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Mareike Winchell

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## After servitude: bonded histories and the encumbrances of exchange in indigenizing Bolivia

Mareike Winchell

Since 2006, Bolivia has undertaken a dramatic program of state reform aimed at overcoming the injustices of the nation's colonial and neoliberal past. In the process, rural practices and sensibilities originating in the former hacienda system have assumed new importance, arising as volatile sites of state intervention and political critique. Like eighteenth-century Bourbon administrators, state reformers today express concern with agrarian patronage, which, they argue, facilitates continued land dispossession and reproduces a particularly servile Quechua-speaking peasantry. Yet, despite reform efforts, hacienda-based ties remain crucial to rural life, structuring acts of redistributive exchange and providing a relational medium by which former landlords attempt to make amends for past violence. By taking seriously the moral and political dimensions of post-hacienda patronage, this contribution challenges dominant frameworks of indigenous justice to foreground the reconciliatory possibilities of exchange relations rooted in a bonded past.

**Keywords:** servitude; indigeneity; exchange; Bolivia; hacienda; patronage; moral economy

The truck wound precariously along a road carved from a rocky mountainside, snaking through villages flanked by steep, fertile ravines. We pass a girl standing on the side of the road, and Don Raul – the nephew of a particularly violent mestizo hacienda landlord – chimes in from the back seat, admonishing the driver Lorenzo, the son of hacienda laborers, for not having stopped. A rifle wedged between his legs and a cigarette dangling from his lips, Don Raul notes sternly, ‘One must be friendly. You should have asked if she wanted a ride’. On the next turn, and without a word from Don Raul, Lorenzo slows down and then stops, giving an elderly man walking along the dirt road time to climb up into the truck-bed. Later, when we stop in a small village to buy freshly made sheep's cheese, the man, carrying a woven *q'ipiri* blanket laden with food, climbs down from the truck-bed and then approaches the driver's side window. ‘How much?’ (*Maschka valen*), he asks, facing Lorenzo but with his eyes directed at the reddish clay at his feet. Don Raul replies in Quechua that it's all right; there is no need to pay. As the truck pulls away, I turn, catching sight of the man disappearing into the underbrush toward a thatched adobe hut where two children await him.

In a nation perhaps best known for the mass mobilizations that swept the country and led to the election of Latin America's ‘first indigenous president’ Evo Morales in 2005, the exchange between Raul and the farmer traveling by foot may seem relatively insignificant,

evidence, perhaps, of the rural limits of political movements or the persistent challenges facing state reform initiatives. Indeed, as I discuss below, it was in precisely such terms that Bolivian state officials understood rural patronage relations, which they saw as evidence of an entrenched agrarian order which in turn required ever more intense and expansive reform programs. And yet, it is possible to discern in this exchange a particular moral stance that is noteworthy in its direct engagement with the problem of a divisive past, a stance demanding of further attention. Along with ride sharing, former landowning families act as godparents, adopt children and sponsor religious events, in this way distributing food, clothing, medicine and money to former servant families. While seemingly marginal to national politics, such practices of aid are nonetheless crucial to rural life, particularly in Ayopaya, which was until the mid-twentieth century home to a severe labor system built on the unpaid work of Quechua and Aymara-speaking peasants in the fields and kitchens of sprawling agrarian ranches or hacienda estates (Figure 1).

Relations of assistance among mestizo elites and indigenous peasants raise questions about ways that rural lives are both entangled in but also attempt to respond to the



Figure 1. Hacienda landlord and servant, Ayopaya circa 1930.

burdens of a divisive hacienda past. Like the workings of money throughout the Andes, these exchange relations point to a mode of circulation that is hardly an ‘unencumbered form’ (Sallnow 1989, 209). On the one hand, such practices reproduce some of the racialized dynamics so pivotal to the earlier hacienda system, dynamics evident in the exchange between Don Raul, a rifle-carrying ‘friendly’ mestizo elite, the Quechua-speaking farmer to whom we offered a ride, and Lorenzo, the Quechua-speaking owner of the truck who Raul instructed to stop. And yet, Don Raul’s instruction to Lorenzo to ‘be friendly’ also suggests a particular orientation to Quechua-speaking peasants and to the region’s hacienda past, one not necessarily shared by all elites or upwardly mobile townsfolk. Thus, while such practices presuppose and in some cases reproduce various forms of economic and racialized difference, they also draw people together across these differences, supplying a moral framework and a relational medium by which to address the region’s hacienda past and the racialized inequalities it left behind. Disturbing as they are to rights-based ideals of equality and citizenship, then, such patronage relations must be attended to in the ways they shape and condition certain forms of shared life.

In what follows, I examine the ways that Bolivia’s history of agrarian servitude conditions the terms and patterns of state reform and rural collectivity today. Bracketing the assumption that Ayopaya’s bonded past operates primarily as a ‘corrosive’ or destructive force that brings ruin to the present (Stoler 2013, 2–9; Gordillo 2014), I consider what it means to live in a place perceived as partially entrenched in the former hacienda system, and query the ways that inherited relations of aid condition rural engagements with both Bolivia’s hacienda past and reformist present. As I discuss below, this more intimate understanding of accountability to past violence diverges notably from legal and reformist approaches premised on the institutionalized redistribution of resources and rights. Like eighteenth-century Bourbon administrators, Bolivian state reformers today worry about the entailments of rural patronage, hacienda forms felt to displace indigenous life-ways, victimize workers, and produce a particularly servile Quechua-speaking peasantry. Yet I show how, despite aggressive state reform initiatives aimed at bolstering indigenous autonomy and self-determination, hacienda-based relations of patronage and aid remain crucial to rural life, conditioning relations among families while also supplying a medium by which to grapple with a divisive past.

Alongside governmental programs and popular projects of indigenous rights, then, this contribution highlights the subagency of rural practices of exchange and aid, and probes their moral and reconciliatory possibilities for everyday life after servitude. By suspending a purely negative reading of histories of servitude (as the absence of rights or as an inherited form of false consciousness), my aim is to critically reframe anthropological and philosophical heuristics of political subjectivity and moral practice. In particular, I offer ethnographic attention to the residue of movement forms and modes of indigenous and non-indigenous relation at odds with reformist and scholarly ideals of indigenous autonomy premised on historical rupture with a subordinating past. In so doing, I foreground the centrality of labor histories for Bolivia’s political present and show how hacienda-based relations are both challenged by and in turn pose challenges to reformist projects and legal imaginaries of indigenous justice.

Attention to the ways that Bolivia’s history of indentured servitude shapes current moral relations and modes of political collectivity brings to light a range of questions that are obscured when servitude is examined primarily as an economic system or when political practices are fixed simply to oppositional acts of hacienda resistance or rebellion. Situating my ethnographic analysis within a longer history of agrarian transformation in the central Andes, particularly in Cochabamba, I highlight the *longue durée* (Braudel 2013, 252) of

rural relations of land, labor and exchange and consider how their contemporary re-articulations complicate reformist and populist approaches to indigenous justice. By diverging from scholarly heuristics that leave unexamined the ‘vitalist’ assumptions (Cheah 2006; Jones 2011) of postcolonial nationalism – ones that pit a resilient indigenous community against the inhibiting workings of mechanistic colonial institutions – I raise new questions about the moral possibilities of patronage relations inherited from the former hacienda system. In the process, I aim to reframe the very problem of historical encumbrance, foregrounding inherited forms less as dead repetitions or ruinous residues than as the shared relational media with and through which people reflect upon and critically engage the entwined problems of debt, injury and post-hacienda reconciliation.

The paper begins by locating post-hacienda exchange practices like Raul’s act of ride-sharing within existing scholarly debates concerning the tenacity of elite obligation in the Andes and its seeming elasticity or responsiveness to changing political and economic circumstances. The next section offers a brief outline of the current moment of indigenizing reform in Bolivia since 2006. In particular, I emphasize the parallels between current initiatives and earlier modernizing reforms aimed at transforming rural life-ways, particularly relations of agrarian servitude in the province of Ayopaya. After offering this broader trajectory of hacienda reform, I revisit the ride-sharing case, considering how current exchange relations in Ayopaya fit within and unsteady the logics of social change and indigenous unity underlying Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) reform efforts. The final section considers the broader political and theoretical implications of these patronage relations given their persistence after nearly a decade of indigenizing reform. Attending to the reconciliatory dimensions of patronage promises a new point of inquiry into justice not only as an elusive political ideal but also as a lived form of moral action by which to inhabit and remedy a divisive past.

### **The elasticity of obligation**

It was the conscious sense of obligation to others – and, in turn, their obligation to you – that struck Edward B. Tylor as particularly ‘curious’ and ‘quite novel’ to the Englishman (Tylor 1861, 250–51, cited by Mintz and Wolf 1950, 352). In these remarks, Tylor revealed his own surprise at the tenacity of an ethic of accountability that, he argued, undergirded practices of patronage and elite assistance in Latin America. In his classic study of godparenting in Mexico, Tylor went so far as to note that, given the ubiquity of godparenting ties and their perceived significance as a source of moral action, ‘it is necessary to count it among the things that tend to alter the course of justice in this country’. Following Tylor, subsequent research has emphasized the unlikely persistence of patronage relations in the face of political change. For instance, in their seminal study of godparenting in Latin America, Mintz and Wolf (1950, 362) outline the unexpected ways that godparenting ties are maintained in the face of ‘progressively accelerating social change’, leading them to wonder whether the elaboration or extension of patronage might be part of ‘the community’s unconscious effort to answer new problems’. Paradoxically, they noted, ritual kinship structures seemed to react to ‘the weakening of certain traditional obligations’ by expanding to include new categories of contemporaries, resulting in the multiplication of patronage ties to meet accelerated social change (Mintz and Wolf 1950, 361–64).

While attentive to the creative workings of godparenting and monetary sponsorship within hacienda life, such classic accounts have emphasized the economic or material workings of ‘vertical relations’ as a means by which landlords solidified their power (Mintz and Wolf 1950; Ossio 1984). Countering assertions of intractable hegemony, more recent works

have reframed kinship ties, godparenting relations, and even marriage as mechanisms of resistance by which peasants subvert economic power and obtain precious resources (Spalding 1970; Wade 2009). More functionalist readings have emphasized patronage relations as devices of subjection and resistance, hegemony and survival, yet they often dismiss the emic or internal stakes of such relations for participants themselves (see Lyons 2006, 12).

Exchange is, of course, a classic ethnographic problem for anthropologists working in the Andean region. One line of thinking about exchange can be tracked back to Murra's (1962) seminal work on 'vertical archipelagos'. In this work, he attended to Andean systems of barter and exchange across distinct ecological zones and social groupings, islands of agricultural production reproduced in haciendas and upheld by rural farmers (see also Larson 1988). Despite hacienda settlement and the growth of mining industries, historians of the Cochabamba region have shown how Quechua and Aymara-speaking communities maintained access – at times through seasonal labor and migrant work – to farmlands across valleys, highlands and jungle (Gotkowitz 2007).<sup>1</sup> While Murra's work on exchange was primarily concerned with barter relations, more recent work has shown how moral ideals of reciprocity (*ayni*) saturate ordinary life, conditioning not only market practices but also agricultural farming techniques, kinship practices and highland ritual life (Abercrombie 1998; Allen 1982; Harris 1989; Isbell 1977). More recently, scholars seem to have returned to the institutional lives of patronage, looking at the moral frameworks of exchange at work in political parties and agrarian unions (Albro 2007; Lazar 2008; Postero 2007). This work has often brought the analysis of patronage systems under the study of clientelism, emphasizing how Andean traditions of collectivity have been impacted by participatory governmental legislation since the 1990s.

Yet such short temporal frames overlook the legal history of patronage as a target and model of reform, thereby obscuring the specificity of exchange forms as bound up in long-run histories of not only labor but also state resistance (Larson 1988). Indeed, it was precisely because of his personal ties to the region's hacienda system that Raul was particularly attuned to the moral reverberations of ride-sharing in Ayopaya today. And yet, while Raul's expression of a sense of duty to 'be friendly' to Quechua-speaking peasants emerged out of his own specific relation to the region's hacienda system, it did not arise simply from a continued structural relation as master or lord. Indeed, in the case of ride-sharing discussed above, Raul in no way determined or controlled the labor of the farmer to whom he offered a ride. For this reason, his call to be kind or generous should not be reduced simply to individualistic instrumentalism – that is, as a means to continued exploitation. Rather than simply repeating an economic form in which exploitation is stabilized by accompanying exchange relations, such exchange practices speak to the 'elasticity of obligation' (Guyer 2012) – that is, the ways that patronage channels are re-crafted as critical responses to the political and moral exigencies of the present.

While it is difficult to detect with any certainty the origins of such a patronage framework, historians generally accept that some notion of distinction among native lords and their subjects preceded Spanish conquest (Thomson 2002, 34–40). For instance, Sallnow (1989, 209) notes that precious metals in the Andes historically belonged to a complex

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<sup>1</sup>Indeed, in my own archival research at the National Institute for Agrarian Reform, I found mention of mitmaq settlements common in documented hacienda property disputes in the mid-twentieth century. Raul's family, for instance, had maintained access to haciendas in both the La Paz jungle and the Ayopaya valleys, with many workers migrating between them.



religious formation or ‘authority complex’ in which silver and gold encased entire imperial buildings, ornaments and ritual objects, and in some ways ‘encoded’ the power of local chiefs, kuraka lords and state elites. This longstanding understanding of redistributive aid as a source of virtue or authority (Sallnow 1989; Nash 1993) casts doubt over more romantic narratives that have pitted traditional forms of horizontal exchange against capitalist greed or hierarchy (Taussig 1980). Instead, and following Sallnow, we might consider how contemporary patronage practices reflect the ‘lineaments of a cultural logic’ in which extraction is linked to morality, and where inequalities are understood not only as a problematic terrain to be ignored or remedied but rather as the constitutive ground upon which ordinary life unfolds.

This scholarship demonstrates that ‘verticality’ is more than a material, spatial order of diversified agrarian production across ecological niches, also constituting a moral framework related to specific notions of political authority and virtue (Harris 1989; Salomon 1985; Lyons 2006). Here, ethnographic studies dovetail with those of Andean historians, specifically studies of agrarian life in the central part of Bolivia. For farmers and miners who had previously worked under the Inca as royal field hands and rotating *mitayo* miners, historians have suggested that wealth was a source not only of corruption but also of political legitimacy, evident in a sort of virtuous authority that was upheld by acts of religious patronage and fictive kinship, and in the distribution and sharing of food and resources (Larson 1988; Gotkowitz 2007). Indeed, appeals to notions of elite duty and agrarian exchange were crucial to mid-twentieth-century peasant politics in the Cochabamba region where Ayopaya is situated. In popular reform proposals, union petitions and legal complaints through the late 1930s, rural peasants made demands that *hacendado* elites not only abstain from violent treatment or limit unpaid services, but also uphold certain duties or responsibilities, including the distribution of food and resources. In some cases, the failure to heed these demands lent support to popular calls for hacienda abolition and, in Ayopaya in 1947, fueled an armed rebellion (Jackson 1994; Dandler and Torrico 1987).

In contemporary Ayopaya, the political turmoil surrounding the region’s shifting topographies of wealth and exchange was addressed in a set of popular narratives and historical retellings. For instance, people recalled how patterns of wealth underwent upheaval overnight with the Socialist Revolution of 1952 and following the nation-wide agrarian reform law in 1953. Confronted with mounting anti-hacienda rebellions beginning around 1938 and culminating in a 1947 uprising in which haciendas were sacked or burned and several landlords killed, hacienda lords were forced to depart quickly on mule- or horseback. Chased off the property by militant hacienda farmers and union leaders, many landlords had to leave the gold behind, hiding riches in kitchen cupboards, grain pots and flour tins, or burying gold and silver in the grey sands of the winding Sacambaya River. After missionaries and then landlords fled the region, many peasant families seemed to have rapidly accrued vast fortunes, finding treasure troves of silver goblets and gold pellets hidden in former hacienda buildings. In these narratives, then, political change was paralleled in the upending of long-term economic patterns, peasants finding themselves new owners of mineral wealth and property that had previously belonged to a class of Spanish-descendent elites, Jesuit priests and hacienda landlords.

Not only do these narratives position the periods of colonial violence, hacienda subjection, mid-century revolution, and military dictatorship as continuous and overlapping, they also highlight the ways that these conjoined pasts cohere in the same material forms and, sometimes, persons. As one municipal worker recalled, ‘During the dictatorships, haciendas were used to trap and torture people’. Here, the worker refers to the fact that primarily mestizo landlords had often been active in or at the least aligned with past military

dictatorships, lasting from 1964 to 1989, their rural homes arising as extensions of institutional power. After the 1953 revolution, former landlords aligned themselves with the state and became union leaders and government officials.<sup>2</sup> Such continuities of violence were not simply speculative. Indeed, Don Raul belonged to what had been an influential Spanish-descendent family, his grandparents holding broad expanses of hacienda lands, some of which he inherited. Later, during the Banzer era, he worked as a military captain, a position that resulted in the dramatic expansion of his landholdings in the region.

Despite the region's particularly violent history of hacienda exploitation and peasant repression, Ayopaya residents linked wealth not simply to depravity or corruption but also to a particular conception of legitimate authority achieved through exchange. Indeed, villagers noted matter-of-factly that 'the bad landlords were killed'. That is, cruel and greedy hacienda landowners perished either in armed confrontations with former colono laborers or in less determinate fates, such as through illness or bewitching. This narrative was also accepted by the kin of landlords. Raul, for instance, described his own family as 'terrible' in their violence and insatiable greed. In this regard, then, mestizos' ability to live in the countryside today was understood as conditional upon their responsible treatment of Quechua-speaking peasants and neighbors, an expectation that continues to condition everyday exchanges and informal relations among the kin of former landlords and servants in rural Ayopaya. Indeed, as evident in Raul's case, popular elaborations of wealth and duty did not simply orient memories or historical narratives; they also conditioned lived relations among families and to former landlords (see Nash 1993; Weisman-tel 2001).

By briefly recounting Ayopaya's specific history of land conflict and hacienda violence, we begin to understand the background shaping Don Raul's call 'to be friendly', and, with it, the call for regional elite's to uphold a particular moral orientation to their own wealth. As evident in these historical narratives, it is not only the continuity of racialized orders of extraction that are seen as detrimental but also – and in some cases more so – elite's failure to act appropriately within a shared moral framework of redistributive exchange. Rather than reflecting a break from primordial collectivism or exchange, then, popular anxieties with wealth should be positioned within specific patterns of agrarian authority that bind wealth to accountability (Sallnow 1989, 227; Harris 1989). In this way, it was not simply wealth that was at stake, but rather a specific orientation to the region's exploitative past. Thus, aid to the kin of former hacienda workers was also a question of enacting one's accountability to the hacienda past. Such practices are insightful as they demonstrate the more quotidian workings of past in present not simply as a shard of prior experience or a ruin of modernity's ceaseless forward motion (Benjamin 1969; Koselleck 2004, 21), but also as an enabling condition, a relational medium through which the living negotiate an unjust past (Lambek 2002).

The continued salience of post-hacienda ties and related exchange practices in Ayopaya pose challenges to a more teleological account of political modernity, one evident also in narratives of revolutionary and postcolonial change (Scott 2004). Central to these post-hacienda relations is the encumbrance of the money form – that is, the tenacity of exchange forms that are often assumed to have been uprooted by the liberalization of labor relations and economic arrangements (Parry and Bloch 1989; Graeber 2001; Yanagisako 2013). In

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<sup>2</sup>Earlier, of course, hacienda landlords had themselves also worked as military generals, screaming insults at tenant farming *colonos* who had recently been released from hacienda labor arrangements in order to enlist in military training for Bolivia's Chaco War (1932–1935).



this regard, such practices show us the complex ways that institutional failures co-exist along with or might even strengthen alternate, more quotidian, approaches to a divisive past. Taking seriously the ethical workings of these post-hacienda relations challenges more familiar frameworks of postcolonial political action that tend to contrast a populist struggle for life with the dead iteration of inherited institutions. To better understand how such exchange relations operate within a contemporary decolonizing political scene, let us now shift to a consideration of state-based reform initiatives in Bolivia since 2006. While reformers see such exchange relations as evidence of peasants' continued constraint or dependency, the second half of the paper attends to the ways that post-hacienda relations of exchange and patronage constitute modes of critical engagement with not only a violent past but also a divisive present.

### **The politics of servitude in indigenizing Bolivia**

For many Bolivians, the year 2006 seemed to take on mythic proportions. After decades of racialized exclusion and economic marginality, Evo Morales Ayma, coca-grower and self-described indigenous *campesino*, became constitutional president. In his inaugural address, tears streamed down the president's cheeks as he described the violent extermination of indigenous groups in the nation's colonial past and called for the founding of a new Bolivian state. He then vowed, 'We will not allow capital to be concentrated in so few hands that many die of hunger. [Others] have the right to live better, but without exploiting, stealing, humiliating, or subjecting people to slavery' (quoted in Christie 2009, 5–6). Following Morales's election, the MAS party government has undertaken a remarkable program of national reform, including a new constitution, approved in 2009, as well as new laws and decrees concerning land and labor relations, education, agriculture, technology, health care, military and police work, racism, maternal and child health, and political structures of regional and municipal governance. The reforms are remarkable not only in their breath but also in their novel insistence on linking economic inequality to the colonial past, thereby articulating indigenous justice and environmental rights as necessarily entwined (Goodale 2008; Perrault 2013).

When I arrived in Bolivia to begin fieldwork in 2010, the initial outpouring of popular support for President Morales seemed to be waning. Mass protests challenging governmental cuts in food and gas subsidies in January 2011 were followed by a nation-wide conflict hinging on the construction of a road through protected regions of the eastern lowlands in September 2011. Some scholars tend to explain opposition to MAS as a result of the party's failure to diverge from the extractive policies of earlier neoliberal governments, a failure evident in the state's continued reliance on foreign capital investments to fund the largest sector of the national economy, resource mining (Fabricant 2012; Farthing and Kohl 2012; Hindery 2014). This argument has also been made in regard to recent MAS agrarian reform programs, with scholars noting that new redistribution measures continue to support men and large landowners (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2007, 8; Zimmerer 2014, 5). Yet, the very terms of this critique are revealing, suggesting how MAS legitimacy relies on its claims to historical change. Thus, while MAS reforms – including anti-racism laws, gender quotas, increases in minimum wage, and a wave of rural infrastructure projects – may diverge from neoliberal austerity, the state's accompanying concern with transforming rural life-ways and indigenous habits is hardly new, resonating in remarkable ways with state modernizing initiatives from the eighteenth century onward.

Indeed, as with late-eighteenth-century Bourbon reform governments (Gotkowitz 2007), the MAS-ruled reform agenda betrays renewed concern not only with improving

rural lives but also with transforming affective sensibilities and labor relations. A nationwide agrarian reform program initiated in 2006 outlines the parameters by which to title lands is redistributed to hacienda *colono* laborers following national land reform in 1953. The program is outlined in two recent laws, the National Agrarian Reform Service Law 1715 (*Ley de Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria*) and the Community Reorganization Agrarian Reform Law 3545 (*Ley 3545 de Reconducción Comunitaria de la Reforma Agraria*), both passed in 2006. In 2008, the 2006 law was amended to add an additional Supreme Decree Law 29802 (*Decreto Supremo 29802*) that targets relations of servitude. Article 2 of the 29802 law empowers land reform officials to ‘reverse haciendas with systems of servitude [and] to liberate captive families’. The article goes on to define ‘servitude’ (*servidumbre*) as ‘any servitude arrangements, forced labor, debt peonage or slavery of families or persons who give services to the owner or title-holder of the land’. In addition, Article 4 notes that any ‘psychological pressure or deception by violent means’ shall be considered a case of ‘servitude relations’ as outlined in Article 2. Interestingly, and like earlier reforms, these labor measures are enfolded into agrarian law. Indeed, as discussed below, it is primarily through land re-titling that reformers hope to detect and subsequently correct servitude relations. Despite assertions of political change premised on a rupture in governance logics, MAS reforms share with earlier modernizing states overlapping concerns with fixing subjects, remapping lands and transforming rural life-ways.

Since 2006, the Ayopaya region has arisen as the renewed target of governmental reform efforts. Municipal government missions include efforts to strengthen participatory government through regional autonomy measures and by increasing the participation of women and Quechua-speaking groups in both electoral politics and regional development initiatives. In addition, the region has been the center of debate and conflict concerning its possible conversion into ‘Native Community Lands’ (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*), a designation marking governmental recognition of lands collectively owned by indigenous, peasant, or union groups (see Assies 2006). In Ayopaya, officials are easily identified by their green vests adorned with a *wiphala* or rainbow flag marking the nation’s ‘plurinational’ composition, land reform officials circling in four-wheel-drive jeeps as they undertake re-titling projects, re-initiated in 2012. Alongside these national and municipal efforts, the regional peasant union constitutes a third avenue of governmental attention and intervention. The regional branch of the national union (*Central Obrera Boliviana*, COB) meets each month, constituting a forum in which new reforms are reviewed and educational pamphlets outlining the reform program are distributed to union members, usually the male heads of household.

Ayopaya’s centrality to national reform projects is not new. Rather, its particularly severe labor regime made the region a target of aggressive state reform initiatives from the late eighteenth century onward (Gotkowitz 2007). To these earlier reforms belong Cochabamba governor Viedma’s 1791 agrarian reform as well as early twentieth-century programs focused on regulating unpaid services and hacendado violence, and imbuing rural peasants with a new, more efficient, labor outlook (Larson 1988). Indeed, it was the ubiquity of ‘unnatural’ or sexual abuses combined with the tight control over labor conditions that culminated in widespread anti-hacienda uprisings in Ayopaya in 1947. In contrast to haciendas in Bolivia’s Eastern lowlands, Cochabamba’s haciendas included smaller family farms that were owned by Quechua-speaking former tenant farmers or small bosses (*juch’uy patrones*). These smaller farms often included close-knit relations between laborers and landlords less common in larger, monoculture-based plantations (Jackson 1994, 182; Klein and Vinson 2007). Following hacienda abolition in 1953, most of the hacienda lands in Ayopaya were redistributed or abandoned. Yet, today, the kin of

several former landlords, like Raul, continue to live and work in the region, agricultural livelihoods largely replaced by small-scale mining in pursuit of gold, antimony and sodalite.

Ayopaya's history of entrenched hacienda labor, coupled with its often-ambivalent relation to twentieth-century state reform projects, made it an ideal site in which to explore the ways that regional histories of indentured labor condition and complicate current agrarian reform efforts. Between March 2011 and March 2012, I lived in the rural town of Laraya,<sup>3</sup> located in the province of Ayopaya eight hours from the city of Cochabamba. Laraya is the municipal center of the province, with a population of about 2000 people, including merchants, farmers and the children of former hacienda laborers, as well as a small *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and indigenous descendent) elite. About 90 percent of the region's residents speak Quechua, making it one of the most heavily Quechua-speaking provinces of Bolivia. In Laraya, I conducted 120 interviews in Quechua and Spanish.<sup>4</sup> I also attended union meetings, joined people in their farmlands and orchards, attended monthly *ch'alla* rituals, accompanied municipal officials to survey roads, celebrated holidays and patron saint festivals, and gathered with villagers and townsfolk for several much-anticipated visits from President Evo Morales.

While in Ayopaya, I learned that reformers' attempts to subject an ever-expanding field of practice to governmental scrutiny do not go unchallenged. Rural challenges to state reform were particularly apparent in regional opposition to agrarian reform projects. As noted above, by way of the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (*Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria* or INRA), this re-titling program sought to re-title lands in order to 'sanitize' rural relations and land use practices. However, in 2011 the regional union called for the immediate ousting of the institute from INRA. In a union statement, rural union leaders noted that the state's attempt to seize and control land risked a 'return to colonialism' (INRA 2011). As this statement suggests, rural groups display a sophisticated awareness of the resonances between current and prior reform programs. In this sense, to tell a story about the continued significance of hacienda-based relations of patronage is also to turn renewed attention to the limits to and fractures of MAS rule, one marked by the government's fraught attempts to distinguish itself from earlier modernizing states.

### **Transforming consciousness through agrarian reform**

While conducting fieldwork and interviews at the land reform institute in the city of Cochabamba in 2011, I learned about the stakes of land 'sanitation' for reform officials themselves. Mr. Arpasi and I sat in his spacious office on the fourth floor of the INRA institute, discussing land titling. A lawyer by training, Mr. Arpasi is in his mid-30s and

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<sup>3</sup>Names of all towns, villages and persons have been changed in order to protect the anonymity of research subjects.

<sup>4</sup>Interviewees were selected through the use of purposive sampling – that is, by seeking out residents with known ties to the region's former hacienda system. In my interviews with former servants and their children, about 75 percent of people with whom I spoke recalled some sort of patronage relation among prior workers and landlords, whether in fiesta sponsorship, godparenting or informal adoption. Those who made no mention of such ties were primarily workers affiliated with a handful of haciendas with absent landlords, managed instead by Quechua- or Aymara-speaking overseers or *jilacatas*. However, that the majority of interviewees referred to some degree of patronage ties suggests that the relation between Raul and the pedestrian farmer, and that between Ramón and Fabio, while noteworthy in their explicit elaboration of proper behavior on the part of regional elites, also belong to a broader pattern of exchange typical of agrarian life in Ayopaya.

speaks both Spanish and Quechua. First, he explained, titling is important because ‘rural peasants don’t use documents to account for property’. This causes irregularities in ownership and limits the government’s ability to subsidize agricultural losses. At the same time, through land titling useful lands can be distinguished from useless lands.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Arpasi continued, ‘As President Morales said while passing out titles, “The land has to have its identification document just like people do”’. In addition, he noted that titles would help resolve ‘internal conflicts’. Thus, ‘with personal property rights, you can clean up a parcel’. In accordance with this view, land with a valid title is ‘clean’, and a clean parcel is free of conflict.

According to Mr. Arpasi, such conflicts result from a lack of clarity in property ownership spanning back to the hacienda. As he noted,

In some places people still will not touch the lands of the *patron* [the former hacienda landlord] even though he left years ago. Only after we arrive and tell them that the land is theirs, will they use the land. Otherwise, they say, ‘How could I? This belongs to the landlord’. They respect this.

Here, then, land titling initiatives are concerned not simply with documentation, but rather include broader attempts to transform land-use practices that originated in the hacienda system. For the nation to progress, then, requires that reformers uproot the affective debris of an anachronistic labor order. Land titling not only works to extend governance or to impose legal order but, more broadly, arises as a means to decolonize rural relations, remapping lands and thereby transforming rural sensibilities, for instance ‘respect’. As evident in Mr. Arpasi’s comments, INRA re-titling measures aim not only to rationalize land ownership but also, in so doing, to purify the region of the polluting traces of hacienda subjection. In this way, ‘sanitation’ (*saneamiento*) assumes importance not only as a form of land redistribution but also as a mechanism by which to fix – to secure as well as to mend – uncertain histories of relation (Fabricant 2012, 155, citing Rivera 1987; Postero 2007; Valdivia 2010).

Despite these reconciliatory aims, however, recent titling initiatives have paradoxically produced surging land conflicts. When I asked Mr. Arpasi about such conflicts, he noted:

Yes, it’s true. People say that before INRA arrived they did not have a single problem, but now they have problems. Before, they did not have property rights, they were planting on what they had inherited and they made their own documents. With land sanitation there are problems and conflicts that we have to regulate.

Among such problems, for instance, was the case of land having multiple owners. ‘For this reason’, Mr. Arpasi continued, ‘we are regulating and perfecting. We make declarations and we resolve these problems’. Here, Mr. Arpasi’s comments suggest INRA officials are aware of the potentially disruptive effects of land titling, yet quickly absorb those conflicts into a more general portrait of festering disorder which then requires and legitimates further regulation and reform. Land titling may disrupt existing land tenure arrangements and create new tensions, yet this fact is then made to buttress INRA claims to regulate, perfect, adjudicate and resolve ‘internal conflicts’.

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<sup>5</sup>Through the process of land titling, INRA officials are able to detect lands that are not being cultivated and, insofar as they fail to serve a ‘social-economic function’, are subsequently turned over to the state or to rural peasant unions (see Fabricant 2012).

Interestingly, INRA officials were well aware that land titling efforts had been obstructed by popular ‘mistrust’ [*desconfianza*] toward INRA. When I asked Mr. Arpasi about the sources of this mistrust, he explained,

It comes from a lack of information. Sometimes we are [in rural parts] explaining to them and they do not understand. It is like they are in the first grade. So we have to explain four times, in different ways, with examples. And afterwards, they still don’t understand. It’s like this. [He gestured at a blank computer screen.] Blank. Nothing. So, because of this, it is difficult. They belong to another generation.

Here, Mr. Arpasi’s comments highlight the paternalistic dimensions of MAS reform, in which opposition to land sanitation is explained away as an effect of old age, ignorance or a lack of education. In the rest of our conversation, Mr. Arpasi described reformers’ frustrated attempts to transform entrenched and seemingly anachronistic orientations to place. As he explained,

It’s not just that the *patrones* left. People come here and say ‘This *patron* did this,’ and we say ‘But there are no *patrones* anymore.’ It’s not the *patron* but rather his son or grandson, but people [continue to] think like this.

As evident here, land titling projects are imbued with a moral force as a means by which to uproot lingering perceptions of *hacendado* authority and property ownership. Much like earlier land titling laws, such as the 1874 Law of Unchaining the Peasant Communities, documents are identified as liberating agents. However, by describing land conflicts and popular mistrust toward INRA as evidence of misinformation, old age or lack of education, reform officials depoliticize and disavow rural opposition to the state. Arguments of subjection and false consciousness, then, work to further legitimize reformist intervention.

Remarkably, officials acknowledged that the shift to a more ‘participatory’ course of development might be jarring. Yet, while jarring, officials argued that rural peasants would eventually come to appreciate its benefits. Mr. Arpasi explained,

I am from the countryside, from a region that had haciendas. We had to walk an hour and a half to school each day. Today, there are better schools. Things are changing. Before, people were used to accepting projects, of being told what they needed. Now, they have to decide for themselves. As the government tells them, ‘I don’t know what you need in your own house, that is for you to decide.’ This is a big change, and often they object, ‘But before..’ Yet, in the end they are pleased with it. They say ‘We didn’t have this before.’

Through land titling, then, reform officials hope to transform rural peasants into more engaged political subjects, citizens whose new ‘critical capacities’ distinguish them from their grandparents, *los abuelos* who labored on haciendas and called the landlord *Taytay*, my father.

Mr. Arpasi spoke as a subject who had weathered this ‘big change’, as someone who has learned how to decide. Yet, from his prestigious post premised on his spatial and cultural distance from the former hacienda countryside, he seemed to overstate the ease of such transformation, overlooking the question of whether all subjects are equally able to shed or supersede the hacienda past. At the same time, this negative account of hacienda forms overlooks the possibility that inherited structures of authority and aid can also arise as sources of reconciliatory and redistributive action, for instance in the ride-sharing case discussed above. In so doing, his stance presumed a more rigid, even teleological, approach to political change that rendered unthinkable and anachronistic other modes of collectivity or moral action. In the process, and despite their liberating aims, such attempts to

institutionalize indigenous agency also work to disavow certain experiences of injury, suffering rendered a necessary step in a process of social betterment whose benefits will only be evident afterwards (see Povinelli 2011; Scott 2004). Thus, the term 'servitude' not only describes but also renders legible a range of rural social and economic relations as objects of state intervention. In the process, rural populations arise both as agents and objects of political change, justice contingent upon expelling the abiding traces of colonial subjection.

It is in this broader condition, then, that rural critiques of MAS and accompanying reliance on former hacienda landlords become intelligible not simply as historical residues but, more broadly, as political critiques displaying a visceral awareness of the difficulties of installing an absolute break with the past. In a political scene marked by radical discontinuities between popular expectations and governmental promises and by the continued grip of neo-colonial patterns of indigenous exclusion and social vulnerability despite state reform efforts, relations to regional elites also arise as an important modality of claim making. Not only do they provide access to material goods and services, they also offer a way to address what has become for many a tense rural climate marked by perceptions of the constant possibility for violence between indigenous and non-indigenous groups. With this political orientation to the problem of hacienda-based ties in reformist Bolivia, let us return to Raul's case and the broader networks of patronage and exchange to which it belongs.

### **The encumbrances of exchange**

In the case discussed above, Raul's call 'to be friendly' points to his effort to differentiate himself from the cast of violent landlords, gold-hungry missionaries and abusive Spaniards commonly understood to populate the region's past. This effort was especially pressing, if fraught, given that Raul belonged to a family infamous for its cruelty and violence. His uncle was known as perhaps the most wicked of the region's former landlords, a title earned through both the sheer violence of his managerial style and his relentless pursuit of indigenous women and female servants. It was this depraved character, peasants noted, that resulted in the landlord's early death, the details of which were many and inconsistent, from accounts of his murder by *colono* laborers to talk of a traffic accident to hints that he was bewitched, dying of an unidentified disease. Raul's grandmother was also known to have been particularly cruel, taken to fits of rage in which she would beat hacienda laborers until they died or, more often, until one of her children intervened. In addition to belonging to a fairly vilified hacienda family, Raul himself had worked as a military captain under former Bolivian president and dictator Hugo Banzer Suarez. Hugo Banzer Suarez was military president from 1971 to 1978, later serving as constitutional president from 1991–2001. In Cochabamba, he is associated with the violent repression of peasant unions, most famously the 1974 'massacre of the valley' in which between 80 and 200 indigenous peasant unionists were killed when the military opened fire on farmers protesting price increases. Coupled with his familial past, prior employment under Banzer raised further questions about Raul's moral character and the shadowy sources of his current prosperity.

While Raul bore a particularly heavy historical burden, this concern with the entailments of authority, including elite's obligations to the hacienda past, was not just Raul's. Rather, Raul's call to inhabit his elite status in a particularly generous way, evident in his insistence on offering rides to peasant pedestrians, was echoed in the demands of former servants for the aid of their prior employers. For instance, Ramón was a Quechua-speaking peasant who had emigrated to rural Ayopaya following an arrangement



his father had made with the former landlord. Following this arrangement, Ramón had worked as a domestic servant in the agrarian hacienda since the age of 8, laboring unpaid for the landlord (*patron*) and overseeing farming activities in adjacent fields. When we met in 2011, he was in his 90s, his thin frame bowed from years of manual labor. During fieldwork between 2010 and 2012, I lived in a nearby town and saw Ramón frequently at the Sunday market and during research trips to the village where he lived. When we spoke, Ramón recounted stories of *ñawpaq kawsay*, ‘life before’ the abolition of hacienda servitude in 1953. Neighbors and fellow villagers described Ramón as a favorite servant, recounting how he used to walk through the pasturelands with the landlord’s youngest son, Fabio, seated upon his shoulders. These days, Fabio visited Ramón about once a month, driving him to buy vegetables in a neighboring village. Yet the house in which Ramón had worked as a domestic servant since his childhood had recently been sold, and Fabio’s assistance had dwindled. In late 2011, a year after we first met, I visited Ramón. Seated on a stool in the barren patio, he lamented Fabio’s absence, explaining that he had hurt his back and wanted Fabio to accompany him to buy vegetables. Of Martin, the current owner, Ramón noted bitterly, ‘He does not give to me’.

In the following months, the question of Ramón’s health became desperate. Elderly and injured, he could not care for himself. And while Fabio and his wife claimed they sent food, none arrived. Martin eventually hired one of the miner’s wives to clean the house and look after Ramón. On several occasions, a friend and I stopped by to visit Ramón, bringing him vegetables and dry goods to augment his sparse kitchen. When Ramón died the following December, the conflict concerning his care did not end. After discovering his body, Martin called Fabio. A day passed, and so he bought a casket and made the appropriate funeral arrangements. The miners’ wives and women servants in Martin’s household helped wash the body and prepare it for burial. According to friends of the two men, when Martin asked Fabio to help pay for the casket, Fabio berated him for having bought such an expensive one. In the end, Fabio did not contribute to covering the cost of the funeral, nor did he attend. When I asked Martin how Fabio could have been so heartless, he explained, ‘It’s that it doesn’t awaken anything in him. He isn’t affected’. By contrast, he implied, a moral relation required being ‘awakened’ by one’s duty to the past.

As Ramón’s case suggests, today the hacienda serves not only as an historical referent but also as the relational hinge at the center of an informal economy of exchange and aid. These exchange practices were loosely organized by an ethic of elite accountability to former servants, the kin of former hacienda landlords often providing ex-servant families with access to transportation, medicine and education as well as goods like clothes and food, caskets and baptismal dress. Along with lingering affective ties (Stoler 2002, 201), bonded histories also conditioned distinct articulations of injury and related practices of claim-making. More than 60 years after hacienda abolition, Ramón requested that Fabio visit to provide food and access to medical care. As scholars note, in many cases, moral ideals are often rendered most apparent in their lapse or failure (Lambek 2010, 87). This was certainly true in Fabio’s case, his failure to provide aid to Ramón eliciting sharp critiques from acquaintances and friends and, eventually, leading others to assume his unfulfilled patronage duties. Thus, with Fabio’s negligence, Martin was prompted to take responsibility for the old man, providing Ramón with food, medicine and, after his death, a proper burial.

While Ramón’s demands for aid and assistance from Fabio grew out of an experience of material vulnerability, it was also coupled with particular sorts of historical reflection and even nostalgia. According to Ramón, he began working on the hacienda as a child and in exchange for food and shelter. One Christmas, he recalled, the landlord gathered together

with his servants in the central patio to make music, Ramón dancing with a small Christ figurine that the landlord had brought back from Peru. Thus, while other former laborers emphasized the violence and desperation of hacienda servitude, Ramón also held fond memories of earlier domestic life. Ramón's nostalgia toward the former landlord contrasted with his antipathy toward villagers involved in anti-hacienda mobilizations. He had lived through both the 1947 and 1953 uprisings in which peasant militias occupied haciendas, burning buildings, slaughtering animals, pillaging goods and, in some villages, killing landlords (Jackson 1994; Dandler and Torrico 1987). While indigenous leaders and unionists described the *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario* (MNR) government's declaration of hacienda abolition in August 1953 as a moment of great euphoria, Ramón recalled awaking bloodied. He had been beaten unconscious by a Quechua-speaking union leader when villagers stormed the hacienda. The landlord escaped on horseback while Ramón attempted, unsuccessfully, to flee by foot.

Today, Ramón's relation to the former hacienda and to former landlords produced a form of subjectivity that contrasted sharply with the positioning of villagers involved in anti-hacienda uprisings and which remained problematic for ex-servants' children and supporters of the ruling MAS government. Ramón's Quechua-speaking neighbors referred to him disparagingly as 'he who remains a slave'. So, too, did one of the leaders of the 1953 uprising note, 'The *pongo* [male domestic servant] ate in the hacienda. We still scorn them. "Your food was from the hacienda, what did you earn?" We still talk like this'. A former *mit'ani* (female domestic hacienda servant) noted that her grown children ridicule her for having 'served the *patron*', particularly for abiding by the convention of addressing landlords with kinship names (*mamay*, *taytay*). They admonished her, 'In order to call someone mother or father, that person must have conceived you'. As these experiences suggest, in Bolivia as elsewhere emancipatory politics can also yield new forms of subjection, paternalist languages assigning the formerly enslaved a 'circumscribed humanity' (Hartman 1997, 6).

Former hacienda servants' ambivalent experiences of emancipation and post-abolition reform have been largely overlooked by scholarship oriented around the notion of a shared and autonomous peasantry (Dandler and Torrico 1987; Stern 1987; for a critique see Rivera 1987). In existing studies of hacienda kinship and exchange, many scholars echo the positions of state reformers and peasant leaders, approaching rural patronage as evidence of lingering dependencies at odds with a 'more developed political consciousness' (Nash 1993, 31). Assuming that political maturation will necessarily result in a shift away from existing ties to landlords to a more class-based reflection on one's labor and livelihood, anthropologists have gone so far as to caution against attention to indigenous peoples' lingering ties to elites, a focus on 'acquiescence' that, it has been argued, obscures and erases indigenous agency (Postero 2007, 187). But this seems to problematically accept the reformist terms of agency and politics. By equating patronage with a conservative politics of peasant dependency and submission, such analyses tend to rely upon European-based juridical and philosophical ideals of (peasant) autonomy without querying the conditions under which such autonomy is or is not considered desirable. What remains to be considered, then, is not only the feasibility but also the very exemplarity of autonomy as an orientation to others and to the past.

Instead of approaching dependency or 'acquiescence' as though these were terms or practices whose meaning could be ascertained beforehand, my interest here is in more carefully considering the sensibilities enfolded within and accompanying specific histories of subjection. By bracketing normative analytics of dependency and autonomy, I approach the embeddedness between former servants and landlords as a question or point of inquiry rather than as a normative judgment – that is, as the lack of agency or politics.

Some readers might object that such an effort risks romanticizing hacienda bonds, echoing earlier apologists of slavery who emphasized the ‘moral equilibrium’ between servants and masters (Hartman 1997). And yet, my aim is not to deny but rather to offer a more robust attention to the subjection, one that takes seriously former servants’ demands for aid and care not simply as evidence of political lack but, rather, as expressions of a particular moral imaginary of authority and obligation (Sallnow 1989). Thus, rather than dismiss such practices as evidence of false consciousness, we might consider them distinct articulations of authority and duty whose claims also mark active attempts to grapple with a divisive hacienda past, including the experiences of injustice and inequality this past is understood to have left behind.

In offering renewed attention to such popular practices and perceptions of authority and accountability, I draw from but also break from a moral economy approach. Namely, I have demonstrated that what is at stake in such exchange relations is not simply the problem of material resources, but also broader understandings of historical accountability to a violent past. Secondly, I have suggested that to more fully understand the moral imaginaries undergirding demands for elite aid requires attention to the historical specificities of particular labor arrangements and accompanying notions of authority and obligation in particular places and times. Thus, and in contrast to Scott’s (1976) influential elaboration of ‘moral economy’, I suggest that patronage is insufficiently understood either as subordination or as an obvious case of resistance, subsistence or everyday subversion.<sup>6</sup> Instead, I have called for a scholarly analysis that more carefully engages with post-hacienda categories of moral action in which lived relations of hierarchy emerge as conditions of possible reconciliatory practice to be inhabited properly rather than refused or overcome.

Reframing the problem of patronage in this way offers a new point of inquiry from which to examine former servants’ elaborations and expectations of aid from former landlords. Indeed, the issue for Ramón was precisely not one of securing his own autonomy from former landlords, but, rather, of lamenting what for him appeared to be Fabio’s alarming abnegation of inherited ties and accompanying obligations. In this sense, Fabio’s failure to provide for Ramón supplied the occasion in which an otherwise unspoken set of moral expectations were rendered explicit. Even or perhaps precisely when violated, Ramón’s expectation of aid from Fabio points to a broader historical sensibility rooted in the ideal that former hacienda lords be accountable to former servants. Rather than assuming the past can or should be properly shed, such claims engage the moral problem of who bears the past and how such bearing works not only as a negative constraint but also as a positive relational condition from and through which to critically engage the hacienda past and its practical entailments for day-to-day life today.

While state reformers and peasant unionists associated hacienda-based ties with a status of continued subjection or even slavery, former hacienda servants actively mobilized demands for aid and used such aid relations as a platform of national political critique. Indeed, far from being bereft of a politics, for former servants hacienda landlords’ generosity in past and present pointed to the shortcomings of state reform. For instance, Ramón contrasted his food and wages today to those of before, noting that under the

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<sup>6</sup>In particular, James C. Scott drew from Thomson’s (1971) account of British peasants’ calls for a fair price of market goods and which, Thomson argued, reflected traditional (feudal) frameworks of patronage between lords and servants. For a critical review of scholarship applying the ‘moral economy’ concept in the Andean region, see Lyons (2006). For the limits to more universalist approaches to peasant claims and their repercussions for historiographic analyses of the hacienda system in the Andean region, see Thurner (1993).

hacienda system he received three warm meals and unlimited coca leaves each day while now he is paid 45 *bolivianos* (about 5 dollars) and is provided only soup for lunch. According to him, life was ‘better before’. Here, then, people like Ramón drew from their experiences of the region’s conflictive history of servitude and land reform violence as a basis from which to assess the risks of MAS governance. Others, too, denounced the MAS government. One man, the son of tenant farmers, noted that in Bolivia, reforms ‘have never been to the benefit of the peasant’. Another man, the son of an illegitimate child born on the local hacienda, noted, ‘For this government, we are not history’.

These statements betray a sophisticated awareness both of former hacienda laborers’ marginal relation to union movements and the central government and of the exclusionary workings of MAS populism. At stake in rural post-hacienda relations, then, was much more than simply the problem of resources. While unfolding in conditions of dramatic social vulnerability and poverty, patronage relations were not narrated primarily or even principally as problems of class-based equality, but rather were linked again and again to the moral problem of the region’s violent hacienda past. If shaped by their conditions of emergence, then, such relations came to work in ways that diverged from and even attempted to undo those historical precedents. In the process, patronage relations arose not only as a source of material duty and historical accountability but also as political critique (on the moral workings of patronage, see Englund 2011; Jauregui 2014). Patronage relations pointed to forms of indigenous practice and history at odds with nationalist narratives of political and economic change, thereby destabilizing governmental articulations of militant MAS citizenship premised on shared indigenous ancestry and history. In tracing the historical underpinnings of these rural ideals of elite obligation, my account foregrounds their simultaneous outgrowth from and responsiveness to Bolivia’s hacienda past.

### **Conclusion: indigenous politics and the encumbrances of exchange**

This contribution has traced the modes of attachment forged through Ayopaya’s hacienda past in order to probe the possibilities of post-hacienda patronage as a mode of moral and political action in reformist Bolivia. Persisting 10 years after President Morales’ election and following at least half a century of anti-hacienda agrarian reform, what might relations of aid and exchange between former landlords and Quechua-speaking villagers tell us about the longevity of hacienda-based ties and the problems such ties present for modernizing state projects? Here, cases like Raul’s indicate the continued salience of an older framework of exchange-based authority whose origins in pre-colonial and colonial histories of labor and law do not preclude their active cultivation as creative moral responses to the lived conundrums of life after servitude (Mintz and Wolf 1957; Anrup 1990). By examining the reconciliatory dimensions of such encumbered exchange relations, I have shown how social forms rooted in oppressive labor regimes work not only to constrain political consciousness but also as critical moral and political engagements with the very problem of indigenous justice and historical harm.

As scholars note, hacienda-based entanglements between indigenous peasants, union organizers and landlords pose challenges to theories of indigenous political action that are rooted in the valorization of autonomy from non-indigenous worlds and histories (De la Cadena 2015). In particular, more romantic portrayals of indigenous agency and resistance to Western modernity overlook the ways that economic and labor histories – including the hacienda institution and subsequent anti-hacienda peasant mobilizations – came to constitutively condition and reshape the terms of indigenous political practice and self-

understanding in the Andes (Gotkowitz 2007; Herzog 2015). Mechanistic understandings of inherited institutions as antithetical to the vitality of indigenous life and culture have foreclosed an inquiry into the ways that inherited forms can be mobilized as sites of critical engagement with the very question of that inheritance. Scholars, anxious to attest to the political agency and autonomy of indigenous groups, have often shared reformers' anxieties about the destructive, corrosive effects of patronage ties among mestizo elites and indigenous peasants. Indeed, it has even been proposed that a truly subaltern or decolonized 'indigenous politics' must necessarily emerge from exteriority – that is, from a position somehow outside of modernity (Sanjines 2004, 13; see also Pérez 1999). The uncritical adoption of exteriority or autonomy as a judge of political efficacy disavows the importance of relational forms that unfold partly within, rather than outside, historical patterns of authority and violence (Strathern 1988, 29).

The unwitting parallels between the political subject of modernizing reform and the political subject of social scientific analysis show that scholars have not always been as critical as they might be of reform logics or their limits as a heuristic for approaching the terms of indigenous political practice (Turner 1993, 45). In their emphasis on indigenous autonomy, scholars unwittingly echo the views of earlier modernizing reformers who viewed hacienda sensibilities as antithetical to citizenship and, as such, equated hacienda laborers with beasts, children and inoperative machines (Gotkowitz 2007). Thus, while scholars have critiqued the ways that liberal analytics have denied the relational character of indigenous life-worlds – their co-production with and by non-indigenous worlds – my analysis takes this critique one step further, showing how particular understandings of indigenous autonomy and agency have worked not only to condition scholarly heuristics but also to constrain and delimit the terms of nationalist, postcolonial justice. In so doing, I raise questions about the ways that the valorization of autonomy in Bolivia stems not simply from 'modern' global juridical norms but also from the nation's specific trajectories of anti-colonial struggle, indigenous culture historically imbued with validity as a vitalist force capable of shattering the mechanistic bonds of colonial servitude (Sanjinés 2004; Gotkowitz 2007).

Attending to the reconciliatory workings of post-hacienda patronage in Ayopaya is instructive not only in furthering our understanding of Bolivia's political present but also in the ways it allows us to rethink reigning theories and analytics of justice. Here, the Bolivian case provides insight into the historical specificity of a language of autonomy and its at times violent disavowal of other forms of moral or reconciliatory action (Lambek 2010, 4; Strathern 1988). Thus, by 'getting to know slower temporalities, almost immobile ones', we are able to partially extricate ourselves from the 'inexorable march of historical time, to leave it behind, and then to return to it with new eyes, with new uncertainties, with new questions' (Braudel 2013, 252). By assessing and to some degree bracketing normative analytics of political transformation and temporal rupture that guide indigenous reform projects in Bolivia, I have sought to reframe and potentially expand the contours of the legibly political. Thus, while my focus on the possibilities of patronage might seem overly pessimistic, it is meant as a more generous and even hopeful stance, one that attends to the politics of an imperfect, inequalitarian present rather than insisting, with reformers, on a more delimited notion of justice that must await material realization in an egalitarian future (Povinelli 2011; Scott 2004). More than a nascent ideal staved off from the reformist present, rural Ayopaya subjects engage justice as a potentiality enfolded in the everyday, one achieved through a set of ordinary actions and their necessary – and at times exemplary – historical bearings.

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**Mareike Winchell** is an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago. Her current book project, *After servitude: Indigeneity, history, and the antinomies of justice in reformist Bolivia*, examines how Quechua-speaking villagers draw upon histories of bonded labor in their critical engagements with governmental reforms aimed at achieving indigenous justice. Her research and writing have been supported by the Josephine de Karman Fellowship Trust, the Designated Emphasis Program in Critical Theory at the University of California at Berkeley, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Winchell received her PhD in sociocultural anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley in 2015. Email: mareike@uchicago.edu