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Examining Citizenship Discourses in a Post-Washington Consensus

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Introduction

This paper attempts to tackle the effects of a post-Washington Consensus on citizenship discourses in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Guatemala. Specifically, it analyzes the conditions under which, citizenship discourses in these countries have helped or prevented civil society¹ to broaden the political space, build social trust and create participatory networks.

Defining citizenship discourses is not an easy task. Mainstream literature in political science is undergoing a heated debate in order to arrive at a coherent definition of citizenship. Notions of citizenship have spread in Latin America since the process of redemocratization in the early 1980s. The re-signification of citizenship (Fraser, 1995; Benhabib, 1996, Young, 1989) has been appropriated by different social movements and civil society dealing with broadening the boundaries of the political arena, specifically in the role of participants involved, nature of political institutions and public agenda.²

Citizenship has also undergone a crucial process of redefinition after the implementation of neoliberal policies in the region, leading to new 'paradigms' in which the citizen faced a market reality, to which he had to adapt in order to 'survive'. Moreover, citizenship became individual 'integration to the market'.³ But which citizenship discourses have been at stake during the Washington consensus reality? And more specifically, how ethnicity played out in the success/failure of citizenship discourses in the cases examined?

In order to address citizenship discourses in Latin America it is interesting to note that the redefinition of citizenship boundaries' was given by the quest of a more participatory democracy in the region. Among the varied tenets of this kind of democracy, specially important are not only the fairness of institutions, acceptance of

¹ Civil society will be considered in this paper as the 'articulation of actors capable of building horizontal and relatively stable networks of trust and cooperation'. See Fernando Leiva the politics of participation

² Dagnino, Evelina, *Meanings of citizenship in Latin America*, p. 1

³ *Ibid*, p. 2

different forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identities, citizens working together in order to participate in political processes 'to promote public good and hold political authorities accountable'.⁴

W. Kymlicka denotes an interesting explanation of citizenship discourses as means that enlarge political and civic spaces:

*'...the discourse on citizenship has rarely provided a neutral framework for resolving disputes between the majority and minority groups; more often it has served as a cover by which the majority nation extends its language, institutions, mobility rights, and political power at the expense of the minority, all in the name of turning supposedly 'disloyal or 'troublesome' minorities into 'good citizens...'*⁵

The process of redemocratization during the early 1980s brought a new revival of indigenous-based and varied social movements in many countries in the region. After decades of authoritarianism, it seemed that civil society was ready to engage and commit into a more active and participatory democracy. Therefore, the Washington consensus was a 'parallel' process to this resurgence of a long-standing dormant civil society. With this argument in mind, the pages to follow will develop the argument that ethnic heterogeneity and/or homogeneity have had an important leverage in the way in which citizenship discourse has been carried out in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Guatemala.

The puzzle

The puzzle in this paper is the understanding of citizenship discourses in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Guatemala in a post-Washington consensus. However, it is necessary to present two caveats. First, it is not the intent of this paper to tackle the economic effects that these four countries have experienced after the implementation of the neoliberal policies of the Washington consensus. Second, for the purpose of this research Argentina and Chile will be considered in this work as ethnically homogenous countries while Bolivia and Guatemala will be considered as ethnically heterogeneous ones.

⁴ W. Kymlicka, *'Multicultural citizenship'*, 1995, p. 175

⁵ W. Kymlicka and Norman, 2000 p. 11. see otero/ jugenitz challenging national borders from within

This paper is organized as follows. The first part tackles the puzzle of whether or not ethnic homogeneity/heterogeneity has been a determinant in the development of citizenship discourses in Latin America. The second part briefly analyzes the Washington consensus framework and how each of our four countries dealt with the foreign policies. The third part delves into the theoretical framework from which this paper is going to develop, introducing new models from which to approach citizenship discourses in the region. Finally, the paper will end with some insights and suggestions for future research in the field.

The Washington Consensus at a glance

The Washington consensus was designed as a response to the varied and profound economic crisis that occurred in many Latin American countries during the 1980's. Although the term has been originally coined by John Williamson, the policies were developed by Bretton Woods Institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury Department. Basically, they attempted to provide a shock to these countries economies by setting up a list of arguably ten recommendations that included: 1) fiscal policy discipline, 2) the redirection of public spending, 3) an exhaustive tax reform, 4) interests rates that flow with the market, 5) trade liberalization, 6) competitive exchange rates, 7) privatization of state enterprises, 8) liberalization of foreign direct investment, 9) legal security for property relations and 10) deregulation barriers to market competition.

These neoliberal policies called for market liberalism, outward or export-led orientation, state reduction and predominance of individualism.⁶ As Onis and Sense underscore, the underlying thinking of the early beginning of the Washington consensus was 'getting prices right', where the state should be minimal in order to not interfere with the market.⁷ Interestingly enough, the Washington consensus arose as an utter recipe to apply systematically in varied countries of the Latin American region. In words of John Williamson:

⁶ Ziya Onis and Friket Sense, *Rethinking the emerging post-Washington consensus: A critical appraisal*, p. 1

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2

'...the Washington consensus should become like democracy and human rights, a part of the basic core of ideas that we hold in common and do not need to debate endlessly...'
(Williamson, 1998: 111)

Although these set of points differed among countries and were applied in different ways, they constituted the structure upon which neoliberal reforms were implemented, either successfully or unfortunately in the region. After the implementation of the first generation market reforms, most countries were experiencing anti-globalization movements that were opposed specifically to trade liberalization and state enterprise privatizations. However, one of the main critiques relied on the fact that these set of reforms were implemented from developed countries, in a top-down fashion, regardless of the economic, social and cultural differences that were palpable in the region. Moreover, economists argued that the consensus was incomplete, as it did not consider productivity processes that included the poor and generated equal conditions of labor.

By the beginning of the 1990's the recipes carried out by the Washington consensus were coming to an end, and their main tenets were seriously challenged; questioning the assumption that trade liberalization would inevitably lead to economic success.⁸

To greater or lesser degrees, the four cases examined in this paper, followed the market reforms of the Washington consensus. Especially noteworthy in the region, has been Chile's performance in achieving economic success through a macroeconomics and market oriented set of reforms. In this paper, it is important to draw attention to the new or redefined citizenship discourses that emerged in the context of the post Washington consensus.

Theoretical framework

This paper builds upon a modification of D.Yashar's model of neoliberal citizenship⁹ regimes, designed to tackle the influence of ethnicity in the emergence of citizenship discourses in civil society after the Washington consensus.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 4

⁹ D. Yashar, *'Contesting citizenship in Latin America'*, Cambridge University Press, 2005

It is worth noting that the consensus, played out in the region as a catalyst to the 'dormant' Latin American civil society. This social awakening took place unevenly in the region and in a variety of forms, considering new forms of inclusion, necessity of differentiated rights, broadening of the political space, participation in public decisions and of course, opposition to American-led neoliberal policies.

Yet, civil society did not behave uniformly in Latin America. Some countries decided to focus their opposition in the exclusive economic policies and their 'deleterious' effects for the society. The case of Argentina is clear enough. Widespread protests emerged in the country after the decision to establish a fixed exchange rate (convertibility) by which argentines became three times poorer than the day before the implementation of the economic policy.

The significance of citizenship is clearly addressed by Yashar's model to look at ethnic politics, in other words the questions she asked are resumed as: Who are considered citizens? How is citizenship defined? Finally, what has been the role of citizenship regimes in mobilizing ethnic identities? For the purpose of this paper, we are going to focus exclusively on the neoliberal citizenship regime in Latin America, as the framework of the era of the Washington consensus.

Although citizenship may be defined in different ways, this redefinition involved at least, a tripartite notion was comprised of the fair participation of groups in the deliberative/decision making processes, the acknowledgement/respect of political/ethnic identities and a just access to economic resources. Especially after the Washington consensus, the 'market' was placed at the forefront of social relations, and became the hinge upon which inclusive mechanisms were put in place (Svampa, 2005). Moreover, Svampa contends that this 'market model' has eroded the foundations of the social citizenship model associated to the welfare state.¹⁰ Therefore, indigenous communities were most affected by this mechanism, and prevented their citizenship discourses to succeed. Yet, the state continued to apply paternalistic social programs to grant a 'limited citizenship', always controlled by the state and of a 'very low intensity'.¹¹

¹⁰ M. Svampa, *"La sociedad excluyente"*, Taurus, 2005, p. 90

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.88

D. Yashar's well-known model of ethnic identities presented in 'Contesting Citizenship in Latin America', utilizes a meso-level approach¹² in order to comparatively examine indigenous identities in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. Her effort is multi-tasked and oriented towards the understanding of citizenship in Latin America, the role of civil society, citizenship discourses and the effects of the neoliberal regime on ethnic politics. Although Yashar builds her model upon three main variables, for the purpose of this work changing citizenship regimes will be taken out from the analysis, as we are dealing only with the neoliberal citizenship regime that functioned in the post-Washington consensus period. Also, it is important to note that in order to narrow our analysis, ethnic fragmentation and social capital building have been added to D. Yashar's model.

Specifically during the period of re-democratization where states were setting the 'new rules of the game', the variable *political associational space* indicates the degree of flexibility allowed by the states in tolerating political action by indigenous groups.

The variable *transcommunity networks* refers to the capacity of indigenous organizations to organize and commit to other groups in order to transcend their demands vis a vis the state. What D. Yashar has in mind is the role of international organizations and NGO's in providing, not only the structure, but also the necessary networks to advance their demands.

The variable *ethnic fragmentation* attempts to tackle the influence of ethnic diversity on the commitment and level of effectiveness of civil society. This paper, in order to make a case for the leverage of ethnic fragmentation, examines two sets of countries that have dealt with similar neoliberal policies during the Washington Consensus but present mainly two kinds of ethnic fragmentation. It claims that whereas Argentina and Chile are almost 'ethnically homogenous' (with the necessary caveat that Chile has a 9% indigenous population), Bolivia and Guatemala present populations highly ethnically heterogeneous.

The last variable, social capital building, addresses the improvement of social networks within civil society, leading to higher levels of trust and a better quality of democracy.

¹² W. Smith, "The Indian Question", Latin American Research Review, Vol. 42, No.1, February 2007, p. 244

Ethnicity and citizenship intersected

Notions of citizenship and ethnic identities are intrinsically related in Latin America. As it has already been noted, the redefinition or contestation of citizenship appeared gradually, but increasingly in the region, after the process of re-democratization. As Yashar underscores, ‘powerful indigenous movements emerged throughout the region’.¹³ Thus, demands for neglected rights, mechanisms of inclusion, and wide and open participation in public agenda become the paradigms of every ethnic movement that arose in Latin America. Of course, this was more palpable in countries, in where the ethnic make up of the population was significantly higher, such as Bolivia and Guatemala. In these countries, citizenship discourses were tied to ancient practices of exclusion, not only vis a vis the state but also within ethnic groups.

As I have noted elsewhere, firstly, it is important to advance a working definition for what ethnicity is. A. Smith’s definition represents the most comprehensive understandings of ethnicity, including not only the traditional and historical features but also the symbolic-cultural dynamics of ethnic identity. An ethnic group is “...*a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions. Such collectivities are doubly historical in the sense that not only are historical memories essential to their continuance, but each such ethnic product of specific historical forces and is therefore subject to historical change and dissolution*”.¹⁴

It is worth noting, that countries like Argentina and Chile reacted highly different from countries in which the ethnic discourse was already powerful and by which social movements appropriated citizenship demands in order to gain new spaces of action. Argentina and Chile, known for being countries inhabited mainly by European ‘white’ immigrants, in which the ethnic population has been reduced, due to conquest wars, to a minimal expression (6% in Chile and less than 1% in Argentina); did focus their citizenship discourses in the social opposition to economic reforms.

¹³ D. Yashar, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 3

¹⁴ A. Smith, “*National Identity*”, 1991, p. 20

According to estimates of indigenous peoples in Latin America; Bolivia has the largest ethnic population (60/70%), followed by Guatemala (45-60%), Chile (4-6%) and Argentina (under 5%).¹⁵

Interesting to note, is the shift that Latin America's civil society has undergone from a working class-based tradition, student-based or human rights driven to a more socio-political understanding of civil society. The corporatist era presented very well drawn boundaries, in which the public space of electoral struggle was reserved to political parties and the spaces for bargaining were dominated by social movements. However, this scenario was about to change with the arrival of the 21st Century. Civil society and therefore, their citizenship discourses become more and more sociopolitical in nature, irrupting in the institutional space and demanding for new spaces of participation that belonged exclusively to political parties.¹⁶

Scrutinizing the cases: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Guatemala

Does 'ethnic homogeneity' make any difference?

Chile's return to democracy was signaled by intense enthusiasm of civil society and indigenous groups. After decades of military rule, the Pinochet regime was coming to an end, and with it, a profound reformulation of the relationship between the Chilean state and civil society. Chile, as we will see later like Argentina, was named as 'ethnically homogenous countries' composed of European immigrants that had arrived in the country since the nineteenth century. Although Chile presents an indigenous population of about 9% of the total population, the country's indigenous laws recognizes the existence of eight different ethnic groups, among which the Mapuche constitute the large majority. The remaining ethnic groups include Ayamara, Atacameña, Rapa Nui, Quechua, Colla, Yámana and Kawashkar). Although the Chilean state has a long-standing uneasy relationship with indigenous groups, especially the Mapuches; this view turns into a persistent attempt to impose ethnic homogeneity from the top-down, overlooking cultural, political and economic differences.

¹⁵ D. Yashar, *op. cit.*, p. 5

¹⁶ Christian adel Mirza, '*Las democracias , los sistemas políticos y los movimientos sociales en el subcontinente*', p. 42

The pattern in Chile was to deal with indigenous groups with paternalistic attitudes in order to assimilate them into the large white majority population. Therefore, citizenship discourses carried out by indigenous groups were shut away in order to maintain the 'homogeneity' of the Chilean state. However, with the arrival of democracy in 1989, there was a sense that the state was prone to accept a more inclusive civil society, with specific interest in the ethnic question.¹⁷

Chile has been certainly, the exception of the poor performance of neoliberal policies of the Washington consensus. The country has been able to achieve high levels of economic growth, internal fiscal discipline and a competitive export-led model. As I have noted above, the purpose of this paper is not to address the economic effects of the consensus, but to tackle how ethnicity affected the way citizenship discourses were constructed during the post-Washington consensus. The link between poverty and citizenship needs not be overlooked in the Chilean case, as many indigenous communities who represent the poorer sectors of the Chilean population, are at the same time considered 'less citizens'.¹⁸

Interesting to note, is that when the major Breton Woods institutions discovered that it was not enough to apply the first generation of reforms, and that more leverage should be given to civil society, NGO's, social capital and cultural understanding of citizenship; the successive governments of the Concertación began to reflect this shift as well. Former president Lagos stated that the government was going to ensure a better civic participation. This endeavor was supported by the Inter-American Bank with a US\$ 15 million program to 'Strengthen Alliances between Civil Society and the State'¹⁹. However, Chile had to face strong youth disenchantment with the political class, political institutions and neoliberal reforms. In order to resolve this situation, the Concertación governments decided to focus their attention on the strengthening of civil society and their social organizations. As the Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno²⁰ points out

¹⁷ R. Valenzuela Fernández, '*Inequidad, ciudadanía y pueblos indígenas en Chile*', Serie Políticas Sociales, CEPAL, p. 8

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ Fernando Leiva, '*The politics of participation and social control under Chile's Concertación governments*', Paper presented at the 2001 LASA Conference, p. 5

²⁰ Viviana Cáceres and Tamara Jeri, '*Participación y estado: viejos y nuevos discursos para el nuevo trato*', documento de discusión No. 1 (Santiago, Chile, Ministerio Secretaría General de Gobierno, División de Organizaciones Sociales, 2000)

in one of their working papers, Chilean organizations are divided into 'materialist' (cooperatives, health organizations, neighborhoods committees, and unions) and 'post materialist' (the Scouts, associations of indigenous peoples, professional associations, and cultural centers) organizations. Also, it is important to note, that this classification was built upon the UNDP's classification of Chilean social organizations, estimated in approximately 83,000.²¹

It needs to be underscored that the neoliberal package applied in the country, was 'tailored to local institutional realities'²², where Chile's institutional infrastructure was characterized by an efficient bureaucracy, a strong rule of law to secure property rights and an urban middle class.²³ Moreover, it has been argued that one of the elements of success of the Chilean experience was the recognition of the unavoidable relationship between the market economy and the rule of law.²⁴ This relevance of the rule of law provided in fact some extent of predictability of the rules of the game that presupposed a 'consensus' among Chilean's political actors.²⁵

Looking at the theoretical applications of our four variables, we may see that the political associational space as the opportunity to freely discuss and associate was given after the termination the Pinochet's dictatorship. However, this path to 'political opportunity' was given in a slow fashion, as it can be expected after a cruel dictatorship, Chilean's civil society was still not willing to engage immediately in civic and social movements.

Transcommunity networks were developed in a consistent fashion after the process of re-democratization. Networks within civil society and at the international level, gave the necessary capacity to exercise a more direct and participatory citizenship. Also, social organizations followed and voluntarism became a critical source for social interaction.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 6

²² D. Massey, Magaly Sanchez and Jery Berhman, 'Chronicle of a Myth Foretold: The Washington Consensus in Latin America', in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Volume 606, July 2006

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ Pedro Isern Munne, 'From the Washington consensus to the Chile consensus', Centro para la apertura y el desarrollo de America Latina, p. 2, 2004. Available at www.cadal.org

²⁵ *Ibid*

As it has been noted above, Chilean's ethnic fragmentation is featured by approximately 91% white majority population and a 9 % of indigenous peoples, where the Mapuches are the largest majority. Although Chilean's civil society was successful to engage in a more committed relationship with state institutions, fostering transversal and horizontal relationships within social organizations and international institutions; indigenous groups were not favored along the same lines. Interesting to note is the Chilean state was unable to promote and sustain a multicultural society among indigenous populations. The political discourses advanced by the state hindered indigenous groups' opportunities to engage in a more participatory role, by improving mechanisms of representation and decision making participation processes.²⁶

Finally, social capital building was basically constructed by the huge number of volunteers to social organizations, which helped foster their structure, capacity and effectiveness.

The case of Argentina shares some similarities with Chile. The country has cultivated the idea of a "homogenously ethnic" nation. Again, the attempt was to neglect the indigenous origins of the nation's population and concentrate on the massive flux of European immigrants that came to inhabit the country in the late nineteenth century. Clearly enough, the Argentine state carried out a long-standing discourse of 'invisibility and exclusion' that penetrated deeply in civil society. Yet the Argentine Association for Native Peoples acknowledges the existence of fifteen different ethnic groups in the country, they represent less than 1% of a population of 40 million people. So, the narratives of indigenous groups²⁷

The narratives of indigenous groups in the country have been explained by long-standing politics of exclusion and discourses of ethnic homogenization. Regarding ethnic

²⁶ G. Hoberman, 'Examining state failure in Chile: The ethnic dilemma in the Mapuche community', Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association, held in Chicago, from April 12-15, 2007

²⁷ The most quoted definition of "indigenous people" is that of the UN Convention ILO 169, both Article 1 (b) and Article 2. Article 1 (b): "Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions". Article 2: "Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply", ILO Convention (No. 169) Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

groups (especially the Mapuches, who constitute the large majority within the 1% indigenous population) the discourse that historically sustained that these communities were considered outsiders in the country, where the Argentine identity was basically forged by the white European immigrants who came to the country during the late nineteenth century. Therefore, indigenous groups were considered illiterate and associated with 'barbarism', while European immigrants were associated with 'civilization'. For decades the country was engulfed in this rhetoric, in which only the white majority were considered 'citizens' and other ethnic minorities were completely disregarded.

Again, the termination of the military rule and the winds of democratization began slowly to challenge this long-standing behavior and new spaces of different ethnic communities were envisioned in Argentina. However, as D. Van Cott asserts, a multicultural society presupposes the recognition of these ethnic communities as 'distinct sub state entities' with particular forms of communal, social and political organization.²⁸ It was during the path of the post-Washington consensus, that this acknowledgment began to become visible with the constitutional reform of 1994, allowing some degree of legal rights to indigenous communities.

It is worth mentioning that in the case of Argentina, 'inclusiveness' of ethnic minorities has been fought from seeking affirmative actions from the Argentine state, protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, securing their access to economic resources, and respecting their attachment to the territory. As it has been noted earlier, the regional process of democratization brought a new upsurge of indigenous demands, and civil society was willing to engage in a more committed and profound political and public sphere.

Interestingly in the case of Argentina, ethnic groups, specifically the Mapuches, challenged practices of exclusion not only carried out by the state but also by civil society. In the post Washington consensus, indigenous groups and civil society seemed to find many points of intersection. Without doubts, the intense opposition to the neoliberal policies implemented by the Washington consensus was the point of departure.

²⁸ D. Lee Van Cott, *"The Friendly Liquidation of the Past"*, 2000, p. 269

If we want to tackle the development of citizenship discourses in Argentina's society, we have to refer to the cycle of economic crisis that affected the country. Among the four cases, Argentina seems to become the case that more clearly related the economic environment and the development of 'citizenship discourses'. Yet, as it has been mentioned above, this paper is not dealing with the causes and consequences of the economic crisis, we need to mention the economic collapse as a point of departure of what has been a 'renaissance' of Argentina's civil society. It has been noted by many scholars that the core of neoliberal policies within the framework of the Washington consensus was applied during C. Menem's administration (Rock: 2002, Etchemendi: 2001, Tomassi: 2002), and transformed completely the role and dimension of federal government.²⁹ There was an attempt to decentralize governmental institutions, reduce public spending, and soon unemployment arose, due to 200,000 jobs that diminished during only two years, from the years 1990 to 1992.³⁰ Along with this impoverishment process, the poorer classes had to face redistribution policies characterized by relations of patronage exercised by the Argentine state. Also, civil society begun to express their discontent to the package of neoliberal policies that was implemented in the country, regardless of the features of the national political culture, customs and behavior.

Before the economic collapse of 2001, Argentines began to feel the disconnection between themselves and the ruling political class, and the social contract that was in place until that time, became completely shattered. Civil society envisioned that they were unprotected, with no access to political institutions and their mechanisms of accountability, and that there was no respect for the rule of law. Soon after, and as a response to an extremely unpopular economic policy, the so-called 'corralito financiero' commenced, under which the government imposed rigid restrictions on bank withdrawals, access and money transfers; the complete civil society mobilized in order to get rid of the government and secure their rights as citizens. This mobilization was carried out by all sectors of society, from the 'piquetero' movement (movement of the unemployed)³¹ to the poor and middle classes.

²⁹ Jean Brugel, and Maria Pia Riggirozzi, *The return of the state in Argentina*, 2007

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 7

³¹ This movement became salient in the province of Salta in 1993 after the privatization of the national oil company. See Brugel and Riggirozzi, *op. cit.*, p.9

The role of the middle class was crucial in recovering the notion of citizenship for Argentines, in which governments are elected by the people who are the bearers of the popular sovereignty. After the repression carried out by former president De la Rúa which involved a death toll of 20 victims and a citizenry discourse that demanded '*que se vayan todos*' (out with all of them), it was pretty obvious the enormous abyss had emerged between society and government. However, after the renouncement of President De la Rúa several presidents transited the path of a quick succession until president E. Duhalde initiated a new period of institutionalism in January 2002.³² After the crisis of 2001, civil society began to develop strong networks among national groups and international organizations. Interesting to note, that after the crisis there was a total collapse of the party system, in which the UCR, as one of the most historic party forces, was completely dismantled and new social movements arose in the country. The role of social movements and strengthening of the civil society became crucial in filling in the gap that political parties were unable to cover in the intermediation between the people and the state. Also, in this social and political turmoil, civil society proved to be united (although the natural disparity of demands that were put in place existed) and able to transcend the institutional chaos in order to defend democracy. The diminished power of the military and the perception in society that democratic values were the only ones possible for the country, helped to recover rapidly from the economic and social crisis.

Applying D. Yashar's modified model, we need to understand how did the political associational space, the transcommunity networks, the ethnic fragmentation and the social capital building worked out in Argentina's civil society during the post Washington consensus.

First, we need to begin with a necessary caveat. As Argentina holds an extremely low percentage of ethnic groups, with 99% of the population belonging to a 'white' majority; the theoretical applications of the model's variable will also be considered 'social movements' as integral and critical components of civil society.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 10

The political associational space³³ has been key in many countries of the region, and provided the local opportunity to the 'de facto existence of freedom of association and expression'. (Yashar, 2005: 76). In the case of Argentina, this opportunity became obvious after the re-installation of the democratic regime. However, as we will see later, it was the 'capacity' (transcommunity networks) that later gave these movements within civil society more significance.

Transcommunity networks were indeed crucial to strengthen Argentina's civil society and promote the diffusion of citizenship discourses vis a vis the state. In the Argentine's case, the organizational capacity that was needed not only to begin, but also to sustain a movement, was determinant to enforce successfully civil society's demands. Therefore, new networks of social associations were created and shared experiences, demands and goals were identified in order to deepen democracy and ensure citizens' rights. Among the main organizations that were part of this process, we can mention labor unions, students organizations, 'piqueteros', human rights and environmental institutions and religious movements. Important to note, is that the neoliberal package implemented during the Washington consensus became a target of a great wave of criticism by these organizations and anti-globalizing forces.

Ethnic fragmentation did not represent an issue for Argentina. As it has already been noted, the fact that Argentina is considered an ethnically homogenous country, prevented to engage in internal disputes and promoted a sense of 'shared values' that helped to strengthen civil society and its citizenship discourses in order to achieve fairer mechanisms of inclusion and participation in the process of decision making and policy implementation. However, it is interesting to note the emergence of the ethnic group Mapuches, as an organized ethnic community that was able to engage in international cooperation actions in order to enhance their political, social and economic situation in the country.

Finally, the social capital building proved to be crucial to sustain these movements that arose during the post Washington consensus and improve the levels of

³³ D. Yashar uses McAdam's (1996:27) definition of the four dimensions of political opportunity structures; including the degree of political opening, elite alignments, presence of elites allies, and the state's capacity and propensity to use repression. See D. Yashar, *op. cit.*, p. 75

trust across organizations, making them more able to engage into a more equal debate with governmental institutions.

Ethnic heterogeneity and fragmentation

Bolivia's conditions of poverty, exclusion, ethnic fragmentation and unequal wealth distribution set the stage for a complicated scenario. Also, state's weakness coupled with the inability of political institutions to effectively enact policy, has led to an upsurge of a "culture of mobilization" that has sought for direct action from the state.³⁴ Although Bolivia began its democratic transition in 1982 through a system of a "pacted democracy," the country faces deep-seated social exclusion, high levels of poverty, increasing ethnic fragmentation (within indigenous groups and vis a vis the mestizo group) and illegal drug production (Gamarra, *Bolivia in the Brink* 2007). Bolivia has been a country that has experienced several crises in many of its forms, including: political, economic, and social.

The ethnic fragmentation of the country, with at least thirty ethnic groups, besides the "mestizo" and white population, has seriously challenged the possibility of achieving unity within the nation-state.³⁵ Coupled with this problem, there has been a growing sentiment of frustration regarding political parties and the questionable economic set of policies that have been implemented in the country since the beginning of the democratic transition. Behind this tendency toward conflict, socioeconomic exclusion has also played a determinant role. Political independence was unable to forge an inclusive model; and in reversal, exclusion, domination and the progressive racialization of politics prevailed in the country.³⁶

. In this context, the package of neoliberal reforms of the Sanchez Lozada administration imposed in the country several reforms that further contributed to the so-called "gas war" in October 2003. Immediately after the vice-president assumed the presidency, a second gas war exploded in 2005. The reason of this outbreak was the decision of the Bolivian Congress to raise taxes imposed on international companies from

³⁴ E. Gamarra, *Conflict Vulnerability Assessment*, LACC/USAID, 2003

³⁵ International Crisis Group, '*Bolivia en la encrucijada: Las Elecciones de Diciembre*', Informe sobre América Latina no. 15, p. 2

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 3

18% to 32%. Marches and popular demonstrations headed by Evo Morales and Felipe Quispe demanded for a more advantageous law for the country and lead to the resignation of president Mesa. Following this events, the president of the Supreme Tribunal, Eduardo Rodríguez, occupied the presidency until a call for national elections was given.

The election of December 2005 brought to the presidency the first “indigenous” candidate. As many scholars signal, the victory of president Evo Morales began the most relevant “sociological change” since the Revolution of 1825.³⁷ The landslide victory that brought Morales to the presidency (54 % vs. 29% of the second candidate) represented the first time that a Bolivian candidate obtained the majority of the vote.³⁸ Along with president Morales, the indigenous people that have been excluded from the process of decision-making since the revolution of 1825 began to aspire to have a say in the deliberative process, and a new group of “excluded” represented by the people affected by the neoliberal reforms implemented since the 90’s, was also included within this project. Among the arguments that president Morales focused during his campaign one can mention, the national sentiment against the plan of the eradication of “coca” carried out by the United States, the rejection of neo-liberal reforms, and the collapse of traditional political parties and the need for new social movements to appear.

Evo Morales obtained the presidency on December 18, 2005, and actively took office on January 22, 2006. The rise of Evo Morales and the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) represented a breaking point in Bolivian politics, and presents a radical shift from other kinds of government that have been elected during the democratic transition. Many scholars have argued that his electoral triumph has allowed a kind of “democratic revolution” to emerge, supported by the legitimacy of the vote and with the predominant aim to gain a more fair political inclusion for disadvantaged minorities (Toranzo Roca, 2006).³⁹ The election of Morales has promoted ample reactions from both opposite groups and supporters of his party

³⁷ J. Lazarte, *‘El nudo giordano del gobierno de Evo Morales’*, 2006

³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ However, it is important to note the confrontational tone of Morales’ discourses. The middle class that supported him in the elections is now beginning to separate from his administration. His political discourses increased the level of conflict with the governors, the Church, the press and the international community (especially Brazil and United States). See C. Toranzo Roca, *‘Constituyente, Conflicto Político y Gestión Gubernamental’*, Bolivia, septiembre, 2006

The election of Morales proved to be a landslide victory that instilled legitimacy to the way in which the president was elected. The government of Morales, unlike the great majority of the democratic period, was granted with the 54% of the popular vote. Moreover, this election can be considered the first one in which a Bolivian candidate reached the absolute majority of the vote.⁴⁰ It is worth noting that this victory was concurrent with the total collapse of the party system and the inability of the opposition to present a competitive option.

However, this paper will argue that the election of Morales has a correlation with the rise of ethnic fragmentation, regional divisions and demands for autonomy and socio-political conflict. Therefore, utter development of a mature and effective civil society has been difficult to sustain. Groups within civil society function in separate units and seek their own benefit's maximization. Specifically, social inequality within the ethnic population is not a new phenomenon in Bolivia. Looking at the relation between the distribution of resources and the occurrence of conflict, mainstream scholars have argued that persistent inequalities in the distribution of assets (such as wealth, land and income) are highly correlated to the outbreak of sociopolitical conflict. Throughout the period of "pacted democracy" (1985-2005) during which three traditional political parties co-governed Bolivia, the relatively smooth relationship between the executive and legislative branches allowed for the implementation of a New Economic Policy (NEP). With the aim of attracting international investors, labor market controls were eliminated.⁴¹

As in many of the countries in Latin America, this package of neoliberal reforms included the privatization of state enterprises, specifically hydrocarbons, railroads, electricity, telecommunications and airlines. Following these economic policies, the country gained international stability and the foreign direct investment expanded rapidly.⁴² Yet, in Bolivia, the new set of economic policies did not help in preventing the

⁴⁰ Many scholars (see E. Gamarra, *On the Brink*, Council on Foreign Relations) highlight how it is noteworthy that after 24 years of democracy, the president was a direct result of the popular vote instead of a result of a process of negotiation in Congress among minority forces.

⁴¹ E. Gamarra, *op.cit.*, p. 9

⁴² *Ibid*

rise of poverty and economic exclusion.⁴³ Moreover, it has been argued (Gamarra, 2007) that this economic approach helped to deepen the lines along which socioeconomic exclusion is manifested. On the one hand, the urban (mestizo) rich population has resulted in being the “beneficiary” of the process of economic reform, while on the other hand, the indigenous and “mestizo” poor (both rural and urban) have ended up being the disfavored group.⁴⁴

Since the presidential election of 2005, Bolivia has experienced a better economic performance at the international level. The levels of inflation have been stable and the economic growth rate is around 4% annually. However, Bolivia’s structural economic problems are reflected in the high levels of unemployment (around 10%)⁴⁵, and the increasing challenge of the rise of the informal sector.⁴⁶ The international context has favored Bolivia during the past year with increasing demand for mineral products and hydrocarbons.

However, the problem of socioeconomic exclusion has been a structural condition of Bolivia and has certainly worsened since the application of neoliberal reforms were implemented during the democratic transition.

The case of Bolivia is very appealing, as it shows a powerful civil society with ethnic and social movement’s organizations along with a very low capacity to succeed at a broader level to effectively deepen democracy by fair mechanisms of participation and deliberation.

Political associational space was opened up with the beginning of the period of ‘pacted democracy’ in Bolivia, after the years of military rule. Clearly, organizations soon followed and ethnic groups became rapidly organized to sustain and advance their demands.

Transcommunity networks were also developed with other ethnic organizations in the region and at the international level. However, the social and economic collapse that negatively affected indigenous communities (the largest in Latin America) by the

⁴³ According to the INE (Nacional Institute of Statistics) an ‘agricultor’ who works on his own, obtains an income of less than 50 dollars per month, while the urban worker obtains around 175 bolivianos. Source MECOVI 2004, INE, Calculations of Roberto Laserna in ‘*Democracia, Representación e Individuación*’, 12/1/2007

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 10

⁴⁵ PNUD Report, 2006

⁴⁶ A recent report of the IDB has shown that approximately 65% of Bolivians are in the informal sector.

implementation of the neoliberal policies of the Washington consensus framework slowed the agency of these networks and postponed their actions in order to aid more immediate problems that affected these communities.

Ethnic fragmentation, however, is the key variable to look at the Bolivian scenario. Thirty ethnic groups recognized in the country have not been able to reconcile their interests and demands, so their struggle has been often been manipulated by ruling elites to favor determined objectives. Here, lies the more surprising paradox; in a country with a relatively strong and powerful civil society, internal differences among basically ethnic groups have prevented them to fully organize and enhance democratic mechanisms. Loyalties have shifted regarding the bearers of authority, and this has negatively influenced the consistency and sustainability of Bolivia's civil society.

Social capital building has only existed within groups, and broader networks of trust have been difficult to create.

Although Guatemala presents some unique features, like Bolivia, it has a high component of ethnic groups in its population. Although the vast majority of these indigenous peoples are Mayan, 21 Mayan linguistic communities co-exist in the country, along with other two indigenous groups, the Xinca and the Garifuna. The rest of the Guatemalans are 'mestizo or ladino', Spanish settlers and descendants of other immigrants who inhabited the country after the sixteenth Century.⁴⁷ Yet, alike the three other cases, Guatemala has undergone a long-standing process of brutal and perverse civil war that led to the signing of peace accords in 1996. It is worth mentioning that these accords were seen as the signal of a new beginning for the country, in which a path to democratization would integrate a multiethnic society into a more inclusive political community.⁴⁸

Along similar lines, Guatemala shares with Bolivia the structural economic and social problems, especially in terms of poverty among different ethnic populations, high rates of unemployment and economic disparity between rich and poor people.⁴⁹ As it happens in many countries with ethnic heterogeneity, Guatemala faces the subliminal

⁴⁷ R. Sieder, *Reframing citizenship: indigenous rights, local power and the peace process in Guatemala*, 1997. Available at www.c-r.org

⁴⁸ Christopher Chase-Dunn, 'Guatemala in the global system', p. 109

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

'class' struggle between two main groups, the 'mestizo and/or culturally hispanic' and a huge majority of different indigenous populations. These 'ancestral differences' have made the behavior of ruling elites very easy to manipulate, thus impeding an integral citizenship discourse that would enhance living conditions for all the civil community.⁵⁰ In order to understand indigenous movements in Guatemala, we need to look at the indigenous resistance that emerged during the 80's to support human rights movements. This quest was later widened by advancing national demands that regarded their ethnic interests.⁵¹

As R. Sieder argues, this movement emerged as a result of two basic assumptions: first, the acknowledgment of indigenous political marginalization, regardless of their pre-colonial history and large constituency; and second, the nature of Mayan indigenous organizations as feasible vehicles to a process of 'reconciliation' and reconstruction.⁵² Later on, indigenous activism was fostered with the 500' Years of Resistance' campaign, a continental movement organized to reject the celebration of the Discovery of the Americas. Interesting to note has been the strengthening of indigenous organizations in the summit held in 1991 in Quetzaltenango, in which Guatemalans began to connect with other organizations at the national, regional and international level.⁵³ Umbrella organizations were also created to secure indigenous groups, such as the Council of Mayan organizations of Guatemala (COMG) and Decenio Maya.

It is worth mentioning the international attention to the struggle of Guatemalans, by granting the Nobel Peace Prize to Mayan human rights activist Rigoberta Menchú Tum in October 2002. Indigenous groups gained strength in their goal of participate in Guatemala's civil society from 1994, when the Coordination of organizations of the Mayan People of Guatemala (COPMAGUA) which represented 200 organizations, presented to the Civil Society Assembly a proposal of identity rights of indigenous peoples. In this document, the organizations condemned both the long-standing structural discrimination and violence to indigenous peoples, including not only the State, but also the actions of the URNG, who did not view the 'brutal' response that indigenous groups

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 120

⁵¹ R. Sieder, *Reframing citizenship: indigenous rights, local power and the peace process in Guatemala*, 1997. Available at www.c-r.org

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ *Ibid*

were going to suffer after their 'guerrilla' activities.⁵⁴ The main critique was focused to the failure of these groups to secure indigenous participation at the negotiating processes that began at Oslo in 1990.

Among other issues the proposal included the need for constitutional recognition of Mayan people; a redefinition of Guatemalan nation as a multi-ethnic nation, a call for cultural self-determination, the restitution of expropriated communal lands and the indigenous rights to use natural resources. Although the proposal faced many obstacles in the Civil Society Assembly, it was finally approved with some recommendations not only of the Assembly but also of the URNG. Although several commissions were put in place in order to secure indigenous rights, many problems began to arise. COPMAGUA representatives failed to receive any payment, and this prevented them to maintain contact with their bases. Also, there was a shortage of resources, so in fact these representatives found it very difficult to lobby in order to present their demands effectively.⁵⁵ In the words of Juan Tiney (Coordinator of National Indigenous and Campesino Co-ordination (CONIC): '...Land is the key to power in Guatemala. By not allowing the Mayan people the means to feed themselves or providing them with work, little by little you destroy their culture... In the long term, this constitutes ethnocide...'⁵⁶

In a country in which a brutal civil war has undermined all levels of decision making, political spaces have been frequently diminished or shattered; and the emergence of a stable and participatory civil society has been at least, difficult to achieve.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was not to address the economic consequences of the implementation of the Washington consensus in the region, but rather to tackle the kind of citizenship discourses that were put in place in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Guatemala during the post Washington Consensus.

The Washington consensus was a turning point of Latin American politics. Much have been the criticisms and less attention has been given to the political impacts of this particular set of economic policies.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 5

⁵⁶ See R. Sieder, *op. cit.*, Personal interview with Juan Tiney, Guatemala, May 12, 1997

Although studies of citizenship are now on the forefront of the analysis, this work has made an effort to show the leverage of ethnic fragmentation in the construction of a consistent and sustainable civil society that would help to deepen democracy with fairer mechanisms of inclusion, deliberation and participation.

Leaving aside economic explanations, the role of civil society in the region has been crucial to articulate networks vis a vis the state, presenting a wide array of successful or less favorable results.

It remains to be seen if the discourses of citizenship will be able to materialize in time across the region, thus enhancing the quality of democracy.

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