reference a

reputed (or imputed) ‘ignorance’—a failure to know how to do something. Where a common critique of the ‘usurpers’ is that, although they have accumulated great sums of money and power, they still do not know how to read or write, Lelio here speaks to the lack of Potosino ability to govern the CBE with the methods required of a proper civil association. The implication is that those ‘leading’ the CBE are not ‘prepared’ (*capacitados*) to lead. As for the Potosino operator in the CBE’s Market, many of whom are tacitly complicit in the ‘usurpation’, they are ‘*burros*’ as well. As the dominant characterization goes, they are beasts of burden who work with their heads down. As such, they lack any kind of social or political vision.

Yet *burro* is also used to charge that one is stubborn, unyielding, or refuses to learn something, often with the idea that one will not adapt to changing circumstances. This refusal to change is also often levied against the *Qollas*, who are believed to cling (often irrationally) to practices that are said to be ‘backward’ or lacking proper vision. With regard to the CBE, where paralyzing intra-Potosino rivalries have been regarded as one of these ‘idiosyncratic’, and hence ‘backward’, practices, their refusal to let go of them is seen as equally ‘idiosyncratic’, and similarly ‘backward’. What is seen as their refusal to modernize—i.e. to engage in a more open, cosmopolitan politics—is taken to be part of their cultural ‘essence’ (*esencia*). What Lelio’s use of *bolita* thus implies is that the Potosinos fighting over the CBE are both stuck in, and sticking to, ‘backward’ ways.⁴¹

This use of *bolita* here was most certainly a critique. As he would state on other occasions, Lelio believed that what was lost to petty rivalry and a desire for a ‘share’ of the CBE’s revenues that by law could not be shared out, was the community itself. What everyone was losing out on were the benefits the CBE had formerly provided because these ‘*bolitas*’ were unable to put aside their traditional ethnic politics and engage others on more cosmopolitan terms.

I would argue, however, that the meanings contained in Lelio’s use of *bolita* to characterize those fighting over control of the CBE are not limited to those that are conjured up by the epithet *burro* that *bolita* indexes. Where *bolita* made a claim for their ‘ignorance’ in government and their unwillingness to adapt to their situation in Argentina—i.e. their being

⁴¹ This is a sentiment shared not just among Bolivian critics of the CBE. One official selected to be part of the IGJ’s Intervention (see Chapter 8) stated to me that “these Bolivians” (here meaning those fighting over control of the CBE) “just don’t get the fact that they have to abide by the rules” (meaning Argentine law). “They are hard headed” (*son cabezas duras*). “This is not Bolivia!” Indeed, the official was exasperated that these Bolivians kept insisting on doing things in their own, idiosyncratic way.

stuck in, and sticking to, ‘backward’ ways—it also made a claim that these first-generation Potosinos were taking advantage of others. Indeed, Lelio’s deployment of *bolita* was meant to convey that these Potosinos were not only *burros*, but that they were *vivos* as well.

What is *vivo*? Despite meaning sharp and perspicacious in a general way, *vivo* connotes a certain cunning, as in ‘one will take advantage of every angle he can’. Indeed, on other occasions, *bolita* was explained to me as somebody that ‘plays you’ (*que te juega*). This cunning-cum-manipulation is often deceptive, and I saw this borne out in other examples⁴². Where Lelio levied *bolita* against those fighting over the communal CBE and its ‘communal’ revenues, this aspect of deception for one’s own advantage was clear⁴³. Indeed, many critics of the ‘usurped’ CBE saw how projects benefitting the public good had ceased while those operating in its Market emerged, one after another, with new trucks. The idea that circulated around the barrio (and among those who had been ousted from the CBE and its commerce) was that the ‘usurpers’ and those complicit in their racket were profiting individually from new configurations of capital that had become possible through the ‘usurpation’ (see Chapters 6 and 8), if not directly from embezzlement. What the ‘usurpers’ had done, so many said, was wall themselves in and defraud the public good. The idiosyncrasy that is conveyed by *bolita* is that of *viveza*, i.e. that those running the racket were ‘playing’ (manipulating, defrauding) everyone else. Those running this racket were mostly Potosinos.

Indeed, while being *vivo* (clever, manipulative) is something that both Bolivians and Argentines believe characterizes Bolivians generally, many Bolivians would claim that *viveza* is a trait that characterizes the *Qollas* specifically. This is not surprising seeing that the *Qollas* are often said to be the most ‘untrusting’ (*desconfiados*) and ‘insular’ (*cerrados*) of the ethnic nationalities. This is likely because they are more endogamous and prefer to deal with lower-level kin groups, i.e. social options that are often unavailable to *Chapacos* and *Qochalos* given the dynamics of their emigrations (see Chapter 7). That the *Qollas* are experienced socially as ‘closed’ and somewhat secretive has added to belief that they are inscrutable in their pursuits.

⁴² One such example was at Pablo’s pool hall, where a relative had tried to cheat another in billiards—earning the designation of *bolita* from the latter.

⁴³ Being *vivo* is not the same as being *despierto* (awake, enlightened) or *capacitado* (educated, trained)—two adjectives that describe one who is engaged with modern thought and practice, and one who has a social and communal vision. Those that founded the CBE and continue to fight to restore it in service of the public good, among whom factor prominent Saropalkeños, are still regarded by many to be both *despiertos* and *capacitados*. On these valuations, they are exalted over others (e.g. the ‘usurpers’) who are labeled as more self-serving and manipulative—i.e. as *vivos*.

This inscrutability is of course compounded by more indigenous cultural practices and their ability to communicate in Quechua, a language that *Chapacos* do not traditionally speak. For the *Chapacos*, as perhaps for Lelio here, *Qolla viveza* is thus difficult to discern and parse. Where he levies the epithet *bolita* at those fighting to control what, through its crisis, has become known as a “Colectividad Potosina”, he is claiming that the *Qollas* ‘inside’ are running a private and inscrutable racket from which those on the ‘outside’ are excluded.

Does this claim of *viveza* (here taken as a cultural idiosyncrasy) index ideas of ‘backwardness’? When the referent is *Qolla*, I believe it does. On the dominant estimation, the *Qolla* is regarded as *ignorante*, i.e. as lacking competence in modern codes. One can imagine that *Qolla* culture has been viewed to be lacking ‘rationality’ in the sense that European-descendant culture is imagined to be ‘rational’. *Viveza* thus becomes a kind of rationality—a cultural idiosyncrasy—that is precisely non-modern. Being ‘other’ it can be imagined as ‘backward’ with respect to modernity.

Conclusion

The argument through these discussions has been that it is in the category of the *bolita*—itself a symbolic figure, an object of relational difference, and a means of critique—that the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness intersect. Regarding the latter, *bolita* is a special kind of *negro*: it references the unwanted, foreign other that often serves as the scapegoat for Argentina’s politico-economic problems. There are two things of note in this. First, the *bolita* is at the very bottom of the racial hierarchy—lower than the Chilean (*chilote*), lower than the Paraguayan (*paragua*). The Bolivian endures a disproportionate amount of the xenophobic discrimination and violence directed at foreigners in general. Moreover, the epithet *bolita* is the ultimate insult, not just for Bolivians: Argentine *negros* levy it against themselves to hierarchize their own ranks, and they levy it against any non-Argentine. All of these uses reveal a great deal about the Argentine racial hierarchy and about the Argentine national imaginary—i.e. its claims of whiteness, European descendancy, modernity, first-worldness, etc. The second thing to note is that Argentines (*negros* and otherwise) see in the *bolita* the image of the *Qolla* more than any other ethnic nationality (e.g. *Qochalo*, *Chapaco*, *Camba*, etc.). I have argued that they see the

bolita as *Qolla* so as to create more distance between themselves and the Bolivian. This distance, on the Argentine reckoning, is made both racially and culturally, especially when class differences cannot be felt or when Bolivians overtake Argentines economically. The distance Argentines create is thus an index of their own ethnic, racial, and class anxieties. In this way, the category of *bolita* reveals a great deal about *argentinidad*.

Yet *bolita*, through its indigenization by Bolivians, reveals a great deal about the Bolivian economy of otherness as well. Specifically, it reveals the values of the Bolivian ethnic hierarchy and the *terms* by which these values are figured. As used between Bolivians in the barrio, *bolita*—once again, as simultaneously a construction and critique of difference—is most frequently used to claim that another is ‘backward’. As we have seen, such backwardness is most often framed as *ignorancia* or *idiosincrasia*. Yet ignorance and idiosyncrasy are themselves most often viewed as specifically *Qolla* characteristics. *Qolla*-ness thus comes to be marked in Bolivian usage of *bolita* just as it does in Argentine usage.

What we see in Bolivian deployments of the epithet *bolita* is an ecology of usage that is consonant with the historically dominant discourses of otherness in the Andes. That is, the *Qolla*—as *indio*—has become the *de facto* referent for *bolita* because historically, and on the dominant rendering of things, the *Qolla* is viewed as one the *most* backward and idiosyncratic ethnic nationalities. This is of course a relative difference with regard to the *Qochalos* (who are known as more urban and educated) and to the *Chapacos* (who, while often rural themselves, are nevertheless Hispanic—noting that they have historically shared linguistic similarities with the Argentines). Indeed, it is of no small significance that I never witnessed any *Qochalo* being called a *bolita* by a *Qolla* or a *Chapaco*. Indeed, as a friend said regarding at least the *Qolla* end of this dynamic: *los Qollas tienen miedo a los Qochalos* (the *Qollas* are intimidated by the *Qochalos*). This is for their linguistic abilities, their phenotypic characteristics, and their economic vision. Similarly, in the local logic of the barrio, a *Chapaco* would not call a *Qochalo* a *bolita* because the barrio’s *Qochalos* are more urbane, commercially oriented, educated, etc.

The means by which *bolita* has come to designate the *Qolla* (as *indio*) is not due to historical factors alone. In Bolivian usage in the barrio, and perhaps elsewhere in Buenos Aires, the identification of *bolita* with *Qolla* is potentially ‘motivated’. I think this is so for a few different reasons, all of which reinforce each other. First, let us remember that on a higher level of abstraction, all Bolivians in Argentina are *bolitas*; they are homogenized as undesired,

uncultured others. Bolivians are forced to be *bolitas* and inhabit this category; they cannot control this vis-à-vis the Argentine. Among themselves however, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, they can claim Argentine birth or lack of indigenous ancestry to negotiate their status—that is, among *themselves*, these are resources they *can* control. I would argue that, among themselves, the referent of *bolita* is another resource they can control for pragmatic ends. That is, if all Bolivians are *bolitas* in the eyes of the Argentine, the *Chapaco* can create distance from himself and the very bottom by mobilizing *bolita* to signify *Qolla*-ness. That is, where all *bolitas* are, in the eyes of the Argentine, *ignorantes* and *idiosincráticos*, the *Chapaco* can appeal to his own Hispanic heritage, his own ‘Argentine speech,’ etc. (all the things that make him a ‘fake Bolivian’) to levy the charge of *ignorantes* and *idiosincráticos* against the *Qollas* to create distance between himself and this internal other he himself has helped (re)create (noting that the Bolivian ethno-racial hierarchy is never absent in all of this; indeed, it *confirms* this marking of the *Qolla*). None of this is dissimilar from the ways that the Argentine *negro*, homogenized and discriminated against from outside and above by the middle and upper classes, creates distance between himself and the very bottom by mobilizing the same discourses of otherness against his own ranks. We saw above how he creates his own *villero*, and so comes to attenuate his own ‘blackness’. In other words, this *Chapaco* redirection of *bolita* toward the *Qolla* is the same process of ‘displacement’ (recursivity) we saw above. It no doubt helps *Chapacos* feel less othered, less shameful, and less of a potential object for humiliation.

Additionally, the underlying ethnic rivalries and hierarchies that exist between ethnic nationalities in Bolivia, and which are brought to Argentina, shape the symbolic struggle over just who and what a *bolita* is. *Chapacos* certainly have no qualms about othering the *Qollas*, with whom they share many ethnic, racial, and linguistic tensions. Finally, on a lower level of abstraction, we must remember that xenophobic Argentines often target *Qollas* as the quintessential *bolita*. The violence they perpetrate reinforces, in Bolivian minds, that the true *bolita* is the *Qolla*. The argument, in the end, is that *bolita* comes to be identified with *Qolla* according to both Bolivian and Argentine practical logics; both reinforce each other. This is how we can see *bolita* as a site where the Argentine and Bolivian racial economies intersect.

Chapter 4:

Progress

Introduction

One of the main arguments of this dissertation is that one cannot understand the corruption of the CBE, or efforts to restore it and the ‘community’ it is meant to serve, without understanding the politics of envy. Yet envy is itself a complex of ideas, practices, and experiences. What lies at the heart of this complex, I argue, is progress.

This chapter analyzes the ways that Bolivians in Escobar conceptualize, experience, and perform progress. As I will argue below, progress is much more than overcoming hardship in the sense of satisfying material needs, or otherwise becoming economically independent. Progress is, more fundamentally, about overcoming the sting of both poverty and discrimination. At the heart of progress are thus experiences of shame and humiliation given conditions of material lack and ascribed cultural ‘backwardness’. As we have seen in the foregoing chapters, both kinds of hardship tend to converge in the lives of the Potosinos (*Qollas*). We have also seen that there are different ways that Bolivians of all stripes attempt to attenuate their ‘*dolores profundos*’ (agonies) by attempting to create distance or separation from the conditions or experiences that cause these agonies. Progress can be conceptualized as efforts to do this, and as status gained in the process. I argue that one of the principal ways people ‘progress’ in the barrio—and through the CBE—is by capitalizing. Indeed, capitalization is the register of progress with the most ‘purchase’ on the sources of shame and ‘agony’. Because capitalizations (e.g. acquiring a truck) can respond directly to histories of material lack and experiences of ethnic discrimination, I suggest that they can ‘trump’ statuses that are otherwise ascribed. As I will show later in the dissertation, this politics of socio-economic, if not also ethnic, mobility is

shaped by the CBE and with great social consequences for the ‘community’ it is meant to cultivate. Indeed, I suggest that the CBE has become the engine of social antagonism.

The discussions here are more limited. They begin with an entrée into, of all things, the semiotics of a popular Bolivian dance. It is through a charge that one “walks as if he were dancing a *caporal*” that we can see what progress is and what it signifies on a basic level for those in Escobar. Having set the ‘logic’ of progress, the ethnographic sections that follow delve deeper into what is being overcome in pursuits of it. These are in turn followed by sections dedicated to illuminating the ways capitalizations fit into this logic, as well as what can be claimed or achieved through them. The chapter concludes with observations that progress is most frequently a zero-sum configuration of esteem that encourages competition and a logic of domination. All of this, I will argue, plays directly into the politics of envy that mars Bolivian moral community.

Walking like a *Caporal* (Stomping, Leaping, Forgetting)

It was July 20, 2006 and we were celebrating Friend’s Day in the barrio. After beginning with beers in a friend’s patio, we went looking for ‘*Los Cesario*’ to continue socializing. The latter were a group of *Qochalo* brothers who were so nick-named after their most charismatic brother, Cesario. They had all come to Argentina in their childhood, and had followed in their father’s footsteps by establishing themselves in Argentina’s textile trade.

We had been at their textile workshop for a few hours since sunset, and it had gotten cold. It was the middle of winter, and temperatures were reaching freezing. We were all seated on the tile floor which was raised relative to the street. It made a perfect, though not fully comfortable, bench from which to view life in the barrio. One source of this action was an Argentine run kiosk, which attracted clients late and which most of the time provided us with an endless supply of beer, lest the intoxication become excessive. Next to it was a *Qochalo*-owned *comedor* and pool hall—engagements in the latter often turning rough. Los Cesario had lowered the corrugated metal *cortina* half of the way down in an attempt to separate the public from the private, and to help insulate our backs. The cold had kept us tightly packed together in a row, the heat we gained from one another helped take the edge off of the chill. We occasionally passed a

Philip Morris (these were cheaper than Camels, but far less satisfying) and circulated a couple *Quilmes*. The rhythm of the liter-sized bottles was broken only by the need to ‘recharge’, which was not difficult, being that our source was on the other side of the street. That we were drinking beer (versus *totín*) and on such a cold night, likely kept this from becoming a full on ‘bender’ (*descontrol*), as gatherings at one or another’s *taller* often became.

This was my first time meeting Juan who, like Los Cesário, was also a *Qochalo*. We were equally curious to know one another’s past and background—not to mention take on life. Indeed, people were often curious what people from the US (*norteamericanos*) were really like, and local curiosity was often piqued given my reputation as a *changarín*, and a solid beer-drinking one. Our conversation had tacked between life in the barrio and the US, and was consistently interrupted by banter of all kinds. Juan and I had glossed over the theme of pride (*orgullo*), something I was interested in, but it had gotten lost in the intoxication and chill of the night. Then, out of the blue, Juan gave me a lesson in the ways of the barrio—ways that were specifically Bolivian. Taking advantage of a fortuitous, though not uncommon, performance, Juan nudged me in the ribs, and then pursed his lips to direct my attention toward a man coming our way. Leaning into me, and speaking discreetly, Juan said:

Juan (*Qochalo*): *Este tipo...*
 This guy...

Juan was calling my attention to a *Qolla*, who I later came to learn had recently purchased a new truck—i.e. who had ‘progressed’. As I learned, he was an increasingly powerful player in the CBE’s Market, and was happy to let people see his newfound position. To Juan, his desire for recognition was obvious; indeed, one could see it in the way he was strutting.

Mirá como viene caminando—como si estuviera bailando un caporal.

Look at how he’s walking—as if he were dancing a *caporal*.

The man was on his way to the pool hall to meet some of his *socios*. As he strode by, he nodded nonchalantly to us. He didn’t recognize us as a grounded or humble person might—i.e. by saying *Buenas noches* or engaging in some other kind of pleasantry. Rather, he was dismissive

of us; the sense being that we were not worth his effort. While it wasn't expected he would come over to us, he had denied us a basic *human* courtesy.

Juan's comment to me was thus a critique—and a trenchant one. What did he mean by likening this *Qolla* to a *caporales* dancer? What were the implications? And how did this relate to the man's newfound position—one in which he suddenly felt himself 'important' (*importante*)? As we'll see in the following discussion, the *caporales* is a dance that is urban, flashy, and haughty; it is about domination. What Juan was thus suggesting was that this man, having come from a humble and rural background, was now overcompensating for his success: that while he sought to be 'important', he had become *agrandado* (self-important). In the process, he was seen as having become imperious—'stomping' on those who enjoyed the status he had just transcended. Yet the critique was more than this: in his will to power he was also seen to have forgotten, if not betrayed, his roots. These roots were not just his; in a way, they were everyone's roots.

To appreciate the depth of Juan's metaphorical critique, let us examine the way that the *caporal* leaps (*saltar*), stomps (*pisar*), and forgets (*olivdar*), both literally and figuratively. As I will argue, these are the very dynamics of 'progress'.

The Caporales: Popular Forms and Popular Meanings

The *caporal* is a contemporary Bolivian dance that is accompanied by brass-band music. Like other dances (e.g. the *morenada*, *diablada*, *negrito*, etc.), the *caporal* has been made popular by the commercial *mestizo* classes of La Paz and Oruro in their *Fiesta del Gran Poder* and *Carnaval*, respectively. The *caporal* is one of the most widely performed dances in Bolivia, second only to the "heavy" (i.e. more costly) *morenada* (see Barragan 2009, Carmona 2009). Collectively, these popular dances are not indigenous, pre-Columbian forms. Rather, they are contemporary, urban elaborations that draw on and interpret elements of the colonial encounter. They have taken on a modern telos in which values of mobility, commerciality, and Bolivian nationality are both paramount and hegemonic (see Abercrombie 1992, Guss 2006, Barragán 2009 [see also Goldstein 1998a, 1998b]).

Among the *mestizo* participants and spectators, the dominant conception of the *caporales* is that it symbolizes power and prestige. These qualities are both expressed by, and embodied in, the *caporal* himself. Who was this figure? On the dominant reading, the *caporal* emerged in the tropical valleys of La Paz during the Colonial encounter. He is said to have been the mixed-race son of a Spanish *patrón* and an African slave. Slaves are said to have been brought to this region to work the citrus and coca estates when they could not survive the cold and cruel conditions of the highland mines. As the *patrón*'s son, the *caporal* was allowed to dress the part. He wore a master's pants, vest, and ruffled shirt; he also wore riding boots and a broad sombrero to shield himself from the sun. Yet the *caporal* also carried a menacing whip. Indeed, loyal to his Spanish father, the *caporal* is said to have been raised to keep order among the slaves, in essence preventing uprisings among his mother's—and his own—kin. In this way he is regarded as having been a traitor to his kind. This cruel and domineering betrayal is captured in a pamphlet describing the dance for the Argentine public at Buenos Aires's *La Festividad de Charrúa*⁴⁴:

[The *caporal*] represents the *mulato* who directs the slaves in the citrus and coca zones of the tropical *Yungas*. As the *patrón*'s preferred hand, he is nevertheless resentful, and ultimately becomes the executioner (*verdugo*) of his own kind. With whip in hand, he causes great torment and agony (*martirio*) among his shackled charges, the latter yoked in heavy chains that produce rhythmic and weary sounds. Immune to pain, and with an arrogant disposition, this unfeeling repressor of insubordination is the haughty and contemptible *caporal*.⁴⁵ (my translation)

Although it is said that the *caporal* 'belongs' (*pertenece*) to the Afro-Bolivian *saya*⁴⁶, its aesthetic features hardly resemble it. In the first instance, the *caporales* is danced by young

⁴⁴ *La Festividad de Charrúa* is Argentina's version of La Paz's *Gran Poder* or Oruro's *Carnaval*.

⁴⁵ Taken from *Renacer*'s "Suplemento Charrúa 2006" (unnamed author). *Renacer* is the principal publication dedicated to the Bolivian Community in Buenos Aires, and in Argentina more broadly.

⁴⁶ *Saya* is an Afro-Bolivian genre of music, dance, and verse (the latter sung in a call and response form) that black Bolivians have traditionally used as a vehicle for the transmission of their oral history and as a musical dance for their village celebrations (Templeman 1998: 426). Where *saya* traditionally depicted and lyrically critiqued the experience of black Bolivians as *peones* and slaves on the *haciendas* of the *Yungas* (Busdiecker 2006: 173), *saya* has since been revitalized by Afro-Bolivians to counter the dominant logics of *mestizaje* and *blanqueamiento* that erase or otherwise mock their history and their ethno-racial and political position in Bolivia (Templeman 1996, 1998; Busdiecker 2006, 2009).

Although indigenous-mestizo Bolivians commonly refer to the music of the *caporales* as '*saya*', and to its rhythm as '*el ritmo negro*' (the black rhythm), the *caporal* is *not* related melodically or rhythmically to the music of the *saya* (Templeman 1998: 440, see also Bigenho 2002: 41-43 for a discussion of the '*saya-caporal* debate'). Where the traditional and 'legitimate' *saya* performed by Afro-Bolivians contains a completely different instrumentation, beat, and step (see Templeman 1996, 1998; Busdiecker 2006), the dance of the *caporales* was nonetheless *inspired* by the dance of the *saya* insofar as the *figure* of the *caporal* exists in the *saya*. In the

urban *mestizos* (not Afro-Bolivians) in the popular expressions of Bolivian national folklore⁴⁷. Secondly, the urban-*mestizo caporales* began with *all* the dancers performing the role of *caporal* themselves in which their protagonist was a re-signified and exaggerated version of the singular *caporal* present in the *saya*. Moreover, over the last few decades, new roles have been added to the *caporales* as it has undergone its own expansion and elaboration. The *cholita* (feminine part) is perhaps the most notable, followed by the *achachi* (slave trader), which is also present in the *morenada*. There is also the *machota*, which is a female that dances the male part of *caporal* and wears his costume. Configurations of these new roles vis-à-vis the traditional *caporal* will vary depending on the particular fraternity. Finally, the dress, music, and choreography of the urban-*mestizo caporales* are truly unique with regard to the *saya*. Where the latter has come to critique the ideology and politics of *mestizaje* (see Busdiecker 2006), the *caporales* champion mobility, power, and status through its idiom.

symbolism of the *saya*, the figure of the *caporal* is played by a dancer who represents the overseer, or *capatáz*, on the *hacienda*. Other dancers, drummers, and singers represent the *peones* or slaves he orders. In the performance of the *saya*, this *caporal* is one of two male dancers (the other being the *guía*) that helps set the beat and order the male and female dancers. Where the *guía* does this rhythmically with *casabeles* (bells) worn around his calves (themselves said to be a reminder of the chains and shackles worn by their enslaved African ancestors [Templeman 1998: 436], the *caporal*—here as the *capitán de baile*—maintains the overall form with a whip (Busdiecker 2006: 172-173).

It was thus from a combination of the actions of the *guía* (with his bells) and the *caporal* (with his whip)—and indeed the symbolic role of slave overseer the *corporal* represented—that the contemporary *caporales* dance was invented. Sources trace this invention to the Estrada brothers of La Paz, who in the early 1970s had observed a traditional *saya* (or perhaps an emergent *tundiqui*, which also bore the *caporal*). The Estradas' elaboration of their own *caporales* came within their own urban-*mestizo* dance troupe, the 'Urus del Gran Poder' (Maidana Rodríguez 2000). It was from this appropriation, and the new ethnic, socio-economic, and political contexts of its urban performance, that the dominant aymara-*mestizo* reading (and re-signification) of the figure of the *caporal* became elaborated.

It should be noted that the urban, aymara/quechua-*mestizo* dances inspired directly by the *saya*, such the *caporales* and the black-faced *negritos* (both frequently misinterpreted as '*saya*'), as well as other dances independent of the *saya* but which nevertheless depict blackness in the colonial encounter (e.g. the *morenada*), are seen by Afro-Bolivians as reductive and stereotypical mockeries of their history and position in Bolivia (Templeman 1998: 441). To take one example, mislabeling the black-faced *negritos* '*saya*', where *negrito* is a pejorative term for blacks and where *saya* is central to black identity in Bolivia, only reflects the symbolic and political position afforded Afro-Bolivians throughout the colonial and republican periods. Fighting against these popular (mis)representations of Afro-Bolivian culture and experience, and the national logics of *mestizaje* and *blanqueamiento* that underpin them, has become the *raison d'être* of the Afro-Bolivian 'Movimiento Negro' (ibid).

⁴⁷ Alicia Carmona (2008): "Urban popular fiestas were among the events that underwent a reorientation with their inclusion in the corpus of practices that could signify the nation. Large-scale religious and folkloric events formerly repudiated as 'lower' class, anti-modern, and/or 'Indio' were increasingly—albeit unevenly—dominated by middle and upper-class (*mestizo-criollo*) participants, while the spectacles themselves were largely re-signified as representative of an authentic national past (see Abercrombie 2004)." For a discussion of the festival in Charrúa see Renacer 2002 (Edición 47) and Alicia Carmona's (2008) dissertation *Bailaremos: Participation in Morenada Dance Fraternities among Bolivian Immigrants in Argentina*.

The Aesthetics of Power and Prestige

In October of 2005 I had gone to Charrúa in Buenos Aires to observe the annual Bolivian *Festividad*. There were tens of thousands of people—spectators and participants alike. The *Festividad* not only featured the hundreds of dance fraternities formed by Bolivian immigrants in Argentina (if not their Argentine-born children), but also the most popular fraternities in Bolivia that traveled to perform and compete (see Carmona 2008). Among the few hundred fraternities that danced the *morenada*, the *diablada*, and *tinku* (to name just the most popular), there were dozens that danced the *caporales*. Indeed, it has become one of the most widely celebrated in both Bolivia and Argentina.

In contrast to the more middle-aged ‘*cholas*’ who danced the *morenadas*, the *caporales* were danced almost exclusively danced by young men and women who wanted to strut their stuff. Indeed, as Wara Céspedes (1993) notes, the *caporales* allows men to show off as men, and the women as women. Everything about the costumes (*trajes*) and movements (*pasos*) were ostentatious. The men wore either brilliantly blue or shiny black suits on whose chests, backs, and thighs were embroidered elaborately patterned (often serpentine) and colorful designs. Satin and velvet were abundant throughout, as were sequins. In addition to a raised collar, the shoulders of the jacket (*hombreras abollonadas*), themselves also adorned, were exaggerated to accentuate the forceful and youthful aesthetic of the dancers. Heightening this athletic form, which celebrated masculinity and virility, was a matching *faja* that narrowed the dancer’s midsection to help accentuate his broad shoulders and billowing pants (*pantalones abombachados*). Matching their suits were riding boots which reached their knees and upon which hung ten or a dozen bells (*cascabeles*). If not porting a decorated brimmed hat (lieutenant-style), the dancers carried a coiled raw-hide whip (*látigo*). Some, usually those leading the troupe (*bloque*), commanded a whistle to mark the beginning of each segment.

In its contemporary and elaborated form, the *caporales* is nothing without its female dancers—famed for their sensuality. The *cholita’s traje* complements that of her male counterparts in terms of style and color. The tight-fitting body is velvet, most often with billowed shoulders and satin sleeves. Like the *caporal’s traje*, hers is embroidered with

matching designs of contrasting colors, most often studded with sequins. On her head, she wears a matching bowler-style hat similar in form to those worn in the *morenada*, with the exception that it may have embroidered trim and long ribbons. The latter cascade down her back alongside her long braids. Adorned with tassels, the latter are often extensions themselves. On her feet, the *cholita* wears matching heels (*de medio taco*). Perhaps the most notable aspect of the *cholita* dress is the multi-layered—and multi-colored—mini-*pollera*, which reveals the entire length of her legs⁴⁸. Under this, a sensual *enagua* (satin bikini bottom, which covers less and less as the years go on) becomes visible in the twists and turns of the dance itself.

Choreographically, the young *cholita* flirts and provokes (*coqueta*). Organized into *bloques*, she moves in step with the music, advancing and retreating, and advancing once again. Swiveling on the balls of her heeled shoes, she twists and turns to force her ruffled, brightly colored *pollera* from side to side. This has the effect of raising it to reveal her upper thighs, hips, and *colita*;) Countering her hips, she moves her shoulders (said to be a sign of sensuality in the Andes: see Busdiecker 2006) with her arms either extended or bent at the elbow. The latter enables her to occasionally clap in time with the beat. Where the provocative movements of the *cholita* are meant to symbolize femininity and sensuality—if not create desire directly—the choreography of the male *caporales* communicates power, status, and haughtiness, which are themselves masculinized.

Similarly organized into *bloques*, the male *caporales* also advance in time with the music. Yet their choreography is incredibly more energetic, forceful, and violent. It is in great part composed of alternating and paired stomps which create a bouncing, almost skipping, step. These stomps, performed either directly underfoot, or with one leg extended in front of the body, are themselves coordinated with alternating shakes of the shoulders and thrusts of the arms. Having little actual contact with the ground, he who dances the *caporal* is as much leaping (*saltar*) as he is stomping (*pisar*). With this tremendous energy, the *caporal* performs a great number of half and full turns, always accentuating the shoulders as he works forward. These turns are often the basis for acrobatic leaps and martial arts-style kicks that contain force. At every step, the great number of bells on each boot calls attention to the troupe, brightly marking the tightly syncopated movements. At specific moments throughout this elaborate choreography,

⁴⁸ See Rey González (2000) for a brief discussion of the re-signification of the traditional Andean *pollera* in the *caporales* dance.

the *caporales* emit ebullient shouts (*gritos*) which further accentuate their status, power, and masculinity—all of which are on display.

Colorful conceptualizations of this choreography are found throughout the scholarly literature on the *caporales*. Sánchez Patzy, for example, states: “The dance is energetic and haughty...it incorporates extravagance and pretense (*refinamiento*) (1999: 138).” For their part, Albó and Preiswerk have characterized it as a dance not just with “athletic contortions”, but with “threatening poses” (1986: 66-67). Finally, Maidana Rodríguez states that “from the very beginning, the choreography of the *caporales* seeks to demonstrate force and domination through its acrobatic movements”; integral to its “expression of power” is a “violent rhythm” and a “threatening stance” (2000: 140).

Performance in Context

We have just seen how the forms of the *caporales* both represent and portray ostentation, power, and domination. Yet to fully understand the meaning of Juan’s critique above, we must also understand the indexical properties of the dance given its contexts of performance. That is, we must delve into the socio-economic and ethno-racial meanings that are attached to, and read through, these aesthetic forms. We must also delve into what one achieves (or seeks to achieve) by being a member of a dance fraternity and participating in the festivals themselves. Let us begin with the following characterization of the dance—one which specifically ties it to a broader cultural dynamics:

The *caporales* is a highly stylized dance with an agile and lively rhythm. It highlights the wielding of power by the *caporal*—i.e. he who, with whip in-hand, subordinates his charges by instilling fear and demanding respect. The *caporales* represents desire, power, and arrogance—and so represents the very traits championed by urban and *mestizo* life. (Jiwaki II Gran Poder 2006, emphasis added)

Indeed, the dance does not just represent ostentation and domination in the abstract. Where the *Gran Poder* and the *Carnaval de Oruro* serve as a frame for the production of the urban and *mestizo* subject, membership in a *caporales* fraternity and participation in the *entradas* has been a way to express one’s upward mobility. This has characterized the longer running *morenada* as

well. Of the latter, David Guss notes that fraternity membership and festival performance have appealed to the ‘new urban Indian’—i.e. “a more prosperous and independent entrepreneur with middle-class aspirations (2006: 316).” Guss argues that with its costly membership and lavish costumes, the *morenada* has become a principal way to display one’s new economic status in the urban context. As *La Razón* (Bolivia’s national newspaper) has stated: “the popular bourgeoisie”, here referring to the participants in the *morenada*, “show themselves off in the festival” (*La Razón* 2005 ctd. in Guss 2006: 317). Yet this is not restricted to the ‘*morenos*’ only. “The popular class with the most economic power distinguishes itself from those with less resources through the opulence of their costumes and activities. In the *Gran Poder*, economic and social differences run deep. Some fraternities are elitist, reflecting a new bourgeoisie, while other groups, in particular the older ones, try to survive amidst the excess of wealth (ibid).”

Taking a momentary step back to consider this larger context, Albó and Preiswerk (1986) have explored how socio-economic differences, particularly in terms of residential and occupational statuses, have long dictated who dances what. They provide what participants see as a *prestige hierarchy* of dances, itself a function of the very costs of participating in them. When their work was published, the *morenada* enjoyed the greatest prestige, as perhaps it still does. Indeed, it has always been known as a ‘heavy dance’ (*danza pesada*) for its cost⁴⁹ (see Carmona 2009). Next in line were the *diabladas* (also ‘heavy’), and then those dances considered ‘light’ (*livianas*). While the status of the *caporales* has only recently grown—such that it is now one of the most popular dances—one should note that there has always been status differentials and competition. Indeed, stratification has always been fractal, occurring between types of fraternities (*morenadas* vs. *diabladas*), and, within these, between fraternities. Stratification even occurs within fraternities, seeing that there is a hierarchy of who performs what role (Albó and Prieswerk 1986: 104-105).

This competitive aspect to membership and performance has led to a re-signification of the forms themselves. As Albó and Prieswerk note, where participation in dances like the *morenada* and *diablada* once privileged socio-political critique and religious devotion, they now both address and extol social hierarchy and mobility. This has, they argue, engendered a new and specific ‘purpose’ to membership and performance. Indeed, while the *diablada* and the

⁴⁹ One should note the popular saying: “*Si quieres bailar morenada, tienes que tener platita.*” (If you want to dance the *morenada*, you’ve got to have [a good amount of] money.)

morenada seem to have originated in mining culture and protests against slavery, they have become something quite different in the *Gran Poder*. Today they are elaborations on a creative form that is specifically tied to a higher socio-economic status. As Albó and Preiswerk argue, these expressive forms have become dominated by a “‘telos’ of being on top of and dominating [or overwhelming] everyone else (Albó and Preiswerk 1986: 231)”.

Where the progressive re-signification of the dances is complex and not total (ibid), the issue of mobility is also complex. With regard to the *morenada*, Guss suggests that participation and performance is as much about ethnic mobility as it is about socio-economic mobility. This, he argues, has as much to do with the symbolic representations in the dance itself (i.e. how, because of polysemic elements, they can mediate shifting identities) as it does with rural to urban migrations and the reconfigurations of the socio-economic ecology this engenders. Certainly, the ‘ethnic question’ has always been related to social mobility in the Andes, as both historical and contemporary studies have shown (see for example Stern 1993 [1982], Bourricaud 1970, Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999, see also Abercrombie 1998: 450, fn 10).

To fully appreciate how these symbolic forms may mediate ethnic and/or economic mobility, one should note that the urban contexts of fraternity membership and dance performance are ‘officially’ *mestizo* (i.e. neither *criollo* nor *indio*), whereas the rural areas from which the members and performers typically come are ‘officially’ Indian. We saw these ascriptions borne out in the foregoing chapters on the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness. Seen in this light, the dances not only become experiments with identity—but specifically with ‘de-indianization’ (see De la Cadena 2000). Because both ethnic and economic mobility are valued, membership and performance have the effect of “reconfirming the racial geography that has continued to define one’s identity in the Andes (Guss 2006: 318).” Indeed, performative frames like the *Gran Poder* have a disciplining effect.

Having seen how participants in these popular ‘Bolivian’ forms may negotiate their ethnic and economic status through them, if not with an ideology of ‘being on top of and overwhelming everyone else’, we may now focus the discussion back on the *caporales*. Let us begin by seeing where the *caporales* fit into the competitive prestige hierarchy. While the *caporales* is not a “heavy dance” (*danza pesada*), it rivals the heavies in significance and popularity, though principally among the younger generations. This is not surprising given the athleticism, flashiness, and sensuality of the form itself. This is not to say that membership and

participation does not entail great cost, or that it is accessible to everyone. As Sánchez Patzy states: “Today, the *caporales* is a dance of the elite class given its high costs of participation (2000: 139).” At the same time, these costs have not hindered its growth and popularity. In recent years, the *caporales* has flourished so much that it comprises its own category of competition in the *Gran Poder* and in other major festivals like that Buenos Aires’s *Festividad de Charrúa*.

Participants in the *caporales* can be said to follow the dominant logic of ‘being on top of and overwhelming the rest’ that is said to characterize the *Gran Poder*. This can be seen in two ways. First, there are fierce competition and rivalries between *caporales* groups in the *Gran Poder*. This has carried over into Argentina, where fraternities attempt to trump and out-do one another. This happens both in terms of style and with respect to the order of appearance in the performances (*entradas*) themselves. Stylistically speaking, Scarborough has noted that the continual evolution and elaboration of forms “stems directly from the competition between the groups and their desire to differentiate themselves from each other (2003: 284).” Regarding who should precede whom in the *entradas*, and with specific regard to what were bitter clashes between *caporales* fraternities in the *Festividad de Charrúa* in 2006, Guillermo Mamani writes: “It isn’t bad to try to be the best [and hence the first in line]; indeed, it is necessary to think this way to continue improving. But to forcefully oust (*defenestrar*) another group is simply ill-considered (*Renacer* 2006).”⁵⁰

Second, this ‘telos of being on top of and squelching everyone else’ is reflected in the dance itself. As we have seen above, the *caporal* maintains a “threatening stance” and dances to “express his power” and “show off his status”. All of these are conveyed choreographically through fierce stomping, ebullient shouts, and the cracks of the whip. That the *caporales* both represents and reproduces this telos has not gone unnoticed by scholars. As Sánchez Patzy has noted, “The *caporales* represents the posture of the high classes, simultaneously modern and traditional, with an aesthetic that reproduces a paternalistic heritage, itself hierarchical and authoritarian... Together with other dance groups and their music, the *caporales* are bearers of a classist and feudal discourse in which wealth and prestige are highly valued (1999: 139-140).”

⁵⁰ This politics of ousting given opposing wills to power is precisely what has characterized the crisis of the CBE. Indeed, its ‘usurpation’ is specifically about being first in line to control both power and the resources that accrue to it. In the CBE, while these resources are symbolic, they are also, and more than anything else, economic.

Finally, where costly membership in fraternities indexes ‘de-indianization’ in terms of class, the taking-on of the role of the *caporal* indexes ‘de-indianization’ in terms of ethnicity. If the traditional Indian has been denied power, the ‘new urban Indian’ may be seen to take it through his playing of the *caporal*. For the *caporal* is specifically he who controls and dominates others; it is he who threatens and disciplines. However, as we have seen, the *caporal* does this precisely by selling out his own kin. Being of mixed race, the *caporal* shows loyalty, not to his enslaved African people, but to his distant father the white *patrón*. One might read the ‘new urban Indian’s’ playing the *caporal* as an effort to side with power, a move that simultaneously entails his own whitening and a denial of his Indian roots. What may be said of those in the *caporales* is what Guss has argued for the *morenada*: i.e. that membership and performance show that “native campesinos are on their way to becoming middle class mestizos (2006: 318).” This can be imagined, if not sensed, through the choreography itself. What is being stomped out (*pisar*) if not one’s Indianness? What is being left over (*saltar*) if not one’s brethren? What is being signaled by shouts (*gritos*) if not one’s new identity and position? Certainly, there is nothing ‘Indian’ about the *caporales*, except for the fact that those who perform it may once have been called *indios*.

“Being on top of and overwhelming the rest”

Having seen what participation in the *caporales* means given their situation in Bolivian racial, ethnic, and class dynamics, let us return to what Juan had charged with regard to the *Qolla* walking opposite us that winter night. Juan contended that this man was walking “as if he were dancing a *caporal*”. What does this mean? What was Juan saying exactly? About wealth; about what it does to people; about what it changes? What was his critique?

What Juan saw in the man’s body language was a disposition that was revealed to us in his snubbing of us; it was a view of someone who had taken on an air of haughtiness because he had purchased a new truck and was ‘progressing’. (As we’ll see below, a new truck is the dominant symbol of upward mobility and ‘de-indianization’ in the barrio.) Juan’s likening the man to a *caporal* was a critique—and a multivalent one. Juan was pointing out that the man saw himself as self-important (*agrandado*) and refined (*refinado*), two arguments that resonated

heavily in a place where the leveling criticism “he thinks he’s more than he is” (*se cree más grande de lo que es*) is heard frequently.

Yet Juan’s critique was more than this. Indeed, the *caporal* is more than a simple ostentation of power. By likening the man to this figure, Juan was implying that the *Qolla* had aligned himself with one world and denied the other. Where in the popular imaginary the *caporal* expresses loyalty to the distant white *patrón* (who is nevertheless his father) and denies his mother’s enslaved African kin, the *Qolla* here is seen to deny his Indian roots and brethren, with whom he is similarly more familiar. Juan’s critique, based on what he observed in the man, was thus that the man had betrayed his own kind.

This critique of betrayal was made explicit in a clarification Juan made shortly after his initial charge. In a shift of reference, Juan saw in this man’s performance of walking like a *caporal* a larger social phenomenon:

Juan (*Qochalo*): **Cuanto más tienen, más fuerte pisan—es que se olvidan de donde eran; de quienes eran.**

The more they have, the harder they stomp—it’s that they forget where they’re from; who they once were.

In Juan’s eyes, Jorge was just another example of the many who, upon capitalization, became so proud (*orgulloso, agrandado*) that they ‘stomped’ on their fellow *paisanos* (Bolivian countrymen), sometimes even on their own relatives (*parientes*). In the process they would deprive their fellow man of their dignity, and often humiliate them purposefully. The more they had, the harder they would stomp (*pisar*); through this stomping they would betray their roots and those with whom they not only began life, but those with whom they emigrated in search of a better one.

Yet coupled with this critique of “the more they have, the harder they stomp” is something of a lament: those who squelch others have “forgotten where they are from, and who they once were”. For Juan, what people had back in Bolivia, if nothing else, was humility—not in any sense of subservience or submission to power, but in the sense of being open toward one’s fellows; of respecting their dignity as persons facing common hardship. Who ‘we’ were, on Juan’s reading, were moral persons. This is what has been lost to pride as people have ‘progressed’. Thus while Juan critiqued this man—and others—for ‘forgetting their roots’ (a

situation in which they are like the treasonous and unfeeling *caporal*), Juan also recognizes that this ‘forgetting’ is a function of a deeper and internal *lucha* (struggle). Indeed, forgetting one’s roots is not wholly a function of pride and a will to power; on one level, people may *want* to forget. Juan knows that this man, ostentatious and haughty, has likely suffered a great deal of disdain for being an *indio campesino*. He knows that this man may want to forget the pain (*dolores*) that being othered and humiliated has caused in him. What this man may be ‘stomping’ may not simply be his fellow *paisanos*, but the very condition of Indianness that has caused him great suffering.

Through his critical, but also sympathetic, pronouncement—one which he had made pedagogically for my sake, but also perhaps for his own sense of the relations and practices that surrounded him—Juan illuminated a complex in which stomping (*pisar*), leaping (*saltar*), and forgetting (*olvidarse*) are inescapably intertwined. This complex, I argue, is at the heart of what ‘progress’ is for Bolivians in Escobar—as a set of ideas, desires, and practices.

Progress

Notions of progress vary throughout the Andes (see Lobo 1982: 64-67; Skar 1994: 217, 227; Nugent 1996: 261; Abercrombie 1998: 451; Leinaweaver 2008; see also Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999). This should not be surprising, given that it is a mobile concept that can be brought to bear on a range of circumstances. As we’ll see in the discussions below, progress is also many things for the Bolivians of Escobar.

In an immediate sense, progress in Escobar is about capitalizing and achieving economic independence—whether this be in the horticultural or textile trade, in construction, or in some other kind of economic endeavor—e.g. running an eatery (*comedor*). The installation of a greenhouse, the acquisition of a truck, or the purchase of new equipment can all count as ‘progress’. Where life in Bolivia is frequently characterized by ‘lack’ and ‘hardship’, the material comforts and aesthetic improvements such capital might afford are likewise signs of progress. Yet progress is much more than this. Progress is also about having or becoming competent in codes that are considered ‘modern’, whether these be linguistic, religious, aesthetic or technological. Such competence is often tied to capital, as we saw in the last chapter with

auto-mechanical knowledge. What one sees is that progress ultimately responds to macro-planar ideas about what is ‘backward’ and what is ‘civilized’; indeed, as a practical logic it is based on the idea that one with roots in the former can acquire the markings and status in the latter. In this way, progress is not simply about economic mobility; it is also about cultural mobility, in which one’s ethnic status often lies in the balance. Progress thus often involves the shedding or concealing of cultural traits that are considered ‘backward’. Where these traits are often those said to characterize the ‘Indian’, as we have seen in the foregoing chapters, progress is often specifically a matter of ‘de-indianization’—i.e. of establishing difference and distance from what is considered Indian.

One of the principal arguments of this dissertation is that progress, as both a desire and a practice, is something that is embodied and visceral. I sought to illustrate this in the section “Walking like a caporal” above. Indeed, the politics of progress is a politics of humiliation, shame, and pride. As I will argue in the next chapter, progress is most often experienced as a zero-sum economy of esteem, such that it fuels a complex of pride and envy. As I argue in later chapters, this complex plays a major role in the corruption of the CBE—an entity which, one must not forget, has not only enabled differential progress, but has helped make progress the dominant logic of production itself.

That work, however, must ultimately rest on more foundational discussions that illuminate what progress is (and is about) for the Bolivians in Escobar. What that, let us turn to the ways progress is framed and formulated among them.

Progress as Overcoming Hunger, Suffering, and Lack

Don Leocario was one of the few *Paceños* in the barrio. Being the biggest personality among them, he had earned the title of ‘the’ *Paceño*. I had always enjoyed speaking with him, as he had been in Argentina for many years, and most of them in Escobar. As one of the oldest Bolivians in the barrio, *Paceño* had a great deal of perspective. Our conversations had ranged from what foods would make one’s wife bear a girl versus a boy (indeed, if anyone knew, it was him, being that he had eleven children), to what the barrio was like when it was first cut from the fields. I had also always enjoyed his capacity for social critique. Indeed, he had seen generations of

Bolivians struggle (*luchar*), both in Argentina and in Bolivia. Moreover, being in the minority, Don Leocario was able to view certain dynamics from a more Archimedean point. He was not caught up in the rivalries and feuds that existed between—and often within—the Potosinos, Cochabambinos, and Tarijeños. He was above all this—perhaps also because he had lived it all and was simply too old for it.

One afternoon, I had run into him around the corner from the Feria. We got to talking about the *Colectividad* (CBE)—about the infighting, the ‘usurpation,’ and the judicial intervention. With this as a ground, and thinking I could draw on his years of experience (perhaps even on his own *lucha*), I asked him what he considered to be the greatest challenge Bolivians had faced, whether in Bolivia or in Argentina. Without hesitating, he replied:

Don Leocario (Paceño): **Allá todos sufrieron hambre.**
[In Bolivia] everyone suffered hunger.

Acá saben aprovechar, saben ahorrar—Y ves como van progresando.

Here they know how to get on, to save—and just look at how they’re progressing.

I was initially taken aback by this—by the frankness and simplicity with which *Paceño* had framed what I knew to be a complex matter. Thinking that *Paceño* would have answered something akin to how the various groups of Bolivians were challenged to overcome their ‘ethnic nationalities’ in the barrio; or how, collectively, they were forced to navigate their ‘otherness’ vis-à-vis Argentines who considered themselves the heirs of European civilization, *Paceño* came in on a much more fundamental level. What was the greatest challenge Bolivians—taken collectively—had faced? *Hunger*. And he looked me directly in the eye, drawing out the word as if to say, ‘think about this, *yanqui*, think about what this actually means’.

And I did. Not just because it was a powerful comment that stitched together so much. Indeed, we had also been talking about the troubles of the CBE. I heeded it because this was not the first time I had heard this sentiment, and because each time I heard it, it was unmistakably clear that I was being told something very personal, and very fundamental—something visceral. *Paceño* echoed what I had heard though the mouths of many:

El boliviano es sufrido;
The Bolivian is long-suffering

El boliviano es carenciado.
The Bolivian is impoverished [literally, deprived]

What this meant was that Bolivians had a common experience of hardship—whether from the hunger that came from fields that would not produce, from the toil in mines where coca leaf was too often a meal, or from their patched clothing that could never insulate one from the cold. Indeed, this was why the Bolivian worked so hard: he had to overcome this hunger (*hambre*), this hardship (*sufrimiento*); this lack (*carencia*).

However much Bolivian immigrants might be ashamed of this original condition, and however much they might even invoke this shame in their own to humiliate them, neither *Paceño*, nor anyone else from whom I heard this kind of visceral, if not confessional, sentiment, saw Bolivians as being victims in this *lucha*. To be hungry, to suffer, to lack—these were not things that happened to one; they were things that one *endured*, what one *did*. There was an agency in them. Indeed, *Paceño*'s pronouncement had come directly from my question about what challenges (*desafíos*) all had faced. That the Bolivian was known to be active before them is seen in the fact that *Paceño* did not stop at mentioning that Bolivians had suffered hunger. After letting me register the gravity of his words, he purposefully followed with: 'Here, Bolivians know how to take advantage of their opportunities, to not miss a step; they know how to *save*'. And mark: saving (as in accumulating a surplus) is not something that comes easy up in the Altiplano, in Potosí, or in any other *campo boliviano* for that matter. For money is scarce; and climate and geography too often frustrate the accumulation (or distribution) of any agricultural surplus.

Paceño's commentary was that hunger, suffering, and lack are the fundamental backdrop against which one 'progresses'. Progress is thus conceived as *overcoming* these challenges on this most basic level; as achieving a kind of separation or distance from them, as states that had to be endured. Implicit in *Paceño*'s evaluation is that this challenge, this *lucha*, is basic to all Bolivians; that all Bolivians have this common, visceral experience of the world. What is explicit is that progress—i.e. this overcoming of these hardships—is achieved through saving (*ahorrar*). That is, progress is not itself saving, but rather what happens when one deploys a

surplus that he has accumulated. In Argentina, this surplus is not corn, as it might be in the Andean highlands, but rather cash. This begs the question: if hunger, suffering, and lack are the backdrop against which one progresses, what is the opposite of these that the deployment of cash can achieve? As we'll see below, this can take different forms.

Progress as Overcoming Cultural 'Backwardness'

As mentioned earlier on, progress is many things. While we have just seen that on a basic level, progress means overcoming material hardship, we should note that progress is often framed as a 'cultural' process as well. Where this is the case, economic movements are never far—a phenomenon we also saw illustrated with the case of 'walking like a *caporal*' above. In the following ethnographic case, I show how progress is framed as overcoming a condition of cultural 'backwardness'—i.e. as an 'evolution'. What is achieved through this evolution is a distance from that which is deemed 'backward', and thus often a source of discrimination or humiliation.

This framing came about through a few separate interactions. I will begin in the middle.

I had accompanied my friend Orlín (a Potosino welder) and Alfredo (his *Qochalo* employee) to fix a set of metal doors down the street. These were *portones*, the huge barricade-style doors that enclosed one's housing compound from the street. They kept family in, and dogs and *vagos* out. Being made of solid sheet metal, they also block the gaze of envious neighbors. The client was a friend of Orlín, and when we began work, he came out to greet us. In being introduced to Alfredo, he noted that he was from Cochabamba for his *Qochalo* Spanish. Conversation quickly led to a discussion of whose Quechua was more pure—the Cochabambino's or the Potosino's. Where the Cochabambino's Quechua was deemed more pure because it was 'closer' to the Incas' Quechua (noting that the Potosino had originally been an Aymara speaker), the Potosino's Quechua could be deemed more '*neto*' (native) because he was more highland and insulated from Spanish contact. Indeed, it was affirmed that he was the more 'indigenous'.

There was no answer that satisfied everyone, and the conversation stalled. Since we were already on the topic of whose Quechua indexed what, I took the opportunity to get some native feedback on an observation I had made unloading trucks in the CBE's Market a few nights prior.

I was taking a rest from unloading crates of citrus—a grueling job second only to squash (*zapallito*), which I fortunately never had to touch because I worked for a fruit operation. I was in earshot of a conversation between an older, more humble couple and an important and well-established operator. While I was too far away to make out the particulars, I later came to learn that it was about the possibility of the latter providing space in his truck such that the former could expand their own operation by purchasing extra goods from Buenos Aires's Central Market and reselling them in Escobar for a profit. This was a common arrangement, and the family *puesto* I worked for operated in precisely this way. What had initially caught my attention, however,—and which, being close enough, I could make out—was that the older couple was pleading with the *puestero* in Quechua.

Quechua was not often heard on the Market floor. This was for reasons that ranged from the fact that not everyone spoke it (indeed, the Tarijeños and Argentines didn't) to the fact that Quechua marked one as a *bolita* in the eyes of Bolivians and Argentines alike. What was perhaps more striking about the exchange was that, for all the older couple's humble pleading in Quechua, the established operator refused to answer them in it and responded only in Spanish. I was further shocked to find out that this couple and the operator were actually relatives (*parientes*) from Pancochi (in Potosí). In reflecting on this, I realized that the older couple's use of Quechua, if out of place, was not simply because they had greater facility in it. It was because it was (or at least had been for many) the language of relatives (the language of *parentesco*). It was the language of common roots and a common past. While the older couple's pleading in Quechua was not persuasive, it was nevertheless a pragmatic choice.

I told Orlín and Alfredo of this observation, asking them what they thought about the established operator who refused to answer his *parientes* in Quechua. With Orlín silent, Alfredo said dryly:

Alfredo (*Qochalo*): **Cuando la gente se refina, ya no pueden hablar el quechua.**
When people become refined, they can't speak Quechua any more.

Alfredo's commentary articulated what I had been surmising about the whole exchange. Where the operator had achieved certain wealth and status—not just through his running of two *puestos*, but through his possession of a truck that could engage the Central Market—he had become (or at least thought himself) 'refined' (*refinado*). As Alfredo saw it, the operator thought his economic progress placed him 'above' what he had come from.

Were he to respond in Quechua, the operator would have compromised his standing—his achieved status—in front of others. Being that it was not yet the *hora de venta* (the time when buyers are let in), these others were not Argentines of consequence, though there were Argentine (and *yanqui*) freight handlers (*changarines*) in the vicinity. Rather, these others were other Bolivian operators with whom he was potentially competing for esteem. Had he responded in Quechua, he would have shown a commonality with this poor, older couple from the *campo* (i.e. *campo indio*) of rural Potosí. Quechua here would have indexed his *belonging* to this world, his *origin* in it, and perhaps its *persistence* in him. Even though everyone knew that the operator spoke Quechua (indeed, being a Pancocheño, it was his first language), he “could not” speak it on Alfredo's estimation. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Alfredo did not say that the operator “would not” (*querer*) speak Quechua to the couple, but that he “could not” speak it to them (*poder*). This is very telling. It not only suggests that the valorizations by which status is configured are (as a discourse) both disciplining and internalized; it also suggests that one's social standing is always somewhat precarious. Because such status is achieved (rather than inherent) with Potosinos in particular, it is always potentially threatened by what might lurk underneath (i.e. indianness). One's standing must therefore always be worked on and continually maintained. Perhaps most significant in all of this is that the operator's 'refinement', which is cultural, but which is also a function of economic achievement and prowess, is so powerful that it caused him to refuse to recognize his own *parientes*. Insofar as he fails to recognize them as his kin, and as those with whom he shares a past, one could liken him to the *caporal* with whom we opened the chapter.

While one can read the politics of progress through these events in the Market—i.e. the operator's refusal to recognize his kin, not just because he had progressed and therefore did not need to recognize them, but also because of the ways such recognition might index a persistence of cultural 'backwardness' in him—there is yet more to say about how such acts are themselves explicitly framed as 'progress' in the barrio.

Later that night, I rolled over to my *compadre*'s for dinner. He had promised me a good *saise tarijeño*. I mentioned that Orlín, Alfredo, and I had touched on the theme of people no longer wanting to speak Quechua. But before I was able to explain the particulars of the events at the Market, or ask him whether he thought the operator was prey to a hegemonic politics of status or whether he was actively cultivating a superiority over his own kin, my *compadre* interjected, as if there were but one reason:

Charly (Chapaco): **Es que han evolucionado; han progresado.**
It's that they've evolved; they've progressed.

Charly's response was not at all ironic or tinged with critique. It was simply a frank statement that for Potosinos, progress meant leaving highland Andean culture behind. That often specifically meant the dropping of the Quechua language in certain contexts, being that his code is perhaps the principal index of this 'Indian' culture. Charly's response reproduced a number of dominant conceptions about Potosí and its inhabitants, which appear to have been internalized by the operator in the Market as well. Specifically, his response relied on the view that *Qolla* culture (and everything that indexes and is indexed by it) is considered 'backward', and that it is only natural that such 'Indian' ways would give way to Western ways when confronted with them. On his estimation, this was simply the natural evolution of things.

Having worked through these examples, there are a few things about progress that stand out. The first is that progress is about overcoming conditions that cause hardship. In the first example, what people strive to overcome is the hardship caused by hunger, suffering, and lack. In the example above, what the operator had overcome was a condition of cultural 'backwardness'. In both cases, progress is about seeking, achieving, or maintaining esteem. What this shows is that what people are progressing from—i.e. what they are moving away from—are conditions that are sources of shame, or things over which one can be humiliated or denied his human dignity. As we have seen, and will continue to see, one is often humiliated for his material poverty or cultural 'backwardness'. These are the 'agonies' (*dolores profundos*) that can be said to motivate progress as a set of desires. Second, one must also note that the two kinds of agonies illuminated above (material and cultural) are borne together by those from Potosí more than any other ethnic nationality. Indeed, where the Potosinos may in some cases

not be that worse off than other Bolivians, only they are considered ‘*indios*’. Finally, what these examples show is that progress, as a thing achieved, can be understood as having achieved a separation from, or distance with regard to, such conditions of hardship. As we’ll see below and in the next chapter, progress is not just distance from these conditions, it is also a distance that, by virtue of the first, comes to obtain between *people*. It is the ‘gap’ created by one’s progress in relation to another’s, and in what becomes a zero-sum configuration, that becomes the object of pride and envy. Within this, we’ll also see that expressions of pride enabled by progress often reinscribe the condition of ‘backwardness’ (if not Indianness) in others. This further complicates the ways that Bolivians in Argentina may achieve a sense of human and cultural dignity that doesn’t mean shedding (or otherwise managing) one’s native culture. Certainly, dancing the *caporales*—a quintessentially “Bolivian” aesthetic form that is publically performed in Argentina—is not the answer, given that this form is in many ways about ethnic mobility and de-Indianization.

Progressing through Capitalizations

While I will argue in the next chapter that Bolivians in Escobar may seek progress to compete with one another in a politics of pride and envy, we have seen above that, on a more basic level, people desire progress to overcome two things: first, to overcome material hardship; and second, to overcome shame over cultural attributes and secure themselves against humiliation. Indeed, the vast majority of Bolivians in the barrio have come from a condition of lack (*carencia*) and must navigate racial and ethnic tensions, not only among their Bolivian rivals, but often among xenophobic Argentines as well.

There are many things that people in the barrio do to seek, achieve, and maintain esteem. These are efforts through which they attempt to create distance between themselves and a condition of hardship or ‘backwardness’—a condition over which they may (or are made to) feel shame. Certainly, as we saw in through the ethnic banter and bullying in Chapter 2, there is a constant negotiation of insides and outsides; a constant public presentation of self. There we saw struggles over phonologies, over places of birth, and over cultural tastes. We may now see how these pretensions, some of them morphing into strategies for distinction, are not simply figured

through dominant ideologies of ‘civilization’ and ‘backwardness’, but more specifically imbued with notions of progress.

In this section I argue that capitalization is the most prominent sign and means of progress. Indeed, I suggest that capitalizations can ‘trump’ other kinds of status—be they racial, ethnic, birth-related, etc.— or otherwise provide a means for their negotiation. Because of this, capitalizations and the desires to capitalize become a key strategy of distinction that organizes many other kinds of practice, shaping for example the Bolivian work ethic and practices of saving, purchasing, and consuming. Because capitalization becomes the privileged means to progress, and because, as we’ll see, progress is always relative, what emerges is a logic of exclusive, competitive accumulation. This ‘economic’ logic can be seen to fit within that overarching logic of “being on top of and dominating the rest” we saw manifest in aesthetic culture above.

In the end, economic capitalization both represents and indexes a distance traversed and a condition overcome. Nowhere is this more apparent than with the purchase of a (new) truck. Indeed, the truck is the quintessential sign of progress. In being an object of wealth, it indexes an overcoming of hunger, poverty, and material hardship; as an object of the modern world, it indexes a certain ‘de-Indianization’. As we’ll see, the truck as a capitalization not only allows one to negotiate his racial and ethnic status, it may also become a means through one may re-inscribe the status of another. Where trucks or other capitalizations are used to humiliate others, the dominant racial and ethnic hierarchies are most often reproduced. This in turn perpetuates the terms of and conditions of progress.

“The more you have, the more you are”

Before attending to two ethnographic cases in which progress is achieved or otherwise signaled through capitalizations, and specifically trucks, it first serves to delve deeper into what capital (and wealth) can mean in a place like the barrio.

There is a rich literature on how pursuits of wealth and status have affected identifications and social relations in the Andes generally. There are studies of the changing relations between native Andean lords and their peoples as the former plugged into the political

economy of Spanish Colonial perquisites (see Stern 1993 [1982], Rasnake 1988, Ramírez 1996); there are studies of the ways that changes in wealth have often entailed the shifting of social spheres (see Larson and Harris 1995); there are studies of the ways that changes in class are imbricated with changes of culture, a phenomenon referred to as ‘cholification’ (see Bourricaud 1970), as well as studies that show that changes in class may not involve the abandonment of indigenous ways, but rather their cultivation, if on new terms (see Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999). Certainly, the topic is a vast one, and there are innumerable ways in which wealth can be configured culturally.

My immediate argument with respect to the Bolivians in Escobar is that pursuits of wealth are, at least on one level, about human dignity. Where one is regarded as—and often made into—an *indio* in the Bolivian economy of otherness, and a *bolita* in the Argentine economy of otherness, capitalization can be a path to dignity, recognition, and self-respect. Indeed, it can be made to respond to, and attenuate, a history of deprivation and a world of cultural discrimination. That it does this is, I argue, reason for why a traditional saying in Argentina (and one that occurs elsewhere in Latin America) is circulated and invoked with such fervor by Bolivians in Escobar.

‘Cuanto tenés, cuanto valés’

The more you have, the more you are [worth]

It is easy for one who has not witnessed the Bolivian struggle (*lucha*) in Escobar to dismiss this as a mere platitude. But if you are made into an *indio*, as all *Qollas* may be (and is something that often happens at their own hand), and if you are made into a *bolita*, as all Bolivians may be (and is something that happens by *paisanos* and Argentines alike), then the sentiment cannot be easily dismissed. For when one is consistently denigrated—not just as an *indio* or a *bolita*, but as dirty (*sucio*), ignorant (*ignorante*), ugly (*feo*)—then acquiring wealth, and especially an object of esteem like a truck, is highly meaningful. Having such a thing (*tener*) can make one ‘someone’ (*valer*). It might help one feel better about the teeth he had kicked in, or forget the pain of having been called a *bolita de mierda* on a bus or in school. Indeed, Bolivians in Escobar, as likely elsewhere, do not have too many paths to achieve esteem. Working and saving to capitalize is one of them.

Betty and Pastor Unveil Their New Truck

This is the story of Betty and Pastor's new truck. Betty was a Potosina from Jujuy, and when asked, she most often said she was an *argentina*. But any Argentine that she bought fruit from or sold it to in the CBE's Market would have immediately identified her as a *boliviana*. Indeed, she had all the physical characteristics that marked her as such for them: she was short, dark, and rotund. She also had a number of the cultural markers that, on this same reading, made her Bolivian. Her speech, though *porteño* in many ways, bore certain phonologic characteristics (specifically the 's') that betrayed her culturally *altiplanic* upbringing—even if the latter happened in Jujuy's *quintas* or cane fields. Betty's claim to being an *argentina* was, I believe, motivated by a desire to mitigate the entailments of being Bolivian in Buenos Aires—namely, being *despreciada*. But for all of Betty's hybridity and her need to negotiate it in favor of Argentine belonging, she was very conversant in the social codes of Argentina. Indeed, between her and her husband, she was one who bought and sold fruit from Argentine purveyors and buyers; she was the one who handled the commerce. Her husband Pastor, who was from Yura, was Bolivian in every respect. Pastor had been raised speaking Quechua, and his fluidity in Spanish was not what Betty's was. Moreover, Pastor was not a man of many words, and he engaged the Argentine *fleteros*⁵¹ and buyers much less than Betty. But Pastor was not at all apologetic about being from Bolivia, from Potosí, or from Yura, whether in the face of any Bolivian or 'criollo', as he referred to the Argentines. Indeed, he once remarked to me that whenever he returned to Yura he would always speak Quechua where it mattered ('*donde corresponde*'). This, he suggested, was unlike others who would inflate themselves (*agrandarse*) and refuse to speak their first language, proffering an Argentinized Spanish in its place. Pastor was humble; he did not need to put on any airs.

But Pastor was *humilde* in another way as well. He had grown up *carenciado* (lacking). Indeed, some months before, in the lull after the *descarga*⁵² but before the buyers would arrive, Pastor had told me about how he had been sent to work in Bolivian lowlands of Santa Cruz at

⁵¹ A *fletero* is one who transports goods—in this case fruit purchased from Buenos Aires's Central Market.

⁵² The *descarga* is the period in the CBE's Market when trucks arrive to unload produce harvested from the local *quintas* or purchased from other sources for resale in Escobar. *Descarga* happens in the evening, while the *hora de venta* begins around 11pm and lasts until the Market closes around 7 or 8am.

age 10. His family was poor and had had too many mouths to feed, not to mention that his father was *malo*. For Pastor, the hardship never changed. After emigrating to Argentina, he found work on a local *quinta*, where he met Betty. Though they eventually made a life together and reached the point of owning their own 4 hectare *quinta*, they worked it around the clock, and often with meager profit. There they toiled for years, raising three young children in the process. Eventually, they sold the *quinta*, as its production was too little for their efforts. But this was not before they were assaulted and robbed in the late 1990s. Out of respect, I never asked about the details of this; I knew from other cases where people had been entirely wiped out, and beaten and tortured in the process (see Chapter 6). Indeed, the look in Pastor's eyes in recounting all this reflected terrible memories.

While the purchase and resale of fruit in the Market was much more profitable than their labor in the *quinta*, in part because of Pastor's access to the banana trade (see Chapter 6), Betty and Pastor still worked around the clock. It was not uncommon for Betty to be up for 20 hours straight on the days when purchases from Buenos Aires's Central Market were accounted for. And so it was perhaps unremarkable to hear Pastor respond to a neighboring operator, who had ask him one day how he was doing with: "*En la lucha, como siempre*" (In the struggle, as always). As with many Bolivians, this had been Pastor's and Betty's story. This was the story of *hambre*, *carencia*, and *sufrimiento* that Paceyño had said characterized all Bolivians in Escobar. Were this not the case, Betty and Pastor would not have been working 20 hours a day, living in self-enforced penury, and forgoing all comforts in a land that had already once targeted them for the savings they had hidden in the fourth furrow of their cabbage.

But 20 years in the *lucha* will bring rewards, especially if one's ethic of work and saving was strong, as theirs was. I saw this first-hand unloading and loading their freight with Wilber, Pastor's nephew who had come down from Potosí. Indeed, I was one of the few willing to work with Betty, for she was known to have exploited many freight-handlers (*changarines*), and often was reluctant to pay them their due. Certainly, these *changarines* had their own *lucha* as well. All of this earned Betty a great deal of moral censure, especially as she bore a stack of bills—many of them 100 *peso* notes—in her apron. I, however, with ample research funding, did not need the sustenance from the *changas* to subsist. And so I endured her stinginess which, perhaps because I stayed for so long, worked so hard, and endeared myself to the family, eventually softened. Indeed, Betty would often take care of me (*cuidarme*), if basically, with a *tapa de*

asado sandwich from the *parrilla*. Eventually, I would be invited over to their home in a nearby locale (a situation any middle-class Argentine would have classified as living in *miseria*), where I enjoyed a laugh, a tender moment, and ate the same humble dishes that had been their austere diet since the very beginning, whether in “Argentina” or not.

Being on the ‘inside’ of Betty’s commerce, many in the Market would try to get me to provide them with more insight into the volume and profit of her operation, which were nevertheless plain for anyone to see. Indeed, everyone’s volume in the Market was both visible to, and viewed by, everyone else (*en la mirada*). One could not sell what they sold without it being registered by everyone else. And so I would often get asides or questions, guarded but burning with interest, regarding Betty’s sales: “*che, Betty vende mucho, no?*”—as if asking me: How is it she sells so much? What is she pulling in after expenses? Indeed, to the consternation of those on the fringes of the horticultural trade, but not surprising to those in the Market, Betty and Pastor would take home thousands of *pesos* every month, though this of course depended on the season. Surely this adds up, and everyone knows it. But no one ever sees it until the day the new truck rolls in.

I also had not been privy to their plans to buy the truck. Though I could have guessed it would come some day, I had no idea it was coming just then. Indeed, no-one did. Capitalizations are not communicated beforehand, as this might invite bad blood. As we will see, this often happens anyway. Thus one does what she or he can to forestall envy, and perhaps even acts of witchcraft or sabotage, as these are also reputed to befall those who have just progressed. At the same time, where in the Market prosperous operators throw their weight around—*agrandandose* or *refinandose*—the unannounced acquisition and sudden unveiling of a truck is a way to ‘stick it’ to those who have been haughty on other occasions, perhaps if they had paraded in a new truck of their own, or were otherwise unwilling to develop amicable relations outside their own kin network. In these circumstances, words of retribution are often unnecessary, and often a knowing glance will suffice. For the capitalization is statement enough; in the language of progress, it stands on its own. In a way, unveiling the truck is a performative all its own.

When that day did come, and I saw Betty for the first time, she was well aware that she and Pastor were being observed by all; that they were in the *mirada*. This caused her a bit of uneasiness and reservation. (Pastor, working from his *puesto*, was a bit more stolid, at least on

the outside.) Despite this, she was nevertheless gleaming, and to my congratulations, responded simply:

Betty (Potosina): **Y, vamos progresando.**
Well, we're progressing.

I was unable to capture the full range of what might have been said about Betty and Pastor's acquisition, for the *descarga* was soon upon us, and there was work to be done. I was also curious if her statement was somehow for my benefit, given that the language of progress was not native to me, as it was to her. This was perhaps because I was from the United States, and because my whiteness ensured that I would never suffer racial discrimination in the ways that Bolivians had in Argentina. That is, on both material and racial accounts, I was already at the destination; I had no 'distance' to overcome. I can only wonder if she would have so explicitly framed this capitalization as 'progress' to another Bolivian, for everyone knew it was. Nevertheless, the way she framed the statement with "y" was interesting to me. Where this might be rendered as something of a 'well...', I believe it introduces a sentiment of 'what else is there?' to the whole affair; the implication being that this truck is 'what we've been after all this time'—which is something readily apparent to everyone in the *lucha*. Certainly, I would know this having worked in the Market for so long. At the same time, by explicitly linking the truck to progress, Betty creates context by situating the acquisition and display of the truck in a wider world of meaning. That is, by calling the truck 'progress', she makes it respond to hunger and hardship, to discrimination and humiliation.

Interestingly enough, perhaps it was precisely *because* she could not make such a pronouncement to another operator that she was explicit about the truck constituting and signaling progress to me. That is, where explicitly pronouncing to others that the purchase and display of the truck constituted 'progress'—a fact clearly communicated by sheer presence of it—would have been interpreted as an agonistic act of pride (*agrandarse*), she had no-one with whom she could celebrate her new and hard-fought status. Perhaps the actual articulation of this capitalization to me, i.e., someone who was not a rival, helped her realize what she and Pastor had just achieved—that they had traversed a distance; that they had overcome a condition. In other words, by saying '*vamos progresando*', she could conjure up the many years of sacrifice and struggle that she and Pastor had endured. Certainly, there had been *carencia* and

sufrimiento. Yet there was also the generalized stigma that surrounded Bolivians in Argentina. Betty and Pastor were *bolitas* by the measure of those Argentines I knew on the other side of the Panamerican Highway in Escobar proper. She and Pastor had to have *felt* this every time they left the barrio; it was indeed a structure of feeling that all Bolivians were forced to live, perhaps most acutely when they were under the humiliating boot of the *chorros* who robbed them of their savings, hard work, and dignity in the *quinta* they had struggled to purchase and till.

In many ways, when Betty made this verbal pronouncement to me, she was performatively creating the progress itself; she had conjured up what had to be overcome, and then realized the actual overcoming through language. All of this was ‘afforded’ by her and Pastor’s capitalization, itself a function of years of toil and sacrifice. In this way, Betty could feel openly (at least in front of me) validated and dignified after her great—and ongoing—struggle.

Everyone knew this struggle intimately. They had either lived it or they had a visceral memory of it; a memory which forever marked them. So when Betty and Pastor arrived to the Market that day in their new truck, and it was on display (like the volume of her commerce had been all along), others *felt* it. Because Betty’s and Pastor’s truck was a concrete measure of their progress, because it marked the great distance they had just traversed, it forced others to consider their own position, which was now cast in critical relief. If progress is achieving certain distance from hunger and lack, and often, by extension, from associated shame over cultural markers deemed ‘backward’, Betty and Pastor’s capitalization showed what others still had not attained. It showed that others had not yet achieved distance from these things, and in so doing reinscribed their relative position. In this way, Betty’s capitalization created a difference *between people*, who were now left behind (*se quedan atrás*). Being left behind was not just figurative. Where Betty and Pastor could now, as a function of this truck, engage the Central Market themselves, versus having to contract a *fletero*, others were left behind in a thoroughly economic sense. This differential access would only widen the ‘gap’, both symbolically and economically.

Elvio Aggrieves Teófilo with His Truck

We have just seen how capitalization not only indexes progress, but becomes progress itself. Capitalization, perhaps more than any other strategy of distinction, mediates the sting—and shame—of material hardship. It also attenuates the sting and shame that stem from ethnic discrimination (*desprecio cultural*). One with a truck *feels* less deprived. Indeed, riding in the truck no doubt constitutes a sense of plenty, of validation, and of dignity. But as many Bolivians in the barrio claim, few are able to remain humble after attaining marked progress. What happens too often, they say, is that the feelings of power that accompany rapid progress—themselves natural and well-deserved to a certain extent—become exaggerated, such that one ‘stomps’ on the empty-handed (*pisa los que no tienen*). Though this is certainly not the rule—indeed, I don’t believe Betty (much less Pastor) would do this—there are abundant cases where people *do* throw their weight around, and often in antagonistic ways. The exact nature of these actions is itself varied; we have already seen how one’s becoming ‘refined’ (*refinarse*) is different than one becoming ‘haughty’ and ‘domineering’ (*agrandarse*). What we have yet to see is how someone may exceed these postures and actively ‘stomp’ on (*pisar*) another, as indicated in the expression just mentioned. This is the kind of antagonism through progress I detail below. In this example, we not only see how progress can be conceptualized as a distance from a condition, we also see how one’s truck, as a symbol of progress, can be used to create a distance between people.

It was one of the first evenings I was not hurried off to the Market to meet the *descarga*. I had recently left my 8 month stint as a *changarín* and relished my newfound time to socialize with friends. On this occasion I was chatting with El Gordo (a Tarijeño from Jujuy) outside his fruit and vegetable shop on Calle Orquídeas. We were sitting on the big wooden crates through which all kinds of harvests had made their way from field to market, and then on to the local shops where they would become fodder for the autumn’s soups. Hearing El Gordo’s crate creak under his corpulence, I delighted in watching the trucks overflowing with produce rumble down the fatigued pavement of Calle Corrientes, which intersected with Orquídeas a stone’s throw away. The trucks kicked up a good deal of dust in the evening light, and created an orange haze that somehow offset the evening chill. El Gordo and I were discussing plans for the upcoming

haircutting ceremony (*corte de pelo*) for his one year old son he had with his Potosina wife. Out of nowhere we heard a shrieking of two sets of brakes, and then an aggressive voice shout:

Elvio (Potosino): ¿Qué hacés!?! ¡La puta que te parió!
What are you *doing*! [Literally] The whore that birthed you!

I looked up to see that the voice belonged to Elvio, whose lower jaw was protruding. Elvio was seated high in the cabin of his 10-ton truck, which was topped with his own *carga* for sale in the Market. He had been pressing down Corrientes at a significant clip when Teófilo, driving a small pickup down Orquídeas, had attempted to break the line of market-bound trucks. No doubt he was tired after a long day in construction, and simply wanted to get home. Teófilo was the foreman of a small crew composed mostly of Bolivians that worked the wealthy (and white) gated communities (*barrios cerrados*) of the area. The two had almost collided; Elvio had to break hard but did not relent, pausing only to issue Teófilo his reprimand before grinding off toward the Market. Teófilo, physically overrun and feeling illegitimately ‘*ubicado*’ (put in his place), was forced to wait.

Though transit in the barrio (as in Buenos Aires more generally) is frequently a question of ‘*huevo*’—if not one of actual might—this exchange between Elvio and Teófilo is telling for our discussion of progress, and for a number of reasons. Origins, words, and things all play important roles in the exchange, which we will see is a classic example of one ‘stomping’ on another (*pisar*). Let us begin with the protagonists. Elvio is the middle brother in a powerful family of Potosinos that has become powerful in the Market’s commerce and the CBE’s ‘usurpation’. Indeed, many consider Elvio’s older brother to be one of the principal architects of the latter. The family is itself from a small hamlet near Pancochi in the Province of Linares. Where Pancochi is known by many (especially their Saropalkeño rivals) to be rustic and off the beaten path, Elvio’s native hamlet is even more so—lacking electricity and all comforts. Teófilo is also from a small community in Potosí. His, however, is in the Province of Nor Chichas, and thus ‘other’ with respect to Linares.

Neither Elvio nor Teófilo would have had to emigrate to Escobar were it not for economic necessity, as is the case with nearly all Bolivians there. It is thus safe to say that both came from the same humble beginnings in the *campo*. But a palpable economic difference has emerged between the two in Escobar. Elvio, along with his brothers, has capitalized

significantly through their commercial involvement in the Market and allegedly nefarious dealings in the ‘usurpation’. Indeed, it has been alleged that flat-out embezzlement has been the propelling force in their commercial success, being that the purchase and resale of produce they run (*compra-venta*) depends on costly trucks. The family possesses not one but two of these. The first is this 10-ton truck (*camión*) driven by Elvio. The other dwarfs it, being a 30-ton, refrigerated, long-distance freighter (*trailer*).

For his part, Teófilo has worked for many years in the much less lucrative construction business, attaining a respectable level of responsibility and authority as a petty foreman. However, being that he is still a wage-earner, and at the mercy of an Argentine boss, many would say that he is still very much in the *lucha*. (It is anyone’s guess, however, how much Teófilo has saved up, and when he might make his own jump ‘*salto*’ and capitalize or open an operation of his own.) In terms of their trucks, Teófilo’s *camioneta* was ‘less’ than Elvio’s 10-ton *camión* on every measure: it was smaller, older, and more beat up. It was also empty, barring a few tools. On the contrary, Elvio’s *camión* was brimming with produce that he and his family had bought at the Central Market and were about to resell in the CBE’s Market. This, one should note, was without having to pay any intermediary *fletero*, and potentially without having to pay the overhead rent in the Market, being so heavily plugged into the ‘usurpation’. In this way, Teófilo’s and Elvio’s trucks indexed two different kinds of economic endeavor—i.e. dependent wage labor vs. independent commerce. They also indexed the different modes of accumulation that accompany these endeavors—i.e. linear and curvilinear, respectively. Indeed, one can argue that their respective vehicles, the ‘light’ *camioneta* and the ‘heavy’ *camión*, represented not only two different *stages*—but two different *rates*—of progress.

So how does all this shape the actual exchange at the intersection of Orquídeas and Corrientes? Much can be gleaned from what Elvio barks out in the encounter. That he begins with ‘¿*Qué hacés!*?’ (What are you doing?!) reveals that Elvio believed he had the upper hand; that he had a right to go first; that he should not have to wait. His reprimand of ‘What are you doing?’ can be read as more than a general reaction uttered in a moment of confusion. It can be read as a specific charge of ‘What are you doing?’—where this ‘you’ is not just anybody, but Teófilo, a humble construction foreman driving an old, beat-up *camioneta*. Implicit in Elvio’s reprimand is his belief that his own self and work are more important. Indeed, on Elvio’s estimation, this is *market* activity; this is a *10-ton* truck that is going to make *big* money

(‘*platita*’). In other words, this is the stuff of the *big* boys. And such *big* dogs do not brake for the likes of such insignificant wage-earners (*obreros*)—just as they don’t brake for *changarines*!

Nested within Elvio’s question of ‘What are you doing?!’ is thus a deeper charge: ‘Just who do you think you are?’ On Elvio’s estimation, he will not be challenged—and most certainly will not give way—to someone in such a lowly position. For Elvio, the calculus of his progress hasn’t just given him the *right* to exercise dominance over the lesser Teófilo (as if this were a resource external to his person he could deploy); rather his progress actually *makes him* dominant, as if he were now made of a different stuff. Let us not forget that both men came from the same origins in rural Potosí; they used to be made of the same stuff—stuff that still characterizes the humble Teófilo.

On one level, this is a classic case of someone who, by virtue of his progress, has inflated himself (*agrandarse*). Yet Elvio isn’t just putting on airs. He gets big directly in the face of Teófilo, whom he calls out and reduces in the process. That is, he ‘stomps’ on him (*pisar*). He does this not only by what he says—being sure to add certain insult to injury by uttering the emphatic ‘*La puta que te parió!*’ ([literally] ‘The whore that birthed you’). He does this by bullying Teófilo with his 10-ton *camión*. Indeed, as Elvio added his ‘*La puta que te parió!*’, he was already shifting back into first gear to continue grinding down Calle Corrientes—forcing Teófilo to ‘remain behind’.

Certainly, there is something to be read into Elvio’s aggressive insult and his out-muscling Teófilo with his *camión*. In the first instance, it is important to note that Elvio used this particular expression and not the equally popular ‘*Hijo de puta*’ (Son of a bitch). ‘*Hijo de puta*’ is heard on the street across the entire Spanish-speaking world. While ‘*La puta que te parió!*’ is also somewhat known, it is an emphatic expression that is quintessentially Argentine, if not *porteño*. To understand why this is this significant, let us consider an occurrence of one ‘stepping on’ another (*pisar*) with a truck up in the Altiplano some 50 years ago.

In an essay entitled “¿Cholificación?” (1970) François Bourricaud recounts how a truck used for commerce linking the rural markets of Puno enabled its driver to *agrandarse*, and to simultaneously reduce others in the process. To begin with, as Bourricaud notes, “the driver enjoyed great prestige (1970: 188).” This was a function of the truck itself. Where the driver derived his authority from owning and operating the truck, as well as from providing transport, itself a scarce and vital resource, he felt entitled to treat his passengers with total impudence

(*desenvoltura*). For him, these passengers, forced to occupy the cold and dusty bed of the truck, were simply “a mass of *indios*, jammed together with all their packages (ibid).”

Let me suggest that Elvio’s impudence in the barrio is not without precedent in the Andes. What is of interest with Bourricaud’s account, however, is not simply the callousness with which a truck owner can treat others. Rather, it is the implications this has for his own ethnic identification and pretensions. In an interesting and rare move, Bourricaud includes for us an entry from his field notes that reveals how ethnic mobility here hinges on economic mobility—something we have already seen with the *caporal* above.

Field Note, 10 May 1953

Our truck, already full, stops to collect an [Indian] traveler signaling on the side of the road. Yet the driver refuses to pick him up because of the size of his package—one which the traveler refuses to leave behind, and for whose cost of transport he cannot pay. The humble traveler pleads for mercy and contrives tears, but the driver is unyielding and leaves him behind, stranded in the road. We tried to intervene on the traveler’s behalf but our attempt was in vain. ‘This is the way these *indios* must be treated’, said the driver, *who in any other circumstance would have been treated as the same kind of Indian*. [Bourricaud 1970: 189, my translation, emphasis added]

The question posed by Bourricaud is whether this truck operator, who treats his Indian passengers with such callousness, is *cholificado*.⁵³ That is, the question is whether he has renounced his origins, set in poverty and Indian-ness, in an attempt to become more urban and ‘cultured’ (*civilizado*). While becoming a *cholo* is complex, it is, at heart, the process of ‘de-Indianizing’. Implicit in this process is a cultural whitening: “El cholo... en cuanto sale de su medio ya es señor y, por lo tanto, pertenece a la raza blanca (Arguedas ctd. en Paz Soldán 2003: 81).” Certainly, we can read Bourricaud’s truck driver as wanting to create a distance between himself and his poor, Indian passengers. This distance is at once economic, social, racial and cultural.

Having witnessed the encounter between Elvio and Teófilo, one can argue that Elvio’s aggression and insult are no different than this aspiration to ‘de-Indianize’ and *cholificarse*. One can also argue that Elvio treats Teófilo as an ‘*indio*’ in the same sense that Bourricaud’s truck driver recreates his would be traveler above. To see this, let us look specifically at Elvio’s insult ‘*La puta que te parió!*’. While the referential meaning of the expression can be read as Elvio

⁵³ See Marisol de la Cadena’s (2006) “The Production of Other Knowledges and Its Tensions” for a discussion of the history of the concept of *cholificación*.

adding emphasis to his charge of ‘What are *you* doing?!’ (‘¿*Qué hacés!*?’) by calling Teófilo a ‘son of a bitch’, the real pragmatic force of the utterance derives from the fact that this is thoroughly an *Argentine*, and not a Bolivian, expression. That is, in putting Teófilo in his place⁵⁴, Elvio chooses an expression, not the likes of which one traditionally hears up in rural Potosí, but rather of one that is thoroughly *porteño*. Moreover, he has taken on a fully *porteño* phonology and meter in deploying it. This is true not just of ‘*La puta que te parió!*’, but in his ‘¿*Qué hacés!*?’ as well⁵⁵. In aggressively inflating himself (*agrandarse*), Elvio speaks, not like rural Potosino he used to be, but rather like a *porteño*.⁵⁶ By positioning Teófilo in this way, Elvio puts distance between himself (a self that, at least in this encounter, is decidedly non-Indian) and Teófilo, who in the process becomes (re)indianized. Indeed, Teófilo is not simply reprimanded for his attempt to cut the line of truckers whose power and authority derives from the progress they don through their trucks⁵⁷; he is also forced to cede the intersection to them—and to Elvio specifically. Like the ‘*indio*’ in Bourricaud’s account, Teófilo is ‘stranded in the road’. Where Elvio marches on to the Market with his truck brimming with profit—and thus on the move toward greater progress—Teófilo is *left behind*, going nowhere.

While all of this is certainly true on one level, we must be careful not to see claims *to* progress as uncontested. I was fortunate to run into Teófilo a few days later at the “Churqui”—a *comedor* run by one of the few *paceños* in the barrio, and famous for showing action films. Certainly, there was nothing better than a *falso conejo*⁵⁸ to go with Rambo’s *First Blood*. Teófilo was having dinner with my good friend Einar (also *potosino*) and whose ability for social analysis rivaled the best in the barrio. After sharing a beer with both of them, and ordering a second, I mentioned that I was at the Gordo’s *verdulería* the evening Elvio *se agrandó*. Being

⁵⁴ This is the same politics of *ubicar* (location) that we saw exercised against the CBE’s Secretary of Culture in Chapter 1.

⁵⁵ In Bolivian Spanish the *¿Qué-* would carry the *priBetty* emphasis, while the *hacés* would simply be *haces*, with the emphasis on the first syllable.

⁵⁶ That Elvio takes on Argentine airs here is interesting, for in the last chapter we saw how his own brother, railed against Gualter (Chuquisaqueño) for his belief that Gualter believed himself superior. *¿Sos boliviano?*, his brother had asked, as if to say: ‘you’re just as Bolivian as anyone else and have no authority to *agrandarte*’. All this shows how ethnic and/or national belonging are resources that can be pragmatically deployed to negotiate status and legitimacy (whether these attempts are successful of course depends on how such ‘insides’ and ‘outsides’ are brought to bear on each other).

⁵⁷ For a parallel argument, see Alicia Carmona (2009): that participants in the *morenada* not only wear their dance attire (*trajes*) as symbols of progress; they also do the same with their trucks, if they are so fortunate to have them.

⁵⁸ “Faux Rabbit”, as this dish is called, is a South-American specialty that is particularly popular among Bolivians—especially those in the barrio. It is not made from rabbit, but rather thin fillets of beef that, when breaded and fried, resemble it. Perhaps the best part is the yellow chili spice (*ají amarillo*) with the garnish of thinly sliced red onion.

close with Teófilo, Einar had already heard what had happened. While Teófilo would condemn Elvio for having ‘denied him respect’ (*faltar respeto*)—a charge that always carried moral weight, and which appealed to a higher sense of authority—he would take issue with anyone who would suggest that Elvio had succeeded in repositioning him. For Elvio, on his and Einar’s estimation, lacked all legitimacy to do so. Though Teófilo recognized Elvio’s ‘progress’, he knew that some (and perhaps much) of this progress could have come through his and his brothers’ allegedly nefarious dealings in the CBE’s ‘usurpation’. Moreover, Elvio had come from the same humble origins as they had, and knew that Elvio was not intrinsically ‘better’ no matter how big a truck he drove, and no matter how much of a *porteño* air he might adopt.

Teófilo (*Qolla*): **Ni tiene educación—¿Quién se cree?**
He doesn’t even have an education—who does he think he is?

This was Teófilo’s attempt to show that *underneath*, Elvio was just another *potoco del campo* (Potosino peasant)—and a rude one at that. Einar, in a show of solidarity with Teófilo, and in an attempt to interpret things for my benefit, said:

Einar (*Qolla*): **Mirá, los que se agrandan típicamente no tienen educación.**
Look, the ones who think so highly of themselves usually lack an education [culture].

But there was a sense that all this stung—that all seemed unfair. Indeed, Elvio had effectively gotten away with this instance of ‘stomping’ on Teófilo because he had the materiality of the truck underwriting the act, and because he had his position in the CBE’s ‘usurpation’, underwritten by those from his corner of Potosí.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have argued that to understand the politics of pride and envy among Bolivians in Escobar and in the CBE, one has to understand the politics of progress. In this chapter I have shown that progress is much more than overcoming hardship in the sense of satisfying material needs or becoming economically independent (see Chapter 6 for a discussion

of how Bolivians achieve independence in the horticultural sector and through the CBE). I have argued that progress is, more fundamentally, about overcoming the sting of both poverty and ethnic or racial discrimination. At the heart of progress, then, are experiences of shame and humiliation over these things—both of which tend to converge in the lives of Potosinos (who bear the condition of ‘Indian-ness’), more than in any other ethnic nationality. In analyzing various examples, I have sought to elucidate that there is an everyday ‘logic’ of progress. This logic can be conceived as the attempt to create distance or separation from the conditions or experiences over which one feels shame or is humiliated. As seen both here and in the foregoing chapters, there are many ways in which Bolivians attempt to establish such distance overcome their ‘*dolores profundos*’ (agonies), as one prominent informant has put it. Motivated phonological shift or other linguistic deployments, change in dress or personal aesthetics, geographical claims of origin or birth, and even religious identification or conversion (e.g. to the *evangelio*) can all be read as attempts to create separation from painful conditions or ascriptions, themselves often associated with Indian-ness and/or *bolita*-ness. On the local rendering, these strategies of distinction are often conceived as acts of attempting to ‘refine oneself’ (*refinarsse*) or ‘inflate oneself’ (*agrandarse*). Yet they are not the only strategies for distinction. I have argued that capitalization is the register of progress with the most ‘purchase’ on the sources of shame or ‘agony’. Indeed, capitalizations (e.g. the acquisition of a truck) respond directly to feelings or histories of material lack and ‘suffering’. Often being associated with modernity, they also attenuate racial or ethnic discrimination. They not only signal membership in the ‘civilized’ world (as it is often called), they frequently provide a means by which one may become ethnically mobile as well. Indeed, I have argued that capitalizations, which are of course achieved, can ‘trump’ statuses that are ascribed.

All of these discussions provide a necessary ground for understanding the workings of envy, whose object is progress. Yet before turning to the next chapter, let me conclude with some final observations about progress itself. What we have seen through the above examples is that progress is also a regime of visibility. As we saw in Chapter 2 people in the barrio are consistently negotiating their interiors and exteriors, often projecting externalities to attend to internal strife. Where that may happen through geographical claims of birthplace or through phonologic pretensions (if not performances), we can see here that it can also happen through capitalizations. Moreover, capitalizations are themselves always visible and on display; they are

always ‘*en la mirada*’ (in the gaze of others). This is especially true of trucks, and what happens through them. As we’ll see, the tendency to focus on the movements of another (*fijarse*) is considered by Bolivians of all stripes to be one of the defining characteristics of Bolivian-ness. This *fijarse* is crucial to the politics of progress, and thus of envy.

Next, and related to this, we have seen that progress often tends to be performative. People may “walk like they are dancing a *caporal*” and perform on the street what is performed in the great festivals—namely, their own economic and/or ethnic mobility. People may also break through into performance in their truck. Certainly, one can read Elvio’s aggression as a display of his progress; but one can also read it as a performance of his own ‘de-Indianization’. Such performances are themselves ‘performative’ in the sense that they create as much as they reflect. Elvio creates himself as an *argentino* just as he creates Teófilo as an *indio*. Yet as Dell Hymes notes, any performance is open for evaluation and critique, and the claims that Elvio makes are, at least on the estimation of Teófilo and Einar, illegitimate because they are ultimately infelicitous.

Finally, we have seen that progress is always relative, and thus tends to be a zero-sum equation. One’s progress most often means another is left behind (*quedarse atrás*). When Betty and Pastor enter the Market in their new truck, everyone else becomes ‘structurally’ repositioned. The distance that Betty and Pastor have achieved from an original condition of humility now comes to obtain between them and others; i.e. the distance is made to obtain *between people*. These are the kinds of ‘gaps’ that become rife with envy, especially if the capitalization (e.g. the unveiling of the truck, etc.) is more purposely—and proudly—performed, as is often the case when one who has been on the losing end of progress, desires to settle scores. What we see through this is that progress is often competitive and agonistic. It is this agonism, often informed by other and pre-existing relationships like ethnic rivalries, that fuels a ‘culture’ of *pisar*—i.e. of ‘stomping’ on one another. This is that logic of ‘being on top of and dominating the rest’ that we explored above.

With an eye toward the next chapter, one can see how this process is at the heart of cycles of pride and envy. As we’ll see in later chapters, it is this schismogenic process, fueled by the ways that the CBE’s Market has shaped economic practices and differential progress, and subsequently exacerbated by the ways that the ‘usurpation’ has reconfigured access to capital (and there again, progress), that has provoked many Bolivians to lament that their ‘community’

has lost all humanity. Where such sentiment was already widespread during the time of my fieldwork, it is no surprise that there were ethical calls to return to a collective humility, and thus usher in a community where one had yet to obtain.

Chapter 5:

Envy

Introduction

In Chapter 1 I showed how the CBE was founded with the ideal of cultivating horizontality and solidarity among and beyond its membership. As I argued there, the founding of the CBE presumed a Bolivian ‘community’ as much as it sought to cultivate one. What has always torn at Bolivian horizontality and solidarity, I suggest, is envy. Indeed, as I will argue in the coming chapters, envy has played a crucial role in the corruption of the CBE. Paradoxically, as I will also show, the CBE has contributed to the very ‘explosion’ of envy that is otherwise wrought through the social and economic changes entailed by the emigration to, and the taking up of life in, Escobar. In this way, the CBE has shaped the very conditions and practices that have contributed to its failure as a communal institution.

To make these arguments, I must show the generative matrix of envy, both in the semiotic and political-economic sense. The foregoing chapters have been dedicated to illuminating the systems of meaning and reference through which envy is experienced and expressed. As I suggested through those discussions, and as I will demonstrate below, envy concerns progress. Progress, as we have just seen, is figured through a politics of otherness, and the shame and humiliation generated by virtue of that otherness. Those discussions hinged on prior illuminations of the Bolivian and Argentine regimes of otherness and the ways they have interpenetrated in Escobar.

Before illuminating how envy has ‘exploded’ through the emigration and the taking up of life in Escobar—a discussion that details envy’s ‘structural’ conditions of possibility in a more classically politico-economic sense—I must first illuminate the actual dynamics of envy. This chapter is thus dedicated to examining what envy is, how it is, and what kinds of consequences it

has. As we'll see below, envy can be theorized as a desire to rectify being left behind vis-à-vis another's progress. Being a function of progress, which is exclusive, differential, and often competitive, envy is the practical manifestation of the logic of 'being on top of and overpowering the rest'. Finally, with regard to consequences, I illuminate the ways that relations of envy may result in the cutting of social fellowship, the cultivation of otherness, and the regimentation of production and consumption. Being practical themselves, all of these consequences come to (re)produce the same dynamics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition that get expressed as envy. What one comes to see are thus not isolated acts of envy, but rather cycles of envy. In the end, this dialectics is fundamentally divisive. While it may articulate people and groups, it does so through their agonism, and thus frustrates any sense of mutuality.

What is Envy?

While there are many things over which the Bolivian residents in the barrio will disagree, there is one thing that most will not dispute: i.e., that envy (*envidia*) is one of the defining characteristics of Bolivian-ness. Indeed, many see envy not just as pervasive, but as deeply shaping all kinds of relationships. These include those between strangers and intimates alike, as well as those between individuals and groups alike. While envy is seen to specifically characterize the relationships between operators in the CBE's Market and Feria, one notes that because these structures are so influential in the economic, political, and social life in the barrio, envy is known to obtain between these operators and those who are not plugged into them to as well. The latter include those in construction, those who perform various services, and those who run local eateries and shops. As we'll see in Chapters 6 and 7, because the CBE has enabled capital accumulation on scales that are unprecedented for most Bolivians in Escobar given that the vast majority hail from the subsistence-producing areas of rural Potosí, differentials between those who work through the CBE's economic outlets (particularly the Market) and those who do not are often great. This is not to say that everyone who works through the CBE's Market and Feria are wealthy. There are differences here that are equally great. To complicate matters, some of these differences, as we'll eventually see, are also a function of the 'usurpation'. Whatever the case may be, great differences in wealth and income have come to characterize relations between

neighbors in the barrio, most of whom are either relatives or ethnic rivals. The results are often social avoidance, negative or unrequited reciprocity, or sometimes even open antagonism.

While many residents in the barrio agree that envy is a social mal, going so far to say that it is the principal “sickness” (*enfermedad social*) that plagues the “Bolivian Community”, many nevertheless see it as a natural feature of social life. As one Pancocheño put it simply: “whatever the case, there is always envy” (*envidia, siempre hay*). As we’ll see, envy is not wholly new to Bolivians in Escobar; many recall that it is present in their homeland of Potosí. Yet the dynamics are not the same. The difference between the envy in Escobar and that in Potosí concerns the nature and meanings of the differences over which it is felt. There are also key differences in the degree to which envy is experienced and the kinds of consequences it can have. While all of these questions are introduced here, they are more fully engaged over the course of the following chapters—chapters that treat the logics and structures of production and social engagement.

For the present, let me raise more modest questions: What is envy? And who envies whom? In the foregoing discussions, I have suggested that envy concerns progress; that the object of one’s envy is another’s progress. Let us recall from the last chapter that progress is much more than becoming economically independent and mobile, where dependence and mere subsistence are linked to the caste system as it has emerged and evolved in the Andean highlands. Progress is, more than this, about managing the deep pains of having come from poverty and material lack, and of having been disdained—either as an *indio* or *bolita*, or both. Indeed, I have argued that one cannot understand progress without understanding what it means to overcome these ‘deep agonies’ (*dolores profundos*). Yet progress is not simply the working toward economic independence, mobility, or the managing of these agonies. Progress is measurable in the material sense—i.e. as a status achieved. What most often signifies progress are capitalizations—e.g. the purchase of one’s own small-holding (*quinta*) on which to grow for the CBE’s horticultural Market, or the acquisition of a (bigger, better) truck. In this way, and through these materials, progress is more than a set of desires or practical efforts; progress becomes the actual achievement of distance or separation from the conditions that cause one shame or over which one can be humiliated.

If one’s envy concerns another’s progress, the esteem it affords, and the material objects that signify it, how is it expressed? What does envy look like in the barrio? While there are

many expressions of the phenomenon, let us begin with what I take to be the most fundamental. The site of the following case was the welding and body shop I have mentioned previously. Knowing from a range of other experiences that trucks are things through which people in the barrio read and create the politics of progress, I was always keen to visit the ‘*taller*’ (workshop) and tune into the larger processes that shaped and made local Bolivian life.

On this particular occasion, Chapi (short for *chapista*, i.e. any automotive body repairman) was doing some work under the hood of Tío Norberto’s 86 Chevi truck. Norberto, who was a neighbor and friend, used the truck to deliver produce he had purchased at the CBE’s Market to individual clients around the Partido of Escobar. While the truck was in good shape, it would need repairs from time to time given its age. As we waited for Chapi to finish, a friend of Norberto’s happened by on his bicycle, and joked with him: “¿*Otra vez?*” (Again?), nodding towards Norberto’s truck, as if he had seen it in the shop before. The two were on good terms, and the joking implication that Norberto’s truck was falling apart was not taken as a slight, especially since the friend was riding a bicycle, which meant he most likely could not afford a truck of his own. Nevertheless, Norberto, realizing that he—and his older truck—were in the public eye, got flustered, if not a bit defensive. Turning to me, and perhaps with some resignation, he said simply “¿*Qué vas a hacer?*” (“What’s one to do?”).

Knowing what trucks meant to people from having worked freight in the CBE’s Market, I replied saying that he was doing quite well with the Chevi, and that it was ‘a lot of truck’. Norberto agreed, but mentioned there were better means out there, and then launched into a story about how a Pancocheño family he knew had recently upgraded. They were at an advantage, he said, because of the size of their family, and the fact that they were pooling their incomes (*contribuyen a un solo bolsillo*).⁵⁹ Norberto, in contrast, did not have a big family—or really any family at all with whom he could expand his produce operation. He was truly alone, and with two children to take care of. His wife, who might otherwise have run a puesto in the CBE’s Market while he operated the truck, was killed in an accident in which he was driving—an accident that also claimed the truck they then owned. Recognizing that much of the commercial activity in the barrio and in the CBE specifically—as in the case of the Pancocheño family he referenced—relied on the cooperative labor or investments of kin, Norberto said:

⁵⁹ This has us recall the Jesuit chronicler Bernabé Cobo’s definition of native Andean wealth. “According to Cobo, a rich man was an individual with a large family that could help him fulfill his tribute service obligations faster than a man with a small family (Ramírez 1996: 15).”

Norberto (Potosino): Así [ellos] van progresando, y yo me quedo allí.

That's the way they go on progressing, and I remain stuck.

Norberto's commentary is, I argue, an expression of envy in its most fundamental form. Norberto envies this Pancocheño family, not just for their economic success, which is seen through their acquisition of a newer and better truck; he envies them for their ability to pool their resources to achieve this level, and for the esteem this affords. Yet what is at play is even more than this. Where progress is relative, and as I will argue below, zero-sum, the Pancocheño family's movement leaves Norberto behind. What does being left behind entail? Where the Pancocheños' upward mobility, which is made manifest in their truck, affords them the ability to manage their former lack and status as *indios campesinos* (see Chapter 2), Norberto, in his more humble position, is forced to remain (*quedarse*) in or with these painful conditions, if perhaps only symbolically. That is, his being left behind, symbolized in his older and potentially failing truck, marks him as that which he likely also wants to overcome. In this way, what lies at the heart of his envy is that dynamics of '*cuanto tenés, cuanto valés*' we saw in the previous chapter. Also at the heart of Norberto's envy is a sense of frustration. Unlike this large Pancocheño family, Norberto does not have access a pool of resources (*un solo bolsillo*) through which he might achieve greater mobility. Where he works 20 hours a day, just like any other, he does not have the material effects to show for it. In this way, and depending on the circumstances, envy must be understood as incorporating a feeling of powerlessness before the circumstances that enable some to achieve certain wealth, status, and esteem while others remain behind to struggle (*luchar*), and to struggle with their agonies (*dolores profundos*). Such differences in abilities to generate progress are often surrounded by a bitterness, given that all up in Potosí began more or less as 'equals' economically speaking (see Chapter 7). Thus it is no surprise that one often hears envy expressed with the word *bronca*, which in Argentina connotes a sense of impotence along with what is taken as an injustice. At its core, envy is not simply a desire to rectify being left behind vis-à-vis another's progress; it is the visceral feeling of indignation that surrounds the difference in progress, focused on the symbols and indexes of it.

Before moving to a discussion of the ways that envy is explicitly 'defined' by Bolivians in the barrio, let us look more closely at the way Norberto's spontaneous expression reveals how envy concerns the politics of progress. In his statement that "[the Pancocheños] go on

progressing and I remain stuck”, Norberto conveys the ways that progress is a chronotopic politics—i.e. that progress is about movement, about distance traversed, and about conditions overcome. We have seen that indian-ness specifically has both a spatial dimension—i.e. being rooted in the *campo* of rural Potosí—as well as a temporal dimension—i.e. that what marks the Indian is most often considered ‘backward’ (*atrasado*); rooted in the past. In this way, when one progresses, they move both away from the *campo* (and towards the city), and away from what is anachronistic or defunct (and towards modernity). This politics is encoded grammatically in the ways Norberto expresses his envy: he actually uses the progressive tense to reference the Pancocheño family’s progress, and the simple present to mark his own position. Through iconic language, Norberto describes the *dynamics* of progress and the *statics* of remaining behind. Moreover, he reinforces his framing of progress as dynamic (and change oriented) with the choice of a compound verb, in which the first (to go [*ir*]) is one of physical movement. At the same time, he reinforces his framing of remaining stuck with the spatial adverb *allí* (literally: ‘there’). Indeed, on his own estimation, he is not traveling or going anywhere, but is rather confined to a position and localized. All of these linguistic constructions encode what he sees (and indeed experiences) in the world.

I have argued that the way envy is most naturally expressed in the barrio is a desire to rectify being left behind vis-à-vis another’s progress. I have also suggested that the gap in progress is a source of frustration, if not indignation, given the ways in which progress may allow another ethnic mobility (i.e. an ability to de-indianize) while one’s own lack of progress keeps alive conditions that have inspired pain or shame. That envy directly concerns another’s progress is born out in explicit framings of the phenomena. Upon my desire to know how Bolivians ‘defined’ envy, I was often struck by how succinct their responses were, and how much they were similar. To my simple question “What is envy?” a friend stated simply:

Silvia (Tarijeña): **La envidia es cuando no te quieren ver prosperar.**
Envy is when they don’t want to see you prosper.

Envy in the minds of those who experience it can be conceptualized as a situation or a relationship in which ‘another does not want you to progress’. In such formulations, envy is framed as something that resides in the ‘other’; that is, that “*they* don’t want *you* to prosper”. As conceptualized by another:

Modesto (Chuquisaqueño): No quieren que progreses; eso es la envidia.
They don't want you to progress; that is what envy is.

These explicit conceptualizations of the phenomenon as residing in others square fully with how Norberto expressed his own envy spontaneously (though he may not have recognized it as such): i.e. where envy is about not wanting to be left behind (*quedarse alli, atrás*, etc.), it is, at the same time, a desire that others not progress. As two sides of the same coin, these formulations reveal that envy concerns the gap created by differential progress.

Before moving to discuss certain variations on this fundamental manifestation and the ways they illuminate a social dialectics of exclusivity and competition, let us briefly pause to note some of the characteristics of envy that should by now be familiar. Envy is, to begin with, a social relationship that is both emergent and dialogically produced. It is also a relationship woven through various things: while it is a relationship between people first and foremost, it also exists through things in the world (like trucks), and is often mediated through language or other forms of communication which bear a range of ideas and valuations. In all this, one must recognize that envy is also an emotional experience; it is a visceral evaluation of the social world itself. A final observation is that envy articulates entities (people, social groups, trucks, etc.) that are understood as discrete and atomistic. Exclusively held trucks and the use of the pronouns 'they' and 'you' shows this clearly.

How is Envy?

I have just argued that among Bolivians in the barrio, envy is a desire to rectify being left behind vis-à-vis another's progress. I have suggested that the envious feels *bronca* over not being able to progress as much as another, and thus achieve the kinds of (human) dignity afforded by the material indexes of progress. Certainly, the progress of another over which one feels envy can cause the latter to feel the conditions of hardship and suffering over which he has felt shame. As we have seen in previous chapters, one can be made to inhabit these conditions in acts of outright humiliation. In this section I explore how envy, being a product of the logic of progress, is both part and parcel a social dialectics of differentiation, exclusivity, and competition.

Let us begin by underscoring that, in its most immediate manifestation, envy is a binary relation rooted in difference and exclusivity. As we have just seen, the envy relation exists between two individuals (though as we'll eventually see, it can exist between groups as well) and the things, statuses, and attributes (or lack thereof) that pertain to each uniquely. The examples illuminated above bear this out. In the first, Norberto envies the progress of the Pancocheño family, objectified in their recently upgraded truck. He frames the relation as existing between a 'them' (*ellos*) and his own self (*yo*), where both are different and exclusive entities. There is no third party to mediate this difference. Similarly, in their explicit 'definitions' of envy, Silvia and Modesto objectify the relation as obtaining between an 'other' and a self in which the boundaries of each are necessarily rigid and mutually exclusive.

Where does this exclusivity originate? As I have argued both here and in the last chapter, progress, being not just a set of desires and practical efforts, but a position that is both achieved and materially recognized, is relative. Given the ways that dignity is achieved, denied, and configured in the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness, this relative difference becomes the sum and substance of a politics of esteem that is zero-sum. Indeed, as Norberto argues, when one progresses, another is left behind. This is especially true given that so many in the barrio (e.g. the Potosinos) have common origins, both in class and culture. Where the 'stuff' of progress is thus exclusively held, people, either through or by virtue of these things, are able to act on others. As we have seen, this can be through the putting on of airs (*agrandarse*) or the actual 'stomping' on others (*pisar*). The point here is that the differences that are reckoned through the politics of progress are predicated upon a mutual exclusivity that is build up through the possession and deployment of the things of progress themselves. Envy is a visceral reaction to—if not also a visceral register of—this exclusivity in its zero-sum configuration. Yet envy is not just a response to this exclusivity; envy also recreates it. Where envy 'visceralizes' differences—i.e. makes sense of them in an emotional and embodied way—the entities become reaffirmed as bounded and mutually exclusive. If nothing else, the actual experience of envy recreates the other – self dichotomy.

Where progress is a zero-sum politics of esteem, it follows that people's framings of envy reveal sentiments of hierarchy and competitiveness. Indeed, envy is frequently defined as a social ethic in which one actively works to forestall or prevent another's progress. Envy thus becomes something of a practical disposition (i.e. a way of engaging others in the world) at

whose heart we find the logic of ‘being on top of and overwhelming the rest’ we illuminated in the previous chapter.

To see this, let us return to Modesto, whom we introduced above. Modesto objectified the envy relation as one in which ‘others do not want one to progress’. Yet Modesto had more to say on the matter. He elaborated his point, explicating envy in this way:

Modesto (Chuquisaqueño): **Cuando sos pobre, no te ayudan; y cuando sos rico, hacen cualquier cosa para que no progreses.**

When you’re poor, they don’t help you; and when you’re rich, they’ll do whatever they can to keep you from progressing.

—**Son capaces de hacer cualquier cosa, aun brujería.**
—They’re capable of doing anything, even witchcraft.

These sentiments are far from uncommon, and not limited to any particular ethnic nationality (which is not to say that ethnic nationality does not shape the expression or experience of envy, or the ways in which it is consequential). A Tarijeño friend of mine had the same evaluation:

Eduardo (Tarijeño): **Te ven pobre y no te ayudan sino se ríen—son tan orgullosos.**

They see that you’re poor and they don’t come to your aid, but rather laugh at you; they’re just so proud.

For Modesto and Eduardo, envy is not simply an occurrence or an event. Rather, it is a way (if not *the* way) in which people are mutually disposed to one another in the barrio. Indeed, for many, envy is the principal ethos of engagement.

There are a few things to emphasize here. First, it is not just that envy is seen to exist ‘in extension’—i.e. as a common practical disposition and social ethic; it is that, as an ethos of mutual engagement, envy is predicated upon mutual exclusivity, hierarchy, and competition. As what many take to be the dominant ethos of engagement in the barrio, envy runs counter to any ethic of mutual recognition and aid that would otherwise build horizontal relationships among Bolivians in Escobar. (One must recall that the latter is precisely the ethic that the CBE has been designed to foster.) Moreover, envy is not simply a privately held desire that another not progress; it is, more than this, believe to consist of active attempts to keep another in a lowly

position or forestall his progress. As seen in the examples above, people are seen to purposefully avoid extending themselves for others (a disposition that garners them the reputation of being ‘stingy’ [*tacaños*]), as well as to actively mar another’s progress by whatever means they can muster, even witchcraft.

Second, where the envious look to minimize or maximize differences in this zero-sum politics of progress, envy comes to make progress competitive. Indeed, differential progress does not simply generate envy; envy motivates competitive desires to progress—to, as we have seen, ‘be on top of and dominate the rest’. Nowhere is this better seen than in a bumper sticker that adorns a vehicle in the barrio:

La fuerza de tu envidia es la rapidez de mi progreso.
The force of your envy is what accelerates my progress.

Certainly, the competitive, hierarchical, and zero-sum nature of progress is here laid bare and explicitly linked to envy. Yet envy does not only spur competitive efforts to progress. Envy also motivates pride (*orgullo*)—i.e. instances of haughtiness (*agrandarse*) and ‘stomping on’ others (*pisar*). As Eduardo mentions above, it is not simply that the envious do not extend a helping hand to another who is struggling; it is that the more wealthy and powerful laugh at those who are in the *lucha*. Indeed, many report next to no sympathy for those who remain in the painful conditions that all have come from. Rather, they are, through acts of pride (i.e. what we might call envy ‘from above), re-made into *indios* and *bolitas*.

What we see through all of this is that there is a social dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition that is rooted in the logic of progress and its politics of esteem. This dialectics gets expressed practically through envy which, as I suggest, can exist ‘from below’, as well as ‘from above’—i.e. as pride. Where Norberto has experienced the former, Modesto and Eduardo have experienced the latter. This dialectics shapes what we might call a visceral economy in which envy and pride beget both themselves and each other.

The Consequences of Envy

This dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition that emerges through the politics of progress and that gets expressed as envy and pride is of course a practical one. As such, we can look at the actual forms this dialectics takes and the consequences it has. In this section I analyze a range of practical manifestations and consequences of what I have previously called the ‘envy complex’. These ethnographic examples variously highlight the ways that social fellowship is severed, the ways that otherness is cultivated, and the ways that economic production comes to be organized. What we’ll see through them are a number of things. First is that the envy complex bears an ethnic structuring. Indeed, the dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition is both a product of, and in turn produces, group-level distinctions. These are often co-terminous with ethnic nationalities (e.g. *Qollas*, *Qochalos*, *Chapacos*, etc.) or with the ethnic communities within them (e.g. Saropalkeños, Pancocheños, Yureños within the *Qollas*). In other cases they take these as points of reference to account for lower-level groups, such as relatives (*parientes*). That the envy complex bears ethnic structuring should not be surprising considering that the basis of envy is *difference* itself. As we’ll also see, because the various examples all treat envy, many reveal the defining characteristics we have explored above: i.e., the desire to not be left behind, the desire that another not progress, etc. What the examples have in common is that they all reveal a common anxiety about gaps in the zero-sum politics of progress. Indeed, all of the examples tend to bear out the others, revealing the extent to which the envy complex is systematic and a pervasive, shared social ethic. Finally, and here with a gesture to the larger project of the dissertation, all of these examples of the envy complex reveal the extent to which social relations among Bolivians in the barrio are agonistic, if not sometimes also antagonistic. Indeed, the envy complex is a socially divisive one that frustrates the kinds of horizontal identifications needed for community and for institutions of and for community—e.g. the CBE.

Envy and the Cutting of Fellowship

The consequences of envy are various. One of the more common effects of envy is social avoidance: the envious avoids interacting with those who have progressed, whether it be a family who acquires a new truck, a relative who expands his business, or a neighbor who is simply better off. Indeed, as we'll see, envy is often understood as a situation in which another's progress "makes it so you don't want to see them" (*hace que no lo quieras ver más*). In more serious cases, social avoidance may occur in the presence of another, such that the envious (or the proud) fails to greet another who has progressed (or one who has not). This failure to recognize another socially may endure for some time, or perhaps even permanently. As we'll see in Chapter 9, what is taken to be a pervasive lack of recognition, central to the 'failure' of the CBE and the 'community' it is meant to cultivate, has garnered great censure and figures into a moral movement to restore a 'lost humanity' based on the virtue of humility.

Given the pervasiveness of social avoidance, it fits to ask how it comes to be. What happens such that people—relatives, neighbors, etc.—cease to greet (*saludar*) one another, engage one another, and regard one another as a fellow? Can we illuminate the proximate antagonisms that terminate in such avoidance? In this section, I examine both a concrete scenario in which social fellowship has been cut, and a reputed scenario that leads to the same. Both, I argue, are the result of envy and reveal a social dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition. In the first, I examine a case between neighboring in-laws that stems from an unrequited reciprocal sharing in hardship, arguing that a common struggle in the *lucha* entails a certain mutuality of being. In the second, I examine how such unrequited reciprocity might theoretically lead to negative reciprocity. Where I specifically engage the form of witchcraft (*brujería*), I argue that this is a more extreme version of a common practice of 'screwing over another' (*cagar a alguien*). Both examples reveal that envy may destroy otherwise amicable relations.

Cutting Off Another's Water

Melchor, a Potosino in his late 40s, lived a stone's throw from what I liked to call the 'hot corner'. This was the intersection of Orquídeas and Corrientes where many of the robberies and

beatings would happen. This was also that corner where Elvio and Teófilo had had their showdown. Where the streets were themselves an area of high visibility and heightened publicness, what lay off them were private compounds that contained whole worlds that were otherwise invisible. What separated the two were high walls and large, plate-metal doors. Where the first were topped with shards of broken bottles to deter the *vagos* from breaching them by night, the second were opaque to deter prying (or preying) eyes. Moreover, the latter were almost always shut, serving the additional function of keeping one's guard dog in. I was fascinated by how their opening could reveal something worthy of Alice and Wonderland in local color. What lay behind Melchor's door was a world I'll never forget.

When we ran into Melchor on the street, we offered him a hand unloading some bagged textiles from his Renault minivan. Following him through his metal *portones*, I was amazed to find an extremely tidy compound with a lush, green lawn. To my knowledge, there was nothing similar in the immediate barrio—a grid of labyrinthine streets that was otherwise dusty, strewn with litter, and the color of construction. Indeed, such a lawn was rather like those of the Argentine houses on the other side of the Panamerican Highway in Escobar proper. Yet what was utterly surprising in Melchor's wonderland was that this lawn was teeming with white rabbits. These were no pets, however. Melchor raised them for sale to restaurants in the Capital. While this was a lucrative endeavor, it was not his principal source of income. Indeed, Melchor had done quite well through a booming textile trade, which he ran between the *Feria La Salada* (in Lomas de Zamora, Buenos Aires)⁶⁰ and the CBE's Feria in Escobar.

Though a curiosity unparalleled in the barrio, the rabbits distracted one from what was more important. It was clear that Melchor had recently refinished his house, adding not only a second storey, which was increasingly common for those with means, but one with an interior bathroom. This second storey projected out with relation to the first, leaving a 'porch' of sorts

⁶⁰ The *Feria La Salada* is a textile market (much of it black market knock-offs) that has exploded in the last decade. Beginning in the early 1990s as a Bolivian exchange (its first incarnation was called Urkupiña, S.A.), "La Salada" blossomed through the resale of cheap goods, many purchased in Paraguay, where the exchange rate relative to the Argentine peso favored resale in Buenos Aires. This was especially the case given that the peso was pegged to the US Dollar until the devaluation of January 2002. One might note that the Argentine economic crisis, while affecting this rate, did not hinder the market's expansion, but rather encouraged it. Indeed, the crisis had the effect of making brand-name clothing inaccessible to Argentina's middle class, many of whom were newly without purchasing power, if not impoverished. It thus forced them to turn to goods that were imitation knock-offs, themselves directly accessible in La Salada, which has been Buenos Aires's prime mover of them. It is estimated that up to 50,000 buyers and sellers attend La Salada on the Wednesdays and Sundays it runs. See: <http://www.ferialasalada.com.ar>

underneath. In this shaded space, replete with a tiled floor, Luís hung a hammock that allowed him to rest with whatever breeze the hot and still airs of Buenos Aires's summers might produce. Contrasting with the well-watered, green lawn, Melchor's newly improved house was plastered a brilliant white. Such finished walls were one of the things that defined a dignified house. They were a marked contrast to the exposed block walls that characterized the more humble dwellings—dwellings which were likely to have only concrete slab floors (as opposed to tile) and exterior, shared toilets and showers. Indeed, Melchor's house was exactly that: a house. It was not a rented room (*pieza*) in which others lived—and lived out their *lucha*.

All of these architectonic features—the lawn, second storey, interior bathroom, front porch, tiled floors, and plastered walls—index progress. These are the aesthetic forms of the city, if a provincial one. Moreover, they are traditionally Hispanic forms. As such, they are a marked contrast to the built environment of the 'indigenous' interior of Potosí from which Melchor hails. Indeed, being from the *campo*, Melchor would have grown up poor; the house he had been born into would have been made of humble *adobe*, most likely with a thatched roof and dirt floor. The kitchen would have been a separate structure, similarly constructed. As for the latrine, it would be some distance from the house, as would have his family's access to water. Any electricity would have been far out of reach⁶¹.

In Escobar, which is a 'generous land' (*tierra generosa*), not just for its fertile *pampa* but for its economy generally, Melchor and others have enjoyed the opportunity to transcend these markers of material lack, if not cultural 'backwardness'. And progress they have. Melchor remarked to us that, shortly after he had finished his home improvements, his neighbor, who was none other than his wife's *pariente*, cut off his water, whose supply ran through her house⁶². Cutting off such a vital resource, which forced him to draw it from the other side of his property, was a classic case of envy, and was labeled as such by Melchor. In a simple sense, his wife's *pariente* did not want him (and his wife, who resided elsewhere for long stretches) to progress. One can imagine that Melchor's in-law was frustrated and displeased by what his progress meant for her own position. Indeed, Melchor's economic success, made manifest in his privately held

⁶¹ See Colloredo-Mansfeld's (1994) "Architectural Conspicuous Consumption and Economic Change in the Andes" for a discussion of the semiotics of architectonic forms in the Andean highlands.

⁶² In the barrio, water and electric lines are often shared and weave their way through what is a sprawling and labyrinthine infrastructure. The same is true of television cable. Sewers, on the other hand, are not networked, being that they are merely 'black holes' (*posos negros*) dug on individual properties.

and beautified house, was not shared. His individually owned capital did not circulate. And his upward mobility had the effect of leaving his neighboring in-law behind.

Here we see that the envious person went beyond simple ‘social avoidance’. Melchor’s in-law’s decision to cut off his water sprang from an envy-generated spite based on the idea that she wasn’t going to cooperate with Melchor if his progress was exclusive to him and yet directly visible to her—not to mention casting a shadow over her lot, both literally and figuratively. And so she matched his unintended, but nevertheless real, exclusivity with an exclusivity of her own.

There are a number of things to note in all of this. First, while cutting off his water was a readily available means to express her *bronca*; it may not have been random. For water is a highly meaningful resource in the Bolivian highlands, as elsewhere in the Andes. Not only is it associated with productivity generally, providing life to crops through irrigation, it is a resource that is linked to ideas of moral community. Indeed, where subsistence producers in the highland Andes must coordinate their turns at using this scarce resource, they must manage the frequent conflicts that arise over this management. Both have implications for groupness and the ethos that undergirds it (see Gelles 2000, Trawick 2001). Noting Trawick’s discussion about how the allocation of water is structured by ideas of fairness and proportionality—i.e. that one should not use any more water than the specific size of his fields requires—we might surmise that Melchor’s in-law thought that the amount of resources that had accrued to Melchor was disproportional to what he ‘deserved’; that by cutting off his water, she sought—if only symbolically—to stem the flow of his progress and close the gap in the differential that emerged between them. If this is true, such a move also relies on the commonly held idea that all have begun ‘the same’ up in Potosí and that, while some differentiation in Argentina can be expected, there is a point where certain ‘levels’ of progress are simply deemed ‘unfair’ given that all have worked equally hard in the *lucha*. As we’ll see below, Norberto makes the assertion (if one needing qualification) that up in Potosí, “everything is equal” (*todo es equitativo*)⁶³. There is certain evidence to corroborate this. Some researchers suggest that when material inequalities reach a certain point in a highland community, the upwardly mobile may leave that community for life as an urban *mestizo*. This has the effect that those remaining in the community continue to be on socio-economic par with one another (see Harris 1995, Rasnake 1988, Harman 1987,

⁶³ Inequalities in Potosí do exist, however much they are downplayed in Argentina as an attempt to construct a moral past with which to critique a present in Argentina.

Bourricaud 1970). In the end, where Melchor and his in-law have the same origins, one could argue that the in-law is, through the symbolic medium of water (pregnant as it is with ideas about proportionality and fairness) making a statement that Melchor's progress is 'unfair' and violates the idea that neighbors should be on par with one another.

Yet the envious encounter did not end with Melchor having to tap his water from elsewhere. Put off by his in-law's move, which he regarded as an unprovoked antagonism, Melchor retaliated. While the two were already no longer communicating verbally, Melchor decided to sever all ties by raising the brick wall that separated his refinished house from hers. This had the effect of making his compound invisible to her, as well as removing all trace of her existence from his view. As we have intimated above, and will explore below, envy makes it such that one does not want to 'see' the other (*hace que no lo quieras ver más*). Here, however, the one who does not want to 'see' is Melchor, i.e. the one who has progressed. Where he has experienced his in-law's envy 'from below', he responds 'from above' by barricading his neighbor out.

What is interesting to note here is that the dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition that gets expressed as envy (and/or pride) is a function of, and in turn reproduces, a regime of visibility. We have seen in the last chapter that many in the barrio, regardless of ethnic nationality, see the practice of '*fijarse*' as quintessentially Bolivian. Indeed, we have seen how trucks—and here houses—are in the gaze of others (*en la mirada*). Certainly, Melchor's white-washed second storey was visible to his in-law, if less so from the 'hot corner'. While Melchor could control the latter, he could not control the former—until, that is, she cut off his water and he built a wall to block her out. As we'll see below, many in this regime of visibility will attempt to avoid the envious *mirada* by concealing their progress—or perhaps more to the point—their *tactics* to progress. Indeed, where plans to capitalize are often kept secret (as Betty and Pastor did with their plans for a new truck), it is just as common for people to actively *display* their achievements in proud and haughty ways. In this way, we see that the visibility surrounding the dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition gets managed in a range of ways, from concealment to revelation.

In the end, this case of envy reveals more than how divisive exclusivity can cycle, whether reciprocally or otherwise (see Mannheim's 2011 [1991] discussion of *ayni*). It also reveals more than ideas about what is deemed 'fair' or proportional. And it reveals more than

certain characteristics of the local regime of visibility. What this case also shows, I suggest, is that there is a kind of kinship—or mutuality of being (see Sahlins 2011)—that exists beyond consanguineal or affinal ties; that there is a relatedness that exists between those that are commonly caught in the *lucha*. What progress does it cut the social fellowship that is established through this sharing in the conditions of hardship, whether these be a function of material lack or cultural prejudice. Because progress is exclusive and ultimately hierarchical, it can amount to a kind of unrequited reciprocity in the mutuality of being given this shared condition. Indeed, one's movements are not shared and rather come at the expense of another. What results from this zero-sum reconfiguration of esteem is that the *lucha* is no longer the same for the parties involved. One's struggle is cast in critical relief by another who has transcended it, if even only to a limited extent. What we see in the case of Melchor and his in-law is that the latter took offense at what she regarded as an unrequited reciprocity in the mutuality of being and expressed her *bronca* in a medium that has always been about sharing and mutual recognition, if even in situations of conflict.

Thus, one might argue that envy, given its roots in differential progress, can have the consequence of changing the modality of sociability from a mutual recognition through a common participation in the *lucha* to an avoidance propagated by antagonistic slights. In the latter, all fellowship is cut and horizontal identifications become impossible.

Witchcraft

There are reputed cases of envy in the barrio that result in more than the mere cutting of social fellowship. That is, there is a not uncommon belief that the envious, whether acting from below or from above, will attempt to sabotage another's progress through witchcraft (*brujería*)⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ While witchcraft is said to exist in Bolivia, it has not been the subject of any major, contemporary anthropological fieldwork. One of the few and revealing treatments of it comes in June Nash's (1979) *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us*. Speaking of the time before the 1952 Revolution, Nash writes of the miners of Potosí: "There was a great deal of competition between each work group to secure the richest vein, and the hostility engendered was worked out in witchcraft. Alejandro, the old miner who had worked in most of the mines of Bolivia and a copper mine in Chile, described these customs: 'The men in the mines who got high returns on their contracts were most often the targets of witchcraft. The miners used to go seek the shamans from among the campesinos who know more about this. These shamans have animal spirits. Here, and especially in Colquecharka, many miners use witchcraft to make their more fortunate companions lose the vein. They went into the mine with the shaman and they threw water with salt on the vein where their enemy was working and this made it disappear. Sometimes the miners knew they were being bewitched and they called on the Pachamama.' Other miners reported pouring the milk of a black burro mixed with garlic on the veins of their enemies to make them disappear. The miners also had

While I was never able to substantiate any particular case that was employed to forestall another's progress, the very belief that the phenomenon is said to exist is telling.

If progress, being exclusive and hierarchical, can amount to an unrequited reciprocity in the sharing of hardship, it is not a stretch to see how such unrequited reciprocity could engender acts of negative reciprocity. To begin with, it is not uncommon for someone who has rendered a service, whether a *changarín* in the CBE's Market or a welder in the barrio, to be denied due compensation because the contractor seeks to progress exclusively (if not at the advantage of the other). Examples of this abound in the barrio, and are most often framed through the local idiom of *cagar* (*a alguien*). Literally meaning 'to shit' (on someone) and most often occurring as *me cagó*, or *le cagó*, the semantic load of this expression lies somewhere between the English expressions of getting 'screwed' and 'fucked' over. Where *cagar* is so common, it is not a stretch to imagine, as Modesto has above, that the envious will go to any length to forestall another's progress, even to that of witchcraft.

In the barrio, witchcraft is conceptualized as a vengeful act that, given the politics of progress, one might understand as a kind of retribution for being left behind, if not abandoned in the *lucha*. Convinced that it is a real occurrence, most concur that the ways to stifle another's progress, and thus level the playing field, include the placing of blood, salt, or a dead chicken at the entrance to the upwardly mobile's house or property. Conversely, one might bathe his own house in vinegar to protect himself from such envy. Practicing witchcraft to target or counter another's envious pretensions—to the extent that such phenomena exist outside of talk—is thus a way to practically negotiate the dialectics of exclusivity, competition, and hierarchy. As a belief and a practice, witchcraft entails the destruction of the social relationship. As a kind of negative

to protect the veins against the 'evil eye' (*bankañowi*) of any workers entering their sector. When they struck a good vein, they sometimes slept in the mine to protect it...(Nash 1979: 160)." What is of note in this passage is not the aesthetics of the practice, however interesting, but rather the ways that witchcraft stems from and reproduces competition and hostility among parties that are conceived as *enemies*.

Treatment of the phenomenon in its contemporary manifestation is perhaps just as sparse in Peru. While not an anthropological or sociological account per se, David Frisancho Pineda's (1986) *Curanderismo y brujería en la costa peruana* also explicitly links the practice of witchcraft to envy: "Muchos 'amigos', parientes, vecinos o compañeros de trabajo que no han prosperado en la vida, o han fracasado, sienten envidia y rencor hacia las personas que triunfan y que tienen éxitos económicos y sociales. Cuando un triunfador a veces menosprecia o no presta ayuda al fracasado, éste en su fuero interno desea intensamente que aquel fracase y para ello recurre a un 'malero' para que le provoque un 'daño'... Cuando una persona comienza a sufrir las consecuencias del 'daño' se dice que está 'salado' y generalmente todo cuanto hace o desea le 'sale mal'..." "Otras veces se echa sal o excrementos en la puerta de la persona a quién se desea 'salar', es decir que le produzca mala suerte (Frisancho Pineda 1986: 35-36)."

For an historical discussion of witchcraft in the Colonial Andes, and the ways it is linked to gender, see Irene Silverblatt's (1987) *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru*.

reciprocity, it is more than avoidance; as a kind of destructive competition, it is a violation of fellowship itself.

Envy and the Cultivation of Otherness

Envy has other consequences besides the cutting of fellowship and the destruction of amicable or otherwise peaceable relations. I argue in this section that the experience of envy, which ultimately responds to a politics of otherness given Bolivian and Argentine regimes of discrimination, generates (or otherwise reproduces) forms and practices of ‘othering’. The ethnographic examples that I discuss below involve two kinds of othering that stem from envy, both of them discriminatory. In the first set, I examine kinds of moral discrimination, specifically accusations of exploiting relatives and drug dealing. In the second, I examine kinds of ethno-racial discrimination. Both kinds surround trajectories of capital accumulation that have created consternation or anxiety.

There are a number of things to note in these examples. First, where envy makes ‘others’, it often does so given the contours of existing social differentiation. As we’ll see in both the moral and ethno-racial examples below, the othering focuses on the Pancocheños. That this group of Potosinos receives the brunt of envious discrimination is not surprising given that they are seen to dominate the CBE and its Market. Indeed, as we’ll see later in this dissertation, many have argued that the CBE no longer serves the inclusive public good as a *Colectividad Boliviana*, but rather has come to serve a more private and limited good as a *Colectividad ‘Pancocheña’*. Certainly, the Pancocheños are, on the whole, thought to have progressed handsomely through their engagement in the CBE. Moreover, many note that their material accomplishments are even more marked than those of others, given that they have come from ‘further back’ on the path to progress. Many are put off by the Pancocheños’ progress, noting (though this is not without certain controversy), that this group’s progress has come without them having played any major role in the founding of the CBE as an inclusive entity of the public good.

Second, what we see is that where envy generates discriminatory othering, the envious construct gaps—here on moral and ethno-racial terms—to attend to and attenuate the gaps

created by differences in progress. That is, the envious create moral or ethno-racial differences in attempts to ‘level’ the differences created by wealth and the esteem that accrues to this. As we’ll see, individuals do this by mobilizing the terms of the Bolivian and Argentine economies of otherness.

Finally, and related to this, what these examples show is that envy does not simply (re)create others, whether morally, ethno-racially, or otherwise. These examples reveal that the envious also ‘de-humanize’ the others they construct. Indeed, where differential progress produces a zero-sum politics of esteem, it is not surprising that those who are ‘left behind’ to suffer the conditions that are often used to deny them human dignity may, in an effort to level (or otherwise re-signify) differences, target the very humanity of those that have progressed.

Moral Debasing: Accusations of Exploiting Relatives

Let us begin by examining the ways in which certain residents in the barrio envy Pancocheño progress and express their *bronca* by morally critiquing their practices of accumulation. As we’ll see, some allege that the Pancocheños lack scruples in dealing economically with their own relatives. The following narrative comes from Omar, a Potosino from the Province of Nor Chichas⁶⁵. His family was ousted from the CBE through its usurpation—a take-over in which he, like others, believes that certain Pancocheños have played instrumental roles. Omar’s critique must thus be read as motivated given his own experience in the entity and his belief (itself not without merit) that its usurpation has abetted differential and illegitimate accumulation within the ‘community’.

Having begun about the CBE and the friction between the various Potosinos, Omar stated that one of the causes of bad blood was a sense of pride that had gone unchecked. He pointed to the Pancocheños—the largest constituent group in the Market—and claimed that they were the most guilty of looking down on others.

Omar (Potosino): **Los pancocheños desprecian los que no tienen.**
The Pancocheños look down on those that are poor.

⁶⁵ Nor Chichas borders the Province of Linares, where Pancochi is located. Rivalries between *pueblos* can sometimes be expressed by appealing to the modern Provincial boundaries of Potosí, such as Nor Chichas vs. Linares.

Though we can read this as a charge that the Pancocheños inflate themselves at others' expenses (*agrandarse*)—noting that the bullying of Gualter in Chapter 2 and the aggression against Teófilo in Chapter 4 were both at the hands of Pancocheños (and specifically those connected with the usurpation)—we should note that what affords such haughtiness is the fact that they have progressed, and some of them handsomely. Omar, like many others still struggling in the *lucha*, must confront the realities of economic differentiation knowing that all have emigrated from the same condition of material lack in Potosí, and that all have similarly begun in the *quintas* of Escobar. Having spoken with Omar on other occasions, I know that he felt this differential progress as something of an injustice, a sentiment that I believe was at play in something he asserted a moment later:

Omar (Potosino): **Los pancocheños se aprovechan de su propia gente.**
The Pancocheños take advantage of their own people/kin.

Omar here reverts to impugning the moral character of the Pancocheños to 'make sense' of their differential progress. Not content with their success or his position relative to it, Omar levies the critique that the Pancocheños have capitalized so well and so efficiently only because they exploit their own people. This sentiment, I add, is not at odds with Norberto's commentary above that Pancocheño families are at an advantage because many can 'contribute to a single purse' and thus access capital acquisition more readily. I believe that Omar would argue that it is precisely through the exploitation of the labor toward this so-called collective purse that the Pancocheños have gotten on so well. Whatever the case—and let us not forget their reputed complicity in the usurpation—Omar charges that such exploitation of one's own kin is highly reprehensible and contrary to an ethic that, on his account, characterizes the true *comunero* from the interior of Potosí. Such an ethic of non-exploitation is, one should note, that which is believed to obtain in the 'ethnic economy' (see Harris 2000) that I explore in Chapter 7; it is an ethic that runs counter to the extractive structures and enterprise that have undergirded the colonial and republican periods in the Andes.

So that I understood the nature of this alleged Pancocheño advantage-taking, Omar spelled it out for me with an example from the horticultural *quintas*. It is important to note that Bolivian-run *quintas* were almost always staffed with labor drafted from immediate kin groups (*parientes*). Where this could not be achieved, it was not uncommon for bosses (*patrones*) to

send for relatives up in their communities of origin. This had the effect that *quintas* were often exclusively Pancocheño, Saropalkeño, or Yureño, to speak here of just the Potosino operations. Omar asserted that in contradistinction to the Saropalkeños, whom he recognized for their honest ethic, the Pancocheño bosses (*patrones*) were known to lie and cheat their workers. It was common, he said, that the Pancocheño *patrón*, who executed the sales from his charges' production in the CBE's Market, would report back to them prices that were lower than what he had actually obtained. That is, the *patrón* would tell his sharecroppers (*medianeros*)—with whom he had arranged to share profits—that a particular product had sold for 7 *pesos*, when in reality it sold for 9. If the *patrón*'s arrangement with his sharecropper was to give the latter 40% of the profit, the sharecropper would take roughly 3 *pesos*, believing that the *patrón* would be taking 4. In reality, however, because the *patrón* actually sold each *cajón* for 9 *pesos* instead of 7, the *patrón* was actually taking 6, a scenario in which 2 *pesos* went unreported and embezzled. Omar mentioned that this was the kind of arrangement that had plagued Bolivians in general when they first immigrated to Escobar and worked for Argentine *patrones*. Escaping the yoke of such exploitation was one of the main reasons Bolivians strove to become independent producers (*independizarse*). Yet in the process of doing so, Omar said, the Pancocheños became what they had reeled against⁶⁶. Omar argued that the Pancocheños had become blinded by wealth—that in the process they had forgotten who they were, echoing the kinds of sentiment we explored in the last chapter concerning 'walking like a caporal' (*se olviden de quienes eran*'). That one could become so bent on accumulation as to *cagar a sus parientes* was, Omar stated, reprehensible.

Omar (Potosino): **Los pancocheños no tienen ética.**
The Pancocheños are immoral.

Sólo se interesan por su bolsillo.
They're only interested in their pockets (making money).

"What kind of people do this?," he asked. On Omar's account, the Pancocheños had sold out: they may progress, he suggested, but their progress was unscrupulous. It had come at the expense of moral character and those (most likely the most recent immigrant families) who were the least well off.

⁶⁶ In this way the Pancocheños could be said to have 'become Argentinized' (*se han argentinizados*)—a critique that we will see is levied against the 'usurpers' of the CBE, in part because they also co-opted Ministerial efforts to restore the CBE in service of the public good.

Let me suggest that Omar's evaluation here is a bit tricky. On the one hand, exploiting one's *pariente* certainly does happen. Such abuse happens in both the *quinta* and the Market. Yet on the other hand, it is exceptionally difficult to know the actual incidence of such deceit and abuse—and whether one 'community' engages in it more than any another. Nevertheless, the discourse of 'who fucked who over' (*cagar*) in the barrio is prevalent. The question to raise here is that, if the incidence of exploiting relatives is more or less evenly distributed across the barrio (and I believe it is, noting that this is a practice of which Omar is himself not entirely innocent), how does one group become the object of moral impugnation where others do not. The answer, I suggest, has to do with progress and the politics of esteem it generates. Thus, while the Pancocheños may be guilty of deceit, abuse, and embezzlement (just as many non- Pancocheños are), they have, because of their progress, become envied, and this envy has generated impugnation of their moral character.

What we see in this, then, is that the Pancocheños have become identified as 'that community' that lacks moral character (*Los pancocheños no tienen ética*). This alleged lack of ethics has, in the eyes of many, become a facet (i.e. iconic) of Pancocheño-ness itself. While one should not forget the complexities of the CBE's usurpation, and the various ways that Pancocheños participate in, but also become dominated by, it (discussions had later on in this thesis), we might note here that Pancocheño progress, being exclusive, hierarchical and, as we've seen, sometimes the source of haughty denigrations, will generate responses that reproduce social divisions and hierarchies. This reveals the cyclical nature of agonism and the production of otherness in the barrio. As I hope to have demonstrated, Omar looks to construct moral difference between non- Pancocheños and the Pancocheños to attend to the gaps in progress that the latter have achieved with relation to the former. That is, Omar looks to construct moral distance between himself and the Pancocheños to foreclose the distance by which he has fallen behind them on the path to progress.

Moral Debasement: Accusations of Drug Dealing

The accusation that another exploits his own relatives is not the only way that those who feel unjustly positioned in the *lucha* impugn the moral character of those who have progressed.

Another way to charge that another is unscrupulous and that his progress is illegitimate—and thus to wrest from the latter its ability to trump indian-ness and bolita-ness in the former—is by claiming that one owes his achievements to drug dealing. Like the accusation of exploiting one's relatives, the accusation of drug dealing is an attempt to 'level' the differences caused by unequal progress through claims to moral superiority. Yet accusations of drug dealing are, just as much, a way to explain just how such differential progress was achieved in the first place. For looming large is the commonly held idea that because most Bolivians have come from the *campo*, and thus share an original humility, gross differentials in progress cannot come through hard work alone; indeed, where all Bolivians are known to work equally hard (*agachar la cabeza*), gross differences in progress are thought to come from 'something else'. As we'll see toward the end of the chapter, accusations of getting rich quick through drug dealing may well be a function of the common practice of concealing one's capital accumulation. Such concealment, made to avoid the envious *mirada*, has the effect that capitalizations appear from one day to the next, effectively erasing from view the years it takes to save up the money needed to purchase a truck, a plot of land, or an eatery.

Perhaps the largest sign of progress to provoke accusations of drug dealing given envious consternation is the construction and operation of the Mercado Pancochi. Owned by a Pancocheño, this horticultural market is a privately held business that satisfies a different kind of demand in the barrio. Where operators in the CBE sell produce wholesale to fruit and vegetable shops for their own resale, operators in the Mercado Pancochi sell to end buyers for their own direct consumption. Because of this, produce in Pancochi is not sold by the crate, as it is in the CBE, but rather by the half- or quarter-crate, or simply by the kilo. Buyers are thus typically families who prefer to save money by buying in bulk at cheaper rates than they can find at fruit and vegetable shops. With the CBE right next door, one can commend Pancochi's owner for his entrepreneurial vision. Indeed, the CBE's operators need to have an outlet for unsold and aging produce to make way for new shipments that continuously come in from the local *quintas*, from Buenos Aires's Central Market, and from beyond. Most of what is sold by operators in Pancochi thus comes from *puestos* run by relatives in the CBE. Because of its slightly lesser quality, it is available at a discounted price, or at least at one more open to negotiation. Conveniently for both operators and buyers, Mercado Pancochi opens toward the close of the CBE's Market. While it doesn't come close to the CBE in terms of volume, Mercado Pancochi is likely the

largest privately held business in the barrio. Moreover, it is eminently visible. The structure is composed of a large *galpón* with a concrete floor that bears its name in a clean and brilliant white, itself set against a dark background. The lot on which it sits is vast, well kept, and valuable.

Despite operating on a different structural level with respect to the CBE, Mercado Pancochi is truly a formidable accomplishment. This is especially true given that it was created by just one man and his family. Moreover, one should note that the rents paid by the *puesteros* to operate there are not destined for redistribution on behalf of the public good, as those in the CBE are, but are rather taken in as private profit. Yet rents generated from the commercialization of produce are not the only ones. The owner of Pancochi dedicates part of the premises to a *feria* for used appliances and clothing—one that meets three times a week. Rent is also farmed from the *Qochalo* couple that runs the Mercado's popular eatery (*comedor*). Perhaps more significantly, however, the owner uses the space as a concert hall—aptly named “Pancochi Bailable”—to host popular Bolivian acts that tour the Southern Cone. Among them are “*Alaska*”, “*Mario Anagua*”, “*Bandy2*” and, as I have heard more recently, *Los Kjarkas*⁶⁷.

Not surprisingly, the owner's successes and achievements have engendered a range of responses. Perhaps the most common is the question “Just how did he do it?” (*¿Qué habrá hecho para que salga así?*). “How *did* he progress so much?” Though many point to his hard work and business savvy—which no doubt some have tried to discern and emulate—others insist that his capitalization and success can only be due to nefarious dealings—specifically drug trafficking. This is precisely what Rómulo, a Tarijeño, has suggested:

Rómulo (Tarijeño): **¿Cómo es que logró tanto en tan poco tiempo?**
How is it that he achieved so much in so little time?

Algo hubo.

There must have been *something* [else going on].

I argue that while this accusation of drug dealing is a sign of envy, the sheer scale of Pancochi's owner's success has simultaneously engendered a great deal of consternation. Indeed, one might argue that where such consternation—if not bewilderment—exists, outright *bronca* over his

⁶⁷ Kjarkas en Pancochi Bailable
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQqngK2tK4A&feature=related>
See also: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6duV45prCc>

progress is hard to muster. Nevertheless, where progress engenders mystery, mystery can soon turn to suspicion, and here we have Rómulo alleging that Pancochi's owner has achieved such heights only because of nefarious dealings. Envious accusations of drug dealing, whether implicit or explicit, are the way that capitalizations, so often shrouded in mystery, become explained.

Yet accusations of drug dealing are not only associated with such great differentials in progress. Envy just as frequently takes this idiom between relative equals. Let us consider cases of less exceptional progress where envy gets expressed as accusations of drug dealing, once again recuperating the idea that the creation of otherness through impugnation of moral character seek to level differences created by wealth.

Perhaps the most common occasion for the accusation of drug dealing surrounds the purchase of a new vehicle⁶⁸. As we've seen, trucks (or other kinds of transport vehicles) often become objects of envy because of the upwardly mobile status they confer on their owner. Here I relay a representative narrative of how another's truck was allegedly obtained through money made from drug dealing. In what follows, Siro not only airs his grievances about someone he knew who—on his reckoning—capitalized 'undeservedly'; he also, through this envious complaint, attempts to explain to me just how such capitalization must have occurred in the world.

Siro (Potosino): **Si todos llegamos con lo que teníamos puesto, y si todos agachamos la cabeza igual, está bien que uno compre una camioneta del año 85 mientras otro sólo llegue a tener una del año 73. Entiendo que hay diferencias. Pero cuando uno estrene un vehículo 0km de un día al otro, te hace preguntar cómo lo ha hecho.**

If everyone came here with just the shirt on their back, and if everyone has worked equally hard, it's understandable that one might buy a pickup from 1985 while another can only reach one from 1973. I understand that there are differences. But when one debuts with a brand new vehicle from one day to the next, it makes you ask, just *how* he did it.

⁶⁸ Space does not permit me here to explore the ways in which the things over which envy is most often felt (i.e. the things of progress) are associated with modernity. With specific regard to how accusations of drug dealing are tied to the things of modernity, see Nugent (1996). See also Taussig (1980).

For Siro, one could not help but suspect that there was a significant number of *paisanos* who had capitalized by nefarious means. Indeed, he admitted to knowing of at least two people who had gotten rich by trafficking cocaine (*mover la blanca*). How else could one explain their progress?

As with accusations of exploiting one's own kin (*parientes*), it is nearly impossible to ascertain whether there is any empirical incidence of drug running in the barrio, or the degree to which this may play a role in capitalizations. Certainly, criminal activity exists in the sprawl of Buenos Aires (*conurbano*), and drug trafficking figures into this. Such illicit commerce may well be parasitic on long-distance trade in fruits and vegetables—the bread and butter for many Bolivians in the area. For the trucks on which such produce arrives cross borders; crates may easily hide substances other than, say, bananas; and the sheer volume of the commerce make policing this kind of thing difficult (assuming policing happens and is not itself part of the phenomenon). Yet Bolivians compose only a fraction of this overall commerce. Indeed, most of it is Argentine. At the same time, investigating the actual incidence of drug running in the barrio would have entailed great risks. People do turn up dead through this trade. Moreover, it would have jeopardized more important research objectives, and could likely have, through the act of inquiry itself, ended up reproducing false stereotypes.

At any rate, For Siro, an honest Potosino who grew up in the *campo* and who worked hard all his life, it was hard to fathom how others were able to attain the progress that he felt eluded him. His grievance was thus a combination of envious lament, in which his unhappy position in the *lucha* was deemed unfair, and an attempt to grapple with a world whose mechanisms of upward mobility were not readily intelligible. While one should not discount the real possibility that drug running does happen in Escobar (being that it happens elsewhere in the *conurbano*), one might just as well see how impugning another's moral character is a way to feel better about being left behind to struggle in the *lucha*.

Ethno-Racial Debasement: The Reproduction of Indian-ness

Attempts to create moral hierarchy are not the only ways that the envious seek to 'level' differences between themselves and those who have progressed. Another way that those who

feel unjustly positioned in the *lucha* attempt to ‘check’ the status of others and/or attenuate their relative loss of esteem is by reproducing ethnic and racial hierarchies. Here I examine a case where envy over another’s progress can reproduce the discursive practices of ethno-racial debasement I explored in earlier chapters. Here again we see how capitalizations—and the states of progress they index—never exist on their own, but are always in the gaze of others. As such, they become objects of signification through which the local politics of esteem is figured.

On a cool evening in 2006, I had finished up some business in the Center of Escobar and boarded the 503 for the barrio. Wending my way through the crowded bus, I saw my friend Ulises, who had already been drinking. Ulises had been at the only Bolivian bar on that side of the Panamerican Highway—“Bar Urkupiña”—and was already animated. He wanted to keep the bender going, and so we ended up going to an Argentine-run bar that was opposite my *pieza* and around the corner from his. The choice was his, and it was not random. He wanted a place where he could be out of the gaze (*mirada*)—and indeed, earshot—of others. For hardly into our first beer, Ulises confessed to having been caught having an extra-marital affair. While not formally married, Ulises, who was from the City of Potosí, had established a conjugal partnership with a Tarijeña, with children of her own. Though not married, Ulises was also not contrite.

Agrandandose, he boasted that the woman had “three trucks, a transport van, and fruit and vegetable shops in the Capital.” Measuring his mistress’s social standing in terms of vehicles first, and then in terms of her occupation, ventures, and residence, Ulises no doubt felt some reflected renown. Her progress had, at least for a time, been his as well. Despite having studied law for a few years in Potosí, Ulises thought his fortunes would be better in Argentina, and so emigrated in the early 1990s. Working for more than 15 years in the construction sector, he had never—at least to my knowledge—made foreman (*capataz*). Rather, he earned just 40 pesos a day as a construction worker (*abañil*). Some months back, he had confessed to me—once again, after we had been drinking—that he lived in poverty (*miseria*). Through tears, he relived the frustration of having lost much of his savings through the *Corralito* and the Economic Crisis of 2001⁶⁹. As we had sat on his cot, he cursed the Economic Minister, Cavallo, and then lamented:

⁶⁹ The *corralito* is the informal name for Argentina’s policy of freezing dollarized bank accounts during the Economic Crisis of 2001. This policy was instituted by Domingo Cavallo, the Economic Minister under Fernando de la Rúa, to prevent a run on the banks. No withdrawals in US Dollars could be made during this time, and assets

with nothing, and now he's got trucks.

You figure it out!

By all reckoning, Ulises knew that he should be worlds ahead of where he was: he had emigrated to Argentina—to a land of plenty (*una tierra generosa*)— and, being from the City and with studies under his belt, had a head start on the path to progress. And yet neither his emigration nor his urban, educated background had borne results. Here he was, a mere *abañil*, with little to show for it, *Corralito* or not. By contrast, the Pancocheños, the quintessential *indios-campesinos*, who had begun with nothing, had overtaken him and dominated the barrio. For Ulises, there was something that was not right with this. It was not 'right' that he was earning a mere 40 pesos a day, and living in *miseria*, while the Pancocheños, who lacked everything from electricity to 'culture', should have amassed small fortunes. For Ulises, the world was upside down. Being urban and 'lettered', progress should have been his; it should have accrued to him as the natural order of things. The gap that existed between his and the Pancocheños' standing was an injustice.

How did Ulises attend to this injustice? Not a moment after his frustrated attempt to make sense of things—an attempt in which he insinuated that there might even be something malfeasant shaping the Pancocheños' success—he blurted out:

¡Los pancocheños son burros cargados de plata!

The Pancocheños are [(uncultured) animals] loaded with money!

There are a number of things to note with Ulises's commentary. Perhaps most fundamentally, it is an example of envy. Ulises, being poor and lacking esteem—save for that which he might garner through an affair—envies the Pancocheños for their progress. There is little doubt that it burns Ulises to see a Pancocheño riding high in his Ford F100, the master of his own destiny, while he is under the thumb of some construction foreman, with a meager wage, and dwelling in *miseria*. While envy is here again expressed as a kind of *bronca* over differential success, the latter indexed and represented by a truck, this is not what interests us. Rather, what is of interest are the very terms through which Ulises expresses his frustration and impotence.

Ulises exclaims that the Pancocheños are *burros*—literally uncultured *animals*. In ascribing this animal condition to them he debases them both racially and culturally. As *burros*, Ulises makes the Pancocheños into 'ignorant' and 'backward' *indios*, rooted in the rural

hinterland. Looming in this denigration is that discourse of *ignorancia* ('ignorance') that comprehends and characterizes all that is 'other' with respect to civilization, modernity, and progress (the latter as it should 'naturally' be)—where all of these are associated with what is racially European. What Ulises does by uttering this epithet is thus more than simply airing his own discontent with the way the way the world has (not) worked. By calling the Pancocheños *burros*, Ulises attempts to level or 'check' the differences in success, wealth, and esteem their progress has entailed by disparaging them culturally and racially. By debasing them (*desestimar*) as *indios*, he attempts to forestall the esteem they have garnered through their economic success, and simultaneously promote his own 'intrinsic' value as an urban and lettered individual.

While there is much to note here in terms of the dialectics of exclusivity and competition, i.e. that Ulises's epithet characterizes envy as a desire not to see the 'other' progress (*no te quieren ver prosperar*) and that given the zero-sum politics of esteem, the 'other's' progress here entails Ulises's own being 'left behind' (*quedar atrás*), the interest of this exchange lies in how one of the major consequences envy is that the idioms of otherness explored in Chapters 2 and 3 (i.e. indian-ness and bolita-ness) often get reproduced by the envious as they attempt to manage their own esteem vis-à-vis that of others. In this way, envy, whether through moral or ethno-racial debasement, (re)creates the politics of otherness on both individual and group levels. Where those who progress often attempt to mitigate their status as 'others' (whether as *indios* or *bolitas*), those who envy them—particularly those that have not progressed—often attempt to manage their own esteem by recreating these others as these same *indios* and *bolitas*. As we have seen elsewhere, this is not the only way the dominant regimes of otherness get reproduced. Certainly, there are numerous examples of the ways that those who have progressed use the terms of 'otherness' by which they have suffered shame and humiliation to engender the same in others.

Envy and the Organization of Production and Consumption

So far we have seen how the practical dimensions of envy have the consequences of either cutting or foreclosing fellowship and/or the (re)production of otherness along moral or ethno-racial lines. While the discussions that follow over the next two chapters explore the changes to

the social, demographic, and economic structures through which envy becomes possible—and indeed ‘explodes’—we would be remiss to leave unexplored the ways that envious relationships are themselves consequential in an economic sense.

As we have seen, envy is not simply felt over differential progress. That is, envy is not simply about not wanting to be left behind. Envy is in many instances very much about not wanting another to progress and about a logic of wanting to be ‘on top of and dominating the rest’. Envy thus also shapes motivations to progress and, as a means to this end, to capitalize economically. Indeed, the experience of envy (which, as we have also seen, may often be generated by another’s proud and agonistic display of his own progress) is crucial to making progress both competitive and relative; i.e. it is crucial in the production of a logic of exclusive, competitive accumulation.

In this section I explore the ways that envy is not simply a precipitant of this logic, but also productive of it. Specifically, I explore the ways that envy is imbricated in the emulation and concealment of production as people work to progress. I do this with an eye toward tracing some of the dimensions of the Bolivian culture of production in Escobar that I will illuminate further in the coming chapters.

Emulation in Production and Consumption

Envy is both the result and cause of a practical complex of emulation. Manifest in both production and consumption, emulation between Bolivians occurs within and between ethnic nationalities. It is forged on the anvil of *fijarse*—i.e. that tendency, if not compulsion, to focus on and become preoccupied with one another’s progress. Being both a function of, and in turn reproducing, this regime of visibility, emulation is as much about a desire to not be left behind as it is a desire to out-compete and dominate others. Indeed, emulation is about both similarity and difference, mimesis and alterity. Where techniques of production and forms of consumption are copied, both individuals and groups attempt to keep pace with one another on the path to progress. At the same time, this mimesis is a means to another end: to out-compete one another given the zero-sum politics of progress, and the esteem wrought through it. Where both kinds of emulation—i.e. the copying of techniques of production and of forms of consumption—are

competitive, the result is a regimentation of practices. Indeed, one notes that in Escobar the politics of progress are played out on very few stages in which people compete at particular endeavors. The buying and reselling of produce in the CBE's Market is one such example. This politics also plays out through particular things—acquired vehicles being prominent among them. In the end, while emulation is ultimately about difference (noting that progress responds to ‘otherness’), many in the barrio recognize that emulation is, like the practices of *fijarse* that afford it, one of the things that defines their common Bolivian-ness despite their ethnic (-national) diversity. Many also note that such emulation is not ‘healthy’—such recognition being an example of how (some) Bolivians objectify their own practices with an eye toward figuring the ethics of community, a topic taken up at the end of this thesis.

Let us begin with an example of the ways that techniques of production have been emulated and the consequences this has had. As many in the barrio are proud to proclaim, the Bolivian is astute and able to pick up a trade quickly⁷⁰. For my close friend Gabino, who was then employed by Japanese ornamental flower growers (*floricultura*), but who often also worked in construction, one of the reasons why his Japanese *patrones* so closely guarded the secrets of their cultivation was because their Bolivian labor was so adept at deciphering and reproducing them as new competitors. What he observed in the floricultural sector was what he imagined had transpired in the horticultural sector. Though the transformation in horticultural production from the Italian and Portuguese *patrones* to Bolivian-run operations is complex (see Chapter 6), the fact that Bolivians have come to dominate such a significant sector of the economy, and this despite having begun without land and with technologies “from the eighteenth century” (as many are wont to proclaim), is a testament to Bolivians’ keen abilities to observe, learn, and in a word, progress.

This ability to emulate is one of the principal attributes by which Bolivians are known as ‘*vivos*’ (clever, shrewd, perspicacious)—both by themselves and by Argentines. On the one hand, their ability to emulate has been a major factor in the creation of the CBE's wholesale Horticultural Market, as well as in the evolution of the commercial activities it affords (e.g. the development of *compra-venta* as a specific type of operation⁷¹). One could argue that Bolivian

⁷⁰ See also Vargas (2005) *Bolivianos, paraguayos y argentinos en la obra: identidades étnico-nacionales entre los trabajadores de la construcción*.

⁷¹ As we'll see in the next chapter, *compra-venta* (i.e. the buying and reselling of already farmed produce) is often more lucrative than production itself. It involves establishing and exploiting relationships with operators in Buenos

viveza in emulation has brought about aggregate growth to those in the sector as a whole. Yet on the other hand, such emulation, and the *viveza* that enables it, is not always seen as a good thing. For, along with the practice of *fijarse*, emulation is seen as a constituent practice in the complex of envy.

My friends Charly and Elizabeth laid it out for me one afternoon. Charly's narrative, like so many I had heard before, began with life in the fields (*quintas*). Charly said that all Bolivians (referring at least to those in Escobar) began in the *quintas*. As they began to become independent producers (*independizarse*), they would look at each others' levels and techniques of production, and emulate what they thought worked. For example, one would see that the neighboring field began using greenhouses (*viveros*). Being wont to *fijarse*, he and others saw him 'progressing'—or at least *imagined* he was making better money—and so copied his technique of cultivating with greenhouses. Nobody wanted to lose out or be left behind. What could happen, Charly said, is that they all began producing the same thing, in the same way, and reducing the diversity of what was available for market. Instead of doing their own thing, neighboring Bolivians would saturate a market and begin underselling each other to survive. Thus while emulation may have proven useful to Bolivians as they copied the horticultural work from their Argentine predecessors, it could be a double-edged sword as they became independent producers.

On another occasion, my friend Orlín provided a similar characterization of this Bolivian practice of 'copying' in the realm of production.

Orlín (Potosino): La manera boliviana es fijarse en quién tiene la camioneta, ver lo que hace, y luego copiar todo hasta el último detalle, con la excepción de vender lo mismo por menos plata para ganarle.

The Bolivian way is to see who has the pickup truck, look at what he does, and then copy everything down to the last detail, with the only exception being to sell the same thing for less in order to out-compete him.

Esta competición no es sana, no es buena.
This [kind of] competition is not healthy; it's not good.

Aires's Central Market as well as with producers or importers across the Argentine Republic. At the time of my fieldwork, operations in *compra-venta* had supplanted many rooted in production alone, marking a specific evolution in Bolivian economic activity.

For Orlín, this practice of emulation is borne of envy. The pattern, he states (and here without referencing any domain of production in particular, whether that be horticulture, construction, or textiles), begins by looking at who has acquired and displayed the objects of progress—here again represented in the pickup truck—and then becomes a point of catching (back) up, often with the aim of out-competing the successful person at their own endeavor. This, Orlín states, is not a good kind of competition; it is not *healthy* competition. Moreover, such competitive emulation can have the effect of bankrupting the endeavor for all involved. This, he told me on a later occasion, was what had happened in parts of the floricultural sector that had become dominated by Bolivians. He said that so many had entered into one kind of production that all had to undersell each other to the point that they ruined everything (*lo fundieron*). He argued that if they had entered into a collective endeavor, where they jointly decided who would produce what, and at what price, they could all have progressed together. Yet their envy, which he termed ‘ignorance’ (*ignorancia*), caused them all, not just to lose out, but to lose some of the capital they had invested in the enterprise initially⁷².

While Orlín may be right in that some Bolivians (or some Potosinos) may at times lack ‘vision’ in exploiting certain economic niches in ways he might consider rational, there are many examples to the contrary. A principal instance of Bolivians ‘getting wise’ (*avivarse*) to the dynamics of markets is in the CBE’s Market, where many have begun to shift productive efforts toward more lucrative and stable *compra-venta* in ways that do not have negative consequences in the aggregate (though here not counting the effects on ‘community’)⁷³. What thus appears to

⁷² One should note that such envy and ‘ignorance’ are often believed to obtain among the Potosinos much more than the Cochabambinos (with the Tarijeños figuring somewhere in the middle). While the Cochabambinos are viewed as being sharp at business (*listos para el negocio*), they are not the only ones. There is also an ecology of commercial acumen within the Potosinos themselves. Here, the Saropalkeños are viewed as the most ‘awake’ (*despiertos, capacitados*), often in specific contrast to the Pancocheños.

⁷³ Certainly, there is no question that certain operators study the operations of others, and attempt to copy their methods of success. Yet the CBE’s Market, rife with competition, has not failed, but rather grown steadily. This is (in part) because there are certain forces that structure production in such a way that not all end up doing the same thing in the same way with the result that destructive emulation is forestalled. As we’ll see in the next chapter, the operators in the CBE’s Market possess varying levels of capital that enable differential engagement in certain kinds of commerce. These levels of capital are often a function of how many years one has been in Escobar saving up, with the dynamics of Argentina’s economic collapse of 2001 sometimes shaping trajectories in major ways. Such differential levels of capital are also, in recent years, a function of the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE and the ways it has configured access to *puestos* and (allegedly) lucrative kickbacks given clientelistic dynamics. Moreover, the strongmen of the ‘usurpation’ are in most instances the kingpins (*magnates*) of traffic in certain products and, by using threats of force, actually ‘set’ and ‘corner’ markets in particular ways. Thus where certain enclaves of production have been ‘ruined’ by emulation (as Orlín has argued), the kinds of commerce in the CBE’s Market are varied enough and the capital necessary for them distributed differentially such that this economic diversity persists, emulation has not hindered productive efforts in the aggregate. To these forces, one must note that there are other

be the case in the examples mentioned above is that meanings and desires one might call ‘cultural’ are shaping (if not trumping) practices that are ‘economic’ in the (neo)classical sense. That is, practices of emulation, rooted in desires to not be ‘left behind’ and/or in the interest of ‘being on top of and overwhelming the rest’, have come to shape pursuits of profit, where such pursuits are thoroughly a function of social relationships. Given the politics of envy, ‘not being outdone’ by one another is often more important than interest in making money for money’s sake.

The subversion of classical, ‘market-oriented’ rationality to cultural meaning is also seen in the sphere of consumption. Regarding the practices of production illuminated above, we saw how Orlín framed the issue of emulation with regard to the pickup truck—saying that ‘the Bolivian way’ was to look at who had one and then to try to copy his methods so as to progress in a similar fashion. Here we see that the pickup truck is itself an object of emulation in practices of consumption. That is, what is emulated is not the method of working to attain the truck, but rather the acquisition of the truck itself, and specifically a particular kind of truck. This was made clear to me by Chapi, the Cochabambino body shop worker we met above. Certainly, Chapi understood as well as anyone how a pickup truck was a commentary on its owner. Chapi worked tirelessly banging out dents, burnishing out scratches, and repainting vehicles in an effort to create an exterior that the owner (or others) might believe could have an effect on other (inherent) attributes that would associate him with indian-ness or bolita-ness. Certainly, for a pickup truck to have this kind of effect, both on the driver and on those who evaluated him, it needed to look the part; it could not be a ‘humble’ (*humilde*) vehicle. With pickups indexing progress and representing individuals—if not also creating them—through their outward aesthetics, there was naturally envy over them. Such envy, on Chapi’s estimation, caused people to emulate one another’s purchases of them.

Chapi gave me a concrete example. When one bought a Ford F100, he said, *everyone* wanted one. And among those who had the F100, he who had the latest year was the one who was most envied. All began to compete for the most recent make of the F100 until (when means

structuring forces that extend beyond the locale of Escobar. First, noting that many in Escobar sell produce purchased from Buenos Aires’s Central Market, prices in the CBE’s Market are often a direct function of the prices established in that market, and thus nationally and internationally. Second, the continual demographic expansion in the ‘northern zone’ of Buenos Aires’s *conurbano* has produced a consistent demand for these and other basic foodstuffs that Bolivians produce. A study demand mitigates the need to have to undersell one another. Both of these phenomena have the effect of creating or otherwise maintaining price floors.

permitted) they were buying the truck brand new (*cero kilómetros*). *Se vuelvan locos*. “They go crazy,” he said, reflecting the “frenetic ambition” (*ambición frenética*) that Bourricaud (1970) argued was characteristic of the *cholo* in the Peruvian Altiplano. Certainly, in Argentina, vehicles are valued in Dollars and are more expensive relative to the cost of living, making the purchase of a brand new vehicle (versus a used one) not rational by many accounts. In purchasing a used vehicle, one would have that much more money available to invest in his *quinta*, *comedor*, or other business. This irrational and unhealthy form of ‘copying’, Chapi mentioned, had come to pass with other kinds of vehicles as well, most notably with particular kinds of cargo vans (e.g. the Renault *Trafic*). Thus although F100s and Renault *Trafics* are important to productive endeavors—i.e. horticultural work and transport, respectively—their competitive purchase is also a form of conspicuous, emulative consumption that has much to do with the desire to dominate and to not be left behind in the politics of progress.

Through these examples, one can see how envious emulation can have a regimenting effect on practices of production and consumption. Where actors end up doing the same thing, in the same way, and collectively figure into the common gaze through which the zero-sum politics of progress and esteem are continually refigured, one can see that emulation only intensifies the complex of pride and envy that—as we’ll shortly see—has ‘exploded’ through structural changes wrought through the process of taking up life in Escobar.

Concealment and Revelation

I have just argued that practices of emulation are both a consequence and generator of envy. Here, I argue that practices of concealing production are similarly imbricated with the complex: i.e. that they not only stem from envy, but also (re)produce it. Specifically, I show how the concealment of savings managed through a rotative credit institution called the *pasanakuy* is a function of envy, and simultaneously productive of it. Through this I suggest that practices of concealment are a way that productive endeavors have come to be commonly and publically managed, and thus shaped and regimented, by the envy complex.

It was a quiet summer night in the barrio, and it was getting late. As on other occasions, El Gordo and I had been sitting on top of fruit crates in front of his fruit and vegetable shop

(*verdulería*) chatting about life. I had always been interested in people's personal histories—which never ceased to amaze me—and had recently learned that Gordo, who was a Tarijeño from Jujuy, had worked the northern tobacco fields as a younger man. He had been telling me about the processes of planting and then transplanting, of harvesting and then of drying the leaves, when his Potosina wife called him in to their—or rather, her—*comedor* next door. I waited patiently for him, keeping an eye on his *verdulería*, whose metal curtain had already been pulled three quarters of the way down. After a minute, Gordo reappeared and asked if I had wanted to run a quick errand before turning in—and before the street became a no-man's land (*tierra de nadie*) perused by the barrio's thieves and thugs. This would be fine, I said, and we closed up his shop and set out. I didn't know where we were going, and we got chatting about the upcoming haircutting ceremony (*corte de pelo*) that he and his wife were planning for their son, Kebin Allen, who was to have his first birthday. As we neared our destination, Gordo asked me to wait at a distance as he knocked on a metal door. It was very much night and I thought the whole affair mysterious, especially when I saw him hand over a sum of money to a woman who came to receive him. When he was finished and we started walking home, curiosity got the best of me and I asked him what the whole affair had been about. Indeed, being a friend, and more recently being named the Godfather of Beer (*compadre de cerveza*) for Kebin Allen's upcoming ceremony (this being both an honor and no small obligation), I was at liberty to inquire. I quickly learned that there was nothing nefarious going on. El Gordo explained that he was simply playing the *pasanakuy*.

A widespread Andean custom, the *pasanakuy* is an interest free, credit and savings system that is organized by a fixed group of contributors whose beneficiary rotates among them over the course of its cycle. For Gordo and his wife, their *pasanakuy* was composed of ten local shop and restaurant owners who for ten consecutive months would each contribute \$250 pesos monthly to create a pot of \$2500. This pot would be 'won' that month by one of the members in a drawing, hence the term to 'play' (*jugar*) the *pasanakuy*. The group would do the same each month until they had all 'won' the \$2500 pesos each had contributed over its course. That the contributions and 'winnings' are redistributed mutually and equally is where the *pasanakuy* also gets its name: the root *pasa-* (Spanish) can be glossed as 'to pass,' while the suffix *-naku* (Quechua) signifies that the action is reciprocal between the members, or otherwise acts equally

upon each. Thus defined as “passing between its constituents”, the term *pasanakuy* encodes grammatically the reciprocal nature of the mutual aid⁷⁴.

Depending on when one draws his or her number, the winner incurs a situation of either available credit or forced savings (and almost always a combination of both). That is, if one wins the \$2500 sum the first month, he has that money available interest-free to make a capital investment, like the purchase of a commercial refrigerator for his *comedor* which would enable him to sell colder (and thus more) beer to increase profits. Regardless of what he earns, he still has to come up with his \$250 for each month, as default is strictly forbidden. (Note that in this scenario, the contributor should have other savings at his disposal to insure against default). On the other hand, if one wins his \$2500 in the last week, he has been forced to set aside, by monthly contributions, what would amount to savings that then becomes available in a lump sum. Though he has earned no interest on this money, he has effectively secured it from potentially wasteful spending—e.g. the purchase of unnecessary, luxury items, or, as sometimes happens, drinking benders. For most participants, winning the *pasanakuy* involves a combination of both credit and savings, and becomes a productive way to access (or otherwise preserve) capital where participation in the banking system (to the extent that this is even trusted by Bolivians in Argentina⁷⁵) may be frustrated. Such frustrations can be caused by a lack of citizenship or immigration papers, a lack of property deed to demonstrate equity, no record of consistent income, or other kind of verifiable collateral necessary for securing a loan. Sometimes one’s illiteracy prevents him from engaging banks. The *pasanakuy* thus provides flexibility and security in the face of various challenges to commercial activity and consumption in the informal economy⁷⁶. Yet let us not forget that the *pasanakuy* is also a source of

⁷⁴ Note that practices and ideals of rotative, mutual aid structure a significant amount of activity in the Bolivian highlands. The *mink’a*, or the practice of opening one another’s *chacras* for the spring planting, is one such example of rotative mutual aid. Imagined by the CBE’s founders to be constitutive of community itself, the phrase “*mink’anakunapaq*”, which contains this same construction –*naku* mentioned above, forms part of the moral code on the wall of the CBE (see Chapter 1).

⁷⁵ Bolivian residents in the barrio will often confess they do not trust the banks (*no confían en los bancos*), and given Argentina’s recent economic history, this is understandable. Certainly, many have their savings stashed away somewhere—one friend joking that he rather trusts in the ground (*confío en la tierra*), referencing the practice of hiding cash earnings out in the fields (*quintas*). This is also a common practice among Argentines.

⁷⁶ Indeed, regarding consumption, the credit and liquidity provided by the *pasanakuy* better positions its participants to purchase items where they would otherwise have difficulty. Certainly, no-one selling used appliances in the barrio (a common occurrence) would allow the buyer to pay in monthly quotas, as shops in Escobar do for brand-new items. This means that lump sums of money are required up front. Even where one prefers (or has the means) to purchase something brand-new from a store in Escobar or beyond, paying in quotas is often not an option given

excitement: even though one merely ‘wins’ what he has himself contributed (or will contribute), the gamble of when the money will come, and thus what this means for one’s economic plans, is exhilarating. Moreover, receiving the money all at once (and indeed unexpectedly) makes it seem like an unexpected windfall.

Like *pasanakuy*s throughout the Andes and beyond, Gordo and his wife’s is based on cooperation and trust (*confianza*)⁷⁷. Indeed, all participants in their *pasanakuy* have been vetted by the group—their common possession of permanent businesses in the barrio ensuring that none can disappear or otherwise ‘screw/fuck over’ another (*cagar al otro*), a practice which we have already seen occurs with certain frequency in the barrio. Remarkably, Gordo and his wife’s *pasanakuy* is ‘mixed’ in that the participants do not hail from just one or another ethnic nationality. This means that the trust and mutual aid that exists is figured between ethnically diverse Bolivians whose groups are often set in agonistic hierarchies. Indeed, on the night I accompanied Gordo, he had given his monthly \$250 to a woman from Cochabamba⁷⁸. Thus ethnic rivalry and mistrust were here suppressed in the interest of economic cooperation. Perhaps undergirding—if not guaranteeing and perpetuating—this cooperation and trust is the fact that the *pasanakuy* is eminently egalitarian and horizontal. It is impossible for internal hierarchization or disproportionality to emerge within a *pasanakuy*, as the only thing differentiating members is not *if*, but *when*, they win. (As we’ll see in later chapters, nefarious exploitation of the ideology of such egalitarian, rotational benefits was instrumental in the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE.) And though tensions may arise, and membership may change over time, the ethic of the *pasanakuy* is at odds with the logic of exclusive, competitive accumulation, at least as this might exist between the participants themselves. (Whether this collaboration is used to compete with others outside the *pasanakuy* is of course another story.)

With all the infighting in the CBE, which often happened by virtue of pre-existing ethnic (-national) differences, learning about the cooperation and mutual dependence in the *pasanakuy* among such a diverse group (at least ethnically, if not socio-economically) was a welcome surprise. Indeed, the *pasanakuy* seemed to be an instance of people progressing, if not together, then at least not at one another’s expense, as so often seemed the case.

that all stores require a *garantía de domicilio* or *sueldo* to secure the credit—a guarantee many Bolivians cannot provide due to the informal nature of their work and status.

⁷⁷ Note that June Nash in her (1979) analysis of tin mining in Potosí discusses the *pasanakuy* under a section dealing with “community reciprocity” and “worker solidarity” (Nash 1979: 110-113).

⁷⁸ Since she had just won the month prior, it was her turn to collect on behalf of the group.

At the same time, this was a limited engagement among just ten participants, and one also fraught with complications given the surrounding dynamics. This was made clear by what Gordo said to me before we parted ways that night:

El Gordo (Tarijeño):

Randall, no puedes contarle a nadie de esto ¿dale?
Randall, you can't tell anyone about this, ok?

When I asked why he said:

Es que hay mucha envidia.
It's that there's a lot of envy.

Gordo mentioned to me that those who participate in the *pasanakuy* do not broadcast or otherwise let on that they are 'playing'. They keep their participation private. This, he said, was to avoid the envy of others. Indeed, where everything in the barrio was constantly in the gaze of others (*en la mirada*), Gordo and the other participants thought it best to avoid exposing themselves. For revealing one's methods of accumulation (or its management) left one open to bad blood, and perhaps even sabotage. Yet this very exclusivity was not just a *function* of the envious gaze; it was the very *stuff* of envy. In this case, this was true because this *pasanakuy* was composed only of prominent shop and restaurant owners—i.e. successful business-people. Public knowledge of their *pasanakuy* would cause them to be regarded as a tight-knit group, and a wealthy one to boot. This could only encourage those (most likely those unhappy with their position in the *lucha*) to associate their progress with their exclusivity, and not with their hard work and sacrifice. Given what had transpired in the CBE, this association in the minds of others could have ill effects.

Gordo's *pasanakuy* reveals the extent to which capital accumulation in the barrio is actively concealed, and the extent to which this concealment (itself a practical manifestation of exclusivity) is both a response to, and motor force of, envy. This practical imbrication of envy and concealment is certainly not limited to Escobar, or even to the Bolivian Andes. Among the Peruvian highlanders who populated the squatter settlements of Lima in the 1970s, Susan Lobo states that savings were publically under-reported or kept an outright secret in the interest of avoiding invidious comparison or the advantage-taking of others. Certainly, an exact knowledge of one's material resources and the extent of one's network of interpersonal influence could be used by the envious to undermine one's position of prestige (or power) in the settlement (Lobo

1986: 48, 71)⁷⁹. This practice of concealment, Lobo argues, had much to do with the asymmetrical relations of power that traditionally obtained between mestizos and Indians in the Peruvian highlands—a dynamic best exemplified by the political economy of the *hacienda*. In such a dynamic, the less advantaged concealed certain activities, resources, and feelings—practices not just honed to a fine art but undergirding the very survival of corporate groups against those who exploited them (ibid). While *haciendas* were not part of the immediate experience of many in Escobar⁸⁰, similar asymmetrical relations of power existed throughout the mining and commercial economies of highland Bolivia. The common, racialized political economy in both Peru and Bolivia has much to do with the similarity in the production of the envy/concealment nexus we see both in settlements in Lima and suburban Buenos Aires⁸¹.

Where one of the consequences of envy is the concealment of capital accumulation and its management, manifestations of capitalization can hardly ever be kept out of the *mirada*. Regardless of how accumulation is generated or managed, the opening or amplification of a *comedor*, the purchase of a field, the building of spare rooms for rent, or the purchase of a truck are all unavoidably visible. In other words, no material capitalization can be kept hidden as the methods of its creation might. Thus what one who is not privy to the methods of accumulation *sees* in the barrio is often not the years of consistent hard work being gradually converted into progress. What one actually *sees*, given the dominant regime of visibility, is *sudden* capitalization—i.e. capitalization ‘over night’. Another’s progress is thus often framed as happening from ‘one day to the next’ (*de un día a otro*). This sudden, sea-change in progress, being zero-sum, is often too much to handle. This is especially true when he who is capitalizing actually controls and manipulates what is seen (and not seen) to his advantage. Though people may keep their savings (and the methods of their accumulation and management) secret, this may not simply be to avoid the envious *mirada*; they may do so because progress is often intensely competitive, and people take advantage of quiet accumulations to suddenly trump another, often in public. Indeed, we have seen that capitalizations are often displayed

⁷⁹ See also Rockefeller (2010: 91).

⁸⁰ While the forebears of some of the Potosinos in Escobar may have once enjoyed the best lands in Potosí, their descendants did not inherit them, as they were appropriated for the construction of haciendas in the Colonial and Republican periods. One might also note that in the interior of Potosí, haciendas were relatively few with regard to other, more fertile regions of Bolivia. For some discussion of the population concentrations and resettlements that would have historically accompanied land appropriations see Rasnake (1988).

⁸¹ I would also suggest that this historical and racialized power dynamic, itself reproduced in certain ways in Argentina, has much to do with the Argentine reputation of Bolivians (which some Bolivians also share) as being ‘untrusting’ (*desconfiados*).

ostentatiously, and sometimes thrust on others with great pride. This combination of the suddenness and motivation behind capitalization is fodder for the generation of envy—and for the perpetuation of *cycles* of envy. Indeed, I would argue that those ostentatious or proud capitalizations that seem to come out of nowhere are more likely to engender moral impuginations, whether these be accusations of drug dealing or the exploitation of kin. I would also suggest that they might provoke instances of witchcraft (if the latter do in fact exist), more than capitalizations that are telegraphed and tactfully managed.

Conclusion: The Origins of Envy

In the previous sections I have illuminated key consequences of envy. I have shown how envy may variously entail the cutting of social fellowship, the production of otherness, and the organization of production and consumption. At the same time, I have endeavored to show how these practices also (re)produce envy, such that one may speak of cycles of envy—or of an envy ‘complex’ that reveals a dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition. In this way, these practices are as much precipitants of envy as they are the practical manifestation of it. While some of envy’s dynamics rely on certain groupness at lower levels, these examples reveal that envy is divisive overall. Indeed, envy compromises the kinds of horizontal identifications that are necessary for a community that might be called moral—i.e. a community in which one regards another as a fellow *with* whom, instead of *against* whom, he might progress and enjoy a common human dignity. As we have already seen, and as I will show further in the final chapters of this work, this is the kind of community the CBE was founded to cultivate; it is the kind which its founding also presupposed to a certain extent.

Before looking into how envy among the CBE’s members has compromised its founding mission, and provoked and undergirded its ‘usurpation’, it fits to explore just where envy came from. Indeed, showing how the corruption of the CBE stems from envy is, while a unique contribution in itself, not the full story. For what one must also show is *how envy arose* to have such penetrating political consequences. Such an illumination is not simply important for explaining the corruption; it is ultimately important for showing how, given this corruption, envy is the complex against which a moral movement to restore—if not found—a community among

Bolivians in Escobar. Indeed, the discussion of the politics of humility with which I conclude the thesis hinges on the larger ‘problem’ of envy.

Chapters 6 and 7 are thus dedicated to showing how envy came to be the dominant complex it is in Escobar. There I argue that the dynamics of the emigration and the taking up of life in Escobar have provoked the ‘explosion’ of envy in Escobar. This dynamics includes the creation of the CBE, its Market, and the ways both have shaped changes in the relations and rationales of production. To preface that discussion, and to conclude the present chapter, let us turn to the ways that Bolivians in Escobar conceptualize the presence of envy in Escobar. What follows is an examination of the ways residents in the barrio respond to the question concerning the origins of the complex that many confess shapes their daily lives.

It was early fall. Though the morning was bright and clear, it had rained all night, and the unpaved Calle Orquídeas was a mine-field of puddles. The 503 that linked the barrio with Escobar seemed to hit all of them, only momentarily purging them of their muddy contents. Things were slow, and not just because of the impossible condition of the street, which kept many at home. It was also late Saturday morning and the horticultural work week had ceased; the CBE’s Market would rest until the following night. I was on my way to get some pastries (*facturas*) to take to my *compadre*’s house—to pay him and Silvia a visit. Before that would happen, I would run into Norberto, who was closing up the big, solid metal doors behind his truck. It needed a rest too.

I had been making all kinds of inquiries into envy—and was pleased to have a handle on its local manifestations, expressions, and consequences. What I had yet to understand was the extent to which it existed up in Potosí—and how. If it existed as much as it did in Escobar, did it have such a divisive effect? Could it otherwise bind a highland community together, if only ever agonistically? Was it a function of progress, where this was a visceral language that all shared? I was interested in comparing and contrasting the dynamics in rural Potosí with those in Escobar to know how the emigration and its entailments had changed the tenure of relatedness and the sense of obligation toward one another, whether stranger or intimate. I was interested to know if differences in the cultural expression of envy might help me parse larger structures and forces. My mind was racing as I went for *facturas*.

When I saw Norberto, who I knew had grown up in the interior of Potosí—and who had emigrated to Argentina when he was 20 years old—I knew he’d be a perfect person with whom to broach my questions. I had always appreciated his eye for social critique. After exchanging greetings, I began by asking him how one might say ‘*envidia*’ (the term in Spanish) in Quechua. I took this tack, hoping not simply to leave the question as open-ended as possible, but also to elicit a more ‘original’ conception of what might amount to envy in Potosí, and perhaps historically so. Based on how ‘envy’ might be glossed in Quechua could potentially reveal the extent to which it has existed, the manner in which it has existed, and the contexts in which it has emerged.

Norberto, perhaps needing to revisit a world and a life he had left more than twenty years before, scratched his head:

Norberto (Potosino): **A ver cómo te lo puedo engramar...**
Let’s see how I can put it into words for you...

Yet Norberto was not able to find words for expressing or characterizing *envidia*—his attempts at circumlocution failed⁸². And after a couple of false starts he said bluntly:

Es que no existe.
It doesn’t exist.

No tenemos cómo decirlo porque no era parte de nuestra vida.
We don’t have a way to say it [“envy”] because it wasn’t part of our life.

I was caught by surprise. Could it be that the one thing that many said defined Bolivian-ness in Escobar—i.e. this complex of envy, which included the practice of *fijarse*, the *ambición*, and the attempts to ‘level’ another’s progress—did not exist up in rural Potosí? Could it be that rural Potosinos had somehow been free of such a ‘sickness’ (*enfermedad*), as they later came to refer to envy. Could it be that in rural Potosí there was less destructive competition and more collaboration and solidarity? What was I to make of this claim that envy did not exist at home; that it wasn’t part of life there?

⁸² Norberto was not the only person that was stumped by this question of what the Quechua term or phrase for envy might be. A Pancocheño friend of mine responded similarly, saying “you got me; I don’t know, but there must be (a term for it)” (*me mataste—no sé, pero debe haber*).

While Norberto was perhaps right that a single, native Quechua encoding for envy—or at least one that all could agree on—did not exist in Escobar (and perhaps even in Potosí), I was not convinced that envy (or something close to it) was not part of life up in Potosí. Certainly, I was well aware of the ways that people in Escobar idealized life and their pasts in the Andean highlands so as to critique what they saw happening among themselves in Escobar. I was aware that such idealizations had historically confounded anthropological understandings of the Andean ‘highlands’ and its dynamics as well. At the same time, I knew that those from rural Potosí had been protagonists in great changes in life and being, and that one could not discount significant differences in the cultures of relatedness that obtained between Potosí and Escobar.

Further investigation revealed that there were in fact ways to express ‘envy’ in Quechua. Some of them depended upon entextualizing the Spanish term ‘envidia’ into the otherwise native construction (e.g. *manchay invidioso payqa*). Yet others did not, and were comprised of only Quechua words. A telling formulation was provided by my friend Heber, a young man from Potosí with strong ties to the *campo*. Heber often spent half the year working in Escobar (or Buenos Aires) and half the year at home in Potosí (between the city itself and his relatives’ provincial community). Heber said that up in the interior of Potosí, an envious person was often known as a “*choqo runa*”, which one might gloss as an ‘interested person’. In a literal sense, *choqo* is the adjective used to describe an animal’s ears that stand up and turn toward a stimulus, be it a threat or otherwise. In people, *choqo* describes someone with an interest or curiosity in something that is happening. It is in its figurative sense that *choqo* can describe an envious person. Certainly, we might see that a *choqo runa* is someone who has the tendency to *fijarse*—i.e. to take an undue, and often unhealthy, interest in another’s activities and progress.

Another telling framing of ‘envy’ in Quechua was provided by a lively young woman named Yolanda. Yolanda was from a hamlet near Betanzos, a town lying east of Potosí, and had just arrived to Argentina for the first time. As was the case with many, Yolanda was unfamiliar with the nearby city of Potosí, and yet soon found herself in a foreign land. Having heard from her before that one of the big things that Potosinos had to learn upon (im)migrating to Argentina was their ‘numbers’ (*aprender los números*) for the sake of negotiating commercial calculations, I was keen to hear her vocabulary for what might constitute ‘envy’ in the *campo*. When I asked her how she would express envy in Quechua, she imagined herself in a situation where she was envied, and provided the following:

Yolanda (Potosina): Pay mana ñoqata rikuyta munanchu.
(S)he doesn't want to see me.

That she glossed 'envy' as a situation in which the envious did not want to 'see' her was interesting; for it recalled the case of Melchor (the rabbit-meat producer) above, whose progress caused his envious neighbor—and in-law—to cut off his water, prompting him to build a wall so they would no longer see each other. When I pressed Yolanda to say more in the hopes she would provide a more metaphorical vocabulary for this relationship of 'not wanting to see the other', she framed the relation as a situation in which she was 'nettled' by the other (*chininakunawan*), noting that the ill will was reciprocal between the two.

While it was clear that envy existed to a certain extent up in Potosí, my inquiries revealed that there was, on the whole, disagreement about where envy was significant (whether in Escobar or at home) and how it might have arisen. While many, whether Pancocheños, Yureños or otherwise, insisted that there was envy everywhere and at all times, even in the *campo* (*envidia siempre hay*), others insisted that envy came only with the emigration and their new life in Argentina. This was a life, many would say, whose purpose was to make money (*juntar plata*). That envy emerged through the emigration *had* to be the case, as one Potosina argued, because: "What was there to envy up in Potosí?!" Indeed, in the *campo*, all the houses were made of adobe, everyone similarly worked the land for subsistence, and no-one had access to things like televisions, let alone the electricity to work them. Though she granted, as others did, that envy in rural Potosí could be felt over another's possessions or what they produced—whether that be their animals (or their ability to reproduce), the size or quality of their lands (or the harvests they generated), or perhaps even the size of another's family—she said that all up in Potosí were 'equals'.

Doña Rufina (Potosina): Allá no había competición; acá se sobresalen⁸³, acá se destacan...

⁸³ Note that 'sobresalirse' is not correct Spanish as the Academia Mayor would have it, but is nevertheless a common form. I cannot pronounce on the extent to which this particular use obtains in Bolivian Spanish (or beyond), but that Rufina deployed the reciprocal pronoun 'se' is significant for understanding her critique. By itself, *sobresalir* means to stand out (if not surpass or outvie), with the attention focused on the agent, and with any other party being underspecified. By adding the reciprocal pronoun 'se', Rufina emphasizes that the action is not simply standing out, but indeed surpassing or outvying 'each other'. This has an effect on how we interpret the following construction "se destacan"—making it 'they stand out from one another', and not simply 'they (themselves) stand out'.

Up there [in Potosí] there was no competition; *here* they surpass each other; *here* they stand out from one another...

Y a la medida que se sobresalgan, se dividen.

And insofar as they surpass each other, they become divided.

For Doña Rufina, the differences (what I have called the dialectics of exclusivity, differentiation, and competition) that produce envy emerged ‘here’, in Argentina, in explicit contrast to the dynamics of life in rural Potosí, where all were ‘equals’. This was a crucial distinction indeed, and one which entailed as much a commentary on life in Argentina as it did a construction of life ‘at home’. Indeed, the statement that all were ‘equals’ in Potosí is more powerful than saying that all simply had common roots there. Indeed, Doña Rufina was leveling a moral critique of *what people had become* in Argentina (i.e. a factionalized, divided community) in contradistinction to *who they were* at home in Potosí, where solidarity was thought to have prevailed. And Rufina was not the only one to make such a claim and advance such an idealized vision of life at home—a vision we might call the Potosinos’ own construction of what is known as *lo andino* in the anthropological literature.

Juan, a Pancocheño⁸⁴, went much further than making the claim that envy—and all that surrounded it—originated in Argentina. He linked it directly with the CBE:

Juan (Pancocheño)

La arrogancia, el orgullo, la envidia—todo este individualismo—todo entra ahora. Todo ha venido con la Colectividad.

This arrogance, this pride, this envy—all this individualism—it’s all beginning now. It’s all come with the CBE.

The next two chapters explore the extent to which envy emerged with the CBE, or whether its origins lie in the changes in the culture of production wrought through the emigration that the CBE helped create and shape.

⁸⁴ Let us remember that the Pancocheño are those frequently vilified for being exclusive, proud, and aggressive—and as those responsible for the CBE’s ‘usurpation’. Here we see a Pancocheño’s critique of precisely these attributes (noting that the CBE is to blame).

Chapter 6:

Making a Living: Migration and the CBE's Market

Introduction

This chapter illuminates the socio-economic conditions that shaped progress (and differences in progress) in Escobar, as well as the CBE's Market's role in this. As I argue that the CBE shaped and intensified the envy that was key to the usurpation of the CBE (not to mention widespread complicity in this usurpation), I must show here how the CBE and its Market shaped and enabled differential progress. To do this (and here focusing specifically on the Potosinos, as much of my dissertation does), I begin with an examination of the immigration, move to show how immigrant fit into the horticultural sector of Buenos Aires, and how they came to capitalize and 'progress' through the years—a trajectory that continues to develop through the CBE's creation of the horticultural Market. Along the way, I include discussions of human and financial security that affect Bolivian movement up the 'horticultural ladder' (i.e. progression from day laboring to sharecropping, from sharecropping to independent production, and in many instances from independent production to the buying and selling of produce). The chapter finishes with a detailed look at the range of different operations within the CBE's Market, as a way to illuminate the differential progress over which socially divisive envy and pride are often expressed.

Reasons for Immigrating to Argentina

To understand the CBE's Market we first need to show how Bolivians began exploiting an emergent niche in the informal horticultural sector. Yet before we can do this, we must first show why they ended up in Argentina.

With regard to the Potosinos (i.e. those from Yura, Saropalka, and Pancochi) there are many factors which encouraged outward, and eventually permanent, migration. Much of this out-migration began in the late 1960s, with the bulk happening in the 1970s and 80s. Though Yura, Saropalka and Pancochi will evince certain heterogeneity in the causes and motivations for out-migration, all of the following are principal causes that characterize the entire region. Within this, we have good data from Caiza D in the Linares Province that is largely representative of Potosí in general. At the same time, not all migratory practices are the same: we see that Yura and Saropalka had a larger predominance of *seasonal* and *temporary* migration for wage labor (see Rasnake 1988: 36, and Harman 1987; Bigenho 2002: 140). Much of this migration ended up becoming permanent emigration to Argentina (and see Bigenho 2002 for an ethnographic treatment of Yureños' return visits). As for the Pancocheños, who did not engage much in seasonal or temporary migration for wage labor, their immigration to Escobar is said to have been 'en masse'.

Perhaps the single most common answer offered by the Potosinos in Escobar as to why they emigrated was an inability to make ends meet at home⁸⁵. Indeed, as we saw earlier, most Potosinos describe their former lives up in Potosí as *carenciados* and *sufridos*—i.e. characterized by lack and hardship. Speaking of his forbears in Pancochi, my friend Juanci offered the following:

Juan (Pancochi): **Antes los comunarios no tenían nada. Nunca pensaron en el día de mañana; vivían en el día. Nosotros éramos doce hermanos, pero sólo seis sobrevivimos. No teníamos cosas de la ciudad. Venimos porque no tuvimos otra.**

Before the people didn't have anything. They could never think about tomorrow; for they lived in that very day. We were twelve siblings, but only six of us have survived. We didn't have the things of the city. We came [to Argentina] because we had to.

⁸⁵ Typically, those that migrate out of Potosí are the least well off. Within all this there is a range of socio-economic standing: some are able to keep on in these locales if they do have sufficient resources; those that do not are most often forced to leave/migrate out (see Rockefeller 2010: 54 for Quirpini in Chuquisaca on this point) / See ALCO (2001: 140) for Caiza D on this point; see Jetté and Rojas (1998: 208): "Los emigrantes no provienen solamente de las familias más pobres, sino también de familias que, en el contexto rural, se consideran acomodadas. Lo que varia, de acuerdo a los estratos socioeconómicos, son las *razones* de la migración, los destinos geográficos y la clase de ocupación buscada (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 208)."

But what contributes to such hardship, and thus to out-migration? Are the same ‘push’ factors common to the Yureños, Saropalkeños, and Pancocheños? [Unfortunately, space does not allow me to examine in any depth this question for the Tarijeños and Cochabambinos].

One of the largest contributors to this hardship across the Provinces of J.M. Linares, Nor Chichas, and A. Quijarro (as reported by those from Pancochi, Saropalka, and Yura, respectively), is a lack of cultivable land. The Southern Bolivian Highlands in general, and these regions in particular, are characterized by steep valleys and poor soils. Indeed, up to 90% of the surface is unsuitable for agriculture (ALCO 2001: 67)⁸⁶. My friend Tío Norberto emphasized this point by making a comparison between the geography of Potosí versus that of the Departments of Oruro and Cochabamba. Though the latter are at different altitudes, he said, they are much less steep. They have broader hill sides and wider valleys, if not actual *plains*. Oruro, being on the *altiplano*, is a case in point. Potosí, in contrast, is much more precipitous and difficult to cultivate. Cultivable surfaces in Potosí are often limited to lower-lying lands near valley floors.

In addition to this scarcity of land, many report a scarcity of water as having complicated their former livelihood—and thus ultimately as a cause for out-migration. Indeed, most of these communities fall in Potosí’s arid *Cabecera de Valle* (2,700 – 3,200m) where rainfall is already minimal⁸⁷. Natural rainfall agriculture (*a secano*) has thus always been difficult (though it can be managed even on Potosí’s high *Puna*). Were this not challenge enough, it has been reported that rainfall has not been what it used to be. Jetté and Rojas (1998: 202, 204) report a decline in rainfall for Potosí over the recent decades⁸⁸. The same has been reported by Rockefeller for the

⁸⁶ Haciendas in the Andean highlands have typically occupied the best lands at the expense of indigenous communities. This is also somewhat true in Potosí, though haciendas are less common there than in other Departments like Cochabamba and Chuquisaca. And while some Yureños have had a greater relation historically with the hacienda economy, those from Saropalka, and especially those from Pancochi, do not, given their geographical location and the local topography.

⁸⁷ Pancochi, for example, averages only 12-14 inches per year, as of 2001 (ALCO 2001)

⁸⁸ Indeed, they mention that some environmental scientists believe that Potosí’s extended droughts over recent decades have been linked to deforestation in Cochabamba—itsself linked to an influx of Potosino migrants as the mining sector collapsed in the 1980s. “La colonización del trópico de Cochabamba (provincias Chapare, Carrasco y Tiraque) por campesinos y mineros de los valles y del Altiplano se intensificó por las oportunidades económicas abiertas con el cultivo de la hoja de coca y de sus productos ‘alternativos’ (plátano, cítricos, piña, etc.) ha provocado un serio deterioro de los bosques húmedos de los yungas y del pie de monte, en la vertiente norte de la cordillera del Tunari. La tasa de deforestación en esta región es una de las más altas en el mundo. Entre otras consecuencias, se cree que esta deforestación, al provocar una disminución de la capacidad de generación de humedad en la vertiente norte, podría ser una de las causas de la prolongación de los ciclos de sequía en los valles de la vertiente sur (Laserna et.al. 1995: 23) (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 204).”

Quirpinis, just west of Potosí in Chuquisaca (Rockefeller 2010: 7). There, Rockefeller notes that most have abandoned their rainfall agriculture altogether (2010: 7).

Most of the cultivation thus continues to be done through irrigation (*bajo riego*). However, because of the steep terrain, many report the difficulties involved in getting water to crops planted higher up⁸⁹ (Don Chinchá, from Nor Chichas). Moreover even the largest of streams from which canals are cut measure only a few meters in width⁹⁰. This general scarcity requires comunarios to take turns using the water, stretching the resource even further. Certainly, water has been an oft-cited cause of conflict within and between hamlets, as is the case elsewhere in the Andean highlands (see Rockefeller [2010: 51] for nearby Quirpini in Chuquisaca, Trawick [2003] for Peru).

If general scarcity of land and water were not difficult enough for managing subsistence, plaguing these altitudes are adverse climatic fluctuations and events. Hail and frost frequently claim crops, as do infrequent, erratic bursts of rain. The latter may wash seedlings from soils, or otherwise flood the best plots sown at lower altitudes when streams overflow. Drought is unfortunately also common⁹¹. Speaking of the toll it can take on cultivation, Doña Anko summed it up thus:

Doña Anko (Nor Chichas): **Te esforzás tanto para que te nazca [el plantín]—solo para que se te seque luego.**

You work so hard just so your plans will bloom—only to have them dry up shortly thereafter.

For the Potosinos in Escobar, social practices only exacerbated an already naturally challenging ecological situation. Many report that, as a function of inheritance, parcels have been subdivided through the generations to the point that one simply did not have enough fields to support a family. This process, referred to as *minifundio* in the literature, is cited as a principal cause for having to leave home. Where Yureños, Saropalkeños, and Pancocheños were

⁸⁹ That comunarios are forced to cultivate these elevated, steep climbs speaks to the scarcity of good, arable land.

⁹⁰ Jatun Mayu, one of the largest sources of flowing water in the Linares Province, and on which Pancochi sits, is less than 4m wide (ALCO 2001: 17).

⁹¹ The most severe drought on record is that which affected southern Bolivia in 1983 as a function the El Niño phenomenon (see Jetté and Rojas 1998: 202). The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that some 1.6 million people were affected across the Departments of Potosí, Oruro, Cochabamba and Tarija. All of them needed emergency relief to prevent famine, as most had their means of subsistence severely threatened, if not lost. See “Bolivia - Drought Aug 1983 UNDRO Situation Reports 1-13” <http://reliefweb.int/node/34660>. It was estimated that up to 80% of fall harvests were lost.

already subsistence producers, this continual subdivision of plots only threatened their basic livelihood more.

Tío Norberto (Nor Chichas): **Ya no alcanza.**
It's no longer enough (to make ends meet).

Though this excessive subdivision of lands is common across Potosí, it is cited by the Pancocheños more than any other comunidad (e.g. Yureños, Saropalkeños) as the principal—indeed acute—cause for their emigration (Don Alberto, Pancocheño). Because of this excessive subdivision of plots, many also reported soil degradation as a contributing factor to their emigration. The Potosinos in Escobar frequently used the phrases ‘*no se saca nada*’ or ‘*no rinde nada*’ to characterize the low yields of agriculture at home. Certainly, these low yields are a function of *minifundio* insofar as a lack of land frequently translates into its over-use (i.e. overfarming, or otherwise the reduction of fallow periods), which depletes soils (see Tacuri 2002; see also Godoy 1990: 40⁹²). Lastly, though not something I heard mentioned, many fieldworkers in Potosí report an increasing tendency to practice single-crop agriculture (*monocultivo*), which further exhausts soils and contributes to erosion (Tacuri 2002)⁹³.

Yet not all Potosinos in Escobar cited these challenges to agricultural subsistence as the principal factor spurring their out-migration. Indeed, where the Pancocheños cited excessive subdivision of plots and climatic challenges as the key factors propelling their move to Argentina, the Saropalkeños (and to an extent the less numerous Yureños) tended to cite the effects of the mining sector as motivating theirs. Many Saropalkeños reported that they did not have the lands that the Pancocheños had, even to begin with. Further inquiry revealed that, prior to their move to Escobar, and in contrast to the Pancocheños’ more exclusive reliance on agriculture, many Saropalkeños had already been supplementing their agricultural production with temporary wage labor in Potosí’s mining sector. Some even recalled histories of some relatives’ early forays into

⁹² As Godoy states: “Frequent use of the same cropland causes the top and the subsoil to wash away faster than in the past, leaving severer gullying, a thin topsoil, and a desolate appearance. Since new fertilizers have not been introduced, reducing the fallow also reduces the soil’s organic matter and nutrient content for crops. This, in turn, hinders the production and genetic diversity of crops, especially potatoes... In the long run, shortening the fallow weakens and eventually destroys productivity, forcing peasants into a predicament of declining output despite intensification (1990: 41).”

⁹³ Corn, being not only a staple, but of ritual significance, is the *monocultivo* par excellence in Potosí. Corn, which depletes already stretched soils, has traditionally been alternated with broad beans (*habas*), which replace nutrients like nitrogen. Monocultivo breaks this cycle and exacerbates soil degradation and erosion.

the Argentine mines of Río Negro as far back as the 1950s, where some reportedly took Chilean wives. The Saropalkeños, and many Yureños as well, were thus an example of a common pattern of mixing livelihood strategies (see Zoomers 1999)—in which agricultural labors were seasonally intercalated with temporary wage work in mining (see Harman 1987, who mentions this practice for Yura; see also Godoy 1990 for the same involving the Jukumanis in the North of Potosí; and for an historical analysis of the relation between mining and agriculture between Cochabamba and Potosí, see Larson 1988).

Indeed, for many, wage work in mining was a way to mitigate the risks of agricultural production⁹⁴, if not secure certain income for the purchase of ritual and household items (e.g. coca leaf and cane alcohol on the one hand, and cooking oil and kerosene lamps, on the other). My friend Don Selmo mentioned that, in comparison to securing a livelihood from cultivation, mining was relatively “stable”. As we saw above, the climate and ecology of Potosí are such that, “a thousand things must come together to produce a proper harvest (Arguedas 1909)⁹⁵”; that is, cultivation is fraught with risk, and often itself the cause of hunger. Wage work in mining was thus a source of subsistence for many in the southern Bolivian Andes (see Nash 1979, Godoy 1990). Yet the mining sector was itself prone to vicissitudes, themselves often violent (see Klein 2003). In the mid 1980s, international prices of ore fell—principally tin—and with them came the collapse of Bolivian mining. Thousands of workers were dismissed and displaced⁹⁶, and the markets of the Southern Departments collapsed (principally Potosí’s, but

⁹⁴ Note that for Potosí and Chuquisaca during the years 1983-1997, Zoomers’ (1999) *Linking Livelihood Strategies to Development* cites a number of stressors on subsistence in the Southern Bolivian Andes, including increasing drought, soil degradation and erosion, overfarming (reduction in fallow periods), land fragmentation, lack of sufficient animal feed, and lack of firewood from deforestation. Her work, however, focuses on the comunarios’ constant response and adaptation to these challenges. That is, she looks at their agency in altering their livelihood strategies to meet ever-changing needs. Migration, most often for wage labor, is just one option in what are diversified strategies that include cultivation, animal husbandry, exchange relationships, and more recently, engagement with NGOs/development agencies (Zoomers 1999: 53-59). These strategies—each with attention to a configuration of different kinds of resources/capital—variously concern accumulation, stabilization, risk reduction, and compensation for declining resources.

⁹⁵ La producción de estos frutos no depende, como natural es suponer, del buen abono de los campos o de su calidad, sino, y no hay que olvidar semejante circunstancia, de las variaciones atmosféricas o cambios estelares. Para que una cosecha sea buena en la altiplanicie, es necesaria la concurrencia de mil circunstancias dependientes exclusivamente del estado atmosférico. Si en determinados meses llueve mucho, la cosecha se pudre; si no llueve, se agusana; si hiela, se seca; si graniza, se pierde... Indispensable es que llueva poco y sólo en ciertos meses; que no hiele sino cuando ha madurado el fruto; que no granice, etc., etc. Y como no siempre estas condiciones se reúnen, los malos años abundan, el hambre cunde y acrecienta ese malestar social, ya patente en Bolivia (Arguedas 1909: 44).

⁹⁶ As part of the structural adjustment program called the “New Economic Policy” (and launched by Supreme Decree 21060 on August, 29 1985), the state closed the mines it had nationalized after the 1952 Revolution. Thirty thousand workers were dismissed during the mid- to late 1980s (Gill 2000: 13; see also Klein 2003). Gill examines

also Chuquisaca's and Tarija's, being that the latter contributed products and labor to the former)⁹⁷. For those like the Saropalkeños that did not have sufficient lands to begin with, the collapse of mining eliminated a key source of subsistence. Moreover, this economic collapse came on the heels of the drought of 1982-83, which as we saw above, had already stretched subsistence in Potosí. Given these dire conditions, many had no other option but to emigrate. For these Potosinos, internal migration was one option; migration to Buenos Aires was another.

For the various Potosinos in Escobar, reasons for their emigration were thus varied. Though the collapse of the mining sector forced many Saropalkeños and some Yureños to migrate, an acute shortage of land was reported as the principal cause motivating the out-migration of the Pancocheños (though of course it also undergirded the Saropalkeño and Yureños patterns of temporary migration for wage labor). Nor did these 'pueblos' emigrate at the same time. Almost everyone in the barrio concurs that the Pancocheños were the first to arrive, with the Saropalkeños and Yureños following shortly thereafter.

Yet their movements were not only provoked by these push factors. There were many pull factors that shaped their migrations as well. Argentina always offered a comparatively larger economy, and labor was always needed in the plantations of the northwest Provinces of Salta and Jujuy—at first in tobacco and sugar cane, and then in a range of products⁹⁸. Seasonal wage work was also offered in the orchards and vineyards of the Cuyo Region (San Juan, San Luís, and Mendoza), and in operations in La Plata and Bahía Blanca, etc. Although some of these 'stops' hosted Potosino migrants—including some Pancocheños, Saropalkeños, and Yureños, albeit to a limited extent—many of those who ended up in Escobar came via a much more direct route to the horticultural belt of Buenos Aires. As told by many in Escobar, the vast majority of Pancocheños emigrated to Escobar directly, "*sin escala*" (without a 'layover'). Indeed, the common narrative, though perhaps an exaggeration, is that many Pancocheños had not even seen the city of Potosí before migrating to the northern fringe of Buenos Aires. I think it is safe to say that some had in fact not. Such a direct transplantation, to the extent that it is true, would have direct consequences for how well these 'insular' Pancocheños—who, because

the ruptures, migrations, and reconfigurations provoked by the mining crisis and the state's neoliberal response as contributing to the growth of El Alto. Goldstein (2004) cites the closing of the mines as contributing heavily to the influx of highlanders into—and the changing demographics of—Cochabamba.

⁹⁷ See Crabtree (1987) for further discussion on the collapse of Bolivian tin mining; see also Jetté and Rojas (1998: 202-203).

⁹⁸ See for example Whiteford (1981) for a discussion of the *zafra*.

of their relatively good lands, had engaged less in seasonal migration for wage labor, whether this had been in the mining sector or harvests in Argentina, and who had participated less in military service—would “*desenvolverse*” in an entirely new social context.

Though we’ll say more about the horticultural sector shortly, here we should note that, with regard to the pattern of migration, work in Buenos Aires lasted the year-round. This was an important ‘pull’ which kept the Potosinos in this area (Escobar, Pilar, and Campana). Being able to cultivate “*el año redondo*” was attractive to many. It meant they didn’t have to continually move, which was easier on families. It also eliminated the unpredictability and risk involved in moving from harvest to harvest, where pay might be withheld, where one might end up with an abusive *patrón*, etc. And though it is reputed that some early Bolivian migrants were exploited by their *patrones* in the horticultural belt of Buenos Aires (*patrones* who were of Portuguese, Italian, and Japanese descent) their year-long residence meant that they could develop productive and fair relations with *patrones* of their choice, which they did. In this way, they not only reduced risk, but also attained certain agency over their own production, beginning (as we’ll see shortly) their path to *independizarse*.

Where most of the migrations to Escobar had been in full swing by the 1980s (noting that the first significant numbers had begun to arrive in the early 1970s [see Benencia and Quaranta 2006]), there were other pull factors besides being able to cultivate the year round (*año redondo*) that resulted in the various Potosinos staying. In the 1990s, construction boomed, opening up a new economic niche for Bolivian labor, which many—including some Potosinos—took advantage of. That the Argentine peso was pegged to the US Dollar at roughly the same time (in 1992) made both horticultural and construction work very lucrative with regard to the Bolivian economy at home. Indeed, the exchange rate favored staying in Argentina. Instead of getting only 3 *bolivianos* per Argentine peso, one could, after the currency revaluation in 1992, get 7 *bolivianos* per *peso*. In the 1990s, Bolivians were essentially earning US Dollars that, when sent home to Potosí, made quite a splash, and accelerated migration to Argentina⁹⁹ (see Frías 2002, Bigenho 2002, Rockefeller 2010).

⁹⁹ “Los migrantes definitivos y exitosos son, para la familia y su círculo de parentesco más amplio, símbolos de mucho prestigio. En sus visitas esporádicas hacen gala de presencia en el pueblo durante todo el tiempo de su permanencia. Pasean en vehículos como automóviles, camionetas o vagonetas en los que realizan el viaje desde la Argentina, convidan celebraciones con abundante cerveza a sus vecinos y parientes en las tiendas del pueblo. Muchos estando borrachos se enfrentan a los vecinos en grescas, repitiendo permanentemente ‘¡Ya no es antes

Indeed, the ability not only to make ends meet in Argentina, but to have ready access to water and electricity, *casas de material con baños integrados*, and eventually to acquire the highly esteemed accoutrements of urban life (new bicycles, new clothing, radios, television sets—and ultimately vehicles/trucks), these Potosinos were able to ‘progress’. Achieving progress has made it harder to return to Potosí permanently, as have the difficulties of having to re-accustom oneself to the challenges of life there—a life that, though familiar and itself ‘home’, was nevertheless *carenciado* and *sufrido*. As we’ll remember from Chapter 4: for many, returning to the *campo* permanently would be to “*volver atrás*”—to take a step ‘backwards’

What did this now permanent residency in Escobar mean for the pueblos of Pancochi, Saropalka, and Yura (and many smaller hamlets surrounding them)? The common narrative of many Saropalkeños and Pancocheños in Escobar (though not so much of the Yureños, who number less) is that their communities of origin are now ‘empty’.

Los pueblos quedan vacíos; sólo quedan los abuelos—los que no puedan caminar. Vas a Pancochi ahora?—el pueblo está vacío. Están todos acá [in Escobar].

The communities are empty; the only ones left are they elders, those that can no longer walk. If you go to Pancochi today, there’s no one there. They’re all here [in Escobar].

Where securing a fit livelihood at home in Potosí was *sufrido*—i.e. not just arduous, but marked by *carencia* (lack), Argentina offered the way out. For many, especially for the youth with their aspirations and energies, the future was in Argentina (though as we’ll see later on, critiques of their present would lead some to create this future by returning to the past). With such exodus, punctuated less and less by return visits, like for Carnival [Yura and Saropalka] (noting that many Pancochenos, in a reverse pattern, now go religiously [literally] back up to Pancochi for yearly Evangelical meetings), the pueblos were stretched. Only the elderly were left behind. And many were worried that life would never be the same again.

The anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Michelle Bigenho noted the following on her first visit to Saropalka [Sarapalca] in 1994:

carajo!...Estas muestras de opulencia influyen bastante para que muchos tomen el camino de la migración (Frías 2002: 142).”

In 1994, Sarapalqueños were notably concerned with the desertion of their community, and the topic crept into our discussions at every turn. During Carnival of 1994, I heard the Sarapalqueños' discourses that were directed at me in my study of the music of Toropalca. I sensed a desperation with which Sarapalqueños were clinging to the kuraqa's fiesta and the music of the flauta, a continual invocation of following what the ancestors used to do, in the hopes of maintaining a thread to the past, as a community was vacated by all but its elderly inhabitants. The school-aged population in Sarapalca was so limited that the community was fighting to keep its locally assigned schoolteacher. With a perception that no future generation was living in Sarapalca, the community was fighting to keep a history, a tradition... As more young people were leaving for Argentina, returning only for a visit, a kuraqa system in Sarapalca counted on fewer and fewer families through which to rotate the burden of authority. (Bigenho 2002: 148)

Though she notes that such anxiety was far less common for Yura than for Saropalka (and neighboring Toropalka), the sentiment referenced a widespread out-migration...

Bolivians' Insertion into Horticultural Sector of Buenos Aires

The organization of relations of horticultural production in Gran Buenos Aires—specifically in what is called the “green belt” surrounding the Capital—has been dynamic. Small holding has a long history in these areas, which were once much more rural than they are today given the expansion of Buenos Aires and its semi-urban periphery. Originally, these small holders, or *quinteros*¹⁰⁰ were primarily of Italian and Portuguese descent.

The first Bolivians—most of them Potosinos—that entered into horticultural production in Escobar in the early to mid 1970s worked for these *patrones*. The conditions facilitating their insertion into this informal sector were multiple. In addition to their familiarity with horticultural production, the first local factor—and one of increasing importance—was a growing shortage of ‘native’ (*criollo*) labor during this time. The aforementioned *patrones*, who had begun to expand their family-oriented production to engage growing markets, had been employing hands from the distant Province of Santiago del Estero as *asalariados*, or day laborers (*asalariado* versus *jornalero*?). During the early to mid 1970s, this ‘native’ labor became scarce, as demand for it increased in the growing agribusiness of the Northern Pampa (Benencia

¹⁰⁰ The *quinteros* were named so after their ‘*quintas*’, the small holdings themselves. The type of production traditionally characterizing the *quintas* has been horticulture, in which almost all the labor is manual.

1997a: 154). Moreover, labor in Escobar had already been depleted through rural to urban migration. For many years, the City of Buenos Aires had offered jobs that paid better, provided union benefits, and which were much less back-breaking. Such jobs, whether in industry or the service sector, were attractive to Provincial rural dwellers, who also sought the benefits of urban life (ibid: 152).

The first arrivals of Bolivian immigrants to Escobar and its neighboring Partidos (Pilar, Campana, Zárate) thus coincided with this structural shift in labor. Contracted first by *patrones* as day laborers, Bolivian families (or otherwise groups of ‘*parientes*’) soon entered into sharecropping arrangements with them. These were arrangements, themselves not unknown in the sector, in which the *patrones* provided the land and, most often, the seeds and any fertilizers or mechanization (e.g. tractor). For their part, the sharecroppers—i.e. *medieros*, or *medianeros* in local parlance—provided the labor. The ‘contract’ between them was verbal, and remuneration for the sharecroppers came upon the harvests, which were often staggered by crop sown. Depending on the arrangement, sharecroppers typically took between 25-40% of the profits. One should note that sharecropping—or working ‘*al partir*’—was not unfamiliar to Bolivian immigrants. Eliseo Quispe (2002: 66-67) lists this as merely one productive arrangement in an otherwise diversified set of livelihood strategies in the Bolivian Altiplano.

As opposed to day labor, sharecropping for Bolivian immigrants provided them with more freedom in their daily work, and more agency in the production itself. They could, depending on their relationship with the *patrón*, determine just what to produce and how. That is, as they became increasingly competent in the techniques of production in the green belt, they could lobby to provide the seed and/or other inputs for a higher percentage of the profit. They could also determine just who would contribute what labor and how. Moreover, sharecropping allowed Bolivian families certain leverage against their *patrón*, which simply did not exist in the tobacco, sugarcane, or larger horticultural operations in the North. That they could *collectively* leave a bad relationship was incentive enough for the *patrón*, who would be left with no-one to see a crop through to harvest, to be fair. Finally, because the green belt allowed for cultivation the year round (*el año redondo*), stable, productive, and enduring sharecropping allowed Bolivian immigrants a ‘permanence’ on the landscape that migrant work (in the North or elsewhere) did not. Indeed, *patrones* frequently allowed their Bolivian sharecroppers to reside on the *quintas* themselves. Though these were makeshift dwellings—and almost always lacking

amenities—they nevertheless became the first year-round structures one could call ‘home’, and a point from which one could navigate the locale, its possibilities, and ultimately, its services (e.g. namely health and education).

Yet sharecropping arrangements were of interest to the Argentine *patrones* as well. First, such arrangements allowed them to share the risks inherent in horticultural production and sales. As *quinteros* decided to plant one crop over another based on *projections* of what would ultimately be profitable that season, one never knew with certainty whether that decision would be a good one. If too many ended up planting the same crops, over-supply would diminish profits. Moreover, prices themselves tended to fluctuate. By not having to front wages before the harvest was in, *patrones* who engaged sharecroppers thus secured themselves against potential losses (Benencia 1997a: 152). Second, such arrangements, by shifting much responsibility to the sharecroppers, freed *patrones* from having to oversee daily production. That is, because sharecroppers had a share of the profits, they did not need to be monitored as day laborers often did. Indeed, Argentine *patrones* had complained about the ‘native’ labor being unreliable and inconsistent in this regard. Where Bolivians would work 7 days a week for an entire season, Argentine labor was much more ‘capricious’ (*caprichoso*). *Patrones* frequently reported that *criollo* labor not only demanded days off and other benefits, but lacked a work ethic. For these reasons, Argentine *patrones* came to prefer Bolivian labor, and specifically sharecropping relationships with them, despite some initial reluctance (ibid: 155).

[For further discussion of the advantages of sharecropping in Gran Buenos Aires, see also Gutman, et. al. (1987) *El campo en la ciudad: la producción agrícola en el Gran Buenos Aires*]

For all these reasons, both structural and practical, Bolivian sharecroppers gradually replaced native labor in Escobar and elsewhere. Writing of this transformation, Benencia states: “Podría decirse que en la actualidad la figura del ‘medianero’ está especialmente representada por ‘el boliviano’, inmigrante limítrofe que casi ha monopolizado el ‘negocio’ de la mediería en las áreas de producción hortícola familiar en la Argentina (1997a: 154).”

Bolivian Horticultural Ladder

Yet there was a complementary dimension to the Bolivian work ethic that was so esteemed by the Argentine *patrones*, and which had helped to secure the place of Bolivians in this informal sector. Equally strong, and with its own effect on the organization of productive relations in the green belt, was the Bolivian ethic of saving. Indeed, Bolivian sharecroppers (like Bolivian immigrants in other sectors) tended to save their earnings at incredibly high rates. Materially speaking, many reproduced the same level and kinds of consumption that characterized their lives of hardship up in Potosí—choosing to eat cheaper starches versus proteins, choosing to live in the fields in shacks (*chozas*) versus in more secure dwellings in some barrio. In other words, Bolivians chose to forego most material comforts for a future in which they might capitalize and change their lot. As noted by both Bolivians and Argentines, all of these practices distinguish them from Argentines. [We're projecting from the barrio in 2005 back onto the 1980s here]:

Tío Norberto (Nor Chichas): **El argentino quiere su milanesa, quiere su ropa de marca; no quiere laburar. Cuando quiera, afana a un boliviano, que siempre tiene una moneda en el bolsillo; que aunque sea poco, siempre tiene.**

The Argentine wants his beef cutlets, wants his name-brand clothing; he doesn't want to work. And when he feels like it, he holds up a Bolivian, who's always got some kind of money on him; even if it's only just a little bit, he's always got something.

What did these Bolivian sharecroppers do with their savings—savings which were often pooled among the family/*pariente*-based unit of production? The most common deployment of this capital was to better access and exploit what produced it in the first place: land. While the outright purchase of land could only come after many years of work (most cited 15 years as necessary for the purchase of a few hectares), many sharecroppers were able to save enough after ten years to *rent* fields from Argentine land-owners (see Benencia 1997a: 172-173). That is, upon accumulating enough capital, Bolivians could transition—indeed ‘jump’—from sharecropping (*mediería*) to renting lands (*arrendamiento*)^{101 102}. In this latter arrangement,

¹⁰¹ Benencia (1997b: 80, 82) states: “El pasaje de la mediería al arrendamiento implica para el migrante boliviano la realización de ahorros importantes en la etapa anterior, que posibiliten la concreción de dicho salto...[P]ara poder

solidified through a more formal contract (*contrato de arrendamiento*), Bolivian families acquired usufruct rights to fields in exchange for monthly, seasonal, or yearly payments.

The advantages of this kind of relation were many. Under these arrangements, Bolivian families had even more freedom over their production. As *arrendatarios*, they had sole control over what to plant, when, and how. That is, they would decide what would be profitable that season—a calculation whose risks they surely undertook, but whose gains they also stood to make. And though they would now pay for all inputs (seed, fertilizer, wire, posts, pesticides, etc.), as well as provide any mechanization (often through the purchase of tractor), they no longer had to consult with, or be constrained by, the land-owner, with whom they may have disagreed. Indeed, the latter had no stake in these decisions—or in the operations themselves—for he would receive his rent either way.

The greatest advantage of renting over sharecropping, however, was the vastly increased control Bolivian families gained over sales. Under sharecropping arrangements, it was the Argentine *patrón* who managed the marketing of harvests. Though many *patrones* were honest in reporting the actual price obtained in-market, it was perhaps just as common for them to under-report profits, such that the share they owed their sharecroppers (whether it be 25% or 40%) came from a smaller sum over-all¹⁰³ (see also Benencia 1997a: 160; Benencia 1997b: 82). Thus in contrast to sharecropping arrangements, in which Bolivian families were often at the mercy of the *patrón*, renting allowed them significant independence with respect to their earnings¹⁰⁴. Adding to this control was the freedom to decide just where to market their produce. As *arrendatarios*, Bolivian families could experiment with different options—i.e. whether they would sell portions on roadsides next to their *quintas*, or provision regular buyers on

producir por su cuenta, el arrendatario debe poseer el capital necesario que se lo posibilite (herramientas, maquinarias, y cierta cuota de dinero en efectivo para levantar algunas instalaciones y poder adquirir los insumos necesarios para producir); es decir que no sólo basta con acceder a la tierra y contar con la mano de obra familiar necesaria.”

¹⁰² For an updated account of this transition from sharecropping to renting in the green belt generally, see Benencia and Quaranta (2008: 426). The authors mention that the move from sharecropping to becoming an independent producer (though one still not owning all the means of production) need not be contingent upon the levels of savings and capital required some years ago. Now, for example, one may become a *productor* by accessing certain means of production (e.g. building his own green house) through credit (2008: 426).

¹⁰³ However, as we have seen and will see, such under-reporting happens between Bolivians themselves, whether this be when they become *patrones quinteros* and work with their own sharecroppers, or otherwise in the CBE's Market's *compra-venta*, where the transactions are trans-regional.

¹⁰⁴ Note, however, that those just making the jump to cultivating renting lands often lacked access to *puestos* in the local concentrating markets of San Fernando, Beccar, and Escobar, and thus had to depend on Bolivian intermediaries in the to sell their produce, for a 15% commission (see Benencia 1997b: 96).

consignment. Yet experimenting with and pursuing various options—which, as operations grew, included selling in the area’s concentrating markets and/or directly to *verdulerías*—required access to other kinds of capital. That is, cultivating rented lands entailed the need to contract transport—i.e. a *fletero*—to access markets. Initially, Bolivians relied on Argentine *fleteros* who disposed of a pickup or other small truck outfitted for such work. In time, Bolivian *arrendatarios* would themselves acquire the same kinds of vehicles to exploit the emergent niches they themselves helped to create. Many earned the money necessary for these vehicles precisely through the profits they made in this mode of production. Indeed, as Benencia states, acquiring a truck and securing a permanent *puesto* in a concentrating, wholesale market were two of the major aspirations realized in this stage of production (1997b: 82).

Yet having to rent land meant one did not own land; it also meant that one’s home was still somewhat precarious, being itself contingent on the relationship with the land-owner¹⁰⁵. And where certain savings and capital were needed to progress from sharecropping (*mediería*) to renting (*arrendamiento*), so did the jump from renting to owning land, i.e. becoming a *propietario*. Indeed, owning land was an ultimate goal for most who toiled in the horticultural sector—for it meant full economic independence, greater margins, and a place to erect a permanent and sturdy house (*casa de material*). But where did the capital for the purchase of land come from? As we saw above, Bolivian *arrendatarios* were often able to make greater profit margins than when they were sharecropping. Much of this resulted from their abilities to control production and sales to their advantage.

Yet there were other ways by which *arrendatarios* could expand their operations, and thus increase their profits. Chief among them was the decision to rent more lands than the immediate productive unit—what was typically their extended family—could cultivate¹⁰⁶. In these circumstances, which were themselves contingent upon continually accumulated savings, Bolivian *arrendatarios* came to contract Bolivian *medianeros*, just as they had once themselves worked with Argentine *patrones* (Benencia 1997b: 83). In these cases, those newly contracted were almost always more recent arrivals from Bolivia who were just beginning their own trajectories of saving and capitalization. Moreover, they were almost always connected to the *arrendatario* by kin relations—if not directly brought in by the *arrendatario-cum-patrón* to

¹⁰⁵ According to Benencia (1997b: 96), some *arrendatarios* were renting, or perhaps building, other dwellings in the local barrios—these would normally be better outfitted with services.

¹⁰⁶ Benencia (1997b: 83) notes that such operations could grow to 25 – 30 hectares.

manage expanded operations. It is widely reported, and my own experiences confirmed it, that Bolivian *quinteros* (here specifically Potosinos) preferred to call home to recruit *parientes* from their own communities of origin (e.g. Pancochi, Saropalka, etc.) than look for other *paisanos* (i.e. merely Bolivians of different stripes) locally in Escobar, the latter only ever being contracted as day laborers¹⁰⁷. The rationale for contracting sharecroppers was no different for these incipient Bolivian *patrones* than it was for their Argentine predecessors: with sharecroppers, they maintained more lands in production; they mitigated certain risks; they benefitted from a constant and productive labor force, even if they had to train it¹⁰⁸; and, by following a schedule of remuneration that came with the harvests itself, they maximized their cash flow. Also like their predecessors, many of these Bolivian *patrones* were known to underreport profits from sales, once again with the effect that their *medianeros*—often not simply *paisanos*, but actual *parientes*—took a lesser percentage of the overall sum.

Finally, as incipient *patrones*, and with increased income, *arrendatarios* could diversify the conditions of their production: many came to adopt the increasing practice of erecting greenhouses in which to cultivate tomatoes and other green leafy vegetables (i.e. perennial favorites in the Argentine ‘*ensalada*’). Crops cultivated in these conditions not only had greater cosmetic appeal, thus fetching a higher price; they also were sure to make it to market having been protected from climatic events such as frost or hail. [For a discussion of this modality of production and its adoption across the green belt, see: Benencia, Cattáneo y Fernández (1997) “La producción bajo cubierta” in *Area Hortícola Bonaerense*; note that eventually, competitive pressure from the southern parts of the green belt caused Escobar to adopt the greenhouse (no?)]. Though greenhouses could become fixtures on *quintas*, replete with their own watering systems, many were much simpler, and could be easily moved from *quinta* to *quinta* in the event an agreement expired or was terminated. As such, they were good investments for those that could afford them.

Yet as mentioned above, owning land—i.e. becoming a *propietario*—was the original and ultimate goal for the vast majority of Bolivians in the horticultural sector. An though

¹⁰⁷ This is an example of the “ethnic economy” discussed in Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁸ Benencia and Quaranta (2008: 421) note: “Estos nuevos ocupados de origen campesino por lo general no conocen la actividad hortícola profesionalizada, la cual aprenden a partir de su base de conocimientos agrícolas campesinos, del trabajo en la quinta hortícola y de la capacitación en esa ocupación que le brinda la persona que lo acercó a ella. De este modo se genera un entretejido de compromisos entre el reclutador y el reclutado que reduce las necesidades de supervisión directa del trabajo.”

purchasing a few hectares could conceivably be wrought through savings accumulated through sharecropping alone, the rule, rather than the exception, was that land-ownership followed upon the heels of cultivating rented land. In other words, the general pattern for the Bolivian exploitation of the green belt was a trajectory that began with sharecropping (*medianero*), graduated to cultivating rented land (*arrendatario*), and culminated with working purchased land (*propietario*). Of this final transition or ‘jump’, Benencia (1997b: 84) reports that the move usually required less time than the transition from sharecropping to renting. For the first purchases of land usually amounted to acquisitions of only 5 hectares, which could be found relatively cheaply so long as they were distant from the Panamerican Highway (Ramal 9). This is the highway leading directly to the City of Buenos Aires on which the town of Escobar sits, and along which the emergence of gated communities (*barrios cerrados, countries*, etc.) and other commercial development drove land prices out of reach. Moreover, families often continued to rent lands and contract sharecroppers for them where they could, such that they could exploit both modalities of production simultaneously. Following a regime of work and saving—i.e. of sacrifice—that most Argentines would not imitate, many Bolivians came to become independent *propietarios* of operations ranging from 2 to 30 hectares, with most averaging 8 to 10 hectares (Benencia 1997b: 97). Earnings were invested in tractors, greenhouses, and in vehicles to move produce to market.

We are fortunate to have Benencia’s account of one particular visit he made to a *quinta* in Escobar—a *quinta* owned by Guillermo, who was one of the founders of the CBE. Benencia’s account, here worth reproducing in full, tells of a family who had gradually capitalized over what was likely 20 years (or close to it), and who, at the time of the interview, had attained a great level...

Cuando llegué a la quinta de Guillermo me sorprendí, ya que observe no sólo la existencia de ocho invernáculos de doble superficie a los que había conocido en la quinta de Apolinario, sino porque la casa de este quintero es de material, con ladrillo a la vista, techo de tejas francesas y aberturas de madera barnizadas. Se levanta un galpón cerrado a un costado de la casa, donde guardan los dos camiones, dos camionetas pick-up y un automóvil Fiat Duna gris, todos de propiedad de Guillermo. El capital invertido en maquinarias es muy importante, ya que observo dos rastras de discos de doble acción, un arado de rejas, un vibro cultivador, un rotobactor, lomador, surqueadora, etcétera. Cuenta también con sembradora a chorrillo (para lechuga, radicheta, etcétera) y tres tractores: dos Massey Ferguson (265 y 1075), y un Fiat 640. Hacia 1990, Guillermo, que había empezado con 5 ha., era ya dueño de 20 hectáreas, y su picardía en comercializar bultos

en los mercados más convenientes en cuanto a precios, además de producir hortalizas de muy buena calidad, hizo que su situación mejorara año a año. Cuenta hoy con tres familias medianeras que trabajan para él, pero me dijo que si viene otro paisano él lo puede tomar como medianero otorgándole una fracción de superficie, la que puede aumentar o disminuir según cómo trabaje, y si no cubre las expectativas de trabajo de quien lo contrata, le puede pedir que se vaya de la quinta. Guillermo se juntó hace tres años y medio con otros trece bolivianos y compraron unas tierras en el barrio Luchetti con el objetivo de hacer las canchas de fútbol para la colectividad y allí realizar los campeonatos que efectúan todos los sábados. Pero posteriormente una parte de esas tierras se utilizó para levantar un Mercado Comunitario de la Colectividad, adonde llevan tres veces por semana sus bultos los quinteros bolivianos para que compren los verduleros cercanos. (Benencia 1997b: 86-87)

Having begun with ‘nothing’—and let us recall the common Bolivian narratives of struggle framed through the key signifier *carencia*), the level of wealth some obtained was significant indeed. These families had, in the words of Benencia (1997b), ‘climbed the horticultural ladder’—a ladder which was also quintessentially Bolivian. This *‘escalera boliviana’* was one of upward mobility; and climbing the rungs (*escalones* or *peldaños*, in Benencia’s formulation) meant progress. There is no question that this progress was economic in the classical sense. Indeed, undergirding the moves from sharecropping to renting, and from renting to owning land, were increased capital, increased production, increased sales, and increased profits. Yet the economic success/mobility achieved through these moves meant another kind of progress as well: independence. Indeed, as Benencia notes (1997a: 172)—and as I heard repeated throughout my fieldwork across the barrio and in the CBE’s Market—“*el boliviano siempre busca (lo que quiere el boliviano es) independizarse*”. Where dependence, whether in Bolivia’s or Argentina’s racialized economy, was often directly associated with, if not a function of, being “*indio*” or “*bolita*” (respectively), achieving independence meant freedom from the conditions in which one was often continually ‘othered’ from above.

Yet for many in Escobar, land ownership—and/or the expansion and exploitation of owned lands—was not the end of the story—literally. There were three factors that challenged cultivating independently owned land as the ultimate goal for those in the horticultural sector. First and foremost, the creation and rapid growth of the CBE’s Market affected many Bolivians’ decisions to pursue this option. As we’ll see shortly, the Mercado, which was built in 1995 and which supplied an increasing demand as *countries* and *barrios cerrados* sprung up around the area, offered new *kinds* of work in the horticultural sector. Though it began as an outlet for all

the local Bolivian producers (*productores*), the Mercado soon became home to diverse operations—many of them detached from production itself. Many Bolivians, whether *medianeros*, *arrendatarios*, or *propietarios*, soon discovered that substantial profits could be made in the buying and selling of products in the Market (*compra-venta*). Crucially, they realized that not all of these products had to come from Escobar's or neighboring Partidos' fields. For indeed, local demand, itself expressed and channeled through the *verdulería* owners that turned to the CBE's Market for their supply, was broad. Extending far beyond locally produced products, local demand included, for example, apples and pears (grown in Río Negro), plums, apricots, and grapes (grown in the Cuyo), and bananas (many imported from Ecuador). Indeed, products as common as the potato, so central to the Argentine diet, cannot be grown locally (Santa Fe and Southeastern Buenos Aires being the areas of cultivation closest to Escobar), and must be acquired through other purveyors.

Thus where a Bolivian family had earned and saved enough through productive endeavors (i.e. sharecropping and cultivating rented lands) to purchase a *camioneta*, they could access larger, extra-regional markets like Buenos Aires's Central Market that supplied these and other products. Often working with a *fletero* if their own vehicle was not yet large enough, they could purchase these products for re-sale in the CBE's Market. Such work in *compra-venta*, as we'll see shortly, had become widely successful (and itself diversified) by the time I began my fieldwork in 2005. *Compra-venta* thus offered a lucrative alternative to cultivating the land itself. And though it required very long days—just as working the land did—it was far less 'sacrificada' than cultivation. It was also less risky. Indeed, unlike crops sown, which could fall victim either to a climatic event (hail, frost, etc.) or to a drop in market price after a great labor and capital investment, products that were purchased for resale were a safer bet. Indeed, as a livelihood strategy, *compra-venta* allowed *comerciantes* to navigate the vicissitudes of the market on a *daily*, rather than seasonal, basis. Moreover, *compra-venta* was often more profitable overall. Though locally produced, but higher technology operations such as strawberries could produce significant profits, most *quinteros*—themselves still up and coming—produced the more common *hortalizas* (lettuce, chard, etc.) which fetched lower prices overall, themselves often further depressed by oversupply. In contrast, and depending on the product and season, a *comerciante* articulating with the Central Market could earn 1-2 pesos more per *bulto* in Escobar.

**Charly Bravo (Tarijeño): ¿Por qué matarte en la quinta para sacar un sólo peso?
La plata está en la compra-venta.**

Why break your back in the fields to earn a mere peso when the real money is in *compra-venta*.

At the same time as the CBE's Market was expanding and diversifying, many Bolivian *quinteros* opted-out of cultivation by opening up *verdulerías*. That is, instead of paying rent to a land-owner and cultivating, Bolivian families could pay rent to a building-owner in the town of Escobar (or elsewhere) and stock it, not with their own production, but with products (both local and extra-local) purchased at the CBE's Mercado. This was thus another kind of *compra-venta* that articulated with, and developed as a function of, the growth of the CBE's Mercado. In these ways, independence—i.e. progress—need not come in the form of cultivating (or renting) land one had purchased. Independence could come in the form of a successful *compra-venta* operation in the CBE's Market, or as a function of it. And while both land-owning and independent production continued to enjoy great prestige, a successful *puesto* in the CBE's Market or a bustling *verdulería* in the town of Escobar could not go unnoticed. Indeed, while still squarely in the horticultural sector, both types of operations were more 'urban', ones in which cash and trucks were eminently visible.

Yet for many, the move into *compra-venta* was motivated by more than profit and prestige. There were other factors that made production less attractive. In addition to the overall hardships of the back-breaking work of the *quinta*, combined with the desire to live in the area's barrios for better access to basic services, human and financial security were chief among the reasons reported for leaving production.

Violence

As we've seen above and elsewhere, violence in myriad forms has always undermined the human security of Bolivians in Gran Buenos Aires, whether it be the exploitation they have endured as *peones* on Argentine-run *quintas*, the xenophobic or racial discrimination they experience in schools and health clinics, or the similarly motivated attacks they suffer on the

streets of the *barrios humildes*. Yet there is another modality of violence that has directly targeted Bolivian *quinteros*—one which has shaped the relations of production in the green belt: violent extortion. Indeed, because of these depredations, which have destroyed lives, both physically and financially, many Bolivians have left production in favor of buying and selling produce (*compra-venta*).

It is widely known that Bolivian families, because of their extreme hard work and strict regime of saving, always possess savings, no matter how humbly they are living. The colloquial expression heard most often is:

El boliviano siempre tiene una moneda en el bolsillo.

The Bolivian always has some silver in his pocket.

And while this is true of the Bolivian on the street, it has been especially true of the Bolivian *quinteros* living in the fields. Indeed, it is widely known that Bolivians typically keep their savings in a tin-can somewhere out on their *quinta*. As my friend Martín expressed it to me:

No usan los bancos! Los quinteros guardan todo en el colchón—o mejor una lata en la tierra.

The *quinteros* don't use the banks! They keep everything hidden in the mattress—or better yet in a tin can in the ground.

Certainly, many of the first-generation Bolivians have not relied on the Argentine banking system. There have been a number of reasons for this. First, many did not always have Argentine documents (or even a permanent address) with which to open a bank account. Second, many simply lacked the literacy or even sufficient competence in Spanish to negotiate bank forms. Other complicating factors included the incompatibility of their own work schedules with those of banks, and often a regular lack of transportation to access them, depending on the location of their *quinta* was. Finally, most Potosinos were unfamiliar with such institutional practices to begin with. Up in rural Potosí there were no banks (indeed, electricity was even rare), and capital most often came in other forms (e.g. animals, land, or in agricultural products for exchange). Indeed, in Potosí, banks and banking practices were typically available only to the urban, *mestizo* elite—and elite who might also define themselves through these and other markers of 'civilization'.

Because Bolivian *quinteros* were known to have savings hidden somewhere out in the fields themselves, and because these *quintas* were themselves often located miles away from what are even minor, dirt roads, the Bolivian *quintero* became an easy target (*blanco fácil*) for bands of thieves. Adding to this, Bolivians were generally unwilling to report crimes—even violent ones—to the police for fear of complication, deportation, or retribution. And when crimes were reported, they often went unheeded by the police or did not merit serious punishment under Argentine law. Indeed, Argentine criminal code stipulates that minors who commit crimes—even violent crimes—are to be returned to their parents (where applicable) versus being incarcerated. Thieves (or their organizers) have exploited their status as minors, and often work with relative impunity.

Attacks against Bolivian *quinteros* spiked in the winter months of June, July, and August of 2000. The recession that eventually led to the collapse of the Argentine economy had already begun. The local manufacturing corridor, which ran from Buenos Aires up the Paraná River, through Escobar, and ending at the port of Zárate, had begun shedding jobs and creating discontent. Worse yet, the ugly xenophobic discourses that had previously accompanied economic down-turns in Argentina had been revived once again. Crystallizing the popular, anti-immigrant sentiment this time around, which for years had centered on the Bolivian more than any other, was the publication in April 2000 of Daniel Hadad's "La Invasión Silenciosa" (Hadad 2000). Bolivians, more than any other foreign presence in Argentina (whether it be Paraguayans, Peruvians, or Chileans), were being blamed for stealing Argentine livelihoods and for usurping their public services. For many in Escobar and its surroundings (Pilar, Campana, and Zárate) the Bolivian *quinteros* were just another flank of this "silent invasion". Indeed, they were seen to be capitalizing when Argentines were losing ground. Perhaps it was no coincidence that some of the worst depredations against the Bolivian *quinteros* came at this time¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ Juana Camargo, editor of the Bolivian periodical *Contacto Boliviano*, explicitly makes this link between the violence against the *quinteros* of Escobar and the publication of Daniel Hadad's incendiary piece. In an article from *Página/12* entitled "A repudios al ataque a los quinteros bolivianos" (June 25, 2000) she is quoted as saying: "Creemos que la nota que publicó Daniel Hadad en su revista, titulada 'La invasión silenciosa', fue uno de los detonantes de estos ataques".

Fidencio Choque

There were more than 70 separate incidences of extortion and robbery of Bolivian *quinteros* that Winter. They left an indelible mark on the victims, and caused many to abandon their *quintas* and leave production for safer pursuits. Most of the cases revealed a similar method of execution: hooded and armed bands consisting of six to a dozen men would attack a family by night and—whether through threats, beatings, or torture—extort whatever earnings or savings they had had hidden on the *quinta*.

Fidencio Choque and his family—*quinteros* from Tarija—fell prey to this method on the night of June 23, 2000. Though the Choque family *puesto* was not far from where I worked in the CBE's Market some six years later, I never asked Don Choque about that night. It was not for lack of wanting to know, wanting those outside Argentina to know, or courage. Rather, it was out of respect. Having been told of Don Choque's torture, and of the consequences he and his family suffered from it, I did not believe I had any place in asking him to relive it—for anyone's sake. Moreover, he already had been asked to tell it before in press interviews, and I was content to rely on the record provided by Jorge Palomarz, who reported it for *La Nación*. Palomarz, along with other journalists in Buenos Aires papers (Clarín and Página/12) was instrumental in reporting the wave of attacks of the *quinteros* that Winter. The resulting publicity helped the CBE in their efforts to stem it by lobbying the Government of Buenos Aires for increased protection.

Interviewing Don Choque two months after the attack, Palomarz told his readers how Choque had come upon such terror. That night he had dropped his wife Basilia and their eldest children off at the CBE's Market to sell what they had harvested that day. Choque and his family were *arrendatarios* of a small *quinta* of two and a half hectares in the nearby locale of Matheu. It was already night, and Choque and his youngest children, María and Fernando, had fallen asleep. In the next room was Alberto, a *peón*, whom he considered another member of the family.

Tengo esas pesadillas...los hombres de la capucha...
I have those nightmares...then men in hoods...

Choque had recalled the ten or so men that had kicked in his door. They had tied him and Alberto up, and began beating them savagely, as the children looked on, terrified. *¡Boliviano sucio—bolita de mierda—decime dónde escondiste la plata!*

Yo les decía dónde estaba guardada la plata, pero nunca terminaban de pegarme.

I told them where the Money was hidden, but they wouldn't stop hitting me.

With each round of beatings, Choque revealed the distinct alcoves where he and his wife had hidden their earnings and savings: three thousand pesos (at that time worth USD 3000). Yet the terror had just begun. Unsatisfied with the sums Choque coughed up—for others had produced thousands more—the men found a clothes iron, and plugged it in.

Walking with Choque through his *quinta* two months later, Palomarz recounts how he repeatedly caressed his chest where the men had burned him. There were three *planchazos*—three horrible scars. Three times they had driven the red hot iron into his bare chest, searing his skin and burning through a heart tattoo he had drawn over his own. Choque had said that he screamed so hard he lost his voice—the pain so severe it even exhausted even his tears.

Yet when the *plancha* failed to produce more money, the thieves resorted to another horrific measure. Where Palomarz noted 5 snakebite-like marks on Choque's side, he replied:

Pelaron el cable de la plancha, y me pasaban corriente. Me estremecía...la electricidad me arqueaba el pecho.

They stripped the wire of the iron, and shocked me with the current. I shook...the electricity caused my back to arc.

With this makeshift "*picana*"¹¹⁰, they continued to torture Don Choque and beat Alberto, the children horrified and cowering. And where the thieves exhausted this measure, they wrapped a rope around Choque's neck, and strung him up.

En el último ahorcamiento...ahí, yo creo, me desmayé... o creo que me desmayé, no lo sé... Se me hizo tiniebla colorada... y me quedé quietito, como muerto, ¿vio? O me estaba muriendo, no sé... y me vi flotar.

In the last hanging...there, I think, I fainted... or thought I fainted, I don't

¹¹⁰ The *picana*, an instrument used to torture a victim by administering electric current, earned its fame in the Argentine military dictatorship (1976 – 1983).

know... Everything was a colored darkness... and I was still, as if dead, you see? Or I was dying, I don't know...and I saw myself floating.

Palomarz recounts how Choque saw himself floating above a lush, green field. It was split in two by a single, dark furrow—life was on one side, death on the other. And there he hovered, his fate suspended.

Two months later, Don Choque was still having nightmares. His family was living in fear and wondering if they would be better off back in Bolivia. Everything had changed. Holding back tears, Choque lamented how his relationship with his youngest son was no longer the same.

Me preocupa Fernando, mi hijo menor. Fernando estaba en la casa cuando nos pasó esto. El está muy mal. Está muy atemorizado, y ya se ha desmayado varias veces. Igual que yo, casi no duermo...ya no quiere salir conmigo, ir al mercado, al pueblo...El ha perdido la seguridad que sentía al lado de su padre.

I'm worried about Fernando, mi youngest son. Fernando was in the house when everything happened. He is in an awful state. He's been terrified, and he's been fainting. Like me he barely sleeps...he no longer wants to go out with me, to go to the Market, to town. He's lost the security he once felt next to his father.

Having suffered such hate, Choque was forced to speak out—not just for himself, but for all those that had suffered silently before him, and for all those who were too scared to speak for fear of retribution.

Esto que me pasó a mí, a muchos otros les pasó antes. Pero ellos se callan, siempre se callan. Somos muy callados, muy humildes, no nos sabemos defender. Somos...quedados.

All this that's happened to me, it's happened to others before. But they all keep quiet, they always remain silent. We're very inhibited, very humble, we don't know how to stand up. We're timid.

Reflecting back on better times, Choque told Palomarz that two years before, production was good; earnings were good. However, things have changed, and obviously not just because of the economic downturn.

Hoy está feo. Encima se vive con mucho temor y eso a uno le quita ánimo para trabajar. Ahora quiero trabajar distinto. No quiero más la quinta. No quiero producir la verdura, quiero comprarla ya producida y venderla en el mercado. No me gusta estar lejos del pueblo, quisiera vivir en la ciudad, cerca de donde hay más gente.

Today it's ugly. On top of everything else, one lives in fear, and that takes away from his desire to work. Now, I'd like to work differently. I don't want to work the fields any more. I want to buy produce that's been farmed by someone else and sell it in the Market. I don't like being far from town, I'd like to live in the city, where there are more people.

Ahora quiero trabajar distinto. “Now I'd like to work differently.” Though I don't believe Don Choque and his family ever left production, many who were robbed and beaten—or who simply feared such treatment—did. Some even returned to Bolivia.

Before the winter had ended, and the numerous cases had come to light, there were reports of being assaulted with chains or axes¹¹¹, reports of extortion through placing pistol and shotgun barrels in childrens' mouths¹¹², and of fallen compatriots. By the end of that season, two Bolivian *quinteros* (one in Pilar, and another in General Rodríguez) remained dead¹¹³. Just as troubling, and stemming from the draconian method of torture and extortion (i.e. the *picana*), that characterized a number of these cases, suspicion ran high that the thieves were not only organized, but somehow related to the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires (*la bonaerense*)¹¹⁴. Rumor had it that only ex-police, many of whom had found work in private security outfits, could be capable of such tactics. Moreover, there ran a parallel rumor that the attacks, despite their xenophobic method, had a deeper, economic motive. That is, many suspected that there was a campaign underfoot to scare Bolivians off lands, many of which were becoming increasingly valuable as the area became home to gated communities (*countries*) and weekend homes (*casas quintas*) for Buenos Aires' upper classes. Were this true, it was not a stretch for many to imagine vested interests contracting strong men to execute their plans. None of these

¹¹¹ June 1, 2000. “El caso de los quinteros bolivianos en Escobar: Lo torturaron con picana para robarle.” *Clarín*.

¹¹² August 19, 2000. “Nueva agresión a quinteros bolivianos” Laura Zommer. *La Nación*.

August 18, 2000. “Asaltan a dos familias bolivianas.” *Clarín*.

¹¹³ June 24, 2000. “Otro brutal ataque a quinteros bolivianos.” Hernán Capiello. *La Nación*.

¹¹⁴ June 28, 2000. “La justicia investiga a policías por los ataques a bolivianos: Los sospechosos tienen uniforme.” Cristian Alarcón. *Página/12*.

June 30, 2000. “Un testigo incriminó a policías bonaerenses.” Hernán Capiello. *La Nación*.

allegations was ever substantiated; however, Bolivians involved in them were intimidated and threatened by unknown actors¹¹⁵.

What was indisputable, however, was the trail of destruction (some lost their life savings¹¹⁶)—and blood. The CBE was called to action. Indeed, being that it was founded in part to stave off an earlier wave of depredations, the CBE already had experience with such matters, as well as institutionalized contacts with the Bolivian diplomatic mission in Buenos Aires. Moreover, the CBE's Market was itself a permanent reunion of *quinteros*. This helped promote the exchange and dissemination of information, backed by the idea that there was strength in numbers. Along with support from Bolivian diplomats in Buenos Aires—and with the intervention of former Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora—the CBE was able to secure a new security measure from the Government of the Province of Buenos Aires (specifically the Ministerio de Seguridad) to stem this violent tide. The initiative was called Grupo ENLACE, and consisted of a special police unit within the *Bonaerense* comprised of officers who were either Bolivian or sons of Bolivians, and who spoke Quechua. Their outfit was created to patrol the *quintas* principally in Zárate, Campana, Pilar, and Escobar, and to serve as a kind of first-response team. Just as important, the Grupo ENLACE maintained an office on-site at the CBE's complex to receive and process cases brought before them. With their common Bolivian heritage, competence in Quechua, and on-site attention, the Grupo ENLACE served a key intermediary between the *quinteros* (and the Bolivian community at large, *socios* or otherwise) and the *Bonaerense*. That Bolivians could appeal directly to them instead of to the common commissaries in Escobar and beyond—commissaries in which they reported a lack of attention, intimidation, and threats of deportation—was a great step in securing Bolivian human security in the area.

In time, however, the Grupo ENLACE lost both funding and its independent existence¹¹⁷, and the *quinteros* once again became dependent on the general *Bonaerense* for protection—the same police force that had been implicated (if only circumstantially) in the cases themselves.

¹¹⁵ July 4, 2000. “Ola de amenazas en el caso de los quinteros bolivianos: El terror viene por teléfono.” Cristian Alarcón. *Página/12*.

¹¹⁶ Sums of up to USD 35,000 were reported stolen (“Los quinteros eran extorsionados” Hernán Capiello. July 2, 2000. *La Nación*).

¹¹⁷ For discussions of Grupo ENLACE in the press, see: June 17, 2003. “Policías que hablan en quichua”. Pedro Lipcovich. *Página/12*. April 27, 2007 “Las manos en la tierra, los pies en el barro”. Verónica Gago. *Página/12*.

The attacks did not subside, peaking again in 2003¹¹⁸. We're already familiar with the murder of Ernesto Yanaje and Norberta Quispe in early 2007.

Argentina's Economic Crisis

We saw above how the violent depredations against the Bolivian *quinteros* forced many to abandon production in favor of the buying and re-selling of already farmed produce (*compraventa*). Here we inquire into whether and how the Argentine economic crisis affected these relations of production.

For most Bolivian *quinteros*, the effects the crisis had on their livelihood and capitalization strategies stemmed mostly from the devaluation of the Argentine *peso*. Let us recall that the *peso* had been pegged to the US Dollar back in 1992. This *uno-a-uno*, as it was called, remained in effect until the economic collapse of 2001. Yet the effects of this devaluation on economic standing and pursuits were uneven for the *quinteros*: they were a direct function of how much capital the *quinteros* had accumulated by the time of the devaluation. As we've seen above, these levels were themselves a function of how many years a particular family or group of producers had been accumulating in Argentina. Let us consider a few different scenarios.

For those that had already spent a significant number of years saving and capitalizing in Argentina, the economic crisis of 2001 essentially reinforced their levels of capital accumulation. That is, for those Bolivians who had arrived early in the 1970s and, through years of accumulated savings, bought land and/or trucks by the late 1990s, the economic crisis of 2001 had the effect of securing these assets valued in US Dollars. Why was this the case? Prior to the *uno-a-uno*, land and commercial trucks (many of them imported) had been valued in US Dollars because of rampant inflation (the latter being one of the principal reasons the *peso* was pegged to the dollar back in 1992). Thus, before the *uno-a-uno*, land and trucks were less accessible given that they were valued in what was a foreign and expensive currency. With the *uno-a-uno*, however, land and trucks became relatively inexpensive and more accessible. Bolivians who had reached significant levels of savings by this time took advantage of these values and capitalized; they purchased land and became independent *propietarios*, purchasing vehicles

¹¹⁸ Martes, 17 de junio de 2003. "Asalto y terror en la quinta" Pedro Lipcovich. *Página/12*.

where they could. With the devaluation of 2001, these assets remained valued in US Dollars (as they had previously), and thus became more valuable with relation to domestic goods and services valued in *pesos*.

Bolivians who had capitalized in the 1990s thus found themselves with valuable assets which could be liquidated or converted after 2001. Some land owners sold their lands (or parts of them) for dollars, which they used to invest in larger trucks and plug into emergent niches in *compra-venta*. Such decisions to leave production were often influenced by reduced profits given that seed and other inputs (*insumos*) also remained valued in dollars. Earnings from production, which once again came in *pesos* (and which followed back-breaking labor, agricultural risk, and now heightened security risk) became less attractive. Others, however, used their newfound position to make capital improvements in production itself, so as to better exploit markets. Where one had savings in dollars, these dollars could now go further in building greenhouses (*viveros*) with which to produce tomatoes or lettuce that would fetch a better market price, and thus offset the effects of devaluation. In the final analysis, those who had accumulated significant capital by the late 1990s stood to weather the crisis better—and with more options—than those who did not.

For those families that had accumulated less capital by the devaluation—i.e. often those who had immigrated to the green belt in the mid- to late 1980s—the devaluation of 2001 put land and vehicles (and hence progress itself) relatively out of reach. For not only were land and vehicles once again valued in dollars, *quinteros* who had immigrated relatively late had less savings overall. Worse yet, if these savings did not consist of US currency (i.e. if they were held in the form of Argentine *pesos*), their value obviously fell by a third, given that the *peso* fell to 30 cents on the dollar. Finally, since profits were no longer in dollar-equivalent *pesos*, the time required to accumulate sufficient savings to purchase land or vehicles was multiplied—once again—by a factor of three. Thus, not only were those lacking significant (and convertible) capital at the time of the devaluation forestalled in their capitalization strategies—and therefore limited in their livelihood strategies—, they also found themselves pinched by the costs of production. Land rents, seeds, and other inputs remained valued in US Dollars. Profits therefore shrunk. This was especially true if one had to compete against aesthetically pleasing produce cultivated in greenhouses.

The CBE's Market

The Market of the *Colectividad Boliviana* is a site of encounters and intersections in almost every sense imaginable. First and foremost it is a place where products grown on local, Bolivian-run *quintas* are concentrated and sold off to buyers. These range from leafy greens and tomatoes to cabbage and fennel. This activity combines with a redistributive traffic in foodstuffs—here mediated by Bolivian merchants—whose origins stretch from the corners of the Argentine Republic. Depending on the season, these products may include apples and pears from Rio Negro; corn, carrots, and squashes from Santa Fe; potatoes and onions from Santiago del Estero; lemons, oranges, and avocado from Tucumán; figs from Jujuy; tomatoes and red bell peppers from Corrientes; cassava from Misiones, and plums, melons, and grapes from San Juan and Mendoza. Yet the Market concentrates and redistributes products whose trajectories are also transnational: at different times throughout the year, pineapples from Bolivia and mangos from Brazil intersect with a steady influx of bananas cut in Ecuador, Brazil, and Paraguay.

There are many activities that go on in the Market, which operates from roughly 7pm to 7am every night except Saturday nights. The most active nights are Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. These nights (and early mornings which follow) are aptly called the *noches de venta*, for they are not only the times when puesteros stock their puestos to the limit, but when local buyers come out in droves to purchase the freshest produce for resale in their own shops (*verdulerías*).

On any given evening, vehicles of all shapes and sizes begin arriving to the market brimming with produce, both extra-regional and local. There are the long-range tractor trailer trucks that come from outlying regions beyond the *pampa*—Mendoza, Tucumán, Corrientes—and which stop off in Escobar to unload merely a part of their payload before continuing on to other markets. There are other trucks, a quarter the size, that come with cargo obtained in the Central Market of Buenos Aires, itself lying just a few kilometers southwest of Capital Federal en route to Ezeiza International Airport. Finally, a significant quantity of produce arrives from local growers (*quinteros*) in small pickups (*camionetas*)—or even in tractor pulled hitches by men in rubber boots if the *quinta* is close enough to the CBE.

The first to attend to these vehicles are the *changarines*, or freight handlers, who are hired by the *puesteros* whose orders these trucks (or tractors) contain. The *changarines*, most of whom are independent contractors of sorts, but who often survive from ongoing relationships with *puesteros*, get paid 15 cents for each crate they unload and stack in the latter's *puesto*. Indeed, a *changa* in Argentine Spanish is a singular, short task or job, making *changarines* those runners who make short work of unloading the produce. Yet this is no easy task: a truck coming from the orange groves of Buenos Aires will carry orders of 30kg-crates which number into the hundreds; a flat-bed truck coming from Santiago del Estero will carry similar-sized orders of 45kg-sacks of potatoes. Unloading these orders is back-breaking work, and the first things one notices about the *changarines* are their broad backs, oversized shoulders, and hands in which more muscle simply cannot fit. The work is also inherently dangerous: all too often, the order a *changarín* must unload is sandwiched in the middle of a truck's payload and, not being able to wait for the next *changarín* to pull the next *puestero*'s order, the former has to climb on top of the truck to pry crates off to pass down to a partner who, in a balancing act of his own, stands on his four-wheeled hand truck (*carrito*) to receive them. These hand trucks, often overloaded with 1.5 tons of produce, and needing two *changarines* to manage, are themselves a source of danger: when pushed over cracks in the asphalt, or up the ramps into the market, they roll on a foot, causing a 300lb stacks of crates to tip.

The activity described above is aptly termed the *descarga*—the unloading. At 11:15pm, and after considerable *mercadería* has been moved inside, one of the secretaries of the Market and CBE Administration announces from a PA system in the offices above that the *descarga* has officially ended, and that all *fleteros* and *quinteros* delivering produce must now remove their vehicles from the Market's docks. This is the moment when the local buyers, who have been lined up outside the Market's gates, erupt on the scene in a cloud of dust and diesel. Such begins the buying and the *carga*, or loading of their vehicles. These are most often pickup trucks (*camionetas*) with wooden boxes (*cajones*) built over the beds. The buyers begin by going around to the various *puestos* to eye the produce. They need to be discerning, as *puesteros* will rotate the produce from a previous night to the front, behind which they stack the current night's shipment. As produce shops sell everything from apples, peaches, and bananas to lettuce, cabbage, and potatoes, buyers will need to purchase from a few different *puestos*, each specializing in something different. When sales have been negotiated and paid for, the *puestero*

(or hired assistant) will set the order aside, giving the buyer an itemized receipt. Moving from *puesto* to *puesto*, and depending on his needs for that night, a buyer will accumulate a short stack of such receipts, which he then gives to his *changarín*. The *changarín*, who has many such ‘clients’, then takes his *carrito* and picks each order up, finally loading it all into the buyer’s pickup. As with the *descarga*, the *changarín* charges 15 cents for each crate he loads in the *carga*. On a good *noche de venta* in summer, when the market is in full force, an established (and hustling) *changarín* can manage 75, perhaps even 100, pesos between the *descarga* and the *carga*. Before all is said and done, this work usually lasts 10 hours, and often 12. If a *changarín* manages half of this the other three nights of the week, he can make \$1500 per month, a decent working class salary. However, this income does not last the year round. In the winter months when vegetables—and particularly fruits—are consumed less, a *changarín* may make only half of this, falling into the all too common category of ‘under-employed’ which characterizes life for many of the working class.

Types of Operations in the CBE’s Market:

Only Bolivians can be ‘*puesteros titulares*’ (i.e. hold usufruct rights to a *puesto* in exchange for rent to the *Colectividad*) and all *puestos* are operated by *paisanos*. Each *puesto*, or more commonly, each pair or set of conjoined *puestos* [hence ‘operation’ as the unit of analysis], is usually run by a family or set of *parientes*, however loosely conceived. The activity one sees in the *puestos* in the *Mercado* is usually the final stages of economic activities that begin, depending on the *puesto*, that morning (e.g. in the *Mercado Central*) or weeks or months before (e.g. in the plowing and sowing of fields, both near and distant). In other words, the preparations for and elaboration of what gets sold in the market are not seen in the market. Of the roughly 150 *puestos* in the *Mercado*¹¹⁹, I was able to identify seven (7) key types of operations during the course of my fieldwork in 2005-2007 (this is a representative sample vs. an exhaustive typology, as sometimes operations are heteroplex and mix modalities). These can be loosely characterized

¹¹⁹ See 51934 Fs. 18: In 2005, there are 156 *puestos* in the market; 73 of which are *produccion propia*. This would be 45%. By 2007 I estimated that only 40% were *productores*.

into two general kinds, the first being an outlet for producers, and the second, of increasing importance, involving the re-selling of purchased fruits or vegetables.

On the order of presentation: one cannot order these types by volume sold or profit made, for different modalities combine with different scales (themselves often a function of available capital in the form of land and/or trucks) to produce different volumes and profits. I thus begin with local producers to reflect the historical significance of this mode of production. Indeed local production is how the vast majority of operators in the Market made their living when it opened in 1995¹²⁰. As we'll see, this way of making a living has given much ground to the resale of purchased goods. *Compra-venta* now constitutes the majority of the operations (though only slightly), reaching roughly 55% by the end of my fieldwork in 2007, with around 40% still producing locally. As we'll see, the remaining 5% of the total, with which we'll conclude, consists of either rarer kinds of re-sale or non-horticultural activity.

Through the course of this presentation, the aforementioned principles of profit seeking (rational calculation), independence-seeking (eliminate any intermediary, whether this be a *fletero*, or even the Mercado Central), and diversification or cornering the market to satisfy and exploit niches will be revealed. Much of this will also help to situate the CBE's Market in larger networks of regional and transnational trade as it grows to satisfy an increasing local demand.

Type 1: Local Producers

The first kind of puesto in the Market is held by local producers who use it to sell what they grow on their own *quintas*, whether they be *propietarios* or *arrendatarios*. This is the most traditional kind of operation; for as the common saying goes: "name one Bolivian that did not begin in the quinta". It is thus this type which comprised the vast bulk of operations in the Market when it opened in 1995. Indeed, the CBE created the Market precisely to serve these producers, given that they had been selling on roadsides and at the mercy of the elements, if not the local police. As we'll see shortly, by the time my fieldwork had ended in 2007, the incidence of this kind of operation had declined to about 40% of the total, giving much ground to the buying and re-selling of already farmed produce (*compra-venta*).

¹²⁰ Indeed, the common expression is: "tell me who did not begin in the quinta?"

Despite typically occupying just one puesto on the Market floor, operations of this type of production are themselves varied, for the producers may be small or large, and unsophisticated or specialized. A small producer is one whose *quinta* consists of only a few hectares (e.g. 3-4ha). Because a *quintero*'s family can typically cover all the labor requirements, small producers usually do not employ *medianeros*, though a day-laborer (*jornalero*) may work with the family. (This was the case with Don Choque, who as we saw above, was an *arrendatario* who employed Alberto as a *jornalero*). Depending on their own levels of capitalization, producers of this size may or may not own a tractor, and often do not cultivate in greenhouses. They will, however, often have a small pickup truck (*camioneta*) with a wooden box constructed over the bed (*cajón*) with which to get their produce to Market. Where a *quinta* is close to the Market, however, such a *camioneta* may not be necessary, as produce may be brought directly in by a tractor on a hitch.

On the other end of the spectrum, a large *quinta* may be as big as 10 or 15 hectares (or perhaps even larger), and will often utilize *medianeros*. Depending on what is cultivated, greenhouses or other kinds of technologies may be employed as well. *Quinteros* with production on this magnitude may even maintain puestos in other local markets (e.g. in Pilar). Operations of this size will almost always have their own tractor and a larger truck, perhaps even one reaching a 10-ton capacity to handle the greater volumes. Teodoro Cahuana's strawberry operation in Pilar is a prime example of such a *quinta* and level of capitalization. Being not only a political visionary, but an economic one as well, Cahuana began importing selectively-bred, Californian strawberry plants to replace the local, native variety traditionally grown in the area. These *plantines*, and the technologies required to make them bear fruit, yielded berries twice as big as the native variety, and earned a handsome price on the Market. Unlike smaller operations, whose produce was typically less expensive, everyday vegetables, Cahuana's strawberry farm was truly a specialized operation. Because of the desirability of these berries, and the large volumes his *quinta* produced, Cahuana was able to meet high demand both in Escobar and Pilar¹²¹, and often beyond. (Note that for Cahuana, Pilar's market was also preferable to Escobar's, being that his political exile entailed limitations on his ability to sell his strawberries in Escobar, i.e. in the Colectividad he founded.)

¹²¹ For a discussion of the Colectividad Boliviana de Pilar, whose Cooperative Market opened in 2001, see (Feito 2010, 2005)

Though operations on either end of this spectrum typically occupy just one puesto, and while they both sell only to buyers (versus to other puesteros for resale), the market niche exploited, the volumes sold, and the incomes generated from these have differed greatly.

Type2: Non-local Producers

There is a related, but uncommon, kind of puesto in the Market which is also held by producers, but which evinces crucial differences with regard to the cases above. During the time of my research there was only one such operation in the Market: the Posadas Brothers from Tarija, who specialize in tomatoes and red bell peppers. The Poncelas Brothers is an extended family-run operation whose *quintas* are located in Corrientes and Jujuy, in the far north of Argentina. It thus cannot qualify as a local producer¹²². Their operation is also much larger—boasting of at least a few dozen hectares—and Escobar is not the only, or even principal, destination for their produce¹²³. Indeed, the Poncelas Brothers service markets like the CBE's at various points in the *conurbano* from their own, private distribution hub located south of Buenos Aires, in La Plata. Their operation is thus both completely independent and 'vertically integrated': from their own *quintas*, the Poncelas Brothers ship their produce on their own 30-ton trailer trucks to their own distribution point, through which their own *parientes*, themselves positioned at various Bolivian markets, sell directly to buyers. In other words, the Poncelas Brothers make profit at every stage of the operation. Being land owners, they do not pay land rents; being truck owners, they do not pay for transport. Moreover, being Bolivian, they are able to hold puestos in the CBE's and other Bolivian markets and sell directly to the local *verduleros*. Were this not the case, they would have to sell their produce to the redistributive middle-men operating in Buenos Aires' Central Market, and thus forego this last leg of profit. Not surprisingly, they are known to be a

¹²² There is also a seasonal dimension to their operation. Because of the harsher climate in the winter months in Buenos Aires, tomatoes and red bell peppers are typically imported from the warmer, northern regions of the country. Operations like the Poncelas Brother thus do better during these key times than they do the rest of the year, when they are competing with locally grown produce. For their part, local producers have begun to compete with these imports in winter given their adoption of greenhouse farming. However, greenhouse production is more extensive south of Buenos Aires (in La Plata) than it is in the north of the green belt.

¹²³ Because they are not 'from Escobar'—or even 'in Escobar' aside from the few they have running the puesto in the CBE's Market—they are not interested in the political strife of the CBE itself. Indeed, their being Tarijeño already has them somewhat excluded from the fighting between the Potosinos.

very ‘rich’ operation, and their independence, vertical integration, and profit margins have earned them great respect. However, being that they are Tarijeños and not ‘from’ Escobar, they are not envied as much as other operations with whom one (e.g. from Potosí) shares a common past and common *lucha*.

Type 3: Sellers for Local Producers

We have seen that the first two types of market operations are run by producers themselves. We have also mentioned that the incidence of production has declined greatly as many *quinteros* turn toward the buying and re-selling of already farmed produce. Before turning to this *compra-venta*, let us look at a third kind of operation in which a local producer, who does not have the ability to market his own produce, contracts a *socio* of the CBE to do it for him. Compared to selling one’s own produce and to *compra-venta*, this kind of operation has a lower incidence, and numbers just a few in the entire Market. It typically occurs when producers are smaller-scale *propietarios* or *arrendatarios* and work the *quintas* themselves—i.e. without *medianeros*. Were these operations larger such that the producer could contract *medianeros*, they would have at least part of their families available to market the produce. However, because the entire family must labor the *quinta* themselves, they must pay a *socio* in the CBE to market their produce for them. In return, the puestero retains a share of the profits, typically 15 or 20%. Such an arrangement is also found when the producer is Argentine, and the closest market is a Bolivian market; because only Bolivians can be *socios* of these institutions, only they can rent a puesto, requiring the *criollo* to contract one of them. Thus, in this kind of operation, the puestero is an intermediary (and one often unrelated to the producer) that pays the fee for operating the puesto and makes his living from the percentage of profit he and the producer have agreed upon; in contrast to the *compra-venta* we’ll see shortly, the puestero here does not buy the producer’s produce. What is not sold is either returned to the producer (often because the puesto is not rented each night, but just on the *noches de venta*) or ultimately discarded.

While a necessary arrangement, this kind of operation is typically undesirable for both the producer and the puestero. For the producer, control over the most crucial part of the productive process is relinquished, simultaneously opening up the possibility that the puestero

will under-report the sale price of each crate and keep a greater percentage of the profits. For the puestero, while a low-risk operation in that he does not have to purchase produce that might not sell, this kind of arrangement is nevertheless a low-income one. Because the *quintas* are small, volumes are low. Moreover, small *quintas* are typically those in which capital investments (like greenhouses) have not yet been made. The produce may therefore be of lower quality or in less demand, making trade in it less lucrative relative to other, higher demand products. Moreover, because the puestero typically lacks a *camioneta* with which to provide the *flete*, he stands to make profit only through the last leg of the production process. Neither he, nor the producer, is as independent as each would like.

Type 4: Re-Sellers that Engage the Central Market

As already mentioned, there are great number of Bolivian *quinteros* in and around Escobar who have left production and turned to the buying and re-selling of already farmed produce. Whether because of the violence, because their capitalization has enabled it, or simply because *compra-venta* is less risky, less back-breaking, and enables a more urban (and perhaps more esteemed) lifestyle, this kind of operation has provided a new domain for competition and the generation of wealth and status.

Most of the puesteros (as they are no longer *quinteros*) that have turned to *compra-venta* do so by engaging the Central Market of Buenos Aires. The Central Market is the largest concentrating market of its kind in the Argentine Republic, and lies a few kilometers southwest of Buenos Aires en route to the Ezeiza International Airport, some 1.5 to 2 hours haul from Escobar. The Central Market is where producers from all corners of the Republic send their produce to be sold off to the smaller concentrating markets in the Capital and its *conurbano*, if not to those local *verduleros* who are able to access it directly. Most of the operations in the Central Market are run by the producers themselves—much in the same way the Poncelas Brothers run their operation in the CBE's Market, just on a larger scale.

The move to *compra-venta* is typically facilitated by the acquisition of a vehicle with which to travel to the Central Market, make the purchases¹²⁴, and then transport the goods back to Escobar. Having a vehicle, however, is not always necessary, as some smaller-scale operators may hitch a ride to the Central Market to make their purchases, and then ride back to Escobar with the *fletero* they have contracted for transport. The goal for most—if not all—in *compra-venta* is to become fully independent, and thus to reap profits in all stages of the commerce. That is, their goal is to acquire a truck big enough (and reliable enough) to provision a lucrative operation of 2 or 3 conjoined puestos in the CBE's Market, and thus eliminate any dependence on a *fletero* whose services cut into profit margins. The kind of truck that enables this level of commerce, and thus that which most aspire to have, is one with at least a 5-ton capacity (preferably one with a 10-ton capacity), and thus able to handle the approximately 500 crates of produce required to restock a sizable *compra-venta* operation. Such a truck constitutes a significant upgrade from the typical *camioneta* with the wooden *cajón* that has traditionally characterized aspiring Bolivian families in the horticultural sector.

While the goal of most in *compra-venta* is to become independent, the relationships these puesteros maintain with *fleteros* are nevertheless interesting and worthy of note. Indeed, because *fleteros* are often themselves *comerciantes* who serve clients of their own at some distance from the CBE's Market, a look at such relationships helps us see the multiple and complex arms of the supply chains integrating this regional market system—i.e. that link the Central Market (and its own extra regional connections) to the smaller redistributive markets in the *conurbano* like the CBE.

Being that I worked in a puesto dedicated to *compra-venta*, and one which depended upon the services of a *fletero*, I was able to see these relationships up close. From October 2005 until the end of April 2006, I earned my daily keep unloading trucks and managing inventory for Betty, the head of a prominent fruit operation. Betty (who was both from a rural hamlet in Potosí and Jujuy) and her husband Pastor (from Yura) had formerly been *quinteros*. Some years prior, Pastor was robbed and beaten on their *quinta*, and the couple (having two small children) decided to sell their 3 hectares to jumpstart an operation in *compra-venta*. Betty's operation was

¹²⁴ Note that I only use the word “orders” for the acquisition of goods *por encargo* (see below). Where this is not the case (as with Betty and Pereyra), I use the word “purchases”.

a diverse one: she bought and re-sold a range of fruit (e.g. bananas, oranges, apples, pears, peaches, and plums)—most of which was not grown locally.

Betty got approximately one half of the fruit she sold from vendors in the Central Market. These vendors were themselves the producers—i.e. apple growers from Rio Negro, or peach, plum, or apricot growers from San Juan or Mendoza. Betty would travel to the Central Market three mornings a week in the family *camioneta* (which I would often have to help jumpstart in the *estacionamiento*, and whose bumper was held on with wire). There she would specify and pay for her purchases with which to stock her own puesto in the CBE's Market for the *noches de venta* (Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday). While not having to outsource the *changarin's* fee by taking Wilson, her own nephew (and my cohort) to load the purchases, the goods nevertheless had to be loaded onto another vehicle that was not their own. Indeed, the family *camioneta* was both too small and too unreliable.

That vehicle was an old, hollowed-out school bus owned by Don Pereyra, their *fletero*. Don Pereyra was a middle-aged Argentine man who lived in Boulogne, some 30 km southeast of Escobar along the Panamerican Highway. Pereyra travels to the Central Market on the afternoons before the *noches de venta* to receive the purchases Betty made that morning, which usually ranged from 300 to 400 *bultos*. While there, he also receives a smaller set of goods (usually of around 100 *bultos*) for the puestera opposite Betty who, like Betty, has also traveled to the Central to make her own purchases for resale in the CBE's Market. In contrast to Betty's operation, which totaled 3 puestos, this puestera's operation was smaller-scale: it consisted of just one puesto.

For his services as a *fletero*, Pereyra probably earned around \$1200 pesos a month. That is, if Pereyra earned 40 cents/crate, and transported 400 crates three times a week (corresponding to the *noches de venta*), Pereyra would gross \$480 pesos a week. Where fuel costs in Argentina are expensive, and being that Pereyra would have to travel to the Central Market before making the trip back up to Escobar—a trip which in itself might take 2 hours—Pereyra would net some \$300 pesos a week. Yet Pereyra was not just a *fletero*. He was himself a *comerciante* who owned his own *verdulería* in Boulogne. Indeed, while at the Central Market, Pereyra has done more than simply receive Betty's and her neighboring puestera's purchases. He has also loaded up his school bus with certain fruits he has purchased for resale in his own *verdulería*. Yet what about vegetables? Does Pereyra not also sell them in his *verdulería*? Indeed, he does—and

while Wilson and I unload Betty's goods back in the CBE's Market, Pereyra goes around to his preferred vegetable puestos and buys the leafy greens directly from Escobar's local producers. Utilizing a different *changan* (being that Wilson and I have moved on to unloading other trucks, which I discuss below) Pereyra has these green leafies loaded onto the bus to join the fruits he bought from the Central Market.

For Pereyra, buying the greens in Escobar has advantages over buying them in the Central Market. First off, they are often cheaper, as many arrive to Escobar on a hitch from adjacent *quintas*. Being so, they are often fresher, having come from these *quintas* that very day. And finally, he only has to transport them one leg (i.e. from Escobar to Boulogne), versus two (i.e. from the Central Market to Escobar to Boulogne). This not only saves on the costs of fuel, but allows him that room in his truck on the front leg to dedicate to shipping goods for Betty and her neighbor, and thus to make profit on that transport service. Yet Pereyra's operation is, like we'll see shortly for Betty's, itself complex: Pereyra's purchases are not simply destined for consumers in his own *verdulería*: his ability to make this commercial 'round' between Boulogne, the Central Market, and the CBE's Market, which is itself contingent on his having a big enough vehicle (even though it is an old school bus!), allows him to provision other *verdulerías* in Boulogne who haven't the resources or vehicle to procure their own fruits and vegetables. And he does just this, earning profit on both the resale of the *bultos* he purchases in the Central and in Escobar—and on their transport.

Yet as mentioned above, Betty only got half of her produce from the Central Market and by working with Don Pereyra. She procured the remaining half from another two purveyors: bananas from a Yureño operation based in the CBE, which I discuss below, and citrus from the Argentine Don Camarasa. Camarasa would come in from San Pedro, a principal citrus growing region of the Province lying some 100km northwest of Escobar, and in the direction of Rosario. In his old, 5-ton truck, he would bring Betty anywhere from 100 to 200 crates of fruit per *noche de venta*, depending on the demand and the season. Camarasa, however, was not a producer. Nor was he—like Pereyra—a *fletero* for sales Betty had herself orchestrated. Rather, he was a true middle man. On the front end of his operation, Camarasa would purchase oranges and lemons (and sometimes peaches) directly from San Pedro's growers and deliver them to Betty for a fee—or *por encargo*. This kind of arrangement is not *compra-venta*, for Camarasa was not

re-selling the citrus to any potential buyer, with the chance that a buyer would haggle the price or that some would be left over. Rather, Betty was a set client (indeed she was his only client) who requested a prearranged number of crates based upon a predetermined price. She had to take the entire number she asked for. In theory, the only room she had to negotiate was with what amounted to Camarasa's acquisition fee—being that, once again in theory, Camarasa was honest with her about the cost of the citrus itself. It was here that Camarasa had some wiggle room. This arrangement was also advantageous for Camarasa in that he assumed little risk: because everything was prearranged, there was no speculation on his part; all the capital he fronted for the purchase was guaranteed to be reimbursed by Betty who, upon receiving her order, would compensate him for everything. As for Betty, while she would ideally want to access the growers *directly* so as not to have to secure the goods *por encargo*, she did not have the truck or the manpower to do so. And even while this method ate into her ideal profit margins, she was still able to get her citrus more cheaply from Camarasa than through the Central Market.

When Betty would begin to turn her profit on her order later that night, Camarasa's operation had only half-begun. Once Wilson and I had unloaded Betty's order from his truck, Camarasa—here *like* Pereyra—would fill it back up with various greens (and other fruits) purchased from puesteros in the CBE. Camarasa, however, did not own his own *verdulería*, as Pereyra did. Rather, he serviced *verdulerías*—once again *por encargo*—provisioning them with a range of fruits and vegetables that were harder to acquire in San Pedro. Indeed, because of puesteras like Betty, the CBE's Market was one step away from the Central Market where goods from the distant corners of the Republic were sold. Camarasa was thus able to provide a range of clients in San Pedro with a range of goods (for example grapes and apples) that could earn him a nice profit. Crucially, two of Betty's key wares were grapes and apples, which she could sell to him, sometimes at a slightly better price than to the public. Not only did this solidify their relationship, which was mutually beneficial, it earned her some wiggle room in her acquisition of citrus. All the same, negotiations, sometimes even bitter ones, were the norm.

Before turning to the banana trade through which Betty would acquire the last quarter of her produce, and through which we'll introduce another kind of operation in the CBE's Market, it is worth noting the key role that trucks play generally in *compra-venta*—and thus profits. As we've seen, the acquisition of a truck—itself the most crucial kind of capital in *compra-venta*—allows one to exploit more links on the supply chain separating producers from local consumers,

and thus increase profits. Indeed, while I was in the final stages of my fieldwork, Betty and her husband had reached the point where their savings—accumulated first through work in the *quintas*, and then through *compra-venta*—were enough to purchase a 10-ton Scania truck.

Though I never had the pleasure of unloading it, for I had left working for Betty, I knew what the truck meant for Betty and her husband's operation. I knew that Don Pereyra would have to find another up-and-coming puestero with whom to work, for Betty no longer needed his *flete* to get her purchases from the Central Market back to Escobar. I knew that, because of this, Betty's profit margins—and monthly income—would see the immediate jump; those \$1200 pesos per month that she paid to Pereyra would now be her own. Betty's truck also meant that she could now compete with Pereyra (and any other *fletero*) in offering such services. Indeed, she would not only take over the *flete* on her neighbor's purchases (which Pereyra had formerly supplied), but still have enough room in her truck for another client—one that might prefer working with her, being that she was a *paisana*, rather than with Pereyra, who was Argentine. Finally, being that Betty traveled to the Central Market only three times per week, the truck would be available on the off days for other uses. Were Betty able to acquire more labor, she could conceivably use the truck to access the citrus growers of San Pedro directly, and thus eliminate her dependence on Camarasa as well. Not only could she increase her profit margins on this facet of her commerce, she would also be in a position to take over the service Camarasa had provided her. That is, she could provide other puesteros in the CBE's Market with citrus *por encargo*.

For those in *compra-venta* then, the purchase of a truck results not just in better profit margins on one's own sales, it enables diversification into remunerated activities like transport or *encargo* that offered greater security. In this way, the acquisition of a truck allowed one to engage in a *range* of livelihood strategies that best fit their needs and balanced risks. Yet this was not all that the acquisition of a truck provided. The freedom to choose *how* one would engage the market, and the *independence* in doing so, conferred special status. Indeed, freedom and independence were themselves highly sought-after achievements—they too were the stuff of progress. It is no wonder then that puesteros with lucrative and independent operations became the envy of those still in the *lucha*.

Type 5: Re-Sellers that Access Sources or Importers Directly

We have just seen how Betty's new truck positioned her to pursue an *added level* of commerce beyond the sale of fruits to local *verduleros*. That is, we saw how, because of her truck, she might now access a source directly and provision *other puestos* with a product *por encargo*. However, Betty's operation was firmly grounded in *compra-venta*, and the bulk of her business depended on the Central Market. Were she to keep her present clientele, this could not change. Moreover, being a small operation, she lacked the manpower to begin exploiting any source any time soon. Yet having looked the evolution of Betty's position, we can now pose a number of questions: Are there operations in the CBE's Market that specialize in securing a product for other puestos in addition to their own sales in it? What kind of capital is needed for such a structurally superior level of commerce? And what are the advantages or implications of such an operation? To answer these questions, let us examine how the CBE's banana trade currently works in the hands of its pioneering magnates, the Anaya and Quelka families. Both of these families are from Yura and, being intermarried, comprise a Yureño block.

The bananas that are consumed in Buenos Aires all arrive from Ecuador and Brazil, and to a lesser extent, from Paraguay, Bolivia, and the northern Argentine province of Salta. Most are concentrated by an importer in Rosario, a major Argentine city lying some 250km (or 3 hours haul) north of Escobar along the Panamerican Highway. Nazario Anaya has been able to insert himself into the regional sale and distribution of bananas because he owns a long range cargo truck. This truck and its accompanying trailer (*acoplado*) had a combined payload of 30,000 kilos, meaning that his operation could transport up to 1,200 crates of bananas at a time (enough to fill their 3 puestos to the brim). A truck this size is a rarity among puesteros in the CBE (though 30 ton trucks belonging to large, non-local producers will pass through on their way elsewhere), and only one other operator, the grape magnate Eusebio Huari, has such a truck.

Anaya's truck allows him to do three things. First, it allows his operation more profits on their own sale of bananas to local *verduleros*. Because he can travel to the importer directly, he can circumvent the Central Market, and thus purchase the bananas at their lowest available cost. This eliminates the commission that the Central Market's re-sellers would otherwise take. Moreover, because of his truck, he also eliminates the costs of having some other entity transport

the goods back to Escobar. Both of these allow the Anaya/Quelka operation to maximize their margins on direct sales.

Second, his truck and its large payload allow him to provision other puesteros with bananas *por encargo*, and thus diversify his operation in such a way as to mitigate risk and ensure a steady stream of profits. Although he could likely sell his entire payload directly to the *verduleros*, which would bring him the greatest profit per crate, such profits would be offset by having to operate and pay for multiple puestos, and by having to assume the natural risk involved in sales itself. Calculating these costs of opportunity, Anaya chooses to designate roughly half of his payload to provision other puesteros for roughly the same cost they would incur in the Central Market, including the sum most would have to pay to contract a *fleteiro* to ship the produce back up to Escobar. As mentioned above, this is precisely how and at what cost Betty acquires her bananas. Though all of this allows Anaya's clients to reap the last leg of profit he foregoes, it allows him to avoid having to manage additional puestos in which potentially unsold and ripening bananas could accumulate. Moreover, because he is filling other puestero's predetermined orders, he ensures his truck will be empty and his bank account full after each trip.

Third, his truck enables him to corner the banana market by creating dependency and foreclosing potential competition. Because he, and only he, can obtain bananas from the importer, he has the ability to sell them cheaper than any potential competitor who would have to work through the Central Market, where they cost more. This, combined with the sheer scale of his operation, and hence reserve of capital with which he works, allows him the power to undersell any potential competitor to the point where they would fold or be forced to place their business through him. Given these tactics, Anaya has been able to channel all the banana business through his own operation. Moreover, because he controls the entire trade and satisfies all of the demand, even as it expands, he is able to fix prices—not just the pre-arranged prices through which he provisions other puesteros, but the retail price they must offer to the *verduleros* for whom it is not practical to access bananas elsewhere. Thus, calculations and adjustments notwithstanding, Anaya has created a monopoly through which he and, to a significant extent, the puesteros he supplies, enjoy steady, sizable profits. Because the trade is so lucrative, participation in it is by invitation only. Betty stood to receive the benefits of inclusion here because her husband Pastor is a *pariente* from Yura.

Though entrepreneurial savvy is not to be underestimated in Anaya's direct engagement of the importer, the enabling factor in his banana republic (however problematic it is for fair market practices) is his unmatched capital in the form of a 30 ton truck. Such a truck has also enabled Eusebio Huari the ability to corner the grape market and develop a similar clientele of puesteros (Betty once again being among them). None of this, however, has gone over without raising eyebrows. The most common question is: "If everybody began in the *quinta*, and we've all worked hard, how can it be that some have so much more?" Indeed, some speculate that Nazario Anaya's father, Heitor (or "*El Sapo*" as he is known), had a hand in the Yureños' capitalization, being that he worked as the CBE's treasurer for a number of years. That is, many suggest coyly that if they ran the CBE they too would have a bigger truck. It angers many that such benefits are not shared among the *socios*, unless by clientelism—especially in an entity of the public good like the CBE.

Type 6: Re-sellers Who Intercept Non-Local Producers En Route to the Central Market

There is a final type of *compra-venta* in the Market that is different from both the Quelka/Anaya-run banana trade and Betty's engagement with the Central Market. It is performed without trucks and by puesteros who purchase goods (for resale) from distant producers by intercepting them en route to the Central Market. This final type of operation, in which puesteros become designated buyers, or *consignatarios*, characterizes much of the potato, onion, and carrot commerce in the Market.

Potatoes, onions, and carrots—like bananas—are in high demand and figure heavily into the Argentine diet. Puesteros in the CBE's Market used to acquire them through the Central Market in classic *compra-venta* fashion. This is because these products (like apples or grapes) cannot be grown in the green belt given its soils and climate—conditions which, as we've seen, are better suited for growing green leafy vegetables. For this reason, potatoes and carrots are typically imported from the provinces of Santiago del Estero, Córdoba, and San Luís—all of which lie north of Escobar. And while onions are widely cultivated in southern Buenos Aires and the neighboring Rio Negro, they are just as easily imported from these same north-lying

provinces¹²⁵. For the puesteros plugged into this commerce, it took them little time to realize that Escobar sat on the way to the Central Market. Indeed, the CBE's Market lay along the Panamerican Highway that connected these northerly producers with their final destination.

Having already bought from these non-local producers in the Central Market, the puesteros simply negotiated with them to have their trucks unload pre-determined quantities of product en route to the Central Market. This arrangement was advantageous to both the distant producers and the puesteros. For the puesteros, they could purchase the goods for at least the same price as they would pay in the Central Market, if not at a lower price. Indeed, because they requested set quantities (and often significant volumes) of produce, and because these quantities were locked in, they could often negotiate a discount. Moreover, because the produce came to them, they did not need to make the trip to acquire it. As we've seen, the trip to the Central Market is both long (sometimes reaching 4 hours round-trip) and expensive—an expense that cuts into profit margins. Finally, whatever trucks these puesteros had previously dedicated to *compra-venta* in these products could now be used for securing others. Indeed, they might still travel to the Central Market, but now come back with fruit. Though I do not know this, there is even the chance that the 30-ton trailer truck that Nicolás Anaya uses for his banana trade with the Quelka family was freed up precisely through this shift to intercepting the producers.

For the producer, this arrangement was advantageous because the quantities requested by the puesteros were predetermined. That is, the producer was guaranteed to sell that entire quantity of produce (that might otherwise accumulate unsold in his puesto)—and at an agreed-upon price that could not subsequently be negotiated. In horticultural sales, where markets can fluctuate and one can be undersold, such a “sure thing” secured him of certain risk. Moreover, having unloaded that quantity of freight in the CBE's Market, the producer's truck would be that much lighter on the final leg between Escobar and the Central Market. This would save him on fuel costs. Finally, once in the Central Market, the producer would not need to rent, stock and staff a puesto he would otherwise need to sell this produce to buyers there. He would thus save here as well.

During the time of my fieldwork, all of the potato and onion commerce ran through *El Sapo*. Indeed, being the pioneering and ultimately chief *consignatario*, he—like his son and the Quelka family in the banana trade—managed all the supply. Similar to their operation, *El Sapo*

¹²⁵ Onions are also brought in from San Juan and Mendoza, which lie west of Escobar.

was able to set prices and, though the sheer volumes in which he worked, out-leverage any potential competition. His power, however, was also political: because *El Sapo* had been the treasurer of the CBE for a number of years, and controlled many levers in what critics called the “usurpation”, most would not think to step on his toes either commercially or politically. Unlike the banana trade, however, (and so far as I know), *El Sapo* did not provision any other puesto with potatoes or onions *por encargo*. Though he could have charged independent operators a fee for securing these products (interestingly, his capital here was not a truck but rather his connection with the producers), it was simply more profitable to leave them out. Indeed, supplying others *por encargo* here was not terribly advantageous. As we saw with the banana trade, one of the benefits of provisioning others was to unload quantities of fruit that might otherwise ripen in one’s own puesto if not immediately sold. In the banana trade, although the last leg of profit was foregone, the suppliers were free from the risk inherent in the final stage of commercialization.

Potatoes and onions, however, are not a sensitive product. If unsold, they can be kept in one’s own puesto for days without losing their value. Taking advantage of this, *El Sapo* preferred to sell all his produce to local *verduleros* directly, and thus extract the greatest profits. Interestingly enough, because his son was running bananas, he did not have enough labor to run his gamut of puestos, and thus needed to employ others. On his right hand was Eneas Huari, the younger brother of the grape magnate, Eusebio Huari. Huari was also, as critics claimed, the key architect of the CBE’s “usurpation”. I do not know how *El Sapo* compensated Eneas for running two of his highest selling potato and onion puestos. Whatever the means, the appointment itself was highly reflective of the alliance between *El Sapo* and Eusebio Huari, and solidified in the minds of all just who ran the CBE’s Market, and the CBE itself. On *El Sapo*’s left hand was Francisca, who ran another key puesto for him. Francisca was another pragmatic choice. She was a Pancocheña, and unarguably the most loquacious and open (*abierta*) of them all¹²⁶. She was a perfect way to connect with the great numbers of Pancocheños in the Market, who had always comprised its majority group. Indeed, by naming her to his operation, *El Sapo*—here as patron—made her a client, who not only depended on him for her income, but through whom he

¹²⁶ The Pancocheños, more than other Potosinos (e.g. the Yureños and Saropalkeños), were known by these groups to be “cohibidos”. Moreover, their rate of monolingualism in Quechua was historically higher than either of these other pueblos, who tended to migrate more. Francisca grew up speaking Quechua, but having come to Escobar relatively young, also mastered Argentine codes of speech, dress, and manner as well.

could run good public relations with the Pancocheños. Not surprisingly, Francisca came to play a key role in the “usurped” CBE. Not only did she and her friend Yamila—who was *El Sapo*’s niece—come to collect the daily operating quotas from the puesteros, Francisca also came to represent “the socios” to both themselves and to the IGJ during its intervention. This no doubt ‘incorporated’—though perhaps only on a symbolic level—the Pancocheños in the politics of the CBE.

In these ways, *El Sapo* used his economic capital to generate political capital; not only had he consolidated relations among all Yureños by facilitating the truck with which his son and the Quelkas ran their banana trade, he also came to solidify relations first with Eusebio Huari (the alleged architect of the “usurpation”) by appointing his brother Eneas to help run his potato and onion puestos, and second with Francisca, who was a natural representative of the Pancocheños. In this way, Anaya sought to “suture” up the Market’s operators into a block of *socios* that saw the CBE as an economic enterprise upon which their livelihoods—and progress—depended, rather than as a not-for-profit entity of the public good, as it was originally founded to be.

Type 7: Concessionaires

All of the operations enumerated above depend upon a puesto to reach their broad clientele, whether it be local *verduleros* or other puesteros—or both. Were it not for the Market—i.e. the sum total of these puestos, and the supply they collectively concentrate—it would be impossible for individual operators to reach such numbers of clients, and thus earn such levels of profit. In other words, it is only through the ‘communal’ property (*patrimonio*) of the CBE that these operators enjoy such success.

Yet not all who earn a living on the premises do so by renting a puesto in the Market. There are two other operations that generate incomes for families outside the Market. These are food preparation operations, and they depend upon two adjacent CBE facilities—the restaurant (*comedor*) and grill (*parrilla*). As concessionaires (*concesionarios*), the families that run them pay the CBE a yearly rent. Whatever profits they make on their *picantes de pollo* and *choripanes* are of course their own. During my fieldwork, both were buzzing businesses with

dozens of hungry and thirsty clients, from *changarínes* and truckers to residents from the barrio looking for some late night socialization.

Indeed, because the CBE's Market attracts hundreds of vendors, buyers, and transporters daily, these operations have become highly lucrative, and highly coveted. Though these concessions are supposed to be awarded through an impartial lottery, rumors have run high about how a particular family, because of their connections or clout, ended up with one or the other. This was the case during my fieldwork, when a prominent Potosino family earned the restaurant's concession.

Conclusion

The argument I will make in the next Chapter is that the CBE had everything to do with the socially divisive envy one finds among Bolivians in Escobar. Indeed, I believe Juansi is largely—though not entirely—correct in his estimation that “*todo este orgullo, toda esta arrogancia, toda esta envidia—todo entra ahora; todo viene con la Colectividad.*” Much of this is because, as we've just seen in this chapter, the CBE's Market provides a framework for the accumulation and deployment of capital that indexes, if not constitutes, the progress over which envy (and pride) are expressed. Indeed, as I have begun to show, the CBE's Market has sharpened a proliferating envy complex by (1) concentrating economic activity, (2) accelerating differentiation, (3) making productivity and progress public, and (4) fueling competition. I will continue to show how the CBE—and its usurpation—does this over the next two chapters.

Yet the CBE is not the original source of envy. As we've already seen, and will continue to see, envy and related antagonisms existed up in the highlands of Potosí. What I'll argue more specifically in the next chapter is that envy 'exploded' in Escobar as a function of larger changes wrought through the immigration—changes that the CBE itself shaped, if not helped produce. Thus, to fully understand the role the CBE had in the production of envy—and thus the extent to which the CBE created the conditions and relationships that compromised its own mission and brought about its own downfall (both of which I'll discuss in Chapter 8)—we need to pull back from the CBE, and view the larger set of changes Bolivians experienced as a function of their

immigration to Escobar. That is, we need to see how the CBE and its Market activity are nested within larger frames and movements, such that we can properly contextualize the envy-generating capital the CBE's Market helped create. Thus the discussion I'll take up in the next chapter concerns how, through their immigration and its entailments, Bolivians experienced a range of changes: changes in the frames and rationales of production (changes that are themselves linked to ideas of what constituted 'home'); changes in the limits on accumulation and thus in kinds of available capital; and changes in relative differentiation. All of these changes are of course inseparable from changes in interlocutors; certainly worlds were uprooted and then newly configured through the immigration. As mentioned above: By showing how each of these changes relates to the 'explosion' of envy I claim for Escobar, and how each change was shaped by the CBE, I can show how the CBE created the conditions of its own downfall.

Chapter 7:

Changes in Relations, Rationales, and Contexts of Production

Introduction

One of the larger arguments of this dissertation is that among the various Bolivian immigrants in Escobar, identifications with an abstract public good, itself predicated upon horizontal identifications between themselves, never fully obtained as the CBE's founders expected (or hoped) it would. Indeed, the 'community' that the CBE was designed to serve was in reality more of a project and an aspiration—a thing to be achieved—than it was a realized set of relationships on the ground. Another principal argument of this dissertation is that the CBE actually *created* certain conditions and relationships that frustrated these horizontal relationships; in this way the CBE ran counter to its vision of communal development among all Bolivians as an entity of the public good. My argument here, as I have introduced it in both Chapters 5 and 6, is that the CBE sharpened a socially divisive complex of pride and envy that motivated both the usurpation of the CBE and widespread complicity in it among many of the operators in its Market. The present chapter examines the role that the CBE played in sharpening this envy complex among these *socios* and among Bolivians in Escobar more generally. I argue that, while envy did not begin in Escobar, it nevertheless 'exploded' there as a function of larger changes wrought through the immigration—changes that the CBE shaped and in some instances constituted. My illumination of these changes, and the CBE's role in mediating them, is necessary to show how envy came to be what it is in Escobar, and how it has compromised the CBE as a redistributive entity—the latter I discuss further in Chapter 8.

Bolivian Highlands of Potosí

The first step is to utilize the critical scholarship on the highland Andean economy to dispel the erroneous assumption that the Indian economy represents a ‘traditional’ and collectivist sphere of exchange based solely in mutual aid and wholly separate from market activity, where the latter is thought to be both individualist and ‘modern’. Were one to fall prey to such a simplistic reading of the Andes, one might read envy in Escobar as a function of a ‘traditional’ people leaving a pristine and timeless Highlands, and through their immigration coming to engage with money, markets, and modernity for the first time. As I hope to have shown so far in this dissertation, the picture is much more complex than this.

What might be the origin of this assumption that an Indian economy based solely on reciprocity is separate from mercantilist activity? Though there is an extensive, critical literature on this—and one I cannot fully explore here—let us content ourselves with Brooke Larson’s (1995) argument that Andean studies has been plagued by an original conceptual dualism stemming from different disciplinary approaches to Andean history. Comparing the implications of Murra’s model of native Andean economic and political organization (typified and elaborated by Inca control) with Carlos Sempat Assadourian’s illumination of evolving colonial markets and their inter-regional, and indeed trans-Atlantic dimensions, Larson states:

Unwittingly, their [respective] influences on the emerging fields of Andean social and ethnohistory contributed to somewhat of a bipolar, Janus-like, view of the colonial and post-colonial Andean world. Inspired by Murra’s work, many ethnologists set out to map the unique structural properties of an Andean social and mental world that seemed impervious to change and far removed from the messy, dynamic context of power relations and struggle. In the meantime, Assadourian’s work made a compelling case for the transformative power of mercantile colonialism that battered Andean communities, while channeling peasant labor toward accumulative European ends. Juxtaposed, their work seemed to reinforce the notion of two co-existing and fundamentally antagonistic economic orders: one governed by the ideals of communal self-sufficiency and reciprocity, and the other by mercantile precepts and the norms of competitive individualism. (Larson 1995: 17)

Larson further argued that many anthropologists and political economists took this conceptual duality as their point of departure and assumed an inherent—and thus persistent—incompatibility between native Andean and European modes of production and accumulation.

For their part, anthropologists were motivated to explore the capacity of native, non-market institutions to shield ethnic groups from the depredations of capitalism, often under the rubric of cultural continuity and resistance and which tended to be moralized through Western tropes of the degenerative influence of money and markets (see Harris 1995). On the other hand, political economists and historians tended to provide accounts documenting the destructive impact of the colonial market and liberal regimes (Larson 1995: 17).

As scholars like Tristan Platt and Olivia Harris have pointed out for the Bolivian context, the reality on the level of the Andean community is more complex, and evinces not two co-existing and irreconcilable economic orders, but a complex articulation in which the pragmatic engagement of various forms (if not their interpenetration) predominates. Platt (1995) has been able to show this historically for the *ayllus* of Lipes in Southwestern Potosí. He argues that in the colonial period, these *ayllus* were not always or wholly ‘resistant’ to the market—or ‘subordinated’ to it—but rather that they engaged in commercial relations creatively and with calculation as a particular strategy to achieve a range of ends. These ends were different, but often linked. They included not only their tributary requirements to the Crown, but their own subsistence production and social reproduction. Indeed, it was common that *ayllus* historically engaged markets to secure income to pay tribute—tribute that guaranteed the possession of their lands which in turn ensured both their subsistence and their ability to recreate themselves as corporate groups and their place in the universe. Platt’s historical illumination thus reveals that different modalities of exchange—themselves often bearing “different forms of economic reasoning” (1995: 283)—could and did co-exist, co-determine, and be combined with one another. It becomes clear that, far from any facile or perduring ‘separation’ of ‘economies’—with one characterized by collectivism and reciprocity and the other by competitive individualism—a range of circumstances, objectives, and responsibilities provided different frames for productive activities, whether these concern tributary, subsistence, or cosmological requirements. In these, different logics of production made different kinds of sense. Certainly, meanings have always been intimately tied with production, and we should consider what comprises *cultures* of production in the first and final instance. These meanings of course change, and it should be noted that Indians across the Bolivian highlands have consistently and agentively negotiated the meanings that undergird and respond to their productive activities.

Regarding present-day highlanders, Olivia Harris has made similar arguments for the Laymi of Northern Potosí. Working throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, Harris has showed that the Laymi economy is neither an isolated, self-sufficient sphere of exchange nor a survival of pre-capitalistic mutual aid (Harris 2000: 132,135). Rather, the Laymi economy is ‘mixed’ in that Laymis engage in both mercantile and non-mercantile forms of exchange to secure their own subsistence production and social reproduction. Through these activities, Harris shows that the Laymi exhibit certain *preferences* for exchanging labor and goods with fellow Laymis, as compared with *mestizo* or other groups. These preferences, she argues, can be seen as a kind of protectionist solidarity, itself not uncommon in the Andean highlands (see also Godoy 1990: 84), that likely evolved to shield the Laymi from exploitative outsiders who have utilized market circumstances (or other mechanisms of coercion) to systematically devalue or otherwise take advantage of their native produce and labor. It is where Laymis *prefer* to deal with ethnic intimates versus strangers, to maintain different rates of exchange between insiders and outsiders, and to circumvent or seek out monetary transactions in negotiating ritual or other kinds of relations, that we might identify a specifically *Laymi* economy. Indeed, Harris argues that the combination of these dispositions and practices forms a single system founded in the common kinship and cultural forms of the whole ethnic group (Harris 2000: 114, 123; Harris 1995b). She calls this single system the “ethnic economy”. This is a useful analytic in that it allows us to speak of a ‘separate’ economy that is nevertheless ‘mixed’. It is ‘separate’ because it obtains by virtue of corporate identifications and social boundary-making; it is ‘mixed’ in that it harnesses, articulates, or otherwise combines different modalities and logics of exchange.

There are a few points about the ethnic economy and the larger contexts in which it is figured that are important to note. First, as Platt and others have demonstrated, mercantile and non-mercantile activities have not always existed in the same proportions across Potosí. Levels of commercial activity and the geographic distribution of markets have varied historically, and often significantly. They have depended upon a range of factors that include the strength of the mining economy, the strength of harvests (often as a function of climate change), and the degrees of out migration for wage labor. As we saw in the last chapter, the most recent contraction of the market in Potosí happened in the 1980s; this was a function of widespread drought combined with the collapse of the mining economy. Such political-economic and climatic shifts will shape the contours of the ethnic economy because they cause reconfigurations of livelihood strategies.

A second point to make regarding the ethnic economy is that, even while it is predicated upon preferences and corporate identifications, it is not without internal tensions and conflicts. Ethnographers working across the Andes have revealed penetrating conflicts over the requirements of mutual aid (Mayer and De la Cadena 1989), water rights (Trawick 2003), land and inheritance (Godoy 1990), and more recently, religious practices (Frías 2002). Conflicts of various natures have frequently led communities to splinter (see Rockefeller 2010), creating a dynamic and perpetual reconfiguration of the human geography of the Andean highlands. In this way the ethnic economy is a dynamic precipitant shaped by flourishing conflicts that are often simultaneously tempered by other practices of collectivist engagement that both pool and redistribute resources.

Yet there is another dimension to the ethnic economy that we must explore further. As alluded to above, production in the Andes is not simply to secure subsistence; it is also a basis through which social reproduction is achieved. Indeed, one might well argue that in the Andean Highlands, subsistence is itself pursued—and indeed thought—through a cosmological frame that identifies social groupings and their place in the universe (see Gose, see Harris's *To Make the Earth Bear Fruit*, etc). A prime example of framing subsistence production within a cosmological frame is the *tarpuj mink'a*. The *tarpuj mink'a* (or *mink'a de siembra*) is a ritualized, cooperative opening of one another's fields for the Spring planting that has been common across Potosí (noting that out-migration and evangelical conversion have decreased its incidence [see Frías 2002]). Indeed, the various Saropalkeños, Pancocheños, and Yureños that I worked with in Escobar all report having participated in the *tarpuj mink'a* prior to their emigration (Harman 1988 provides an excellent ethnographic account for Yura). Though participation in this *mink'a* is widespread, it is not principally for utilitarian or adaptive reasons. Rather, families belonging to the same productive unit, often termed the *rancho*, participate in it because they find it meaningful and expressive of who (and how) they are. Through ritualized work coordinated by specific offices, the *tarpuj mink'a* not only reproduces the relationships, coherence, and boundaries of the *rancho*, it places their collective production within a cosmological frame that makes relationships between them and spiritual entities explicit. Much of this is achieved phenomenologically through collective labors and festive commensality, both of which are accompanied by the consumption of food and alcohol. The ethics established through these practices, themselves cosmologically situated, is one of we-ness, reciprocity, and

sharing. One might argue that the *tarpuy mink'a* performatively institutes a moral model of mutual dependency and collective subordination before the cosmos that runs counter to expressions of divisive exclusivity that emerge throughout the year through conflicts over land, water, inheritance, or through envy over the fruits they provide (e.g. harvests, herds, etc.).

Throughout Potosí, a significant amount of the production may itself be geared toward meeting ritual needs, which can be demanding. In many locales, such as in Yura, there are elaborate *fiesta-cargo* systems (see Rasnake 1988) that demand that community or *ayllu* members sow and cultivate well beyond their subsistence needs, to the extent this is possible. Thus much of the corn and potatoes that is produced within what we might call a ritual frame is not produced for sale in any market. Rather, it is produced for redistribution in the form of *chicha* (a corn beer) and other ceremonial foods that help anchor festivities through which social groupings reproduce themselves within larger cosmological orders. The relationships that structure who produces what—and for whom—are most often expressed as *ayni*, which is a kind of reciprocal prestation of labor and goods in which debts are both carefully recorded and compulsorily repaid (see Harman 1987). Through the *fiesta-cargo* systems, one always produces for others, and on behalf of more inclusive entities, be they social or spiritual. In these practices, what is garnered by the married couples who hold the coordinating offices (*cargos*) is not wealth, but rather prestige. However, this same prestige will be enjoyed by another couple the next year, as the *cargos* typically rotate among the *ayllu*. What emerges through production in this ritual and redistributive frame is thus not a regime of individual, personal wealth, but rather one of prestige that is *ayllu*-wide and in which many participate—sometimes under great social pressure. For while holding a *cargo* affords certain prestige, it is often a burden a couple must bear on behalf of the *ayllu*. Given this ritual frame, the *telos* of production is thus very different from meeting subsistence needs; it is also very different from any kind of individualized pursuit of wealth. One might add that it is also quintessentially Andean. Indeed, there is a rich history in the Andes of cultivating a surplus through which to fete. These celebrations, themselves often competitive and redistributive, have historically been a means by which political and ethnic entities reproduce themselves and reaffirm their place within the cosmos at large (see Cummins, Ramírez 1996).

None of this production in what I have termed a cosmological or ritual frame is wholly separate from market activity. In the Bolivian highlands, as elsewhere in the Andes, festive

events require a range of items not produced locally, and accessible only through cash which must almost always be earned outside the community. Indeed, there many accounts (see for example Harman 1987) where *ayllu* members migrate out for wage labor to procure the cash needed for the purchase of rice, hot peppers, coca leaf, cane alcohol, candles, and a host of other items that have become necessary in ritual activities. In this way, market engagement—whether one produces goods for sale, or sells his own labor—is often specifically *geared toward* and *subordinated to* this ritual frame, rather than toward profit for the accumulation of personal wealth. At the same time, desires for material goods such as bicycles, radios, and certain types of clothing are not absent. These are not only useful items, they have become markers of status and indexes of modernity itself. Thus we must not leave our discussion of the ‘ethnic’ economy without mentioning progress, and all the racial, ethnic, and economic contexts that shape it. Indeed, desires for progress shape yet another frame of production. Here, and unlike in the ritual frame, productive activities are often engaged in on an individual level, as the markers of progress are often possessed individually. To my knowledge, there has been limited research into the ways in which production between or across what may well be competing frames is negotiated—and why one set of meanings or logic of production may predominate over another (Frias’s 2002 *Mistis y Mokochinches* suggests very productive lines of research in this regard).

What we can conclude about the highland ‘ethnic’ economy is that production may be pursued across a range of frames that may overlap, interpenetrate, and even compete. As we saw above, production is pursued for subsistence needs, ritual needs, and—perhaps increasingly—for one’s own progress. All of these pursuits bear a different ethics. In this way, we may conclude that the highland ethnic economy has always been a constant negotiation between a range of ends and means that have varied over space and time. While I have only sketched some of the major contours of these frames and logics, I believe we have a sufficient foundation for exploring what changes in them Potosinos have experienced as a function of their immigration to Argentina, and specifically to Escobar. As we’ll see, the immigration to Escobar has entailed significant shifts within this ecology of frames, in great part because of the role the CBE has played in shaping the experience of immigration itself.

From Potosí to Escobar: Changes and Continuities

So what changes when the Yureños, Saropalkeños, Pancocheños, and others leave Potosí and take up life in Escobar? How do they come to secure their subsistence? What happens to the cosmological and ritual frames of production (do they produce according to the same meanings we saw above)? And what about progress? How might they pursue progress differently—or in different proportion—with regard to these other frames? Do the meanings of production change? What else changes? Were any of these changes already happening in Potosí?

Regarding subsistence production, we saw in Chapter 6 how the various Potosinos fit into the horticultural sector generally, and into the ‘green belt’ surrounding Buenos Aires more specifically. First entering production as day laborers, they soon engaged in relations of sharecropping, which afforded them greater control over both the conditions of work and their remuneration. In this work, the various Pancocheños, Saropalkeños, Yureños, and other less represented groups continued to exhibit a strong preference for working with their own relatives (*parientes*), a category which is often employed to denote anyone from the same community. As we saw above, this preference for maintaining economic solidarities and corporate identifications was what characterized the ‘ethnic economy’ in Potosí. These relationships were typically what structured the transition into sharecropping, and characterized relations there in. That is, an Argentine boss would have a *quinta* that was farmed by either Pancocheños or Saropalkeños, but never by any mix of the two. As we saw, this was for a number of reasons, ranging from the overall vulnerability of the workforce (they could be victims of economic abuse, predatory violence, etc.) to the fact that sharecroppers almost always lived in the fields they cultivated, leaving no-one with a desire to have potentially bad neighbors with whom they already shared rivalries. Trust, security, and ease of coordinating the relations of production (all easier among relatives than with strangers or rivals) were thus paramount in maintaining such ethnic solidarities and intra-ethnic dependencies in Escobar. At the same time, much of this was also out of necessity. We must remember that even while many of these *pueblos* emptied out through mass migrations that terminated in Escobar and nearby locales, ranchos were often broken up in the process, creating degrees of social and familial reconfiguration *within* the immigrating *pueblo* itself. These reconfigurations likely caused certain strains and broke long standing relations of cooperation and mutual responsibility. Moreover, none of this means that the intra-

ethnic conflicts and tensions that also characterized the highland communities ceased to exist. Indeed, the different fortunes and capitalizations that became possible over the years became a prime source of economic differentiation, and hence differential progress, among *parientes*. These circumstances, often indexed by envy and related sentiments, could provoke great rifts in social and productive units, causing them to splinter and pursue separate paths.

Beyond these changes and continuities to the social organization of production, the emigration from Potosí to Escobar also entailed great shifts in the ability to cultivate a surplus. In Potosí, much of what was produced (e.g. potatoes and grains, especially corn) was produced for direct consumption, for next year's seed, for barter, and for ritual needs. The Pancocheños, Saropalkeños, Yureños, and those from lesser represented *pueblos* (e.g. Caiza, Jari, Molle Molle) that emigrated to Escobar all report that their production was eminently subsistence production. The narrative between them was singular: *Cultivamos para nosotros nomás; cultivamos sólo para subsistir*. Speaking of his parents in Pancochi, a friend told me: *Vivían en el día, no juntaban nada por encima de lo que podían producir*. The limits on accumulation were many. As we saw in Chapter 6, there were ecological factors limiting production that ranged from thin and nutrient-poor topsoils to the steep slopes of fields, and to an overall lack of water. These were compounded by the damage drought, hail, frost, or burst of rain could wage. The production families were able to manage under these conditions was often barely enough to sustain them, often provoking out-migration. Moreover, that the few *haciendas* of Potosí were all at some distance from Yura, Saropalka, and Pancochi is itself a commentary on the kinds of lands these communities occupied: they were marginal areas, and areas where their ancestors (most of whom *Wisisjas*) were resettled (see Rasnake 1988, etc.). Finally, we've also seen that there was an overall lack of land within these communities to meet subsistence needs. *Minifundio*, i.e. the increasing subdivision of plots through the generations, simply reduced the number of hectares one had with which to feed a family.

In the few instances where a surplus beyond basic needs might be had, there were always difficulties in getting it to market. Most Potosino immigrants in Escobar report that, back in the 1970s and 80s, there were not enough roads to move any surplus. And where roads did exist, they were often impassable for large stretches of the year because of rain. What had existed for many years, however, were trails through which seasonal exchange with other groups could be had (see for example Platt 1995). Proper roads that would connect the rural hinterlands with the

small regional markets would only come later, if at all. Finally, where markets could be reached, the prices gotten for agricultural products were—and still are—meager (see Harris 2000: 89, Godoy 1990).

In general terms then, the subsistence-dominated economy from which many Potosinos came was not one conducive to accumulating a surplus that could be converted into cash. On the contrary, much of the production was failing to meet basic subsistence needs, provoking out-migration for seasonal wage work to supplement incomes and shore up needs at home. Over time, and as needs and desires shifted, many Potosinos left their homelands for more secure and sustainable livelihoods of the likes found in the Bolivian lowlands and in Argentina.

In Escobar, accumulation is possible—and on levels well beyond the meeting of basic subsistence needs. Indeed, many of the Potosinos residing there will refer to Argentina as a “generous land”—*una tierra generosa*—in which even a seed that has fallen out of one’s pocket will germinate on its own, and this in any season, being that one can cultivate the year round in Argentina! This stands in stark contrast to the incredible care and input that it takes one to secure even a meager harvest in the Bolivian highlands. That Bolivians in Escobar are able to cultivate and dispose of a surplus is a *sine qua non* of their movement up the ‘horticultural ladder’ we discussed in the last chapter—i.e. that progression beginning with laboring or sharecropping for an Argentine patron, moving subsequently to independent production on rented land, and culminating with land ownership and the full control of all means of production. In this way, accumulation, the capitalization this affords, and the fruits of this process mark a strategy of production all its own. Moreover, this strategy can be pursued actively in Escobar, and for reasons that extend well beyond the change in ecological or climatic limits on accumulation. In Escobar, there is also a network of markets and national infrastructure enabling access to it that do not obtain up in Potosí.

Related to the ability to produce a surplus is a concomitant practice that further differentiates production in Potosí from that in Escobar: the exchange of this surplus for cash through market activity. While some production in the highland *chacras* is destined for market engagement (as has been the case historically), most of it is geared toward meeting basic subsistence needs, either through direct consumption (*autoconsumo*) or through barter (*trueque*). And where production is generated through a ritual frame, a *chacra*’s fruits are destined for festive redistribution, often in the form of *chicha* that does not involve market mediation. In

Escobar, by contrast, all of the production in the *quintas* is geared toward market engagement with the objective of producing cash. That is, while it is true that some families will draw certain sustenance from the *quintas* they farm, their production far exceeds *autoconsumo*—as it is indeed meant to—and is not generated for direct deployment in ritual or festive complexes. In this, we should note that the crops cultivated in the *quintas* are also very different than those produced in the highland *chacras*. Where in the latter the principal crops are corn and potatoes—and where both have ritual and festive deployments—in Escobar’s *quintas*, neither of these can be sustained through the conditions of the humid *pampa*. Rather, green leafy and other types of fruits and vegetables are the crops produced, and these specifically for the demands of the Argentine market.

In addition to this change in the destination of the production, which in Argentina is always a surplus, we find a concomitant increase in the monetization of the relations of production within the productive unit itself. Whether as sharecroppers or independent producers, incomes from horticultural sales in Escobar must be distributed and managed between what are almost always *parientes*. While the dynamics of these monetary relations—i.e. how incomes are parsed within and between families, how savings are pooled or shared out, etc.—are not well understood, it is safe to say that the modalities of productive engagement across the *quintas* and the CBE’s Market stand in stark contrast to those that characterize the highlands of Potosí. Indeed, many in Escobar will differentiate social relations in their native, highland communities from those in Escobar’s *quintas* and barrio by pointing to the predominance of the *mink’a* in Potosí. As one Potosino makes clear: “*Allá no hay nada de esto* [and he rubbed his fingers together to indicate money]; *es pura mink’a*”. Where in Potosí members of a *rancho* or community will engage one another through the exchange of labor for food (*mink’a*), or through the reciprocal exchange of labor (often framed as *ayni*)—noting that both of these contribute to the economic ethics of the ethnic economy we discussed above—in Escobar, these modalities have given way to relationships in which cooperation does not entail debts of service but rather garners cash profits that must be distributed horizontally (as in the case of families who cooperate in sharecropping) or vertically (as in the case of landowners who engage sharecroppers). Indeed, where in highland Potosí (and once again reflecting the contours of the ethnic economy) labor remunerated with cash is typically found *outside* the native community—

i.e. in engagements between the indigenous and the *mestizos* (or other non-intimates)¹²⁷—in the *quintas* and Markets of Escobar, cash-remunerated labor between *parientes* is much more common. And it is not just that production in Argentina is geared toward sale that makes such remuneration more common; it is that consumer goods are widely available there where in Potosí they are not. This greatly increases the *desire* to have cash income. Indeed, as we'll see shortly, remuneration in cash that can be deployed for 'progress' makes acquiring money eminently important in Argentina. This is why in Escobar, all want their own money—the common narrative being: *todos quieren su platita*. As we saw in Chapter 6, these desires have shaped, if not helped motivate, much of the out-migration in Potosí.

At this point we might ask: If generating a surplus in Escobar is possible, and if market engagement is the principal rationale of production, what has happened to the cosmological frame of production? How has the Potosinos' immigration and engagement in Argentina's horticultural sector shaped it or changed its presence? And beyond this cosmological frame, what has happened to the fiesta-cargo systems, to the extent that these existed up in Potosí? Regarding the overall placing of production within a cosmological frame—i.e. within a broader ontology in which the relations between natural, human, and spiritual entities are made explicit—there is much yet to investigate. Little is known about how earlier and later generations of Potosino immigrants, and now their Argentine children, regard the land and their activities in Escobar, and whether they nest them within any cosmological order approximating the one that surrounded them and their labors in Potosí. To a great extent, the Argentine landscape is not a sacred one, as were their native lands up in Potosí. And so far as I know, no specific spiritual forces have been identified in their Argentine surroundings. Whether and to what extent Potosinos consider their *quintas* and the fruits they draw from them within the frame of the *pachamama*, or if they separate 'worlds' and must negotiate their sense of place between both new and native 'homes', are key questions that deserve investigation. While ritual libations (*ch'allas*) are on a small scale made to bless the various plantings, just as they are made to ask for productivity in the puestos in the CBE's Market, there is a conspicuous absence of more encompassing practices like the *tarpuy mink'a*. Certainly, the means and relations of production in the *quintas* differs from those in the *chacras* of Potosí: not only have the units of

¹²⁷ This is changing to some extent in certain parts of Potosí. As some communities convert to Evangelical Christianity, they often abandon practices like the *mink'a* because of the consumption of alcohol (ritual or otherwise) associated with them. See Frías 2002.

ritual activity and cooperative labor (e.g. the *rancho*) often been fragmented, labor itself may be controlled and disciplined by an outside—or Argentine—*patrón*. Moreover, because production in Escobar is remunerated in cash, little opportunity exists to engage in reciprocal agricultural labor. Finally, as mentioned above, the *quintas* are not able to produce the corn and potatoes that hold native ritual significance, changing the contexts and elements of rituals over seeds. All of these factors have no doubt frustrated the reproduction of the *tarpu y mink'a* and practices like it in Escobar.

Regarding the fiesta-cargo systems and the ways they might shape social engagement and forms of production, many have not been recreated in Escobar to the extent they existed up in Potosí (see Rasnake 1988 on the *kuraqkuna* of Yura). Much of this is because the social units of ritual activity did not survive the immigration, whether this be due to fragmentation and dispersion, or simply to the fact that not all migrated together, or at all. Moreover, we must remember that many migrated to Argentina with the immediate goal of making ends meet, if not to accumulate savings to finance a better life back up in Potosí. With their migration being an economic one, and not dissimilar to prior forays outside the ethic economy to engage in wage labor, many families always intended to return to Bolivia. This means that ‘home’ always remained up in Potosí, with the implication that the locus of true ritual activity remained there as well. For this reason, there existed little impetus to recreate fiesta-cargo complexes in Argentina. As time went on, and as return migration became more and more difficult, home came to be—perhaps more *de facto* than by desire—Escobar. Where pueblos in highland Potosí are now “empty”, and yet still “home”, fiesta-cargo complexes have become lost in the shuffle (see Rasnake 1988, end; see Bigenho 2002).

This is not to say that such systems have failed to exist entirely. Some continue to persist and undergo negotiation in Potosí. The moral pleas expressed through them, as well as the desires for home they cultivate serve as principal reasons for seasonal, and sometimes year-long, return visits to one’s native community. Yet what frustrates their reproduction in Escobar also compromises them in Potosí: Evangelical conversion (see Frías 2002). Indeed, these practices, as well as others like the *tarpu y mink'a*, have been eschewed by Evangelical Christianity for two key reasons: first, because they pay homage to native Andean deities and Catholic Saints that the Evangelical Church does not recognize; and second, because their rituals involve intoxication

with alcohol—often as a way to establish connections with these spiritual entities—that the Evangelical Church similarly does not allow.

Nevertheless, native Andean and Catholic ritual practices (themselves syncretic complexes since the Spanish invasion) still play an important, if potentially altered, role in Escobar. Where homage to Saints does exist, followings often tend to be mixed. For example, homage to the Saint *Tayta Laguna* is made by Potosinos with a range of backgrounds, as well as by many born in Northern Argentina. The offices that exist in more formal fiesta-cargo systems are not as numerous, specific, or related to kin units in celebrations in Argentina. Moreover, the preparations and celebrations have been largely unmoored from agricultural rituals and labors. The corn, potatoes, and other ritual items are not cultivated in a ritual frame, as they are in Potosí, but must rather be purchased from markets with cash earnings. Moreover, these fiestas seem to function less as a means of social reproduction and prestige in the native Andean sense than as a means of taking turns accumulating money, as if it were a kind of *pasanakuy*. Moreover, the reciprocal prestations of music, roasted chickens, beer, and decorations that help make a successful fiesta in which the *pasantes* are rewarded with cash (usually pinned on the likeness of the Saint/Virgen) are often done so with speculation, in which ‘interest’ is factored (though see Nash 1979, as this practice is also common in Potosí). Where these aspects obtain in Escobar, coordinating and hosting a celebration becomes less of a burden that must be born on behalf of a social grouping, as it often has been in the fiesta-cargo systems of highland Potosí, but rather an opportunity for a family to accumulate cash on an individual basis. In this way, we might speak of a change in the *telos* of such ritual activity. As little is known about the ways in which Potosino immigrants situate their production in larger cosmological frames, more research is also needed to understand the ways in which festive culture relates to wealth, prestige, and religious belonging in locales such as Escobar.

With the overall decline in production geared toward redistribution and social reproduction in a traditional ritual frame, one finds in Escobar an increase in production that is signified through the idiom of progress. While ideas of progress have likely enjoyed certain traction in the Bolivian highlands¹²⁸, achieving it in Potosí is often frustrated by certain limits on (individual) accumulation, both ecological and socio-cultural. In contrast, progress in Escobar—

¹²⁸ There is so far little research in Potosí that illuminates the particular contours of these ideas, and how they are reconciled with other ideologies or logics of production.

understood as becoming independent economically (*independizarse*) as well as shedding the conditions of poverty that mark one as Indian—is possible to a great extent. This is for a number of reasons that we have already addressed. First, many of the limits on accumulation that exist up in Potosí do not obtain in Escobar. Indeed, the conditions of production in Escobar enable a family to accumulate a surplus and deploy it to their advantage. Not only is Escobar a “generous land” that can be cultivated year-round (and with ample irrigation), it is also relatively free from the drought, frost, and other climatic events that mar crops in Potosí. Moreover, Escobar and its surroundings possess a range of outlets through which to market produce that is in high demand. Because accumulation and profit are possible in Escobar—and indeed mark a chief reason for decisions to emigrate there—production in the *quintas* is geared almost exclusively toward market engagement. As discussed in Chapter 6, much of this is done with an eye toward becoming independent (*independizarse*) and moving up the horticultural ladder. For many Potosinos, this is the first time they have been able to ‘work on’ their class standing in any significant sense. Yet more than this, progress as a frame of production becomes increasingly engaged because, through this very process of climbing the horticultural ladder, one is able to better negotiate those aspects that mark him¹²⁹ as racially and culturally inferior. Indeed, while most are caught up in the *lucha*, Potosinos in Escobar are able to ‘work on’ their own human dignity in ways they haven’t been able to in Bolivia, even as life in Argentina tends to dehumanize them. Finally, progress also increases as a frame of production because progress is itself, as we saw in Chapter 4, most often exclusive and competitive. In its competitive dimension, progress becomes contagious far beyond a frame of economic production: it becomes central as a frame of social (if not racial, ethnic, and political) engagement.

For these reasons, and in conjunction with the decline of ritual complexes, the emigration and the taking up in Escobar have produced a ‘culture of production’ in which the principal signifying frame of production—and indeed the chief motivation for it—is one of progress. With this one might say that the ‘ecology’ of frames and modalities of production has changed from Potosí to Escobar. Where in Potosí, mercantilist production certainly occurred, though always in balance with non-mercantile modes of exchange such as the *mink’a*, it was often subordinated to a logic of social and cosmological reproduction given the dynamics of the ethnic economy. In Escobar, by contrast, non-mercantile modes of exchange fall away as mercantilist

¹²⁹ To what extent is this deindianization gendered? See De la Cadena 1995.

production comes to be deployed, not toward social or cosmological reproduction, but rather toward progress, effectuating a displacement of these ‘traditional’ forms. This is not to say that cooperation has ceased to exist in Escobar. Notwithstanding the degree to which the social units of cooperation (e.g. the *rancho*) have been disrupted, cooperation continues to occur in Escobar. We have seen how this works in both the *quintas* and in the CBE’s Market. In both of these settings, cooperation tends to become a technique of production that is deployed toward the blossoming and more encompassing end of progress. Through this activity, social groupings are not *collectively* reaffirmed as Indian within an indigenous cosmology, as they tend to be within Potosí’s communities, but rather as *differentially* Indian in an ethics of de-indianization and integration in Argentina.

We might say that between Potosí and Escobar, the economy has become less mixed. That is, where in Potosí multiple frames of production were engaged (both mercantilist and non-mercantilist, with all their cosmological underpinnings and ritual activity), in Escobar, one mode of production predominates at the expense of the others. This change in ecology of production¹³⁰ is only solidified through the production of new generations: the Bolivian-Argentine children born to their Potosino parents tend to be raised in the culture of progress. All this leaves us with a key question: To what extent does this change in the ecology of production entail new ways of being, both individually and collectively? What changes in ethics might come from such a change? One of the arguments I make in this dissertation is that, as economic differentiation increases in Escobar, so does socially-divisive pride and envy. This is not to idealize the highland Andean community, though we’ll see in Chapter 9 that in doing their own native anthropology, many Potosinos do just this. Rather, it is to show the ways, both similar and different, in which this community comes to exist, and exist with other communities on different levels, in Escobar.

¹³⁰ We might explore the matter differently: Is it that there has been a shift in the ecology of production—i.e. between frames and their incidence; or is it that production itself has been *resignified*? If we look at it through the lens of resignification, which is likely the case to a certain extent—especially taking the different generations into account—we run the risk of idealizing the highland Andean community. Let us not forget that mercantilist activity existed up in the highlands; but where this activity was carried out given the terms of the ethnic economy, it was oriented—indeed pragmatically so—toward social and cosmological reproduction. So it seems to be more an issue of changes to how production is geared—i.e. what it is oriented to—than a resignification per se. Nevertheless, what production is geared toward is a set of meanings, and indeed we see this shift in meanings, making resignification germane nevertheless.

Role of the CBE and its Market in Mediating and Constituting these Larger Changes

So we've seen that there are "changes" in a number of dimensions (some of them overlapping and interpenetrating) that have been wrought through the emigration and as a result of taking up in Escobar. We have seen that there have been changes in the limits on accumulation and checks on differentiation, changes in social and ethical horizons, as well as in the conception of home, and finally, changes in the predominant rationale and mode of production. I argue that we must view the CBE and its Market as situated within these larger shifts and reconfigurations. More specifically, I argue that the CBE and its Market have, in many cases, not just mediated these changes, but also helped constitute them.

We have seen both above and in the previous chapter that one of the fundamental changes wrought through the emigration and the taking up of life in Escobar has been a change in the ability to accumulate a surplus, which in Escobar is either converted to cash if one is a *quintero*, or is cash itself if one is involved in *compra-venta*. What role has the CBE played in this, if any? By creating the Market, the CBE has both enabled and fostered accumulative pursuits through both kinds of pursuits. First off, the Market has enabled *quinteros* to attract and reach a broader clientele, and fill an increasing demand. By concentrating the production of the area's *quintas* under one roof—and a roof that sits just off the Panamerican Highway—it has allowed *quinteros* greater sales and more profit than they would otherwise manage (indeed, *quinteros* can even price fix to a certain extent to ensure a higher base price upon which to secure profits). The earnings garnered from these sales have enabled *quinteros* to make capital investments in their operations, including the purchase of land, trucks, or tractors, or the construction of greenhouses or irrigation systems to improve the quality of their produce. Such capital investments not only lead to greater profits; they have also allowed *quinteros* or those working through the Market to diversify their operations with an eye toward exploiting new niches or increasing profit margins.

Through enabling and fostering accumulative pursuits, the CBE's Market has also accelerated economic differentiation. While differentiation in most cases is ultimately a function of the number of years one has accumulated, saved, and capitalized in Escobar, economic engagements through the CBE's Market have often had a multiplying effect on pre-existing differentials, resulting in even greater gaps between all who, at one point, remote or otherwise,

have common roots in Potosí and a common beginning in Escobar's *quintas*. Indeed, and as we saw in Chapter 6, because of a growing demand for fruits and vegetables in the area during the 1990s, those operations possessing certain capital and size at the start of the Market have been able to grow at faster rates. For large and independent *quinteros* already possessing certain capital, they have been able to meet more of this demand and generate more profit relative to the cost of new capital inputs when compared to smaller producers. For *puesteros* engaged in *compra-venta*, the initial possession of a truck enables the purchase of a larger truck, and hence the ability to plug into different *kinds* and *levels* of commerce that bring greater profits and/or margins than is possible for a *puestero* who did not begin with such a truck. As we also saw in Chapter 6, such differentiation has allowed operators to engage in market-cornering practices that allow them to manipulate price and commercial relations to their advantage, further increasing differentiation. We'll see in the next chapter how nefarious dealings have a hand in creating these capital differentials that become multiplied by the Market's commercial opportunities.

Among those who work through the CBE's Market—whether producers or those in the buying and reselling of produce—or among those who view these operations from the barrio itself, the CBE's Market has become known as an institution that creates great wealth—and wealth on unprecedented scales. The following is a common evaluation of the CBE in this regard:

Juan (Potosino): ***Nunca se imaginaba que la Colectividad generaría tanta plata.***
No one ever imagined that the CBE would generate *so much*
Money.

Let us note that this is a general statement, but one that hits on two levels. On one hand, Juan is here referring to the revenues the CBE as a parent entity has been able to garner as a result of the Market, themselves comprised of the fees the *quinteros* and those in *compra-venta* pay to operate there. As we saw in the first chapter, these revenues have at times reached more than US\$1M—a sum likely not foreseen by the founders of the CBE when it built the Market in 1994-1995. On the other hand, these revenues would not reach such sums were it not for the booming commerce inside, in which individual operators are earning sums that, in a similar fashion, could not have been predicted. Indeed, many in the CBE's Market are earning on scales that bear little

resemblance to endeavors in construction or other kinds of services (body work, welding, or perhaps even textiles). The differentiation that the CBE's Market has accelerated, enabled, and sometimes multiplied, is truly remarkable when considering *paisanos*' and *parientes*' common roots in Potosí. Indeed, in inquiring about differentiation in Potosí relative to Escobar, the answer is always clear-cut:

Tío Norberto (Potosino): **Allá son todos iguales...**
At home, everyone is equal...

Doña Rufina (Potosina): **Acá se sobresalen, acá se destacan...**
Here they surpass each other; *here* they stand out from one another...

And why would answers be anything but blunt when one sees another driving, not just a beat up Ford pickup from the 1970s, but a brand new 10-ton Scania; or when one sees another, not just sharecropping a few humble plots, but owning a 20-hectare *quinta* that employs multiple families in this capacity. Thus while many operating in the CBE's Market are still very much still in the same *lucha* that characterized the hard life in Potosí common to all, the wealth the rich operations have created through their time in Escobar generally, and through their engagement in the CBE more recently, stands in stark contrast indeed.

Beyond fostering both accumulative pursuits and the differentiation in wealth that occurs through them, the CBE has mediated what for many Potosinos has been an increasing monetization of economic relationships—this change being a function of the emigration itself. Though we have been careful to note that rural Potosinos have long participated in market activity and wage labor, noting as well that this has been shaped by demands in 'ethnic economies', there have been some families and groups that, prior to their emigration to Escobar, did not handle or deploy money to any significant extent. For example, owing to 'better' lands, most Pancocheños did not have to engage in the same out-migration for wage labor that Saropalkeños and Yureños often did. At the same time, most Pancocheños' inability to cultivate a surplus beyond their subsistence needs foreclosed engagements with the areas markets, were this desired. Even where this might be possible, reaching and exploiting markets was always difficult. Because of these circumstances, economic relationships for the Pancocheños, and for groups bearing similar profiles, tended to be both within the *comunidad* and unmediated by money. Labor within and between related families, itself often structured by various forms of

mink'a, was the principal modality of economic engagement. When this production failed to meet basic subsistence needs because of land shortage and climatic events (e.g. the drought of the early 1980s) permanent emigration was often the best, if not the only, option.

When Pancocheños and groups bearing similar profiles emigrated to Escobar, their engagement in the horticultural sector constituted the first time in which they produced for cash income. As waves of immigrants successively moved up the horticultural ladder, relationships that were once horizontal in native communities could become hierarchical, as one set of *parientes*—perhaps now renting land—contracted a more recently-arriving set as sharecroppers. These situations often provided the first instances in which ‘intra-communal’ labor relations became mediated by differential incomes that had to be distributed. This increased monetization of productive relationships stood in contrast to highland practices like the *mink'a* in which cooperation or collective labor were compensated with food, and in which commensality was crucial to reproducing relationships and debts of *ayni*. Yet these arrangements rested on another and more fundamental change: in contrast to many situations in Potosí, production in Escobar ultimately depended upon trucks, tractors, and land that had to be purchased or rented. For many Pancocheños and groups with similar backgrounds, engagement in Escobar’s horticultural sector thus constituted the first time in which cash was needed to work and profit from the land.

The CBE’s Market, in fostering growth of the local horticultural sector, intensified this process of increased monetization and cash dependency. Not only did it increase opportunities for commercial production, it facilitated another, equally significant shift: the abandonment of production for the buying and re-selling of already farmed produce. Engagements in *compra-venta*, in which trucks—not land—were the key form of capital, and in which traffic in goods—not their cultivation—was the principal activity, marked an even greater departure from this ‘traditional’ means of making a living. Moreover, *compra-venta* constitutes a cash-intensive engagement of the market as compared to a labor-intensive one. Though cash is needed for both production and *compra-venta*, cash plays a proportionally greater role in the latter because the produce must be purchased before it can be re-sold. It is also important to note that such transactions happen on a daily basis. Because of this, one might argue that the nature of cooperation and dependency is somewhat different in *compra-venta*. Where in production, relationships between land-owners and sharecroppers or those within blocs of sharecroppers are often negotiated on a seasonal basis, in *compra-venta*, debts and work are canceled on a daily

basis, and potentially more susceptible to change, even if longer-term arrangements provide certain sought-after stability. Certainly, that debts in *compra-venta* are constructed through purchases and satisfied daily through cash payment stands in contrast to the nature of debts in the highlands of Potosí. There, debts are often constructed through labor or goods that must be reciprocated in kind. Moreover, they tend to be ongoing, and are thus never ‘canceled’.

We should note that not all Potosinos will have experienced these changes—changes which we might gloss as a general transition from *chacra* to *quinta* to *mercado*—because of their emigration to Escobar. As we have been keen to note, production for cash sale, the monetization of economic relationships, and even the buying and reselling of goods, have all existed in rural Potosí. The point is that they have existed *unevenly* across Potosí, such that they are experienced to a greater or lesser extent as a function of the emigration—and of the CBE’s mediation of it. Where the Pancocheños have experienced this transition from *chacra* to *quinta* to *mercado* in a more pure sense, the Saropalkeños and Yureños have not. As we saw in Chapter 6, these groups were often forced to supplement their agricultural subsistence with wage labor in mining, and so tended to manage money to a much larger extent. Yura was also more integrated into the region’s market-system, having had a long history of railroad articulation as well as *haciendas*. Because of these more diversified livelihood strategies, the immigration to Escobar has not produced such an upheaval of their customary practices, as it arguably has for the Pancocheños and groups like them.

This brings us to another key change that has been both wrought through the immigration and shaped by the CBE. The emigration has entailed a situation in which various groups have been thrust together. In and around the barrio, one finds Potosinos of various stripes—the Pancocheños, Saropalkeños, and Yureños being chief among them. In Potosí, these groups engaged one another, though often in highly patterned ways. Sharing a border, and owing to certain differences in wealth and occupation, the Pancocheños and Saropalkeños developed a strong and bitter rivalry—one that they continue to elaborate in the CBE (see next Chapter). As for the Yureños and Saropalkeños, relationships between them have been much more civil. Despite their differences, and along with Taropalqueños, they have a history of folkloric exchange (see Bigenho 2002). Yet each of these groups in Potosí occupied its own territory. In Escobar by contrast, all of them have come to occupy *one* locale. Because of this, Escobar’s barrio has become a crucible in which these groups must co-exist as *everday* interlocutors.

Where in rural Potosí relationships were typically hammered out within the *comunidad* and between *parientes* (though not without conflicts), in Escobar, by contrast, relations tend to be much more varied. This is due in great part to its semi-urban and more dense human geography. Indeed, once out of the *quintas*, one is consistently confronted with strangers, whether on the bus or in the street, in the meat shop or in the medical clinic, or, as we will see shortly, in the CBE.

Yet one's non-intimates in Escobar are not just other Potosinos: while the barrio is dominated them, there are great numbers of Tarijeños that have also converged there. In lesser, but still significant numbers, are groups of Cochabambinos, Sucreños, and Paceños. All of these groups diversify the realm of strangers from the perspective of the Potosinos. In fact, for many Potosinos, their first engagements with *paisanos* from these other Bolivian Departments has been as a function of their emigration to Escobar. This is said to be particularly true of the Pancocheños and groups with similar profiles, for whom out-migration for wage work and military service were rare, and for whom the emigration to Escobar was direct. Indeed, the common narrative is that the Pancocheños came to know Escobar without ever having seen the city of Potosí. This is a narrative that bears certain truth. Thus for many, being thrust together in Escobar has meant a change in one's everyday interlocutors—i.e. people with whom one has little in common. Indeed, both ethno-national groups and communities within them (e.g. the various *comunidades* of Potosinos) frequently engage one another as 'others'¹³¹. When I asked a friend if they all got along, he said dryly: they don't have any other option.

¹³¹ Beginning with constructions of the level of ethnic nationality, the Potosinos (here engaging in certain self-critique) will say that they are wary of the Cochabambinos, for the Cochabambinos are thought to be better educated and skilled (*más capacitados*), better communicators (*más habladores*), better at commerce (*más comerciantes*) and more cultured (*son de nivel*). Potosinos will sometimes even remark at the phenotypic characteristics of the Cochabambino—i.e. that he is taller, whiter, and with lighter-colored eyes—as if these sought-after traits naturally went with their 'developed' cultural characteristics. In turn, Cochabambinos that are sympathetic to the Potosino will state that he is hard working, simple (*sencillo*), and the true Quechua speaker. However, those who have borne the brunt of Potosino hubris or exclusion may quickly mobilize the time-worn discourse of the *indio bruto*; i.e. that the Potosino is both ignorant (*ignorante*) and backward (*atrasado*), not to mention inscrutable and full of underhanded malice (*malicia*).

Regarding the Tarijeños, Potosinos feel that they have the upper hand. Without qualification, and often in a discriminatory tone, Potosinos will refer to the Tarijeños as weak (*débiles*), slow (*lerdos*), thieving (*ratas, vagos*), and uncultured (*cochinos, brutos*). That Tarijeños sometimes fail to know the meaning of *ama suwa, ama llulla, ama qella* (a Quechua injunction popularly attributed to the Inca) is something the Potosinos find both unpalatable and unjustifiable. Indeed, because Tarijeños neither speak Quechua nor bear the Inca legacy, they are discriminated against as 'fake' Bolivians (*bolivianos truchos*). This Potosino charge does not always upset the Tarijeños, however. For the latter are just as wont to proclaim that they hail from the 'Independent Republic of Tarija' in a bout of their own ethno-national pride. This Tarijeño pride in turn seeks to reposition the Potosinos as the ones lacking the accoutrements of civilization. Here, civilization is not understood vis-à-vis the Inca, but rather as the advances brought by the modern era—i.e. running water and electricity, formal education and fluent Spanish, etc.

Waldo (Cochabambino): **Y, no tienen otra.**
Well, they have no other option.

As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, relations between these ‘others’ depend upon and reproduce group-level exclusivities; they are most often tense, racially charged, and hierarchical. We saw, for example, how people will humiliate one another by invoking their belonging to one or another group, invoking its characteristics along a hierarchy of ‘civilization’. Yet these exclusivities, and the antagonisms wrought from them, take many forms. On a basic level, families of one or another ethnic group will tend to live and work together wherever possible. This is true in the *quintas*, where families tend to live in the fields themselves, as well as in the *barrio*. There, multi-family, intergenerational compounds are a norm. In many ways, this pattern reflects the insularity often found in the highlands of Potosí. We have seen through our discussions of the ‘ethnic economy’ in Potosí that preferences for dealing with one’s *parientes* have emerged in great part because of the histories of exploitation by outsiders (often *mestizos*). Indeed, for highland Potosinos, outsiders are typically mistrusted. To the extent that they are encountered, they are often suspected of nefarious dealings, be it theft or more devilish doings¹³². Much of this general disposition towards outsiders has been recreated in Escobar; those who are not *parientes* or in one’s circle of trust are often not readily engaged. This is likely encouraged by the precarious situations (economic, political, and racial) in which many—especially more recent arrivals—find themselves.

Also as a function of, and once again reproducing, these group-level exclusivities, ethnic groups have historically not intermarried or engaged in relations of mutual aid. Regarding the former, endogamy has been particularly strong among the individual (and often rivaling) groups of Potosinos. However, as second-generation Potosinos have grown up in Argentina (often

Indeed, Tarijeños are wont to describe Potosinos as backward for not having achieved these things (*no han evolucionado; no han progresado*)—something they would not say of the Cochabambinos.

Beneath these constructions on the level of ethnic nationality, we have seen that Potosinos frequently construct differences between themselves on the level of ethnic community. These differences are similarly fashioned in hierarchical ways, and often employ the same idiom of ‘civilization’. As we have seen, the most patterned representations concern the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños. In the dominant interpretation, the Saropalkeños are said to be better educated and skilled (*más capacitados*), more shrewd at business relations (*más listos para el negocio*), and more enlightened overall (*más despiertos*). They and others will often argue that this is due to their engagement in the mining sector and the worldly exposure this has afforded them. Many similarly report that their experience in military service has ‘socialized’ them vis-à-vis other Bolivians and taught them more urban, ‘civilized’ ways. In contrast, the dominant interpretation holds the Pancocheños to be more Indian (*más indio*) and more peasant (*más campesino*)—and as a result, less civilized (*más salvajes*).

¹³² Stories of past depredations in Potosí by *lik’ichiris* are still discussed in Escobar—especially by the Pancocheños.

being Argentine themselves), intermarriage has grown. This is not to say that it is welcomed or supported, however. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear how the families of different ethnic groups have failed to support their intermarried children, whether financially, socially or both. Indeed, all the racial, ethnic, and class tensions that exist between ethnic nationalities, lower level ethnic groups, and groups of Argentines shape both the production and reception of unions.

Related to the traditional practice of endogamy is a reluctance among ethnic groups to engage each other in mutual aid—or otherwise manipulate these relations unfairly¹³³. As these practices are traditionally strong among the Potosinos, it is no surprise that the conflicts over these ethics involve them. The Pancocheños, for example, are known to be particularly stingy (*tacaños*) with outsiders, refusing to engage them. This disposition has greatly contributed to their reputation as the most ‘tight’ group of Potosinos (*siempre unidos*), if not more prejudicially as an exclusive band (*una banda*). Yet complaints over a reluctance—if not failure—to reciprocate do not just exist between groups of Potosinos. Regarding the Potosinos generally, one Cochabambina friend of mine said that the Potosinos of all kinds have repeatedly abused relations of *ayni* with her. She states bluntly that the Potosinos have no problem using the moral language of mutual aid to elicit her cooperation, yet will fail to reciprocate in good faith when the time comes.

Doña Eloida (Cochabambina): ¿Qué ayni? ¡Ellos abusan del ayni! ¡No tienen conducta moral!

What ayni? They abuse ayni! They lack moral conduct.

Where as a function of the emigration both ethnic nationalities and lower level groups have been thrust together in the barrio—constituting what for many has been a change in everyday interlocutors—, and where in this crucible both orders of groups engage one another as ‘others’ and ‘outsiders’, it fits to ask whether the CBE has mediated any of this, and how. The answer is that the CBE has played a crucial role in both the shape of the barrio and the tenor of relations therein. To address these mediations, we must begin with the founding of the CBE. Despite their differences, Bolivians in Argentina have always had one thing in common: they have always been collectively ‘othered’ by Argentines. As we have seen in Chapters 2, 3, and 6,

¹³³ There is a long literature involving conflict and manipulation in reciprocity in the Andes.

this ‘othering’ is most often accompanied by prejudice and discrimination, if not violence. Thus where some will look at the founding of the CBE as a natural outgrowth of the Sunday ‘*tinkus*’ that occurred between Bolivians in the early years of the barrio, arguing that ‘natural’ affinities undergirded them, we must ask whether such affinities were not somewhat superficial vis-à-vis deeper differences, if not a function of groups’ common status of ‘other’ in Argentina. Indeed, where life on the *quinta* was isolating, relentless, and potentially exploitative, it is no wonder why many sought environments that were social, that recalled their *patria*, and that served as a haven from being ‘other’. Certainly, Bolivians were frequently denied any sense of security by the Argentine population, if not State agencies, as continues to be the case. It is likely under these conditions that the CBE’s founders saw the potential for a Collective Association that would serve all Bolivians. Yet let us not forget that while this idea existed for them, it was only institutionally articulated once a spike in Argentine violence caused them to found the CBE. In other words, it took a wave of violence strong enough to threaten the whole of this ‘community’ for the CBE—and its claims of and for community—to be founded. For this reason I argue that Bolivian community, as articulated through the founding of the CBE, has been more of a project to be realized—more of a thing to be worked on—than it has been a set of deep yet horizontal affinities on the ground.

Once the CBE was established, and despite those who had scoffed at its pretensions, its work and projects began to accelerate the growth of the barrio, and thus the extent to which distinct groups of Bolivians came to relate to one another. While the CBE no doubt helped spread the reputation of Escobar’s barrio as a destination for Bolivians, attracting more and more numbers by the year, it was the CBE’s creation of the Market in 1994-1995 that really brought Bolivians of different stripes into both immediate and intimate contact. Indeed, by creating the Market, the various and dispersed *quinteros* that had been selling on roadsides, and at the mercy of the elements and police, were brought together under one roof. Moreover, they were brought together under one administration (i.e. Cahuana’s) that oversaw the production of this roof, the fees collected under it, and their redistribution through projects that benefitted the public good.

Yet the CBE did not only shape the experience of the immigration by helping configure relations between (new) interlocutors. Through its creation of the Market, the CBE had a tremendous influence on the economic situation of those who operated through it, if not in the local horticultural sector generally. In the first instance, it reproduced the ethnic structuring of

the relations of production found in the *quintas*. Moreover, through facilitating transitions into *compra-venta*, it allowed certain ethnic clienteles to emerge and corner the market in certain products. In these ways, it served as a frame through which the ‘preferences’ we saw in Potosí’s ethnic economies could be exercised and recreated. Yet through preferences, if not as a function of them, the CBE’s Market tended to accelerate differentiation, make progress visible, and increase competition. These effects further sharpened ethnic exclusivities, and through them, the non-cooperation and rivalry that characterize relations between ‘outsiders’. Thus where the CBE shaped the crucible that is the *barrio*, it has nevertheless become a crucible all its own.

This brings us to a final change wrought through the emigration that the CBE has specifically shaped—i.e. the predominance of the logic of progress in production. We have seen throughout this dissertation that progress in Escobar is understood not just as becoming economically independent (*independizarse*), but also—if not through this and the wealth it entails—shedding the conditions of poverty and perceived cultural backwardness that mark one as Indian. We have also seen that while progress may have existed to some extent up in Potosí, it would have been in competition with other socio-economic rationales that tended to reproduce the ‘ethnic economy’. Indeed, exclusive accumulation (to the extent accumulation was even possible given ecological and climatic limits) often had to be negotiated with—if not subordinated to—cooperative or collective redistribution through ritual frames. In Escobar, where accumulation is possible, where monetization has increased, and where ritual logics of production have declined through certain fragmentation of social units and the rise of new desires and possibilities, the logic of progress has come to predominate in a new culture of production.

What role has the CBE and its Market played in this predominance of progress? First off, we have seen how in attracting the demand that has generated growth and new opportunities in the local horticultural sector, the CBE has fostered and enabled the accumulative pursuits upon which progress depends. Yet the CBE has done more than simply facilitate actual progress. It has helped configure social relations in a way that has helped cement progress as a primary rationale of production. It has done this in a few related ways. First, as we just saw, the CBE has articulated ‘others’ and ‘outsiders’ in intimate ways by bringing them together under one socio-economic and political roof (one which also explicitly engages them with Argentine buyers). We have also seen how these ‘others’ and ‘outsiders’ have pre-existing rivalries and

hierarchies that are often articulated through the idiom of ‘civilization’—one that differentially values cultural, economic, and racial characteristics. By enabling differential accumulations that are themselves structured by ethnic exclusivities, the CBE has created a culture of competition in which pursuits of progress are the means of negotiating, not just these rivalries and hierarchies, but the ethno-racial and cultural differences they bear. In these ways, the CBE and its Market have created a *frame* in which to address rivalries, hierarchies, and differences, as well as a *language* in which to address them. Despite their differences in a range of codes, the groups drawn together through the Market have become ‘monolingual’ in this language of progress. This is for a few different reasons: not only are economic movements, capitalizations, and independence both visible and public, they are also zero-sum, such that one is irrevocably positioned (i.e. left behind) by another’s movement (progress). For these reasons then, both political-economic and ethno-racial, progress has been solidified as a principal (if not *the*) rationale of production and engagement.

Consequences and Conclusions

What are we to make of all of this? We began with Juansi’s statement that “*todo este orgullo, toda esta arrogancia, toda esta envidia—todo entra ahora; todo viene con la Colectividad.*” That is, that the CBE was responsible for all of the infighting, backbiting, and mistrust that plague relations between Bolivians in Escobar. Yet having just explored the economic and social situations that not only characterize the highlands of Potosí, but Escobar as well, we can see that the matter is more complex. Indeed, we have seen that conflict, rivalry, and exclusivity characterize the cultural landscape of the Bolivian highlands. Envy and pride are not just a function of the CBE. As one Pancocheño friend of mine stated with regard to Potosí: “There is always envy” (“*envidia, siempre hay*”). Certainly, envy existed over the productivity of another’s fields or herds, and it could arise through intra-familial conflicts over land, inheritance, or intimate relations. Moreover, key differences between ethnic groups—i.e. the wealth, occupations, and cultural profiles of the Saropalkeños versus the Pancocheños, for example—were the stuff of bitter rivalries that were often framed in terms of envy (*los dos quieren estar el*

uno encima del otro; los dos quieren estar arriba y agobiando a los demás). So what is the argument here?

The argument is that the socially divisive complex of envy we see in Escobar and throughout the CBE has its roots in Potosí, but that there, envy and pride were somewhat “checked”. That is, the terms of both the local climate and ecology, and the ethnic economy, kept differentiation in check; individual, exclusive accumulation (to the extent this was even possible) often had to be reconciled and negotiated with rationales of production whose object was otherwise (i.e. production through ritual/cosmological frames that privileged redistribution and the reproduction of social units and their place in the universe). With the emigration to Escobar, the checks on accumulation and differentiation were removed, at the same time that the logic of progress supplanted other productive logics. In Escobar, a family could accumulate a surplus, market it, climb the horticultural ladder, and thus progress. In this way, the emigration created a series of changes, not just in the ‘physical’ circumstances of production, but in the modalities and purposes of production. The changes allowed Potosinos of various stripes to ‘work on’ their differences and dignity in ways that were not possible at home. The argument, then, is that the envy complex we see in Escobar “exploded” as a function of the emigration. Yet the argument does not stop there—what of the CBE’s role in this?

The second part of this argument is that the CBE, by mediating the changes wrought through the emigration, has helped produce, but also shaped, this explosion of envy—in both inter- and intra-ethnic dimensions. We have seen that, by creating the Market, the CBE has played a crucial role in enabling and facilitating the pursuits of progress over which envy is both experienced and articulated. Indeed, it has shaped economic differentiation among those who operate within it, whether they be producers or those in *compra-venta*. We have also seen that the differentiation the Market shapes has deeper roots in differences in occupation, wealth, and cultural profiles among the Potosinos it has brought together under one roof. By articulating ethnic and class rivals in this way, and making their relative progress visible, the CBE has intensified competition. In these ways it has solidified progress—which both incorporates and responds to the ethno-racial dimensions of economic difference—as not just the predominant logic of production, but the primary language of articulation between Bolivians as outsider-others. In this way, Juansi’s argument that “*todo este orgullo, toda esta arrogancia, toda esta envidia—todo entra ahora; todo viene con la Colectividad*” is in fact correct.

What we'll show in the next chapter is that, by enabling and shaping this envy complex, the CBE brought about the very conditions that frustrated its mission of serving the public good. That is, I argue that by contributing to the explosion of socially divisive envy and the antagonisms this engenders, the CBE frustrated its own work of cultivating other-regarding and horizontal identifications between Bolivians who had pre-existing rivalries. I argue that the conditions it helped bring about played a crucial role in its usurpation and the complicity in it.

Chapter 8:

Envy, Usurpation, and the ‘Failure’ of the CBE

Introduction

In the last chapter I argued that envy did in fact exist up in rural Potosí, though only to a certain extent, and that ‘native’ communities there cannot be imagined as pristine places cut off from market involvement, structured wholly by egalitarian reciprocity, and without hierarchy and conflict. I also argued that, as a function of the changes wrought through the emigration—changes which were shaped by the CBE and its Market—envy and the complex surrounding it ‘exploded’. In this chapter, I argue that the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE, first introduced in Chapter 1, cannot be understood without reference to this ‘explosion’ of envy, and the role the CBE’s Market played in it. While it is an open question whether and to what extent envy, broadly conceived, played a role in motivating those who allegedly designed and carried out the ‘usurpation’, I argue that the complex of envy was a necessary condition for its ‘architects’ to orchestrate the regime change they are said to have accomplished. Indeed, I argue that these ‘architects’ were able to oust the incumbent Cahuana by cultivating sentiments of envy and rivalry between (among others) the Pancocheños and Cahuana’s own group, the Saropalkeños. I also argue that, once they had taken control of the entity, these and other ‘usurpers’ enlisted the complicity of many in this new regime by pragmatically distributing spoils between socios puesteros among whom there had already been a history of ‘*fijarse*’ (i.e. competitive comparison). With this, I argue that the patron-clientage that came to overtake the CBE only came to reproduce and exacerbate what had already been an intensified culture of envy. The effects of this given the larger ‘usurpation’ ranged from significant exclusions to the deepening of economic hierarchies, and from the entrenchment of pre-existing social and racial cleavages to the elaboration of new ones.

The progression of discussions in this Chapter is thus the following: First, I recount how the CBE contributed to the explosion of envy produced through the changes wrought through the immigration. Second, I recount the original ‘coup’ that initiated the ‘usurpation’ and examine the extent to which it was motivated by envy and its entailments. Third, I examine whether and how its ‘architects’ cultivated envy and rivalry to orchestrate a regime change that favored them, and that came to elicit the complicity of the bulk of the Market’s puesteros. And lastly, I discuss what the ‘usurped’ CBE looked like vis-à-vis its founding mission and project. In this, I examine how the ‘usurpation’ came to reproduce and exacerbate the very envy complex that helped shape the ‘usurpation’ itself. By showing how the CBE ultimately ‘failed’ in generating *communal* development and esteem among *all* Bolivians in Escobar, I provide the ground upon which to, in the following chapter, discuss how critics of the ‘usurpation’ attempt to repair a lost moral ethic they believed obtained at home in Potosí with an eye toward laying the foundation of a Bolivian community that had never fully obtained among ‘Bolvians’—i.e. as national brethren in a foreign land.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Before beginning, let us first discuss ‘who is who’ in this chapter. Writing about the ‘failure’ of an entity of the public good is challenging enough, were it not also for having to describe within this—without being able to point to any smoking gun—the allegedly nefarious acts by individuals so as to make larger arguments about ethical reflection and practice. Indeed, how is one to refer to individuals whose critics call them corrupt, and for which there is a body of evidence that supports this claim, but where such evidence is only circumstantial, and where no political body competent in establishing culpability—yet which nevertheless recognizes ‘irregularities’—is to be found? Indeed, the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ), which is the arm of the Argentine Ministry of Justice charged with regulating entities of the public good, is not capable of establishing wrongdoing in any legalistic sense. As I show in Chapter 1 and its associated appendix, such competence is outside of the IGJ’s jurisdiction which, being part of Argentina’s Executive Branch (*Poder Ejecutivo*), is administrative and not judicial. That this is the case has, as I will show in the following chapter, serious implications for how both the

‘usurpation’ of the CBE and efforts to restore it in service of the public good are shaped. For this and other reasons, I face what becomes an *ethical* question concerning how to represent those on either ‘side’ of the conflict gripping the CBE.

While there are a few different systems of reference one might employ, it is crucial to note that the purpose of this dissertation is not to indict people, or to attempt to ‘prove’ who did what, at whose expense, and whether someone has broken the law. Where I am not a judge or jury in any legalistic sense, I can, as an anthropologist, work through a critically humanist epistemology to reveal the ethical critiques, protestations, and discontents that have arisen among various actors in the CBE’s crisis and those caught in its wake to comment upon the collective *lucha* of Bolivians in Escobar. While such a presentation is no doubt an artifact itself, and one that makes an argument about the ‘world’, it is based on an empirical record of events and acts that are often constructions made by actors themselves. On the one hand, and as presented in Chapter 1, we have the voices and arguments of the CBE’s protagonists as seen through the legal file maintained by the IGJ. This, we should note, is of course a set of contrasting representations of ‘facts’—representations that are not always accurate or even made in good faith. On the other hand, and as presented below, we have an ethnographic record of what many argue is a new kind of politico-economic order—i.e. what is the ‘usurpation’ itself. My anthropological reconciliation of these lines of evidence largely (but not wholly) confirms the critics’ interpretation of just who has committed, at the very least, ethical (if not legally verifiable) wrongdoing based on the evidence that is available.

All of this is quite Geertzian. Where events in the CBE are bathed in—and often constructed through—discourse, they become texts that are interpreted in the creation of yet other orders of texts. I, as an anthropologist coming in from outside, have indeed strained to read these over the shoulders of those that produce and animate them. In the end, I have produced this text in which I sort through the layers of practice and the representation of practice to get at the conditions and mechanisms shaping both. In this way I hope to illuminate the alleged ‘usurpation’ and its effects.

Because of these various degrees of mediation, because of the circumstantial nature of the evidence, and because there has not been any judicial pronouncement on wrongdoing regarding individual acts (just administrative declarations of ‘irregularity’ obtaining within the entity as a whole) I have chosen to employ—in this text—my own system of representation to refer to the

protagonists in the conflict gripping the CBE. By doing this, I avoid mis-assigning wrongdoing to specific individuals under the pretensions of legal or anthropological authority (which could have certain repercussions for them and for me) while still being able to—and here drawing on the evidence that, while circumstantial, is nevertheless real and abundant—describe the world as most who have experienced it will describe it. In the process, I afford the critics who have spoken out against these allegedly nefarious acts security against any depredations that might come from them were I not to use such a system of representation and incriminate them using their testimony. All of this allows me to, I hope, reveal in an ethically responsible and safe way, the practices and the conditions of their production that illuminate the predicament many Bolivians find themselves in as immigrants in Escobar.

How then, am I to refer to these various protagonists? There are a few options, not least of which was suggested by a friend of mine one Saturday afternoon in the barrio. As we watched the 1966 Clint Eastwood film *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, my friend suggested that one could tell the story of the CBE using these same designations. While my friend made an excellent case for rendering the complexities of the CBE's crisis in what were sufficient terms, arguing that the world, despite appearances, was quite simple underneath, I will opt for a different classification, for no better reason than because it points more to processes than to essences.

In the following discussions I refer to the range of actors participating in the 'usurpation' as either 'architects', 'capos', or 'usurpers'. Where the 'capos' most often includes the 'architects'; the 'usurpers' includes the 'capos'. Those whom I call the 'architects' are those few who allegedly designed and orchestrated the original coup of December 2001, and who were influential in setting up the Interim Commission that stood in place of what would have been Cahuana's incumbency had they not impugned his re-election. It is important to note that the alleged 'architects' were neither Pancocheño nor Saropalkeño. Those whom I call the 'capos' are those who became patrons in and of the 'usurpation'. In many instances, the 'capos' had been the largest *comerciantes* in the Market prior to the 'usurpation' and, through the new political-economic order they helped facilitate, expanded their operations and created clientele through their ability to manage perquisites and benefits. The principals among this group were those that oversaw the collection of the entity's revenues from the Market's puesteros. Moreover, these principals were known to enforce through intimidation and strong-arm tactics

the new political-economic structures from which they benefitted, and were those believed to have authored—or otherwise contracted—the mafia-style hits on those that opposed them. Finally, those whom I call ‘usurpers’ are those who played any role that supported or contributed to the ‘usurpation’, whether this be with regard to its design, implementation, or perpetuation. This category not only includes the ‘architects’ and the ‘capos’, but all those puesteros they were able to co-opt into their regime, either through patronage or by generating other forms of complicity. Those whom I call the ‘critics’ are those that oppose and speak out (though not always publically) against the ‘usurpation’. These are most often those socios (some of them former puesteros) who have been ousted from the CBE or excluded from participating in it under the ‘usurpation’.

CBE and the ‘Culture’ of Envy

In the last chapter I argued that envy ‘exploded’ as a function of the immigration, and that the CBE both contributed to and shaped this explosion. Indeed, by creating its Market, the CBE enabled and fostered the pursuits of progress over which envy is wrought. In the process I showed how the Market made this process differential. I also demonstrated how this differentiation occurred between rivals and ‘others’ that the Market had brought together. Because the Market made the differential progress between them visible and public, it intensified competition between them, further sharpening their rivalries. This tended to exacerbate the racial and ethnic dimensions of their differentiation—both reproducing and contesting discourses of otherness articulated through the idiom of ‘civilization’. Indeed, capitalization and economic independence could be used to justify ethnic superiority, or to contest the superiority another had claimed.

We have already discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 how envy can be understood as a visceral reaction against another’s progress. For another’s progress creates an economic-cum-cultural distance (or gap) between the parties, such that he who has progressed is seen to have purchase on the attributes of civilization while the other is left behind, having his lack of modern ways reinscribed. Unfortunately, civilization is often understood against the backdrop of indianness, meaning that progress is synonymous with movement away from indianness, while being left

behind means stagnating in it. Moreover, while another's progress may speak for itself, it is often accompanied by communicative acts—often performances linking words and things (like trucks)—that specifically mark or reference this gap and their ethno-racial entailments. Communicative demonstrations not only tend to connect in explicit ways one's capitalization or independence with civilization, they tend to highlight the other's lack of modern ways or indianness. Such demonstrations in which those still in the *lucha* are humiliated over the 'lack' (*carencia*) that marks them are understood as pride (*orgullo*). Yet pride, like envy, has become generalized, such that both have contributed to a 'culture' in which no-one wants anyone else to progress. Broadly understood, envy (which in many ways comes to incorporate pride) is often expressed as the recurrent and painful situation in which "they don't want you to progress": *no quieren que progrese; no te quieren ver prosperar*.

Though these relationships were likely proliferating across the barrio, no other institution enabled this 'culture of envy' like the Market did. This is because no other institution has facilitated the differentiation over which pride and envy are wrought—or concentrated 'others' with pre-existing hierarchies and rivalries that have been managed through the language of progress. Because of this, it has been easy for many to point the finger at the CBE and say that all the envy, pride, and exclusivity that occurs between Bolivians in Escobar is a function of it. While we have seen that the envy complex is in fact a function of changes wrought through the emigration, and that the CBE more accurately facilitated its 'explosion', it is also true that it has been nowhere stronger than in the CBE. Indeed, the CBE has been plagued by the envy complex, and this complex has played crucial roles in the 'failure' of the CBE—i.e. in its usurpation.

Because we will shortly explore whether the envy the CBE helped to produce motivated the usurpation, and the widespread complicity in it, we should briefly recount what envy looks like in the Market. There are different ways that envy manifests itself. First, we will discuss what envy looked like between individual puesteros. Second, we will discuss how this more simple envy is related to the rivalries that exist between ethnic groups (i.e. how rivalries encapsulate this basic envy being that envy is over progress, that progress is imbued with ideas of 'civilization', and that groups exist in hierarchies according to this idiom).

Envy and the Original ‘Coup’

In Chapter 1 I presented the original conflict over the CBE by examining its legal representation in the file compiled by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ). As seen there, the conflict surrounded the disputed election of December 22, 2001. The CBE’s *Fiscalizador*, Ceferino González, alleged that the incumbent President and principal founder of the entity, Teodoro Cahuana, had committed electoral fraud in seeking reelection. González claimed that Cahuana had not only failed to display the roll of eligible voters 50 days in advance of the election as required by the CBE’s statutes, but that he also presented an additional and unvetted roll of voters on the eve of the election. According to González, Cahuana’s insistence that the latter be allowed to vote was evidence that he had attempted to steal the election. González petitioned the IGJ that those listed on this second roll be declared ineligible to vote, that their votes be discounted, and that Cahuana be denied the reelection he claimed.

After González filed his allegations with the IGJ, Cahuana responded in kind. Arguing that the election of December 22, 2001 was fair, and that all socios deserved the right to vote, Cahuana claimed that a minority group of socios had seized the CBE and its patrimonies by force. Indeed, Cahuana had been violently ousted from the CBE. He argued that those responsible for this ‘coup’ were none other than the most powerful operators (*comerciantes*) in the CBE’s Market. Their objective, he claimed, was not to serve the public good as the CBE’s statutes dictated, but rather was to use the CBE as a front for their own private enrichment. In their ‘usurpation’, as he called it, these *socios* effectively eliminated the cultural, educational, and civic work the CBE had always performed, and for which his own tenures were famous. It is worth recalling his original language before the IGJ on 5 April, 2002:

Lo cierto es que, mediante amenazas de muerte y acciones de fuerza en contra de las autoridades legítimamente elegidas, en la primera quincena de enero de este año han procedido a copar, mediante el uso de la violencia física, el importante predio de cinco hectáreas, que incluye dos pabellones de 2.400m², con oficinas, laboratorios, restaurante con equipamiento industrial para 150 comensales, un salón de actos con todo el confort para reuniones, asambleas y espectáculos de 200m² de superficie, y demás instalaciones...

...Se trata de un grupo de ‘puesteros’ del mercado que forma parte de una de las actividades de la Colectividad, pero que tienen fines de lucro en forma personal, pues allí tienen permitido comercializar los productos de huerta que producen en sus fincas y otros que

reciben en consignación de grandes productores del interior. Esa es una de las muchas actividades de nuestra Institución, pero sus beneficiarios, lejos de pagar el canon obligatorio a la Colectividad para poder usar las instalaciones, decidieron tomar por la fuerza todo el predio y usar a la Institución como ‘pantalla’ de sus actividades comerciales. Han desbaratado todas las actividades sociales, propias de una asociación civil, tales como las de carácter cultural, deportivo, educativo, etc. para abocarse exclusivamente a lo que les da rédito monetario, pretendiendo utilizar la forma jurídica de nuestra asociación civil para generar un negocio, si bien lícito en sí mismo, no apto para llevarse adelante con la pantalla de nuestra Institución.

Given the different allegations made by González and Cahuana, what was this conflict really about? Was it about power? Was it about money? Was it about defending the community? Had there been a ‘usurpation’ as Cahuana alleged? If so, who had orchestrated it, and how did they consolidate their rule?

Although the original complaint denouncing Cahuana was brought to the IGJ by González in his capacity as *Fiscalizador*, the ‘usurpation’ was, as many would argue, not begun or coordinated by him. Rather, those critical of Cahuana’s ouster pointed the finger at two key players in the Market that were believed to be pulling the strings behind him: Eusebio Huari, who was the grape magnate, and Heitor Anaya, who was both the potato magnate and father of Nazario Anaya, who ran the banana trade. While Huari was viewed as the ‘brain’ (*cabeza*) behind the ‘usurpation’, Anaya was believed to have laid certain groundwork for it, having been the CBE’s Treasurer for some years and suspected of embezzling institutional monies. This, some alleged, had gone on under the noses of everyone, including Cahuana¹³⁴.

If Huari and Anaya were in fact behind the ‘usurpation’, as many critics alleged, what evidence supports this claim? In what capacity might they have been behind it—were they its ‘architects’, or merely strong-men (*capos*) that emerged through it? While we will get to different aspects of their roles and those of others throughout the chapter, let us begin here with

¹³⁴ It is important to note that, in the barrio, Anaya was known as *El Sapo*—“the Toad”. While Anaya may have earned this appellation for his dark skin, heavy-set body, broad nose and jowls, he may have also earned it for his reputation as an unscrupulous individual. For in the Andes, among other meanings, a *sapo* is someone who is not only shrewd (*vivo*), but wont to take advantage of others for their own gain. Calling someone a *sapo* thus means identifying them as deceitful, selfish, and immoral. The belief that Anaya was profiting from the ‘usurpation’ (if not also guilty of prior embezzlement) is likely the motivation behind this appellation. That there is also a popular patio game called “Sapo” is a felicitous coincidence. For in this game, one throws a metal token (or coin) at a wooden chest hoping to land it in the holes that grant the most points. Of paramount value, however, is landing the token in the mouth of the bronze *sapo* that sits atop the chest. Where one imagines the *sapo* as snapping the token out of the air just as he would a fly—swallowing it up and without a trace—one could also imagine *El Sapo* as seen snatching up the CBE’s revenues, leaving none the wiser.

some of the main lines of evidence—and popular reasoning—that implicates them in this alleged malfeasance.

“Projects Are Works of Love and Good Reasons to Trust the Directors”

“Obras son amores y buenas razones para confiar en los dirigentes”¹³⁵

Those critical of Cahuana’s challengers and their alleged behind-the-scenes backing by Huari and Anaya frequently point to a simple contrast. Cahuana, the critics argue, had been responsible for the incredible success of the CBE; it was because of his various terms as President that so much had been done on behalf of the Bolivian community. Cahuana, they argued, had been instrumental in creating that for which the CBE had become famous. To begin, Cahuana had initiated the formation of the *Grupo Enlace*, the Quechua-speaking police force which came to secure Bolivian life and property against Argentine depredations. Second, Cahuana had initiated the construction of the Market (and later the Feria) that provided a major means of economic development for the *quinteros* and textile merchants, respectively. The critics of the ‘usurpation’ also pointed to the fact that the revenues generated from the latter ventures had, once again under Cahuana’s stewardship, financed not only infrastructural and public works in the barrio (e.g. the paving of the main streets) but also the staffing of a local health clinic with Quechua-speaking physicians. Finally, many also stated that it was under Cahuana that the Bolivian community had become respected, not just in Escobar, but in Buenos Aires the City. Cahuana was, they argued, responsible for the support the CBE’s socios received from the Bolivian diplomatic mission in Buenos Aires, and the reason why the CBE became a resource for managing the political aspects of Bolivian immigration and foreign residency. Indeed, Cahuana and his Commissions were known as those who had opened these channels and established political relations with those that mattered most.

¹³⁵ This statement, that says that the CBE’s public works are the signs of devotion by its leaders, and thus the ways through which both the socios and the public at large can trust in them, is taken from *Imagen de Bolivia* (2000), a publication dedicated to recounting the history of the CBE and its successes since its founding in 1990. The implication is that where the CBE is performing its mission of serving the community, its leaders are honest and legitimate; where this is not the case, the implication is that those at the helm are not legitimate. For an immigrant population that may be unfamiliar with the juridical nature of the CBE, this phrase, which titles a section on the history of the CBE is likely meant to be didactic.

By contrast, these critics pointed to the simple fact that since Cahuana had been ousted in early 2002, the CBE had ceased to function on behalf of the ‘community’. All educational, cultural, and civic programming had been eliminated, with the sole exception being the annual festivities of Bolivian Independence Day. Moreover, they pointed to the fact that no new infrastructural development had been undertaken, and that certain patrimony of the CBE had disappeared. Many cited the loss of the new computers that comprised the recently constructed *sala de computación* as iconic of the ‘usurpation’ itself. In their eyes, all of this delegitimized the Interim Commission that had taken over, and which they viewed as having been erected by Huari and Anaya as a puppet government. Indeed, they stated bluntly that this Commission had simply been named by the ‘*capos*’ themselves in their own meetings and without the mandate of the whole body of *socios*.

Yet Huari and Anaya, as the entity’s *de facto* leaders, were seen to be behind the ‘usurpation’ for more than simply failing to pursue the public good. As discussed in the previous chapters, both Huari and Anaya were those that managed the collection of the CBE’s revenues. This was orchestrated by employing Anaya’s niece and an outspoken Pancocheña to handle the job in a move that some alleged was made to generate both a level of distraction regarding the distance Anaya had with this practice as well as a politics of misrecognition whereby the Pancocheños could be contented with a degree of, at least ostensible, representation in the workings of the entity. Certainly, the combination of Huari and Anaya’s collection of the puesteros’ nightly operating fees and failure to generate service projects on behalf of the community raised more than a few eyebrows. While we’ll see how this fact plays into the ways we might read their motivations in allegedly orchestrating ‘usurpation’, there are a few more points concerning their involvement to consider. Beyond their management of the entity’s funds, Huari had always been the *apoderado* (legal representative) of González the *Fiscalizador* in the legal fight over the CBE. As seen in Chapter 1, Huari became the principal litigant of the ‘usurpers’ during the protracted legal battle, a side whose machinations and pretensions against the public good are—I believe—clearly seen in the evolution of their stance vis-à-vis the ‘irregularities’ of the CBE. Finally, Huari is seen to be behind the ‘usurpation’ for the violence in which he and his alleged co-conspirators have been implicated. While the CBE’s Secretary of Culture was brutally beaten for allegedly speaking out against the ‘usurpation’ allegedly run by him, Huari has been the specific target of yet-to-be realized plots to overthrow him. That is, on a

few different occasions I was informed of different plots to break his legs and oust him for having committed political-economic violence against the community and individual socios. Indeed, his alleged ‘usurpation’ had changed many families’ livelihoods, and threatened to do so where anyone challenged the new order he facilitated and defended. That these plots specifically targeted him as an object of violent retribution links him to the ‘usurpation’ as a whole, if only circumstantially.

The point of examining the extent to which the ‘usurpation’ can be traced to certain individuals is not to establish their culpability in any objective sense, but rather to illuminate the dynamics around which we can ‘see’ ethical reflection and moral commitment. I have proposed that this dynamics is one of envy. We are now in a position to ask: Was the original ‘coup’ that initiated the ‘usurpation’—so far as we understand it given the limitations of the case—motivated in some part by envy?

“Everything Is for Money”

“Todo es por plata”

Having identified the alleged architects of the ‘usurpation’, what might have motivated them? What was the logic that shaped their actions, if not also desires? Certainly, with the CBE undergoing a regulatory intervention by the IGJ—an intervention which many regarded as having been co-opted by the ‘usurpers’—, I was not in a position to make direct or public inquiries about just *what* had motivated *whom* for fear of being ‘*ubicado*’ (put in my place). In fact, I was consistently reminded that one who stirred the pot could end up like the CBE’s Secretary of Culture who had turned up brutally beaten for allegedly speaking truth to power. Moreover, many warned me that I was out of my element, and mustn’t forget it.

Cuidado, estos tipos no tienen problema en matar a gente; y si desaparecís, nadie lo va a saber. Acá estás solo. Ojo.

Careful, these guys don’t have any problem killing people; and if you disappear, no-one is going to know it. You’re here alone. Watch it.

Nevertheless, when I asked certain critics with whom I shared trust (*confianza*) what had motivated the ‘usurpers’, their response was often brutally frank: “Everything is for money” (*Todo es por plata*), as if this needed no further explanation. Not infrequently, this common response was followed by a cascade of rhetorical questions that focused on the CBE’s revenues:

¿Qué hacen con la plata que juntan? Cuando Betty paga su canon diario, ¿adónde va esa plata?

—¡la están sacando pues! ¡y ahí van comprando terrenos y camiones!

What are they doing with the money they collect? When Betty pays her nightly fee, where does that money go?

—They’re taking it for themselves! And there they go buying land and trucks!

¿Pagan sus canones los grandes? Imagínate cuánto uno ahorra en un año si no lo paga. ¿Cuántos son 25 pesos diarios por un año? ¡Imagínatelo!

Are the capos even paying their own fees? Imagine how much one saves in a year if he doesn’t pay. What’s \$25 pesos a day for a year? Just imagine it!

That money was the principal motivation behind the ‘usurpation’ was not a stretch. Indeed, as we have seen others remark elsewhere: no-one ever imagined that the CBE would generate just so much of it.

In all of this however, it is important to note that most in the Market did not preoccupy themselves with the question of corruption or embezzlement. Nor were most operators overtly critical of the Interim Commission, the Commissions that followed, or their alleged patrons¹³⁶. Many puesteros even vociferously claimed that Cahuana *had* in fact made an illegitimate push

¹³⁶ There were of course exceptions to this. While most of the critics were in fact ‘outside’ the Market and the alleged racket that was run through it, there were puesteros on the inside that were critical, if not always outwardly vocal about it, once again for fear of being ‘ubicado’. One in particular was a puestero that had formerly been influential in the CBE’s politics and had enjoyed certain prosperity but had, for one or another reason, come to scratch out a meager living selling for a local Argentine *quintero*. At around 3am one winter night, I caught him standing at the bar of the *parrilla*, having drunk a fair amount of an Argentine rum called *Legui*. I had just finished my *descarga* and had gone there for a *tapa de asado*, momentarily enjoying the warmth of the fire whose coals fed the grill. Animated by his *trago*, the *puestero* launched into a critique of those who had occupied the CBE. Before he could go too far, however, he was quickly hushed by the *parrilla*’s concessionaire. *Shh shh shh*—the latter briskly implored him; airing his critique wasn’t worth the risk. For no-one knew who might be listening. Indeed, not much time had passed since the Secretary of Culture had been beaten for making similar accusations. While there was a contingent in the Market that was, like this puestero, critical of the ‘usurpation’, they were far less vocal about it. They had too much to lose. As long as they were able to continue to earn their daily keep, there was little reason for them to risk their livelihood by speaking out. With so much on the line, they kept quiet. This itself earned the reproach of those outside the CBE such that the common expression ‘*se comen la lengua*’ (literally, they swallow their tongue) was a popular way to critique the ‘usurpation’.

for continued power, that his ouster was fully warranted, and that the entity's revenues were being tied up in having to address *his* legalistic pretensions¹³⁷. While we will shortly explore what helped shape these convictions, we should note that the gaze of many puesteros was nevertheless narrow. As with my own *patrona*, many were concerned, not with 'politics' as some were wont to call it, but with what was happening in their own puesto¹³⁸. Many puesteros simply paid their nightly fee of \$25 pesos content with the fact that that sum enabled them to pursue their own livelihood more or less unencumbered. While everyone knew their fees were a sizable amount of money when added up over a year, it was the price one had to pay to secure what could be nevertheless become a handsome income, especially if one enjoyed certain perquisites of the 'usurpation' (see below).

If money was in fact a principal motivation behind the alleged 'usurpation', it fits to ask whether this motivation was not also shaped by larger structures of meaning—if not feeling. That is, if on one level it is true that everything was for money (*todo es por plata*) noting that the CBE's revenues figure squarely in how the 'usurpation' manifested itself, it fits to ask whether the actions and desires of those behind it were not also related to their *luchas*—i.e. to the kinds of painful struggles we explored in earlier chapters. Had the alleged architects been discriminated against for being *indios*, *pobres*, or *bolitas*? Had they otherwise been humiliated by others who threw their own progress in their faces? Might this have shaped their desires to turn the tables—i.e. to come out on top of and overwhelm everyone else in a will to power that was both visceral and calculated? Finally, noting that the alleged architects were from minority groups of Potosinos (i.e. Yureño and Jareño, specifically), to what extent might ethnic rivalry have shaped their desires to control the CBE and its revenues at the expense of the dominant groups?

¹³⁷ Even if this were the case, the CBE's revenues far exceed what could be spent on legal fees. Moreover, while funds collected on behalf of the public good can legally be used on behalf of the entity as a *whole* (i.e. as a legal person), it does not appear that they can be used to support the legal counsel of one party over another in an *internal* dispute, as in the present case. Certainly, Cahuana was not utilizing (or in any case even able to access) CBE funds in his fight to restore the CBE in service of the public good.

¹³⁸ As many of the younger generation would remark: *al viejo potosino le interesa laburar nomás—no le interesa la política; está contento agachar la cabeza y ganar su pan diario*. That the old Potosinos lacked *visión* was one of the reasons the younger generation believed they needed to be replaced on the Commissions that represented the socios—and the Bolivian community—generally.

“The Poorer They Were, The Harder They Stomp”

“Cuanto más pobres eran, más fuerte pisan”

Whether envy (broadly conceived), and all that to which it attends, shaped the alleged architects’ actions and desires is an open question, and will remain so here. Nevertheless, many critics suggest that an envious desire for power (*estar por encima de los demás*), itself inseparable from the desire to secure what one had always lacked (*carencia*), was in fact present for those allegedly behind the ‘usurpation’. Indeed, there was a common narrative levied specifically against *El Sapo* that said that those who had come from such poverty, from such lack—in a word, from farther back on the path toward progress—were wont to overcompensate. That is, they were wont to take more than their fair share, even if it might mean doing so unethically, and to subjugate (*pisar*) others.

Cuanto más pobres eran, más fuerte pisan.

The poorer they used to be, the more they [come to] oppress.

What had Anaya’s background been? As we mentioned in Chapter 6, he had come from Yura. Yet what was of note to many was not *where* he and his family had come from, but rather *what* they had come from: incredible poverty (*miseria*). People spanning a range of backgrounds had mentioned that the Anayas’ poverty was so severe that they needed the most basic of things—namely shoes. Some remembered that Anaya himself lacked them, and that relatives had bought him shoes out of pity. Others remarked that his children (specifically Nazario, who came to run the banana trade) were shoeless—and that upon going to school, the teachers took such pity on them that they brought in hand-me-downs from their own children. Indeed, pity (*lástima*) was the condition most emphasized in these recollections, and it was said to have endured for the Anayas up into the adult life of their children. Another familiar with the family mentioned how Jesusa Quelka, the wife of Nazario, used to sell sandwiches outside of the Market in the middle of the night—and how he had bought them up from her just so she wouldn’t have to bear the cold. Relative to other families of Potosinos, he said:

**Es que no tenían nada—pero nada; realmente, te daba lástima.
Pero mirálos ahora—¡mirá cómo están!**

They had nothing—*nothing*; really, you had to pity them.
But look at them now—just look at them!

One can only speculate as to what Anaya and his family had endured—the sting of poverty; the sting of indianness; the sting of being called *bolita sucio*. One thing is certain, however: in a relatively short time, the Anayas and the Quelkas had built an incredible pair of operations in the Market, cornering the trade in potatoes and bananas, and having a 30-ton truck as capital with which to access sources directly. Certainly, many familiar with their background ask how—if they had come from such poverty—could they have achieved such a level of wealth in so little time. While some suspected that their progress could only have come through the narcotics trade (not uncommon for those who had capitalized rapidly—see Chapter 5), most saw Anaya’s role as the CBE’s Treasurer, both prior to and during the ‘usurpation’, as evidence that he had privately capitalized at the expense of the public—i.e. that he had embezzlement of the CBE’s funds.

Where many recognized that *El Sapo* had played a major role in the ‘usurpation’, including an instrumental role in orchestrating the original ‘coup’, they pointed to the intersection of his extreme poverty and condition of ‘backwardness’—and the pain these engendered—as shaping both. Someone who has come from such an awful situation, they said, is so used to being stomped on by others (*pisado*), that if they have a chance to turn the tables, to come to power, they can’t refuse it. Moreover, they can’t help going overboard, even if it means committing unethical acts and stomping on others in return. *Cuanto más pobres eran, más fuerte pisan*. And where these relationships and practices are shaped by ethnic rivalries, such that the humiliation one is made to feel for his class or ethnic condition comes from rival groups (as is frequent), turning the tables often means doing so on—or at the expense of—these groups. This, many claim, is the *idiosyncracia*—indeed the *ignorancia*—of the Potosino.

Thus where everything may in fact be for money (*todo es por plata*), we may nevertheless read the alleged coup behind the ‘usurpation’ (and as we’ll see shortly, much of the ‘usurpation’ itself) as tied to the politico-racial economy of progress. That is, the lived condition of being *carenciado*, *indio/bolita*, and *pisado* comes to shape the motivations behind the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE. This, many say, includes Huari as well, who many recognize was a ‘*nadie*’ (nobody), a ‘*marginado*’ (outcast). That this lived condition of discrimination and shame plays a significant role in the ‘usurpation’ is ironic given that the CBE, as an entity of the public

good, was built specifically to help Bolivians (mostly Potosinos) attain cultural respect and human dignity through initiatives fostering economic development and human security.

In all this, one must note that while many critics read Anaya's and Huari's roles in the 'usurpation' as explainable through the idiom of envy and progress, broadly conceived, they do not see their acts as ethically defensible, or their *de facto* leadership of the CBE as legitimate. In their view, no amount of pain endured through the process of immigration and the changes it brought (which some even called '*trasculturación*') justified taking such advantage of others or committing criminal acts, some of which were violent ones. Despite the challenges posed by the immigration, one had to remember where he was from, even if this was painful. Indeed, many in the barrio and in the CBE had backgrounds not dissimilar to those of Anaya and Huari, and yet did not sell out or forget their roots as many claim these two had. At the same time, and as we'll see shortly, there are many who were similarly taken by this same social sickness of envy (*enfermedad social*) that there was rampant complicity in the 'usurpation' spawned by Anaya and Huari.

Orchestrating and Consolidating the 'Usurpation': The Cultivation of Envy and Rivalry

While it remains an open question whether in their 'usurpation' the alleged architects were motivated directly by envy, or simply had their desires shaped by it, what seems more certain is the way relations of envy among the puesteros—including ethnic rivalries expressed through this idiom—were a necessary set of conditions for the 'usurpers' to *carry out* the ouster of Cahuana and ultimately consolidate their hold over the CBE. Indeed, the 'usurpers' needed the support of a large majority of puesteros to successfully remove a storied figure whom many respected.

Yet more than a necessary set of conditions, I argue that the 'usurpers' were keen to the power and potential of the dynamics of envy and rivalry, and manipulated them toward their own ends. This suggests that the envy complex was not beyond the limits of their awareness, but was rather 'available' for their pragmatic engagement, even while they may have been 'prey' to it themselves. Where this is the case, I argue that the usurpers actually *cultivated* envy and rivalry among the Market's operators such that they could orchestrate the permanent ouster of Cahuana and his bloc, and come to control the intake and destination of the CBE's revenues.

This manipulation of sentiment was, I suggest, just one side of a two-pronged approach used by the ‘usurpers’ in securing their ‘usurpation’. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, and the ways it links up with what I laid out in Chapter 1, the other angle pursued by them—and here given their legal counsel—was to manipulate the IGJ’s *inability* to dictate specific terms to the CBE as a ‘private’ entity, even one under its own formal regulatory intervention. Indeed, where the IGJ possesses merely administrative—rather than judicial—competence, it can only demand that entities of the public good *self-regulate* in situations of ‘irregularity’. While the IGJ does ultimately possess the ability to revoke an entity’s authorization to function as such (i.e. their juridical personhood), that this happens only in extreme cases, and only after all other avenues have been exhausted, provides a wide margin for ‘corruption’ until such a determination may be made.

Returning to the immediate discussion, and to the present section, it fits to ask: if the ‘culture’ of envy and rivalry the CBE helped produce was a necessary element for the ‘usurpers’ to orchestrate their alleged coup, how did they play upon and cultivate these sentiments toward their own ends? What did they do such that the impugnation and ouster of Cahuana and his ethnic bloc would not only be the result, but would be seen as legitimate by a majority of the Market’s operators? To answer these and other questions, let us explore the events prior to and surrounding the election of December 22, 2001 in greater detail. In particular, let us examine how this election came to be contested through the idioms of kinship, exclusivity, and hierarchy.

The Election of December 22, 2001

As seen through the documents analyzed in Chapter 1, there was great disagreement over just who among the CBE’s *socios* should be allowed to vote in the election of December 22, 2001. For weeks leading up to it, Cahuana’s Executive Commission and the Electoral Commission backed by the *Fiscalizador* Ceferino González could not agree upon a single roll of eligible voters. Because of this, and as we saw above in Section 2, there were two rolls used at the time of the election, and the *socios* on each were asked to vote in separate ballot boxes. While Cahuana lost the first 132 to 69, with 6 abstaining, he won the second by such a wide margin—98 to 5, with 3 abstaining—that he easily carried the overall election. Seeing these different

margins, those behind the ‘usurpation’ called foul. After a period of tumult in which Cahuana was physically expelled from the CBE, Ceferino González became the principal signatory on a complaint before the IGJ alleging that those listed on the second roll had been made *socios* upon the eve of the election in order to steal it. González argued that these new socios not only lacked the antiquity to vote, but that the electoral rolls had not been exhibited and vetted at least 50 days prior to the election, as required by the CBE’s statutes.

In his response before the IGJ, Cahuana argued that the *socios* comprising the second roll had not been admitted ‘compulsively’ on the eve of the election, as González had claimed, but rather, that they had been admitted six months earlier in a properly issued sequel to the CBE’s Official Register (*Registro de Asociados* N°2). All of this, he argued, was done legitimately by his Executive Commission given the provisions of the entity’s statutes. Moreover, Cahuana claimed that his challengers had plotted to limit the number of *socios* allowed to vote to those on the first roll only¹³⁹. These *socios*, he argued, were none other than the Market’s chief operators, and were interested only in their own commercial activity and pecuniary gain. They were not, he continued, interested in the civic mission of the CBE which, by law, had to serve the public good. Contrary to the ‘usurpers’ tactic of exclusivity, Cahuana argued for inclusivity—i.e. that the greatest possible number of *socios* should be allowed to vote. This meant electoral rolls 1 and 2. As for González’s claim that the results of the second ballot box revealed Cahuana admitted these members only to steal the election, Cahuana responded that his support among these new *socios*—who were, moreover, *not* operators in the Market—was due to his successful stewardship of the CBE as an entity of the public good. That is, he argued that his support was due to the social, *not* economic, benefits the CBE provided to the community under his leadership.

“Between a rock and a hard place”

Entre la espada y la pared

¹³⁹ In his petition, Cahuana states: “No se pretenderá que la Colectividad tenga un *numerus clausus* de socios y que justamente dicha cantidad coincida con los socios que caben en uno solo de los libros. Esa idea sería no solamente absurda, sino que no estaría avalada por el Estatuto. Siempre pueden asociarse nuevas personas.”

Yet one might ask why Cahuana seemed to keep this second electoral roll containing the most recently admitted *socios* from the Fiscalizador and the Electoral Commission if both were required to vet it prior to the election. Those close to Cahuana claimed that he had been in a serious bind. They claimed that early in 2001, Cahuana had discovered that the electoral roll used in the previous year's election (December 2000) had been purged of some of his supporters in what was a first and then unknown plot to oust him. Huari and a few of his associates were the ones suspected of orchestrating this, for no other reason than that they were later discovered to have secured legal counsel before that election—the idea allegedly being that they could plan and navigate the aftermath of a successful coup, as they had been accused of doing in the election of December 22, 2001.

Seeing these designs, and against the idea that the CBE should become just a shell to foster commercial activity (a situation neither condoned by the CBE's statutes nor permissible under Argentine law), Cahuana was said to encourage an expansion of the membership beyond the Market to include more members from the Bolivian community at large—i.e. to include those that had always benefitted from the projects and services the CBE had provided. While this was not difficult, doing so successfully vis-à-vis the CBE's internal politics and factions was. Cahuana had no statutory obligation to communicate or publicize new admissions, being that they were the responsibility of the Executive Commission, and not a function of the General Assembly of *socios*. However, his failure to do so or to announce his intentions to the mass of *socios*—and particularly to the puesteros—was his error, politically speaking. Why? If those close to Cahuana are correct, and the eventual 'usurpers' had co-opted the office of Fiscalizador, if not the Electoral Commission as well, then Cahuana, who would not have wanted to show his full hand to his opposition before the election—but who would have depended upon their authorization to carry out an unassailable election—would have been stuck. This is likely why there ended up being two separate electoral rolls for the December 22, 2001 election, and why the second roll had not been exhibited for public review.

What were the effects of this? While the IGJ's Resolution (0628) from July 22, 2002 would state that the *socios* admitted during Cahuana's tenure in 2001 were perfectly legitimate, and that they had every right to vote, the damage to Cahuana's reputation, and to the CBE in general, had been done when the votes were first counted. Because Cahuana had not communicated the most recent admissions to the *socios* comprising the first roll (who were both

the oldest *socios* and the Market's operators, and who were those that would come to stand against him); because these recent admissions had not been vetted by the Fiscalizador and the Electoral Commission (who Cahuana believed were plotting against him); and because these "new" *socios* voted overwhelmingly for Cahuana, it was easy for Cahuana's opposition to spin a narrative of fraud, and impugn his intentions, acts, and character. Before examining the precise dimensions of the opposition's reaction, and thus showing how pre-existing relations of envy and rivalry were necessary for Cahuana's ouster, let us briefly ask whether Huari, González, and their bloc knew of Cahuana's recent admissions, and whether they might have used this to their advantage. This will help us determine the extent to which their alleged 'coup' was premediated.

Though it appears that Cahuana never gave what would become the second electoral roll to the Fiscalizador and the Electoral Commission for its due vetting for the reasons listed above (i.e. that he believed they had been compromised by the alleged architects, that he didn't want to show his full hand to those he suspected of nefarious plotting, etc.), he nevertheless tried to a certain extent—and thus reflecting the bind he was allegedly in—to cover his own bases statutorily speaking by making it known that there were in fact two Registers of *socios* (i.e. Registro de Asociados N°1 and N°2), and that he believed all *socios* (not just those contained on the first electoral roll) should be allowed to vote in the election of December 22, 2001. Cahuana made this clear in a letter to the Electoral Commission dating December 20, 2001:

To: Señores Eloy Apala and Lucio Copani

Tenemos el agrado de dirigirnos a Uds. para hacerles saber que, de acuerdo con lo previsto en el Estatuto Social en materia de asambleas y actos electorales, deberá utilizarse el padrón completo de asociados, es decir, el Libro N° 1 que incluye a los asociados del número 1 al 559 y su continuador, el Libro N°2 que incluye los asociados del número 560 al 796, inclusive... La limitación a una cierta cantidad de votantes, sin respaldo legal, es motivo de impugnación por fraude en perjuicio de la Institución.

Teodoro Cahuana, et.al.

Cahuana's attempt to cover at least some of his bases gave the alleged 'usurpers' certain options: if they couldn't defeat him outright through their own lobbying of those on the first electoral roll¹⁴⁰, they could argue that Cahuana, by not showing them the second roll, admitted these

¹⁴⁰ And lobby they did: the alleged architects were known to have waged a campaign to sway public opinion against Cahuana, claiming that he had committed various kinds of fraud and unethical acts.

socios at the last minute to steal the election. Indeed, they may well have anticipated this very scenario. Moreover, by spreading a pre-election discourse that the only *socios* eligible to vote were the oldest ‘founding’ *socios*—i.e. those who carried the weight in the Market, and who thought themselves more powerful than those who did not operate in the Market—whatever move Cahuana made would look like an illegitimate, if not desperate, push for continued power. This would particularly appear the case if those on this second roll voted in his favor, which they ultimately did. In many ways, one can imagine a scenario in which whatever Cahuana did, he had already been set up—a situation due in part to his failure to tackle the roots of the plot earlier on and outside of the election. By insisting that the *socios* listed on the second electoral roll vote in a separate ballot box, the usurpers were able to impugn Cahuana, his actions, and his character—even though Cahuana had won the election with a rightfully admitted mandate and had fought to preserve the integrity of the CBE as a not-for-profit entity of the public good.

“There is a great deal of envy between the pueblos”

“Hay mucha envidia entre los pueblos”

We have seen in Chapter 1 how the ‘usurpers’, with their legal counsel allegedly waiting in the wings, handled the aftermath of the election. One of their main tactics was to tie everything up in a legal bind such that they could profit from the strife and power vacuum within the CBE. For in the end, they knew that the IGJ would, given the limitations of its powers, require that the CBE *as a whole* resolve its own conflicts and *self-regulate*. Within this, they calculated that it would be highly unlikely that the IGJ would revoke the CBE’s juridical personhood if the latter did not excel at resolving its own conflicts. Where such an internal, pan-CBE resolution could not be achieved—because they themselves would prevent it from happening—they could explain to the *socios* that work on behalf of the public good could not be carried out because there was no IGJ-recognized Executive Commission to redistribute the entity’s revenues, which they of course continued to collect.

Yet underneath this legal tactic of manipulating the State, the ‘usurpers’ deployed a second and socio-political tactic to manipulate the puesteros of the CBE’s Market. I argue that to consolidate their hold over the CBE, the ‘usurpers’ incited pre-existing relations of envy,

rivalry, and hierarchy between the two most important factions within the Market—the Saropalkeños and the Pancocheños. Indeed, where Cahuana was a Saropalkeño, and González was a Pancocheño, this was a fruitful tactic indeed. By framing Cahuana’s move as an attempt to associate his own Saropalkeño relatives (*parientes*) and thus steal the election, the usurpers were able to rile up the Pancocheños and create a politics of misrecognition that distracted attention from their own nefarious acts. Within this, the ‘usurpers’ were able to frame their own ‘coup’ as a dignified response to an illegitimate power-grab by Cahuana whose logic was to enrich his own relatives at the expense of the Pancocheños and other groups.

To show the dynamics of this, let us first revisit the Saropalkeño-Pancocheño rivalry, and the political-economic, demographic, and cultural differences that undergird it. We have already seen some of the discursive representations of each *comunidad*. To mention them again briefly, the Saropalkeños are said to be more educated and skilled (*más capacitados*), more shrewd at business relations (*más listos para el negocio*), and more enlightened (*más despiertos*). They and others will argue that this is due to their engagement in the mining sector and the worldly exposure this has afforded them. Many also report that their experience in military service has ‘socialized’ them vis-à-vis other Bolivians and taught them more urban, ‘civilized’ ways (not least of which is to bathe oneself). In contrast, the dominant discourse holds that the Pancocheños are both more Indian (*más indio*) and more peasant (*más campesino*)—and as a result, less civilized (*más salvajes*). Many point to the fact that, because they are said to have had better lands, they did not need to engage in out-migration for wage labor, and were thus a more inward-looking community (*encerrados, unidos*). Having land, however, did not make them ‘wealthy’. Indeed, with relation to the Saropalkeños, the Pancocheños are said to have been extremely impoverished.

While these are discursive representations, there are demographic and human geographical differences that both subsume and inform them. Unfortunately, the data by which we can know the differences between Saropalka and Pancochi has only been published for the Provincial level, not the level of the individual cantons or communities within them¹⁴¹. Beginning with the political-economic data, itself collected in 1992, we see that the Linares Province, where Pancochi is located, accounted for 16% of the Department of Potosí’s overall cultivated surface (up from 12% in 1950). By contrast, the Nor Chichas Province, where

¹⁴¹ See, however, that we do have data for Caiza D, and within this canton, Pancochi specifically

Saropalka is located, accounted for only 5% of this surface (up from just 1.4% in 1950). Agriculture is thus more common in Linares than in Nor Chichas, even when the population difference is taken into consideration (in 1992, Linares had a population of 52,000 where Nor Chichas had 41,000) (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 117).

Where having a shortage of land often means higher rates of out-migration for wage labor, and where the latter is often related to higher rates of bilingualism, we see that the human geographical data once again bears out the differences upon which the Saropalkeños are said to be more ‘civilized’ and the Pancocheños less so. In Linares, where Pancochi is located, 46% of the population was monolingual in Quechua in 1992. By contrast, in Nor Chichas, where Saropalka is located, only 33% of the population was monolingual in Quechua¹⁴² (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 41). Set in the context of the aforementioned differences in agricultural production, these rates seem to confirm the fact that Saropalkeños migrated out more; i.e. that their greater bilingualism was a function of their engagement in more diverse economic pursuits (e.g. mining), if not in their greater participation in military service (known especially from the tattoos they bear from ‘*cuartel*’). This also seems to be confirmed by differential literacy rates. In Linares, where Pancochi is located, 47% are illiterate, while in Nor Chichas, where Saropalka is located, only 41% are illiterate¹⁴³ (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 48).

The rivalry—and indeed hierarchy—that has historically obtained between the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños is in many ways a function of these different attributes: the Saropalkeño is more bilingual and more literate; he has migrated out more and engaged in labor and civic pursuits that have connected him more to a “plurinational” Bolivia that is indeed multilingual and multicultural. In these ways, he has become more ‘civilized’ and ‘enlightened’. By contrast, the Pancocheño, being both more monolingual and illiterate, and more thoroughly *campesino*, is seen as more Indian (in the pejorative sense). By this reckoning, he is more ‘backward’ (*atrasado*). And where class and ethnic questions are intimately related, these hierarchical valuations in culture are never without their economic underbellies. As we just saw, the Pancocheño, in contrast to the Saropalkeño, is said to have left a very significant poverty (*una pobreza fuerte*). If the Provincial-level data is telling, this is also what the United Nations

¹⁴² Broken down by gender, we see that in Linares, 33% of men were monolingual in Quechua, whereas in Nor Chichas, only 16% of men were monolingual in Quechua.

¹⁴³ Broken down by gender, we see that in Linares, 28% of men and 61% of women are illiterate, while in Nor Chichas, only 16% of men and 60% of women are illiterate (Jetté and Rojas 1998: 48).

Development Programme saw as well: In 1998, the PNUD (in its Spanish acronym), gave the Linares Province a rating of 0.74 on the Index of Social Vulnerability, a composite measure of poverty. This is much higher than its findings of 0.68 for Nor Chichas, where Saropalka is located (PNUD 1998, cited in Jetté and Rojas 1998: 70).

These politico-economic and human geographic differences between Saropalka and Pancochi have created a hierarchy that, when signified through the idiom of progress, plays a significant role in the rivalry and envy between them. Yet there is also a history of political and cultural differences that contributes to this complex. What are they? Beginning with their cultural differences, a Pancocheño friend of mine stated simply that Pancochi and Saropalka are not only different, their differences are stark:

Juan (Pancocheño): **No tienen nada en común; son como el blanco y negro. Son diferentes en casi todo—en pensamiento, costumbres, vestamiento...**

They don't have anything in common; they're like black and white. They are different in almost everything—in their thought, customs, dress...

These differences in worldview and customs incorporate religious devotion, which has become a key way the two communities contrast themselves. Whereas the Pancocheños are almost exclusively Evangelicals, the Saropalkeños are almost all Catholics. From the Evangelical perspective, the Pancocheños are *creyentes* (believers), while the Saropalkeños are *mundanos* (worldly). Referencing their Catholicism, the Pancocheños do not hesitate in calling the Saropalkeños drunks (*borrachos*), noting that the latter's feting of the Virgin, the Saints, and indigenous spiritual entities is accompanied by the collective consumption of alcohol. For the Evangelical Pancocheños, not only are the Saints and indigenous spirits eschewed, so is the consumption of alcohol beyond what the Bible prescribes. Indeed, they hold that only Jesus Christ is the true lord, that the path to salvation is individual, and that the body—being a divine work—must not be contaminated or indignified by intoxication. While this slight of the Saropalkeños is somewhat ironic, being that the Pancocheños used to be Catholics themselves, it may be one way that the latter have pragmatically worked on the hierarchy through which they have been deemed inferior (i.e. *más campesino, más indio, más salvajes*). For being that the Evangelical gospel is often associated with progress—which as we saw earlier is frequently

conceived as movement towards ‘civilization’ and thus distance away from what marks one as ‘backward’—Pancocheño conversion to Evangelical Christianity may well have been motivated¹⁴⁴. Indeed, the term used by the Pancocheños—as is common in the Bolivian Andes—to refer to the place and practice of worship is *culto*. While *rendir culto* is a common gloss for the process of worship, the adjective *culto* also means cultured, educated, and refined. By practicing, and thus also being, *culto*, the Pancocheños have purchase on civilization and modernity in ways they historically lacked. In this way, and lacking other kinds of cultural capital, they may seek the upper hand on their Saropalkeño rivals. Nevertheless, these alleged pretensions of the Pancocheños have not gone uncontested. The Saropalkeños, and sometimes others as well, have been known to retort: “Sure the Pancocheños tout the Bible, but they can’t read it (or they can’t understand it)!” Such retorts are a not-so-subtle way of referencing their relative illiteracy and reinscribing their inferior place in the order of things.

“Before they used to tear at each other’s hide”

“Antes se sacaron el cuero”

These cultural differences are said to be in the blood (*en la sangre*), and relations between the two communities have historically been contentious. The Pancocheño-Saropalkeño rivalry—which we now see is as much cultural as it is economic—has no doubt been intensified by their geographical proximity. As my friend Juan was clear to point out, Pancochi and Saropalka literally border one another (*tienen limites*), with a mountain marking their divide. Many note that up in Potosí, there have been conflicts over the lands between them, and that trespasses from either side—whether human or animal—have always brought consequences.

While I believe the present discussion is enough to allow us to see how their differences could be exploited by the architects of the ‘usurpation’ (which I explore below), one is nevertheless left wondering if these differences are not based on a deeper divide that may have pre-Hispanic roots. Indeed, it may be no coincidence that the modern political boundary separating the Linares and Nor Chichas Provinces runs right between Pancochi and Saropalka,

¹⁴⁴ For a comparative literature on the subject, see Robbins (2004), Keane (2007).

seeing that such boundaries often reflect Spanish colonial designations which are themselves frequently based on pre-Hispanic ethno-political geographies.

The accompanying Appendix is thus dedicated to exploring the Pancocheño – Saropalkeño rivalry in ethno-historical perspective. It examines Spanish Colonial evidence to determine whether the forebears of Pancochi and Saropalka had common or different ethno-political roots prior to the Spanish Invasion, and how these roots might have contributed to their relationship through time. Tentative findings suggest that the Saropalkeños are descendant from the Wisijsa ethnic group, itself part of the larger QaraQara nation, and that the Pancocheños are descendant from Ayllu Manasaia of the Chichas nation. While both of these nations enjoyed certain prestige under the Inca as part of the Confederation of Charcas, the QaraQara seem to have been a more highly regarded and ‘civilized’ polity. Moreover, the forebears of the Pancocheños (i.e. Ayllu Manasaia—what is today Ayllu Mangasaya), resided within the Wisijsa’s ‘core’ territory as ‘foreign’ others. While this was not uncommon given the larger pattern of ethno-political interdigitation in the pre-Hispanic Andes, I suggest that this foreign residence, coupled with the relative status of each group given the differential prestige of their parent nations—not to mention their own local cultural differences—, may have been enough to ground a mutual designation of each other as ‘other’ (and in a hierarchical configuration) that may have persisted through time and structuring multiple resignifications as pre-Hispanic ethno-political designations gave way to new symbolic distinctions emerging in the Colonial and Republican periods. In this way, the current quarreling and backbiting (*rencilla*) that characterizes the relationship between Pancocheños and Saropalkeños is not based simply on their memories of land disputes, on their being “Linareños” and “Chicheños”, or on their being *creyentes* and *mundanos*. Rather, these more contemporary designations are based on ‘deeper’ divisions—even if the precise terms of the latter have worn away over time. In this way, one comes to appreciate the extent to which such a rivalry between the Pancocheños and Saropalkeños is “in the blood” (*en la sangre*), as well as how such deep-seated opposition is viewed by other ethnic-nationalities (e.g. the *Qochalos* and *Chapacos*) as the ‘idiosyncrasy’ (*idiosincracia*) and ‘essence’ (*esencia*)—if not also the ‘ignorance’ (*ignorancia*) of the *Qolla*.

“They brought the fight from home”

“Trajeron la pelea de allá”

While most Potosinos will agree that the Pancocheños arrived first to Escobar, most will also agree that the Saropalkeños were the thrust behind the founding and development of the CBE as a juridical entity. Cahuana was of course instrumental in this. Not only was he the principal signatory on the entity’s statutes through which the IGJ authorized the CBE into being, he was, a few years later, crucial in the design and construction of the Market. By the end of the mid 1990s, Cahuana had been the President of the CBE for six consecutive years (1990-1996), and had guided the CBE to great success and renown, both in Argentina and Bolivia. It was likely for this reason that the Saropalkeños were rumored to have viewed the CBE, its Market, and perhaps the success of both as ‘theirs’. This no doubt helped reproduce the rivalry and hierarchically superior position they were known to have with the Pancocheños¹⁴⁵.

Within the Market itself, the rivalry between the Pancocheños and Saropalkeños—as between Potosino communities more generally—was likely experienced and framed as envy. This is because the Market, set within a larger set of changes it itself shaped, provided both a means and a frame within which to work out the relations of progress which, as we have seen, is the most frequent idiom through which groups negotiate their differences. Where progress is most often a zero-sum equation, competition between the Pancocheños and Saropalkeños must have been fierce. I was unable to observe this directly. For by the time I arrived to the barrio in 2005, it had been four years since the Saropalkeños had pulled out—or been forced out, depending on one’s view—of the CBE and its Market.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ While both groups progressed economically speaking, and sometimes even intermarried, they still remained true to their religious and cultural practices. The Saropalkeños continued to be *mundanos*, while the Pancocheños continued in their wholesale conversion to Evangelical Christianity—even founding their own ‘culto’ in the barrio, where the sermon is delivered in Quechua.

¹⁴⁶ True to their reputation for being able to get things done, the Saropalkeños created their own Market in Morón, where many now reside. No doubt having felt burned by their experience in the CBE, the Market the Saropalkeños formed is officially a cooperative, which is juridically different than the CBE.

Cultivating Envy and Rivalry vis-à-vis the Ethics of Proportionality and Rotationality

When I worked in the Market and asked what had originally happened in the CBE's election of December 22, 2001 the response from many *puesteros* was that Cahuana had not wanted to relinquish the Presidency, and that he had associated his *parientes* to win the election to maintain it. While many *puesteros* framed this as Cahuana's individual desire to retain power and the perquisites this might afford (e.g. *quería todo para él; no quería soltar lo que tenía*), just as many framed it in terms of the Pancocheño – Saropalkeño divide. As we saw above, if the Pancocheños were the first to arrive to Escobar, as well as those who eventually comprised the bulk of the Market's *puesteros*, it was the Saropalkeños who had been the thrust behind the founding of the CBE. It was because of this, many maintained, that the Saropalkeños saw the CBE—and its Market—as 'theirs'. It was not right, many said, that this should be the case. For as one Yureña stated, the CBE was a “Colectividad *Bo-li-vi-an-a*”—sounding out the syllables of Bolivian commonality and inclusivity to emphasize that all groups (though here the reference was to all groups of *puesteros*) should have both equal representation and a right to the benefits this brings. Indeed, the implication was that the Saropalkeños—here organized by Cahuana—were taking their undue share of a collective resource.

I would argue that this sentiment, conveyed here by a Yureña, is a common one in the Bolivian highlands (if not in the broader Andes), and that it reflects a long-standing ethic of resource allocation and political participation along ideologies of turn-taking and proportionality, if not egalitarianism. Beginning with resource allocation and/or management, we may look no further than perhaps the most crucial resource in the Andes: water. Many have noted how this resource must be carefully managed in practices of irrigation. Water 'mayors' (*larqa alcaldes*) have been a commonplace across the highlands, and are elected to ensure that proper turns are taken in distributing water equitably among fields party to an irrigation network. Though this turn-taking ultimately stems from the scarcity of water, the need for such mayors is also to settle the disputes that arise over transgressions—i.e. when neighbors 'steal' water from one another through this commons¹⁴⁷. Trawick (2003) has noted how these practices have generated an ethic

¹⁴⁷ With water allocation we are of course dealing with a commons. Yet the ethic of proportionality—or the equitable distribution of resources—has been brought to bear on situations in which a commons did not exist and in which a new resource was introduced. Xavier Albó recounts how an effort to introduce oranges into a community in the Bolivian *yungas* continued to fail until every family obtained their own orange trees. Indeed, the original

of water distribution in which turn-taking and proportionality have become moral standards. Indeed, the ethics which emerges in such settings is one that seeks to ensure that no-one is receiving an undue share at the expense of others. Though such an ethic may have deep roots in the Andes, it may be due in large part to the changes wrought by the Colonial era (see Harris 1995).

This ethic of rotationality and proportionality, if not egalitarianism, in resource management has in many instances been brought to bear on the economic changes Andean highlanders have continually had to negotiate. Where engagement in the market economy has increased, systems of rotative credit and/or savings have emerged. In Chapter 5 [Envy] we discussed the *pasanakuy* as the quintessential form of this. As I demonstrated there, the *pasanakuy* is an interest free, credit and savings system that is organized by a fixed group of contributors whose beneficiary rotates among them over the course of its cycle. All participants contribute the same, fixed sum every week to create a pot that is ‘won’ by a drawing. All participants will win once—and only once—before the cycle is complete. Where they all win the same money, which is no more and no less than what they put in, the difference comes in *when* they win. An early draw will afford the winner what amounts to a line of credit over the course of the cycle which they might use to make a capital improvement to their shop or *comedor*, for example. A late draw, in contrast, amounts to having put away savings for the duration of the cycle that under no circumstances could be touched. Regardless of how it turns out for each participant, all will have had an equal turn at the benefits, with no-one receiving an undue share or privilege.

While rotationality as a practical ethics is seen in the management of resources ranging from water to lines of credit, it is also seen in community celebrations and politics. There is a vast literature on the *fiesta-cargo* systems of the Andean highlands—one which I cannot review

inequality caused by the differences in who had orange trees resulted in situations where those who lacked them were stealing the fruit of those who had them. Albó argues that the ethic of resource sharing found in Andean communities may often be due not just to a communitarian spirit, but to *mutual distrust* as well. As narrated by Albó: “Tomemos otro ejemplo, el de la distribución equitativa de beneficios entre todos los miembros de la comunidad. La equidad de la distribución puede deberse no solo a un espíritu igualitario sino también a la desconfianza colectiva. Hace unos años hubo una iniciativa en una colonia de Yungas para introducir naranjos. Pero la iniciativa fracasó hasta que por fin toda la comunidad logró ponerse de acuerdo y al unísono *todos* introdujeron naranjos en sus parcelas. La razón dada para explicar eso fue: “Ahora ya no hay peligro de que los que no tienen naranjas se las quiten a los que tienen”. Las mutuas sospechas encontraron su equilibrio a través de una acción colectiva. La desconfianza engendró un cierto comunitarismo. Pero un comunitarismo que en última instancia era sólo una yuxtaposición sincronizada de individualismos (Albó 1977: 18).”

here. With regard to southern Bolivia, we may look to the work of Rasnake (1988) and Harman (1987) to see how such a system of *cargos* evolved in Yura and what its implications are concerning an ethics of rotationality and proportionality, if not egalitarianism. Rasnake states that in Yura, the nature of political authority has changed greatly over the centuries. Where in the pre-Hispanic Andes *curacas* were hereditary rulers who concentrated and redistributed resources on behalf of their subjects in a co-creation and representation of the polity, this relationship often became exploitative under Spanish domination, as many *curacas* fought to preserve their own personal status in the colonial regime at the expense of their subjects (Rasnake 1988; see also Ramírez 1996, Stern 1993). Rasnake demonstrates how, following the indigenous rebellions of the 1780s, the hereditary *curacas* were abolished and what had become contradictory aspects of their authority were split between, on the one hand, an emergent, egalitarian system of leadership by the *ayllus'* own elders (*kuraqkuna*), and, on the other, the post of Corregidor which, against the former and before the state, came to be occupied by the local *mestizo* elite (*vecinos*) (Rasnake 1988: 164, 170). What had taken place, essentially, was a leveling of the *ayllus'* own authority roles and the removal of internal hierarchy to an external, non-indigenous position.

In Yura today, the *kuraqkuna* serve on a rotational basis, and their political leadership emerges through practical consensus, versus stemming from any inherent status. In this way, the *kuraqkuna* serve to enunciate a sense of the *ayllu* in its collectivist dimension where disputes or individual demands might threaten group unity (Rasnake 1988: 263-267). As regards to their duties in ritual and festive contexts, the *kuraqkuna* have come to coordinate the mobilization and distribution of resources (rather than concentrate and redistribute them in the style of their hereditary forbears), such that the economic burdens—and benefits—are distributed among the *ayllu* as a whole. Unlike their *kurakas* in the colonial era, the *kuraqkuna* do not gain personal wealth from their *cargos*; rather, they more often than not endure certain hardships to perform them (Harman 1987). As for any status that might accrue to them, this is only temporary given that the post will rotate the following year. As many scholars have noted, what becomes stratified are the offices (*cargos*) themselves, not the married couples that perform them (see De la Cadena 1989: 102). In a range of ways, then, the power of the *kuraqkuna* has become a cohesive, rather than a coercive, force in a politics of socio-cultural reproduction (Rasnake 1988: 267; Harman 1987). This, however, is not to say that internal differentiation or conflict do not

exist; rather it is to argue, as Rasnake and Harman have, that such systems of authority subordinate and manage differences and conflict within larger, cosmologically dense frames that reproduce degrees of collectivism in light of colonial and republican extraction. Indeed, the fiesta-cargo systems are central to the ‘ethnic economy’ we explored in the last chapter.

This contemporary politics of rotationality predicated upon ethics of egalitarianism and proportionality has likely been the basis upon which new political structures are ‘indigenized’ in Andean communities. Xavier Albó notes how in Jesus de Machaca near Lake Titicaca, the introduction of labor politics following the MNR Revolution has resulted in a representational form reminiscent of the egalitarian, rotational structures we just explored. What is stressed, he argues,—even more than one’s aptitude or qualifications for the position—is that access to opportunities and the costs they might entail are evenly and democratically distributed across the group:

Incluso en muchos lugares en los que se ha introducido la organización sindical campesina de cuño más moderno, persiste el esquema de que todos los miembros del grupo—sean estas familias, estancias, zonas, comunidades, o grupos de comunidades—vayan pasando por turno rotativo a ir ocupando los diversos cargos necesarios para el funcionamiento del grupo. La igualdad de oportunidades (y de inoportunidades) para todos y cada uno es considerado un criterio más importante que el de aptitud para el cargo... [E]ste mismo hecho fomenta el sentido comunal, casi ritual, de toda la gestión comunitaria y exige, para su buen funcionamiento, un constante control comunitario sobre los que están de servicio en un período determinado. Este sistema genera también una cierta mística de ‘servicio a la comunidad’ en contraposición a la de ‘poder sobre la comunidad’ más propia de los sistemas occidentales. (Albó 1977: 2)

Albó argues that in this indigenous form of democracy, what is generated is an ideology of “service *to* the community” rather than an ideology that legitimates any individual’s “power *over* the community”.

Yet as I have been at pains to point out, communities of highlanders—whether in Bolivia or in Argentina—are neither thoroughly egalitarian nor free from pursuits of distinction and power. Not only are there conflicts between individuals and families regarding one another’s progress, there are rivalries between entire communities. Conflicts on both levels are frequently articulated through the idiom of envy: between individuals and families, this is most often framed as “*tus vecinos—tus parientes—no quieren que prograses; no te quieren ver prosperar*”, while between entire communities it is often expressed simply as “*hay mucha envidia entre los*

pueblos”. Across both of these levels runs a practical logic frequently articulated as ‘one person or group wanting to be on top of another’ (i.e. “*los dos quieren estar el uno encima del otro*”).

What we thus see vis-à-vis practices of rotationality and their ethics of egalitarianism—ethics which, as we have seen, arise just as much through communitarian concerns as through mutual suspicions and distrust—are logics of exclusive accumulation and the desire to be ‘on top of’, if not suffocating or overwhelming, one’s own neighbors and even relatives¹⁴⁸. The *tension* between these two is very much what Albó had in mind when he titled his piece (cited above) “The Aymaran Paradox” (*Paradoja Aymara*).

In light of this tension, and returning to the CBE, how are we to read the events surrounding the election of December 22, 2001? Let us briefly recall the discourses among the Market’s *puesteros* that continued to reference them a few years after the fact. Of the original strife, what one frequently heard was that Cahuana had wanted to retain power at all costs; that he wanted everything for himself; and that the Saropalkeños (i.e. his ethnic bloc) saw the CBE and its Market as ‘theirs’ over and above groups like the Pancocheños. When viewed in light of the above tension, these representations come to have deeper meaning. I would argue that through their insistence that the votes be tallied in separate ballot boxes—i.e. one for the ‘old socios’ (*socios antiguos*) and one for the ‘new socios’ (*los nuevos*)—the architects and other would-be usurpers were able to point the finger at Cahuana and accuse him and his fellow Saropalkeños of violating a communitarian ethic that, despite having traditionally obtained within single highland communities, looks to have been brought to bear on the *entire* Bolivian Collective, even those who were not highlanders. That is, through the simple fact that those associated by Cahuana voted overwhelmingly for him, those with nefarious interests could charge that Cahuana had refused to relinquish what should have been a *rotational* position, and one which was giving Cahuana—and by extension, his own *parientes*—an undue share of the perquisites (if not wealth directly) that should have been distributed *evenly* across the Collective. Moreover, where this move was easily made to appear as pre-meditated power-grab by Cahuana and his lot, the effect was that it was perceived by the unknowing *socio* as a bald-faced move to hold power *over* groups, rather than provide service *to* them in what should have been a consensual, democratic politics in the ‘traditional’ sense. Finally, let us not forget that none of

¹⁴⁸ This is the ideology of “*estar arriba y agobiando a los demás*”, described by Albó, that we have discussed in earlier chapters.

this played out upon a field comprised merely of nameless or unrelated *socios*. Rather, it unfolded on a field of rival groups with histories of hierarchical arrangements and envies given a ‘culture’ of *fijarse*. As shown above, the most significant of these envious rivalries was that between the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños. Cahuana’s move to associate new members to, at least in his mind, shore up a culture of service to the public good, likely came to be viewed by the Pancocheños (many of whom had supported his leadership in years past¹⁴⁹) as his group attempting to gain the upper hand in a rivalry already sharpened by differences in wealth and culture, where both of these afforded and indexed the accoutrements of ‘civilization’. Indeed, how could one *not* look at the second ballot box—and Cahuana’s intransigence before it—and not see one group attempting to ‘be above and overpowering other groups’ (*estar arriba y agobiando a los demás*); and how could this *not* appear illegitimate in an entity that all knew should be representing *Bo-li-vi-a-nos*, as so aptly framed by our Yureña commentator above? In other words, how could all this *not* appear that Cahuana, and the Saropalkeños generally, were denying their Bolivian brethren their due shot at progress?

In all of this, the key question becomes: Did the “architects” of the alleged usurpation *play upon* and *cultivate* these sentiments of rivalry and envy among the Pancocheños and other potosinos in their alleged bid to usurp the CBE—knowing that positions and decisions would be taken by ethnic blocs? And did they do this by rekindling among them a sense that what had been violated was an ethic of rotative politics and egalitarianism? This is of course a hard question to answer directly. Nevertheless, in looking at their insistence that the voting take place in two separate ballot boxes, as well as at the discourses that followed, we have certain evidence that they had in fact prepared for—if not directly *prepared*—this eventuality. Moreover, it does not seem random that Ceferino González, the *Fiscalizador*—who was allegedly hand-picked by Huari a year prior—was a Pancocheño, or that his brother Teyo (obviously also Pancocheño) was named—again, allegedly at the hand of Huari—Vice President on the Interim Commission that worked to oust Cahuana. Nor does it seem random that a third brother, Cipriano González was named President of the CBE the following year in an unsanctioned election. As some close to Cahuana suspect, the ‘architects’ of the ‘usurpation’, themselves from smaller *comunidades*

¹⁴⁹ However, it has been suggested that the issue of Cahuana’s prior incumbency was not an issue at all. This was because the CBE had not yet earned the reputation for making money that it later came to have through its revenue-generating Market and Feria. Indeed, one contact suggested that people had in fact laughed at Cahuana and his plans in designing the CBE and helping to finance it himself. On this argument, only when it became known that the CBE was generating resources would disputes over rotationality and proportionality become significant.

(i.e. Yura and Jari) and thus unable to lead the CBE directly, pit the Pancocheños against the Saropalkeños to create a politics of ethnic rivalry—and thus also of misrecognition—through which to co-opt, through what became their Pancocheño clientele of sorts, the CBE and its revenues. As not just a few commentators have suggested: *A rio revuelto, ganancia de pescadores*. This suggests that the architects of the usurpation used these Pancocheños in an *instrumental* sense.

What is interesting about this—i.e. about how the ‘architects’ of the ‘usurpation’ *cultivated* and *preyed upon* ethnic rivalries and envies—is that these dynamics are not beneath their limits of awareness. That is, ‘knowing’ that the *socios* could be riled up in blocs; ‘knowing’ that they would respond in blocs; ‘knowing’ that having Pancocheños (and moreover, *brothers*) in the positions of Fiscalizador and Vicepresidente, and ultimately Presidente, could help a disparaged community get their due—and *using* this knowledge to orchestrate a ‘coup’ couched in ethnic terms—reveals that one can *objectify* the same social processes in which he is immersed (and prey to) and engage them pragmatically to a particular effect—in this case, was a ‘usurpation’ of an entity of the public good.

What the Usurped CBE Looked Like Compared to its Founding Mission

Before beginning this final section, let us briefly review the progression of discussions thus far. On the heels of the previous chapter, we set out by recounting how the CBE and its Market contributed to an ‘explosion’ of envy by shaping—and in some cases, producing—the very conditions of its possibility. Next, we reviewed the original events surrounding the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE, and explored the extent to which it was shaped by the envy complex. In the section just completed, we explored the extent to which the “architects” of the usurpation cultivated envious rivalry between historically differentiated groups so as to permanently oust Cahuana and secure their hold over the CBE and its patrimonies. In this final section, we explore what the ‘usurped’ CBE looked like vis-à-vis its founding mission—i.e. what I have called its *proyecto a realizar*.

“They’ve holed up!”

“¡Se han encerrado!”

By the time I began my fieldwork in 2005, the most common narrative that had coalesced *outside* of the CBE, and in the barrio generally, was that a group which many, though not always openly, called the ‘usurpers’, had taken over the CBE by occupying its Market and the administrative offices lying above it. “*Se han encerrado*”—“they have closed themselves in”—was the oft-repeated phrase, making any reference to a ‘usurpation’ almost redundant. But what, exactly, did such a saying mean and entail? To begin with, we should note that the ‘usurpers’, while a heterogenous mix of Potosinos and Tarijeños, emerged from a similarly mixed population of puesteros that no longer included any Saropalkeños. Not long after the events following December 22, 2001, when Cahuana was physically ousted from the CBE, the Saropalkeños collectively pulled out of the Market. With an Interim Commission partially set up and staffed by Pancocheños, though perhaps not designed by them, the bloc of Saropalkeño puesteros were likely under certain threat of expulsion themselves. Indeed, where Cahuana’s ouster had been violent—and as he reported, accompanied by death threats—it is not a stretch to believe the reports that there had been similar threats on the Saropalkeños as well. While it would be some time before they would set up their own market in nearby Morón—one that, given their experience in Escobar, was *not* part of a larger, not-for-profit collective association, but was rather a private cooperative—the immediate effect of their pullout from the CBE was likely significant. For where they had been a principal force behind the original founding of the CBE as an entity of the public good, their abandonment of its most important sphere of activity must have signified to all that the ‘usurpers’ had consolidated their hold over what had become an institution run for private gain. Indeed, in the years that followed, it became evident that creating projects that benefitted the public was not on the agenda of those that came to replace Cahuana. That the CBE no longer functioned on behalf of the community—for which it gained the reputation of being a mere ‘*sociedad*’ (i.e. private enterprise)—meant that it stood in violation of its own state-sanctioned authorization to exist and generate revenue. Indeed, that the not-for-profit CBE had effectively become coterminous with its Market was in violation of Argentine law.

Beyond the forced pullout of the Saropalkeños, what did the ‘usurpation’ look like? And what were its consequences, both inside and outside of the CBE? First, and perhaps most fundamentally, the ‘usurpation’ changed the way commerce unfolded in the Market itself. The most significant change in this dimension concerned the number of puestos a single operation could hold. This may well have been, along with the control over the CBE’s revenues, one of the prime motivations of the ‘usurpers’. For up until Cahuana’s ouster, no operation could hold more than two puestos. Most recognized that this policy, itself likely a function of the same ethic of proportionality, if not egalitarianism, we explored above, was originally designed by the founders of the CBE to help democratize economic opportunity. Given that the Market was only so big, this policy allowed the greatest number of independent families to work through the CBE. During the ‘usurpation’, this rule was violated, and with significant consequences.

Most critics pointed out that those they accused of having designed and orchestrated the ‘usurpation’ came to occupy more than their fair share of puestos. Some, they pointed out, like the magnates of bananas, potatoes, and grapes, occupied four and sometimes even more puestos (if not by themselves, then by the clientele they built). That these already rich operations occupied additional puestos meant that other, would-be operators would not have access to them and thus the living that they would help facilitate. Where this change enabled the production of economic hierarchy on an historically unprecedented scale (especially given the relatively equal condition most came from in the Bolivian highlands), the critics also pointed out that it was unlikely these magnates even paid their nightly dues to operate them. This, they alleged, was for the simple reason that they were, in addition to having allegedly designed the usurpation, those who orchestrated the very collection of revenues on behalf of the entity itself. We have already seen in Chapter 6 how much of a difference saving \$7500 pesos per year, per puesto, might make. Such savings, accumulated through time and invested in a truck, might catapult one’s operation from accessing Buenos Aires’s Central Market to accessing producers directly, and thus eliminate certain middle-men who siphon off a share of the profits. Were this true, as many allege, it would further exacerbate already contentious ‘class’ hierarchies.

A final effect of occupying more puestos, alluded to above, is the creation of clientele through the increased volumes they enable. This is precisely what we saw with the banana, potato, and grape commerce in the Market in earlier chapters. Where these magnates were the alleged architects of the usurpation, it was not a surprise for many to see how they consolidated

their hold over the entity by generating political allegiances through economic dependencies they created through their increasingly extended operations. In these ways, the ‘usurped’ CBE came to evince patron-client relations on a scale that had not been possible prior to Cahuana’s ouster. The increased power of these magnates, both economic and political, allowed them to further corner markets, set prices, and allocate spoils and privileges (e.g. who would run the CBE’s grill [*parrilla*] or restaurant [*comedor*]). It is thus no wonder why those on the ‘outside’ of the CBE and its patron-clientage came to state that those ‘inside’ had ‘holed up’ or ‘walled themselves in’—i.e. “*se han encerrado*”.

What effect did this patron-clientage have on the ethos of the CBE? First, the usurpers’ control of capital both in terms of their management of the entity’s revenues and their power to decide who could run what number of puestos (if not at what cost) intensified a ‘culture’ of envy and pride that had already been sharpened by the creation of the Market. This was for the simple reason that these practices enabled even greater—and more accelerated—differentiation, and did so through a clientelistic system predicated on differential—and illegitimate—access. As the perquisites of supporting the new establishment (e.g. additional puestos, a concession to run the *comedor* or *parrilla*, etc.) entailed greater incomes, and where greater resources allowed people to negotiate the politics and signs of progress, who was ‘getting’ or ‘doing’ what became an ever-more prevalent concern. Indeed, this culture of *fijarse* (i.e. of constantly looking at what one another was doing and getting) was often unavoidable, as those who gained certain mobility through their engagement with the new economic order proudly thrust their ‘progress’ in the faces of those who had formerly had the upper hand, or otherwise in the faces of those who had wanted to play by the rules but were fearful of speaking out against those in power and potentially losing (perhaps even through violent retaliation) the access to the puestos they already had.

For the usurpers, the culture of envy that their patronage propagated served to shore up their hold over the CBE. For where puesteros were preoccupied with who was able to operate in what number of puestos, who was able to sell what and at what profit, and who was able to procure what concession, all ‘bought in’ to—or were otherwise recruited by—the usurpation itself. Supporting the CBE as a not-for-profit entity of the public good thus took a back seat to a preoccupation with one’s own progress, and with where one stood relative to another’s. In this way the usurpers were able to, through their patronage elicit complicity from socios who might

otherwise not have ‘sold out’ (*venderse, sumarse a la estafa*). This of course depended on a pre-existing culture of envy that they could exploit and pragmatically cultivate. In the end, who was getting and doing what in this new order—and the reality that one too might profit from it (potentially even handsomely)—was for many a preoccupation more powerful than any that took the public good (the community at large) as an object of cooperation and sacrifice. According to many of its critics, what the ‘usurpation’ had thus also generated, beyond hierarchies and the differential ‘progress’ that made them, was a social and political myopia.

“They’ve worked it out: a year for you, a year for me”

“Se acomodan entre sí: un año por mí, otro año por ti”

Paradoxically however, the intensification of envy and rivalry among those that remained in the Market after the ‘coup’ sometimes produced situations in which spoils had to be ‘democratically’ allocated. These situations seemed to be structured by the same rotative logic we examined above. Nowhere else was this more apparent than in the case of who would run the CBE’s primary concessions—i.e. the *comedor* and the *parrilla*. Indeed, while these resources continued to rotate from year to year (as they had previously), they now rotated exclusively among those who were closest to the usurpers, fierce bickering notwithstanding. In this way, the traditional ethics of rotation came to shore up and reproduce, not an open, ‘liberal’ system (in at least the native Andean sense), but rather an illiberal politics that stood in contrast to the CBE’s founding mission and in violation of its authorization to function as an entity of the public good.

Interestingly, the *capos* perpetuating the usurpation had to deftly negotiate the politics of ethnicity in their allocation of spoils. While the overall diversity of operators in the Market was less after the Saropalkeños pulled out following Cahuana’s ouster, there was still a rich ecology that included a range of Potosinos and Tarijeños that the *capos* had to continually serve. I believe it is not a coincidence that for some time, the concessionaires of the *parrilla* and *comedor* were not Pancocheños, but rather a mix of other Potosinos and Tarijeños.

“It’s a group of thieves!”

“¡Es un grupo de chorros!”

Despite this still-rich ecology of diversity, the patron-clientage in the usurped CBE had the effect of producing significant exclusions. Where the CBE’s projects on behalf of the public good ceased, and the entity became essentially conterminous with its Market, those that were not plugged in to its commerce or economy of spoils had no space or opportunity for participation. Nowhere was this more evident than in the CBE’s meetings. Where these meetings were formerly open to all *socios*—whether involved in the Market or not—after the events of December 2001 they were known to be ‘closed’ (*cerrados*)¹⁵⁰. The restrictedness was seen both immediately and well into the ‘usurpation’. In both instances, and originally as a function of the ejection of Cahuana and his supporters, the meetings hosted just the Market’s *puesteros*. Though merely a minority of the CBE’s overall number of *socios*, their unanimous voice in the only forum that mattered repeatedly ratified the Interim and subsequent Commissions—Commissions that many critics alleged were puppet governments erected under the guise of official statutory process to publically legitimate a private program of personal enrichment. Those that might dare oppose the tide of the ‘usurpation’ in any of these meetings were reportedly silenced and intimidated, effectively ending any democratic process. As time went on, the CBE’s meetings, in which matters ranging from how to manage Cahuana’s opposition—which he now waged from his ‘legal residence’ (*domicilio legal*) in Buenos Aires proper—to the upkeep and coordination of Market, came to be held on the schedule that most served the *puesteros*. That is, meetings were often called on the spot and at 3am once the night’s *descarga* had been completed. This had the effect that no-one except the *puesteros* could plan for them or be there. Indeed, for many critics of the ‘usurpation’, braving the barrio’s thieves and thugs at 3am just to be bullied by potentially violent *comerciantes* was not worth it. They had already seen what had happened to their former Secretary of Culture for opposing the CBE’s de facto government. All of this was of course a change from what had been the practice under Cahuana’s—and others’—stewardships: meetings were held on Sunday mornings at 8am and only after having been announced a week prior over what was then the CBE’s Sunday radio program.

¹⁵⁰ This term no doubt helped give rise to the expression “*se han encerrado*” mentioned above.

In and around these ‘closed’ meetings, many critics alleged that the *capos* pushed a politics of misrecognition. They said that they misinformed everyone, including those *puesteros* in the Market that wanted to see the CBE continue to serve the public good. The message was simply that the entity was unable to move forward because Cahuana continued to refuse to relinquish his bid for it, and had tied the institution’s energies up in what had become an intractable legal bind. This legal bind, they argued, hinged on Cahuana’s insistence that the *parientes* he had associated had a right to vote in the election that would establish a Commission that all must recognize. The net effect of all of this was that business (literally) carried on as ‘usual’—except for the fact that it was not usual at all. For as mentioned above, those with muscle allowed themselves more than the traditional share of *puestos* and used the volumes they could generate through them to control what others might sell and at what price.

In the end, the rejection of the public good and the limitation of participation to economic matters only—not to mention *by* only those that had an economic stake—resulted in a great loss of the CBE’s human capital. As the entity became synonymous with its Market, those socios (or would-be socios) who were agricultural engineers, medical and educational professionals, or those who worked for (multi-)cultural and political recognition of Bolivians in Argentina were effectively excluded or otherwise disempowered. The structure through which their human capital had formerly been deployed was dismantled, leaving the community unable to benefit from them. That this work had been foregone in favor of what many took to be a private racket led many to state that those that ran the CBE were nothing more than a “group of thieves”—*un grupo de chorros*.

Exprimir y Pisar: The Individualist Ethos of the ‘Usurped’ CBE

Yet the critique did not end there. Those who lambasted the bloc of powerful *comerciantes* that included both those orchestrating the ‘usurpation’ and those most complicit in it tended to frame their ideology as one of unfettered individualism that came at the direct expense of others—a Collective which, now more than ever, was made to represent the Bolivian ‘community’ in an inclusive sense. While I will later discuss how the internal ‘corruption’ of the CBE was perhaps the major *Bolivian*-generated condition of possibility through which the idea—if not ideal—of

Bolivian ‘community’ was articulated (i.e. as in contradistinction to external, *Argentine*-driven conditions like the previously discussed xenophobic violence), here we benefit from a brief examination of how such charges of ‘*egoísmo*’ are part of the universe of meaning through which the envy complex was wrought. For indeed, while the CBE was supposed to represent Bolivian community writ large, what represented *it* in fact was an exacerbation of the envy complex.

While for many critics it was enough to simply point out that those who stood at the head of the CBE controlled the intake of the entity’s revenues, and yet failed to generate any work on behalf of the ‘community’, others were more precise in spelling out the ideology they believed motivated the ‘usurpation’ and complicity in it. In a rare moment, one prominent, elder socio from La Paz—who frequented the Market but did not earn his living through it—levied a direct critique against the *capos* in one of the CBE’s meetings¹⁵¹. In this meeting, which was run by the then current IGJ Interventor, Paceño stated—though without mentioning any names—that while the CBE had always been a communal institution, many that had ‘come in’ (here implicitly pointing the finger at one of the main architects, who had only been in Escobar for as recently as the CBE’s Market was built) did not share that view. Rather, as if not only indifferent to the CBE’s communal roots, these people *used* its very apparatus for their own personal profit without regard to anyone else, including those, like him who had been there from the very beginning:

‘Paceño’ (Paceño): Vienen para sacar; vienen para exprimir.
They come to take; they come to exploit.

Sacar is here used to mean to extract, or to take something away from someone, while *exprimir*, used in a similar sense, engenders the idea that one is literally wringing something out of something else. Paceño’s statement thus charges that the *capos* are extracting or wringing out of the CBE the lifeblood of the community for their own exclusive gain. One familiar with the Andes may see lurking in this image the figure of the *lik’ichiri* or *ñak’aq*—especially given that

¹⁵¹ Where others like the Secretary of Culture that had enjoyed as much public recognition in the barrio as he did did not fare well after challenging the ‘usurpers’, perhaps this aged Paceño banked on the fact that an attack on such a senior man could not be justified under any circumstances, and so potentially felt insulated from it. However, given that “Paceño” was such a strong-willed and outspoken man, it is also likely that he did not bank on this at all, but rather gambled with it, and dared the *capos* directly.

those who are seen to have become corrupt are viewed as having become Argentine: “*se han argentinizados*”.

Indeed, this charge of using what should be communal patrimony for private gain was echoed by another critic who compared the ‘usurped’ CBE to what it originally had been.

Germán (Cruceño): Ahora la Colectividad es individualista; que si uno se logra despegar, y tiene que pisar la cabeza de otro, no tiene problema.

Now the Bolivian Collective is individualistic, such that if one can separate himself [by] stomp[ing] on the head of another, he has no problem.

What is important about Germán’s comment here is his use of the terms *despegarse* and *pisar* to characterize the ‘usurped’ CBE. Indeed, both of these terms conjure up the envy complex which, while already intensified through the construction of the CBE’s Market, became exasperated through the ‘usurpation’. *Despegarse* in this case means to separate or distance oneself from something. As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, that from which people are at pains to separate themselves is most often the poverty and indianness over which they are made to feel shame. As we also saw, progress is conceived as the very degree of separation from these things—a position that is indexed by the things of modernity (e.g. pickup trucks and the Spanish language), if not also economic independence. If the CBE has helped enable progress, Germán suggests that under the ‘usurpation’ this progress can only be individual. And instead of feeling solidarity with a fellow socio—or with a Bolivian generally—one is rather wont to ‘stomp’ on him, either to catapult himself forward or simply halt this other’s own progress. In this light, Germán echoes Paceño’s evaluation of the CBE as having been overrun by an ethos of individualism; instead of using the metaphor of ‘wringing something out of another’ (*exprimir*), Germán uses the imagery of ‘stomping’ on another (*pisar*).

“This is not a ‘Colectividad Bo-li-vi-an-a’”

“No es una colectividad bo-li-vi-an-a”

While there is no doubt an ethos of *exprimir* and *pisar* that has run rampant through the CBE as a function of its ‘usurpation’, this individualism has, as I hope to have shown, always been structured by relationships of family (*prójimos*), relatives (*parientes*), and clientele (*clientelas*). Thus the *lack* of solidarity among fellow Bolivians—whether this be between socios *comerciantes* in the Market or between them and others in the barrio—always butts up against the solidarity that *is* seen between relatives and the clientelistic structures that often take groups of them (even if un-related themselves) as their basis. While relationships within such clientele are nevertheless ethnically diverse, internally hierarchical, and sometimes exploitive, they often appear as simple blocs to outsiders. For these reasons, the CBE has appeared as a ‘*Colectividad Potosina*’ to all those from other ethnic nationalities that have not been able to participate in it or benefit from it, either directly (as through the Market’s commerce) or indirectly (as through the public service projects it has run). This is precisely how the CBE is framed by the Cochabambinos and the Sucreños, who are the two largest ethno-national minorities in the barrio after the Potosinos and Tarijeños. While they might grant that there are Tarijeños who are prominent *comerciantes* and prominent figures in the politics of the ‘usurped’ CBE, they concur that it is really the Potosinos that run the show. Their exclusion on this level, and vis-à-vis the ‘usurpation’ itself, has allowed them to levy moral critiques against the Potosinos *generally*. “They have no moral sense” says one Qochala, “they disgust me” (*No tienen conducta moral; me dan asco*). “They’re ignorant, and they know we’re better equipped to run the CBE; but with what they’ve got going, how are they going let one from outside take over?” (*Son ignorantes, y saben que estamos mejor capacitados para manejar todo; pero con lo que tienen armado, ¿cómo van a dejar que alguien de afuera asuma?*).

At the same time, there are a number of Potosinos who have been excluded from the ‘racket’ in this ‘Potosino’ Collective. While the Saropalkeños have moved on to found their own market -cooperative nearby, and are thus no longer involved with the daily activities of CBE (save for Cahuana’s legal fight for it), there are other Potosinos from smaller and less well-represented pueblos that feel the CBE has become nothing more than a ‘*Colectividad Pancocheña*’. Indeed, as I have mentioned above, the Pancocheños were the most numerous

group of Potosinos in the CBE. As also seemed clear, they were riled up by the architects of the ‘usurpation’ to oust Villafuerete, and came to occupy some of the most visible and prominent political roles within the new order. While it seems clear that the Pancocheños did not design the ‘usurpation’, they were nevertheless necessary for it, and so continued to profit from the Market’s commerce even though none had previously (or while I was there) reached the commercial prowess the architects had. Nevertheless, many who were elbowed out of the CBE, or who were simply from minority groups, experienced the Pancocheños as part and parcel of the ‘racket’ that went on in the CBE. Described at the very least as “always unified” (*siempre unidos*), if not at the worst as a predatory pack (*una juala de lobos*), the Pancocheños became an easy bloc to impugn. As with the Potosinos more generally, the Pancocheños were lambasted for their lack of communal vision. Always being compared to the Saropalkeños who had the reputation for being ‘enlightened’ (*despiertos*) the Pancocheños were called *ignorantes* and *burros*, if not *indios*. Such epithets were almost always followed by calls that the CBE be led by ‘competent’ people (*gente capacitada*)—an obvious dig at the Pancocheños’ higher rates of illiteracy, lack of ‘culture’, and past as *indio-campesinos*.

Moreover, as the CBE came to be known for its ethos of *exprimir* and *pisar*, so too the Pancocheños came to be known as *those* people that exploited others—even their own. Their progress, now viewed as coming directly from immoral dealing, no longer generated simple envy as it perhaps once had; now it produced feelings of exasperation—even desperation—before the realization that the ‘game’ of progress that all seem to be playing was rigged and backed by violence, and that no-one could do anything about either. Depending on one’s own position, the CBE, whether as ‘Colectividad Potosina’ or ‘Colectividad Pancocheña’, came to generate, not solidarity or progress for all Bolivians, but rather rancor, enmity, and racism between them. And this was on top of the rivalries they had already brought with them from their homeland. Thus, rather than cultivating any kind of horizontal identifications between Bolivians, the CBE ultimately depend already existing divides. Where a *Chuquisaqueño* looked in on a Potosino Collective, or a Saropalkeño looked in on a Pancocheño Collective, the nested metonymies generated through the ‘usurpation’ that caused these Potosinos or Pancocheños (here visible through the abuses and perversions they were said to produce) to stand for Bolivian-ness generally were in no way viewed as legitimate. “How can we let such corrupt *bolitas* stand for us?”, many exclaimed; “They are ruining the image of the Bolivian in Argentina!”

Conclusion: The Project that Never Was

All of these phenomena, which were either produced or exacerbated by the ‘usurpation’, are at odds with the founding mission of the CBE. That is, the envy generated both inside and outside the CBE, the ethos of *exprimir* and *pisar* that has overtaken it and, as many have argued, come to permeate the barrio¹⁵², and the racialized, socio-cultural divisions that have been produced in the process are all at odds with the CBE’s mission of promoting communal development and esteem for Bolivians in Escobar. In the ideal-typical sense, and as read through the CBE’s juridical founding as an entity of the public good, such a mission not only proposes the *ideal* of a Bolivian community (and yet also presupposes this to a certain extent), it also demands conjoint action between Bolivian socios who agree to work in pursuit of it. The ethos between socios that such a proposal courts is thus one of cooperation and sacrifice for a larger, abstract social imaginary, of which they also see themselves as part. In this sense, and as the Argentine jurists have conceived of such entities, the CBE must not only already possess and continually cultivate civic virtue, it must also exteriorize this virtue for the benefit and improvement of the larger political community.

What we see in practice, however, is that the founding rationale (*affectio societatis*) of working on behalf of Bolivians and Bolivian culture in Escobar, while clear to those who sought to build both Bolivian community and the institutional means to achieve it, was not shared by all those socios it would take to do so. Indeed, it seems that the original, horizontal identifications (*afectos superadores*) this work fundamentally relied on—even as it sought to cultivate them—were never strong enough to sustain such work. While this may have originally been because of cultural rivalries and socio-economic differences, both of which were historically deep, it was only made worse by the changes the creation of the Market brought, and then those wrought through its ‘usurpation’.

Vis-à-vis the founding of the Colectividad *Bo-li-vi-an-a*, we can thus ask: Beyond the limited identifications with the public good that might have existed, did these Bolivians ever even identify with one another as *Bolivians*? That is, as immigrants in Escobar, and given their

¹⁵² Let us return once again to Juansi’s statement: “*Todo este individualismo, todo este orgullo, toda esta envidia—todo entra ahora; todo viene con la Colectividad*”. What we see is that, while true in a general sense, this is especially true with regard to the ‘usurped’ CBE.

more primordial identifications with their ethnic nationalities and, within these, lower-level ethnic groups and/or groups of relatives, did they ever regard, or come to regard, one another as the kind of *prójimo* required to sustain the CBE. That is, did they identify with one another as fellow beings with whom to collaborate in collective world-building? While this has no doubt become more and more difficult given the evolution of the CBE and its effects, it fits to ask whether, in its original foundation and mission, the CBE did not ask too much of those who would become its socios. Indeed, given the rivalries and socio-economic hierarchies they brought with them, the discrimination and marginalization they needed to manage in Argentina, and the fact that their own subsistence was often at risk, did the CBE's project of working on behalf of one's 'foreign' compatriots (*paisanos*) not ask too much? In other words, could work toward the ideal of mutual progress among 'strangers' (who nevertheless shared similar interests and ambitions) be successfully reconciled with one's own *lucha*?

Yet the founding ideology of the CBE was one that suggested that it was *only through* a collaborative effort that one could derive individual benefits. While this is evident in the logic undergirding the CBE's construction of the Market (i.e. that no-one could progress as well as they could unless there was a conjoint effort to bring producers together under one roof)—and noting that this same ideology was later made explicit through the moral code painted on the wall of the meeting hall (though this was done in Quechua, a commentary on who was 'really' Bolivian)—it was also evident long before through the circumstances that originally gave rise to the CBE. As we have seen, as an entity of the public good, the CBE arose in direct response to xenophobic depredations. No one would be safe individually unless there was a collective response to this common problem. "Strength in numbers" was the same call echoed 15 years later after the killing of Norberta Quispe and her husband: *Tenemos que estar unidos; no importa de qué Departamento seas...la situación nos obliga a unir* ("We must be united, regardless of what Department you're from...the situation demands that we unite"). Yet therein lies the rub: calls for—and presumptions of—unity had perhaps always been *situational*. The fact that there needed to be such a call following the loss of one of the 'community' is in itself telling.

Indeed, despite this collectivist ideology, and frequent collective recognition that staunch individualism will get Bolivians nowhere (*en el individualismo hay la derrota*), integration has always been a challenge for Bolivians in Escobar. Yet this is not just a localized issue. Bolivia

itself has often been referred to as a “Balkanized” country, despite (or perhaps in light of) the fact that its national motto is “Unity is Strength” (*‘La unión es la fuerza’*). Thus we come upon a key question: Could more organic, horizontal identifications between Bolivians be found or cultivated in Escobar beyond those generated merely in response to xenophobic violence, or from some other ‘external’ source? In the next chapter we’ll see whether, amidst the ashes of the CBE’s foundational project, such integration could not be found by appealing to something that (in comparison to Bolivian national belonging), was far less abstract and that, paradoxically, most had always sought to conceal and transcend: their own humility.

Chapter 9:

When Everything Else Fails: A Return to Humility

Introduction

In this dissertation I have argued that the ‘usurpers’ consolidated their hold over the CBE by pursuing two different tactics. I just showed in the last chapter how the ‘architects’ played upon and actively cultivated sentiments of envious rivalry among ethnic factions to orchestrate the permanent ouster of Cahuana and his Saropalkeño bloc. Indeed, they framed Cahuana’s push for reelection as a bid to acquire more power and perquisites than what was fair given an Andean ethic of turn-taking and resource management, thus allegedly revealing a plot to ‘be on top of the rivaling Pancocheños. ‘Beneath’ but not separate from these maneuvers on the level of ethnic groups, I also attempted to show how the ‘usurpers’—i.e. the very agents who collected the entity’s revenues and managed its patrimony—generated complicity among individual operators by deploying a politics of patronage that relied upon a widespread desire to not fall behind in the zero-sum logic of progress. All of this, which was backed by strong-arm tactics, frustrated the horizontal identifications and collective sacrifice required of the CBE’s socios as per its founding mission of generating communal development and esteem among all Bolivians in Escobar.

Yet cultivating and managing sentiments on the ground was not the only tactic used by the ‘architects’ in their ‘usurpation’. As we saw in Chapter 1, the ‘architects’ appear to have been very skilled in manipulating the Argentine state in their work. I have argued that this manipulation consisted of their ability to maintain a legal bind that begged and gestured toward resolution but which perpetuated a state of limbo from which they could profit that was never ‘irregular’ enough to warrant a juridical dismantling of the entity by the *Inspección General de Justicia* (IGJ) who, despite the inability to dictate terms to ‘private’ entities, nevertheless have the ultimate ability to rescind their authorization to function as such (i.e. to revoke their legal

personhood as an entity of the public good). In Chapter 1, the ability of the ‘usurpers’ to navigate the regulation of the IGJ through a back and forth maneuvering is evident. The record, which clearly shows unsanctioned elections held in violation of court stays and the wrongful request of official books at their hand shows that this maneuvering was never performed in good faith. Combined with the ethnographic evidence presented in the last chapter (which I noted was circumstantial), this legal evidence indicates that the ‘usurpers’ did in fact hijack an entity of the public good for their own private ends.

Yet what about solutions? One is left to ask: Could such a situation *really* persist under the nose of the Argentine state? And what kinds of solutions are offered up where this is in fact the case? In this chapter we look at various solutions, the first being the IGJ’s formal Intervention of the ‘usurped’ CBE. From there I then turn to more indigenous solutions.

Co-opting and Resisting the IGJ’s Intervention

Let us begin this discussion by briefly returning to the *expediente*—to see that the Argentine State does have a process on the books to settle disputes where regulation ‘from above’ yields no results: formal intervention (as noted in law such and such⁰). Indeed, as the Argentine jurists agree, the duty of the state is to uphold the public good—and the CBE, given what many there and many within the IGJ knew about it, was in violation of its founding mission, and hence in a state of irregularity that by law could not persist indefinitely.

By July of 2004, the IGJ had come to realize the extent of the CBE’s irregularity, the ‘usurpers’ machinations, and its own laxity—if not errors—in its regulative duties. As seen at the end of Chapter 1, the IGJ’s Resolution 0837 (13 July 2004) petitioned the Minister of Justice to authorize a formal Intervention of the CBE with the hope that it could be made ‘regular’ with regard to its own Statutes and the dominant legal regime governing entities of the public good. Not a week after this petition for Intervention came another Resolution—Resolution 0857 (19 July 2004)—that declared the duplicate set of books requested by the ‘usurpers’ and granted by the IGJ irregular and inoperative.

One could see in the combination of these two Resolutions the potential downfall of the ‘usurpers’—or at least the dismantlement of their alleged ‘racket’. For as per Argentine Administrative Law, a regulatory Interventor named by the Ministry of Justice formally *replaces* any Executive Commission at the head of the ‘irregular’ entity, whether that Commission be there legitimately or, in the case of the CBE, by *de facto* ‘usurpation’. Moreover, this formal replacement happens *on-site*, such that the Interventor becomes the physically present and state-backed authority that administers all aspects of the institution. This not only includes the taking of control of the entity’s government, it also includes the oversight of its revenues and expenditures. Finally, all administrative acts—which would range from the oversight of an approved electoral roll to any new associations—would, as per the Interventor’s oversight, be duly documented in the entity’s books. These books, as per the declarations of Resolution 0857, would be those held by Cahuana; the last entries that could be recognized as legitimate would precede all acts taken by the ‘usurpers’. On paper, at least, the pending Intervention requested of the Minister of Justice spelled the end of the ‘usurpation’.

Yet as we saw in Chapter 1, those we have come to know as the ‘usurpers’ would not simply lay down and let an ‘outsider’ take control of an entity whose annual revenues exceeded 1.5M Argentine *pesos* (USD\$1.5M before the devaluation). Thus, even before the Intervention could be authorized by the Minister and duly declared by the *Secretaría de Política Judicial y Asuntos Legislativos* (the Ministerial body charged with making such a declaration), the ‘usurpers’ and their legal counsel petitioned to have the measure suspended and thrown out. It fits to briefly recount their tactics of resistance here not only because it provides a deeper history with which to contextualize their motivations for co-opting the first Interventor (and for resisting the second, where he would not be bought off), but also because it allows us to appreciate just how far the ‘usurpers’ would go in their own machinations which ranged from changing positions before the State to manipulating its agents and the very members of the CBE whose support they needed to perpetuate their hold over the entity and its patrimonies.

The principal tactic used by the ‘usurpers’ in attempting to avoid the pending Intervention was to claim that the CBE had already resolved its internal conflicts and was thus well on its way to complete normalization. The implicit argument was that any Intervention would only perturb this restoration by opening the door to more conflict after what had already been an arduous process of transcending it. In the documents that reveal this tactic—all of which

were written after learning of the IGJ's recommendation for Intervention but before such a measure could be authorized and declared—it is easy to read through the representations grounding such a claim. For one, the 'usurpers' attempt to get the Ministry (here generically addressed in the hopes of resonating with some official on some level) to consider the CBE as that body of *socios* who were governing the institution on-site in Escobar, and thus excluding the faction led by Cahuana and all others critical of the 'usurpation'. Certainly, the bloc of 'usurpers' and those under their ideological and physical domination were in fact unified. Their power and perquisites depended on it. Though getting Ministerial officials at this late point to recognize their bloc as the CBE—or even as its 'base'—was perhaps a weak ploy, it was one nevertheless one worth making in the hopes of forestalling the Intervention.

The first evidence of this ploy is apparent in the 'usurpers'' appeal of Resolution 0857. As we saw in Chapter 1, Resolution 0857, which was issued on 19 July 2004, declared 'irregular and inoperative' the duplicate set of CBE administrative books rubricated by the IGJ at the request of the 'usurpers'. This declaration was based on the fact that the duplicate set had been requested under false pretenses, noting that the original (and still valid) books were in the hands of Cahuana, if not sometimes attached to the legal proceedings maintained by the IGJ itself.

Ceferino González Appeals Resolution 0857 and Argues CBE is 'Regular' (5 August 2004)

In this letter to the Inspector General, Ceferino González, the author of the original charges against Cahuana, petitions to have Resolution 0857 dismissed. His rationale is that such a move to disallow the validity of the set of administrative books they acquired, and by extension all the administrative proceedings documented in them, would do irreparable damage to the CBE—an entity which he claims was already close to full administrative normalization, and thus not in need of any Ministerial intervention.

INTERPONE RECURSO DE RECONSIDERACIÓN JERÁRQUICO Y DE APELACIÓN EN SUBSIDIO

Buenos Aires, 5 de Agosto de 2004

Sr. Inspector General de Justicia

Dr. Gabriel Eichel:

Ceferino González en mi carácter de Fiscalizador Titular de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar...al señor Inspector General de Justicia, respetuosamente me presento y digo:

Que vengo, por la presente a interponer Recurso de Reconsideración Jerárquico, y Apelación en Subsidio contra la Resolución I.G.J. N° 0857 de fecha 19 de julio de 2004 que causa a la entidad un daño irreparable en plena etapa de regularización y normalización institucional, con el ‘des crédito social’ que dicha medida implica, debido atento a ello, solicitamos al señor Inspector General que—por contrario imperio— desestime la resolución que declara irregulares e ineficaces a efectos administrativos las rúbricas de los Libros de Actas de Asamblea N°2, Actas de Comisión Directiva N°2 y ratifique la validez del Registro de Asociados [N°3] de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar.

Such a blow, González argues, would discredit all of their efforts to transcend the CBE’s conflict and would thus jeopardize the entity’s political stability. Moreover, disallowing these books would do irreparable harm to those new members (read: political supporters) that his Commission had associated by virtue of them. Such members, he argues, would be denied the ability to vote in what would, on his estimation, be a violation of their rights.

La resolución cuestionada resulta perjudicial, atenta contra la seguridad jurídica de los actos de gobierno, ya que la declaración de irregularidad implica que todos los socios que hayan ingresado a la Asociación y se encuentren inscriptos en esos libros nuevos, se vean perjudicados al no poder seguir gozando de los beneficios de nuestra Institución que se dedica al fomento de nuestra cultura, además de no poder hacer uso de su condición de socio y como tal intervenir en la Comisión Directiva o votar según corresponda, violando los derechos adquiridos.

While we have already seen that these members were not incorporated into the CBE under good faith, that the Commission that associated them was illegitimate, and that the books they used to document their registration were equally illegitimate, what is of note is the attempt by González and his bloc to portray the CBE as having achieved institutional normalization and unification on its own. This success, his letter tacitly suggests, should not be jeopardized by any Ministerial Resolution or Intervention. As we have seen, and as will become more apparent below, what González and his bloc do not want jeopardized is their own control over the CBE and its patrimonies.

Cipriano González Petitions the IGJ to Hold Elections (17 September 2004)

With the Intervention pending, but not yet declared, the ‘usurpers’ petitioned the IGJ in yet another letter a few weeks later. Here led by Cipriano González, who in 2003 was ‘elected’ President of the CBE in defiance of the reigning Court stay, the ‘usurpers’ tacitly suggest that a Ministerial Intervention is unnecessary given that they have successfully resolved all internal conflicts marring the CBE, and that on the basis of this, they be allowed to hold their own elections to put an end to the proceedings.

Buenos Aires, 17 de Septiembre de 2004

Ministerio de Justicia
Asuntos Jurídicos

Tengo el agrado de dirigirme a Uds. en mi carácter de Presidente de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, Asociación Civil, en referencia al trámite N° 32.160/1.520.370, a los fines de manifestarle que esta entidad se encuentra en vías de recuperación en virtud de los diversos acontecimientos jurídicos y de hecho que han afectado la vida institucional de esta entidad.

No obstante ello pongo en su conocimiento que en mérito de un gran esfuerzo mancomunado que día a día desarrollan nuestros asociados procuramos dar cumplimiento con el ideal de nuestros fundadores, inserto en nuestro estatuto.

As the spokesperson for what he portrays as a united community of socios, Cipriano González argues that this ‘we’ has, through conjoint efforts, been able to achieve the ethos proclaimed by the entity’s Statutes. Such an ethos—which I have argued has always been more of a project to be realized than any palpable set of identifications among the members—is one of solidarity and cordiality between all Bolivians. Indeed, Cipriano González argues that this ‘we’, which explicitly avoids any mention of Cahuana or of any critics of the ‘usurpation’, has succeeded in resolving all conflicts and reaching a consensus on how to restore the entity in service of its original mission. The implication is that this ‘we’ has once again been aligned by the overarching identifications (*‘afectos superadores’*) that the IGJ suggested undergirded the original formation of the entity, and which, in the Resolutions that culminated in their recommendation for Intervention, have been deemed lacking such that the entity requires Intervention.

A tales fines hemos saneado los conflictos internos que se suscitaron a raíz de la aparición de diferentes sectores que orientaban sus esfuerzos a sus propios intereses, pero no obstante ello y luego de serias e innumerables reuniones hemos podido consensuar y arribar a un acuerdo que se orienta expresamente a recuperar a la entidad, a desarrollar nuevamente nuestro capital intelectual y económico y cumplir con el propósito de esta entidad...

Si es cierto que nada es fácil, y que han acaecido innumerables inconvenientes, debe destacarse que cada conflicto, propio de una entidad, ha sido debidamente tratado con la masa societaria y se han tomado resoluciones que procuraron dar fin o solución justa a cada conflicto ya sea jurídico o de simple administración.

González suggests that while conflicts have occurred and will continue to appear, as in any organization, in the CBE they have always been handled and resolved democratically by the 'mass' of members. González argues that what has always obtained in spite of their challenges is a due process and respect for the entity's Statutes and for the legal regime regulating such civil associations.

De igual modo comunicamos por este medio que las diversas administraciones que se sucedieron desde diciembre de 2001 han procurado y han logrado administrar exitosamente a la entidad, cumpliendo con la normativa vigente, presentando la debida documental ante el órgano de contralor y cumpliendo con el estatuto.

Certainly, we have seen through the ethnographic and legal data presented in earlier chapters that the realities of elections held in violation of Court stays, administrative books requested under false pretenses, coercive commercial practices, lack of proper accounting, and intimidation and violence all belie this petition to forestall Intervention on the basis of solidarity and regular institutional practices. Nevertheless, in a final effort and invoking the original Resolution 0628, González and his bloc petition the Ministry to allow elections such that the CBE can once again be declared 'regular' and no longer require any Intervention.

Destacamos que la entidad se encuentra saneada y en vías de desarrollo que supera las expectativas propias, y que la masa societaria se encuentra pacificada y a la espera de un comicio regular que legitime debidamente a las autoridades.

Por ello solicito se tenga en cuenta esta manifestación y se proceda a establecer el mecanismo que habilite la va del comicio legítimo, previa conformación del padrón a utilizarse, y tomando como base la original resolución de IGJ de fecha 22 de julio de 2002 en la cual se ha resuelto llamado a elecciones en el plazo de 70 días.

Sin otro particular, saludo a Ud. atte.

The Ministry, however, is not swayed by this request for the simple reason that the CBE's conflicts were far from resolved, that the ethos gripping the entity was not one of solidarity and cordiality—nor was it focused on the pursuit of the public good—and that nothing had changed (especially not overnight) that would allow any election to be successfully called and carried out.

Secretariat's Resolution 035 (27 October 2004)

Declares Formal Intervention for the CBE

For this reason, the Secretariat charged with the power to declare the Intervention did so following its authorization on 27 October 2004. I offer an exegesis of this Resolution not simply to demonstrate the extent to which the Ministry recognized the degree of irregularity gripping the CBE, but to provide a ground upon which to later show how the Intervenor they named failed to attend to this situation.

Resolution 035 begins by citing the very first Resolution in the proceedings: Resolution 0628 from 22 July 2002. Prior to declaring 'irregular and inoperative' the CBE's election of 22 December 2002, the latter stated that the situation gripping the CBE required all parties involved to put forth their most sincere efforts to work towards its resolution. In Resolution 0628, the IGJ imagined the CBE as having originally been knit together by over-arching identifications (*afectos superadores*) that might be appealed to in the work of resolving its internal conflicts.

LA SECRETARIA DE POLITICA JUDICIAL Y ASUNTOS LEGISLATIVOS
RESUELVE: "DECRETAR LA INTERVENCION"

Buenos Aires, 27 de Octubre de 2004

CONSIDERANDO:

Que ya en el considerando de la Resolución I.G.J. N°0628, la Inspección General de Justicia había sostenido que "*las diferencias advertibles entre los socios de la institución—todos ellos vinculados a la colectividad boliviana en la Argentina y unidos por afectos superadores—amerita la necesidad de realizar los mayores esfuerzos para*

alcanzar su pronta solución y en cuya procura se orientan las medidas que se adoptan por la presente...”

Que surge claramente de lo actuado, que el expreso propósito de la Inspección General de Justicia no encontró reciprocidad ni coincidencia en el ámbito interno de la entidad. Tanto es así que una de las partes, desobedeciendo el mandato judicial citado supra, resolvió convocar a elecciones en la institución, muchos meses antes de que se resolviera el amparo que había dado lugar a la medida cautelar, que fue desestimado recién el 5 de mayo de 2004.

Yet in recounting the history of the CBE’s case, Resolution 035 states that such efforts—such virtue—were not forthcoming from the protagonists in it. The IGJ states that, contrary to such hopes, it did not encounter reciprocity with, or good faith within, the entity and cited the ‘usurpers’ decision to hold one-sided elections in violation of a Court stay as a prime example. It then moves to state that the CBE’s conflict has frustrated the institutional pursuits for which it was authorized. That an entity cannot fulfill its mission of serving the public good is grounds for the revocation of its juridical personhood as such.

Que el evidente, manifiesto e inequívoco enfrentamiento interno paraliza a la institución, imposibilitando el cumplimiento de las finalidades que el Estado tuvo en cuenta al momento de autorizar su funcionamiento como persona jurídica.

Que en consecuencia, no puede soslayarse la existencia de irreconciliables grupos antagonicos que comprometen la unidad de la agrupación, situación especialmente contemplada como causal de denegatoria de la autorización para funcionar como persona jurídica (conf. Art. 99 inciso ‘a’ de la Normas de la Inspección General de Justicia, aprobadas por Resolución I.G.P.J. N°6/80).

For these reasons, and in the interest of preserving the CBE as an entity of the public good, the Ministry has decided to take the extreme measure of Intervention to restore its institutional regularity and integrity. Such a measure, provided for in the *Ley Orgánica de la Inspección General de Justicia* (Ley N° 22.315), is justified when there have been acts taken in violation of the law or the entity’s Statutes, when upholding the public interest demands it, when there are irreconcilable conflicts in the heart of the entity, and/or when the entity cannot fulfill the mission for which it was authorized.

Que por las razones expuestas, para resolver las cuestiones de fondo que se debaten en las presentes actuaciones, y en aras de la perdurabilidad institucional, amerita la aplicación de una medida extrema tendiente a regularizar y normalizar el funcionamiento institucional.

Que tal el remedio previsto por el artículo 10 inciso j) de la Ley N° 22.315, máxime que se encuentran reunidos los presupuestos que lo viabilizan, a saber: la existencia de actos graves que importan violación de la ley, estatuto o reglamento; si la medida resulta necesaria en resguardo del interés público; si existen irregularidades no subsanables; o si la entidad no puede cumplir su objeto.

Given that these conditions exist in the CBE, the Secretariat states that a formal Ministerial Intervention is the most appropriate measure to be taken. This is done not only to reestablish institutional regularity before its sanctioned mission, but to safeguard the rights of its members.

Que en mérito a lo hasta aquí sostenido, con fundamento en el principio constitucional de la razonabilidad que exige una adecuada proporcionalidad entre las medidas a adoptar y los hechos y circunstancias que le sirven de causa, resulta que la intervención es el medio más idóneo para alcanzar el saneamiento, la normalización y la regularización de la entidad, todo ellos para asegurar el pleno ejercicio de los derechos asociativos y el cumplimiento de los objetivos institucionales.

By virtue of all this, the Secretariat formerly declares the Intervention of the CBE and designates the private citizen and accountant, Manolo Popovich, as the Interventor. With this charge, Popovich enjoys broad administrative faculties and, though not here mentioned, replaces any and all Executive Commissions operating in or on behalf of the CBE, whether led by Cipriano González or Teodoro Cahuana. His duties include the complete administrative ‘normalization’ of the entity, including the elaboration and vetting of an electoral roll of eligible voters for elections that will install legitimate leaders of the CBE. Popovich is also required to submit reports of his administrative acts and progress to the IGJ every 20 days, and for the duration of his Intervention, which the present stipulates at 120 days.

Por ello,

**LA SECRETARIA DE POLITICA JUDICIAL Y ASUNTOS LEGALES
RESUELVE:**

Artículo 1° - Decretar la intervención de la Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar del registro de la Inspección General de Justicia a los fines de proceder a la regularización de la entidad. En consecuencia desígnase interventor normalizador al [contador] Dr. Manolo Popovich ...con facultades de administración, debiendo depurar el padrón de asociados dando estricto cumplimiento a las normas estatutarias, como paso previo a convocar a elección de autoridades, debiendo informar sobre los progresos de su gestión a la Inspección General de Justicia cada veinte (20) días.

Artículo 2° - Dispónese que el plazo de la intervención ordenada es de ciento veinte (120) días corridos a partir de la aceptación del cargo por parte del interventor designado.

Artículo 3° - Regístrese, notifíquese y gírese al Organismo remitente, a sus efectos.

So what happened once Popovich began his Intervention on behalf of the Ministry of Justice¹⁵³? After certain initiatives to reconcile Cahuana's and González's blocs through the mediation of the Bolivian Embassy, Popovich and his work were soon impugned by Cahuana and the critics of the 'usurpation'. Indeed, by March 2005, Popovich had already been accused of siding with and supporting the 'usurpers' who had occupied the CBE since Cahuana's ouster in January 2002.

Cahuana Contests the Intervention and Impugns Popovich's First Report (n.d. March 2005)

In conjunction with two other formal complaints brought before the IGJ in February and March 2005, Cahuana and his counsel lodged the following with the IGJ to contest Popovich's first report. Indeed, one of Cahuana's principal complaints was that, in addition to the partiality and malfeasance he alleged, Popovich was not fulfilling his duty of regularly informing the IGJ of his progress in restoring the CBE's administrative regularity—the latter including an account of the CBE's revenues and expenditures. Toward this end, Cahuana made the IGJ aware that Popovich's first report, was not made until 8 March 2005. This was months after his initial appointment and therefore in violation of Resolution 035 which stipulated he report back to the IGJ every 20 days.

IMPUGNA INFORME—SOLICITA INMEDIATA DESTITUCIÓN

Buenos Aires, [n.d.] Marzo 2005
Señor Inspector General de Justicia

Teodoro Cahuana, por la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar... a V.S. con respeto expongo y digo:

¹⁵³ It appears that Popovich began his Intervention on 31 November 2004.

Que mediante esta actuación procesal, en legal tiempo y forma, vengo a impugnar el informe del Dr. Manolo Popovich del 08 de marzo de 2005, en razón a los argumentos de hecho y de derecho que a continuación expongo:

A fs. 3 de su informe, acompaña Popovich una nota dirigida a los asociados con fecha 02 de febrero de 2005 para una reunión que se haría el 05 de febrero de 2005, para la supuesta entrega de un ‘Padrón o Lista Provisoria’ de asociados, o para poner dicha ‘lista’ a consideración de los ‘ex-presidentes’ que no son otros que los usurpadores, Freddy Galán, Bonifacio Corihuanca, y Cipriano González, esto obviamente con la finalidad que dichas personajes den el visto bueno para la inclusión de más de 500 asociados que se encuentra en el Libro N°3, que como ya se sabe, su irregular inclusión fue declarada irregular y ineficaz tanto por la IGJ como por la Exma. Cámara del Fuero Civil.

Yet the accusations did not end there. As seen here, Cahuana claimed that Popovich was not performing his fundamental duty of preparing a legitimate roll of eligible voters (*padrón*) for an election that would install a rightful leadership in the CBE. While Popovich would later counter that Cahuana refused to cooperate with his endeavors on this point, Cahuana claims that Popovich, at the hand of the ‘usurpers’, had agreed to legitimize the voting status of those 500-plus members that were associated by González’s illegitimate Commission in Administrative Books that had been acquired under false pretenses (specifically those in *Libro N°3, Registro de Asociados*). Such a move, Cahuana claimed, was in clear violation of the IGJ’s Resolution 0857.

Contrary to what one would suspect of a proper Interventor, it appears that Popovich never consulted the IGJ on the legitimacy of those memberships, and thus whether they should be included in the electoral roll that would decide the fate of the CBE. Rather, it appears that his own appointed collaborator—an accountant like himself who was similarly not versed in administrative jurisprudence—spoke for the IGJ on this matter and decided unilaterally that these memberships were in fact legitimate; that what had been deemed illegitimate by Resolution 0857 was the acquisition (*rúbrica*) of *Libro N°3*, not its *content*. It appears that it was *Cahuana* who had to introduce the matter to the IGJ such that the Intervention—and the fate of the CBE—be guided by proper jurisprudence. Cahuana’s work on this crucial point culminated in Resolution 0574 from 24 May 2005, which upheld an earlier Resolution (0469 from 26 April 2005) that declared that just those members contained in *Libro N°1, Registro de Asociados*—and not just those contained on the original *Padrón N°1* from the original election of December 2001—could be considered for the official roll. The basis for this declaration was that *Libro N°1* had never been contested by either of the litigants or their respective blocs. While Cahuana continued to

push for the voting rights of those members registered in *Libro N°2, Registro de Asociados* based on this *Libro*'s validity given the declarations of Resolution 0857—as well as on the basis of the recommendations made in another IGJ declaration (i.e. Resolution 0328 from 11 March 2005)—he eventually conceded that, in the interest of the CBE, a legitimate election could be held with a *Padrón* drawn from just those contained in *Libro N°1*. This was eventually consented to by both parties on 28 June 2005, though perhaps only momentarily. For the Expediente reveals a Dictamen from 3 August 2005 that recommends the whole matter be elevated for judicial consideration by the relevant Court (Excma Cámara de Apelaciones en lo Civil). Future research will reveal the fate of the election and its felicity conditions, pending since December 2001.

Yet before the Court could consider the matter, there was much that happened with Popovich and his Intervention. Returning to the accusations surrounding his report from 8 March 2005, Cahuana claims that Popovich had never taken full control of the CBE and its administration, and that he had left the 'usurpers' in place. This was a violation of the very terms of a Ministerial Intervention. For as per Argentine administrative law, the Inteventor becomes the sole authority of the entity; he replaces any and all pre-existing Commissions. Cahuana and his counsel argue that where Popovich has not replaced those occupying the CBE, he is at their mercy and thus lacks impartiality in his work to 'normalize' the entity. As evidence, they point to his naming of these individuals to a 'Sub-commission' in which they enjoy the same titles and functions they appropriated for themselves in their 'usurpation'.

A fs. 25 del informe, se encuentra agregado la composición de la supuesta subcomisión conformada por Popovich, 'subcomisión' que está refrendada por el 'Presidente' Cipriano González y por el 'Secretario' Evaristo Copani, lo que demuestra V.S. el tipo de trato y de sumisión del interventor a los usurpadores de la Institución, que peso a lo aseverado en su informe, que no lo reconoce a González como presidente, acompaña documental donde aparece los Srs. González y Evaristo Copani como 'Presidente' y 'Secretario' ...los nombrados continúan usando y abusando de las oficinas y de todas las instalaciones de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar... Lo que quiere decir que todos los miembros de la 'Comisión Directiva' del 'Presidente' González se encuentran en funciones plenamente y con todas las facultades.

The allegations against Popovich did not end there. In addition to the claim that he was not tackling the root of the problem—i.e. the hijacking of an entity of the public good—Cahuana and his counsel charged that Popovich was also failing control the CBE's revenues and expenditures. His attempt to provide an accounting of the CBE's fiscal situation, they claim, was nothing short

of a sham. Indeed, his report from a local accountancy provided no information on what was coming in or going out—nor *to whom*. Not only was this true for the three-year period since Cahuana’s ouster, it was also true for the duration of his own Intervention.

A fs. 27, con fecha 21 de enero de 2005 se encuentra agregado un supuesto Informe Contable, suscrito por la Dra. Roic, Mónica Alicia... que consigna en modo alguno los ingresos y los egresos de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, desde el año 2002 hasta la fecha o al menos desde el 31 de noviembre de 2004 hasta el 23 de marzo de 2005, es decir, los cuatro meses que estuvo el Sr. Interventor al “mando” de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar.

The singular exception regarding expenditures in Popovich’s report—which was not included with the financial analysis—was his reference to the construction of an external addition to the Market that would double its size. He stated that, in the absence of any representative for Cahuana, Eusebio Huari, here representing Cipriano González, directed the “subgroup” in charge of this construction—a construction he called a “social work”. In a separate complaint from 29 March 2005, Cahuana alleged that this project was grossly over-invoiced; that the CBE was paying ARS \$520,000.00 for a structure whose market-value was \$200,000.00. If true, who was taking what cut of the remaining ARS \$320,000.00 remains unknown. Moreover, Cahuana argues that such a construction was at the expense of programming and works that truly benefitted the *mass* of members and the public good. Expanding the Market, he stated, only served the economic interests of the ‘usurpers’ and the clientele of operators they managed. In this regard it wasn’t a “social work” at all. Cahuana called upon the IGJ to intervene against Popovich and order a cessation of all payouts on this contract. This addition to the Market was finished in 2006.

Cahuana and his counsel claim that Popovich’s inability to take control of the CBE and its revenues shows his complicity with the ‘usurpers’. They petition the IGJ to immediately dismiss Popovich from his charge and to demand that he provide the reports and balances required by Resolution 035. Most importantly, they demand that the IGJ solicit a judicial intervention to determine whether Popovich had violated the terms of conduct of a public official¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵⁴ Interestingly, there is subsequent discussion within the IGJ on whether Popovich, as an Interventor, is a public official or not.

Como se puede observar V.S., Manolo Popovich es absolutamente dócil y funcional a los intereses de los usurpadores, en contra de los cuales esta Comisión que presido, y que es la última elegida legalmente, ha estado luchando desde hace más de tres años, no sólo para expulsarlos de la Subse de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, sino también para que rindan cuentas del despilfarro de los recursos económicos de la Institución, función que pensábamos V.S. que el Dr. Popovich podía cumplir...

...[Que] V.S. ordene la extracción de testimonios y solicite de oficio la intervención de la justicia penal, a fin de averiguar si Popovich, como mínimo, pudo haber cometido el delito de incumplimiento de los deberes de funcionario público, y otros, ya que según la Resolución 035 del Ministerio de Justicia, V.S. es contralor de las actividades o funciones que cumple Popovich en la C.B.E., ...a fin de no causar más daños a la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, se lo suspenda de sus funciones y simultáneamente se solicite la destitución de Popovich...

Before moving to the IGJ's evaluation of Popovich's Intervention—which eventually culminates in his dismissal, replacement, and a petition to the Minister to initiate a penal investigation against him—it is perhaps worth contrasting Cahuana's allegations with Popovich's own request of the IGJ for an extension of his Intervention. As read from his report on 8 March 2005, Popovich petitions the IGJ to extend his Intervention for another 240 days (8 months) on the basis that his charge could not be completed in the allotted time of 120 days (4 months):

Petitorio:

Dada la envergadura de las tareas a realizar en todos y cada uno de los puntos informados y la imposibilidad de implementar su realización en el plazo previsto en el artículo 2° de la Resolución 035/04 de la Secretaría de Política Judicial y Asuntos Legislativos del Ministerio de Justicia de la Nación, se solicita la ampliación del mismo en un término no menor a doscientos cuarenta (240) días corridos.

Saludo al señor Inspector General de Justicia con mi consideración más distinguida.

Manolo Popovich

Indeed, we will see shortly that an extra 8 months of Intervention would have been of great economic benefit to Popovich and the 'usurpers', all at the expense of the CBE and the public good.

The months of April – August 2005 were a time of great tumult in the CBE. It was during these months that the IGJ came to realize the extent to which the Ministry's chosen Interventor had

been co-opted by the ‘usurpers’, and by extension, the extent of the ‘irregularities’ of the entity itself. Here I provide an exegesis of the key Resolutions which cast Popovich’s work on behalf of the Ministry and the public good in critical relief.

IGJ Resolution 0456 (21 April 2005)

The IGJ Petitions the Secretariat to Deny Popovich’s Extension and Replace Him

In Resolution 0456 from 21 April 2005, the IGJ pronounced on Popovich’s petition to have his Intervention extended not by one term, but by two, for a total of 8 months. Stating that the term of 120 days stipulated by Resolution 035 had expired; that the key work of producing a legitimate roll of eligible voters had not yet been performed; and that there were allegations against Popovich for professional misconduct, the IGJ, citing both the public interest and the rights of the CBE’s members, petitioned the Ministry’s Secretariat to deny Popovich his request for extension, and declare his work formally terminated.

Buenos Aires, 21 de Abril de 2005

CONSIDERANDO:

Que... surge del informe de gestión presentado por el Interventor surge, que ha desarrollado múltiples tareas en miras a la normalización de la entidad, tal como le fuera encomendado, y según el detalle que obra en el mismo.

Asimismo, consta en estas actuaciones que una parte importante de asociados cuestionan gravemente la gestión de la intervención, presupuesto este, que podría desvirtuar los fines que la autoridad de contralor tuvo en miras al momento de aconsejar la medida de normalización y regularización ordenada por la Res. Min. 035/04...

Que en resguardo al interés público comprometido, este Organismo de Contralor debe velar por proteger la vida asociativa y garantizar la transparencia de la gestión de los funcionarios que se designen para cumplir tareas en el seno de la Institución.

...Resultaría prudente aconsejar dar por concluida la tarea del mismo interventor de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, rechazando en consecuencia la prórroga solicitada.

In its Declarations, Resolution 0456 also petitioned the Secretariat to name a new Interventor, the lawyer Horacio Mendoza, to replace Popovich, and to order the latter to remain in his charge until the former take command. This should not be without first completing a full and final reckoning of his Intervention within 15 days.

Por ello,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE:

Artículo 1° - Solicitar al Sr. Ministro de Justicia dar por concluido el mandato del Dr. Manolo Popovich como interventor de la “Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar” y proponer en su reemplazo al Dr. Horacio Mendoza, para que finalice la tarea encomendada en la Res. Min. N° 035/04.

Artículo 2° - Hacer saber al Sr. Manolo Popovich deberá continuar en funciones hasta tanto asuma el interventor que se designe, debiendo rendir cuentas de toda su gestión y depositar toda la documentación social y el comprobante de los depósitos de dinero que se encuentren en su poder, en la Inspección General de Justicia.

Such a final reckoning, which the Resolution stipulated should include copies of all administrative acts as well as bank receipts showing deposits of the CBE’s funds, was not forthcoming from Popovich. As we’ll see shortly, given what appeared in his final report, it is perhaps hard not to see why. Nevertheless, Popovich would later contest that Resolution 0456 was not clear in that it asked him for a ‘final’ report while ordering him to continue on in his functions.

Secretariat’s Resolution 083 (27 June 2005)

The Secretariat Authorizes the IGJ’s Requests and Replaces Popovich

The requests made by the IGJ in Resolution 0456 were duly granted by the Secretariat in its own Resolution issued two months later on 27 June 2005. In addition to confirming the dismissal of Popovich and authorizing the appointment of Horacio Mendoza as the new Interventor (once again for a period of 120 days), Resolution 083 reiterated the requirement that Popovich provide a full administrative account of his Intervention, now not just for the 120 days stipulated by its earlier Resolution 035, but up to the present as well. The Secretariat demanded that Popovich include an account of the CBE’s revenues and expenditures for what had become six months of work.

Que en razón de lo precedentemente expuesto, el Sr. Manolo Popovich deberá rendir cuentas de su gestión en el término de quince (15) días, e informar ingresos y egresos de la entidad desde su asunción hasta la fecha.

While Popovich had issued periodic reports to the IGJ after the declarations of Resolution 0456—though only on administrative endeavors that had little to do with the fundamental matters of the ‘usurpation’—he finally complied with the Ministry’s full request of providing a *financial* account of his Intervention a month later, on 27 July 2005. This submission came in violation of the 15 days stipulated by the Secretariat’s Resolution 083, and was partial cause for the IGJ to disallow his aforementioned contestation of the terms of his Intervention and reports.

Yet this violation was the least of Popovich’s worries. His final account of the revenues and expenditures of the CBE under his oversight revealed such malfeasance that the Inspector General, Dr. Gabriel Eichel, recommended a penal investigation of Popovich. That recommendation came in Resolution 0768.

IGJ Resolution 0768 (16 August 2005)

Inspector General Recommends a Penal Intervention to Investigate Popovich

By the time Resolution 0768 was issued on 16 August 2005, Popovich’s replacement, Horacio Mendoza, had already been appointed Interventor, and had begun working by 10 July 2005¹⁵⁵. While out of order chronologically, I will defer the discussion of Mendoza’s attempts to take control of the CBE until after completing the present treatment of Popovich’s Intervention, which is the primary focus of 0768.

Issued by the IGJ, Resolution 0768 recounts the Ministerial pronouncements surrounding Popovich’s appointment, including an explicit warning to him that he abstain from any preferential treatment.

Buenos Aires, 16 de Agosto de 2005

CONSIDERANDO:

¹⁵⁵ An official act marking his installation was performed by IGJ Inspectors in the CBE’s Administration on 13 July 2005. Evaristo Copani —the CBE’s self-appointed “Secretary”—co-signed the act as a witness.

Que la Secretaría de Justicia del Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Nación, por Resolución N° 083/05 dispuso dar por finalizada la labor del Sr. Manolo Popovich como interventor de la ‘Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’ y designar en su reemplazo al Sr. Horacio Mendoza para que finalice las tareas encomendadas en la Resolución 035/04.

Por esa misma Resolución 083/05 se estableció que el anterior interventor deberá rendir cuentas de su gestión en el término de quince (15) días e informar ingresos y egresos de la entidad desde su asunción hasta la fecha de esa resolución...

En este expediente el Sr. Manolo Popovich ha sido objeto de diversos cuestionamientos en el cumplimiento de su gestión habiendo sido incluso intimado a no subjetivizar su accionar en pro de ninguna de las partes en conflicto, pese a lo cual continuó concurriendo con posterioridad a la designación del nuevo interventor.

The Resolution quickly moves to consider Popovich’s financial account of his Intervention and of the revenues and expenditures of the CBE. The Inspectors are surprised to find—in Popovich’s own report nonetheless—his decision to award himself a weekly commission (*honorario*) for his work on behalf of the Ministry.

De los informes presentados por el mismo Popovich resulta que se asignó, por propia voluntad y sin previa consulta, una suma en concepto de honorarios.

As seen from a Dictamen that later takes up the issue, any honorarium can only be awarded through a formal request to the Judiciary¹⁵⁶. It thus appears that not even the Ministry of Justice (which is of the Executive Branch) can assign an honorarium.

None of this ‘irregularity’ should gloss over the sheer *amount* of the honorarium (at least as far as it was actually documented). As shown on his own report, Popovich took ARS \$33,000.00 of CBE funds over an 8 month period. Where those appointed to the “subcommissions” of his Intervention were Eusebio Huari, Heitor Anaya, Cipriano González and Evaristo Copani—the same individuals involved in the collection and management of the CBE’s revenues—it leaves little doubt that these ARS \$33,000.00 were a perquisite granted by these ‘usurpers’ for being allowed to operate as they always had, as Cahuana had in fact alleged. Yet Popovich’s being on the take was not the only ‘irregularity’ contained in his report.

¹⁵⁶ From a Dictamen by Alicia Rossin to Inspector Jefe, 1 Feb 2006 (fs. 619, Cuerpo 3°, 51934): “Respecto a la regulación de honorarios, se hace saber que en virtud a la labor desarrollada la misma debe ser solicitada judicialmente.” Such a norm, like the process of appeal seen in Chapter 1, is likely a function of the separation of powers.

De la documentación aportada con sus informes por el propio Sr. Manolo Popovich surge la existencia de posibles infracciones a la ley antievasión inadmisibles en la gestión de una intervención ministerial.

Del informe preliminar del Estudio Contable Impositivo Matteo-Graziano & Asociados acompañado por el actual Interventor a fs. 522/523, surge la existencia de situaciones anómalas consentidas, toleradas o permitidas durante la gestión del anterior Interventor, tales como el pago de horas extras a personal sin relación de dependencia o de facturas que no cumplen con la normativa aplicable en materia de IVA o el de aparatos de telefonía celular para equipos que figuran a nombre de un ex –directivo, o de vales de caja a ex integrantes de Comisión Directiva.

Del informe corriente a fs. 525/528 del actual Interventor, presentado en base a una ampliación del primer trabajo del estudio contable-impositivo Matteo-Graziano & Asociados surge la reiterada práctica de los miembros de diversas Comisiones Directivas de la ‘Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’ de asignarse retribuciones en violación a las normas que rigen el gobierno de las entidades de bien público y sin que sobre ello existiera informa anterior.

Popovich’s financial reckoning reveals that he allegedly authored, participated in, or was otherwise complicit in a range of other illegal practices as the Ministerial Interventor. His record shows cash payouts to Cipriano González’s illegitimate Executive Commission—a Commission that his Intervention was required to have replaced by law. For example, for 2004, his report shows that payouts to González’s Commission totaled ARS \$55,400.00. Payouts to their legal counsel (principally Koprivec) exceeded ARS \$18,000.00 for just the period of Popovich’s Intervention. These payouts, for which there were no formal receipts, were almost always in excess of ARS \$1000. For an entity of the public good, this meant they were in violation of Argentine tax law (*ley antievasión*).

What were equally egregious were CBE payments for individualized communicative devices and transportation services. Regarding the former, the Nextel devices named in Popovich’s report no doubt belonged to the magnates (*consignatarios*) in the Market who formed González’s Commission (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of the economics of their operations). In 2004, these devices cost the CBE’s members—and by extension, the public—ARS \$13,400. Regarding the transportation services which benefitted those occupying the CBE, the exorbitant sum of ARS \$20,900 was reported for the same year. Finally, what was equally striking was the IGJ’s discovery (ultimately with the aid of Mendoza’s Intervention, to the extent he was allowed to perform it) that the CBE had not kept bank accounts for any of its revenues. This was incredible given that the CBE’s revenues approximated ARS \$1.5M (formerly USD\$1.5M).

With no accounts—and no accounting—it was not surprising to see how Popovich and González’s Commission defrauded both the CBE and the public at large.

Resulta evidente que el manejo de los fondos de la ‘Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’ no se ha ajustado a las normas legales lo que amerita la correspondiente investigación, sobre todo ante la posible comisión de ilícitos que podrían dar lugar a la acción pública, máxime existiendo obligación legal de denunciar dado el carácter de funcionario público del suscripto.

Where Popovich had not dismissed and replaced the ‘usurpers’, but had rather joined them and profited from their corruption, what could the CBE’s members have hoped for? Certainly, if he was on the take, Popovich could never have been relied on to develop a legitimate electoral roll whose use might dislodge his co-conspirators. Similarly, he could never have been impartial in any CBE matter, or operated in good faith. In realizing this, the IGJ, which had been lax (and perhaps even swayed) in its regulation of the CBE following Cahuana’s ouster, stated that the rule of law had to be respected. On this premise, the Inspector General resolved to refer Popovich’s public work to the Judiciary to determine whether he had committed public offenses and/or other crimes.

Es responsabilidad del Estado asegurar el cumplimiento de la ley y de las resoluciones que se dicten en su mérito.
Por ello,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE

Artículo 1º - Dar intervención a la justicia penal a fin de que se investigue la posible comisión de ilícitos de acción pública durante la gestión del Dr. Manolo Popovich y hasta el presente, tanto con relación a la administración y contabilidad de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar como con relación a los hechos recientemente denunciados por el actual interventor.

Yet Resolution 0768 also references violent events in the CBE that frustrated the installation and command of their newly appointed Interventor, Horacio Mendoza.

Con posterioridad a su presentación del 9 del corriente, el Sr. Interventor [Mendoza] informó personalmente a esta Inspección General de Justicia sobre los hechos de

violencia que se habían producido en los predios donde funcionan el Mercado Mayorista y la Feria dominical de la ‘Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar,’ hechos de violencia que culminaron con el obligado retiro del personal de vigencia contratado por el Interventor.

Just what had happened? And more importantly: Why did the IGJ need to petition the Ministry of the Interior to dispatch a police force to replace Mendoza in his charge? Had he too been ousted by the ‘usurpers’, where they couldn’t buy him off as they had done Popovich?

Como inmediata consecuencia...corresponde adoptar las medidas necesarias para mantener el imperio de la ley cualesquiera fuere la forma en la que se intentare o pretendiere conculcarla.

Por ello,

EL INSPECTOR GENERAL DE JUSTICIA
RESUELVE

Artículo 2° - Requerir al Ministerio del Interior preste el auxilio de la fuerza pública necesaria para restablecer a la Intervención en la persona de su Interventor y/o de los colaboradores que designe en la pacífica posesión de las instalaciones de la ‘Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar’.

While the IGJ did petition to have Mendoza physically re-installed in the CBE as its Interventor, one might argue that he had never in fact been ousted by the ‘usurpers’. This is for the simple reason that Mendoza, despite his repeated efforts, was never fully able to physically dislodge the ‘usurpers’ from, the CBE’s premises.

Mendoza’s Intervention and the ‘Usurpers’ Appeal of Resolution 083 (12 July 2005)

As we saw in Resolution 083 above, Mendoza’s appointment had been confirmed by the Ministry’s Secretariat on 27 June 2005. As described in an IGJ Dictamen two weeks later¹⁵⁷, Mendoza had reported to the CBE’s Sunday Feria on 10 July 2005 to replace Popovich and begin his work. Popovich, who had already been ordered by the IGJ to abstain from the CBE’s premises, also through Resolution 083¹⁵⁸, allegedly pleaded ignorance of his orders and sought to

¹⁵⁷ See the Dictamen from IGJ Inspector Alicia Rossin from 11 July 2005.

¹⁵⁸ Popovich received a certified letter notifying him of Resolution 083 on 4 July 2005.

continue on in his charge. The encounter, however, was preceded by another between representatives of both Popovich and Mendoza, and had resulted in a conflict that culminated in accusations filed in Escobar's Police Station. It was this resistance that Mendoza faced that resulted in the IGJ's designation of Inspectors to travel with him to the CBE on 13 July 2005, and formerly install him as the rightful Interventor—an act that was signed by Evaristo Copani in representation of the 'usurpers'.

Seeing that Mendoza intended to comply with his orders from the Ministry and to take control of the CBE's and its revenues, the 'usurpers' quickly petitioned the Ministry to repeal Resolution 083. They claimed that dismissing Popovich would do "irreparable harm" to the CBE.

Buenos Aires, 12 de Julio de 2005

Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Sra. Secretaria de Justicia
Dra. María José Rodríguez

...Que venimos, en tiempo y forma por la presente a interponer Recurso de Reconsideración Jerárquico, y Apelación en Subsidio contra la Resolución Ministerial N°083 de fecha 27 de junio de 2005, por la misma haber devenido en abstracta y que causa a la entidad un daño irreparable en plena etapa de regularización y normalización institucional, con un dispendio innecesario de gastos y tiempo.

Atento a ello, solicitamos al señor Ministro que—por contrario imperio—desestime la resolución citada en cada uno de sus puntos, y dicte una nueva resolución reconfirmando al Sr. Manolo Popovich, como Interventor de la Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, otorgándole un plazo no mayor de 50 días, a los efectos que termine con el proceso electoral que ha iniciado.

The 'usurpers' argued that the CBE under Popovich's Intervention was achieving its institutional regularity and that, as a result, he should be reconfirmed as Interventor. It was under his administration, they argued, that the CBE could rightfully carry out its elections. Having already seen the final accounting of the CBE under Popovich's watch, it is easy to see why the 'usurpers' sought to keep him: they would not only continue to pay themselves a large cut of the CBE's funds, they would also control the process of election in which they would come out victorious (and thus have a state-sanctioned command of the CBE through which to perpetuate their racket) or otherwise impugn any result to the contrary, as they had originally done.

The ‘usurpers’ appeal, however, was short-lived. In a Dictamen from 19 July 2005, the IGJ cited legislation stipulating that Ministerial Resolutions could only be heard by the Judiciary. The appropriate body to receive an appeal was not the IGJ, but rather the *Cámara Nacional de Apelaciones en lo Civil*. Moreover, the IGJ stated that the mere dismissal or designation of any Interventor was a discretionary act of the State. This meant it could not—in and of itself—cause harm to a particular party, as the ‘usurpers’ had alleged. The usurpers, figuring that an involvement of the Judiciary might expose what nevertheless came out in Popovich’s final report, pursued other, more immediate means of resisting Mendoza’s Intervention.

The Usurpers Refuse to Comply with Mendoza’s Intervention

Indeed, one of their principal tactics was to refuse to surrender any of the entity’s revenues to Mendoza. On 17 July 2005, and for the second week in a row, the ‘usurpers’ failed to hand over the revenues generated from the Sunday Feria. At ARS \$15,000.00, this was no small sum. As reported in a brief to the Inspector General, Mendoza detailed the *de facto*, physical entrenchment of the ‘usurpers’ and reiterated the refusal of Cipriano González’s illegitimate Commission to allow him to take control of the CBE’s administration.

Buenos Aires, 18 de Julio de 2005

Señor Inspector General de Justicia
Dr. Gabriel Eichel

De mi consideración:

Horacio Mendoza, Interventor de la Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, en el expediente 1.520.370/51934, al Sr. Inspector General digo:

En el día de ayer, domingo 17 de julio, a las 7 hs., con el objeto de dar principio de cumplimiento a la labor encomendada, me constituí, acompañado por un grupo de colaboradores, en la feria que esa entidad tiene habilitada en la ciudad de Belén de Escobar.

Demás está decir—esto hace a la problemática que deberé afrontar en el cumplimiento de mi gestión—que varios socios, que en su momento, integraron la Comisión Directiva desplazada por la Intervención, encabezados por su ex-presidente—pretendieron no sólo continuar ejerciendo su función, sino, además, imponerme el procedimiento al que debía sujetarme...

Cuando aproximadamente alrededor de las 20hs. Requerí la entrega de la recaudación me encontré con la sorpresa que tanto las cobradoras como los playeros, pese a las expresas directivas impartidas, habían entregado todo lo cobrado al ex tesorero David Anaya...

Ante lo ocurrido me trasladé a la Seccional Primera de Policía de Escobar y formulé la denuncia penal del caso como lo acredito con la copia de mi declaración.

Saludo a Vd. atentamente,
Horacio Mendoza

Where Mendoza would not be bought off, the ‘usurpers’ would not cooperate. Despite being allowed to physically occupy the CBE’s administrative offices on 1 August 2005 (though this too would be short-lived), the ‘usurpers’ continued to deny Mendoza access to the CBE’s revenues. And where this brought mixed results, they reverted to demanding that the Market’s and Feria’s operators refuse to pay their fees in ‘protest’.

The flyer below was the first of two, and the only one copied to the file, in which the ‘usurpers’ demanded their boycott. Yet how did they justify it? What were the Market’s and Feria’s operators led to believe was the cause behind their ‘protest’? In what follows, the ‘usurpers’ purposefully misrepresent the nature of the IGJ’s pronouncements and of the respective work of both Popovich and Mendoza in order to argue that it is *Mendoza* (not Popovich) that has failed to perform his Ministerial charge. That is, the ‘usurpers’ argue that Mendoza has failed to call and carry out elections, which they argue is his *only* duty as Interventor.

Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar
Asociación Civil

Buenos Aires, Belén de Escobar 7 de Agosto de 2005

Según la última Resolución 083 de la Inspección General de Justicia de junio del corriente año hace referencia de lo siguiente:

‘Que el plazo de la intervención dispuesto por la Resolución S.P.J y A.L. N° 035/04 feneció, encontrándose pendiente la depuración del padrón y la convocatoria a elecciones.’

En la misma resolución menciona que se designa a Horacio Mendoza como nuevo interventor para que finalice la tarea encomendada en la Resolución N° 035/04. Entendemos entonces que queda pendiente la convocatoria a elecciones ya que el padrón electoral ya fue resuelto de la siguiente manera: El día 28 del corriente se firmó en la Inspección General de Justicia un acurdo donde consta que ambas partes están de

acuerdo de convocar elecciones con el libro N°1 de registro de asociados ya que nadie puede cuestionarlo. Es decir que el padrón ya está resuelto por ambas partes y que el interventor tiene que finalizar la intervención con el llamado a elecciones que además en el acuerdo fue establecido mínimo 30 días máximo 60 días.

Por tal motivo decimos que el único designado para llamar a elecciones es el señor Horacio Mendoza y que la única función que tiene este es llamar a elecciones. Los deberes del funcionario público, como el señor Horacio Mendoza, es de seguir los lineamientos del acuerdo firmado ya que en ella constan las firmas de inspectores como Dra. Rossin, Dr. Silvio Bagnara y Javier Foscaldi comprometidos a tal efecto.

Por tal motivo informamos a todos los asociados y puesteros de la feria que la tarea pendiente es el llamado a elecciones únicamente y es éste la tarea que debe realizar el Dr. Mendoza, únicamente es éste el objetivo y no de retener la situación hasta los 120 días como fue designado.

Yet as seen here, the ‘usurpers’ misrepresent both the nature of the Secretariat’s Resolution 083, and the nature of a proper Intervention. With regard to the former, they cite language from Resolution 083, but cleverly extract it from its original context. While true that the 120 days of Intervention originally stipulated by Resolution 035 is long over, this 120 days referred to *Popovich’s* Intervention—not Mendoza’s. Second, 083’s mention that the election had not yet been realized was made in reference to *Popovich’s* Intervention—not Mendoza’s. Indeed, Resolution 083 was issued precisely to reject Popovich’s request to stay on as Interventor (and for another 8 months) on the basis that *he* had been unable to perform his work given his term. With their pragmatic entextualization, the ‘usurpers’ thus attempted to pin Popovich’s failures on Mendoza (whom they continued to resist, in violation of the law), and to argue that this was justification for ‘protesting’ his work. It is worth reproducing the original language and spirit of Resolution 083 to reveal their sleight of hand:

Que a fs. 71/78 del trámite 1.520.370/51934 se presenta el Sr. Manolo Popovich, en su carácter de interventor designado por Resolución S.P.J y A.L. N° 035 de fecha 27 de octubre de 2004, de la “Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar” presentando un informe de gestión y solicitando una prórroga de su designación por el término de doscientos cuarenta (240) días.

Que el plazo de intervención dispuesto por la Resolución S.P.J y A.L. N° 035/04 ha fenecido, encontrándose pendiente la depuración del padrón y la convocatoria a elecciones.

Yet none of this should gloss over the ‘usurpers’ misrepresentation of what a proper Intervention should be. In their flyer, they repeatedly claim that the *only* task of the Intervention

is to call and carry out elections. This of course, is not true. As per the Resolution 035, the Intervention has been called to restore regularity to the CBE as a whole. That is, before any election can be successfully carried out, the CBE's administration and institution must first be made regular—and that entails the dismissal of any and all previous Commissions.

To the undiscerning operator and/or member—who themselves confess that they simply want to sell their products as they always have—Mendoza is made out to be abusing his authority and manipulating the CBE. Such is the basis for the 'usurpers' call to deny him any leverage in his Intervention:

Señores Puesteros de la Feria

Petitorio:

Que se abstengan de pagar los puestos, los días domingos y todos los domingos posibles hasta que el interventor Horacio Mendoza convoque a una reunión de socios de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar y en ella diga la fecha de las elecciones según el acuerdo firmado. Que el interventor actúe de buena manera para con los socios y feriantes sin favoritismos hacia personas ajenas a la colectividad. Que todos pidamos las elecciones porque estamos cansados de que nos manipulen de acuerdo a sus conveniencias.

In another brief to the Inspector General on 9 August 2005, Mendoza states that where this flyer was anonymously written, another from the next day—8 August 2005—clearly bore the names of the 'usurpers'. It too implored the CBE's operators to refuse to pay their fees in protest of Mendoza's Intervention. As reported by Mendoza:

Buenos Aires, 9 de Agosto de 2005

Señor Inspector General de Justicia
Dr. Gabriel Eichel

De mi consideración:

...Al día siguiente, domingo 7 de agosto, circuló en la Feria el panfleto adjunto...en el que no sólo se recomienda el no pagar los arriendos sino, prácticamente, se insta a alzarse contra la intervención y se pretende imponerle la forma en la que debería desarrollar su gestión...

Si bien ese panfleto era anónimo, al día siguiente, lunes 8 se produjo una situación similar, pero con nombres y apellidos.

Los socios Eusebio Huari, Heitor Anaya, Bonifacio Corihuanca y Cipriano González instaron a los puesteros del Mercado a no pagar la locación de sus puestos. Es decir que tomaron una actitud de franca rebeldía...

This ‘rebellion’, Mendoza explains, is easily understood if one considers the ‘accounting’ practices in the CBE (the very practices we saw illuminated in Popovich’s final report). Mendoza states that the ‘usurpers’ resistance to his Intervention was a direct function of their desire to maintain the perquisites they awarded themselves through controlling the CBE’s revenues:

Empero, todo tiene su porqué.

La reiterada resistencia a entregar la administración del Mercado se explica si uno se adentra en el análisis de la ‘contabilidad’ de ese Mercado...

Va de suyo que la resistencia y el hostigamiento a la Intervención tienen como necesaria causa antecedente la pérdida de sus prebendas por parte del grupo directivo desplazado por la Intervención, prebendas de las que siguieron beneficiándose durante la actuación del ex-Interventor.

Saludo a Vd. atentamente,
Horacio Mendoza

Through their flyers and impositions, the ‘usurpers’ succeeded in swaying—perhaps also under certain coercion—the CBE’s operators to refuse to comply with Mendoza’s Intervention. And on 10 August 2005, the ‘usurpers’ took the CBE’s Administration and Market back from Mendoza, who had been able to run his Intervention from there since 1 August 2005. Not only did they physically oust Mendoza, they ousted the security force he had contracted to replace the guards formerly maintained by the ‘usurpers’¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁹ It is of note that the ‘usurpers’ security force had been none other than off-duty police officers from the *Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*, a.k.a. the ‘*Bonaerense*’. (This is the same force that had been implicated in the organization of the violent robberies of the Bolivian *quinteros* mentioned in Chapter 6). Officers of the *Bonaerense* are by law ineligible to perform any private security detail, such as that seen in the CBE under the ‘usurpation’ and Popovich’s Intervention. As stated in Resolution 0905 from 22 September 2005:

“Que respecto al cambio del personal de seguridad, dicha decisión a todas luces, no resulta una causal de recusación. Sin perjuicio de ello, señala que ellos se realizó con el fin de cumplir con la normativa vigente; el personal de seguridad contratado por la entidad integra la planta permanente de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, por lo cual se encuentran inhabilitados para prestar funciones como seguridad privada; sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que nunca exhibieron autorización de sus superiores para realizar esa tarea...”

That the ‘usurpers’ had contracted these officers was no small circumstance: where they were privately backed by the public *Bonaerense*, no-one was ever in a position to physically confront them. Indeed, where the ‘usurpers’ were in themselves intimidating, the heat packed by the off-duty *Bonaerense* was enough to get anyone—especially those who wanted to keep their livelihood in the CBE—to fall in line. Some suspect that the ‘usurpers’ hit-men (*matones*), for which there is also reference in the legal file, were personal connections of these off-duty officers—perhaps even other officers of the *Bonaerense*. Many found the *Bonaerense* just as dangerous on-duty; for some believed they could deport one for being an illegal immigrant.

While the ‘usurpation’ had always been a physical occupation, this was the first time it had physically confronted the Argentine State (or rather, that part of the State—i.e. the IGJ, here represented by Mendoza—that could not be co-opted, as other parts had, e.g. Popovich and the *Bonaerense*).

This physical confrontation led Mendoza to file a police report and to petition the local arm of the Judiciary to physically dislodge the ‘usurpers’. As he stated in another brief to the Inspector General:

Buenos Aires, 12 de Agosto de 2005

Señor Inspector General de Justicia
Dr. Gabriel Eichel

De mi consideración:

Cumplo en comunicar que, ante la usurpación de los predios en los que funcionan el Mercado mayorista y la Feria dominical de la Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, en la fecha formulé la correspondiente denuncia penal en las oficinas de la Fiscalía en Escobar. Asimismo informo al Sr. Inspector General que, en ese mismo legajo, requerí que el Fiscal interviniente solicitara a la Jueza de Garantías interviniente el desalojo de los usurpadores.

Saludo a Vd. atentamente,
Horacio Mendoza

With Mendoza and his representatives ousted from the CBE, the ‘usurpers’ foresaw repercussions from the Ministry. Indeed, they were in complete disobedience of its attempts to ‘normalize’ their violations. To brace themselves for what they imagined would be a more concerted effort to squash their now outward rebellion, the ‘usurpers’ intensified their campaign of misrepresentation. Indeed, were they to remain in control of the CBE and its revenues, they had to manage perceptions of their recent transgressions.

Ceferino González’s Open Letter to Inspector General Impugning Mendoza (12 August 2005)

The ‘usurpers’ campaign of misrepresentation followed the same two tactics it always had. On the one hand, the ‘usurpers’ continued to manipulate the Ministry’s regulatory efforts through

legal contestation; on the other, they continued to manipulate the CBE's operators—and to an extent the public at large—through misrepresenting both their own activities and what was going on in the legal domain. That they could get the bloc of operators to close ranks behind them was important; for given that there were hundreds of Bolivian immigrant families that depended on the CBE for their livelihood, they could count on the fact that the Ministry would not dismantle the CBE (perhaps even when they resisted its Intervention) because of the popular protest they would encounter. For the 'usurpers', presenting Mendoza's Intervention as a threat to Bolivian livelihoods that they themselves defended was a key part of their effort to maintain control of the CBE and its revenues.

Both tactics of their manipulation coalesce beautifully in the following letter written to the Inspector General—a letter that was simultaneously circulated around the CBE and barrio. While the letter is a legalistic impugnation of Mendoza that the 'usurpers' hope will win sympathy with (or at least complicate efforts within) the Ministry, the basis upon which they contest Mendoza is meant to play upon the sentiments of the operators they need for popular support. Where in the last chapter we saw how the 'usurpers' played upon dispositions of envious rivalry between ethnic blocs to orchestrate the ouster of Cahuana, here the 'usurpers' play upon sentiments of discrimination, sacrifice, and expropriation (all of which have historical depth in the Andes) to rally the operators (here recruited as 'Bolivians') against what they make out to be an Argentine suit bent on exploiting them.

While the CBE's operators would never know that the Commission backed by Cipriano González had paid itself ARS \$55,400.00 and lifted \$13,400.00 for individualized Nextel accounts in 2004—or even that the CBE had paid Popovich \$33,000.00 and Koprivec \$18,000.00 for the former's Intervention alone—many would come to reproduce the rhetoric that it was *Mendoza* who was exploiting them. As my own *patrona* remarked to me as I retrieved her orders of bananas and grapes from the magnates' trucks, "the rich always come out on top" (*siempre ganan los ricos*). However, she was not referencing the Anayas, Huaris, and González's, but rather Mendoza. For she too had been swayed by the 'usurpers'' campaign of misinformation; she too had read Ceferino González's letter to the Inspector General.

Before turning to the letter itself, it is worth noting that González's disquisition is one of multiple pursuits and tactics in which the addressee varies between the Inspector General, the CBE's operators, and the public at large. Whether intentionally or not, these pursuits and tactics

intersect and overlap—and not always logically—to create a kind of bewilderment whose desired effect is misrecognition. While the Inspector General was never swayed, most of the CBE’s operators—and many in the public at large came to regard all authorities except the Commission backed by González (ironically those who were in fact exploiting their efforts) as enemies of the CBE and their livelihoods.

Buenos Aires, 12 de Agosto de 2005

Señor Inspector General de Justicia
Dr. Gabriel Eichel

La Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar, es presa hoy de una serie de actos arbitrarios, abusivos y discriminatorios, por parte de un nuevo Interventor Dr. Horacio Mendoza, que ha desconocido la actuación del anterior Interventor poniendo nuevamente en tela de juicio todas las decisiones adoptadas y el llamado a elecciones, maltratando y tratando despectivamente a los nacionales bolivianos.

The letter begins with the bold claim that Mendoza has abused and discriminated against the Bolivian nationals comprising the CBE. It then moves to argue that Mendoza has also jeopardized all the regulatory work performed by Popovich, which he claims included a successful preparation for the pending elections.

Según el informe final del Interventor anterior, el Dr. Manolo Popovich, presentado en la Inspección General de Justicia, se informa que se había concluido con la tarea encomendada a la Intervención en todas las áreas, restando solo elaborar el cronograma para el llamado a elecciones, es decir según los estatutos un cronograma de 30 días.

Indeed, González claims that Popovich had completed all of the tasks required of him as Interventor, the only exception being the actual holding of the election. González then rhetorically asks why, if this were the case, and if the CBE were on the brink of full institutional normalization, a new Interventor had been named to replace Popovich and frustrate his successful work. He asks: “What interests lie behind these decisions?”

¿Qué sucedió entonces? ¿Por qué se resolvió nombrar un nuevo Interventor a 30 días de una elección? ... ¿Qué intereses se mueven detrás de estas decisiones? Muchas preguntas sin respuestas.

¿De qué se trata? Se trata de 1.500 familias, que desarrollan sus actividades sociales, culturales, de esparcimiento, deportivas, que también viven, comen, trabajan, y obtienen

su subsistencia de la Entidad. Se trata de personas, se trata de subsistencia, se trata del sacrificio que desde su fundación cada uno de los socios ha puesto en la entidad.

In answering that there are too many questions without answers, González attempts to sow the seeds of a conspiracy, knowing full well that conspiracy theories surrounding those in power have great resonance with Bolivians—and highlanders in particular.

Moreover, he suggests that what is at stake is nothing short of humanity and the very subsistence that sustains it. In his representation of the matter, it is perhaps no accident that González states that it is about ‘people’ (*personas*). For as we have seen, too often in Argentina Bolivians are denied their humanity, and treated like animals. As one Argentine friend simply stated: “the Argentine treats the Bolivian like a dog”. And as we saw in Chapter 3, one of the most poignant statements made over the caskets of Norberta Quispe and her husband (killed selling produce out the back of their truck) was that Bolivians are not animals: “We are not animals,” as one man said “—some [dead] dog just thrown somewhere.” Nor is it an accident that, beyond humanity, González invokes the powerful idioms of subsistence and sacrifice. All Bolivians in the Market have fought to secure a livelihood, often in the most challenging circumstances—whether they involve the highland Andean climate and ecology, or the depredations they face before Argentine thieves who strip them of their earnings. Moreover, who had not worked 16 or 20 hours a day bent over in the quinta—who had not known this *trabajo sacrificado*? Humanity, subsistence, sacrifice. These are the idioms meant to move the CBE’s operators to identify, not with the ‘outsider’—i.e. the rich, white Argentine official who has never known these things—but rather with those who have also felt them.

Crucially, however, González argues that while all Bolivians know this *lucha*, not all Bolivians are good Bolivians. Where the CBE’s operators must resist the exploitation of Mendoza, they must remember that he is there for a reason. According to González, that reason is Cahuana, for whom many already believed had had exploitative ambitions. As I have argued, this is precisely because González and the ‘architects’ of the usurpation had *created* that discourse as a means to oust Cahuana.

¿Cuál fue la cadena de hechos que generaron esta situación? Un fraude electoral producido por el entonces presidente Teodoro Cahuana, realizado en el mes de Diciembre de 2001, fue la chispa inicial. El agregado de un padrón sin cumplir con los tiempos legales que duplicaba el número de socios, generó que el fiscalizador Ceferino González

denunciara este hecho ante la Inspección General de Justicia, luego entrega de llaves, luego desconocidas, comisiones ad hoc, acuerdos rotos, denuncias cruzadas se encargaron del resto.

González attempts to get his audience—who, let us remember, is not only the Inspector General but the public at large—to believe that it is Cahuana who has been the one manipulating the CBE and the IGJ all along. Not only does González claim that it was Cahuana who committed the fraud in the December 2001 election, but that he was the one who influenced the IGJ in its subsequent attempts to carry out a proper election. Certainly, the public here is not told the true story—i.e. that it was *González* and his cohort that had associated new members in IGJ-rubricated books secured under false pretenses; that it was *their* machinations that had resulted in the Court’s stay on elections; and that *they* were the ones who violated this order and installed themselves as the Executive Commission of the CBE.

A partir de allí la Inspección resuelve convocar ellos a elecciones y confeccionar un nuevo padrón, que por supuesto es observado por quienes había fraguado el primer padrón y un amparo suspende la elección, años después el Juzgado Civil 45 donde tramitaba el amparo resuelve que la cuestión es abstracta, dándole la razón a la IGJ, es allí donde alguna mente brillante se le ocurre intervenir la entidad en lugar de continuar con el proceso electoral suspendido.

González instead paints a very different picture: that the Court’s stay on CBE elections was not because of any cautionary measure taken by the Court as it worked to resolve Cahuana’s appeal for Constitutional protection [*amparo*] over and above what were essentially IGJ-sanctioned moves to legitimate the ‘usurpers’ machinations, but rather because of Cahuana’s conniving. He does this to set up the claim that the Court then returned the matter to the IGJ who in turn, contrary to common sense, called for an Intervention of the CBE rather than simply calling for elections that would have solved everything. Indeed, González does not tell the public here that the IGJ called for an Intervention because of the irregularities perpetrated by him and his cohort (irregularities which the IGJ realized it had itself exacerbated) and because Cahuana would not relent in his pursuits on behalf of the public good.

After arguing that Cahuana’s ‘method’ of resisting agreements and continually filing complaints has caused the CBE great delays in achieving institutional regularity (itself a recurring discourse among the CBE’s operators), he then impugns the IGJ for similar delays.

That is, González argues that where on 28 June 2005 the two sides agreed that the original ‘roll’ of eligible voters could be used in the CBE’s election¹⁶⁰, it was now not Cahuana, but rather the IGJ who frustrated things by deciding to change Interventors. That is, González tells the public that where the CBE was on the brink of institutional regularity under Popovich, the IGJ arbitrarily moved to replace him with Mendoza—a move which jeopardized everyone’s Constitutional rights to associate and elect their own representatives democratically.

...Luego de idas y vueltas ambas partes y la sociedad en pleno deciden retrotraer la situación a diciembre de 2001, llamar a elecciones utilizando para votar solamente con el padrón que no había sido impugnado y que fue acordado por todos. Cuando se pensaba que al haber llegado a un acuerdo el día 28 de junio del presente año, en la propia IGJ, en presencia del Jefe de Civiles Dr. Javier Foscaldi, del Señor Interventor Manolo Popovich, y de representantes de ambas partes conjuntamente con socios fundadores, reafirmando el derecho amparado por la Constitución Nacional a asociarse libremente, a elegir y ser elegido, una nueva designación de un nuevo Interventor con 120 días hábiles se hace cargo de la entidad.

Invoking violations of the member’s rights to vote—and in essence, to participate in politics generally—is not without motivation. For many Bolivians, especially those in the highlands, political participation in Bolivian national politics had historically been frustrated, if not denied, based on one’s Indian-ness. It was the MNR Revolution of 1952 that brought universal suffrage to all Bolivians regardless of race or social position. That González plays on memories of political—and by extension, social and economic—disenfranchisement in Bolivia is a tactic through which to cast Mendoza, if not the IGJ, as attempting to deny the members their rights in Argentina. Indeed, González’s invocation of political rights must be understood in relation to subsequent claims that Mendoza (a white, Argentine state official) has discriminated against the CBE’s members, which are specifically *Bolivian* immigrants.

Yet González does not simply play upon sentiments of racial and political disenfranchisement, themes to which he eventually returns. He also situates his portrait of discrimination within one of political malfeasance and machinations—all in attempts to get the

¹⁶⁰ González’s mention of ‘roll’ (e.g. *padrón*) here is factually incorrect: the IGJ’s Resolutions state that what should be used in any CBE election should not be the original *Padrón N°1* from December 22, 2001, but rather a new *padrón* configured on the basis *Libro N°1, Registro de Asociados* containing members N°1 - N°559. The IGJ argues that a period of two weeks be granted for these members to verify their inclusion on the *padrón*, and update any required documentation needed for such inclusion.

operators to trust him and his cohort, and to suspect that Mendoza is a state agent bent on expropriating their collective patrimony.

Sospechosamente se cambia el Interventor, quien cumplió con las funciones encargadas, y se puso a su efecto una persona que desde el primer día se manejó con total arbitrariedad, generando una gran cantidad de inconvenientes que produjeron daños y perjuicios a la Entidad y a los socios en particular.

Estas medidas arbitrarias, abusivas, y discriminatorias, se manifiestan desde echar por la fuerza pública a nuestro abogado, hasta cambiar el personal y los colaboradores de la Institución, incluida la totalidad de la seguridad de los predios que llevaba 8 años.

Desde negarse a recibir a los socios hasta algunos ser golpeados por su nuevo personal de seguridad. Desde impedir el armado de puestos de venta, hasta lograr la clausura del patio de comidas por no hacer las reformas comprometidas. Desde negar todo lo actuado por el anterior interventor hasta tener reuniones con vecinos del barrio y changarínes para ponerlos en contra de la entidad. Desde negar información del manejo económico de la entidad a los socios hasta publicar en la prensa información que compromete el futuro de la Institución. Desde ordenar dejar sin seguridad el predio de la Colectividad hasta hacer una falsa denuncia indicando que dicha seguridad fue echada por un grupo de socios.

With the Inspector General as the putative addressee, González tells the public that Mendoza has ousted their lawyer using the Police force, impeded CBE operators in their ability to earn a living, and more nefariously, consorted not only with groups of neighbors, but with the operators' own *changarines*, in attempts to subvert their efforts. All of this, he reports, has been done amidst false police reports and a failure to disclose the financials of the CBE. What González essentially tells the public is that *Mendoza* is the 'usurper'.

Yet González's false portrait of Mendoza's 'usurpation' is far from complete. As yet another example of it, González misrepresents the events of the CBE's celebration of Bolivian Independence Day on 6 August 2005. He claims that Mendoza offended the Bolivian members not only by rejecting their lawyer (meaning the 'usurpers'' counsel, Koprivec), but that in a clear manifestation of partiality, he then invited Cahuana—who he once again reminds everyone was the mastermind of the fraud that brought the conflict on—to sit next to him. Were this not enough to shore up support for him and his cohort, González claims that Mendoza officiated the celebration (and its politics) with the collaboration of 'outsiders'. In this way he invokes popular memories of expropriation in the Andes—the most widely recognized being the usurpation of Indian lands by mestizo hacienda owners. Indeed, exploitation and expropriation in the Andean highlands are what has given shape to the "ethnic economy" we explored in Chapter 7.

Pero el hecho que constituyó un agravio más fue el haber ignorado los acuerdos firmados en la Embajada respecto de los colaboradores en cada una de las áreas, el haberlos rechazado y organizado el evento patrio de Bolivia con gente ajena a la entidad, el poner a conducir el acto al autor intelectual del fraude original de los problemas, el haber exteriorizado en ese acto del 6 de agosto, un comportamiento discriminatorio e injustificado respecto de nuestros compatriotas. ...

Luego del día 06, sus actitudes arbitrarias, abusivas, y discriminatorias aumentaron, esa misma noche varios de los ex directivos fueron golpeados por su personal de seguridad, y tratados de negros sucios.

What is most brash in his rendering of the events of 6 August 2005 is an attempt to get the public to believe that the brutal beating of Jorgito Choquehuanca, the CBE's former Secretary of Culture, was at the hands of Mendoza's henchmen, and not a violent crime committed by his own cohort. As I sat with Jorgito and our friend Nacho a week later at the Feria, Nacho remarked to me: "Just look at what his *own* people have done to him", a reference to the fact that Jorgito, who was from a hamlet near Caiza, had been attacked (or had had the attack authorized by) those from neighboring Panchochi and Jari—i.e. Ceferino and Cipriano González, and Eusebio Huari, respectively. These were people who, outside of such circumstances, could be considered 'relatives'. How could *parientes* do this to one of their own?

As Secretary of Culture, Jorgito had always promoted the celebration of Bolivian traditions, and had coordinated the August 6th festivities. Where he had always been an ardent supporter of Cahuana, and where Cahuana and 'his people' were invited to sit with Mendoza at the celebrations, the 'usurpers' took notice, perhaps also suspecting—or overhearing—open criticism of their racket to Mendoza. In retribution for this, the 'usurpers' decided to put Jorgito in his place. Their method of '*ubicarlo*' (literally, 'locating' him) was to attack him with a tire iron. When I saw Jorgito and Nacho at the Feria, Jorgito had been released from the hospital but his face still registered the blows, his broken ribs still ached, and his arm still hung in a sling.

Just as perverse as the 'usurpers'' attack on Jorgito was their decision to tell the Inspector General—and the public—that it had been Mendoza's doing. As if this were not enough, they claimed that Mendoza's attack was out of discrimination—i.e. that he had made Jorgito, whom all respected for championing Bolivian-ness in a land unfriendly to Bolivians, into a "*negro sucio*". The motivation here was clear: where all Bolivians in Buenos Aires—especially those from highland, Indian descent—had been made into *negros sucios* at some point (see Chapter 3),

they could easily imagine that Mendoza was just another white, rich, Argentine official that sought to dehumanize them as unwanted immigrants. González thus played upon the deep pains of being discriminated against (i.e. the *dolores* I have discussed in earlier chapters) to create solidarity around his and his cohort's 'usurpation'.

Where González invokes these pains to rally support, he then turns to Bolivian pride for the same end. His rhetoric plays upon nationalistic sentiments of success—indeed progress—in an adopted land. In a change of footing in which he not only speaks on behalf of, but now also as a part of, a pan-Bolivian 'we', González recounts the achievements of the CBE, which he reminds everyone is the envy of all other collectives.

Somos Bolivianos, no hacemos mal a nadie, con nuestro sacrificio hemos generado un mercado concentrador para que nuestros paisanos no sean estafados, una feria para generar fuentes de trabajo para todos los vecinos y oportunidades de abaratar la canasta familiar, un polideportivo que es el orgullo de toda la colectividad, cursos de capacitación y eventos culturales que han sido imitados por el resto de las Instituciones.

Yet González does not tell the public that most of these successes are a result of Cahuana's stewardship of the CBE. He does not tell them that where he and his cohort defraud the public good, this good has been most ardently pursued by Cahuana and his supporters. As the record shows, if there is anyone to whom conjoint Bolivian progress in Escobar can be attributed, it is Cahuana. Indeed, his leadership has been most responsible for the pan-Bolivian 'we'-ness González here invokes.

What 'we' want, González petitions, is simply to continue our work, to have our rights respected, to live without discrimination, and to pursue our own self-determination. That these freedoms have been circumscribed, González states, is dumbfounding.

Solo queremos seguir trabajando que se respeten nuestros derechos, que no nos discriminen y que nos dejen elegir democráticamente nuestras autoridades. Es tan difícil entender esto. O el Sr. Interventor piensa que porque somos agricultores y gente de trabajo somos animales que tiene que arriar.

Or perhaps it is not so dumbfounding after all, González suggests, if Mendoza thinks that Bolivians—being mere agriculturists and working people—are simply "animals" that must be reined in. In revisiting the question of how Bolivians are denied their fundamental humanity in Argentina (a move which simultaneously—and cleverly—conjures up memories of Indians being

denied their humanity in Bolivia), González appeals to a rhetoric of basic human rights. Indeed, the discourse of human rights has often surrounded the Bolivian condition, and is a deft way for him to distract attention away from his and his cohort's own corruption, and to focus it on what he makes out to be the corruption of an Argentine public official. In his politics of misrecognition, González goes so far as to invoke the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights in his claims.

Actualmente en el mundo, las modernas Constituciones prohíben la discriminación a partir de la proclamación de la igualdad de los ciudadanos ante la Ley. Es más, uno de los llamados derechos fundamentales es precisamente la no-discriminación por razón de nacimiento, raza, sexo o cualquier condición personal o social. En la Declaración Universal de los Derechos del Hombre de 1948 este derecho se encuentra reconocido expresamente. Además no son pocas las legislaciones penales que consideran delito la práctica del funcionario público o del particular que desempeña un servicio público que deniega a una persona, por razón de origen, raza, religión o sexo una prestación a la que tiene derecho. La ley de discriminación que a partir de los ataques a nuestras familias se empezó a conocer.

After telling the public that legislation forbids a public official—like Mendoza—from denying these fundamental rights to citizens, González ends his letter stating that the Bolivians of Escobar know the effects of discrimination most intimately. Once again invoking, and speaking as part of a pan-Bolivian 'we', González states that the Bolivians of Escobar have been the ones who have endured abuse, mistreatment, and even torture (see Chapter 6). They have been the ones who have been on the front pages of foreign newspapers for the depredations they have suffered. Being this the case, González tells the public that he and his community are obligated to denounce any discrimination—and so must here denounce the circumscription of rights he states Mendoza has perpetrated.

Nuestra gente, la gente de Escobar fue la que mayor sufrió los efectos de la discriminación, nos han torturado, maltratado y abusado de nosotros. Hemos sido primera plana en los diarios del mundo, hemos estado presentes en las convenciones Internacionales sobre discriminación. Sabemos de qué estamos hablando. En este sentido nos vemos obligados a denunciar públicamente, que han sido vulnerado nuestros derechos, a la Igualdad, al trabajo, a elegir y ser elegido, a nuestro libre tránsito, a la no-discriminación, a nuestra propia identidad, a la libertad, por parte del actual Intervención que lo único que hace es perjudicar a los socios y a la Institución. Buscando nosotros de todo corazón que se nos permita desempeñarnos libremente en este país, respetando nuestras costumbres y nuestras principales actividades que desempeñamos a diario. No puede ser que terceros quieran aprovecharse de la colectividad, porque un grupo de cinco

personas, estemos casi 4 años discutiendo si tenemos que votar con el padrón anterior al fraude o con uno nuevo. Solo queremos respeto, democracia y respeto a la palabra empeñada, a los compromisos de la IGJ que nos permitan a la mayor brevedad elegir a nuestras autoridades democráticamente, sin injerencia ni digitaciones de ningún tipo.

Ceferino González
Socio N°173, Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar

In the end, González tells the Inspector General that all they want is to be able to elect their own representatives.

As mentioned above, where the ‘usurpers’ had ousted Mendoza and his aides, and were now gearing up for a more concerted effort by the State to dislodge them, they had to manage popular opinion such that they could count on a bloc of support to resist such an effort. We have just seen how, through an open letter to the Inspector General, they attempted to do this in the public domain. Indeed, this letter was not only circulated among the CBE’s operators, it was disseminated throughout the barrio. Before moving to address Mendoza’s response to his ouster from the CBE, it fits to briefly discuss how the ‘usurpers’ managed opinions and representations behind closed doors—i.e. in private.

Where Mendoza and his cohort were physically unable to access the CBE’s premises, they were not without recourse for keeping their finger on the pulse of the ‘usurpation’. Indeed, the legal file reveals that Mendoza had at least a few supporters amongst the CBE’s operators that were willing to help him, and ultimately Cahuana and his supporters, dislodge the ‘usurpation’. For what was yet another ‘closed’ meeting of the Market’s operators on 20 August 2005, Mendoza had something of a mole who infiltrated the meeting to write up minutes and leak them back to him and the IGJ. These minutes, analyzed below, show just how the ‘usurpers’ manipulated the CBE’s operators in a space not accessible to ‘outsiders’.

Leaked Minutes of a Closed Meeting of the ‘Usurped’ CBE (20 August 2005)

The meeting was held on 20 August 2005, shortly after the circulation of Ceferino González’s open letter to Inspector General Eichel. The minutes, which bear no author, begin by stating that

the meeting has been called jointly by the ‘usurpers’ and their lawyer, Koprivec, to inform the operators of the prior week’s struggle for the CBE. As we saw above, the ‘usurpers’ continue their tactic of misrepresenting the nature and purpose of the Intervention, and of the legal actions they are taking on behalf of the CBE. In addition to reiterating the charge that Mendoza has discriminated against them, their lawyer Koprivec claims he is preparing a petition to have the Intervention taken over by a Judge who will administer the elections. Here again we see that the ‘usurpers’ tell the CBE’s operators that the sum and substance of the Intervention is simply to carry out the pending elections. By failing to disclose that the true purpose of the Intervention is to restore regular institutional practice across a *range* of fronts, which includes the entity’s accounting practices, they effectively distract attention away from their own nefarious dealings.

Siendo las has. 10am, se inicia una reunión convocada por el abogado Koprivec seguido de los señores nombrados como comisión interina los cuales informan de todos los trámites y denuncias hechas durante la semana. Primeramente toma la palabra el abogado el cual informa todas las denuncias hechas contra el Interventor por abandono de sus funciones, por discriminación, por mal trato en contra de los ex directivos, la noche de las fiestas Patrias de 6 de agosto... Y dice que está gestionando un trámite, para que de hoy en adelante no vengan más Interventores sino para que se haga cargo directamente un Juez de las elecciones, y nada más que de las elecciones vuelve a recalcar...

The minutes then describe statements made by Evaristo Copani, who we saw above was Cipriano González’s Secretary. Evaristo Copani minces no words in telling the operators that Mendoza has come with one purpose: to rob the CBE of its revenues. According to him, Mendoza has already taken so much that that the CBE is strapped with debts—even for some of its most basic expenses like electricity. Rounding out his misrepresentation of Mendoza’s Intervention, Copani attempts to further sway the operators by telling them that Mendoza is already undergoing criminal proceedings. All of this is capped off by his statement that the IGJ’s Inspectors are bumbling idiots.

Seguidamente toman la palabra las mujeres las cuales ratifican todo lo hecho hasta el momento. Luego toma la palabra el señor Evaristo Copani el cual se manifiesta en forma exaltada diciendo que Mendoza se vino a robar la plata, que dejó muchas deudas, que no pagó el teléfono y cuando vino a cortar la luz tuvo que llorarle Juan para que no lo corten la luz, que hay muchos juicios que se le vienen... También opina sobre los inspectores de los cuales dice que son unos estúpidos reiteradas veces...

Finally, the minutes describe statements made by Eusebio Huari. The author claims that after playing the victim and claiming discrimination, Huari tells the operators that they are amidst attempted depredations by a “mafia” that starts at the top. According to the author, Huari tells the operators that Mendoza is not the kingpin, but rather a functionary of yet more powerful *mafiosos*; the mafia, he tells them, goes right up the Ministry and includes key political figures in the Province of Buenos Aires. Already having played upon the same themes of discrimination we illuminated in González’s open letter above, Huari here attempts to unite the operators by stating that they are up against “professionals”. Indeed, he plays upon their own self-recognition as humble subsistence farmers familiar with manipulation by state-authorities, both in Argentina and at home in Bolivia. In this way, Huari invokes that powerful discourse of ‘ignorance’ (*ignorancia*) we have seen throughout the dissertation, but does so not to discriminate, but rather to unite the operators behind him, as one of them. They have to be vigilant, he tells them, because the Argentine suits are bent on taking both their Feria and their Market—i.e. their very livelihoods.

Luego toma la palabra Eusebio Huari, el cual luego de llorarle a la gente que son discriminados por el Interventor dice que la mafia viene desde arriba y que están metidos los Inspectores de la IGJ más algunos políticos de la zona. Que están luchando con los más grandes, con los profesionales, por lo tanto deberíamos estar unidos más que nunca para poder derrotarlos que su objetivo es sacarles la Feria luego el Mercado, vuelve a repetir que hay una mafia bien organizada y que viene desde arriba.

The minutes reveal that in their private meetings, the ‘usurpers’ appealed to many of the same sentiments as in their open letter to persuade the CBE’s operators to close ranks behind them—namely discrimination and expropriation. Perhaps the one difference between this tactic deployed in its public versus private modality is that in their closed meetings, the ‘usurpers’ accusations are more simple and frank: ‘Mendoza came to steal money’; ‘the mafia comes from above;’ and they ‘must be united to prevent the expropriation of the Feria and Market.

In their dual tactic of contesting the Ministry’s attempts at regulation and of galvanizing support for their own regime, the ‘usurpers’ proved difficult to dislodge. Initial IGJ attempts to get the Ministry of the Interior to dispatch a police force to reinstall Mendoza on the CBE’s premises were marred by debates over which force had proper jurisdiction to do so. Mendoza would

remain ousted for months to come. We see him petitioning the Minister of the Interior even into January 2006 to be allowed to perform the duties charged of him. We will close this first section by presenting a letter by Mendoza to the Minister of the Interior on 12 January 2006, in which he demands that the Minister restore the rule of law in the case of the CBE.

Mendoza Petitions the Minister of the Interior to Restore the Rule of Law (12 January 2006)

Mendoza begins his petition to Aníbal Fernández by recounting the Ministry of Justice's Resolution 083 that named him Interventor to replace Popovich, for whom the IGJ recommended penal proceedings.

Buenos Aires, enero 12 de 2006

Señor
Ministro del Interior
Contador Aníbal Fernández

De mi mayor consideración:

Horacio Mendoza...al Sr. Ministro me presento y digo:

Por Resolución N°083/05 de la Secretaría de Justicia del Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Nación, fui designado Interventor de la Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar...

Por último, la Inspección General de Justicia de la Nación decidió formular denuncia penal contra el primer Interventor de la Asociación Civil Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar de resultas de su actuación como tal y requerir al Ministerio del Interior prestare el auxilio de la fuerza pública necesaria para restablecer a la Intervención en la pacífica posesión de las Instalaciones de la Asociación...

He then recounts how in taking command of the CBE he had been resisted by the 'usurpers', who he states saw his Intervention as a threat to the perquisites they obtained from their de facto control over the entity and its patrimonies. He states that the CBE's 'usurpation' has yet to be the object of any judicial proceedings.

Demás está decir que, desde un principio, mi labor se vio obstaculizada por el obrar de un grupo de asociados molestos por mi actuación que comportaba la pérdida de sus prebendas; baste como ejemplos mencionar la apropiación de lo recaudado en la feria, la

privación de libertad sufrida por el administrador del mercado y la usurpación de los predios de la entidad; demás está decir que aun no ha habido pronunciamiento judicial alguno al respecto...

In building his case that the Minister of the Interior intervene in the case, Mendoza then describes how he was physically ousted from the CBE's Market on 10 August 2005 by the 'usurpers', their agents, and those they controlled—all under the eye of the Police of the Province of Buenos Aires. Officials of this same *Bonaerense*, he then tells Minister Fernández, were then re-contracted by the 'usurpers' to secure their physical occupation. All of this, he states, is in violation of the Ministry of Justice's Resolution 035 which declared the CBE undergo an Intervention to restore its institutional integrity. Indeed, he makes it clear to Fernández that the 'usurpers' have no legal right to be occupying the CBE and controlling its patrimonies.

Intempestivamente, un grupo de socios de la Asociación, con la colaboración de terceros extraños a la entidad y la permisividad de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires desplazó *manu militari* a mis colaboradores y les impidió continuar en sus funciones.

Cabe destacar que ese mismo grupo, por sí y ante sí, decidió prescindir de los servicios del personal de vigilancia que yo había contratado y dispuso su reemplazo, por personal de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.

Ese mismo grupo de socios, invocando un inexistente abandono de mis funciones como Interventor, tomó a su exclusivo cargo el manejo de la actividad social en lo que significa evidente alzamiento contra la Resolución N° 035/04 de la Secretaría de Política Judicial y Asuntos Legislativos del Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Nación.

Más aun, tienen ilegítimamente a su cargo—no existe norma legal alguna que sustente ese obrar, máxime ante la situación de Intervención de la Asociación—la percepción de los cánones locativos que los interesados abonan por el uso de las instalaciones existentes en la ciudad de Belén de Escobar...

With the facts laid before Minister Fernández, Mendoza argues that the rule of law must be upheld; that true authority must be respected. The State, he argues, cannot allow such a rebellion—especially one which metes out its own 'justice'—to persist. To dislodge this rebellion, Mendoza reminds the Minister, one cannot count on the *Bonarenses*. What is needed, he argues, is a force significant enough that its sheer presence and force will guarantee respect for the rule of law. With this, he petitions the Minister of the Interior to dispatch the Argentine National Guard to dislodge the 'usurpers'.

Se hace necesario reimplantar el Estado de Derecho y la plena vigencia de las normas que integran nuestro ordenamiento jurídico. Se hace necesario restablecer el principio de autoridad. El Estado no puede permitir ni tolerar semejante actitud de rebeldía que ni siquiera puede considerarse como pretensión de hacerse justicia por mano propia.

...Es lamentable decirlo, no se puede contar con la colaboración de la policía provincial. Se hace necesario contar con una fuerza de seguridad que, con su sola presencia, imponga el respeto debido a la autoridad nacional... Surge la evidente necesidad de contar con el apoyo operacional de la Gendarmería Nacional.

A la espera de una respuesta favorable, saludo al Sr. Ministro con mi mayor consideración.

Horacio Mendoza

A Return to Humility

Where the first Interventor had been bought off, and where the second called for the Ministry of the Interior to restore the rule of law, many critics felt they could no longer count on the State to dislodge the ‘usurpers’. Indeed, where the CBE had failed to pursue its State-sanctioned mission for well over four years, many saw the State as part of the problem. And in fact it had been.

Notwithstanding its own limitations¹⁶¹, those fighting to dislodge the ‘usurpers’ had already seen

¹⁶¹ We must not forget that in this domain of administrative regulation, the IGJ is limited in its powers and reach. As we saw in Chapter 1, entities of the public good are—as per Argentina’s Civil Code—*private* entities. As such, and here reflecting Argentina’s liberal tradition, they enjoy the freedom (but also duty) to self-regulate. The IGJ is the public regulatory body that ensures that these entities follow the law and do not infringe upon the rights of others. Only when an Intervention has been called to address gross irregularities, irreconcilable differences, or non-fulfillment of its mission, does a Ministerial representative (the Interventor) take over for the entity’s own Executive Commission and govern it. Yet this public representative controls the private entity only insofar as he or she can ‘normalize’ it, and restore its capacity to self-regulate. In considering the reach of the IGJ, it is also important to note that, as part of the Ministry of Justice, the IGJ belongs to the Executive Branch. Regulation is thus an administrative, not judicial, matter. The Judiciary becomes involved only when Ministerial measures are appealed by parties to the litigation, or when the Ministry requests involvement for crimes it suspects have been committed. In this way, the IGJ does not have the competence to punish crimes, or even to administer justice formally speaking. One could well argue that, as a system of right, it is not perfect, and there are areas that can be exploited. At the same time, one could also argue that such a system of right is not supposed to be the sum and substance of a healthy polity; that citizens must act ethically and in good faith. It is here that one sees that a polity’s rule of law must forever be supplemented by the virtue of its citizens. In regards to the CBE, one can look at the many years of CBE ‘usurpation’ as a failure of the State; yet one must also recognize that there has been a failure in the virtue of (many of) the members that comprise it. Indeed, one cannot expect the State to resolve the deeper human crisis that lies at the heart of the CBE’s institutional crisis. As a third Interventor eventually stated: “I cannot manage the passions that cause you to fight” (*Yo no puedo solucionar los amores y odios de ustedes...*)

how in 2002 they had manipulated the IGJ in configuring the electoral register and securing a duplicate set of administrative books; they had also seen how in 2003 the ‘usurpers’ had held elections in violation of a Court stay without sanction. Seen in this perspective, the co-optation of Popovich and the subsequent ouster of Mendoza simply became the most recent chapters in what many saw as a perennial failure of the State.

Where ‘justice’ was not forthcoming, it is perhaps no surprise that some—especially those that had been displaced or otherwise harmed by the ‘usurpers’—sought to take matters into their own hands.

“We’re going to turn the Colectividad right-side up”

“Vamos a dar vuelta a la Colectividad”

Late one night in 2006 I became privy to a particular plot to oust the ‘usurpers’ through the same violent techniques they had used against the CBE’s former Secretary of Culture. My informant and a few other men—some of whom had lost their livelihoods at the hands of the ‘usurpers’—were planning to break the legs of at least two of the “*pesados*”¹⁶² controlling the CBE. This was to be an act of vigilante justice to restore the CBE in service of the community¹⁶³. While it was not yet time for the move (and it had yet to happen before I finished my field work), my informant put it to me squarely:

Vamos a dar vuelta a la Colectividad.

This was most certainly a polysemic construction. While the transitive phrase “darle vuelta” literally means to ‘give a turn’ to something, the construction “dar vuelta” in Argentine Spanish (precisely because it does not carry the indirect object pronoun) is more idiomatic. Referencing the ‘usurpation’ we might render the entire construction as: “we are going to shake the CBE up”. What my informant conveyed was that, through a violent action, he and his potential vigilantes would remove the ‘usurpers’ from the CBE. Yet this choice of “dar vuelta” was perhaps not

¹⁶² A *pesado* in this case is someone who is oppressive.

¹⁶³ For work on vigilante, communal justice in the Bolivian Andes, see Goldstein (2004).

random for such a native Quechua speaker¹⁶⁴; there were layers of meaning that I sensed, being familiar with Andean life, and came to co-produce. Recognizing my informant's choice of words, I immediately switched into Quechua, and replied:

Pachakuti-hina.

Just like a *Pachakuti*.

My informant looked me in the eyes and, perhaps a bit surprised, smiled knowingly. Indeed, I had just ratified his meaning by rendering it through the classic Andean idiom of *pachakuti*. Linked to the Inca King Pachacutec Yupanqui (see Rostworoski 2001), the concept of *pachakuti* has been popularized in the Andes to signify a revolutionary transformation of the order of things, often with the idea of a restoration or a righting of affairs.

As we'll see shortly, this idea of restoration—of a return to a previous order of things—was not unique to my informant, though perhaps his plan of leg-breaking was. Rather, it was an idea that was widespread among many critics who saw the 'usurpation' as an outgrowth of a deeper human crisis. To appreciate how many critics conceptualized the restoration of the CBE through a return to a lost ethic—fundamentally a lost humanity—it fits to delve into the semiotics of *pachakuti*.

In Quechua, the term *pachakuti* is a compound comprised of two morphemes, *pacha* and *kuti*. In English, *pacha* can be glossed as the 'world' or perhaps 'cosmos.' While there are Quechua constructions of the Andean cosmic order that might (though perhaps only for us) spatialize *pacha* (e.g. *hananpacha* and *ukhupacha*, the world above and the interior world, respectively), these constructions should not be understood without reference to time. Indeed, *pacha* also means epoch or era, as in the construction *ñawpa pacha* (ancient time; the time before the present). In the Andean worldview, time and space are intrinsic to one another, and must be understood as constitutive of an order that is itself dynamic and in flux. Indeed, time and space cannot be properly apprehended without situating them in Andean ideas of circulation and cyclicity—the latter also articulating, if not integrating, both the social and the natural¹⁶⁵. In

¹⁶⁴ An alternative in colloquial Argentine Spanish, that was not chosen was “*reventar*” (literally, to burst or destroy).

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion of Andean chronotopes in Bolivia, see Abercrombie (1998)

this way, Andean life and history are to be conceptualized as non-linear¹⁶⁶ and punctuated by ruptures in which cosmopolitical orders can be made present or even obtain anew in a recursive experience of time-space¹⁶⁷. This is indexed by the second morpheme *kutiy* in the construct under consideration.

As an infinitive, *kutiy* means to return, to come back. Where Quechua is an agglutinative language, *kutiy* as a root morpheme appears in a number of constructions, e.g. *kutichiy* (to answer, to respond), *kutipakuy* (to reproach), *kutichipuy* (to restore, retribute), *kutirimuy* (to return to health). In all of these instances, the root *kutiy* must be understood as a part or a phase of an ongoing process—whether of dialogic interaction or an alternation of states. When combined with *pacha*, *kuti* gives the construction *pachakuti* a meaning we can gloss as ‘a return of an era’ or ‘a restoration of a previous order’, most often with the idea that such a fundamental transformation will ‘right’ that which had been perverted. It is thus no surprise that the idiom *pachakuti* has often been applied to the Spanish Conquest, which on the Andean estimation, has been a perversion of the proper, native order of things.¹⁶⁸

It was this sense of ‘a righting through the restoration of a previous order’—a turning right-side up—that my informant’s expression “dar vuelta a la Colectividad” was meant to convey, and which my invocation of *pachakuti* came to ratify.

A Return to Our Humility

Where Mendoza continued to struggle with the Ministry of the Interior to gain control over the CBE as Interventor—and where the ‘usurpers’ continued to occupy the entity at the expense of its members and mission—there arose another indigenous ‘solution’ to the conflict over the CBE. While the plot above sought to remove the CBE’s ‘usurpers’ by physical force to restore a previous political order (i.e. to restore the CBE in service of the public good as it existed under Cahuana’s original leadership), this solution was merely a *call* to restore a previous order. Yet

¹⁶⁶ For a discussion of Western linearity, and the ways it is both signified and a function of semiotic systems, see Whorf (1997)

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion of ideologies and events of rupture in Andean history, see for example Serulnikov (2010), Robins (2002), Stern (1987).

¹⁶⁸ See Susan Ramírez’s (1996) *The World Upside Down: Cross-Cultural Contact and Conflict in Sixteenth-Century Peru*.

despite its status as a call, it was even more radical and penetrating. For it sought to restore something much more fundamental than political leadership and good governance. This call sought a *pachakuti* in human relationships themselves. For where many critics saw the crisis of the CBE as an outgrowth of a deeper human crisis, what was needed was a restoration of human regard and treatment itself. We should note as well that such a call was equally violent and equally physical. For given that it seeks a fundamental revolution in how people conceive of and relate to one another, it is violent in that it seeks to break (not legs) but whole systems of meaning and engagement, as well as the senses of orientation and purpose—at once individual and collective—that are wrought through them. It is also physical in the sense that all these meanings have produced embodied dispositions that have become a principal modality of social engagement in the barrio. What this *pachakuti* challenges are the visceral rationalities of these engagements as they have come to characterize the CBE's—and barrio's—culture of interaction. This call asks people not just to regard or consider others differently; it asks them to *feel* differently toward others and before their actions.

What was this call? What were its concrete propositions? I was sitting with a friend one Sunday afternoon in April 2006 when I first heard it. The call—made by a Potosino in conversation with a mixed group of Bolivians—was for the restoration of a lost ethics that was believed to have obtained at home in Bolivia; the call was for a return to people's common roots of humility. As broadcast over the barrio and surrounding fields on the radio program *Kaypi Bolivia*:

La Colectividad se ha olvidado de sus principios...
Hemos olvidado de nuestra identidad; ahora nos amenazamos y nos peleamos—nos robamos. Tenemos que volver al inicio—a nuestras raíces. Tenemos que volver a la humildad.

Our Colectividad has forgotten its principles...
We have forgotten our identity; now we threaten and fight with each other—we rob one another. We have to return to the beginning—to our roots. We have to return to our humility.

I argue that such call for a return to people's common roots of humility strikes at the heart of ethical deliberations in the CBE and across Escobar. These are deliberations crystallized by the question many have been forced to ask themselves as participants in an immigrant collective that

has been corrupted: “What was, what is, and what ought to be—and for whom?” While there is much to say regarding the nature of ethical process and attempts at moral implementation, let us confine ourselves here to a key question that further illuminates the ethnographic story we have been telling. That question is: What *problem* is a return to humility meant to solve?

There is no doubt that the call for humility is meant to address the crisis of the CBE in a direct sense. Yet as we have seen, this institutional crisis is seen to be a function of a deeper social, human crisis. For beyond immediate interests in money (e.g. *todo es por plata*), many see the crisis of the CBE as emerging from the excesses and entailments of envy—i.e. of not wanting another to progress. We saw in the last chapter that it is this interpersonal—and intergroup—politics of progress that has come to dominate the CBE, and structure engagements in the barrio more generally¹⁶⁹. We also saw that the CBE played a key role in both shaping and producing this social complex given that it mediated and in some cases brought about the changes wrought by the immigration itself. Indeed, the CBE’s Market not only accelerated and accentuated differential progress, it contributed to the decline of other logics of production as well. In this way the Market—and by extension the parent entity for which it has come to stand under the ‘usurpation’—has been overcome by an ethos of exploitation and domination (i.e. *exprimir* and *pisar*). That is, in contrast to its founding principles of mutual assistance and benefit, the CBE has come to facilitate the instrumental use of people and their capital for one’s own gain—prompting many to ‘stomp’ on others as they distinguish themselves (*agrandarse*) in what has become a zero-sum configuration of progress. And, as the saying goes, the larger and more proud (*agrandado, orgulloso*) one becomes, the harder they stomp; they stomp on those who had previously humiliated them or simply on those whose indian-ness they might use to differentiate and exalt themselves.

The problem humility is meant to solve is thus a *human* problem that is ultimately linked to the changes wrought by the immigration from Bolivia. Indeed, envy and pride are regarded as a “social sickness” (*enfermedad social*) that has not only divided people, but taken their very humanity in the process. In the barrio, one frequently hears how, as people become preoccupied with one another’s progress (*fijarse*), and as they competitively pursue their own exclusive accumulation at the expense of others, they lose their very humanity.

¹⁶⁹ As we have seen elsewhere, what the CBE is meant to “exteriorize” according to the legal regime that provides state authorization for civil associations is an ethos that benefits the surrounding political community and fosters the good of all.

Ya no son seres humanos.

They are no longer human beings.

Somewhere in the process of leaving the Bolivian highlands and creating a new life in Argentina, people have lost their humanity. This moral lament is heard repeatedly in the barrio. As one woman put it to me:

En los treinta años que estamos acá, quedan cinco familias que son seres humanos. Son pocas que te saludan bien, que colaboran con vos, que no se aprovechan de vos... Ahora andan en su camioneta 0km y te pisan nomás; te desprecian.

In the thirty years we've been here, there are only five families that are still human beings. There are only a few that say hello to you, that collaborate with you, that won't take advantage of you. (Here) they ride in their brand new truck and they just stomp on you; they put you down.

What many lament is the loss of an ethics of mutual recognition and engagement they say used to obtain at home in the Bolivian highlands. This fundamentally human sociality, they claim, is lost to the hegemony of progress in Argentina. Where people are taken by the zero-sum logic of progress, and engage each other through the dynamics of pride and envy, they fail to regard one another as human. Where progress reigns over other logics of engagement, relationships become uncooperative, class-based, instrumental, and fundamentally unsocial. As many stress, much of progress is, after all, achieving economic success and independence (*independizarse*). While in an immediate sense this means getting out from under the yoke of someone that might exploit you (including a fellow *paisano* or even a *pariente*), it often also entails certain social atomization when seen in relation to modalities of engagement like the *mink'a* prevalent in the "ethnic economies" of Potosí (*allá es puro mink'a*). Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 7, the logic of individual progress in Escobar is very different from the logic of the *mink'a* in rural Potosí. As many Potosinos point out, in practices of *mink'a* (which are sometimes suffused with *ayni*), mutual dependence and engagement, commensality and shared phenomenological states, and collective subordination to cosmological forces are stressed over and above practices that might otherwise separate individuals from one another or from the larger social groupings such engagements reproduce. As I pointed out, practices like the *tarpu mink'a* may in fact institute a

moral model of social life vis-à-vis socio-economic or political circumstances that give rise to antagonisms, hierarchies, etc.

In this way, the call for a return to humility is meant to restore a lost ethics of mutual engagement that is believed to have obtained in Potosí and enabled a kind of humanity that has not endured through the changes entailed through the immigration to Escobar. A return to humility is meant to counter the pride and envy that have emerged as a function of these changes—and of the CBE's Market's mediation and production of them—and so in turn produce socio-economic relations that run counter to the logic of 'usurpation' and its culture of exploitation and disparaging domination of those who are otherwise fellow immigrants. In the end, this call for a *pachakuti*—a revolution in the manner of human engagement—is quintessentially ethical in that it proposes to close the gap between an "is" and an "ought". In the spirit of the spatio-temporal complexities of a *pachakuti*, we see that what "ought to be" in the CBE and in Escobar is in fact what is reputed to have "already been" at home in Potosí.

Can Humility Recruit?

Having discussed what problems a return to humility is meant to solve given this larger context of "what was, what is, and what ought to be?" let us examine the extent to which such a call recruits a following. In this section I broach the larger question of "*—for whom?*" To get at this question, I raise and address others: As a rhetoric of inclusiveness, how might the call for humility resonate with different people across this ecology of socio-economic and ethnic differentiation? How might it relate and align people in ways other rhetorics cannot? How might it shape their practices and mutual engagements? In other words: Can the call for humility create a "we" that conjointly pursues a common orientation to—and in—the world? Can it make "ethical kin" out of people who are antagonized in the politics of progress, or who might otherwise be rivals and/or strangers?

Where the rhetoric of Bolivian discrimination and exploitation proffered by González sought—and achieved—*mis*recognition of the matters gripping the CBE, the present call for humility succeeds in identifying precisely what is going on. That is, it succeeds in showing that the crisis of the CBE, and the deeper human crisis that has generated and shaped it, are a function

of the excessive pride and envy wrought through the politics of progress. Paradoxically, while the call for a return to humility is effective in identifying the causes of these nested problems, as well as a proper remedy for them, it is nevertheless limited in its ability to recruit a range of people to its project, and for a range of reasons. Indeed, as a rhetoric of inclusiveness, the call is borne from particularly Potosino sentiments and does not resonate with non-Potosinos to the same extent. Moreover, even among the Potosinos (which nevertheless comprise the bulk of those in the CBE and surrounding barrio, its propositions are radical. That is, they ask too much of people who are still very much in the *lucha*.

Beginning with humility as a rhetoric of inclusiveness, I suggest that the call ‘works’ for Potosinos, but less so for Tarijeños, Cochabambinos, and others. This is because the ‘beginning’ to which one (and all) must return is more germane to the rural highlands of Potosí than to rural Tarija or more urban Cochabamba. That is, the roots that must be reinvigorated, despite their being called “our roots” (*nuestras raices*), are not everyone’s, but rather those of the Potosinos. What are these roots? Though they are not specified, I suggest that what humility invokes is the ethos of engagement that undergirded the “ethnic economy” discussed in Chapter 7. That is, the roots that have been lost to envy and pride, and to which all are asked to return, consist of a kind of practical ideology of mutual dependence, cooperation, and solidarity given outside, exploitative enterprises. Through this is a sense that while wealth and influence inside any community will vary, they should not exceed certain limits. Such ethics of proportionality (if not also egalitarianism), themselves often expressed through practices of hospitality and commensality, are buttressed by a sense, itself often phenomenologically instantiated through ritual, of collective and common being before cosmological forces. Indeed, one of the key characteristics of the ethnic economy that many Potosinos stress (if implicitly) is that logics of progress or of exclusive accumulation are often subordinated within more cosmologically oriented frames of production.

Much of this ethos can be seen through practices like the *tarpu y mink’a* (the annual opening of one another’s fields), which many Potosinos use as a reference point by which to contrast life in their native communities with life in Escobar. As we have seen, the distinction of “In Bolivia (i.e. Potosí) it’s all *mink’a*, while here (in Escobar) it’s all cash” is a common formulation. While ‘native’ Andean life does not run wholly by this ethos, or even partially by it in some cases, it is nevertheless what many Potosinos remember, what they identify with, and

what they mobilize to understand their present—as well as past and future—in Escobar. This may well be a function of ritual itself. That is, this ethos may have become a ‘default’ sense of collective self (i.e. a ‘we’ to which we can return) because it is made explicit and salient in certain ritual activity—activity which, among other things, attends to the very real antagonisms over water and land, bickering over inheritance, and envy over one another’s herds and harvests up in Potosí. Indeed, certain rituals, and here I include the *tarpu y mink’a*, may performatively institute this ethos (as a moral model) precisely to manage the challenges such antagonisms present to a community that must also negotiate encroachments from outside—often exploitative—forces. Whether a function of ritual or not, Potosinos in Escobar create this sense of self—this idealized *lo andino*—as much as they resurrect it to locate themselves vis-à-vis the changes and challenges they confront as immigrants in Escobar. Whether an imaginary or a reality, it is what counts as people engage in ethical deliberations with an eye toward who ‘we’ have become. So people express their lives, so they are.

If these roots are in fact Potosino roots, how does a call for a return to them fall on those that do not share them? Is the call for a return to humility intelligible to the next largest ethnic nationality—i.e. the more Hispanic Tarijeños (*Chapacos*)—that have not grown up with the *mink’a*? I believe this call can in fact resonate with them—and even with the more urban, though far less numerous, Cochabambinos and Paceños that have also grown up outside the kind of “ethnic economy” one sees in the highlands of Potosí. This is for the simple reason that all Bolivians are, in a general sense, “humble”. Indeed, as many Bolivians in Escobar (and elsewhere) make clear, humility—like envy—is perhaps what makes them *Bolivian*. Yet *humildad* is polysemic, and the humility they reference is not the one shaping the ethical call under consideration. Where humility can reference the ethos of mutual engagement detailed above, humility can also index the suffering of hardship experienced by Bolivian immigrants everywhere—the common refrain being: *el Boliviano es sufrido* (the Bolivian is long-suffering). Yet having endured great hardship (being *sufrido*) is not the same as being humble in the sense entailed by the ethnic economy. Indeed, one must note that while the aforementioned Potosino ethos is *associated* with struggle and hardship given the physical conditions of production and the larger ethno-political environment, it is not *coterminous* with them. Thus, while the call for humility may in fact ‘reach’ the Tarijeños and others, it does not recruit them in the same way it does the Potosinos for whom humility has this other, deeper, cultural reference. Moreover,

where non-Potosinos are interpellated by humility-as-hardship (i.e. where they recognize themselves as objects of address in rhetorics of hardship), such hardship is most certainly not something to which they would want to *return*. For as is the case with the Potosinos themselves, a case discussed in more detail below, such hardship and the material lack (*carencia*) it entails is something that most are bent on overcoming. Indeed, overcoming hardship and its social entailments is the very stuff of progress.

None of this is to say that any Tarijeño, or Cochabambino or Paceño, does not—or cannot—understand the point of this Potosino call for a return to humble roots, as I have interpreted it. For I believe its message—i.e. that ‘we’ have become lost to envy and pride, and that things before having access to pickup trucks were more ‘human’ (no matter where people were from)—is clear enough. It is simply that Potosinos will have a more concrete set of experiences and memories *with each other* to reflect upon as they deliberate upon whether and how to modify their approach to the world and others in it. The point is that the sense of loss is more of a Potosino sense in that, in contrast to most Tarijeños and others, the Potosinos emigrated with their previous interlocutors (*parientes*) to a far greater extent, sometimes even in whole communities (e.g. the Pancocheños being a prime example). Thus, even while Tarijeños and others may easily capture the spirit of this Potosino call for a return to humble roots, the very fact that they have always been ‘excluded’ from their tightly-knit groups makes identification with Potosinos already a challenge.

Turning to the Potosinos themselves, I have already suggested that while the call is incisive in identifying both the problem and a remedy for it, a return to humble roots is problematic and faces great challenges. I have argued that this is because its propositions are radical. To begin with, the call asks people to return to roots that many are at pains to negotiate, if not shed or otherwise conceal, in Escobar. While the call insists there is something redemptive in these roots, the ethos it begs to restore is distributed through practices that not only mark one as Indian but which are also associated with a condition of great material lack (*carencia*) if not extreme poverty (*miseria*). As we saw in the preceding chapters on the Bolivian and Argentine ethno-racial economies, Indian-ness, which comprehends both cultural and economic markers, is a source of shame, and is often that over which people are humiliated. Because of this, many Potosinos in Escobar are forced to negotiate just how Indian—and how much from the *campo*—they are. As a result, many are wont to shift phonologies, to deny knowledge of Quechua or to

refuse to speak it, to feign competence in things considered modern, and even to deny their rightful birth in Potosí. For not only are these the things that mark one as an *indio* vis-à-vis other Bolivians, they are the things that mark one as a *bolita* in the eyes of Argentines (and often other Bolivians).

The call for a return to humility is thus radical in that it asks people in these ethno-racial contexts to return to the beginning, to return to their roots, and to revive an ethics that exists through practices that mark them as Indian—and hence ‘backward’. Moreover, it asks them to practice them in a hostile environment, where being a *bolita*—identified most often through the same characteristics that mark one as an *indio*—can get one’s teeth kicked in, or worse. That is, contrary to the dominant valuations (which for some includes even their own newfound evangelical faith), this call asks them to see their native practices and their ‘original’ selves through an anti-hegemonic light—i.e. to valorize them and to see in them something redemptive and foundational for the future. Furthermore, it asks them to detach these ethics from the material condition of lack and poverty that so many are at pains to transcend. Indeed, as we have seen above, overcoming poverty—which many confess is painful (*doloroso*)—is often a way people attenuate the equally significant pains of feeling (or being made to feel) culturally backward. In other words, working on the former is a way of working on the latter—where working on both is the stuff of progress. In this way, the call to return to one’s roots jolts with frequent attempts to overcome or conceal one’s roots. One must ask if such a radical call for a return to humility does not ask too much of people still struggling with their own *lucha*.

Ethical Kinship

While the call for a return to humility faces its own challenges, we would be foolish to see it as *sui generis*—merely a momentary blip on the barrio’s ethical radar. I suggest that this call is part of a larger ethos of reflection, recognition, and mutual engagement that has been percolating from before the time of the CBE’s ‘usurpation’. That is, the excesses of pride and envy, while crystallized in the corruption of the CBE but reflective of a ‘human’ crisis that has been as deep as the immigration itself, have generated a *range* of responses that share the same spirit. The call

for a return to humility merely makes explicit in a *public* broadcast—and for the *entire* Bolivian ‘community’—what many have actually been doing on smaller scales for some time.

A prime instance of this ‘counter-culture’ is an ethos shared among some of my closest friends—an ethos they simply call “codes” (*códigos*). What are *códigos*? As one man, a Potosino in his 30s, explained to me:

Mira, when you look out there—at the barrio, at the CBE, what do you see? You see that everyone’s burning everyone else. We don’t do that. *Códigos* are about respect; they’re about trusting one another to look after the other; to not to take advantage of the other—in whatever it is, be it business, personal life, whatever. You recognize that your *socio*’s got a family to support, and he recognizes that you’ve got a family to support. And so you don’t burn each other; you work together; you support one another. You offer him work. This is what we have; this is how we do things.’

Códigos, then, are not only about mutual recognition on an individual level; *códigos* are about the mutual recognition that one another is wrapped up with—and necessary to—other people; that everyone is someone’s keeper. What is particularly interesting about these *códigos*, however, is that they obtain between a group of families that is remarkably diverse. Those linked by this set of *códigos* were, variously, Potosinos, Cochabambinos, Tarijeños and, before my fieldwork was done, some Sucreños that had come to rent rooms in the Cochabambinos’ compound. I also became part of this web of mutual respect. When I remarked on the mix itself, my friend replied to me that this was not out of the ordinary, precisely because those that might ‘burn’ you could just as easily be your own relatives (*parientes*)—which he stressed are those that you *should* be able to count on.

What here amounts to an ethical alliance is, I suggest, just as common as it is uncommon. The very existence of such mixed sodalities is evidence that ethnic groups, and groups of relatives within them, are rife with rivalry, stinginess, and in some cases, deafening silence. Certainly, these kinds of alliances did not exist up in Bolivia—precisely because, in the highlands of Potosí (save in the mining centers), such an ethnic mix did not obtain. What might we call such an alliance? Certainly, being diverse, they are not an ethnic bloc. And while they are all Bolivians, Bolivain-ness is not what aligns and holds them together. I propose to call such an alliance—and sodalities like them—“ethical kin”.

By ethical kinship, I mean a kind of relatedness and practical alignment that is a function of problematizing the world in a similar way. What makes ethical kinship unique is that it takes

the very nature of the social order as a thing of reflection—objectifying and problematizing relationships, practices, and ideologies. What characterizes ethical kinship, I suggest, is that people achieve the kind of critical distance from the forces that shape their world that Foucault championed in his ethics. That is, ethical kin see themselves vis-à-vis the subjectivizing—and subjectivizing—forces that make the dominant order of things. Seeing themselves before these forces, they conjointly build new, alternative worlds in efforts of collective self-fashioning. In this way, ethical kinship is poetic.

Those who share ‘*códigos*’ are ethical kin. They are a ‘we’ who have developed a common orientation to—and in—the world. Moreover, they practically construct a world that runs counter to the one that surrounds them—i.e. they have made fellows (*prójimos*) out of those who might otherwise be competitors antagonized by the politics of progress (and the macro-plane categories that shape this politics); they have made *socios* out of those that might otherwise be ethnic rivals—and sometimes are. (Indeed, one should note that ethical kinship takes work to sustain, and as these interlocutors exist in a challenging ethos of pride, envy, and dehumanization, they themselves fall victim to such idioms of engagement from time to time.) In a word, these ethical kin—all from diverse backgrounds; yet all commonly confronted by the same ‘social sickness’—have ‘decided’ to *progress together*. That is, they have revolted against the dominant logic of progress in which people progress at one another’s expense in a zero-sum configuration. Having been ‘burned’ by relatives, having suffered the same *lucha*, having been dehumanized by Argentines—and, I should point out, having differential access to capital and what it affords—these ethical kin have decided to progress together.

The call for a return to humility is an explicit attempt to generate and cultivate this same kind of ethical kin. It too objectifies and problematizes the very nature of the social order. While it specifically invokes the idiom of humility (which I have suggested bears Potosino impletion, and therefore faces certain challenges), it nevertheless speaks this same ethical language of mutual recognition and dependence to run counter to this order. What distinguishes it from ‘*códigos*’ is that it is a *public* call to cultivate such an ethos of engagement on a broader scale to bring about a sea change in the CBE. In this way it is specifically motivated and fights to recruit the same people that might otherwise be mobilized by the usurpers in their projects for misrecognition, whether they be based on rhetorics of common discrimination or otherwise. Yet as I hope to have indicated, this call for a return to humility is an instance of a broader ethic that

is percolating vis-à-vis the problems gripping the Bolivian ‘community’ in Escobar and in the CBE specifically. I believe it exists in a kind of productive tension with other instances, such as the ‘*códigos*’ discussed above. Each project informs the other, and exists in dialogical engagement with yet others. They simultaneously challenge and ratify one another, clarifying the terms of a common ethical horizon.

Whether the ethos of progressing together will ever replace (even partially) that of exclusive, competitive accumulation and the dynamics of envy and pride is yet to be seen. Perhaps other things need to happen to facilitate—or even enable—such a movement. Perhaps progressing together in Escobar requires there be, as a condition of possibility, an overall higher standard of living and dignity for Bolivians in Argentina, and for Potosinos in Bolivia. Perhaps a willingness to recognize a stranger or rival (immigrant or not) as a fellow (*prójimo*) with whom to embark upon world-building projects that produce mutual benefit requires that one *not* begin from a point of being *despreciado*—i.e. denied their humanity.

Is Ethical Kinship Enough to ‘Heal’ the CBE?

Toward the end of my fieldwork I participated in what was to be the first in a series of cultural events dedicated to the greater Bolivian Community in Buenos Aires. Held in May 2007 at a Bolivian Cultural Center in Liniers¹⁷⁰, this inaugural event featured Norberto Taboada Terán, a well-known Bolivian author who had just published a work called *Tierra Mártir*¹⁷¹. Yet the event was more than a book presentation. Reflecting the desired nature and reach of the series itself, the coordinator, journalist Jenaro Moyano, invited the Bolivian Ambassador to Argentina, Sixto Valdez Cueto, to help launch the project. Having already been in contact with Moyano over the CBE—an institution he had helped found, and one he was fighting to recuperate—I mentioned that we might also get a colleague of mine, David Frye, to speak as well. Professor Frye had just completed an abridged translation of Guamán Poma’s early seventeenth-century chronicle *El Primer Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, and was visiting Buenos Aires. Moyano

¹⁷⁰ Liniers is one of the most important Bolivian locales in Buenos Aires.

¹⁷¹ Some of Taboada’s more famous works include his first novel *El precio del estaño* (1960), *Manchay Puytu: el amor que quiso ocultar Dios* (1977), and *Ollantay, la guerra de los dioses* (1994). Having fled BAnkor’s dictatorship in Bolivia, Taboada had spent many years in Buenos Aires.

was excited that Frye might discuss the legacy of Guamán Poma in a country where history too often meant European history, and saw his recent work as a natural complement to Taboada's *indianista* writing. And so the event was billed as a *tinku* (a Quechua term meaning 'encounter') that would celebrate and vitalize the Bolivian presence in Buenos Aires. It would come to inaugurate a series of such events that would do the same.

What did this have to do with the crisis in the CBE? Where Taboada and Ambassador Valdez spoke on the problems facing Bolivia, and where Frye conveyed Guamán Poma's critique of the Spanish Invasion, I was taken by how much their characterization of Bolivia and the Andes—both past and present—spoke to the struggles in Escobar. Indeed, one could see the struggles of the CBE writ large in Bolivia, and those of Bolivia writ small in the CBE. These were deep, intractable struggles born of a colonial interculture.

What were they? Both Taboada and Ambassador Valdez spoke of the struggle for human dignity. Where Taboada argued that Bolivia was without question the most discriminatory country in Latin America, the Ambassador affirmed that there was no greater pain than that felt in being disparaged—i.e. in being despised for one's race, looked down upon for one's culture, and scorned for one's social position. As we have seen, these are conditions that too often overlap; they are statuses that are difficult to overcome. It is perhaps no surprise that both men came to remark that what has always plagued Bolivia has been the problem of "integration" (*integración*). This problem has always been social, political, and economic. It is not only palpable on local levels; it threatens the very integrity of the Bolivian nation-state. It is perhaps for this reason that the Bolivian national motto is: "Unity is Strength" (*La unión es la fuerza*). And while perhaps all know that, as Ambassador Valdez reiterated, "in individualism lies defeat" (*En el individualismo hay la derrota*), many nevertheless struggle to recognize others—and to be recognized by them—as fellows in a conjoint effort (*prójimos*). Hearing these commentaries, I reflected upon my experiences in Escobar—on the many times I had heard that 'egoismo' was ruining everything. Not just the CBE, but humanity itself. There were not platitudes.

I have argued that ethical kinship is a response to these problems as they have arisen in and around the CBE. But a final question remains: Where everything else has failed, is the elaboration of ethical kinship, to the extent it can be cultivated vis-à-vis the powerful, and perhaps dominant, ethos of *individualismo*, enough to overcome the 'usurpation'? While this is a

difficult question to answer in the abstract, I will nevertheless argue that ethical kinship must be there for the CBE to fulfill its mission. For ethical kinship combines the *afectos superadores* and the *affectio societatis* needed for institutional work on behalf of the public good. That is, where ethical kin is a ‘we’ who have ‘agreed to progress together’, both of the requisite conditions of a collective identification (*afectos superadores*) and a conjointly determined purpose (*affectio societatis*) are met. These are precisely what the IGJ found lacking in the CBE throughout the ‘usurpation’.

While these identifications and sense of purpose may counter the ‘usurpation’, the question of whether they are sufficient to dislodge the ‘usurpers’ themselves (here meaning the ‘*pesados*’ specifically) is another story. Can such an ethical movement overcome them, their politics of misrecognition, and their strong-arm tactics? One should note that the call for a return to humility includes them as well. It seeks to interpellate and recruit them as part of this ‘we’ who must revive an ethics that they too once knew and practiced. The call treats them as human beings that, having already brutalized others, having treated them instrumentally, nevertheless have enough humanity left to see the humanity of others—and so regard them as fellows with whom to embark upon a conjoint project. In this light, the call for humility seeks less to ‘dislodge’ the ‘usurpers’ (as a *pachakuti* rooted in violence might) as it seeks to *convert* them.

Yet what if the ‘*pesados*’ cannot be converted? What if, after all the wealth they have accumulated, after all the power they have wielded, they still cannot be bent? What if they continue to resist justice and refuse to relinquish the CBE? Is ethical kinship enough to oust them? Or is there, as Guamán Poma decried before the corrupt aberrations of the Spanish Invasion, simply no remedy? While many in Escobar have proclaimed “*no ay remedio!*” before the intractableness of the situation and the individuals who profit from their subordination, we must remember that Guamán Poma did not throw his hands up entirely. While in his letter to the Spanish king Guamán Poma suggested reforms, so too, the new chroniclers in Escobar have issued their calls. Through their return to humility and an extension of ‘*códigos*’ they have not only proposed—but also practice—a new order of things. And while these movements might themselves appear humble—and while the problems of the ‘usurpation’ and ‘human’ crisis loom so large—let us not forget the way things looked to those who would eventually found the CBE back in early 1990.

Imagen de Bolivia, a publication dedicated to celebrating a decade of the CBE's success, and published shortly before the 'usurpation' of December 2001, recounts the adversity that faced the Bolivian 'community' before the events that sparked the CBE into being. As reported by the founding President Teodoro Cahuana and the journalist Jenaro Moyano¹⁷²:

Cahuana:

I had met Luís Intimayta who, facing the desperation of not knowing what to do after a fellow *paisano* had killed a local gang leader while being attacked, asked that we go see him. Facing the gang's promise to take one Bolivian life each week until they had avenged their leader's death, Luís said that no one had any idea what to do if the authorities continued to do nothing. He suggested we might find Jenaro Moyano, who had had a radio program dedicated to Bolivians in Buenos Aires; that he would know how to help.

Moyano:

In our first meeting that muggy, January morning in 1990, those that described the events were timid and conveyed a profound sadness. One could see that the emotions ranged from impotence to fear to indignation. But I asked them: 'If they are 15 or 20, and we are 300, what are we afraid of? I think stating that shocked them; it produced a surge of self-confidence and esteem. I proposed to them that we form an organization, an *asociación civil*. Everyone was on board. I told everyone that, no matter what, the crucial component was the tenacity and passion of all involved. Everything that has been achieved by the *Colectividad Boliviana de Escobar* is because of its members.

While it may be easier to unite against an 'external' force, in this case against Argentine gangs—or, sadly, as in the case of González's politics of misinformation above, against the one Argentine Interventor dedicated to dislodging the 'usurpers'—it fits to ask: Does the cultivation of ethical kinship not see the 'usurpers' as an outside force bent on exploiting the CBE's members, and the community at large? Does it not see them as outside of the ethical horizon? Does ethical kinship, to the extent it can be cultivated, not generate a 'we' that can overwhelm these 'usurpers'? If those at the heart of the 'usurpation' are only 15 or 20 strong, and the 'we' that have decided to progress together are 300—or better yet, 500—strong, what are they afraid of?

As with the Argentine gang's threatening to take one Bolivian head per week until they felt satisfied, the 'usurpers' too can be overcome. The challenge, as it perhaps exists

¹⁷² I have complemented this narrative with information added by Jenaro Moyano.

everywhere, is to cultivate an other-regarding, world-building ‘we’ passionate and tenacious enough to tackle the problem. What was, what is, and what ought to be—and for whom?

Appendix:

Saropalkeño – Pancocheño Rivalry in Ethno-Historical Perspective

As I argue in Chapter 8, the envious rivalry between the Pancocheños and the Saropalkeños was a key factor in the ability of the ‘architects’ to both plan and orchestrate the permanent ouster of Cahuana. Specifically, I argue that they succeeded in their alleged ‘usurpation’ by framing Cahuana’s push for re-election as a move by him and his Saropalkeño relatives to take more than their fair share of power (if not wealth) in violation of a traditional ethics of rotationality and at the expense of other groups, principally the Pancocheños. More than a necessary set of conditions for their ‘coup’, I argue that these ‘architects’ actually stoked this rivalry to secure their hold over the CBE and its revenues. Where this dissertation examines the extent to which Bolivians in the CBE—and in Escobar generally—identify with one another as *Bolivians*, it serves to investigate, to the greatest possible depths, the kinds of lower level identifications that ultimately frustrate such horizontal identifications.

Given that many in the barrio claim that the Pancocheños and the Saropalkeños are as different as “black and white”, and given that the border that separates their communities in Potosí is the same as that which divides the Provinces of Linares and Nor Chichas, it fits to ask if, ‘underneath’ their contemporary conflicts and differences in ‘culture’, there is not a deeper ethno-political divide (and potential hierarchy) that pre-dates the Spanish invasion and colonial reorganization—one which might also be responsible for shaping the modern Provincial boundary that runs between them.

A cursory consultation of the ethno-historical literature suggests that a deep, ethno-political divide is not the case. This is for the simple reason that both groups appear to be common descendants of the Wisijsa ethnic group—a constituent of the QaraQara nation¹⁷³—that

¹⁷³ The QaraQara ‘nation’ was composed of a number of different groups (often referred to as ethnic groups in the ethno-historical literatura): Citing Capoche [1585], Rasnake states that in addition to the Wisijsa, the QaraQara were composed of the Macha, Chaqui, Muru Muru, Colo and Caquina, Picachuri, (lesser) Cara Cara, and Tacobamba (Rasnake 1988: 97). As for the status of the QaraQara as a ‘nation’, Espinoza states: “De manera concreta las

were ‘concentrated’ in the Spanish Colonial settlements (*reducciones*)¹⁷⁴ created within what was the Wisijsa’s ‘core’ territory. Formed in the sixteenth century, these *reducciones* were Encarnación de Yura, Concepción de Toropalca, y Espíritu Santo de Caiza¹⁷⁵. Today, these settlements are the modern day towns of Yura, Toropalca, and Caiza (see Rasnake 1988: 102).

Yet the story becomes more complicated when one appreciates the nature of native Andean settlement patterns, and the ways these patterns were both reproduced and altered by the Spanish in their attempt to control native populations and resources. In the pre-Hispanic Andes, there were a number of distinct polities (*señoríos*) that were brought under Inka control to form the Inka Empire. The QaraQara, which included the Wisijsa, were one such polity. In some cases, these polities could rightfully be called ‘federations’, given the extent of their internal diversity and hierarchy. While the QaraQara do not appear to have been a federation, the Killaka (Quillaca), which we’ll discuss below, were one that seems to have been produced by Inca statecraft¹⁷⁶.

While each of these polities typically occupied their own ‘core’ area on the landscape¹⁷⁷, they frequently maintained satellite settlements beyond them, and thus within the core areas of other polities. This was often to have access to a range of resources on different ecological

fuentes escritas del siglo XVI presentan a los caracasas como una *nación*. Y aunque ciertos autores modernos piensan que más bien fue una ‘federación’ de pequeños grupos étnicos, tal punto de vista es una hipótesis prosaica, basada en que esos pequeños grupos han sobrevivido hasta hoy conservando su identidad y hasta sus territorios. Dicho error emana por ignorar que aquella fragmentación (¿segmentación?) interna de Caracara fue motivada por la acción colonial de España, cuyos caudillos de la conquista se vieron impelidos a dividir la *nación* Caracara en varios repartimientos para poder entregarlos como encomienda a un máximo de soldados merecedores de tal dádiva (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 37).”

¹⁷⁴ The *reducciones* (from the Spanish *reducir*—literally to ‘reduce’) were colonial settlements created by Virrey Toledo through his *Visita General* in 1572-75 in which Indians, dispersed across the landscape as per their traditional settlement pattern, were concentrated and ordered to build houses so as to be able to present themselves for their tribute, corvée labor (the *mita*), and evangelization (*doctrina*). The establishment of *reducciones* was performed according to the delineation of larger Spanish jurisdictional units, called *repartimientos*. The territorial and human dimensions of *repartimientos* were often decided according to traditional ethnic divisions. As new vassals delineated in *repartimientos*, Indians could be ‘given’ to deserving Spaniards in *encomienda* who could benefit from their tribute and labor in exchange for the provision of protection and religious education.

¹⁷⁵ Yura and Toropalca were the principal *reducciones* in the Repartimiento de los Wisijsas. The *reducción* of Caiza was requested sometime after 1575 by Wisijsa authorities in an effort to accommodate the local population, who would be able to have better engagement with their traditional landholdings. See del Río (1995b: 61); Rasnake (1988: 103).

¹⁷⁶ “Las evidencias sobre la provincial Killaka son contradictorias, pero es posible que esta ‘nación’ sumamente heterogénea también fuera una creación Inka... Efectivamente, el señorío de los Killaka se componía de dos grupos aymaras (Killaka y Asanaqi) y cuatro grupos de urus (Awillaka, Siwaruyu, Arakapi, Urukilla), formando así un corredor multiétnico entre los Charka y los Karanka (Platt et.al. 2006: 53).

¹⁷⁷ I take this term from Rasnake, who describes ‘core’ areas as where a groups villages and fields were clustered (1988: 97)

floors in the vertical Andean economy¹⁷⁸, or was otherwise a function of Inka state control, or per royal perquisite. Because of this, the core area of any polity was never ethnically homogenous, and the political landscape was one of ethnic interdigitation at both the levels of polities and their constituent groups. Moreover, the different *ayllus* that comprised these constituent groups were themselves not territorially cohesive units, and most often recurred given this greater pattern of ethno-political interdigitation.

While the Wisijsas occupied a core territory, they were also dispersed within this larger pattern of interdigitation. Beginning with their core territory, there is no question that Wisijsa *ayllus* predominated. This is visible through the Spanish colonial records surrounding the founding and administration of the *reducciones* of Yura, Toropalca, and Caiza. There, the same Wisijsa *ayllus* recur in each, as shown in the accompanying Figure (see Rasnake 1988: 104; see Jilamita and Soto 2005). Yet a look at the *reducciones* in the core areas of other nations (which the Spanish often named after them)—for example Tacobamba and Chaqui—reveals that Wisijsa *ayllus* were located there as well. If the Wisijsa had their own *ayllus* located elsewhere, it fits to ask if other nations, perhaps even belonging to other federations, had *ayllus* located within the Wisijsa core territory.

A close review of the ethno-historical literature reveals that the Wisijsa core area was indeed home to a range of ‘foreign’ (satellite) *ayllus*. Perhaps the most obvious example of such interdigitation was seen through the Spanish *reducción* and *doctrina* of Caiza, and its annex, Tuctapari. Colonial records reveal that there were constituent *ayllus* of nations belonging to the Killaka Federation residing close to both Caiza and Tuctapari. The Killaka were an ethnolinguistically heterogeneous federation located on the southern edge of what was then the Lago de los Aullagas (Awillakas)—i.e. what is now Lake Poopó in the Oruro Department. The Killaka Federation was composed of two Aymara nations (the Killaka, from which the Federation took its name, and the Asanaqi), as well as four Uru nations (the Awillaka, Siwaruyu, Arakapi, and Urukilla)¹⁷⁹. The latter were Uru-Chipaya speaking peoples that the former Aymara speaking nations considered ‘inferior’ (Platt et. al. 2006: 53-56)¹⁸⁰. We are fortunate to have in Espinoza

¹⁷⁸ There has been a vast literature on the ethnic and ecological dimensions of ‘verticality’ that has emerged from the pioneering work of John Murra (see Murra 1975, 1985; see also Harris 2000, Lehmann 1982).

¹⁷⁹ See Abercrombie (1998: 146-160) and Espinoza Soriano (2003: 79-139) for a history of the Killaka Federation under Inca control and through the early years of the Spanish conquest.

¹⁸⁰ For a discussion of the Uru-Chipaya languages, see Adelaar and Muysken (2004: 175-176, 362-375)

Soriano's volume (2003) a reproduction of certain records from M. Aguilar de Mendoza in 1684 that reveal the existence of these Killaka *ayllus* in Caiza and its vicinity¹⁸¹:

Indios poblados en el anexo de Tuctapari de la doctrina del pueblo de Cayza pertenecientes al pueblo de Aullagas – Uruquillas de la provincia de Paria que pagan tasa en este de Porco de pocos años de esta parte en virtud de provisiones del gobierno superior de estos reinos y enteran mita por dicho Aullagas.

Indios pertenecientes al pueblo de Aullagas de la provincia de Paria, poblados en el paraje de Silui de las tierras de Tuctapari, que pagan tasas a sus caciques del dicho pueblo de Aullagas. (M. Aguilar de Mendoza 1684, ctd. in Espinoza Soriano 2003: 46)

In looking at the *ayllus* of the present-day Municipality of Caiza (Linares Province), we see that there are *ayllus* that still bear the names Ullaga and Uruquilla, though their constituents have long ceased to speak the Uru-Chipaya languages (and, like the originally Aymara-speaking Wisijsas, have spoken Quechua probably since the early decades of the seventeenth century¹⁸²). As indicated on the accompanying map, these Ullaga and Uruquilla *ayllus* are found in the vicinity of the modern day towns of Tuctapari and Caiza, respectively.

Yet a review of the contemporary *ayllus* of Caiza reveals more than just the past presence of Aullagas – Uruquillas peoples in Wisijsa territory. There are two more *ayllus* that appear to be of 'foreign' origin as well. Located just north of Tuctapari, and at the northern and southern limits of the Caiza Municipality, are the Aransaya and Mangasaya *ayllus*. What might be the affiliation and origin of these? Though *alaxsaya* and *manqhasaya* (and their variations) have been Aymara terms traditionally used to designate upper and lower moieties in the common pattern of Andean dual organization, the *ayllus* bearing these names in Caiza do not appear to reflect any Wisijsa or Killaka designations. Moreover, one sees *ayllus* bearing these very names in the nearby *reducciones* of Santiago de Cotagaita and Totorá¹⁸³ (see Gil Montero 2008: 254). The apparent recurrence of these *ayllus* in what was the Repartimiento de Cotagaita (which comprehended both of the *reducciones* of Cotagaita and Totorá) is tentative evidence that they were *ayllus* belonging to a different polity. The question thus arises: to what pre-Hispanic polity, if any, did these *ayllus* (and the larger Repartimiento de Cotagaita) correspond? This

¹⁸¹ See also del Río (1995b: 55-56) and Abercrombie (1998: 158) for mention of the same.

¹⁸² See Rasnake (1988: 57).

¹⁸³ This Totorá is not that which is frequently mentioned in the ethnohistorical literature (i.e. the Totorá located in the north of Potosí, not far from Sucre), but rather is a small community located approximately 12km southwest of Santiago de Cotagaita in the Nor Chichas Province (see also Frías 2002: 23).

repartimiento, along with a number of others¹⁸⁴, are thought to comprehend what has been referred to as the Chichas Federation. Where the core area of the Killakas lay to the north and west of the QaraQaras, the Chichas lay to the south. As Presta states:

Los chichas se ubicaban en la región cruzada por los ríos San Juan y Camblaya, al norte del territorio tarijeño. Es el mismo fundador de Tarija, don Luis de Fuentes y Vargas, quien dice haberlos reducido al oeste de los valles tarijeños en los pueblos de Santiago de Cotagaita, San Juan de Talina y Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Calcha. (Presta 1995b: 241)

Platt and his co-authors have argued that, being a mix of *mitimaes* of other ‘provinces’ and natives of the eastern valleys, the Chichas must have been a heterogenous and multilinguistic federation (2006: 56). Palomeque’s list of principal *mitimaes* include those from Cuzco, Canchis, Condesuyos, Carangas, Quillacas, and Soras (Palomeque 2010: 17). Where the first three would have spoken Quechua, the latter were Aymara speakers. And yet other linguistic groups were represented as well. Near the *reducción* of Calcha, for example, one found a strong contingent of Churumatas who had their own language¹⁸⁵ and whose *señorío*, located south of the Chichas core area¹⁸⁶, lacked the socio-political complexity of the Chichas¹⁸⁷ (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 228-232). The *reducción* of Cotagaita, which interests us here, also evinced certain heterogeneity. The aforementioned *mitimaes* of Quillacas (from the Killaka Federation) and Soras (from the eponymous *nación* located north of the Charka) were concentrated (*reducido*) there, along with the other *ayllus* that, for lack of known evidence to the contrary, we presume to be classically Chicha—i.e. Arasaia, Manasaia, and possibly Pancori. Thus while the Chichas came to incorporate diverse groups, the Chicha *nación*, was nevertheless still a classic Aymara-speaking *señorío* in the pre-Hispanic sense (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 236, 292). If Arasaia and Manasia were in fact ‘authentically’ Chicha, they would have spoken Aymara¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁴ Calcha, Talina, Tupiza, Esmoraca, and Cochaya (see Gil Montero 2008: 254).

¹⁸⁵ See Espinoza Soriano (2003: 232) for colonial descriptions of the Churumata language.

¹⁸⁶ Espinoza Soriano locates the Churumata’s core area east and north of what are now the modern-day Argentine provinces of Jujuy and Salta, respectively (2003: 230).

¹⁸⁷ “La conformación política [de los Churumatas] no fue como la de las sociedades complejas de los reinos aymaras del altiplano peruano-boliviano (Chichas, Qaraqara, Quillaca-Asanaque, y otras del Qollasuyu) que se caracterizaban por una organización política de tipo avanzado (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 231).”

¹⁸⁸ Corroborating this, Palomeque confirms that the ecclesiastical *doctrina* given in Cotagaita was given in the Aymara language only, whereas in Calcha it was given in both Aymara and Quechua, the latter to accommodate the Quechua-speaking *mitimaes* from Cuzco and what is now southern Peru (Palomeque 2010: 17).

We thus see that the area surrounding Pancochi and Saropalka is one with a rich history in which the pre-Hispanic settlement pattern—itsself reproduced to a certain extent by the Spanish colonial administrators—was one of ethno-political interdigitation. We are now in a position to ask where the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños fit in this overall ecology and its evolution through time. More specifically, we are in a position to ask whether the ancestors of each belonged to different polities, and whether any prior ethnic differences have shaped the history of their rivalry, and/or been re-signified—or reconstituted along new axes—in the process.

While *ayllu* identifications on different levels have broken down, changed, or been forged over time, we can nevertheless trace genealogies to a certain extent. Although findings are preliminary, and require confirmation, the Saropalkeños identify with and comprise part of larger cluster of *ayllus* centered around Toropalca. These *ayllus*, like those of contemporary Yura, are Wisijsa in origin. They reflect the internal organization of the Wisijsas into ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ moieties—*Arasaya* and *Urinsaya*—which Toropalkeños now call “cabildos” (Arteaga 1997; see also Rasnake 1988: 56). While I have not yet been able to inquire into the lowest level identifications of the Saropalkeños (i.e. which Wisijsa-descendent *ayllus* they might constitute), preliminary work suggests that they identify with the Cabildo Urinsaya within this larger Wisijsa-descendant formation.

As for the Pancocheños, they identify themselves as belonging to Ayllu Mangasaya. Though lying between Wisijsa-descendant *ayllus* to the north (in Caiza) and the south (in Toropalca), Ayllu Mangasaya appears to have been an outlying satellite of the Chichas, whose core area borders that of the Wisijsas’, and thus the larger QaraQara *nación* to which it belongs.

If the ancestors of the Saropalkeños were Wisijsas (QaraQaras), and those of the Pancocheños Chichas, what might their relative status have been? What kinds of prestige might one or another—or both—have enjoyed? To answer this question, we need to look into the larger ecology of alliances and differences in the pre-Hispanic Andes. Specifically, we need to look into the ethno-political dynamics of “Charcas”. Charcas was the entire ‘Province’ that lay south of Collao, and included what in the colonial *Memorial* of 1582¹⁸⁹ were referred to as the ‘*siete naciones*’ (seven nations). The seven *señoríos* that comprised the *Confederación de las*

¹⁸⁹ *El Memorial de los Mallku y principales de la provincia de los Charcas* (1582). The *Memorial* was in fact a letter directed to the Spanish King by the lords of Qaraqara and Charka demanding certain privileges under his rule. Both Platt et.al. (2006) and Espinoza Soriano (2003) reproduce this document in their respective analyses.

Charcas (Charcas Confederation), and who all signed the aforementioned *Memorial*, were: Charka, QaraQara, Chichas, Chuis, Quillacas, Carangas, and Soras (see Platt et.al. 2006). What was the reason for this grouping? Why these seven? And were there any other permutations of groupings? In a first instance, all seven of these polities formed a military alliance against the Pizarro brothers in the Battle of Cochabamba in 1538. As reproduced in Platt et.al. (2006: 843), the *Memorial* states:

Cuando envió el marqués don Francisco Pizarro a su hermano el comendador Hernando Pizarro y a Gonzalo Pizarro y a los demás capitanes y soldados hacia esta provincia de los Charcas, todos los naturales de esta provincia de los Charcas, así la nación de los Charcas y Caracaras, Chichas, Chuis, Quillacas, Carangas y los Soras, estas dichas siete naciones, por mandato de Inca Mango Capa y de su hermano Inca Paullo fue mandado por ellos que se resistiesen y les hiciésemos guerra y batalla a los capitanes de Vuestra Majestad, que con ellos venía el Inca Paullo. Y así todas estas dichas siete naciones les dieron guerra y batalla en el Valle de Cochabamba a los dichos capitanes y soldados de Vuestra Majestad, y después que fueron desbaratados y vencidos y muertos por los dichos capitanes de Vuestra Majestad las dichas siete naciones cada una fueron a diversas partes...

Platt and his co-authors argue that what may have undergirded this military alliance was the fact that all seem to have shared a common spiritual devotion to the *wak'a* of Tata Purqu, in what is now Porco (Platt et.al. 2006: 60-61). In this first instance then, the Qaraqaras and Chichas seem to have had a certain amount in common as constituents of this larger ethno-political Confederation.

Yet the commonalities did not end there. The *Memorial* mentions a grouping of four of these seven nations as “soldiers of the Inka” (*las cuatro naciones que eran soldados del Inka*) (Platt et.al. 2006: 62, 64, 841-843). The four that had earned this prestigious designation were the Qaraqara, Charka, Chicha, and Chuy. As soldiers of the Inka, they collectively defended the Inka Empire against the incursions and depredations of the fierce Chiriguanos (Chiriwanos) on their eastern borderlands^{190 191}. Indeed, being so lauded by—and indeed indispensable to—the

¹⁹⁰ In this defense against the Chiriguanos, the Chicha, often sent as *mitimaes*, were prized by the Inka for their valor and prowess. They were awarded the right to wear *orejeras* (ear plugs) in the style of Inka nobility, and were thus known to the Spanish as *Chichas-orejones* (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 233, 295).

¹⁹¹ Vis-à-vis what we'll shortly see are some stark differences between these four nations, Platt and his co-authors suggest that the ‘alliances’ among them may have simply been a common need to collectively defend themselves against the Chiriguanos before their collective incorporation into the Inka Empire—a pre-existing relationship the Inka come to perpetuate for its own Imperial work (see Platt et.al. 2006: 80).

Inka and their statecraft, these *naciones* had been largely exempt from tribute and corvée labor under the Inka's regime (ibid: 64; see also Espinoza Soriano 2003: 295)

Despite these commonalities as respected and rewarded military powers, there were also ways the Qaraqara and Chicha were differentiated in the historical record. There was another designation that again named just four nations, but this configuration was quite different than the aforementioned “soldiers of the Inka.” In the *Interrogatorio* of the *Probanza de Don Fernando Ayra de Ariutu* (1638)¹⁹², the Qaraqara, Charka, Killaka, and Karanqa are collectively referred to as the *Marcanies*. This designation referred to those nations—all of whom were highland polities—that were settled in villages¹⁹³. Platt and his co-authors state that this distinction, also indexed by their depiction as ‘*policía aymara*’, amounted to their being “civilized”; *policía* in this context seems to have meant a nation well-ordered socio-politically speaking (Platt et.al. 2006: 62-63). These four *Marcanies* stand in stark contrast to the Chicha, Chuy, and Yampara, who are referred to as “Indians of bows and arrows” (*indios de arco y flecha*). The latter had their origins in the lower-lying, inter-montane valleys and generally lacked access to the otherwise ‘civilized’ highlands (Platt et.al. 2006: 61-63). Moreover, within the aforementioned “soldiers of the Inka” it appears that these “Indians of bows and arrows”—the Chicha and the Chuy—were subordinated to the Qaraqara and Charka, respectively, given the higher status of *Marcanies* (Platt et. al. 2006: 64-65).

The distinction by which the Qaraqara likely enjoyed great esteem, however, did not end with their status as ‘civilized’ *Marcanies*. There was an ecology of difference within the *Marcanies* as well. Where the Killaka and Karanqa were known as mere shepherds (*ovejeros*), the Qaraqara and Charka were known to be agriculturists who had direct access to the entire range of products in the Andean vertical economy. Where this afforded the Qaraqara and Charka certain repute, they really stood out for their political and military prowess. Indeed, they were known as esteemed lords and soldiers (‘*señores y gentes soldados de guerra*’) (ibid: 64). It is likely for this reason that the Charcas Confederation was often referred to as the Qaraqara – Charka Confederation.

Yet relative to the Charka, with whom the Qaraqara enjoyed this greater prestige, the latter would have held the upper hand among the two given their status as *urqu*, as opposed to

¹⁹² This *Probanza* is reproduced in Platt et. al. (2006: 721-759).

¹⁹³ The term *marka*, in Aymara, connotes a settlement—what is *llaqta* in Quechua.

uma. All the Aymara *Marcanies* were signified as either *urqu* or *uma*, and instantiated geographically—and thus also ecologically—as Urqusuyu or Umasuyu¹⁹⁴ (see accompanying map). Apparently, this was a distinction *not* enjoyed by the Chicha, Chuy, and Yampara—i.e. the “Indians of bows and arrows”. Where Uruqsuyus, such as the Qaraqara, were associated with mountains, virility, aggression, and masculinity, the Umasuyus, such as the Charka, were associated with plains and fertile valleys, water, and femininity. Although the hierarchy of the former was likely common knowledge, it was often made explicit by Inka royal treatment and recognition in state rituals. In these and other contexts, Urqusuyu enjoyed the greatest repute and was considered the most ‘civilized’ (see Bouysson-Cassagne 1987: 158-159; see also del Río 2005: 34-36; Espinoza Soriano 2003: 38, 290; Rasnake 1988: 56-57). As Espinoza Soriano states, the relation between *Urqu* and *Uma* may best be described as one of rivalry (2003: 290)¹⁹⁵. This symbolic relationship seems to have been the case with the Qaraqara and Charka particularly. Platt and his co-authors note not only a desire for supremacy by the Qaraqara over the Charka, but also evidence that the latter may have been subordinated to the former in military matters (2006: 63, 81). For their part the Chicha were neither *Urqu* nor *Uma*; as “Indians of bows and arrows” they were likely considered ‘other’ and inferior to both in this respect.

Having described some of the symbolic dimensions of the ethno-political relationships and engagements between in the pre-Hispanic, Southern Andes, we are now in a better position to comment upon the historical relationship between the forebears of the Saropalkeños and the Pancocheños, assuming there have been continuities in both residence and affiliation over time, as appears to be the case (see figure). Where the forebears of the Saropalkeños appear to have been Wisijsas, and thus part of the larger Qaraqara nation, it is likely that they conceived of themselves not only as different, but as superior to the neighboring Ayllu Manasaia, who appear to have been an outlying group of Chichas. Though both parent nations enjoyed great esteem (and perquisites) by the Inka for their military prowess, the Qaraqara, were most likely a more prestigious kingdom. As one of the *Marcanies*, they were not only settled and ‘civilized’ as opposed to the “Indians of bows and arrows”, of which the Chichas were of course principal, they were also *Urqu*. Thus even while the Wisijsa belonged to the lower moiety of the Qaraqara,

¹⁹⁴ Against this division of *señoríos* into Urqusuyus and Umasuyus, each polity was internally divided into upper and lower moieties—*Anan* and *Urin*, respectively. These internal divisions, ultimately expressed as *ayllus*, were also hierarchical, with the upper moiety enjoying greater prestige.

¹⁹⁵ “Urcosuyos y umasuyos constituían dos bandos aparentemente rivales (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 290).”

it is possible they nevertheless enjoyed the esteem shared by all Qaraqara before foreign groups like the Chicha. Moreover, given that the dominant settlement pattern was one of ethno-political interdigitation, Ayllu Manasaia was flanked by Wisijsa *ayllus* on both the north and the south. Indeed, both Manasaia and other *mitimaes* like the Ullagas and Uruquillas were set within what was Wisijsa (and hence Qaraqara) core territory. This combination of putatively lower prestige, cultural difference, and ‘foreign’ residence may well have placed Ayllu Manasaia in a hierarchically inferior position relative to their immediate Wisijsa neighbors.

Where the Saropalkeños are descendants of the QaraQaras (Wisijas) and where the Pancocheños are descendants of the Chichas (Ayllu Manasaia), we are also now in a position to state what their ethno-historical divide has *not* been. The rivalry between the Saropalkeños and the Pancocheños has *not* been one between Urqu and Uma, or Anan and Urin, for the simple reason that these groups appear to descend from two different nations, and not from the moieties of one single polity. ‘Rivalries’ between moieties, Espinoza states, frequently bear an ideology of mutual betterment through ‘healthy’ competition. Being set within a parent entity, direct competition is constructive, not destructive; the idea, he states, is to ‘match’ one another as both subsume their difference in the larger entity (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 41)¹⁹⁶. Interestingly, this very idea comprises part of the moral code posted in the CBE’s meeting hall—and as seen specifically through the term *Churanakunapaq*¹⁹⁷. In the CBE, however, this seems like more of an ideal (if not an exhortation) than a reality. Indeed, looking at the relationship between the Pancocheños and the Saropalkeños, it seems that their rivalry has had a different logic altogether. Contrary to the founding mission of the CBE, their rivalry has not been one of each trying to ‘match’ the other as both work toward the betterment of any parent entity (in this case the CBE); rather, it has been—or more to the point, has been *made to be* by nefarious interests—one where

¹⁹⁶ Speaking specifically of the Caracara, Espinoza states: “Ambas mitades constituían un solo Estado, con una organización especial definida y bien conocida. Las dos sayas se sentían unidas y vinculadas como hebras que se intercalan para formar un solo tejido. Claro que había emulación entre ellas, pero conformaba una ‘rivalidad’ competitiva para hacer mejor las cosas, y jamás una guerra a muerte. Incluso llevaban a cabo batallas teatrales o deportivas con enorme trasfondo ritual, en las que una y otra saya (o mitad) medían sus fuerzas intentando empatar o emparejarse. El ideal era igualarse, quedando como un solo cuerpo. Representaba, pues, un encuentro armonioso. La lucha o choque artificial lo hacían en un punto medio para intensificar la complementariedad entre las dos mitades. Con todo, en caso de salir una de ellas ganadora y la otra perdedora, la triunfante siempre debía ser la de Anan, ya que los ‘más principales’ nunca podían ser vencidos ni siquiera teóricamente (Espinoza Soriano 2003: 41).”

¹⁹⁷ While the reflexive root verb *churanakuy* has a range of meanings, including “to keep for one another” and “to contribute mutually to a collective sustenance”, it can also mean “to strive or compete to emulate one another”. Calvo Pérez (1993: 301) glosses *churanakuy* as “pretender un inferior equipararse con un mayor; competirle.” The Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua glosses *churanakuy* as “emularse entre dos personas o rivales” (2005: 77).

both try to dominate the other at each other's expense (*los dos quieren estar el uno encima del otro*).

While certain distinctions, identifications, and practices have changed over time (e.g. all came to negotiate language shift to Quechua and Spanish, all came to indigenize Spanish Catholicism, and all even came to learn to be 'Bolivian' in many ways), I suggest that the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños, both past and present, have nevertheless maintained the practice of seeing each other as 'other', and perhaps hierarchically so. This maintenance of status as mutual 'others' may be why, where the concrete terms of *Marcanies* and "Indians of bows and arrows", etc. did break down, the Saropalkeños and Pancocheños came to find yet other, more contemporary ways to perpetuate their differences, and hence sense of themselves.

A prime example of this is the Pancocheños' self-identification as "Linareños"—i.e. denizens of the modern Bolivian Province of José María Linares—and the Saropalkeños' self-identification as "Chicheños"—i.e. denizens of the homologous Province of Nor Chichas, eponymously named for the Chicha nation. What is striking here is that it is the Saropalkeños, whose forebears were Qaraqaras, that now call themselves "Chicheños", and not the Pancocheños. Though ironic, it makes sense when one appreciates how, in a first instance, the modern Bolivian state set its Provincial boundaries close to the larger pre-Hispanic divide between the core areas of Wisijsas (Qaraqaras) and the Chichas, and how, in a second instance, this divide was not a hard and fast one, but was rather one that was approximate and somewhat virtual given the pre-Hispanic pattern of ethno-political interdigitation. Regardless, these 'modern' Provincial identifications are significant on the ground in Escobar: regarding the 'usurped' CBE, one supporter of Cahuana tried to make it clear to me that those from Linares were blocking those from Nor Chichas ("*Los Linareños no quieren dejar subir a los Chicheños*"). Another more contemporary way the two *comunidades* now establish difference is of course through religion. We have seen how the Pancocheños have almost exclusively converted to Evangelical Christianity, while the Saropalkeños maintain their 'traditional' Catholicism. Indeed, where the Saropalkeños have enjoyed the upper hand both economically and culturally speaking given their labor migrations, engagement in the mining sector, and the 'enlightenment' all this brings (i.e. as compared to the economic and cultural entailments of 'traditional' agricultural subsistence), the Pancocheños' conversion to Evangelical Christianity and they ways they, as 'believers' (*creyentes*) destined for Salvation, have acquired cultural

capital with which to disparage the vulgarities and ‘paganism’ of the Catholics has likely been a key way they have attempted to turn the tables on the Saropalkeño ‘*mundanos*’.

By way of conclusion: I have argued that the Pancocheño – Saropalkeño rivalry played a key role in the ‘usurpation’ of the CBE. The present investigation has sought to determine the terms upon which this rivalry has been fashioned over time. Where the Saropalkeños are no longer Wisijsas, and where the Pancocheños are no longer Chichas as they appear to have once been, I have suggested that these ‘original’ identifications and their entailments have not been forgotten, but resignified as both have maintained a sense of their difference in changing politico-economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

Note: The following two pages of this table are meant to be read side by side, left to right, such that one can compare the *ayllus* (rows) of each locale (columns). See also the Map to follow.

Table: *QaraQara (Wisijsa) and Chicha Ayllus in Historical Perspective*

Wisijsa	Wisijsa	Wisijsa	Wisijsa, Chichas, Quillacas
Ayllus of Wisijsa Ethnic Group (16th century)	Ayllus of <i>Reducción Yura</i> (today)	Ayllus of <i>Reducción Toropalca</i> (today)	Ayllus of <i>Reducción Caiza</i> (today*)
<i>Anansaya</i> (Upper Moiety):	<i>Anansaya:</i> <i>'Qullana'</i>	<i>Cabildo Arasaya:</i>	
Collana	Jatun / Sullk'a Qullana	Collana	Jatun / Chico Qollana
	Agregado		
Capacanaca / Tiquiscaya	Qhapaqa	Qapaqa	Qapaqanaqa
	<i>'Wisijsa'</i>		
Saulli / Soroma	Sawlli	Saulli, Soroma	
	Wisijsa Qullana	Jatun / Juchuy Agregado	
<i>Urinsaya</i> (Lower Moiety):	<i>Urinsaya:</i> <i>'Qhurqa'</i>	<i>Cabildo Urinsaya:</i>	
Araya Corca / Manaya Corca	Jatun / Sullk'a Qhurqa	Qorqa	Qhorqa
	<i>'Chiquchi'</i>		
Checochi	Jatun / Sullk'a Chiquchi	Cheqochi	
Araya Chacti / Manaya Chacti		Chejti	
		Jatun / Juchuy Agregado	
		Ayllu Chico	
			Uruquilla
			Ullaga
			Kinsa Suyu (?)
			Manqhasaya 1/2
			Aransaya
<i>Source</i>	<i>Source</i>		
Rasnake (1988)	Rasnake (1988)	Arteaga (1997)	Jilamita and Soto (2005)

*Regarding the *ayllus* of the Spanish *Reducción* of Caiza, Jilamita and Soto (2005: 29) suggest that these were the same that existed in 1601, though they state no archival source.

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