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# **In the name of the environment: The political economy of socio- environmental conflicts in Altiplano mining areas of Bolivia**

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# The new mining *boom* in a neoliberal context

*Neoliberal policies and mining as a financial national strategy*

- Peru, Ecuador y Bolivia grew consistently at high average rates (4.66 %, 4.16 % and 3.11 %)
- poverty –rural poverty – no significant improvement
- Much of growth has been based on the extraction and export of minerals and hydrocarbons

## FDI in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, 1989-1999 (%)

Country/ Region	Average FDI/GDP		FDI Average annual growth rate		FDI in Primary Sectors (percentage of GDP)	
	1989-93	1994-98	1989-93	1994-98	Average 1990-95	Average 1996-99
Bolivia	1.01	6.70	124.22	60.93	1.8	5.8
Ecuador	1.61	3.28	55.60	11.81	1.9	3.1
Peru	0.46	4.17	84.73	-11.23	0.3	0.3
Andean countries	1.12	3.38	30.38	14.49	1.0	2.1
LAC	0.95	2.42	18.11	21.96	0.9	1.3

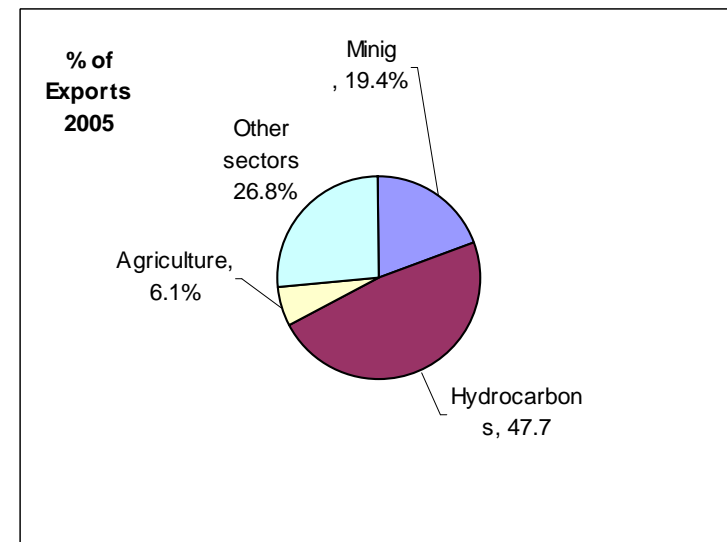
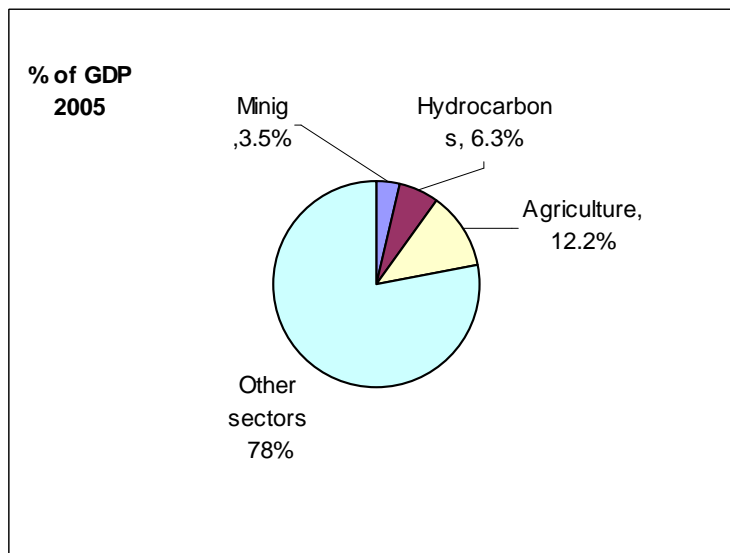
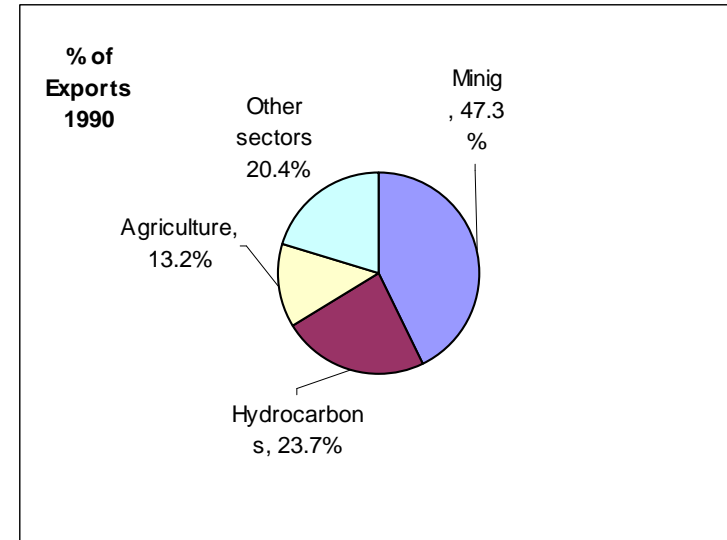
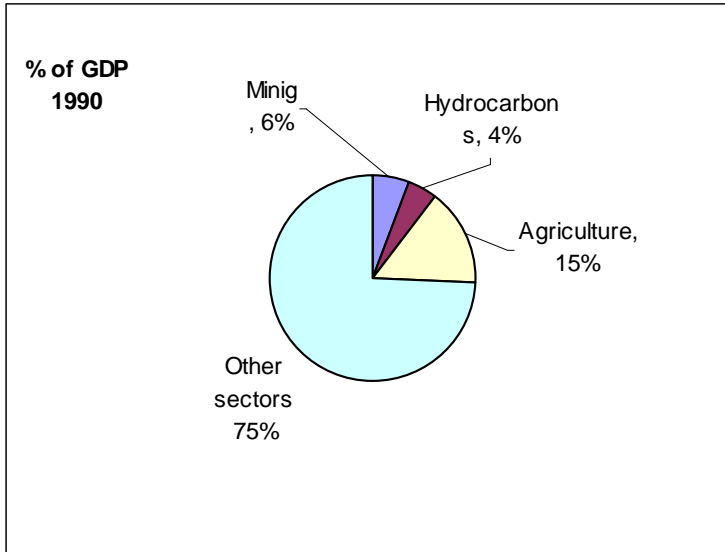
# Policies for attracting and facilitating entry of TNCs

- equal treatment as national investors
- no barriers to profits repatriation
- no or very low fiscal obligations (other than canon)
- long-term fiscal stability
- facilities for inputs and technology imports
- ratification of international agreements on private investments

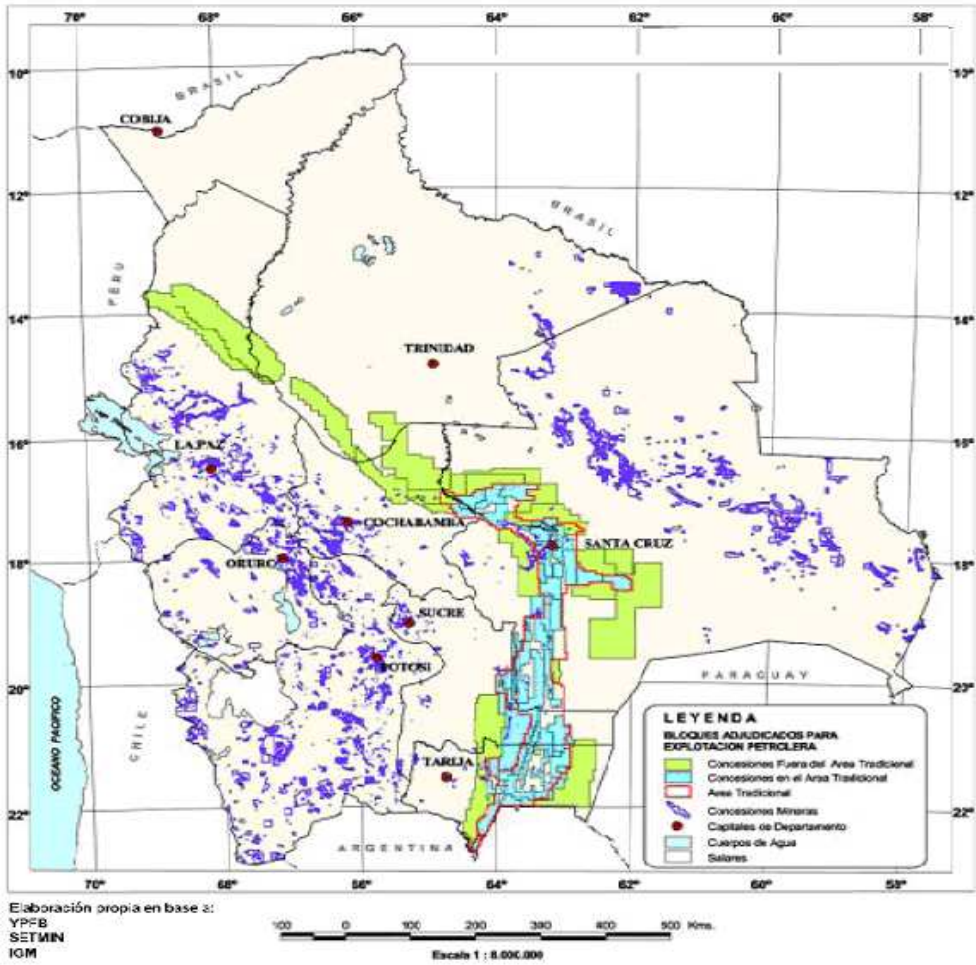
# Mining in Bolivia

- Bolivia 'a mining country'
- After the collapse in 1985, since the 1990s revival and expansion
- A neoliberal policy framework favourable to private investments, but limited increase
- Mining effective increase only when international prices rose
- Establishment of big companies in rural areas are followed by 'environmental' and 'socio-environmental' conflicts

# Macroeconomic importance



# Mineral and hydrocarbons concessions in Bolivia, 2001





# What changed with neoliberal policies

- Not many changes in mining areas (extension, minerals)
- But changes in ownership:
  - Big private transnational companies & 'big' national miners
  - State (Comibol)
  - Mining 'cooperatives'
  - Workers
- Changes in mines ownership imply:
  - changing power relationships
  - difficulties to identify the polluters
  - conflicts of interest
  - new actors: i) rural (non-miners) population  
ii) NGOs



# Conflicts in mining areas

- Labor conflicts
- Environmental conflicts
  - competition for access to natural resources
  - pollution and contamination – threats to livelihoods
- Political conflicts
  - competitive uses of the rural territory
  - access and control of the resources generated by extractive industries



# Environmental conflicts

- Quite recent
- International concern for the environment and environmental problems (Summits,, institutions, resources ...)
- New agenda for governments, international cooperation, NGOs
- Referents (e.g. the oil spill in Oruro)
- The environment as an instrument to claim for economic and social rights

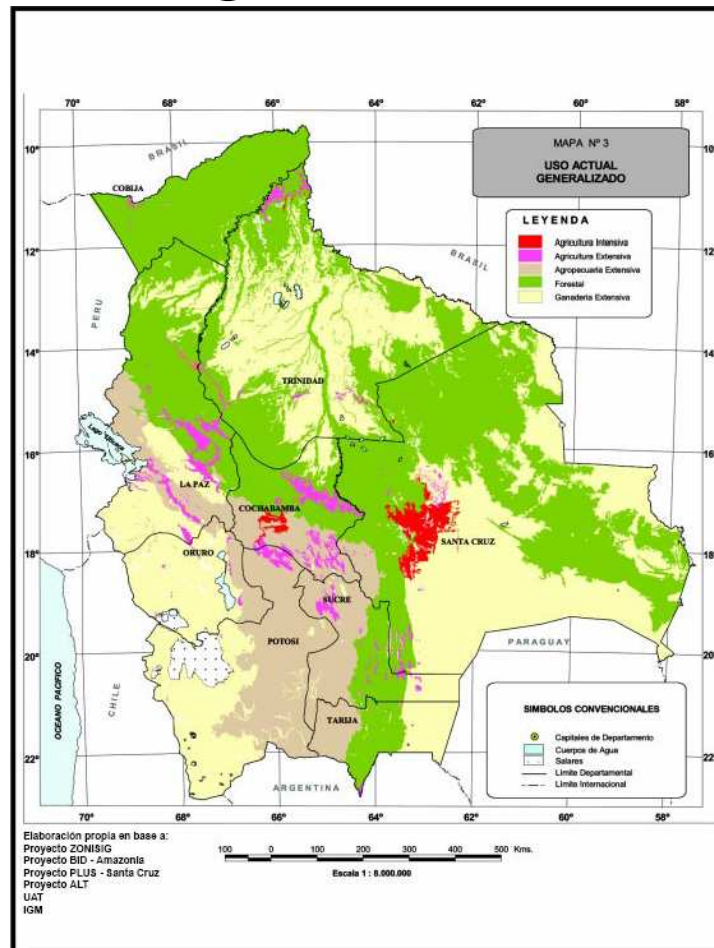
# *Factors of conflict*

- the dynamics of neoliberalism have threatened the viability of much small and medium farm agriculture
- social conflicts increasingly polarized, recurrent and violent b/c social discontent
- challenge the capability of rural people to control patterns of change in their lived environments
- Involvement of civil soc. and TNN

# Structural factors

1. Scarcity and poverty of non-mining resources in rural areas
2. Economic priorities in people's livelihoods
3. Institutional land issues
4. Territorial aspects
5. Asymmetrical relationships between and inside civil society organisations
6. Knowledge gaps

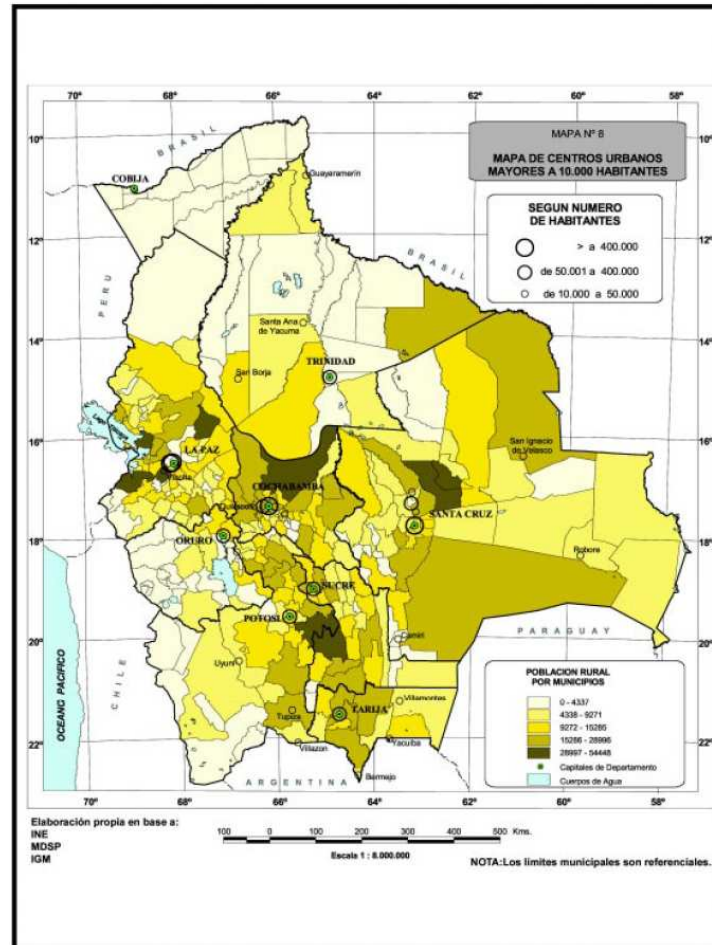
# Current use of soils (extensive livestock and high-altitude agriculture)



From: Ministerio de Desarrollo Sostenible y Planificación (2001) Lineamientos de políticas de ordenamiento territorial en Bolivia. La Paz.

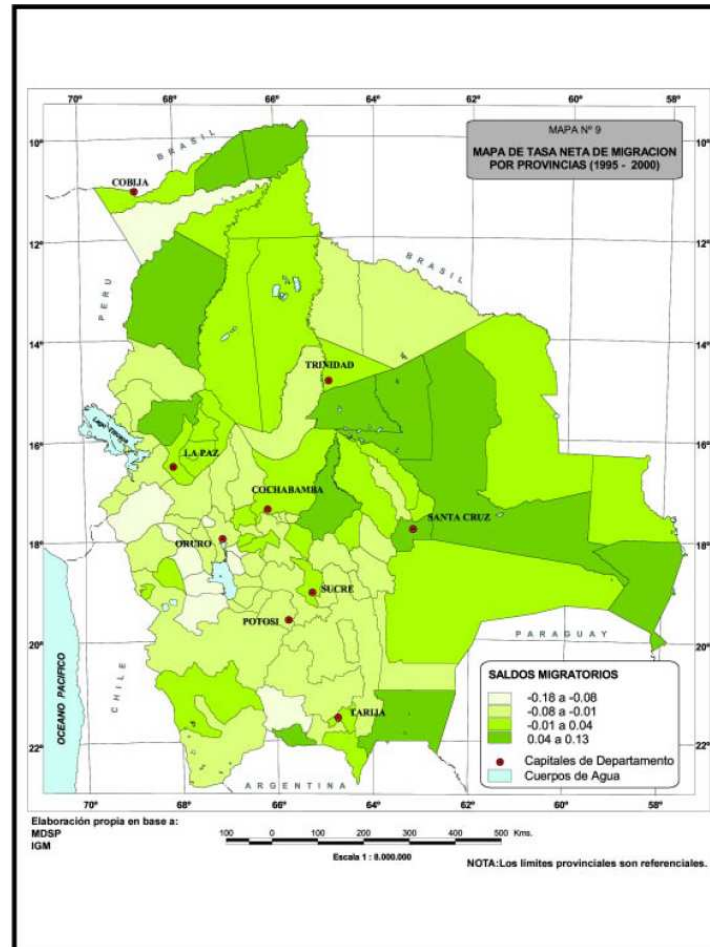


# Population density and urban centers



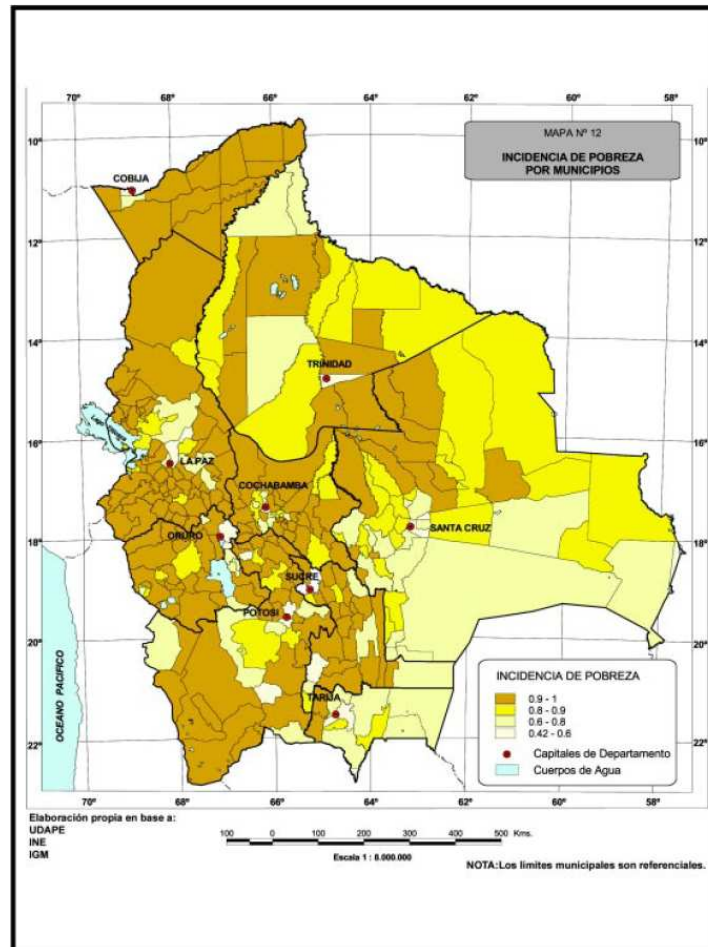
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# Migration



From: Ministerio de Desarrollo Sostenible y Planificación (2001) Lineamientos de políticas de ordenamiento territorial en Bolivia. La Paz.

# Poverty



From: Ministerio de Desarrollo Sostenible y Planificación (2001) Lineamientos de políticas de ordenamiento territorial en Bolivia. La Paz.

# Concluding remarks

- Environmental conflicts are fairly recent
- Factors: Neoliberal dynamics, Actors, Structures
- International concern for the environment (Summits, institutions, financial resources)
- New agenda for governments, international cooperation, NGOs
- Referents for acting through networks (division of labor/tasks)
- The environment as an instrument to claim for economic and social rights

*Thank you*

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