National Political Community and Ethnicity.
Evidence from two Latin American Countries

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Abstract

The political community is the social basis for modern democracies. A strong political community is particularly difficult to achieve when different social cleavages ‘divide’ society into more or less stable and mutually exclusive groups. Ethnic identities can constitute cleavages whose lines divide society along racial or cultural lines. At the same time, inequality in the distribution of income and property can generate class-based cleavages. Using survey data from the two countries with the highest levels of ethnic diversity in Latin America, Bolivia and Guatemala, this paper focuses on the effect of ethnicity on the strength of the attachment that citizens have to their political nations. Findings suggest that ethnicity has a relevant effect on the way people feel about the nation only when ethnic differences are consistent with socioeconomic cleavages, but socioeconomic differences have an effect that is independent from other factors.

Keywords: Nation; political community; ethnicity; Bolivia; Guatemala.
Introduction

The political community is the social basis for modern democracies; the strength and cohesion of the community of citizens who form a society is a requisite for the effective functioning of the set of political institutions that are part of democratic government: In contrast with authoritarian regimes that can impose by force decisions, democracy requires that citizens legitimize its authority and decisions. An obvious condition for legitimacy is that citizens feel part of the political community of the nation, that they recognize the authority of the State as legitimate. By feeling part of the political community, citizens recognize that their future as individuals depends somehow on the fate of the society to which they belong.

This idea of feeling part of the national community is what I understand as the attachment that individuals have to the political community. The strength of the national political community depends directly on the intensity of this feeling among citizens.

A solid political community, with individuals strongly attached to it, is particularly difficult to achieve when different social cleavages ‘divide’ society into more or less stable and mutually exclusive groups. Cleavages come from the activation of some particular criteria that form social groups and differentiate individuals according to socially constructed stable patterns. Ethnic identities can constitute cleavages whose lines divide society along racial or cultural lines. At the same time, inequality in the distribution of income and property can generate class-based cleavages.

My goal in this research is to establish the effect, if any, that ethnic identities have on the strength citizens’ attitudes to national political communities in Latin American countries with a large proportion of indigenous population. In order to do so I analyze survey data from Bolivia and Guatemala using different measures of ethnicity ad of strength of citizens’ attachment to the national political community, from which different conclusions are extracted. The results enable us also to discuss different theoretical conceptualizations of ethnicity.

Political community and democratic government

The existence of a human group, with a certain level of autonomy in its decisions, over a relatively well defined territory, and whose members legitimize authority in the community, seems to be necessary for any kind of government. This obvious requisite for government, i.e.,
the political community, has been taken for granted in much of the contemporary study of politics. In spite the importance of the concept and with a few exceptions, the empirical study of the political community has been practically absent from the field of comparative politics, as an evaluation of the state of the research on this subject demonstrates.

Much of the limited research on political community has been approached from the larger and multidimensional conceptual construct of political support. This perspective, initially proposed by Easton and later developed, among others, by Norris and Dalton, argues that attachment to the political community is one dimension of support for the political system, the others being support for regime principles, norms and procedures, institutions, and the authorities.

I argue in this paper that the attachment of citizens to the political community should be treated as a concept in itself, and not as part of the concept of system support. The relationship between the strength of the political community and the legitimacy of a political system is evidently straightforward and empirically robust: a weak sense of attachment of citizens to the national political community would also imply a weak commitment of that person to the values and procedures that are central for that political system; but it seems necessary to distinguish one as a requisite for the other and not as a part of it.

The understanding that government requires a relatively consolidated political community is not new. Following John Stuart Mill’s insight that the political community is a fundamental condition for democratic government, Dankwart Rustow’s built on this notion arguing that the sense of belonging to the national political community is a background condition for the emergence of democracy.

Democratic government requires the existence of a strong political community even more than other regimes. From its contractual origins, and from the centrality of the idea of citizenship, a democracy needs that citizens accept and recognize government, while an authoritarian regime can impose its power with the use of force. The political community seems to be a condition for democratic government in two ways. One is related to the consensus that is required even before the democratic government has formed, under which all citizens feel that they belong to a community and accept its use of power via the State. The second refers to a
certain type of solidarity required in the way in which citizens see each other in a democratic society and can only be produced as part of a shared identity⁷, or the possibility that most individuals see each other as right-bearing citizens. In this sense, there is one particular kind of political community that seems to be required for modern universal and inclusive democracies, one in which individuals are seen as citizens, or as legitimate others⁸, by fellow members of the nation.

My approach to political community is different from the previous strand of research on nation building in the sense that it conceives the political community as a shared political identity, which is different from the idea of nation as the building of a shared cultural identity⁹. This idea of membership to the nation as a political identity is related to Linz and Stepan’s idea of state-nation¹⁰, and thus independent from cultural and ethnic memberships. Along those lines, the political community is a combination of rational, affective, and power-based bonds that can be understood as an overarching loyalty, in Lijphart’s terms¹¹, necessary for the cohesion of a polity. Overarching loyalties can contribute to mitigate the conflicting potential of cleavages, creating conditions for moderation based on a sense of national unity.

**Ethnicity and the political community**

If we understand ethnicity as a primordial identity¹², ethnic identification would generate profound loyalties amongst members of an ethnic group that are more basic and therefore stronger than other loyalties, such as the national identity required for democracy, producing a permanent confrontation between competing ethnic groups. Research based on this perspective usually finds that ethnic differences necessarily cause tensions and can lead to democratic instability and even breakdown¹³.

The primordialist conception of ethnicity has increasingly been challenged within the academic world. Gradually the social sciences are growing to regard the complexity of ethnicity as a social construct¹⁴; this perspective is based on the acceptance of the notion that identities are constructed in relation to relevant characteristics within the boundaries of a social space. Constructivist approaches seem more complex, but also have more verisimilitude in relation to a phenomenon that is complex per se. The effects that ethnicity understood in this way can have on democratic government are also more nuanced and less straightforward.
It seems clear that the process of construction of a politically relevant ethnic identity cannot come out of thin air: it has to be based on some objective historical differences, namely cultural attributes, language, and race; this explicitly discards an extreme version of constructivism in which an individual can freely ‘choose’ any identity. These characteristics can be understood as the basis of an ethnic cleavage that can be (but not necessarily is) politically activated.

Should an ethnic cleavage, even if it has been politically activated as seems to be the case in present time Latin America, have to be opposed to the political community of the nation and to a political system in general? The few studies concerned with this question have found contradictory results: some research has found evidence supporting this idea, but there is also evidence suggesting the opposite.\(^16\)

I hypothesize that strong ethnic identities are not necessarily at odds with national identities: it seems likely that if members of different ethnic groups in a country feel like equals, then the common identity of citizens and its overarching loyalties would not have to be affected by particular identities. However, when different cleavages coincide or reinforce each other, when there is a high level of ‘status crystallization’, ethnic minorities are likely to be disenfranchised from the national political community and resent the State and its power.

**Ethnicity and indigenousness in Latin America**

In the concrete environment of contemporary Latin American politics, the most relevant set of ethnic relationships has to do with the political emergence of indigenous movements. While recently Afro or black movements have appeared in some Latin American countries, these usually do not have the level of consolidation that indigenous political mobilization has.\(^19\) The long-term reason for this emergence is probably linked to what some researchers call the colonial horizon, or the way in which the traumatic process of conquest and subsequent colonial rule imposed by force on indigenous peoples in Latin America left a long-lasting hierarchical social organization which presently persists.\(^21\) A more immediate explanation of this recent activation can be found in the consequences of the neo-liberal reforms and the democratization process in the region, that have provided the conditions for the activation of relatively dormant tensions.\(^22\)

During the last decade of the 20th Century, the politicization of indigenous identities in Latin America has emerged as a powerful set of movements in many countries in the region, reshaping
political institutions and redrawing the political map. Part of this emergence has been channeled through the available means of participation – improved by constitutional reforms, in electoral processes, and the development, consolidation and even success of ethnic political parties. This process is now visible in the democratic coming to power of indigenous leaders, of which Evo Morales, the elected Indian President in Bolivia, is the most striking example.

Other significant components of this participatory energy have challenged the available democratic institutions, transforming the contents of citizenship. This participation has often taken place in the form of demonstrations and protests that have brought down democratically elected governments (such as the Ecuadorian Government in 2000 and the Bolivian Governments in 2003 and 2005). The later model of participation signals for some observers the alleged incompatibility of democracy and ethnic diversity in the region.

In sum, while this paper is concerned in general with the relationship between ethnicity and the political community, I understand that the most important manifestation of ethnic politics in contemporary Latin America is the political activation of indigenous identities. The relevant question for this paper is, thus, if indigenous identities in Latin America have any effect on the strength of the political community.

**Hypotheses**

Table I summarizes the expected effect of ethnicity and socioeconomic on strength of the political community.

--------------------------- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE ------------------------------------------

H1: *Ethnic minority status has a negative effect on the strength of individuals’ attachment to the national political community.*

This hypothesis derives from an implication of the ‘primordial’ conception of ethnicity: that indigenous groups in Latin America would permanently be in conflict with the national states insofar as they are controlled by other ethnic groups (i.e.: whites or mestizos). Accordingly, indigenous people would feel less attached to the national political community because loyalty to their particular group would necessarily be greater than any other loyalty. In other words,
individuals in cells 2 and 4 in Table I should show a significantly lower level of attachment to the national political community than the other 2 cells.

H2: Individuals disadvantaged in socioeconomic terms will tend to have a weaker bond with the national political community than individuals with better socioeconomic conditions.

This is the ‘pure’ socioeconomic hypothesis, and it is based on the logic that people who feel excluded from the economic benefits of the State will also have a weaker bond with the nation than better-off individuals. Individuals in cells 3 and 4 should have a weaker attachment to the nation than those in cells 1 and 2.

H3: Ethnic identities affect the strength of national political communities only when they are coincident with other forms of social stratification, i.e.: socioeconomic status.

This hypothesis is the most relevant for the conception of political community that I present here. Specifically, I expect that individuals who are disadvantaged simultaneously in multiple ways in society would tend to feel less attached to the political community than those who have a more advantaged position in society. This is consistent with the idea that ethnic differences are politically relevant when they coincide or are reinforced by other cleavages, the socioeconomic one in this specific case. According to the idea of coinciding cleavages, I expect that being disadvantaged on only one dimension (cells 2 and 3) would either not be enough for generating a weaker attachment to the national political community (in relation to the group with no disadvantage in cell 1), or would affect it unsubstantially. It would be necessary to have two major systems of social stratification consistently positioning individuals systematically at the bottom (cell 4) in order to have a negative reaction to the nation.

Research strategy

Design considerations and case selection

Two Latin American countries were selected for this study: Bolivia and Guatemala; other studies have also used this two countries as comparisons, which suggests the appropriateness of this choice. Two considerations were crucial for the selection: socioeconomic and demographic similarities, including their relatively large indigenous population, and the conspicuous politicization of ethnic cleavages (or the political activation of indigenous identity).
Different socioeconomic indicators show similarities between the two countries, consistently placing them among the poorest nations in Latin America. Guatemala and Bolivia also share as a common characteristic relatively large indigenous populations. Though the proportion of people that could be defined as indigenous in each country is a hotly debated issue (different measures usually produce different results), it is safe to estimate that roughly one half of the population in each country could be considered as indigenous (Bolivia’s 2001 Census estimated the Indigenous population in 63%, while Guatemala’s Census in 2002 established the percentage of indigenous in almost 40%). Under general conditions of underdevelopment, both countries have societies in which indigenous people are on average disadvantaged in relation to white, ladino, and mestizo populations, reflecting a pattern of social stratification that is common throughout Latin America.

In recent years, indigenous movements and leaders have started participating more actively in politics, both at the municipal and the national level. This process has had different levels of success, and appears to be more consolidated in Bolivia. However, the candidacy of indigenous leader and Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú for the upcoming 2007 elections in Guatemala suggests that the political empowerment of the indigenous movement in Guatemala is an ongoing process.

**Hypotheses testing**

In order to test empirically the proposed hypotheses, the following questions need to find empirical answer:

1. Are the effects of ethnicity and socio economic differences on the strength of the political community the same for the two countries in the study?

A positive answer to this question would mean that the results reflect a general relationship between ethnicity, socio economic differences and national identity, and are not country specific effects; this would allow us to fit a single statistical model for the two countries in the study. Clearly, one single model would allow for further reaching conclusions in the analysis, and would also be preferable for the objectives of this project, testing the main hypothesis in general. Alternatively, the development of different models for each country would give a more accurate
perspective of the relationship of interest in each particular country, with the downside of a less general explanation.

2. Everything else being equal, is there a combined effect of ethnicity and socio economic differences on the level of attachment to the national political community?

Question 2 is crucial for testing the central hypothesis proposed for this project (H3), namely that ethnic identities affect the strength of national political communities particularly when they are coincident with socio economic differences as another form of social stratification (reinforcing cleavages). A negative answer to this question would be equivalent to accepting either that ethnicity does not have any effect, or that ethnicity and socio economic differences are independent of each other in their relationship to citizens’ attachment to political community.

Data

Data used in this project come from the 2004 round of national surveys conducted in Bolivia and Guatemala by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. The pooled dataset used in this study contains 4,781 observations.

The questionnaire used in the survey was designed for studying the way in which citizens relate with political institutions in each country, as well as values, attitudes, and perceptions of individual respondents. Each country has a particular questionnaire composed of country specific items as well as ‘core’ items comparable across surveys conducted by LAPOP in 10 other Latin American countries in 2004. The questionnaire was translated to indigenous languages in each country (Quechua and Aymara in Bolivia, Mam, K’iche, Kaqchikel, and Q’ekchi in Guatemala) in order to avoid a linguistic bias in the selection of respondents.

The Bolivian survey was conducted in November and December 2004 on a nationally representative sample. Total number of observations is 3,073 divided in 9 strata equivalent to the 9 departments (provinces or states) in the country. The sample also includes a probability weight for each stratum, assigning equal probability of selection to all individuals within strata; due to rounding the use of this weight reduces the actual size of the sample to 3,070 observations.

The survey in Guatemala was conducted during the first semester of 2004. The national representative sample consists of 1,708 interviews in 5 different geographical areas (strata).
Variable operationalization

Dependent variable

*Attachment to the political community* is measured with the following 2 questions:

1.: National Pride: To what extent do you feel proud of being (*Bolivian, Guatemalan*)?

The question uses a 7 point ordinal scale in which 1 means ‘nothing’ and 7 ‘very much’. This is the standard question used in the literature for measuring the attachment to the political community\(^3\). Despite its spread usage, it is possible that this measure leaves aside some dimensions of the concept other than that of nationality pride\(^4\); however, the question seems to capture an essential dimension of the concept, having at the same time a rational and affective appeal.

2.: Common Values: To what extent do you think that we (*Bolivians, Guatemalans*) have common values that unite us?

This question also uses the same 7 point ordinal scale described above. This question taps into another dimension of attachment to the political community, the idea of shared values.

Correlation between the two variables is .25, which indicates that two different dimensions are in fact being measured; differences in the correlations between the two countries are not large (.29 for Bolivia, .21 for Guatemala). A relevant difference between these two variables is that the national pride variable is highly skewed to the right, with the 3 highest points in the scale concentrating 90% of the answers in the pooled dataset; in the common values variable slightly less than 70% of respondents in the two countries fall in three highest points of the 1 to 7 scale used. In substantive terms, people in general are more inclined to feel very proud of their nationality than to feel that the country actually has common values for most citizens. An empirical consequence of that is that a relevant proportion of respondents rank high in national pride and low in the common values variable.

Independent variables

*Ethnicity*
One of the main causes for confusion in the study of ethnicity in politics is the divorce between a rich or ‘thick’ concept of ethnicity, and a rather ‘thin’ measurement of ethnic categories used in most empirical studies\textsuperscript{35}. Nationally representative data (e.g., census data) use simple ‘labels’ as ethnic categories; these labels then become unquestioned ‘facts’ in the domestic and international scenes. The problem with such a unidimensional treatment of ethnicity is the misrepresentation that comes with a more nuanced and hence accurate measure of the concept or phenomenon. The result of using census ‘labels’ is that scholars and policy makers have fundamentally flawed foundations on which to build their analyses\textsuperscript{36}. The efforts to develop constructivist measures of identities\textsuperscript{37}, the development of diversity indices capturing different dimensions of ethnicity\textsuperscript{38}, or the attempts to ‘model’ their change in time\textsuperscript{39} are very interesting contributions, but do not seem to fully resolve the problem in operational terms.

I decided to use 2 variables for ethnicity trying to avoid the limitations derived from the use of fixed ethnic categories. The two alternative measures of ethnic minority status used in the analysis are: a dummy variable for self identification as indigenous; and a dummy coded 1 if the person spoke an indigenous language as first language.

The sets of individuals that could be classified as indigenous, and thus as members of a particular ethnic minority, overlap only to a limited extent. Correlation between the 2 variables is only .35; not all individuals who identify as indigenous speak an indigenous language (less than half of those individuals who identify as indigenous also have an indigenous language as first language), and not everyone who had an indigenous language as first language identifies as indigenous; so it is safe to say that the two measures actually capture different attributes or dimensions in the concept\textsuperscript{40}. Differences in the two variables are particularly large in Bolivia, where correlation for the two variables is .29, while in Guatemala indigenous identity and speaking a Maya language seem to be more intimately related (r=.48).

A very small number of respondents were excluded from the two samples given that they identify as part of an ethnic minority other than indigenous. In all, 33 interviews corresponding to ‘blacks’ in Bolivia (1%) and 4 to ‘Garifuna’ in Guatemala (0.25%) were excluded. Such small number of cases dropped does not affect the sample’s power of representing each country.

*Socio economic differences*
Wealth measured by number of capital goods in the household was defined as the measure for socioeconomic differences\textsuperscript{41}. The measure is a dummy coded 1 if the person affirmed having less than 2 of the following 5 items: running water inside the home, refrigerator, phone, microwave and washing machine\textsuperscript{42}.

Additionally, an interaction term was built for each of the two ethnicity measures and the wealth variable. This interaction term represents the combined effect of the two variables.

Control variables

- Education level, with three categories: elementary, high school, university or technical.
- A measure of dissatisfaction with the current government, introduced as a political control, and measured in a 1 thru 5 scale in which 1 means ‘very good’ and 5 ‘very bad’.
- A dummy coded 1 for female respondents.
- Age measured in years.
- A dummy coded 1 if the person lives in a rural area.
- A dummy variable for Guatemala, and an interaction term combining a dummy for Guatemala and each ethnicity measure (used only for testing whether a single model could be fit for the two countries).

Is it possible to separate the effect of ethnicity from that of poverty in the context of these two countries? A major challenge to the empirical testing that this paper intends could come from the fact that the ethnic cleavage is in general consistent with socioeconomic differences, or that indigenous people are usually low class individuals and communities\textsuperscript{43}; in terms of the analyses discussed here, if almost all the respondents who identify as indigenous would also have a level of wealth below the median, then the loss of significance of the ethnic identity term could be a product of a loss in number of cases.

As Table 2 below shows, the incidence of poverty is high among those who feel indigenous or spoke a native language during childhood (around two thirds have a level of wealth below the median, while the proportion between non indigenous is one third); however, a substantial portion of those who identify as indigenous and of those who spoke a native language (around a
third, or more the 300 respondents in each case) remains out of the low-wealth cell. The statistical analyses presented and discussed below were based on enough cases to make relatively safe statistical inferences.

--- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE ---

Methods and analyses

In the social sciences it is usually accepted that once an ordinal dependent variable has more than 5 or 7 points, then the use of an Ordinary Least Squares model would produce unbiased results. For this project, a series of OLS models were initially fitted in order to determine whether this simpler method could be used (assuming that, all else being equal, the simpler model would be preferable). In all of them, serious indications of violations of the normality in the distribution of residuals were detected, as well as suspicions about heteroscedasticity. In conclusion, OLS models were not viable for the analyses of these data.

Since the simpler statistical technique could not be used, I opted for an ordinal logistic regression, a form of Generalized Linear Model (GLM) that considers the ordinal nature of the dependent variable and generates a single estimate calculated as the ratio of increment in the probability that the scale reaches the next ‘step’ of the outcome variable with a one unit increase of the independent variable.

The ordinal logistic or proportional odds model is based on the assumption that the change in the probability of observing the immediate value in the scale is proportional across all values of the ordinal scale (i.e.: the rate of change in the probability is constant across all values in the scale). In other words, if we were to independently model the probability of observing each single value of the dependent scale as a function of the independent variable, we expect to see ‘parallel lines’ representing these probabilities. I checked for this assumption (LM and Brant tests) and the results were satisfactory for the overall models; however, some independent variables, particularly in the common values dependent variable models, seemed to violate the parallel lines assumption.
Given that the parallel lines assumption was in fact violated by some of the variables, I decided to perform a different type of tests, the *partial proportional odds model*,\textsuperscript{45} which can be thought of as a compromise between ordinal and multinomial logistic regression. This approach is an adequate alternative for dealing with the violation of the parallel lines assumption in some independent variables. These models impose parallel lines constraints for some variables, while producing different coefficients for each level of the dependent variable for variables that violate the parallel lines assumption. All statistical models presented in the paper employ the partial proportional odds model, and each of the coefficients presented and the resulting overall models are consistent with the parallel lines assumption.

The statistical analysis also requires us to account for the effect of the complex sample design in the variance estimates. The default option for analytical procedures in most statistical software assumes independence of observations (as in a Simple Random Sample). This assumption does not hold under complex sample data as the ones used for this project, in which the sampling distribution itself varies following a normal distribution. Variance estimates need to be calculated in a different way than under independence of observations and no finite limit assumptions\textsuperscript{46}. Results presented in this paper have been produced using robust standard error calculation methods and take into account the weighting criteria for each national sample.

**Results**

Does one single model for each dependent variable fit the data from the two countries? In order to answer this initial question, two models were estimated for each dependent variable with only the ethnicity measure, the country dummy, and the interaction term between both. If the interaction terms between the country and the ethnicity measure turn out to be statistically significant, then each country would require an individual model and it is not possible to use a single model for the two. Table 3 below summarizes the results for these tests..

--------------------------- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE -------------------------------

The results in Table 3 indicate that the effect of ethnicity as self-id on attachment to the national political community is common for Bolivia and Guatemala. Only when we consider the effect of ethnicity as language on the nationality pride measure of strength of the political community do the results indicate that the effect might be different for the two countries. In the
following section I present results for the three cells for which a single model can be estimated, grouped by the ethnicity variables.

**Ethnicity as a self identification**

Table 4 below presents the effect of ethnicity measured as self identification on each of the two dependent variables, nationality pride and common values, including all the specified statistical controls. Models 4 (for the nationality pride measure) and 6 (with the common value measured as dependent variable) are the fully specified models. They differ from models 3 and 5 in the fact that the interaction term between indigenous self id and wealth below median is included there.

--- TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE ---

When the nationality pride measure is used (model 3) the coefficient for indigenous identity appears as a highly significant negative predictor of attachment to the political community. Here, other things controlled for, individuals who identify as indigenous are around 25% less likely to feel very proud of their nationality than those who have another ethnic identity. Wealth does not seem to have any effect on the level of strength of national identity. Individuals from Guatemala are almost three times more likely to feel very proud of their nationality than Bolivians. Other factors with significant results are dissatisfaction with the current government and age.

Model 4 has all covariates already included in model 3, but also adds the interaction term between indigenous self identity and wealth under the median. The inclusion of this variable makes a big difference: the dummy for indigenous identity does not have a relevant effect in the model anymore. What has a significant effect now is the interaction term between indigenous self identification and wealth below the median; individuals who are both poor and identify as indigenous are around 34% less likely to feel very proud of their nationality than those who are not poor and not indigenous. The influence of other variables in the model is similar to that discussed in model 3. It is also relevant to note that the variable used for socioeconomic differences has no effect on the level of attachment to the political community even when the interaction term with ethnic identity is not included (model 3).
When the common values measure of strength of the political community is considered, the measure for indigenous self ID also loses its significant effect once the interaction term is included. However, the interaction between indigenous ID and wealth below the median is not significant. What remains significant after the inclusion of the interaction term is the wealth measure: even controlling for other factors including the combination of being indigenous and poor, those who have a level of wealth below the median in the sample are around 16% less likely to believe that Bolivians or Guatemalans share common values. So wealth (or poverty, as measured here by wealth below the median) has an effect on the idea of shared values that is completely independent from ethnic identity.

There are other relevant differences between the results for nationality pride and common values worth commenting. First, the level of education has a strong positive effect on the idea of shared values, but no effect on nationality pride. Second, age increases the probability of having a high nationality pride, but has no effect on common values. Third, Guatemalans are prouder of their nationality than Bolivians, but there are no clear differences in the acceptance of the idea that shared values unite the nation. Finally, both the Guatemala and the female dummy variables have an effect on the idea of common values that is not constant across the scale of the dependent variable.

Ethnicity as a linguistic attribute

The results show that language spoken at home during childhood cannot be treated in a model combining data from the two countries when the nationality pride measure is considered; but a general effect is apparent for the second dependent variable considered here, common values. Table 5 contains model 7 with the initial specification, and 8 is the fully specified model with the interaction term between wealth below median and native language spoken during childhood.

--- TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE ---

The same pattern noted above is evident here: once the interaction term between the ethnic socioeconomic variables is included, the effect of ethnicity on the strength of the political community becomes insignificant, but the effect of socioeconomic differences persists. As in model 4, individuals who spoke an indigenous language at childhood and who are below the
median of wealth in the sample are around 30% less likely to agree with the idea of shared national values than native Spanish speakers non poor people.

Socioeconomic status seems to affect the idea of shared values beyond its combination with the ethnicity variable. Those who have a level of wealth below the median in the sample are around 16% less likely to agree with the idea that Bolivians or Guatemalans share common values when compared to individuals with better material conditions, or above the median of the measure used here.

**Additional evidence**

Additional findings from Bolivia seem to confirm that identification as indigenous does not negatively affect the strength of citizens’ attachment to the national political community; the available data suggest that there could be a positive relationship between particular affiliations and the national political community. The 2004 LAPOP Bolivian survey includes a series of questions about how strongly does the respondent identify herself: as a Bolivian citizen; with her Department; the Quechua culture; the Aymara culture; and the *Camba* culture\(^4^8\). The use of these questions here does not imply assuming some equivalence between these three categories; on the contrary, it shows that very different types of particular identities can be positively correlated with national identities.

As the bivariate correlations between the strength of the feeling as a Bolivian citizen and other regional and ethnic identities in Table 6 shows, particular identities seem to be positively related with the attachment to the national political community\(^4^9\). The bivariate correlation of feeling a Bolivian citizen with the regional identification is particularly strong; the relationships with feeling part of the Quechua and *Camba* culture are also substantively large and statistically significant; feeling part of the Aymara culture does not have the same large positive relationship with feelings as a Bolivian citizen, but it does not affect it negatively either. The evidence suggests that, in Bolivia, feeling part of a particular cultural identity, such as *Aymara*, *Quechua*, or *Camba*, tends to increase the level of attachment that individuals have to the national political community.
Discussion

Results obtained in this study suggest that the effect of self identification as indigenous in both measures of attachment to the political community is similar across the two countries under consideration. We can thus talk about a similar pattern for ethnicity – when defined as self identification – in its relationship with the political community in the two countries with the largest proportion of indigenous population in Latin America, despite their many differences. Both in Guatemala and in Bolivia, individuals who identify themselves as indigenous do not feel less attached to national political community than individuals with other identities unless ethnic differences coincide with socioeconomic ones. This evidence suggests that hypothesis 1, negative correlation between particular and national identities, should be reconsidered, if not completely abandoned.

If we focus on the linguistic feature of ethnicity, the variable behaves in a different way in relation to the two dependent variables considered here. When the common values measure is taken into account, there is a general effect similar to that of self identification. When the level of nationality pride is considered, the effect is not the same for the two countries and should be treated as country-specific: language seems to be a much stronger differentiation factor in the Bolivian context than in the Guatemalan one.

The fact that three of the four combinations tested here are similar in the two countries suggests that the idea of a common effect of ethnicity on the process of construction of the nation in Latin America is at least plausible. Despite large historical, cultural, and economic differences between the two countries, Guatemala and Bolivia seem to have similar patterns in the relationship between ethnic and national identities.

It is evident that most people who speak an indigenous language as a native tongue will have some accent when using Spanish; additionally, translation requires some effort and often involves communicating with a Spanish language native speaker in uneven terms. Given that Spanish is the language used for most State-related activities (and most ‘official’ transactions), it is possible that the combination of accent and grammatical structure that can be called linguistic competences works as a mechanism of discrimination and produces a weaker sense of inclusion among those non-native Spanish speakers. While this appears to be a plausible explanation,
understanding why this seems to be the case in Bolivia and not in Guatemala requires further specific research.

Leaving for a moment the issue of ethnic identities aside, there is another difference between results from Guatemala and Bolivia presented here: Guatemalans on average feel significantly prouder of their nationality than average Bolivians. In fact, Bolivians tend to have lower levels of pride in their nationality than citizens in most other Latin American countries50. The causes for the lower level of attachment Bolivians feel for their political community are not clear, and their identification demands further efforts and specific studies. Average Guatemalans are not more convinced than average Bolivians of the idea that their political community is united by common values shared by most of the population.

Both dependent variables employed for this paper focus on the national political community, either on the sense of pride that citizens have in relation to their nationality, or their degree of belief that there are shared values by members of the nation. There are also relevant subnational levels of government that are likely to produce some loyalty to those local political communities; in countries as the ones studied here, where the national State has historically had a weak presence in distant areas, subnational spaces are likely to become strong referents for citizens. Is it possible that some citizens find these local levels more relevant and identify with them as an alternative to the national political community? This is an empirical question that should be addressed in a specific study, but it is possible to hypothesize that, given that these local spaces are framed within the national state, they could be reinforcing the attachment of citizens to the national political community, instead of competing with it.

In the statistical analyses presented in this paper, once an interaction term for the combination of having a low socioeconomic level with indigenous identity or indigenous language is introduced in the models, the independent effect of being indigenous on the level of attachment to the political community disappears. This is true for both the nationality pride measure and the common values measure of strength of the national political community, and seems to support strongly hypotheses 3. That suggests that there is something beyond ethnicity, something related to a combination of poverty and a hierarchically lower status level that negatively affects people’s relationship with the nation. Consequently, in the two countries, any policy potentially oriented toward increasing the sense of attachment of citizens to the national
community should address the combination of ethnic and socioeconomic inequality and not only one of the two factors.

Results from Bolivia presented here suggest that feeling part of one’s particular group, either in the form of ethnic or regional identities, might be positive for one’s feeling as a citizen. Identity might be playing the role of social capital suggested by Putnam and other authors, in the sense that feeling part of a particular group might be reinforcing individuals’ bonds to the political nation.

Supporting hypothesis 2, poverty seems to be an obstacle for the consolidation of strong and cohesive national political communities, independently of its connection to ethnicity. Individuals who have a level of wealth below the median are people who have only 1 or none of the following items in their households: running water inside the home, refrigerator, phone, microwave and washing machine. This group has consistently shown to be less likely to agree with the idea that there are common values shared by all members of the national political community irrespective of ethnicity.

Why is it necessary to disentangle the effect of ethnicity from that of socioeconomic differences in a region where they are intimately related? The first answer points to the fact that socioeconomic differences can be overcome. And that means that, if the results found here are true, the appropriate ways to accommodate difference in these countries should focus on generating development programs targeting indigenous populations in order to boost their economic capacities and overcome their disadvantaged socioeconomic status. This is clearly a hard road to follow in the sense that it requires major state-guided economic decisions and efforts attempting to transform a system of economic exclusion; but the difficulties should not make this one an impossible solution, particularly because of the obvious implications that this issue currently has in terms of justice and equal citizenship.

The second answer points out to a societal transformation in which ethnicity ceases to be a system of social stratification. A few years ago this would sound as an utopia even more difficult to achieve than the economic one; however, the active political participation of indigenous actors in national politics particularly in the Andes seems to point out the end of the hegemonic control of the State by non indigenous groups, opening the possibility to reverse the hierarchical
stratification of society along ethnic lines. The fact that an indigenous leader holds national power, as in the case of Bolivia and Evo Morales, should imply that, at least symbolically, being indigenous does not mean being a second-class citizen, even if socioeconomic cleavages persist.

And that brings us to a final point about the constructivist understanding of ethnicity: How class identities relate with ethnic identities, and how they mutually nurse and reinforce each other. It seems particularly relevant to investigate the relation of the construction process of the politically relevant difference with established socioeconomic differences. How a politically active identity is constructed and how does it depart from objective inequalities or linguistic differences as part of a historical process should be studied more in depth.

**Conclusion**

This paper has found evidence for the hypotheses that suggest that a), ethnicity affects the attachment to the national political community only when it is combined with an additional form of social stratification such as socioeconomic differences; and b), that socioeconomic differences have a direct effect on the strength of citizens' attachment to the nation that is independent of the effect of other variables.

The effect of ethnicity on the strength of the political community seems to be conditioned by socioeconomic status. The combination of being part of an ethnic group that is placed at the bottom of system of social stratification based on ethnic lines and being poorer than the average person seems to weaken the bond between citizens and the national community; beyond this combined effect, ethnicity does not seem to have an independent effect. This pattern seems to be independent of the measure of ethnicity and the measure of strength of the national political community chosen.

If the findings presented here hold true, the implications for the primordialist definition of ethnicity are lapidary: strong bonds to particular identities (such as the Quechua or the regional identities in Bolivia) are positively related with the feeling of attachment to the political nation. Ethnic identities do not seem to generate a type of loyalty that necessarily is stronger than the national one, and the loyalties they generate do not seem to be mutually exclusive. Thus, the political community required for democracy does not require the existence of an ethnically homogeneous nation.
On the other hand, poverty seems to have an effect on the strength of the political community that is independent of the interaction between socioeconomic status and ethnicity. This points out the importance of social class theories for the treatment of issues that too often and easily are categorized as caused by ethnic differences.
Notes


5 Mill, pp. 391.

6 Rustow, pp. 350-352.


10 Linz and Stepan, 16-37.


15 On this perspective see, among others, the vast work of Anthony Smith.


22 Yashar, pp. 54-84.


29 Different policies aiming to solve ethnicity-based socioeconomic inequality differences have been implemented by governments of the two countries over the last decades, but inequality has remained pervasive. Much of the efforts of the Evo Morales government since his election in Bolivia 2005 aim at equalizing the country; however, data used in this work come from a year before the Morales election. On the correlation between poverty and indigenous identity in Latin America see Jorge Pascharopoulos, and Harry Anthony Patrinos, eds. Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America. An Empirical Analysis, Washington: The World Bank, 1994; for the same relationship in the two countries see Pascharopoulos, "Ethnicity, Education, and Earnings in Bolivia and Guatemala".

30 A detailed description of the LAPOP project, as well as access to reports and databases can be obtained at www.lapopsurveys.org.

31 For a more detailed description of the sample and for the general national results of the study Mitchell Seligson, Daniel Moreno, and Vivian Schwarz, Auditoría de la democracia. Bolivia 2004 (La Paz: Universidad Catolica Boliviana - USAID, 2005).


It is plausible, for example, that this measure captures elements of the political community as a modern political identity, as this paper conceptualizes it, altogether with elements of nationalism as a type of belief on the superiority of one’s own community. While it seems impossible to empirically disentangle these two concepts at this stage, I decided to use this variable in the analysis considering that some modest nationalism seems necessary in order to have a strong political community.


Fearon, pp. 195-222.


The strategy of using two different measures allows to ‘capture’ the effect of different dimensions of ethnicity, without relying on one single facet of a multi-faced phenomenon. It is necessary to state that this decision greatly reduces the problem of simplifying complex and relational categories into fixed ethnic labels, but does not solve it completely.

I opted for this variable for socioeconomic differences because it directly taps on the material conditions of well-being that a person has in her everyday life, something that questions about education or access to other public services do not necessarily touch. Additionally, this variable has far less missing cases in the dataset than the direct question about income.

The median for the 0 to 5 count variable is 2, so I decided to separate the two groups at this point (below the median and equal or above it).

Pascharopoulos and Patrinos, pp. 205-218.


The table presents odds ratios, which in an ordered logistic regression show the ratio of the probability that the scale of the dependent variable reaches one “step” higher for each increase in the independent variable; when the odds ratio has a value less than 1, then the effect of the variable is negative, while the effect is positive if the odds ratio figure exceeds 1.

This set of questions does not assume that there is necessarily one Quechua (or Aymara, or Camba) ‘culture’ as a whole, with delineated limits and characteristics; the intention of these questions is to establish how much does the respondent identify herself with ethnic categories defined in a cultural way.

Part of this evidence has been presented before in Seligson, Moreno, and Schwarz, pp. 53.

Seligson, Moreno, and Schwarz, pp. 39-42.

Table 1: Expected relationship between ethnicity, socioeconomic differences, and strength of the attachment to the political community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity / Socio economic differences</th>
<th>Non-minority</th>
<th>Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Poor</td>
<td>1. STRONG (Reference)</td>
<td>2. NONE / WEAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3. NONE / WEAK</td>
<td>4. WEAK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Identity as indigenous and wealth below median cross-tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth below median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic minority status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self ID as indigenous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Can one model be used for the two countries?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity Variable Variable</th>
<th>Self ID</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality Pride</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Values</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Models for ethnicity as indigenous self ID (Odds ratios*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 3 Nationality Pride</th>
<th>Model 4 Nationality Pride</th>
<th>Model 5 Common Values</th>
<th>Model 6 Common Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous self id</td>
<td>.756**</td>
<td>.985</td>
<td>.762**</td>
<td>.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth below median</td>
<td>1.046</td>
<td>1.162</td>
<td>.808**</td>
<td>.842*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction indigenous wealth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>.641*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>3.181**</td>
<td>3.192**</td>
<td>.421 (p.1) - 1.602 (p.6)**</td>
<td>.444 (p. 1) – 1.528 (p.6)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government</td>
<td>.825**</td>
<td>.826**</td>
<td>.881**</td>
<td>.878**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1.243**</td>
<td>1.247**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.936</td>
<td>.939</td>
<td>.698 (p.2) - 1.209 (p.5)*</td>
<td>.695 (p.2) – 1.201 (p.5)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.007**</td>
<td>1.008*</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>1.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>3,977</td>
<td>3,977</td>
<td>3,861</td>
<td>3,861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. p < .05; ** p < .01; *Odds ratios = exp(b) of the partial proportional odds models
Insignificant coefficients from variables that violate the parallel lines assumption were omitted from the table. In cases were a variable violates the assumption but produces significant coefficients, minimum and maximum significant values are presented with a reference to the value of the dependent variable in which they appear.
Table 5: Models for ethnicity as language spoken (Odds ratios)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable label</th>
<th>Model 7 Common Values</th>
<th>Model 8 Common Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous language</td>
<td>.818*</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealth below median</td>
<td>.771**</td>
<td>.843*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction indigenous wealth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>.684*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>.358 (p.1) – 1.379 (p.6)**</td>
<td>.357 (p.1) – 1.385 (p.6)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for government</td>
<td>.878**</td>
<td>.878**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>1.215**</td>
<td>1.221**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.001</td>
<td>1.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4,211</td>
<td>4,211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. p < .05; ** p < .01; ♦ Odds ratios = exp(b) of the partial proportional odds models
Insignificant coefficients from variables that violate the parallel lines assumption were omitted from the table. In cases were a variable violates the assumption but produces significant coefficients, minimum and maximum significant values are presented with a reference to the value of the dependent variable in which they appear.

Table 6: Correlations with *How strongly do you feel as a Bolivian Citizen*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional ID (Feels part of her Department)</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional ID (Feels part of her Department)</td>
<td>.417(*)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID as Aymara (Feels part of the Aymara culture)</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>2993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID as Quechua (Feels part of the Quechua culture)</td>
<td>.128(*)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID as Camba (Feels part of the Camba culture)</td>
<td>.117(*)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the .01 level