

# GEOPOLITICS, NATIONALISM OR PERSONAL INTEREST: MORALES' ASPIRATION TO HAVE BOLIVIAN BEACHES

The persistence of the maritime claim towards  
Chile in the political agenda of Evo Morales



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**\*\* The photo on the first page is derived from the authors own material and was taken during the field research in La Paz, Bolivia, during June and July 2017.**

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## **List of abbreviations**

<b>ALBA</b>	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America)
<b>DIREMAR</b>	Dirección Estratégica de Reivindicación Marítima (Strategic Direction of Maritime Demand)
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>ICJ</b>	International Court of Justice
<b>MAS</b>	Movement towards Socialism
<b>MNR</b>	Revolutionist Nationalist Movement
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OAS</b>	Organisation of American States





## Introduction

This thesis will analyse the maritime conflict between Bolivia and Chile. After the liberation in 1825, the Bolivian nation was defeated in the War of the Pacific between Chile, Peru and Bolivia from 1879 – 1884. Chile came out as the winner and deprived Bolivia of more than 120.000 km of Bolivian territory, a territory approximately the size of Greece (Long, 2013). The biggest setback was the loss of 400 km of coastline which resulted in a landlocked nation. In 1904, the Peace and Friendship Treaty was signed and from this moment on, Bolivia relinquished its territory to Chile forever. However, this event did not stop the Bolivian nation from trying to regain a sovereign corridor to the sea. Interestingly, in the past 100 years, nothing has changed their landlocked situation, although the maritime issue did make a resurgence on the political agenda of the current president of Bolivia. This paper will investigate the main motives of Evo Morales, the current president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, to pursue the maritime claim to Chile.

In order to understand the maritime issue, three different concepts have been applied. Through the concepts of geopolitics, nationalism, and leadership focused on the diversionary theory of war the maritime issue will be analysed. This thesis will take into consideration the development of the government related to the maritime aspiration. Besides that, it will analyse to what extent there is a relationship between the maritime claim and the re-elections of Bolivia in 2019. Lastly, it will take into account the historic, economic and political aspects of the maritime dispute. The thesis is based upon a qualitative research design in order to provide an answer to the main research question:

*Which factors explain the importance of maritime conflict in the political agenda of Evo Morales? A hypothesis has been formulated and will be reviewed at the end of this thesis. The hypothesis reads as follows; President Evo Morales uses the maritime issue to create support for his re-election in 2019.*

In order to answer the central question, field research has been conducted in La Paz, Bolivia for a considerable period of two months in June and July of 2017. During the field research interviews have been carried out. The interviewees have been carefully selected and have been contacted via an already established network in the Netherlands. The interviewees all have expertise in a specific field regarding the maritime issue. The topic of this thesis is very sensitive, due to the fact that the issue is brought forward as a case by the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Therefore, it was difficult to interview members

of the current political party, the Movement towards Socialism (hereafter referred to as MAS), and the Dirección Estratégica de Reivindicación Marítima (hereafter referred to as DIREMAR) this is a Bolivian state organisation completely devoted to the maritime issue, this can be seen as a limitation of this paper.

The thesis is structured into three different sections. The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework, in which three different theories will be elucidated and carefully explained based on academic literature. The concepts of geopolitics, nationalism, and leadership focused on diversionary theory of war will be used to provide an analytical framework. In order to analyse the maritime issue in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The second chapter offers a background and comprehensive context of the maritime issue. The War of the Pacific 1879 – 1884 will be explained, after which the history of the Bolivian country in relation to the loss of other territories will be clarified. In the last part of this thesis, the history of the political agenda of previous Bolivian leaders will be discussed. This information will be carefully explained, in order to understand the political, historical and economic background in which the maritime issue took place before Morales commenced. In the third chapter, a comprehensive analysis will be made. In particular, the first part is designed to analyse the geopolitical situation under the Morales administration, the second part will clarify to what extent nationalism is portrayed in the Bolivian society, and the third part will reveal the political agenda of the current administration.

# Chapter 1

## Geopolitics, Nationalism and Leadership: a theoretical approach

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, this thesis is based on three different important concepts in order to understand the maritime conflict and the role of the current president, Morales. The first section of this chapter will clarify the concept of geopolitics. The second part will offer an outline regarding nationalism. The third section will be dedicated to leadership, more specifically in relation to the diversionary theory of war.

### 1.1 The heartland of geopolitics

Geopolitics is an important factor in contemporary Latin America. Governments in this region established their identities on their maritime and land areas, which are linked to geopolitical thinking (Nolte & Wehner, 2015). In 1979, Child presented a broad explanation and described it as 'political geography'. The author claims that the full definition should be linked to the connection between geography and expansion, national development, military strategy and imperialism. Kacowicz (2000), refers to the importance of the relationship between politics and geography, especially the significance of territory, because it is essential in the international politics of South American countries since the liberation from the Spanish colonizers. The work of Kacowicz reveals that the revolutionary element of geopolitics indicates "that the most important space to be conquered and controlled is not physical, but psychological: the hearts and minds of men and women" (2000, p. 83). The work of Pittman claims that "geopolitical thinking shapes government policy and performance in the involved countries and establishes "recognition of geopolitics as a political force in the region" (1981, p.6). The geopolitical theories listed in this thesis all have one definition of the geopolitical aspect in common, namely the relation between geography and international politics. Apart from that, all the authors refer to relation of geography, international politics and the link to the economy of a nation. For this paper the latter is the most crucial and will be more elaborated on.

Some authors refer to geopolitics as the "the race for imperial hegemony" (Cohen, 2001, p. 6200). According to Chandler & Munday (2016), hegemony means the supremacy or power over another state. An example of this can be found in Mackinder's *'heartland theory'*, which reflects an era of constructing an empire, and severe nationalism (Cohen, 2001). Mackinder shed light on geopolitics in 1904 and described the theory as a country that broadens its power and control over other countries, because the dominant country rules 'the heartland' (Mackinder, 1919). To understand Mackinder's heartland theory a connection should be made between international

relations and geography (cited in Sloan, 1999). Sloan argues that there are three different components within this theory. The first component is that the relationship can be viewed as an aim of policy; an award which can be won in a battle between states. The author claims that states are in charge of their territory, therefore any part of that territory can be a cause of conflict. It is widely known that one of the main objectives of a state is to protect its frontiers from external violence. However, Sloan adds that inhabitants of one state can emigrate by pacific or aggressive means and establish a new state, which “consequently changes in geographic scope of a state’s political authority” (1999, p. 16).

The second component is concerning the historical and ecological environment. The same author reasons that the historical view of the geographical location contains a ‘*long duration*’. The principle element of this ‘*long duration*’ emphasises that time does not change much. According to Sloan, “the effects of the geographical environment are the most persistent and unchanging” (1999, p. 16). For the relevance of this paper the last component is the most important since this one is very suitable to the case study. The third component can be related to the military action. It follows that once this component arises, the other methods are no longer being perceived in the same way. With this component, only the essential geographical traits that are significant for military purposes are important. To understand Mackinder it is important to see the interaction between the military action and the geography.

It is important to highlight the theory of Tambs (1965), cited in the work of Hepple (2004), since Tambs built upon the concept of Mackinder. However, the distinction that Tambs (1965) makes is that in his view ‘the heartland’ is South America. The view of Tambs can be denoted as valuable for the paper since it is directly applicable to the case study because according to Tambs’ ‘*new heartland theory*’, the idea of the heartland region and its rule can be directly utilised in the South American perspective (Hepple, 2004). The work of Tambs, reveals that Latin America possesses over two significant strategic regions; the Bolivian triangle and the Caribbean basin. Hepple (2004), indicates that the countries such as Colombia, the Guianas, and Venezuela have been separated from the other South American nations by the Amazon and the Andes. Therefore, these countries are historically part of the Caribbean basin. Furthermore, Hepple indicates that the central geopolitical interest of Tambs’ was in particular the Bolivian triangle since “the South American mountain ranges and river systems have been vital influences on this inter-state competition” (2004, p. 362). The South American continent consist of the Andean mountains and the Amazon basis territories. Besides that, the region possesses important rivers that have their source in South America. Tambs makes clear that “these geographical factors made this the continental core area or heartland of South America” (Hepple, 2004, p. 362). Bolivia can be seen as the heartland with all its specific and extraordinary

geographical characteristics, and therefore neighbouring countries tried to penetrate the nation. Tambs (1965) specifically points out the Brazilian annexation of the Amazon basin and Chile who invaded Bolivia's maritime outlet. The work of Tambs specified that "Bolivia was dying the death of a thousand cuts, and its leaders, though they had the heartland, they did not have the head to stop the haemorrhaging" (Hepple, 2004, p. 362). The heartland itself was not the centre of control, but the domination of this heartland of another state such as Chile or Brazil. Moreover, Hepple refers in his article to Tambs's vision of the heartland as;

"Bolivia was the heartland of South America but her dismemberment in the past was due to her inability to dominate the region in the face of aggression by her neighbours" (Hepple, 2004, p. 362).

The discourse of Tambs (1965) differs from the original theory of Mackinder, which visualises that the heartland itself had control and influence (Hepple, 2004). Nevertheless, Tambs' theory is of great significance for this paper, and will therefore be applied in the third chapter.

Apart from the heartland theory, this thesis will apply the idea of Pittman (1981) since this author also emphasises the economic element of geopolitics. According to Pittman (1981) there are several factors which can be indicated for the interest in geopolitics in Latin America. The first rationale Pittman elucidates are the extreme '*geographic elements*' and the '*climate circumstances*' in the region. These conditions are still problematic in Latin America in spite of the contemporary technology. In addition, the modern expertise is being used to locate resources which can be situated in areas near the border that are poorly inhabited. This can bring up previous conflicts and arguments and are likely to create additional ones (Pittman, 1981). The second factor is crucial for this paper, because it explains the increase and the poorly spread population in the countries. Some are facing a stable growth of their populations and have many remote areas which are not exploited, other countries encounter a rapidly expanding population and are affected by the lack of fertile soil. Pittman (1981) claims that the latter generates rivalry between the nations for the most desired territory and this results in emigration to the more valuable and preferred areas. Pittman argues that

"This more or less peaceful expansion and population movement feeds fears of loss of sovereignty and political control on the part of affected governments, and thus contributes to tension and conflict" (Pittman, 1981, p. 8).

Growing population in a nation explains the common need to nourish the population which consequently results in disputes for limited resources, especially, some countries are possessing valuable minerals and other resources which are very popular on the international market

(Pittman, 1981). As a result of these important resources, the countries are fighting with each other to seize their control. Besides that, the author complemented his theory with a convincing feature for this paper. In particular, Pittman shows that there is a competition regarding desirable access to the sea. He that “certain portions of the sea, for the process is rapidly extending itself offshore, to include growing competition for control of the resources of the continental shelf, [and] the deep sea bed [...]” (Pittman, 1981, p. 9). More specifically, the author tries to indicate that having access to the sea with its valuable resources and having access to ports are a crucial factor in the economies of the nation states. As the result of a better economy, the nations are more capable to nourish their citizens. It can be seen as an important element for the development and proliferation of a nation. This is a very interesting point of view that will be further elaborated on in this thesis.

The geopolitical idea of Nolte and Wehner (2015) is of major importance as it highlights the economic relation to geopolitics. Nolte and Wehner (2015) are making clear that policy making based on geopolitical thoughts still occurs on a daily basis in Latin America. In addition, the same authors are referring to a map in the Defence White Books and arguing that most of the maps emphasise the Navel borders and the lost and repossessed areas. According to them, “the attempts of Latin American governments to construct identities based on territorial and maritime spaces are deeply rooted in geopolitical thinking” (Nolte & Wehner, 2015, p. 33). The authors summarising the central elements which influence geopolitical thinking in Latin America since 1990. One of the elements relates to the natural resources, which turns out to be a key matter in geopolitical thinking in Latin America. The authors are stating that this has led to increased securitization and to more territorial disagreements, in particular associated with maritime frontiers. Nolte and Wehner (2015) are arguing that maritime border disputes have become more crucial in new geopolitics as these conflicts have a close relation to economic interests. According to them, there is a shift in the international market following the growing importance of the Pacific Ocean. Due to an upsurge in Asian economies, they became significant business partners with in particular the new superpower: China. The countries with direct access to the Pacific Ocean economically benefitted from this condition. According to the Nolte and Wehner (2015), this *‘Pacific Consensus’* created a new geo-economic situation in the region. Apart from that, Nolte and Wehner (2015) are emphasising the importance of natural resources in the region which, continuously, are a crucial geo-economic and geopolitical issue. An interestingly insight is that Asia is the largest buyer of these significant minerals. Therefore, the territories where the supposed resources are located turned into highly conflict areas (Nolte & Wehner, 2015). The authors are stating that

“Already in the 1990s, maritime geopolitics changed, turning away from sea-lanes and choke points to fishing resources and exploitations – which made the maritime frontiers a major concern of South American geopolitics” (Nolte & Wehner, 2015, p. 40).

The insights of Nolte and Wehner will be further elaborated on in the third chapter of this thesis because of their importance.

## 1.2 Nationalism

Nationalism is a centuries old theory that has been applied in almost all nations over the world. The mentioned authors all have their own idea regarding nationalism. However, this thesis will base itself upon the theories of Hobsbawm (2012), Baycroft (1998) and Silvert (1961).

Hobsbawm (2012) argues that nationalism must be seen as ‘invented traditions’. In his view, this means a set of routines that are collectively recognised and have a symbolic or ritual character, which indoctrinates particular values and standards of behaviour by recurrence and these inevitably entail a continuity of the past. The author adds that although traditions are mostly alleged to be ancient, frequently traditions can be recent in foundation and on occasion be invented. The term ‘invented tradition’ refers to;

“The term ‘invented tradition’ is used in a broad, but not imprecise sense. It includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally institute an those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period - a matter of a few years perhaps - and establishing themselves with great rapidity” (Hobsbawm, 2012, p. 1).

Apart from this, it is obvious that not all of the traditions are long-lasting in the same way, although it is important to emphasise the form and establishment of these traditions instead of the endurance. Traditions can be introduced with a reference to the past, even though the tradition is new and did not occur in that same past. The eccentricity of invented traditions is the endurance by means of its repetition (Hobsbawm, 2012). It should be highlighted that Hobsbawm made a difference between custom and tradition. The author illustrates a clear example in his book to demonstrate the distinction, by referring to judges and claiming that custom is what they do and that that tradition (or invented tradition in this case) is the robe and the wig. The decrease of custom results in the alteration of the tradition since it is linked. So, an invented tradition is “essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (Hobsbawm, 2012, p. 4).

Baycroft (1998) on the other hand, claims that states are ‘imagined communities’ established out of the image that the participants invented for themselves, and this is founded on the history. He states that every nation has a deep-rooted connection with the past. Such a past can be glorious

with many military or cultural victories. Yet, this can also be the opposite wherein a nation had to process many defeats. The author argues that the national history is crucial in “the formation, strengthening and ultimate penetration of national sentiment and nationalism to the roots of the members of the nation” (Baycroft, 1998, p. 24). According to the author, there is a relation between the historical content, the origin of national history, and the manner in which it converted into something widely accepted by the common masses.

The first argument he demonstrated is that nationalism needs to be cultivated and promoted to gain common recognition by the majority of the population. In addition, both the image the population has regarding themselves and national historical mythologies need to be created. The author added that this practice needs a long time, “using a carefully edited version of the history of the nation which highlights certain key episodes and events and downplays or ignores others” (Baycroft, 1998, p. 24). In fact, the creation of a certain national image calls for a specific selection of historical events and their interpretation. Furthermore, a nation can only endure due to the ability to forget historical mistakes, if a nation would recall its mistakes and defeats, clearly this would harm the nation's credibility (Baycroft, 1998). The second argument the author reveals is that a nation should define and prioritise its ethnic, cultural historical features. It follows that, due to these central characteristics nations can be distinguished, from one another. The composition of these features is supported and emphasised by “the select interpretation of history” (Baycroft, 1998, p. 25).

Apart from this, the term ‘*national myth*’ is being stressed, with this the author is referring to the connection of the future of a group of human beings. This is a very interesting insight and will be used in the third chapter of this research. According to Baycroft;

“The idea is to show how the members have all lived through and share a similar past, and to demonstrate that these characteristics have unified and continue to unify the identified group into what should be called a nation” (Baycroft, 1998, p. 25).

Furthermore, the author acknowledges that the establishment of a nation can be related to the recognition of the society, the sense of belonging to a particular group, and the competence to recognise other members of that society. It should be stated that there are also different ways to create a constructed feeling of nationality. Baycroft (1998), for example, refers to the national symbols in his text, by arguing that it is effective to link specific symbols in order to portray certain positive historical events of the nation. However, these symbols do not directly relate to these events, as many of them are neutral or imprecise. Obviously, the most well-known symbol of a nation is the national flag. Besides that, the author refers to an excellent example of a national symbol in France. He describes the way the government, in those days, chose the date



and a symbol for a national holiday in France to celebrate the French Revolution and the foundation of the republic. The government selected 14<sup>th</sup> of July as this was the date that the Bastille got seized, which represented the collapse of an establishment that represented the previous regime. The government decided to pick this event, since everyone could identify with it or would find it inoffensive (Baycroft, 1998). Moreover, national events are key in the development of nationalism, official state ceremonies are sometimes created to increase their prestige, and “to give an impression of longevity, stability and historical tradition which is fictitious” (Baycroft, 1998, p. 29).

Silvert (1961) claims that the concept of nationalism clarifies the way in which history can be used to justify present actions. He indicates that nationalism can be understood in three different approaches; nationalism as patriotism, nationalism as a social value, and nationalism as an ideology. Patriotism refers to the affection for the country and the used symbols to express this. According to Silvert (1961), these celebrated aspects include worship of the race, military display and ceremonies on the national holidays, fierce anthems, and honour towards symbolic elements. However, there are some obstacles to this, one of them is that many inhabitants of rural communities do not fully transferred their sense of belonging from local ‘barrio’ to national (Silvert, 1961). Besides that, many nations have a scarcity of national symbols since there are not many great heroes of the war, abundant exploits and impressive conquests which are significant elements for national mythology. Therefore, Silvert (1961) states that instead of the revival of myths, the creation of myths is the best approach in Latin American nationalism.

The second fundamental approach is nationalism as a social value, which Silvert describes as “the norm defining the loyalty due to fellow citizens and to the secular state as the ultimate arbiter of all conflicts of public interest” (1961, p. 4). The third approach is nationalism as an ideology, which is the most examined aspect of the issue as this is the one with the strongest presence. This aspect also represents sensitive issues such as; anti-imperialism, political extremism, xenophobia, expropriation and racism. With regard to Silvert (1961), nationalism as an ideology comprises explicit reasoning wherein the symbols of a nation are being applied in order to encourage actions aimed, at least to some extent, “to glorify the nation as a good in itself” (Silvert, 1961, p. 5). The demonstrated ideologies in a nation relate to certain other factors, in particular the type of leadership in a nation, the connection among social classes, and the political parties and interest groups.

### 1.3 Leadership and diversionary theory of war

The diversionary theory of war is widely discussed in the academic debate. In general, it could be stated that it is not a new phenomenon especially in Latin America (Miller & Elgün, 2011). The classic diversionary theory of war stipulates that conflicts are not initiated due to a disagreement about interests between nations, but that motives can be found in domestic difficulties (Derouen, 2002) (Levy, 1989) (Tir, 2010). Tir (2010) adds that under certain domestic circumstances due to political discontent or economic hardship, the leader of a nation may try to initiate a “foreign policy crisis” so he can distract the domestic dissatisfaction and strengthen his political aspirations through “a rally around the flag effect” (2010, p. 413). This thesis will be built upon the recent work of Tir (2010), Sobek (2007), and Smith (1996), since their theories suggest that political leaders are using foreign policy to manipulate the population in order to remain in office. Besides that, it is important to highlight that these theories can be applied to all nations, whilst the classical diversionary theory of war is only applicable in the most powerful countries.

The theory of Tir (2010) establishes a link between territory and diversion and the author refers to this as ‘*territorial diversion*’. Political leaders can benefit from using a geographical region as a diversion tactic, because territorial conflicts have the ability to provoke more feelings of threat and can unify the society more than other matters such humanitarian intervention or trade. Tir (2010) claims that political leaders are using the sense of belonging to certain territory, a significant element of national identity, as an advantage to manipulate the citizens and use this for their personal interest. Citizens feel attached to land, therefore they are concerned about who governs it, and are willing to defend their territory. Gottman (1973) agreed with Tir, by stating that inhabitants of a nation are emotionally concerned and socially involved when it comes to territory. Tir points out that “territorial conflicts elicit greater emotional investment, mobilization, and societal bonding provides the unscrupulous leader with some important advantages - which may make the territorial diversion logic work better” (2010, p. 413). The author supports his theory by suggesting that some international disputes are led by the political leader’s self-interest instead of national interest. Conflicts concerning territory between nations are generators of antagonistic behaviour. This hostility is an ideal environment for a political leader’s legitimisation that his actions are designed to defend the national interest instead of personal gain. Under these circumstances, political leaders are assuming that by using this territorial dispute the society will support them (Tir, 2010). Moreover, by employing this technique the leader hopes that the citizens will give the leader “carte blanche or at least a greater benefit of the doubt” (2010, p. 416).

According to Tir, diversionary action has to be identified as extremely valuable by the populations because “the conflict (i.e., the diversion) [needs to be] worth the cost of damaging or even breaking the otherwise important ties” (2010, p. 415). It is important to indicate the meaning of these ties, with saying this the author means the relationship among countries. Most territorial disputes are located exactly amid bordering nations. Besides that, territorial diversion is useful for a political leader because territorial concerns are viewed as an essential element of a nation’s ability to survive and protect its identity (Tir, 2010). In this case, identity is being viewed as the connection between the sense of belonging to a defined geographical area. In particular, since humans are surrounded by land, the territory between two nations or regions has been the cause of conflict since humans are sensitive to hazards to their land (Vasquez, 2009). Overall, the territorial diversion of Tir (2010) implies that (1) leaders can seize society’s attention, (2) to appeal to citizens feelings regarding their identity, and (3), to assist a political leader to unite a polarised society to make sure he/she can stay in power (Tir, 2010).

Coser (1956), argues that conflict consist of five different elements; two of these elements are elements being part of the diversionary theory. In particular, conflict can be viewed as a convergence of the society since who feels unified for the same matter. Furthermore, Coser (1956) elucidates that conflict can serve as an identity and can create a periphery. It focuses on the in-group and out-group principle, distractions are introduced to unify a polarized society (which can be seen as the in-group), by portraying the foreign opponent as the outgroup (Tir, 2010). Tir added that, since geographical disputes are at

“The heart of human perceptions of identity, they can be used by the leader to overcome societal divisions. The leader can argue that the society as a whole is the in-group with a common territorial interest and cast the state controlling, or attempting to control, the land that “rightfully” belongs to the leader’s country as the outgroup” (Tir, Territorial Diversion: Diversionary Theory of War and Territorial Conflict, 2010, p. 417).

As can be expected, political leaders can employ this and use this to stay in power. This theory is will be further elaborated on in chapter three.

Smith, on the other hand indicates that “re-election incentives influence foreign policy decision making in democratic states” (1996, p. 133). In his article, he reveals that governments usually represent the interest of the nation. However, elections can affect the government’s behaviour and act against the interest of the nation when implementing a policy. Smith (1996) states that the behaviour of governments change when the policies that increase the possibility of re-election differ from those that increase the welfare of the nation. Moreover, he claims that foreign policies that are aimed to support a government to retain control are identified as

*'diversionary wars'*. The fundamental aspect is that when a government is under national pressure, it employs a risk-taking *'diversionary foreign policy'*. Due to the implemented foreign policy, the government attempts to distract the attention from the domestic circumstances to the international sphere. Smith adds that "if the foreign policy event overshadows domestic problems then the government avoids being removed from power" (1966, p. 134). In general, governments that execute effective policies convince the society to prevent them from resigning. This stimulates political leaders and governments to employ certain behaviour and implement foreign policies which are not automatically for the benefits of the nations (Smith, 1996).

Furthermore, Sobek (2007) highlights that the diversionary theory could be illustrated as *'rally around the flag'*, with reference to this, the author explained that political leaders usually would like to stay in office which can create threats in domestic spheres. Political leaders have several possibilities to manage these threats. However, Sobek states that "one of the most theorized and tested alternatives is the manipulation of the 'rally around the flag' effect through the diversionary use of force" (2007, p.31). The use of diversionary theory can have four constructive effects for the political leaders, for this thesis the first effect described by the author is essential because it shows a direct link to the case study. The first is the effect of a victorious action in a foreign country which may collect wider support at home. As a result, the increased support gives the leader the opportunity to stay longer in power. Secondly, due to a conflict overseas and the friction it generates domestically, the leaders can "justify a crackdown" (Sobek, 2007, p. 31). According to the author, this crackdown means that, if properly addressed, the political leaders can eradicate any forceful opposition towards the government. Thirdly, the external conflict may distract the nation's attention away from matters that initiated the discontent (Sobek, 2007). Lastly, the conflict with a foreign country may rally backing for the government through the in-group/out-group effect, as previously explained by Coser (1956).

On the contrary, Gent (2009) focusses on the two-game diversionary theory. This means that the author contradicts the previously mentioned theories of Coser (1956), Tir (2010), and Sobek (2007). These models emphasise the relation between political leaders, their national re-elections and how foreign policy is deployed to ensure to endure their time in office. According to Gent (2009), these are principal-agent models since the electoral districts (the principle) have to determine if its leader can remain in office (the agent) founded on their implemented foreign and national policies. Even though the principle-agent models studies "how domestic reselection incentives can induce diversionary war behaviour, they typically ignore the critical role that strategic interaction plays in international relations" (Gent, 2009, p. 2). However, these models are neglecting the fact that decisions to start a conflict or go to war are not made solely made by

one leader. As far as the author is concerned, political leaders “anticipate the decisions of other leaders when deciding what actions to take in the international arena” (Gent, 2009, p. 2).

## Chapter 2

### The evolution of the maritime conflict since the War of the Pacific

This part of the thesis will provide a comprehensive contextualisation regarding the maritime issue in order to facilitate the comprehension of the analysis that will be presented in third chapter. The chapter will start with a brief history of the Bolivian country concerning the territory of the nation. It will be followed by an extended explanation of the War of the Pacific, which according to the results originated through geopolitical reasoning. The second part of this chapter presents the territorial history of the Bolivian nation. The country has endured many territorial amputations which has had an effect on nationalism. The last part of this chapter presents an overview of the performances regarding the maritime issue since the loss of the coastline by the political leaders of Bolivia.

#### 2.1 The War of the Pacific: the geopolitics of a territorial conflict

In 1825, Bolivia obtained independency, though the geographical landscape at time was different than the Bolivian territory today. Bolivia had sovereign access to 400 km of coastline, currently referred to as the Atacama Desert (Kleiman, 2016). The Atacama Desert located in the mid-west coast of South America, is a sparsely populated territory due its remoteness and desolateness (St. John, 1994). In spite of the characteristics of this remote area, the desert has been the subject of territorial conflict and clashing geopolitical foreign policies of the surrounding countries. The conflict regarding this territory commenced before Bolivia, Chile and Peru, the main actors of the conflict, became independent from Spain (St. John, 1994) (Carmona, 1966). St. John (1994) argued that the dispute can be traced back to the nineteenth century, where the Spanish colonizers prevailed. Simultaneously with the independence, the Latin American nations accepted the doctrine of *Uti Possidetis de jure in 1810*. The work of Checa Drouet (1936) reveals that *Uti Possidetis* means that each new nation is bound by the territory that was appointed to them by the colonial rulers. Moreover, the Spanish administrative neglected to precisely demarcate the borders of its colonial properties, because most of these where located in remote and sparsely populated areas which were insignificant to the Crown (St. John, 1994). St. John added that “given the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the exact borders of the newly-proclaimed republics of Bolivia, Chile, and Peru were immediately a subject of acrimonious dispute” (1994, p. 2).

In 1879 the War of the Pacific commenced with three main protagonists; Bolivia and Peru at one side and Chile at the other. According to Mesa Gisbert (2016), ex-president of Bolivia and representative of the maritime issue, the main inhabitants in the region were Chileans, which led to the dramatic fact that there was almost no civil confrontation to the dispossession. Under these circumstances, Chile turned out to be the major winner in 1884, by annexing the complete coastline of Bolivia which as a result became a landlocked nation. The victorious Chile also integrated the Peruvian province of Tarapacá and had therefore almost absolute power of the largest deposits of nitrate in the world (Sater, 2007). Sater states that “this struggle would dramatically alter not merely these nations’ boundaries but their collective memory as well” (2007, p.1). Bonilla (2008) points out that none of the other countries in the region faced the same remote situation as Bolivia, apart from Paraguay. The author added that before the defeated war in 1879, the Bolivian nation was confronted with the tremendously weak connections to the world. The country had two connections since colonial times: the Atlantic, although due to growing costs of transportation this route was less significant, and the Pacific, which according to the author was, “probably the more important of the two”( 2008, p. 564), although it was difficult to reach due to the remoteness of the Atacama Desert.

The immediate cause of this war remains difficult to point out, however this paper will support the idea that the natural resources were the main incentives for the war. Because several studies have highlighted the factors that indicate that the resources were so valuable for the South American nations that this was the main reason for the war (Bonilla, 2008) (García Argañarás, 2012) (Weil, 1984) (Wehner, 2010) (St. John, 1994) (Kleiman, 2016) (Querejazu Calvo, 1979) (Sater, 2007) (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014) (Mesa Gisbert, 2016) (Sicotte, Vizcarra, & Wandschneider, 2009). Mesa Gisbert (2016) presented a convincing argument in favour of the previous described argument, by stating that the main reason why a territory that inhospitable as the Atacama Desert, converted in a disputed territory has to do with its wealthy natural resources. The Atacama contained a variety of commodities; nitre, silver, copper and guano. Guano was at that time interesting because it could be sold on the European Market as a fertilizer or gunpowder (Mesa Gisbert, 2016). Due to the wealthy resources in the region, the area became of particular interest to Chile, who before this discovery drew minor attention to the Atacama Desert. Chile’s desire was to require access to the nitrate resources specifically in Peru, who at that time had possession of large stock of nitrate even more than Bolivia. However, to retrieve that access, Chile was forced to gain fully access of the Bolivian territory (E. Kunt, personal communication, June 22, 2017). According to Kunt, Diego Portales, an important Chilean statesman at that time, claimed that Chile was forced to expand its frontiers in order to develop the country. He added that, if Chile would not enlarge their territory it would end up as a failed nation. Kunt stresses that this was the actual reason for the War of the Pacific. An article

by Ortega (1984) points out the same view by claiming that an elite group of Chile supported a policy of conflict and territorial enlargement as the most practical answer to the nation's political and economic setbacks. With that objective, this group of Chilean elites advocated with an effective political force to obtain its objectives, namely the integration of the nitrate regions (Ortega, 1984). The author added that, according to this group, this could be seen as a perpetual solution to the difficulties the country was facing (Ortega, 1984). The report of Wehner (2010) indicates similar motives for the War of the Pacific. The author emphasised the economic issues being the conflict of control over the nitrate production in the Atacama Desert.

However, there are other motives for the War of the Pacific. Wehner (2010) for example, added another trigger that could be seen as a reason to initiate the war, namely the strategic concern. This strategic concern was the secret defence pact that was signed by Bolivia and Peru (Wehner, 2010). This pact signified that both nations were obligated to assist the other in times of war, according to the same author this pact was perceived as a significant threat by Chile at that time. Others, such as Garcia Argañarás, blame the Bolivian government for the war since Bolivia imposed "a 10 cent tax on every quintal of exported salt" (2012, p. 3), which was in contradiction with a treaty signed by both nations in 1874.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the main trigger were the natural resources in the area, especially for Bolivia who lost the war and thereby also access to natural resources. The article of Sciotte *et al.*, (2009) estimates the profit for Bolivia if it still would have sovereign access to the natural resources during the 1880s. A multi-country model of export taxation was used to replicate the hypothetical government profits, and reveals that Bolivia would have gained between 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of sterling throughout the 1880s. This work indicates the immense impact of the loss of the former Bolivian territory.

The outcome of the war was terrible for Bolivia, since it deprived the country from its single sovereign outlet to the sea. Ever since, Bolivia has tried to regain access to the lost coastline. Directly after the war, several treaties have been signed amongst the protagonists. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1904 between Bolivia and Chile can be identified as crucial, since it entailed several important elements. The first element was to endorse the 1884 treaty, which was directly signed after the war. The 1904 Treaty was an amendment of the previous and thereby should strengthen the relationship between the countries. Moreover, it clearly marked the boundaries between the two and hereby relinquishing Bolivia of its territory with access to the coastline. Chile on its turn was obligated to build a railroad to connect the port of Arica with the city La Paz in Bolivia, compensate Bolivia with 300,000 sterling in cash, and give Bolivia the permission to free commercial trade in its territory and its Pacific ports (Chargé Ames to the



Secretary of State, 1905). Perrier Brusle (2013) claims that even though it is a bilateral treaty, the complexity can solely be comprehended in the multilateral relationship that unites Chile, Bolivia and Peru. The author stated that

“In fact, one of the arguments advanced by Bolivia’s liberal government for signing an agreement so unfavourable to the country’s interests, since it would permanently concede the Pacific, was that Peruvian restrictions prevented it from accessing the port of Arica, which was necessary for the country’s economic development because it was the closest maritime outlet for Bolivia’s capital” (Perrier Brusle, 2013, p. VII).

Apart from that, in 1929 Peru and Chile signed the Treaty of Lima. The signing of this document had serious implications for Bolivia, the treaty specified that both countries were obligated to consult with each other before one of them could cede territory to a third nation (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014).

It can be concluded that the War of the Pacific had tremendous effects on the Bolivian state. The outcome of the war deprived the country from its wealthy natural resources guano, nitrate, chopper, and silver. According to the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2014), Chile also profits from the recently discovered lithium in the territory that previously belonged to Bolivia. Besides that, the other crucial element is that it dispossessed Bolivia to sovereign access to the sea which makes it a landlocked nation. For this reason, Bolivia cannot possess the benefits from the maritime capacity.

## **2.2 The effects of losing territory in Bolivia and the relation with nationalism**

The state exercises power concerning a ‘territorially-demarcated area’ (Mann, 1984). According to Mann, the state can be identified as “a central place - and a unified territorial reach” (1984, p.198). Territory is repeatedly the cause of conflict with other states because territory is “at the heart of national identity and cohesion” (Murphy, 1990, p. 531). In Bolivia, territory has played a huge role since its independence, especially, since it lost many of its territory to neighbouring countries. Mesa Gisbert (2016) refers in his book to the fact that many Bolivians are educated by ‘the famous mourning map’. This map reminds the alleged original territory of Bolivia and it illustrates the present boundaries of the country, although, the author stated that this map is insufficient to clarify what happened. According to a famous Bolivian book, *Pueblo Enfermo*, written by Alcides Arguedas, the Bolivian nation developed a negative self-image due to the significant territory losses. Núñez C. and Taylor (1989), stating that Arguedas negatively expressed himself regarding national geography that appeared “to conspire against by vices, a people incapable of governing themselves, a people condemned to mediocrity, a military and political set of rulers committed to the rape of the land” (Núñez C & Taylor, 1989, p. 88). This

implies that the Bolivian nation put itself in a negative light, and consequently transformed into the nation it is today. This can be viewed as a vital part of their nationalistic sentiment.

As illustrated in figure 1, Bolivia lost most of its territory to neighbouring countries, for example to Brazil during the Acre conflict in 1903. This dispute was fought in the centre of the Amazonian rubber boom territory (Klein, 2008). Klein (2008) claims that the Acre area was neighbouring the Brazilian frontiers and were mainly inhabited by Brazilian migrants. Mesa Gisbert (2016) adds that there was a lack of Bolivian state presence, a lack of Bolivian population, and the precise border was disputable. The Bolivian government established a custom house at Puerto Alonso, however this initiated riots by the local tappers who were supported by Brazil (Mesa Gisbert, 2016). As a result, Bolivia lost the Acre territory to Brazil, which was officially relinquished by the Treaty of Petropolis in 1903 (Klein, 2008). Apart from this conflict, Bolivia lost also parts of its territory to Argentina and Peru before 1930.



Figure 1. Brusle (2013, p. 689)

In 1932, Bolivia commenced the war with Paraguay regarding the Chaco territory. This enormous territory was claimed by both Paraguay and Bolivia, and was of specific concern due to the alleged oil and gas in the area. Paraguay’s triumph can be related to several factors. First of all, it had a modern army, besides that, it was used to the environmental climate and had therefore advantages over the Bolivian soldiers (Cote, 2013). Moreover, Cote (2013) indicates

that Bolivia struggled with political and social disruptions which affected employment and mobilisation. A clear example was the language barrier, due to the fact that the ordinary Bolivian soldiers spoke either Aymara or Quechua and they could therefore not communicate with their officers who spoke Spanish. The outcome of the war was devastating for Bolivia as it lost even more territory to Paraguay. Interestingly, it should be mentioned that the Chaco war also found its origins in geopolitical factors, since various authors indicate that the war commenced because of alleged oil and gas in the territory. Therefore it can be concluded that a line of continuity in geopolitical interest can be identified. The aftermath of the Chaco war started a realisation process within Bolivia. First of all, the Bolivians realised that all the other neighbouring countries will come to Bolivia and seize territory (P. Michel, personal communication, July 1, 2017). Luykx build upon that statement by pointing out that

“Bolivians share an awareness that not only is their country not a global winner, it is also rather far down on the list of losers. [...] Also present in the back of the national mind is the fact that, since independence, Bolivia has lost more than half its territory to the ambitions of its neighbors. Thus, a major theme of Bolivian nationalism is the attempt to hold on to that which is being insidiously and inexorably plundered” (Luykx, 1999, pp. 38-39).

Mcgurn Centellas (2008) forms the same statement, and claims that all neighbouring countries included territorial parts which were previously Bolivian. As a result, the same author points that Bolivia was reduced to an “extreme and perhaps inhospitable environment” (2008, p. 97) and the modern Bolivians experience this as “a powerful sentiment” (2008, p. 97). Second of all, there was a recognition of the fact that Bolivia was a multicultural society, and that Bolivia was one nation, although they could not speak the same language (P. Michel, personal communication, July 1, 2017). Finally, Bolivia realised that it had to resolve its internal problems such as voting available for all levels of society, development of education and access to education, agricultural improvements, and enhancement of internal politics. Michel, an important Bolivian historian, expresses that if these internal problems will be addressed, Bolivia will be able to resolve its external problems such as acquiring sovereign access to the sea (personal communication, July 1, 2017).

The Chaco war caused a breach in the traditional political parties and caused a generational division among the Bolivian citizens (Vila de Prado, 2006). Vila de Prado (2006) adds that the war provoked a vital impact on the lower and middle classes and these classes perceived the reality of their nation in another aspect. After the war the youth, the middle class, workers and peasants spoke out their disappointment. According to Weil, the Chaco War resulted in the “exasperation of the people [which] may well have constituted a turning point in the social and political life of the country that led to the Revolution of 1952” (1984, p.8). Vila de Prado claims

that “the revolution of 1952 allowed the entry of the masses into the electoral system, installing a populist democracy” (2006, p 13). Resulting from the 1952 revolution, a new political movement the Revolutionist Nationalist Movement (hereafter referred to as MNR) was formed. During 1952 and 1964 the MNR represented the state, a movement and a party (Vila de Prado (2006). Luykx has drawn attention to the fact that subsequently to the 1952 revolution the most important government concern “has been how to forge a unified nation from a diverse melange of frequently antagonistic social groups” (1999, p. 18). The author complements his statement by emphasising that Bolivia is not merged as one nation. Besides that, some of Bolivia’s core features such as the different languages, a conflictive history, endurance of the indigenous way of life, a solid working class awareness, severe social imbalances and marked regional distinctions can be seen as the main hindrances to ‘national unity’ (Luykx, 1999, p. 18)

It is important to highlight the gravity of the loss of different parts of territory in Bolivia. According to Echalar, an important Bolivian journalist, Bolivia created a victimized image themselves (personal communication, June 26, 2017). He stated that “we lost this terrible jungle in Acre, however, there was nobody interested in” (personal communication, June 26, 2017). Moreover, Echalar declared that Bolivia did not lose as much territory in Acre as was proclaimed by the Bolivian government. Apart from that, the journalist affirmed that the same occurred with Paraguay, since it was completely unclear which part belonged to Paraguay and which part did not (personal communication, June 26, 2017). Mesa Gisbert (2016) reveals that the consequences of the War of the Pacific is the most significant loss of all the territorial difficulties the country encountered. He points out that there are two elements that give magnitude to the loss of the coastline. The first one is that this war persisted in the heart of the citizens, since it was the only war in “which all the Bolivians were always united” (Mesa Gisbert, 2016, p. 25). The maritime dispute converted into a spiritual cohesion of the nation, a topic that everyone supports, and that also strengthens “[its] collective identity and [its] patriotism” (Mesa Gisbert, 2016, p. 25).

The loss of sovereign access of the sea still presents an important component in the nation-building of the country. The country celebrates every year in March the Day of the Sea. This day commemorates the War of the Pacific, but especially the war hero Eduardo Abaroa is being honoured since he got killed on this exact day at March 23, 1887 (Cuiza, 2016). Eduardo Abaroa became a war hero because he was a normal citizen who fought for Bolivia against Chile during the memorable war (Querejazu Calvo, 1979). At this day, thousands of Bolivians march through the streets in city of La Paz dressed in navy outfits and singing anthems about the sea. Moreover, in order to demonstrate that the Bolivians still desire access to the sea, the nation still has a navy that is also presented during that day. According to Perrier Brusle (2013) the Day of the Sea

illustrates how deeply rooted the loss of the War of the Pacific is and that it is a part of its '*collective memory*'. In addition, it can be seen as "a central pillar of its nation-building, [and] it has never been absent from Bolivian political life" (Perrier Brusle, 2013, p. II). McGurn Centellas (2008) adds that the political usefulness of the littoral should not be misjudged.

Echalar indicated that Bolivians cannot separate the emotional part of 'the loss of the sea' with the practical part (personal communication, June 26, 2017). According to the journalist the loss of the sea is being romanticized, because the Bolivian society interpret the coastline as something splendid. However, the journalist stated that Bolivia never really has been invaded by Chile, and that Chile 'solely' confiscated the Bolivian access to the sea. Nonetheless, having a coastline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an important economic factor (ibid: June 26, 2017). The journalist complements his argument by stating that many Bolivians get taught that being a good Bolivian citizen means showing hatred and dislike against Chile. Gangopadhyay (2014) enhances that statement and claims that Chile is being held responsible for being a landlocked nation and this agitates the antagonism sentiment towards Chile. The author reported that "it became an issue of national honour" (2014, p.141). According to Echalar, having a collective enemy is being seen as a symbol which unites the citizens of Bolivia from the western part of the country to the citizens living in the east. The Day of the Sea, the plenty full anthems, the museum of the sea all contribute to a nationalist feeling which goes into "the hearts and minds of the people of Bolivia" (Echalar. personal communication, June 26, 2017).

### **2.3 The political history of the maritime dispute**

Since Bolivia lost sovereign access to the sea, several regimes and governments have tried to recuperate this territory. Birns and Sanchez stating that "the issue remains a deep-rooted source of historical resentment in Bolivia, for which only the turn of lost lands access to the coastline will compensate" (2011, p. 113). Due to a lack of sovereign ports, Bolivia has to rely on ports in Peru or Chile for import and export in order to have a thriving economy (Birns & Sanchez, 2011). The authors reporting that Peru constructed facilities to assist the Bolivian export of natural gas for symbolic and economic motives, however Bolivia continued to seek a settlement for the maritime dispute with Chile. After the First World War Bolivia believed that the League of Nations could ameliorate their situation by settling the maritime dispute (St. John, 1994) (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014). The Bolivian government, however, submitted their claim, to regain access to a Bolivian coastline, after the deadline and therefore the League of Nations did not take their claim into consideration (St. John, 1994). Kelchner (1930) argued, as reported in an article by St. John, that the government of Bolivia resubmitted its claim to revise the 1904

treaty (St. John, 1994). In spite of Bolivia's undertakings, the League of Nations declared that the organisation had no authority to amend a treaty (St. John, 1994).

Another attempt to regain sovereign access to Bolivians littoral was made by the U.S. Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg in 1926 (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014). He conveyed a memorandum to governments of Chile and Peru with the request to relinquish a littoral to Bolivia in "perpetuity, all rights, titles and interests, which either may have in the Provinces of Tacna and Arica" (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014, p. 39). After Kellogg's effort, an attempt made by U.S. Secretary of State instead of the Bolivian government, the maritime issue has been neglected. Between 1926 until 1950 the issue was not put back on the political agenda of the Bolivian governments (Longaric, 2017) (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014) (Wehner, 2010) (St. John, 1994) (BBC, Timeline: Bolivia, 2012) (Argañarás Garcia, 2012). Perrier Brusle claimed that "in times of crisis, when national unity is fractured, the maritime claim is revived" (2013, p. III).

Occasionally the maritime issue returned on the political agenda, the first occasion was in 1950. In 1950, Bolivia tried to reinforce the issue by initiating dialogues with Chile with the main motive of recuperating sovereign access to the coastline, this dialogue is referred to as the 1950 Notes (St. John, 1994). St. John argued that Chile decided to deliberate the issue with Bolivia, however, the Chilean government desired a compensation and added that it was compelled to perform according to the Lima Treaty in 1929 (1994). According to this treaty, Chile and Peru have to consult, and as a consequence of its desire to restore the Bolivian territory, Peru opposed Chile's proposal to relinquish the waters of Lake Titicaca as a compensation for sovereign Bolivian access to the coastline (St. John, 1994). After the 1950 Notes, there has been a long period without significant interest in the maritime dispute. In 1962, the issue revived on the political agenda of Bolivia, called the Lauca river dispute (Wehner, 2010). The relation with Chile during that time was severe (Weil, 1984). Wehner argued that this dispute concerned the exploitation of the water from the Lauca river, "which has its origin in Chile and ends in Bolivia" (2010, p.11). Furthermore, Bolivia raised political awareness of this Lauca river dispute by connecting it to the maritime issue of sovereign access to the coastline. Weil (1984) commented that Bolivia expressed its objection and presented the dispute at the Organisation of the American States (hereafter referred to as OAS) council. Chile hindered Bolivian's linkage effectively, "as the OAS resolution called only for a peaceful bilateral solution to the river issue" (Wehner, 2010, p.11).

After the 1962 Lauca river dispute, it took a long time before the maritime dispute was put back on the political agenda in Bolivia. The Bolivian government did not showed any interest on the

issue until 13 years later, during the military regime of Bánzer. In 1975, crucial negotiations were held between Bolivian President General Hugo Bánzer and Chilean President General Augusto Pinochet (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014). This important meeting is referred to as 'the Charaña embrace', named after the city Charaña in Bolivia where the negotiations were situated. These negotiations can be seen as the most important in the history of the maritime issue as the attempts between both leaders were the most serious throughout since the war. It can be indicated that this can be related to the fact that both leaders were dictators. The article of Gangopadhyay (2014) reveals that scholars assumed that the Charaña embrace could have solved the dispute. Chile, in fact, offered to relinquish a sovereign maritime corridor to Bolivia which was located "north of Arica up to the Línea de la Concordia" (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014, p. 43). Peru impeded the covenant between Bolivia and Chile, and instead suggested a 'zone of collective sovereignty' among the three nations (Gangopadhyay, 2014, p. 141). Chile, vetoed against Peru's request, ending the negotiations.

In 1979, the Bolivian nation went back to the OAS, who stated that the issue "was a matter of continuing hemispheric interest" (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014, p. 98). The OAS stated that both countries should find a solution through which Bolivia could have a sovereign corridor. Thereafter, both countries in 1986, 1987, and 2000 assembled to further discuss the issue, however without any victorious outcome for Bolivia (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014). In the years subsequently to 2003, as shown before, the issue occasionally raised interest at diplomatic and political level although without active involvement of the citizens of Bolivia. The year 2003 was commemorated as a turbulent year, the administration of Sánchez de Lozada intended to build a pipeline through Chile (Gangopadhyay, 2014). However, due to the hostile sentiment against Chile, provoked after the War of the Pacific, the president antagonised the Bolivian society. Gangopadhyay argues that the Bolivian gas war led to "the resignation of the Bolivian President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada" (2014, p. 144). The gas war astounded the political environment with a strength that has not occurred since the 1952 revolution (Webber J. R., 2005). Carlos Mesa succeeded Lozada in 2003, despite of his good intentions he was not able to retain power and was compelled to resign in 2005 (Klein, 2011).

The resignation of Mesa led to a political opening for leftist candidate Evo Morales, the leader of the Movement for Socialism (hereafter referred to as MAS). His victory in 2006 was an epic moment in Bolivians history, because Morales, with 54 percent of the total votes, became the first indigenous president in Bolivia (Buitrago, 2010). According to Anria (2013) the MAS is a rural social movement established by coca growers from the Chapare district in Cochabamba. The author adds that

“The MAS represents indigenous constituencies, [however] is not to say that it is an “indigenous” party. Instead, we can conceive of the MAS as a party that presents itself using an ethnic discourse but tries to appeal to a wider constituency by blending class and ethnic elements in a manner that tolerates ethnic diversity. The MAS is a case of a movement-based party” (Anria, 2013, p. 20).

Buitrago (2010) notes that Morales, during his first presidential term, accomplished several of his campaign promises to generate social change in the country. One of them was the nationalisation of Bolivia’s natural gas and oil resources, which were in hands of foreign companies (ibid). Moreover, the administration renegotiated the agreements with these foreign corporations, and as a result Morales was able to increase its profits (Buitrago, 2010). According to Klein (2011) the government could implement welfare projects, these social expenditures were aimed at children, mothers-to-be, the elderly and students. Apart from this, the MAS fulfilled its promise to revise the constitution and presented a Constitutional Assembly in 2006 (Buitrago, 2010). Consequently, in 2009 the Bolivian citizens favoured the new constitution, which “sought to reverse centuries of ethnic discrimination and to promote nationalist and socialist policies” (Lehoucq, 2014, p. 273). Buitrago (2010) claims that the new constitution was approved with 61 percent of the votes and therefore Bolivia modified its name into the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

The MAS sought to construct relations among current organisations to accumulate a more comprehensive movement with revolutionary aspirations (Lehoucq, 2014). The author adds that the main target of the MAS was to eradicate neoliberalism. It was Albro (2006) who states that this comprised the abolishment of the Supreme Decree 21060, through which the free market principles were adopted. Morales hereby antagonised the proponents of neoliberalism, which were mainly situated in the eastern part of the country. Albro indicates that these measures contributed to even more enmity of the business elite, “and perhaps to further polarize an already polarized nation” (Albro, 2006, p. 410).





## **Chapter 3**

### **The maritime issue on the political agenda of Evo Morales**

This paper is based upon a qualitative research design in order to provide an answer to the main research question. The key elements of qualitative research are reliability and viability, therefore this paper is structured around a triangulation of methods (Neuman, 2014 ). This triangulation means that this paper combines a careful examination of secondary sources and primary sources. Especially, documents of the organisation DIREMAR, supplemented with official documents of the International Court of Justice and economic reports of Bolivia. For the primary sources, interviews have been conducted with several key individuals in different fields, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political institutions, educational institutions, and journalism. An extensive explanation of the interviewees can be found in appendix 1. A large part of this material and sources were collected during field research that was conducted in La Paz, Bolivia for a period of two months in June and July of 2017.

This chapter provides an analysis of the current Bolivian government, the theories that were explained in the first chapter will be reviewed based on empirical data. The chapter will start with an analysis of the current government in relation to geopolitics. It will highlight the implications of the nationalisation of important sectors in Bolivia and the trade conditions in the landlocked country. The second part will present to what extent the nation portrays nationalism. The third sector will analyse the leadership of Evo Morales in relation to the maritime issue.

#### **3.1 Geopolitics: The Morales administration and the relation of the maritime issue on its political agenda**

The War of the Pacific made Bolivia a landlocked nation and as a result it could no longer benefit from the advantages of having sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. The maritime loss has continuously portrayed a major factor in the political agenda of various presidents in Bolivia. As discussed in the previous chapter, some leaders have paid more attention to the maritime issue than others. The emergence of Evo Morales and the MAS administration revived the maritime matter, one of the implications of this can be designated to the importance of geopolitics in his government. This part of the paper will elucidate to what extent the geopolitical factor of the maritime issue portrays a crucial role in the administration of Morales. It will be divided into

two different parts with one the hand trade and on the other the nationalisation of important sectors in the Morales’ government at the other.

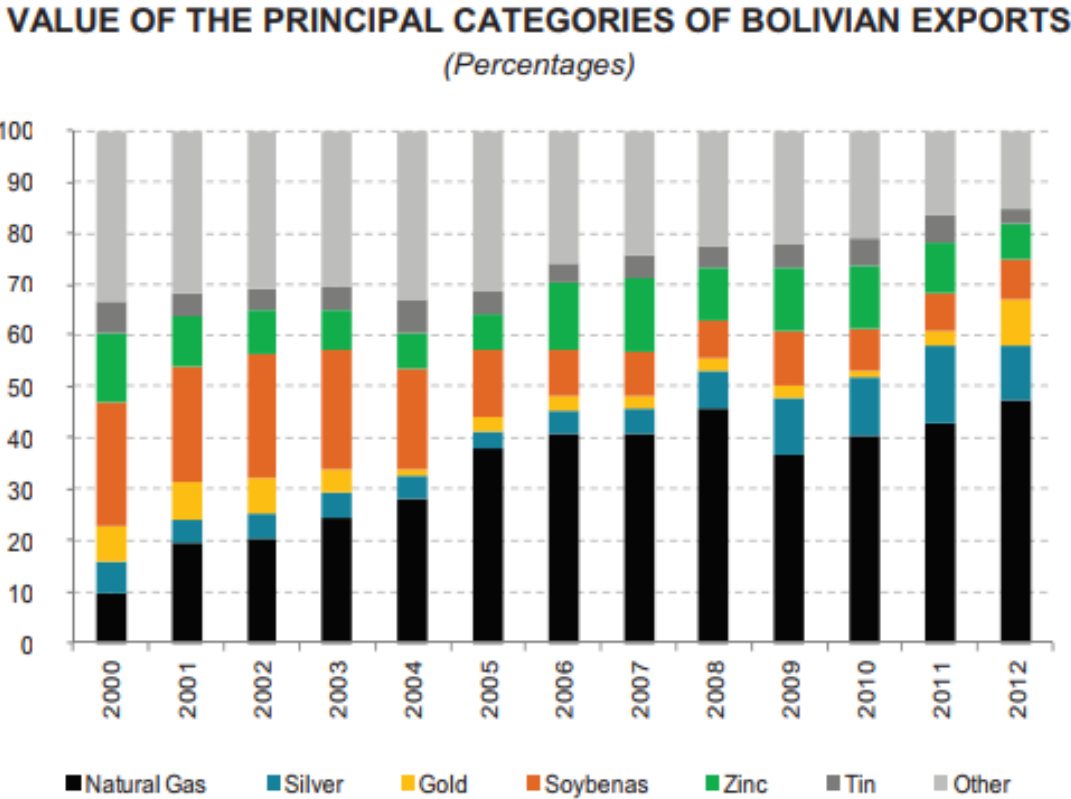


Figure 2. Source: Pérez-Salas et al., 2014, p. 40

Looking at the trade situation in Bolivia, it should be emphasised that being a non-coastal nation has tremendous effects on the economy. According to a report of United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Bolivian exports are inadequate because they are not diverse. Figure 2 shows the percentages of the Bolivian export, the figure shows that the export relies on silver, soybeans and their derivatives, gold, chestnuts, lead concentrates, tin, zinc concentrates and in particular natural gas (Pérez-Salas et al., 2014). The Bolivian nation is geographically separated between the lowlands in the east, where the petroleum production is located and the Andean highlands, where the mining industry is situated (Morales & Sachs, 1988). Due to this unpleasant geographic location, Bolivia is compelled to depend on roadway infrastructure (Kleiman, 2016). A report of ECLAC revealed that

“Around 53 per cent of the roads in the Plurinational State of Bolivia are dirt roads, 38,6 per cent are gravel and 8.5 per cent are paved. These characteristics have a direct impact on road

transport costs, increasing the price per kilometre travelled, as well as the length of time required for transport and the wear and tear on the vehicles” (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014, p.25).

It can be argued that due to these features Bolivia desires a sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. Especially the maritime transportation would be way more efficient and cost-effective (Kleiman, 2016). Morales & Sachs (1988) adding that the transport costs of the valuable resources in Bolivia continuously have been high due to the absence of access to the sea and the reliance on road infrastructure. Guzman Escobari, a Bolivian writer of many knowledge about the maritime issue because he wrote significant books and relevant articles, expresses that without this maritime access Bolivia lost its possibility to trade with key economies, which automatically effected the economic growth in the country (personal communication, June 29, 2017). Several studies have specified that landlocked nations trading percentage is 30% lower in comparison with countries that have access to the sea. In addition, the landlocked nations suffer a reduced average growth of 1.5%, encounter more difficulties in trade, are scoring lower on the Human Development Index (HDI), and have a less Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per individual whereas the percentage of trade of non-coastal countries is about 57%(Faye *et al.*, 2004) (Arvis *et al.*, 2010) (World Bank-United Nations., 2014). According to the latest data of the Human Development report, the Plurinational State of Bolivia is listed on number 118 of all the countries in the world. The report shows that the country scores 0.674 on the HDI, importantly the report specified that since 1990 the country has been improving slowly (United Nations Development Programme., 2016). The report specified the GDP which is estimated at 6.476 per capita and in total 69.5. To give a meaning to those numbers, the neighbouring coastline countries are registered much earlier on the list. Chile for example is listed on number 38 and Peru finds its place on number 87.

There are also other factors that are hindering the trade in Bolivia since the country has no sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. One of these factors can be related to the difficulties Bolivian companies encounter with their import and export. According to Kleiman “imports in Bolivia take twice as long as those in Chile, and cost over \$800 more per container, while exports take about a week longer in Bolivia, and cost \$510 more per container” (2016, p. 249). Faye *et al.*, (2004) also highlights that transportation costs are higher for landlocked nations and therefore it is less attractive for other countries to trade with them. An example for the increased transportation costs can be traced back to the customs. According to a report of CECLA, Bolivian imports are increasing in price because of the custom process. The report indicated that “this is due to the excessive amount of time required for the Bolivian customs clearance procedure because of the limitations imposed on operations in Bolivian free trade zones for certain goods” (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014, p. 73).

A report of CECLA highlights the export of the Bolivian soybean and revealed that due to ineffectiveness of logistics the price of the product increased with 20.9% (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014). As one can see in figure 3, due to inland water transport the costs expand with 11.2%, the pre-shipment process reports 5.5% because the soybeans get lost due to poor infrastructure or robberies along the way, customs procedures comprises 4% and lastly the costs increase with 0.3% because of postponements of payments (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014).

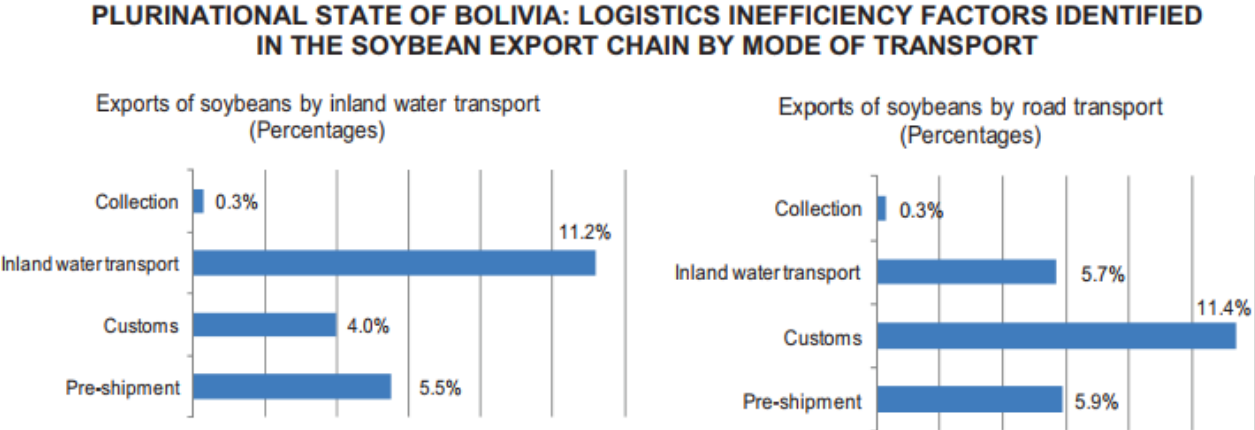


Figure 3: Source: Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014, p. 70

Furthermore, Kunt argues that Bolivia needs sovereign access to the sea for economic reasons, which is important for the development of the country (personal communication, June 22, 2017). Kunt supports his view by claiming that Bolivian products lose competitiveness caused by Chilean and Peruvian customs. As a result of the customs, the Bolivian products are more expensive because of the increasing price. Erick Kunt was an independent advisor DIREMAR. Longarick, a professor of international rights at the UMSA University in Bolivia, and writer of books and news articles regarding the maritime issue, argues that experience shows that Bolivia has increasingly been facing more difficulties with the Chilean ports and that Chile tries to hinder Bolivian trade (personal communication, July 3, 2017).

Natural gas is Bolivia’s main export product and comprises of 43% of the nation’s exports with a profit of about 3,885 million US dollars (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014). The principle trading partners for natural gas are Brazil and Argentina. According to the report of CECLA:

“Bolivia does not have the ability to export to other countries overseas because its landlocked position prevents it from having a natural gas liquefaction terminal that would allow it to handle liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers” (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014, p. 41).

Alurralde Tejada, ex-vice president of foreign relations of the MAS, expresses “hay un daño económico brutal, a Bolivia y ni es un tema de distancia, es un tema de acceso al mar”<sup>1</sup> (personal communication, July 4, 2017). By stating this, the interviewee illuminates that it is not about the distance, but that the issue of ‘not having access to the sea’, creates damage to the economy. As explained in chapter two, the Sánchez de Lozada administration planned to build pipelines to transport the gas, however the government failed to do so due to heavy protest of the society (Gangopadhyay, 2014). The above listed results can be linked to the theory of Pittman (1981). His theory specified that the ability of having sovereign access to the sea and therefore access to sovereign ports and resources in the deep seabed are pivotal for an effective economy.

It can be indicated that Morales perceives Bolivia according to the Tambs ‘*heartland*’ theory. According to the theory, Bolivia is the heartland of South America due to its unique geographic location and its valuable natural resources. Morales attempts to protect the nation from foreign aggressors, it can be assumed that Morales perceives the neoliberalism model and the countries who support this as attackers. Previous years, before Morales became president, the country had followed the neoliberalist path. The most important sectors were privatised and foreign investment increased (Kohl, 2002). Because the model created economic dependency, Morales’ administration was against this form of reliance and desired more independence. It can be alleged that through sovereign access to the sea this independence could be reached. This protection goes beyond the importance of territory and emphasises the significance of state protection. The Morales administration implements far-reaching state participation and nationalised diverse sectors such as mining, electricity, hydrocarbons, telecommunications, the pension administration system (export.gov, 2017). It can be argued that due to this state protection, Morales aspires to have sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. Especially because sovereign access will increase the likelihood to enlarge trade with international countries. In fact, during the Morales administration the demand for raw materials has increased, most of these demands are coming from business partners in Asia.

This is congruent with the geopolitical theory of Nolte and Wehner (2015) which also emphasises the current relation with Asian countries. According to them, the maritime frontiers in the Pacific become more important since this provides direct connection to the Asian economies. These economies have increased in its importance due to a change on the international market. This ‘*Pacific Consensus*’ reveals that having access to the pacific sea is crucial for the economies in Latin America (Nolte and Wehner, 2015). The CECLA report showed that there is substantial upsurge in the exports of minerals to countries in Asia (Pérez-Salas *et*

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<sup>1</sup> Own translation: This is a brutal economic damage for Bolivia, and it is not a matter of distance, it is an issue of access to the sea

al., 2014). Moreover, the report specified that from 2002 till 2006 exports increased from 4% to 14% to Asian countries. On the other hand, the imports from those Asian countries also saw a rise from 13% to around 20% (Pérez-Salas *et al.*, 2014). The Santiago Times (2017), indicated that Bolivia and China have established diplomatic and economic relations since the 80s, and with the arrival of Morales the relations are significantly improved. Accordingly, China is nowadays one of the key trading partners of Bolivia, the nations have deepened their collaboration in several fields such as energy, mining and transportation (Industrial and Commercial Bank of China., 2011). Wilmsmeier & Sánchez observed that “the development of these trade relations also depicts the importance trade corridors to ports on the Pacific coast have for Bolivia” (2009, p. 11). Hereby, the theory of Pittman (1981) can be applied since the author stated that having access to the sea with its wealthy valuables and having access to ports are a crucial factor in the economies of the nation states. As a result of a better economy, the nations are more capable to nourish their citizens.

Overall, the results indicate that the Bolivian economy would be more developed if the nation had sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. The country possesses enormous amounts of valuable resources, with gas as the most valuable resource of the nation. Due to the lack of sovereign access to the sea, the country is forced to rely on trade with neighbouring countries. Undoubtedly, Bolivia could strengthen its economy if it could also do more and cost-effective business overseas. As the results indicate, Asia has become one of the largest business partners for Latin American countries, as in the recent years the trade among Bolivia and Asian countries has increased. However, trade opportunities with these countries would enlarge if Bolivia would have sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. Besides that, the country faces more transportation costs due to their current situation. Geopolitical interest thus lay behind the revival of the maritime issue on the political agenda of Evo Morales.

### **3.2 Nationalism and the sea of Bolivia**

During the fieldwork it became clear that, in addition to the economic factors, other factors also play a role in this maritime issue in particular the factors of nationalism. This section deals with the following hypothesis: *Evo Morales uses the maritime conflict to create unity in the country that since the change of the constitution has been going through a process of redefinition.*

Bolivia is with 62 per cent of its population the most indigenous nation (Van Cott, 2010). This has created division and conflict in the country. According to Luykx, the society is divided into “the poor indigenous majority, the elite criollo minority, and a small, mostly mestizo middle class” (1999, p.8). This polarised society is comprised by supporters of the neoliberalism paradigm on one side and supporters of the more socialist paradigm on the other (Luykx, 1999).

As described in chapter two, the author pointed out that since the 1952 revolution, Bolivian administrations have encountered many struggles to unify the nation because of its diverse social backgrounds. In addition, Webber (2010) argued the same, by stating that Bolivian society is deeply polarised and that preceding administrations have encountered many difficulties to mediate between the two different blocs.

Luykx (1999) stated that Bolivia is constructed upon the impetus among the *'inward oriented'* and the *'outward oriented'* perceptions (Luykx, 1999, p. 15) The most important element for this paper is the inward orientation, which concentrates on the traditional cultural customs, and the extreme patriotic feeling which is extremely strong in Bolivia. The outward oriented focusses on *'external cultural ideal'* (Luykx, 1999). This is congruent with the theory of Coser (1956) and Tir (2010) described in the first chapter in the section about leadership. The authors identified the in/out group principle, the in-group portrayed as the whole society who have a common territorial interest and the out-group is displayed as the foreign country that is controlling that specific land. Luykx noted that "in unity there is strength; thus constructing a unified nationalism is popularly viewed as crucial to Bolivia's future" (1999, p.38). In spite of the fractured society, there are some elements in the country through which the nation feels united. Through careful examination of the Bolivian nation, it can be concluded that the most principal component through which the society is cohesive, is the maritime issue. Perrier Brusle (2013) indicated that the loss of the Pacific Ocean is central in the formation of the Bolivian collective memory and the main feature of its nation-building. The author highlighted that

"In people's minds, this loss arouses an emotional bond with the territory that has been deformed by these territorial amputations, and must be protected by very reason of its deformity. The maritime claim, because it is based on historical arguments and memory, is etched in people's emotions" (Perrier Brusle, 2013, p. XI).

Aliaga, former advisor to the ex-president Carlos Mesa Gisbert in 2003 – 2005 regarding the maritime issue, argues that there are several elements in the nation that unites the Bolivians, one of them is the maritime issue (personal communication, June 22, 2017). Ex-president Mesa Gisbert specified, during a personal interview, that Bolivia encounters many political, economic, and social differences. However, the ex-president claimed that there is a national agreement that unites all the Bolivians and that is getting sovereign access to the sea (personal communication, June 29, 2017). Mesa Gisbert highlights during the interview that the maritime aspiration is unifying the nation. These results confirm the association between Baycroft (1998) and his *'national myth'*, which according to the author means that an identical past unifies the nation. The results indicate that the maritime issue can be regarded as a *'national myth'*. The outcome of the War of the Pacific created a unifying narrative for the construction of the nation.



The results of this paper indicated that there are two elements surrounding the maritime issue that reinforce the feeling of nationalism in Bolivia, the first identified element is through education. Perrier Brusle notes that “through transmission by repetition and simplified arguments, Bolivian schools are at the centre of the apparatus of memory” (2013, p. 689). The author reported that geography currently is an essential element in primary schools, through drawings about the sea and huge maps of Bolivia on the wall (Perrier Brusle, 2013). The BBC (2013) stated that the maritime issue is a key element for national sentiment and that therefore schoolchildren in Bolivia learn that recuperating the Pacific Ocean is a ‘patriotic obligation’. Furthermore, García Argañarás (2012) draws attention to the fact that Bolivia’s collective memory is strongly connected to the loss of the maritime outlet. The author added that education is a mechanism through which the past is reproduced and transferred from one generation to the next. As previously described in chapter two, Eduardo Abaroa, is viewed as the hero of the War of the Pacific. According to García Argañarás, “school children hear about Eduardo Abaroa, the great defender of Calama, before they learn to add and subtract” (2012, p.13). Moreover, the author added that all the communication on paper of the army is presented with the following statement; “Recovering our access to the Ocean is our duty” (2012, p.13). Besides that, the book of Mesa Gisbert (2016) indicated that Bolivians are raised with a pessimistic image of the country and are educated with a specific map that shows how much territory the country lost since the independence.

In addition, on April 2013, DIREMAR distributed a video to educate the Bolivian society about the War of the Pacific. This educational video portrayed the War of the Pacific in a certain way, the video namely commences with an image of the sea and a melancholic sound. Thereafter, one hears a touching sound saying; “A ningún país le es tan preciada la costa como a Bolivia, para unos es riqueza y poder. Para otros es un girón de tierra, para los Bolivianos un girón del alma. Pues como el mar ha dejado de estar delante de nosotros, ahora está dentro de nosotros”<sup>2</sup> (Diremar, 2013). Subsequently, the video shows how the country was invaded by the Chileans and how horrible this was for the nation. This comes across as if the Bolivians should feel miserable about their situation, in particular it seems that the video was produced in such a way that it attempts to evoke nationalistic and patriotic feelings. Apart from that, in 2014, the same organisation published *The Book of the Sea* aiming to expose the Bolivian maritime issue within the Bolivian society and internationally (Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2014). The book presents an outline in such a way that it indicated that the Bolivians lost the most important part of their nation and that this has always been under the attention of the Bolivian society and government.

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<sup>2</sup> Translation by DIREMAR: In not one country the coast is as precious as to Bolivia, for some it is power and wealth. For others it is a portion of land, for the Bolivians it's a portion of their soul. Even though, the sea is no longer in front of us, now it is inside us.

Echalar, an important Bolivian journalist who wrote many articles about the maritime issue, expresses that Bolivians, at very young age, are educated about the War of the Pacific in such a manner that it creates nationalistic feelings (personal communication, June 26, 2017). The interviewee declared that the main issue here is the fact that Bolivians developed a feeling of patriotism related to the loss of the sea. Echalar added that this lesson continues throughout high school, and changes into prejudicial forms during military school (personal communication, June 26, 2017).

The second indicated element are the national celebrations through which nationalism is presented in the Bolivian society. As Baycroft (1998) points out, national celebrations are an important component of nationalism. In fact, the author specified that nationalism needs to be cultivated and encouraged to gain mutual recognition between the citizens in the society. The results draw attention to the celebration of the national 'Day of the Sea' as an important indicator of nationalism. As described in chapter two, every year on March 23 Bolivians revive the nationalistic feeling through the Day of the Sea. Perrier Brusle (2013) acknowledges that the Day of the Sea and the war hero Eduardo Abaroa are inherent to the Bolivians and are a part of the '*collective memory*'. The author correctly argued that these are fundamental elements which contribute to the nation-building. The Economist (2015) highlights the Day of the Sea and in particular the Bolivian navy who marches through the streets of La Paz, Bolivia. The Economist argues that "Bolivia has all the trappings of a maritime power except an actual coastline (confining its navy to lakes and rivers)" (2015, para. 1). Gustavo Rodríguez Ostría, a Bolivian historian and former deputy minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology in the Mesa Gisbert administration, argues that the Day of the Sea was celebrated in 1924, but that the first sincere activities of the celebration commenced during 50s (El Mostrador., 2006). A possible explanation might be that nationalism was at the centre of attention due to the 1952 Revolution. As previous described in chapter two, the 1952 was a social revolution initiated by the peasants and mineworkers in the country, this event generated the feeling of nationalism (Lehoucq, 2014).

It should be mentioned that during those national celebrations, special anthems regarding the loss of the sea are chanted. These anthems are important components of nationalism according Silvert (1961) and Baycroft (1998). Luykx (1999), argues that these shared rituals successfully strengthen the sense of belonging to a nation. The author adds that the Bolivian national holidays "contribute to the fortification of patriotic feeling" (1999, p. 19). In the view of Hobsbawm (2012), the celebration of the Day of the Sea can be indicated as an invented tradition. The Day of the Sea is namely collectively celebrated and has a symbolic nature, since on that specific day the loss of the War of the Pacific is being commemorated. Moreover, the day

symbolises the war hero Eduardo Abaroa who died during that same war. In addition, the theory of Hobsbawm specified that the tradition has to have a connection with the past. It is clear that this Day of the Sea in Bolivia has a direct connection with the past. The Day of the Sea is widely celebrated and recalls the disastrous outcome for the Bolivians, since it reminds them of their landlocked situation.

The results support the theory of Baycroft (1998) who referred to nationalism as '*imagined communities*'. The society constructs an impression of itself and this impression is based on the history of the country. Baycroft (1998) added that every country has an inherent association with the past, a past that can experience many misfortunes like the Bolivia nation who lost many of their territory. Guzman Escobari argues that Bolivians had a victimised image of themselves, the citizens felt grieve and that neighbouring countries had invaded their territory, but now this had changed (personal communication, June 29, 2017). This change is a result of the feeling of victory, and the good work done by ex-president Mesa Gisbert during an interview on national television. The details regarding this aspect will be revealed in the next section. The country has been through the same past, a past which was not prosperous however it established a feeling solidarity. More importantly, it created a feeling of unity which is the main aspect of nationalism.

Altogether, these results contribute to the notion that nationalism plays a major role in the Bolivian society. The findings indicate that there is a very clear link between the maritime issue and the feeling of nationalism. To review the hypothesis it can be concluded that Evo Morales knows that the maritime issue is at the centre of interest among the Bolivians. Besides that, it is an issue about which the society is being congruent and this is an issue through which the society unifies. According to the found data it can be concluded that the hypothesis is partly correct. Evo Morales attempts to seize the society's attention by addressing the maritime issue, which evokes national sentiment in Bolivia. However, it cannot be concluded that the division in the country, between supporters of the current administration and supporters of a more neoliberalism agenda, is created by the amendment of the constitution into the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The polarisation in the country has shown to have a role since the 50s. However, since the arrival of Morales the distinctions have become culminated. The new constitution in 2009 created a new nation state and as a result recognition is being given to all the different cultures in the country, this can be seen as an attempt to assemble the divided country. Besides that, it can be stated that the maritime issue is also being exploited to reconcile the polarised society. Thus, it can be argued that nationalism is currently seen as an important factor since it is so actively been portrayed by the society. Finally, it can be concluded that Morales aims to unify the nation, or at least counter divisional tendencies, through the maritime issue.

### 3.3 Leadership and territorial division

This part of the paper aims to compare the divisionary theory with the maritime issue in the political agenda of Evo Morales. Therefore, the following hypothesis was drafted: *President Evo Morales is using the maritime issue to create support for his re-election in 2019.*

As mentioned in chapter two, it depends on the political leader of Bolivia to what extent the maritime issue moves higher up in the political agenda. It can be assumed that the leadership has had a determining effect and is still of significant importance. For example, strong leadership was depicted in 1975, during the Charaña embrace of general Pinochet and general Bánzer. Interestingly, it can be cautiously speculated that this crucial rapprochement occurred because of the same motives as we are currently seeing in the MAS administration. General Bánzer was a dictator who perhaps also attempted to create a feeling of unity in his polarised society. As stated in the previous section regarding nationalism, the maritime issue evokes the feeling of unity within the nation. Surprisingly, the results indicate that ever since Morales holds presidency the country has faced a resurgence of the maritime issue.

At the time that Evo Morales was inaugurated as president, the left wing administration of Michelle Bachelet also initiated her presidential term in Chile. Wehner (2010) reveals that both administrations were proponents of leftism and this created an opening for the improvement of the relationship among the two nations after centuries of hatred. The diplomatic relationship commenced with reciprocal symbolic gestures between the political leaders, for example invitations for their inaugural ceremonies (Wehner, 2010). The same author points out the invitations were followed by a bilateral meeting in Santiago, Chile which can be seen as the kick off for enhanced dialogues. As a result of this dialogue the 13-point agenda was established in July 2006. Between 2006 and 2007 the presidential leaders met 9 times and agreed that their relationship of mutual trust was essential (Estrada, 2007). Especially both nations emphasised the critical issues for their country, therefore the 6<sup>th</sup> point on the agenda was the discussion about the maritime issue (Estrada, 2007). According to García Argañarás, “the probability of national elections in 2008 forced a new political twist and turn and gave renewed urgency to Bolivia’s claim” (2012, p.10). Therefore, Bolivia stressed the importance to stipulate a deadline to accomplish the negotiations (García Argañarás, 2012). Once again, these results show the importance of leadership regarding the maritime issue. This time it was the left leaning leadership of Bachelet that brought convergence.

Unfortunately for Bolivia, in 2010, Bachelet had to resign her presidential duty and her successor was the right-wing President Sebastián Piñera. This caused a dramatic change for Bolivia, since Chile restored its status-quo. At the beginning of 2011, negotiations among the

Piñera and Morales concerning the maritime issue occurred in La Paz, Bolivia. Cuiza (2016) points out that, after those negotiations, Morales forwarded a proposal to the Chilean president Sebastián Piñera, however, there was never an official response. According to Wehner, “Sebastián Piñera [...] was reluctant to discuss the idea of an outlet to the coast for its neighbour” (2010, p.22). The determining leadership of Chilean president Piñera revealed once more that leadership is crucial in the whole maritime theme.

As a consequence of the reluctant attitude of Chile, Morales promulgated, during the national celebration of the Day of the Sea at March 23, 2013, that Bolivia would sue Chile at the International Court of Justice in The Hague (hereafter referred to as ICJ) (Cuiza, 2016). The same author highlights the fact that Morales authorised the former president Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé to be the ambassador to file the claim. The lawsuit proclaimed that Chile is obligated due to several agreements, diplomatic dialogues, and declarations of high-level diplomats “to negotiate a sovereign access to the sea for Bolivia” (International Court of Justice., 2013). Accordingly, Bolivia appealed to the court that Chile has to negotiate, in good faith, officially within a set time to concede Bolivia a solution to acquire sovereign access to the Pacific sea (International Court of Justice., 2013). Chile objected the Bolivian claim and uttered that the ICJ has no legal authority regarding this issue since it was already settled by the 1904 Peace and Friendship Treaty (Kleiman, 2016) (Republic of Chile., 2014). Whereas Bolivia declared that Chile misinterpreted the Bolivian claim and that their claim was not to alter the content of the 1904 Treaty, but that it was a distinct issue (Plurinational State of Bolivia., 2015). Kleiman states that the issue was “whether or not Chile's subsequent actions created an obligation independent of any prior treaty” (2010, p.251). Subsequently, on September 24, 2015 the court decided to agree with Bolivia and hereby rejecting Chile’s objection (International Court of Justice., 2015).

After the judgment of the ICJ, ex-president Mesa Gisbert, appointed by Morales as the international spokesperson regarding the demand in The Hague, was interviewed by the Chilean national television (TVN Chile., 2015). During this interview Mesa Gisbert effectively explained the Bolivian outcome and elucidated the value of this outcome for Bolivia. Apart from that, Morales searched for national and international support to show the importance of his claim in The Hague. In order to stretch the importance of the support, the book *‘I want a sea, a blue sea for Bolivia’* was published. This book points out the claims of support by famous Chilean personalities such as writers, journalists, historians, the worldwide personalities such as Kofi Annan, and the Paus John Paul II, the international organisations such as OAS, and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA), the foreign chancellors and authorities, the former presidents of Bolivia and other significant national representatives (Plurinational State of Bolivia., *Yo quiero un mar, un mar azul para Bolivia*, 2015). It can be argued that after the

achievement in The Hague, the interview of Mesa Gisbert, and the national and international encouragement the Bolivian society felt victorious. It gave a new impulse to the belief that Bolivia might regain access to their beloved ocean.

Despite the victories and the effective achievements of the Morales administration, it should be highlighted that this has also been constructive for his personal interest. Morales, who almost completed three electoral presidential terms, held a referendum in February 2016. Through this referendum Bolivians were asked to approve a constitutional amendment that would allow Morales to continue a fourth presidential term (The New York Times, 2016). The Bolivian constitution specifies that presidents can only run twice for presidency. Surprisingly, Morales is currently running his third term because the president was able to amend the constitution. The Guardian reveals that “the constitutional tribunal has ruled his first term in office does not count since Morales did not complete the full five-year term” (2016, para. 4). Despite Morales’ popularity, the society voted against the referendum with 51% against 49% in favour of another term (Collyns & Watts, 2016). Nevertheless, last November, the constitutional court approved the re-election of Morales for next campaigns, which means that Morales can run for elections of presidency in 2019 (TeleSur, 2017). According to TeleSur (2017), Morales maintains the belief that the outcome of the referendum was affected by campaigns that attempted to prove that the president was doing favours for stakeholders of China.

It can be concluded that it is not a surprise that that the maritime issue revived on the political agenda of Morales. As previous mentioned, Morales can use the maritime conflict to gain support among the society to vote for him during his re-election in 2019. The president can argue that he should remain in office to continue the pending issue in The Hague. Perrier Brusle (2013) indicates that the revival of the maritime issue resurged simultaneously with a political watershed in the government of the MAS. The author points out that the support of social movements on which the movement is based are decreasing. Therefore, the author argues that

“Morales has stressed the need to give common interest priority over sectarian interests. To strengthen his weakened political base, he has promoted the common goal shared by all Bolivians: the restoration of the coastline” (Perrier Brusle, 2013, p. 689)

Interestingly, Ormachea comments that “the team of Morales mixes politics, ideology and strategy, and that is always the recipe for a Molotov cocktail” (personal communication, July 28, 2017). For the interviewee this entails that Morales is mixing national interest, personal interest ideology and diplomacy. In response to the question: What is the personal interest for Morales? Ormachea firmly said that “the president wants to get re-elected, preferably for eternity, until he is dead” (personal communication, July 28, 2017). The interviewee argues that Morales is

responding to the national aspiration to retrieve access to the sea because of historical and economic reasons. Ormachea added that the maritime theme is deeply rooted in the minds of people, not in the presidents' mind but Morales can therefore easily use the theme (personal communication, July 28, 2017). These results are supported by the theory of Tir (2010), the author draws attention to the fact that there is a link between a geographical area and diversion better known in his theory as '*territorial diversion*'. As comprehensively explained in chapter one, this territorial diversion means that political leaders can use a specific territory as a diversion manoeuvre (Tir, 2010). Importantly, the author argues that citizens feel attached to their land, therefore it is easy for a political leader to unify a polarised society. He added that the feeling of belonging to a geographical region has a direct link to nationalism and national identity. Thus, it is not surprising that a leader will use these feelings of unification for his or her personal political interest.

In general, this research has stressed the importance of leadership. As it has been pointed out several times in this thesis the maritime conflict is revived because of the importance of leaders of both nations. As portrayed, several aspects are key in order for the maritime issue to revive on the agenda, the characteristics are both personal and political. An example of this is the relation between general Pinochet and general Bánzer, both were dictators and had the same political view which resulted in rapprochement. The same approach was portrayed between president Morales and Chilean president Bachelet who supported the same political interests. On the other hand, it can be argued that if the leaders are opponents, such as the Chilean president Piñera and Morales, a rift arises. This generates difficulties to deliberate the maritime issue. In spite of the complications of leadership, it can be argued that Morales is using the maritime issue to create support for his re-election in 2019.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine the main factors behind the persistence of the maritime claim towards Chile in the political agenda of Evo Morales. The main research question was therefore: *Which factors explain the importance of maritime conflict in the political agenda of Evo Morales?* The identified theories of geopolitics, nationalism and diversionary of war theory were specifically chosen to analyse this thesis. As stated before the War of the Pacific 1879 – 1884 culminated in an aggravating situation for Bolivia, resulting in a landlocked nation. The historical sentiment together with the economic disadvantages developed into a feeling of national sentiment within the country. In 2006, Morales seized power in Bolivia and put the maritime issue back on the political agenda. Interestingly, Perrier Brusle argues “of all the territorial amputations, why is the loss of the coastal province the most mobilizing?” (2013, p. XVIII). The answer can be found in a combination of three different aspects. First of all, the loss of the coastline resulted in many economic disadvantages that point to the geopolitical factor. Bolivia possesses many valuable resources, but through the lack of sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, the country is forced to trade with countries closer to home. This study has shown that through its landlocked status, the nation encounters many difficulties with their transportation which creates in-efficiency and increasing costs. Moreover, trade with Asian countries is nowadays key at the international market, however Bolivia is not part of the ‘*Pacific consensus*’. Due to the lack of Pacific access the country loses business opportunities which can ensure that the Plurinational State of Bolivia improves its status on the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme.

Furthermore, the loss of the coastline nowadays plays an important factor in a sense of nationhood for Bolivians. Chapter two has demonstrated that there are two components that comprises the maritime issue and strengthen the feeling of nationalism in the country. The components education and national celebrations contribute to the reconciliation of the society, a society that has been polarised since the independence and that has witnessed a resurgence of nationalism since the 50s. This research has shown that nationalism is noticeable and tangible with reference to the maritime issue, because the society feels united through their sense of belonging to a certain territory. The Bolivian nation reinforces a ‘national myth’ and introduces ‘invented traditions’ such as the Day of the Sea which can be viewed as strong connections with Baycroft’s theory regarding nationalism. The study has identified that through anthems, national holidays, and convincing education from the MAS government, the maritime issue is being passed on from one generation to another. Bolivians maintain the idea that most of their



territory has been confiscated by neighbouring countries, creating a feeling of solidarity and a unifying aim to recuperate sovereign access to the Pacific.

The third indicated factor is the significance of political leadership in the nation, which undoubtedly is the most crucial for this thesis. Chapter three provided a comprehensive analysis of the importance of leadership in relation to the maritime conflict. As shown in section 3.3 leadership continues to be a constant factor within the maritime issue. In fact, it was general Bánzer during the famous Charaña embrace, who for the first time showed that strong political leadership is essential to revive the issue. His rapprochement to Chile has a direct link to the theory of Tir (2010), indicating that leaders are using territorial division to unify the country in order to continue their political position. Interestingly, no difference is found in the behaviour of the current president. Morales certainly takes advantage of the broad support for the issue, to ensure his own political continuation. Nevertheless, the political leader needs the geopolitical factor to build his case, the economic inconveniences for the Bolivian nation have been clear ever since the loss of the territory that gave sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. Moreover, this study has illustrated that nationalism is of significant importance to gain broad support nationally and internationally to further reinforce the strategic maritime claim introduced by Morales.

Analysis presented in this study indicates that Morales aspires to ensure his political leadership: the Bolivian leader wants to be re-elected in the next presidential elections in 2019. This study suggest that Evo Morales is using the maritime issue towards this aim. Accordingly, this study strengthens the idea that Morales brought the case to the court in The Hague in order to respond to the national desire to get a sovereign outlet to the sea. By responding to this national aspiration, the Bolivian leader attempts to prolong his time in office. Especially because the International Court of Justice will not give its verdict until spring 2018. In case of a judgment in favour of Bolivia, this will strengthen Morales' aspiration to pursue his political continuation, because he can demonstrate that he initiated this case and he is the only one who can bring it to a successful conclusion. In case the court rules in favour of Chile, the Bolivian leader will not resign but seize this opportunity to explain to the society that this defeat is not his own fault but that the court needs to be blamed. It can be attempted that Morales will do everything to rectify this outcome to ensure his political ambitions to retain power. This thesis was designed to evaluate the different factors geopolitics, nationalism and leadership referring to territorial diversion that could explain the resurgence of the maritime issue on the political agenda of the current president. It can be concluded that these factors can be juxtaposed however, the political leadership is extending above the other two factors. Further research should be carried out after

the verdict of the International Court of Justice in The Hague in order to distinguish the exact relation between the re-election in 2019 and the maritime issue.



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## Appendix 1 List of interviewees

Name of interviewee	Profession	Place and date	Time of the interview
<b>Dr. Gonzalo Montenegro</b>	Ex- Ambassador of Bolivia in Brazil	27.06.2017 in his office	1 hour
<b>Agustín Echalar</b>	Journalist, who wrote many articles regarding the maritime issue	26.06.2017 at Café vanilla in San Miguel	1.5 hour
<b>Carlos Mesa</b>	Ex-president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the international spokesperson about the maritime issue, historian, and writer of several books regarding the issue.	29.06.2017 in his office	30 minutes
<b>Andrés Guzmán Escobari</b>	Economist and Bolivian diplomat. Besides that, writer of The role of master narratives of Bolivia and Chile in the formation of their national identities, Un Mar de Promesas Incumplidas. La Historia del Problema Marítimo Boliviano (1879 - 2015), Diálogo no marítimo entre Bolivia y Chile, El tema marítimo en democracia (1982 - 2012), Las relaciones Bolivia - Chile y el riesgo para la seguridad regional	29.06.2017 in his office	1 hour
<b>Eric Kunt</b>	Now: professor the Catholic University international relations Before : advisor for DIREMAR	22.06.2017 at the University	1.5 hour
<b>Gustavo Alliaga</b>	Former advisor to the ex-president Carlos Mesa Gisbert in 2003 – 2005 regarding the maritime issue	22.06.2017 at Café Ciclick	1 hour
<b>Javier Murillo</b>	Now: Dean of Catholic university political	28.06.2017	1 hour

	science Before: Diplomat and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia, and writer of books regarding the topic such as Bolivia y Chile, una vecindad fracturada.	at In his office at the University	
<b>Juan Carlos Alurralde Tejada</b>	Vice president of foreign relations of the MAS administration	4.7.2017 in his house	1 hour
<b>Karin Longarick</b>	Doctor of Economic Sciences, Bolivian diplomat and professor of international rights at the UMSA University in Bolivia, and has published extensively on the topic	3.07.2017 In her office	40 minutes
<b>Ofelia Michel</b>	Member of two different groups of historians and studied the theme for more than 15 years.	03.07.2017 at the Lobby of Hotel Real	1.5 hour
<b>Pablo Michel</b>	Historian	1.07.2017 in his house	1 hour
<b>Víctor Hugo Zamora Castedo</b>	Chair of the international political commission	28.06.2017 at his office at Plaza de Murillo	30 minutes
<b>Juan Manuel</b>	Youth Deputy	4-7-2017 at Café Alexander, plaza Abaroa	1 hour