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Eija Ranta-Owusu
University of Helsinki

From Post-Washington Consensus to Indigenous Worldview: Policy and Ideology in Contemporary Bolivia

Abstract

This article examines the construction of policies and ideologies in contemporary Bolivia. Post-Washington Consensus refers to development policy frameworks required by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund before a country can be considered for debt relief scheme or any concessional loans. Through an analysis of the Bolivian Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the ideological underpinnings of Post-Washington Consensus development policies are investigated. It is argued that, in today's world, the processes of development policy-making and their respective ideological operations are creations of a neoliberal nature. Nevertheless, the article aims to show how development policy-making is a battlefield for various actors with multiple interests and motives. The construction of ideologies emerges within contradictory and ambiguous political processes, and is, therefore, prone to be contested and even to change. Therefore, the latter part of the article will study emerging social movements, recent political changes and respective development policy processes in Bolivia.

Introduction

Post-Millennium Latin America has been a locus for contentious issues and contradictory tendencies. For decades prior to the turn of the century, Washington Consensus economic reforms and policies had been implemented by the region's poor and middle income countries. In the aftermath of the continent-wide debt crisis in the early 1980s, the international financial institutions' (IFI) grip on national economies was tightened to the extreme through structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). By the turn of the century, a need for a change had become evident, and it was manifested in two parallel and interlinked ways: firstly, there was a visible attempt to develop more participatory and democratic policies and practices; and secondly, and partly as a response to the first one, a growing mobility of social movements and popular groupings started to take place. The former has been called the Post-Washington Consensus.[1] The latter, in turn, has been commonly placed in the wider context of the rise of left-wing politics throughout the region.[2] In some countries, such as Bolivia, it started to lead to political change with associated changes in development policies.

Bolivia is an ideal place to study these two distinctive but interlinked tendencies: the establishment of Post-Washington Consensus development policies and the rise of social movements. In the development policy field, after a period of extensive economic reforms and liberalizations (that some would call neoliberal), attention was turned to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

[1] Craig & Porter 2006; Jomo & Fine 2006.
[2] Prashad & Ballvé (eds.) 2006; Stahler-Sholk, Vanden & Kuecker 2007; Vilas 2006.

which, it was assumed, were appropriate tools for achieving national ownership and participation in development cooperation. These policy frameworks, led by international financial institutions, were supposed to be more democratic and accountable to the Bolivian people than the widely criticized structural adjustment programmes. Nevertheless, poverty reduction policies have been strongly criticized by academics and a range of civil society groups and social movements. They have argued that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) reflected the international financial institutions' priorities and, therefore, did not adequately respond to the needs and aspirations of Bolivia's civil society, especially its indigenous peoples.[3] Nevertheless, these strategies are widely used in international development policy today.

This article will investigate the construction of development policies and ideologies. It will concentrate on Post-Washington Consensus policy-making and resistance to it in contemporary Bolivia. This article will study the poverty reduction strategy process through its policy content, the various actors involved and the political tensions that occurred at the time. Although there was an attempt to forge consensus politics, the policy-process was accompanied by confrontation with social movements. Policy-making is usually considered a neutral and technical endeavour, but my perspective will highlight its ideological dimensions. The article will critically analyze how ideologies are constructed and transformed in the policy-making, and in so doing will aim to address the question about the interplay between what is generally considered to be neutral and technical area of development policy-making and political processes in the country. Consequently, it will be argued that, in today's development-filtered world, the processes of policy-making and their respective ideological operations are creations of a neoliberal nature.

Nevertheless, ideologies – whether neoliberal or not – do not constitute a homogeneous doctrine. Rather, because they are embedded in political actions and their respective discursive universes, ideologies are constantly contested and are, therefore, prone to change. Since 2006, the focus of development policies and politics in general has shifted considerably in Bolivia. This was due to a political change that brought the first indigenous president Evo Morales and his socialist and pro-indigenous political party and social movement coalition (*Movimiento al Socialismo,* MAS) to power in this highly divided and conflict-ridden country. This resulted in a change of policies and in a change of dynamics between the various political actors involved in the development policy process. Moreover, new types of political confrontation have also emerged. All in all, the story of the change in Bolivian development policies from Post-Washington Consensus to pro-indigenous and leftist policies is a revealing story of "both the logics and limits of neo-liberalism, and the different ways in which people and places live with/in – and against – neoliberalism."[4]

This paper is based on an analysis of the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy document (*Estrategia Boliviana de Reducción de Pobreza EBRP, 2001*) and the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia digna, soberana, productiva y democrática para Vivir Bien, 2006*). Although I have not conducted systematic fieldwork as yet, my personal experiences from working with an indigenous non-governmental organization in 2001 and with the United Nations in 2002 in Bolivia have undoubtedly left their imprint on some of the views presented in this paper. Indeed, I would argue that my research has benefited from combining the different roles of researcher, activist and development worker, because, as Lendvai & Stubbs point out, "it is through the bending and blending of different positions and perspectives that we are enabled to see policy as a constant move between the formal and the informal, the institutionalized and unofficial practices, the paperwork and 'the reality'."[5]

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[3] Booth & Piron 2004; Molenaers & Renard 2002; Morrison & Singer 2007.
[4] Clarke 2004, p. 89, quoted in Lendvai & Stubbs 2007, p. 9.
[5] Lendvai & Stubbs 2007, p. 9. Brackets in the original.

Post-Washington Consensus and Development Policy-Making in Bolivia: Brief Description and the Background for its Emergence

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are required by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before a country can be considered for debt relief within the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme. The most innovative aspect of this policy initiative is its emphasis on civil society participation and national ownership. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are "prepared by the member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund." It continues: "updated every three years with annual progress reports, PRSPs describe the country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a three year or longer horizon to promote broad-based growth and reduce poverty."[6] Since 2001, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have been prepared in a wide range of low-income countries.[7] Nowadays, they are a prerequisite for any concessional loans from international financial institutions, and are, therefore, undertaken in most developing countries.

There are basically two approaches to understanding poverty reduction policy-making. According to the first approach, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers facilitate the creation of a coherent and coordinated development strategy as well as the allocation of funds. Ideally, the poverty reduction strategy process increases national ownership and the participation of citizens in the policy process and enables the harmonization of development cooperation.[8] The second approach assesses poverty reduction strategies in a different light. They are criticized for their macroeconomic and political conditionalities and, despite their rhetoric of ownership and participation, for ignoring the specific political, economic and social contexts. Some even suggest that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are actually delivering repackaged structural adjustment programmes, imposing neoliberal policies at the expense of social equality and increasing the influence of international financial institutions over the internal issues of developing countries.[9] Most academics argue that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have failed in their goals of achieving national ownership and a wide ranging participation of civil society.

It can be argued that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are part of Post-Washington Consensus thinking.[10] Craig & Porter place the emergence of the Post-Washington Consensus in the financial crisis of the late 1990s, especially that of the Asian Tigers.[11] It is also widely acknowledged that its emergence was strongly related to criticisms of its predecessor, that is, Washington Consensus economic policies. The main instruments of this neoliberal policy era in

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[6] http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp (the site accessed 28th of February 2008).
[7] For the list of countries, see: http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp (the site accessed 28th of February 2008).
[8] This is mainly the policy approach adopted by the development agencies. For more details, see Christiansen & Hovland 2003.
[9] Gould 2005; Peet 2003; Steward & Wang 2003.
[10] Bello (2007) argues that there is no single Post-Washington Consensus. Instead, he argues that former adherents of the Washington Consensus have gone in different directions, including Washington Consensus Plus, neoconservative neoliberalism, neostructuralism, and global social democracy. In this article, I have chosen to use the term Post-Washington Consensus to describe what Bello calls the Washington Consensus Plus, which to him, refers to the Poverty Reduction Strategy policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In addition to market reforms, these strategies promote institutional and legal changes, good governance, and social inclusion. Yet, the core of the reforms remains similar to the Washington Consensus: trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and commercialization.
[11] Craig & Porter 2006, pp. 77-8.

Latin America were macroeconomic structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that started to tackle the debt crisis in the mid 1980s. As a response to drastic inflation rates, a dramatic collapse of the world market price of tin (Bolivia's main export at the time) and to a piling up of foreign debt that Bolivia was increasingly unable to cancel, the *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario* (MNR) government, together with the international financial institutions, came up with a framework for the New Economic Policy (NEP).[12] The main objectives of this framework were to reduce state involvement in the functioning of the markets to a minimum, as well as to promote the opening up of the national economy to foreign capital.[13] It implied a major structural change in comparison to the earlier import substitution industrialization (ISI) era, common throughout Latin America. Bolivia shifted rapidly from being one of the most nationalized economies in the region, to being one of the most liberalized ones.[14]

However, the social consequences of the structural adjustment programmes faced worldwide criticism. In Bolivia, their implementation led to the closure of mines, the opening up of the country to foreign investment, the acceleration of the privatization of state enterprises and services with the consequent disappearance of tens of thousands of jobs, all of which led to growing income inequalities, unemployment and social problems. The informal sector, including the coca and cocaine production, expanded rapidly as an alternative mode of income-generation.[15] Although Bolivia is said to be a country which wholeheartedly adopted the Washington Consensus model of neoliberal economic development, it is important to note that the process of restructuring was a battlefield for various actors with multiple interests and motives: "the discursive hegemony of the entire neoliberal package among political elites was far from total, particularly at the earliest stages."[16] Therefore, the New Economic Policy (NEP) did not represent a unified and coherent, top-down orthodox policy framework. Instead, neoliberal economic policies were enacted within contradictory and ambiguous local realities.

According to Craig & Porter, the late 1990s financial crisis convinced international financial institutions and the donor community of the need to enhance national ownership and civil society participation in development policy-making. The decision-makers increasingly made an explicit link between macroeconomic adjustment, debt relief and poverty reduction.[17] Instead of assessing the internal fallacies of their own policies, international financial institutions concluded that the failure of structural adjustment facilities lay in the widespread corruption and lack of good governance found in developing countries. By the turn of the century, international financial institutions turned their attention towards more democratic and participatory policy frameworks that concentrated on poverty reduction, good governance and social inclusion. Bolivia was one of the first countries in the world, together with Uganda, to launch Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in

[12] Kohl & Farthing 2006, pp. 65-70.
[13] According to the famous list of the World Bank economist John Williamson, the Washington Consensus economic policies included: 1. fiscal discipline with deficits of less than two per cent; 2. a change in public expenditure priorities that reduces subsidies for special interests; 3. tax reform that includes cutting marginal tax rates, especially on overseas investments; 4. financial liberalization, with market-determined interest rates, or, minimally, the abolition of subsidized interest rates for special interests; 5. unified exchange rates; 6. trade liberalization and the replacement of trade restrictions by tariffs, not to exceed 10 per cent, or at worst 20 per cent; 7. increase of foreign direct investment through abolishing investment barriers in order to 'level the playing field'; 8. privatization of state enterprises; 9. deregulation and abolition of regulatory barriers to entry to all industries, and; 10. guarantees of secure property rights. Williamson 1993, 1329; quoted in Kohl & Farthing 2006, pp. 20-1.
[14] Crabtree 2005, p. 18.
[15] Kohl & Farthing 2006.
[16] Kohl & Farthing 2006, p. 66.
[17] Craig & Porter 2006, pp. 77-8.

2001. It clearly responded to an urgent need, because Bolivia was (and still is) one of the poorest countries in Latin America.[18]

If the poverty reduction strategies were introduced as a response to massive criticisms of the social costs of the structural adjustment programmes and to a need to find a "new, more nuanced view on the virtues of neoliberalism",[19] the question arises: how and why did the poverty reduction approach suddenly become a dominant development policy framework? Or, from the opposite angle: do Post-Washington Consensus policies continue to praise the virtues of neoliberalism and, if they do, then how much, after all, has changed in relation to earlier policies? The very possibility of formulating this last question requires us to investigate the ideological dimensions of the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy, and especially, of its assumed neoliberal nature. Therefore, I will now describe and analyze the ideological operations of the poverty reduction policy process. Together with some theoretical insights into the articulation between policy and ideology, I will first study the overall features of the poverty reduction approach by assessing the contents of the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy and analyzing the role of international financial institutions in the process. Later I will discuss the operation of ideologies in civil society consultations and investigate the various forms of resistance to it.

Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Role of International Financial Institutions in Bolivia: Creating Norms, Making Ideologies

Post-modern research has argued for the end of ideology as an object of analysis.[20] In his article "*The Death and the Resurrection of the Theory of Ideology*" (1997), Laclau reminds us that, despite political and economic changes in the world order, the theory of ideology is nevertheless valid. He argues that the discursive universe is inherently ideological, and therefore the scope of ideology goes far beyond the earlier structuralist approaches. Here we are in the terrain of discourse analysis and critique of the Marxist understanding of ideology. Therefore, meanings are not hidden in cores or bases, or in economic, social or mental structures, but are present in intra-discursive settings. Howard & Stavrakakis define the basics of this approach by stating that "discourses [are] social and political construction[s] that establish a system of relations between different objects and practices, while providing (subject) positions with which social agents can identify." In this view, "*all* objects are objects of discourse, as their meaning depends upon a socially constructed system of rules and significant differences."[21] According to Laclau (1997), ideology emerges as an attempt to constitute a fullness of a society through particularity; it emerges when a particular idea or set of ideas starts to represent more than it is by itself – when it assumes universality – and when this assumed universality becomes the normative order through policy measures. This construction of ideology emerges within contingent power relations that necessarily create multiple demands and heterogeneous points of identification. Therefore, ideologies are constantly contested and prone to change.

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[18] Nearly 63 % of the population is considered poor and 36.5 % is considered extremely poor. Another characteristic feature of Bolivian society is that it has a large variety of indigenous peoples. Aymaras, Quechuas, Guaranís and approximately 30 minor nationalities form 62.33 % of the population. Poverty levels are highest in the rural and High Plateau (*Altiplano*) areas that are mainly populated by indigenous peoples. MDG Report 2002; Bolivia 2001.
[19] Boås & McNeill 2003, p. 148.
[20] Ideology has been widely studied within different fields of the social sciences. I do not have space to explore the various theoretical dimensions of ideology research, but I want to address a few interesting viewpoints. In this article ideology is not understood as 'a master narrative or a coherent grand theory', but as specific functions within discursive universes. See Fox 1991.
[21] Howard & Stavrakakis 2000, p. 3. Brackets & italics in the original.

This is echoed in Larner, because in her analysis of neoliberalism as governmentality, she understands discourse not merely "as a form of rhetoric disseminated by hegemonic economic and political groups..., but rather as a system of meaning that constitutes institutions, practices and identities in contradictory and disjunctive ways."[22] Therefore, the local representations of neoliberalism are always contradictory and ambiguous, and embedded in cultural, social, political and economic circumstances. Political agency and political actions ensure that multiple interests and motives inevitably contest themselves in making specific worldviews into ideologies through normative processes. This thought will be exemplified further in the article in discussing the establishment of Post-Washington Consensus development policies and the parallel rise of social movements.

The unveiling of the relationships between policy and ideology in the poverty reduction strategy process has to start by considering the role of international financial institutions. With globalization, the transnational nature of policy-making has intensified in an unforeseen manner. It has brought international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), into the frontline, when macroeconomic and social policies are defined in developing countries. It is their actions and respective institutional discourses that tend to assume the role of universality in defining the political, economic and social frameworks and programmes in developing countries. Despite the rhetoric of participation and ownership, the poverty reduction strategy processes are often regarded as donor-led initiatives. In Bolivia, this has occurred, partly, because the country is highly dependent on foreign funds. In this respect, Nickson indicates that Bolivia is comparable to an average African country eligible for the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) programme. He has shown that although the amount has declined since the late 1980s, around fifty per cent of the public investment budget remains dependent on foreign assistance.[23]

Dependency aside, in comparison to other similar heavily indebted poor countries, the donor community in Bolivia is considered to be very well coordinated and cohesive.[24] Despite this seemingly seamless cooperation, in her working paper about the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy process Eyben suggests that asymmetrical power relations between the Bolivian donors do exist. She places the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as the leading agencies, because of their substantial role in guiding the macroeconomic policies and the overall policy frameworks. The second most important are the bilateral donors.[25] Yet Craig & Porter remind us that "increasingly, bilateral donors have shifted towards PRSP-sanctioned direct budget support systems that augment these larger budget funding instruments [the Poverty Reduction Support Credit of the World Bank and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility of the International Monetary Fund], and this, more importantly, has placed the World Bank/IMF even more clearly in the role of being a 'signaller' to others".[26] As in many other countries, the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy process was clearly led by international financial institutions and their economically orientated experts and technocrats.[27] Despite participatory consultations, "the PRSP ended up being written in a government think-tank, by people who did not participate in the Dialogue [local expression for

[22] Larner 2000, p. 12.
[23] Nickson 2002; quoted in Booth & Piron 2004, p. 2.
[24] The largest overall donors are the Andean Community Fund (CAF), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Gamarra 2007, pp. 40-1.
[25] Eyben concludes her findings with a look at the weak role of the United Nations agencies, because of the low level of their own financing. Eyben 2003, p. 15.
[26] Craig & Porter, 2006, p. 88.
[27] Curran 2005; Gould & Ojanen 2003; Molenaers & Renard 2002; Seppänen 2003.

participatory consultations].”[28] A more detailed description of their role will be provided in the section on civil society participation.

How is the overwhelming role of international financial institutions in poverty reduction policy-making translated into ideological operations? And more crucially, what are the assumed neoliberal implications of this ideological construction? Given the prominent role of the experts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the formulation of the poverty reduction strategy, the languages and discourses of development represented in the strategy reflect their institutional priorities. As is the case with these strategies in other developing countries, the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy concentrates both on macroeconomic and social reforms. Its main objective is to “reduce poverty and promote human development... through improved access to markets, building capacities by providing basic public services, increasing social protection and security, and promoting citizen participation and integration within a context of growth with equity.” The four strategic components include: 1) expanding employment and income opportunities, 2) developing people’s capacities, 3) increasing safety and protection for the poor, and 4) promoting social integration and participation.[29] Overseen by experts from international financial institutions, the discursive universe around poverty reduction policies narrates the heterogeneous and ambiguous local realities into already existing universal (economic) models of development.[30]

The main underlying assumption in the poverty reduction strategy is the achievement of economic development through a relatively free operation of markets. This, in turn, is necessary for poverty reduction. In accordance with Post-Washington Consensus thinking, the poverty reduction strategy document considers informational asymmetries as the main reasons for market imperfections, which, in turn, are considered to be the major cause of poverty in Bolivia.[31] Therefore, the abolition of market imperfections through the development of informational systems is believed to be a solution for various developmental problems ranging from rural poverty to gender inequality. If the Washington Consensus was determined to deregulate the markets, the Post-Washington Consensus strives for “deliberate and incisive action on the part of the state to tackle poverty and social inclusion.”[32] Yet, this newly discovered role of the state does not imply a developmentalist state or a return to the import substitution industrialization era, but is considered as a temporary solution until the informational asymmetries have been solved. After that, the markets will, it is argued, be able to function freely, create economic growth and, therefore, reduce poverty.[33]

This description leaves us with the question I posed earlier about the relationship between Washington Consensus and Post-Washington Consensus development policies. This story seems to be leading to an inevitable conclusion: although there are great differences between the structural adjustment programmes and the poverty reduction strategies, it can still be argued that their ideological ground lies on parallel assumptions. In reference to the Washington Consensus, Larner has noted that this “particular political Ideology (with a capital “I”), a body of ideas or a worldview”, included the following values: “the individual; freedom of choice; market security; laissez faire, and minimal government.” “These values underpin the new institutional economics [which] comprise the intellectual basis of the neoliberal challenge to Keynesian welfarism, and provide the theoretical impetus for deregulation and privatization,” she concludes.[34] According to

[28] Komives et. al. 2003; quoted in Morrison & Singer 2007, p. 727.
[29] Bolivia 2001, p. 58.
[30] For similar discrepancies between the discourses of development and local realities, see Ferguson 1994; Grillo & Stirrat (eds.) 1997.
[31] See Hoff & Stiglitz 2000.
[32] Bolivia 2001, p. 11.
[33] See Jomo & Fine 2006.
[34] Larner 2000, pp. 7, brackets in original.

Jomo & Fine, Joseph Stiglitz, the main architect of the Post-Washington Consensus and an ex-World Bank economist, sought to supplement the ten key points of the neoliberal agenda and their respective ideological implications, mentioned by Larner, by including new and more varied policies, such as "better financial regulation, competition policy, more attention to technology transfer, environmental sustainability, reduced income and asset inequality, and democratization."[35] Nevertheless, they argue that "the Post-Washington Consensus is better characterized as a modified or updated version of the Washington Consensus rather than as its abandonment."[36]

One way to grasp this modification or updating analytically is Craig & Porter's discussion about the recent shift from conservative neoliberalism (structural adjustments) to inclusive neoliberalism (poverty reduction strategies). Inclusive neoliberalism is considered to combine markets with social inclusion. Its basic premises include among others: 1) an assumption that the state should create institutions that enable the functioning of markets, 2) some sort of regulation, 3) good governance, 4) the promotion of social conditions that enable people to be included in the markets, 5) co-production of services by the state, municipalities, private sector and civil society, 6) poverty reduction through markets.[37] These assumptions are both implicitly and explicitly present in the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy document. This reflects the institutional practices and discourses of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that have become authorities in defining the priorities of development frameworks and programmes. The poverty reduction language and discourse have assumed the role of universality in explaining contradictory and ambiguous local realities. The emphasis on poverty reduction relies on a firm belief in opening up the markets to foreign capital and in mathematical theorems that verify those beliefs.

These institutional discourses are inherently political. Yet this is often downplayed by the "objective, neutral, legal-rational idioms in which they are portrayed."[38] This Foucauldian 'political technology', described by Shore & Wright, is at work when public policies such as poverty reduction strategies are neutralized and detached from their political origins.[39] Craig & Porter follow the same line of thought by reminding us that ideology is extremely powerful particularly in those cases when something is represented and understood as a purely natural, neutral and technical matter.[40] Because of their discursive nature, development policies not only reflect "real" (economic) meanings, but also themselves create, reproduce and transform ideologies. The full realization of these implications suggests a continuation along the neoliberal path.

Although it is fair to say that the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy is concerned of development with identity, local cultural patterns, and indigenous rights, I want to argue that the handling of indigenous issues appears somewhat superficial. The concepts, ranging from *chachawarmi*[41] to traditional medicine and ancestral principles, are well articulated in the poverty reduction document. Still, it appears that they are concepts with no contents. The basic point is this: if the specific ideological framework is already set up, there is little room for alternative worldviews. Questions about indigenous identities, cultures and worldviews are glued on a pre-set framework. Therefore, it prevents the various actors from being heard and, thus, alternative social logics from emerging. It undermines the role of various active social movements seeking alternative visions about development and well-being. Boås & McNeill remind us that technocratic language such as that

[35] Jomo & Fine 2006, p. 3.
[36] Ibid: p. 3.
[37] Craig & Porter 2006, p. 93.
[38] Shore & Wright 1997, p. 8.
[39] Ibid: 8.
[40] Craig & Porter 2006.
[41] This concept refers to 'man-woman' (gender) or conjugal pair in Aymara language.

used in the poverty reduction strategy document, provides a strategy for depoliticisation by keeping potentially dangerous discussions within the framework of already existing structures. Thereby, they continue, the "underlying political conflicts could, at least partly, be controlled."[42] This is a crucial point for understanding (indigenous) counter-discourses and forms of resistance that I will investigate in the latter part of the article. Before that I will discuss the role of civil society consultations in connecting development policies with ideological implications.

Civil Society Consultations: from negotiations to legitimization

Post-Washington Consensus development policies have sought democratic and participatory decision-making through national ownership and civil society participation. Interaction and dialogue between government and civil society representatives is a crucial, and quite innovative, feature of the poverty reduction strategy process. It is believed that civil society participation will lead to "improvements in the legitimacy of public decisions as well as the redistributional nature of government allocations."[43] Therefore, the involvement of civil society is a prerequisite for the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to open negotiations on a debt relief scheme or, indeed, any concessional assistance and to undertake the poverty reduction strategy exercise. The form and function of the participatory processes are left to governments to decide.

In Bolivia, the launching of the *Estrategia Boliviana de Reducción de Pobreza* (EBRP) was preceded by a massive, nationwide 'National Dialogue' consultative process.[44] Lasting from June to August 2000, it included more than two thousand people. The consultations were held on three levels: municipal, departmental and national. Yet the main emphasis was deliberately put on the municipalities, thus, taking advantage of the politically important decentralization process and the institutional framework of the Popular Participation Law (1994).[45] At the municipal consultations, four members of each municipality were invited to participate: the mayor, the vice-president of the Municipal Council, a representative of the municipal vigilance committee and a female representative of the vigilance committee. These vigilance committees (*Comités de Vigilancia*), established by the Popular Participation Law, were composed of members from territorial base organizations (OTBs), including peasant communities, indigenous people, and neighbourhood committees. Their role was to function as mediators between civil society organizations and municipal governments.[46]

Prior to the municipal consultations the Catholic Church had become proactive in ensuring its role in the monitoring of the poverty reduction process. The church had traditionally played an overwhelmingly dominant role in Bolivian civil society as a provider not only of moral standards but also of social services, including approximately 30% of the health services and a vast educational system where the state provides the teachers.[47] As a consequence, it ran its own parallel consultative process (Jubilee 2000) prior to the government consultations. These departmental consultations included representatives of the Church and a broad spectrum of church-related civil society organizations. As a result of this active lobbying, the Catholic Church later obtained the

[42] Boås & McNeill 2003, p. 8.
[43] Morrison & Singer 2007, p. 722.
[44] This was not the first time in Bolivian development policy-making that an attempt to involve civil society in governmental affairs had emerged. A 'National Dialogue' (1997) was undertaken during the former-dictator Banzer regime to legitimize his policies and to reduce the opportunities for the opposition to confront the government's legitimacy. Morrison & Singer 2007, pp. 726-7.
[45] Booth & Piron 2004, p. VIII.
[46] Ejdesgaard Jeppesen 2002, p. 33.
[47] Morrison & Singer 2007, p. 728.

significant role of coordinator of the National Mechanism for Social Control, a monitoring system for the implementation of poverty reduction policies.[48]

In each municipal consultation representatives were chosen to participate in the departmental consultations. They were joined by departmental authorities, government technocrats, Jubilee 2000 representatives, and other civil society invitees. The majority of the participants in the departmental consultations came from the departmental level or from the Catholic Church or church-related organizations. Therefore, the proportional influence of the municipal representatives was lessened. In the national level Dialogue, representatives of the municipalities were in a majority, but their voices were challenged by a strong representation of departmental and national level civil society groups and Church authorities, as well as government representatives and some political parties.[49] The role of the parliament in the whole process was minimal.[50] The neutrality and technical focus of the process were highlighted through bypassing the formal political system and the contradictory political processes agitated by rising social movements in the civil society sphere.

Despite the municipal, departmental and national consultations, Komives et al argue that "the PRSP [in Bolivia] ended up being written in a government think-tank, by people who did not participate in the Dialogue."[51] This led to the prevalence of expert knowledge and its respective development jargon, and technical frameworks. The fundamental feature of the 'political technology' of disguising and detaching the political is the use of experts and expert knowledge in policy-making and the design of institutional operations.[52] In the case of development policies, this expert knowledge has been produced in depoliticized machineries with a knowledge of logical planning and by locating social spaces and places into economic models devoid of heterogeneity and multiple meanings. This complex terminology and specialized knowledge was already present in the departmental and national consultations and had an effect on the dynamics between civil society actors. Due to the technocratic nature of the discussions, the Catholic Church, church-related non-governmental organizations and pressure groups, such as departmental civic committees, were able to dominate the Dialogue at the expense of municipal representatives, who were more aware of local problems and concerns than universal paradigms and dominant development terminologies. This led to inequalities between the civil society representatives.[53]

Morrison & Singer describe how the civil society consultations turned out to be a battlefield between civil society actors who had multiple interests and motives.[54] Their description highlights the internal contradictions and the dynamic nature of the policy-process, thus, shedding light on the complex nature of ideological operations. Although the macroeconomic and political conditionalities of the international financial institutions were not negotiated and the strategy ended up being written by a group of consultants, the Mechanism for Social Control and the allocation of debt relief funds were open to negotiation, and therefore, became battlefields between civil society

[48] The informal sector workers (*comité de enlace*) became an important counterforce to the church's power in civil society consultations and in the aftermath, when the monitoring of the process started. Eyben 2003; Molenaers & Renard 2002; Morrison & Singer 2007.
[49] Proyecto Diálogo Nacional 2001; quoted in Morrison & Singer 2007, p. 730.
[50] The Poverty Reduction Strategy was not submitted to a parliamentary vote, but parts of it were approved by law (as the important National Dialogue Law). It was considered that parliament would not represent the poor, but rather corruption, clientelism and material self-interests. See Molenaers & Renard 2002, pp. 14-5. Leaving out the national parliament seems to be common in other PRSP countries as well. See Curran 2002; Gould & Ojanen 2003; Seppänen 2003.
[51] Komives et. al. 2003; quoted in Morrison & Singer 2007, p. 727.
[52] Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982, p. 156; quoted in Shore & Wright 1997, p. 9.
[53] Morrison & Singer 2007.
[54] Morrison & Singer 2007.

actors. Eyben remarks that the Catholic Church's interpretation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy process was that it was an attempt on the part of government technocrats, economists and foreign donors to diminish the role of the church in society. Therefore, a contestation of meanings emerged between the conservative, status quo seeking, Church-related league, and the more liberal, economically orientated technocrats that were comprised of the consultants, economists and part of the donor community.[55] Yet it is my argument that these two leagues of actors shared the same belief in the macroeconomic and political conditionalities. Some civil society actors actually benefited from them and were, therefore, negotiating within the existing (neoliberal) framework. Indirectly, the Catholic Church also benefited from macroeconomic restructuring because of the increasing emphasis on civil society actors as providers of social services. For liberal technocrats, the poverty reduction strategy process meant allying the like-minded in the state, private sector and civil society. This alliance also became a major guideline in the poverty reduction strategy through the requirement for "the political system and society to undertake a coordinated effort to tackle poverty."[56] This allows the penetration of market forces to a wide range of sectors of society. Some might even argue that this ever increasing social embeddedness of neoliberalism is where the ideological operations of the Post-Washington Consensus are most clearly observed.[57]

I believe that no-one doubts the importance of strengthening civil society in its various and heterogeneous forms. Nevertheless, the involvement of civil society in development policy-making raises serious questions. Who and on what terms are being heard? Do the opinions of civil society organizations actually turn into policies? Or, alternatively, do civil society consultations actually legitimize the already existing views of some specific actors? Now, if we try to avoid this pitfall of linking civil society participation with greater democracy and better accountability, what becomes problematic, is the analysis of those civil society representatives that *did* participate in the poverty reduction strategy consultations. In what kind of light should they be viewed? Molenaers & Renard give us an important insight by claiming that "a lot of civil society is donor-bred and fed, hence the strength of organized civil society may be to some extent artificial." "As such", they continue, "civil society organizations might be as far away from the people as the [formal] political institutions."[58] For Craig & Porter, poverty reduction strategy consultations have served "the wider Liberal approach to poverty reduction and to framing local poverty in ways that suited these forms of governance", as well as in giving the poor "a crucial voice in legitimating the whole enterprise."[59] An example of this in Bolivia, for example, was the municipalisation of civil society consultations. The municipal consultations enlarged the state control in the conflict-ridden (indigenous) countryside and reduced the state responsibilities at the municipal level by ascribing poverty reduction responsibilities to municipal level and civil society representatives. Both of these processes were legitimated by municipal and civil society actors themselves.[60] The negotiations between civil society actors and government representatives that were undertaken within the consultations ended up legitimizing the overall macroeconomic and political conditionalities. In resistance to this a third, heterogeneous, group of actors demanding an alternative discursive-ideological order began to emerge. I will turn to analyzing these actors and respective political processes in the next section.

[55] Eyben 2003.
[56] Bolivia 2001, p. 11.
[57] See Jessop's (1997) capitalist societalization.
[58] Molenaers & Renard 2002, p. 28.
[59] Craig & Porter 2006, pp. 78-9.
[60] Molenaers & Renard 2002.

Indigenous Movements, Counter-Discourses and Resistance: contesting or constructing?

I have argued earlier that, in today's development-filtered world, policy-making processes, and their respective ideological dimensions, are creations of a neoliberal nature. Nevertheless, the policy-making processes are absorbed in the surrounding political process. Because of political agency, actions and their respective discursive universes, ideologies are formed within constant battlefields between various actors with multiple interests and motives. Therefore, they are also prone to change. Because society can never be captured as a fixed set of normative elements, ideology can not be considered as a coherent, pre-established set of ideas, but rather as a particular construction of reality. Therefore, from the actor's point of view, ideology includes "those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and 'make sense' of some aspects of social existence."[61] These aspects of social existence can be contradictory and ambiguous as can be seen from the emerging social movements, their counter-discourses and resistance in Bolivia.

In addition to the conservatives and liberals however broadly defined, another heterogeneous group of actors is relevant for an understanding of the overall process of poverty reduction. It is important to remember that nearly at the same time as the civil society consultations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy process were held, yet with no apparent link to them, the government was involved in the 'Cochabamba Water War', fighting against the mass mobilizations of various social movements and trade unions.[62] Because of this mobilization, various important civil society actors did not attend consultations or refused point blank to negotiate with the government. These included the Bolivian Worker's Union (*Central Obrera Boliviana, COB*), the teachers' union, state pensioners, and other trade unions, whose role in defining poverty reduction priorities ought to have been regarded as crucial.[63] Molenaers & Renard argue that actually a major part of the poor themselves were absent from the consultation process. Excluded were women's organizations, trade unions, indigenous people and the main architects of the ever-growing social movements.[64] Both the *Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti* (MIP) of the Aymaras of the Andean highlands, led by the peasant union leader, Felipe Quispe, 'El Mallku', and more importantly, the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) of the Quechua coca-growers from the Chaparé region, led by their union leader, Evo Morales, were not drawn into institutional negotiations, but were left to argue and fight for their cause outside the consensus policy-making process. Both of these movements were asking for profound structural changes in society and better living conditions for indigenous people.

Hughes remarks that the lack of indigenous people in the poverty reduction process is not a particularly Bolivian trait. Instead, she argues that indigenous peoples are seldom invited to participate in such processes, which leads to poverty reduction strategies being culturally inappropriate or even destructive for them.[65] In Bolivia, as Curran has noted, all consultations were held in Spanish, although it is not the mother tongue for most of the rural population. Some documents were initially available only in English.[66] Hughes continues that even if indigenous

[61] Hall 1981, p. 31; quoted in Larrain 1996, p. 49.
[62] The Cochabamba Water War grew up as a resistance to the privatization of water. Nevertheless, it also responded to various other concerns related, for example, to poor people's access to public services in general, coca eradication in the Chaparé region and growing dissatisfaction with the macroeconomic conditionalities of international financial institutions. Social movements active in the Cochabamba Water War consisted in large part of indigenous people, but at the peak of the conflict it obtained the support of majority of citizens. Crabtree 2005; Dangl 2007; Olivera 2004.
[63] Booth & Piron 2004, p. 20.
[64] Molenaers & Renard 2002, p. 29.
[65] Hughes 2005.
[66] Curran 2002, p. 4.

populations are consulted in the policy process, their views are often misunderstood in order to fit them into already planned frameworks. Questions of fundamental importance to indigenous peoples, for example, those related to cultural autonomy, productive relations and land ownership have been dismissed.[67] In Bolivia, the civil society consultations concentrated solely on social issues, although the process itself was divided into political, economic and social agendas. Economic and political structures could not be questioned and the issues of production, property rights and land ownership were not discussed, although they were highly relevant for poverty reduction and were the causes of most of the ongoing social conflicts.[68] According to Arce, "the exclusion (censorship) of development counter-tendencies and their risks is made a part of a normative condition in the language of development."[69] It is common that the dominant discourses of development do not take into account the local cultural, social, political and economic circumstances, but aims at taming local ambiguities, contradictions and political processes. Yet, a new, contrasting discursive universe started to emerge by unifying the heterogeneous demands of various social movements. These social movements and indigenous groups were not only opposed to the methods of poverty reduction proposed, but also disagreed with the fundamental ideological underpinnings of the whole enterprise.

In line with the National Dialogue Law, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was to be updated in 2003. As a response to ever-growing social mobilization and conflict, attempts emerged to put more emphasis on questions related to production, small scale entrepreneurship and indigenous peoples' affairs. For all that, as was the case with the initial consultations in 2000, the revision in 2003 was overshadowed by an upturn in the activity of social movements, who were increasingly challenging the government and its policies. In the eyes of social movements and trade unions, the poverty reduction strategy was located in the discursive universe of neoliberal policies. Despite the heterogeneous nature of these social movements, the growing social activism of indigenous peoples, started to occur within contrasting actions and discourses, that of '*la lucha contra el neoliberalismo*'(fight against neoliberalism). It escalated in the violent conflicts of the gas war that, in the end, led to the resignation of the president, Gonzalo 'Goni' Sánchez de Lozada, and to a deterioration of the poverty reduction strategy process.[70]

The culmination of continuous conflicts was the win of Evo Morales and the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), a pro-indigenous and socialist party, in the presidential elections of December 2005. The newly elected government promised to restore the authority of the state in economic decision-making, to challenge the traditional political parties and authorities and to empower the poor and especially the indigenous peoples.[71] As its first tasks the government set about organizing a Constituent Assembly and nationalizing natural resources (especially hydrocarbons). The Morales administration also produced a new development policy framework that underlines the statement that "neoliberalism is by no means unchanging, all-powerful and universal."[72] This policy framework articulates complex demands through the concept of Living Well (*Vivir Bien)*. This concept involves a set of (idealistic) ideas about indigenous community values including, among others, harmony, equilibrium and a cyclical worldview inherent in traditional Aymara and Quechua

[67] Hughes 2005.
[68] Booth & Piron 2004; Molenaers & Renard 2002.
[69] Arce 2000, p. 38. Brackets in original.
[70] The gas war refers to a massive mobilization of various social movements, including Aymara peasants, neighbourhood committees in the town of El Alto, women's organizations, students, pensioners, ex-miners and the coca-growers, who all resisted the export of natural gas through a Chilean harbour to the United States and a parallel rise in income taxes. Later they demanded the complete nationalization of oil and gas resources, as well as the resignation of the president. See, for example, Crabtree 2005; Dangl 2007; Kohl & Farthing 2006.
[71] Gamarra 2007, p. 3.
[72] Lendvai & Stubbs 2007, p. 8.

cosmologies. It also has communitarian and redistributive implications as opposed to the individual-based neoliberal 'growth-without-redistribution' thinking that is visible in the idea of 'living better' (*vivir mejor*). Instead of focusing on the rights and well-being of the individual, the aim is to turn the attention to collective rights and subjects. Although culturally appropriate solutions to poverty reduction have been academically challenged,[73] the Morales administration aims at culturally and ethnically defined forms of development. This indigenous worldview is crowned with the concepts of solidarity, equality, a quest for an intercultural nation and indigenous autonomy.

What is particularly new about this policy approach is the attention given to the role of the state as a promoter of structural changes in production, trade and employment. This reflects a major change in comparison to the poverty reduction strategy approach and actually responds to an urgent need from the poverty reduction perspective. For example, Craig & Porter have noted that, despite their market orientation, "PRSPs are weak on the actual economic growth strategy." They continue: "Poverty Reduction has yet to significantly elaborate sectoral or industry or even trade policy of the kind that will radically boost productivity and international competitiveness in sectors that can most impact poverty."[74] When the role of the state in poverty reduction policies is restricted to enabling individuals to be included in markets through, for example, legislative and governance reforms, the current policy framework emphasizes more an active role for the state in restructuring productive relations and in assuring a more equal distribution of incomes and social benefits. This has been a common denominator for the recent, and very heterogeneous, New Left in Latin America. Vilas emphasizes the attempt of the New Left "to grant policy stimuli to the growth of investment, production, and employment in order to allow for a satisfaction of social demands in a framework of monetary stability, institutional governability, and democratic participation…. The state is expected to take a more active role than in the neoliberal strategy, monitoring the performance of markets and, in general, operating through conventional mechanisms of active fiscal and monetary policies: taxes, exchange and interest rates, economic regulation, and so on."[75] In Bolivia, a vision of an (idealistically) egalitarian indigenous community parallels an attempt to construct some sort of redistributive democratic state.

Nevertheless, development policy-making remains an arena for ambiguities and internal contradictions. The new policy and decision-makers in Bolivia are social activists, trade unionists and members of the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party. Dunkerley, while describing "Morales and his entirely inexperienced cabinet comprised of indigenous activists (of all ages), sixty-something left-wingers from the 1970s, and forty-something radical intellectuals from the 1990s", emphasizes the divisions within the political discourse, let alone the divisions within society (highlands-lowlands, indigenous autonomy-regional autonomy to name few). Within government there is a division between the actions and discourses of the academic intellectuals, influenced by the Marxist and poststructuralist theory, and the indigenous activists, whose background is in militant grassroots activism.[76] In society, in addition to political opposition, lowlands mayors and lowlands civic committees, some intellectuals and indigenous activists have raised critique against the Morales government. Therefore, it is clear that the chancing discourses of development continue to emerge within contingent power relations that necessarily create multiple demands and heterogeneous points of identification. Despite occasional provocative rhetoric, pace of the reforms in Bolivia has been quite moderate. Nevertheless, for some sections of society, such as the conservatives and liberals, the status quo has been shaken beyond recognition. At the same time, it remains to be seen whether the scale and pace of the reforms will be too moderate and slow

[73] Zoomers 2006.
[74] Craig & Porter 2006, pp. 85-6.
[75] Vilas 2006, pp. 239-40.
[76] Dunkerley 2007, pp. 134, 142-146. Brackets in original.

for the more radical activists of the government and the poor masses who are asking for more radical reforms and quick fixes to their everyday material living conditions.

Conclusions

This article has argued that a close relationship exists between development policy-making and the construction of ideologies. I have concentrated on Post-Washington Consensus development policies in Bolivia. I have concluded that despite the apparent differences between Washington Consensus economic policies and the poverty reduction approach, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers are still ideologically embedded in neoliberal thinking. I have discovered that the international financial institutions have a predominant role in defining the macroeconomic conditionalities of the poverty reduction strategy and its respective discursive universes. In order to highlight this, I have discussed the consultative processes through which some civil society actors became vehicles of legitimization for these conditionalities.

This article has demonstrated that the ideological implications of development policy processes can be identified as functioning through various means. This is evident in the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy process in the following ways: 1) the contents of the poverty reduction strategy are centred on a set of ideas about free individuals, market forces and economic growth. The state is expected to enable individuals to access markets with the implications of continuous economic growth without redistribution. The shift from redistribution models, discussed by Larner, to free competition by individuals is an ideological choice; 2) the poverty reduction strategy emphasizes the shared responsibility between the state, private sector and civil society in ensuring poverty reduction. This allows the penetration of market forces to a wide range of sectors of society. It implies an ever increasing social embeddedness of neoliberalism; 3) the macroeconomic conditionalities of the poverty reduction strategy show that alternative worldviews or ideologies are not accepted. This can be verified also by recognising the predominant roles that the government, international financial institutions and their think-tanks had in its establishment; 4) the dismissing and bypassing of alternative worldviews or ideologies has also been demonstrated through analyzing the exclusion of various social movements and trade unions from civil society consultations. These groups were asking for structural changes in society and the abolition of neoliberal economic and development policies altogether. The denial of alternative ideologies makes these supposedly neutral and technical processes overtly ideological; 5) the language of development in the poverty reduction strategy process is framed in a technical, neutral and objective vocabulary that detaches the policy discourses from the political processes in which they are absorbed. Heterogeneous, contradictory and ambiguous cultural, social, political and economic realities are narrated to fit already existing policy frameworks.

Although I argue that, in today's development-filtered world, the Poverty Reduction Strategy processes and their respective ideological operations are creations of a neoliberal nature, I want to emphasize that the policy-processes as well as their ideological operations are located within overall political processes and their respective discursive universes. Therefore, policy-making offers a battlefield for various actors with multiple interests and motives. This highlights the contradictory and ambiguous as well as contesting and changing nature of ideologies in the making. The establishment of Post-Washington Consensus development policies went in parallel with the rise of social movements in Bolivia. The poverty reduction strategy consultations in 2000 coincided with the massive mobilizations and conflicts of the Cochabamba Water War, and the three-year revision in 2003 was overshadowed by the gas war. These mobilizations, which testified to a growing resistance to the neoliberal macroeconomic conditionalities, implied changes in political agency and the elaboration of an alternative discursive universe, which ultimately led to political changes and new orientations in development policy-making. The presidency of Evo Morales and the rise of the socialist and pro-indigenous Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) party has resulted in a change of policies and in a change of dynamics between distinct actors involved in development policy processes. In the current development policy-making, the factors emphasized include: the community, the state, indigenous worldview, equality, redistribution, collective rights, production, and so on. It remains to be seen how this alternative worldview or set of ideas will be delivered in terms of concrete development practices. It also remains to be seen whether disputes can be replaced by a constructive normative order.

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