

**Circulating citizenship practices: Bolivian routes of migration,
hometown associations, and development**

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Abstract

International migration has become a widespread phenomenon across the Andes in recent decades. In Bolivia, where approximately 20 percent of the population lives abroad, long-term routes of migration have transformed cities and rural areas within the country and beyond. This dissertation examines the lives of Bolivian migrants from the Valle Alto of Cochabamba in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. Drawing on Bolivian scholars, I analyze the non-linear paths taken by migrants and the varied nature of indigenous experiences through the vertical archipelago model. Using a collaborative multi-sited ethnography of migrant organizations, I explore the circulation of money, values and practices between migrant settlement nodes and places of origin. I show that Bolivian hometown associations have adapted rural organizational practices to a suburban U.S. landscape while also transforming places in the Valle Alto. I also analyze migrant efforts to negotiate their belonging within changing citizenship regimes in Washington D.C. and Cochabamba. By playing soccer, performing folkloric dance in public spaces and constructing transnational houses and public works projects, Bolivian migrants are able to be recognized as members of communities in Cochabamba and the Washington D.C. metro area even if they are not physically present or formal members of the national polity. Finally, I analyze the decisions of migrants to stay in the Washington or return to Bolivia through the lens of gender and the family, highlighting the importance of family responsibility and fatherhood for male migrants. The case of migration from the rural municipality of Arbieta offers important insights into both the struggles and opportunities confronting migrants as they traverse international, regional and local boundaries and put

down roots in multiple places. Ultimately, I argue that migrant practices are changing what it means to be a *campesino* (peasant) from the Valle Alto. While Bolivian migrants are using collective remittances and the intention to return to construct a reformulated rural identity based on long-distance ties and investment in the rural economy, migrant identities also have to be located within a broader understanding of belonging that takes into account the deep roots that migrants have developed in multiple communities.

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Chapter One

A multi-sited ethnography for multi-sited lives

Arbieto, March 2011

In early March, the normally sleepy town of Arbieto is full of activity. Carnival, a Catholic festival largely celebrated with dancing, water and paint in cities across Latin America, lasts for the better part of three weeks in rural Bolivia. During February and March, *arbieteños* living in Argentina, Spain and the United States return to Bolivia for the festivities. Vacant houses, abandoned for most of the year, are suddenly occupied. New trucks with foreign license plates congest the pot-hole filled dirt roads. Empty plazas become lively centers of activity after dark. As celebrations rotate among dozens of tiny villages, streets are filled with former residents and visitors from the city of Cochabamba who dance and drink from morning until late at night.

While returning migrants are usually the center of attention for Carnival, this year Arbieto residents are preoccupied with a more famous visitor. The mayor has finally fulfilled his campaign promise of bringing Bolivia's president to Arbieto. Evo Morales is attending the annual *Fería del Durazno* (peach festival) to inaugurate a soccer field built by migrants living in the United States. The week prior to the *Fería*, municipal officials hurry around the town cleaning the plaza, widening streets and mounting the national colors of red, yellow and green alongside blue, black and white MAS flags (the Movement Towards Socialism, Morales's political party) on buildings around town. Visiting migrants from the United States meet several times that week to discuss their

financial contributions with the mayor, who himself lived in Buenos Aires and West Palm Beach for almost 30 years.

The morning of the *Fería*, members of the 42 communities¹ in the Arbiето municipality² gather on the newly inaugurated soccer field behind the local school. Vendors sit at tables surrounding the field, almost invisible behind huge piles of peaches picked in Arbiето and several neighboring municipalities. Bands play on the hastily constructed stage at mid-field while the announcer promises the imminent arrival of the invited dignitaries. At two o'clock, almost four hours behind schedule, Morales's caravan arrives. Supporters rush to greet the president and vice-president, who are immediately given flower and peach necklaces and showered with confetti. After listening to speeches by a long line of local officials, Morales stands up. A famous soccer fanatic, Morales marvels at the beautiful new field that had been built by migrants over the span of 20 years. Even though they had left Bolivia, Morales lauds the migrants for "always returning and for never forgetting their *pueblo*."³

But while Morales was clearly impressed with their efforts, he insists that the migrants and their families should eventually return to Bolivia. Under Morales this prospect has become the centerpiece of migration policy in La Paz, where the foreign ministry is developing a *plan de retorno* (return plan) that seeks to encourage Bolivians living outside of the country to come back. While he does not address this policy directly,

¹ In the Valle Alto, rural settlements are referred to as "communities." To avoid confusion with other types of communities (see chapter three), I generally employ the more generic term of "village."

² Arbiето refers to both a municipality and a town (the seat of the municipality). Because the distinction is important for local community members and migrants living abroad, I include the additional political description whenever referring to either throughout the dissertation.

³ *Pueblo* often means town, but in Spanish it can also refer to all residents within a nation-state.

Morales suggests that even if migrants could not return permanently right now, at the very least they could travel to Arbiesto to participate in the 2011 census. At this, the crowd begins to murmur. One man calls out, “and what happens to those who do not have documents?” People gathered in front of the stage nod and voice their agreement, mostly under their breath.

Northern Virginia, May 2011

Almost two months later, dozens of Bolivian migrants gather at a park in a Northern Virginia suburb. Two teams of *jóvenes* (young people) play a short-sided game on a dusty soccer field while a group of older men sit on the concrete wall built around the field to protect against erosion. The men are all from Villa Verde, a small village 20 minutes northwest of the town of Arbiesto. Like most conversations at soccer games that spring, the men initially talk about Carnival. Even though dozens of migrants visited Bolivia a month earlier, only a few men on the wall had. Despite the rumored emergence of a cheap flight from Washington D.C. to Cochabamba via Panama, the cost of the trip remains prohibitive to many. Furthermore, some migrants lack the necessary legal documents to leave and easily come back to the United States. Still, the men on the wall had all heard detailed accounts of the Carnival celebrations from family members and friends or had seen videos posted on YouTube.

The game is hardly underway when a van from the County drives onto the field. The players stop and several go over to talk with the local official, who speaks to the young men through his rolled-down window. Apparently responding to a complaint from

a local resident, the official tells the players to leave the field immediately. Although the County does not require a permit to use the park, it prohibits “organized” soccer matches. The transgression of this vague rule is clearly indicated by the Bolivian and Argentine jerseys worn by the two teams and the captains offer only a mild protest. But as the migrants file slowly off the field, the men on the wall complain quietly about the parks department. “This is our field,” a man named Fernando⁴ says. “We have been coming here for 20 years.” The other men nod, remembering how when they first moved to the surrounding apartments in 1985 the park was little more than a grass field. Since then the county has added a baseball diamond, tennis courts and basketball hoops, but migrants from Villa Verde continue to play soccer on the small field.

Organizing these gatherings has grown considerably more complicated as Bolivian soccer leagues have multiplied in recent decades. Most of the year, migrants from Villa Verde spend Sunday mornings watching the community’s young men play other teams from the Arbieto municipality in an outer Virginia suburb almost an hour from the District of Columbia. Others travel to the southern metro along the I-95 highway to watch the small but growing women’s soccer league. But every Sunday afternoon and at least one night during the week, Villa Verde migrants gather in this small park to eat, play soccer, and hold community meetings. Within the large and increasingly dispersed Bolivian community of the Washington D.C. area, the park represents a known and comforting space for Villa Verde families.

According to the men sitting on the wall, the policy prohibiting organized soccer is designed to allow children to use the fields. When Fernando reminds the others of this

⁴ All names, except public figures and those otherwise indicated, are pseudonyms.

policy, another migrant named Miguel responds angrily: “*pero no están nuestros niños aquí?* (but aren’t our children here?)” Indeed, while the men play soccer, small groups of women sit in camping chairs along the sidelines alternating between support and barbed critiques of their husbands. Around them, young children run around the field and are occasionally corralled into the small playground by their parents. The men insist that they will continue to use the park. Miguel implores one of the captains to visit the county parks and recreation department, while Fernando suggests that the community start playing on Saturday and Sunday because the official in the van doesn’t work on the weekend.

I. Bolivian routes of migration

Taking place on soccer fields almost 4,000 miles apart, these two events represent how Bolivian lives have been shaped by long-term routes of migration between the rural municipality of Arbieta and suburban Washington D.C. People from Cochabamba, a department in Bolivia’s central highland valleys, often refer to themselves as “world travelers” because of their long history of migration to the mines of Potosí and Chile, the sugarcane fields in northern Argentina and, in recent decades, global cities in Europe, the Middle East and the United States. The Valle Alto (literally, high valley) region, where Arbieta is located, has often been at the center of these sustained patterns of circular migration. Like other rural areas across the global South, towns and villages across the Valle Alto have been transformed by out-migration and the circulation of money, values and practices between migrant settlement nodes and places of origin. As migrants live

and work outside of Bolivia for years or even decades, they build lives that stretch across international boundaries and incorporate multiple places.

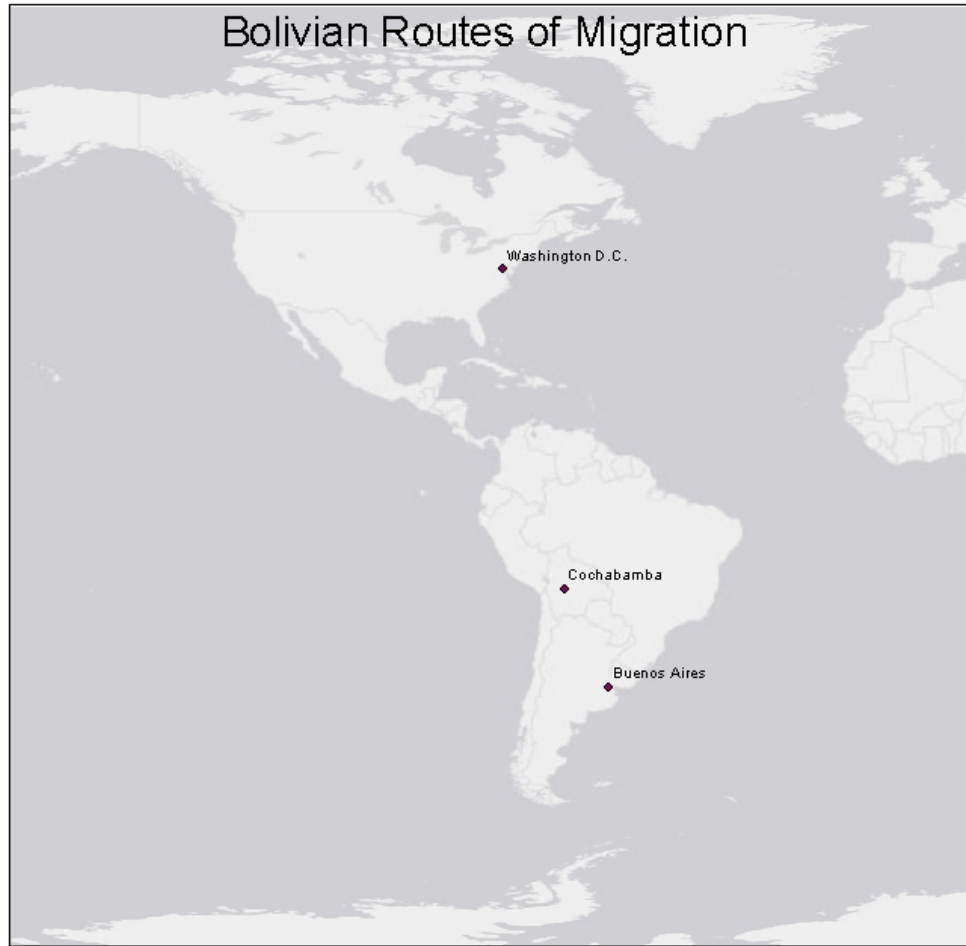
People have long moved across national borders but the size and visibility of international migration has increased dramatically in recent decades. By 2010, more than 200 million people lived outside of their country of origin (United Nations 2010a). New communication and transportation technologies, as well as extensive social networks, allow migrants to maintain strong and durable connections with family and community members who remain behind. In response, scholars have highlighted the increasingly *transnational* nature of people's lives (Basch et al. 1994), arguing that migrants are often able to be part of two or more societies simultaneously (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

The events on soccer fields in Arbieta and Virginia demonstrate how Bolivian lives are increasingly unfolding in spaces that are not bound by national territories. Scholars estimate that around two million Bolivians, approximately 20 percent of the country's total population, live abroad.⁵ Most live in neighboring Argentina while migration to Brazil and Spain has expanded dramatically in recent years. Less attention has focused on one of the oldest and most established Bolivian migrant communities located outside of Washington D.C. At least 40,000 migrants currently live in the region, a significant percentage of the more than 100,000 Bolivians in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a).

⁵ Estimates of Bolivian international migration vary widely. Official statistics show 1.6 million emigrants (IOM 2011) but a number of Bolivian scholars and government agencies have suggested that between two and 2.5 million people live abroad (Godard and Sandoval 2008; Hinojosa 2006; de la Torre forthcoming). I use the middle estimate of two million to reflect the likely undercounting of undocumented Bolivian migrants living abroad.

This dissertation examines the lives of migrants from Arbieta in the Washington D.C. metropolitan region and their multifaceted connections with Cochabamba. It builds on and extends the work of Bolivian migration scholars, particularly Leonardo de la Torre Ávila. De la Torre has published several books in Spanish (2006; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007) and produced a film documentary (2010) about out-migration from Arbieta and other places in Valle Alto. But although he conducted some fieldwork in the United States and has connections with migrant organizations, this research is largely focused on the impact of migration on development in the Valle Alto. By studying the transnational practices of Bolivian migrants from the United States, this dissertation contributes to emerging scholarship on the characteristics of Andean migration and its implications for both sending and receiving societies. It also begins to analyze the far-reaching impact of the global economic crisis and heightened immigration restrictions on routes of migration and migrant belonging. Thus, this case study offers important insights into both the struggles and opportunities confronting migrants as they traverse international, regional and local boundaries and put down roots in multiple places.

Figure 1: Bolivian routes of migration



Unlike other cities along the Eastern Seaboard, Washington D.C. historically had a small immigrant population. As the United States transitioned from a manufacturing to a service economy beginning in the 1970s, the Washington region expanded rapidly and now has more than 5 million people in the metropolitan area. It has also emerged as a new immigrant gateway (Price and Singer 2008). Foreign-born residents, who make up more than 20 percent of the region's population, are dispersed throughout the District of Columbia and the multi-ethnic suburbs of Northern Virginia and Maryland (Vicino et al.

2011). This is an increasingly common pattern in U.S. metropolitan areas (Wilson and Singer 2011), although Washington's immigrant population is unique in its diversity and high concentration in the suburbs.⁶

Most stories of Bolivian migration to Washington D.C. begin in the 1950s, when well-educated members of the country's small upper class moved to the area to work at the embassy or international financial institutions. They largely settled in the District of Columbia or Arlington, an inner-ring suburb across the Potomac River in Northern Virginia (see figure 2). The Bolivian population expanded dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s as new migrants came from the city of Cochabamba and surrounding rural areas, particularly municipalities like Arbieta in the Valle Alto. In the last decade, rising housing costs and work pushed migrants further out across the metro area, especially to Fairfax County in Virginia and to Montgomery County in suburban Maryland. Today, Bolivian migrants are highly diverse in terms of their ethnicity, education, social class and legal status in the United States.

Migrants from Arbieta first arrived in Arlington in the early 1980s. One of the first migrants from the municipality, Wilson, had spent several years during the 1960s working in Los Angeles before returning to Bolivia and then moving on to Argentina. In 1983, he migrated to Washington D.C. because friends from the neighboring city of Cliza had already found work in the region. In these early days, when only a handful of Bolivians lived in the area, Wilson recalled playing soccer with only four or five other

⁶ According to estimates from the American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2010b), 21 percent of Washington D.C. metro area residents are foreign-born. The foreign-born population is highly diverse, with approximately 40 percent from Latin America, 35 percent from Asia, 14 percent from Africa, and 9 percent from Europe.

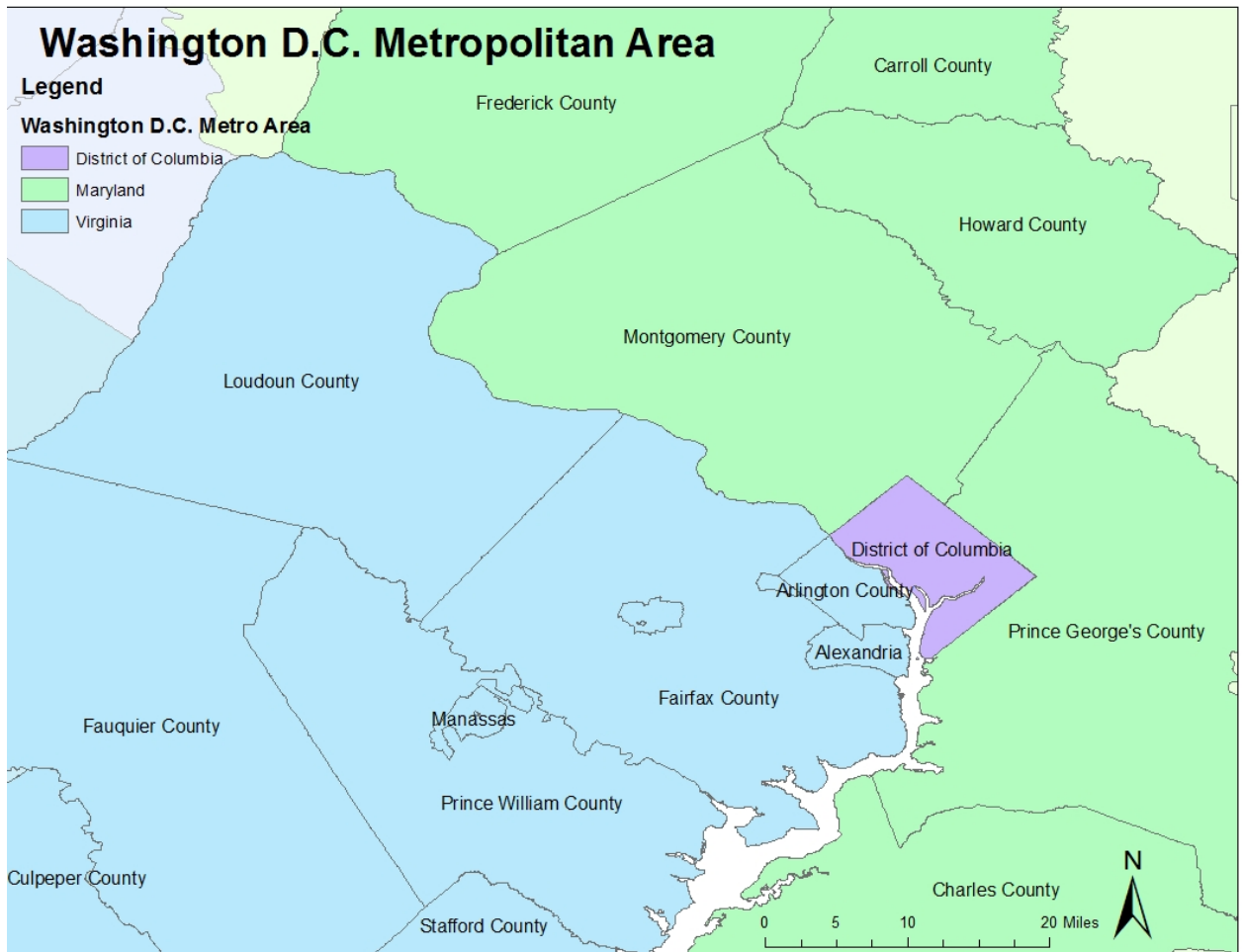
migrants. Games were interrupted on most Saturdays, which were spent picking up friends and relatives arriving from Cochabamba. Before long, Wilson told me, the soccer field was full. Drawing on extensive social and labor networks developed during their sojourns in Argentina, Venezuela, Israel and other countries, men from Arbieto quickly inserted themselves into the region's booming construction industry. Most early migrants were men, but this changed during the 1990s and 2000s as women joined their husbands and found employment as domestic workers or with office-cleaning companies.⁷

As a relatively small group within the multi-ethnic Washington suburbs, Bolivians are not highly visible. However, they have transformed the landscape through a variety of economic, cultural and religious activities. Bolivian-owned restaurants and travel agencies dot shopping centers across Virginia and Maryland, and migrants have also inscribed their presence into local communities through soccer and folkloric dance. Every weekend and most weeknights, Bolivian migrants and their children gather in public parks, churches and school parking lots to rehearse and perform Bolivian cultural practices. These activities, as I show in this dissertation, serve two primary purposes. First, by performing explicitly Bolivian activities in public spaces, migrants are claiming space and belonging within the Washington D.C. metro. Second, these activities also produce social and cultural spaces that are central to the formation of migrant communities and identities (Ehrkamp 2005).

⁷ See Jokisch and Pribilsky (2002) and Hinojosa (2009) for a general discussion of the feminization of migration in the Andes. Marie Price (2006) has argued that although Bolivians in the United States are relatively well-educated compared to other Latin American immigrants, many work in so-called "unskilled" jobs because they lack professional credentials and formal legal status in the U.S.

Soccer fields and folkloric dance performances are sites of simultaneously local and transnational participation. My research focuses particular attention on soccer leagues organized by Bolivian hometown associations (HTAs). While activities largely take place in the Washington D.C. metro area, HTAs are oriented towards sending communities in Arbieta and fund public works projects through collective remittances. Migrants transfer money, work skills and values through long-distance social connections and physical travel to Arbieta during vacations (for those with legal status in the United States), as well as through more permanent return migration.

Figure 2: Map of Washington D.C. area



Andean transnationalism and the vertical archipelago model

Any study of Bolivian migration must take into account the country's long history of interaction with and subordinate position among global and transnational flows. When Spanish conquistadores arrived in the Andes at the beginning of the 16th Century, much of Bolivia was controlled by the vast Incan empire that stretched from present-day Ecuador to Chile. The Spanish quickly overthrew the Incas and set about extracting silver from Potosí through indigenous and African forced labor. The raw materials at the center of the colonial economy fueled the emergence of global trading networks (Mann 2011) and eventually a new world economic system with Europe at its center (Dussel 1995; Quijano 2000). It also set the stage for Bolivia's continued dependence on the export of primary goods and natural resources.

In the decades following the country's 1952 Revolution, which was moderated by substantial military and economic aid from the United States (Klein 1992), transnational flows played a central role in the Bolivian economy and political system. Most notably, indigenous movements across the region have drawn on international human rights norms and transnational advocacy networks since the 1960s to become important political actors. Indigenous peoples in Bolivia make up approximately 60 percent of the population, one of the highest percentages in Latin America. Challenging their historic and continued social, political and economic marginalization, indigenous movements have transformed Bolivia through protests and participation in formal politics (Kohl and Farthing 2006).

The emergence of indigenous movements has occurred, uneasily, alongside dramatic neoliberal social, political and economic reforms. Starting in the 1970s, Bolivian governments adopted a series of policies encouraged by economists and policymakers in the United States. Structural adjustment reforms devastated much of the country's economy and helped to drive hundreds of thousands of rural *campesinos* (peasants) to settle in expanding urban centers (Gill 2000). Neoliberal multicultural reforms (Hale 2002), especially decentralization, also created new spaces for indigenous political actors at local and national scales (Postero 2007a). Indigenous movements took advantage of these spaces during a cycle of protest in the early 2000s against privatization and neoliberal policies that culminated in the 2005 election of the country's first self-identified indigenous president, Evo Morales.

Sustained economic crisis over this period also led Bolivians and other Andeans to move abroad in staggering numbers. Bolivian scholars from a variety of disciplines have portrayed international migration to Argentina, the United States and Europe as a globalized extension of longstanding Andean mobility and systems of reciprocity (Hinojosa et al. 2002; Hinojosa 2004; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; Ferrufino Coqueugniot 2009; Ferrufino et al. 2007). These accounts draw on John Murra's (1967) theory of the "vertical archipelago" to explain diverse livelihood strategies that stretch across international boundaries and, like pre-Inca ethnic groups, link together people living in different ecological zones. Although there are obvious differences between pre-Columbian social forms and contemporary international migration, these scholars argue that Andean migrants living abroad maintain close ties with their rural communities of

origin and draw on indigenous cultural resources, most notably the Andean institutions of reciprocity such as the *ayni*, to maintain and strengthen existing social networks.

The vertical archipelago model, as I elaborate in chapter two, offers two main contributions to our understanding of contemporary Andean migration. First, it demonstrates that transnational connections are constructed through specific ties and in particular places. While transnationalism scholarship has made a number of contributions to our understanding of migration, it continues to view migration as a largely frictionless movement across borders (but see R. Smith 2006 and M. Smith 2001 for two notable critiques). By focusing on the livelihood practices that connect settlements in different locations, Andean migration scholars have highlighted the multidirectional nature of mobility in the Andes and shown that transnational identity is always rooted in places and connections across space. Second, the vertical archipelago model highlights how indigenous cultural practices are shaping migrant settlement and continued ties to sending communities. Migration research in Latin America, which has long focused exclusively on *mestizo* (mixed-race) migrants, has recently begun to pay more attention to indigenous migration as a result of increased migration from southern Mexico to the United States (Stephen 2007).

This focus is relevant for migration from Cochabamba even though the region holds a decidedly ambiguous position within Bolivian discourses of indigeneity (Albro 2010). While Quechua⁸ is widely spoken throughout rural and urban Cochabamba, it is seen as the most *mestizo* region in highland Bolivia (Larson 1998) and rural inhabitants

⁸ Quechua is the most important native language in the Andes and is spoken by more than 10 million people in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

often refer to themselves as *campesinos*. This is the outcome of state efforts following the 1952 Revolution to promote national integration through *mestizaje* (race-mixing), which deemphasized indigenous identity in favor of class-based categories and forms of organization like the *sindicato* or agrarian union (Dandler 1969).⁹ Still, representations of indigeneity continue to be relevant in Cochabamba, particularly as indigenous identities have taken center stage in Bolivian politics and society (Bigenho 2002; Himpele 2008).

Migrants from Arbieto, most of whom are bilingual in Spanish and Quechua, reflect this continued ambiguity. While migrants define themselves as *campesinos*, *residentes* (literally residents, but a reference to their positions as migrants; see below for a further discussion), Bolivians or Latinos, they also occasionally refer to their practices in Washington D.C. and Cochabamba in explicitly indigenous terms. As James Clifford (2007) has argued, indigenous peoples develop new ways of being native even as they move across long distances and reside away from traditional lands for long periods of time.

Theories of migrant transnationalism have documented the social, economic and political networks that stretch across international borders, but they often fail to capture the full extent of these movements. Research on the impact of migration generally focuses on economic remittances from the advanced industrialized world to countries in the global South. Less work has explored what Peggy Levitt (1998; 2001) has called “social remittances,” or the movement of ideas, value systems, behaviors and less tangible technologies between migrants and their countries of origin (see also Goldring

⁹ As I discuss in chapter three, *sindicatos* are local forms of governance that incorporate both corporatist and indigenous elements.

2004). Even these accounts tend to focus only on flows in one direction, North to South (but see Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). My research demonstrates that these flows are often highly complex and multi-directional. In other words, migrants also influence host societies by transferring economic and social remittances to their new homes.

In order to account for this complex movement, I shift the focus away from remittances, which imply a purposeful and unidirectional transfer, towards migrant practices.¹⁰ I view practices broadly as both everyday activities and more organized actions undertaken by individual migrants or groups. These practices can challenge the social order but do not always. In some cases, they can reproduce power hierarchies. Throughout the dissertation, I show how the movement of organizational, cultural and political practices is a central part of Bolivian routes of migration. As migrants move between the Valle Alto, the city of Cochabamba, Buenos Aires and Washington D.C. (although not necessarily in that order), they bring certain practices with them. Practices move and circulate through a variety of different means, although I argue that hometown associations are particularly important conduits. Hometown associations themselves are shaped by rural organizational practices from Cochabamba, and they facilitate the transfer of collective remittances and the construction of public works projects in migrant communities of origin.

Practices are also transformed as they move and are deployed in new places by migrants. *Residentes* adapt rural organizational strategies from the Valle Alto to better fit the dispersed labor and residential geography of suburban Northern Virginia and

¹⁰ Theories of practice are most closely associated with Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and Bolivian migration scholars have often used his notion of habitus to argue that cultural practices associated with an indigenous *cosmovisión* (view of the world) travel with migrants and are transformed in a new place (Hinojosa 2009).

Maryland. The practice of organizing collective remittance projects in the United States in turn shapes migrant ideas about development and politics, which are transferred to and reformulated in Arbieta. The movement of practices always encounters some friction, however. For instance, migrants gain skills in the Buenos Aires and Washington D.C. construction industries but find that these highly specialized techniques are not always well-suited for the Cochabamba economy.

Practices can also be productive. Following Doreen Massey (1994), I argue that places are constructed as flows of people, money and ideas move through them and touch down. As migrants carry out practices in multiple spaces, they transform places in important but always differential ways. As Michel de Certeau (1984) suggests, practices can be a way for individuals to reappropriate space and challenge dominant power structures. In the Washington D.C. metro area, cultural practices like soccer and folkloric dances create physical and symbolic spaces through which migrants can belong to local communities as Bolivians, thus challenging anti-immigrant narratives to a certain degree via a cultural citizenship frame (Flores and Benmayor 1997). Migrants also create belonging through more permanent transformations of the landscape, most notably through the construction of “transnational” houses (i.e. Pellow 2003) in Arbieta and the Washington area. This practice simultaneously rearticulates social hierarchies in both places. Thus, migrants use a variety of everyday and organizational practices to engage with and belong to local communities.

II. Negotiating belonging: Migrant citizenship practices

At the heart of the dissertation are migrant efforts to negotiate their belonging within changing citizenship regimes in Washington D.C. and Cochabamba. Citizenship is generally understood as a formal legal status with a set of rights and duties attached to it. Although citizenship initially emerged in ancient Greek cities, its modern form has become synonymous with the nation-state (Isin 2002). Especially in liberal democratic regimes, membership is assumed to be universal within national boundaries. In practice, however, individuals and groups have often been excluded from membership or certain citizenship rights. Internal groups like women and minorities have long been marginalized (Isin and Turner 2002), while citizenship itself is defined through the exclusion of outsiders (Ngai 2004; Honig 2001).

But even though the foundations of citizenship are exclusionary, citizenship regimes are far from static. Individuals and groups have, in some cases, been able to expand rights by making demands on the state. At other times, civil, political and social rights can be diminished by changing economic structures or government decisions (Holston 2008). Scholars have proposed that citizenship be seen as both a legal status and a social process (Isin and Turner 2002). Citizenship is constructed, as Sallie Marston and Katharyne Mitchell (2004) argue, through the relationship between the state and citizens and in response to changing economic, social and cultural processes. Thus, while citizenship remains attached to existing territories, the boundaries of membership and rights are transformed through practices that give citizenship meaning (Isin and Wood 1999; Staeheli 2011).

The movement of people across international borders is often seen as a challenge to the nation-state and national citizenship regimes (Benhabib 2004). Early transnational studies suggested that the increasing mobility of people would fundamentally transform the relationship between the state and its citizens by weakening the nation-state (Basch et al. 1994) and giving rise to new understandings of citizenship based around international human rights norms (Soysal 1994). The nation-state continues to be the primary container for rights, but the presence of large numbers of residents without formal legal status *within* nation-states has begun to slowly challenge the exclusionary character of national citizenship (Bosniak 1999).

But while the nation-state model of citizenship is being undermined in some ways, it is not resulting in deterritorialization or placelessness. Indeed, people continue to hold strong attachments to national, regional or local places (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006). As Mitchell (2004) has argued, transnationalism can be understood as a process of respatialization or a constant reworking of spaces at multiple scales. Much attention has focused on the construction of global cities through financial flows (Sassen 1991) or the dramatic reach of transnational corporations overseas, but scholars have also shown that labor migrants can transform places through social, political and economic practices that move across international borders and within local communities while always remaining rooted in particular places and livelihoods (M. Smith 2001; Guarnizo and M. Smith 1998). Thus, while migrants often participate in two or more societies simultaneously, broader structures shape how migrants engage with and belong to these places.

Research on immigration in the United States has traditionally viewed migrant belonging in linear terms and is often based on a series of geographical assumptions. Following the Chicago School of Sociology, scholars posited that immigrants would initially settle in ethnic enclaves located near factory jobs in central cities (Park et al. 1925). As immigrants gradually adapted to the United States, this model suggested, they would eventually move to the suburbs and become part of mainstream social, political and economic institutions (Massey and Denton 1988; Alba et al. 1999). This dichotomy between an immigrant and mainstream “American” identity has been disrupted by accounts of migrant transnationalism. Recent research has shown that transnational connections can occur alongside and even strengthen local ties to receiving communities (M. Smith and Bakker 2008; Ehrkamp 2005). Transnational politics is therefore not the exclusive domain of recent arrivals, but rather is more likely to include older, better-educated and more established migrants who are interested in migrant incorporation and transnationalism (Portes et al. 2009; 2008; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Itzigsohn et al. 1999).

But even though international migrants are, in many ways, more connected to sending communities than in previous generations, they still confront a variety of restrictions on their mobility. Scholars have shown that migrants without formal U.S. citizenship or legal residency are marginalized in a number of respects (Mahler 1995; Chavez 1992; Varsanyi 2006). They are generally prohibited from legal employment and are confined to insecure jobs in the informal sector. Expanding immigration enforcement measures have made insecurity a constant feature of migrant lives, particularly on their way to and from work (Coleman 2011). Migrants without legal documentation are forced

to limit travel outside of their homes in order to avoid contact with law enforcement officials, and cannot leave the country without having to make an expensive and often dangerous trip across the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus, as Susan Coutin (2000) has suggested, undocumented migrants can be surprisingly immobile.

In recent years the United States has become more inhospitable to immigrant residents, although this trend is highly uneven. Sociologists and geographers have noted that local contexts of reception (Portes and Rumbaut 1996) and the position of cities within global flows (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011) shape how immigrants are incorporated into host societies. While Washington D.C. has become a multi-ethnic global city in many respects, it simultaneously limits the movement of many immigrants. The economic recession has restricted access to public space with important consequences for migrant organizations, while most outer suburbs in Virginia and Maryland have implemented exclusionary local immigration policies that have caused Latino and Bolivian residents to feel unwelcome. Immigration laws have also resulted in long-term physical separation of undocumented migrants from their families in Bolivia and new difficulties in finding work.

But while life has clearly gotten worse for migrants without papers, legal status does not always determine how migrants see themselves or belong to communities in the Washington area or Cochabamba. Legal status is an important subtext for undocumented migrants and comes to the forefront in many cases, resulting in deportation or deteriorating working conditions in the United States. At the same time, migrants from Arbieta participate in hometown associations, attend civic events and are part of

communities in Washington regardless of their legal status but I demonstrate. Migrant subject positions are shaped by formal citizenship, but also by gender and family life, ethnic and racial identities, and work experiences and recreational activities. In other words, migrant identities are much complex than how they are often presented in migration research.

Migrant subject positions are also shaped by continued ties to the Valle Alto of Cochabamba. The possibility of return, always an important topic of conversation, has taken on new significance in recent years because of new immigration restrictions and the recession's devastating impact on the construction industry (Kochhar 2008). At the same time, most Bolivians in the Washington area have become firmly rooted in North American society. Established migrants have built homes and started businesses. Parents lament that children born or raised in the United States are *americanos*¹¹ and that cannot easily return to Bolivia. These deep ties in multiple locations affirm the central thesis of the vertical archipelago model while at the same time challenging how the idea has been employed in migrant transnationalism research.

Migrants in the Washington D.C. area may intend to use migration as a strategy to return to the Valle Alto (Cortes 2004), but this goal is complicated by the non-linear nature of migration routes in practice. By occupying soccer fields and performing folkloric dances in the Washington D.C. metro area and contributing to collective remittance projects in the Valle Alto, Bolivian migrants are engaging in practices that

¹¹ In the United States, the term "American" is generally used to refer to citizens of the U.S. This notably excludes most residents of the Americas, and is sometimes contested by Latin Americans. Among many Latino and Bolivian migrants, American generally refers to white Anglo-Saxon residents of the United States, although in this and other instances Bolivians expand this limited racial definition to include their own children.

redefine citizenship and belonging by redirecting attention away from formal legal status and towards the performance of responsibilities. In challenging the current immigration system, Bolivians are articulating alternative imaginaries of transnational belonging and mobility based around migrant contributions and connections to multiple places (Lawson 2000).

III. Tracing migrant mobilities: Multi-sited ethnography

Understanding the complex nature of citizenship and belonging requires attention to the everyday spaces inhabited by migrants. In my view, this necessitates sustained ethnographic research in a variety of places, or as Ulf Hannertz (2003) put it, “being there, and there, and there.”¹² My research was multi-sited in several ways. Over a period of 11 months in 2010-2011, I conducted fieldwork in the suburbs of Northern Virginia and Maryland. Because Bolivian migrants are dispersed throughout the Washington D.C. metro area, there was no “bounded” or particularly identifiable “community” to analyze. After beginning my research in Arlington, the traditional site of Bolivian settlement in the region, I quickly realized that many migrants had moved further out during the last decade. Although less recognizable than the more established community, Bolivian restaurants, churches and migrant organizations dotted the outer suburbs of Northern Virginia. Through contacts at several organizations, I began visiting Bolivian institutions and discussing my project with migrant leaders.

¹² Traditionally ethnography has involved the long-term and intense study of a bounded community, generally somewhere in the Third World. As social and economic processes have become increasingly global, however, anthropologists and other scholars have become critical of this approach. James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (1992) notably argued that since places are not bounded, they must be approached from a different perspective.

My own paths of mobility also helped to shape my research. After several months of living with a relative in the District of Columbia, my wife and I moved to an inner-suburb in Maryland. Searching for ways to reduce my commute, I discovered that migrants from the Arbieta municipality had also crossed state lines in recent years and had formed a soccer league 15 minutes up the road. The few studies on Bolivian immigrants focus exclusively on Northern Virginia, so I decided to begin splitting my time between Maryland and more established locations in Virginia. But while the location of migrant residences shaped where activities were held, this was not always the case. As Zelinsky and Lee (1998) have shown, new patterns of immigrant settlement are characterized by the disjuncture between residence, workplace and social activities. In the case of Bolivian migrants, difficulties accessing public spaces in the Washington area led them to hold religious, folkloric and sports events at sites throughout the metropolitan area even if few Bolivians lived nearby.

I also conducted fieldwork in Bolivia in order to examine how migrant practices were being transferred to the Valle Alto. This research trip drew on my own networks that I had developed as a volunteer for a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with peasant and indigenous communities in Cochabamba. During most of 2004, I traveled across the Cochabamba department with NGO personnel. In the Valle Alto, I frequently heard about Arlington and the large Bolivian community in the Washington D.C. area. As I continued to work on indigenous politics in Bolivia as a graduate student, I kept in touch with scholars and NGO personnel who facilitated my dissertation research.

For six weeks in February and March 2011, I moved between the city of Cochabamba and the village of Santa Rosa in the Arbiesto municipality, where I lived in the home of Elmer, an informant in Northern Virginia (see his story in chapter two). Although Elmer remained in the United States, I designed this research trip to coincide with the annual return of other migrants to Arbiesto for Carnival. While in Cochabamba, I conducted interviews with migrants about their connections and sense of belonging to Arbiesto. I also spoke with returned migrants about their experiences in the United States and their decisions to return to rural Bolivia, however temporary their stay was.

Beyond tracing international migration routes, I also worked to follow everyday patterns of movement in Bolivia. As I describe in greater detail in chapter two, residents and migrants living abroad tend to own homes in the Valle Alto and the city of Cochabamba, especially in the neighborhoods near the bus stop and fruit stands where peaches are sold during February and March. Every three or four days, I would squeeze into a minibus stationed in Arbiesto's plaza that, once filled to the brim with passengers, sped towards Cochabamba. A number of bus drivers and passengers were visiting or had lived in the United States, and these rides became important meeting places during my research.

A multi-sited approach to the study of Bolivian migration, therefore, offers several advantages. Traveling on the Arbiesto-Cochabamba circuit illustrated the complex rural-urban connections that are simultaneously bound up with international migration. Several scholars have noted that internal migration serves as a stepping stone for later international migration, particularly in the Andes (Paerregaard 2008; Guaygua et al.

2010; Roncken 2009 et al.). My research suggests that international migration can also lead to subsequent moves within the country of origin (i.e. Melly 2010).

Multi-sited ethnography also allowed me to explore the networks and social relations that stretch between Arbiето and the Washington D.C. (i.e. Marcus 1998; Bigenho 2002; García 2006). By conducting interviews with migrants and their family members in both places, I observed the various ways that migrants contribute to their community of origin and simultaneously produce tensions, findings that would have been unlikely if I had conducted research in only one place. Finally, multi-sited ethnography offered a greater understanding of the mobility and immobility of research subjects (Stephen 2007). Because of our positionality as scholars affiliated with research institutions and usually armed with passports and visas, ethnographers are unable to fully experience migrant travels across cultural and physical borders. Still, moving along routes of migration and within sending and receiving communities provided me with a better sense of the opportunities and limitations that mobility brings.

Developing organizational histories: The benefits and pitfalls of collaborative research

As Daniel Goldstein (2004) has observed, ethnographers in the Andes often encounter *desconfianza*, or mistrust, within local communities. Poor areas in Bolivia are sites of seemingly constant surveys and development projects conducted by government and non-governmental actors alike. More often than not these efforts do little to transform the daily realities faced by Bolivians. As a result, ethnographers enter a landscape of suspicion and mistrust. Ironically, in my research this *desconfianza* was a more important

factor in the United States than in Bolivia. Although I had visited the town of Arbiето several times as a NGO volunteer in 2004, I had few contacts besides a list of names and approximate addresses gathered in Washington. However, because I stayed in Elmer's home, I was quickly integrated into the community of Santa Rosa. Most residents in the Arbiето municipality have relatives in the United States or have spent time there themselves, and were eager for news or wanted to share their stories. Even when people approached me to ask what I was doing in their community, their concerns seemed to dissipate when I explained my research with migrants in Washington D.C.

I encountered more suspicion in the Washington suburbs. Most weekday nights, Saturday afternoons and all day on Sunday, I attended soccer games, church services or folkloric dance events in dozens of locations across the metro area. At the beginning of my research I was politely ignored at more multi-ethnic events at churches or folkloric dance competitions, but the presence of an Anglo researcher made some people at smaller gatherings wary. In a few cases, but particularly when I took out my notebook, people asked me directly what I was doing there. Several thought that I was a local government official checking up on their activities, although I suspected that others had greater worries. I was never accused of being an immigration officer to my face, but offhand comments and jokes later suggested that people had this concern. This went away as I spent more time at events and got to know a number of organizational leaders and members. At one point, a long-term migrant from the town of Arbiето named Mario joked that he would give me "residency" in Arbiето, symbolically shifting the power dynamic of immigration law and status in the United States.

Despite my acceptance in the Arbieto migrant community, I often encountered silence from participants at soccer games and other events. Bolivian migrants have fairly frequent contacts with white native-born residents at work, church and at their children's schools, so many seemed comfortable with my presence. This did not mean that everyone was eager to participate in my research. Researchers have observed that immigrants in the United States are generally overburdened with work and other obligations (Pribilsky 2007). This certainly extends to migrants from the Valle Alto in the Washington D.C. area. Often rising at 5:00am to arrive at a far-flung construction site at 7:00am, men work long hours six days a week. Women work a similar schedule. Sundays represent the only free day for most migrants and, consequently, are packed full of activities. Players and spectators at early Sunday morning soccer games generally went to other games or folkloric dance practices. As a result, I was able to speak informally with almost anyone during and after games but had a difficult time scheduling more formal interviews for weeknights.

Migrants did become more invested in the research as I began collaborating with two of the hometown associations that organized the soccer leagues. Early in my fieldwork, leaders of INCOPEA (*Integración Comunal de los Pueblos de Esteban Arce*, Communal Integration of the Communities of Esteban Arce) expressed interest in documenting their 20-year history in Northern Virginia. As I describe in chapter three, rural migrants from Arbieto separated from a league organized by migrants from the neighboring colonial city of Tarata in 1991 after complaints of discrimination and corruption. Over the years INCOPEA has become one of the most prominent Bolivian

soccer leagues in the Washington area, appearing in several studies and, more importantly, managing to play a 2008 soccer game against Evo Morales in New Jersey.

While 11 communities from the municipality of Arbieta participated in the league during my research, older organizers were concerned that younger Bolivians lacked a solid understanding of traditional Bolivian values. This was particularly the case for the 1.5 generation (Bolivians that came to the U.S. at an early age) and second generation (those born in the United States). By writing down the antecedents and the achievements of the league, organizers hoped to spark interest of *jóvenes* (young people) in activities beyond Sunday matches. The leaders of INCOPEA were also interested in publicizing their contributions in Bolivia, a frequent concern of migrants (R. Smith 2006; Goldring 1998), and saw my connections with Bolivian scholars and NGOs as potentially useful. A similar organization in Maryland, CELAPKA, also expressed interest in disseminating their work to sending communities in Bolivia. At the same time, I quickly found out that several HTA leaders had their own methods of keeping organizational histories. Zenobio, INCOPEA's president in 2011, kept a detailed log in several notebooks that stretched back to 1991 and brought these carefully preserved archives to some meetings and my interviews with him. Another early organizer had already embarked on a book project of his own and seemed somewhat reluctant to discuss INCOPEA's history with me.

The varied reaction to my research project suggests that communities see potential benefits and drawbacks to social science research. As Goldstein suggests, local residents often regard ethnographic research as an “extractive enterprise” that does little to benefit the community. At the same time, they can view research as a useful form of

publicity. The writing of the INCOPEA and CELAPKA organizational histories can be seen as an ideal way to use academic research for the benefit of the community, but it also presents potential problems. In Goldstein's fieldwork in an urban Cochabamba neighborhood, he was pressed by community leaders to write a book about Villa Pagador and represent it to the outside world. This facilitated his fieldwork but it also caused informants to shy away from sharing negative aspects about the community.

I had similar experiences during my fieldwork. Almost uniformly, migrants spoke positively about their time in the United States and made a point of placing the blame on others for any problems. Migrants were also reluctant to share any critiques of the Bolivian community, although concerns about the lack of "unity" or "organization" among Bolivians dominated informal conversations. During one focus group session, one HTA leader asked me directly to only publicize the positive characteristics of Bolivian migrants. In Bolivia I heard more direct criticism of Americans or U.S. law enforcement officials, suggesting that the precarious position of migrants in the United States precluded them from doing anything that would be perceived as complaining.

Initially my research consisted of participant observation at INCOPEA and CELAPKA meetings, soccer games, folkloric dance events, and religious activities. I conducted informal interviews during some of these activities, particularly on the sidelines of soccer games on Sunday. Once the outline of the collaborative projects was finalized, I held more formal conversations with organizational leaders. Through these conversations and interviews in Bolivia, I was able to trace the history of both organizations back to communal soccer leagues founded in Arbiesto during the 1970s. I

am currently involved in efforts to publish both organizational histories in a more accessible format that can be of use to the HTAs.

These collaborative projects facilitated my dissertation research in several ways. Early on in my research, I relied primarily on a single informant, Germán, to introduce me at soccer games and other events as a researcher interested in Bolivian organizations.¹³ Although these introductions were extraordinarily valuable, they were necessarily limited by his limited knowledge of the Bolivian community in the Washington area. Germán spent most of his adult life in Argentina and arrived in the United States only six years ago. Because he lacked a driver's license, he was limited to public transportation and rides (one of the reasons that he was so willing to assist in my research, I always suspected, was my ability to provide rides on Sunday). Although Germán was able to quickly integrate me into some networks, he knew little of others. As I tried to branch out to other organizations from Arbieta, I quickly ran into walls. Becoming associated with the broader INCOPEA leadership team allowed me to expand my focus and extend a concrete offer of collaboration to other organizations.

Because ethnography requires intimate and sustained contact with individuals and communities, many of whom are marginalized, there are often concerns about the impact of research. This concern is often articulated in terms of the power differential that exists between the researcher and the subjects of the research, which is generally front and center in work with undocumented immigrants. Individuals and communities without

¹³ A fortuitous event helped me make this connection early in my research. In early August, Leonardo de la Torre, a Bolivian sociologist and documentary filmmaker, came to the Washington area to premier his movie about Bolivian migration to the United States. As we sold movies and set up showings around the metro area, Leonardo introduced me to Germán, the president of one of the hometown associations that I would later work with.

legal permission to reside in the United States have often avoided contact with government officials and researchers. This potential concern structured my research in several important ways. Because I expected to encounter some migrants without papers, I made a conscious effort to avoid asking any direct questions about immigration status or the journey to the United States. Despite these precautions, migrants often told me directly about their legal status and the difficulties of being undocumented. But in other instances, immigration status proved somewhat of an obstacle. In spite of the continuing effects of the economic recession,¹⁴ the vast majority of men and women from Arbiето worked full-time jobs during the week and on Saturday. Although I developed good relationships with a number of migrants, accompanying them to worksites proved difficult in a tense and competitive atmosphere. After several migrants expressed misgivings about my proposal to visit construction sites, I decided to focus all of my attention on social organizations.

During my time in Washington, I also participated in a research project at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). While the museum includes a permanent exhibit on native cosmology in Central and South America, it focuses primarily on indigenous peoples in the United States. Several years after opening a spectacular new museum on the National Mall, however, NMAI directed some of its attention towards the creation of virtual exhibits on indigenous migrants in the United

¹⁴ When I arrived in Washington D.C. in July 2010, the unemployment rate was 6.4 percent, three percentage points below the national average and unchanged from 2009, when the recession officially ended. This statistic is somewhat misleading. While the Washington area was largely sheltered during the economic downturn by the presence of the federal government, the construction industry did lose thousands of jobs and as a result Latino unemployment was higher than the regional average, at 6.9 percent (Austin 2011). This was confirmed by my fieldwork in Northern Virginia and Maryland, where I found a number of Bolivian and other Latino migrants who had or continued to experience long-term unemployment or underemployment.

States entitled “Ancient Peoples Modern Migrations.” Robert Albro, an anthropologist at American University in Washington D.C., was asked to lead the project on the Bolivian community in the Washington metro area. In the Spring of 2011, I assisted Rob with the identification of key themes surrounding indigenous cultural practices and data collection, including multiple interviews in Arbieta and Northern Virginia.

The NMAI project differed considerably from my research with the soccer leagues and provided another opportunity to examine the challenges of collaborative projects. The prospect of appearing on a museum’s website, either in video or audio form, created a great deal of concern for some migrants in the Washington D.C. area and even former migrants now living in Bolivia. Because many migrants are accustomed to avoiding public scrutiny and are wary of discussing their experiences, the presence of the tape recorder and legal waiver from NMAI unnerved potential participants. At the same time, others seemed more interested in the museum project than my dissertation research because of the potential publicity from the exhibit. Because of the scope of the project, the NMAI was also much less open-ended than a PhD thesis. Time and resource constraints demanded that we focus almost exclusively on migrant leaders in the Bolivian community, shaping the types of perspectives we gained. But in spite of these limitations, working on the project allowed me to explore the complex ways in which identities and cultural practices travel between the United States and Bolivia.

Over the course of 13 months of fieldwork, I conducted formal and informal interviews with 58 migrants and returnees from throughout the Arbieta municipality, as well as many other unstructured conversations during participant observation. These

interviews took place in the United States and in Bolivia, and on several occasions involved the same respondent in both places. I also conducted seven additional formal interviews with non-migrants in Arbiето. Finally, I conducted four focus group interviews with organizers in INCOPEA and CELAPKA. Because I focused on migrant organizations, the majority of my interviews (48) were with men. Although I did make efforts to interview women organizational leaders from other parts of Bolivia (see below) and had many more informal conversations with women from Arbiето at soccer games, church, folkloric dance practices and in rural Bolivia, this focus allowed me to examine men's views on family separation and fatherhood, aspects of migration that are often overlooked (Pribilsky 2007).

My work with INCOPEA also meant that most informants in the United States were from established rural villages that, in most cases, surround the town of Arbiето.¹⁵ To introduce a different perspective into my research, I conducted interviews with 10 migrants from Rayo Pampa and Kaluyo, both recent sending villages on the outskirts of the Arbiето municipality. Although this is not always the case, migrants from these villages tend to be poorer and are more likely to be undocumented than migrants from established sending communities. This aspect of my research was the result, like many others, of a chance encounter. During one of the Carnival celebrations in the town of Arbiето, I found Joshue celebrating with the Rayo Pampa soccer team just off the plaza. I knew Joshue well from INCOPEA meetings and had recently attended his wedding in Northern Virginia but was surprised to see him in Bolivia (like many migrants, Joshue

¹⁵ These villages, which are featured prominently in later chapters, are Arbiето, Santa Rosa, Villa Verde, Tiataco, La Loma and, to a lesser extent, Achamoco.

did not decide until the last minute to visit during Carnival). I was invited by the team to see the soccer field built by migrants in Washington area and, after returning to the United States, became more involved with Rayo Pampa activities in Northern Virginia and Maryland.

While I occasionally employed a digital voice recorder for organizational interviews and those for the NMAI project, most of the time I preferred to take the routes of migration and mobility practiced by Bolivians as a starting point for my research and sought to conduct interviews in informal spaces. I took notes during almost every conversation and reflected on them at the end of long days of fieldwork. While these conversations were open-ended, I used a short guide (see the Appendix) to focus the interview on specific aspects of migration histories and questions of belonging in Argentina, Bolivia and the United States. Since interviews took place on the sidelines of soccer games and often covered unanticipated topics, the unstructured format was designed to allow for maximum flexibility. The interviews were conducted and transcribed entirely in Spanish.

In order to gain a better understanding of the broader landscape in which migrants are positioned in the Washington area, I also conducted formal interviews with 29 leaders of Bolivian folkloric, soccer, religious and political groups from places other than Arbieta. A much higher percentage of these interviews were with women than my research with migrants from Arbieta. I complemented this with interviews of several Bolivian diplomatic officials at the consulate and embassy. As I discuss in chapter three, this organizational survey revealed a number of tensions and fractures within what is

often referred to by scholars and leaders as the “Bolivian community.” While cultural organizations seek to present a visible and unified immigrant community to the host society, this symbolic nationalism elides the constant power struggles between individual leaders and regional groups. Migrants from Cochabamba are the dominant group in Washington D.C., but the Bolivian population is composed of individuals and organized groups from all nine of the country’s departments (provinces).

Research on a related project helped me to gain a sense of the broader landscape of immigrant settlement in the Washington D.C. area. During the summer and fall of 2010, I examined the strategies of immigrant advocacy organizations for a project with Helga Leitner. Interviews and participant observation with immigrant rights coalitions quickly introduced me to important issues and faith-based organizations throughout Northern Virginia and Maryland. In some cases this project led me to Bolivian migrants, but more generally I developed an appreciation for the complex geographies of immigrant settlement and local responses in the suburbs of Washington D.C.

Finally, in La Paz and Cochabamba I also participated in several workshops around the formation of a new Bolivian migration policy called the *Plan del Retorno*, the Return Plan, and conducted eight interviews with Bolivian government officials, researchers and heads of non-governmental organizations that work closely with migrants. Combined with fieldwork in Washington D.C., this experience gave me a better sense of the broader landscape that shapes the policies governing the movement of migrants and their engagement with institutions in sending and receiving communities.

A note on terminology

Writing about indigenous peoples is fraught with tension. Social scientists writing about Latin America often avoid using the term “Indian” because of its obvious shortcomings as a geographical identifier and, more relevant, its historical baggage. Many American Indians in the United States have reappropriated the term but this is not the case in South America, where “*indio*” remains a derogatory term. In Bolivia, people of indigenous descent are generally referred to (and refer to themselves) as *indígena*, *originario*, or *campesino* (or some combination of the three). The terms *indígena* and *originario* are relatively recent, especially in the Bolivian highlands, but despite the broad resonance of indigenous identities many people in Cochabamba and other regions still refer to themselves as *campesinos*. I try to reflect the complex nature of identities by referring to rural Bolivians as *campesinos*, peasants or indigenous peoples.

Research on mobile groups presents similar difficulties. Researchers have used a variety of terms to describe foreign-born populations in the United States. Bolivians from Arbieta and other regions generally refer to themselves as “*residentes*.” As de la Torre (2006) has suggested, this is as much a descriptive term as an aspired transnational legal status, since permanent residency allows migrants to build lives in the United States while being free to visit Bolivia, something undocumented migrants are unable to do. I occasionally use the term *residentes* but generally employ the more technical “migrant” to refer to Bolivians living in the United States, Argentina, Spain and elsewhere. Perhaps tellingly, *residente*’s close association with the English word “resident” introduced too many complications in trying to represent peoples living outside of their country or

community of origin. I also prefer “migrant” to the term “immigrant” because migrant maintains a sense of indeterminacy about a mobile individual’s ultimate destination that immigrant lacks, although I occasionally use the latter term to refer to the broader foreign-born population in the Washington D.C. area. Throughout the dissertation, I try to highlight and elaborate on how Bolivians are employing terminology to represent their own status, identity and ties to different places.

IV. Outline of the dissertation

The second chapter provides a theoretical overview for the study of Andean migration. Recent Bolivian scholarship has suggested that contemporary migration can be understood as a globalized version of the vertical archipelago. This is similar to theories of migrant transnationalism, but the vertical archipelago model provides important insights into the non-linear and multidirectional nature of transnational migration in the Andes. The model also places Bolivian migration within an indigenous framework, part of a broader project of reimagining the Bolivian nation led by indigenous movements, and demonstrates that there are multiple types of indigenous experiences. The chapter further develops the model by analyzing migration from Arbieta as a series of movements and settlements between places and across international borders and rural-urban divides. Even as migrants have settled in Northern Virginia and Maryland for long periods of time, Arbieta has remained at the center of their lives. Thus, I suggest that migrant identities are the result of a variety of vertical, horizontal and imagined connections between places.

The third and fourth chapters explore the movement of organizational practices, money, work skills and values between rural Bolivia and migrant places of settlement. In chapter three, I explore how hometown associations have adapted organizational practices from *sindicatos* (agrarian unions) and reciprocal relationships to a suburban U.S. landscape. My analysis focuses on the soccer field, which I argue can be seen as a cultural space used to pass on traditions and identities to the second generation. The chapter also documents the construction of multiple Bolivian communities in the Washington D.C. area. Although the language of community can obscure divisions and power relations, I argue that it remains a powerful tool for belonging. Drawing on a collaborative organizational history project with two hometown associations, I highlight the fluid nature of community and the conflict and division that often underlie Bolivian relationships.

The fourth chapter explores the impact of international migration on Arbiето. Following Doreen Massey (1994), I suggest that places are constructed through connections with other places, and I trace the circulation of economic, cultural and political practices between migrant nodes of settlement and rural Bolivia. After documenting how money has transformed the physical landscape of Arbiето through individual and collective remittances, I analyze the movement of construction work skills between Buenos Aires, Washington D.C. and Cochabamba. Like other migrant practices, I suggest that returning migrants face real limitations in transferring skills developed in the highly specialized U.S. construction industry to more labor intensive and informal settings in Cochabamba, although this is not always the case. The chapter also explores

how the movement of returning migrants into local politics in Arbiето has produced and altered ideas about democracy, corruption and public space. Finally, I examine the implications of the Arbiето case for discussions about migrant-led development in rural Bolivia.

Chapter five explores the citizenship practices of Bolivian migrants. I argue that migrants are employing a variety of strategies to claim citizenship and belonging in the Washington D.C. metro area and Cochabamba. By occupying public spaces, performing in local civic events and organizing collective remittance projects in Bolivia, I argue that migrant organizations are representing Bolivians as hardworking, honest and educated members of local communities in the United States while claiming an important position within social hierarchies in Arbiето. In doing so, they redirect attention away from formal legal status and towards the performance of responsibilities as a measure of citizenship and belonging.

Chapter six explores the possibility of return migration in the context of changing economic and political circumstances in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. As a result of the economic recession and restrictive immigration measures, Bolivian migrants have become increasingly insecure about their position in the United States. I analyze the decisions of migrants to stay in the Washington or return to Bolivia through the lens of gender and the family. Although a variety of individual and structural factors influence migrant decisions, I argue that men often base their decision to stay in the United States or return to Bolivia on family responsibility and their role as fathers. The chapter also evaluates the future of Bolivian settlement in the Washington area. I show that while

migrants, especially those without legal documentation, face an uncertain future, the durability of long-term routes of migration between Arbieta and Washington makes it likely that Bolivians will continue to settle in the region.

The conclusion provides an overview of the arguments in the dissertation and further explores the implications of understanding migrant belonging in terms of citizenship practices. I argue that Bolivian migrants have become part of local communities through the construction of material and symbolic spaces such as transnational houses and soccer fields. Crucially, this suggests that migrants are belonging to places and are making places belong to them.

Chapter Two

Situating Arbieta in transnational space: Non-linear routes of migration and multiple destinations

Elmer

Sitting in a Northern Virginia McDonald's, Elmer eagerly scrolls through the pictures on my digital camera. I have just returned from staying in Elmer's house in Santa Rosa, a small village of approximately 150 families in the Arbieta municipio. During my visit in March, I diligently took dozens of photos of the main plaza. On the west side sat a newly constructed Catholic church that was finished several years ago. Across the plaza to the east, work continued on a three-story community center. Elmer is excited to see evidence of Santa Rosa's transformation because of his key role in the hometown association, INCOPEA, that financed the construction. Over a period of 20 years, migrants living in Northern Virginia raised money and consulted on the building plans. But upon reaching the end of the photos, Elmer looks up and inquires about his house in the city of Cochabamba. "Didn't you take any pictures?" he asks, looking disappointed. "I built the house," he explains, "but I have never seen it."

Like many men from the Arbieta *municipio*, Elmer left for Argentina when he was in his early twenties. After spending several years working in construction on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Elmer returned to Bolivia. There, he got married and quickly had two children. Unable to support his family in Santa Rosa, in 1991 Elmer set off for Europe and eventually joined friends living in Israel. They settled in Tel Aviv, where

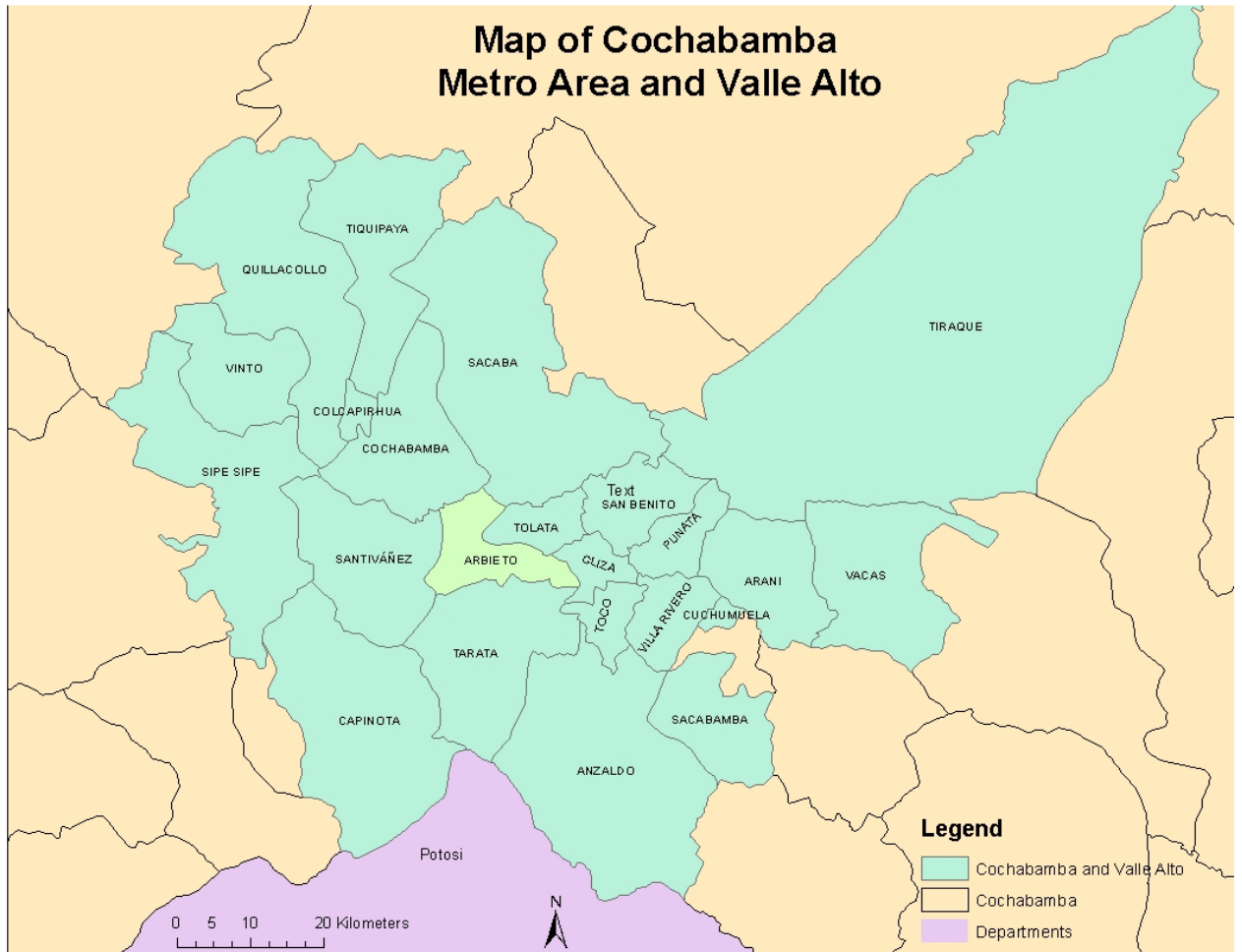
Elmer built apartment buildings for Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union. He remembers his time in Israel fondly, recalling visits to the beach in Tel Aviv and religious sites in Jerusalem. Almost two years later, he returned to Bolivia and prepared to travel to the United States. Elmer settled in Northern Virginia and was quickly integrated into the Washington D.C. area construction industry.

Now in his 15th year living in the United States, Elmer sends remittances to his wife and children on a regular basis but, because he was never able to legalize his status, has not physically returned to Bolivia. This additional income has allowed the family to renovate their house in Santa Rosa and add a second story. Behind the house, the family has dozens of peach trees, which Vilma, Elmer's wife, and daughter, Katia, harvest every summer. Over the years, Elmer has also contributed to various collective remittance projects in Santa Rosa, helping to build the church, the community center and a soccer field.

But by his own accounting, a large percentage of Elmer's remittances went towards the construction of a house in the city of Cochabamba. Like many in Arbieta, the family purchased a plot of land in the Zona San Carlos neighborhood. The neighborhood is situated on the edge of Cochabamba's sprawling market complex known simply as La Cancha ("The Field"). Beginning just south of Cochabamba's downtown, the Cancha covers more than 15 square kilometers. Inside the market, vendors line narrow streets and sidewalks selling almost every product imaginable. Although largely unregulated by the municipal government, the Cancha is organized into recognizable sections based on the item for sale.

Moving south from downtown, the clothes and household appliances hung from temporary shop walls gradually turn into tables of fruit. Here, peaches, grapes, apples and other produce are transported daily to the city from neighboring regions. In this part of the Cancha, most women sitting at makeshift tables along the sidewalk or spilling over onto the street are from the Valle Alto, the rural region in the “High Valley” south of the city (see figure 3). The crowded Avenida República passes in front of the pink colonial church known as the Templo San Carlos, where the neighborhood gets its name. Vendors from Santa Rosa and other villages in the Arbieta and San Benito municipalities have staked out places along the sidewalk.

Figure 3: Cochabamba metropolitan area and the Valle Alto



Not coincidentally, Elmer’s house is located on a parallel street one block from the Avenida. Enclosed behind a tall iron fence whose red paint is already fading from the sun, the house towers above most of the one and two story buildings in the neighborhood. Like many houses in newer parts of Cochabamba, however, it is also unfinished. When I arrived in late February, the dirt yard was full of puddles and littered with construction materials. A narrow cement staircase ascended to the second story, where Elmer’s family currently lives. It is the only floor that is fully enclosed and is strikingly similar to

suburban homes in the Washington D.C. area. The dining and living room have hardwood floors and “Los Simpsons” blares on the TV in the background. Outside, the stairs continue on to the rough outlines of the third and fourth levels.

Back in Virginia, Elmer asks for a detailed description of the house. I tell him about the second floor and the bustling neighborhood outside its windows. In spite of my assurances, he apologizes for the house’s incompleteness. But as he says this, Elmer tells me that he does not want to live in Cochabamba. “When I return to Bolivia,” he says, “I will go back to Santa Rosa. There, I can grow peaches and relax. The house in the city is for the family,” he continues, “so the kids can attend a good high school and then university.” Like Vilma, who returns to Santa Rosa almost every weekend, Elmer does not feel comfortable in the big city. However, both of their children will almost certainly stay in Cochabamba.

Elmer’s house in the Zona San Carlos represents the continual and unfinished transformation of rural Cochabamba. Unable to make a living solely from agriculture but also seeking adventure and family reunification, many *campesinos* have left the Valle Alto. Through a series of dense and often halting social, cultural and economic networks, rural migrants have moved across Bolivia and to Argentina, the United States and other countries. While this mobility has created new opportunities for Elmer and his family, on the whole it has not resulted in the development hoped for by international institutions and NGOs. Thus, even as economic conditions in the global North deteriorate, there is little evidence that migrants are permanently returning to their communities of origin. But even as migrants are simultaneously rooted in multiple places, their lives are based

around continuing connections with rural Cochabamba. In a world of transnational mobility that is becoming increasingly limited for some, Bolivian migrants are able to exert some control over their identity and sense of belonging by anchoring themselves, whether through physical or imagined means, in the Valle Alto.

I. Andean migration and the vertical archipelago model

In recent decades, international migration has become a widespread phenomenon across the Andes. As Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru experienced sustained political and economic upheaval during the 1980s and 1990s,¹⁶ migrants sought out opportunities in other South American countries and the United States. The pace of migration picked up further in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as tens of thousands of people left annually for Spain and other European countries. Brad Jokisch and Jason Pribilsky (2002) described the “panic to leave” in Ecuador that characterized the dramatic response to continued economic crisis in the Andes and increased demand for immigrant labor in the North (see also Hinojosa 2009).

Although emigration rates have slowed in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, millions of Andeans currently reside outside their country of origin. Bolivian scholars and government officials estimate that two million people, 20 percent of the country’s 10 million citizens, live abroad (Godard and Sandoval 2008; Hinojosa 2006).¹⁷ Bolivia has a long history of international migration, most notably to Argentina where

¹⁶ Colombia and Peru also experienced widespread violence, particularly in rural areas, that sparked both internal and international migration.

¹⁷ Estimates of out-migration vary widely in Bolivia and other Andean nations. Most official estimates claim that between 10 and 15 percent of each country’s population lives outside of the country, but scholars frequently make the case that these statistics do not capture the largely undocumented migrant population.

approximately one million Bolivians currently live (Grimson 1999). Long considered the second-most important destination, at least 100,000 but probably many more Bolivians make their homes in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a; see chapter one). This migration pattern shifted sharply in the early 2000s, when Bolivians responded to economic crisis in Argentina and stricter immigration controls in the United States by looking towards southern Europe. Following a dramatic increase in only a few years, well over 300,000 Bolivians now live in Spain, Italy and several other European countries. A similar number have settled in São Paulo, Brazil (Hinojosa 2006).

In order to explain this phenomenon, Andean scholars have often drawn on John Murra's (1975) model of the vertical archipelago. Murra argued that pre-Incan ethnic kingdoms exercised vertical control over the landscape by linking together non-contiguous territories at different elevations through the exchange of agricultural products and natural resources. Archipelago systems varied widely in terms of their scale and political organization (Solomon 1985). In some cases, ethnic kingdoms established colonies in peripheral locations to provide resources to populations in the center. Other archipelago units consisted of a network of territories bound together in kinship groups called *ayllus*.

Murra and other Andeanists argued that this complex territorial and social organization was necessary because of environmental constraints in the Andes. In the harsh *altiplano* and *puna* grassland climate of more 12,000 feet above sea level, few crops are viable. Tubers and quinoa have long been staples of Andean diets but drought and frost can claim entire harvests. As a result, communities in the highlands have looked

to more temperate valleys and even territories on the coast to guard against failed harvests and supplement their diets with maize, squash, and other crops (Larson 1998). Thus, although the vertical archipelago system has its roots in specific pre-Incan societies (Murra 1985), it is seen as a common livelihood form and relationship with the environment across the Andes.

During centuries of change in the Andes, the basic elements of the vertical archipelago have been incorporated into subsequent political and economic systems. Most notably, the Incas continued to redistribute resources across ecological zones and resettled some ethnic groups in distant agricultural colonies known as *mitamaes*. While the Spanish dismantled many of these patterns of land use and connections across space (Larson 1998; Zimmerer 2000), *ayllus* continued to hold non-contiguous territories until the 19th Century (Murra 1985). Today, *campesinos* (peasants) and indigenous peoples in the Andean highlands continue to access resources in different microclimates in order to distribute risks (Zimmerer 1993; Regalsky 2003).

The concept of the vertical archipelago has been influential in scholarship on the Andes since the 1970s, but it has also been the target of criticism. Most notably, Orin Starn's provocative article on "Andeanism" (1991) charged that anthropologists focused only on ecological adaptation and rituals while neglecting crushing poverty and political unrest in the highlands of Peru. Others suggested that the assumption that Andeans uniformly adapted to environmental constraints, itself a form of environmental determinism, obscured the diversity of mountain and valley ecosystems as well as that of Andean societies (van Buren 1996). By searching for "traditional" forms of reciprocity

and relationships with the environment, therefore, anthropologists and other scholars placed *campesinos* outside of modern history and were thus incapable of understanding the contemporary Andes.

This critique remains essential for scholars of the Andes even as research has become more likely to view peasants and indigenous peoples as actors able to effect political, social, and economic change. Scholars have documented how indigenous movements have transformed political systems (Yashar 2005), understandings of identity (Lucero 2008), neoliberal policies (Kohl and Farthing 2006; Gustafson 2009), and development programs (García 2006; Andolina et al. 2009) across the Andes and Latin America. But while these movements are clearly shaped by global and national forces, they also draw on Andean cultural practices and worldviews (Postero 2007b; Albro 2010). In some cases, indigenous proposals for constitutional and land reform have explicitly referenced ideas about accessing resources at multiple sites.

This is seen most clearly in debates around indigenous autonomy, which has been at the center of Bolivian politics since at least 1990 (Yashar 2005; see Diaz Polanco 1987 for a seminal discussion of indigenous autonomy in Mexico). Following his election in 2005, Evo Morales convoked a constitutional assembly with the goal of “refounding” Bolivia, an explicit acknowledgement that indigenous peoples who had been excluded from previous statebuilding exercises would now direct the process. This highly contentious assembly focused on the creation of a “plurinational” state that would recognize autonomous indigenous nations and territories within the Bolivian state. Some indigenous movements, particularly those representing *ayllus*, called for their

autonomous territories to include traditional access to land and resources in non-contiguous territories across multiple ecological zones (REPAC 2007; see also Lucero 2008).

But while these autonomy proposals highlight the vertical livelihood strategies of rural Andeans, they notably overlook other forms of mobility practiced by contemporary peasants and indigenous peoples. In response, Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera (2009) argued that attempts to demarcate autonomous territories would exclude the majority of indigenous peoples who lived in cities or work in Buenos Aires, for example. She noted that indigenous peoples have long employed mobile livelihoods, including ties to urban areas and territories at different elevations, as they interacted with and resisted colonial projects (see also Larson et al. 1995). Proposals to fix social, political and economic rights in bounded territories, therefore, potentially marginalize indigenous peoples and other Bolivians who routinely cross borders.

Mobile Andean livelihoods, conceptualized in a variety of forms, have been an important part of Bolivian scholarship in recent years. This is particularly the case for studies of international and, to a lesser extent, internal migration. A growing number of researchers have argued that Andeans are occupying multiple ecological zones in a similar, but more globalized, fashion to the vertical archipelago (Hinojosa et al. 2002; Hinojosa 2009; Cortes 2004; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; de la Torre 2006; Vaillant 2008; Antequera 2011). In these accounts, which are almost entirely in Spanish (for exceptions, see Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999; Salman and Zoomers 2002), migration represents a livelihood strategy undertaken by rural individuals and families facing

declining agricultural yields and rising costs of living.¹⁸ As Bolivians move between and settle in new places, these scholars argue, they are able to maintain ties to sending communities by drawing on Andean cultural understandings of mobility and connections across space. Resources gained outside of the country are directed towards rural economies through the purchase of land, houses, or investments in agricultural technologies. Thus, activities in Argentina, Brazil, the United States or Europe represent different niches within a complex system that continues to be anchored in the rural Andes.

Migrant transnationalism

Although the vertical archipelago model comes from the specific context of the Andes, it has a great deal in common with the broader literature on migrant transnationalism. Traditional research on immigration in the United States and other host nations assumed that as people moved to a new country, they would eventually abandon their previous ethnic and national identities as they became part of the receiving society (Alba et al. 1999). Instead of viewing migration as a move from one set of social and spatial arrangements to another, however, scholars of transnationalism have demonstrated that international migration is a "circular process in which people remain oriented to the places from which they have come" (Rouse 1991: 11). Although migrants have long maintained ties to sending communities (Foner 2006), new transportation and communication technologies such as cell phones, the Internet, and relatively inexpensive

¹⁸ Although the vertical archipelago model is often extended to all Bolivian migrants in these studies, the model is based on rural out-migration and the vast majority of the case studies involve rural migrants.

air travel have facilitated different (and faster) forms of transnational connections (R. Smith 1998). Thus, as migrants move across international borders and settle in new societies, they continue to participate in their country of origin (Basch et al. 1994).

But while theories of migrant transnationalism offer a more dynamic representation of contemporary migrants, they still present migration largely in terms of movement between two poles. In most cases, migrants move from a sending community in the global South to a destination in the global North. This overlooks South-South migration (i.e. Bolivians to Argentina) as well as the multiple stops that people make during migration routes. Rural migrants often move first to a city before deciding later to migrate abroad (Skeldon 1997; Paerregaard 2008) or can move through several different international locations (Collyer 2007). Migrant transnationalism also obscures the potential return of migrants to their country of origin (see chapter six). Finally, as Elmer's story suggests, international migration can potentially lead to subsequent movement within a migrant's country of origin.

By documenting the dense social and economic networks that connect places at different elevations, the vertical archipelago model offers insights into the multidirectional nature of mobility in the Andes.¹⁹ Migrants from places like Arbieta move between Buenos Aires, Madrid, Washington D.C. and the city of Cochabamba over decades while maintaining ties in some fashion with the Valle Alto. Furthermore, as I discuss in chapter four, international migration has facilitated new connections between Arbieta and highland Bolivia. As rural livelihoods in the *altiplano* have become

¹⁹ See Besserer (2004) and his concept of "transnational topographies" for a similar discussion in the context of Mexican migration to the United States.

increasingly difficult to sustain in an era of neoliberalism and climate change, internal migrants are increasingly seeking opportunities in the Valle Alto. In many cases, they literally fill in at work and in the homes of Bolivian migrants that have moved abroad. Thus, the vertical archipelago model demonstrates how contemporary Bolivians are connected across a variety of different locations and elevations through international migration.

The model further grounds these connections between places in a variety of livelihood practices that include agriculture, exchange and mobility. As Michael Peter Smith (2001) has argued, theories of transnationalism often rely on an abstract notion of space and overlook the ways that flows touch down and transform specific places (see also Voigt-Graf 2004). Smith's work on transnational urbanism focuses on migrants in cities, but scholars have long understood migration as part of rural livelihood practices that involve the movement of labor, capital, and other flows between different locations. In their long-term research on migration from western Mexico to the United States, Douglas Massey and his colleagues (1990; 2005) argued that migration decisions are made collectively by the household, rather than the rational individual of neo-classical economics. This closely follows the new economics of labor migration (NELM) theory, which views migration as a strategic response to resource constraints that seeks to maximize household income and minimize risk (Stark and Bloom 1985; see de Haas 2010 for an overview).

In the Andes, scholars have often presented migration as a one of a diverse set of strategies employed by rural households that are adapting to social, economic, and

environmental change (Zoomers 1999; 2001; Dandler and Medeiros 1991). Anthony Bebbington (1999; 2000) argues that rural Andean livelihoods depend on access to a variety of different resources (such as credit, capital and land) that go beyond agriculture. Through migration, seen in terms of the vertical archipelago model, rural Bolivians are securing access to resources in multiple sites that extend well beyond the countryside to cities in Bolivia and across international borders. While livelihood practices often include labor in non-agricultural settings, most notably the construction industry, migrants living abroad invest remittances in houses, education and agricultural enterprises in rural areas. Thus, livelihoods are ultimately anchored in rural communities of origin.

Feminist scholars have challenged the household and livelihoods approaches to migration for overlooking the existence of generational and, even more notably, gendered power relations within households (Pessar and Mahler 2003). Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994; 1999), for instance, has shown that gender shapes who is able to move and who benefits from the migration. Crucially, this critique suggests that household resources are not always equally shared. In particular, women who stay behind in sending communities may not benefit from their husbands' social networks or mobility.

Gender, as I discuss further in chapter six, has taken on a much larger role in migration research in recent years, often as a response to the increasingly visible feminization of migration (Donato et al. 2006; Jokisch and Pribilsky 2002). This perspective helps to disrupt traditional understandings of migration and livelihoods practices. It also challenges scholars to think further about unequal access to social networks and resources. Migration decisions are not made by the abstract concept of the

household, but rather are the result of power-laden negotiations between family and, in some cases, community members.²⁰ Furthermore, migration can exacerbate existing gender, class and ethnic inequalities within migrant and sending communities.

There is now a vast literature on the impact of migration in economics, political science, sociology and geography, among others. While there is some important variation (see especially Levitt 2001; Goldring 2004; R. Smith 2006), most of this work focuses on monetary remittances and suggests that migration has a positive, albeit limited, impact on sending communities (de Haas 2010; Durand et al. 1996). Others have argued that migration is more likely to exacerbate existing inequalities (Jones 1998; see chapter four for a more detailed discussion). The vertical archipelago model, like this line of research, views local development as always shaped through connections with other places (cf. D.B. Massey 1994). But rather than viewing migration and its connection to development as a recent phenomenon, scholars have often highlighted the long history of Andean mobile livelihood strategies (Larson et al. 1995).

By demonstrating that transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, the vertical archipelago model provides an avenue into the complex intersections between modernity and tradition that are central to Andean rural migration. In her account of peasant livelihood strategies in the Valle Alto, French geographer Geneviève Cortes (2004) argues that migration can be understood as a *campesino* response to the expansion of modernity into the rural Andes. The notion of migration as a strategy to maintain rural ties and identities has been at the forefront of scholarship in the Andes and Bolivia in

²⁰ This is often the case in the Valle Alto, where significant amounts of money are loaned to future migrants by relatives (de la Torre 2006).

particular, expressed vividly in the title of her book (2004) *Partir para quedarse*, “Leaving in order to stay.” At one level, Cortes opposes global flows (modernity) with Andean traditions. But at the same time, her discussion of migration demonstrates that modernity and indigeneity cannot be so easily separated.

Rejecting the common assumption that modernity is an exclusively European phenomenon, Enrique Dussel (1995) has argued that the modern world was the outcome of the colonization of the Americas. Resources from the silver mines of Potosí played an important role in the construction of the modern world system with Europe at its center (see also Quijano 2000; Blaut 1993; Mann 2011). Notably, this perspective views the movement and (forced) labor of indigenous peoples as central to this process, both in the mines and the agricultural fields of Cochabamba that supplied food to workers in Potosí (Larson 1998). Thus, Andeans have been intimately involved in the production of modernity long before contemporary migration patterns.

Even though she at times explicitly contrasts modernity with tradition, Cortes does recognize the ambivalent relationship between the two. When *campesinos* migrate, they engage directly with global flows of labor and production alongside Andean cultural practices and indigenous identities. Much like Colloredo-Mansfeld’s (1999) ethnography of Otavalo, a region in the Ecuadorian Andes, indigenous migrants gain opportunities in urban economic sectors within the Andes and abroad through kinship and ritual god parenthood networks (see also chapter three). Furthermore, livelihoods that are practiced in multiple locations can become central to the construction of rural and indigenous identities. This has been particularly visible in Otavalo, where indigenous communities

are well known for their economic success selling traditional crafts and goods abroad (see also Kyle 2000; Meisch 2002). Thus, indigenous practices and identities can be mobilized and transformed through international migration. As James Clifford (2007) has argued elsewhere, indigenous experiences are quite varied. Even though indigeneity is generally defined by an extended attachment to a particular place, indigenous migrants can have multiple identities and belong to new places while maintaining ties to traditional homelands.

The effort to adapt the vertical archipelago to a globalizing world is part of a broader trend that acknowledges the importance of indigenous identities in the contemporary Andes. Unlike most research on migration, this comes primarily from the perspective of the global South and as a result emphasizes different aspects of the migration process, most notably the impact of migration on sending communities and the eventual return of migrants. Despite the emergence of transnational scholarship, most research on immigration in the United States continues to focus on immigrant integration. Recent years have seen more studies on return migration, but for the most part it remains an overlooked aspect of the migration process (Jones forthcoming; Conway and Potter 2009).

Following Bolivian scholars, I argue that return is an important part of migrant lives in the Washington D.C. metro area (see also Martinez and Gelles 1992).²¹ As I discuss in more detail in the final chapter, migrants frequently discuss their future return even if it is, for many, symbolic. Thus, even though my research was conducted during a

²¹ Clifford (2007) also views that the possibility of return as central for indigenous migrants, although he suggests that the term diaspora is more appropriate because indigenous peoples have a sense of longing for a return to tradition and land.

period of economic recession and heightened immigration enforcement, I found that the prospects of return are limited by the deep roots that migrants develop in multiple communities. The difficulty of circular migration and return highlights the non-linear nature of migration in practice, and therefore further disrupts established migration models and policies. But whether or not it is ever realized on a large scale, I argue that the idea of return is important because it is central to the construction of migrant identities.

By privileging return, however, the vertical archipelago model does tend to overlook the impact of migration on receiving countries. I attempt to expand this focus in the dissertation by demonstrating how Bolivian migrant organizations have an important impact on the suburban landscape in Washington D.C. even as they transform both urban and rural places in Bolivia. The model in its original and updated form also obscures the *horizontal* connections of Andeans, particularly those well-established links between the city and countryside that have been an important feature of Andean life since the colonial period. In recent decades, a number of scholars have highlighted the large-scale and transformative nature of rural-to-urban migration in Bolivia (Albó 1997; Goldstein 2004), occasionally employing the concept of the vertical archipelago to describe connections between rural and urban areas (Antequera 2011). For the most part, however, this work has not explored the connections between rural-to-urban and international migration (for exceptions in Bolivia, see Roncken et al. 2009 and Guaygua et al. 2010), especially the subsequent movement to cities as international migrants return to Bolivia. As the story of

Elmer suggests, though, living in cities and suburbs in multiple countries are increasingly a central part of rural Bolivian livelihoods and identities.

In the following sections, I explore the opportunities and limitations of the vertical archipelago model through a history of urbanization and migration in the Cochabamba Valleys. I argue that Bolivian routes of migration are shaped by social and economic factors in Arbieta as well as by connections to other places. Using the Arbieta bus stop (*parada*) in Cochabamba as a starting point, I illustrate the complex and dynamic interconnections between rural and urban Bolivia. Then, I examine the formation of different migration circuits that connected the Valle Alto with Argentina and the United States, among other places. Crucially, these routes of migration are the result of both structural forces and lived practices.

Following de la Torre (n.d.), I suggest that Bolivians “learn how to” migrate and maintain ties with their sending communities during different migration stages and participation in hometown associations. Home, as Clifford (2007) suggests, is not just imagined from a distance but is actively practiced through a variety of cultural activities, collective remittance projects and, for those with papers, visits. However, while return remains an important goal that is occasionally achieved by some individuals, I argue that Bolivians develop roots in multiple places that complicate linear understandings of leaving and returning.

II. The *parada Arbieto*: Migration, urbanization, and the transformation of Cochabamba Valleys

Every morning well before the sun rises, minibuses begin to make their way from Arbieto to the city of Cochabamba. In each bus, at least eight people sit inside while boxes of produce are tied on top or wedged in between seats. Most passengers are women but buses become more diverse during Carnival, when Bolivian migrants returning from Argentina, the United States, and Europe travel between Cochabamba and Arbieto. While the roads in Arbieto are unpaved and full of potholes, most of the trip occurs on the two-lane highway known as the Avenida Petrolera (literally, the “Oil Avenue”) stretching south of the city into the Valle Alto. After 40 minutes, the passengers are let off at the corner of Barrientos and Guayamerin south of downtown Cochabamba. Although not a formal bus stop, the residents of the Zona San Carlos neighborhood have installed a small street sign indicating that this is indeed the *parada Arbieto*, the stop for buses to and from Arbieto. Most Saturdays, Vilma walks two blocks to the *parada* and boards a minibus for Santa Rosa, returning to the city on Monday morning.

The development of the *parada Arbieto* represents the transformation of rural and urban Bolivia in recent decades. Following the urbanization trend across Latin America and much of the global South,²² Bolivian cities have grown dramatically since the 1950s and particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the combined impact of

²² Mike Davis (2007) and others have recently detailed the increase of rural-to-urban migration in most countries across the global South. This trend began earlier in Latin America. In 1950, almost 60 percent of the region’s population lived in rural areas, but by 2010 almost 80 percent lived in cities. Bolivia has historically been more rural than other countries in the region, but this has also changed dramatically. More than 75 percent of the population lived in rural areas in 1950, but in 2010 two-thirds of the population was urban (United Nations 2010b).

neoliberal restructuring and environmental crises eroded rural livelihoods and caused *campesino* farmers to leave their villages and settle on the outskirts of urban centers.²³ Internal migration dramatically transformed Cochabamba, the country's third-largest city. From 1950 to 2001, Cochabamba grew from 50,000 inhabitants to more than 600,000 (Goldstein 2004), and the metropolitan area now has more than one million residents.

Newcomers made their homes in a variety of locations, but most scholarly and popular attention has focused on the southern part of the city beyond the Cancha, known broadly as the Zona Sur (southern zone) (Roncken et al. 2009). Unable to afford houses in established neighborhoods, migrants often organized invasions of land designated as *areas verdes* (green spaces) by the municipal government. Local officials, deeply concerned by this rapid and largely unregulated urbanization, incorporated some new peripheral settlements while excluding others. Since the mid-1990s most of the Zona Sur has been legally incorporated into the city, but residents of these *barrios* continue to lack basic services or security (Goldstein 2004). As the Zona Sur has expanded into Arbieto, the presence of peri-urban informal settlements in a largely rural municipality is a constant reminder of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the Valle Alto.

While recent rural-to-urban migration has undeniably transformed the political and ecological landscape of Cochabamba, the city has always been closely connected to its rural hinterlands. Set in the central highland valleys, Cochabamba is situated 8,360 feet above sea level to the east of the *altiplano* and the Cordillera Oriental of the Andes.

²³ The most visible migration occurred in El Alto, a satellite city overlooking the capital of La Paz that now has more than one million inhabitants. For several decades, hundreds of thousands of mostly Aymara-speaking migrants from the surrounding *altiplano* and recently closed tin mines moved to informal neighborhoods (Gill 2000; Lazar 2008). People from highland communities also moved to the emerging economic powerhouse in the lowlands, Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Kirshner 2010).

Known as the land of eternal spring, the three main valleys of Cochabamba (low, central and high (*alto*) valleys) have fertile soils and an ideal temperate climate for agriculture. For centuries, the region has served as the breadbasket for other parts of the Andes. The Incan empire colonized the Cochabamba valleys during the late 15th Century and established state-controlled maize colonies that exported large quantities of the crop to other population centers (Larson 1998). Similarly, the Spanish mining operation in Potosí was fueled in part by labor and food produced in Cochabamba. Trade that flowed through La Cancha (Cochabamba's largest *fería* or market) also helped to make the city a central place in the region's economy and connect it to the surrounding countryside. As Goldstein (2004) notes, the Cancha has been around since the early days of the city and remains a site where the city and countryside meet.

Improvements in transportation and agricultural technologies during the 20th Century allowed for even more sustained connections between the Valle Alto and the city. In 1945, Mexican engineers constructed the first large-scale dam in Bolivia to provide irrigation for farmers in the Cochabamba valleys (see figure 4). In the 1970s, Bolivian officials and international organizations sponsored several development projects in the Valle Alto to make peach cultivation an alternative to migration to the nearby coca-growing region of the Chapare (interview with Alvaro Moscoso, March 2011; Zimmerer 2010). While some communities in the Arbieto municipality already had access to irrigation through individual wells and communal canals, the Laka Laka reservoir and a

new network of irrigation canals greatly increased agricultural production, much of which is sold in the city of Cochabamba.²⁴

Figure 4: Angostura Lake (photo by author)



As a result of these changes and transportation arteries like the Avenida Petrolera, many residents of the Valle Alto now commute on a daily basis to the city for work or to

²⁴ See Zimmerer 2010 for an analysis of the agroecological changes that resulted from the Laka Laka project. A UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-sponsored study in 2001 estimated that 900 families in 10 different Arbieta communities in the Calicanto irrigation landscape gained access to irrigation from the Laka Laka reservoir (CISTEL 2001; Zimmerer 2010).

shop. Others have built homes in the city although, as Elmer's unfinished house suggests, this is not necessarily a permanent move. Neighborhoods in the southern part of the city are increasingly made up of people that also maintain residences in rural Valle Alto towns or abroad (interview with Yeshid Serrudo, March 2011). Many migrants in the Washington area have second homes in the city of Cochabamba that they rarely or, in the case of Elmer, have never visited. Thus, international migration has facilitated new forms of rural-to-urban migration (Dandler and Medeiros 1991).

There has also been movement in the other direction. In recent years, some city dwellers have begun to commute to the Valle Alto and other rural areas for work, reversing a long-standing trend of rural-to-urban migration. Buses leaving from the *parada Arbieta* now carry lawyers, accountants and public health officials to their jobs in the Arbieta municipal government. Buses also leave regularly from the southern boundary of the Cancha to larger towns like Punata and Cliza. Both towns hold important markets on Tuesday and Sunday, respectively, which draw bargain hunting consumers from across the department and in some cases the city of Cochabamba. Villages in the Valle Alto also draw tourists from the city and former migrants for regional folkloric festivals and agricultural *ferías* (like the Arbieta peach festival mentioned in chapter 1; see also Albro 2009). As a result of these new connections, places like Arbieta are gradually transforming from rural agricultural economies to an integrated part of a greater metropolitan region.

Rural municipalities in the Valle Alto have also been transformed by increasing in-migration from other parts of Bolivia. Although residents continue to leave for

Argentina, the United States, Brazil, and Spain, local officials expect the population, at 9,438 in 2001, to increase by at least 1,000 people when next census is completed (Instituto Nacional Estadística de Bolivia 2001; interview with Diógenes Escobar, February 2011). Much of this population growth has occurred in a series of informal settlements on both sides of the Avenida Petrolera known as the Zona Norte (North Zone). In practice an extension of Cochabamba's Zona Sur, the Zona Norte is a series of peri-urban settlements where internal migrants from Oruro, Potosi and poorer regions of Cochabamba have built informal neighborhoods since the 1990s. Nestled among steep hillsides overlooking the highway, most Zona Norte residents lack potable water and access to health care.²⁵

While Zona Norte settlements are technically part of Arbieta, they far have stronger ties with the city than the rest of the still largely rural municipality. Most residents work and visit markets in the city, facilitated by dense transportation networks. Descending from the hills, buses to Cochabamba pass every few minutes on the Avenida Petrolera. In contrast, the only council member from the Zona Norte has to take a taxi or two buses to reach the municipal office in Arbieta. As I discuss further in chapter four, other internal migrants have settled in the more traditional rural villages of Arbieta to work in the peach harvest or to serve as caretakers in the homes of international migrants

²⁵ Life in the Zona Norte is similar to the struggles described by Goldstein (2004) in the Zona Sur over land and access to water and other resources. Residents have also struggled with theft, sometimes responding with violent lynchings (field notes, March 2011; see Goldstein for a fascinating discussion of lynchings as spectacles of citizenship). Interestingly, residents of the Zona Norte make citizenship claims both to Arbieta and Cercado, the municipality that encompasses the city of Cochabamba. Settlements near the Arbieta-Cercado boundary line demand to be incorporated as residents of Cercado, hoping that this will result in greater resources than possible in a more rural (and poorer) municipality.

(de la Torre and Aramayo 2007). Thus, international migration is part of, and in some ways a catalyst for, dramatic transformations in rural Bolivia.

III. Livelihood strategies and circuits of migration in the Valle Alto

Over the course of the 20th Century but particularly in the last 40 years, the Valle Alto of Cochabamba has become one of the most prominent migrant sending regions in Bolivia. As Bolivian sociologist Leonardo de la Torre suggests, it has also become a “laboratory” for the study of migration. A number of Bolivian and foreign scholars have documented migration from the region to other places in Bolivia, Argentina (Dandler and Medeiros 1991; Cortes 2004), Spain (de la Torre n.d.) and the United States (de la Torre 2006; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; Yarnall and Price 2010). Although access to irrigation, fertile soils and close ties to the Cochabamba markets have led peasants in the Valle Alto to be, on average, more prosperous than most other Bolivian *campesinos* (Perreault 2005), most small-scale farmers in the region do not own enough land to make a living solely from agriculture. As Dandler and Medeiros (1991) suggest, the roots of land scarcity lie in the 1953 Agrarian Reform, one of the most important reforms in Latin America during the 20th Century. Although the reform ended serfdom and distributed *hacienda* land to indigenous and *mestizo* peasants, its overall legacy has been negative.

Because the Cochabamba valleys were one of the most densely populated areas of Bolivia in the 1950s, the reform resulted in relatively small plots of land. Over time, these plots became even smaller as families divided land among multiple children (Cortes 2004). This system of landholdings is known as the *minifundio*, opposed to the *latifundio*

system that is dominated by large land owners. As full-time farming became an increasingly untenable prospect for many in the Valle Alto, families adopted diverse spatial and economic strategies that have often included internal and international migration.

In an early study of migration to Argentina, Dandler and Medeiros (1991) argued that (mostly) men from the Valle Alto traveled to markets, bought land in the lowlands, and labored temporarily in other parts of Bolivia and Argentina as a strategy to remain in rural villages. Migrants invested remittances earned abroad in homes and businesses, and tended to return after short periods of time. Foreshadowing later arguments about migration and the vertical archipelago, Dandler and Medeiros suggested that even though many people spend significant time outside of the region, migration can help to slow the depopulation of rural areas (see Bebbington 2000 for a similar conclusion). Many people from Arbieta confirmed the effectiveness of this livelihood strategy, describing their parents' temporary movements abroad to Argentina that allowed them to grow up in the Valle Alto, rather than in Argentina or the city of Cochabamba. At the same time, of course, many have continued to migrate abroad.

Almost every migrant I interviewed pointed to the lack of economic opportunities in rural Bolivia as the primary reason for leaving Arbieta. In practice, however, this explanation had a variety of different meanings. César, a returnee in the village of Tiataco who previously lived in Buenos Aires and Northern Virginia, said that he was motivated to "travel" because his parents could not afford to keep him in school. In contrast,

Germán, an active migrant from Villa Verde, told me that he and his brother initially migrated in order to continue their studies past high school:

Chris: Why did you decide to go to Argentina?

Germán: I had this idea when I was in high school. I wanted to study. Before I finished high school with my brother there was a lady [teacher] that came and told us that we would have good luck . . . that we would study in another country, that's what she told us. I always had this idea as a kid. My father told me that you have to become a professional, like a teacher. So studying, that was the idea. We always thought that schools abroad were better, right? In those times we were talking about Argentina.

Germán went on to study at a university outside of Buenos Aires, and although he did not become a teacher, he suggested that his time in Argentina and later the United States gave him prestige similar to an advanced degree: "There is a saying in Bolivia, going out of the country is like getting a doctorate, and coming to the United States is even more, it's like having a degree from Harvard!" Like Germán, informants from Arbiето frequently cited education as an important reason to leave Bolivia, but since few adult migrants had time to attend school in the United States this was primarily discussed in terms of their children. Almost every Bolivian migrant in Washington with older children, whether from Arbiето or elsewhere, told me that their son or daughter was studying to, or had, become a professional. While the United States was often praised for its educational opportunities, migrants like Elmer proudly relayed that their children were becoming professionals in Bolivia.

Others said they were motivated to leave Bolivia because of the discrimination they faced in the provincial capital of Tarata or the city of Cochabamba. During regular visits to attend school or access government services, *campesinos* from Arbiето were often looked down upon or openly discriminated against. Eduardo, another migrant from

Tiataco who lives in Northern Virginia, suggested that this discrimination motivated him to study and work elsewhere:

We from the *campo* (countryside) were totally discriminated against. You weren't given any attention in any of the offices, how we suffered. Thus, as children we were taught by someone who guided us, who studied the world. Most of us became professionals and most of the people here [the United States] are professionals. At the very least they finished high school. This isn't done in Bolivia, only elementary school.

As the stories of César, Germán and Eduardo suggest, migration decisions are shaped by a variety of factors that include social and economic obstacles in the Valle Alto and, just as important, the perception of opportunity abroad.

“Learning” how to migrate

Migration is likely to remain an important option for people from the Valle Alto for several reasons. Despite real improvements in agricultural technologies, it remains difficult to make a living primarily from farming. People living in Arbieta routinely expressed concerns to me about supporting their families. This is even true for *campesinos* who grow peaches, the most lucrative crop in the Valle Alto. Peaches are only harvested once a year, at the end of the rainy season in February and March. After this, farmers have little real income and are forced to rely on subsistence crops like corn, onions, and potatoes the rest of the year.

Still, as de la Torre (2006) has shown, Arbieta households with peach orchards are in a better economic position than those without. This divide is often spatially manifested in the municipality between wealthier villages surrounding the town of Arbieta and communities on the outskirts of the *municipio* that tend to lack access to the

irrigation networks necessary to cultivate peaches (see Cortes 2004 for a similar discussion at the regional scale of the Valle Alto). Although irrigation is slowly expanding into the poorer parts of Arbieta, villages like Rayo Pampa and others on the outskirts of the municipality are largely dependent on subsistence crops and a small number of domestic animals. This balance of commercial and subsistence agriculture is threatened by frequent droughts, which have become more common in recent decades (Zimmerer 1993; Los Tiempos 2010).

In villages across the Arbieta *municipio*, there is significant debate among farmers as to whether this represents a new trend or a continuation of unpredictable weather patterns. However, most people I spoke with said that peach production has fallen dramatically in the past three years. The 2011 harvest was even less fruitful than in previous years, although discouraged farmers have few alternatives to the region's most famous product. Those with access to capital, generally from their time abroad, tend to be involved in the transportation sector, either formally (taxi and bus service) or informally (hauling peaches and other goods to the Cancha in Cochabamba).

These debates take place alongside discussions of economic and social conditions in migrant destinations. Even Bolivians who have not been to the United States are familiar with the social geography of the Washington area and the routes that many migrants take through Central America and Mexico. People in Arbieta also know a great deal about the mundane details of life in Northern Virginia and Maryland, often explaining to me how difficult their family members found it to pay \$800 a month or more in rent. Communication networks also transmitted worries about life in the United

States back to Bolivia (see chapter six for a detailed discussion of these concerns).

During my research in Bolivia, many conversations with family members of migrants began with a variant of the phrase, “I hear that life in the U.S. is much more difficult now.”

Even so, residents of Arbieto insist that people will continue to migrate.

Established networks to the United States attract many in rural villages, especially young people looking to escape the agricultural sector. During my visit to Rayo Pampa, young men on the soccer team said that they hoped to travel abroad because there wasn’t any future for them in the rural economy. Even though several players had recently been deported from the United States, the team was unified in its desire to migrate to the Washington D.C. area. Ramiro, the team’s captain, called migration to the United States “our dream, our American dream” but noted that it can sometimes turn into a “nightmare.” Even intimate knowledge of the hardships of migration and life without papers in the United States is unlikely to deter those oriented towards the Washington area.

Thus, even more than economic and environmental constraints in the Valle Alto, migration continues to be facilitated by long-term social networks that stretch to Argentina, the United States, and Spain. Douglas Massey has argued that migrants often follow existing pathways established over decades by friends and family members (Massey et al. 1990; 2005; see Goss and Lindquist 1995 for a broad overview of migrant and institutional networks). Migration has become a similar tradition in regions like the Valle Alto and more broadly in the Cochabamba valleys. Because so many of their peers

(and parents) have left, most men and some women assume that they will eventually undertake a similar journey during their lives. De la Torre describes the expectation of future migration as “*algo obligatorio*,” something obligatory, for local residents (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; see also Cohen 2004 and Pribilsky 2007 for similar discussions in Mexico and Ecuador, respectively).

The power of this expectation was on display during one of several lengthy interviews I conducted with Germán. When I asked if he planned to return to Bolivia, he replied “of course.” While this response is almost universal among migrants from Arbiето, it does not necessarily imply a linear and final return to Bolivia. Instead, as Germán elaborated, migrants are likely to move on after a temporary return to Arbiето:

Even if I return to Bolivia, I don't think I will stay that much time. I will have to go to Argentina or another place. With a family and children, no. What would I do with the rest of my life? Be a taxi driver? Working age people are always seen in a negative light, another person looks at them like, “why is he here, he should go abroad.” Something like that. Well in [the Valle Alto], in Cochabamba it's not as much. There a person can have a business. . . In the Valle Alto it would be written like, he who can work cannot stay here, is not allowed to stay here (*prohibido quedarse aquí*) in the Valle Alto. If someone looks at you, the look is saying this phrase.

While peer pressure plays an important role, Bolivians with long migration histories like Germán also suggested that they had trouble readjusting to life in Arbiето. Joshue, for example, described his recent visit to Rayo Pampa while sitting in a Northern Virginia park: “Personally, I am not accustomed anymore in my country [Bolivia] because I have already gone to other places.” Joshue recalled that although he initially went to Israel on a short-term work contract (after several years in Argentina), he ended up staying for seven years before leaving Bolivia again for the United States. Similarly, when Germán

returned to Villa Verde after more than 15 years in Buenos Aires, he found Bolivia to be “different” and decided to join his brother in the United States. Long-term migration, therefore, changes the affective relationship between a migrant and his or her community. In some instances, this can result in migrants becoming more accustomed to living outside of the country and can decrease the likelihood that they will return permanently.

Regardless of whether migrants returned to Bolivia by choice or were forcibly deported from the United States, I found that most, like the members of the Rayo Pampa soccer team, immediately looked to Argentina, Brazil or, until recently, Europe. During my fieldwork in Arbieta, I met several migrants from the Washington D.C. area who passed through Bolivia on their way to Buenos Aires. Others who knew Northern Virginia or Maryland well spoke with me about returning to the United States once the economy recovered. This pattern of migration has led de la Torre (n.d.) to posit that places like Arbieta should be seen as a "circular territory" where migrants constantly move through on their way to other destinations (see also Tarrus 2000).

In response to changing conditions in the Valle Alto and abroad, migration routes have transformed over time. Migrants frequently suggested that the circular migration routes traveled by their parents laid the foundation for continued and arguably more permanent migration out of rural areas. Using a common phrase among migrants in the Washington, Germán argued:

For *cochabambinos*, if there is work on the moon, we will be there (*si hay trabajo en la luna, allí vamos a estar pues*). This was what is known as the spirit of the traveler, especially for those from the Valle Alto. For example my grandfather, my mother’s father, was from Independencia [a town in the remote region of Ayopaya in the Cochabamba department] and they say that he carried those jugs that are called *p’uños* for exchanges or *trueque*, I think that this is being perfected

(*se va perfeccionando*). If a person does one thing, the other perfects it. The son, the grandson, the great grandson.

For Germán, his travels to Buenos Aires and Washington D.C. follow and extend well-worn paths between Ayopaya and the city of Cochabamba. The roots of international migration can be found in Andean forms of internal migration and exchange, most notably through the *trueque*, a non-monetary form of trade in which goods are directly exchanged for one another. The *trueque* occupies a central place in the anthropological literature on the Andes and is associated with indigenous systems of reciprocity such as the *ayni* (see chapter three). By suggesting that older forms of Andean mobility and exchange continue to shape contemporary migration, Germán locates his migration history within a specifically Andean history and as a continuation of indigenous cultural practices.

Germán's narrative also highlights how migrant networks that originate in the Valle Alto are shaped and transformed by experiences developed over many decades and in multiple locations. As migrants move along established routes, the practice of mobility and settlement influences how Bolivians construct communities and interact with their surroundings. Researchers in Bolivia have often demonstrated how internal migration is an important step in subsequent international migration. Guaygua and his colleagues (2010), for instance, argue that recent migrants to Spain learned how to get accustomed to a new place, find work, and develop networks by first moving from rural areas to El Alto and La Paz.

Indeed, people from Arbieta often explained to me that their migration and continued ties to their hometowns are something they “learned to do” (see also de la

Torre n.d.; Giorgis 2004). Sitting in his brother's house in an outer Northern Virginia suburb, Eduardo told me that people from Tiataco had "always been traveling. The *cochabambino* (someone from Cochabamba) travels to every country. Maybe," he thought, "we got this idea [to migrate] from our parents who migrated little by little. We were raised with this idea to emigrate wherever and *quedarnos* [stay]." In recent decades, international migration routes from Arbieta have become longer, lengthier, and more complex.

Most men and some women from Arbieta lived in Buenos Aires before coming to the United States, while others spent time in Venezuela, Israel or Europe. The practices that migrants develop during their journeys play a crucial role in their mobility and adaptation to new places. In Argentina, as I describe further in chapter four, male migrants developed important skills and social networks in the construction industry that allowed them to access economic niches in Washington D.C. They also made or reestablished connections to residents of neighboring villages in Arbieta, which became crucial as migrants made their way from Argentina to other countries like Israel and the United States.

Beginning in the early 1980s, a number of Arbieta migrants began to move from Buenos Aires to Northern Virginia and West Palm Beach. Some early migrants were able to take advantage of their residency in Argentina to travel to the U.S. on tourist visas. However, for many this option was not available. The inability of so-called unskilled laborers to secure work visas and permanent residency has forced Bolivians without immediate family members in the U.S. to enter the country without authorization.

Although I did not directly ask Bolivians about legal status or their route to the United States, many volunteered information about their unauthorized trips across the U.S.-Mexico border. The journey from Cochabamba to the United States is extraordinarily expensive and requires that future migrants borrow a significant amount of money. Even though most Bolivians had already accumulated some capital in Argentina, they still need additional money from family members or from extended networks in Cochabamba or the Valle Alto (see de la Torre 2006 and Cortes 2004 for similar accounts).

Starting in Cochabamba, migrants traveled with other Bolivians to a Central American country or Mexico, where they crossed the U.S.-Mexico border with a group of other Latin Americans. These trips are generally arranged by traffickers known as coyotes or "*polleros*" (literally chicken wranglers) based in Cochabamba or Cliza, a neighboring town in the Valle Alto. Migrants estimated that the trip currently costs more than \$15,000, up from \$12,000 in 2006 (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007: 123) and less than \$10,000 in 2001. Migrants often referred to the journey as "*la chingada*," a vulgar Mexican term. Others that crossed since 9/11 referred vaguely to the dangerous nature of the trip, particularly in August 2010 after news of dozens of migrant deaths in northern Mexico reached Washington D.C.

Like other immigrant groups, Bolivians based much of their initial migration decision on the success of others already in the United States. Long-term migrants often told me stories of being sent for by older brothers or friends that had found work in the Northern Virginia construction industry. Upon arriving in the United States, newcomers are met by established migrants who provide them with temporary housing and assistance

in finding work.²⁶ New migrants connect with friends and family members from Bolivia at work sites, soccer games and church. All of these interactions teach migrants the accepted norms of the Bolivian community in the Washington area and provide direction as to how to participate in local communities.

Furthermore, as de la Torre (n.d.) has suggested, moving to a variety of places teaches migrants that going to another country is not permanent and does not preclude the possibility of return. There is a large literature on circular migration, particularly in the context of Latin America. Most research has explored the circular routes of Mexican migrants in the United States (Massey et al. 1990; Rouse 1991), although a number of studies have documented similar patterns of Bolivian migration to Argentina (Dandler and Medeiros 1991; Hinojosa et al. 2002; Rockefeller 2010). While migrants travel long distances in search of economic opportunities and may even acquire residency in foreign countries, they generally intend to return to their community of origin. However, since the mid-1990s, increased control along the U.S.-Mexico border has decreased the circular nature of migration to the United States (Massey et al. 2003) and isolated migrants from their communities of origin in the global South (Pribilsky 2007). Even though the desire to return continues to shape the actions and identities of migrants, return is an increasingly difficult prospect as rural economies continue to stagnate and migrant families become rooted in their new homes.

At the same time, many migrants from Arbieta have become part of expanding urban centers in Bolivia. Migrants are increasingly staking claims to urban

²⁶ See Ferrufino Coqueugniot (2009) for a detailed, albeit fictional, account of these Bolivian networks in Northern Virginia

neighborhoods in Cochabamba, as the story of Elmer suggests, by building “transnational houses” (i.e. Pellow 2003; Grant 2009; see Leinaweaver 2009 for an example in the Peruvian Andes). Although construction occurs in stages and may take years or decades to complete, houses offer migrants originally from rural areas an opportunity to live in the center of a dynamic city and urban economy. As Melly (2010) suggests, these diasporic constructions also represent a form of urban participation through which migrants stake a claim to future presence in ways that non-migrants cannot.²⁷

The construction of houses in neighborhoods near the Cancha demonstrates how international migration has fragmented and reconstructed rural communities in urban areas. Even though Elmer has never seen his house in Cochabamba and does not plan to live there, the house offers his children a chance to attend better schools and universities than is possible in the countryside. Thus, Elmer and Vilma are staking a claim to belong to a small but growing professional class in Bolivia. Like the multi-story houses built by migrants in the rural Valle Alto, constructing homes in Cochabamba or Washington D.C. (see chapter five) can be a type of status symbol and an effort to belong to *Arbieto* communities located in multiple places.

IV. Conclusions

Understanding Andean migration through the vertical archipelago, I have argued in this chapter, makes sense for a number of reasons. As Elmer’s story demonstrates, Bolivian migration involves a series of movements and settlements between places and

²⁷ Melly (2010) describes the unfinished houses built by migrants in Dakar as “inside-out houses” because their interior becomes public and scrutinized by other residents.

across international borders and rural-urban divides. Migrants from Arbieta have established niches in Buenos Aires, Madrid, and Washington D.C., while at the same time generating social, economic, and geographic mobility within Bolivia. But even as migrants have settled in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and other places for long periods of time, Arbieta has remained at the center of their lives through a variety of transnational and translocal connections.

Beyond describing this multi-directional movement, emphasizing Andean mobilities and connections across space helps to locate the agency of migrants in a transnational world. As I argue in this chapter and the rest of the dissertation, international migration is shaped by a variety of social, political, economic and environmental structures. In the Cochabamba valleys, the lack of economic opportunity and well-traveled pathways established by previous generations to Argentina, the United States and Europe have made migration the first option for many people and will likely continue to do so in the future. Although new technologies allow for greater communication with sending communities, there are a number of obstacles to sustained transnational connections. The distance from Bolivia to Washington D.C. makes regular travel difficult and expensive, while undocumented migrants cannot leave the United States at all.

But even though structural constraints limit the mobility of migrants, they are still able to construct identities and understandings of belonging based on ties with multiple places. As I explore in more detail in the following chapter, hometown associations in particular play a crucial role in maintaining connections to sending communities. As de la

Torre argues, collective remittance public works projects are a way not only of fulfilling obligations to their communities of origin but also of keeping the dream of return alive (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007: 126). When many migrants settle more or less permanently in the United States, they still plan for a future return to the Valle Alto. As Elmer once told me, “I think that people that are here, that have come from Bolivia, we have this desire (*anhelo*) to return to our land, to the town (*pueblo*) that saw us grow up.”

This desire to return, whether or not it actually is realized, guarantees that migrants are rooted in the Valle Alto. Thus, as migrants move within a network of dense and evolving connections between places, they exercise some control over their lives and future. Andean scholars have argued, rightly, that rural territory becomes an important site of identity formation during this process and serves as an anchor for circulating migrants (Cortes 2004; Valliant 2008). But while HTAs are oriented towards sending communities, transnational practices are also rooted in and shape how migrants interact with receiving communities. Thus, migrant identities and practices are formed through a variety of vertical, horizontal and imagined connections between places.

Chapter Three

Constructing Bolivian spaces: Migrant organizational practices and community formation in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area

On most Sunday mornings, migrants from the Arbieto municipality gather at different soccer fields across Northern Virginia and Maryland. The largest and most prominent league, INCOPEA, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and occasionally draws more than one hundred spectators to an outer Virginia suburb. There, men from eleven rural villages play in competitive round-robin tournaments that also raise money for collective remittance projects in the Valle Alto. Migrants participate in a variety of social and cultural activities in the Washington D.C. area, but soccer is the primary way that they socialize, maintain cultural practices, and participate in their community of origin. Different men's and women's soccer leagues provides an important collective identity for migrants while operating at overlapping local, regional, and national scales.

In this chapter, I examine the formation of Bolivian migrant communities in the Washington area. Most policy and academic discussions of immigration in the United States operate on the assumption that migrants from the same country or region are largely homogeneous (Mahler 1995). This is generally articulated through the language of community. In the Washington D.C. area, references to the Bolivian (or Peruvian, Salvadoran, etc.), Latin American or immigrant community are ubiquitous in local media accounts and in press releases put out by migrant organizations, who hope to project a sense of collectivity and unity that can be recognized and valued by the host society.

At the same time, the term “community” obscures how migrants are often sharply divided along class, ethnic, gender, and educational lines. Much like Doreen Massey’s (1994) suggestion that communities are always internally differentiated, case studies in the United States have demonstrated that differences in legal and social status fundamentally shape migrant experiences and can threaten solidarity between individuals from the same country, region or city (Mahler 1995; Pribilsky 2007; Pallares 2005; Berg 2008; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Li 2006; Parreñas 2001). Transnationalism scholarship further challenges the notion of a singular and territorially bound immigrant community (R. Smith 2006). Communities, therefore, are not natural, but rather are dynamic social formations that are always constructed and have shifting boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

But while recognizing the fragmented nature of immigrant communities helps to move beyond simplistic understandings of migrant experiences, it does not mean that we should abandon the concept of community altogether. Indeed, it remains a powerful tool for creating belonging and is often at the center of how immigrant groups participate within both host and sending societies. This chapter makes a case that research on immigration should explore the formation of multiple communities among migrants from a single country or, in this case, even a single rural municipality. I pay particular attention to the role played by migrant cultural and sports organizations in the construction of Bolivian communities. Even though not all migrants belong to hometown associations and folkloric dance troupes, these organizations serve as conduits for participation in local and transnational activities.

Figure 5: Soccer game in Northern Virginia (photo by author)



The first part of the chapter provides an overview of two soccer leagues in Northern Virginia and Maryland. Alongside affiliated “internal” leagues²⁸ made up of people from a single sending village, soccer leagues are the dominant institutions for migrants from the *Arbieto municipio*. Through detailed ethnographic analysis of hometown association meetings, soccer tournaments, and a collaborative oral history project with migrant leaders, I demonstrate how HTAs are shaped by rural organizational

²⁸ Soccer leagues from individual *Arbieto* villages are referred to by migrants as “*internos*,” literally internals.

practices and networks of reciprocity that structure relationships in rural Bolivia. As these practices travel to Argentina and the United States, migrants adapt them to the dispersed social and economic geography of the suburbs of Washington D.C.

In the second section, I explore the construction of Bolivian migrant communities at multiple scales. The most visible activity for Bolivians living abroad, folklore can be understood as a practice of symbolic nationalism that strives to construct a singular migrant community. But while folklore sometimes stands in for all Bolivians in the Washington area, dance troupes are a part of a diverse migrant cultural landscape. I demonstrate how Arbieta hometown associations and internal soccer leagues have constructed identities at local and regional scales. I also suggest that soccer fields and folkloric dance practices are crucial sites of cultural production that seek to transfer practices and identities to the second generation. The sidelines of soccer games in particular become important physical and symbolic spaces where migrants can renew acquaintances, maintain cultural practices, and contribute to their communities of origin. Many, but by no means all, migrants from Arbieta attend soccer games on Sunday even though most are not involved in transnational business, political or even HTA leadership activities.²⁹ By providing spaces for cultural activities, though, HTAs help construct collective identities that are based in both the Washington D.C. area and different sites within the Arbieta municipality.

The final section of the chapter explores the tensions that exist within migrant organizations. Even though hometown associations and soccer leagues are based around

²⁹ This is similar to the findings of Alejandro Portes and his colleagues (2009), who have shown that only a small percentage of Latin American migrants participate regularly in transnational activities.

relationships within a single municipality, Arbieta migrant communities are not free of conflict. HTAs continue to be exclusionary spaces dominated by men, and leaders have frequent disagreements over day-to-day activities, long-term plans, and organizational membership. Despite frequent tensions, I argue that these fragmented communities still play an important role in shaping how migrants belong to and engage in receiving and sending societies.

I. “We are always thinking of our community”: Bolivian hometown associations and networks of reciprocity in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area

Northern Virginia, May 2011

On a Wednesday evening in early May, INCOPEA leaders gather for their monthly meeting. The month before, a player from the village of La Loma suffered a serious shoulder injury during a soccer game. Organizers called an ambulance, but only after taking the player to an unlicensed and, from all accounts, incompetent doctor in a nearby suburb. Later, they found out that the organization’s insurance, which is required to rent fields from the county, would cover less than half of the cost of the ambulance ride and visit to the emergency room.

Talk of the injury dominated INCOPEA meetings for the rest of the spring. At the beginning of the May meeting, the delegate from La Loma makes a direct appeal to the organization’s leadership for help in paying the medical bills, noting that the injured player would not be able to work for months and had a pregnant wife at home. La Loma

has supported people from other communities in the past, he insists, so INCOPEA should do the same. After this, delegates from the town of Arbieto present a petition, signed by most migrants from the town, asking that the association's insurance policy be changed.

The conversation switches returns to the organization's leaders. Oscar, INCOPEA's vice president, explains that teams used to pay a higher premium but this has declined over the years as a result of complaints about the cost. Currently, players pay only \$.30 per game towards insurance but several villages still had yet to pay their share from previous tournaments. Thus, although the Arbieto letter states that players were willing to pay more each season for insurance, most delegates around the table openly express their doubts. Zenobio, the mild-mannered president from the village of Liquinas, remarks quietly that players always want things like better insurance or outside referees without considering the cost: "It's very easy to sign something, but when it is time to pay they [community members] will not pay." While the delegates ultimately decline to make a formal offer of financial support to the player, they set about finding a better insurance policy for the league.

This debate demonstrates how reciprocal relationships common in rural Bolivia are being transformed in the United States. In this section, I examine the transfer of rural forms of governance from Arbieto to hometown associations in the Washington D.C. area. While these cultural and organizational practices help migrants to form tightly-knit communities, they are also transformed as they are adapted to life in the suburbs of Washington D.C. Many Bolivians live outside of the formal social safety net in the United States because they work as subcontractors or in small construction or service

industry businesses that do not provide health insurance. Undocumented immigrants and many legal permanent residents cannot qualify for government assistance and as a result are forced to rely on personal and community networks to raise money for health care and other emergencies.

Although INCOPEA provides insurance for players on the soccer field, migrants are not necessarily committed to paying the premiums. This is a result of both the broken system of health care in the United States and Bolivians' reliance on informal mutual aid mechanisms available through migrant organizations. INCOPEA, for instance, occasionally raises money through soccer tournaments or special fundraisers to pay for larger medical expenses or for migrants to travel to Bolivia to receive care (even with the airline ticket, this can be cheaper than paying for health care in the United States). While there are some obvious strains in the system, as the injury of the La Loma player suggests, networks of reciprocity and mutual assistance continue to function informally and shape how migrants define themselves and their communities.

Hometown associations and indigenous migration

Migrants have a long history of participating in mutual aid societies but the formation of hometown associations is a relatively recent phenomenon (Sites and Vonderlack-Navarro 2012). HTAs are volunteer-based organizations composed of migrants from a single village or town.³⁰ Although migrants participate in a variety of political, economic and cultural institutions, HTAs have received a great deal of attention from researchers and policymakers because they facilitate direct and sustained

³⁰ HTAs described in the migration literature are overwhelmingly made up of migrants from rural areas.

connections across international borders. Over the last 30 years, migrants have formed hundreds of HTAs in the United States (Lanly and Valenzuela 2004) as well as organizations in Europe (Cagler 2006) and internal migrant destinations (Altimirano and Hirabayashi 1997).

Hometown associations serve as a vehicle to contribute resources and carry out public works projects in migrant communities of origin. Associations are generally formed through informal meetings of migrants at sporting or cultural events (R. Smith 2006). Over time HTAs tend to become more formalized, although they still remain small volunteer-led organizations (Waldinger et al. 2008). Whether they meet at restaurants, soccer fields or in private homes, HTAs operate by raising funds and carrying out collective remittance projects in their community of origin. These projects are often based around basic infrastructure, communication, recreation and other community projects. Unlike individual and familial remittances, collective remittances serve a public good and are designed to provide services that otherwise would be unattainable in rural communities (Goldring 2004).

Migration scholarship in the Americas has focused almost exclusively on *mestizo* (mixed race) migrants, but this oversight has begun to change in recent years as indigenous peoples have become a more visible part of migration to the United States, particularly from southern Mexico, and to other destination countries. This emphasis is necessary because, as Lynn Stephen (2007) argues, indigenous peoples experience migration differently than *mestizos*. As they travel to the United States, for instance, Mexican indigenous migrants cross a variety of ethnic, class, cultural, and legal borders.

Furthermore, because they face racial discrimination in Mexico and the United States, from host communities and other Mexican migrants, indigenous migrants do not fully belong in either country (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004).

This has also been the case for Bolivian peasants and indigenous peoples who migrate internally and to Argentina (Grimson 1999; Sassone 2002; Giorgis 2006; Rivera 1993). Most Arbieta migrants in Northern Virginia and Maryland had previously lived in Argentina, where they took advantage of amnesty programs to obtain legal residency. But despite this status, they were often treated poorly by Argentines. Bolivians (as well as other South American migrants) are generally portrayed as dirty in Argentina because of their work in the construction and textile industry, Germán explained once in response to a question about discrimination in the United States. Migrants who had been in Argentina often told me similar stories about being called “*bolitas*” and other derogatory names.

In spite of the obstacles that indigenous migrants face, they are sometimes able to access a different set of social and cultural resources than *mestizo* migrants can. Studies have shown that indigenous peoples from southern Mexico have transferred practices such as communal labor and the cargo system³¹ to new settings in the United States. Mixtec and Zapotec migrants, for instance, return home to fulfill civil and religious obligations (Conway and Cohen 1998; Mountz and Wright 1996), although this is becoming more difficult as a result of restrictive immigration policies that prevent migrants from traveling to Mexico regularly. As a result, some migrants now send

³¹ The cargo system refers to a set of duties and responsibilities connected to festivals across Latin America. As Abercrombie (1998) notes, civic and religious functions have become intertwined since Spanish colonialism. The contemporary cargo system refers to administrative responsibilities that all community members must fulfill.

remittances as a way to fulfill cargo obligations (Stephen 2007).³² Similarly, Guaygua and his colleagues (2010) argue that migration from El Alto and La Paz to Spain is organized around Andean kinship networks (*redes de parentesco*), which help to minimize risk and to help migrants find work and places to live in Europe. Indigenous Bolivians have also transferred rural forms of organization and cultural practices such as folkloric and religious festivals to El Alto (Albó 1997) and Buenos Aires (Grimson 1999).

Indigenous migrant communities are also constructed through networks of reciprocal obligations and mutual aid that are common in sending areas. Lane Hirabayashi (1993) has argued that Zapotec migrant associations in Mexico City are shaped by the concept of *paisanazgo*, or forms of solidarity among migrants from the same locale. *Paisanazgo* is not equivalent to traditional forms of mutual aid, however, but is actively created by migrants in a new social situation (see Waldinger et al. 2008 for a similar argument). Similarly, Albó (1997) distinguishes between mutual aid among rural-to-urban migrants in La Paz and El Alto and the social and economic ties that migrants maintain with their rural communities of origin. For both, cultural practices and established forms of social organization brought from the countryside shape how indigenous migrants organize and distinguish them from other migrants in a new city, even as migrant associations are ultimately based around the new concerns of their members.

³² But as Mutersbaugh (2002) notes, not all indigenous communities are eager to accept remittances. Zapotec communities in Oaxaca in particular have taken measures to control migration and encourage migrants to fulfill their obligations in person.

Migrants from the Arbieto municipality and other parts of Cochabamba sometimes suggest that hometown associations in the Washington area are an embodiment of the *pazanaco* or *ayni*, two important indigenous practices of reciprocity and mutual aid in Bolivia (see also de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; de la Torre 2008; e.g. Albó 1997; Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999). Like Marcel Mauss's (2002) rendering of the gift, the *ayni* is a social system in which members feel an obligation to reciprocate goods or services in the future.³³ Rural-to-urban migrants in Bolivia, as Goldstein (2004) and Albro (2010) have noted, are sometimes quick to assert that the *ayni* no longer exists in their communities. Residents of the Valle Alto made similar statements during my fieldwork. For instance, Andrea, an organizer of a well-known cultural *fería* (festival) in the village of Achamoco called the Ñawpa Manka Mikhuna (Quechua for "the food of our ancestors"), told me "before there was the *ayni*, reciprocity. There wasn't any hatred. Today, there is a lot of corruption and delinquency. We have to recover (*recuperar*) the culture of our ancestors." The *ayni*, like other indigenous traditions in Bolivia, is often opposed to "modern" cultural influences, with either positive or negative implications.

But even as Bolivians suggest that they have been distanced from the *ayni*, it remains an important part of how indigeneity is understood and practiced, much like the *trueque* discussed in chapter two. Crucially, networks of reciprocity are not static and are constantly transformed as Bolivians move between the countryside and the city. For instance, Goldstein and Albro have shown that the *ayni* and related networks of reciprocity continue to be practiced in the city of Cochabamba. As forms of exchange are

³³ These exchanges are not dictated by the market or direct swaps of the same good or service. For instance, an individual or household that helps with a neighbor's harvest for a day can expect to receive labor help in their field or with a home repair (Geffroy et al. 2008).

increasingly commercialized in Bolivia, fiestas and fictive kin practices are based on established notions of reciprocity where ritual *padrinos* (godparents) are responsible for contributing money or services during baptisms, weddings and other important events, while recipients are expected to reciprocate in the future.

Reciprocal practices are also transferred to and transformed in migrant communities outside of Bolivia. In the Washington D.C. area, most Bolivian hometown associations, folkloric dance troupes, and religious groups hold informal fundraisers commonly known as *recaudaciones* (or, alternatively, as *kermeses*), where members and their friends raise money for organizational activities or to provide assistance to individual members. Although the system is informal, it is governed by a clear set of rules. On Saturday or Sunday afternoon, organizations sell food and drinks at a member's house or, less frequently, at a local church or school. Other members are asked to bring a dish to sell and are also expected to buy a large plate of food. *Recaudaciones* are advertised through word of mouth (and, increasingly, over social networking sites like Facebook) and tend to attract the same set of family and friends.

This method of fundraising is a central part of the system of mutual obligations that connects Bolivians in the Washington area and, increasingly, is also seen in terms of the *ayni*. In a transnational context in which indigenous identities are increasingly valued, Bolivian relationships in cities like Cochabamba and Washington D.C. have become more likely to be represented through a connection to Andean culture (i.e. Albro 2010). As Bourdieu (1977) argued in his critique of structural anthropology and the gift, the actions of individuals are shaped by dynamic social relations rather than pre-existing

structures and objective rules. The *ayni* and other Bolivian cultural practices, therefore, are constantly transformed by social, political and economic forces in the United States and Bolivia and movement between them.

Rural organizational practices and Bolivian hometown associations

Hometown associations from Arbieta also reference their connections to indigenous organizational practices, most notably in the form of the *sindicato* (agrarian union).³⁴ *Sindicatos* were initially formed by *campesino* communities in the Cochabamba valleys during the 1940s as a way to control the distribution of agricultural land, particularly as haciendas were dismantled prior to and following the 1953 agrarian reform (Dandler 1969; Gotkowitz 2007). Like other peasant and indigenous forms of governance,³⁵ *sindicatos* require community members to participate in communal activities and sometimes serve in administrative posts through a rotating cargo system. *Sindicatos* also make decisions through consensus-based direct democracy procedures. Rural governance structures have undergone many changes in recent decades but most notably under the 1996 Law of Popular Participation (LPP), part of a broader package of social and economic neoliberal reforms passed in the 1980s and 1990s. The LPP sought to involve communities directly in local government by creating *Organizaciones Territoriales de Base* (Grassroots Territorial Organizations, OTBs), which formally took

³⁴ See Levitt and Lamba-Nieves (2011) for a similar discussion about Dominican migrants and organizational practices from the Dominican Republic.

³⁵ Despite sharing a number of traits with *ayllus*, critics have argued that *sindicatos* are foreign structures because of their association with the corporatist 1952 Revolution (Rivera 1990). While this is true to a certain extent, *sindicatos* are also a product of collective action and syncretism in the Cochabamba valleys (Dandler 1969).

the place of neighborhood associations in urban areas and *sindicatos* in the countryside (Kohl 2003a).

In Arbiato, *sindicatos* are now referred to as OTBs for the most part and primarily serve as an intermediary between villages and the municipal government. OTB leaders are responsible for developing plans for public works projects and securing funding from the *municipio*, located in the town of Arbiato. OTBs also work with migrants in Argentina, the United States and Spain to carry out collective remittance projects (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007). Finally, OTBs organize communal labor projects, including the maintenance of roads, irrigation canals, plazas, and other community spaces, as well as providing public safety.

For example, just prior to my fieldwork in 2011, Santa Rosa and several other villages put up checkpoints as a response to growing theft in the Valle Alto. The OTB rigged a large log attached to a pulley system that serves as a barrier at each road leading to the village. Individual members are required to sit at the checkpoints and let community members through while refusing entrance to strangers. The Santa Rosa OTB organized an additional communal labor project, described in chapter six, to clean the plaza for the village's Carnival celebration. According to local leaders, only half of the village was present that day. This count did not include migrants like Elmer who live full-time in the United States, although several migrants visiting from Argentina did participate. Households that failed to send any members were fined a small amount (50 bolivianos, about \$7).

Before I arrived in Santa Rosa, two long-term migrants had recently been elected to leadership positions in the OTB (see chapter four for a detailed discussion of migrant participation in local Bolivian politics). Both complained about the extent of corruption among previous leaders, who had now moved to the city of Cochabamba, and the lack of participation by community members in labor projects and local meetings. These are common critiques in Bolivia that reflect a broader decline of *sindicatos*, OTBs, and other rural forms of governance as municipal politics have expanded (Kohl 2003). Furthermore, as de la Torre has argued, migration to Cochabamba and lengthier trips to Argentina and the United States have weakened community organizations because migrants, particularly those living abroad, are less likely to participate in communal activities (see Stephen 2007 for a similar discussion in Mexico). But even as out-migration is transforming how villages in Arbieta are organized, aspects of these rural organizational practices are transferred to the United States.

These practices are seen most clearly in the INCOPEA and CELAPKA bimonthly meetings held at a public park or community center in Northern Virginia or Maryland, respectively. A representative or delegate from each Arbieta village is chosen collectively at the beginning of the year and is responsible for attending biweekly meetings and reporting back to his or her community on a regular basis. Before the meeting starts delegates sit around picnic tables and joke with each other in a mix of Quechua and Spanish, but the meetings are held entirely in Spanish. Like *sindicato* meetings in Bolivia, hometown associations in the United States follow a rigid structure. The secretary opens by taking attendance, noting which late or absent members will be fined

for their infraction. The president of the organization then organizes the discussion around three or four predetermined themes.

Any issues that do not fit in the outline are tabled until the end of the meeting, although all comments are heard and discussed. Like in Bolivian meetings, decisions in INCOPEA and CELAPKA are reached collectively through extensive and open debate. Delegates are given the floor to exercise their opinion simply by raising their hand to ask for the *palabra* (word), and every member generally speaks at least once on a contentious topic. When leaders sought to make decisions outside this system to save time, they were reprimanded for failing to consult with the other delegates. As a result of these norms, meetings frequently extend beyond the two hours of allotted time despite focusing on one or two minor issues, much to the dismay of some delegates who begin work before 7:00am.

Like in rural Bolivia, fines given out by the hometown association play an important role in enforcing communal norms and discouraging certain types of behavior. The most visible fines occur during soccer games on Sunday, when players are fined \$5 for each yellow card and \$10 for a red card.³⁶ The entire migrant community (i.e. all migrants from Villa Verde in the Washington area) is fined for a forfeit or for playing with an unregistered player, although in practice the fines are paid by only players and others active in the organization. Each team within INCOPEA and CELAPKA is also expected to designate a referee and two assistants for one game on Sunday,³⁷ as well as

³⁶ Unruly players and spectators can also be suspended for particularly egregious actions at games.

³⁷ In order to avoid conflicts over officiating during important games, both leagues hire referees for the semi-finals and finals. INCOPEA and CELAPKA raise money for this and other miscellaneous expenses

someone to register players at the *mesa* (registration table). Thus, although communal labor is not mandated by hometown associations, players and other community members are expected to contribute to the functioning of the league.

Collective remittance projects also represent the fulfillment of migrant obligations to sending communities (R. Smith 1998). In discussions with academics and local officials in Washington, HTA members frequently highlight their role in financing and implementing public works projects in Bolivia such as plazas, soccer fields, schools or churches. For instance, a presentation at the National Museum of the American Indian by a former INCOPEA president consisted entirely of pictures of these projects throughout the Arbieta municipality. Migrants justify their participation in HTAs by arguing that they are responsible for their communities of origin and those that made their journey possible. Thus, collective remittance projects are shaped by a sense of obligation and an expectation that previous forms of assistance will be reciprocated.

Migrants in the Washington area often develop the initial project proposal, which is then discussed and revised in communal assemblies in Arbieta.³⁸ After finalizing the details, projects are carried out in consultation with village members and local government officials in Bolivia. While migrants in the United States tend to describe this as a largely collaborative process, there are occasional disagreements between *residentes* and those in Arbieta (see chapter four). Because migrants provide the vast majority of the

(soccer balls, corner flags, etc.) through fines, which are paid to the organization rather than the individual community organizing the tournament.

³⁸ Initially, INCOPEA had a rule that collective remittances could only be spent on sports-related projects, but over time this was changed to allow for other public works.

funding for these projects, they have more power to make decisions in practice, a fact that was occasionally acknowledged by my informants.

There are also hierarchies within migrant organizations. During one of several interviews about the history and structure of INCOPEA, Zenobio and Oscar (the current president and vice-president) emphasized the oversight function of the organization.³⁹ Oscar, a long-term migrant from the town of Arbieta, explained that the INCOPEA leadership ensures that its members follow organizational rules. Both INCOPEA and CELAPKA employ a rotating system that allows each village to organize a tournament and raise funds for collective remittance projects. At end of each tournament (there are two or three within a calendar year), the HTAs require that the organizing community submit its project proposals to the organization's leadership within 60 days. The proposals are then analyzed to ensure that no funds are being diverted. In rare cases, INCOPEA has taken over collective remittance projects or the direction of a tournament from a community that fails to coordinate well, Oscar said: "We tell [the communities] that the money will be split 50-50. No one wants this. So they organize."

Finally, migrants have transferred rotating systems of work and administrative responsibilities from rural Bolivia. Like cargo positions, delegates are expected to serve for one or two years before stepping aside for another member. At the beginning of each calendar year, delegates elect a new president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. These rules are enforced in Northern Virginia and Maryland by explicitly calling upon

³⁹ In Bolivia, *sindicatos* serve a similar oversight role. The 1994 decentralization reform created Oversight Committees (*Comités de Vigilancia*) to institutionalize communal control over municipal government decisions. Oversight Committees are made up of OTB or *sindicato* members and have veto power over local budgets (Kohl 2003a).

Bolivian norms. When Germán, INCOPEA's president in 2010, sought to stay on for additional year, other members reminded him of the importance of rotating positions and proceeded to elect new officers to leadership posts.

Transferring organizational forms: New practices in the Washington D.C. suburbs

During my research on the collaborative organizational history project, I found that INCOPEA (and, by extension, CELAPKA) is based on a particular soccer tournament held in six communities in the Arbieto municipality during the 1970s and 1980s. The tournament was started by a young university student named Wilfredo Camacho, who worked as a volunteer in the village of La Loma. Don Willy, as he is known to some local residents, noticed that communities were largely isolated from their neighbors only minutes away and sought to foster connections through sports. Calling it the *Trofeo Amistad Todos Seamos Hermanos* (literally the “We are all brothers friendship tournament”), Camacho invited six villages to play in a round-robin tournament. The winning team was given a trophy and the honor of hosting the tournament the following year.⁴⁰

Many older migrants recalled playing in the *Trofeo Amistad*, and several HTA organizers told me that the tournament directly influenced the formation of soccer leagues in the United States. The name of INCOPEA, *Integración Comunal de los Pueblos de la Provincia de Esteban Arce* (Communal Integration of the Villages of the

⁴⁰ While Camacho is credited with starting the precursor to INCOPEA, the tradition of organizing soccer leagues is common throughout the Valle Alto and actually started much earlier. According to de la Torre and Aramayo (2007: 64), this may be the result of returning migrants from Potosí and Chile, who formed soccer leagues based on their experiences there.

Esteban Arce Province), suggests that facilitating connections between communities remains an important goal. INCOPEA only allows players from villages in the Esteban Arce province to participate in the league. Currently all teams are from the Arbieto *municipio*, but villages from other municipalities in the larger province have participated in previous years.

Validating a player's eligibility is often a difficult and drawn-out process because of complex migration histories that have led parents and their children to be absent from Bolivia for many years. Players are not required to have been born or even have lived in Arbieto, but they must have a connection to a particular village through their parents. Even though eligibility is taken quite seriously by delegates, players with parents from different villages move frequently between teams, as happened several times during my fieldwork. In contrast, CELAPKA and internal Arbieto leagues are more open to players from other places. CELAPKA currently has several teams from other parts in the Valle Alto and the city of Cochabamba. Internal leagues, despite their highly localized nature, often invite Mexican and Central American teams to participate through individual connections made at construction worksites.

Thus, despite their clear roots in rural *sindicato* structures, Bolivian migrants have adapted HTAs to new social and economic contexts in the United States. The centrality of fundraising in INCOPEA and CELAPKA differs significantly from the *Trofeo Amistad* and other leagues in rural Bolivia, which have little to do with money. This allows HTAs to focus on an important priority of migrants, contributing to public works projects in their sending community. The governance feature of *sindicatos* has also been

transformed dramatically. Because work is distributed across a much wider geographic area and multiple industries, Bolivian HTAs have less of a role in the day-to-day lives of their members. Rather than controlling the distribution of agricultural land or organizing communal labor projects, INCOPEA and CELAPKA focus their activities entirely on the one free day for migrants, Sunday, and on raising money for public works projects in the Valle Alto. By holding soccer tournaments, selling food at games, and holding additional fundraising events, migrants from a village in Arbieto can typically raise \$7,000-10,000 through during a single tournament.

Even when traditional norms shape the structure of HTAs, they are not always followed.⁴¹ Zenobio and Oscar, who were elected in 2011, had previously served in these positions and many of the current delegates have served longer than two years. CELAPKA, which has a much shorter history, has been led by the same president for the past five years. Even more than in rural Bolivia, it is difficult to convince migrants to take on governing responsibilities in addition to a busy work schedule. Delegates are often accused of stealing funds, much like public officials and *sindicato* leaders in Bolivia, which serves to further dissuade new people from becoming leaders. Thus, although there is some change in leadership positions, in practice HTAs are run by a fairly small group of migrants.

This group is almost exclusively male, another characteristic of many (although not all) rural Bolivian forms of governance (Rivera 2009). But despite the noticeable lack of women in leadership positions, this is an increasingly contested arena as women become more involved in migrant organizations. Most early Arbieto migrants in the

⁴¹ Lazar (2008) makes a similar point in the context of the Bolivian city of El Alto

Washington D.C. area were men, but women became more likely to move abroad during the 1990s and 2000s as a result of family reunification visas. Women are now an important fixture as spectators and food vendors on the sidelines of INCOPEA and CELAPKA games even though they do not play in the games. But, as in Bolivia, women have formed their own soccer leagues in the Washington area.

Women migrants participate in the Liga Boliviana and a Northern Virginia league for women from across the Valle Alto formed in 2000. Leaders in the women's league, currently almost evenly divided between men and women, told me that INCOPEA has tried to exert control over their organization in the past since many of the players come from the same villages, although open conflict between the leagues seems to have subsided. Men's and women's leagues also direct money towards different projects. Teams in the women's league occasionally send collective remittances to Bolivia but this process is not nearly institutionalized as it is in INCOPEA and CELAPKA. Organizers in the women's league told me that funds are often spent on uniforms and other needs in the United States.

The lone woman HTA leader during my research, Marta, became the de facto treasurer of INCOPEA in 2009. During meetings, which she attended with her husband, Marta meticulously went over the accounts of each village and demanded payment from other delegates. Her presence occasionally generated some tension, and I occasionally heard male leaders refer to Marta as her husband's secretary, even though she was clearly more involved in the running of the organization. Still, Marta was generally accepted by the male delegates and wielded considerable power within INCOPEA.

Hometown associations are also based around mutual aid networks that are transferred from Bolivia but are transformed in the United States. Migrants from Arbieta described these networks in terms of *ayni*-like reciprocal relationships even as they complained about the increasingly individualistic nature of other Bolivian immigrants. For instance, Eduardo explained that “each person that arrives here [from Tiataco] . . . we always try to take care of family, friends, it doesn’t matter who they are but we try to take care of them.” In this narrative, Bolivians living in Northern Virginia and Maryland are responsible for helping new migrants to find housing and work, just as they were helped upon their arrival. As seen in the vignette above, HTA members are expected to contribute when a fellow migrant becomes sick or injured. Migrant organizations also assist families during a crisis and have helped to pay for burial costs in Bolivia when a community member dies in the United States.

At the same time, migrants often acknowledge that not all Bolivians follow these norms and point to stories of new migrants exploited by earlier arrivals (see also Mahler 1995). Samuel, a returned migrant in Santa Rosa, for instance, told me that once Bolivians reached the United States they became different: “Look how it is here [Bolivia]. But you get there [the United States], that moment, if they don’t know you they won’t give you the time. . . They only think of themselves. They don’t think about the rest of the people.” Even though INCOPEA sometimes offers assistance to migrants, Samuel argued that individual members tended to only help friends and overlook others. The story above also suggests that networks of reciprocity are frequently strained by the low wages, lack of a safety net and high health care costs in the United States.

Despite these pressures, networks of reciprocity serve as a form of collective identification for migrants from Arbieta. When INCOPEA and CELAPKA members insist that their actions are shaped by indigenous cultural practices and obligations to sending communities, they are distinguishing themselves from other Bolivian migrants. Arbieta HTA leaders frequently contrast their organization with the more well-known Liga Boliviana (see more below). They note that the Liga does not regularly send money to Bolivia and instead spends all of its money on expensive soccer fields, referees and jerseys in the United States. In language common to Bolivia, Liga organizers are said to only be interested in putting money in their *bosillos* (pockets). In contrast, migrant leaders from Arbieta insist that they “are always thinking of their communities.” Zenobio backed this up by pointing to the fact that his organization invests “100 percent [of funds raised] in public works projects (*obras*).” Thus, hometown associations promote a particular type of identity for migrants as committed members of transnational communities rooted in the Valle Alto.

II. Passing on Bolivian traditions: Folklore, soccer and the production of cultural spaces in the Washington area

Although INCOPEA and CELAPKA frequently emphasize their transnational focus, most HTA activities actually take place within the Washington D.C. metro area. Soccer games on Sunday morning bring together dozens of migrants and their children. Later, migrants move to internal leagues, churches, folkloric dance performances, and Liga Boliviana games located throughout the Washington metro area. At some of these

events, informal food vendors sell typical Bolivian dishes and, less frequently, *chicha*, the corn beer popular in the Cochabamba valleys. Other migrants stop at food trucks along a main thoroughfare in Northern Virginia to pick up typical soups and meat dishes for later in the day. By creating spaces for migrants to socialize and practice Bolivian cultural forms, hometown associations and other organizations are often at the center of migrant communities in the suburbs of Washington D.C.

Besides soccer, folklore is by far the most visible activity for Bolivians in the Washington area. Folklore has become increasingly popular both in Bolivia and in migrant communities abroad (Grimson 1999; Giorgis 2004; Gavazzo 2005; Carmona 2008; Bigenho 2002). Up and down the East Coast of the United States,⁴² Bolivian groups perform an array of folkloric dances, particularly the energetic *caporales* and *tinkus* dances that attract younger participants (see figure 6). Migrants from Arbieta and their children are regular participants in a broad array of folkloric dance troupes, although only a few organizations have specific Arbieta ties.

Instead, folkloric dance troupes tend to draw migrants from different regions and cities across Bolivia. Groups are composed primarily of younger second and 1.5 generation Bolivians, although most also have older members. High school students from other ethnic backgrounds are also invited to join by Bolivian classmates. It is difficult to estimate the number of dance troupes because they are established and disappear with regularity, but my research in 2010-11 suggests that there are at least 30 groups operating

⁴² Dance troupes in Washington maintain informal connections with groups in New Jersey, Providence and Miami and occasionally participate together in parades or organized dance competitions in different cities.

in the Washington area alone. Around half of these groups belong to the Comité Pro-Bolivia, an umbrella group that promotes Bolivian culture in festivals across the region.

Performances at local civic parades, festivals and dance competitions are an example of what Amalia Pallares (2005) calls symbolic nationalism. This notably differs from the “long-distance” nationalism, or participation in home country politics, that is often highlighted in the literature on migrant transnationalism (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001). Symbolic nationalism refers to practices that reproduce nationalism from the sending country. This serves both to develop social solidarity among migrants and to facilitate incorporation by presenting a unified community to the host society (for further discussion of the later point, see chapter five). Thus, folkloric dance performances are simultaneously directed at multiple audiences.

Figure 6: Folkloric “tinkus” dance competition in Northern Virginia (photo by author)



For Bolivians in Argentina, Spain, and the United States, migrant collective identities are constructed through soccer and, more visibly, folklore (Grimson 1999). This is, in part, a reflection of how national identity is performed in Bolivia. Elites across Latin America have used indigenous traditions to promote national consolidation and a common history (Goldstein 1998; de la Cadena 2000). While folkloric dances are seen as traditional remnants from the past, they are also simultaneously modern and

representative of the continuity of national culture over time (Goldstein 2004). Two festivals in Bolivia, Oruro's Carnival and the Fiesta de la Virgen de Urkupiña in Quillacollo, a satellite city of Cochabamba, have become especially representative of national culture (Albro 1998; Lagos 1993; Abercrombie 1992). As Goldstein notes, it is not a coincidence that the most prominent folkloric festivals take place in urban areas. Performing in cities allows folklore to shed its anti-modern associations while still maintaining ties to a rural past.

Critics have noted that Andean folklore is largely performed by the upper middle-class (Pribilsky 2007; Goldstein 1998) while indigenous peoples have continued to be marginalized and excluded from power (Postero 2007a). At the same time, other scholars have pointed to the important role of urban migrants in transforming national politics and culture. The increasing visibility of peasants and indigenous peoples in urban centers since the 1970s, alongside the successes of indigenous movements, has helped make indigeneity a central part of Bolivia's national project. Rural migrants brought with them forms of political organization, religious festivals, and traditional dances that gradually became part of the urban social scene (Himpele 2008; Albó 1997).

Still, for migrants in Bolivian cities and particularly outside of the country, folklore represents a national culture that is physically divorced from rural areas. Dance troupe leaders in Washington metro area told me that while they taught participants about the significance of folkloric dances, most lack a real understanding of the dances' origins. Younger dancers have generally lived in the United States most of their lives and rarely visit Bolivia, if at all, while older migrants tend to be from cities or rural areas like

Arbieto that are part of local, regional, and national folkloric festivals but are not sites of origin for folklore. Interestingly, most dancers and organizers I spoke with in the Washington area only began participating in folkloric troupes after their arrival in the United States, citing their desire to remain connected with Bolivia through traditional cultural activities.⁴³

Folklore in the Washington area does function through occasional physical and virtual connections with places in Bolivia. Dance troupes occasionally travel to Bolivia to participate in the Carnival in Oruro, festivals in Cochabamba, or smaller events in sending communities like Arbieto. During these trips or on individual vacations, dancers buy the newest *trajes* (costumes) and carry them back to the United States for other group members. Videos of new dances and music also make their way to the Washington area, although Facebook and YouTube allow these to travel independently of the physical routes of dancers. Two prominent dance troupes in the Washington area are affiliated with the famous San Simon University group in Cochabamba. Folklore in the Washington area also travels to Bolivia in a more limited way, seen most notably in the appearance of the San Simon Virginia group's theme song on the radio in Cochabamba. Overall, this circulation of folkloric images and practices shapes how dance troupes in Virginia and Maryland practice Bolivian culture and represent themselves to a wider host audience.

In pursuing nationalism through the embodied practices of dancing and being a spectator, cultural activists seek to integrate a diverse group of migrants into a single Bolivian migrant community. In Argentina, Alejandro Grimson (1999) has argued that

⁴³ See Gavazzo 2005 for a similar phenomenon among Bolivian migrants in Buenos Aires

folkloric festivals can be understood as unifying experiences that provide migrants from different regions and socioeconomic backgrounds with a collective identity and a common past. This is a difficult task in Buenos Aires as well as in the Washington metro area, where the Bolivian population is socioeconomically, ethnically and regionally diverse. Most migrants in Washington D.C. are originally from the Cochabamba department, but there are also important contingents from La Paz, Oruro, and, in recent years, the lowland city of Santa Cruz. Cultural organizations employ national symbols like the Bolivian flag and often reference each of the country's nine departments as contributing to the Bolivian nation.

But like traditional forms of nationalism, these processes often result in fractured collective identities and the exclusion of certain groups (i.e. Radcliffe and Westwood 1996). While openly attempting to construct a unified and organized community, in private cultural leaders lament the fragmentation of Bolivian migrants. This occurs most frequently along regional lines, a process that has been exacerbated by recent social and political developments in Bolivia. Since the 2005 election of Evo Morales, existing divisions between the Bolivian highlands and lowlands have been exacerbated, particularly in the wake of lowland autonomy movements that vehemently oppose Morales (Gustafson 2005). Few migrants in the United States participate in Bolivian party politics, but political tensions remain relevant. While these conflicts are generally invisible to the host society, cultural events can bring them into the open. Cultural activists seek to overcome regional divisions by inviting dance troupes from both the lowlands and highlands to festivals. In other cases, however, regional groups have split

off from mainstream Bolivian celebrations. In 2009, an association of migrants from lowland Bolivia began holding the *Día de la Tradición Cruceña*, which celebrates traditions from Santa Cruz, on the same day as the Bolivian Festival. Even though the date of the Cruceño festival has since been moved, the competing festivals highlight the fragmented nature of the Bolivian community and the variety of local and regional migrant identities.

“Los chicos nacidos en este país no saludan”: The second and 1.5 generation and the production of cultural spaces in the Washington D.C. suburbs

Like the Comité Pro-Bolivia, the Liga Boliviana constructs a national form of identity for migrants. Founded in 1991, it continues to hold games at different public parks and schools in Arlington. As I explore in greater detail in chapter five, the price of renting these fields has increased significantly since the early 1990s but the Liga values its strong ties with Arlington County and prefers to pay more than move to fields in the outer suburbs as INCOPEA has done. The Liga Boliviana is composed of teams from different regions and cities in Bolivia,⁴⁴ including the Tiataco village in the Arbieta municipality, and occasionally hosts Bolivian soccer stars from the local professional club D.C. United. It also has an over-40 men’s league, an indoor *futsal* league in the winter and a recently formed women’s league. The highly competitive games and typical food offerings draw large numbers of spectators, which serves to recreate the playful yet sometimes hostile atmosphere of professional games in Bolivia.

⁴⁴ Even though the league continues to be strongly identified with Bolivia, in practice many teams are now composed of non-Bolivians.

The Liga Boliviana attracts spectators from across Bolivia, including the Valle Alto. Some migrants from Arbieta attend the Liga after INCOPEA and CELAPKA games on Sunday mornings, while others have stopped attending HTA events over time and now only participate in the Liga. But despite its broadly inclusive nature, the Liga Boliviana symbolizes some of the tensions that exist between migrants from urban and rural areas. Mainstream cultural organizations like the Liga and the Comité Pro-Bolivia are dominated by established migrants from the cities of Cochabamba or La Paz.

In contrast to national Bolivian organizations, INCOPEA and CELAPKA represent regional and local identities based on ties to particular communities of origin. Although they lived close to each other in the Valle Alto, Bolivians in the dispersed social geography of Washington metro area have little chance of encountering friends and relatives except at the soccer field on Sundays. As immigrants have settled across metropolitan areas in recent decades, geographers have demonstrated that they have generally not formed ethnic neighborhoods. Instead, as Zelinsky and Lee (1998) have argued, immigrants have constructed relatively cohesive “heterolocal” communities by participating in cultural, sports and religious organizations in different locations. Like transnational migrant communities, new transportation and communication technologies facilitate these connections across space.

Migrants from Arbieta attribute the plethora of organizations to their newfound mobility in the Washington D.C. metro area. Germán argued that soccer leagues and folkloric dance troupes in the Washington area were more likely to be based on local and regional identities than in Buenos Aires. Despite the vast array of Bolivian activities in

the Argentinean capital, migrants told me that there are no separate Arbiето organizations. Folkloric dance groups in Buenos Aires tend to be made up of migrants from a single neighborhood, while soccer players from Arbiето similarly joined teams within broader Bolivian leagues. The decision to participate in a national-level migrant community was largely determined by transportation. Most Arbiето migrants in Argentina did not own cars and as a result often spent hours riding buses and the metro on their way to and from work. Recreational activities, therefore, were based on locational proximity rather than community of origin, and these place-based social networks ensured that migrants from all over Bolivia would dance and play soccer together.

In contrast, migrants in the Washington D.C. area have much greater flexibility in their associational life because most own cars. This is the result of two important characteristics of migration from Arbiето to the United States. First, a significant percentage of migrants arrived during the 1980s and 1990s. Early migrants were often, although not always, able to secure legal permanent residency and U.S. citizenship through legalization programs and bring their family members from Arbiето. Even though many migrants lack legal documents, individuals with a long history in the region will generally have driver's licenses and access to other important documents.

The prevalence of cars means that attending different meetings at night and over the weekend, whether it is at public parks, community centers, schools, churches or restaurants, is relatively easy in spite of the notoriously bad Washington traffic. As a result, migrants from the same city or region in Bolivia have been able to form their own

organizations. Within this organizational geography, the sidelines of soccer games have become a meeting place to eat,⁴⁵ gossip, and reaffirm social connections. Joshue and Omar, two leaders from Rayo Pampa, placed a great deal of importance on soccer games as places of connection:

Joshue: *Fútbol* is the only way for us to get together or share something. . . I don't know what would happen [without soccer] because otherwise we might not find each other for years here.

Omar: Soccer is where we meet friends from other places. We are together on Sunday and not on other days, we always go to work Monday through Friday so we almost never see each other.

Over time, soccer fields have become an important part of migrant identities and relationships in the Washington area. When someone loses touch with other members of the community, migrants often say that he or she no longer comes to the field (“*ya no viene a la cancha*”). This is used both as an excuse for not knowing what a person is up to and to place blame on the absent person for failing to make the effort to belong to the community in the United States.

Although they represent migrants from a single rural municipality, Arbiesto soccer leagues construct communities at a variety of scales. Following INCOPEA and CELAPKA games, individual villages hold their own soccer tournaments later on Sunday. The importance of internal leagues has accelerated in recent years as the majority of people from many Arbiesto villages are now in the United States. Francisco, one of the first migrants from the village of La Loma, said that the expansion of Bolivian migration and geographic dispersion across the metro area had the effect of dispersing the

⁴⁵ Food used to be an important part of Bolivian soccer games but local governments have increasingly sought to limit this practice in recent years. Food is sold openly at CELAPKA games and draws Bolivians from other regions because of a relative lack of Bolivian restaurants in Maryland.

initial group of migrants who used to gather at a single field in Arlington. This has the effect of closing off some social networks, as Eduardo explained through the example of Tiataco:

“The first years after we arrived here [Northern Virginia] we had soccer tournaments and a small party when we finished the tournament. But we weren’t just *tiataceños*, there were 10 or 15 people from Tiataco but also from Arbieta, Achamoco, all these other places. Over the years these villages don’t get together anymore. Tiataco is with Tiataco. Arbieta with Arbieta. . . . Now it is not even Tiataco. If I have a party I will just invite my family because there isn’t enough space.”

In multiple Arbieta migrant communities, increased migration appears to cause greater fragmentation among migrants in the Washington D.C. metro area.

But even as localized networks have emerged, soccer leagues and folkloric dance troupes help migrants to simultaneously maintain a broader set of social relations. When INCOPEA competed against an Evo Morales-led team in New York or attended D.C. United games to watch the team’s two Bolivian stars, soccer became a way for migrants to reconnect with the Bolivian nation. Events like this can also reinforce a broader regional identity, such as when INCOPEA played against Wilstermann, a club team from Cochabamba, several years ago in Washington. Finally, INCOPEA, CELAPKA and even the Liga Boliviana facilitate connections between migrants from across the Cochabamba metro area. Migrants from a particular village in Arbieta often have relatives and in-laws in other nearby villages or towns in the Valle Alto, but may not reconnect with them outside of weekend activities. In the busy and fractured organizational landscape of the Washington area, soccer and folklore organizations offer spaces for migrants from different places to encounter each other and to construct an identity based in the

municipality of Arbieta, the Valle Alto, and, more broadly, in Bolivia. Thus, migrants belong to a set of different local, regional, and national communities that overlap and never exist in isolation from each other.

Migrant communities also include individuals from the second or 1.5 generation, who were born or raised primarily in the United States. Indeed, soccer and folkloric dance activities are often centered around the participation of younger Bolivians and the transfer of cultural practices to the second generation. A common complaint among migrants from Arbieta is that children born or raised in the United States do not *saludar* or greet other people. In Bolivia, especially in rural areas, people are expected to extend a simple greeting and handshake to fellow community members. Migrants feel that this custom has been abandoned in the United States and frequently insist that *jóvenes* (young people) greet each adult at social events. Elizabeth, a woman originally from the Valle Alto city of Punata but whose husband is from Villa Verde, explained that soccer games are important because, “*los chicos nacidos en este país no saludan, pero van a saludar aquí*” [the children born in this country don’t greet people, but they will greet people here]. For Elizabeth and others, the soccer field represents a cultural space where parents and older migrants can introduce the second generation to the everyday practices that structure social relationships and construct identities in rural Bolivia.

Even though I focused primarily on migrants who had come to the United States as adults, their concern with passing on cultural practices to the second generation became a central part of my research. At the beginning of my fieldwork, Germán approached me about helping INCOPEA develop an organizational memory. For him,

there was a sense that the practices brought from rural Bolivia to suburban Virginia and Maryland would be lost if they were not recorded. Most of the younger participants in INCOPEA had little knowledge of the organization's history, which he suggested led them to complain constantly about fines. Other HTA leaders agreed that documenting the history of the organization would teach younger members about what came before them and allow HTAs and soccer leagues to be preserved into the future. Thus, the process of community formation simultaneously seeks to maintain and adapt Bolivian cultural practices to a new set of circumstances in the Washington D.C. suburbs.

Similarly, cultural activists view folklore as a useful tool to teach *jóvenes* about Bolivian traditions and cultural practices. For activists and parents concerned about the loss of Bolivian identity and the Spanish language, therefore, folkloric dance practices and performances help to create Bolivian spaces within a cultural landscape dominated by North American traditions. The act of dancing or being a spectator replicates shared activities associated with Bolivia. Groups also employ images that evoke a deep connection to Bolivia, such as using names like *sangre* (blood) or *alma* (soul). While older migrants play an important role within dance troupes, the majority of participants are 1.5 and second generation Bolivians. Folkloric groups embody the dual identity of younger Bolivians by generally including "U.S." in the names of the dance troupe and an American flag in their logo (as figure 6 above shows, migrant organizations like the Comité Pro-Bolivia also employ this strategy). Younger dancers occasionally use American pop songs and dance moves at the beginning of performances, although this is clearly separate from the traditional folkloric steps used in the rest of the dance.

Cultural activists also routinely emphasize that folklore can help develop leadership skills and keep kids away from gangs, a traditional goal of community-based organizations in the United States. Thus, folklore can be understood as a project of transnational integration for multiple generations of Bolivians living in the United States. Folklore and Bolivian food, sold at restaurants and at individual homes during *recaudaciones*, are generically cultural goods that migrants can consume in the United States (Robert Albro, personal communication, May 2011). Although indigenous cultural traditions have been transformed as they travel within Bolivia and abroad, they are open to use by migrants from a variety of cultural backgrounds in the construction of Bolivian and American identities.

III. “*Asi es cómo comunidades mueren*”: The emergence and “death” of migrant communities

Migrant organizations, as I have suggested in this chapter, promote images of unified and organized communities in order to develop solidarity among migrants and, in some cases, facilitate collective action. Although HTAs may draw support from a broader set of migrants, in practice the work of organizing is done by a small group and is highly gendered (R. Smith 1998; 2006). Migrant organizations can also face internal conflicts as a result of existing divisions brought from the home country or new ones that arise in receiving societies (Waldinger et al. 2008). In this final section, I explore the tensions that have arisen within Arbieta hometown associations in the Washington D.C. area. Their history demonstrates that migrants belong to different communities that overlap

and occasionally are in conflict with each other. But rather than a problem to be overcome by better organization, a frequent topic of discussion among migrant leaders, I argue that these conflicts have been central to the history of Bolivian migration to Washington D. C.

Early Arbieta migrants were part of the Comité Pro-Tarata, a soccer league and hometown association organized by migrants from the neighboring colonial town of Tarata. By 1991, however, migrants from Arbieta decided to form their own league. Older migrants generally described the conflict as a result of the paternalistic attitudes of *tarateños*. Tarata, currently the provincial capital of the Esteban Arce province, has historically been an important political center in Bolivia even though its influence has declined significantly in recent decades. People in Arbieta have long resented the privileges enjoyed by Tarata residents and the discrimination they encountered on the streets and in government offices there.

In Northern Virginia, *campesinos* from the Arbieta municipality complained that they were shut out of the decision-making process in the Comité Pro-Tarata. Migrant accounts of INCOPEA's founding recalled the anger they felt as the money raised through the league was directed towards schools in Tarata rather than their more rural, and poorer, villages. When migrants from Arbieta demanded an audit (*rendición de cuentas*), the leadership from Tarata declined. Frustrated by their marginalization, eight villages in the Arbieta *municipio* formed INCOPEA in August 1991. Players initially played at a field in Alexandria on Sunday mornings, with the league growing to as many as 15 teams over the years as new communities were added.

Migrants active in the formation of INCOPEA recalled this period with a great deal of pride and I filled several notebooks with details about the organization's founding. At the same time, early leaders recalled the difficulties of getting people to attend games. As more Bolivians settled in the area during the 1980s and 1990s, a number of new communities were formed and, in some cases, dissolved. Several communities, notably Tiataco, were expelled from INCOPEA over money issues, although organizers from the village of Tiataco claimed to have left because they were marginalized by migrants from the town of Arbieta. Tiataco and Arbieta are often seen as rivals in Bolivia, but, interestingly, this tension did not become a problem in the United States for more than 15 years.

After leaving INCOPEA in 2001, Tiataco formed its own league (along with players from Tarata and other neighboring towns) and frequently fields more than eight teams. While there has been some discussion within the INCOPEA leadership about readmitting Tiataco, this idea has run into opposition. Because Tiataco and other several teams left the league in the middle of a tournament, they did not contribute to the collective remittance projects organized by another village. If Tiataco wants to return, some delegates insisted, it must make up these losses and repay past dues and fines with interest. However, others argue that younger migrants and the second generation should not be punished for the actions of others many years ago. This struggle to define membership shows that multiple understandings of community and responsibility can co-exist within a single organization.

There are also frequent conflicts between communities that remain in INCOPEA. During meetings and other events, members of smaller communities openly express their resentment of the town of Arbieto. For instance, crowd members jeered when women from the town of Arbieto won raffle prizes at the Mother's Day celebration organized by INCOPEA in May, suggesting that organizers were favoring people from their own village. Much of this suspicion is based on real and perceived inequalities in Bolivia. As the seat of the municipality, the town of Arbieto is larger and wealthier than surrounding rural communities. When the mayor of Arbieto, who is also from municipal seat, formally requested assistance from INCOPEA for a new soccer field in August 2010, delegates were reluctant. Pepe, a migrant from the small village of Flores Rancho on the outskirts of the *municipio*, recalled seeing two school buses filled with students attending the new high school in Arbieto while driving past a group of poor kids walking to school. Such visible inequalities have made delegates like Pepe question projects that seem only to benefit one community. In this case, all of the delegates decided not to support the mayor's request.

Conflicts between communities in INCOPEA contributed to the sense, often expressed during my fieldwork, that INCOPEA has lost *fuera* (strength) in recent years. Migrant leaders generally pointed to the emergence of internal leagues as a source of the problem. Although these games are generally held on Sunday afternoons, they draw spectators and players away from INCOPEA. Other men's and women's soccer leagues, folkloric dance groups, and churches further compete for migrant attendance on the weekend.

In contrast, the formation of CELAPKA did not directly challenge INCOPEA. During the 1990s but particularly in recent years, a number of Bolivians have moved to Maryland in search of new economic opportunities and less restrictive immigration laws. In 2004, migrants from four villages in the Arbieta *municipio* founded CELAPKA. At the beginning, teams played short-sided games but the league expanded to 14 teams before several left in recent years. Although CELAPKA is modeled closely on INCOPEA and several villages have teams in both leagues, there is little overlap between the two organizations because games are played at the same time. Migrants in CELAPKA tend to be from more recent sending communities that are also poorer than established villages like Arbieta and Santa Rosa and as a result tend to raise less money (an average of \$4000 per tournament) than INCOPEA. Because of their less established position and need to find additional financial support for collective remittance projects, organizers in Maryland are also more likely than INCOPEA to emphasize their collaborations with the municipal government.

Although both INCOPEA and CELAPKA often attract more than 100 spectators to games, organizers say that they have seen declines in attendance and participation during the last four or five years. Beyond internal leagues, delegates consistently argued that younger players are only interested in playing their game and refuse to take part in any other activities. Although more than 15 villages from Arbieta continue to play in INCOPEA and CELAPKA, players and fans quickly leave at the end of the game for smaller group activities held in other places, which long-term migrants often blame on a lack of unity. Much like the complaint about the failure of young people to greet others,

jóvenes are charged with lacking the proper commitment and sense of obligation to others in the community. In other instances, fines are blamed for declining attendance. While some delegates have broached the topic of reducing the fines for yellow cards or forfeits, most organizers are strongly opposed to any changes. They argue that fines are necessary to prevent “anti-social” behavior and to encourage participation. Still, organizers do acknowledge that the economic recession has created financial problems for some players and communities, and are often willing to waive or reduce large accumulated fines.

During my fieldwork, leaders often discussed strategies to improve participation that attempt to hold both individuals and communities accountable. Delegates argue that if *jóvenes* want to play, they should be forced to referee, register players and help to organize the league more broadly. Responsibility for organizing soccer games needs to be directed at individuals, some leaders suggest, because fines directed at communities have little impact or actually discourage participation, most notably in the case of Tiataco and other communities that have left INCOPEA. By contemplating the return of these communities and the refocusing of fines on individuals, migrant leaders are adapting traditional forms of organization to new social contexts in the United States.

For many migrant leaders, the fragmentation of Arbieto soccer leagues represents a threat to the maintenance of social networks and migrant identities in the United States. As Germán explained to me, communities like Tiataco became isolated from friends and relatives from the rest of the Arbieto *municipio* after leaving INCOPEA. While they are likely to participate in other social activities, without the social glue of the hometown association there is little to keep people from the community together. “*Así es cómo*

comunidades mueren,” he said. This is how communities die. Germán’s provocative language underscores the stakes for migrant leaders as they attempt to maintain cultural practices and transnational connections in the context of recession and heightened immigration enforcement policies in the Washington suburbs.

But at the same time, this obscures the dynamic nature of migrant community formation in the United States. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, migrants from Arbieta belong to multiple communities at local, regional and national scales. While membership is often based on ties to specific places in Bolivia, it can also be quite fluid. When Rayo Pampa contemplated leaving INCOPEA in 2011, Joshue insisted that he would continue to be a part of the organization because of the connections that he had developed over the years. Complex social networks and migration mean that someone from the village of Rayo Pampa may also identify as being from the Arbieta *municipio*, the Valle Alto, Cochabamba, Bolivia, or even Argentina or the United States.

IV. Conclusions

A study of migrant organizations helps us understand how Bolivian cultural practices are put to work in the Washington area. As Bolivians move across international borders, rural organizational practices travel with them and are transformed in the context of a dispersed social and economic suburban landscape. Thus, as migrants settle and make their homes in Northern Virginia and Maryland, they develop new identities, practices, and values that become part of migrant organizations. Despite concerns about decline, the sidelines of INCOPEA, CELAPKA and internal leagues remain important

spaces and sites of cultural production for Bolivian migrants and their children by creating series of rotating obligations that members should follow in the United States. Taking part in soccer tournaments constructs a collective local, regional and national identity, and facilitates connections between Bolivians living in the Washington D.C. metro area and those in the Valle Alto. The tensions surrounding Arbieta soccer leagues highlight the always constructed and contested nature of community, as well as the multi-scalar and fluid sense of identity among migrants.

Chapter Four

Circulating practices: Remittances, skill transfer and politics in Arbiето

The impact of migration is usually measured through the transfer of monetary remittances, or money sent by migrants to family members or businesses in communities of origin. There is, of course, good reason for this. Remittance flows have increased dramatically since the 1970s, and by 2010 people living outside of their country of origin sent home more than \$440 billion worldwide. Almost three-fourths (\$325 billion) of these remittances were directed towards countries in the global South (Ratha et al. 2010).⁴⁶ The estimated two million Bolivians living abroad remitted almost \$1 billion in 2011, a small percentage of all remittances but over 10 percent of Bolivia's GDP.⁴⁷

In municipalities like Arbiето, monetary remittances have transformed the physical landscape, seen most dramatically in the multi-story mansions built by migrants living in Argentina, Spain and the United States. But this tells only part of the story. Peggy Levitt (1998; 2001) has argued that by privileging the economic, migration scholars have overlooked the broader impact of migration on both sending and receiving communities. As migrants work and participate in host communities, they develop "ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital" and then transfer "social remittances" to migrant communities of origin in the global South (1998: 927). While initial research positioned social remittances as unidirectional, more recent scholarship has highlighted the multi-

⁴⁶ Even though remittances declined sharply during the global economic crisis, they have proven to be remarkably stable and, by 2011, have largely returned to pre-recession levels (World Bank 2011).

⁴⁷ As Vertovec (2004) notes, official statistics almost certainly underestimate the actual flow of remittances since money is often sent through informal channels.

directional nature of these flows (Leitner 2000; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). In Arbieta, non-monetary flows from migrants living abroad have greatly influenced politics, culture and development in sending villages even as migrants are transforming communities in Buenos Aires and Washington D.C.

In this chapter, I expand the discussion of the impact of migration by moving beyond economic and social remittances to also include migrant practices, which I define as organized actions and everyday activities undertaken by migrants living abroad and by those migrants who return to Bolivia for vacation or more permanently. In their article on circular migration in India, Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) argue that migration should be understood as both an economic and cultural event. As migrants move between the city and countryside, they engage in everyday practices of consumption that can disrupt established hierarchies. Not all migration challenges or alters the dominant social order, but migration is often a destabilizing force that can transform places in both sending and receiving areas (see also Albó 1997; Wilson 2007).

The complex migratory routes of Bolivians demonstrate that the movement of money, cultural traditions, skills and values should not be seen as a simple transmission from one place (i.e. Washington D.C.) to another (i.e. Arbieta) but rather as a circulation of practices between multiple sites. In examining this circulation, I draw on Doreen Massey's (1994) understanding of place. Massey has argued that places are dynamic and open-ended constructions that are produced through connections with other places. Rather than being defined by what lies within their boundaries, places are constantly transformed as people, money and creative practices (i.e. Rogers 2011) move through and

are set down within them. Practices are also transformed as they travel and are picked up again in new places, a result of the friction that is always involved in global connections (Tsing 2005). Furthermore, these processes are always uneven and shaped by existing and new power relations (what Massey calls “power geometries”) and the practices of migrants themselves.

Building on chapter three’s discussion of hometown associations and rural organizational practices, I argue that Bolivian communities in Washington D.C. and Arbieta are formed through the dynamic circulation of resources and practices between multiple sites. Although practices move along a variety of paths, hometown associations are particularly important conduits (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). In the first part of this chapter, I examine the movement of money between the United States and Bolivia. I argue that monetary remittances, which are used primarily for public works projects but also to support cultural festivals in Arbieta, are a form of transnational belonging that migrants use to remain connected and improve their social status in Bolivia.

The second section examines how skills developed in the Buenos Aires construction industry move with migrants and facilitate their entrance into niche economies in the Washington D.C. area. Migrants develop new values and practices around work, punctuality and order by interacting with host communities in the United States, some of which are then transferred to Bolivia. This transfer always involves friction, however, and I highlight some of the obstacles that returning migrants face as they move between the highly specialized Washington D.C. construction industry and the

more labor intensive settings and comparatively low social status of the industry in Cochabamba.

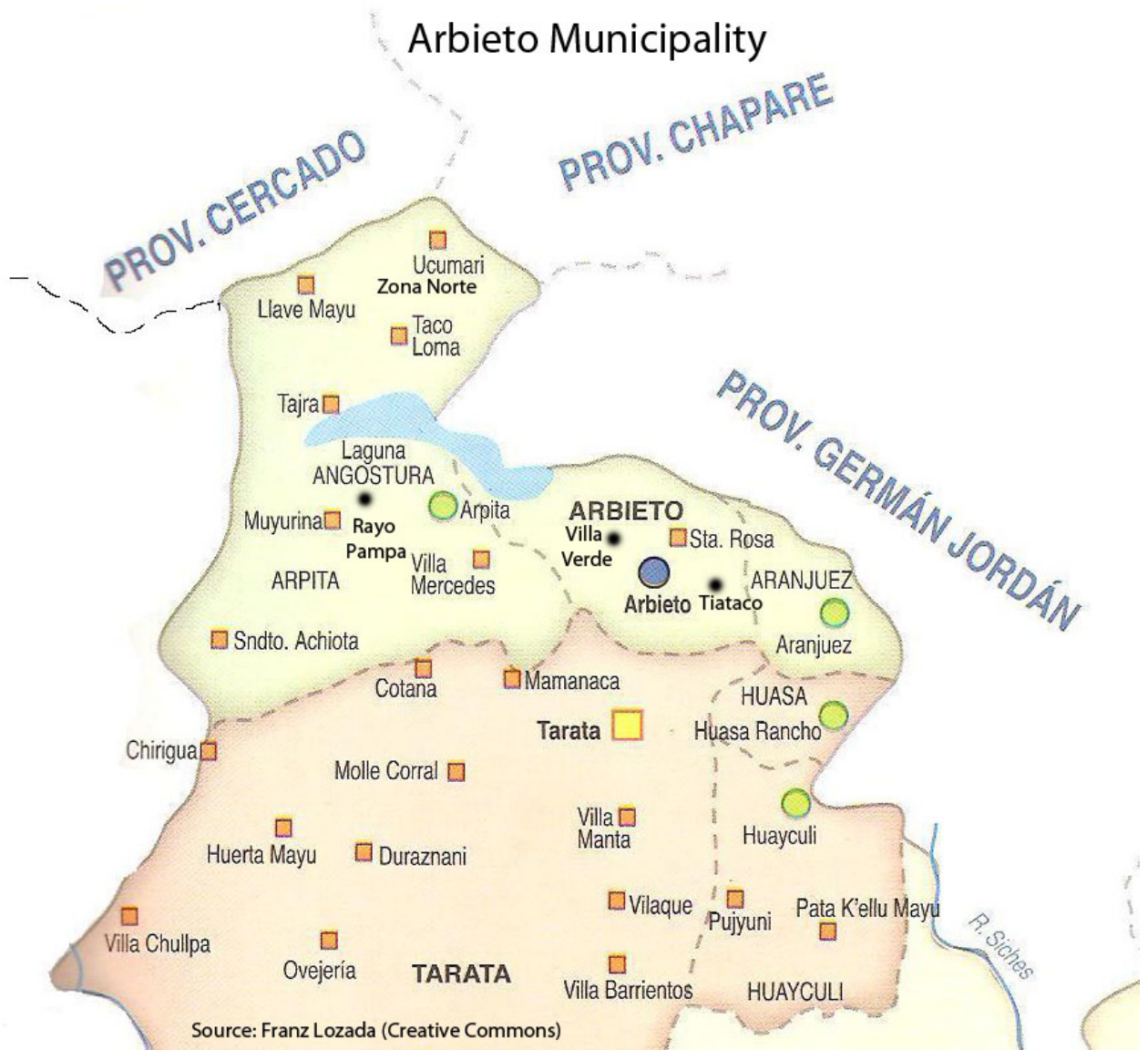
The third section explores how migrant HTA leaders have transferred values and practices about politics, democracy and development to Arbieta. Returning migrants in municipal and village-level OTB leadership positions talk about seeing rural Bolivia differently as a result of their experiences in the Washington D.C. metro area. This can lead to an environmental politics based on the United States or a renewed focus on preserving cultural traditions through tourism. Migration can also disrupt deeply entrenched racial and ethnic hierarchies in the Valle Alto. I demonstrate how the perceived success of migrants living in Argentina and the United States has begun to transform the social status of *campesinos* in the Valle Alto (see also Yarnall and Price 2010) and, perhaps, the nature of Bolivian society more generally. At the same time, however, migrant success abroad and a return to leadership roles has resulted in new social hierarchies.

In the final section of the chapter, I further explore the impact of migration through a discussion of Arbieta as a “migrant municipality” that sends and receives migrant labor. While the Valle Alto is increasingly seen as a model of migrant-led development, I document a number of tensions that have emerged. Internal migration from other parts of Bolivia highlights the dynamic character of Arbieta, but it also reveals the inequalities and conflicts over belonging that are increasingly a part of life in rural Cochabamba. I argue that the circulation of practices between multiple sites, both within and outside of Bolivia, is crucial to the production of place.

I. Monetary remittances

Although Arbieta is increasingly a part of the expanding urban center of Cochabamba, the municipality can also feel deserted. Walking through small rural villages in the weeks before Carnival, I rarely encountered people in the streets. Many houses seemed to have no inhabitants. Even in the central plaza of Arbieta, the site of the municipal government and home to several restaurants (*pensiones*), by far the most activity occurs when buses depart for the city of Cochabamba. The emptiness was apparent not only to outside researchers but also to local residents, who frequently noted that most families in their village live outside of the country. This claim is expanded further by migrants in the Washington D.C. area, who argue that entire communities are now in the United States. Sonia and Octavia, two migrants from Villa Verde, epitomized this representation when, following my return from Bolivia, they told me that, “there is nothing in the village, right? The entire village is here.”

Figure 7: Map of the Arbieta municipality



But even though migrants are physically absent for most of the year, they have greatly influenced social, political and economic life in rural Bolivia.⁴⁸ The most visible and dramatic transformations have been in the physical landscape, particularly the emergence of new multi-story houses known as “*chalets*” (Yarnall and Price 2010; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; see figure 7). Cars purchased abroad or in distant Bolivian cities drive on cobblestone streets and a mostly paved highway across the Angostura Lake. INCOPEA, CELAPKA and an array of internal leagues in the Washington area used collective remittances to pave (“*empedrar*”) roads, construct dozens of soccer fields, churches, and plazas, paved roads, and contribute to local school improvements in small villages across Arbieta. Remittances have also led to the expansion of the peach industry in the Valle Alto. As Cortes (2004) and de la Torre (2006; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007) have shown, a growing number of Valle Alto households now have access to irrigation canals or wells throughout the year that allow them to cultivate cash crops like peaches with value in the nearby Cochabamba markets.

The importance of monetary remittances is also apparent in the suburban landscape of Northern Virginia and Maryland, which is dotted with small storefronts that wire money and arrange travel to Bolivia and other Latin American countries. In a 2005 survey, Manuel Orozco estimated that Bolivians in the Washington D.C. area sent 40 percent of remittances to Cochabamba (cited in Yarnall and Price 2010). However, it is

⁴⁸ Robert C. Smith (*ausentes siempre presentes*, absent but always present) and Geneviève Cortes (*ruralidad en ausencia*, rurality in absence) have used evocative phrases to suggest that physically absent migrants play a large role in the politics and development of sending communities. A number of recent studies have explored the extent of migration in Arbieta and the broader Valle Alto, with most estimates suggesting that 40 percent of region’s population lives abroad (de la Torre 2006). I decided not to do a detailed survey of village homes because of time constraints and the recent nature of these studies, but I did gather information from local officials in 2011, who estimated that more than 50 percent of the municipality’s population lives abroad in the United States, Argentina or Europe.

difficult to determine the amount of remittances that are sent to Arbiето or the Valle Alto with any certainty because most money is wired to the city of Cochabamba. Indeed, when Germán asked me to deliver \$60 to a friend in Bolivia, he sent it to a Western Union office in Cochabamba because there are no such offices in the town of Arbiето.⁴⁹

International financial institutions, states, and migrants have increasingly seen remittances as a form of development for sending communities across the global South. This trend emerged first in the late 1980s in Mexico, and since then other countries and multi-lateral institutions have sought to direct remittances towards development projects and entrepreneurial activities.⁵⁰ Migrants have become key actors in development because of their experience in both the global North and South, which is seen to provide them with the expertise, social capital and monetary resources necessary to coordinate and carry out projects with local officials. Thus, even though they send home relatively small amounts of money (Lowell and de la Garza 2002), hometown associations are viewed as an important conduit for collective remittances (M. Smith and Bakker 2008).

⁴⁹ Although this is not a widespread phenomenon, money also flows from Bolivia to the United States. Claudia, a young professional from the La Loma who lives and works in the city of Cochabamba, told me that her family sent money to relatives in Northern Virginia in the height of the economic crisis. Journalists have documented similar transfers from Mexico to the U.S. (Lacey 2009).

⁵⁰ These efforts began in traditional sending states of western Mexico and later moved to the federal level in 1989 in the form of the *Programa para Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero* (Program for Mexican Communities Abroad, PCME). Modeled after the well-known program in the state of Zacatecas, the Mexican government offered to match collective remittances through a two-for-one program. Several Mexican states now have three-for-one programs in which the federal, state and local level all match development remittances (Alarcón 2002).

Figure 7: Migrant “chalet” in Tiataco (photo by author)



Because of their potential to be invested in new businesses or infrastructure projects, migrant investments in collective and so-called productive activities are privileged by states and development practitioners. Scholars have shown that the majority of remittances are actually directed towards individual household consumption (such as food and clothing), education costs, home maintenance or new construction, and land acquisition (Jones 1998). Migration research has also occasionally questioned the assumption that productive remittances are the most likely to stimulate local economies

or improve the lives of those in the sending community. Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar (2001), for instance, argue that highlighting only entrepreneurial activities overlooks the contributions of women to local economies and the ways in which they use remittances to broaden the options available to children and families. Still, Jorge Durand and his colleagues (1996) argue that individual remittances can have important multiplier effects on the broader economy and can indirectly result in economic growth.

Migrants in the Washington D.C. metro area send a variety of remittances types to Bolivia, as Elmer's story in chapter two suggests. During his more than 20 years outside of the country, Elmer used individual remittances to finance the expansion of his home in Santa Rosa and the construction of a new one in Cochabamba. Elmer's brother-in-law and next door neighbor in Santa Rosa, Samuel, used his earnings from Northern Virginia to purchase two trucks that he uses to haul peaches and other goods to the Cancha in Cochabamba. As members of INCOPEA and the Santa Rosa internal league, Elmer and Samuel also contributed to multiple collective remittance projects, including the village's plaza, church, community center, and soccer field.⁵¹

Migrants have also directed remittances towards agricultural improvements and other "productive" investments in the Valle Alto. For the most part, these effects have been organized individually while collective remittances have remained focused on recreation and other public works projects. This differs from the movement of established Mexican hometown associations in the United States from collective "social" remittances

⁵¹ Goldring (1998) divides collective remittances into four types of projects: basic infrastructure and communications projects (roads, potable water, and electrification); public service infrastructure and capitalization projects (education and health); recreation and status-related projects; other community and urbanization projects (plazas and community centers). Even though early projects were almost exclusively soccer-related, hometown associations in the Washington D.C. area have financed each type of project.

towards “productive” ones. Smith and Bakker (2008) describe this shift in terms of an expanding neoliberal project led by the Mexican state and international financial institutions, although they note that migrant leaders often engage reluctantly with and sometimes contest the “remittances-to-development” discourse.

While the Bolivian state has adopted this discourse in recent years, it lacks the institutional capability to intervene and direct migrant remittances even in established sending areas like the Valle Alto. Instead, migrants send money to Arbieta through long-established relationships with local municipal and OTB officials, as well as through more informal channels. Despite the economic crisis in the United States, and in some cases because of it, migrants in the Washington area are continuing to invest in the Valle Alto. Often challenging the conventional wisdom that Bolivia is a risky place to invest, migrants referenced the many Bolivians that lost homes during the recent housing crisis in the United States (see chapter six) and suggested that the U.S. economy was actually less stable.

Belonging through remittances

Scholars working in the global South have often commented on the houses built by migrants living abroad or those that have recently returned to their countries of origin. The construction of large, often ostentatious houses in rural sending villages is generally seen as an act of consumption linked to migrant belonging. Described evocatively by Peri Fletcher (1999) as “*casas de sueños*” (dream houses), the construction of an American style house offers migrants a chance to return to their community of origin as wealthy

and important individuals (see Pellow 2003 for a similar discussion in Ghana). Because houses are permanent structures, they also make transnational migration visible for other residents, provide physical spaces where social relations between migrants and non-migrants can be maintained (Leinaweaver 2009), and serve as a placeholder and a statement of intent for international migrants who hope to return home (Melly 2010).

Luin Goldring (1998) has argued that collective remittances serve a similar purpose of improving the social status of migrants and reaffirming their belonging to sending communities. As I suggested in chapter three, Bolivian migrants participate in hometown associations and donate to public works projects as a way to maintain ties to sending villages and other migrants. While remittances can be seen as an effort to belong to communities of origin, the construction of houses in particular can realign physical and social spaces. Scholars have often noted that leisure is an important goal for migrants (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999; Abbots 2012), and Bolivian migrants often described Arbieta as a place to rest after so many years of working hard in the United States. Houses in particular represent a place where migrants can be comfortable and continue to live like they do in the United States, although communal spaces like recreation centers or imagined retirement homes also serve similar purposes. This physical and imagined connection to the United States suggests that migrant houses can reflect and introduce new inequalities, even as migrants living abroad spend little time in the village (Fletcher 1999). Furthermore, the increasing construction of houses in the city of Cochabamba means that migrants may never come back full time to Arbieta even if they return to Bolivia.

Monetary remittances are also used to participate in the social life of Arbieta by sponsoring community events like Carnival festivals, weddings, and baptisms. Although such events occur throughout the year, they are particularly common when most migrants visit Bolivia in February and August. During my fieldwork, each village in the Arbieta *municipio* held at least one Carnival celebration. Beginning in the late afternoon, informal dance groups known as *comparsas* dance around plazas and along local streets to loud and repetitive music, generally performed by a brass band hired from the city of Cochabamba. Spectators throw water and spray foam at the dancers from the sidelines. For the most part, migrants living in Argentina, the United States or Spain serve as *pasantes* for these fiestas, which requires them to sponsor the prizes, entertainment, food, and drink for other community members. While this is usually an individual responsibility, in some cases migrants will pool money from people in the Washington area, as Eduardo did prior to Tiataco's 2011 Carnival. Later in the evening, *pasantes* take on a public role by helping local organizers to hand out prizes for the "best" *comparsa* group (in practice, most groups receive an award for participating) and inviting community members to continue drinking and dancing.

Migrants living in Northern Virginia and Maryland also sponsor cultural *ferías* that are designed to promote traditional foods and customs. As Albro (2009) notes, these types of festivals became increasingly common under neoliberalism in Bolivia. Facilitated by political and administrative decentralization in the 1980s and 1990s, municipal governments sought to use indigenous heritage to promote regional tourism. Beyond the Arbieta peach festival (discussed in chapter one and below) organized by the

municipal government, there are several smaller cultural *ferías* in the *municipio* that revolve around indigenous harvest traditions, religious ceremonies and typical food dishes from the region. Migrants in the United States and returnees in Bolivia argue that the promotion of rural indigenous traditions through *ferías* helps to put their village on the map and contributes to economic development.

But while these justifications hew closely to the line of local governments, migrants also view festivals through the lens of cultural preservation in a foreign environment. Extending the concerns of parents on the sidelines of soccer games (see chapter three), migrants argued that cultural *ferías* are needed to teach children about traditional practices and values. When I asked Eduardo why he visited Tiataco and contributed to the village's *fería* each year, he replied:

“More than anything else it is to continue maintaining the culture we have . . . to transmit it to our children. I always go to Bolivia during summer here [the United States] for a special festival there, the San Juan festival. . . I bring my children to see this. We want to make them aware of our culture.”

Crucially, the location of these events in Bolivia is seen to provide a more complete cultural experience for young people, as Eduardo and his brother Jaime insisted that the festivals in the United States were different because migrants had so little time to prepare food. Unlike soccer games in Northern Virginia and Maryland, however, participation in these cultural *ferías* is limited to migrant families with the proper papers and money for plane tickets.

Still, sending money from abroad can allow migrants to feel like valued members of sending villages and, as I discussed in chapter three, be part of a unified and culturally distinct community in the United States. One of the Northern Virginia organizers of the

Ñawpa Manka Mikhuna, a *fería* held in the village of Achamoco, insisted that migrants in the U.S. were “*bastante organizado*” (very well organized) while those in Spain do little to contribute. Like cultural activities in the United States, monetary remittances are an essential part of building community and transmitting culture to the second generation. More broadly, individual and collective monetary remittances can be understood as a citizenship practice that allows migrants to belong to and improve their social status in both sending and receiving communities.

II. *Drywalleros*: Skill transfer between Buenos Aires, Washington D.C. and Arbioto

With a few exceptions, men from Arbioto in the Washington D.C. area work in the construction industry. This is the outcome of a decades-long process that began in Buenos Aires, where migrants encountered drywall for the first time. As we sat in a church in Northern Virginia, Germán recalled his early days installing drywall. Over the years, Bolivians built up reputation in Argentina as good workers and were increasingly sought out by Argentinean employers. Even though this reputation for hard work originated in Argentina, Germán argued it is not confined to that country and told me one of his favorite stories about a group of Mexicans in Spain who told contractors that they were Bolivians in order to secure work. In Washington D.C., men from Arbioto transferred their reputation and skills in the construction industry to work across the metro area.

In this section, I present the circulation of construction industry practices between Bolivian sites of settlement in Argentina, Europe and the United States as an example of skill transfer. There is an established literature on the movement of highly skilled individuals from countries in the global South to advanced industrialized countries in the North. Early studies tended to see this migration in negative terms, often referring to it as a “brain drain” that would deprive countries of their best and brightest. In contrast, others argued that poor countries would benefit when migrants, who develop new skills abroad, eventually returned and started new businesses. AnnaLee Saxenian (2006), for instance, has suggested that the circulation of highly-skilled migrants has important and differential impacts on places. As migrants with connections to Silicon Valley have set up IT and software businesses in India, China, Israel, and other countries, they transfer technical skills, social networks and understandings of institutional models. As a result, Saxenian argues, migrants are undermining “the old pattern of one-way flows of technology and capital from the core to the periphery, creating far more complex and decentralized two-way flows of skill, capital, and technology” (2006: 6).

While this perspective helpfully focuses on the movement of skills and practices between places, it obscures much of the world’s population and economic activity (Wilson and Keil 2008). In particular, migrants with less formal education and permission to move across international borders are overlooked. In series of recent articles, Nichola Lowe, Jacqueline Hagan and their colleagues explore the movement of construction skills between different worksites. Although construction work is often seen as unskilled, they argue that Latin American migrants in the United States develop a

broad set of skills in their home country (Hagan et al. 2011a; Lowe et al. 2010).

Immigrant construction workers often experience “deskilling” as they move into specialized positions in the U.S., but they are sometimes able to draw on their skill set to impress employers and find better work. In contrast to traditional studies of knowledge production and flows, immigrants encounter new knowledge and skills at a variety of points in their migration process and reinterpret it. In the process, they create new practices (Iskander and Lowe 2011) and forge an alternative path to mobility outside of ethnic economies.

I argue that Bolivian experiences in the construction industry represent a similar strategy of skill transfer and economic mobility. As they became an established part of the Argentinean construction industry, migrants often brought these skills with them to the United States. Bolivians developed dense economic networks across the Washington metro area and found work in a variety of construction businesses. Many became successful independent contractors or opened their own businesses. Thus, although the recession had a devastating impact on the Washington D.C. construction industry, most migrants from Arbieta have continued to find enough work to get by.

Recalling their work history, male migrants often told me that they were initially attracted to the construction industry in Buenos Aires because of its high pay.⁵² The work, however, was not easy. Migrants that lived in Argentina during the 1980s characterized construction labor in Argentina as “heavy” (*pesado*), largely because of the lack of

⁵² De la Torre and Aramayo (2007) note that migrants were also attracted by the relatively high status of construction work in rural Bolivia. Although many migrants (and, increasingly, political leaders in Bolivia) view agriculture as a link to an idealized rural past, peasant farming has long been looked down upon in rural areas like Arbieta. As a result, migrants are eager to work in professions seen as more urban and skilled.

drywall. Fernando, a migrant from Villa Verde who spent two years in Buenos Aires before coming to Northern Virginia, contrasted the two work environments: “there in Argentina we worked outside and here we work inside with drywall. There wasn’t drywall in that time period.” Similarly, Francisco said that, “Here [the United States] we use brick for the outside and drywall for the inside. Drywall is good because you can get rid of a wall easily to remodel. It’s easy to change.”

When Bolivians moved to the United States, they quickly inserted themselves into the Washington D.C. region construction industry. Some, like Fernando, had to learn how to deal with new materials and tools. Manuel, an early migrant to Argentina and the United States who now lives in Villa Verde, recalled that the small size of most construction companies in Northern Virginia provided more opportunities to work than in Buenos Aires. Male migrants are able to quickly move into specialized parts of the construction industry and become experts through apprenticeships and social networks. David, a migrant from the small village of Kaluyo and the president of CELAPKA, works with a group of Bolivian migrants in Maryland in a tiling company. He has become highly specialized within this field in only a few years in the U.S. after limited experience with tiling in Buenos Aires. Others, like Germán, were able to directly transfer expertise with drywall from Argentina to the United States. Upon coming to Northern Virginia six years ago, Germán immediately began working with his brother using the same materials that he had encountered in Argentina over the last 20 years. Thus, both extensive social networks and broad skill sets developed in Argentina have

allowed migrants from Arbieta to move into economic niches in the Washington area economy.

Migrants can pick up and transform skills along their routes to the United States, but there are important limitations on this transfer (see also Levitt 1998; Jones and de la Torre 2011). Even though many are skilled construction workers in the United States, I was surprised to find that migrants tend to hire local architects and laborers to build public works projects in Arbieta rather than employ their own expertise. Migrants have a limited amount of time in Bolivia during their vacations, of course, but there are often enough return migrants to supervise the construction. Fernando, who has worked in construction for more than 25 years but all of it in Argentina and the United States, told me that *residentes* were largely unfamiliar with construction in Bolivia and would have to bring the necessary tools with them from Washington D.C.

The limited flows of construction materials and tools from Argentina and the United States to Bolivia present an important obstacle for migrants that hope to return to Cochabamba in the coming years. As the recession in the United States and economic growth in Bolivia has led migrants to more seriously consider return, some expressed hope that they could find work in the construction industry. Standing with a group of men on the sidelines of a soccer game in Northern Virginia, Germán said he had heard that drywall was beginning to be used in Bolivia. This was echoed in conversations with other migrants, who knew individuals that had returned and found decent work in the city. However, most dismissed the idea that they would be able to employ their skills in the

construction industry in Cochabamba, largely because drywall was not a common material in Bolivia.

The low social status of manual labor in Bolivia also limits returnee aspirations to continue working in the construction industry. Armando Morales, a Bolivian journalist who travels between Cochabamba and Northern Virginia on a regular basis, told me that even though construction work pays fairly well in Cochabamba, few returning migrants will take these jobs and instead want to open their own business or work as professionals. Although Armando's experiences were primarily with migrants from the city of Cochabamba, this "*vergüenza social*" or social stigma attached to the construction industry applies broadly. As a result, much of the construction work done in the Valle Alto is done by internal migrants from other parts of Bolivia.

But even though work skills are not easily transferred, experience in the United States and Argentina can still have value. I encountered several returned migrants who had built their own homes in the Valle Alto. Marcelo, a migrant from the village of La Loma who returned to the colonial city of Tarata almost 15 years ago, showed me the house he built with skills developed in Northern Virginia: "I learned how to paint there [the United States]. All of this I painted. . . All of this that I did is for me. Not an architect, it is by me." Similarly, César, a return migrant in Tiataco (see his story below) was currently in the process of building a multi-story home. The construction was going slow because he worked on the house himself, with limited labor from relatives, on evenings and weekends. However, most construction projects in Arbieta continue to be carried out by local architects and internal migrants from other parts of Bolivia,

underscoring the difficulty that returning international migrants face in transferring highly specialized skills and practices to a different work and social environment in Bolivia. In contrast, as I discuss in the following chapter, migrants often do most of the construction work themselves when they build their own homes in the Washington D.C. area

III. “A different mentality”: Migrants in local politics

Tiataco, March 2011

One afternoon in March, I meet César in the village of Tiataco. After living abroad in Argentina and the United States for almost 10 years, César returned to Bolivia three years ago. He immediately became the representative of Tiataco migrants in Northern Virginia and helped them carry out several collective remittance projects, including the brand-new community center that now overlooks the plaza where we are standing. A passionate and charismatic speaker, César was elected as a leader in the Tiataco OTB (*Organización Territorial de Base* or Grassroots Territorial Organization) and then to the Arbieta municipal council in 2010. We walk towards the forest on the edge of the village, the site of the *Mastaku y la T'anta Wawa* festival that is held every November to celebrate death and life.

Standing in front of a large statue built by migrants in Argentina and Washington D.C., César explains how he learned to understand the Arbieta *municipio* through his experiences in the United States.

What I learned [abroad] is to value my community, my land, because when a person leaves a country like the United States, which is a developed country, it's

different, right? As *residentes*, we have seen the reality of our municipality, and that is of trash. We want to implement a solid waste project to separate useful and non-useful materials . . . and to recycle. Sometimes it is a little difficult to make local authorities and OTBs understand. They still haven't seen reality, like us who have seen reality from the outside, how to recycle glass, disposable objects.

Like César, many migrants talk about seeing Bolivia in a new light as a result of their experiences abroad. In some cases, life in the United States or Argentina leads to nostalgia for a more “simple” rural existence. In others, Bolivia is transformed into an inefficient, dirty, and corrupt place, a common theme in my interviews. For César, Arbieta is understood through environmental politics and, crucially, a direct contrast between rural Bolivia and the orderly and clean nature of American cities. Although César only lived in the United States for eight years, his experiences in Northern Virginia form the core of his understanding of politics, development, and the environment now that he has returned to Bolivia.

In this section, I analyze the circulation of political values and norms between Arbieta and the Washington D.C. area. I focus particular attention on returning migrants that have moved into local Bolivian politics. César was one of three officials elected to the Arbieta municipal government in 2010 who spent significant time outside of the country. Like in most rural municipalities, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS), Evo Morales's party, dominated the election. At the top of the MAS ticket in Arbieta was Diógenes Escobar, a former migrant who decided to run for mayor after living for more than 25 years in Buenos Aires and West Palm Beach. As described in chapter one, Diógenes recently fulfilled his campaign pledge to bring Morales to Arbieta in order to inaugurate a soccer field built by migrants in Florida and Washington D.C. At the event,

Diógenes referred to himself as he often does, as the first “transnational” mayor in Bolivia.

César was also on the MAS ticket while Maria, who lived in Argentina for several years, was elected through the Movement without Fear (*Movimiento sin Miedo*, MSM), an opposition party formerly allied with the MAS. Thus, fully half of the six elected officials in the municipality have spent significant time outside of Bolivia. A number of the 44 OTBs in the Arbieto *municipio* also have return migrants in leadership positions. This phenomenon is increasingly taking place across Bolivia as migrants return from Argentina, the United States, and Spain. As Iver Lara, a Bolivian sociologist who spent time in Maryland and Valencia, told me in La Paz, “people outside of the country are preparing themselves (*se va formandose*), leaving behind their shyness. Empowering themselves” (*Empoderandose*).

Migrant political transnationalism

Most research on immigrant political behavior has focused on the receiving country, but transnationalism scholarship has helped to broaden understandings of where and how migrants engage in politics. This research has shown that migrants engage in transnational politics at a variety of scales by voting, supporting political parties or individual candidates (Itzigsohn et al. 1999; R. Smith 2006). Scholars have also shown that political identities and behaviors from sending countries shape migrant political participation in destination countries (Jones-Correa and Andalón 2008) while norms and ideas can also flow from migrants back to countries of origin (Basch et al. 1995; Levitt

and Glick Schiller 2004). Academics and policymakers have often expressed hopes that migrant political transnationalism will contribute to the construction of democratic and accountable institutions and politics in the global South (M. Smith and Bakker 2008). Most research, however, suggests that the impact of political transnationalism has so far been limited (Itzigsohn and Villacrés 2008).

From the perspective of migrant leaders living abroad, political institutions in Latin America have become more open in recent years and have provided a variety of new spaces for migrant political actors (M. Smith and Bakker 2008). However, most eligible immigrants in the United States do not participate in formal politics on a regular basis, particularly in home country elections (Guarnizo et al. 2003; 1999). This was the case for Bolivians living in Washington D.C. in 2009, when they and migrants in other important concentrations abroad were allowed to vote, for the first time, in national Bolivian elections from abroad. Turnout in the United States was far lower than expected, largely the result of migrant reluctance to participate in formal politics in both the U.S. and Bolivia (see chapter five for further discussion).

There are also real questions about the types of political change that migrants are likely to bring to sending communities. Migration seems likely to reproduce existing hierarchies or create new ones, and research on political transnationalism has shown that the most active participants are well-established and likely to be better educated and more economically secure than the general migrant population (Portes et al. 2009; Guarnizo 1998). Thus, although new migrant elites may be interested in transforming the existing social and political order in sending communities, they are not necessarily concerned

with democratic change that extends to marginalized groups or may actively exclude them (Itzigsohn 2000). Still, it is clear that migrant political activity has had some important impacts. Migrants have, in some cases, successfully pressured sending and receiving governments for new rights and electoral procedures, while some individuals returned to their country of origin in order to enter national and local political office (R. Smith 2006; Levitt 2001; M. Smith and Bakker 2008).

But while research has often highlighted the impact of migrant transnationalism on sending countries and localities, it has largely overlooked the multi-directional flow of ideas, values, and practices. Rural organizational practices, I argued in chapter three, are transformed as migrants move to the Washington D.C. suburbs. At the same time, migrants develop new understandings of politics through their participation in HTAs and the organization of collective remittance projects. As migrants communicate via telephone or through physical return to their village in Arbieta, they also transfer these practices. This process is not always easy, however, as differences in the political environment and competing interests can lead to conflicts between migrants and community members in Bolivia.

Transferring values

The election of César, Diógenes and other long-term migrant returnees has brought new attention to the influence of migration in Arbieta but, as de la Torre and Aramayo (2007) have demonstrated, this is far from a new process. During the first half of the 20th Century, men and women traveled to Chile and the mines in Potosí. As a result

of these experiences, returning migrants spoke more Spanish, brought home new food and participated in new social activities such as soccer leagues. This continued as migrants in Argentina and the United States transferred ideas about consumption and development to Bolivia through individual and collective monetary remittances.

Returning migrants also transform understandings of politics, organization, and development as they move into local positions of power in Arbieta. Migrants often cite the organizational skills and new mentality that they gained abroad. For instance, Wilson said that he became more open to new ideas as a result of his time in the United States:

“when I entered [the OTB] upon return, I was already more open. I learned well. Being in the United States, one always picks up experience. One becomes more prepared to wake up a little more. One learns other things . . . realizes how things should be, if organizations are good or bad.”

Soon after taking up his OTB leadership role, Wilson decided to cancel Santa Rosa’s annual peach festival. He explained that the former OTB president, who lives in outside of the community in the city of Cochabamba, went over budget and never accounted for the money spent in previous *ferías*. After consulting with community members, Wilson proposed an alternative use for municipal funds, bathrooms: “If we don’t have the *fería*, we can save the money and invest it in something else.” The experience working in restaurants and construction in the United States, he argued, gave him an appreciation for responsible accounting and new ways of conducting local politics.

As César’s discussion above also suggests, returning migrants are often interested in using public resources to literally and figuratively clean up the municipality. This can be in the form of a recycling program, the installation of trash cans in village plazas, or, Wilson’s alternative proposal to construct public bathrooms in Santa Rosa. The example

of an advanced industrialized country like the United States, migrants often argued, led them value clean public spaces as indicator of progress and order. Like other municipal officials throughout the Valle Alto, return migrants are focused on promoting tourism and implementing projects that attract outside visitors.

Wilson's narrative also highlights the open concern about corruption held by many migrants (i.e. M. Smith and Bakker 2008). In Bolivia and Washington D.C., migrants have moved to transform the existing relationship between *dirigentes* (leaders)⁵³ and community members. Tiataco migrant leaders installed César as their representative in Bolivia to handle all the money for the construction of a community center, which effectively bypassed the local OTB leaders accused of pocketing the money while failing to make progress on construction. Histories of collective remittance projects frequently involve accusations of corruption. Reuben and Adrian, two Northern Virginia migrant organizers for the Ñawpa Manka Mikhuna *fería*, criticized OTB leaders in Achamoco for failing to apply for additional development funds from the municipal government and, just as seriously, of stealing money. Although migrants living abroad cannot participate directly in municipal or OTB elections, they do have some influence and Reuben told me that migrants were exploring ways to bar the OTB president from being elected again.

Values about public service are also shaped by experiences in the United States. Migrants develop different social networks, monetary resources, and new perspectives that helped some move quickly into elected office. César, for instance, said that he developed a mentality of wanting to help not just Tiataco but also other communities in

⁵³ *Dirigente* is a common term used in Bolivia to refer to leaders in community-based organizations, particularly local governance institutions like *sindicatos* or OTBs and social movements.

the Arbiето municipality through his participation in INCOPEA. The experience of directing collective projects at a variety of scales is an important skill that returning migrants can draw upon as they carry out and reconfigure development projects.

But while many migrants and returnees hold negative views about corruption, they are not necessarily the result of migration (Jones forthcoming; Jones and de la Torre 2011). Bolivians, migrants and non-migrants alike, hold extremely negative views about the state of politics in the country (Lazar 2008). Attitudes about political modernization have a long history in Bolivia and were developed through nationalist reforms following the 1952 revolution, neoliberalization in the 1980s and 1990s, and more recently nationalist indigenous reforms under Evo Morales. Thus, while it is clear that migrants are transferring ideas and normative values to Bolivia, it is important not to over-interpret the extent of this process.

Disrupting hierarchies

Beyond the movement of individual migrants into local politics, international migration has had a broad impact on social and political hierarchies in Cochabamba. Here, I draw on Featherstone (2005), Wilson (2007) and Gidwani and Sivaramkrishnan (2003), who have shown that transnational networks and migration can disrupt the dominant spatial and social order. Crucially, these accounts suggest that labor, everyday practices and movement across established boundaries are capable of transforming "subjectivities and perceptions of place" (Gidwani and Sivaramkrishnan 2003: 190). In other words, migrant identities and connections with different places are transformed

through movement. In the Valle Alto, sustained international migration to Argentina and the United States and transnational ties has begun to disrupt entrenched social hierarchies.

For migrant and non-migrant Arbieta residents alike, migration has led to a number of important structural changes. Many rural migrants have been economically successful abroad, often through their work in the construction industry, and as a result are now increasingly envied by urban middle class migrants from the neighboring colonial town of Tarata and the city of Cochabamba. As Eduardo said of migration: “in this way the poverty of Tiataco [his village in Arbieta] is being eradicated. . . There has been a lot of improvement, it is better than the city.” This is acknowledged, with some chagrin, by migrants from Tarata in the United States. At a meeting of the Comité Pro-Tarata in Northern Virginia, migrant leaders assured me that Arbieta was *not* the capital of the Valle Alto despite the ostentatious displays of wealth in the municipality. Other migrants from Cochabamba and other Bolivian cities also acknowledged the success of Arbieta, even if some expressed surprise at the success of *campesinos* in the modern U.S. economy.⁵⁴ This is a sharp departure from how many peasants in Arbieta were treated only a few decades ago, when they routinely faced discrimination in larger towns and cities by *mestizo* and white Bolivians (see chapter two).

As Eduardo suggests, the economic mobility of Valle Alto migrants in the United States is also having an impact on how people from rural areas are seen in Bolivia.

⁵⁴ Pribilsky (2007) highlights a similar dynamic in southern Ecuador, as out-migration to New York has raised the status of *campesinos* in relation to the city of Cuenca. See Yarnall and Price (2010) for a discussion of these dynamics in the Valle Alto.

Thanks to this country that we have come to [the United States], there has been a total change. We have pushed for a change in the government [of Bolivia] . . . it seems to me that discrimination is being slowly ended. Like in this country [the United States], we are all equal. I have seen this change . . . before people from the countryside were totally discriminated against. Maybe we were the pioneers of this change.

By searching for opportunities outside of the country, *campesinos* from the Valle Alto have begun to disrupt entrenched Bolivian racial and class hierarchies. Migrants from the Valle Alto continue to face discrimination from Bolivian urban middle class migrants, but this is much less of a factor in the suburbs of Washington D.C. than in Cochabamba. Migrants also favorably compared their social position in the United States to Argentina, where they have been less socially mobile and face open racism from many Argentines. For Eduardo, this is the result of his hard work and the opportunities available in the United States.

Thus, even as he is highly critical of the racism that he encounters in his Northern Virginia neighborhood (see this narrative in chapter five), Eduardo also internalizes common tropes about equality and democracy in the United States and argues that these norms are being transferred to Bolivia. The transformation of Bolivian politics and society is a long process that extends beyond the influence of migration, but it is notable how transnational practices have been central to the emergence of indigenous movements (Brysk 2000; Van Cott 1994). Thus, as international migrants and other Bolivians develop extended relationships with actors abroad, therefore, they bring new ideas and resources that have helped to transform Bolivian society at multiple scales.

Encountering frictions

At the same time, the process of transferring new ideas and practices to the Valle Alto often runs into obstacles. This is particularly the case for returning migrants who left Bolivia early in their lives, since they later face difficulties adjusting to the political culture of Arbieto. By spending so much time abroad, most migrants were unable to serve as a *sindicato* or OTB leaders. While some, like Wilson, were community leaders before migrating, migrants are largely disconnected from local politics during their time abroad.

Migrants in the United States often said that distance prevented them from being involved in the decision-making processes in their OTB or irrigators association. Community members frequently rotate through leadership positions, often leaving migrant leaders unsure who they should be dealing with. As Elmer once told me, “If you are not there, you don’t know anything” (*si no estás, no sabes nada*). Even with new communication and transportation technologies, migrants and community members have trouble communicating between different contexts.

Furthermore, even though many returning migrants served as hometown association leaders in the United States, this did not always prepare them for a position in the formal political system. This was true for Diógenes, who expressed concerns about the controlling nature of party politics and his inability to act independently of MAS decisions at the regional level. Here, he said, the party “controls everything” (*manda todo*). Migrants in leadership positions abroad may also not be accustomed to the pressure and constant criticism that is at the heart of Bolivian politics.

These tensions were on display a week after I arrived in Bolivia during a meeting between local officials and visiting migrants in the town of Arbieta. Prior to the meeting, I found Wilfredo, an athletic middle-aged man who seems to be in perpetual motion. Born in Argentina to Bolivian parents, Wilfredo has lived in the United States for more than 20 years. Although he has never lived permanently in Arbieta, he feels like he has become a part of the community through the connections he makes during vacations and collective remittance projects. This year, Wilfredo has agreed to raise money for the *Fería del Durazno*, the annual peach festival held in early March. He said that he has been scouring the town for migrants all day long but has only gotten contributions from a few people. At eight o'clock, Wilfredo checked his watch and began moving towards the *alcaldia*. "I like to be punctual," he said. "We can't do things at the *hora boliviana*," or Bolivian time, which is usually several hours late.

Inside the first floor meeting room, tensions were running high with the *Fería* only a few days away. Wilfredo insisted that all migrants be required to contribute \$50. Mario, another long-time migrant in Virginia who is rumored to be extremely wealthy, countered that some migrants might not be able to afford \$50 this year and suggested that the donation be voluntary. He also appealed to the "democratic system that exists in this country [Bolivia] and for *residentes* [in the United States]." This sparked a prolonged discussion over how to define contributions to the town and municipality of Arbieta.

From the back of the room, a lean and impeccably dressed older migrant from Northern Virginia argued that all migrants had an obligation to support Arbieta. Juan spoke forcefully: "I always contribute (*aportar*), even though I am a *campesino* and he

[Mario] is a professional.⁵⁵ All *residentes* should contribute because we are from the community and because Arbieta has given us everything.” Juan noted that contributions to OTBs or *sindicatos* are not voluntary and that migrants in the United States had more than enough to pay their fair share. This is particularly true for someone like Mario, who, Juan argued, had used the resources of the town to become a professional. While the migrants from the United States bickered, the town’s youth organization insisted that their contributions also be recognized. “The *residentes* may provide the money,” the president of the local soccer team argued, “but we are the ones that actually organize the *Fería* every year.”

The conflict surrounding the *Fería* is symbolic of the broader tensions that underlie migrant involvement in Arbieta politics. Prior to his election as mayor, Diógenes attended these annual meetings as a migrant leader. While the issues were largely the same, he is now faced with the difficult task of trying to reconcile competing interests of migrants and community members in Bolivia while personally inhabiting both sides of the issue. The meeting also highlights the contested nature of contributions to sending communities. Although hometown association leaders in Maryland and Virginia often present fundraising as an outcome of reciprocal obligations, Mario’s comments make it clear that many migrants view them as voluntary, even if expected, donations. In contrast, community members in Arbieta see contributions to *ferías* and public works projects as obligatory and part of belonging to the community, just as their dues to local OTBs are.

⁵⁵ “Professional” is an important term of social classification in Bolivia and among migrants in the United States. Construction workers are sometimes referred to as professionals, as Mario was, but this is not always the case and largely depends the success of the individual.

These disagreements shape how migrants interact and participate in their sending community.

Several months later in Northern Virginia, Mario continued to express dismay at the divisions that emerged during the meeting in Arbieta. It was useless to organize and make decisions in Bolivia, he argued, because ad hoc meetings there only led to conflicts and prevented migrants from making clear proposals. Instead of getting together during vacations, Mario said that migrants from the town of Arbieta should organize exclusively under INCOPEA. Since the majority of *arbietaños* live in Northern Virginia, he argued, “We need to organize ourselves here and collaborate with the mayor from here. . . We should raise the money here and give to the municipal government for public works projects.”

Mario’s proposal to shift the location of decision-making is an effort to consolidate more power in the hands of migrants. Because an organizational infrastructure exists in the form of INCOPEA, CELAPKA and internal leagues, working exclusively in the United States would allow migrants to form a united front. Furthermore, Mario argued that the migrants have a better understanding of public policies and development funds than people that live in Arbieta, and are in a better position to make demands of the mayor. Antonio, a migrant from the tiny village of Korimayu on the outskirts of the municipality who has moved frequently between Bolivia and Northern Virginia, echoed this sentiment when he contrasted his success in applying for development funds from national and international sources with the failure of the municipal government to do so.

Migrants also seek guarantees from local authorities that their contributions will go to the proper recipients. Bolivians in the Washington area frequently expressed frustration with how collective remittance projects were carried out in Arbiesto. In particular, migrants from the town of Arbiesto were upset that the last two mayors had *municipalizado* or “municipalized” Arbiesto’s soccer field, which meant that migrants will not get preferential treatment despite the fact that they contributed the money for the field. The desire to have projects primarily benefit migrants or members of a single community is an important obstacle to coordinating public works projects with the municipal government. For instance, as I discussed in chapter three, when local officials made a direct appeal to INCOPEA for financial support in 2010, migrants declined to contribute after expressing concerns that funds would go exclusively to the wealthier town of Arbiesto.⁵⁶ Thus, while migrants contribute important resources and ideas to rural Bolivia, this transfer is not without complications.

IV. The “migrant municipality”: Development and change in Arbiesto

Each February, two groups of migrants converge in Arbiesto. Alongside the dozens of international migrants from Argentina, Spain, Brazil, and the United States visiting for Carnival, migrant laborers from other parts of Bolivia arrive in Arbiesto to work in the peach harvest. Over the summer, agricultural laborers work alongside long-term residents to prepare for the harvest and then pick, sort, and transport peaches to the Cochabamba market. These internal migrants are almost exclusively from poorer regions

⁵⁶ Local governments across Bolivia and Latin America have made similar appeals, often visiting migrant communities in the United States and other countries.

in the Andes. In Bolivia, Arbieta villagers often pointed to the mountains behind Arbieta as they explained to me that new residents come from “*más arriba*” (higher up).

Diógenes connected this migration to well-known concerns about climate migration, suggesting that there is less access to water higher up in the mountains: “*Cuando no hay agua, no hay vida*,” [when there is no water, there is no life] he said. Inequalities in Bolivia, therefore, are sometimes expressed vertically.

Unlike the temporary visits from international migrants,⁵⁷ many internal migrants have stayed in Arbieta more permanently.⁵⁸ A number of families now live year-round in Arbieta, serving as caretakers in migrant-owned *chalets*, tending to peach orchards, and working as construction workers on migrant-financed development projects. Peri-urban settlements in the Zona Norte (described in chapter two) have also become an important presence in the municipality. For the first time, a representative from the Zona Norte was elected to the municipal council.

These new residents embody the complex local transformations that have resulted from migration. In Washington D.C. and Arbieta, Bolivian migrants reference the “immigrants” that have settled in the Valle Alto. As Eduardo told me, “migration connects us, those of us that have come here [to the United States] and those that have come from somewhere else.” Fully aware of the irony, long-time Arbieta residents call internal migrants “Latinos.” Jaime explained: “Thus, there is movement with us leaving there [Arbieta] and there is no one to work. They come to our place in search of work, and they are immigrants also. We call them immigrants, like we are called Latinos here,

⁵⁷ These visits can last as little as one week because of work and family commitments in the United States.

⁵⁸ Some internal migrants will go back to their own villages following the harvest, particularly younger and more mobile agricultural laborers.

we call them Latinos.” Like conversations about immigration in the United States, international migrants and long-time community members in Arbiето view the newcomers with some trepidation. Discussions about the position and impact of these new residents are a fairly frequent topic of conversation even in the Washington D.C. area.

In the weeks following the inauguration of the Arbiето soccer field, for instance, INCOPEA members in Northern Virginia expressed concerns about who would access public works projects. Arguing about the construction of a new park in the town of Arbiето, a migrant in Northern Virginia insisted that the “Latinos” should be prevented from using the park because they would damage it [*ellos van a hacer mierda de los parques*]. This turns the marginal position of Bolivians in the United States on its head by positioning another set of migrants as low-wage workers and a threat to local communities. But at the same time, other international migrants viewed the changing demographics of the Valle Alto in a more positive light.⁵⁹

Domingo, a long-term migrant in Northern Virginia from the town of Arbiето, challenged his friend’s suggestion that Latinos should be excluded from municipal services. Using similar arguments to the immigrant rights movement in the United States, he argued that new residents are important because their children bring state funding to rural areas and allow schools to stay open in the face of declining enrollment. Following Domingo, other *residentes* argued that internal migrants were simply replacing those who had left and were contributing to the economic dynamism initiated by international

⁵⁹ The topic is discussed much less frequently in Maryland because many migrants come from poorer villages in the Arbiето *municipio* and are unlikely to hire internal migrants to harvest peaches or take care of their houses.

migrants in Argentina and the United States. By sending home remittances and financing the construction of new homes and public works projects, therefore, migrants in the United States insist that they are helping to provide jobs for people in other areas of Bolivia. This interconnection between international migration, remittances, and in-migration has led Diógenes to call Arbieta the *municipio de migrantes*, the migrant municipality.

“Here you make enough to eat, but no more”: The limits of migration-led development

Research in the Valle Alto has suggested migrant investments in infrastructural and agricultural enterprises are creating the possibility for lasting economic development (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007; de la Torre 2006; Cortes 2004). De la Torre has noted that Bolivian migrants direct a higher percentage of their remittances towards investments than migrants from other Latin American countries.⁶⁰ Migrants from the Valle Alto in particular have used resources gained abroad to purchase land, build new houses, finance public infrastructure projects, and expand agricultural production through investments in new irrigation technologies. These investments, he argues, have improved life not only for migrants and their families but also for community members. The Valle Alto is now one of the largest peach producing regions in the country and its orchards, alongside numerous construction sites, employ dozens of workers from the region and

⁶⁰ According to a 2004 survey, 55 percent of Bolivian remittances were directed towards investments (education, home construction, the purchase of vehicles, and business) (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007: 33). See Baby-Collin et al. (2008) for a similar argument via a comparison of Bolivia and Mexico.

beyond (de la Torre 2008). As a result, Arbiето is increasingly seen as a model for migration-led development in Bolivia.⁶¹

Extending de la Torre's analysis of the relationship between migration and development in Arbiето is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I do want to highlight several points that emerged from my fieldwork. My informants, which included migrants and non-migrants living in Washington D.C. and Arbiето, saw migration as a mostly positive force and frequently referenced the dramatic transformation of their villages. Although many infrastructure and communications improvements are the result of government programs separate from remittance-led development, residents of Arbiето often pointed to specific migrant-financed projects such as new soccer fields, schools and roads that had improved their quality of life.

My work with Bolivian organizations in the Washington D.C. area suggests that migrants from the Valle Alto are more likely to be connected to sending communities through dense social and institutional networks than migrants from other regions in Bolivia. This is realized primarily through hometown associations and related soccer leagues, as I have suggested, although strong family networks also tie migrants to family and community members back home. In contrast, connections to other regions in Bolivia are less institutionalized or frequent. While folkloric dance troupes or soccer leagues from a different region of Bolivia may contribute money to charity or local development projects, these projects generally take place in larger cities and depend on the personal

⁶¹ This was clear in several workshops on migration and development that I attended in February 2011. Financed largely by the Organization for International Migration, the Bolivian foreign ministry invited NGOs that work with migrants to help design a new "Plan of Return" that would promote the return of Bolivian migrants living abroad. De la Torre's research on Arbiето figured prominently as a potential model of migrant-led development. As of April 2012, the law is still in the process of being written.

connections of migrant leaders, which can limit the impact of migrant remittances. Thus, if local development is dependent on dense transnational networks, as de la Torre and others have suggested, then other sending communities are unlikely to follow the example of Arbieta.

Furthermore, the economic transformations in Arbieta or the broader region of Cochabamba have yet to provide adequate economic opportunities to migrants living abroad when they return to Bolivia. This has been brought into sharp relief by the recent economic recession in the United States, which has forced some migrants to return from the Washington area earlier than they had planned (see chapter six for a more extended discussion of this phenomenon). During my fieldwork in Arbieta, returning migrants stressed that they were making ends meet, but only barely. “Here you make enough to eat, but no more” was a common phrase among those that had worked in the cash economy of Buenos Aires and Washington D.C. Returning migrants scraped together income from agricultural production and various side jobs like hauling peaches to the Cochabamba market, but beyond sending their children to school or expanding their homes most were unlikely to invest in new economic activities.

Many scholars of migration and development, including de la Torre, acknowledge that remittances do not automatically lead to sustained economic development and are likely to require additional resources from the state or other actors (Vertovec 2004; M. Smith and Bakker 2008). As I suggested above, adequate support from La Paz seems unlikely at this point. Migrants in the United States and returned migrants in Arbieta often complained about the lack of development assistance from the regional and national

government. In their place, local municipal governments and OTBs across Bolivia have developed close working relationships with migrant associations abroad. While these partnerships are often tense, as I demonstrated above, they provide local officials with important resources.

Levitt (2001) has argued that by financing public works projects, migrant hometown associations can absolve the state of its responsibility. In rural Bolivia, the state has long played a minor role in development, although this has changed somewhat following the decentralization reforms of the mid-1990s. The Law of Popular Participation transferred new resources and responsibilities to municipal governments (Kohl 2003b). Although Arbieta had been a municipality since 1983, local officials gained access to central government funds as they were expected to propose and carry out development directly. By devolving responsibility for development to municipalities, decentralization created a variety of new spaces for migrants to collaborate with local officials (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007). In contrast to Levitt, I argue that migrant-led development can actually strengthen, rather than weaken, the local state by allowing it to have a broader reach (M. Smith 2003). In Arbieta, the municipal government and OTBs are able to implement a variety of projects that they could otherwise not afford because of their relationships with migrants. Thus, although tensions almost inevitably emerge, migrants and local governments are bound together by relations of interdependency (R. Smith 2006).

But while migration-led development offers new opportunities to local governments, it also conditions the type of development that can occur. When INCOPEA

and CELAPKA finance the construction of soccer fields, community centers, plazas, and new roads in Arbieto villages, they are promoting a particular kind of development based around infrastructure improvements. As I discuss further in chapter five, this is in part reflective of the goals of migrants to highlight their contributions in very visible manifestations. At the same time, this also aligns with the more general Bolivian development strategy of constructing *obras*, literally public works, as a way for leaders to point to their concrete achievements (Lazar 2008). This became clear during my fieldwork in several villages on the outskirts of the Arbieto municipality and in the Zona Norte where migrants and the municipal government constructed soccer fields rather than, for instance, the expansion of irrigation to poor areas. Migrant-led development may make it less likely that officials will tackle underlying social and spatial inequalities. At the same time, it focuses local development on collective and visible projects that can be accessed by the entire community rather than the often narrowly focused “productive” or entrepreneurial remittance projects.

Scholars have often argued that remittances result in greater inequalities over time as migrant families benefit more than non-migrants (Jones 1998). In Arbieto, the differences between families with migrants and those without are seen in material terms and in new social classifications. This was illustrated by an exchange with César. As we walked through Tiataco one day, he pointed to almost every house along the way, saying that they were owned by “*residentes*” or, more revealingly, “*americanos*.” Although César immediately pivoted and said, laughing, that Bolivians were also Americans, his use of the term clearly distinguished long-term and absent migrants from others in

Tiataco. Thus, even though César lived abroad for more than 10 years in Argentina and the United States, he distinguished himself from those that had decided not to return yet. Non-*residentes*, while still in the village, lived in crumbling abode houses and remained apart from, in many ways, the wealth brought by international migrants.

Migration also reproduces existing inequalities both within and between Arbieto villages. Villages without a long history of international migration tend to be poorer than more established migrant communities of origin. As migrants contribute to public works projects and collaborate with municipal officials, these inequalities are exacerbated further (de la Torre and Aramayo 2007). There are a variety of efforts to promote regional development in Bolivia (often through municipality groupings called *mancomunidades*), but these have not formed close ties with more locally-driven migrant hometown associations in the Valle Alto. As a result, some rural and urban communities may be passed over by local governments who are intent on collaborating with migrants.

Despite the focus on development, migration is often seen in a negative light by local community members and is blamed for the abandonment of communities, the destruction of families, and the introduction of negative influences like gangs, graffiti, and “American” traditions of disrespecting elders (Ferrufino et al. 2007; see also R. Smith 2006 and Pribilsky 2007 for a discussion of similar issues in Mexico and Ecuador, respectively). Criticism of these changes come from non-migrants as well as returning migrants, who were often quite critical of international migration (see Jones and de la Torre 2011 for similar findings) and those that remained abroad. But even though the critique of migration has become a standard narrative in Arbieto, migrants are also lauded

for their contributions to public works projects. Migration, therefore, always has a complex and contradictory impact in sending communities.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored the movement of money, work skills and values between Bolivian communities in Argentina, the United States and the Valle Alto. But rather than a simple transmission from one place to another, as is often suggested in the migration literature, I argued that migrant resources, values, and skills are transformed as they travel, are set down and practiced in multiple places. The case of Arbiesto, therefore, suggests that the literature on remittances and circulatory migration could benefit from a broader and more complex understanding of spatiality. As circulating practices move through and between different places, they have differential impacts. Monetary remittances have transformed the physical landscape of the Valle Alto as well as neighborhoods in the city of Cochabamba, and have begun to challenge ethnic and spatial hierarchies in the broader region as well. At the same time, other practices have a much limited impact in Arbiesto or are met by resistance from local residents. As I explore further in chapters five and six, tensions surrounding social and economic change in the United States shape how circulating practices impact receiving communities. Thus, as Bolivians routinely cross international borders and set down roots in different locations, they are transforming the places they leave from as well as the places they go.

Chapter Five

Practicing citizenship and imagining transnational belonging

On a Wednesday evening in September, INCOPEA delegates sat around a picnic table outside a Northern Virginia community center for their bi-monthly meeting. Shortly after the meeting began, a Salvadoran man walked over to the tables and asked if he could speak to the group about recent funding cuts to local parks and community centers. Although Central American migrants are often viewed suspiciously by Bolivians, the delegates listened attentively and promised to make everyone in their respective villages sign the organizer's petition. Both INCOPEA and the internal Liga de Arbieta had been fixtures at this particular community center for more than 15 years but were in danger of losing their meeting spaces if the county reduced the center's hours and programs.

Several months later, I attended a meeting at the community center to discuss its future. About 30 neighborhood residents, including several hometown association (HTA) delegates, sat in a small classroom and listened to two officials from the parks and recreation department. Although the county is one of the wealthiest in the nation, the economic crisis and plummeting tax revenues had left it in dire fiscal straits. When the officials finished, a representative from the town of Arbieta stood and said quietly in Spanish that the budget cuts would prevent the league from continuing to meet at the community center.

Neighborhood residents from a youth group, an African American organization and a tenants association also expressed their concerns about the loss of an important

space at the center of the neighborhood. As they relayed their individual stories, several groups also advocated on behalf of the Bolivian soccer leagues. One youth group member, who happened to be the daughter of the Arbiesto delegate, told officials that teenagers in the neighborhood needed a place to hang out after school and on the weekends. The county should provide a safe space for young people, she argued. Her appeal on behalf of the soccer leagues, however, rested on their long-term presence in the neighborhood. She pleaded with the officials, in English, to give the soccer leagues their meeting space back: “It’s not fair that they can’t meet here anymore. They have been here for 18 years.” The meeting ended without resolution, but several weeks later the delegates were informed that both soccer leagues could continue to meet on weekday nights in the center.

This struggle illustrates how migrants from Arbiesto are claiming spaces and belonging within a global city that is placing new restrictions on their mobility and access to public space. Despite these difficulties, migrants continue to negotiate with local authorities and conduct their activities in public parks and streets. This civic engagement is often a multi-scalar process even though most migrant activities physically take place in Northern Virginia and Maryland. For INCOPEA and the Liga de Arbiesto, access to the community center clearly is a local issue, seen in the unexpected solidarity between different groups in the neighborhood. At the same time, their presence at the community center is also the result of broader transnational networks. Migrants used rural organizational practices transferred from Bolivia to facilitate collective action and political engagement by requiring individuals to sign the petition. The intervention of

INCOPEA and the Liga de Arbieta in the meeting allowed migrants to simultaneously be active participants in the Washington D.C. area and the Valle Alto by using soccer leagues to collect and send collective remittances to Bolivia.

This chapter uses the lens of citizenship to examine the diverse strategies employed by Bolivian migrants to belong to local communities in multiple places. In the first section, I argue that citizenship is both a legal status and a set of practices through which individuals and groups engage in political communities. Rather than a static category of membership in a nation-state with an agreed-upon set of rights, therefore, citizenship is always contested, dynamic and multi-scalar. While the literature on migrant civic engagement in the United States focuses on formal politics and organized protests, the second section explores how Bolivian migrants make citizenship claims in the Washington D.C. area through ordinary and spectacular performances at soccer fields and folkloric dance festivals. By being Bolivian in public space, migrants are claiming a right to belong as distinctive and valued members of local communities.

The third section examines migrant belonging through their contributions to communities “here and there.” Although Bolivians generally do not participate in immigrant rights organizations or protests, they draw on similar narratives to highlight their contributions to the United States through work, taxes and consumption. Building on the discussion of belonging and transnational houses in chapter four, I examine how migrants draw attention to their contributions to Arbieta through collective remittance projects and to the Washington D.C. area through work, consumption and paying taxes. By highlighting these practices, migrants are arguing that the performance of work and

responsibilities outweighs any transgression of immigration laws or international borders. I argue that migrants are constructing narratives of belonging that promote alternative understandings of mobility that revolve around sustained connections and contributions to communities in multiple places. Far from passive actors accepting their legal and social marginalization, Bolivians are presenting themselves as responsible, law-abiding and hardworking members of local communities.

I. Practicing citizenship

Modern citizenship has generally been understood as a set of rights and duties attached to membership in a nation-state (Isin and Turner 2007). In his famous formulation, British sociologist T.H. Marshall (1965) presented citizenship as a progressive institution that would expand from civil and political rights to, eventually, economic and social rights. While scholars often begin their analysis with Marshall, his view of citizenship as a uniform status within a nation-state has been the subject of extensive critique (Purcell 2003; Lazar 2008). In both theory and practice, citizenship relies on the exclusion of marginalized insider groups within the political community such as women and minorities, or outsiders like migrants (Lister 1997; Ngai 2004; Bosniak 2006). Furthermore, as James Holston (2008) has demonstrated, equality of status can still result in “differentiated citizenship” where social differences determine which individuals and groups enjoy rights and privileges.

But while citizenship is always exclusionary at some level, it is also a dynamic and contested social formation. Scholars have argued that citizenship is not only a legal

status and set of responsibilities, but also a social process that is negotiated through the relationship between the state, capital and its citizens (Marston and Mitchell 2004). Thus, individuals and groups can claim new rights and expand understandings of belonging through mobilization, legal action and everyday practices (Isin and Wood 1999; Isin and Turner 2002). This process is not always progressive, however, and studies from the global North and South have shown that people can lose rights through the erosion of the welfare state under neoliberalism (Joppke 2007) or increasing violence (Holston 2008).

Scholars of citizenship have highlighted this dynamic perspective by focusing on citizenship as a set of practices through which people engage in political communities (Staeheli et al. 2012; Lister 1999; Oldfield 1990). For instance, in Sian Lazar's (2008) ethnography of the highland Bolivian city of El Alto, rural-to-urban migrants practice citizenship by participating in trade unions and urban neighborhood associations. These organizations motivate migrants to engage in protests, local politics, and folkloric dances, all of which make demands on the local, regional and national state. Citizenship is located at a variety of different scales, in multiple places, and in practices that mediate between the state, individuals and communities (Staeheli 2011).

In this section, I explore the citizenship practices of Bolivian migrants in the Washington D.C. metro area. Even though migrant organizations in the United States differ significantly from those in El Alto, they both shape how Bolivians practice citizenship on an everyday or at least weekly basis. Through a discussion of the spatial practices of Bolivian soccer leagues and folkloric dance groups, I argue that the creation of cultural spaces and embodied practices in those spaces allow migrants to belong to

local communities, in some cases on their own terms. By performing dances or playing soccer in public spaces, migrants are claiming a unique cultural identity and a place within the diverse landscape of the Washington D.C. metro area.

The centrality of cultural organizations for Bolivian migrants suggests that citizenship is not only practiced through participation in formal politics and organized protests, but also through more ordinary and non-confrontational strategies. Thus, even though some migrants may lack formal citizenship in the receiving nation-state, they claim belonging in a local community as a result of their long-term residence in and contributions to that place (Stephen 2007). Migrant citizenship practices are also transnational, and I argue that migrants are making simultaneous claims to belong in the Washington D.C. metro area and the Valle Alto even though most practices are physically performed in the United States.

Migrant civil society

New restrictions on social services implemented in the mid-1990s led non-profit organizations to take on an increasingly important role in marginalized neighborhoods in U.S. cities (Trudeau and Veronis 2009). Nik Theodore and Nina Martin (2007) argue that what they call “migrant civil society” organizations provide not only legal and economic assistance to immigrants but also facilitate migrant civic engagement and involvement in politics (see also Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008). As Kim Voss and Irene Bloemraad (2011) suggest, immigrant advocacy organizations engage in what is normally

understood as contentious politics even if non-citizens are generally left out of the social movements literature.

Most research on migrant civil society has focused on the 2006 immigrant rights protests, which were held in response to a particularly punitive bill debated by the U.S. House of Representatives (Cordero-Guzmán et al. 2008; Cordero-Guzmán 2005; Bada et al. 2010). Over a period of several months, millions of immigrants from Latin America and other parts of the world marched through hundreds of large and small cities. Immigrants carried signs demanding rights, dignity and a respite from heightened enforcement efforts. They also inverted anti-immigrant arguments by highlighting the economic and social contributions of immigrants and their ties to the United States (i.e. Coutin 1999). The presence of hundreds of thousands of people in important U.S. cities made the immigrant population visible to the rest of the country and laid claim, however temporarily, to the public realm (Voss and Bloemraad 2011; Beltrán 2009).

Scholars have often presented the city as a strategic arena for the development of new citizenship regimes (Isin 2002; Smith and McQuarrie 2012; Guarnizo 2012). Mark Purcell (2003) argues that Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city" provides a framework to think about membership in terms of inhabitation rather than formal legal status. All urban residents, regardless of their place of birth or citizenship, are thought of as urban citizens with the right to participate in decisions about the use of public space. A number of studies have shown how urban residents across the global North and South have made claims based on their position within neighborhoods and cities. Social movements have engaged in organized collective action to demand the right to housing,

water and livelihoods more generally (Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Leitner et al. 2007). Other movements have insisted that they be allowed to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

In many cases, however, marginalized urban residents are engaging in cities and expanding notions of rights through more ordinary and everyday practices. As street vendors, migrants and other residents occupy city streets and urban parks, they inscribe their presence into urban life (Bayat 2010). This can occur both in the center of the city and at its edges. As Holston (2008) demonstrates in the case of São Paulo, the construction of illegal homes and demands for municipal services by residents of peri-urban neighborhoods challenge both the exclusionary nature of cities and national citizenship regimes (see Goldstein 2004 and Gill 2000 for similar discussions in the context of urban Bolivia). Rather than challenging the state through organized collective action or formal politics, urban residents are using ordinary livelihood activities that encroach on public space and can, in some cases, transform the established order.

Drawing on these arguments, Faranak Miraftab (2012) posits that West African and Latin American immigrants in a small Midwestern town are occupying residential and recreation spaces through everyday activities. In what she calls the “quiet appropriations of local space,” immigrants have bought homes and worked with local public school officials to buy land for a soccer field and develop inclusionary programs for their children. Public presence at soccer fields and in neighborhood schools can be seen as a citizenship practice through which migrants are asserting their right to belong.

These perspectives help to direct our attention towards the ordinary practices of urban residents as they engage with local communities (Staeheli et al. 2012). Although traditional collective action and large-scale protests remain important strategies for social movements in the United States and elsewhere, they are generally not the norm for undocumented migrants. Migrants with tenuous legal status are often reluctant to participate in highly visible activities because of the restrictive political environment in the United States. This is not always true, as the immigrant rights marches and protests in recent years demonstrate so vividly, but my fieldwork in Washington D.C. suggests that migrants are increasingly concerned about public visibility as immigration enforcement has expanded to local and state jurisdictions (see also Coleman 2011). In any case, migrants are more likely to participate in recreational activities and cultural and religious events than political protests. Our understanding of migrant civic and political engagement, therefore, should reflect the diversity of forms that migrants use to belong to local communities.

In particular, it is important to extend our analysis to a different set of activities that go beyond what is normally explored in the social movements literature. Bolivian migrants in the Washington area frequently insisted that their activities are not “political,” which represents any engagement with the formal political system in the United States or Bolivia. This includes immigrant rights protests, voting in the 2009 Bolivian presidential election in Washington D.C.,⁶² political rallies in support of or in opposition to Evo Morales, or collective support for candidates in local Arbieto elections,

⁶² Although Bolivian migrants in Argentina frequently mobilized in support of external voting rights for migrants, eventually granted for the first time in the 2009 election, the turnout in Washington was minimal (interview with Rodolfo Henreich, April 2011).

among other activities. I found that even though migrant leaders from Arbieta closely followed political events in Bolivia and the United States, particularly immigration reform measures like the DREAM Act, most refrained from participating in advocacy organizations and formal protests. While rumors about increased deportations and new enforcement programs like “Secure Communities” were important factors in the reluctance to join protests, migrants cited the fractured and conflictive political system in Bolivia as the primary source of their antipathy towards formal politics. In particular, migrants are concerned that by supporting a politician or political party, they would make individuals feel unwelcome and lose influence with officials from a different party. As Oscar explained to INCOPEA’s attitude on formal politics to me once, “what we want is to not be from one [political] party or the other.”

At the same, cultural activities are never totally separate from politics. Migrant leaders frequently attend local government meetings in the Washington D.C. metro area, as the story above suggests. Events like these allow migrants to engage and develop connections with local institutions in a relaxed and non-confrontational way. Even Oscar emphasized the importance of maintaining ties with local officials over many years in a Northern Virginia county, since they facilitated INCOPEA’s access to parks and other public spaces. Other migrants view civic engagement as necessary to build a future where second generation Bolivians will be able to participate in formal politics. Germán, whose nephew danced in a tinkus group during most of my fieldwork, suggested that folklore could even serve as a foundation for future political power in the United States:

[Dance troupes] are more organized [than before] in their practices and performances. This will provide a base for bigger things . . . it will go on

encouraging and creating leaders because they have support behind them. For example if I run for city council, the 200 people that dance will want to vote for me because they know that if I am in a position [*cargo*] I will support them.

Although migrants from Arbieto reject any notion that their activities are “political,” it is clear that they fall within a broader definition of the political, which is central to citizenship scholarship, as any negotiation of belonging or membership in a community. In other words, migrants are participating in host and sending communities through a variety of citizenship practices that may rarely involve formal politics but always involve a struggle to belong.

Studies of migrant organizations, as Levitt (2001) has argued, also paradoxically tend to focus on only one location and therefore ignore the dynamic relationship between local and transnational participation. This has begun to change in recent years (see especially Guarnizo et al. 2003; M. Smith and Bakker 2008; Stephen 2007), but research on the social and political incorporation of immigrants continues to be set almost entirely in the United States. Studies of hometown associations, on the other hand, tend to only explore the impact of migrant remittances on sending communities (i.e. de la Garza and Lowell 2002; see Sites and Vonderlack-Navarro 2012; Stephen 2007; Viramontes 2008 for notable exceptions). Similarly research on political transnationalism analyzes migrant voting patterns and engagement in party politics in their country of origin (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2005; Itzigsohn 2000). As Michael Peter Smith (2007) has noted, this singular focus overlooks the “second face” of transnational politics, the participation of migrants in host communities.

Smith (1998; 2003) has shown that migrant participation in local, regional and national politics in Mexico can influence their involvement in the United States. For instance, migrants can transfer social and political capital from hometown networks to wider arenas of immigrant political engagement in the U.S. (M. Smith and Bakker 2008). Thus, belonging is dependent on the context of reception in receiving countries (Portes and Rumbaut 1996) *and* on the broader relationships that migrants maintain with other places. Research has often highlighted how individual and collective remittances serve as an important vehicle for migrants to negotiate their belonging and increase their social status in sending communities (Goldring 1998; see chapter four), but far less work has focused on the role of HTAs in promoting civic engagement in receiving societies (for exceptions, see R. Smith 2006 and Stephen 2007). As Bolivian hometown associations organize projects to be carried out in Arbieta, they are also promoting migrant engagement and belonging in the Washington D.C. area.

II. Being Bolivian in public space: Belonging at the soccer field and cultural festivals

The primary purpose of Bolivian hometown associations, as I described in chapters three and four, is to raise money for collective remittance projects in Arbieta. But even though they are oriented towards sending communities in Cochabamba, HTAs also serve as an important intermediary between migrants and local institutions in the Washington D.C. metro area. As functioning soccer leagues, both INCOPEA and CELAPKA must form relationships with local governments in Northern Virginia and Maryland in order to gain access to public parks for games and meetings. Migrant leaders

have to undertake a number of mundane and bureaucratic practices like filling out forms at a county office, contacting relevant officials and even purchasing health insurance for players, a requirement at some public parks. Since these tasks that can be difficult for individuals without strong English skills or experience with local governments in the United States, migrant leaders sometimes reach out to familiar officials in the Bolivian Consulate, community-based organizations and local governments.⁶³ Delegates are also responsible for overseeing clean-up efforts after games, another important condition of renting public spaces and one that, if not followed, can lead to fines and the loss of fields.

These mundane tasks often were at the center of my interviews with migrants in the Washington area. Most organizational leaders emphasized how difficult it was to reserve soccer fields, school auditoriums and community centers for sports and dance practices. Long-term migrants sometimes told me that it used to be easy to reserve public spaces in the neighborhoods where Bolivians were concentrated, although during one focus group on the history of INCOPEA, one of the founding members recalled the number of times (five) that he visited local officials in a Northern Virginia county in order to get the initial permits. Migrants described the significant time that they invested in dealing with local governments with an alternating sense of frustration and pride. For instance, when I asked Oscar about whether INCOPEA is organized in a similar manner to tournaments in Bolivia, he replied, “no, we wanted to do this but the system there is a little different.” The primary difference, beyond the obvious economic gap between the

⁶³ Language barriers remain important obstacles in some cases, but I found that Bolivian migrants were almost always able to find a Spanish-speaking official in the multi-ethnic Washington suburbs.

U.S. and Bolivia, was the effort that migrants had to expend in order to play soccer in the Washington area, Oscar explained:

There [Bolivia] there are few young people and because there isn't economic support, the prizes aren't the same as they are here. I was at a game in La Loma once and I didn't see the strength (*fuerza*) that we have here. It's not there. They could barely field seven or eight players to play a game. Once the game is over, the field is empty. . . That is what I saw. It's been sad because having all the freedom they have there they can't play. Here, there are so many barriers and we still play. There, they have free fields, free time, they can play whenever they want and unfortunately they don't play. But when we are here we are behind the clock, running behind the clock because the field [reservation] begins at eight and ends at noon, and we have to leave the park. Unfortunately that's how it is and we have to cope.

Unlike rural Bolivia, where public space is generally open to local residents, migrants have to struggle to reserve parks in the Washington area.⁶⁴ Facilitating migrant engagement with local institutions has become an increasingly important exercise as public spaces have become more limited. Even though migrants from Arbieta now live throughout the Washington metro area, they have sought to continue meeting in the same parks and community centers out of habit and comfort with familiar spaces. As the story at the beginning of the chapter indicates, the economic crisis is the primary reason behind the decline of certain public spaces and threatens Bolivian long-term relationships with particular parks and suburbs. But, as Oscar suggests, these obstacles have come to have some value because migrants are forced to organize and act collectively in order to reserve fields and play games in a limited amount of time.

⁶⁴ At the same time, comments like this obscure the labor of rural Bolivians, who regularly move between Arbieta, the city of Cochabamba, and the Valle Alto cities of Cliza and Punata while working in the fields. This is particularly the case when migrants visit during Carnival, but the image of Bolivia as a more relaxed place persists in the minds of migrants.

While INCOPEA and the Liga de Arbieta were able to successfully pressure the county to keep their community center open, almost every league (including INCOPEA) has been forced to switch fields as the cost of renting across the metro area has increased dramatically. This is particularly the case within inner suburbs, which have experienced sharp rises in property values along metro corridors and in other gentrifying areas. Local jurisdictions have also moved to install field turf in place of grass in order to lower maintenance costs. This not only temporarily displaces soccer leagues, something that happened to at least three Arbieta internal leagues during my fieldwork, but it usually prevents them from returning because of the corresponding rent increases.

Migrant access to soccer fields has also been transformed by recent crackdowns by local officials on unauthorized food and drink in public parks. While encounters with police in public parks do not necessarily spark concerns about deportation, they can lead to fines and the loss of permits. Migrants from Arbieta have transformed their food practices to avoid heightened regulations at parks and other public spaces. Food has vanished almost entirely from the sidelines of some games, with one or two families selling sandwiches surreptitiously out of a cooler in order to raise money for public works projects in Bolivia.⁶⁵ In other locations that are less visible to local officials, food and drinks, including the corn beer from Cochabamba known as *chicha*, are enjoyed more openly.

New surveillance tactics have generally made migrants feel less comfortable in public spaces and sometimes feed into complaints about discrimination from public

⁶⁵ Much to the consternation of some Bolivians, Central American food trucks registered with the local government sell food openly in nearby parking lots.

officials. In one instance, Eduardo and Jaime, brothers from the village of Tiataco, expressed frustration that the fields in their exclusive neighborhood in the outer suburbs of Northern Virginia were dedicated to “American” sports like baseball and football. “They don’t give us” soccer fields, Jaime argued, even though “we [Bolivians] are at least 30 percent of the neighborhood. . . They should think about soccer because we pay our taxes.” Eduardo added that the neighborhood association had received complaints from some local residents and had even put up a sign prohibiting soccer: “Here in this neighborhood. This hurt us a lot. . . I think that since Hispanics occupy such an important place and play sports, soccer, they should give us a place.”

Similarly, Joshue complained that Rayo Pampa’s team was no longer about to rent fields in the Northern Virginia jurisdiction where many players lived. Like Germán’s claim in chapter three about the death of communities, Joshue worried about keeping his team and community together if they constantly had to move between fields or could not find a place to practice:

“Where am I going to take the *jóvenes*? If they can’t practice sports during the week at least 2 times, where will the *jóvenes* go, where will they go? [The county] sends us to another field and then they come to that field . . . and give priority to younger children. The *jóvenes* get frustrated because there aren’t fields, and they will stop coming. Little by little they will disappear.”

These difficulties of soccer teams from Tiataco and Rayo Pampa echo the story in chapter one, when the Villa Verde players were confronted by a county official for playing an “organized” soccer game. Soccer, often understood in the Washington suburbs as mostly a Latino sport despite its much broader appeal, becomes the target for local officials and neighborhood residents seeking to control activities in public spaces.

Although these encounters are of great concern to Bolivian migrants, it is notable that they have chosen to not openly challenge local officials even when they are treated differently from “Americans.” Sitting in his basement, Jaime pondered the efficacy of a petition to demand soccer fields from the local government: “Maybe we will collect signatures and take them to the county. More and more [the neighborhood] is being filled by Latinos, the Americans are now old (*viejitos*) and it is always the Latinos who are buying houses . . . everyone in the county offices is Latino.” But although Jaime recognized the potential strength of Latinos in his neighborhood and in Northern Virginia more broadly, he and Eduardo quickly backed away from this idea and admitted that they would simply keep moving to new fields.

Thus, Bolivian soccer games are generally not sites of mobilization, but instead represent a more ordinary encroachment into public space through non-confrontational measures. This encroachment is always political since migrants have to claim a right to use public space by interacting and negotiating with local government officials. Furthermore, the encroachment is visible both to officials and the broader population since migrants almost always participate in public spaces as Bolivians. As I suggested in chapter three, soccer is also essential to the production and maintenance of Bolivian communities. At fields across the Northern Virginia and Maryland suburbs, players and spectators engage in activities that mark them as Bolivian (or more generally as Latino) to onlookers. This is less overt than folkloric dance troupes, but players do wear jerseys from Bolivian professional teams while spectators wave flags or large banners from Bolivia (see figure 9). At important games, organizers play Bolivian music and speak

Spanish and Quechua over loudspeakers. Through these actions, soccer games are inscribing the presence of Bolivians into the Washington landscape.

Soccer games also can promote encounters across difference. As Wright, Ellis and Parks (2005) suggest, immigrants have a variety of everyday interactions with native-born members of host communities in the streets, on public transportation and at their children's schools. This is certainly the case in the multi-ethnic suburbs of Washington D.C., where Bolivians encounter neighbors and coworkers from a variety of different ethnic, racial and class backgrounds in their neighborhoods and worksites across Northern Virginia and Maryland. On weeknights and weekends, Bolivian players and spectators interact with white residents in public parks. Even though these interactions are usually fleeting and are not always positive, Bolivian soccer leagues have often become established institutions. In a few cases, Bolivians have met in the same place for more than 15 years. As Miraftab suggests, soccer fields can represent "new inclusive spaces of interracial and intercultural interaction" (2012: 196). Most interactions between white and Bolivian soccer players and spectators involved requests to Bolivian spectators to keep off neighboring fields, but there were also occasional conversations in Spanish that surprised Bolivian migrants.

Soccer games also allow Bolivians to socialize with migrants from other countries outside of work. In most internal leagues (but notably not in INCOPEA or CELAPKA), Bolivian men and women invite Central American co-workers to field teams in their soccer leagues over the weekend. In interviews, men from Arbiesto described working alongside other Bolivian, Salvadoran and Mexican migrants in the construction industry,

while Bolivian women in the expanding home and office cleaning business routinely work with women from Guatemala and Honduras. In contrast with the very general negative representations of Central Americans often expressed by Bolivians, migrants had positive experiences with individual co-workers from other countries.

Figure 9: Wilstermann flag at Northern Virginia soccer game⁶⁶



Bolivian HTAs use a number of different strategies to secure access to public spaces. Migrants have numerous everyday encounters across difference, but they are less likely to have direct interactions with local authorities. In most cases, they rely on HTAs and other migrant organizations to mediate. However, there are a number of instances where HTA members participate directly in local civic events. In the opening vignette of

⁶⁶ Santa Rosa's team uses jerseys and the banner pictured here from Wilstermann, the popular professional team in Cochabamba.

this chapter, delegates mobilized signatures and spoke out at a public meeting to demand that the county keep their meeting space open. While this is on a decidedly small-scale, it suggests that collective action can remain an important option even for migrants who are reluctant about engaging in protests or formal politics. Migrants from Arbieta routinely visit government offices to apply for permits and negotiate access to soccer fields. And in spite of concerns about encountering local officials, migrants continue to occupy public parks and soccer fields with or without permits. In doing so, Bolivians are asserting their right to be part of neighborhoods and communities in the Washington area.

Folklore and spectacular multicultural citizenship in the Washington area

Ethnographies in Bolivia have often focused on folkloric dance as one of the most visible displays of identity and community in rural and urban communities. Folklore is an embodied practice that Bolivians experience directly as dancers or more indirectly as spectators at civic and religious festivals. According to Lazar (2008), this experience is an essential part of individual and collective identity formation because it allows “individuals to define and physically experience the collectivity, creating a shared sense of identity through movement” (194). Similarly, Michelle Bigenho (2002: 17) argues that dancing and playing music establishes connections between people and physical space by “root[ing] people to places through bodily movement” (see also Grimson 1999; Carmona 2008). Folklore is also a way for migrants to make demands on the state and to claim belonging. Goldstein (2004), for instance, argues that rural migrants have used folkloric performances from Oruro to construct a unique identity from themselves within the Zona

Sur and the city of Cochabamba more broadly. Folkloric dance allows migrants “to negotiate new understandings of community in a diasporic context, providing them with a means to communicate the needs and demands of that community to the municipal and national authorities” (Goldstein 2004: 176).

Folkloric dance takes on similar meanings in the Washington D.C. metro area even though migrants face a very different economic and political environment from Cochabamba. Although Bolivians have been part of local communities for decades, they are a small part of the growing multiethnic population in the Washington region. Through spectacular folkloric performances, Bolivians make themselves visible to the host society and, as I suggested in chapter three, attempt to create an image of a unified community to both insiders (other Bolivians) and outsiders (local officials and non-Bolivian members of host communities). As migrants and their children perform dances in a range of public and private spaces across the metro area, they are actively negotiating their belonging within host societies.

Unlike soccer, which blends into the multi-ethnic landscape of the Washington suburbs, Bolivian folkloric dances are a decidedly spectacular display. Especially during the summer and fall, dance troupes perform in a variety of public spaces across the Washington D.C. metro area. The largest event is the *Festival Boliviano*, organized each year over Labor Day weekend by the Comité Pro-Bolivia. Previously held outside an Arlington school, the Festival was moved to the Prince William County fairgrounds in recent years to accommodate the thousands of spectators who come to watch the dances and eat typical Bolivian meals. Folkloric groups are also a mainstay of local civic events

like Fourth of July parades and Hispanic celebrations (see figure 10). Generally held during the summer and fall, these events take place on public streets in the District of Columbia and different Virginia and Maryland suburbs. In recent years, dance troupes have performed frequently at the new Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in D.C.

Figure 10: Tinku performance at Arlington Hispanic Day Festival (photo by author)



Folkloric groups also perform in less public spaces. During August and September in particular, dance troupes are busy most weekends at Bolivian religious

festivals (such as Virgen de Urkupiña festival) and civic celebrations like Bolivian Independence Day. Dance competitions are held at other times during the year, as are events organized at the Bolivian Embassy in the District of Columbia. These events are held in public parks, on streets outside of Latino churches, in public school and library auditoria, and even inside restaurants across the inner and outside suburbs of Virginia and Maryland. While Bolivian religious and civic events are more directed towards a Bolivian audience than a Fourth of July parade, for example, non-Bolivians are spectators at most events. This is particularly the case when Bolivian festivals are held on streets outside of Latino churches in inner suburbs that have more foot traffic. Dance troupes also hold practices during the week in a variety of public and private spaces like schools, community centers and churches. Even in such nominally public spaces as parking lots, folkloric groups can attract attention from drivers and neighborhood residents as more than 30 people dance to a folkloric song playing in a continuous loop from a boombox or larger speakers powered by a generator.

The participation of folkloric dance troupes in public spaces can be understood as a strategy of making Bolivian migrants visible and improving their social standing within a framework of multicultural citizenship. Folkloric dances are colorful, distinctive performances that identify a variety of ethnic groups within the Latino and broader immigrant population of the Washington D.C. metro area. Performances generally take place within prescribed multicultural spaces (Veronis 2007), most notably during Hispanic month celebrations and civic parades that are made up of a diverse set of participants. Spectacular displays of citizenship, which showcase appealing cultural traits

like traditional costumes, music and, in some cases, food, fit easily within multicultural understandings of citizenship that are increasingly common in U.S. cities (Berg 2005). This is particularly the case in localities that openly value diversity and the contributions of immigrants such as Arlington County (2007), but also in suburbs that have adopted restrictive immigration ordinances like Prince William County, which hosts the Bolivian Festival and other Latino events.⁶⁷

In Argentina and the United States, migrant leaders see folkloric dance as a way to present a positive image of Bolivians to the host society (Grimson 1999). In particular, performances allow Bolivians to present themselves as a culturally unique and “organized” community, a frequent adjective used by cultural activists in the Comité Pro-Bolivia and other organizations. Within a diverse global city like Washington D.C., Bolivians seek to differentiate themselves from Peruvians, Ecuadorians, and, most significantly, Central Americans, who make up the majority of the region’s Latin American migrant population. Events like the *Festival Latino*, which is held in a Salvadoran neighborhood in the District of Columbia every October and is generally dominated by Bolivian dance troupes, are cited as proof of the importance of Bolivians. Without saying so directly (although sometimes this contrast is explicit), activists are comparing Bolivians with Central Americans, who are presented as less consequential because of their smaller presence in cultural celebrations.

⁶⁷ At the beginning of my fieldwork, an article in the *Washington Post* (Lee 2010) detailing Salvadoran concerns about attending a festival in Prince William County, the site of an infamous immigration enforcement ordinance, caused a stir among immigrant rights advocates and Bolivian officials. Bolivian cultural activists I spoke with said, however, that migrants were not deterred from attending the festival held in the same location only a few weeks later.

Bolivian folkloric dance echoes the notion of cultural citizenship described by William Flores and Rina Benmayor (1997) in which Latinos define themselves as culturally different from the dominant U.S. culture through everyday cultural and artistic practices while also claiming rights and space within the nation-state. While folklore is rarely transgressive of the social order in the United States, it can simultaneously contest and reproduce dominant conceptions of multiculturalism and citizenship (Veronis 2007). Bolivian dance troupes and other organizations in Washington notably appropriate neoliberal understandings of accountability and responsibility by presenting migrants as hardworking and upwardly mobile to the broader host society. In speeches at cultural events and in interviews with local media, folkloric dance leaders and Bolivian officials from the consulate routinely assert that young Bolivian are excelling in school and becoming professionals, while folklore participants more specifically are lauded for practicing hard and staying away from drugs and gangs.

At the same time, this representation contests negative stereotypes of Latino immigrants as unengaged and temporary residents of cities, particularly since Bolivian folkloric groups have been attending the same festivals and parades for many years. Furthermore, while folkloric performances are usually part of official multicultural celebrations, practices can at times become an unwanted encroachment onto public space. Like soccer leagues, dance troupes consistently struggle to access public space for weeknight practices. As they have been pushed out of valuable spaces in area schools, folkloric dance practices have moved to visible locations in parking lots and areas that are more likely to draw noise complaints from local residents.

By occupying soccer fields, residential neighborhoods, public streets and parking lots across Northern Virginia and Maryland, Bolivians are carving out cultural spaces within the multi-ethnic suburban landscape of Washington D.C. I argue that migrants participate and negotiate belonging in the host society through a variety of strategies that range from small-scale collective action to everyday recreational practices to, finally, participation in official multicultural spaces designated by local governments. In each case, hometown associations, soccer leagues and folkloric groups are asserting their right to belong by inscribing their presence into public spaces, whether they are authorized to do so or not. While this does not involve a direct demand for rights from the state, soccer and folklore are practices through which Bolivians claim space and belonging in local communities.

III. Contributing to communities “here” and “there”

In response to arguments that immigrants are a burden on host countries, a frequent complaint of anti-immigration groups, immigrant rights advocates have often highlighted the contributions of migrants to local communities. In these narratives, which revolve primarily around the issues of taxes and work (Voss and Bloemraad 2012), immigrants are presented as “hard-working” individuals who take the labor intensive jobs that native-born Americans no longer want. Advocates and researchers have also pointed to concrete economic contributions in the form of sales and income taxes paid by immigrants (Immigration Policy Center 2011). While Bolivians in the Washington D.C. region are largely on the sidelines of the immigrant rights movement, many migrants have appropriated its language.

This was clear from what Francisco, a long-term migrant from the village of La Loma, told me as he showed me around his recently renovated house in Northern Virginia: “We are always supplying (*abondando*) this county. We supply it with taxes, with our work, our effort. We are consuming with our money. We go to markets, we buy clothes. We are not taking the money directly to Bolivia, we are investing in this country, benefiting this country.” As Francisco spoke, his wife Carmen interrupted to argue that unlike single male migrants, Bolivians with families have to spend a lot of money. “Everyone wants a new car. . . With a woman you have to live in bigger apartment or a house. Sometimes people in Bolivia, ask where is all the money? With a family you can’t save anything and send much to Bolivia. You have to pay for everything, food, clothing . . .” Unlike Elmer, Francisco noted, most Bolivians have families in the United States. So, while Elmer built two new houses in the Zona San Carlos and Santa Rosa, Francisco lamented that “we haven’t been able to build our house [in La Loma].”

Research on migrant houses focuses on construction of “transnational” houses in countries of origin, as I discussed in chapters two and four. These case studies have argued that migrants live simply in the destination country, usually in cramped apartments or houses, in order to save money and build large homes back home (Pellow 2003). This is also the case among many Bolivian migrants but, importantly, not all. Some migrants, like Francisco, also have spent time and money on homes in the Washington D.C. metro area. During my fieldwork, I was invited to a number of impressive mansions in different neighborhoods across Northern Virginia. In many respects they looked similar to the *chalets* that are now such an established feature of the

Valle Alto landscape, although they do not look nearly as out of place in suburban Washington neighborhoods. But unlike *chalets* in Bolivia, however, these homes are generally built by migrants themselves rather than by hired laborers. Established migrants live most of the year in the Washington area and thus have the time and expertise with construction materials in the United States that are necessary to build these homes.

Transnational houses in Washington are concrete proof of migrant social mobility within Arbiesto migrant communities. Family gatherings and *recaudaciones* (fundraisers) in the Washington area typically are held in large homes that can accommodate dozens of guests and show off migrant success to Bolivians and outside researchers. For instance, when I attempted to organize an interview for the NMAI project with migrants from the village of Achamoco, they asked that the on-camera interview take place in one leader's mansion. Thus, like *chalets* in Bolivia, migrants can raise their social status by building homes in the United States.

Even though the collapse of the housing market has threatened some of the gains made by established migrants, as I argue in the following chapter, building a house also establishes roots in local communities in Northern Virginia and Maryland. As Francisco's narrative demonstrates, this type of consumption directly challenges the notion that immigrants represent a burden on local communities. The economic contributions of immigrants to the United States were a common theme in my interviews, both in the Washington area and in the Valle Alto. Samuel, a return migrant in Santa Rosa, followed a similar script as he touted the potential benefit of increased transnational mobility for the United States:

Like I said, the United States would benefit too, all the taxes would be paid. If it was like that, everyone would pay. Who contributes more, the immigrant or the American? The immigrant, yes or no? The immigrant has five, six children. And he has to pay rent, for food and clothing, he has a ton of bills. Every month he spends \$5,000-\$6,000, spending like that. But an American no longer has 3-4 children, only one or two. . . I don't want to offend [Americans] but this is how more money would enter the US. If there was more freedom [to cross international borders], do you know how much more money would enter the U.S. economy?

While undocumented migrants may not always pay income taxes (although, as Samuel notes, they might be happy to in exchange for legal status), they do contribute by consuming. Rather than a negative characteristic, Samuel suggests that the large size of an average Latin American family means that immigrants contribute even more to the economy than Americans. Whether or not “women” are responsible for this increase in spending, as Carmen suggested, is debatable of course, but consumption habits show how migrants view their lives as firmly rooted in the United States. Although migrants with families most commonly made this argument, solo migrants (like Samuel once was) also insisted that most of what they earned stayed in the United States in the form of rent, car insurance, food and clothing. Hometown association leaders also suggested that they contributed to local Virginia and Maryland communities through the considerable and increasing fees they paid to reserve soccer fields.

Bolivian migrants simultaneously define themselves as responsible and hardworking through their contributions to sending communities in the Valle Alto. This argument is an uneasy one because of concerns in the United States that migrants are not spending money in their current place of residence. As a result the immigrant rights movement has tended to focus primarily on immigrant contributions to host communities,

as Francisco does, but other migrants frequently challenged this dichotomy. Bolivian hometown associations, for instance, often document and publicize their collective remittance projects as a fulfillment of obligations to communities of origin in Bolivia (see chapter three) and as proof of their moral and trustworthy actions in the United States.

As I suggested in previous chapters, sending individual and collective remittances allows migrants to improve their social status in communities of origin (Goldring 1998). For Bolivian migrants in the Washington D.C. area, collective remittances projects become the physical embodiment of their position in Arbieta villages. HTA leaders are insistent that their contributions be recognized in the form of a plaque, which is generally attached to community centers, churches and other structures built by migrants.⁶⁸ In most cases these plaques refer to “*residentes*” in the United States or Argentina (see figure 11), although in some instances individuals are listed as contributors. In this way, migrants living abroad for extended periods of time or undocumented migrants are unable to visit Bolivia can have their contributions recognized in sending communities even without being physically present (Miyares et al. 2003).

Migrants suggest that individual and collective remittances have broad impacts beyond public works projects. During an interview in Northern Virginia, Elmer argued that “now we *residentes* are creating jobs there [in Bolivia].”⁶⁹ Migration, as I discussed in the previous chapter, has contributed to the development of the rural Cochabamba

⁶⁸ Oscar once told me that when INCOPEA helps fund a public works project, “the only thing [the organization] asks for a small plaque that has the name of INCOPEA.”

⁶⁹ Similarly, leaders of folkloric groups in the Washington metro area frequently noted that their purchase of expensive dance costumes (*trajes*) represents an important economic contribution to Bolivia. Costumes cost an average of \$200 but this can be considerably more for the *morenada* and other more elaborate dances.

economy and the transformation of the social status of *campesinos*. This link to development in Bolivia allows migrants to counter claims about their lack of contributions to the United States or possible disregard for U.S. immigration laws. As Eduardo explained once, “thus we have made healthy progress. Maybe we have evaded American laws but with a healthy ideology, no?”

By calling on a moral framework to justify the actions of Bolivian migrants, Eduardo downplays the importance of immigration laws and argues that the intent of migrants to contribute to development in Bolivia outweighs other factors. Similarly, Francisco drew a clear distinction between legitimate and illegitimate activities, although it rests on a different premise than anti-immigration arguments: “We don’t take money from the county illegally. Everything is done under the law.” Although undocumented migrants are increasingly referred to as “illegal” by U.S. politicians and the media, Bolivian migrant narratives suggest that working and living in the United States without documentation is justified. Illegal behavior, in contrast, is defined in terms of criminal activity and is represented as a primarily Central American trait.

Thus, even as Bolivians employ immigrant rights discourses, they simultaneously construct divisions among immigrants. Bolivians frequently target Central Americans for criticism, arguing that they are responsible for the negative association between Latinos and violence, poverty, or abuse of social services held by some native-born Americans. Mexican migrants in particular are widely perceived by Bolivians to be at fault for selling fake documents to 9/11 hijackers, and therefore for the expansion of immigration enforcement in recent years. By contrasting themselves with a negative stereotype of

Central American immigrants, Bolivians present themselves as successful, educated and law-abiding. Much like the exclusionary nature of citizenship, Bolivian migrants claim rights and construct identities through narratives of inclusion that are simultaneously accompanied by a process of othering.

In Bolivian migrant narratives, therefore, citizenship is based not only on residence but also on contributions to that place. Drawing on discourses of immigrant rights in the United States, migrants and returnees argue that they are valued members of local communities in Washington and Cochabamba because of their economic and social contributions to both places. While they acknowledge that some migrants have violated immigration laws, Bolivians articulate citizenship as a series of mundane and organizational practices that redirect attention away from formal legal status and towards the performance of responsibilities.

Figure 11: Plaque on Tiataco community center documenting the contributions of *residentes* (photo by author)



IV. Conclusions: Imagining transnational mobility and belonging

Samuel

Next to Elmer's house in Santa Rosa, two new Ford trucks are parked inside a small yard surrounded by a green metal fence. During the peach harvest the owner of the two trucks, Samuel, is in high demand. Almost every morning, he loads wooden crates into the back of the larger pickup truck and hauls them to the market in Cochabamba. In a good harvest he can make several trips a day. Samuel also has a small orchard behind his

house, where his family spends most evenings during February and March picking peaches. For the last several years the orchard has failed to produce enough peaches to fill the truck, leading Samuel to think about moving abroad again.

In 2008, Samuel returned to Santa Rosa after working in Northern Virginia for eight years. Like many in Arbiето, Samuel's first trip abroad was to Argentina, but he was eventually convinced by friends to try the United States. He arrived at his brother's house and immediately began putting up drywall. Work was steady for a while, but, as Samuel tells it, everything began to change after 9/11. After the attacks in New York City and the nearby Pentagon, it became increasingly difficult to secure good jobs and Samuel opted to return to Bolivia to be with his wife and two children.

Returnees like Samuel are often highly critical of the U.S. immigration system and contrast it with a much more familiar model of migration to Argentina. Samuel recalled his previous pattern of mobility:

“I was in Argentina for almost 17 years. I went and came, went and came (*iba y venia, iba y venia*). I was there for eight months or a year and then I would come and be here a month, two months, not much, and again return. Like that. . . When I go to Argentina, I can be there and come back and be with my family whenever I want to, and later return. How nice would it be (*que lindo sería*) if there were laws that allowed us to travel back and forth from the United States. If we could work in construction for six months and then be at home with our families.”

Experience with circular migration, even to a neighboring country, provides migrants with a starting point to imagine a different relationship with the United States. As I discuss in the following chapter, heightened immigration enforcement and increased economic anxiety following the recession have caused some migrants to return to the Valle Alto while others feel less secure about their future in the Washington area. But

while these new circumstances are transforming Bolivian practices in some ways, migrant narratives challenge exclusionary citizenship formations and articulate belonging as based on contributing to communities in multiple locations.

Bolivians in the Washington area also claim to belong to multiple locations by referring to themselves as *residentes* rather than immigrants or migrants. *Residente*, literally “resident,” has a variety of meanings but most clearly embodies migrants’ aspiration for legal status or residency in the United States.⁷⁰ In most situations, the term refers to all migrants regardless of whether they actually have legal status in the United States. In this way, migrant legal status is downplayed and obscured, and all migrants are presented as lawful residents of the United States. In other moments, however, *residente* is used more literally and only applies to migrants with papers. This is particularly the case in Bolivia, where the difference in legal status is most noticeable. *Residentes* are able to travel to Bolivia and reenter the United States, while migrants without papers endure long periods of physical separation from the Valle Alto. Legal permanent resident status is a goal, therefore, because it creates more permanent connections to both the US and Bolivia (de la Torre 2006).

In this chapter, I have highlighted the diverse ways that Bolivian migrants are participating in Virginia, Maryland and Valle Alto communities. The literature on migrant civic engagement stresses formal political incorporation and involvement in large-scale protests, but I argue that Bolivian migrants are negotiating citizenship through more ordinary practices (Staheli et al. 2012). By occupying soccer fields, performing

⁷⁰ As Albó (1997) and Lazar (2008) note, this term is used by rural-to-urban migrants in El Alto and La Paz. It is also employed by other migrant groups in the United States.

folkloric dances and contributing to collective remittance projects, migrants are making citizenship claims in multiple places simultaneously. This highlights the interconnected nature of local and transnational migrant activities and suggests that migrant transnationalism is crucial to the construction of citizenship and belonging in both sending and receiving countries (Ehrkamp 2005). As migrants contribute to communities that are “here” and “there,” they disrupt the singular relationship between territory and identity (Bauböck 2003; Basch et al. 1994) and create the possibility for new types of relationships.

Taking migrant practices and narratives seriously, as Vickie Lawson (2000) has argued, reveals the contradictions that are inherent in citizenship regimes. It also highlights how migrants are active agents in the construction of alternative imaginaries and practices of citizenship and belonging (M. Smith 2003: 499). While undocumented migrants in the United States are physically isolated from Bolivia, experiences with more circular migration to neighboring Argentina allow migrants to imagine a different migration system. These narratives also reveal the ways in which positive and negative discourses about immigration can be appropriated by different actors for a variety of purposes. While Bolivians are not frequent participants in the immigrant rights movement in Washington D.C., they draw on it to construct new understandings of rights and belonging that are based on connections to specific places but are not necessarily rooted in national citizenship regimes (i.e. das Gupta 2006; Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006).

Chapter 6

Economic crisis, immigration enforcement and gendered perceptions of return

Northern Virginia, September 2011

On a chilly Sunday morning in late September, I stand on the sidelines with a group of men watching the *clásico* game between Villa Verde and Santa Rosa, two neighboring villages in the Arbieta *municipio*. I learned early on never to conduct interviews during soccer games because spectators focused intently on the action and only spoke to yell encouragement or critiques of the referees. The Villa Verde section is particularly quiet today as an early lead quickly unravels. When the 4-1 game ends, the conversation quickly turns towards a common theme: how expensive Bolivia had become in recent years. Jorge, a large man with slicked-back hair, insists that La Paz and Santa Cruz are as expensive as (or even more than) the United States. Fernando had also visited La Paz several years ago, and says that a night in a three-star hotel costs more than a motel in Virginia. Cochabamba was less expensive, he allows, but claims that the Burger King there cost more than the fast-food restaurants in nearby Tyson's Corner. Not everyone agrees. A younger man named Jesús says that he could find soup for 3 *pesos* (bolivianos, the Bolivian currency). Jorge dismisses this comment. Restaurants in Cochabamba no longer charge so little, he told Jesús. "These days, a good soup would cost at least 7 or 8 *pesos*."

Jorge's insistence that Bolivia has become unaffordable does not mean that he is ruling out a return. As we later discuss his annual trip to Villa Verde during Carnival, I

ask Jorge and Octavia, his wife, if they were planning to return to Bolivia more permanently. Octavia answers, “yes, we will return when we are older. We will rest there.” Like many other migrants from the Valle Alto, Octavia and Jorge are planning to retire in Arbiето. “This country [the U.S.] gives you a lot of things,” Jorge argues, “but only when you are working. If you aren’t working, you still have to pay for everything.” Jorge says that the cost of land, utilities and other expenses are still relatively low in the Bolivian countryside. Octavia tells me that she and Jorge had already built a house in Villa Verde and would be able to sit around with the other *viejitos* (the elderly). With a big grin, she says to me, “one day you will visit us and we will talk about *aquellos tiempos* (these times).”

Conversations about return are a common fixture among Bolivian migrants. Almost all first-generation migrants insist that they will return to Arbiето (see also de la Torre 2006; de la Torre and Aramayo 2007) and many, like Octavia and Jorge, are able to point to a new or improved house they have built with remittances from the United States. However, the moment of return in these conversations is almost always far off in the future, and occasionally migrants admit that return may not be so easy. A conversation several minutes later immediately provides such a counterpoint to Jorge and Octavia’s plans.

One of three brothers from Villa Verde now living in Northern Virginia, Edgar is a tall, lean man with graying hair. Along with his wife and their children, he is a constant presence at Villa Verde community events. Although Edgar visits Bolivia regularly, he seems much less certain that he would return permanently: “Maybe I will return, but it is

difficult with the family, with children here. They will go to college here and then they won't want to return [to Bolivia] and one cannot separate the family." While return may be a goal of policymakers and migrants themselves, the reality of migrant lives makes this possibility uncertain.

In this chapter, I examine the changing economic and political circumstances faced by Bolivian migrants in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The first section focuses on the impact of the economic recession and restrictive immigration measures on migrants from Arbieta in Northern Virginia and Maryland. As a result of these two factors, Bolivian migrants have become increasingly insecure about their position in the United States over the last decade. Concerns about immigration status and expanding enforcement were generally understated and spoken about in private, but the impact of the recession was at the center of migrant conversations along the sidelines of soccer games. I demonstrate that even though strong social networks largely insulated Arbieta migrants from economic disaster, the housing crisis and continued weakness in the construction industry continue to cause a great deal of anxiety among Bolivians in Northern Virginia and Maryland.

The second section explores the phenomenon of return migration in greater depth. In the immediate aftermath of the global economic crisis, many scholars and policymakers speculated that migrants would choose to voluntarily return to their country of origin. Some migrants have returned to Arbieta and the possibility of return has taken on new importance for many others. However, even though South-North migration has slowed considerably, most migrants from Bolivia and other countries in the global South

are remaining abroad. I analyze the decisions of migrants to stay in the Washington area or return to Bolivia through the lens of gender and the family. Although a variety of individual and structural factors influence migrant decisions, I argue that men base their decision to stay in the United States or return to Bolivia primarily on family responsibility and their role as fathers. The final section evaluates the future of Bolivian settlement in the Washington metro area. I show that while migrants, especially those without legal documentation, face an uncertain future, the durability of long-term routes of migration between Arbieta and Washington makes it likely that Bolivians will continue to settle in the region.

I. Changing circumstances and rising migrant anxieties

Despite the longstanding concentration of political power in the U.S. federal district, Washington D.C. was not seen as a global city (Sassen 1991) until relatively recently. Since the 1980s, however, the metropolitan area's foreign-born population has increased dramatically. Immigrants found work in both the high-tech and relatively low-wage service sector. According to the 2010 Census, at least 21 percent of Washington D.C. metro area residents are foreign-born, making the Washington the seventh largest region of immigrant settlement in the country (Price and Singer 2008). Immigrants are also dispersed across inner and outer suburbs, making ethnic and racial diversity a central part of life in the Washington region, notwithstanding continued segregation by race and class. But in spite of this global city image, immigrants feel increasingly unwelcome and less secure about their future in the metro area and the United States more broadly. These

feelings of insecurity and anxiety can be traced to the combined effects of the economic recession and the expansion of restrictive immigration measures to the local level.

Migrants from Arbieta pointed to September 11, 2001 as the moment when their position within the United States changed. Undocumented migrants had hoped to qualify for legal permanent residency, but soon after 9/11 it became clear that comprehensive immigration reform would be unlikely to pass. Even popular reforms like the DREAM Act have stalled on Capitol Hill in recent years. Much to the dismay of migrant leaders and Bolivian consular officials, the most recent failure to pass the bill came during my fieldwork in 2010. The terrorist attacks have also been used to justify new restrictions on state-issued forms of identification. In Virginia, state officials moved quickly to require proof of legal status for driver's licenses after several of the 9/11 hijackers were found to have used Virginia driver's licenses. Most other states followed even as congressional efforts to issue new requirements for driver's licenses have stalled. By 2012, only three states allow residents to obtain a license without proof of legal status.⁷¹

Driver's license restrictions are an important concern for migrants from Arbieta because driving is such a central part of life in the suburbs of Washington D.C. Migrants need regular access to a car in order to move between home, school, retail stores and work. Most men work in the construction industry, frequently moving between worksites in the metro area and as far away as Pennsylvania, Delaware, Richmond and Baltimore. Women have similar patterns of mobility for their work in the home and office cleaning

⁷¹ Regulations in Virginia have also become more restrictive over recent years. In September 2010, legislators in Richmond responded to a drunken driving accident caused by a Bolivian migrant in Prince William County, which killed a nun, by passing a law that prevents immigrants with temporary legal status from obtaining driver's licenses (Kravitz 2010).

business. Driving is also essential to participating in Bolivian cultural activities that are scattered across the suburbs of Northern Virginia and Maryland (see chapter three).

New restrictions on driver's licenses are an important part of expanding immigration enforcement measures across the United States. Although immigration policy is generally the responsibility of the federal government, over the last decade states and localities across the country have implemented restrictive housing and other ordinances targeting undocumented immigrants (Coleman 2007; Walker and Leitner 2011). Local governments have also signed up for federal-local immigration enforcement partnerships, most notably the 287(g) and Secure Communities programs that empower local law enforcement officers to identify undocumented immigrants and in some cases initiate deportation proceedings (Capps et al. 2011; Mittelstadt et al. 2011). Washington D.C. has been a particular hotspot of these policies, with most outer suburbs in Maryland and Virginia adopting restrictive local immigration policies since 2005. While the District of Columbia and the surrounding inner-ring suburbs tend to have more inclusionary stances, they also have been enrolled in federal-local enforcement partnerships since 2010 (Leitner and Strunk n.d.).

As a result of these policies and an increasingly anti-immigrant political climate, Bolivian migrants have become more wary of encountering local officials on the roads and in public spaces. In a few cases, migrants moved away from localities with restrictive immigration policies towards more welcoming jurisdictions in the Washington region. Initial research and newspaper accounts suggest that a sizable number of Latinos left Prince William County, which adopted a local immigration enforcement bill in 2006 that

was a model for Arizona's notorious Senate Bill 1070 (Capps et al. 2011; Guterbock et al. 2010). Migrants from Arbieta were well aware of the county's negative reputation, but only a handful had left in recent years.

Furthermore, these migrants cited the housing crisis (see below) rather than immigration policies as their reason for leaving Prince William County, although in practice it is difficult to separate the two.⁷² Some migrants in Maryland, particularly from the outskirts of the Arbieta municipality, made vague references to the anti-immigrant climate in Virginia as a reason for moving across state lines in recent years. However, job opportunities and a lower cost of living in Maryland seemed to be just as important in driving movement within the metropolitan area, and in any case most migrants from Arbieta continue to live in Virginia.

Despite ambiguity about impact of greater enforcement, migrants did express concerns about the increased involvement of local authorities in the enforcement of immigration laws. This extended to most Bolivians regardless of their legal status, which is not surprising since most migrant households and extended social networks are made up of both documented and undocumented members (i.e. Menjívar and Abrego 2009). For instance, one Sunday at an INCOPEA game Mario and a group of men from the town of Arbieta spoke at length about a series of police checkpoints being set up around the metro area to check for drunk driving. Although Mario has papers and is able to travel

⁷² Advocates in Prince William County blamed the county's immigration policy for the Latino population decline, but acknowledged that the dramatic increase in foreclosures and the decline of the construction industry also played important roles (Leitner and Strunk n.d.). Studies have also highlighted the difficult task of collecting data on the impact of the housing crisis and closely connected restrictive immigration policies on Latinos (Capps et al. 2011).

regularly to Bolivia (see chapter four), he insisted that these stops are particularly worrying because any arrest can now lead directly to deportation.

This link is the result of federal-local immigration enforcement partnerships like the Secure Communities program. As a result of Arlington's efforts to opt out of Secure Communities in late 2010 (Strunk and Leitner n.d.), the program became an important issue in the Washington area during my fieldwork.⁷³ But although I occasionally heard Bolivian migrants warn one another about driving at night and after attending parties, the changing landscape of immigration enforcement was not a central topic along the sidelines of soccer fields because immigration status tends to be private in ways that other personal issues are not. In other venues, however, migrants acknowledged that heightened immigration enforcement measures, combined with the economic recession, were resulting in new concerns about their lives in the Washington D.C. area.

“Ha bajado bastante”: The impact of the recession and heightened immigration enforcement

Although the Washington D.C. housing market expanded rapidly during the early 2000s, it began to falter by late 2006 and 2007. The housing crisis had a profound impact on Latinos across the country because of their concentration in the construction industry. During 2007 alone, Latinos lost more than 250,000 jobs. Latino immigrants suffered disproportionately, and were more likely to become unemployed than native-born Latinos (Kochhar 2008).

⁷³ This was particularly the case for officials at the Bolivian consulate, which has become more involved in legal issues as the number of deportations has risen significantly in recent years.

Unlike many Central American migrants in the Washington D.C. area, most of my informants from Arbieta continued to work throughout the housing crisis and subsequent economic recession, even if it was almost always for fewer days and hours than normal.⁷⁴ The work level, most men told me at soccer games and during interviews, *ha bajado bastante*, or had gone down significantly. These general statements were often accompanied by very specific discussions of the hours and wages earned in recent years. Although some migrants expressed hope during the winter of 2010 and early spring of 2011 that the construction industry might be turning around, most remained pessimistic throughout my fieldwork.

Beyond statements about changing work levels, the impact of the housing crisis was often discussed in terms of lost houses. This was particularly the case for those who bought homes in Prince William County and other outer suburbs. During the boom years of the early- and mid-2000s, migrants moved further out in Virginia and Maryland as they were displaced by new development and property value increases in the inner suburbs (interview with Connie Freeman, January 2011; Singer 2003). Others sought to capitalize on dramatic housing price increases in the still relatively cheap outer suburbs. During my fieldwork I heard a number of anecdotes about Bolivians who, after the

⁷⁴ Although I was unable to undertake full comparative studies with other migrant groups, my limited encounters with Bolivian migrants from other regions and with Central Americans at day labor sites in Northern Virginia suggested that male migrants from Arbieta were better equipped to find employment than other migrants during the recession because of their extensive social networks in and around the construction industry. Unlike Central Americans, who are a highly visible presence on street corners and parking lots throughout the Washington D.C. area, few Bolivians work as day laborers. Established Bolivian migrants tend to have stable positions in larger construction companies, and even those migrants that work on a temporary basis have been able to find fairly steady work through connections with subcontractors.

market collapsed, were forced to walk away from their homes and return to the inner-ring suburbs of Northern Virginia.

Although the housing crisis and recession have impacted all migrants, more recent arrivals face even greater difficulties. This is particularly the case for individuals from poorer communities like Rayo Pampa, who are more likely to be undocumented than migrants from established sending communities in the Arbiesto *municipio*. As we sat in a Northern Virginia park in April 2011, I asked Joshue and Alex about the challenges that fellow migrants from Rayo Pampa have encountered in recent years:

Joshue: Before . . . there was enough work to choose. But now you have to take whatever job comes first. At least for me, my company takes whatever jobs there are, especially everything that the government offers because there isn't another way to get by. The majority of people that work in the company legally, we are [legal permanent] residents or [U.S.] citizens. We try to get by. We have the advantage of having government work and thus until now we are fine working. But for contractors and tile companies, the work has gone down a lot (*ha bajado bastante*).

Alex: About the difficulties, how we arrived . . . the majority of us arrived, *pues*, over the border, this doesn't give us many possibilities for work. We don't have good jobs and we always have to look [for them].

During the housing crisis and the long road toward recovery, undocumented migrants were generally able to find work in informal spaces within construction industry. Arbiesto migrants living in Maryland without papers seemed to be concentrated in the *cerámica* (tile) business and were finding fairly steady work by the time my fieldwork began. But as Joshue and Alex suggest, this contrasts sharply with the opportunities available to migrants with legal status. Documentation opens up more lucrative and secure opportunities with government contractors, an essential part of the Washington area

economy and one of the reasons that the region has maintained a relatively low unemployment rate during the recent slowdown.

Furthermore, as Joshue explained later, undocumented migrants are often reliant on Bolivians with documentation for transportation and economic opportunities:

The most important difficulty that I see for immigrants is that a majority still don't have papers. They are not given licenses, they can't drive. This has a big impact. . . If the majority had licenses at least they could have a car that could allow them to search for a little farther away. In my community this is how it is. The person who has a license has to help two or three other people.

Migrants living in the United States insisted during interviews that established family and community members always helped newcomers find work, usually described in terms of reciprocal Andean institutions like the *ayni* or *pazanaco*. This was generally confirmed in interviews with relative newcomers, who recounted the assistance they received from brothers, uncles and friends from the Arbieto municipality and the broader Valle Alto. However, as I suggested in chapter three, some migrants challenged this narrative, particularly those who ended up returning to Bolivia. After 9/11, these migrants said that more and more companies began requiring work authorization documents. While temporary jobs at construction sites were still available, the lack of papers became even more of an obstacle to finding steady work. As a result, migrants seemed more likely to consider returning to Bolivia than in previous years.

II. “Many people are leaving”: Return migration, gender and the intention to stay

As the United States and Western Europe implemented a variety of restrictive immigration measures in recent decades, governments simultaneously encouraged migrant laborers to fill low-wage jobs in the construction, service and agricultural industries. Underlying these seemingly contradictory measures was often a hope that migrants would follow established patterns of circular migration (see chapter two) and return to their countries after working for a limited period of time, relieving host societies of the burden of caring for migrant families and even promoting development in sending countries. The onset of the economic recession in 2008 seemed to present an opportunity to promote this type of migration, which has increasingly become the goal of a range of development actors and policymakers (Vertovec 2007).

Governments and NGOs, particularly in Europe, have gone about this in two ways. First, a variety of European actors sought to directly involve migrants in development programs, a venture known as “co-development.” In one of the most prominent examples, local and regional governments in Catalonia offered training and support for development policies in Morocco. In Madrid, the Association of Bolivian-Spanish Cooperation (ACOBES) encouraged migrants to invest their remittances in productive activities back home and even set up offices in Bolivia (interview with Ricardo Martinez, February 2011).

Eva Østergaard-Nielsen (2011; 2009) has praised the Catalonian programs for allowing migrants to simultaneously contribute to development in sending communities

while becoming integrated citizens in their new homes, although she notes that Moroccans have yet to contribute to these programs because they are more focused on their lives in Spain. More critical analyses, especially from the global South, have argued that co-development is an attempt to push immigrants out or at least slow emigration from poor countries (Cortes and Torres 2009), although there are few in-depth analyses of specific programs.

During the same period, European nations and the United States further tightened border control and implemented harsher immigration policies. In Europe, these changes were accompanied by new efforts to encourage the voluntary return of unauthorized migrants. The European Union approved the Return Directive in 2008,⁷⁵ and local governments and NGOs also developed programs that would provide free return tickets and cash upon arrival in migrants' home country.⁷⁶ Governments in the global South have also supported return migration. Early in his presidency, Bolivian President Evo Morales made a number of statements supporting the rights of Bolivians *en el exterior*, outside of the country. More recently, however, he has sought to encourage migrants to return permanently to Bolivia, arguing that they would transfer capital, technologies and ideas to the country. This goal has been pursued through small initiatives like a 2010 directive allowing migrants to bring up to \$35,000 tax-free with them and discussions around a proposed *Plan del Retorno* (Return Plan) that would provide further incentives for migrants to return.

⁷⁵ The Return Directive is an EU-wide policy that establishes rules for the voluntary departure of migrants (including a five-year ban on re-entry) and minimum standards for the treatment of migrants in detention.

⁷⁶ As de Bree and his colleagues (2010) note, a number of European countries enacted similar policies in the 1970s. The United States has not provided similar incentives to immigrants, but dramatically increased deportation efforts in recent years have similar goals in mind.

Although circular migration patterns have long been the norm for many groups, recent scholarship has generally overlooked the possibility of more permanent return migration. When it has, research has tended to focus on older, post-retirement returnees (like, potentially, Jorge and Octavia) and therefore glosses over the movement of working-age individuals and families back to their country of origin. Research in Bolivia (Jones forthcoming), the Dominican Republic (Guarnizo 1997), the Caribbean (Conway and Potter 2009) and Morocco (de Bree et al. 2010) has shown that a diverse group of migrants and in some cases their children indeed are moving back to their country of origin. But while return migration is often presented as the natural end of the migration process, it is often not the last movement for migrants. As I suggested in chapter two, returnees continue to be part of transnational networks and in some cases may maintain a residence in the host country or reemigrate in the future (see also Guarnizo 1997; de Bree et al. 2010).

The entrenched nature of circular migration patterns, alongside the continued lack of economic opportunities in sending countries, has often thwarted attempts to promote return. Despite the efforts of Spanish and Bolivian institutions, only a small percentage of migrants have returned to Bolivia in recent years (interview with Ricardo Martinez, February 2011; ACOBE 2011). This has also been the case among migrants in the Washington D.C. area despite the heightened immigration enforcement measures discussed above. Researchers of Latin American migration have suggested that while the combined impact of the economic recession and stepped-up enforcement on the U.S.-Mexico border has caused migration from Latin America to slow considerably, only a

small percentage of migrants already in the United States have returned to Mexico (Passel and Cohn 2010; Cave 2011). Limited data on Bolivians in the United States shows that the population actually increased substantially between 2000 and 2010. This suggests the legalization of previously undocumented Bolivians who may have avoided the 2000 census as well as some new immigration from Bolivia, but not widespread return.⁷⁷ Despite this, the possibility of return remains a central part of life for migrants from Arbiato.

Concerns about the economy and immigration enforcement in the Washington area were often expressed in the evocative phrase, “*mucha gente se está yendo*” (many people are leaving). Especially early on in my fieldwork, this was a dominant theme of conversations along the sidelines of soccer games and with migrant leaders. Officials at the Bolivian Consulate and Embassy, both located in the District of Columbia, insisted that there has been a substantial increase in the number of return migrants in recent years (interviews with Marcelo Martinez, February 2011, and Erika Dueñas, September 2010). Leaders of migrant organizations and non-profits that work with Bolivians often provided anecdotal evidence of multiple families deciding to abandon the United States, and I encountered new businesses in Northern Virginia that were selling condos along the Prado in Cochabamba to well-off migrants interested in returning (interview with Armando Morales, April 2011).

⁷⁷ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of foreign-born Bolivians in the U.S. increased by 57,000 between 2000 and 2010. Currently almost 100,000 Bolivians are residents of the United States, with around 40,000 in the Washington D.C. metro area alone (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a). This suggests that it is unlikely that there has been significant Bolivian out-migration since 2007, although as I discussed in chapter one, these data miss a substantial portion of migrants.

But although I found some evidence that return migration had increased in recent years, most migrants in the Washington area had no immediate plans to return. Rather than providing an accurate account of migrant movements, the phrase “many people are leaving” reflects the broader anxieties felt by migrants. By repeating these words, migrants were laying the groundwork for a potential return if the economy did not pick up soon and expressing a real concern about the future of the Arbieto community in the Washington area.

“Circular return” in the vertical archipelago

During my fieldwork in Arbieto, I encountered a number of migrants that had recently returned from the United States (see chapter four). Some, like Diógenes Escobar and César, were planning to stay permanently in the Valle Alto because of their leadership positions in the Arbieto municipal government. For most, however, return was a temporary stop on the way to somewhere else. The phenomenon of “circular return” (de la Torre n.d.) was on display during a communal labor project in Santa Rosa. Two days before the village celebrated the first of its Carnival festivities, community members were called to the plaza. After signing in, men and women were given rakes, shovels or pickaxes and told to make the plaza look presentable. I joined most of the men next to the community center, where we were directed by Wilson and two other OTB leaders (also returned migrants) to move dirt into the numerous potholes on the village’s main street.

Initially I worked next to Oliver, a large middle-aged man who furiously swung the hoe to loosen the dirt but tired quickly. As he leaned on his shovel, he told me wearily that he was no longer “used to this type of work” because it had been several years since he had worked in construction. Oliver worked in Northern Virginia for eight years until, in the midst of the recession, he decided to leave and go to Argentina where most of his family had remained. Now, he sells vegetables at a market outside Buenos Aires. But however unprepared Oliver was for manual labor, he toiled much harder than a group of *jóvenes* who quickly retired to benches under the trees.

When we took a longer break from filling the potholes, the *jóvenes* introduced me to Alonso, a stocky guy in his late 20s who immediately asked me “Where are you from?” in nearly perfect English. Alonso had attended to high school in England but had spent more time in the Washington area. Over a series of encounters at Carnival festivities over the next several weeks, Alonso talked extensively about how much he missed the United States. Alonso loved American football and going to clubs. Although he occasionally went out in the city of Cochabamba, he was bored by the slow pace of life in Santa Rosa. Alonso spoke in vague terms about the “problems” he encountered in the U.S., but I later learned that he lost his work permit after pleading guilty to a DUI. A consequence of a 1996 change in immigration law,⁷⁸ Alonso was forced to eventually

⁷⁸ The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) the expanded the categories of noncitizens that were subject to deportation and increased the offenses for which noncitizens could be deported. The closely related Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) restricted judicial review for certain groups of noncitizens facing deportation. These laws, along with other restrictive measures passed following 9-11, have led to dramatically increased numbers of deportations (Hagen et al. 2010).

accept voluntary deportation but continues to pursue a legal entry to the United States, traveling to La Paz every few months to meet with a lawyer.

Alonso's story was representative of other returned migrants I met during fieldwork. As I sought out informants in villages across the municipality, people would often approach me and ask where I was from, clearly hoping to talk about their experiences in Northern Virginia or Maryland. Most of the time this involved a detailed description of where they lived and worked, as well as a long list of relatives that continued to make their homes in the United States. But in a number of cases, I found myself in the role of informal immigration adviser as people asked about the possibility of returning to the United States (I unfortunately had very little to offer returnees other than agreeing to listen to long and often heartbreaking stories of separation from loved ones in the U.S. For instance, one night at a wedding of a Northern Virginia couple held in the village of Achamoco, I met a woman who had been deported and was waiting for the penalty of 10 years to elapse before she could reunite with her children in the United States).

Like Alonso, the decision to return to Bolivia was often sparked by the loss of a crucial legal document or work in the United States. César and Samuel (see their stories in chapters four and five, respectively) decided to return after being unable to find sufficient work during the housing crisis. Another migrant, Roberto, returned to Santa Rosa in late 2010 after losing his driver's license during a traffic stop in Northern Virginia. I heard bits and pieces of this encounter with police over the course of many evenings sitting around the corner store owned by Roberto's son-in-law. But while

Roberto was generally fixated on assigning blame to racist police officers and President Obama for his effective deportation, he simultaneously argued that he would not go back to the United States even if he had a chance because, as his wife told me, working in construction had tired him out. Choosing to return even while they are actively pushed by U.S. officials allows migrants to exercise some control over their mobility within an increasingly restrictive environment.

These encounters in Arbiesto gave me a sense of the increased flow of return migrants, but I undoubtedly missed many others. After coming back from his vacation in Bolivia, Joshue told me that many migrants had returned to Bolivia. However, instead of moving back to Arbiesto, they chose to settle permanently in the city of Cochabamba:

Joshue: I also have many friends that I found in Bolivia, many that were here [Washington D.C.] are there [Bolivia]. From Spain, Europe, but mostly from here. They said that [Bolivia] is worse than the United States. Here you can get by but there [Bolivia] there is no work. There are also a lot of single people, separated families also, some their wives that stay here or there.

Chris: What happens when they return? Where do they work?

Joshue: Most have their own business. . . . Some are established, they have small companies and they are working.

Chris: In Rayo Pampa, or the city?

Joshue: In the city. Once they leave from here [the United States] the majority live in the city [Cochabamba]. They have a door factory or a workshop, that is how they are working.

The vertical archipelago model described in chapter two suggests that Bolivians employ international migration as livelihood strategy to contribute resources and eventually return to their community of origin. As I have discussed throughout this dissertation, migrants from Arbiesto use hometown associations and family networks to maintain ties

and contribute to public works projects in their village and the broader municipality. But as Bolivians move abroad, they also develop strong ties to and build transnational houses in a variety of places within and outside of the country. Thus, while some migrants have returned more or less permanently to Arbieta in recent years, most will continue to move between Arbieta, Cochabamba and even Argentina. Others have chosen to remain in the United States, at least for the time being. Despite rising anxieties in the Washington D.C. area, many migrants acknowledged that they will probably not return to Bolivia anytime soon or, in some cases, at all.

Gender identities and the intention to stay or return

Historically most migration research has focused on men but this dynamic has changed in recent decades. Feminist scholars have sought to bring gender more systematically into migration research (Mahler and Pessar 2006; 2001; Pessar and Mahler 2003; Silvey 2006). This often involved studies of women as they moved across borders (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Parreñas 2005) or remained behind in sending countries (Mahler 2001; Abbots 2012). Scholars also insisted that a gendered perspective is important not only to document the participation of women in the migration and other social process, but also to analyze how men and women negotiate and construct gendered identities (Gutmann 2007; 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999).

In his groundbreaking study of men in a Mexico City neighborhood, Gutmann (2007) challenges traditional notions of Latin American men as unconcerned with family life, often understood through the term “macho.” Instead, he argues that men occupy a

range of gender identities, which can include house work and child raising activities. Men's understanding of their role as fathers, husbands and sons are always shaped by their interaction with other men and women, as well as broader social norms. Masculinity (and femininity), therefore, are not natural states of being but rather are socially constructed and are always shifting.

This dynamic understanding of male identities challenges how masculinity has been approached in research on gender and migration. A number of scholars have suggested that male migrants tend to experience a loss in status in the destination country. As a result, they remain oriented towards the home country and are more likely to participate in institutionalized transnational connections than women. In contrast, women may become empowered through migration and adapt more quickly to the host society (Jones-Correa 1998; Goldring 2001). This is especially the case for women that work outside of the home and have access to monetary and institutional resources that they lacked in the sending country (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2005). In these accounts, masculinity is often portrayed as a dormant and patriarchal force that emerges when men lose status in receiving countries (Pribilsky 2007).

More recent work has suggested that the gains of women are not inevitable and are often uneven and contradictory (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999). Furthermore, men's identities are also transformed during the migration process (Datta et al. 2009). In his ethnography of Ecuadorian migration to New York, Jason Pribilsky (2007) argues that masculine identities are constantly reworked during the migration process and through men's relationships with their families. Young men in Ecuador are under a great deal of

pressure to provide for their families and to live up to masculine ideals by migrating, but their experiences as undocumented immigrants in New York depart significantly from these ideals. This process, Pribilsky argues, changes how male migrants understand their identity as men.

Pribilsky also challenges dominant understandings of the impact of migration in the rural Andes. Research on gender and migration in Bolivia has focused primarily on the highly visible presence of migrant women working in Spain and Italy as caregivers and domestic workers (Hinojosa 2009; 2008; Escandell and Tapias 2010; Guaygua et al. 2010; Bastia 2009; for exceptions see Abbots 2012; Bastia 2007). As Tanja Bastia (2011) notes, scholarly and popular accounts of Bolivian migration express deep concerns about the feminization of migration and the absence of mothers, which is seen to cause family problems, divorce and child delinquency (Ferrufino et al. 2007). Pribilsky argues, in contrast, that the family has increased in significance for Ecuadorians as a result of migration while other bonds within the community have been weakened. Even though male migrants have not necessarily achieved financial success, they are able to send some money home and invest in their children's education.

Although gender identities were not a central part of my research, Bolivian male migrants often spoke to me about their families and their roles as husbands and fathers. For the most part, men explained their initial decision to migrate in terms of family obligations. Because Bolivia offered few opportunities to save enough money to buy more land or support their children's education, men searched for work abroad (see chapter two for a detailed discussion of these decisions). Similarly, family obligations

shaped how men thought about their future in the United States and the possibility of returning to Cochabamba.

I found that Bolivian intentions to stay in the United States were often tied to migration experience, life stage, and the location of their immediate family. Migrants and family members in Arbieta told me that the impact of the economic crisis meant that recent arrivals will likely stay in the United States for longer than anticipated, since the possibility of saving enough money to pay off debts is unrealistic in rural Cochabamba. Migrants who have already paid off their loans also hoped to save additional capital before returning. Although Bolivia has experienced economic growth in recent years, the urban and rural poor continue to struggle, and migrants often expressed concerns about returning to an uncertain future in the Valle Alto or city of Cochabamba.

Fathers with second and 1.5 generation⁷⁹ children in the United States, like Edgar in the story above, admitted that they are unlikely to return permanently to Bolivia and pointed to their children as the primary reason to remain in the United States. Children that grow up in the United States, both men and women frequently told me, are now *americanos*, or Americans. Despite their ethnic and racial differences from white Americans, the standard of Americanness for most Latino immigrants, children of Bolivian migrants have many of the same social and cultural experiences and take part in similar activities. This *americano* identity is a source of frustration for Bolivian parents. As I described in chapter three, older migrants put a great deal of energy into

⁷⁹ The 1.5 generation refers to children that migrated at a young age (generally before the age of 10) and have spent their formative years in the host country (R. Smith 2006).

reprimanding children at the soccer field for not following the Bolivian tradition of greeting others.

Of greater concern are the difficulties that second or 1.5 children have adapting to life in Bolivia. When Mario visited Arbiето over Carnival, he traveled without his children because, he said with a sigh, they complained the entire time during their last vacation. Children used to life in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area tend to find the rural Valle Alto, with its lack of video games and dusty streets, to be boring and dirty. This was a common story among parents and several 1.5 generation *jóvenes* I met in Arbiето, who explained that children without any memory of Bolivia could not appreciate the benefits of life there (although they also admitted that they preferred to visit during Carnival when the municipality was much more lively). Because young Bolivians have grown up almost entirely in the Washington area, their parents acknowledge that their future lies in the United States rather than Bolivia. In order to remain with their family, men also have to commit to staying.⁸⁰

The decision to have a family in the United States is transformative in many ways for male migrants. Many of the men I interviewed initially came to Washington D.C. without their families and, after obtaining legal status, were later able to bring their wives and children. As Fernando once told me, “once your family is here, everything changes.” Previously, Fernando was able to visit Bolivia fairly frequently, but he lamented that he

⁸⁰ Not all migrants with children in the United States make this decision. I met several migrants with adult children that have decided to retire in Bolivia, but they are prepared to visit their children and grandchildren in the Washington area for years to come. Wilson, who recently retired to Santa Rosa after more than 25 years in the U.S., was back in Northern Virginia only a few weeks after we met during Carnival in Bolivia to see his daughters and grandchildren. This option is only available to migrants with legal documents, however.

no longer has the time or money to travel. Other migrants made similar statements about their lack of mobility in the Washington area because of family obligations, complaining that they are no longer able to visit Bolivian restaurants in the area because they are expected to be at home whenever they were not working. At the same time, there is a clear sense of pride that accompanies these changes. Most migrants that I spoke with brought up the general success of second and 1.5 generation Bolivians in the United States, and fathers of older children made sure to tell me where their children had attended college and how they had become professionals.

Although family reunification in the United States was the norm for early migrants from Arbieta, there is considerable variation in migrant family structures. Despite the increasing number of women from the Valle Alto in the Washington area, a significant percentage of men left their wives and children behind in Arbieta.⁸¹ For this group of migrants, the location of their children seemed to make their return to Bolivia much more likely. Male migrants often told me that they would eventually return in order to spend more time with their children and, to a lesser extent, their wives.

David, a migrant from the village of Kaluyo, exemplified this narrative when he lowered his hand to his waist, showing me how small his children were when he came to the United States. Of his three children, only one was born in Bolivia. The second and third sons were born in Argentina and the United States, respectively, but returned to the Valle Alto with their mother. “Now they are *jóvenes* (young people),” he said as he raised his hand to make the children as tall as he is. “They need me. We talk on the phone but

⁸¹ A third group included young single men and women in their late teens and early 20s who often joined family members in Northern Virginia or Maryland but did not yet have families of their own.

they also need me physically.” David planned to leave Maryland within a year. The sense of responsibility towards family and the pain felt by absent fathers whose children are thousands of miles away, demonstrates that affective relationships, not just rational economic motivations, shape the decisions of migrants to stay or leave.

Men’s decisions to return are also influenced by how family obligations are understood in Arbiato. During my fieldwork, both men and women frequently expressed disapproval of migrant decisions to remain abroad for extended periods of time even as they acknowledged the structural forces pushing people to leave. This was often discussed in explicitly gendered terms, with male migrants cast as deficient husbands and fathers. Resentment of migrant husbands and son-in-laws was a common topic of conversation, even in cases when men continued to support their families in Bolivia, and it is notable that a number of men and returned migrants joined in this line of criticism. One returnee, speaking about a relative who still lives abroad, said poignantly: “He barely knows his children. When he returns, they will see him as a stranger and won’t listen to him. It’s better to only spend a few years away from your family at a time.” This critique of migration, even as it serves to justify the decisions of returning male migrants, may also represent a new understanding of gender roles in rural Bolivia as men openly acknowledge their role in caring for children.

I found that Bolivian men in Washington D.C. took on a number of childcare responsibilities. At soccer games over the weekend or on weekday nights, I often saw men taking care of children. Although women made up at least half of spectators on most Sundays at INCOPEA or CELAPKA games, a number of fathers brought one or more of

their children to the field while the mother stayed home or went to another event. Even when mothers and grandmothers attended the game, fathers were often responsible for keeping an eye on the children and frequently had to run after young children who dashed onto the field. The centrality of men's role as fathers in at the soccer field recalls Gutmann's (2007) observations about men in Mexico City. Despite assumptions that men do not want to be seen doing women's work, men often held children in public.

Like Gutmann, I found that male migrants from Arbieta held a variety of gender identities and understandings of masculinity. While many men saw soccer games as cultural spaces for the entire family, others viewed hometown associations as masculine spaces that were clearly separate from the family sphere. Oscar, the vice-president of INCOPEA, viewed time spent at meeting and home as a zero-sum game: "We all have our obligations and sometimes we have X amount of time and we use it but sometimes we can't. But we always try to steal time from the family for INCOPEA . . . because it also gives us satisfaction." Although I rarely heard complaints from women about the time their husbands spent at the soccer field every weekend, men often suggested that their families were upset. Much like Robert Smith's (2006) ethnography of Mexican HTA leaders in New York, male migrants must constantly negotiate between their public and private lives. While Oscar vowed to continue participating because he gained a different type of satisfaction from working on behalf of the migrant community than he did at work or at home, other men were thinking of stepping aside. Joshue, for instance, explained that he would no longer serve as Rayo Pampa delegate because years of work with INCOPEA were causing problems with his family.

As economic and political conditions measures make life in the United States increasingly uncomfortable for immigrants, Bolivians are forced to consider their short- and long-term plans in the Washington area. Some migrants have returned to Bolivia in recent years while many others have remained in the United States. For men, these decisions are often shaped by how they understand their role as fathers and husbands. Bolivian men, whether in Washington D.C. or Arbiesto, insisted that fathers should be responsible for helping to raise their children. While sending remittances was seen as an important contribution, both migrants and returnees routinely expressed that this was not enough. As a result, migrants in the Washington area suggested that they would eventually choose to live in the same place with their children, although these choices are always constrained by immigration status and economic conditions.

III. The future of Bolivian settlement in the United States

The recent nature of heightened immigration enforcement measures and the economic recession makes their impact on immigrants an open question that will require future research.⁸² My case study of Arbiesto migrants suggests that changing political and economic circumstances will likely have real implications for migrant belonging and settlement patterns. As I described above, some migrants have returned to Bolivia and the (yet unrealized) possibility of widespread return has led to rising migrant anxieties. While migrants with legal permanent residency and U.S. citizenship, particularly those with

⁸² Several studies have begun to explore the impact of restrictive immigration policies (Capps et al. 2011; Lacayo 2010; Hagan et al. 2011b) and the recent recession (Kochhar 2008; Martin 2009) on immigrants.

children in the United States, will likely remain in the Washington area, the future was much less clear for undocumented migrants.

I found that many migrants without papers in Northern Virginia and Maryland were increasingly resigned to deportation. No longer able to assume or even hope for an immigration reform that would allow undocumented migrants to obtain legal residency and petition for their families, even individuals with a long history in the United States told me that they are ready to return to Bolivia whenever they are deported. Although I encountered some anger about immigration policies from returnees in Arbioto, often directed personally towards President Obama, most migrants in Washington insisted that the United States was a fair place when people follow the rules. But even though migrants justified their presence in the United States by highlighting their economic contributions in the form of taxes and consumption (see chapter five), they rarely challenged the deportation of migrants without papers.

Elmer, for instance, told me that undocumented migrants should be prepared to leave if they are caught by immigration authorities: “If they catch you and say that you have to go home, you have to go and enter legally.” This tenuous connection to the United States contrasted sharply with Elmer’s own migration history and ties to places in the United States. Several weeks before I traveled to Arbioto, I learned that Elmer had undergone heart surgery in a Northern Virginia hospital close to his home. Despite the fact that Elmer lacked legal documentation, the county picked up most of the surgery bill because he had lived there for almost 15 years. Sitting upright and clutching an ice pack to his chest only a few days after the surgery, Elmer spoke movingly about how much he

owed to the county. Like many other Bolivians, Elmer saw his neighborhood and county in the Washington area as a second home. But at the same time, Elmer knows that he is ultimately not welcome in the United States because he never followed through on his application for legal status many years ago. He will go home to Bolivia at some point, he says, either when he chooses to or when he is deported.

This willingness to leave does not represent total resignation, as I argued above in the case of Roberto, but instead an acknowledgement of circumstances that are beyond the control of individual migrants and an attempt to exercise some agency within these structures. But this increasingly widespread view does raise some serious concerns. I found that undocumented migrants are often more isolated from social life in the Washington area because they were often unable to drive and were forced to work longer hours for less money. Their isolation from sending communities in Arbieta was even more pronounced because of the limitations imposed on their transnational mobility. Migrants like Elmer had not visited Arbieta in more than 15 years, and even though he maintains ties through his work with INCOPEA, many community members in Santa Rosa had lost contact with him or were not sure who he was. Access to legal documents plays a major role in the mobility and belonging of migrants. Because undocumented migrants are increasingly unable to envision a long term future in the United States, there is a danger that they will be less inclined to put down roots in the United States.

This is not always the case, however. Despite the difficulties associated with being out of status, undocumented migrants often play prominent roles in migrant organizations. This is particularly the case for long-term migrants, who have access to

many of the same documents and services that legal permanent residents have, with the notable exception of a valid passport. For instance, most individuals who arrived in the United States more than a few years ago still have valid driver's licenses.⁸³ But more broadly than access to documents, undocumented migrants are able to participate in cultural activities alongside those with legal permanent residency and U.S. citizenship. Migrants with and without papers play and watch soccer across the metropolitan area, while the Bolivian Festival continues to be held in Prince William County despite its reputation as a place hostile to immigrants. Furthermore, Bolivian migrants continually work to overcome new restrictions on their mobility even in the face of an unwelcoming environment and resignation about the future.

While social networks can sometimes be just as important as legal status, undocumented migrants go to great lengths to obtain a driver's license. Before Maryland began requiring proof of legal status for driver's licenses in 2009, undocumented migrants in Northern Virginia would change their cell phone number to a Maryland area code and use a friend or relative's address in the state to apply for a license there. When I traveled to Seattle for a geography conference in April 2011, several migrants told me that they were also planning a trip to Washington State, one of three states that still grants driver's licenses to people without social security numbers. While migrants acknowledged that they were unlikely to actually make the cross-country trip because of fears of running into immigration officials (Germán quipped that they are less likely to make it to Washington State than to be deported to "Bolivia State"), contemplating such a

⁸³ There may be a time limit on this. Manuel, a former migrant who returned to Villa Verde almost 15 years ago but keeps in touch with family and friends in Northern Virginia, predicted that every undocumented Bolivian would return in 2014, when the last valid licenses issued by Virginia would expire.

trip demonstrates the importance that migrants place on obtaining legal documents. At the same time, it hints at some of the creative practices that migrants use to stay in the United States even as the odds are increasingly stacked against them.

Conclusions

As the housing crisis and expanding immigration enforcement have made life more difficult for migrants, Bolivians are increasingly evaluating their future in the Washington area. In this chapter, I have argued that the economic and political climate can both delay or hasten return, depending on migrants' legal status, length of stay in the United States and, perhaps most importantly, family location. Migrants with children in the Washington area appear likely to remain in the U.S. for the long-term, while those with children in Bolivia make more definitive plans to return. This is not always the case, of course, but gendered notions of family responsibility play an important role in shaping decisions to remain or return.

More broadly, the long-term nature of migration routes between Arbieta and the Washington D.C. metropolitan area will guarantee the survival of the Bolivian community. Migration scholarship has shown that as migrants stay in the United States for longer periods of time, they develop deep ties to host communities. As Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) suggests, settlement should be understood as a process rather than a one-time decision. Thus, while individuals and families may intend to stay in the host country or return, settlement decisions can be altered by different events and conditions. Research has found that as time passes, immigrant men and women become more integrated into

the United States and less likely to return permanently to their sending country (Jones and de la Torre 2011). Deep roots in receiving communities pose an obstacle to recent efforts by state and non-state actors to promote the return of migrants and suggest that people from the Valle Alto will continue to make their homes in Northern Virginia and Maryland.

An exchange with migrant leaders in Northern Virginia highlighted the durability of the ties between Arbieta and Washington D.C. A month before our conversation, members of the Rayo Pampa soccer team in Bolivia told me that they intended to migrate to the United States, some for the second time. When I asked migrant leaders for their opinion, Joshue, Alex and Omar all shook their head. Joshue, the coach of Rayo Pampa's INCOPEA team and a community leader, spoke first and expressed concern about the ability of new arrivals to succeed in an increasingly difficult environment:

Joshue: Personally I would tell them not to come. It would be better if they could study to learn some type of profession. . . Come as a mechanic. . . We already know what the American system is like. I would like them to be a little more prepared because now there are few jobs. My people are hurting. I wouldn't want them to experience the same thing. That's why I would say [that] they could train there at least two or three years and prepare themselves a little more for the [U.S.] system. . . They are *jóvenes* and they want to come, but come a little more prepared and there will be more options for work.

Omar: It's fine for them to leave [Bolivia]. They wouldn't have to be professionals, but they should study so they can work [in the United States].

Alex: Yes, they have to know more or less where they are coming. Where they will come to work and how they have to work, I think more than anything they have to inform themselves.

Despite the difficulties faced by Bolivian migrants in the aftermath of the housing crisis, Joshue, Omar and Alex acknowledged that young people will continue to travel

along the paths constructed by earlier migrants. The task for leaders in Northern Virginia and Maryland, therefore, is to help new migrants learn how to operate in changing circumstances.

Conclusion

“This place belongs to us, too”

More than 10 years ago, migrants from the town of Arbiето purchased a plot of land in a rural part of Virginia almost two hours away from Washington D.C. After clearing the plot of most of its trees and leveling the surface, a group built a soccer field. A small, dilapidated shed is the only other feature of the property, which is surrounded by a ring of tall trees and isolated from the traffic and noise of the Washington suburbs. Arbiето migrants travel to their field several times a year to hold celebrations that feature soccer games and folkloric dances. During the “*Fiesta de Arbiето*,” held each year in August in honor of the Virgin of Copacabana (a popular Bolivian figure), migrants told me that they felt like they were in Bolivia. Although the extremely high cost of land ruled out any properties within the Washington metro area, this purchase by migrants from the town of Arbiето implies a permanent presence in the United States for themselves and their children.

At the same time, migrants in Northern Virginia and Maryland inscribe their presence in the Valle Alto of Cochabamba by participating in hometown associations. Oscar, the current vice president of INCOPEA, told me that *obras* (public works projects) and *chalets* in Arbiето represented footprints in the landscape that would serve as a model for future generations:

We hope that [young people] will keep collaborating because we continue to be Bolivians. Maybe for them the feeling isn't much but we feel it because we are far away. Those that are in Bolivia every day don't feel it, but our thoughts are always there and we think that the day after tomorrow we will retire. The idea is

always to return to the homeland (*la patria*) and use the *obras* that we have built or at least look at them and say, “I remember this *obra* from 20, 30 years ago that we built, we worked [on it] with him, with him. This is what we want. We try to leave something, leave footprints so young people can come and say, “if they did this why can’t we?” I hope that we can teach the children how to work like this, leave something behind so that someone else can come and leave another footprint. Build something for our country.

Transnational houses, soccer fields and other public works projects in Bolivia and the United States serve as important symbolic and material spaces of belonging for Bolivian migrants. Collective remittance projects are particularly important embodiments of migrant identities, which often become more closely associated with Bolivia during their time outside the country. The physical presence of the projects is essential for absent migrants because they etch proof into the Valle Alto landscape of migrants’ travels and contributions to the Bolivian nation and local communities. But as Oscar suggests, collective remittance projects are also directed towards those in the Washington D.C. area. By constructing *obras* in Bolivia, migrants are teaching their children in the United States about values and the importance of collective identity. In doing so, they are ensuring that the lives of migrants and their children will continue to unfold in a variety of transnational spaces.

In this dissertation, I have explored Bolivian routes of migration and belonging between rural Cochabamba and suburban Washington D.C. Drawing on the work of Bolivian migration scholars, I argue that vertical archipelago model provides a productive lens into contemporary Andean migration by highlighting its multi-directional and non-linear nature. The movement of men and women from Arbieta between Buenos Aires, Tel Aviv, Madrid, Washington D.C. and the city of Cochabamba (although not

necessarily in that order) points to the non-linear paths of migration between different countries and the complex relationship between internal and international migration. This perspective helps to integrate Latin American studies with work on Latino migrants, two closely connected fields that often remain separate in academic research. By analyzing international migration through the vertical archipelago model, my dissertation highlights the continued importance of indigenous identities for migrants while also demonstrating the varied nature of Bolivian indigenous experiences.

My research also suggests that movement of practices is a central aspect of Bolivian routes of migration. Most research on the impact of migration focuses on economic and, to a lesser extent, social remittances that travel from the global North to migrant communities of origin in the South. My dissertation examines the impact of individual and collective remittances on the landscape of the Valle Alto, but I also suggest that as migrants maintain ties with or even return to Arbieta, they also transfer work skills, political values and ideas about development. This process is not unidirectional, however, and I demonstrate how migrants bring organizational practices with them as they move to new destinations. As migrants settle in suburban Washington D.C., they adapt rural organizational forms and use them to construct Bolivian cultural spaces and mediate between migrant communities and local institutions. Thus, hometown associations can be understood as networks of practices and belonging that stretch between Arbieta and the Washington D.C. metro area but also include sites in Buenos Aires, Cochabamba, and other places.

The movement of practices between Arbieta and Washington D.C. also demonstrates that transnational migration is an exercise in community formation at multiple scales. Hometown associations in the Washington area have constructed soccer fields as cultural sites and locations where place-based communities can gather and rearticulate ties with the Valle Alto. Hometown associations also develop broader connections across villages in the Arbieta municipality and the broader Valle Alto region, which exist alongside and occasionally overlap with more nationally focused soccer leagues and folkloric dance troupes. This landscape of migrant organizations belies any notion of a coherent Bolivian “community,” and presents a broader picture of the diversity of identities and the dynamic and contested nature of migrant communities.

Hometown associations also reconstruct communities in the Valle Alto of Cochabamba. Speaking about his work with Tiataco cultural festivals while in Northern Virginia, César explained that migrant remittances have helped to keep rural villages alive: “I returned with this value of being able to do something in my community, of being able to organize this festival for the *pueblo* because sometimes nobody remembers that these communities exist.” By organizing public works projects and festivals from the United States, migrants contribute to cultural production and economic development in Bolivia. However, as I have suggested, migrant-led development is always a contradictory process. While the practices and values of returning migrants offer the possibility of new resources and forms of solidarity within rural Bolivia, migration has transformed the character of local communities and produced new tensions between migrants and community members.

Ultimately, I argue that migrant practices are changing what it means to be a *campesino* from the Valle Alto. As migrants live outside of Bolivia for years and decades, they have fewer direct ties to land and agriculture than in previous generations. De la Torre and other scholars have argued that remittances and the intention to return constitute a reformulated rural identity based on long-distance ties and investment in the rural economy. This perspective is valuable, and the construction of transnational homes and the expansion of peach orchards in Arbiesto highlight the new ways that *campesinos* are belonging to the rural Valle Alto. At the same time, however, Bolivian migrant identities have to also be located within a broader understanding of belonging that takes into account the deep roots that migrants have developed in communities in Argentina, the United States and the city of Cochabamba.

Throughout the dissertation, I show how migrants are actively constructing such ties by living and working in Virginia or Maryland. Established migrants have sometimes built mansions or, in the case of the town of Arbiesto, a soccer field. Creating such permanent structures in the United States is not always an option for Bolivians, particularly for those without documents. I highlight the difficulties that undocumented migrants face as a result of expanding immigration enforcement and the economic recession, but argue that they continue to inscribe their presence in Northern Virginia and Maryland by playing soccer and performing folklore, among other activities. In other words, migrants are staking their claim to belong to local communities through more transitory yet still visible practices. Struggles over citizenship and belonging are fundamentally about space, and participation in public spaces allows migrants to be

recognized as members of communities even if they all are not formal members of the national polity. In contrast to much of the literature on undocumented immigration, I suggest that legal status is an important but not always fundamental characteristic of migrant identity.

Migrants also claim belonging to local communities and the United States more broadly through their children. Challenging the exclusionary implications of the term “American,” Bolivian migrants argue that their children are also “*americanos*.”⁸⁴ This considerably broadens understandings of who belongs to the United States and what types of practices are understood to be “American.” Bolivian *jóvenes* (young people) in the Washington D.C. area tend to feel more connected to United States than Bolivia, a result of their participation in local institutions like public schools and their comfort level speaking English. At the same time, many participate regularly in social activities like soccer games and folkloric dance that take place in Bolivian cultural spaces. Bolivian traditions and identities, as they are practiced in the United States, are also part of an *americano* identity for the second and 1.5 generation.

The term *americano* also shifts the position of adult Bolivian migrants. In recent years, migrants have experienced increased anxieties about their future in the Washington area as a result of the economic recession and heightened immigration restrictions. While this can produce wariness of certain forms of political and civic engagement, most Bolivians do not see themselves as temporary visitors or migrants with weak connections to host communities. Instead, many suggest that they will remain in Northern Virginia or

⁸⁴ As I suggested in chapter one, Bolivians also use the term “*americano*” to refer to white, native-born people in the United States even as they insist that their own children are American.

Maryland with their children, while even those with firm plans to return to the Valle Alto acknowledge that they will continue to visit their children and grandchildren in the United States.

As a result, places in Northern Virginia and Maryland have become home for Bolivians. Pablo, a migrant from the village of Mamanaca, expressed this to me after a hometown association meeting in Arlington: “When a person lives in a place for a long time, it becomes part of them. Arlington belongs to us now, like Bolivia (*Arlington pertenece a nosotros ahora, como Bolivia*). What happens here matters to me.” In other words, migrants do not simply belong to multiple places. Instead, they lay claim to and appropriate places as their own by participating in organized and everyday activities in public spaces, contributing to local economies, and putting down roots. As they move between different social and cultural worlds in Bolivia and the United States, they challenge and, in some cases, transform accepted understandings of citizenship and belonging. Thus, migrants from Arbieta are actively making multiple places a part of their lives and identities. While recent circumstances have sought to restrict belonging for certain groups, these deep roots and dense social networks mean that transnational ties will likely endure.

Limitations of the current study

Studying migration from Arbieta to the Washington D.C. metro area offers insights into how mobile groups are negotiating belonging within a world that simultaneously enables and restricts movement. The experiences of Bolivians are similar

to other immigrant groups in the United States in a number of respects. Migrants come from a diverse set of class, gender, ethnic, racial and educational backgrounds. They also have a range of different experiences in the United States. Almost 40 percent of Bolivians came to the United States before 1990, while a similar number entered the country after 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

In spite of this diversity, migrants from the Valle Alto are not representative of all Bolivians or other Latin Americans. As I have shown, long-term settlement patterns in the Washington area have allowed a number of migrants to obtain legal status and to physically visit the Valle Alto most years. Strong social networks allow an even broader range of migrants to participate in their communities of origin through collective remittance projects. These networks also helped migrants to largely weather the collapse of the housing market and the economic crisis in ways that Central American migrants in the Washington D.C. area could not. In a related research project on the impact of heightened immigration enforcement (Leitner and Strunk n.d.), I found that day laborers, who are almost exclusively Central American, fared much worse under the economic recession and felt directly targeted by local immigration measures.⁸⁵

My research was limited further by my focus on hometown associations. As I suggested in chapter three, women are largely absent from leadership positions in hometown associations and *sindicatos* in the Valle Alto. Thus, although I had dozens of informal conversations with female migrants along the sidelines of soccer games, the majority of my formal interviews were with men. Interviews with women from other

⁸⁵ Even under these circumstances, however, Central Americans said that they were unlikely to return home.

migrant organizations helped provide a different perspective, but this lies somewhat outside the scope of the dissertation. A more comprehensive understanding of Bolivian migration experiences would require more interviews with women and young people as well as sustained observation of everyday activities in the Washington D.C. area, particularly in more private spaces. This is a limitation that extends to urban ethnographies more generally (Ferguson 1999), and as a result many aspects of Bolivian migrant lives, particularly within the home and at work, are largely left out of this ethnography.

At the same time, the focus on migrant organizations allowed me to observe important and overlooked sites of institutional and more everyday engagement between migrants and other residents of host communities. At soccer fields, cultural festivals and government meetings in the Washington D.C. area, Bolivians made unexpected connections with other community members and local officials. In doing so, they claimed their place as local residents even as they reconstructed their ties to changing communities in the Valle Alto.

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Selected interviews with government officials, activists and academics

- Wilfredo Camacho, Cultural Activist. Cochabamba, March 2011.
- Erika Dueñas, Bolivian Embassy. Washington D.C., September 2010.
- Diógenes Escobar, Mayor of Arbieta. March 2011.
- Connie Freeman, Service Provider in Arlington County. January
- Rodolfo Henreich, Cultural Activist. Washington D.C., April 2011.
- Iver Lara, Sociologist and Researcher at ISCOD. La Paz, February 2011.
- Marcelo Martinez, Bolivian Consulate. Washington D.C., January 2011.
- Ricardo Martinez, Research Director of ACOBE. La Paz, February 2011.
- Armando Morales, Journalist. Washington D.C., April 2011.
- Alvaro Moscoso. Director of CIDRE. Cochabamba, March 2011.
- Yeshid Serrudo. Program Coordinator at ISCOD. Cochabamba. March 2011.

Appendix: Interview guide

1. When did you arrive in the United States?
2. What motivated you to travel to the U.S.?
3. What kinds of jobs have you worked in while in the United States?
4. Did you go to Argentina or another country before the United States?
IF YES: How is work in the United States similar to work in Argentina, Israel, the city of Cochabamba, etc.? How is it different?
5. What are the most notable differences between life in Bolivia and the United States (Argentina, Israel, etc.)?
6. How many people from your community live in the United States? Where do they live (Virginia, Maryland, somewhere else)?
7. How are *residentes* organized in the United States?
 - a. Do communities from the Valle Alto organize in a similar manner to Bolivia?
 - b. Are there differences between communities in the U.S. and Argentina (or other countries where you have lived)?
8. How many people from your community participate in the soccer league?
 - a. Why do you attend games?
9. What have been the impacts of migration on your community in Bolivia? How have the projects by *residentes* changed the community?
10. What are some of the most important problems that *residentes* face in the United States?
11. Do you plan to return to Bolivia? When? Why or why not?